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# Can the Terrorist Threat in Canada be Reduced by Focusing on Root Causes?

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## Abstract

The greatest threat to Canada's national security today, and indeed to the security of much of the Western world, is terrorism. Traditionally, counterterrorism strategies have sought to reduce this threat by dealing with the symptoms of the problem. Police work, intelligence, surveillance, judicial sanctions and the involvement of the military are the usual tools used to detect, track, break up and prosecute terrorists and terrorist organizations. Less frequently have counterterrorism strategies sought to understand and resolve the root causes that motivate terrorists in the first place. In fact, for many, a root cause focus is akin to legitimizing terrorist violence by recognizing that the terrorist's cause is justifiable.

This paper contends that a counterterrorism strategy that includes a focus on resolving root cause issues can be essential to reducing the threat of terrorism. However, there are limitations to a root causes focus that need to be clearly understood. A root causes focus can be of limited value, and frequently no value whatsoever, in reducing the threat posed by existing terrorists. Further, the motivation behind some terrorist organizations simply cannot be resolved. The only way to reduce the threat posed by these organizations is to destroy them. On the other hand, resolving root cause issues can be a very effective means of preventing the spread of terrorism by resolving the underlying grievances that facilitate the recruitment of the next generation of terrorist.

## Chapter 1 -  Introduction

The terrible events of September 11th, 2001 galvanized the western world into action against the terrorist threat.  While many Canadians continue to believe that "it can't happen here," the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) annual reports since 1991 have consistently identified the threat of a terrorist attack occurring in Canada as among the highest security threats facing Canadians.[1]  September 11th, 2001 has made us more keenly aware of the terrorist threat, but the threat has been with us for some time.  In 1978, at a Canadian colloquium on terrorism, noted terrorism expert, Paul Wilkinson, stated "We live in a terrorist age . . . ."[2]  While the history of terrorist acts in Canada is quite short compared to many other countries in the world, numerous acts have been carried out on Canadian soil.

In October 1970 after a sporadic seven-year campaign of bombings, mostly in Montreal, the Front de Libération du Québec kidnapped British Trade Commissioner James Cross.  Several days later, they kidnapped and killed Quebec Labour Minister Pierre Laporte.[3]  In 1982, Direct Action, a small BC-based anarchist group, bombed a power station on Vancouver Island and the Litton Systems Canada plant in Toronto causing millions of dollars in damage.[4]  In the 1980s, Armenian and Sikh terrorist groups carried out numerous terrorist actions in Canada, including the 1985 bombing of Air India flight 182 which killed 329 people.  In 1999, Algerian nationalist

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[1] CSIS Annual Public Reports from 1991 to 2004-2005, http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/en/publications/annual_report.asp; Internet; accessed 23 Jan 2007.

[2] J. Nef, "Some Thoughts on Contemporary Terrorism: Domestic and International Perspectives," *Terrorism in Theory and Practice: Proceedings of a Colloquium*. ed by John Carson, (Toronto: Atlantic Council of Canada, 1978), 4.

[3] Thomas H.Mitchell, "Controlling Terrorism in Canada," Paper presented to the 30th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, University of Southern California, 1989, 4.

[4] *Ibid . . .*, 5.

Ahmed Ressam was arrested in Port Angeles after attempting to smuggle bomb making supplies into the US from Canada. And in June 2006, 17 suspected terrorists were arrested in Toronto after attempting to buy several tons of fertilizer (allegedly to make bombs).[5]

Canada has considerable experience with terrorist organizations and in dealing with the terrorist threat. However, much of the effort both nationally and internationally has been focused on tackling the symptoms of terrorism. This includes measures such as surveillance of potential or suspected terrorist organizations, intelligence gathering, security and enforcement measures, and financial measures, such as tracking and intercepting money destined to support terrorist organizations. There has been considerably less focus on addressing the root causes of terrorism. It seems intuitive that there must be underlying motivation for terrorist acts. Addressing these root issues, it stands to reason, should reduce the threat significantly. Despite the logic of this argument, there continues to be little focus paid to identifying and addressing root causes. There are several reasons for this. First, for some, it is anathema to recognize that there are root causes to terrorism. Such an exercise simply makes excuses for terrorist violence, they argue. As Canadian academic Thomas Homer-Dixon notes, in attempting to explain this rationale, "At its best, consideration of root causes is softheaded idealism. At its worst, it's appeasement of evil."[6] There is also no consistent agreement internationally on what terrorism actually is. Within the United States government, for instance, a recent study found that practically every official

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[5] Michael Friscolanti, Jonathan Gatehouse, Charlie Gillis, "Homegrown Terror - It's Not Over," *Maclean's Magazine*, 19 June 2006, 18.
[6] Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Pull Up Terrorism by the Roots." *The Globe and Mail*, 11 September 2006; http://proquest.umi.com; Internet; accessed 5 Oct 2006.

agency defined terrorism differently.[7] The lack of a common understanding of what terrorism is makes it challenging to develop effective counterterrorism strategies. Finally, while conventional wisdom might suggest that there must be an easily identifiable and common cause, such as poverty, that drives people to terrorist violence, a brief review of the literature will show that this is not the case; the roots of terrorism are both many and complicated.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the debate over the utility of addressing the root causes of terrorism by considering the following questions: Can a standard set of root causes for terrorists be identified? Can a counterterrorism strategy focused on addressing these root issues be effective at reducing the terrorist threat to Canadians?

It will be argued that a counterterrorism strategy that includes a focus on resolving root cause issues can be essential to reducing the threat of terrorism. However, there are limitations to a root causes focus that need to be clearly understood. A roots cause focus can be of limited value, and frequently no value whatsoever, in reducing the threat posed by existing terrorists. Further, the motivation behind some terrorist organizations simply cannot be resolved and the only way to reduce the threat of the organization is to destroy it. On the other hand, resolving root cause issues can be a very effective means of preventing the spread of terrorism by resolving the underlying grievances that facilitate the recruitment of the next generation of terrorist.

The paper will commence with a discussion of the challenges of defining terrorism and consider the impact of the lack of consensus on counterterrorism strategy. Then, a review of the

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[7] Alex Schmid, "Terrorism - The Definitional Problem," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 36 no2/3 (Spring 2004): 377.

current literature will determine whether consensus exists on the roots of terrorism and whether a counterterrorism strategy focused on root causes should be effective. The findings of the literature review will be tested using three cases studies of terrorism in Canada. Finally, the paper will make concluding comments.

## Chapter 2 -  Definitional Dilemma

Considerable effort within the literature on terrorism is devoted to discussion of the challenge of finding a satisfactory definition.  Internationally, and even nationally, there is little consensus on what precisely terrorism means.  In the US, for example, the State Department, the FBI and the Department of Defense have each adopted different definitions.[8]  Members of the United Nations have struggled since 1972 to find an internationally acceptable definition of terrorism but have failed despite recent pressure by the Secretary General and the Security Council to reach agreement.[9]  In Canada, the Anti-Terrorism Act definition of terrorism, while similar to each of the US government definitions, contains some critical differences.[10]  Within academic circles, there is also considerable debate.  A recent study in the periodical *Terrorism and Political Violence* found seventy-three different definitions in four leading journals in the field.[11]

Given the considerable focus on terrorism in the world today, the lack of consensus on a definition is cause for concern.  A clear and common understanding of terrorism is an essential departure point for any study of the issue.  Internationally, for instance, an effective counterterrorism strategy hinges on each of the affected countries sharing a common understanding of terrorism.  In a recent paper, Alex Schmid of the UN Terrorism Prevention Branch notes that "[w]hile a definition of terrorism, like a definition of war, is not solving the

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[8] Bruce Hoffman, "Terrorism Defined." in *Terrorism and Counterterrorism – Understanding the New Security Environment*, ed. Russell D. Howard and Reid L. Sawyer, 2-23. (Dubuque: McGraw Hill, 2006), 19.

[9] Alex Schmid, "Terrorism - The Definitional Problem." . . ., 377.

[10] Department of Justice. *Anti-Terrorism Act* (2001, c.41); http://laws.justice.gc.ca; Internet; accessed 29 January 2007.

[11] Leonard Weinberg, "The Challenges of Conceptualizing Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, No 777 (2004), quoted in Alex Schmid, "Terrorism - The Definitional Problem," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 36 no2/3 (Spring 2004), 381.

underlying problem, a lack of definition is perceived widely as one of the factors likely to encourage future terrorism."[12]

Why is it so difficult to define terrorism?  As Canadian author Denis Stairs wrote in a recent paper on terrorism:

> Terrorism really amounts to a pejorative designation that we give to a particular battery of war-fighting techniques...because other techniques (e.g., the mobilization of large armies equipped with high-tech weaponry) are not readily available to them.[13]

While many, including this author, would disagree with Dr. Stairs' statement, it serves to illustrate the differing perspectives on terrorism.  Bruce Hoffman, a noted American terrorism expert, argues in a 1998 paper on terrorism:

> . . . terrorists perceive themselves as reluctant warriors, driven by desperation – and lacking any viable alternative – to violence against a repressive state, a predatory rival ethnic or nationalist group, or an unresponsive international order.[14]

Designating individuals or groups as terrorists generally gives the state greater power to prosecute them as compared to common criminals.  Further, conventional warriors who conduct themselves in accordance with international laws governing armed conflict, such as the Geneva Conventions, are immune from prosecution for their violent actions.  From the terrorists' perspective, they are persecuted for waging their form of violence.  Thus, at the international level, much of the challenge in reaching agreement on the definition of terrorism stems from a fundamental disagreement on what acts constitute terrorism.  In fact, it was resistance from the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) that foiled the most recent UN attempt to define

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[12] Alex Schmid, "Terrorism - The Definitional Problem."…, 378.

[13] Denis Stairs, "Terrorism is Politics," *Newsletters*, Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, Winter 2006; http://cdfai.org; Internet, accessed 15 January 2007, 1.

[14] Bruce Hoffman, "Terrorism Defined . . ., 14.

terrorism.  The OIC argued unsuccessfully that national liberation movements fighting foreign occupation should not be considered terrorism.[15]

Another challenge to achieving a common definition is that there are so many forms of terrorism, each having very different motivations.  For example, in its 2003 annual public report, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) identifies four broad profiles of terrorist organizations: religious extremists, nationalist/secessionist groups, domestic extremists and state-sponsored terrorists.[16]  The particular manifestation or manifestations of terrorism prevalent in any given part of the world will shape popular opinion.  For instance, religious extremists in the form of radical Islamics have been the focus of Anti-Terrorism campaigns in the West since 9/11.  In Sri Lanka, however, the predominant terrorist threat is from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who are motivated by the quest for their own homeland.  While there are similarities between these terrorist groups, there are enough differences that it is difficult to find a common descriptor.

Despite the challenge in defining terrorism, there is enough commonality between Western definitions to allow for an adequately clear picture of terrorism to emerge.  Two authors, in their search for a definition of terrorism, list its distinguishing attributes.  Paul Pillar, an intelligence officer for the CIA, lists the following key attributes of terrorism:

- Premeditation – there must be intent and prior decision to commit an act;
- Politically motivated – there is always a political goal to a terrorist act;
- Targets are noncombatants;

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[15] Alex Schmid, "Terrorism - The Definitional Problem.". . ., 388.

[16] Canadian Security Intelligence Service, "CSIS 2003 Public Report," http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007, 4.

- Perpetrators are either sub-national groups or clandestine agents.[17]

In a recent paper on the nature of terrorism, John Gearson, a UK-based terrorism expert, argues that terrorism is always:

- Purposeful and planned
- Political in its aims and motives
- Indiscriminant in its targeting
- Violent or threatening of violence
- Accepting of no restraint
- Designed to have psychological repercussions beyond original target.[18]

While there are differences in each of these lists, there is sufficient commonality to clarify both the key attributes of terrorism and the characteristics that differentiate terrorists from others who use violence to achieve their ends. The political motivation of terrorists distinguishes them from violent criminals who are generally motivated by self-gain. The deliberate and indiscriminant targeting of noncombatants distinguishes terrorists from conventional military forces who are bound by the international laws of armed conflict to deliberate targeting of combatants. Hoffman further distinguishes guerillas from terrorists by noting that while the two groups often employ similar tactics for the same purposes, the term guerilla generally refers to a larger group of armed individuals who operate as a military unit, attacking enemy military forces and seizing and holding territory.[19]

With an appreciation for the key characteristics of terrorism, the paper will now consider the definition of terrorism contained in the Canadian Anti-Terrorism Act and assess it against these

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[17] Paul R. Pillar, "The Dimensions of Terrorism and Counterterrorism 2001," in *Terrorism and Counterterrorism – Understanding the New Security Environment*, ed. Russell D. Howard and Reid L. Sawyer, 24-45. (Dubuque: McGraw Hill, 2006), 25.

[18] John Gearson, "The Nature of Modern Terrorism," *The Political Quarterly* 73 (August 2002 Supplement 1): 11.

[19] Bruce Hoffman, "Terrorism Defined . . .," 21.

characteristics to ensure that it is adequate. While any number of American, international or academic definitions could be adopted, the definition in the Anti-Terrorism Act must be considered the authoritative definition in Canada since it is used by the judicial system to prosecute terrorists. According to the Act, 'terrorist activity' is defined as:

> An act or omission in or outside Canada that:
>
> - is committed in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause and in whole or in part with the intention of intimidating the public or a segment of the public….
>
> - intentionally causes death or serious bodily harm to a person by the use of violence, endangers a person's life, causes a serious risk to public safety, causes substantial property damage or causes serious interference with an essential service…other than as a result of advocacy, protest, dissent or stoppage of work that is not intended to cause harm.[20]

The Act goes on to exclude an act or omission committed during an armed conflict that is conducted within customary international laws.

Since this definition was crafted as part of a legal document, the wording is somewhat convoluted. Nevertheless, the key characteristics of terrorism identified above are all contained in this definition. While it does not include the words 'premeditated' or 'purposeful and planned', the Act uses 'intentional' to capture this characteristic. The political nature of terrorism is mentioned and expanded upon to include religious and ideological motivations. The Act is clear that the targets of terrorism are members of the general public (noncombatants). It includes damage to property. The definition also captures the intimidation aspect of terrorism through its intention to cause repercussions beyond the original target. To two caveats contained

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[20] Department of Justice, *Anti-Terrorism Act* (2001, c.41); http://www.laws.justice.gc.ca; Internet; accessed 29 January 2007.

within the definition serve to illustrate the challenge of defining terrorism and not casting too wide a net. The specific exemption of military actions conducted with the bounds of the laws of armed conflict clearly serves to differentiate terrorist violence from violence conducted in pursuit of legitimate military goals.  The caveat that exempts interference and disruption of essential services resulting from "advocacy, protest, dissent and stoppage of work . . ." in particular serves to highlight the fine line that must be walked in a democratic country to permit lawful dissent.

On balance, the definition of terrorism in the Anti-Terrorism Act captures the key characteristics of terrorism. While somewhat wordy, it will be used as the definition of terrorism in this paper.

## Chapter 3 - The Roots of Terrorism

Having established a working definition of terrorism, the paper will now turn to consideration of its root causes. Based on a review of the relevant literature, this section will examine three questions: What are the root causes of terrorism? Is there a common causal theme across the spectrum of terrorist groups? Can the threat of terrorism be reduced by focusing on its root causes?

In the past, there has been a reluctance to focus on the causes of terrorism. Some analysts, explains Edward Newman, Director of the Peace and Governance Programme at the United Nations University, ". . . are reluctant to consider root causes because they refuse to accept that there may be any legitimate causes or grievances behind terrorism."[21] Acceptance that there is a legitimate cause driving terrorist violence is seen as condoning the violence. An example of this logic is found in a 1987 Report from the Senate Special Committee on Terrorism and Public Safety that found: ". . .terrorism cannot be, or perceived to be, "successful." A resort to terrorism should result in a group being ostracized and its cause or grievance discredited."[22] While there may be cases where it is challenging to find any legitimate motivation to terrorist violence, the recent focus on terrorist violence has led to greater efforts to understand and address the root causes of terrorism. The Canadian government recently adopted a "Whole of Government"[23] approach and the US Department of Defence advocates the Diplomatic,

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[21] Edward Newman, "Exploring the "Root Causes" of Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29 (December 2006): 749.

[22] Senate of Canada, *The Report of the Senate Special Committee on Terrorism and the Public Safety*." (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, June 1987), 11.

[23] See, for example, Department of National Defence, "Backgrounder – Canadian Forces in Afghanistan," 5 January 2007; http://www.dnd.ca; Internet; accessed 8 April 2007.

Information, Military and Economic (DIME) model[24] when faced with asymmetric warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq.  Both governments have recognized that insurgencies cannot be defeated by military action alone and that parallel efforts are required to address the root causes of insurgency.  There is increasing acknowledgment that a similar approach is required to defeat terrorism.  For such an approach to be effective, though, a thorough understanding of the motivation behind terrorist action is necessary as well as a degree of confidence that focusing on root causes will be effective at reducing the threat of terrorism.

The fact that a terrorist act, from the definition discussed above, is committed in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose suggests that there must be an underlying grievance that the terrorist is seeking to resolve.  However, the literature paints a complicated and often conflicting picture of the root causes of terrorism.  Conventional wisdom often suggests simplistic causes such as poverty or social inequality are at the root of terrorism, but the reality is that a much more complex set of circumstances must be in place to drive individuals to terrorist violence in the name of their cause. Further, the situation is complicated by the fact that motivations vary substantially between terrorist groups.

It is frequently argued, and all too often assumed, that poverty is a primary cause of terrorism.  Recent studies have suggested that, while there is a link between poverty and terrorism, the linkage is complex.  As Walter Laqueur, a noted terrorism expert, argues in a recent book on terrorism, if there was a direct correlation between poverty and terrorism then the incidents of terrorism should be highest in the world's poorest countries.  However, this is not

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[24] United States Joint Forces Command, "Joint Forces Command Glossary," http://www.jfcom.mil/about/glossary.htm#ONA; Internet, accessed 12 April 2007.

the case.  Of the forty-nine least developed countries in the world, designated by the United

Nations, there is only one in which terrorism is present to a significant extent: Sudan.  Even

there, the terrorist threat is not from native terrorists, but from foreign terrorists.[25]

In a widely-cited 2002 paper, Krueger and Malečková studied the link between poverty,

education and terrorism in the Middle East.  Looking at both quantitative data on income and

education levels and qualitative data gleaned from interviews with terrorists in Lebanon, the

authors concluded that there was little reason to expect that a reduction in poverty or an increase

in education levels would lead to a meaningful reduction in the terrorist threat.[26]

In a 2002 paper on the root causes of terrorism, Karin Von Hippel of the Washington-

based Centre for Strategic and International Studies also considered the connection between

poverty and terrorism.  She also concluded that, while common sense might suggest that

there *should* be a direct link between poverty and terrorism, the evidence gathered to date

suggests the opposite.[27]

While a direct link between poverty and the threat of terrorism may not exist, there is a

connection between the two. Von Hippel provides an interesting illustration of how poverty,

when combined with other factors, can stimulate terrorism.  In many developing countries,

access to education is not free.  As a result, poor parents often simply cannot afford to send their

children to state-run, secular schools.  However, in some Muslim countries, free religious

schooling is often provided to the poor.  Frequently, these schools, which are not regulated by

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[25] Walter Laqueur, *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*. (New York: Continuum, 2003): 15.

[26] Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Malečková, "Does Poverty Cause Terrorism?" *New Republic* 226, no 24 (24 June 2002):33.

[27] Karin von Hippel, "The Roots of Terrorism: Probing the Myths," *The Political Quarterly* 73 (August 2002 Supplement 1): 26.

the state, preach a narrow and violent version of Islam.  Von Hippel notes that of the several

million Afghan refugees displaced to Pakistan in the 1980s as a result of the Afghan-Soviet war,

the children from the poorest refugee families attended these religious schools or *madrasas*.

Many of these children would later become Taliban.[28]  Poverty forced upon these parents a

decision that might later lead to a healthy pool of potential terrorist who, from a young age, were

exposed to a radical and violent form of Islam.

The view that poverty can often be an indirect factor in causing terrorism is supported by

Newman who argues that poor societies are frequently found in weak states.  These states may

not have the capacity to prevent the proliferation of terrorists, through, for instance, an effective

education program which might reduce support for terrorism.[29]

Another perspective on poverty and terrorism is presented by Homer-Dixon.  He argues that

while terrorists themselves may not be poor, they are taking action on behalf of their society or

ethnic group that is poor.  While some terrorists may be recruited directly from communities in

misery, such as Palestinian suicide bombers, many are recruited from wealthier, more educated

groups precisely because they can blend in and move about Western societies much more

readily.[30]

Drawing together these seemingly disparate threads, while there appears to be broad support

for the position that there is no direct correlation between poverty and terrorism, poverty does

play a role as an enabler when combined with other factors.  As Newman states, "poverty can

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[28] *Ibid . . .*, 29.

[29] Edward Newman, "Exploring the "Root Causes" of Terrorism . . ., 751.

[30] Thomas Homer-Dixon, "We Ignore Misery at Our Peril," *The Globe and Mail*, 26 September 2001; http://proquest.umi.com; Internet; accessed 7 March 2007.

breed resentment and desperation and support for political extremisms."[31]

Another common misconception is that there exists a direct link between lack of education and terrorism; that terrorists tend to be relatively uneducated. This connection has been studied extensively in recent years. Krueger and Malečková examined the relationship between education and terrorism in their study. They noted that a simplistic view of terrorism is that it is akin to violent crime. Available evidence suggests that criminals tend to earn less and have less formal education that the average person. This logic suggests that terrorists also should have less than average levels of education. However, their study found the opposite. Terrorists tended to have higher than average levels of education. Further, they noted that support for terrorist organizations tended to be greater amongst the better educated. They attributed their findings to the political nature of terrorism and noted that better educated people from privileged backgrounds are more likely to participate in politics for the simple reason that political involvement takes commitment, time and interest, all of which is more likely when people do not have to concern themselves with issues of subsistence.[32]

This explanation of the link between terrorism and education has much support in the literature.[33] It can be concluded, then, that simply providing access to education for all will not make terrorism go away. However, as will be seen later, there is a connection between lack of opportunity, which is often associated with lack of education, and terrorist motivation. Further, as Von Hippel pointed out above, in the case of the Pakistani *madrasas*, the education received by the children of the poor Afghanis contributed to their radicalization and improved their

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[31] Edward Newman, "Exploring the "Root Causes" of Terrorism . . ., 751.

[32] Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Malečková, "Does Poverty Cause Terrorism . . ., 30-32.

[33] See, for example, Walter Laqueur, *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty First Century* . . . , 16.

chances for recruitment as terrorists. Therefore, the link between education and terrorism is a complex one and will continue to be a theme as the paper examines the roots of terrorism. However, it is clear that a lack of education, on its own, does not lead directly to terrorism.

If poverty and lack of education are not direct causes of terrorism, what is? The fact that terrorist acts have a political, religious or ideological motivation clearly indicates that terrorists are responding to what they perceive to be an injustice that has been done to them or to elements of their society. This injustice could stem from a number of different sources. In a 2001 paper, Pillar noted that injustice could flow from a sense of political repression, a lack of self determination or the depravity of leaders.[34] For example, the early Russian terrorist group *Narodnaya Volya* was motivated to bring freedom to the Russian people living under the repressive Tsarist regime.[35] Palestinian terrorists groups, such as Hamas, seek to destroy the state of Israel to right the perceived injustice of the loss of a Palestinian homeland. In 1996, Osama bin Laden issued his first major manifesto which included the following statement that clearly articulates his sense of injustice:

> It is no secret that the people of Islam have suffered from the oppression, injustice and aggression of the alliance of Jews and Christians and their collaborators to the point that the blood of the Muslims became the cheapest and their wealth was loot in the hands of the enemies.[36]

Newman, reviewing the work of Nasra Hassan who interviewed nearly two-hundred and fifty people involved with the most militant Palestinian groups, noted that many of the people were

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[34] Paul R. Pillar, "The Dimensions of Terrorism and Counterterrorism 2001 . . ., 36.

[35] Bruce Hoffman, "Terrorism Defined . . ., 6.

[36] Osama bin Laden as quoted in Henry Munson, "Lifting the Veil - Understanding the Roots of Militant Islamic Militancy." *Harvard International Review* 25, no 4, (Winter 2004): 22.

middle class and had held paying jobs but were now refugees.  They expressed feelings of humiliation, indignity, dispossession and trauma.[37]

We have seen how terrorists are motivated by powerful feelings of injustice and humiliation.  But for the vast majority of people, this in itself would not drive them to resort to violence.  What is it, then, that causes one element of society to resort to violence while the majority either accept their lot or resort to some form of peaceful protest?  There is consensus among scholarly writers that a critical factor is youth, in particular young urban males, who may be predisposed to violence as a means of achieving goals.[38] Urbanization exacerbates this problem.  The social structures and support networks identified with traditional rural society are weakened or broken.  This breakdown is not neat and clean as once assumed but can be extremely disruptive and unsettling.[39] When these factors are combined the demographic explosion of youth in developing countries, high unemployment and few prospects for economic improvement, the risk is high of terrorist activity is high.[40]

Having looked at factors that cause individuals to turn to terrorism, the paper will now consider factors that contribute to the solidarity and longevity of terrorist groups.  The importance of the group itself as a cohesive with common goals and shared experienced is recognized as a key contributor to terrorist violence. It is worthwhile quoting noted terrorism expert Martha Crenshaw at length from her 1981 book on the roots of terrorism:

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[37] Edward Newman, "Exploring the "Root Causes" of Terrorism . . ., 753.

[38] See, for example, Edward Newman, "Exploring the "Root Causes" of Terrorism . . ., 752; Matenia Sirseloudi, "How to Predict the Unpredictable - On the Early Detection of Terrorist Campaigns," *Defense & Security Analysis* 21, no 4 (December 2005): 378; or Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Pull Up Terrorism by the Roots . . ., 2.

[39] Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis* 3rd Ed.(Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1993), 13.

[40] Paul R. Pillar, "The Dimensions of Terrorism and Counterterrorism 2001 . . ., 37.

We are not dealing with a situation in which certain types of personalities suddenly turn to terrorism in answer to some inner call. Terrorism is the result of a gradual growth of commitment and opposition, a group development that furthermore depends on government action. The psychological relationships within the terrorist group – the interplay of commitment, risk, solidarity, loyalty, guilt, revenge and isolation – discourage terrorists from changing the direction they have taken. This may explain why – even if objective circumstances change when, for example, grievances are satisfied . . . terrorism may endure until the terrorist group is physically destroyed.[41]

In considering the root causes of terrorism as a means of addressing terrorism, Crenshaw's thesis is of tremendous significance in that it suggests that once a terrorist organization has formed, there is little that can be done to satisfy the objectives of the group. This perspective is shared by Canadian writer John Thompson of the MacKenzie Institute. Thompson's perspective is that a terrorist's motivation is largely internal and based on American psychologist Mazlow's fifth tier needs, self actualization and self-identity.[42] In Thompson's view, terrorists' self identity becomes wrapped up in being a revolutionary. They enjoy the influence, fear and perceived respect that comes with it. As Thompson says, the terrorist ". . . sees himself as the agent of history or the visionary builder of a new Jerusalem. Being a janitor or filing clerk just doesn't carry the same prestige."[43]

This perspective is widely shared by terrorism experts and suggests that a focus on root causes will be effective only insofar as reducing the long-term threat of terrorism by removing the motivation to resort to terrorist violence in the first place or reducing the chance of others joining with an already existing terrorist group. Once a terrorist organization has formed,

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[41] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4 (July 1981), 397; http://www.jstor.org; Internet; accessed 6 Feb 2007.

[42] John Thompson and Joe Turlej, "Other Peoples' Wars: A Review of Overseas Terrorism in Canada," MacKenzie Institute Occasional Paper (June 2003): 6.

[43] *Ibid . . .*, 12.

however, a counterterrorism strategy concerned primarily with a root causes focus may be less successful.

Academics have studied the link between political parties and terrorist groups and concluded that there is some correlation between them. Leonard Weinberg examined seventy-five terrorist groups and found that thirty-six percent of these groups had linkages with legitimate political parties.[44] Terrorist groups such as the IRA in Ireland, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka and the Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA) in Spain each have connections to a political party with a similar objective but a more peaceful means of achieving that objective. Wienberg notes that "the most frequent occurrence is for a faction of the party, often its youth branch, to break away for its parent body for the purpose of waging a terrorist campaign."[45] In many cases this break away group retains ties to the parent organization. The faction may be dissatisfied with the actions of the majority, perhaps feeling that not enough progress is being made at addressing grievances, and decides to take more radical action on its own. The radical group may consider that they are acting on behalf of the wider constituency although that group generally has not been consulted about, and may not necessarily approve of, the terrorists aims or efforts.[46]

The literature review of the root causes of terrorism has shown that the causes are complex and there is no single unifying thread. Still, common themes run through the root causes of many terrorist groups. It has been demonstrated that factors such as poverty and lack of

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[44] Leonard Weinberg, "Turning to Terror: the Conditions under Which Political Parties Turn to Terrorist Activities," *Comparative Politics* 23, no 4 (July 1991): 431; http://www.jstor.org; Internet; accessed 27 Jan 2007.
[45] *Ibid . . .,* 431.
[46] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism . . .,* 397.

education that are often thought of as being key motivators for terrorism have a more subtle

and indirect relationship to it. Homer-Dixon summarized well the current thinking on root

causes in a recent article saying:

> . . . participants in terrorism tend to be men in their twenties or thirties who are
> ferociously angry because of powerful feelings of humiliation. The humiliation can
> have many sources, but it's likely to arise when relatively well-educated young men
> are deeply frustrated by a lack of political and economic opportunity and when, at the
> same time, they strongly identify with a group, society or culture they perceive as
> oppressed or exploited. Extremist leaders then inflame and manipulate these feelings
> of humiliation. . . [47]

In an effort to use root causes to understand and perhaps anticipate terrorism, several

frameworks have been developed.[48] In 1981 paper Crenshaw explored the variables that lead to

terrorism and grouped them into two broad categories: *preconditions*, long-term factors that set

the stage for terrorism, and *precipitants*, specific events which immediately precede terrorist

actions. She further subdivided preconditions into *enabling/permissive* factors, those long-term

structural factors that provide the opportunity for terrorism to happen, and *proximate* causes,

situations that directly inspire or motivate terrorist campaigns.[49] Crenshaw's model is

summarized in Table 1. A focus on the root causes of terrorism must necessarily concern itself

with the preconditions for terrorism vice the precipitant factors that immediately precede terrorist

actions. Crenshaw's model provides an intuitively satisfying way of looking at the potential root

causes of terrorism. Further, there is widespread support within the literature for this type of

causal model in which preconditions and precipitants are identified and two different types of

preconditions are considered. For instance, Pillar says the following in his 2001 paper:

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[47] Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Pull Up Terrorism by the Roots . . ., 2.

[48] For a discussion of several different approaches see Matenia Sirseloudi, "How to Predict the Unpredictable - On the Early Detection of Terrorist Campaigns . . ., 371.

[49] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism . . ., 381.

Two types of antecedent conditions are germane to the emergence of terrorists. The first consists of the issues expressed directly by the terrorists and those who sympathize with their cause: political repression, a lack of self-determination . . . [equivalent to Crenshaw's direct conditions].The other type of root condition includes the living standards and socioeconomic prospects of populations that are, or may become, the breeding stock for terrorist. [Crenshaw's permissive conditions][50]

In recent years, Crenshaw's model has been further developed by other authors. Working together, Schmid and Sirseloudi have used Crenshaw's preconditions and precipitants as a departure point and have added accelerators and decelerators which influence preconditions.[51] Schmid and Sirseloudi's model, however, is somewhat more complex than Crenshaw's and while there are similarities, the factors influencing terrorism development in Schmid and Sirseloudi's model are not consistently echoed in the literature.

**Table 1 –** The Setting for Terrorism – Crenshaw

| **Preconditions:** - factors that set the stage for terrorism over the long-term | | **Precipitants:** - specific events that immediately precede terrorist action |
|---|---|---|
| **Permissive Conditions:** - provide opportunities for terrorism to happen | **Direct Conditions:** - directly inspire and motivate terrorist campaigns | |
| - modernization <br> - urbanization <br> - social facilitation <br>    - habits and traditions that sanction the use of violence <br> - government unwillingness or inability to prevent terrorism | - concrete grievances <br> - lack of opportunity for political participation <br> - elite dissatisfaction | - pattern of government actions as a catalyst <br>    - unexpected or unusual force in response to protest |

Source: Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism . . ., 381-385.

Newman has also built on Crenshaw's model and provided additional granularity to the

[50] Paul R. Pillar, "The Dimensions of Terrorism and Counterterrorism 2001 . . ., 37.

[51] Alex Schmid, "Root Causes of Terrorism: Some Conceptual Notes. . . , 133; Matenia Sirseloudi, "How to Predict the Unpredictable - On the Early Detection of Terrorist Campaigns . . ., 381.

concrete grievances that Crenshaw discusses in her model. Newman's model is summarized

in Table 2.

**Table 2 –** Newman's Causal Model

| Condition Variables: - provide the social environment and widespread grievances that, when combined with precipitant factors, lead to terrorism | | Precipitants: - essential intervening variables or catalysts that, in conjunction with appropriate condition variables can lead to terrorism |
|---|---|---|
| **Permissive Conditions:** - create an enabling environment for terrorism | **Direct Conditions:** - tangible political issues that, when combined with permissive conditions, can lead to terrorism | |
| - poverty<br>- urbanization<br>- urban migration<br>- population growth<br>- burgeoning young age structure<br>- population density<br>- unemployment<br>- social change | - inequality<br>- exclusion<br>- repression<br>- dispossession<br>- sense of humiliation/ alienation<br>- sense of foreign occupation<br>- clash of identities<br>- violent conflict<br>- globalization<br>- sudden economic downturn | - leadership<br>- funding<br>- state sponsorship<br>- political upheaval |

Source: Edward Newman, "Exploring the "Root Causes" of Terrorism . . ., 750-764

Newman tested his model to against two ways. First, he used a broad sample of terrorist

incidents and organizations worldwide to evaluate the link between the incidents and

organizations and his model. Then, he conducted a specific case study examining the motivation

of a terrorist organization using his model. His conclusions are particularly relevant to this study

and are summarized below:

- analyzing a wide range of samples is not conducive to generalized conclusions regarding the relationship between social conditions and terrorism. *Thus, neither permissive or direct conditions are alone effective in explaining or predicting terrorism.* [emphasis added]

- focusing on terrorist organizations suggests that root cause analysis may be helpful in explaining certain types of terrorism

- qualitative case analyses that present a detailed picture of specific conflicts offer the most effective methodology for understanding the role of root causes in relation to other explanatory variables. Root causes are necessary, but not sufficient, factors in explaining and understanding certain types of terrorism, but only in conjunction with precipitant factors

- root causes tend to be most relevant in helping to understand terrorism associated with ideological, ethno-nationalist, and Islamic groups in developing countries. They are of limited value in explaining nationalist groups in developed countries and least relevant with regard to ideological and nihilist groups in developed countries.[52]

There were three questions to be answered in this section of the paper. What are the root causes of terrorism? Is there a common causal theme across the spectrum of terrorist groups? Can the threat of terrorism be reduced by focusing on root causes? It can be seen from the literature that there are common roots to terrorism and these roots are complicated. An understanding of root causes is best developed by looking at them in terms of permissive conditions that allow terrorism to flourish and direct conditions that describe the grievances that terrorists seek to resolve.

Turning now to a consideration of whether the risk of terrorism can be reduced by focusing on root causes, it stands to reason that an effective counterterrorism policy should consider the underlying motivation behind the terrorist threat. The following two citations support this perspective:

> Any 'treatment which fails to deal with the root political causes of terrorism and addresses only its 'symptoms' will be bound to fail in the long run.[53]

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[52] Edward Newman, "Exploring the "Root Causes" of Terrorism . . ., 769-770.

[53] J. Nef, "Some Thoughts on Contemporary Terrorism . . ., 21.

. . . if we don't prepare ourselves better to deal with terrorism, especially by understanding and doing what we can about its deep causes, we'll eventually pay a heavy price. It's very unlikely we'll defeat this menace through military force alone.[54]

However, it is clear that there are limitations to the effectiveness of focusing on root causes alone. Newman found limitations within his own model in terms of its ability to accurately describe the motivation of some terrorist groups, specifically those terrorist organizations operating in developed countries.

This viewpoint is shared by Pillar who identified major constraints to the effectiveness of reducing terrorism by focusing on root causes alone, including the complexity of the antecedent conditions and the emergence of terrorism, and the fact that there will always remain a core of incorrigibles who cannot be appeased.[55] This last perspective is certainly shared by Thompson who feels "It is not so much that the ends justify the means for a terrorist, it is rather that the means are attractive enough to require the invention of an end."[56] Clearly, in Thompson's view, a focus on root causes will be ineffective. While this may seem a somewhat extreme viewpoint, it was echoed in a 1987 Senate of Canada report on terrorism.[57]

From these varied opinions, it can be concluded that an effective counterterrorism strategy must include police and military action, including surveillance, intelligence gather and enforcement, to deal with the 'incorrigibles' along with an effort to understand and treat the root causes that motivate a terrorist organization and provide an environment ripe for the recruitment of terrorists. In recent years, Western governments seem to have recognized the limitations of

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[54] Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Pull Up Terrorism by the Roots . . ., 2.
[55] Paul R. Pillar, "The Dimensions of Terrorism and Counterterrorism 2001 . . ., 38.
[56] John Thompson and Joe Turlej, "Other Peoples' Wars . . ., 10.
[57] Senate of Canada, *The Report of the Senate Special Committee on Terrorism* . . .11.

force alone in dealing with terrorist organizations and have developed approaches such as Canada's Whole of Government approach and the US Department of Defence's Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic (DIME) model in an effort to deal with the asymmetric threat posed by terrorist organizations. What should be clear, though, from the review of the root causes of terrorism, is that there is no simple formula to address terrorisms' root causes. The causes are complex, interrelated and not easily resolved.

## Chapter 4 -  Case Studies

This chapter will apply the conclusions drawn in the previous section to case studies of current and historical terrorism in Canada.  Newman's root causes model will be examined to determine its validity and, for each group studied, an assessment will be made to determine the potential effectiveness of a counterterrorism strategy that includes a root causes-based focus.

In their 2004-2005 Public Report, CSIS identifies three general terrorist profiles that pose a threat to Canadian security today: Al Qaeda and like minded groups, nationalist/secessionist groups and domestic extremists.[58] The case studies will focus on one group from each of these profiles. The first group, Direct Action, was a small, domestic extremist group that was active in BC in the early 1980s.  The next group, the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ), was a nationalist/secessionist group from Quebec that was active from 1963 to 1970.  Finally, Al Qaeda, a religious extremist group, was the last group examined.

It will be seen that there is a logical progression in the terrorist organizations studied.  Direct Action was a very small and unsophisticated terrorist group comprising five people.  It benefited from very little public support and its threat to Canadian security was quite limited.  The FLQ also lacked sophistication, but was considerably larger, measuring its membership in the hundreds.  The FLQ had fairly widespread support among separatist sympathizers in Quebec. With the benefit of hindsight, it is apparent that the FLQ did not pose a great risk to security, at the time it appeared to the federal and Quebec provincial governments that widespread insurrection was possible in Quebec.  Al Qaeda is a very large and sophisticated organization

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[58] Canadian Security Intelligence Service, "Public Report 2004-2005." http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007, 4-5.

with global reach and tens of thousands of members. It draws upon considerable support throughout the Muslim world and poses the greatest security threat to Western countries, including Canada, today.

*Case Study 1- Direct Action: A Domestic Extremist Group*

Canada has seen a number of domestic extremist groups develop over the years. These groups range from neo-Nazi movements to single-issue groups such as radical environmentalists, animal rights and anti-globalization movements.[59] One of the most destructive of these groups was Direct Action, a self-styled urban guerilla group that conducted a campaign of violence in BC and Ontario in the early 1980s, including the bombings of a BC hydro sub-station and the Litton Systems plant in Toronto. Direct Action, also known by the media as the Squamish Five, rejected the lifestyle and values of modern society and hoped to spawn a movement of widespread militancy that would ultimately lead to revolution. In a communiqué after the bombing of the hydro sub-station, the group explained that they reject ". . . ecological destruction and the human oppression inherent in the industrial societies [of the world]."[60] Their actions were loosely patterned on European terrorist groups, such as the German Red Army Faction (Baader-Meinhof gang), that advocated 'direct action' – urban guerilla warfare as they called it.[61] Although some single issue terrorist organizations, radical animal rights and environmental groups in particular, are still active in Canada, since the early 1990's secular terrorist groups, such as Direct Action, have largely given way to religious nationalist groups.[62]

The case study will commence with a brief review of the history of Direct Action including an assessment of the enduring legacy of the group. Then, its actions will be compared against

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[59] *Ibid . . .* , 5.

[60] "Communiqué Regarding the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir Bombing," found in Ann Hansen, *Direct Action – Memoirs of an Urban Guerilla*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2001), 475.

[61] Walter Laqueur, *A History of Terrorism*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2001), 204.

[62] Canadian Security Intelligence Service, "Backgrounder No 8 Counter Terrorism," August 2002, 3; http://csis-scrs.gc.ca; Internet; accessed 29 November 2006.

the Anti-Terrorism Act's definition of terrorism to confirm that it was indeed a terrorist group. Finally, the motivation of the group will be examined using Newman's root cause model to determine how well the model applies to groups such as this. Finally, comments will be made on the effectiveness of a counterterrorism strategy that includes a root causes focus against an organization such as Direct Action. It will be seen, as predicted by Newman, that the root cause model does not adequately explain the motivation of Direct Action and it will be clear that a root causes-based approach to this type of terrorist group would be completely ineffective.

It will be noted that very few references are used in this case study, the memoirs of Ann Hansen, one of the group's leaders, being the primary reference. Despite the extent of the damage caused by this group, there is a dearth of information on it. The bulk of the information that exists resides on websites of current Anarchist movements and is not particularly unbiased. Despite the lack of suitable reference material, when considering the motivation of a terrorist, an autobiography is an ideal reference since it gives first hand insight into the mind of the terrorist.

Direct Action emerged from the large anarchist community that was active in Canada in the 1970s and early 1980s. The anarchist groups opposed modern society's values outright and sought to build a popular movement to overthrow it. Most sought to achieve their objectives peacefully; Direct Action chose to use violence. The five person cell comprised Ann Hansen, considered the spiritual leader of the group, Brent Taylor, the intellectual leader, Doug Stewart, the group's technician and explosives expert, and Julie Belmas and Gerry Hannah, the foot soldiers.[63] Hansen, Taylor and Stewart got together in the fall of 1980 with the intention of

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[63] Lindsay Scotton, "On a Warm Afternoon in late April 1982 . . .," *Toronto Star*, Toronto: 23 May 1985; 2; http:/www.proquest.umi.com; Internet; accessed 19 February 2007.

taking militant action in the pursuit of their revolutionary objectives.[64]  Their first strike was against the Amax Corporation, a BC-based mining company that had received federal government and BC Ministry of the Environment permission to dump mine tailings into the Pacific Ocean near its mine north of Prince Rupert, BC.  In April 1981, members of Direct Action broke into and vandalized the Vancouver office of Amax.  Frustrated by the lack of publicity over their efforts, they then vandalized the Ministry of the Environment office in downtown Victoria in a similar fashion and sent a communiqué to the media.  This time the vandalism was reported locally.[65]

Satisfied with their initial efforts, the members of Direct Action began preparing for larger targets.  Over the next year they supported themselves through shoplifting and stealing money and cars as they planned their next action.  They stole a large number of guns from a local gun collector and on two occasions broke into explosive storage sheds owned by the BC Department of Highways and cached away over 2000 pounds of explosives.

By the fall of 1981, they had chosen their next target - the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir power line. This was a controversial BC Hydro project that would see a large, submarine power cable supply electricity to Vancouver Island.  A number of environmental and other groups were protesting the project not only on the grounds that it might turn Vancouver Island into an industrial park but also because it was the first of several large hydro projects planned.  Some of these follow-on projects would involve construction of dams in northern BC which would flood out traditional native fishing grounds.  Finally, there was some suspicion that the power line might be part of a

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[64] Ann Hansen, *Direct Action . . .*, 40.
[65] *Ibid . . .*, 65.

long-term plan to construct a nuclear reactor on the island.[66]  The group's logic in selecting

Cheekeye-Dunsmuir as a target was that it would be popular and well understood.  While the

group was interested in and supportive of the cause of those protesting the development of

Cheekeye-Dunsmuir, its real motivation was that it was a target for which a protest movement

already existed but had exhausted all of the legal avenues available.[67]  Consistent with the

members' anarchist philosophy, they hoped that their action would stimulate greater militancy.

They also hoped that if they caused enough damage, perhaps the project would not go ahead.

On 31 May 1982, using the explosives they had stolen from the Department of Highways,

Direct Action blew up a hydro sub-station on Vancouver Island causing an estimated $3.7

million dollars in damage and receiving national attention.[68]

Shortly after the bombing, the terrorists began to focus on their next target, the Litton

systems plant in Toronto which was building components for the guidance system of a US cruise

missile.  At the time, there was considerable national discontent about Canada's involvement in

cruise missile development and testing.  Direct Action's motives in selecting Litton as the target

were that it fit in well with the group's political opposition to nuclear weapons.  It also believed

that the bombing would build on the existing widespread opposition.[69]  At 11:30PM on 14

October 1982, Direct Action set off a van load of explosives in front of the Litton plant.  The

blast injured ten bystanders, four permanently, and caused over $3 million in damage.

Interestingly, in a departure from the anarchist groups in Europe after which Direct Action

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[66] *Ibid . . .*, 60.
[67] *Ibid . . .*, 169.
[68] Lindsay Scotton, "On a Warm Afternoon in late April 1982 . . ., 2.
[69] Ann Hansen, *Direct Action . . .*, 186.

modeled itself, Direct Action was exclusively interested in causing damage and did not intend to injure or kill people. In the bombing of the Litton plant, it tried to ensure that there would be time for the plant to be evacuated. Unfortunately, the explosives went off earlier than expected, preventing the night shift in the plant from getting out. The bombing of the Litton plant received considerable media attention and caused police to step up their efforts to find those responsible.

Once back in Vancouver, two members of Direct Action, Ann Hansen and Julie Belmas joined with eight other women to create the Wimmin's Fire Brigade. This group decided to take militant action against a video chain called Red Hot Video which purportedly carried violent, sexual depictions of women in explicit videos.[70] Several women's groups were protesting against Red Hot Video, but their peaceful demonstrations were making little progress. The Women's Fire Brigade decided to take violent action and fire-bombed three Red Hot Video stores on 21 November 1982.[71]

On 20 January 1983, the five members of Direct Action were arrested by the police as they drove to a remote quarry near Squamish for target practice. When police searched their house, they found evidence that the group was planning an attack against aircraft, radar equipment and fuel tanks at Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake.[72] The members of the group were charged, convicted of a variety of offenses and sentenced to prison terms ranging from six years to life. That was the end of Direct Action.

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[70] Peter Steven, "Not the Sopranos: Ann Hansen, out of jail and looking back. In conversation with Peter Steven," *Briar Patch* 31, no 2 (Regina: March 2002), 15.

[71] Ann Hansen, *Direct Action . . .*, 339.

[72] D.J. Ashton, "Canadian Forces Base Security and Ground Defence - A Proposal." (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Command and Staff Course Paper, 1983), 4.

Direct Action is still remembered fondly by some anarchist groups in Canada,[73] but ultimately the group accomplished little other than causing unnecessary pain and suffering for those injured in the Litton Systems bombing and needless expense for BC Hydro and Litton. The Cheekeye-Dunsmuir hydro project completion was delayed by two months, but the delay could not be attributed to the bombing. The Litton plant in Toronto resumed production after only two days.[74] The fire bombing of the Red Hot Video outlets, on the other hand, did stimulate renewed protests against the store by women groups which rapidly led to the closure of the store and charges being brought against the store's owners.

The members of Direct Action considered themselves to be urban guerillas, not terrorists, and yet when their actions are considered against the Anti-Terrorism Act definition of terrorism discussed earlier, it is clear that they were terrorists. There was an underlying ideological motivation to each of their actions, which generally was to build support for militant action leading eventually to revolution. In addition to trying to build support for militancy, their actions were intended to intimidate their targets into changing course. In their communiqué after the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir bombing, Direct Action said "[we] must make this an insecure and inhospitable place for capitalists and their projects."[75] The bombing of the Litton plant in Toronto was an intimidation tactic designed both to disrupt production at the facility and to dissuade Litton from continuing to work on the cruise missile project. Finally, the bombings intentionally caused millions of dollars damage to the BC Hydro facility and the Litton plant,

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[73] See, for example, Jim Campbell, "History of the Vancouver Five," *Antifa Info Bulletin* no 92, Spring 2000; http://www.hartford-hwp.com; Internet; accessed 8 March 2007.

[74] Ann Hansen, *Direct Action . . .*, 469.

[75] *Ibid . . .*, 476.

meeting the Anti-Terrorist Act requirement of causing substantial property damage. It can be concluded that Direct Action's violent acts meet the definition of terrorist activity as defined in Canadian law.

Turning now to an assessment of the motivation of Direct Action, Newman's model will be used to determine whether a root causes-based approach would be an effective counterterrorism strategy against such groups. This analysis will be conducted in two parts. First, *permissive conditions*, those conditions that create an enabling environment for terrorism, will examined to determine if they contributed to the rise of Direct Action. Then, *direct conditions*, those tangible political issues that, when combined with permissive conditions, can lead to terrorism, will be considered to determine what direct conditions, if any, contributed to the formation of Direct Action.

Permissive conditions collectively create a social environment of general unrest. Urbanization, for instance, when combined with a burgeoning young citizenry and unemployment leads to large, idle groups of potentially disaffected youth in close proximity to each other. There is little to suggest that any of the five members of Direct Action were exposed to the permissive conditions identified by Newman. Ann Hansen, for instance, grew up in a small town near Toronto. By her own account, she had a normal upbringing in a supportive, happy working class family. As a young teenager in a rural environment, she became angered at the encroachment of the city and the development of subdivisions and factories on what had been pasture land. This experience initiated her political awareness and caused her to gravitate to a

1960's 'hippie' philosophy. [76] While it is clear reading her book that there is a link between her early influences and ultimately to her becoming a terrorist, her early experiences are really not that different from any other typical child growing up in Canada. Later she became more politically active while attending the University of Waterloo and was drawn to the urban guerilla groups in Europe ultimately adopting their techniques.[77] But again, from the perspective of permissive conditions for terrorism, there is little in her background that is particularly unusual when compared with other Canadian youth of that time. The literature is scant on the background of the other members of Direct Action but equally there is nothing in Ann Hansen's book that suggests that, other than seeking what they perceived as the exciting life of the urban guerilla, there was much to distinguish them from other youth. In summary, it is challenging to find permissive conditions that were sufficiently out of the ordinary to have created an environment that could potentially lead to terrorism.

Turning now to direct conditions, are there specific political issues that may have caused the members of Direct Action to consider terrorism? Newman listed a number of possible direct conditions, but in this case Crenshaw's model is more helpful. She generally describes direct conditions as concrete grievances which provoke tremendous anger.[78] Hansen's statement to the court during her trial gives a good appreciation for her motivation:

> I would prefer to live in peace but, when I looked around me, I couldn't find it
> anywhere. Everywhere I looked, the land was being destroyed, the Indians were

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[76] *Ibid . . .,* 57.

[77] *Ibid. . .,* 22.

[78] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism . . .," 381.

victims of genocide, Third World peoples were oppressed and massacred, people lived in industrial wastelands and women were being raped and children molested.[79]

This was certainly a list of grievances but, with the exception of the "destruction of the land", she had not experienced any of them directly.  Also, although there is clearly a kernel of truth to each of her concerns, there is also considerable embellishment of the extent of the grievances.

If the concrete grievances that lead to terrorism are meant to invoke feeling of ferocious anger as Homer-Dickson has argued,[80] one must be struck by the considerable *lack* of anger expressed by Ann Hansen in her book.  Indeed, while it is clear that the members of Direct Action were frustrated by modern society and its capitalist focus and very concerned over the plight of the environment, they do not seem particularly angry.  Their selection of targets, for instance, demonstrates this.  While they were interested to a degree in each of their targets, they were much more interested in the presence of an already existing protest movement that they could feed into.  And with the exception of the fire bombings of the Red Hot Video stores, they seemed to take little interest in the protest movements.  For instance, they did not join the protests in front of the Litton plant, they simply arrived in Toronto, conducted their business, and left.

One is left with the impression of a group of young people seeking adventure; adventure with political motivation certainly, but adventure nonetheless.  Thompson's description of a terrorist being "someone already predisposed to violence" with the cause being "secondary to its use as a

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[79] Ann Hansen, *Direct Action* . . ., 491.

[80] Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Pull Up Terrorism by the Roots . . ., 2.

justification"[81] seems to apply.

The objective in focusing on the root causes of terrorism is to reduce the threat of terrorism over the long-term by either addressing the causes that motivate terrorists or by addressing the permissive conditions that allows terrorism to flourish.  After studying the motivation of Direct Action, it should be clear that there is little that could have been done to address the perceived grievances of this group.  Further, it did not emerge from an environment that provided the permissive conditions to encourage terrorism.  In fact, the members of Direct Action seem to have been little more than disgruntled youth seeking adventure.  In hindsight, there is not much that could have been done to prevent this group from taking the violent action that it did and little that could be done at the root cause level to prevent another group from following in its footsteps.  Because of the widespread nature of the member's discontent – modern society – and the arbitrary nature of their targeting, the most effective strategy against this type of group would be based on intelligence gathering and police work. This conclusion is consistent with Newman's finding that root causes are least relevant in helping to understand ideological terrorism in developed countries.[82]

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[81] John Thompson and Joe Turlej, "Other Peoples' Wars . . ., 10.
[82] Edward Newman, "Exploring the "Root Causes" of Terrorism . . ., 770.

*Case Study 2 – Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) : A Nationalist/Secessionist Group*

From its origins in 1963 until its demise in 1971, the Front de Libération du Québec carried out the most extensive campaign of terrorist violence in modern Canadian history. Ultimately, it was responsible for seven deaths, numerous injuries, two kidnappings and untold damages.[83] The campaign culminated in the October Crisis of 1970, provoked by the kidnappings of James Cross, the British Trade Commissioner in Quebec, and Pierre Laporte, the Quebec Minister of Labour. While Cross survived his encounter and was released after sixty days, Laporte's FLQ captors were more brutal, murdering him shortly after he was kidnapped.

The FLQ grew out of a handful of revolutionary groups active in Quebec in the early 1960s. Frustrated by what they perceived as the repression of and discrimination against French Canadians at the hands of the Anglophone counterparts, the organization's main objective was a politically and economically independent Quebec state.[84] The early leaders were strongly inspired by overseas revolutionaries such as Fidel Castrol and Che Guevara in Cuba and Brazilian radical Carlos Marighella.[85] By the mid 1960s, the goal of creating an independent worker's state appeared in FLQ manifestos as Marxist influences began to permeate the FLQ. However, the desire for an independent Quebec state was the enduring motivation for the group and the cause for which it drew support from French Canadians. There were numerous incarnations of the FLQ over the course of its existence as its leadership changed. The group's

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[83] Jeffery Ross, "The Rise and Fall of Québécois Separatist Terrorism: A Qualitative Application of Factors from Two Models," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 18, no 4 (October - December 1995): 285.

[84] FLQ's first manifesto: "Revolution by the People for the People," reproduced in James Stewart, *The FLQ - Seven Years of Terrorism*. (Montreal: Montreal Star, 1970), 10.

[85] David Charters, "The Amateur Revolutionaries: A Reassessment of the FLQ," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9, no 1 (Spring 1997): 137.

separatist message resonated well within Quebec in the 1960s as the groundswell of Quebec

separatism grew. Although the FLQ itself measured no more than several hundred members

over its life, it drew upon a considerable network of sympathizers in the radical separatist

movement and in labour and student groups.[86]

This case study will examine the history of the FLQ and its motivation in the context of

Quebec in the 1960s. It will commence with an overview of the history of the group and its

evolution over the seven years of its existence. The group's actions will then be tested against

the Anti-Terrorism Act's definition of terrorism to confirm that the FLQ was terrorist a

organization. The FLQ's motivation will be analyzed through the lens of Newman's root cause

model to determine how well the model explains its rise. The results of this analysis will

demonstrate that, contrary to Newman's findings that root causes tend to be of limited value in

understanding nationalist groups in developed countries, the model fits the FLQ very well. Both

permissive and direct conditions existed in Quebec during the formative years of the FLQ. The

study will conclude with comments regarding the utility of a root causes based counterterrorism

approach to the FLQ.

The FLQ was not a single entity. The organization was constantly changing, as was its

philosophy, depending on the views of its leading members at any given time. The FLQ was

also not a monolithic whole. It comprised related and often discordant cells that were constantly

breaking up and reforming because of police raids, arrests and differences among the members.[87]

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[86] *Ibid . . .*, 151.

[87] William Tetley, *The October Crisis, 1970: An Insider's View* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 22.

This cellular structure foreshadows the much larger and more sophisticated cellular structure used by extremist Islamic terrorist organizations post 9/11. Finally, the FLQ lacked consistent leadership. In fact, analysts identify as many as eight distinct periods in the life of the FLQ, each characterized by different leadership.[88] These periods are discussed below as part of the historical overview.

Out of the political unrest that dominated Quebec in the early 1960s, a small group of separatists formed a revolutionary committee intended to speed their province on its path to independence. The Réseau de Résistance (RR) was born in November 1962.[89] But the RR moved too slowly for some, so from the more radical elements of the RR, the FLQ emerged in February 1963. Its first manifesto, released in March 1963, claimed that the FLQ was "a revolutionary movement of volunteers ready to die for the political and economic independence of Quebec."[90] Shortly thereafter, the FLQ launched a bombing campaign aimed at federal government establishments and other targets that it felt were symbols of the repression of French Canadians.

The original leadership of the FLQ comprised Raymond Villeneuve, a young activist, Gabriel Hudon, a member of the separatist movement, and Belgian-born Georges Schoetters. Schoetters is considered by most to be the father of the FLQ, having been a young member of the Belgian

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[88] See, for example, Gustave Mort, *Terror in Quebec - Case Studies of the FLQ* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Co, 1970) or William Tetley, "The October Crisis - The Events Preliminary to the Crisis," http://www.mcgill.ca/maritimelaw/crisis ; Internet; accessed 3 April 2007.

[89] James Stewart, *The FLQ - Seven Years of Terrorism* . . ., 8.

[90] FLQ's first manifesto: "Revolution by the People for the People," reproduced in James Stewart, *The FLQ - Seven Years of Terrorism*. . . ., 10.

resistance in World War II and spending a year in Cuba influenced by Castro and Che Guevara.[91]  After an extensive bombing campaign through the spring of 1963, an FLQ bomb killed a night watchman at an Army recruiting centre.  Over the course of the summer, a number of arrests were made effectively shutting down the fledgling network by the end of August.[92]

With many of the original members of the FLQ behind bars, a new offshoot group, the Armée de Libération du Québec (ALQ) emerged in September 1963.  Many of its members were related to the FLQ founding members.  Its leader, for instance, was Robert Hudon, the younger brother of Gabriel Hudon.  This group focused on logistic preparations for future operations by stealing weapons, ammunitions and money to support the revolutionary guerrillas they hoped to recruit.  This was a short-lived organization, however. Most of its members were arrested after a failed bank robbery in April 1964.[93]

After the demise of the ALQ, another militant offshoot of the FLQ appeared almost immediately - the Armée Révolutionnaire du Québec (ARQ).  Its leader was François Schirm, a Hungarian-born, former French Foreign Legionnaire.  Schirm was a romantic revolutionary who created a training camp in the woods near Saint-Boniface-de-Shawinigan. After the FLQ promised to provide the ARQ with weapons but failed to deliver, Schirm and four other ARQ members decide to take action on their own and planned a robbery of the International Firearms store in Montreal.  In the disastrous effort that followed, two of the store's employees were killed, one by the ARQ and one by police cross fire. Five members of the ARQ were arrested and

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[91] Gustave Mort, *Terror in Quebec* . . ., 23.

[92] William Tetley, "The October Crisis- The Events Preliminary to the Crisis . . ., 5.

[93] James Stewart, *The FLQ - Seven Years of Terrorism*. . . ., 22.

convicted.  The FLQ gave its own version of events in its clandestine journal *La Cognée* (*The Hatchet*) saying that the victim's resistance to the armed robbery justified his death. The ARQ came to an end in August 1964.[94]

In February 1965, a Quebec separatist was arrested in the US for providing explosives to the Black Liberation Front in a failed plot to blow up the Statue of Liberty and other monuments, revealing a connection between the Quebec separatist groups and black activists in the US.  From June to August, FLQ members carried out a handful of bombings of CNR sites, protesting the carrying of imported food that the FLQ felt could be grown in Quebec. All of members of the cell responsible for the bombings were arrested in August.[95]

In mid - 1965, Pierre Vallières and Charles Gagnon, both considered to be Marxists intellectuals, combined their Popular Liberation Movement with the FLQ and provided new leadership and direction to the FLQ after the unsuccessful Schirm era.  Both were strongly influenced by their Marxist beliefs and they changed the focus of the FLQ to emphasize the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.  Revolution became the primary objective of the FLQ; independence the second.[96]  At first, the FLQ appeared to be dormant during this period, but internally it was organizing on a wider basis and spreading its new ideology.  In the spring of 1966, the bombing campaign was renewed and the number of bombings and size of bombs increased markedly.  By mid-1966, two more people had died as a result of FLQ bombs. In July, 1966 Vallières and Gagnon fled to the US and were arrested while picketing the United

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[94] William Tetley, "The October Crisis - The Events Preliminary to the Crisis . . ., 8.

[95] Gustave Mort, *Terror in Quebec* . . ., 75.

[96] David Charters, "The Amateur Revolutionaries . . ., 144.

Nations.  While in jail in the US, Vallières wrote *White Niggers of America*, a violent attack

on the existing order and a searing description of his emergence from poverty, crime and

violence of Montreal slums.  The book was an instant success and was read widely by the

Quebec left and by revolutionaries and restless students around the world.[97]

After the arrest of Vallières, Gagnon and many other members of the FLQ, the campaign of

violence slowed in 1967.  Nevertheless, support for the separatist movement grew with French

President Charles de Gaulle's famous "Vive Quebec Libre" statement on 23 July 1967 during a

visit to Montreal.[98]  Separatist sentiment was further inflamed on Saint Jean Baptiste day in

1968.  Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was on the reviewing stand for the parade in Montreal.  He

was unpopular with Quebec separatists after a federal election campaign in which he had harshly

criticized them.  He was roundly booed by separatists, who threw bottles at him and chanted

separatist slogans.  The crowd grew violent and riot police were called in to break up the mob.

Separatist sentiments were hardened by what the protestors perceived as police brutality.[99]  A

renewed campaign of FLQ bombings was triggered in 1968-1969, including the bombing of the

Montreal Stock Exchange in February 1969, the most destructive in the FLQ's history.  The

bombings tapered off in late in 1969 when the FLQ began to realize that the violence was having

little effect on the Quebec populace.  A new direction was required.[100]

In early 1970, three FLQ cells, the Liberation cell, the Chenier cell and the Viger information

cell began plotting kidnappings. This final wave of FLQ violence culminated in the October

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[97] James Stewart, *The FLQ - Seven Years of Terrorism. . . .*, 35.

[98] *Ibid . . .*, 37.

[99] *Ibid . . .*, 40.

[100] Gustave Mort, *Terror in Quebec . . .*, 148.

Crisis of 1970 when the Liberation cell kidnapped British Trade Commissioner James Cross on 6 October.  Five days later, unbeknownst to the first group, the Chenier cell kidnapped Pierre Laporte, the Quebec Minister of Labour and Immigration, after the Federal and Quebec Governments failed to meet the demands of the Cross kidnappers.  Seven days later, Laporte was murdered by his captors.  Cross was released on 4 December.

The October Crisis culminated with the Quebec government requesting assistance from the Canadian Forces which resulted in the deployment of army troops on the streets of Montreal on 15 October.[101]  The next day, the Trudeau government proclaimed a state of apprehended insurrection as well as the Regulations under the War Measures Act at the request of the Quebec government.[102]  This allowed the police to round up and detain suspected members of the FLQ without charge.

After the October Crisis, FLQ violence came to an end.  Some felt that the Quebec populace, many of whom supported the FLQ or sympathized with their cause, was not prepared to support the escalation of violence that led to the death of Laporte.[103]

Between 1963 and 1970, the FLQ carried out 232 acts of violence including 163 bombings (although 47 bombs were defused or failed to go off).  Seven people died.  In the end, the FLQ failed to achieve its goal of an independent Quebec, although a few years later on 25 November 1976 Quebec's first separatist government came to power under the leadership of René Lévesque.

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[101] James Stewart, *The FLQ - Seven Years of Terrorism. . . .*, 73.
[102] William Tetley, *The October Crisis, 1970: An Insider's View . . .*, 89.
[103] *Ibid . . .*, 147.

Estimates of the size of the FLQ vary significantly, ranging from a handful of cells to several thousand members. Recent estimates put the total number of members over the existence of FLQ at between three and four hundred people.[104] Therefore, the key to the success of the FLQ was its ability to project such an illusion of strength, despite its small size, that the federal and provincial governments believed widespread insurrection in Quebec was near. However, the FLQ was hampered by a weak organization, continually changing leadership and poor strategic judgment.[105] As a result of these weaknesses, most argue that the actions of the FLQ had little influence on the ultimate success of the separatist movement gaining political power.[106]

Was the FLQ a terrorist organization? It is quite clear that it was. Its acts were committed initially purely for political reasons and later, once Vallières and Gagnon added their Marxist influence to the group, for both political and ideological reasons. Its acts actions were almost exclusively intended to intimidate the "colonial symbols" that its members considered were responsible for the repression of French Canadians and, in doing so, to inspire a revolution that would lead to an economically and politically independent Quebec. Finally, its acts always intentionally caused substantial property damage. Although most of the fatalities caused were accidental, the murder of Laporte was intentional. It is quite apparent that the FLQ was a terrorist organization according to Canadian law.

Turning now to a consideration of root causes, Newman's model identifies permissive conditions that create a social environment of general unrest in which terrorism can flourish.

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[104] *Ibid . . .*, 20.
[105] David Charters, "The Amateur Revolutionaries . . ., 163.
[106] William Tetley, *The October Crisis, 1970: An Insider's View . . .*, 190.

Between 1960 and 1966, generally coinciding with the regime of Premier Jean Lesage, Quebec underwent a period of enormous change now known as the Quiet Revolution, a period of long avoided reconciliation with social and economic developments that had occurred in Quebec.[107]   It had its genesis in the intellectual ferment and social change that occurred prior to the 1960's but the authoritative and traditional regime of Premier Maurice Duplessis in the 1950s was reluctant to accommodate these changes.  After his death in 1959, the pent-up desire for change was released.[108]

Quebec had experienced massive urbanization and, although much of the population had migrated to urban areas, French Canadians still strongly identified with an agricultural society. This traditional perspective was reconciled with reality in the 1960s.  The period also saw the rebirth of long dormant nationalist feelings in Quebec and a narrowing of the concept of 'nation' to include only French Canadians.  There was a new attitude towards the state characterized by strong feelings that too much power was held by the federal government.  There was significant modernization of the state.  Private institutions, most notably the Roman Catholic Church, had held considerably more sway over education, health and welfare than was the case elsewhere, but the influence of these institutions was waning.  The goal of Quebec nationalists became *rattrapage* or catching up with the social and economic changes that had occurred elsewhere in Canada.[109]  This was a period of tremendous social change.  Kenneth McRoberts, a noted specialist in Quebec-Canada relations, observes in his book, ". . .the beliefs and assumptions that had guided most French Canadian intellectuals for over a century were being uncompromisingly

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[107] Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisi*s . . ., 128.
[108] David Charters, "The Amateur Revolutionaries . . ., 134.
[109] Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisi*s . . ., 129.

examined and, to a very large extent, abandoned."[110]

The Quiet Revolution, characterized by urbanization, modernization, secularization and wide spread social change, was a tremendously unsettling period in Quebec's history. In addition, since the late 1950s, Quebec, like the rest of Canada, had suffered from a serious recession. Quebec was particularly hard hit by its effects. Unemployment was high and was highest amongst French speakers, affecting as many as fifty per cent of rural households.[111]

Considering the permissive conditions identified in Newman's model, it is clear that many of them - urbanization, unemployment and widespread social change - existed in Quebec in the early 1960's. An "enabling environment,", as Newman defined it, of general unrest existed in Quebec creating conditions ripe for the emergence of terrorism.

It is also worth considering the international influence on the permissive conditions. Crenshaw identifies social facilitation - social habits and historical traditions that sanction the use of violence against the government - as a permissive condition.[112] Social facilitation simplifies the task of justifying the use of violence. The early 1960s were a period of protest and revolution world-wide. In Africa, seventeen African states gained independence from their former colonial masters in 1960. Young Québécois began to draw comparisons between the successful struggle for independence in these African states and their own struggles.[113] As

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[110] *Ibid . . .*, 128.

[111] Raphael Cohen-Almagor, "The Terrorist's Best Ally: the Quebec media coverage of the FLQ crisis in October 1970," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 25, no 2, (Spring 2000): 257; http://proquest.umi.com; Internet; accessed 8 January 2007.

[112] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism . . ., 382.

[113] David Charters, "The Amateur Revolutionaries . . ., 137.

David Charters, a professor of history and former director of the Centre for Conflict Studies, observes:

> [T]hese were heady times in Quebec. Revolution and liberation were in the air, there and abroad. Students were protesting world-wide against imperialism and colonialism. In Quebec, the labour movement was becoming increasingly militant.[114]

The fact that there were examples worldwide of revolutionary and separatist terrorist organizations from which the FLQ could draw inspiration facilitated the formation of a terrorist organization within Quebec and made the justification of the use of violence against the government much more palatable.

Turning now direct conditions, tangible political issues that combined with permissive conditions can lead to terrorism, there were many in Quebec in the 1960s. Premier Jean Lesage's government coined the slogan 'Maître chez nous' (masters in our own house), but in the early 1960s, French Canadians were clearly not masters of their own house.[115]

Quebec's economy was dominated by Anglophone Canadians, who controlled approximately eighty percent of Quebec industry. There were few French Canadians heading large corporations.[116] The federal government's Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism released a preliminary report in 1965 that confirmed for French Canadians what they had known for sometime: French Canadians earned considerably less than their Anglophone counterparts. The study showed that in 1961 English speaking Quebecers earned an average annual salary of $5,502 while unilingual French speaking Quebecers earned only $3,099. Only

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[114] *Ibid . . .*, 138.
[115] *Ibid . . .*, 136.
[116] Raphael Cohen-Almagor, "The Terrorist's Best Ally . . ., 6.

Italians and aboriginals earned less.[117] There was clearly economic inequality in Quebec.

English was the language of the workplace in Quebec in the 1960s. Most offices functioned in English, in many stores people had to speak English to be served and federal government business was conducted in English.[118] French Canadians considered themselves marginalized within their own province. As Pierre Vallières remarks in his inflammatory book *White Niggers of America*:

> . . .the workers of Quebec are aware of their condition as niggers, exploited men, second-class citizens. Have they not been, ever since the establishment of the New France in the seventeenth century, the servants of the imperialists, the white niggers of America.[119]

For French Canadians, these inequalities stirred powerful feelings resulting in the formation, by the early 1960s, of at least three informal separatist parties.[120]

Examining Newman's direct conditions, it is clear that many of them existed in Quebec in the 1960s. French speaking Quebecers were not equal within their province; they earned less and experienced greater unemployment. Because English was the primary language of the work place, French Canadians felt excluded and repressed. Vallières' provocative use of the word 'nigger' in the title of his book gives a sense of the feelings of humiliation felt by French speaking Quebecers. Concrete grievances clearly existed in Quebec in the early 1960s.

Newman's model captures the considerable social unrest and powerful political tensions from which the FLQ arose. Many of the permissive and direct conditions identified in

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[117] James Stewart, *The FLQ - Seven Years of Terrorism. . . .*, 21.

[118] Raphael Cohen-Almagor, "The Terrorist's Best Ally . . .,6.

[119] Pierre Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, (Toronto: McCelland and Stewart, 1971), 21.

[120] James Stewart, *The FLQ - Seven Years of Terrorism. . . .*, 8.

Newman's model were present in Quebec.  Given that, how would a counterterrorism strategy focused on addressing root causes be used to reduce the threat of nationalist/separatist terrorism in Quebec?  It could be argued that the political path taken by the Quebec provincial government and the federal government in the 1970s and 1980s did exactly that.

There are differing opinions on what brought the FLQ violence to an end in 1970.  It has been argued already in this paper that whatever public support and sympathy there was for the FLQ evaporated after the killing of Pierre Laporte, demonstrating that there was very little support for genuine revolutionary action in Quebec.[121]  Another viewpoint is that the proclamation of the War Measures Act and the widespread arrests of FLQ members and principle supporters brought the violence to an end in the short term.[122]  Regardless of what caused the immediate end of the violence, in the long-term there was neither a resurgence of violence nor the emergence of new terrorist groups.  In the decades since 1970, most of the direct conditions, the concrete grievances that led to the rise of the FLQ were addressed through political means.

The rise of Parti Québécois in the 1970s gave a legitimate political voice to many of the grievances that French Canadians felt in the 1960s.  The passage of the Official Languages Act in 1969 ensured that federal government services would be delivered in both English and French and provided for equality of the French and English languages in Canada.[123]  The passage of Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language, by the Quebec government in 1977 provided for

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[121] Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisi*s . . ., 201.

[122] William Tetley, *The October Crisis, 1970: An Insider's View* . . ., 147.

[123] Department of Heritage, "History of Bilingualism." http://pch.gc.ca; Internet; accessed 8 April 2007.

protection of the French language in Quebec by requiring the use of French on commercial signs within the province.  Further, since 1970 Quebec has prospered economically and many of the economic imbalances between French speaking and English speaking Quebecers have been addressed.[124]  Finally, vigorous state intervention in the economy since the 1970s has considerably lessened the cultural division of labour in the province.  The vast majority of industry is no longer controlled by Anglophones, spawning both a new middle class and a Francophone business elite.[125]  As a result, Francophones feel firmly in charge in their province.  In summary, most of the direct causes of anger and frustration leading to the rise of the FLQ have been resolved through legitimate political means.

While separatist sentiment still exists in Quebec, the economic and linguistic inequalities that existed in the past no longer do.  Although the role that the FLQ played in raising awareness and forcing action to address the grievances of French Canadians is marginal at best, this case does serve as a good example of how addressing the root causes of conflict will, over the long-term, reduce and perhaps even eliminate the threat of further conflict.

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[124] William Tetley, *The October Crisis, 1970: An Insider's View . . .*, 151.

[125] Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisi*s . . ., 434.

*Case Study 3 – Al Qaeda: Religious Extremists*

Al Qaeda is a very different terrorist organization than the two groups already examined. Much more dangerous, global in its reach, Al Qaeda sits at the top of an international jihadist network considered by CSIS to be the greatest security threat facing Canada today.[126]

Formed in 1989 by Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda's motivation is to wage global Salafi jihad. Salafists generally seek broad Muslim revivalism. While many Muslims seek to achieve this objective peacefully, some Salafists advocate jihad to achieve violent revolution.[127] To Al Qaeda's leadership Muslim revivalism means two things: the expulsion of foreign forces and influences from Islamic society and the creation of an Islamic state governed by Sharia law, a strict interpretation of the Koran, spanning from Morocco to Indonesia.[128] Al Qaeda's violent campaign has killed thousands and caused untold billions of dollars in damage. On 11 September, 2001, Al Qaeda masterminded the deadliest and most destructive terrorist act in history when two aircraft flew into the World Trade Center Towers, another crashed into the Pentagon and a fourth crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. Where both Direct Action and the FLQ were relatively small organizations, Al Qaeda is huge. The precise number of Al Qaeda terrorists worldwide is obviously unknown, but an estimated 18,000 individuals passed through the Afghanistan training camps between 1996 and 2001 and are believed to be positioned in sixty

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[126] Canadian Security Intelligence Service, "CSIS 2003 Public Report . . ., 4.

[127] Angela Gendron, "Militant Jihadism: Radicalization, Conversion, Recruitment," Trends in Terrorism Series, 2006-4, (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies, Carleton University), 3.

[128] Christopher Blanchard, "CRS Report for Congress - Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology." (Washington: Congressional Research Service, January 24, 2007), 13.

countries around the world.[129]

This case study will commence with a historical review of the development of Al Qaeda and the global Salafi jihadist movement. Although Al Qaeda is the focus of the case study, the group is inextricably linked to the global jihad network. Al Qaeda's motives and actions will then be briefly compared against the Anti-Terrorism Act definition of terrorist activities. Then, the motivation of those joining Al Qaeda and its affiliated terrorist organizations will be studied to determine why these groups have been so successful in recruiting terrorists. The motivation Al Qaeda's members will be examined against Newman's root cause model to assess how well the model explains the rise and continued appeal of Al Qaeda. Finally, comments will be made regarding how an effective root causes-based counterterrorism strategy could be implemented to counter the threat of Al Qaeda specifically and the global jihad more generally.

It will be found that, while a conventional counterterrorism approach based on intelligence, surveillance, police and military action worldwide is necessary to combat the current generation of Al Qaeda terrorists, a comprehensive, integrated national and international root causes-based approach is essential to reduce the appeal of these organizations to young Muslims and stem the flow of terrorist recruits.

The modern period has seen the decline of the Islamic civilization and brought a sense of humiliation to Muslims worldwide. After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire on the threshold of Vienna in 1683, Islamic territory has been slowly eroding. European powers ascended during the industrial revolution and later they extended their empires deep into the Islamic heartland. The

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[129] Bruce Hoffman, "Al Qaeda and the War on Terrorism: an Update." *Current History* 103, no 677 (December 2004), 424.

once powerful Islamic world gradually became subservient to Europeans.  The Ottoman Empire continued its decline until it was dismantled in the aftermath of World War I. With the physical decline of Islamic territory also came waning confidence and influence of the Islamic people.[130]  In the intervening years, events arising from the foreign and domestic policies of Western and Muslim governments have led to the politicization of Muslim peoples, particularly those in the diaspora.[131]

The Iranian Revolution in 1979 was a key turning point in modern Islamic history.  The establishment of a pure, Islamic state under Sharia law was seen as a victory for Islam and proof that an Islamic state could be established in spite of corrupt Arab governments and their Western supporters.[132]  Concurrent with the Iranian Revolution, the Afghan war against the Soviet Union from 1979 to 1988 was a watershed event in the development of the militant Islamic revivalist movement.[133]  Islamic militants from around the world met on the battlefields of Afghanistan in an effort to expel the infidels from Muslim lands.  They forged bonds with other Islamic militants, gained critical experience and honed their violent craft.  The Islamic victory over the Soviets in 1988 re-energized Salafi jihadism and advanced it from a local to a global struggle.  But Afghanistan was not the only place that radical Islamic ideas were taking hold and military skills were being developed.  Ongoing conflicts in Algeria, Egypt, Kashmir, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Chechnya provided similar opportunities for militants Islamists.[134]

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[130] Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror*. (New York: Random House, 2002) 54-56.

[131] Angela Gendron, "Militant Jihadism: Radicalization . . ., 5.

[132] *Ibid* . . .5.

[133] Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 18.

[134] Angela Gendron, "Militant Jihadism: Radicalization . . ., 5.

Al Qaeda was created out of the Afghan war in 1989 in Peshawar, Pakistan by Osama bin Laden and a small circle of experienced fighters around him, including Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri, who would become bin Laden's lieutenant and second in command. From the beginning, Al Qaeda was dedicated to the toppling of existing Muslim regimes considered corrupt by jihadis and the establishment of a new caliphate, or undivided Islamic realm ruled by Sharia law.[135] Afghanistan offered a secure base for the new terrorist organization, so Al Qaeda established training camps there and began preparing a new generation of terrorists for jihad.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, bin Laden offered the services of his mujahedeen to the Saudi royal family to defend Saudi Arabia from Iraq. The government declined, instead inviting US forces to stage in Saudi Arabia.[136] Bin Laden was disgusted by the presence of the 'infidels' in Islam's holiest state. He was not alone. An unprecedented level of dissent appeared in Saudi Arabia after the arrival of the American forces. In the Islamic world, feelings of resentment and anger towards the West were inflamed. This event represented a turning point for bin Laden and confirmed for him that the US was the unalterable enemy of Islam and would become the primary target of Al Qaeda violence.[137]

Al Qaeda continued to develop through the 1990s and conducted a number of major terrorist acts, including bombing the World Trade Center in 1993. The sophistication of the organization was demonstrated in 1998 by its coordinated attack on US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. Throughout this period, Al Qaeda's political and religious rhetoric remained constant:

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[135] Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror . . .*, 103.

[136] Hamid Mir in *Al Qaeda Now - Understanding Today's Terrorists*, ed. Karen Greenberg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 137.

[137] Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror . . .*, 109.

Muslims must view themselves as a single community, or umma, and unite to resist anti-Islamic aggression on the basis of obligatory defensive jihad. Bin Laden developed the principle of defensive jihad in a 1998 fatwa, or religious edict, in which he claimed that US aggression against Muslims through its policies in the Islamic world made armed resistance and the targeting of military and civilian Americans mandatory for all Muslims.[138]

The events of 9/11 were planned and executed by Al Qaeda to clearly identify the US as the enemy of the umma and ignite the global jihad by harnessing the anger and resentment of Muslims worldwide. The decision by the US and its coalition partners to invade Afghanistan and Iraq furthered Al Qaeda's goals. The mujahedeen and religious nationalists would again come together to strike at the enemy of the umma, form bonds and develop the skills necessary to further the global jihad, as an earlier generation had during the Afghan-Soviet war of the 1980s.[139]

From 2001 to 2003, Al Qaeda was directly targeted by the US and coalition forces in an effort to destroy it. Although many of its leaders were killed or captured, Al Qaeda survived the attacks and has emerged as a transformed organization. Where pre 9/11 Al Qaeda was a 'lumbering bureaucracy', it is now ". . . an ideological movement true to its name Al Qaeda – the base of operations."[140] The global jihad is now prosecuted by a network of affiliated organizations brought together by shared ideology, objectives and experiences. The decentralization of the jihad is characterized by a shift from central operational control to a high

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[138] Christopher Blanchard, "CRS Report for Congress . . ., 4.

[139] Angela Gendron, "Militant Jihadism: Radicalization . . ., 6.

[140] Bruce Hoffman, "Al Qaeda and the War on Terrorism . . . , 424.

degree of local autonomy and further expansion of the operating area to include the local areas of the affiliated organizations.[141]

However, Al Qaeda continues to play a key role in the global jihad network as the inspirational and ideological centre. In a recent testimony before the US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee, noted terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman described the current Al Qaeda organization as comprising the following four dimensions:

- Al Qaeda Central - the professional cadre:  the most dedicated, committed and professional element.  This group is entrusted with the 'spectaculars', the high publicity, global terrorist actions such as 9/11.  Actions are fully funded by Al Qaeda.

- Al Qaeda Affiliates and Associates - the trained amateurs:  They are provided with basic training, given general targeting instructions and provided with seed money.

- Al Qaeda Local - local walk-ins:  local Islamic radicals who devise their own plans and approach Al Qaeda for funding.  This level appeals to bin Laden's self-conception as a venture capitalist.

- Al Qaeda Network – the homegrown radicals: insurgents, guerillas and terrorists worldwide who are prepared to carry out attacks in support of Al Qaeda's global jihadist agenda.[142]

After nearly twenty years in existence and many concerted attempts to destroy it, Al Qaeda remains the pre-eminent terrorist organization in the world today.  From Hoffman's perspective, the keys to the 'success' of Al Qaeda have been the effective combination of modern technology with a rigidly puritanical explanation of religious practice that resonates with Muslim youth worldwide, uncommon patience, planning, attention to detail and a unique degree of

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[141] Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, "Violent Jihad in the Netherlands: Currents trends in the Islamist terrorist threat." 13 April 2006, 23; https://www.aivd.nl; Internet; accessed 17 November 2006.

[142] Bruce Hoffman, "Combating Al Qaeda and the Militant Islamic Threat."  Testimony Presented to the House Armed Services Committee, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, February 2006, 3-5.

sophistication.[143]  While Hoffman believes that the greatest threat continues to come from Al

Qaeda Central he is also concerned with the threat posed by the unpredictable nature of the

network.[144]  The Netherlands General Intelligence and Security Service, in fact, believes that

continued focus on the international threat posed by Al Qaeda central oversimplifies a complex

phenomenon and masks the more serious threat posed by the autonomous organizations that are

part of the Al Qaeda network.[145]  Regardless of which part of the global jihadist network poses

the greatest current threat, any counterterrorism strategy will have to consider all elements of the

network to be effective.

 It readily apparent that Al Qaeda meets the definition of a terrorist organization as defined

by the Anti-Terrorism Act.  Its acts are committed for political, ideological and religious reasons

with the intent of intimidating a large portion of the Western world.  Its acts are intended to

cause as much damage and as many fatalities as they possibly can.

The appeal of Al Qaeda and other global Salafi jihadists to Muslims worldwide and the

apparent ease with which the next generation of terrorists is recruited is of enormous concern in

the West.  The emergence of the so-called homegrown terrorists carrying out terrorist acts in

their native country has been particularly alarming.  For example, the London Underground

bombings in July 2005[146] and the murder of film maker Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands in

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[143] Bruce Hoffman, "Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism Since 9/11." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 25, no 5 (September 2002): 308.

[144] Bruce Hoffman, "Combating Al Qaeda . . ., 6.

[145] Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, "Violent Jihad in the Netherlands . . ., 20.

[146] Faisal Devji, "A Muslim Militancy born in Modernity not Mosques." *Financial Times*, London (UK), 28 August 2006. http://proquest.umi.com; Internet; accessed 5 October 2006.

2004 were the work of homegrown terrorists.[147]  The seventeen Muslims arrested last summer

in Toronto and accused of planning terrorist bombings, the so-called Toronto 17, were

homegrown.[148]  There are also a number of examples of homegrown terrorists emerging in the

US.[149] With the proliferation of homegrown terrorists, there has been increasing interest in how

these individuals are recruited and why the global jihad appeals to them.

The Netherlands General Intelligence and Security Service describes three phases to the

development of a jihadist network that is helpful in understanding how recruitment occurs:

- The traditional phase - migration of jihadists:  Veterans from conflicts and extreme ideologs migrate to other countries and maintain contact with international groups, many in direct contact with Al Qaeda or related groups.  This phase ended abruptly after 9/11 as pressure from the worldwide campaign against terrorism led to large scale decentralization and disintegration.

- Proliferation phase – recruitment:  Veterans and radicals began to approach members of local Muslim communities in Europe.  Recent immigrants and young second and third generation immigrants are particularly receptive to the radical messages which they received, initially in radical Salafi mosques, but later in living rooms and via the Internet.  This is characterized by top-down recruitment.

- Home grown phase – bottom-up recruitment and grass roots radicalization:  Triggered by extremist ideology disseminated by itinerant preachers and via radical websites.  Many young Muslims are receptive to these ideas as a consequence of a complex of socio-cultural, psychological, political and religious factors.  This is sometimes referred to as self-radicalization.[150]

What is it that makes some Muslims receptive to the radical message delivered by the

jihadis?  To be sure, the majority of Muslims lead peaceful lives and reject the violent message,

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[147] Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, "Violent Jihad in the Netherlands . . ., 7.

[148] Michael Friscolanti, Jonathan Gatehouse, Charlie Gillis, "Homegrown Terror . . ., 1.

[149] See, for example, Robert Mueller, "Homegrown Terrorists and the Radicalization Process." *Vital Speeches of the Day* 72 no 20/21 (New York: August 2006); http://proquest.umi.com; Internet, accessed 12 October 2006.

[150] Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, "Violent Jihad in the Netherlands . . ., 15-17.

but for an increasing number of young Muslims particularly, the message resonates. There are

a number of reasons for this.

The sense of humiliation and anger that generally pervades Muslim culture has been

mentioned, feelings which stem from the decline in influence and power that Islamic countries

have experienced in recent times. The realization of the disparity in power and prosperity

between the Western and Muslim worlds has fueled resent and hatred against ineffective Muslim

rulers and the Western leaders who frequently support them.[151]

US foreign policy is another key reason for Muslim hostility towards the US. Without

passing judgment on the validity of these concerns, it is important to understand the Muslim

perspective on US foreign policy, particularly as it is applies to the Middle East. Many Muslims

see the US-led global war on terrorism as a war against the Islamic world - feelings reinforced by

the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and further inflamed by ill treatment of detainees at Abu

Ghraib and Guantanamo.[152] Polls conducted in 2003 indicated that many Indonesians,

Pakistanis, Turks, Jordanians and Kuwaitis were either somewhat or very worried about possible

US threats to their country. Further, there is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the issue which

causes the most hostility towards the US in the Middle East. Many Muslims hold the US at least

partly responsible for the suffering of the Palestinians and resent American support for the

Israelis.[153]

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[151] Blake Ward, "Osama's Wake: The Second Generation of Al Qaeda." (Maxwell, AL: USAF Counterproliferation Centre, August 2005), 9.

[152] Bruce Hoffman, "Combating Al Qaeda . . ., 7.

[153] Henry Munson, "Lifting the Veil  . . . , 22.

While there may be some basis in fact for Muslims to feel a sense of resent and humiliation, these feelings are inflamed by terrorist and religious extremist propaganda. Radical messages seem to resonate well with some sectors of Muslim youth who follow political developments closely via Arab TV and internet sites. Often they receive an extremist interpretation of events, highlighting atrocities committed against Muslims but failing to mention, for example, the most recent beheading of a Westerner by Islamic terrorists in Iraq. As a result, the young Muslim perceives that the umma is under severe pressure by Western oppression and persecution. This further inflames feelings of anger, powerlessness and humiliation amongst the youth, who often feel a strong connection to the umma.[154]

Globalization and modernization are also causing unrest in the Muslim world. Jessica Stern, a Harvard University terrorism expert noted that opposition to globalization is a recurring theme with Islamic terrorist groups.[155] The exportation of principally American culture worldwide via television, movies, popular music and the internet causes many to fear for their own culture and whether it can survive the onslaught. Further, many Muslims are uncomfortable with the material nature of Western society and the loss of family structures, which is at odds with their own traditional culture. Modernization feeds into this by highlighting the economic inequality between Islamic and Western countries. Frustrated and confused by the proliferation of Western cultural ideals and angered by the inequalities of globalization, many young Muslims are

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[154] Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, "Violent Jihad in the Netherlands . . ., 33.

[155] Jessica Stern in *Al Qaeda Now - Understanding Today's Terrorists*, ed. Karen Greenberg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 34.

prepared to channel their feelings into violent jihad against their perceived enemy.[156]

But how does this explain the radicalization of the homegrown terrorists? While it may appear that they form part of the Western culture of their native country, research indicates that many Muslim youth in Western countries are torn between their traditional religious culture and the Western culture surrounding them. While they may have been raised to practice a traditional form of Islam, the youth are confronted with a rapidly modernizing, secular society that is very different from their religious traditions. As a report by the Netherlands General Intelligence and Security Service observes:

> [The] youth have often not been fully secularized themselves and they continue to struggle with existential and religious questions often seeking answers in an Islam which is increasingly divergent from a local cultural context.[157]

The confusion this struggle creates makes the youth particularly receptive to the clarity and simplicity of the extremist message.

Finally, a substantial portion of young Muslims in Western society are not satisfied with their station in life. Experiencing higher levels of unemployment that their non-Muslim peers and often perceiving that they are discriminated against in the workplace, Muslims can feel isolated from society.[158]

Turning now to consideration of Newman's model, it should be apparent that many of the factors facilitating the recruitment of future jihadi terrorists are what Newman would call direct conditions. Permissive conditions, however, are somewhat more challenging to identify,

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[156] S.P. Huntington, "Al-Qaeda: A Blueprint for International Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century?" *Defence Studies* 4, no 2 (Summer 2004): 231.

[157] Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, "Violent Jihad in the Netherlands . . ., 30.

[158] Walter Laqueur, "The Terrorism to Come . . ., 56.

particularly in Western countries. In the Middle Eastern countries, from which many Islamic

terrorists are recruited, many of the permissive conditions exist. Poverty, increasing urbanization

and high unemployment are present. A burgeoning youth population is also a significant factor

in these countries. The average age of Muslim people is decreasing as the Middle East

experiences enormous population growth. It is estimated that two–thirds of the population of

Arab countries is under twenty-five.[159] In Western countries, however, most of Newman's

permissive conditions generally do not exist. Those conditions that do exist, urbanization for

instance, have been constants in recent times so would not account for the increasing appearance

of Western terrorists. Perhaps the lack of perceptible permissive conditions is one of the reasons

that the emergence of homegrown terrorists has caused such surprise in Western countries.

Most of the direct conditions identified by Newman have been discussed already:

perceptions of inequality between the Muslim and Western worlds; a sense of repression of

Muslims at the hands of West; powerful feelings of humiliation that have historical roots;

perception of foreign occupation, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan; a clash of identities

between the Islamic and Western worlds, violent conflict throughout the Middle East; and the

effects of globalization. Newman's model describes well the tangible political grievances that

are felt in the Muslim world.

The model also considers precipitant factors, catalysts that, when combined with the

condition variables, lead to terrorism. Precipitant factors have not been examined in this paper

because they are not considered root causes. However, in the case of Al Qaeda, it is important to

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[159] S.P. Huntington, "Al-Qaeda: A Blueprint . . ., 231.

consider the effect that precipitant factors, particularly leadership, have on the ability of Al

Qaeda and its ilk to recruit new terrorists. While many of the direct conditions described above

*do* exist to a degree and there are clearly grievances that need to be resolved, terrorist and

extremist religious leaders have greatly exaggerated the existence of these conditions through the

effective use of propaganda. The role of leadership in fanning the flames of anger, resent and

humiliation cannot be forgotten.[160]

The model also successfully predicts the direct conditions that have led to the emergence of

Al Qaeda and other global jihadist organizations. The permissive conditions identified by the

model fit fairly well in the context of a Middle Eastern country, but less so when considering the

rise of Islamic terrorists in Western countries. With a better understanding of the root causes of

Islamic terrorism, how would a counterterrorism strategy that includes a focus on root causes be

crafted?

There is general recognition that the majority of the current generation of terrorists are hard

core and beyond the reach of a root causes approach. The threat from this group must be

addressed through intelligence, surveillance and police and military action. But, there is

insufficient effort focused on stemming the tide of the next generation of terrorists. Hoffman and

Stern articulate this conviction well in the following quotations:

> . . hunting down militant leaders . . is a monumental failing not only because
> decapitation strategies have rarely worked in countering mass mobilization terrorist or
> insurgent campaigns, but also because Al Qaeda's ability to continue this struggle is
> ineluctably predicated on its capacity to attract new recruits.[161]

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[160] Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Pull Up Terrorism by the Roots . . ., 2.
[161] Bruce Hoffman, "Combating Al Qaeda . . ., 2.

> We are making a very profound error in focusing almost exclusively on today's terrorists rather than on who becomes a terrorist and why. We are paying insufficient attention to the flow of new recruits, to what facilitates recruitment.[162]

Addressing the root causes of the global jihad is the most effective means of reducing the appeal of the terrorist's message to the next generation of potential terrorists. If the underlying grievances are removed, the message will no longer resonate. Perhaps one of the reasons that there has been so little focus on addressing the root cause issues is that, in the case of Al Qaeda, they are so complex. As an example, concerted efforts have been underway for years to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but little headway has so far been made. Further, most of the root cause issues are global in scope and require a coordinated effort by the international community. Nevertheless, one of the key challenges in the short term is addressing the terrorist propaganda campaign that is greatly exaggerating the extent of the grievances.

Regardless of the complexity, reducing the threat of Islamic terrorism requires that progress be made. Several consistent themes emerge from the literature that should be considered. First, bridges need to be built between the Western and Muslim communities to better understand Muslim perspectives on issues. Moderate Muslim leaders are best positioned to challenge the extremist message of hatred and violence.[163] Further, peaceful fundamentalist Muslim organizations may attract the same cluster of young men that the terrorist organizations are currently recruiting.[164] The critical importance of the anti-Western hate speech to the survival of the global jihad has already been established. The West generally, and the US in particular, needs to systematically and thoroughly overhaul communications with the Muslim world to

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[162] Jessica Stern in *Al Qaeda Now - Understanding Today's Terrorists . . .*, 36.

[163] Robert Mueller, "Homegrown Terrorists and the Radicalization Process . . ., 4.

[164] Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks . . .*, 182.

counter the extremist message both diplomatically and in the global media.[165]  Finally, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict stands as an open sore between the Muslim world and the West. While no simple solution exists to this struggle, its continued existence will ensure continued distrust and suspicion of the West.

In summary, Al Qaeda is by far the most complex of the terrorist groups studied but also the most relevant to the threat facing Canada and other Western nations today.  Newman's causal model describes well the direct conditions that have inflamed the Muslim world and permitted Al Qaeda and its network of terrorist groups forming the global jihad to flourish.  Considering permissive conditions, many of those identified in the model exist in developing countries but this is less true when considering homegrown terrorists.  Finally, in the case of Al Qaeda, the importance of leadership as a precipitant factor is critical in exaggerating the extent of the direct conditions and inflaming feelings of anger, resent and humiliation within the Muslim community.

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[165] Bruce Hoffman, "Al Qaeda and the War on Terrorism . . . , 427.

# Chapter 5 - Conclusions

The greatest threat to Canada's national security today, and indeed to the security of much of the Western world, is terrorism. Amongst the terrorist organizations in the world today, religious extremist terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaeda and the global jihadist network, pose the most immediate threat. Traditionally, counterterrorism strategies have sought to reduce this threat by dealing with the symptoms of the problem. Police work, intelligence, surveillance, judicial sanctions and the involvement of the military are the usual tools used to detect, track, break up and prosecute terrorists and terrorist organizations. Less frequently used as part of a counterterrorism strategy is focusing on, understanding and resolving the root causes that motivate terrorists in the first place. In fact, for many, a root cause focus is akin to legitimizing terrorist violence by recognizing that the terrorist's cause is justifiable. Still others fear that attempting to resolve terrorists' grievances gives the perception that their violent acts have been 'successful,' possibly encouraging others to resort to terrorism.

This paper has sought to explore the root causes of terrorism by considering two key questions. Is there a common set of root causes across the spectrum of terrorist organizations? And can a counterterrorism strategy focused on addressing root causes be effective at reducing the terrorist threat?

Before delving into the examination of the root causes of terrorism, the paper first considered the definition of terrorism and found there is no international consensus. This is troubling, but not surprising. It is troubling because most modern terrorist organizations know no national boundaries. Thus, it will be the exception that a single nation can develop a counterterrorism strategy that will be effective against an international terrorist organization. A concerted global

effort is required to deal with terrorism.  For this to occur there must be a common understanding and commonly accepted definition of the problem.  The lack of consensus is not surprising because terrorism tends to be the strategy of the weak.  Unable to deal with a stronger opponent through conventional and legal warfare, the terrorist feels compelled to resort to terrorist tactics to have a chance of success.  As a result, the weak and the strong tend to see terrorism differently.  This is a key reason for the lack of international consensus on the definition of terrorism.

Despite the lack of international consistency, within Canada and the US there is a common understanding (but somewhat inconsistent wording) of what terrorism is.  The Canadian Anti-Terrorism Act's definition captures the key attributes of terrorist activities:  intentional acts of violence, committed for political, ideological or religious purpose that are intended to intimidate.  This definition was adopted for use throughout the paper.

The causes of terrorism are not simple.  Efforts to reduce a terrorist's motivation to poverty or a lack of education, two causes frequently suggested to be at the root of terrorism, significantly misstate the complexity of the issue.  Further, individual conditions tend to be insufficient motivators.  It is much more useful to think of the root causes of terrorism as consisting of two broad categories of conditions.  *Permissive conditions* create both a sense of unrest within the populace and general discontent which results in an environment in which terrorism can flourish.  *Direct conditions* provide tangible political issues and concrete grievances which, when combined with permissive conditions, can lead to terrorism. This root

cause model was initially proposed by Martha Crenshaw[166] and later refined by Edward Newman.[167] Newman noted that there were limitations to this approach in understanding root causes, limitations that were later confirmed in case studies of three terrorist organizations.

Newman's root cause model was tested through three case studies of terrorist organizations that were either based in Canada or pose a threat to Canada. The terrorist groups studied were selected to provide representation from each of the three general terrorist profiles identified by CSIS: religious extremists, nationalist/secessionist groups and domestic extremists. In each of the cases, the history of the terrorist organization was reviewed and then its motivation was examined with a view to determining whether a root cause-based counterterrorism strategy would have been effective against it.

The case studies demonstrated that a root causes-based focus can be an effective, and sometimes essential, tool in a broader counterterrorism strategy, but there are limitations. Considering the limitations first, existing terrorists might not be reachable by addressing root causes. Indeed, there is considerable literature that supports this conclusion. While root causes may provide the initial motivation for terrorists to resort to violence, at a certain point, the violence can become the ends rather than the means. In other words, terrorists come to identify themselves as revolutionaries committed to a violent existence and are unable to return to their 'normal' lives. At this point and beyond, resolving the initial grievances will do little to diminish the threat posed by the terrorist group. Al Qaeda terrorists provide an example of this. Hardened by years of violent struggle, poisoned by years of anger and perhaps predisposed to violence in

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[166] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism . . ., 381-385.
[167] Edward Newman, "Exploring the "Root Causes" of Terrorism . . ., 750-764

the first place, this group is generally past the point of salvation. It is difficult to imagine that Osama bin Laden, for example, would lay down his arms if some of his grievances were addressed.

Further, in some cases it might not be possible to address the root causes of the terrorist's struggle. Direct Action provides an example of such a group. Seeking nothing less than stimulating a revolution to overthrow modern society, it is hard to conceive how this group's perceived grievances could be addressed.

A root causes-based focus can be very effective, and in some cases is essential, at reducing the long-term threat posed by terrorist organizations. So long as the underlying conditions that led to the rise of a terrorist organization still exist, there will be a sympathetic and supportive segment of society from which the terrorist organization will be able to recruit future members. Both the FLQ and Al Qaeda illustrate this. The FLQ was able to renew itself several times during the 1960s after police arrests depleted the organization. In the case of Al Qaeda, many terrorism experts are convinced that stemming the tide of recruits into the global jihadist network is the only long-term solution to this terrorist threat. The longevity of the network depends on the flow of new jihadists recruits. These new recruits are motivated by the existence of the root causes. Sometimes the presence of underlying grievances is not enough to stimulate the rise of terrorism. Al Qaeda illustrates this. The role of terrorist leaders and religious extremists in exaggerating the grievances through a relentless propaganda campaign to fan the flames of anger and hatred to the point where people feel compelled to act is a necessary catalyst.

How should these conclusions be factored into an effective counterterrorism strategy? It is clear that a thorough understanding of the adversary is necessary to fully appreciate the

conditions, both permissive and direct, that have contributed to the rise of a terrorist organization. While some existing terrorists may be deterred by the resolution of root causes, in general, they will be insensitive to a root causes-based focus. These terrorists need to be hunted down through a more traditional counterterrorism approach of police work and military action. However, this traditional approach will not necessarily be effective in preventing the appearance of new terrorists. It is here where a root causes focus will be truly effective and may, in fact, be essential to ensure a long term reduction in the terrorist threat. But a root causes-based strategy is necessarily a long-term strategy. Permissive conditions by their very nature are entrenched and will take many years, and perhaps decades, to resolve. Similarly, direct conditions can be complicated and challenging to resolve. Witness the decades required to ameliorate the permissive conditions in Quebec that contributed to the rise of the FLQ. Without doubt, addressing root causes will not be easy. Equally, a long term counterterrorism strategy will not be effective without understanding and addressing the root causes.

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