The Mediation of Poverty: The News, New Media and Politics

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In accordance with University of London regulations for the submission of a PhD thesis, I herewith declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis considers how the mediation of poverty in Canada and the United Kingdom influences responses to the issue of poverty. The thesis focuses in particular on the issue dynamics concerning children as constructions of a "deserving poor" and immigrants as constructions of an "undeserving poor".

A frame analysis of mainstream news content in both countries demonstrates the extent to which individualizing and rationalizing frames dominate coverage, and that the publication of the news online is not leading to an expansion of discourses, as hoped. A frame analysis of alternative news coverage and coverage from the 1960s and 70s demonstrates significant absences of social justice frames and rights-based discourse in contemporary coverage. I suggest that mainstream news coverage narrows and limits the way poverty is talked about in a way that reinforces the dominance of neoliberalism and market-based approaches to the issue. Interviews with journalists, politicians, researchers and activists collectively indicate that getting media coverage is essential to gaining political attention in both countries. These interviews also reveal the power dynamics influencing the relationships between these actors and the way the issue of poverty is approached. I argue that while new media tools create new opportunities to share information, these tools are also creating new pressures by speeding up the working practices in mediated political centres in a way that forecloses potentials to challenge dominant news coverage and approaches to poverty. However, this cross-national comparison also reveals context-specific factors influencing poverty politics in each country.

I conclude that this analysis and comparison of poverty issue dynamics reveals shortcomings in the democratic processes in both countries. Changing poverty coverage and approaches to the issue will require changing specific media and political practices.

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This project investigates the mediation of poverty in Canada and the United Kingdom. The concept of mediation is valuable as it draws attention to processes of communication and how they shape and are shaped by individuals and society (Thompson, 1995; Silverstone, 2005, Livingstone, 2009; Davis 2007b; Couldry 2008):

> Mediation, as a result, requires us to understand how processes of communication change the social and cultural environments that support them as well as the relationships that participants, both individual and institutional have to that environment and to each other (Silverstone, 2005: 189).

This project is concerned with how poverty is represented in the news and how news content, news processes, and new media influence the way those involved in poverty issue dynamics respond to the issue and to each other.

As history demonstrates, definitions and approaches to poverty are bound up with the dominant social, political and economic ideas and practices of a time. History also demonstrates that definitions of poverty have far more influence on whether or not poverty is addressed or ignored than its depth and severity (Edelman, 1977). How poverty is understood influences what is done about it, for example whether or not there is a redistribution of resources to create greater equality. It is for this reason, as Lister argues (2004), that the meaning of poverty is continually contested. In contemporary Canadian and British societies, much of the contestation over the meaning of poverty plays out in the news.

1.1 The news as a central site of definition

The media, the news in particular, is a prime arena where the meaning of poverty is constructed, reinforced and contested (Gamson, 2004). The news plays a central role in framing political debate (Kitzinger, 2007). We also know that political actions, advocacy and policy are increasingly being developed with the news in mind (Davis, 2007b; Fenton, 2010; Kuhn, 2002). Rendering explicit how poverty is being defined in the news and how both content and processes of news gathering influence political actors has important political and social consequences as dominant definitions of poverty are bound up with value judgments that influence which solutions are deemed necessary (Lister, 2004). Dominant definitions of poverty influence how those who are poor are treated generally (Edelman, 1977; Bauman, 1998; Gans, 1995), but also how they are treated in particular when such views are reified through legislation and policy (Katz, 1990).

Previous research suggests a number of links between news representations and definition. A recent UK survey found that broadsheet readers were more likely to view poverty as caused by social factors than were tabloid readers or those who didn't read newspapers (Park, Phillips, and Robinson, 2007). In her survey of Canadian attitudes to poverty in two urban centres, Reutter et al. (2005 and 2006) found that the majority of respondents indicated that they had learned about poverty from the media. Although an American example, Iyengar's (1994) poverty study is relevant to this discussion. He found that how poverty is framed affects how people see the issue and, more specifically, affects whether or not responsibility is assigned to the individual or to society at large. Numerous studies in the United States have also documented a connection between poverty coverage and public attitudes (Kensicki, 2004; Sotirovic, 2001; Gilens, 1996, 1999).

In their study of poverty and welfare coverage, Golding and Middleton (1982) link media coverage to public attitudes, but also to policy making. They argue that the media are implicated in social policy via its framing of public debate and advancement of priorities. They note that policy development is often a response to media-driven demands and also argue that the media influence policy through the creation of expectations, mythologies, stereotypes and elisions (1982: 236). Writing in 1982, Golding and Middleton do not focus on neoliberalism in their book. However, in their final assessments of the relationship between the State, the mass media and popular ideologies Golding and Middleton note that the assault on the welfare state following the end of the post-war period of economic growth came 'armed with a neo-liberal critique always present in post-war writing and thinking on social policy among the radical right' (1982: 205). They argue that the media helped to 'jerk' this critique into prominence through its emphasis on 'scroungerphobia'. Almost thirty years later, this thesis approaches the same subject matter from a different vantage point, at a time when neoliberalism[1] is saturating representations of and approaches to poverty.

1.2 Why study news coverage of poverty? Why now?

When this project began in 2007, the most significant questions were: Given the overall economic growth over previous decades in Canada and in the UK and given the wealth of both nations why are there such persistently high levels of poverty? Why is inequality rising? Why have political responses to date been so inadequate? Several key unexpected events were: The financial crisis that began with the American housing market in 2007

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[1] Neoliberalism is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

and spread internationally, leading to government bailouts of banks in the billions (in this Canada was an exception), a global recession, massive government spending in the form of fiscal stimulus, and, most recently in the UK, the deepest cuts in public spending in decades, and where benefits are concerned the deepest cuts since Beveridge. Recent events in the UK and Canada provide ample evidence that efforts to reconstruct social and political life are happening, and that a redefinition of poverty is central to these projects. It is largely through the news that we hear political justifications for public service and benefit cuts, and where these cuts are challenged. Those advocating cuts and those challenging them often hold very different understandings of what poverty means and who 'the poor' are. The meaning of poverty or who is invoked as 'the poor' is not fixed. In the UK for example the Conservative Liberal Democratic Coalition has recently been using the term 'culture of worklessness' which implies that people do not want to work. This understanding of poverty blames those who are poor for their poverty, and provides a justification that there should be benefit cuts to force those who are 'lazy' into work. In contrast, anti-poverty advocates draw attention to the little work on offer throughout much of rural England, the low pay of much work throughout the country, the lack of affordable child care, etc. These details indicate that economic development and an investment in public services are needed to deal with poverty. Such contestations over the meaning of poverty are being played out in the news.

1.2.1 Redefining poverty in the United Kingdom

In the UK there are ongoing attempts to redefine what poverty means and concrete attacks on the poor have already started. Despite George Osborne's claim that the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition government had delivered a progressive budget, follow-up analysis, conducted first by The Institute for Fiscal Studies, demonstrates that in actual fact the budget will hit the poor hardest (Browne and Levell, 2010). In discursive terms, while New Labour placed blame on the individual by emphasizing individual responsibility and, particularly under Blair, by invoking underclass depictions, such depictions are employed to an even greater visceral effect by the Conservatives. Cameron, for example, regularly refers to the root causes of poverty as 'welfare dependency, addiction, debt, poor schooling and above all, family breakdown' (Cameron, 2010). Returning to 17th-century depictions of 'the poor' as 'wantonly idle',[2] Work and Pensions Minister Iain Duncan Smith argues that it is the benefits system that has 'created

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[2] See Golding and Middleton 1982, pp. 6-56 and Piven and Cloward 1997.

pockets of worklessness, where idleness has become institutionalised' (quoted by Mulholland and Meikle, 30 July 2010).

As welfare services erode and times get tougher, immigrants, migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees become popular scapegoats, portrayed as a drain on services and as a threat (Arat-Koc, 1999; Greenslade, 2005).[3] Immigration debates are fuelled by longstanding negative and stereotypical portrayals of 'the poor'. Previous research argues that in the UK British politicians fuel such scape-goating, and that they dominate and shape public discourse on immigration (Statham, 2003; Athwal et al. 2010). Most recently, immigration was one of the central issues in the 2010 UK general election. Despite convincing arguments for its futility, the Conservative party promised a cap on non-EU immigration, and as of 19 July 2010 the Conservative Liberal Democrat coalition government applied an 'interim cap'.

1.2.2 Redefining poverty in Canada

Poverty debates are not as heated in Canada as they are in the UK, and the Federal Conservative Government is notably silent on the issue of poverty. In the last few years there have been two Senate of Canada committees and one House of Commons committee examining the issue. Despite this the Federal Conservative Government shows no interest in responding to calls for a poverty reduction strategy. Recent events suggest that rather than addressing poverty the Conservative government is more interested in erasing it. In the spring of 2010 the Federal Government announced it will be eliminating the mandatory long form census and moving to a short form voluntary census. The implications are vast as the information gathered from the long-form census provides detailed information about inequality and poverty in Canada. This information is used to justify funding for social programs and to also ensure money is being directed where needed. McQuaig (2010) argues that despite Conservative claims that the form is being eliminated because it is too intrusive and demanding; it is actually being eliminated to make the poor invisible and 'easier to ignore'. She notes that replacing the mandatory long-form census with a voluntary abbreviated survey will result in less reliable data, particularly from the poor and the marginalized. This is because, as health officials have noted, those who respond to voluntary surveys tend to be white and occupy the middle income bracket, thus presenting an inaccurate representation of the population

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[3] While the focus of this study was on news coverage of immigrants, given the political and media mixing of discussions of immigrants, migrant workers, asylum seekers, and refugees, it is impossible to discuss news coverage of immigrants in isolation from these other groups. As noted by Gabrielatos and Baker (2008), who analyzed UK press coverage from 1996 and 2005, in media coverage there is often confusion and conflation of the four terms.

(McKeown, 2010). The impact of this move is a potential erasure of poverty, of its specific realities. The less information available about the poor and the unemployed, the less need to allocate resources to them.

Much research discussed in this thesis focuses on the province of Ontario. The situation in Ontario had looked promising when in response to much advocacy and a 'War on Poverty' series by the *Toronto Star* the Ontario Liberal Government introduced a poverty reduction strategy in 2008. Although limited in its overall focus on child poverty and its hedging that federal money was required for much activity, some elements of the strategy received very favourable attention. These included the introduction of poverty reduction targets, the promise of new labour laws and a dental program for low-income Ontarians. But since their announcement, the government has backtracked on a number of promised initiatives including a dental program for the working poor and new employment standards.

In Canada, as in the UK, one of the early government responses to the financial crisis was a renewed emphasis on nationalism, citizenship and immigration. In both cases, immigrants *with money* are of little concern. The most loaded attacks are directed at those identified as possessing 'few skills' such as: migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees. Just as former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown introduced a new program to ensure immigrants 'earned citizenship' in the UK, in Canada the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Jason Kenney has stewarded a dramatic overhaul of Canada's immigration system. In addition to the new rules to fast track specific applications introduced in 2008, as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 2 and 3, Kenney has more recently introduced a citizenship guide for new Canadians, vowing to prioritize the fighting of 'citizenship fraud'. Asylum seekers and refugees have become a government target; the number of approved asylum claims has dropped by 56 percent from 2005 to 2008 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). Raids on migrant workers have increased, as have deportations. Further, on 28 September 2010 the new Center for Immigration Policy Reform, comprised in great part of members with ties to the Conservative movement in Canada, marked its entrance into the public arena by arguing that Canada's immigration and refugee system must be completely altered to prevent newcomers who, it is argued, overwhelm and drain Canada's social system. On 14 September 2010, Angus Reid released a poll indicating that more Canadians than previously are questioning whether immigration is benefitting the country, this suggesting further links between economic difficulties and attitudes to immigrants and migrants.

1.3 Poverty and inequality in Canada and the United Kingdom

The failure to address poverty and inequality in both Canada and the UK occurs despite its irrationality. Evidence shows that the more equal our societies are the better off we all are (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). Canada and the UK had respectively been moving toward greater equality after WWII and into the 1970s. Finkel (2006) and Lowe (1993) argue that the redistributive policies and improved social programs introduced after WWII improved the quality of lives across both countries and reduced the number of people living in poverty. The move toward greater equality in the 1950s, 60s and 70s was marked by significant legislative and policy changes. In Canada, between 1945 and 71, several key pieces of legislation were introduced including a universal system of family allowances (1945), universal old age pension plan (1951), a Medical Care Act and the Canada Assistance Plan (1966) and a new Family Allowance Act (1970). Such legislation did have an effect. For example, the introduction of numerous programs targeting elderly Canadians such as Old Age Security, the Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Canada Pension Plan played a key role in substantially reducing poverty among that demographic (Kerr and Michalski, 2005). Some of the notable pieces of legislation and policy in the UK were the 1944 Butler Act, the commitment to full employment which manifested in the same year, the Family Allowance Act (1945), the National Insurance Act (1946) and the National Health Act (1948).

Legislation in both countries can be read as an indication of the salience of poverty and inequality issues at the time and of the strong presence of a discourse promoting collective responses to such issues. In reference to the UK, Deakin (1994) and Lowe (1993) argue that while it is inaccurate to say there were universally held and undifferentiated beliefs in support of the welfare state after WWII, there was acceptance and compromise among political parties that enabled the expansion of social services. Finkel (2006) makes the same point in reference to Canada. He notes that legislative responses from government to popular demands for socially progressive policies were always a compromise between demands from popular groups and conservative/business groups. He points to pension levels, health care legislation and social housing as examples of such compromises. The move toward greater equality was halted with the ascendency of neoliberalism and its accompanying policies and rhetoric in the UK in the late 1970s and in Canada in the early 80s (Walker, 1997; Brandolini and Smeeding, 2007; Frenette et al., 2006; Cornia et al., 2004; Cornia, 2003). A neoliberal programme in Canada and the UK led to cuts in social spending, reduced regulation of the market and of privatization, contributed to the stagnation of overall poverty rates and increased

economic inequality in both nations. It is estimated that 11.7 percent of Canadians live in poverty and that there has been a rise of 900,000 between 2007 and 2009 as a result of the recession (Pasma, 2010). The gap between rich and poor has increased in Canada over the last thirty years. In 2004 the richest 10 percent of families earned 82 percent more than the poorest ten percent (Yalnizyan, 2007). Moreover, the richest 10 percent of Canadian families own 58.2 percent of the wealth in the country (Morisette and Zhang, 2006). With the recession it is likely things will become and remain worse as many of the income supports Canadians relied on during the recessions of the 1980s and 90s have been cut (Yalnizyan, 2010). Early analysis in Canada indicates that this recession is hitting Canadians 'harder and faster than any previous downturn' and that 'Canadians are more exposed to economic ruin than they've been since the 1930s' (Yalnizyan, 2009).

In the UK, the percentage of people living in poverty increased from just below 14 percent in 1979 to nearly 22 percent in 2008-09 (Joyce et al. 2010). Joyce et al. (2010) argue that there was some improvement in poverty rates under New Labour and that New Labour oversaw the longest decline in poverty since the start of their time series in 1961, but that the decline in poverty came to an end in 2004-05 and that poverty then continued to rise for three consecutive years. The Institute for Fiscal Studies reports that the rise of income inequality in Britain has been unparalleled historically and in comparison to other developed countries (Brewer et al., 2008). In 2005, the Office of National Statistics noted that while the UK has seen considerable economic growth over the last thirty years people have not benefited equally from this growth (Babb, 2005). In 2002/03 the top 30 percent of income earners received over half of the total income earned in the UK, while the bottom ten percent of income earners received less than 5 percent of total income. Half of the population owned just 5 percent of the wealth and assets in the UK in 2001 (Babb, 2005). According to the 2007 Unicef Report Card, Canada and the UK have some of the highest child poverty rates among developed nations: Canada at 13.6 and the UK at 16.2. These results ranked Canada at 15 and the UK at 22 out of the 24 OECD countries evaluated. In the UK unemployment has been rising steadily for the first time since the 1990s (Kenway, 2009), house repossessions are rising, rises in the cost of living are making life even more difficult for people in poverty and recent reductions in some forms of poverty are being reversed (Haddad and Bance, 2009).

In the face of rising levels of income inequality and persistently high poverty rates, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights argued, in their review of Canada and the UK, that these nations need to do more to address inequality. In their May 2006 review of Canada, the UN Committee expressed concern

over the nation's high rates of poverty, particularly among disadvantaged and marginalized communities. The Committee also noted that welfare benefits in most Canadian provinces amounted to less than half of basic living costs, that the country's employment insurance program needed to be more accessible, that minimum wages do not meet basic needs and that homelessness and inadequate housing need to be addressed. In their May 2009 review of the UK, the Committee expressed concern for continuing widespread poverty and fuel poverty in the nation and the fact that poverty levels differ by region and by group, with ethnic minorities, asylum-seekers and migrants, older persons, single mothers and persons with disabilities marking the highest levels of poverty. The Committee also expressed concern about the continued discrimination, disadvantaging and marginalization of these groups. They noted that progress in narrowing the wage gap between men and women has stalled and that unemployment or low-paid work continues to be higher for some groups than for others.

1.4 Why a cross-national comparison?

   Conducting cross-national comparisons are challenging on a number of fronts. As Livingstone (2003) argues, researchers conducting cross-national comparisons need to make an argument for use of the nation as a unit of analysis, given the extent to which economics, business and politics exceed national boundaries. While recognizing the global nature of numerous institutions, relationships and processes, using the nation as a unit of analysis was necessary in this study. This study focuses on Canadian and British poverty issue dynamics, on those involved in the debates and approaches directed at poverty in Canada and poverty in Britain. The texts and people interviewed for this study were tied to nationally-based and directed institutions including media organizations, government bodies, activist organizations and think tanks. While all of these institutions may at times direct efforts toward international goals, for the most part their efforts are directed toward national goals making the nation as a unit significant.

   The aims of the cross-national comparisons were to identify findings that would be relevant to national discussions about poverty and immigration politics in Canada and the UK, but to also draw some conclusions that are "generalizable" and relevant beyond a national context. Using the nation as a unit of analysis provides a means to do this as comparative investigations help us see, as Blumler et al. (1992: 4) argue, 'communication arrangements in a fresh light'. The act of comparison enables more sensitivity to what is similar and different, to test ideas about the inter-relationships between phenomena (Hallin and Mancini, 2004), the ability to identify characteristics and practices that are

unique to specific national contexts and those that are common between them. The comparative analysis provided here is presented with the awareness that this comparison is not a complete account of the many ways that British and Canadian media systems are different and similar.

This project compares and considers the influence of two particular contemporary forces in both countries. The first is the advent and increasing use of digital media technologies. In our instantaneous digital age, new media technologies are accelerating the speed of communication, work practices, contemplation and debate within mediatised political centres (Meyer, 2002). There is a need to look specifically at the impact of digital media on poverty issue dynamics. The second is the dominance of neoliberalism as the overarching paradigm of our time. Given this, my analytical approach aims to be continually conscious of how neoliberalism operates as a political and an economic program (Harvey, 2005, 2007 and 2010; Hay, 2004), as an ideology (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001; Giroux, 2008), and as a rationality influencing schemas of thought and processes of analysis (Couldry, 2010; Foucault, 2008; Brown, 2005). As noted by Curran (2011) and Hallin (2008) the relationship between neoliberalism and the media has been overlooked in much media studies. This has occurred despite the necessary relationships between information communication technologies and neoliberalism (Hassan, 2008). Any attempt to challenge neoliberalism requires moving beyond generalizations to identify how it is applied in practice. A cross-national comparison aids in this identification of nation-based and more generalizing conclusions about how digital media and the many fronted forces of neoliberalism are influencing news coverage of poverty and poverty issue dynamics on a national and cross-national basis.

One of the difficulties in doing cross-national comparisons can be the presence of too many variables to conduct an effective comparison. As Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue, an effective means to address this problem is to reduce the number of variables by selecting comparable cases. Canada was chosen as a unit of analysis for a number of reasons. As a Canadian with academic and professional knowledge of the country's social and political dynamics and history, I possess the solid grounding needed to embark on an investigation of Canada's poverty issue dynamics. As indicated above, the danger when conducting a single nation study is an inability to see things with fresh eyes or how they might be otherwise. Britain presents an important case to use for comparison in relation to poverty issue dynamics.

Canada and the UK share a number of structural and systemic similarities in terms of welfare state development, in addition to social, media and political structure as

detailed below. This reduces the number of variables. But, most important to this comparison, is that the UK declared poverty reduction a national goal in 1999 and developed a national poverty reduction strategy. Further, the New Labour government in the UK placed significant discursive emphasis on the reduction of child poverty and set targets to which governments could be held to account. In contrast, it would appear that the present Canadian government does not view poverty as a major policy priority as it has failed to respond to calls for a national anti-poverty strategy and has stepped away from a 1989 unanimous House of Commons call for the eradication of child poverty in Canada. This project started in 2007, it was thought that a UK analysis and comparison would enable an analysis of whether or not the identification of targets influences the extent to which poverty is identified as a prominent social issue, or the ability of social groups to hold government to account.

My knowledge and grounding in the British context is not as strong as my overall awareness of the Canadian context. I took steps from the outset of this project to develop the necessary grounding and contextual awareness by moving to the UK. In addition to my own research, I also audited several Masters level courses at Goldsmiths in the first year of the project including Contemporary Political Communications, Politics and Welfare in Britain and Europe, and Contemporary British Politics.

The research presented in this thesis aims to provide comparable snapshots of the mediation of poverty and to consider political implications. There is a gap in knowledge in both countries about how the media influences political actors, and this research contributes an empirically-based discussion to this area of research. It must be noted that there have been no cross-national comparisons of poverty coverage.

Similarities in the political and media systems of Canada and the UK permit a detailed comparison of poverty discourse and a consideration of how it circulates and is influenced by various political and social factors. As a British colony, Canada adopted the UK system of representative politics and the poor law system. Canada and the UK largely embraced a liberal welfare state model: the UK into the late 1970s and Canada into the early 80s (Canada: Finkel, 2006; Bashevkin, 2002; UK: Lowe, 1993; Deakin, 1994).

Both Canada and the UK have a long tradition of public service broadcasting, and have legislated commitments to preserve the integrity of broadcasting and print information as a public good. In Canada this commitment is enshrined in the Canadian Broadcasting Act (revised 1991) and in the Constitution. In the BBC Royal Charter Agreement (revised in 2006), the first public purpose listed for the BBC is to sustain citizenship and civil society. While the public service broadcasters in both nations

struggle to adapt to new technologies, to a changing media audience and to funding constraints, they maintain a strong cultural position within media, political and social landscapes. The fact that both the CBC and the BBC are the most popular news sites within both nations is testimony to this. A comparison between Canada and the UK allows me to consider if there is a distinct mediating role played by these public broadcasters in terms of poverty discourse.

It is also significant that social groups campaigning against poverty play a prominent role in both countries. The strong presence of such groups enables a comparison of how counter publicity interacts with the public sphere in each nation. As noted by Downey and Fenton, such an analysis could enable a better understanding of 'the relationship between media representation and social change' (2003: 200). My research indicates that there is a trans-national poverty discourse and similar levels of intense mediation within political centres in both countries. However, my work also demonstrates the crucial role that nation-specific research institutes and advocacy groups play in influencing how poverty is talked about and responded to.

1.5 Poverty and constructions of a "deserving" and "undeserving poor"

Constructions of a "deserving" and "undeserving poor" have influenced what poverty means and approaches to the issue for centuries (see Lister, 2004; Piven and Cloward, 1997; Fraser and Gordon, 1994; Katz, 1990; Golding and Middleton, 1982). It was decided at the outset that any attempt to investigate poverty would need to capture coverage, debates and political approaches to groups typically represented as "deserving" and "undeserving". This thesis focuses on coverage and debate surrounding children in order to capture representations of the "deserving poor", and on coverage and debate surrounding immigrants in order to capture representations of an "undeserving poor". In contemporary politics, news coverage and activism children are often constructed into a group identified as the "deserving poor". In the 1980s many anti-poverty activists in Canada decided to focus on child poverty as a means to avoid the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor divisions dominating social policy, and to strategically counter the dominant and pervasive neoliberal emphasis on individual responsibility (Wiegers, 2007). In the UK the Child Poverty Action Group was established in 1965 to campaign to eliminate child poverty. In 1999 Tony Blair committed the then New Labour government to 'eradicate' child poverty by 2020. The target was enshrined in the Child Poverty Act of 2010. Although the Canadian Government has not set any poverty reduction targets, an NDP motion in 1989 to eliminate child poverty by 2000 was passed in the House of

Commons with all-party support. Further, nearly every province and the Territories have introduced poverty reduction strategies that at minimum addresses, if not outright targets, child poverty. In Canada and Britain children are widely identified across the political spectrum as not being responsible for their plight. Seniors may be the only other group in both societies to be represented as frequently as the "deserving poor".

Choosing which type of group construction to analyze as representative of constructions of the "undeserving poor" proved more challenging. In the end, the decision to focus on immigrants as an example of "undeserving poor" discourse was based on two factors. The first being the increasing focus and negative stereotyping of immigrants as a group to be blamed for the rising insecurities due to the stagnating of wages, unemployment and cuts to social services as a result of global neoliberal restructuring (Sales, 2007; Greenslade, 2005; van Dijk, 1989; Redden, 2007). Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s both Canadian and British governments have been changing their immigration legislation and policy, moving toward more "selective admission" with an emphasis on attracting "skilled immigrants" (Brown and Tannock, 2009; Tannock, 2009; Kofman et al., 2009; Bauder, 2008a and 2008b; Arat-Koc, 1999). The sometimes explicit but always implicit message underlying these changes has been that some immigrants (namely those identified as high skilled) provide an economic benefit to their new country while others pose a "burden" (Kofman et al., 2009; Bauder, 2008a and 2008b; Tannock, 2009). A recent UK example of this focus is the 2008 implementation of the points-based system of immigration and the refinement of Canada's system in order to fast-track the entry of immigrants in select occupations. Both countries have also tightened and restricted the rights of those entering under "lower" skill categories or temporary work categories; these individuals are not provided with the same rights to settle, gain citizenship or bring their families (Tannock, 2009; Nakache and Kinoshita, 2010). These policy changes codify deserving and undeserving categories of migrants, the skilled as deserving and the "lower" skilled as undeserving. It was speculated at the outset of this investigation that focusing on news coverage when policy changes were implemented would provide a means to investigate if immigrants are being explicitly or implicitly constructed into an "undeserving poor" group.

Second, immigrants, particularly recent immigrants, are one of the groups most affected by poverty in Canada and the UK (Hatfield, 2004; Picot, Hou, Coulombe 2008; Platt 2007). In the UK the child poverty rate for the majority is 14.6 percent, while it is 23.3 percent for children in minority and immigrant families (Smeeding et al., 2009). In Canada the child poverty rate for the majority is 13.7 percent and 21.7 percent for

minority and immigrant families (Smeeding et al., 2009). Immigrants who arrived in Canada after 1990 were more likely to live in poverty than those who arrived in the 70s and 80s (Picot and Sweetman, 2005). This is despite the fact that they were more educated than most Canadians and the economic upturn of the late 90s that saw the overall unemployment rate drop from 9.4 percent in 1995 to 6.8 percent in 2000 (Fleury, 2007). It is also despite changes in the immigration selection process in the 1990s to attract more skilled immigrants due to the perception that they were more likely to succeed in a knowledge-based economy. Research indicates that those entering under the skill-based category in recent years are more likely to suffer persistent poverty than those entering via the family stream category (Picot, Hou, Coulombe 2008). Fluery (2007) concludes that recent immigrants to Canada face more employment barriers than other Canadians. The difficulties that new immigrants encounter have got worse more recently (Fleury, 2007; Picot, Hou, Coulombe, 2008). The factors contributing to persistent poverty among skilled immigrants include a failure to recognize foreign credentials, demands for Canadian work experience and discrimination (Galabuzi, 2006; Danso, 2009).

In the UK there are large polarities among incomes between those from different countries of origin (Platt, 2007). There has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of immigrants possessing "high skills" and increased levels of education over the last 20 years but employment and wage outcomes differ (Dustmann and Fabbri, 2005). Kofman et al. (2009) note that many high-skilled migrants work in low-skilled and low wage jobs. Dustmann and Fabbri (2005: 460) note that white immigrants have similar employment probabilities and in fact higher wages than British-born whites with the same characteristics, non-white immigrants 'have, on average, lower employment probabilities' and lower wages. A range of factors, including discrimination, play a significant role (Platt, 2007). Migrant men typically earn 30 percent less and women typically earn 15 percent less than their British born counterparts. For migrant men it takes about 20 years to close the gap, while it takes women 6 years. Different nationalities experience different rates of catch-up with Europeans closing the gap quickest and Asian men not catching up at all (Dickens and McKnight, 2008).

1.6 Contextualizing immigration

Despite their more recent immigration policy convergences, Canada and the United Kingdom have very different immigration histories. Their historical differences do in part explain why political approaches and debates about immigration in each country at

the moment are so different. In the nineteenth century, while Britain was a declining imperial power Canada was a new country that 'looked to the rest of the world as a source of immigrants rather than as lands to be dominated' (Reitz, 1988b: 127). Canada unlike the United Kingdom relied on immigration to expand its population, to physically inhabit its vast geography and gain independence (Kelley and Trebilcock, 2010; Reitz, 1988a). From the beginning immigrants provided the nation with new opportunities. However, Canada has its own history of racism and discrimination that does in part explain the more tacit mainstream news representations of immigration in terms of deserving and undeserving, and the reduction of migrants into entities to be measured mainly in terms of economic cost or benefit.

In Canada from the beginning not all immigrants were equal; the Canadian Government considered it legitimate to select immigrants based on cultural and "racial" preferences (Reitz, 1988b). Canada is widely viewed as a country that embraces multiculturalism and difference. However, Reitz (1988a) argues that although Canada has experienced less racial conflict than Britain it is no less discriminatory. Canada has a long history of racism, most notable is the treatment of First Nations communities. Canadian immigration history reveals the extent to which policy has been driven by labour needs and racism. A few examples illustrate this point. From the 1850s through the 1880s Chinese immigrants came to Canada as part of the gold rush, but were also sought to help Canada build its national railroad. When the railroad was complete, the Canadian government introduced the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 to reduce the number of Chinese workers allowed into the country by requiring them to pay a very large 'head tax' to enter the country (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg, 2009: 383). The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 banned immigrants from China completely.

Discriminatory attitudes and racism in Canada were widely evident during the World Wars and the Depression. During WWI close to 9,000 people of 'enemy-alien' birth were incarcerated. Deportation provisions were strengthened in 1919 so that labour and political activists could be deported under the guise of rooting out communists, this practice continued into the 30s with business support (Kelley and Trebilcoc, 2010). In the 1920s Asian immigrants were nearly entirely prevented from entering Canada. Before and during WWII Jewish refugees were prevented entry despite the mass extermination they faced. Japanese immigrants and those of Japanese descent were forced to relocate to internment camps and their property was confiscated. There was an attempt to deport many people of Japanese descent after the war (Kelley and Trebilcock, 2010: 16). There would be recognition after the war of the injustices experienced by Jewish people and a

re-evaluation and recognition of the racism embedded in Canadian immigration policies. But it should be noted that despite this Canada was slower to respond than many other countries in the acceptance of war refugees. The country's racist immigration policy is evident in the hierarchy used to select immigrants based on the country they were coming from (George, 2010; Kelley and Trebilcock, 2010). British and European immigrants were highest priority immigrants and there were restrictive policies directed toward Asians, Africans and West Indians (Kelley and Trebilcock, 2010: 17).

In the 1960s decreases in the number of immigrants from Europe and a desire to remove racial discrimination from immigration policy led Canadian policy makers to remove some of the preferences based on national origins and introduce a points-based system of immigration in 1967 (George, 2010; Reitz, 1988a). Under this system applicants were assessed on the basis of 'education and training, personal qualities, such as adaptability, motivation and initiative, age, and knowledge of English and French; and the demand for the applicant's occupation in Canada' (George, 2010: 96). As a result of this the composition of Canada's population began to change.

While 90 percent of immigrants came to Canada from Europe and the United Kingdom before the 60s, as of 2006 only 10.8 percent came from these areas (George, 2010: 98). At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of immigrants from South and Central America, Africa and the Middle East (George, 2010). Immigrants from the Asia Pacific region now account for 61 percent of all immigrants as of 2006 (George, 2010).

These changes have not been received favourably by all and throughout the post-war period there has been some controversy surrounding immigration policy. Nevertheless, there is overall agreement and acceptance of the idea that immigration provides social and economic benefits to the country. A recent trans-national survey found that the majority of Canadians see immigration as an opportunity. In contrast, the majority of respondents in the UK view immigration as a problem (Transatlantic Trends, 2011).

High levels of immigration are relatively new in the UK, and this in part explains the current media, political and public focus on immigration. As Somerville and Cooper note, before the 1980s more people were leaving the country than entering (Somerville and Cooper, 2010). But, this does not mean that Britain has never been "open" to migration at least theoretically. While there was essentially a policy of zero net migration well into the post-WWII period, in practical terms Britain had an open door policy for Commonwealth members. British nationality was not restricted to those living in Britain

throughout the 19th and into the twentieth century (Somerville, 2007). Common citizenship status was created through the concept of 'British subject'. The concept was 'invented to provide a common citizenship status throughout the imperial domain' (Reitz, 1988a: 434). The policy enabled free movement within the UK, the colonies and the Commonwealth (Reitz, 1988a). The policy was designed to serve commerce and diplomatic ends (Reitz, 1988b). The British Nationality Act of 1948 re-asserted this view of common citizenship, and granted citizenship to everyone in the British Empire (Somerville, 2007). Reitz argues (1988a) that this policy, once strongly supported by Conservative defenders of the Commonwealth, came under attack in the 50s and 60s when immigrants from the new commonwealth countries began moving to Britain. Although immigrants from the Caribbean and Asia made up a relatively small number in the 50s and 60s, the focus on these particular migrants as a social problem was intense. Fuelling this racism was the much vocalised fear that these new immigrants would be a drain on Britain's social and economic system (Reitz, 1988a). A series of immigration and citizenship acts were passed, in 1962, 1968 and 1971, which put in place skill based selection criteria (Reitz, 1988a). The goal of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act was to restrict non-white immigration (Somerville, 2007: 15). All three Acts were intended to severely limit the entry of migrants into the country. The 1971 Immigration Act explicitly stated that Britain was a country of zero net migration (Somerville and Cooper, 2010: 129).

The country became more open to migration with the policy changes introduced by New Labour post-1997. New Labour introduced the concept of 'managed migration' and a commitment to economic migration (Somerville and Cooper, 2010: 129). This led to more people moving to Britain, as did the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 when eight central and eastern European countries joined, giving residents the ability to work throughout countries in the EU via the Worker Registration Scheme. The UK's long and sustained period of economic growth, prior to the 2008 economic crisis and recession, attracted many to the country for work (Somerville and Cooper, 2010). There has been increased public anxiety about the recent inflow of migrants, an anxiety that is being 'fuelled by media attention' (Somerville and Cooper, 2010: 128). In contrast to Canada, immigration is 'one of the biggest public policy issues in the UK' (Select Committee on Economic Affairs, 2008). The percentage of adults viewing 'immigration and race relations' as the most important issue facing Britain has increased from 5 percent in the 1990s to over 40 percent in 2006 (Select Committee on Economic Affairs, 2008). Surveys indicate that 70 percent of people in the UK think their government is doing a

poor job managing immigration, while in Canada only 43 percent feel negatively about their government's handling of the issue (Transatlantic Trends, 2011).

As already mentioned, in response to rising concerns, the United Kingdom introduced a points-based system of immigration. The system began roll-out in 2008. This system is modelled on the point systems already in place in Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Home Affairs Committee, 2009). In their report on the points system the Home Affairs Committee is not shy in its assertion that the new system is primarily economic and business driven and describe it as:

> An effective system that has worked well in Australia and Canada to attract migrants that can contribute positively to the national economy and offer new opportunities in terms of global investment and commercial status (Home Affairs Committee, 2009: 184-185).

The new system is designed to enable more selective practices in terms of the highly skilled and to stop the permanent settlement of "low skilled" workers. Britain expects to fill all low skill positions with EU workers (Somerville and Cooper, 2010: 129). The government is also actively cutting the number of asylum seekers admitted.

In 2009, there were 252,172 new immigrants in Canada, and in 2009 there were 397,900 permanent-type incoming migrants in the United Kingdom (Milan, 2011; Vargas-Silva, 2011).[4] As of 2009, 4.4 million people born outside of the UK were living in this country, making up 7.2 percent of the population. In Canada, 20 percent of the population was born outside of the country. The majority of new immigrants to Canada in 2008 came from, in descending order, China, India, the Philippines, United States, the United Kingdom and Pakistan (OECD, 2010). In 2008 most migrants to the UK came from, in descending order, Poland, India, Pakistan, China and Germany (OECD, 2010).

While the United Kingdom is trying to cut the number of immigrants coming to the country, Canada has maintained its overall target for immigration in 2010 and set similar targets for 2011 (CIC, 2011). Both countries have placed an emphasis on attracting people through their work (economic) streams. In Canada, the percentage of economic immigrants has increased from 45 percent (49,935 people) in 1990 to 64 percent (78,222 people) in 2009 (CIC, 2011). In the UK, which only introduced its point-system in 2008, 24.8 percent of new migrants came through the work stream (101,000 thousand) (OECD, 2010). The UK differs from Canada in that EU residents can enter the country via the free movements category, 28.5 percent of new migrants entered under this category (99,000

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[4] The UK figure is based on the OECD's category 'permanent-type legal migration' which includes those who enter under the categories of work, family, humanitarian, to accompany family of workers, and free movement migration as a result of the EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007. The Canadian number includes those entering under the economic, family, refugee and other categories.

people). Canada, like the UK, has placed increasing emphasis on attracting highly educated and "skilled" immigrants, as a result the proportion of immigrants in Canada with bachelor's degrees has nearly doubled from 25 percent in the early 1990s to 45 percent (Reitz, 2011). Immigrant education levels have increased far more dramatically than that of the native born in Canada (Reitz, 2011). However, as Reitz notes (2011), immigrant skills in terms of education and work experience have only two thirds of the value of the same education and skill set among native-born Canadians. He argues that discriminatory underemployment is a major reason for this: 'When the discounting of immigrant qualifications disproportionately affects visible minorities, as it clearly does in Canada, it is an instance of racial discrimination' (Reitz, 2011). Immigrant experiences are similar in this respect in the UK.

In the UK more than 50 percent of new immigrants have post-secondary education (Wadsworth, 2010b). Those with middle and higher skills tend to have lower levels of occupational status, employment and other economic indicators in comparison to British native born (Somerville and Cooper, 2010). Somerville and Cooper (2010) note that lack of recognition of education and work qualifications are a factor. While first generation adults do catch up over 20 to 25 years in terms of economic outcomes, there is evidence that those from non-white minority backgrounds never catch up (Somerville and Cooper, 2010), racism and discrimination must be considered as crucial in this. Early studies indicate that while Canada and the UK are different in that there has been more open racism driven conflict in the UK, there may in fact be similar amounts of racial discrimination in both countries (Reitz, 1988a). Reitz (1988a) compared studies done in the 80s looking at discriminatory employment behaviours in Toronto Canada and in Birmingham and London UK and found there to be similar levels of direct racial discrimination.

This brief overview of Canadian and British immigration histories is meant to provide context and illustrate some of the differences between the two countries. It is also meant to demonstrate the long histories of discrimination and racism underlying Canadian and British immigration policies and debates. This brief overview it is hoped also provides greater detail about some of the roots of constructions of deserving and undeserving binaries in relation to immigrants. The aim has been to show how this is connected to economics, both national economics and in relation to the perceived potential for new immigrants to earn a living.

The aims of this chapter were to provide a general introduction to my research topic, to stress why an investigation of poverty coverage is an important undertaking, to

discuss why a cross-national comparison was undertaken, to outline my decision to focus on poverty issue dynamics concerning those constructed as a "deserving poor" and those constructed as an "undeserving poor", and finally I provided support for my focus on children as contemporary constructions of a "deserving poor" and immigrants as often being presented as an "undeserving poor".

In the following chapter I list the research questions I set out to investigate and detail the approach and methods used to conduct my research.

Investigating the mediation of poverty: Methods

In this study I set out to examine and compare how news coverage of poverty in Canada and the UK influences political responses to the issue. Four inter-related series of questions identified at the beginning of the project guided the methods selected for investigation and the analysis conducted throughout the project:

1. The first series focuses on news content. What are the dominant representations of poverty in mainstream print news coverage, online and offline, in both nations? How does an analysis of historical mainstream coverage and that on alternative news sites provide insight into the limits of contemporary poverty coverage?

2. The second series of questions centred on processes of mediation. How does the news influence political actors? Is new media changing working practices within political centres and what is the impact of these changes on coverage?

3. The third series of questions considers contestation: Are dominant representations of poverty being contested, by whom and to what effect? Are traditional power dynamics changing? Has new media reinvigorated the political process?

4. And the fourth series of questions engages at a more macro level: What do these results indicate about the application of neoliberalism at a transnational and national level in relation to discourses of poverty? What do these results indicate about the relationship between news media, the state and democracy in Canada and the UK?

In this chapter I argue that addressing these questions requires a holistic and multi-methods approach, one that enables a consideration of content, practices, processes and relationships. Following previous models (Fenton et al., 1998; Miller et al., 1998),[1] the aim is to respond to the complexity of media, political and social environments by crafting a methodological approach that accounts for both 'the nature of communication' and 'social agency' (Fenton, 2007: 19). Although structured, the methodology was

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[1] The research project outlined here recognizes the need for a holistic approach when doing media analysis as stressed by these two earlier texts, but differs from these projects in several ways. Firstly, in both *Mediating Social Science* and *The Circuit of Mass Communication* emphasis is placed on the need to analyze news production, content, and audience reception. This project focuses only on production and content. Secondly, the objective of these studies is not to provide a cross-national comparison, as done here. While both these works discuss the news and news production in terms of context, neither considers in great detail the influence of new media on working practices.

designed to be fluid in its combination of approaches and methods to avoid 'atomization', in this case by focusing solely on media texts or journalists, and instead consider simultaneously the relationships between texts, actors and working practices (Fenton et al., 1998).

2.1 Epistemological foundations

This study draws on social constructivist and critical realist research traditions. Underlying the arguments advanced in the following chapters is my view that language, practice and structural processes are mutually reinforcing, and my position that an evaluation of poverty politics requires an investigation of all three. From social constructivism (Foucault, 1977, 1980; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) I begin from the position that language matters, that how we describe and understand an issue such as poverty through language determines what actions are deemed necessary and appropriate to deal with the issue. The decision to focus on the news is based on the argument that the news is a central site of definition and is implicated daily in the (re)construction of what "poverty" means. The social constructivist premises crucial to this project are: firstly, that we must take 'a critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge' and recognize that our knowledge of the world and the world presented to us via media, such as the news, is not 'objective truth' but rather a product of 'ways of categorising the world' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 5). Secondly, the ways we understand poverty and construct those who constitute "the poor" are historically and culturally situated. The forms of knowledge 'that abound' about poverty in any culture are 'artefacts of it' (Burr, 1995: 3). Thirdly, our ways of understanding what poverty means, for example the extent to which we see poverty as the result of individual failing or unjust social and economic circumstances, 'are created and maintained by social processes'. It is through our interactions with others, with media content, with various forms of information, that we 'construct common truths and compete about what is true and false' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 5; Burr, 1995: 3). Fourthly, approaches to and understandings of poverty are bound up with one's particular worldview and the modes of thought and representation that dominate at any particular time. For example, the degree to which one holds the neoliberal view that society works best when market values prevail means that certain forms of action become viewed as natural and others, at minimum, irrational or unthinkable; 'therefore the social construction of knowledge and truth has social consequences' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 6; Burr, 1995: 3).

Social constructivism has come under criticism for leading to descriptivism and 'anti-theoretical tendencies' due to its concern for and preoccupation with investigating how various constructions are carried out (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009: 37). Critics also argue: 'if everything is a social construction, then social constructivism is too, and there is no reason to believe in it, rather than any other taken-for-granted assumption' (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009: 38). In response, social constructivists have noted that such criticisms amount to a caricature and that even though social constructivism sees knowledge and identities as being always 'in principle' contingent, they are in fact 'always relatively inflexible in specific situations' which limit and restrict what is considered meaningful (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 6). However, while holding that language plays a significant role in influencing how we understand the world and act in it, I also take the critical realist position that a crucial task of research is 'gaining knowledge of a reality that exists independently of our representations of it' (Cruickshank, 2003: 3). Critical realism, with its focus on structural processes, provides an important balance to social constructivism.

Critical realism can, in sum, be described as 'the package of ideas linked with the Bhaskar "school"', and also as a set of 'basic concepts and explanatory principles' with a much longer history that can be traced back to Marx (Jessop, 2005: 40). Several of these concepts and explanatory principles have been embraced in this project. First, I embrace the critical realist position, an ontological one, that 'social forms pre-exist individuals' and that these forms are 'discursive as well as material' (Jessop, 2005: 44). I take from critical realism the position that an 'analysis of underlying mechanisms' and of the 'structures behind phenomena' is needed to develop theories that move beyond description (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009: 39) so as to place data within its wider context in an attempt to explain why poverty coverage is the way it is and what influence such coverage has. The goal is to develop causal explanations, not in the positivist sense of predictable cause-and-effect patterns but explanations that are understood instead as linked to ever-changing contextual factors within changing societies (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). Taking this position means recognizing that 'there are social and cultural structures that shape people's options for action but exist independently of their awareness of them' (Deacon et al., 1999b: 10). Structures, such as marketized news or normative processes of news production, are viewed as the product of human action which 'emerge at particular times', have 'traceable historical careers', are 'resilient but not permanent' and 'continually modified by social action' (Deacon et al., 1999b: 10). Through a critical realist approach to research, structure and agency are linked and

considered in relation to each other to avoid deterministic interpretations that put all of the weight of argument on one or the other (Cruickshank, 2003). For example, a critical realist approach enables and in fact necessitates a consideration of how journalists are influenced by broad social forces, such as continual working pressures to be fast and efficient, while also recognizing that journalists can and do at times counter such forces (Hesmondhalgh and Toynbee, 2008). Structures, as products of human action, are approached from the perspective that there are a variety of responses available to them, including challenging and changing them. Thus '[t]he critical analyst's task is to bring them to light and explain how they work in order to encourage informed action aimed at eradicating barriers to equity and justice' (Deacon et al., 1999b: 10). From this perspective, the legacy of Marx is embedded in a critical realist approach as one must not only seek to 'explain the world but also to change it' (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009: 42). The object identified for investigation and the methods chosen for analysis were in part shaped by these epistemological foundations. The research project design was also a response to previous work in the field of media studies.

2.2 Contributions to media studies

This project is informed by and engages with previous work in media studies in the areas of textual analysis, the mediation of politics, media source relations, new media studies and critiques of communication and democracy.

2.2.1 Textual analysis of poverty coverage

While there is a large body of work within media studies concerned with investigations of news content, the number of studies of poverty coverage are, by comparison, limited. This previous work, however, serves as orientation and has informed my approach to textual analysis. Previous theorists have argued that in part Western societies do not do enough to address poverty because the issue is not presented in the mainstream media as a social problem with social solutions. They argue instead that the poor are most often stereotypically portrayed and blamed for their poverty (Bauman, 1998; Gans, 1995; Katz, 1990). While these theorists do not provide empirical assessments of media coverage to support their arguments, numerous others have quantitatively and qualitatively assessed news coverage of poverty.

A common finding of those researching the American context is that news coverage of poverty rarely provides contextual information or discussion of causal factors (Kensicki, 2004). Iyengar (1994) argues that the dominance of episodic frames in

television news leads audiences to lay the blame for poverty on individuals. Building on Iyengar's study, Sotirovic (2001), argues that people's perception of and support for welfare are linked to the type of program watched and news read. She argues that contextually poor, event-centred and personalized media leads to a negative welfare bias. Others note that poverty coverage is often stereotypical and blame-laden. Gilens (1996 and 1999) argues that the American media over-represent the poor as unemployed African American males in a way that leads to racist stereotypes and increased attacks on welfare services. Through a discourse analysis of *Newsweek* coverage, de Goede (1996) argues that conservative arguments which place blame on the individual as the cause of poverty must be read as part of neoliberalism's discourse of individualism and laissez-faire economics. Bullock et al. (2001) examined news coverage of poverty in nine newspapers across the U.S. over a three month period in 1999. They found little contextualization or discussion of the actual causes of poverty in coverage. Similarly, in the UK McKendrick et al. (2008) conclude their analysis of news with the observation that a reliance on standard rhetoric and clichés leads to the treatment of poverty as abstract and not the result of social conditions. Hackett et al.'s (2000) analysis of media 'blind spots' is the only study identified in Canada that is explicitly about poverty coverage. In it Hackett et al. (2000) argue that the political shift to the right in Canada occurring between the early 1980s and 90s is evident in news coverage of poverty. They compare *Vancouver Sun* coverage in 1988 to that of 97 and find coverage in the later period to be less sympathetic in tone, less in-depth in treatment, to cite advocacy groups less and to rely more on government and political sources (2000: 201).

The above studies focus on media content and in some cases on how audiences negotiate meaning and interpret coverage. The conclusions drawn from these previous studies have been taken into consideration in my own textual analysis and evaluation of the extent to which causal factors are present in coverage, the presence or absence of context and the role individuals play in article tone and construction. Further details about my coding schedule are presented below. I diverged from the above studies by complimenting textual analysis with interviews with journalists, politicians, activists, think tank researchers and civil servants. The goal was to better understand processes, structures and relationships. In this way the project is modelled on Golding and Middleton's (1982) approach. As mentioned in the Introduction, they analyze the relationships between media coverage, public attitudes and policy development. In line with this work, my aim was to take a relational approach to analysis and investigate the routine processes in news production and source relations which configure the news

coverage of poverty. As my analysis takes into consideration the impact of new media on production processes and source relations, this project provides a valuable return to Golding and Middleton's (1982) assessments. My analysis demonstrates that concerns about the impact of elite source dominance and the impact of deadline pressures on the quality of poverty coverage are, if possible, even more pressing now in our new mediated environment than they were thirty years ago. Further, given the ascendancy of neoliberalism over the last few decades, my work aims to trace how this ideology and rationality has been extended over time and is applied in practice.

2.2.2 Mediated politics

As mentioned in the Introduction, in contemporary democracies mediated political communications are central to politics and public life (Bennett and Entman, 2001). Hallin and Mancini argue that the media does not stand apart from the social processes reflected in the content of the news but rather both constitutes and is constituted by political and social life:

> Their (the media) function, as we understand it in modern liberal societies, is primarily to provide a running, day-to-day representation of the life of the community. But how they do this, the form of representation they employ, varies greatly, shaped by the structure of those very political and social processes that they attempt in one way or another to 'reflect' and by their own role in those processes. And there is every reason to believe that these forms of representation, in their turn, profoundly affect the conduct of politics and the character of social interaction (Hallin and Mancini, 1984: 829).

My aim is to assess how representations of poverty affect how political actors engage with the issue and with each other. In providing an issue-focused analysis, this project is able to consider, in detail and with attention to texts and practices, news processes and the politics of poverty.

Further, while it has been largely recognized that we live in mediated democracies (Corner, 2007; Louw, 2005; Corner and Pels, 2003; Meyer, 2002; Bennett and Entman, 2001) where the media are fundamentally inscribed in the political process itself (Silverstone, 2005), few provide an assessment of how mediation, particularly in our new media environment, influences political processes. The research that does provide assessments of media influence on political processes often does so from an agenda-setting and quantitative perspective (Green-Pederson and Stubager, 2010; Walgrave, 2008; Soroka, 2002a and 2002b). Most influential on this project is work that provides a qualitative assessment of how media influences political actors (Davis 2010c, 2007a, 2007b; Franklin, 2004; Cottle, 2003; Deacon and Golding, 1994). Qualitative investigations enable the researcher to inquire into and assess the how and why of

particular actions and processes of description. The research design of this project was most influenced by Davis's (2007b) approach of looking at the mediation of sites of power and the actors operating within these sites and consideration of 'how media and culture are used by, as well as influence, those actors, processes and sites themselves' (Davis, 2007b: 2). This project differs from most investigations of the mediation of politics in its qualitative assessment of the contingent relationships between news content, news processes, political actors and new media use. While building on Davis's work (2007b), this project is unique in its focus on Canada and most significantly in its assessment, reached through an analysis of news content, of how processes of mediation and neoliberalism are intertwined.

2.2.3 News production and source relations

This project engages directly with previous work in the area of news production. In looking at why poverty is covered in the fashion that it is I engage directly with questions about journalist source relations. There is a lengthy history in media studies of work that questions the extent to which elite sources are relied upon as information sources and serve as primary definers (Hall et al., 1978; GUMG, 1976). As noted by Carlson, 'the reliance on official sources and routine news channels is one of the most reproduced findings in studies of journalism' (2009: 529). That elite sources dominate news content, and therefore the kind of reality that gets reproduced in the news, is certain. However, crucial for this study is a qualitative consideration of what this mutual dependence means in terms of poverty coverage and how such coverage influences political practices. Gans evocatively describes the journalist source relationship as a 'dance' given the reliance of both on each other. He also invokes the image of a 'tug of war' given that journalists attempt to 'manage' their sources and 'extract the information they want', while sources attempt to 'manage' journalists in order to be represented favourably and have their 'take' on events reproduced in the way of content (1979/2005: 116-17). I adopt more recent approaches to journalist source relations by investigating news content as the product of complex interactions, relations and processes (Cottle, 2003).

Questions about journalist source relations are aided by previous work in the area of media sociology (Schudson, 2003; Knight, 1982; Schlesinger, 1987; Gans, 1979/2005; Tuchman, 1978; Chibnall, 1977) which provides insight into a range of factors influencing how and why the news is produced the way it is. In particular, concerns with the influence of time, deadlines, news values and narrative norms are returned to in this

study and reconsidered in light of new media use and in relation to poverty issue dynamics. In 1977 Chibnall argued that elite source privilege is in part due to the fact that these sources often present information that adheres to dominant frameworks, concepts and values; and so their views are recognized as 'responsible' (1977: 12). I demonstrate that this argument remains relevant and requires investigation in the current Western neoliberal context. Finally, as Cottle notes (2003: 14), questions of media access and source relations must avoid overemphasizing journalists' power by considering how political contingencies and strategic activity (Miller et al., 1998; Deacon and Golding, 1994) influence content. While recognizing that those in positions of authority often have more access to journalists, mass media content remains a contested space (Gamson, 2004; Snow, 2004; Benford and Snow, 2000; Schlesinger, 1990). Therefore, incorporated into my research design are investigations of the strategies used by elite sources, such as politicians and think tank researchers but also activists, to influence poverty coverage.

2.2.4 New media democratic potential – new media studies

There is a growing body of research questioning the democratic potential of the internet. In the mid 1990s, positive predictions dominated Western media coverage, the argument being that the internet would enable a more inclusive and responsive politics (see Curran, 2010). In terms of news, numerous scholars have speculated about the potential of the internet to increase the depth, quality and diversity of coverage (Boczkowski, 2004; Bruns, 2005; Gunter, 2003; Pavlik, 2001). Others have been more cautious, noting the ever-encroaching presence of corporate interests on the internet (McChesney, 2008; Dahlberg, 2005) and the likelihood that those in positions of power would take their advantages with them online (Margolis and Resnick, 2000). Yet rare are actual analyses of how new media is changing political, journalism and advocacy working practices (Davis, 2010c and 2007b; Phillips, 2010; Fenton, 2010).

This more recent work suggests a significant line of enquiry is in how journalists, politicians and advocacy organizations are using the internet as an organizational and information tool. Those interviewed for this project were asked how they are using new media to access information, to communicate, to share information and so on. This latter line of inquiry is an attempt to respond to Goode's (2005) injunction to move beyond a treatment of the internet as a public sphere abstracted from a wider social and political context. Rather, the goal is to consider how new media may be re-orienting political interactions (Goode, 2005). Investigating the effects of mediation is especially urgent now given the increasing and 'complex logics of the media' in our 'instantaneous digital

age' as new media technologies accelerate the speed of communication (Dahlgren, 2009: 54), work practices, contemplation and debate within mediatised political centres (Meyer 2002). My concern in this project was to investigate how new media is influencing the working practices of those in political centres and how changing and emerging practices shape the ways in which poverty-related information is presented and engaged with. For example, the speed and intensity of working practices emerged as highly significant in limiting poverty debates in ways that were unanticipated at the start of my investigations.

2.2.5 Democracy and communication

Habermas's (1989) historical account / theory of the media as providing a public sphere, a space for public debate and potential public will formation, must be acknowledged as a starting point for much of the analysis in the following chapters. I accept many of the critiques of the theory, most notably that the public sphere never really existed for most people (Fraser, 1992) and that the concept is outdated given that today many political decisions take place outside of public view and even exterior to national borders (Davis, 2007b). Nevertheless, the theory still holds critical value as a useful point of departure when considering what functions the media *should* serve (Curran, 1996) and when qualitatively assessing the kind of information being provided. As argued by Garnham, the concept of the public sphere focuses attention on the 'indissoluble link between the institutions and practices of mass public communication and the institutions and practices of democratic politics' (1992: 360). The attraction of the concept lies not in whether or not Habermas's historical account as presented and elaborated upon is "true" but in the process of analysis and the relationships drawn between 'the material, economic reality of media systems, and the public debate, formation of public opinion and influence on public policy those media made possible' (Garnham, 2007: 206). Further, the value of this concept, as Fraser argues, is that it 'permits us to keep in view the distinctions among state apparatuses, economic markets, and democratic associations, distinctions that are essential to democratic theory' (1992: 111).

While Canadian and British mainstream political and counter public spheres cannot be viewed as fixed concrete spaces, a location-specific analysis can geographically limit the range for analysis to specific institutions and organizations which play a role in constructing, reinforcing, and/or challenging how poverty is covered in the news. Gaining a better understanding of the quality of discourse and of the quantity of or openness to popular participation within these spheres enables an assessment of how well both nations

adhere to democratic norms (Calhoun, 1992). This investigation of how an issue such as poverty is constructed and circulates within contemporary political and counter public spheres raises important questions about class, resources and access in political communication. Just as Habermas's depiction of the bourgeois public sphere (1989) has been criticized as functioning to legitimate class rule (Fraser, 1992), the extent to which processes within contemporary political environments obscure poverty issues and limit the range of debate is central to this analysis.

My use of the public sphere as a concept to inspire modes of interrogation takes into consideration a number of significant critiques. A danger in relying on this concept alone is that it has the capacity to over-privilege the liberal democratic model and to direct questions to how well it functions, doing so to the potential exclusion of other democratic and political models. In more recent writing, Habermas (2006) locates the public sphere at the periphery of the political system and portrays it as operating as a sluice-gate (Benson, 2006) between civil society and the political system at the centre. Benson (2006) argues that this model rightly directs our attention to how the openness of media and political systems varies, but does not engage with processes occurring at the centre. While public sphere theory criticizes the quality and potential for public debate, there is little interrogation of the peopled processes of political communication, of who is doing what to what effect(s). Public sphere theory does not provide a way to engage with questions of how certain processes of rationalization come to dominate, where they come from, how they are maintained and how they might be changed. These criticisms are addressed in my project design and its focus on the actions of elite actors within political centres. Habermas's public sphere model has been criticized for privileging dialogue and participatory action while failing to consider the important role of agonistic challenges to consensus (Mouffe, 2005). It has also been criticized for failing to foreground the role of mediated interaction (Goode, 2005). As Goode rightly (2005) argues, any investigation of the contemporary public sphere must confront the realities of pervasive mediation, including the role of electronic and audio-visual media. And the impact of online media, in particular, warrant investigation.

The purpose of the above discussion has been to locate my research approach within specific epistemological coordinates and to situate this project within media studies. I now detail the methods used for investigation.

2.3 Methods: Case studies

The scope of the project was narrowed to enable greater explication and detail. Given the durability and significant ways in which constructions of the deserving and undeserving poor direct meaning (see Lister, 2004; Piven and Cloward, 1997; Fraser and Gordon, 1994; Katz, 1990; Golding and Middleton, 1982), it was decided at the outset that any narrowing of focus would require capturing coverage of groups typically represented as "deserving" and "undeserving" in much mainstream news and political discourse. This led to the decision, as detailed in the Introduction, to focus on "child poverty" and "immigrants". The focus was further narrowed by conducting an event-based analysis. This meant that several events were used as anchorage points. These events were used to decide upon the time periods for the news articles collected for the frame analysis. The events were also used to guide who I sent interview requests to. Where possible, those involved in the events being analysed were interviewed.

It was acknowledged at the outset that since this was a cross-national comparison, the events / case studies compared must be as similar as possible given that media systems, as argued by Benson (2001: 4), operate differently depending on the topic, degree of elite consensus and presence or absence of challengers. Finding identical circumstances is of course impossible, but as detailed below two similar event-based objects of analysis were selected to provide similar circumstances for analysis: 1) child poverty campaigns: Campaign 2000's release of its annual report card on 21 November 2008 (Canada) and the Campaign to End Child Poverty protest held on 4 October 2008 (UK). 2) Immigration policy changes: the Canadian Conservative Government's implementation on 28 November 2008 of policy changes designed to 'fast-track' skilled immigrants and the roll out of the UK Government's new Points-Based System for Immigration beginning 29 Feb 2008.

Given the fact that immigrants and migrants are disproportionately affected by poverty and the previous research demonstrating negative coverage, it was expected my sample would provide numerous articles explicitly connecting immigration and immigrants to poverty. However, my results proved more complicated. Connections between poverty and immigration were more implicit than explicit. More common was a view of migrants in terms of economic value or cost to British or Canadian society. Results are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

2.3.1 Sites of investigation

My object of analysis was honed further by situating my research in two particular sites of power. My goal was to look closely and compare two media and political environments: Queens Park Toronto and Westminster London (although there will also be some discussion of the federal context for Canada). These sites are significant for a number of reasons. Toronto and London are the locations for the most widely circulated newspapers in their respective countries; they are also home to the national offices of public service media, the CBC and the BBC; both cities house a number of highly organized and active anti-poverty groups; and both cities possess high levels of poverty. Political, media and advocacy fields and actors at work in them play a profound role in shaping national poverty discourses. By focusing on the micro-level processes at work in these sites, the goal was to investigate the particular politics and cultures shaping poverty coverage and politics. Interviews were selected as the best method for a fluid analysis that combines texts, social actors and practices. The reasoning behind this assertion is that interviews provide the most efficient means to access information about several fields simultaneously, and to ask directly about particular stories, the nature of event coverage and specific influences.

Although triangulation is now most commonly used to refer to the process of integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to cross-check findings (Deacon et al., 1999b), two qualitative research methods were employed here to triangulate findings. The argument for this approach is that unlike many quantitative studies which seek to investigate representative samples on a larger scale, the objective here was to look at fluid and changing processes within and between particular sites which would be illustrative of broader social and cultural processes (Deacon et al., 1999b). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with journalists, politicians, civil servants, researchers and anti-poverty advocates and activists. A frame analysis was conducted on news texts to identify which frames dominate, where contestations emerge and in what form and how and when they are incorporated. Framing provides a useful tool for investigating 'how events are turned into news stories or social issues and how reality itself comes to be defined and understood' (Kitzinger, 2007: 156).

2.3.2 Interviews

The decision to conduct interviews was made in recognition of previous research which stresses the importance of investigating empirically how media and political environments operate and the practical struggles around the definition and presentation of

issues such as poverty (Miller et al., 1998). As Philo argues, there is much that textual analysis will not reveal, such as the role of individual choices, circumstances and influences in story development (2007: 112). Also important is the need to consider usage of sources, the organization and logistics of news gathering and market pressures (Philo, 2007: 112). The mass media must be considered as a contested space that not all groups have equal access to (Gamson, 2004). Interviews with journalists, politicians, civil servants and anti-poverty advocates and activists provide a means to take into account and consider the role of resources and social capital in the framing of poverty within competitive political environments (Chong and Druckman, 2007). I also investigate how groups and individuals alter their behaviour in anticipation of how their communication would be perceived by the media (Philo, 2007). Questions were raised as to whether or not new technologies and new media forms influence actors and mainstream news content. Significantly, Philo notes that the extent to which the media is open to contesting views will vary in relation to political, economic and institutional factors (Philo, 2007: 115). The cross-national comparison of the nation-specific constraints operating within media, political and advocacy fields enhanced the ability to identify the relationship between these factors and access.

2.3.2.1 Interviewee selection

My interview sampling strategy was guided by my case studies. At the outset the goal was to interview journalists from each news organization being sampled, particularly journalists who covered the events in question or who regularly covered poverty or immigration issues. In terms of politicians, I aimed to interview representatives from each of the three main political parties in each country. My goal was to also ensure those interviewed included the Ministers responsible for poverty or immigration as part of their portfolios, and shadow ministers responsible for these areas. I also set out to interview civil servants involved in child poverty policy development and immigration policy development in both countries. I set out to interview researchers working for think tanks that publish regularly on poverty and so would be able to discuss the successes and challenges in getting coverage. In Canada this is the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Fraser Institute, and in the UK the Institute for Public Policy Research and the Institute for Fiscal Studies. Although not a think tank, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation is a research body that publishes extensively about poverty. Given this I decided it would be necessary to interview somebody from this organization as well. I also set out to interview activists from organizations involved in the events being

considered. In terms of poverty, in Canada my objective was to interview someone from Campaign 2000. In the UK my objective was to interview an organizer from the End Child Poverty Campaign and the Child Poverty Action Group. In terms of immigration, my objective was to interview an activist from a group that works on behalf of migrants in Canada and who actively challenged the Canadian government's changes to immigration policies from the time of their introduction in March 2008 to their implementation in November 2008. In Canada No One is Illegal fulfils these criteria. In the UK my goal was to interview an activist from a group that works on behalf of migrants and who challenged the UK moves to a points-based system of immigration. The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants fulfils these criteria.

Table 1: Initial goals for British and Canadian interviews.

Field	Goal	Organizations
Journalists	To interview reporters or editors from each news organization I sampled in my textual analysis with experience covering poverty or immigration issues, ideally during the time of my text sample periods and with stories in my news sample.	UK: BBC, Daily Mail, Guardian, The Times, Sun. Can.: CBC, Globe and Mail, National Post, Toronto Star, Toronto Sun
Alternative News Contributors	To interview editors or regular contributors to each of the alternative news organizations I sampled in my analysis.	UK: IndyMedia, Red Pepper Can: Mostly Water, Rabble.ca
Politicians	To interview politicians from each of the three main political parties in each country. Ideally to interview Ministers responsible for poverty and immigration during 2008, shadow secretaries and critics.	UK: Labour, Work and Pensions Secretary, Home Office Secretary and Conservative and Liberal Democrat shadow secretaries.
	In the Canadian context I aimed to interview Federal Members of Parliament, and Members of the Provincial Parliament for Ontario.	Canada Federal: Conservative Ministers responsible for Human Resources and Social Development and for Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Also Liberal and NDP critics for these areas. Canada Provincial: Liberal Minister of Children and Youth Services, and NDP and Conservative critics.
Civil Servants	To interview one civil servant involved in developing policy responses to child poverty and immigration.	UK: Civil servants working in the Government's Child Poverty Unit, and within the Department of Work and Pensions and the Home Office. Canada Federal: Civil servants working within the Department of Human Resources and Social Development and Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

		Canada Provincial: Civil servants working within the Department of Children and Youth Services and Citizenship and Immigration.
Think Tanks	To interview researchers involved with the four think tanks I had chosen, and ideally who worked on poverty related reports published by these think tanks.	UK: Institute for Public Policy Research, Institute for Fiscal Studies Canada: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Fraser Institute.
Activists	To interview activists involved in the child poverty events being analysed. To also interview activists involved with migrants rights groups challenging proposed immigration changes.	UK: End Child Poverty Campaign, Child Poverty Action Group. Also Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants. Canada: Campaign 2000 and No One is Illegal.

I was able to reach my interview selection goals in some areas and not others. Getting people to agree to an interview from some organizations in particular proved very difficult. There are gaps in the areas covered by interviews. Where I could not get a representative from the organization desired I attempted to find a suitable replacement.

Forty-seven[2] semi-structured interviews were conducted with journalists, politicians, civil servants, researchers and activists to examine the internal and external factors influencing how poverty and immigration is covered in the news, and also what influence such coverage has on journalists, politicians, researchers, advocates and activists. The majority of interviews were conducted between 2008 and 2010.

Table 2: Interview list

Field	Organization	Name	Date
UK			
Journalists	Daily Telegraph	Reporter A[3]	April 2009
	Guardian	Amelia Gentleman, Social Affairs Reporter	April 2009
		Alan Travis, Home Affairs Editor	Feb. 2010
	Daily Mail	Reporter B	Sept. 2010
	BBC	Dominic Casciani, Home Affairs Correspondent	Feb. 2010
	Daily Star	Reporter J	July 2011
Canada	Globe and Mail	Murray Campbell, Former Queens Park Columnist	Sept. 2008
Journalists		Marina Jiménez, Immigration Reporter	June 2009
	Toronto Sun	Carol Blizzard, Columnist	July 2009
	Toronto Star	Laurie Monsebraaton, Social Justice Reporter	Aug. 2008
		Carol Goar, Columnist	July 2009
	National Post	Reporter C	Nov. 2008
	Online journalist	Reporter D	July 2009
	CTV	Robert Fife, Ottawa Bureau Chief	Jan. 2009
	CBC	Reporter I	July 2011

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[2] Although there are forty-eight people identified in my interview table, in actual fact only forty-seven people were interviewed because one person fulfilled two roles. This person is identified by name in one listing but wanted to be anonymous when speaking about their previous work experience.
[3] Some sources are anonymized while others are not because each interviewee was given the option to not be named. Some opted for this while others did not.

Alternative News Contributor	IndyMedia.uk	Peter Marshall, Regular Contributor	Sept. 2010
	Red Pepper	Hilary Wainright, Editor	May 2010
	Mostly Water	Editor, E	Jan. 2009
	Rabble.ca	Duncan Cameron, President and Contributor	June 2010
Politicians UK	Labour	Frank Field MP, Active in poverty politics	March 2010
		MP A, member of Home Affairs Select Committee	March 2010
	Conservative	Paul Goodman, Former member of Work and Pensions Committee, former MP	Aug. 2010
	Liberal Democrat	Jenny Willott MP, member Work and Pensions Committee, former Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.	Aug. 2010
		Matthew Taylor, former MP now Lord Taylor of Goss Moor, Party strategist	Dec. 2010
Politicians Can. Federal	Liberal	Ken Dryden, Former Minister of Social Services	Sept. 2008
	Conservative	Senator Hugh Segal, Co-Chair recent Senate All Party Committee on Poverty	Feb. 2009
Provincial	NDP	Michael Prue MPP, Poverty Critic	Nov. 2008
		Cheri DiNova MPP, Active on poverty and Immigration issues.	July 2009
	Liberal	Marie Bountrogianni, Former Minister of Children and Youth Services and of Citizenship and Immigration	March 2009
Civil Servants	City of London	Civil Servant F, Children's Services	Dec. 2008
	Better Gov. Initiative	Representative G, Better Government Initiative	Feb. 2010
	Ontario Gov.	Civil Servant H, Poverty Policy Advisor	Jan. 2009
	Ontario Gov.	John Stapleton, Former Ontario Gov. civil servant now poverty policy consultant	Nov. 2008
	Citizenship and Immigration Canada	Peter Ferreira, Former Immigration Officer	July 2009
Think Tanks	IPPR	Lisa Harker, Co-director and child poverty advisor	Dec. 2008
	IFS	Mike Brewer, Research Fellow works on poverty	Sept. 2009
	CCPA	Trish Hennessy, Director Income Inequality Project	Nov. 2008
	Fraser Institute	Niels Veldhuis, Vice president Canadian Policy Research	Feb. 2009
		Chris Sarlo, Adjunct scholar works on poverty	Jan. 2009
Pressure Groups	Campaign to End Child Poverty	Hilary Fisher, Former Director	June 2009
	Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Donald Hirsch, Poverty Advisor 98-08	June 2009
	Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants	Brendan Montague, Press Officer	June 2010
	Campaign 2000	Jacquie Maund, Ontario Coordinator	Sept. 2009
	Voices from the Street	Pat Capponi, Lead Facilitator	July 2009
	Ontario Coalition Against Poverty	John Clarke, Organizer	Nov. 2008
	The Colour of Poverty	Grace Edward Galabuzi, Academic partner	July 2009
	No One is Illegal	Syed Hussan and Yen Chu, Members	July 2009

As the above table indicates I was not able to secure interviews with all of those I sent requests to. I tried multiple people at the *Sun* and *The Times*, but was unsuccessful. To counter this short-coming I interviewed a journalist from the *Telegraph* who covers poverty and other social issues. I also interviewed a former journalist from the *Daily Star* in order to be able to interview a journalist who worked for a mainstream tabloid. This journalist regularly covered immigration issues. Initially, I was unable to find a reporter from the CBC who would agree to an interview. To make up for this I interviewed a journalist from the other major national broadcaster in Canada, CTV. I also interviewed an online journalist who works for a national news organization's online publication. Accessing high-profile politicians proved difficult. In the UK I was unable to interview Secretaries or Shadow Secretaries. To address this I approached Members of Parliament who worked on select committees that dealt specifically with poverty or immigration. This approach was successful and I was able to interview representatives from each party. I was not able to interview any Conservative Members of Parliament in Canada or any Conservative members of Ontario's provincial parliament. I addressed this at the federal level by interviewing Conservative Senator Hugh Segal who co-chaired a Senate Committee on poverty and also worked as a Conservative Party strategist. I was not able to interview a federal member of the NDP, but did interview two provincial NDP politicians. Finally, finding appropriate civil servants to approach who would also agree to interviews proved very difficult. I was able to secure an interview with a key poverty advisor in Ontario. I was also able to secure interviews in two cases by approaching former civil servants. To make up for the lack of sources in my British sample I interviewed a representative from the Better Government Initiative which is made up of high profile former civil servants and is also active in trying to improve the policy development process in the UK. The limited number of civil servants interviewed constrained my ability to gain extensive material about how news content, news processes and new media tools are influencing the work that civil servants do.

2.3.2.2 Interview method

A semi-structured interview format was selected as it abandons concerns with standardization and complete control and instead promotes open-ended dialogue (Deacon et al., 1999b). The approach provides the flexibility to follow up interesting leads as they emerge. As the goal of the project is to consider reciprocal relationships, questions were designed to draw out how media content and tools shape working practices in relation to specific policies, how practices have changed over time and how and to what effect actors

in various fields attempt to influence the policy process. Although work investigating elite actors at a micro and qualitative level is rare, Davis (2010a and 2007b) and Herbst (1998) present two excellent examples to follow. Through interviews and textual analysis, the goal was to inductively build 'grounded theory' by engaging continually and reflexively in data collection, initial interview analysis and theorizing (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Theories were developed incrementally as interviews were continually transcribed, analyzed, and considered in relation to other interviews and news texts. In this way, certain findings throughout the course of the study became 'solidified' and others fell 'by the wayside' (Herbst, 1998: 194). A sample of interview questions is included in the Appendix. In brief, questions were grouped into three categories: news influence, working practices and new media use. Transcripts from all interviewees, both elite and non-elite sources, were surveyed and categorized by the following themes: attitudes to poverty and immigration; background of interviewee; challenges to being heard and responded to; opinion and thoughts regarding child poverty focus and coverage of immigration; contestation; information sources; media influence; media logic; new media use; policy influence; political connections; political influence; power; connecting to the public; recession; and work. As the interviews progressed and results were coded, it became clear that several themes were highly significant given the number of times they were referenced: time and speed, information management and filtering and centralization and trust. In the later stages of interviewing I was able to focus more questions on these specific themes.

In total, 47 people were interviewed. These included mainstream journalists who report on poverty and immigration; in some cases, specialist correspondents were interviewed. Civil servants working on child poverty or immigration issues were interviewed. Politicians who have been involved in poverty or immigration work were interviewed. Anti-poverty advocates directly involved in child poverty campaigns and immigration advocates focusing on policy change were interviewed. And researchers from influential think tanks in the UK and in Canada were interviewed.

2.3.3 Textual analysis

This thesis provides a frame analysis of the news content surrounding two similar events in Canada and the United Kingdom that were selected in order to capture coverage of child poverty and immigration. The events selected are as similar as possible to enable a comparison of coverage. 1) Child poverty campaigns: Campaign 2000's release of its annual report card on 21 November 2008 (Canada) and the Campaign to

End Child Poverty protest held on 4 October 2008 (UK) 2) Immigration policy changes: the Canadian Conservative government's implementation on 28 November 2008 of policy changes designed to 'fast-track' skilled immigrants and the roll out of the UK government's new Points-Based System for Immigration beginning 29 Feb 2008. News texts were selected for the two weeks before and after each event.

In addition to an analysis of mainstream news coverage, the textual analysis also involved several points of comparison. Mainstream print content was compared to its online counterpart to see if there were any differences, and specifically to see, given the space available to news organizations on the internet, if online news provided more detailed, in depth and diverse content. Mainstream coverage in 2008 was compared to coverage of similar events in the 60s and 70s to gain a better appreciation of how coverage has shifted over time. A particular goal was to see if there were any significant differences in news coverage of poverty and immigration before neoliberal rhetoric with its emphasis on individual responsibility, smaller government and competition dominated politics and policy. It was expected that coverage in the 60s and 70s, at the end of the post-WWII welfare expansionist periods in both countries, would be qualitatively different and this might provide greater insight into my analysis of contemporary coverage. Finally, mainstream news coverage in 2008 was compared to alternative news content online to assess if content on these sites contains poverty and immigration discourses that are missing from mainstream news coverage. The goal of the various comparisons was to shake the analyst's taken for granted assumptions about content and to also identify explanations and representations missing from contemporary mainstream content. As noted by Entman, often what is missing from content is as important as what is present (1993). I take up Kitzinger's recommendation that a frame analysis should include reflection on the different ways a debate could be framed and ask what would happen if opposite frames were used (2007). In total 1812 articles were analyzed.

Table 3: Total number of articles in news sample

News type	Poverty	Immigration
Canada		
Mainstream (2008)	246	305
Historical Snapshots	21	65
Alternative News	20	20
United Kingdom		
Mainstream (2008)	411	611
Historical Snapshots	35	62

Alternative News	5	11
Total	738	1074

The research questions guiding the analysis are: What frames dominate poverty and immigration mainstream news coverage in Canada and the United Kingdom (online and offline)? Does a frame analysis of historical mainstream news coverage provide any indication of limitations in contemporary coverage? Does a frame analysis of alternative news content provide insight into the ways in which mainstream news content is limited?

To ensure a representative sample, broadsheet press, tabloid and mid-range (present in UK only) sources were selected based on circulation, narrative type and readership. The broadsheet sources analyzed for the UK include: *The Times* (centre-right) and the *Guardian* (centre-left) *(*McNair, 2009; Jones et al., 2007*)*. The tabloid sources include those with the widest circulation: the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail* (Bednarek, 2006*)*. Canadian sources include the only national papers available in the country: the *Globe and Mail* (centre-right) and the *National Post* (right-leaning) (Soderlund and Hildebrandt, 2005). The *Toronto Sun* and the *Toronto Star* (left-leaning) were also selected as they represent the provincial broadsheet and tabloid with the widest circulations (Canadian Newspaper Association, 2010). Articles from both print and online editions were analysed. In both nations, the public broadcasting websites for the CBC and the BBC are the most popular online nationally based news sites[4] and these are also analyzed. The alternative news sites analyzed include Rabble.ca and Mostly Water (Canada) and IndyMedia.org.uk[5] and Red Pepper (UK). Rabble.ca and Red Pepper operate as online magazines. Mostly Water and IndyMedia operate as continually updated news sites. The historical news coverage analysed included content from the *Guardian* and *The Times*, and the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*.

For mainstream contemporary print articles, the Lexis Nexis database was used to collect articles for the UK sample, and the Factiva database was used to collect articles for the Canadian sample. Mainstream news site search engines and alternative news search engines were also used to collect the online news sample. The search term for the child poverty sample was "poverty", and the search terms for the immigration sample were "immigration" and then "immigrant". Only articles relating in some way to the Canadian or UK national context were selected for analysis.

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[4] Based on Alexa.com search 25 January 2011.
[5] Of the sites analyzed IndyMedia is the most studied (just several examples: Hoofd, 2009; Pickard, 2006; Platon and Deuze, 2003; Kidd, 2002). There were more than 150 Independent Media Centers around the world when last counted (IndyMedia, 2007).

Table 4: Contemporary sampling

Country	Event and Date	Database	Search term	Dates
Canada	Campaign 2000 releases annual report card 21 November 2008	Factiva	"Poverty"	7 Nov. – 5 Dec. 2008
UK	End Child Poverty Campaign protest 4 October 2008	Lexis Nexis	"Poverty"	20 Sept. - 18 Oct. 2008
Canada	Immigration policy changes to fast-track implemented 28 November 2008	Factiva	"Immigration" and "Immigrant"	14 Nov. - 12 Dec. 2008
UK	Roll-out points based system of immigration 29 February 2008	Lexis Nexis	"Immigration" and "Immigrant"	15 Feb. - 14 Mar. 2008

Issues did arise in relying on databases and search engines to collect the sample. Collecting articles through databases like Factiva and Lexis Nexis means that analysis is limited to text, excluding any visuals. Also, articles are returned isolated and separated from any additional material that accompanied them in publication, such as their juxtaposition with specific photographs, text boxes, etc. As the goal was to analyze a fairly large sample of content, analysis of photographs and other visual representations were sacrificed in order to facilitate the efficient collection of large numbers of articles. There are a number of issues that present themselves in trying analyze website content. The first is the speed at which web content changes. Sites are continually being updated. Relying on web site search engines proved problematic for the *Globe and Mail*. The *Globe and Mail* site search engine provided access to stories that were published online, but any material that may have accompanied the story on the webpage when originally posted was removed so it was impossible to determine what supplementary material may have been present when the stories were originally posted.

In total 1573 mainstream news articles were analyzed in my contemporary mainstream news sample.

Table 5: Number of articles in mainstream news sample by organization

News organization	Poverty	Immigration
Canada		
Globe and Mail	57	72
Toronto Star	132	138
National Post	17	49
Toronto Sun	29	28
CBC News online	11	18

United Kingdom

The Times	92	120
Guardian	176	218
Daily Mail	72	154
Sun	30	57
BBC News Online	41	62
Total	657	916

2.3.3.1 Print versus online coverage

Although the main objective is to provide an analysis of poverty and immigration coverage, the analysis of mainstream and alternative online news enables an assessment of the extent to which this coverage differs from print coverage. An appraisal of online news and new media use is both timely and relevant. While most people in Canada and the UK still rely on television as their main news source (Nanos, 2009; Ofcom, 2009), more and more people are going online to supplement their news consumption. Seventy-three percent of UK households have internet access as of 2010 (Office of National Statistics, 2010). Ofcom reports that the internet is the fastest growing platform for news and other information (2007). Eighty percent of Canadians 16 years and older used the internet for personal reasons in 2009, 68 percent of whom viewed news or sports online (Statistics Canada, 2010). Recent research indicates that younger Canadians (12-29 years) are more likely to read the news online versus offline, and that the news websites favoured by youth (12-17 years) are not significantly different than those favoured by adults (Zamaria and Fletcher, 2008). Much of the hope that the internet would revitalize democracy was in some way related to the fact that it provided seemingly endless space for content, thereby enabling news providers to deliver more in depth, detailed pieces and more varied content. My analysis indicates that any hoped for revitalization of news is not, for the most part, happening within mainstream news spaces. It was common across newspaper sites for online content to be identical to offline content. The *Guardian* and the *Toronto Star* were exceptions, having a fair amount of content online that did not appear in their print versions. However, alternative news content was found to be very different.

2.3.3.2 Alternative news analysis

Articles from the alternative news sites were collected by performing keyword searches on each site and were limited to within the same time periods, as was done with mainstream news content. The exception is Red Pepper, which publishes by-monthly, and so for the immigration analysis content was analyzed from the Dec/Jan 2008 and

Feb/March 2008 issues in order to have a sample of at least three articles. The poverty content was sampled from the August/September 2008 issue.

In total 56 articles were analyzed. Although the number of articles sampled is small, the content is strikingly different from mainstream news content and illustrative.

Table 6: Number of articles in alternative news sample by organization

News organization	Poverty	Immigration	Total
Canada			
Rabble.ca	16	13	29
Mostly Water	4	7	11
United Kingdom			
Red Pepper	3	3	6
IndyMedia	2	8	10
Total			56

2.3.3.3 Historical snapshots

The events chosen as the basis for the historical analysis are deliberately similar to the 2008 case studies: 1) Advocates release of child poverty statistics in an attempt to pressure government to address poverty. The Canadian event chosen was the National Council of Welfare's release of its 'Poor Kids' report on 5 March 1975. This report was the first attempt in Canada to measure the impact of poverty on children (Wiegers, 2002: 12). The Council's finding that 24.5 percent of all children in Canada were living in poverty came as a shock. Similarly, the event chosen for analysis in the UK was the Child Poverty Action Group's (CPAG) release on 23 January 1971 of numbers showing that at the end of 1970 more than two million children were living on or below the poverty line. At the time these numbers were shocking for they indicated that poverty had doubled in the previous four years. CPAG released the numbers to the press but also sent their findings to the Prime Minister in a request for a standing royal commission on inequality (Healy, 1971). 2) The introduction by governments of changes to immigration rules. Canada's points-based system of immigration was introduced on 1 October 1967. In these new rules, racial discrimination, which had directed Canadian immigration policy up until this time, was eliminated as the basis of the immigration process (George, 2010). In the UK the government's 1971 Immigration Act took effect on 1 January 1973. The Act largely extended the system of control hitherto applied to 'aliens' to commonwealth citizens and in this way represents a tightening up of borders (Martin, 1986). The Act came into effect the same day as the UK's accession to the European Economic

Community (EEC), which radically affected the Act since EEC rules took precedence and provided for the free movement of workers and their families (Martin, 1986). For both cases, the same keywords were used as in the contemporary analysis, and articles were analyzed for the two weeks before and after the event. News databases were used to collect articles from the *Guardian*, *The Times*, the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*. In total 183 articles were analyzed.

Table 7: Number of articles in historical news sample by organization

News organization	Poverty	Immigration	Total
Canada			
Globe and Mail	9	32	41
Toronto Star	12	33	45
United Kingdom			
The Times	20	29	49
Guardian	15	33	48
Total	56	127	183

The historical snapshots of poverty coverage provide an opportunity to consider how poverty was framed before the dominance of neoliberal policy and politics and of neoliberal rationality with its privileging of market values. At the outset it was assumed that poverty coverage at the end of the post-war welfare expansion period in both nations would be very different from coverage following two decades of retrenchment and cuts to social services, although this proved for the most part not to be the case.

2.3.4 Framing

The roots of frame analysis are often associated with Goffman (Nisbet, 2010; Koenig, 2004), who argued that people make sense of their world and their interactions through 'schemata of interpretation' or 'frameworks' which he said rendered events, scenes, etc., meaningful (Goffman, 1974: 21). There are wide divergences in the applications of frame analysis (for overviews see D'Angelo and Kuypers, 2010; D'Angelo, 2002; Koenig, 2004), and analyses are conducted across a variety of disciplines including: media and communications, sociology, politics, linguistics, psychology and the fine arts (Kitzinger, 2007: 135). As noted by Hertog and McLeod (2008) frame analyses within these disciplines make use of a wide variety of theoretical approaches and methods. As such when employing frame analysis there is no one set of basic propositions to employ or single methodological approach to draw upon (Hertog and McLeod, 2008). Further, there is no consensus 'about how framing should be defined

and operationalized' (Vliegenthart and Roggeband, 2007: 420). The sheer variety of approaches to frame analysis led Entman to argue that news framing research is too fractured, and that communication scholars should develop a common understanding of framing in order to constitute a research paradigm (1993). D'Angelo (2002) convincingly counters Entman's call and argues that one of the reasons the literature on framing is as rich and vast as it is, is because researchers are employing the method under differing paradigmatic perspectives which he categorizes as cognitive, constructionist and critical. The result of this theoretical and paradigmatic diversity, he argues, facilitates a more comprehensive view of framing processes (D'Angelo, 2002: 871). Existing frame analyses range in their focus on: the identification of frames, the conditions that produce frames, how news frames are activated and interact with readers/viewers in relation to their previous knowledge (Miller et al., 1998), and how frames influence 'socio-level processes such as public opinion and policy issue debates' (D'Angelo, 2002: 873). While recognizing the value to be gained from diversity, Entman's core point, that there is a need to be more precise about how one understands the concept of framing and how the concept is being employed when conducting a frame analysis must be addressed.

The frame analysis conducted for this study aims to identify the frames that dominate contemporary poverty and immigration coverage. This frame analysis does not aim to investigate how these frames are received by news readers. Through interviews, I do discuss the working constraints that limit the way poverty and immigration are covered in the news.

What is a frame? There are several often cited definitions of frames that have influenced the analytical approach taken in this analysis. Drawing on Goffman, Gitlin presents the definition of a frame as follows:

> Even within a given event there is an infinity of noticeable details. Frames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters. In everyday life, as Erving Goffman has amply demonstrated, we frame reality in order to negotiate it, manage it, comprehend it, and choose appropriate repertoires of cognition and action …. Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion …. (1980: 6-7).

Media frames, as suggested here by Gitlin, are principles of selection and presentation 'composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters'. Key in Gitlin's definition is the idea that in media frames we find persistent patterns of presentation and emphasis.

The significance of a frame, as suggested by Gamson, is that it presents a central organizing idea 'for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue' (1989: 3). Also important in terms of definition, as suggested by Entman:

> To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation (1993: 52).

Entman stresses that the significance of frames is that they make some aspects of reality more salient in a text in way that promotes how an issue like poverty for example, is understood. A frame should not be understood as a policy position, as a pro or con position for example. Indeed, even those who disagree on an issue can communicate using the same frame.

These three approaches go a long way in identifying what a frame is but vary in the degree to which they view framing as a conscious versus an unconscious process of selection (Koenig, 2004). Framing as a conscious process of selection would involve the deliberate selection of some aspects of reality in order to promote a particular way of viewing an issue or problem. As an example, some of the activists interviewed for this thesis indicate that they deliberately choose to "individualize" a story in the hopes of getting news coverage. Framing can happen at an unconscious level, or in a non-deliberative fashion when we, as Edelman argues, make sense of information and produce meaning by focusing on some cues, ignoring most and placing the cues chosen into categories (Edelman, 1993: 231). Or when producing texts, as Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007:12) argue, when journalists and other communicators rely on framing as a tool to reduce the complexity of an issue. Such reductions can be the product of professional practices and constraints (Gans, 1979/2005) within and between fields, and can also reflect already dominant frames. I would argue that when journalists emphasize poverty statistics and economic cost in their coverage of poverty related events over social justice concerns, this is not a deliberate attempt to rationalize poverty but instead is in part the product of adhering to news norms and demands for facticity and newness. In this way the decision to present poverty within a rationalizing frame is not necessarily because a journalist has the view that a rationalizing frame is the only or even the most important frame to use when considering poverty, it may be that presenting poverty related information within this frame allows the journalist to most easily adhere to news norms and values. I take the position in this thesis that the process of framing can be both conscious and unconscious.

Framing was chosen as the best method to use in conducting a textual analysis of poverty coverage for a number of reasons. Identifying which frames dominate poverty coverage is a way to register the 'imprint of power' (Entman, 1993). As a method, frame analysis is amenable to both social constructivism and critical realism (D'Angelo, 2002) since embedded in the approach is a recognition of the central importance of language and an awareness of language's role in constructing reality. In addition, the approach also demands recognition that while frames are drawn upon to make sense of reality, whether or not a frame achieves a position of dominance is often influenced by structural processes and frame sponsorship. As Kitzinger (2007) and Tankard (2008) argue, the concept of framing is important in media studies because it extends beyond ideas of bias.

> Embedded in the approach is the recognition that 'any account involves a framing of reality. The notion of "bias" suggests that there is an objective and factual way of reporting an issue "correctly", but that some reports distort this. The notion of "framing", by contrast, suggests that all accounts of reality are shaped in some way or other' (Kitzinger, 2007: 137).

This is not to suggest, as Van Gorp argues (2007: 63) that frames are the same thing as a personal mental structure but that frames are part of culture and its shared organized set of beliefs, codes, myths, stereotypes, values and norms.

Frame analysis also provides a conceptual tool useful for considering how particular idea packages or frames persist across time. Identifying dominant idea packages or frames provides an efficient way to quantify patterns and to quickly identify similarities and differences. Identifying the frames that dominate coverage is significant because how an issue or event is framed will often tacitly suggest what should be done about it. As Edelman writes:

> The character, causes, and consequences of any phenomenon becomes radically different as changes are made in what is prominently displayed, what is repressed and especially in how observations are classified. Far from being stable, the social world is therefore … a kaleidoscope of potential realities, any of which can be readily evoked by altering the ways in which observations are framed and categorized. Because alternative categorizations win support for specific political beliefs and policies, classification schemes are central to political manoeuvre and persuasion (1993: 232).

Categories or frames are especially powerful when they appear to be natural or self-evident (Edelman, 1993).

Previous research has demonstrated that subtle changes in phrasing can lead to dramatic changes in opinion (Kitzinger, 2007). Smith, for example, found that altering words in a survey question without changing the meaning or intent of the question, could dramatically change the opinions rendered (1987: 71). Smith documents a range of American surveys which found that respondents were significantly more in favour of

increasing assistance if that assistance was going to 'poor people' or the 'unemployed' as opposed to 'welfare recipients' (1987: 76-77). He concludes that 'the welfare/poor distinction illustrates the major impact that different words can have on response patterns' (1987: 83). In all contexts examined, Smith found that "welfare" produced increasingly negative and less generous responses than "poor", and he suggested the two terms tapped slightly different dimensions: welfare accessed notions of waste and bureaucracy that were untapped or tapped much less by the word "poor" (1987: 75). Research such as this speaks to both the implicit and explicit elements in an issue culture and is involved in both the definition and interpretation of frames. At this point it is important to note that there is no necessary correlation between frames and how they are interpreted, but there is also no denying their power. Instead, I share with Van Gorp the position that frames should be viewed as an invitation to read a news story a certain way, as interpretations will vary according to the individual and her background, interests and beliefs (Van Gorp, 2007: 63).

Overall, the purpose of the frame analysis of contemporary mainstream coverage was to also compare results and ask: Is there a discourse of poverty that is dominant in Canada and England? Does this differ online and offline? How, in what forms and in what contexts does such a dominant social and political discourse occur? Further, a comparison of the similarities and differences between news discourses of poverty was conducted to consider to what extent Western news discourses of poverty are transnational and to also consider the role of neoliberalism in these two evolving welfare states. Aided by interviews, the goal was ultimately to question how dominant poverty discourses contribute to or constrain public debates.

2.3.4.1 Operationalizing frame analysis

Frame analysis as a method comes with its own unique set of complexities and challenges, these were kept in mind when developing my coding schedule and conducting the analysis. One of the most significant concerns in relation to conducting a frame analysis is the subjectivity embedded in the method (Van Gorp, 2010; Koenig, 2004). A frame analysis provides a means to identify persistent and often tacit modes of representation that influence what an issue like poverty means. But identifying and measuring tacit frames is a challenge, as argued by Koenig (2004), because doing so will necessarily involve subjective interpretation at some level. This challenge was addressed in this analysis by following Van Gorp's guidelines and employing an inductive and deductive approach. Rather than identifying frames at the outset and then analysing news

texts in order to identify their presence or absence, effort was made to become familiar with the content of the news samples in order to inductively identify the frames that appeared to dominate news coverage of poverty and immigration and to also identify other significant patterns in coverage. Initially, roughly half of each news sample including mainstream, historical and alternative news coverage was read and analyzed. The analysis took place in 2009. A separate research summary was produced for each sample: 'Poverty Coverage in Canada', 'Poverty Coverage in the UK', 'Immigration Coverage in Canada', and 'Immigration Coverage in the UK'. The initial questions asked of the texts in order to identify significant patterns and dominant frames were: What are the key themes? What does "poverty" and "poor" mean in this article, how are these words invested with meaning and who are they used to describe? What frames dominate? Also in the case of immigration, who is being depicted as an immigrant and how are immigrants or immigration being presented? The process of writing these "mini" summaries for each sample provided a means to become familiar with the topic and issue as covered in each country before conducting any comparisons, it also provided a means to identify frames that operate in all four samples and gain an appreciation for how these frames operate in various contexts.

These analyses led to the identification of rationalizing and individualizing frames as dominating mainstream news coverage. Social Justice frames were identified as dominating alternative news coverage, but also showing a minor presence within mainstream news coverage. Although the presence of reform frames appeared minor, articles were coded for their presence or absence so this could be better judged after coding the full sample. The table below provides a summary of these frames in the frame capsule column. The third column provides brief examples of how the frame would manifest in headlines or sentences.

Table 8: Frames

Frame	Frame Capsule	Examples of how frame would manifest in article
Rationalization	Rationalizing frames present poverty and immigration in terms of instrumental reason (Taylor, 2003). Poverty is presented as an issue to be evaluated based on quantification, calculation and cost–versus-benefit analysis. Poverty for example is often discussed in reference to statistics and the cost of various programs. Immigration is presented in reference to the economic cost or benefit immigrants bring to their host countries. Immigrants are also often portrayed as needing to pass through or be managed by institutional bureaucratic stages in	'report seeks $100 million for youth programs'; poverty 'costing Ontario 13B annually'; 'meeting the target to lift 90,000 children out of poverty in five years'; Taxpayer to pick up 50m bill for SNPs free school dinners'; ''Millions' of UK young in poverty'; 'Ottawa pledges to fast-track immigrants for key jobs'; 'Immigration will fuel growth in GTA'; 'Britain sends £28 million a

	order to earn citizenship or residence. UK coverage often references immigrants as a cost or burden despite research indicating the contrary (Dustmann et. al., 2009; Akbari, 1989).	year in child benefit to Eastern Europeans'; 'Translate bill £24m for police'
Individualization	Discourses of individual responsibility dominate coverage, and it can be argued are tapping into a master frame of liberal individualism which dominates all news coverage (König, 2004). In terms of poverty, an individual(s) is often presented in coverage as being responsible for causing poverty or as being responsible for getting themselves out of poverty. Similarly, in immigration coverage articles often focus on an individual as representative or responsible for the matter or event being discussed be that an immigrant, or a politician as was often the case in the UK.	'A single mom who chooses to raise a family on welfare by having baby after baby'; 'girls' lack of ambition was leaving them in poverty'; 'Croatian accused of war crimes can stay'; 'man who killed sister in law wins immigration fight for new wife'; '25k benefit cheat told: pay back £1; 'Too many migrants in my backyard, says Minister, as foreign workers are forced to prove worth'
Social Justice	Poverty and the need to address poverty are framed as a matter of rights to a better quality of life and/or to equality of distribution or recognition (Fraser, 1999). Similarly, in immigration coverage social justice frames are identified through an emphasis on immigrants' rights to better labour or living conditions, to citizenship and/or in relation to human rights and/or equality. In alternative news coverage there is often coverage of collective actions conducted in the name of citizen rights for better conditions.	'We demand immediate housing for all street-homeless in Vancouver and concrete action to build social housing'; 'said anti-social behaviour orders and other measures, such as mosquito devices, "may violate the rights of children to freedom of movement and peaceful assembly"'; 'protested against this policy of the indefinite detention of child asylum seekers, on the grounds of pure pragmatism as well as human rights.'
Reform	Poverty and "the poor" are often framed within discussions of "improvement" (Katz, 1995), education, socialization, and training. There are distinctions in coverage. In some cases discussion focuses on the need to improve or reform the character of those being depicted as poor, and in other cases coverage discusses the need for improving skills so individuals fit into the job market.	'with proper training, these brain differences can be eliminated'; 'invest in areas such as childhood development, programs to improve school performance, higher education for at-risk youth, language training and workforce integration for new immigrants.'

In addition to these frames, the initial survey of texts also indicated that other aspects of coverage were both common and significant in terms of influencing the direction of meaning. These included depictions of the poor and migrants as "deserving" or "undeserving", and whether or not underclass depictions were present. Given that the contemporary sample period occurred within a time of economic crisis, articles were coded for the presence or absence of references to the economy, although such references were rare in mainstream poverty coverage. All articles were read and coded for the presence or absence of the above frames and topics.

As argued by Van Gorp (2010), developing a straightforward coding schedule with yes and no responses is one of the best ways to systematize a frame analysis,

eliminate subjectivity as much as possible and improve the reliability of results. A coding schedule for poverty coverage and for immigration coverage was developed to make the process as systematic as possible by making most coding a matter of a yes or no response. These schedules are detailed below.

Table 9: Poverty coverage coding schedule

Frames / Question		Response
Rationalization	Is poverty being rationalized, that is, is it being presented in terms of cost versus benefit, quantified, and/or instrumental reason (economical application of means to a given end)?	Yes or No
Individualization	Is poverty being presented as caused by an individual(s) or as being the responsibility of an individual(s) to get her or himself out of poverty?	Yes or No
Social Justice	Is a social justice frame present? For example, is poverty being presented as a matter of rights in relation to quality of life, rights to equality, etc?	Yes or No
Reform	Is it being suggested that those portrayed as poor should reform themselves in any way, through training, mental health services, counselling, etc?	Yes or No

Other elements / Question	Response
Is the person being portrayed as poor being presented as deserving or undeserving?	D or U
Are there underclass depictions / descriptions present?	Yes or No

Table 10: Immigration coverage coding schedule

Frames / Question		Response
Rationalization	Is immigration being rationalized, that is, is it being presented in terms of cost versus benefit, quantified, etc? Are immigrants being portrayed as needing to pass through or be managed by institutional bureaucratic stages in order to earn citizenship or residence.	Yes or No
Individualization	Does the article focus on one individual as central, representative and/or responsible for the matter being discussed be that an immigrant or migrant or a political figure?	Yes or No
Social Justice	Is a social justice frame present? For example is immigration being discussed with any connections to the right to better working or living conditions, human rights or equality?	Yes or No
Reform	Is it being suggested that immigrants should reform themselves in any way, through language classes, citizenship classes etc?	Yes or No

Other elements / Question	Response
Are immigrants portrayed as deserving, undeserving?	D or U
Are there any underclass depictions of immigrants present?	Yes or No

The codes were recorded in excel spreadsheets. When the coding was complete the results were counted and analyzed. These results, the sheer numbers, showed that rationalizing and individualizing frames dominate both poverty and immigration coverage. Social justice frames were found significant given their absence in mainstream news coverage and dominance in alternative news coverage. The presence of reform frames was low and not deemed significant in relation to the overall findings. In terms of the other categories coded, the deserving/undeserving and the presence of underclass depictions were deemed significant because these frames provide a means to quantify the negative or positive tone of representations.

To validate findings, I followed Chong and Druckman's model (2011), and employed a second coder to code a random sub-sample consisting of approximately 20 percent of the 1812 articles. An effort was made to ensure that the second coder coded 20 percent of articles from each sample, including 20 percent of articles coded for each country and for each news organization. Although it is more desirable to test coding schedules with coders and come to inter-coder agreement about questions through a pilot (Van Gorp, 2010; Bernard and Ryan, 2010), as this ensures the coding schedule and process are clear to all coders, in this case that was not possible. The main coding had already been completed when it was decided to employ a second coder. The second coder was provided in this case with the already complete coding schedule. As a means of training and for further clarification the second coder was provided with, and talked through, the framing capsule table provided above in addition to the coding schedules.

The second coder blind coded 354 articles in total. Because there was a lack of negotiation in developing the coding schedule, which also meant a lack of familiarity with the concepts being engaged, the second coder expressed some confusion about how to account for the presence or absence of rationalizing and social justice frames in particular. The other coding categories were not problematic and did not create confusion. To deal with this, after the second coder had coded roughly 15 percent of the articles the results were compared to the main coding. Where there was disagreement the articles were returned to and re-assessed. If the second coder agreed with the main coder's results, the second coding was changed, if not the results remained the same. It should be noted that the second coder was more likely to code for the presence of rationalizing frames than the main coder. This indicates that the main coder required the presence of more quantification and/or other forms of rationalizations in order for the article to be coded as having the presence of a rationalizing frame. It suggests that the percentages of rationalizing frames present in content may in fact be slightly higher than recorded in this

thesis. After this initial check and process of clarification the second coder coded the remaining articles. When complete, the second coder's results were compared to the main coding.

The data was confirmed reliable with an overall percentage agreement of 94 percent and with the Kappa rates for each frame exceeding .80. These statistics meet or exceed typical standards of reliability (Chong and Druckman, 2011; Neuendorf, 2002; Bernard and Ryan, 2010). Although percent agreement is the most commonly used method of calculating inter-coder reliability in communication research (Lombard et al., 2002), the calculation of Kappa was deemed necessary given the critique that percentage agreement is a misleading measure because it overestimates true inter-coder agreement by not taking into account the potential for agreement by chance (Lombard et al., 2002; Neuendorf, 2002; Bernard and Ryan, 2010)[6].

The specific reliability statistics for each of the four frames and for the two additional categories are detailed in the table below. It should be noted that Kappa values are lower than percent agreement values as they factor in chance (Chong and Druckman, 2011). Kappa values above .70 are generally considered good and acceptable indicators of reliability (Bernard and Ryan, 2010).

Table 11: Main coder and second coder percent agreement and Kappa

Frame	Presence of Frame: Percent Agreement	Presence of frame: Kappa
Rationalization	91	.81
Individualization	92	.83
Social Justice	94	.81
Reform	95	.85
Category	Presence of qualifiers: Percent agreement	Presence of qualifiers: Kappa
Deserving / Undeserving	96	.88
Underclass	95	.83

2.3.5 Summary

Investigating the construction and influence of poverty coverage on political actors requires a complex and fluid approach that reflects the intense mediation of contemporary societies and considers the role of these processes in shaping social realities (Couldry, 2008). Interviews and a frame analysis help locate what frames are most

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[6] Each means of assessing inter-coder reliability come with their own set of failings, and while Cohen's Kappa is one of the most popular means to assess inter-coder reliability (Neundorf, 2002; Ryan and Bernard, 2010) that factors chance into equations, this means of assessment has also been criticized (Kripendorff, 2004).

influential and why. A cross-national comparison helps one to see differences in national spheres and fields more clearly. An event- and location-specific analysis keeps the object of study in focus. These strict time and location boundaries enable more energy to be directed toward tracing the complex web of people, processes and influences surrounding poverty coverage. The overall objective of this methodological approach is to bring this web of influence and contestation to the surface.

Table 12: Methods overview

Multi-methods Approach	
Semi-structured Interviews	News production: Journalists (mainstream and alternative). Total: 18
Semi-structured Interviews	News sources: politicians, civil servants, researchers, anti-poverty advocates and activists. Total: 29
Frame analysis	Mainstream news content (2008), Online news content (2008), Historical Snapshots (1960s and 70s) and Alternatives news content. Total articles analyzed: 1812

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach informing my empirical analysis, the results of which are discussed in the following chapters. This research design is based on the argument that investigating the complex web of people and structures that both influence and are influenced by poverty coverage requires a complex, multi-faceted approach that enables easy movement between the theoretical and the empirical. It also requires the adoption of particular research strategies drawn from textual and interview analysis techniques to consider news content in relation to its social and political context, complex relationships and power dynamics. How poverty coverage is constructed and influences political action speaks to site-specific relations of power. In this way, a micro analysis fuels discussions on a macro level about larger theoretical questions concerning the functioning of these two liberal welfare democracies.

The mediation of poverty being investigated in this thesis is taking place within a time of neoliberal dominance. As noted by Siapera: 'Processes of mediation take place in a certain historical, socio-cultural, economic and political context, which in turn feeds into them' (2010: 7). The aim of the following chapter is to contextualize the investigation of the communication processes influencing poverty politics by discussing the relationship between these processes and neoliberalism as the overarching paradigm of our time.

Chapter 3

Neoliberal rationality: A theoretical framework

In the following chapters I argue that neoliberalism is at the heart of contemporary poverty politics, and that poverty politics reinforce and re-inscribe neoliberalism. The body of literature about neoliberalism is vast; it has been described as a theory, a political/economic/social project, a set of economic policies and a dominant ideology that has become hegemonic. It is all of these things, but most crucial for this work is the idea presented by Foucault during his 1979 'The Birth of Biopolitics' lectures that neoliberalism dominates in the form of a rationality, a practice, a method of thought, a grid of economic and sociological analysis (2008: 218). What this means in practical terms is that the rationality of the market, 'the schemas of analysis it offers and the decision making criteria it suggests' (Foucault, 2008: 323), is extended to all facets of life (Brown, 2005). Others have also drawn our attention to the influence of neoliberalism on thought and action. Harvey argues that neoliberalism has 'become hegemonic as a mode of discourse and has pervasive effects on ways of thought and political-economic practices to the point where it has become incorporated into the common sense way we interpret, live in, and understand the world' (2007: 23). Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001) argue that neoliberal newspeak operates as a 'planetary vulgate', constraining communication to the extent that those who want to engage in issues have to speak on neoliberal terms. McGuigan (2005: 229) argues that culture 'is now saturated with a market-oriented mentality that closes out alternative ways of thinking and imagining'. Giroux (2008: 56) writes that neoliberalism 'limits the vocabulary and imagery available to recognize anti-democratic forms of power, and reinforces narrow models of individual agency'. The significant commonalities between all these appraisals are the observations that neoliberalism is dominant, pervasive, influential at the level of thought and reinforced and inscribed through discourse *and* practice. It is these characterizations of neoliberalism that are essential to understanding how and why poverty is presented and responded to the way it is and, moreover, how poverty, in the way that it is presented and approached, reinforces and inscribes neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism serves as both context and theoretical framework for this project. This chapter aims to demonstrate how neoliberalism influences politics, policy, discourse, thought and practice. However, the overview of neoliberalism provided in the following

paragraphs is put forward while being mindful of the danger raised by Freedman that simply providing lists of neoliberalism's negative tendencies is a problem since neoliberalism can too easily become an umbrella term for all that is wrong with a commercially-driven society (2008: 37):

> The risk is that, by talking about neo-liberalism as a steamroller laying waste to public culture and paving the way for market forces, more complex and precise accounts of the agents, arguments and mechanisms involved in neo-liberal practices may be sacrificed in order to emphasize, in this context, the undesirability of the project itself. Treating neo-liberalism as simple shorthand for marketization not only runs the risk of dehistoricizing the process (as if the obsession with markets and capital flows was only invented recently), but also marginalizes the tensions and competing interests that lie at the heart of neo-liberal projects.

An appreciation of how neoliberalism operates as a rationality in terms of poverty provides a means to move beyond overly general and problematic discussions of neoliberalism, as identified by Freedman, and focus instead on how it functions and on the specifics of the ways in which it is, as Harvey argues, halting, geographically uneven and influenced by social forces (2007: 29). It is in outlining these specifics that we can begin to uncover how neoliberalism can best be challenged.

3.1 Neoliberalism: Context

Neoliberalism began as a philosophy whose central tenet was that the market should be the guide for all human action (Dean, 2009). This philosophy holds that freedom and not justice or equality is the most important political value (Dean, 2009). Unlike early political liberalism, neoliberalism posits that the role of the state is not to supervise the market; rather, the market itself is the site of truth and should be the regulator of the state (Foucault, 2008). While Foucault acknowledges that locating the origins of neoliberalism is difficult and cannot be attributed to one cause (Foucault, 2008), he begins with Liberalism in the mid 18th century. The origins of neoliberalism for Foucault lie in the beginning of changed attitudes to the market. From the Middle Ages and into the 17th century, Foucault observes how the market operated as a site of jurisdiction where regulation was recognized as needed to protect buyers from fraud and risk. In the middle of the 18th century, the market begins to appear as a site of truth in that it was perceived as something that obeyed and had to obey "natural" mechanisms which led to the formation of a "true" price. Also foundational to neoliberalism are the ideas put forward by liberals such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke that 'free, rational individuals' should be the 'foundation of the state' (Dean, 2009: 52). From these two points emerges the argument that both the market and individuals should be free from

constraint. These ideas are taken up, dusted off and altered by the neoliberals in the early 20th century. For them, the market and rational economic behaviour are not natural but rather must be constructed, 'organized by law and political institutions' and require 'political intervention' (Brown, 2005: 41). As Lemke summarized, the free individual under this model is not one who is required as a precondition for rational government but rather one who rationally calculates costs and benefits (2001: 200). The difference here is that government constraint does not function to protect a 'pre-given' human nature but instead an 'artificially created form of behaviour' (Lemke, 2002: 8). This rational chooser is viewed as 'acting and reacting in accordance with various economic incentives and disincentives' (Dean, 2009: 52). These ideas are put forward by the founding figures in neoliberal thought, a group of economists, philosophers and historians who 'gather around Austrian philosopher Friedrich von Hayek', and who in 1947 founded the Mount Pelerin Society (Dean, 2009: 52).

Foucault's account presents us with two streams of neoliberalism: Austro-German and American, each having its own distinct features. For the founders of American neoliberalism at the Chicago School – which most influences the form of neoliberalism adopted by Canada and Britain – the state should not define and monitor market freedom. The market is the organizing and regulative principle underlying the state, and society and market freedom must be ensured and protected (Lemke, 2001). These neoliberal theorists also attempt to re-define the social sphere as an economic domain, arguing that 'economic analytical schemata' and criteria for economic decision making should shape decision making in non-economic areas (Lemke, 2001: 200). The role of the state, according to neoliberal theory, is to create a legal and political framework to ensure that market criteria are applied in as many areas of social and economic life as possible (Klassen, 2009).

Initially, during the post-war boom, neoliberalism remained a 'marginal economic movement' as during this period Keynesian economics dominate (Dean, 2009: 52). As Dean argues however, throughout this time period neoliberal proponents continue their attacks on Keynesianism and begin to gain increasing support from financial and political elites. Miller and Dinan (2008) detail the strategizing and effort undertaken by corporate leaders, public relations professionals and others to advance neoliberalism. As they and others note, in the early twentieth century an international network of foundations, institutes, research centres, publications, scholars and writers take up the task (Dean, 2009; Harvey, 2007). Credibility also came from other sources; Von Hayek received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1974, as did Milton Friedman in 1976. The crisis of

capitalism in the 70s gave neoliberalism new footing. At the end of the 60s there were a series of problems including the major recession of 1973, the oil embargo and price hike after the Arab-Israeli war, the abandonment of the Bretton Woods accord which had been set up to regulate international trade and finance in favour of floating exchange rates in 1973, high inflation and a breakdown of the agreement between governments and organized labour (Harvey, 2007; Couldry, 2010). During this crisis everyone was doing poorly. As Harvey notes, there was a widespread mobilization of people and parties across North America and Europe arguing for increased state intervention (2007). Labour organizations had grown quite powerful in this period as a result of the labour shortages in the West during the 60s (Harvey, 2010). Harvey argues that the crises of the 70s and the increased mobilization and activism of the period posed a clear political and economic threat to ruling classes. For Harvey (2007), neoliberalism should above all be recognized as a project to restore class power. Neoliberalism 'took root' in this climate (Couldry, 2010: 4) and '[b]y reading that crisis as the result of the failure of the preceding economic policy regime (Keynesianism), neoliberalism authorized a quite different approach to politics and economics which saw market competition as their common practical and normative reference point….'

The real neoliberal coup came with the elections of Margaret Thatcher in the UK in 1979, of Ronald Reagan in the U.S. in 1980 and with their effort to use neoliberal ideology 'to dominate economic policy' (Dean, 2009: 52). Foundational to this project was the leadership of Keith Joseph. As a follower and promoter of von Hayek he became Thatcher's Secretary of State for Industry; while Milton Friedman, leader of the Chicago School, became advisor to Reagan (Couldry, 2010). Canada's embrace of neoliberalism came with the election of Brian Mulroney's Conservatives in 1984. As Couldry notes, while neoliberalism was imposed on Latin American and other countries in return for finance in the 80s and 90s, rich countries such as the U.S., the UK and Canada adopted neoliberal policies voluntarily (2010: 4). Harvey argues that after 1980 the U.S., backed by Britain, sought to export neoliberalization far and wide, doing so through a mix of leadership, persuasion (he notes that the economics departments of U.S. research universities played a major role in training many of the economists from around the world in neoliberal principles) and coercion (2007: 32). The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe also provided rhetorical support for those arguing against state economic management (Couldry, 2010).

At a global level, there occurred an institutional purging of Keynesian economists from the International Monetary Fund, who were replaced by neoliberal monetarists in

1982 (Harvey, 2007). The U.S.-dominated IMF became an enforcer of neoliberalism by demanding structural adjustments as a condition of assistance with debt repayments: 'The Washington Consensus that was forged in the 1990s and the negotiating rules set up under the World Trade Organization in 1998 confirmed the global turn toward neoliberal practices' (Harvey, 2007: 32). Neoliberal principals and practices were also installed through the international collaboration of the top capitalist powers via the Group of Seven (G7) and the re-shaping of the global financial and trading system, which meant that all other nations had to submit to the new ordering principals and practices (Harvey, 2007: 32). National governments began to have less influence over their own economies as a result of the global structural changes to financial markets and trading rules (Couldry, 2010: 55). Key changes include the liberalization of capital flows and national financial sector ownership. In particular, the interlinking of global stock and financial markets from 1986 drastically diminishes barriers to international capital flows meaning that 'liquid money' could 'roam the world' looking for the best rate of return' (Harvey, 2010: 20). This led to growth in global financial market trade, increased and easier direct foreign investment, increased mobility of capital and the global spread of risk (Couldry, 2010; McGuigan, 2005).

Numerous free trade deals facilitate the transfer of manufacturing from richer to poorer countries and the expansion of global businesses. Through internationalization processes, corporations establish systems of cross-border production and exchange, establishing a new 'spatial economy that transcends national borders and valorizes production for the world market over production for the home one' (Klassen, 2009: 165). In addition to this modern corporations are also now often controlled by institutional investors whose primary concern is shareholder value, such as hedge funds, banks, private equity groups and brokerage firms (Klassen, 2009). As Klassen argues, this has further shifted the balance of power toward financial interests (2009: 165). This complete global transformation of trade and finance was all facilitated and made possible by the advancement and speeding up of information and communication technologies (Hassan, 2008; McGuigan, 2005). Harvey details that throughout this period, as stocks become the main focus a disconnect is created between stock values and how a company performs as asset values are bid up, which drives up stock values, and which leads to more bidding up (2010: 21). He notes that 'strange new markets', like futures markets, emerge along with shadow banking systems which permit investment in credit swaps, currency derivatives, etc (2010: 21). The outcome is that by the 1980s reports circulate that even non-financial corporations like General Motors and Enron are making more money out of their

financial operations than from actually making things or providing energy (Harvey, 2010). When neoliberalism is regarded from this perspective, the global financial crisis of 2007-08 seems unsurprising.

Domestically, neoliberal theory dictates that the role of the state is to create a legal and political framework that ensures the market is extended to as many areas of social and economic life as possible (Klassen, 2009). As described by Klassen, the application of this theory leads to the deregulation of existing markets and the creation of new ones in areas such as health, education, policing, utilities and public administration (2009: 164). As noted by Dorey, domestic policy makers take the position that they must adjust to meet multinational corporate demands on economic and employment policies or risk a 'flight of capital' (2005: 225). There are investment and cost of borrowing consequences for governments that introduce policies the markets do not like (Couldry, 2010: 55).

Hay (2004) argues however that it is important to interrogate the 'flight of capital' threat. According to Hay's analysis, the 'appeal to globalization' operates almost as a fallacy to justify neoliberal domestic restructuring. He argues that the appeal to globalization and the notion of capital flight continue to fuel 'a dull logic of economic compulsion' that serves to make neoliberal changes appear necessary, thereby de-politicizing these changes. It is argued in the present economic climate that states must 'adapt and accommodate' capital and that welfare retrenchment and labour-market reforms are necessary to 'shoring-up' the economy (2004: 519). Hay argues that this argument is based on the false assumptions that: capital possesses complete knowledge of what is in its best interest and always acts in ways to promote its best interest, that markets for goods and services are fully integrated, that all forms of capital possess total mobility and can easily move from one location to another, and that a strong welfare state which produces highly skilled, reliable and innovative workers is a drain and not a benefit (Hay, 2004: 519-521).

3. 2 Neoliberalism and poor bashing

Capitalism creates winners and losers. Keynesian economics and its system of organized capitalism which dominated political and economic thought during the post-war period openly recognized this fact and were 'designed to stabilize capitalism and protect citizens from its worst excesses' (Dean, 2009: 52). As Blake and Keshen note, the emergence of organized capitalism came as a result of the widespread experience of poverty during the depression and changing attitudes to poverty:

> After the catharsis of the Great Depression, the country finally realized that the economic and social systems had indeed collapsed and that the thousands of

destitute Canadians could not be individually accountable for their plight. This period marked an important shift in thinking about both economics and social welfare. No longer did most Canadians believe that all types of social welfare were demeaning (Blake and Keshen, 2006: 3).

The experience of the great depression by many directly challenged the idea that poverty was the result of individual failing. This collective experience of poverty also facilitates the expression of a collective discourse about the need and demand for poverty reduction. It is this collective experience and approach to poverty that neoliberalism needed to undermine in order to take root.

The turn toward neoliberalism required the battling of ideas and the undermining of the post-war 'consensus' and organised capitalism (McGuigan, 2009: 133). It is significant that political turns toward neoliberalism in Canada, the US and the UK were accompanied by shifts from wars on poverty to wars on the poor (Bashevkin, 2002; Finkel, 2006; Swanson, 2001). Initially as the postwar boom ended in Canada, the US and the UK, the war on the poor was facilitated through highly effective attacks on Keynesianism. Business lobbyists and others argued that the crisis in capitalism was a result of years of government overspending on social programs (Finkel, 2006; Katz, 1990; Gans, 1995; Golding and Middleton, 1982). Finkel's description of the Canadian context could equally apply to the US and the UK:

> While few called for a full return to the Poor Law, the underlying argument of neo-liberalism was that Canadians had become too reliant on state handouts for their well-being and required the discipline of market forces to smarten them up. Social activists were placed on the defensive as the well-funded business rhetorical onslaught influenced government policies in all areas (Finkel, 2006: 281).

Further, attacks on solidarity movements and labour power were also essential, particularly in the US and the UK (Harvey, 2010). The US, the UK and Canada abandoned goals of full employment. Harvey notes that Thatcher's chief economic advisor, Alan Budd, admitted that the policies in the 1980s which attacked inflation and squeezed the economy and public spending were intended to create an industrial reserve army to undermine the power of labour and permit capitalists to make 'easy profits ever after' (Harvey, 2010: 15). The result was wage stagnation. In addition, a significant change in language happens in the 80s as socialist discourse – with its emphasis on collectives, mutual dependency and social justice – is 'consigned to the dustbin' (McGuigan, 2009: 135). Neoliberalism's new conceptual apparatus and the language that accompanied it emphasise market values: individual freedom (of choice, not from constraint), entrepreneurism, flexibility and responsibility for the self (Harvey, 2007; McGuigan, 2009; Foucault, 2008; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001).

In the 80s there is a return of emphasis on punitive treatment for those who are poor, one that had prevailed in Canada in the 19th and early 20th centuries and in the UK from the 17th century into the 20th (Golding and Middleton, 1982), as evidenced by poor laws and the incarceration and abuse of poor people in poor houses and work houses in both countries (Finkel, 2006; Collins, 1994; Golding and Middleton, 1982). Punitive treatment, while always present in some form, becomes again dominant in the 80s through means-testing, workfare, criminalization and the penalization of those who are poor. As Wacquant argues (2009), in advanced countries over the past decade the downsizing of the social-welfare sector has been accompanied by an upsizing of the penal arm. He posits a link between the ascendancy of neoliberalism as ideological project and governmental practice in which submission to the 'free market' and the celebration of 'individual responsibility' in all realms have been accompanied by the 'the deployment of punitive and proactive law-enforcement policies targeting street delinquency and the categories trapped in the margins and cracks of the new economic and moral order' (2009: 42). There is little doubt that the expansion of neoliberalism has been accompanied by an expansion in prison populations in the US, UK and Canada (Walmsley, 2005 and 2009). The regular practice in the UK of detaining refugees and the more recent detainment of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka in Canada are further evidence of the penalizing of the poor, particularly since these policies and practices 'violate international standards for the protection of refugees' (Welch and Schuster, 2005).

3.3 Neoliberalism in the UK

Rising inflation and unemployment, IMF mandated budget restraints and a series of labour battles in the 1970s formed the backdrop to Thatcher's election victory in 1979. Once elected and under the influence of Keith Joseph, a very active and committed neoliberal follower and publicist, Thatcher abandoned Keynesianism and turned to monetarism to 'cure' the British economy (Harvey, 2007: 22).[1] Her government confronted trade union power, attacked social solidarity, dismantled or rolled back welfare state commitments, privatized public enterprises and reduced taxes (Harvey, 2007). Thatcher's goal was not just to change institutions, structures and systems but to change 'the heart and soul of the nation'. In an interview with *The Sunday Times* reporter Ronald Butt two years after being elected, Thatcher responded with the following when asked about her priorities:

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[1] There is argument and recent re-appraisal, well detailed by Hay (2007), as to whether Thatcher represented a break from the past or a continuation given the Treasury's inclination toward monetary conservatism and the post-war government's weak commitment to Keynesianism.

> What's irritated me about the whole direction of politics in the last 30 years is that it's always been towards the collectivist society. People have forgotten about the personal society. And they say: do I count, do I matter? To which the short answer is, yes. And therefore, it isn't that I set out on economic policies; it's that I set out really to change the approach, and changing the economics is the means of changing that approach. If you change the approach you really are after the heart and soul of the nation. Economics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul (Butt, 1981).

In this comment we find, as voiced by Thatcher, neoliberalism as a set of economic policies, as a political alternative and as a rationality. Neoliberalism is also presented here as directly in opposition to 'the collectivist society'. Economics is the method, and at stake are hearts and souls. Success therefore, in terms of neoliberalism, is not just achieving desired economic policies and political outcomes but changing the very nature of how people see themselves and each other. Thatcher's statement demonstrates the significant role discourse plays in neoliberal strategy. The language of battle also implies the resistance Thatcher knew she faced. In fact, in the end she failed to dismantle the welfare state to the extent she intended (Harvey, 2005). Faced with massive opposition, Thatcher's efforts to extend the ideal of personal responsibility in areas such as health care and education were widely opposed. As Harvey notes, it was not until 2003 that a Labour government, albeit still facing massive opposition, was able to introduce a fee paying structure to higher education (Harvey, 2007: 61).

From 1997 New Labour continued many of Thatcher's neoliberal policies including: privatization, marketization, the abandonment of wealth redistribution as a political aim, and labour market flexibility (Couldry, 2010), in addition to maintaining restrictive trade union legislation while establishing 'weak and compliant regulatory regimes' (Hall, 2003). Hall argues that New Labour is a hybrid regime with neoliberalism as the dominant strand and the social democratic strand the subordinate. So while New Labour has instituted some redistribution, a minimum wage, family tax credits, concern about public services, and more money for health and education, all of this has been done alongside increasing marketization (Hall, 2003). Hall argues that New Labour modified the anti-statism of American-style neoliberalism by reinventing 'active government' and emphasizing 'entrepreneurial governance' (2003):

> Far from breaking with neo-liberalism, 'entrepreneurial governance' constitutes its continuation – but in a transformed way. The New Labour orthodoxy is that only the private sector is 'efficient' in a measurable way. The public sector is, by definition, 'inefficient' and out-of-date, partly because it has social objectives beyond economic efficiency and value-for-money. It can only save itself by becoming more like the market. This is the true meaning of 'modernisation'. Marketisation is now installed in every sphere of government. This silent revolution in 'governance' seamlessly connects Thatcherism to New Labour.

With market fundamentalism as the new common sense, argues Hall, the role of the state is not to support the less fortunate but to 'help individuals themselves to provide for all their social needs'. Those who can must do so, and the 'rest must be targeted, means-tested and kept to a minimum of provision lest the burden threaten "wealth creation"' (Hall, 2003).

A central point made by Couldry is that neoliberalism's prioritization of market logics as a principle for government could not have been effective if it were not for the longer and ongoing process of rationalization (2010: 53). This process made it easier for market discourse to be 'actualized as a mode of governance' (Couldry, 2010: 53). He argues that the audit explosion that occurred in Britain from the 1980s onwards must be viewed as part of this process. As identified by Power (1997: 3), this explosion could be viewed in the 80s and 90s in a variety of contexts that ranged from finance, the environment, intellectual property, medicine, teaching and technology. As noted by Couldry, the rise of target culture is connected at base to an overall growth in the calculability of social life since the 19th century, but it must also be recognized as a distinct product of neoliberalism's need for increased regulation to secure market conditions (2010: 53).

3.3.1 Child poverty

New Labour's hybridization of neoliberalism and a social democratic strand is evident in Tony Blair's famous 'Beveridge Lecture', delivered in 1999 and in which he committed his government to eliminating child poverty by 2020. In this speech we also see Thatcher's legacy in discourse (Phillips, 1998). The speech demonstrates New Labour's move from 'old Labour' in the party's shift from an emphasis on equality of outcome to equality of opportunity (Platt, 2005). The speech demonstrates that the political emphasis on child poverty in the UK must be read as connected to the more general neoliberal shift in politics and policy. Concern about child poverty in particular does have a much longer history in the UK than in Canada. Charles Booth's 1880 survey of London revealed a high proportion of families with children in poverty, and by WW I there was public awareness that child poverty was a problem and increasing recognition that the state needed to act (Platt, 2005).

The Child Poverty Action Group was established in 1965 to campaign for the alleviation of child poverty. However, it was not until 1999 that the reduction of child poverty was identified as a political priority when Blair announced New Labour's target to 'end child poverty forever' in 20 years. Blair attaches this pledge to his plans to reform

welfare in a speech promising a 'modern vision of welfare'. The speech is quoted at length because it illustrates how neoliberalism shifts poverty politics:

> The characteristic of the modern popular welfare state will be the following. First, it will tackle social exclusion, child poverty, community decay in an active way; and tackle it through tackling the fundamental causes: structural unemployment; poor housing; the crime and drugs culture. […] Second, welfare will be a hand-up not a hand-out. Mutual responsibility. We have a responsibility to provide young people with life chances. They have a responsibility to take them. Parents have responsibility for their children. Those who can do so have a responsibility to save for their retirement. The state becomes an enabler, not just a provider. Otherwise the costs are out of control and the consent for the taxpayer to find welfare declines. Third, where people really need security, the most help should go to those with the most need. […]Fourth, we must root out fraud and abuse in any way we can and, as Frank Field has rightly said, not just in individual cases, but by ending the systemic encouragement of fraud in the way the welfare state is designed. Fifth, the welfare state need no longer be delivered only through the state or through traditional methods of government. Public / Private partnership and the voluntary sector will have and should have a greater role to play. Sixth, welfare is not just about benefits. Active welfare is about services too – schools, hospitals, the whole infrastructure of community support (Blair, 1999: 13).

In this speech Blair emphasises 'responsibility'. There is a clear binary created here as Blair explicitly names those who are deserving; children and those who take responsibility for their poverty. He also directly points to those who are undeserving; those taking advantage of the state, fraudsters and addicts. There is a clear appeal to constructions of an underclass here. In outlining the characteristics of the modern welfare state he is proposing, there are more people taking advantage of the system and who are undeserving than are deserving.

In four of the five categories Blair establishes for the modern welfare state, he either directly points to 'problem types' of poor people or does so indirectly. He references structural unemployment and poor housing as causes of poverty, but simultaneously refers to a 'crime and drugs culture'. Secondly, stereotypes of an underclass are invoked in the phrase 'welfare will be a hand-up not a hand-out' as this phrase reinforces stereotypes that there are many people receiving welfare benefits because they are too "lazy" to work. Thirdly, he argues that the most help should go to those with the most need, and fourth that there is a need to 'root out fraud and abuse'. Blair's speech makes clear that underlying the New Labour focus on child poverty is an attack on the welfare state and a conception of the role of the state very much opposed to the Beveridgean model (Jessop, 2003: 16). As argued by Lister (2003), changes to welfare-state structure are designed to also change ideas of citizenship. She argues that in the neoliberalized state the child takes on an 'iconic status' as there is a preoccupation with the development of children and 'future citizen-workers' (Lister, 2003: 437).

3.3.2 Immigration

Over the last 100 years the marketization of immigration policy has intensified. Neoliberalism is now integrally connected to immigration on two fronts: 1) Ongoing and heated debates about immigration, as evidenced during the 2010 British election, are a reflection of the fact that immigrants have become the focus of insecurities brought about by global neoliberal restructuring (Sales, 2007: 10). As Sales notes, by drawing on notions of 'national interest' complex developments such as the stagnation of wages, unemployment or inadequate social services can be presented as stemming from the presence of 'outsiders' (Sales, 2007: 10). 2). The new points-based system of immigration demonstrates that immigration policy has become marketized just like other spheres of policy.

From the beginning, immigration control has been classist and racist. In the first piece of legislation barring entry to Britain, the 1905 Aliens Act, both the poorest 'would-be' immigrants who travelled steerage class and Jews were the main targets of the Act (Sales, 2007: 130). Immigration tensions in the 60s, 70s and 80s focused on who could be classified as British. There were three pieces of immigration legislation in the 60s and 70s: the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act (both of which entrenched differences in citizenship according to ethnicity and ancestral connection to the UK) and the 1971 Immigration Act. The 1971 Act meant that Commonwealth citizens would lose their automatic right to remain in the UK. Commonwealth citizens now had to produce a work permit relating to a specific job in a specific place to be allowed to stay, had to register with police and after 12 months had to re-apply for permission to stay. However, the Act also lifted restrictions on those immigrants with direct personal or ancestral connections to Britain. This was criticized as imposing a colour bar, as most people with such connections would be white. The Labour party opposed the legislation and promised to repeal it when elected, but when they were elected this did not happen (Bloch, 2000). As argued by Somerville (2007: 17), all three pieces of immigration legislation were racist in restricting Asian and black immigration to the UK: 'The 1971 Immigration Act was a statement that Britain was a country of "zero migration", with strong control procedures, and immigration sanctioned only in selected cases' (Somerville, 2007: 16).

A shift in approach toward immigration accompanied the ascendancy of neoliberalism. Since 1997, New Labour has pursued immigration policy with an emphasis on economic benefits (Sales, 2007). The introduction of the points-based system with its emphasis on economic migration and skills must be considered in the context of the UK's

evolution as a neoliberal state (Harvey, 2007; Prasad, 2006). As Somerville observes, 'British immigration policy during the past 11 years reflects an overarching desire for greater control over migration flows while also selectively opening its borders to preferred flows' (Somerville, 2007: 129). The new points-based system for immigration demonstrates the marketization of immigration policy in both language and practice and a new global war for talent (Brown and Tannock, 2009: 377). Brown and Tannock argue that the new points-based system represents a 'new phase in neoliberalism' as what is sought is the liberalization of not just capital and commodities but high skill labour. They note that 'OECD countries, virtually without exception, have opened their borders to high skilled immigrants, actively recruited top workers from around the world, and transformed education, employment, tax and investment policy to make themselves more competitive and attractive to high level professional and managerial workers' (2009: 381).

The new points-based system for immigration, which only applies to immigrants coming from outside the European Economic Area, was introduced in March 2006. And '[i]n this system, skill is the key, determining feature' (Tannock, 2009: 245). There are five tiers: Tier 1 is for highly skilled workers, Tier 2 is for skilled workers who fill jobs Britons do not want, Tier 3 is for low skilled workers and Tiers 4 and 5 are for students, youth and temporary workers. Only Tier 1 immigrants have open access to jobs and the freedom to enter the country without a job offer (Tannock, 2009). Tier 1 and 2 immigrants are able to settle, gain citizenship and bring their families with them (Tannock, 2009). Low skilled workers in Tier 3 do not have these rights. The tiers alone demonstrate that skill is being associated with access to equality and rights. As argued by Tannock (2009: 257), the language of skill also encodes the priorities of the market: 'To base immigration, education and social policy on the centrality of skill, at least in the current context, is to embrace the full marketization of these fields of practice and privilege the interests of business elites.' The new points-based system of immigration explicitly marks and names those who are desirable, those possessing the skills 'the economy needs', while also explicitly and implicitly identifying those deemed undesirable; those who are poor: refugees, asylum seekers, low skilled and "un-skilled" migrants. As Tannock argues, skill-based tiering in Britain is not new, but what is new is the systematization of the new system in its use of a skill-based grid to determine who is allowed into the country and what rights are granted (2009: 244). He notes that the system demonstrates the extent to which the language of skill has become hegemonic and forms the basis of a new method of social stratification (Tannock, 2009).

It is not a coincidence that with the ascendancy of neoliberalism there has been a tightening of restrictions on asylum seekers, the poorest of migrants. By way of example, the Asylum and Immigration Act of 1993 and of 1996 introduced measures to detain asylum seekers, extended the liability for those transporting asylum seekers, cut housing and welfare support and introduced a list of safe countries where nationals were deemed to not be at risk of persecution (Squires, 2008). Although when in opposition Labour was somewhat critical of the restrictive asylum policies of the Conservatives, since being elected New Labour has increased the scale, pace and intensity of restrictions (Squires, 2008). Squires attributes the increasing restrictions on asylum seekers to a number of factors, most notably that in a post-Cold War context granting asylum is of less political utility, and the further closure of asylum routes is being used as a way to calm anxieties caused by neoliberal restructuring (2008: 255).

3.4 Neoliberalism in Canada

Canada's neoliberal turn is widely identified with the election of Brian Mulroney's Conservative Government of 1984-1993, which undertook vast deregulation, privatization initiatives, public-sector layoffs and the North American Free Trade Agreement (Gattinger and Saint-Pierre, 2010). Canada's welfare expansion actually ended in the 1970s as Prime Minister Trudeau and his Liberal Government began cutting social spending as of 1975, by 1980 Trudeau regarded tight monetary policies as the way to stem inflation. Nonetheless, he did not embrace neoliberalism to the extent that Thatcher or Reagan did (Finkel, 2006). When elected, Prime Minister Mulroney shifted Canada towards neoliberalism with incremental steps and without the heavy-handed anti-poverty rhetoric of Thatcher and Reagan (Evans, 2002; Bashevkin, 2002; Finkel, 2006). In fact Mulroney's Conservatives were elected on a promise to attack the deficit while maintaining Canada's social programs which Mulroney referred to as a 'sacred trust' (Evans, 2002: 283). While much anti-welfare state rhetoric in the UK and the US in the 80s involved the demonization of single mothers, in Canada Mulroney said little about single mothers, arguing instead that social programs were important but unaffordable (Bashevkin, 2002). Indicative of the Canadian government's neoliberalism by stealth is the 1985 report by the Royal Commission on Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada. This report heralds the changes to come. The report calls for a free trade agreement with the US and a move from universal to more targeted welfare policies. Part V of the report outlines the restructuring of social services being recommended and begins by arguing that Canadians need 'new' values.

Underlying Canadian post-WW II welfare policies was the idea that the welfare state needed to guarantee a decent standard of living for all, this being a matter of citizens' rights. Although these policies were always contested by a strong business lobby (Finkel, 2006), the idea that the social world is comprised of individuals who are mutually dependent is clearly a founding and popular principal driving policies like universal health care, old age pensions, unemployment insurance etc. (Drache and Cameron, 1985). This view is in stark contrast to the conception of society outlined in the MacDonald Report. The Report's rhetoric indicates the neoliberal shift happening at the time at the political elite level (Swanson, 2001):

> We Canadians seek opportunity. To most of us, opportunity is tied to labour force participation; for most of us, a job represents our avenue of upward mobility and is often an essential element of our self identity. We therefore want our human resource programs to be structured in such a way as to help us to find opportunities, to take advantage of them when they come, and to gain some economic headway when we do so. The other side of opportunity is responsibility. We have a corresponding responsibility to provide for ourselves whenever we can and to be willing to adjust our behaviour so as to minimize our dependence on government (MacDonald, 1985: 537).

The conception of the state and citizens outlined here is very similar to the comments made by Blair in the 1999 'Beveridge Lecture'. The MacDonald Report authors are, in this extract, sowing social division. The 'we' being mentioned are Canadians who work and do not need to rely on social services. The implicit 'they' are those who do not 'seek opportunity' and work, are not 'responsible', do not provide for themselves and who implicitly take advantage of the system. In this language citizens are conceived and constructed as entrepreneurs. What gets masked is the role that social programs play and were designed to play in order to compensate for the shortcomings of a highly competitive and exploitive capitalist system. This type of rhetoric proved somewhat successful, although being continually challenged. Within six years of being elected, As Bashevkin details (2002), Mulroney took major steps to "neoliberalize" Canada: he signed a free trade deal with the US, he made cuts to unemployment insurance and also made it more difficult to qualify for unemployment insurance, he made it possible for provinces to introduce workfare, he cut universal child and senior social benefits, the tax changes he introduced were a benefit to upper-income groups, and he limited the amount provinces could spend on social services by placing a cap on federal subsidies for social programs (Bashevkin, 2002). While the Liberals campaigned with promises to reinvest in the welfare state, once elected they continued and enhanced Canada's neoliberal transition (Evans, 2002), cutting provincial funding for social services even further.

3.4.1 Child poverty

In Canada there is little focus on child poverty, over poverty more generally, until the late 1980s. Wiegers argues that in the 80s activists focus on child poverty as a strategic response to the dominant and pervasive neoliberal emphasis on individual responsibility (2007: 247). A search of *The Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* from the 1970s onwards shows that the phrase "child poverty" is rarely used. The phrase creeps into news coverage through activist and political discourse in the 80s and is popularized in the late 80s due to a number of factors. Firstly, several groups come together in the 80s to form the Child Poverty Action Group, and this group begins lobbying provincial governments and the federal government. Quoting McGrath, Wiegers notes that the founding members of the Child Poverty Action Group in Canada chose a child-centred strategy in the hopes that it would connect with the public and avoid the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor binary that had been dominating policy debates as children could not be seen as responsible for their poverty (2002: 20). The phrase child poverty gains political support in 1989 when retiring New Democratic Party MP Ed Broadbent makes the issue a priority and gets other parties to agree to a motion to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. The phrase also gains popularity as new empirical data documents child poverty and rising numbers of poor children. Internationally there is a World Summit for Children and a 1991 ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child poverty becomes the subject of both Senate and House of Commons committees which reported in 1991 and 1993 (McKeen, 2004: 101). In 1992, Mulroney announces an initiative to fund and develop programs for 'children at risk' and legislation to reform 'child benefit programs' (McKeen, 2004: 101). By the mid 90s, federal Liberal and provincial governments were revising the child benefit systems.

Wiegers argues (2002) that politicians and policy makers embraced the phrase and concept because they fit the overall neoliberal policy orientation of the 80s by narrowing the definition of poverty and thereby reducing expectations of the state. McKeen (2004: 101) argues that at the least progressive, as in Tory approaches, child poverty is placed within an individualizing discourse where parents are blamed and the connection between poverty and the unemployment or underemployment of their parents is denied. In these cases child poverty serves 'as a cover for a neoliberal agenda of reduced social spending and the dismantling of universal rights…' (McKeen, 2004: 101). She points out that at its most progressive, as in the platform of CPAG and its allies such as Campaign 2000, child poverty is linked to calls for a national child care system, affirmative action, pay equity, job creation, training, full employment etc. Nevertheless, Wiegers (2002: vii-viii) is right

to draw our attention to the danger in framing poverty as child poverty, something many activists recognize, in that doing so: 1) limits the understanding of poverty and the construction of adequate solutions, 2) implies that adult poverty is not a concern but rather an individual responsibility, 3) constructs adult recipients of social assistance as deviant or unnatural, 4) renders the structural causes of poverty less visible, 5) entrenches a focus on the helpless, passive and vulnerable victim and 6) raises questions about how and why parents are unable to support their children – while leaving these questions unaddressed and uncontested.

3.4.2 Immigration

Previous research (Bauder, 2008a) demonstrates that contemporary debates about immigration law and policy which play out in the Canadian media are embedded in an overall immigration discourse focused on economic advantages, humanitarianism, danger and culture. There was a shift in the 1990s toward discussions that focus on the 'economic worth' and 'self sufficiency' of immigrants, a move linked to the overall general policy shift toward neoliberalism (Bauder, 2008a: 291; Abu-Laban, 1998: 205). However, immigration in Canada has from the very beginning been associated with nation building and labour power (Arat-Koc, 1999). Canadian immigration law has undergone several key changes. On 1 October 1967 Canada introduces a point-based system of immigration designed to end the nation's longstanding practice of selecting immigrants based on their ethnic and racial backgrounds (Triadafilopoulos, 2011). Under the old system immigrants from the British Isles and Northern Europe were the most desired and recruited. Immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were granted entry in periods of economic growth, but were watched more closely in turbulent times. He notes that non-white immigrants from outside Europe were completely excluded through the Chinese Immigration Act, the 'continuous journey' clause and a range of other discriminatory regulations and practices (2011: 1). In the new point- system immigrants were to be selected based on their education, language competency in English and French and labour market potential. Points were received for each, and persons with at least 50 points could immigrate to Canada:

> The result of this change in immigration policy was precisely what King had endeavored to avoid: the diversification of immigration and consequent transformation of Canada's demographic structure. Whereas immigrants from 'non-traditional' source regions including Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa comprised only a small fraction of Canada's total immigration intake from 1946-1966, by 1977 they made up over 50 per cent of annual flows (Triadafilopoulos, 2011: 2).

While the points system has been praised by some for eliminating blatant and outright racism in immigration practices, it has also been noted that the system was designed to 'rationalize' immigration and that in practice it involves the increased commodification of immigrants as people's contribution and value to the country are determined solely by the their role in the labour market (Arat-Koc, 1999: 36). Arat-Koc observes: 'Those people whose skills are considered useless, less useful or irrelevant to the labour market are either totally excluded from, or get differential treatment through immigration' (Arat-Koc, 1999: 36). Similar to the UK, increasingly there are gradations of rights for migrants, those identified as possessing the most "skills" being afforded the most rights.

Bauder's account (2008a) details how between the introduction of the points based system in 1967 and immigration policy changes introduced in 2008 Canadian immigration law and policy began to shift more and more toward economic benefits. In 1976 an Immigration Act is introduced which aligns immigration with Canada's 'economic interest and demographic goals, multiculturalism policy, and international obligations toward the 1951 United Nations Convention and the 1967 United Nations Protocol relating to refugees' (Bauder, 2008a: 293). In the 90s there is increased debate about immigration and the Legislative Review Advisory Group begins reviewing existing legislation. Their report stimulates more activity, including several reports by the Auditor General. Most notable is the 2000 *Citizenship and Immigration Canada – The Economic Component of the Canadian Immigration Program* which argued that immigrant selection should be improved to increase the benefits of immigration to the Canadian economy (Bauder, 2008a). A revised Immigration and Refugee Protection Act is tabled in 2000, debated and reintroduced in February 2001. The Act becomes law when passed in November that same year. Bauder argues that the impact of the 11 September attacks can be read in the discursive emphasis on security and that the Act allows for 'secret trials' and the indefinite detention and deportation of foreign visitors and permanent residents (Bauder, 2008a: 296). In 2002, the government announces its plans to raise the number of immigrants selected under the skilled immigrant workers program.

The next major change to immigration policy happens in 2008 when the Conservative Government introduces a series of amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act buried in Bill C-50, the budget bill. The new amendments mean that the Minister of Immigration can control the number and type of people allowed into the country, as well as the speed at which they enter. Under the old law, Citizenship and Immigration Canada were required to assess every Permanent Resident application on a first-come-first-serve basis. Under the new law, Citizenship and Immigration can choose

those who they think best suits Canada's labour market requirements. The Minister has the authority to 1) limit the number of immigration applications Canada accepts, 2) deny admission to applicants already approved by immigration officers and 3) block the entry of would-be immigrants 'by category or otherwise'. One of the major criticisms of the new amendments were that they gave the Minister increasing power; yet there was nothing contained in the Bill to indicate precisely how that power would be used.

The Conservatives argued that they were introducing the changes to clean up the Immigration Department's enormous backlog of unprocessed applications. When introduced, the Conservatives insisted there was a backlog of 900,000[2] unprocessed applications and wait times of 3 to 6 years for those who fit all of the requirements. They argued they were going to fast-track applications made by skilled immigrants who could fill labour shortages. The changes were opposed by immigrant associations, refugee advocates, human rights campaigners and the New Democratic Party. Immigration lawyer Lorne Waldman argued in the *Toronto Star* that with the introduction of these changes Canada would no longer be an immigrant welcoming country but a rich Western power that shops for high-value immigrants.[3] Critics also argued the changes put too much power in the hands of the Minister and created a two-tier system of immigration. Businesses supported the amendments on grounds that they need professional and skilled employees and that there is a labour shortage in the country of more than 300,000 workers. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce continues to push for even greater changes.

On 28 November 2008 the Tories published the changes they were making to immigration policy. Under the changes, visa officers reviewing applications of would-be immigrants to Canada were instructed to fast-track applicants with skills to fill the 38 "high-demand" occupations the Department identified. The Reforms and the arguments put forward for these immigration changes continue to be questioned, most recently by Auditor General Sheila Fraser in her November 2009 report. In the report, Fraser claims the changes have done little to cut the number of new applications coming in or put a dent in the backlog, and may leave temporary workers open to exploitation (Fraser, 2009).

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[2] NB this number changes: the Conservatives say there is a backlog of 900,000 when arguing for the need for changes in the spring of 2008; they then claim 800,000 by November 2008 and Sheila Fraser reports 600,000 in November 2009.
[3] Quoted in column by Goar (2008).

3.5 Neoliberal rationality

The above discussion aims to demonstrate, through its accounts of the rise of neoliberalism and its effects on very particular discourses and practices in Canada and the UK, that neoliberalism must be understood as more than a set of economic policies or as a political alternative. The goal is to move 'to a fully sociological understanding' in order to grasp 'the institutional machinery and symbolic frames through which neoliberal tenets are being actualized' (Wacquant, 2009: 306). The idea being presented is that neoliberalism is a rationality that is embedded in everyday 'social organization and imagination' (Couldry, 2010: 5). As Couldry puts it, to say that neoliberalism is more than an ideology (a set of false or illusory beliefs) is not to argue that neoliberalism cannot serve specific ideological ends (2010: 6). It is to argue that neoliberalism is in fact a 'hegemonic rationality' (Couldry, 2010: 6). To argue this point is to argue that neoliberal rationality aids in the achievement of neoliberal hegemony. As detailed by Fenton, hegemony can be summarized as:

> the ongoing formation of both image and information to produce a map of common-sense sufficiently persuasive to most people that it is allowed to define the 'natural' attitude of social life. As such it is not simply imposed by class power but constituted organically through the superstructure – a set of social and cultural practices, ideas and interpretations that can be recognized as naturally occurring givens in social life (2003: 7).

It will be argued and demonstrated throughout this thesis that neoliberalism is normalized and appears as common sense, largely through the extension and reinforcement of neoliberal ways of thinking and reasoning: for example, through news coverage, as detailed in Chapter 4. And that neoliberalism is also reinforced and normalized through new mediated processes of news production and political communication that intensify time and work pressures making it difficult for dominant modes of poverty representation to be challenged, as detailed in Chapters 6 and 7.

To describe neoliberalism as a rationality is to recognize that neoliberalism is a method of thought, a grid of economic and sociological analysis (Foucault, 2008: 218). Foucault argues that this form of liberalism is a 'way of doing things' directed towards objectives and regulating itself by continuous reflection (2008: 318). This rationality, to quote Brown (2005: 40), can be defined as the extension and dissemination of market values to all institutions and social action: 'a mode of governance encompassing but not limited to the state, and one that produces subjects, forms of citizenship and behavior, and a new organization of the social' (2005: 37). What this means in practical terms is that the rationality of the market, 'the schemas of analysis it offers and the decision making criteria it suggests' (Foucault, 2008: 323), are extended to all facets of life. In this way

neoliberalism constrains and shapes language and practices, and also functions as a 'politics of truth, producing new forms of knowledge' which are inscribed in 'practices or systems of practice' (Lemke, 2002: 55).

But, *how* is it that neoliberalism's proponents extend and inscribe market rationality? This is a question that warrants greater empirical analysis than is presently available. Clearly, as detailed above, some of this is achieved directly through institutional and policy changes which demand alterations in behaviour, such as IMF mandated social service cuts or new workfare programs that punish and blame individuals for being unemployed. However, much of the extension also operates through the internalization of market rationality/market logic (Brown, 2005; Couldry, 2010). In this, as noted by Fenton, the mass media can support a hegemonic bloc 'by helping to define the rules of play and the nature of the playing field which, once accepted, serve to dilute potential conflicts' (Fenton, 2003: 8). For example, some anti-poverty activists alter their language to fit neoliberal frames and criteria as a strategic attempt to get news coverage. While for some journalists, the rationalization of poverty can be what makes an item newsworthy.

At the level of the individual, neoliberalism renders subjects and also families responsible for social risks such as illness, unemployment and poverty (Lemke, 2002). Such social and personal expectations manifest through and pervade discourse. Neoliberal rationality aspires to 'construct responsible subjects whose moral quality is based on the fact that they rationally assess the costs and benefits of a certain act as opposed to other alternative acts' (Lemke, 2002: 59). The subject is considered only as homo economicus, and economic behaviour is the 'grid of intelligibility' attached to and through which this new individual is perceived and self-perceives (Foucault, 2008: 252). Neoliberalism is conceived here, on a macro and micro level, as not just ideological rhetoric or economic policy, but as a political project that 'endeavors to create a social reality that it suggests already exists':

> Neo-liberalism is a political rationality that tries to render the social domain economic and to link a reduction in (welfare) state services and security systems to the increasing call for 'personal responsibility' and 'self-care'. In this way, we can decipher the neo-liberal harmony in which not only the individual body, but also collective bodies and institutions (public administrations, universities, etc), corporations and states have to be 'lean', 'fit', 'flexible' and 'autonomous': it is a technique of power (Lemke, 2002: 60).

Neoliberalism takes 'responsibility for the self' to a wholly new level as the rational, calculating individual is fully responsible, no matter the constraints on her or his action (Brown, 2005: 42). Brown observes: 'The model neoliberal citizen is one who strategizes

for her-or himself among various social, political, and economic options, not one who strives with others to alter or organize these options…. The body politic ceases to be a body but is rather a group of individual entrepreneurs and consumers….' (Brown, 2005: 43). Harkening back to Weber, Boltanski and Chiapello argue that what we are witnessing in this era is a 'new spirit of capitalism' that re-conceptualizes, re-creates and colonizes human experience. They note that in the era of industrial organized capitalism the individual was treated like a machine and that in this era the most singular aspects of human beings – their emotions, moral sense, honour and so on – were excluded from the pursuit of profit (2005: 465). However, they argue that in our present age new enterprise mechanisms demand greater engagement as people are expected to give themselves to their work. In this 'new spirit of capitalism' there is an instrumentalization and commodification of what is expressly human about human beings as marketization penetrates people's interior beings (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005: 465). As noted by Couldry, this new spirit involves a new ontology and epistemology as individuals and organizations must maximize their opportunities by meeting 'capitalism's needs for greater mobility and flexibility' (2010: 3).

This market rationality is reinforced through culture, and here the media plays a most significant role. As Couldry observes:

> Neoliberal rationality is reinforced not just by explicit discourse but through the multiple ways in which that discourse and its workings get *embedded* in daily life and social organization. Neoliberal rationality provides principles for organizing action (in workplaces, public services, fields of competition, public discussion) which are internalized as norms and values (for example, the value of entrepreneurial freedom) by individuals, groups and institutions: in short, they become 'culture'. Through this process neoliberalism, over time, crowds out other rationalities, other ways of organizing. As neoliberal rationality becomes institutionalized culture, it shapes the organization of space (2010: 12, author's emphasis).

The notions of neoliberalism as capable of organizing space and as being *embedded* in daily life are crucial for this project on multiple levels.

I take the position that neoliberalism is the overarching paradigm of our time. Given this, from the outset I recognize that understanding why poverty is reported the way it is and why political approaches are the way they are, requires understanding the broader political and economic trends shaping poverty politics and discourses. The goal was to better understand big 'N' neoliberalism as a fairly fixed program and agenda and to also understand small 'n' neoliberalism as it is applied and operates in practice with all of its contradictions and variations (Ong, 2007). This chapter has largely been concerned with big 'N' neoliberalism. In the first section of this chapter I attempted to show that

things have not always been thus by historicizing neoliberalism and tracing neoliberalism's philosophical roots. I then moved into an historical account of how neoliberal political and economic movements have achieved a position of dominance, begetting numerous international and domestic policy programs. Domestically, neoliberalism in theory and practice dictates that the role of the state is to ensure the logic of the market is extended to as many spheres of social and economic life as possible (Brown, 2005; Klassen, 2009). In this chapter I used examples of poverty and immigration policy in Canada and the United Kingdom to illustrate how market logic has been extended into domestic policy. But, I also tried to demonstrate in the final section of this chapter that while neoliberalism must be viewed as a political and economic program, one that extends to the level of policy, that it also constrains and shapes language by producing new forms of knowledge that are inscribed in practice (Lemke 2002), and which prescribe a 'way of doing things' (Foucault 2008). Crucial but lacking in most discussions of neoliberalism is how market logic gets extended, amplified and embedded in language, politics and daily life. I have provided an overview of work by Brown (2005), Foucault (2008), Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), and Couldry (2010) because they provide the necessary link between big N neoliberalism and small n neoliberalism. Brown (2005), Foucault (2008) and Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) detail how the neoliberal program is not just about achieving particular policy objectives, but about altering our way of thinking so that market logic becomes the dominant mode of evaluation when we evaluate ourselves and issues such as poverty. Couldry (2010) argues that the media help embed neoliberalism as a dominant mode of evaluation by amplifying neoliberal discourse and ideas.

As Brown observes, neoliberalism is a constructivist project and takes as its task the development, dissemination and institutionalization of its own rationality (2005: 40-41). Neoliberalism, as a dominant mode of thought, schematic of evaluation, must be continually socially reproduced and reinforced. In the following chapter I provide empirical evidence for my argument that the mainstream media not only amplify neoliberal values (Couldry, 2010), they re-create and re-inscribe them. Through my cross-national comparison I am able to draw some conclusions that are "generalizable" and relevant beyond a national context. My frame analysis demonstrates that individualizing and rationalizing frames dominate mainstream media coverage in both Canada and the UK. I suggest that this type of coverage narrows and limits the way poverty is talked about and reinforces the dominance of market-based logic. My argument is that the news is involved daily in the re-inscription and reinforcement of neoliberal rationality. In

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 I draw on interviews with politicians, journalists, activists and researchers to consider in greater detail the political and media related dynamics that influence why poverty is covered the way it is and how media coverage influences political responses to the issue. My interviewees in both countries confirm that media coverage of poverty is central to gaining political attention. But gaining media coverage and political attention is not a straightforward process. In Chapter 5 I detail some of the power dynamics that influence when and how activists and researchers are able to access journalists and politicians. In Chapter 6 I delve further into the working practices of journalists, much of this chapter focuses on how new digital tools are changing journalism in a way that has particular consequences for the way poverty is covered in the news. In Chapter 7 I continue my focus on new media use, but look at how new media technologies influence the working practices of politicians, researchers, and activists. These two chapters in combination present a vivid portrayal of how the use of new media technologies produces both constraints and opportunities. There is, as noted by Fuchs (2008) a contradiction between the constraints offered by new media and the opportunities it offers. New media, through it's reordering of time, serves to normalize neoliberal values of efficiency, immediacy and competition. As previously reported, media time demands have in effect been foreclosing potential debate on important issues and policy developments for some time (Meyer 2002). What is new is that in contemporary mediated political centres new media has intensified time pressures, and therefore has even further foreclosed the potential for deliberation and discussion.

However, the battle to embed neoliberal rationality in social, political and economic thought is an ongoing one that must continually be re-asserted, as evidenced within the news content presented in Chapter 4 and through the analysis of the relations between politicians, activists and journalists presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Throughout the empirical chapters there is an effort to balance my assessment of how things are, with a consideration of how things might be otherwise, and what factors are preventing content and practices from being otherwise. In Chapter 5 and 7 I aim to demonstrate that despite attempts to reduce the world to markets, contestations and challenges to this logic are ongoing within Canada and the UK. My cross-national comparison demonstrates that there is a cross-national discourse about poverty that is influenced and over-determined by neoliberalism; and yet there are differences in poverty discourses by location that are a reflection of the issue dynamics of a particular context. For example, the presence or absence of well-resourced anti-poverty research groups does have an effect on poverty discourses. Everywhere that neoliberalism is enforced it meets opposition and presents

contradictions. As Couldry aptly notes, the emphasis placed on the individual to make decisions which are based on calculations, to be efficient, to be competitive actually conflicts with human desires to be meaningful to others and to trust and be trusted (2010: 33).

The remainder of this thesis discusses the results of my empirical analysis of poverty issue dynamics in Canada and the UK. I begin by focusing on news content and detail the results of my frame analysis of mainstream and alternative poverty coverage.

Chapter 4

Poverty in the news: A frame analysis of news coverage

It has long been argued that the mass media 'limit the frames within which public issues are debated' (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993; Iyengar, 1994; Gamson, 2004; Snow and Benford, 1992; Benford and Snow, 2000; Ferree et al., 2002), and so 'narrow the available political alternatives' (Tuchman, 1978: 156). My frame analysis of poverty coverage supports these previous findings, and in this respect the content of this chapter is not new. What is new about this frame analysis is the identification and comparison of the frames dominating mainstream news coverage of poverty and immigration in Canada and the UK. Overall, I find that rationalizing and individualizing frames dominate mainstream news coverage of poverty and immigration in both countries. I suggest that the significance of the dominance of these frames is their ability to privilege and embed market-based approaches to poverty and immigration, thereby limiting the public space available to discuss alternative approaches to these issues. Through several different types of comparison I consider what frames are missing from mainstream news coverage and how coverage might be different. Throughout this chapter specific news articles are highlighted and discussed in detail as illustrative and exemplary of my findings more generally.

4.1 Analysing contemporary news coverage

In short I find that rationalizing and individualizing frames dominate contemporary mainstream news coverage in relation to poverty and in relation to immigration, both offline and online. As previously mentioned, in total 1573 mainstream articles were analyzed. There were a high number of duplicates as online content most often mirrored offline content. This is discussed in greater depth below.

Table 13: Number of articles in mainstream news sample by issue and organization (print and online content)

News organization	Poverty	Immigration	Totals
Canada			
Globe and Mail	57	72	129
Toronto Star	132	138	270
National Post	17	49	66
Toronto Sun	29	28	57
CBC News online	11	18	29

United Kingdom

The Times	92	120	212
Guardian	176	218	394
Daily Mail	72	154	226
Sun	30	57	87
BBC News Online	41	62	103
Total	657	916	1573

As the chart above indicates there are significant differences by news organization in the amount of attention devoted to these issues. In Canada, the *Toronto Star* had more content than other media sites. In relation to poverty this was linked to the *Toronto Star*'s 'War on Poverty' series, in relation to immigration the amount of content is very likely tied to the fact that Toronto is home to more immigrants than any other metropolitan area in the nation and so stories about immigration are recognized as of great interest here (Statistics Canada, 2009). The very high number of articles in the *Guardian* about poverty in relation to other news organizations is a reflection of the paper's interest in the issue, as expressed by Guardian reporter Gentleman, and likely has to do with the paper itself being left of centre and being owned by the Scott Trust, a not-for-profit holding that although obliged to act commercially has given the newspaper 'room to manoeuvre that has not been open to other papers' (Sparks and Yilmaz, 2005: 265). The high number of articles in the *Daily Mail* is related to the large amount of political attention being paid to the issue during my sample period, but it is also well known that the *Daily Mail* has long been focused on this issue and as many allege and my content indicates been invested in sensationalizing the issue.

4.1.1 Rationalization

The percentage and number of all 2008 articles with rationalizing frames are detailed below.

Table 14: Presence of rationalizing frames in poverty and immigration coverage (print and online content)

News organization	Percentage	Number of Articles
Canada		
Globe and Mail	47	61
Toronto Star	37	100
National Post	50	33
Toronto Sun	30	17
CBC News online	52	15

United Kingdom

The Times	80	169
Guardian	58	229
Daily Mail	78	177
Sun	72	63
BBC News Online	84	87

4.1.1.1 Child poverty

By rationalizing frames I mean that when it comes to poverty coverage, the issue is most often in the UK and very often in Canada presented as an issue to be evaluated and understood based on quantification, calculation, and cost benefit analysis. It is common for statistical breakdowns, particularly in the case of child poverty, to be presented as having no detailed connection to causes, arguments for the elimination of poverty, or proposed solutions. The measurement of poverty in much news coverage is presented in and of itself.

4.1.1.1.1 Case study: Canada, Campaign 2000 report card release

Campaign 2000 released its national Child Poverty Report Card and Ontario provincial Child Poverty Report Card on 21 November 2008. Although most of the articles in my sample were actually not about this event, an analysis of news coverage of the Report Cards provides a means to assess what the mainstream media selects to cover and what is ignored when an event like this is reported. Campaign 2000 releases report cards annually that provide measurement and updates of poverty rates nationally and provincially. The updated quantifications of poverty are used as a strategy to get media attention by playing into media demands for facts, numbers and newness. In 2008 the Report Cards received mixed coverage. Most coverage focuses on the national Report Card. The *Globe and Mail* and the *Post* devoted little attention to covering their release: both had just one brief article. The *Toronto Sun* had more detailed coverage: two articles reference the Report Cards, one of these provides a bullet point breakdown of some of the Report Card's recommendations. The CBC had four articles covering the Report Card and the *Star* had the most coverage, with 5 articles about the Report. A brief overview of coverage illustrates how rationalizing frames in much coverage simplify and reduce the complexity of the issue, limiting what poverty means in news coverage.

4.1.1.1.1.1 Assessing mainstream news coverage of report cards

The national Child Poverty Report Card begins by noting that despite long periods of economic growth in Canada, the child poverty rate remains the same as it was in 1989. On page one the Report provides an overview of child poverty rates by province, the steps being taken by provincial governments to address the issue, and also makes the argument that federal government action is necessary. Pages two through five provide detailed discussions of who is most affected by poverty, why these groups are most affected, what needs to be done to reduce poverty, a discussion linking poverty and inequality overall, and a factsheet about poverty. However, most news coverage of the Report focuses only on the statistics contained on page one.

The *National Post* covered the Child Poverty Report Card in 143 words. The article is CanWest wire copy.

> Almost one child in nine in Canada is living in poverty, despite a promise made 19 years ago by Parliament to eradicate child poverty– and advocates are cautioning that statistic will worsen with the current economic downturn unless the federal government implements a national poverty reduction strategy. In an annual report card on poverty released yesterday, a coalition of organizations called Campaign 2000 said 760,000 children were living in low-income families in 2006. In First Nations communities, one in every four children is growing up in poverty. Low income is defined as a two-person family … with a total income of $21,300 after taxes. The child poverty rate of 11.3% is virtually the same as in 1989, when the House of Commons pledged to eliminate child poverty by 2000. The report calls for the federal government to develop a strategy that would reduce the child poverty rate by a minimum of 25% in the next five years and by half in 10 years (Canwest, 2008).

In the *Post* it is the numbers that have news value and nothing else. The article provides numerous quantifications of poverty, how many children are living in poverty in relation to other children, how many children in total are living in poverty, what percentage of children are living in poverty, how much family income is needed for a child to qualify as living in poverty and finally at what rate activists say the federal government should reduce poverty over the next ten years. This article reduces the complexity of the issue and of the Report, by focusing on the quantifications of poverty. The article does not report the contextual information contained in the report or the policy proposals.

The *Globe* does not provide any direct coverage of the Report Card(s), but does reference the British Columbia Child Poverty Report Card in the Globe article entitled 'As Province Maintains a Sunny Outlook, Hope Dims For Children Living in Poverty' (Hunter, 2008). The article focuses on the likelihood that the British Columbia Finance Minister will cut a new program designed to help poor children in order to save money. There is very little discussion of poverty or of how the program will help children from

poor families. Instead the first half of the article discusses how all-day Kindergarten will help middle class working families and quotes a middle-class mother who provides specifics about how it will make life easier for her because it will mean more stability for her son and less shuttling between one caregiver to another. The program, which was intended for children 3 to 5, is said to help children from poor families because it would prepare them: 'ensuring that children show up for school ready to learn,' and the program is also said to 'help close the health and education gaps between Canada's well-fed children and the economically disadvantaged ones'.

More content from the Report Card is contained in the *Toronto Sun* article entitled 'Little Progress on Child Poverty' (Artuso, 2008). This article provides references to some of the causes and solutions listed in the Report Card. Poverty is quantified but it is also personalized as the article begins by quoting Stacey Bowen, who says that she wants her daughters to escape poverty by getting a good education and a good job. The *Sun* article notes that:

> A lack of affordable housing is identified by Campaign 2000 as one of the reasons many Ontario children live in poverty. High tuition fees and inadequate social assistance rates are also criticized by the organization.

At the end of the article there is a brief bulleted summary of the poverty statistics contained in the report, there is also a bulleted list of some of the solutions being provided in the Report Card: 'Poverty-proof minimum wage, improve access to EI, Transform social assistance, increase rates, Increase Ontario Child Benefit, Repair and upgrade social housing stock, Fund national affordable housing program, Freeze university tuition'. This article does not provide any of the contextual or explanatory information contained in Campaign 2000's report, but goes further than most of the other news organizations sampled by listing them. The article concludes by quoting a Government spokesperson who says the Report Card does not reflect initiatives already introduced. The spokesperson also notes that the province would be introducing its poverty reduction strategy. Concluding the article in this manner in effect indicates that the government has matters well in hand and likely deflates any compulsion to act engendered by the Report Card's findings.

The *Toronto Star* was the only newspaper in my sample to provide an excerpt from the report. The excerpt was published in the editorial section of the *Star*. The headline given to this excerpt is 'Investing in Poverty Reduction Pays Off' (Editorial, 2008a). The section of the Report that the *Star* chose to quote is significant:

> The Ontario government has made good progress to date in setting the framework for a multi-year poverty reduction strategy. Campaign 2000 calls for a plan with a minimum target of 25 per cent reduction in poverty over 5 years, and 50 per cent

reduction over 10 years to put Ontario solidly on the path to eradicating poverty…. It is estimated that the public cost of poverty in Ontario is $10 billion to $13 billion per year in health-care costs, criminal justice, and lost productivity. Investing in preventing and reducing poverty is a more effective and less costly approach….

Both in the headline assigned to this excerpt and in the act of quoting this particular section of the Report, the *Star* is signaling the report content it deems most "quotable" and worthy of attention. This section emphasizes the economic logic of action, and in quoting these few paragraphs specifically the *Star* is stressing that these are some of the most significant points raised in the Report, the aspects of the issue that warrant our attention, and how poverty should be understood. The aspect in the Report being emphasized is that poverty is estimated to cost the province $10 to 13 billion a year in health-care costs, criminal justice and lost productivity. The argument being put forward is that it is more cost effective to invest in preventing and reducing poverty.

An emphasis on cost frequently occurs in news coverage of poverty generally. In Canada much coverage of child poverty focuses on government action or plans for action. This is related to the fact that during my sample period the Ontario Liberal Government released its poverty reduction strategy. In these stories the costs of proposals dominate, as in the *Globe and Mail* article 'Liberals promise to lift 90,000 Ontario children out of poverty' (The Canadian Press, 2008) detailed below. The article begins by summarizing that the new strategy promises:

$300 million in new initiatives, and commits the government to reducing the number of children living in poverty by 25 percent over five years. It includes a $230 million annual increase in the provincial child benefit by the end of the five-year plan, which will provide up to $1,310 for each child in a low-income family. Another $10 million will fund an after-school program for children in high needs neighbourhoods, and $6 million will be used to triple the number of parenting and family literacy centres in Ontario. There will be $7 million a year to develop what the government calls a community hub program around schools to help respond to local needs on poverty reduction.

At issue here are not the proposals themselves, but the money being spent on them. The emphasis on cost is seldom followed with any discussion or rationale explaining the reasons behind the introduction of particular policies. The emphasis on cost provides an immediate indication that the government is doing something, but little opportunity to consider why these actions are deemed necessary and if in fact they are adequate.

An emphasis on cost also implicitly sets up a comparison, are the services worth the money? Relieving poverty then is associated with monetary value and not social value. Further, the numbers are presented without any historical context. The a-historicity and compressed style of news formats is often at the expense of context. For example, in

this article there is no mention of the cuts that were made to social assistance and family allowances in the 90s that made life far more difficult for those living in poverty, and that this increase only partly redresses these earlier cuts. There is also no discussion of the cuts made to the national affordable housing program or the cancellation of plans for a national childcare program. The impact of this increase is small compared to what might have been.

4.1.1.1.1.2 Assessing what is missing from mainstream coverage

News content clearly varies in the amount of attention paid to covering the release of the Child Poverty Report Cards, and in how these Report Cards were covered. Overall, across the news spectrum, content focuses on quantifying poverty and also presenting arguments and details that invoke cost benefit mental frameworks. Another striking similarity in coverage is what the news organizations chose *not* to report. While the National and Ontario Child Poverty Report Cards did begin their reports with statistical breakdowns of poverty, both reports devote the majority of content to detailing why certain groups are more affected by poverty than others, what actions are needed and why they are needed. The Ontario Report Card for example includes on page one:

> Census data with demographic breakdowns indicate that children with disabilities, Aboriginal children, racialized children and children in immigrant families experience poverty rates that are 1.5 to almost 3 times higher than the provincialaverage. Children from communities and groups that face systemic discrimination are clearly much more likely to be growing up in poverty.

The links between poverty and discrimination are not mentioned in any of the news articles about the Report Cards.

On page three the Ontario Report focuses on the lack of secure, good paying jobs as one of the main causes of poverty. Some news coverage of the Report Cards did quote activists who argue that the minimum wage needs to be raised, or parents who say they 'hope' their children can get a good paying job. Consider the difference between these brief mentions and this quote from page three of the Ontario Child Poverty Report Card:

> Work isn't working well for many Ontario parents. 45% of children in low-income families in Ontario live in a family where at least one parent worked full-time, all year, but did not earn enough to lift their family out of poverty. Their jobs don't provide an adequate living standard for their children or enough financial security to weather the crises of everyday life and plan for the future. The shift to non-standard, precarious work has created jobs with lower pay, poorer benefit coverage, less security and unsatisfactory, sometimes unsafe, working conditions — bad jobs. Women, immigrants and workers from racialized communities are disproportionately found in jobs with the worst wages and working conditions.

This paragraph directly challenges stereotypical portrayals of poverty as a matter of individual failing by countering one of the most persistent and often repeated stereotype, that the poor are lazy (Katz, 1990). While detailing the extent of the problem, the sentences do so in a way that suggests that action is a matter of social justice through words and phrases such as 'don't provide an adequate standard of living', 'enough financial security', 'plan for the future', 'unsatisfactory', 'unsafe', or 'worst wages and working conditions'. These qualifying terms and descriptors provide more detail about what it means to live in poverty than the statistics quoted and emphasized in much news coverage.

On page two the Report Card directly invokes a social justice frame. The fact that this appears on page two demonstrates that the group is using the statistics and numbers provided on page one as a means to grab attention and then move into the presentation of arguments detailing why poverty needs to be addressed.

> The higher risk of poverty for these vulnerable groups is the result of persistent social and economic inequality in Canada which threatens social cohesion in a country that prides itself on being inclusive. Unfair and unwise practices in the workplace and labour market, including systemic discrimination, inequities in pay, and practices that fail to recognize foreign credentials and work experience of many newcomers, contribute to long-standing high poverty rates. Specific policies to address systemic barriers for vulnerable populations and to achieve greater equity must be included within a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy.

This quote and the other quotations from the Child Poverty Report Cards provide an indication of how news coverage could be otherwise. Poverty is described as the result of 'persistent social and economic inequality'. Systemic issues such as 'unfair' and 'unwise' labour practices are blamed. Correcting problems is treated as a matter of necessity and citizen rights. This frame, as clear in the three quotes provided in the above paragraphs, pervade the Child Poverty Report Card (provincial and national). But, the frame is noticeably absent from news coverage of the Report. The absence of this frame in effect renders invisible, in terms of content, a social justice line of argumentation, thinking and reasoning.

4.1.1.1.2 Case study: UK, End Child Poverty Campaign

As indicated, rationalizing frames are more common in UK coverage. In my sample there is almost as much focus on fuel poverty as child poverty, with groups like National Energy Action, Consumer Focus or Unite union providing quantification. By playing into news emphasis on numbers and cost, groups and organizations have been very successful in gaining coverage in the UK. Coverage in the UK like that in Canada often presents poverty measurements with little to no discussion of causes of poverty that

exist beyond the individual; nor do such measurements entail arguments as to why poverty must be eliminated.

4.1.1.1.2.1 Campaign content and discourse

The End Child Poverty Campaign, a coalition of a number of groups across the UK, organizes a month of action that spans September and October every year to gain public and political attention to the issue. In 2008 the group released statistics indicating the poverty rates by constituency at the end of September, and also held a march and rally on 4 October 2008 to urge the Government to keep its promise of halving child poverty by 2010. In advance of the protest the Group also prepared a series of resources which were posted on their website including a 'Campaigners Guide', public speaking tips, media relations tips, a factsheet and a petition. In the Campaigner's Guide the End Child Poverty Campaign argues that 2008 is a 'vital year':

> One in three children live in poverty in the UK today….We can see the damage that poverty does to children and to our society and are demanding a better future for all our children….The Government have made the boldest political promise of a generation – to end child poverty. This was to halve child poverty by 2010 and end it by 2020….With the financial situation as it is, the Government will not take such an expensive step without significant and sustained public pressure, so Keep the Promise: End Child Poverty is going to engage more people than ever before in the Campaign and we are holding the largest ever event to end child poverty in the UK.

As above and throughout the Guide the Campaign draws connections between the poverty related problems and solutions that are often dealt with singly and in isolation in news articles about poverty. In the quote above the group begins by quantifying the problem but moves very quickly into framing poverty reduction as a matter of rights and equality: 'We can see the damage that poverty does to children and to our society and are demanding a better future for all our children'. The action required and by who are clearly articulated as it is stressed that Government must be pressured to not step away from poverty reduction targets during this time of financial crisis, and must invest in poverty reduction measures now. The group specifically calls for £3 billion to be invested on benefits and child tax credits in the next budget. The group also calls for the building of 20,000 affordable homes, an increase to the minimum wage, in-work benefits and the child tax credits, investments to help people keep their jobs and progress, more affordable and accessible childcare, early years education for all children from low-income families, to focus new spending on closing gaps between state and private schools and toward schools in the poorest areas, and to provide increased school support for children from low income families. The group renders poverty meaningful as a social policy issue by

drawing connections between problems, reasons for action and what action is required (Nisbet, 2010). The Guide makes connections between arguments for why poverty should be eliminated, some of the contextual factors surrounding the issue, namely previous government promises, and the current financial crisis threatening these promises, and also details what steps need to be taken. It is this very act of connecting that makes this document different from most from mainstream news coverage.

4.1.1.1.2.2 Assessing media coverage of the End Child Poverty Campaign

Mainstream media coverage of the release of child poverty statistics and the protest were mixed. The *Daily Mail* had no coverage of the constituency poverty report or of the protest, *The Times* had three news briefs and two articles, the *Sun* had two articles, the *Guardian* had five articles and the BBC had six. The protest itself received very little coverage in *The Times*, as in this news brief entitled 'Shaking Things Up' (5 Oct. 2008):

> More than 10,000 people marched past parliament to rally in London's Trafalgar Square yesterday, calling on the government to keep its promise to end child poverty in Britain by 2020. Unicef campaigners made their point waving pompoms. Nearly 4m children in Britain live below the poverty line.

Similar to Canadian coverage, in this brief there is an emphasis on poverty numbers. Across all five pieces in *The Times* there are few references to the factors involved in generating poverty or to the actual solutions being proposed. In terms of poverty causes, Nick Clegg is quoted as saying that poverty will not be eliminated until 'Labour makes work pay' (5 Oct 2008); another article states that families are 'workless' and 'being failed by the system' (30 Sept 2008). In terms of referenced solutions, there are references to people calling on the Government to keep its promise; calls on ministers to 'spend £3.5 billion on halving child poverty' (Ramrayka, 2008); and to 'help parents find work' and ensure 'free nursery school to toddlers' (1 Oct. 2008). With the exception of the actual amount ministers are being called on to spend, all of these references are similar in their lack of specificity.

Of the *Sun's* two articles, one is fairly extensive. The article entitled 'Hungry and Cold' (Leyby, 2008) opens with the Campaign's poverty numbers. The article moves quickly into blaming New Labour for the high levels of poverty in Birmingham and the country:

> And, even though Labour have vowed to fight poverty during their 11 years in power, a shocking four in five children in the area live below the poverty line. This includes all children whose families receive the maximum Child Tax Credit because they have low incomes.

Blame is underlined further in the article through the quote of an MP who says that high levels of poverty in Britain are the result of 11 years of New Labour government. The article is, however, punctuated by stories about specific families living in poverty. Those who are depicted in this article as poor are not being blamed for their poverty. Poverty in this article is connected to job losses, unemployment due to a lack of jobs or jobs moving elsewhere, rising costs, benefits that are too low and falling ill through disease. The majority of the article focuses on how hard it is for the three families being profiled in this article to get by, providing specific details about how much money they have to live on. However, missing from this article is any discussion of what should be done, there is no mention of any of the specific proposals being put forward by the Campaign.

The BBC provides the most coverage of the End Child Poverty Campaign in my sample. Several BBC articles do provide context or links to more detailed information, however, the story entitled 'Child Poverty Ranked High in City' (BBC News, 2008a) demonstrates the limitations of coverage when the focus is on numbers:

> The Campaign to End Child Poverty report said 75% of children in the Bradford West constituency were living in or close to poverty. It ranked eighth out of 174 constituencies, with the Ladywood area of Birmingham coming top at 81%.... Arshad Hussain, Conservative councillor for Toller in Bradford West, said the figures were shocking. 'It is very disappointing to hear so many families in this area are struggling and certainly this issue needs to be looked at,' he said.

This article places emphasis on the new numbers, the poverty statistics by constituency released by the End Child Poverty Campaign. These numbers meet news demands for something new and for easily reproducible facts. The numbers also adhere to news demands to present information in a compressed format.

Of the news sites analyzed, *Guardian* coverage was the most closely related to Campaign publications. In part this was due to the fact that many of the articles discussing the child poverty figures or protest were comment pieces, and like the Campaign, calling for Government to meet its child poverty reduction targets. Polly Toynbee's coverage of the End Child Poverty Campaign report and march entitled 'In the Face of the Apocalypse, Heed not Horsemen's Advice' (Toynbee, 2008) was unique in my sample. As a comment piece and not a news article, this piece is automatically stylistically different than a news article and so cannot be directly compared. Further, as a comment piece Toynbee was permitted to present a position on poverty, End Child Poverty Campaign activities and government action. This piece is highlighted here as an illustration of the more advocacy oriented tone of Guardian opinion and comment pieces as related to poverty.

In this 'Comment is Free' piece Toynbee connects the campaign to a critique of the economic crisis and political responses to it as not heavy handed enough. She urges Brown and New Labour in the time left before the election to restore fairness by readjusting tax rates to ensure the rich pay more and the poor pay less. In this article a social justice frame is employed as the central organizing idea, the lens to use to make sense of poverty. This is done through a discussion which urges that poverty reduction is necessary as a matter of fairness and people's rights to equality. The article runs counter to most of the mainstream news coverage detailed above in the level of complexity provided through detailing poverty causes and solutions. It is also unique in employing a social justice frame. The article is more like some of the articles contained in the radical media sites detailed below. The article is a reminder that, as Atton argues (2002), radical and mainstream media can overlap when an ideological perspective is shared. It also suggests that there is overlap when similar frames are employed.

4.1.1.1.3 Child poverty case studies: Summary of findings and discussion

In summary, there were two similar child poverty events in Canada and the UK in 2008. In both cases the activist organizations involved used the release of new poverty statistics to try and grab media attention. The content of Campaign 2000's Child Poverty Report Cards and the End Child Poverty Campaign materials demonstrate that both groups were using the numbers as a means to generate a discussion about poverty that would include details about why it is so high, why it needs to be addressed and what should be done about it. The *Star*, *Guardian*, BBC and CBC provided the most news coverage of these events, and the most contextual information. But, most coverage overall, including coverage on these sites, focused on the numbers.

The point to be made is not that the presentation of statistics in relation to poverty is in and of itself a problem. Statistics can be used very effectively to detail just how pervasive poverty is. Activist organizations have been successful both in Canada and in the UK in getting media and political attention by quantifying the extent of the problem. The sheer size of the problem makes it an issue that is difficult for the media and politicians to ignore. However, the extent to which child poverty numbers are reported without mention or with very limited discussion of the causes identified or the solutions activists are proposing presents a problem as it is difficult to shift opinion without such discussion.

As mentioned in the introduction a number of audience studies have found a connection between the types of news people turned to or how an issue is framed and how

people view poverty (Park, Phillips, and Robinson, 2007; Iyengar, 1994; Kensicki, 2004; Sotirovic, 2001; and Gilens, 1996, 1999). This is not to suggest there is a simple cause and effect relationship, but to suggest that there is some evidence to indicate there is *some* relationship between the qualitative nature of information and opinion. And to offer that the lack of social and economic causal explanations for poverty in the news must be read alongside the fact that in the UK 32 percent of survey respondents view poverty as an inevitable part of modern life, and 28 percent think it is a product of laziness or lack of willpower according to a recent survey (Park, Phillips, and Robinson, 2007). In Canada 37 percent of people think people are not doing enough to lift themselves out of poverty (Angus Reid, 2007).

In the UK there has been a relatively continuous process of measuring poverty since the beginning of the twentieth century and the work of Rowntree (1901) and Booth (1903) (Platt, 2005). However, as history demonstrates, measurements do not dictate in any uniform way how poverty is addressed. For example, in 1834 measurements of poverty were used to justify the Poor Law Amendment Act, which led to the highly punitive treatment of the poor and their incarceration in workhouses (Platt, 2005). Yet, conversely, a number of social surveys quantifying poverty span the pre- and post-World War II period, a period that saw the introduction of the 1942 Beveridge report which although not radically progressive did advocate full employment, universal family allowances, a free national health service, and a unified flat-rate social insurance system for all classes (Abel-Smith, 1992: 5). As Harris argues, the Report can be viewed as a product of its time since it assumed a high degree of social solidarity and reflected the degree of collective organization taking place during the war (1999: 25). By contrast, the doubling of poverty between 1979 and 1991 (Stewart, 2005: 306) did little to influence Margaret Thatcher to view poverty and inequality as problematic or change her embracement of neoliberalism (Platt, 2005: 24). The point these examples raise is that calculation and quantification of poverty alone do not influence policy, but rather the frames and ideological packages accompanying or attached to such forms of measurement influence how the meaning of poverty is constructed and what is done about it. The problem is that news reporting and its emphasis on facts which really means an emphasis on numbers, lends itself to market-based processes of evaluation.

4.1.1.2 Immigration

In relation to immigration coverage, rationalizing frames are also consistently present but are of a different character. First, as the table below indicates, there is very little direct and explicit connection between immigration and poverty.

Table 15: Percentage and number of immigration articles connecting immigration and poverty

News organization	Percentage	Number of Articles
Canada		
Globe and Mail	15	11
Toronto Star	33	46
National Post	12	6
Toronto Sun	21	6
CBC News online	11	2
United Kingdom		
The Times	7	8
Guardian	28	61
Daily Mail	11	17
Sun	7	4
BBC News Online	11	7

Numbers based solely on articles from immigration sample.

While poverty is not directly referenced in much immigration coverage (with the exception of the *Guardian* and the *Toronto Star*) it does form the subtext of coverage that instrumentalizes immigrants in relation to costs versus benefits. In Canada immigration coverage focuses on how immigrants can benefit Canada's economy. In the UK immigration coverage focuses on the cost of migration / immigration, or the bureaucratic measures needed to manage and control migration.

4.1.1.2.1 Immigration case study: Canada, fast-tracking rules and coverage

In Canada, there was very little coverage of the new rules designed to 'fast-track' skilled immigrants at the time of their implementation 28 November 2008. The *Globe*, *Star*, *Post*, *Toronto Sun* and CBC all devoted one article to covering the issue. The *Globe*, the CBC and the *Toronto Sun* all rely on CP Wire copy for content. The *Globe* and *Toronto Sun* reproduced similar versions of the same CP Wire story. The *Post* uses CanWest wire copy. The *Star* had its own reporters cover the story. In all stories Immigration Minister Jason Kenney's descriptions and arguments about the new rules are the main focus. Much emphasis is placed on quantification as a mode of explanation, as in this CBC article:

> The Tories have said the speeding up of paperwork for specific immigration applicants will benefit skilled workers in more than three dozen fields, including health care, skilled trades, finance and resource extraction. Kenney said the measures taken to improve the federal immigration system "will help ensure that Canada remains competitive internationally and responsive to labour market needs domestically." The government's 2009 immigration targets — between 240,000 and 265,000 new permanent residents — will be roughly the same as this year, he said (CBC, 2008b).

As clear in the above quotation, the message coming from government is immigration reform is primarily an economic and labour issue, and that government needs to be able to be more selective and have more discretion in who they choose to allow to enter the country.

Coverage in the *Globe*, *Star*, *Toronto Sun* and CBC is quite similar. The relative consensus on immigration in the country is evident in the fact that none of these news organizations present coverage of the changes in such a way that suggests that the entrance of immigrants to the country and the idea that some would be fast-tracked is a bad idea. This runs counter to UK immigration coverage below. Also unique in this Canadian coverage, are the links made between the changes and class. Both the CBC and the *Toronto Sun* cite critics who argue that the new rules create two classes of migrants:

> Critics of the reforms said that while the changes might help some segments of the economy, they would create two classes of immigrants, which would leave less-skilled workers permanently stuck at the back of the queue (CBC, 2008b).

The *Globe* and the *Toronto Sun* quote NDP Immigration Critic Olivia Chow who criticizes the changes for increasing the number of temporary workers which she argues is unjust as this "categorization" of workers are not able to bring their families, establish roots in communities and are often open to abuse and exploitation. Although little detail is provided in the articles about why and how the new system contributes to the exploitation of temporary workers, the criticism is recognized as legitimate enough to report and reference. Chow's position as MP for the NDP legitimates the criticism, and notably only she is quoted. The presence of this criticism is an important demonstration of the extent to which immigration discourses in Canada are more varied in mainstream news coverage. It also demonstrates the importance of having a political voice presenting social justice critiques to getting news coverage of this line of argument. It is Chow, not the activists in this case, who is quoted directly and by name. Immigrant rights groups, such as No One is Illegal, have been and continue to make the above criticisms and others since the changes were introduced. Many of this group's criticisms are not cited in mainstream media coverage. They link the changes directly to discrimination and racism, they also argue that the new rules provide the government and immigration officers with

too much discretionary power and link the changes to business lobbies for cheap and disposable labour (Noii, 2008).

The *National Post* did not present any criticisms of the new rules as being exploitive. The *Post* is the only news organization to present the argument that letting in new immigrants is ill advised given the economic downturn in Canada. This line of reasoning is present from the outset of the article about the changes entitled 'Immigration Levels to be Maintained' (Crawford, 2008). The article begins:

> Despite uncertain economic times, Ottawa announced plans yesterday for Canada to take in up to 265,000 new permanent residents in 2009 and to speed up the processing of applications for potential new Canadians in dozens of high-demand occupations.

In the opening four lines Crawford (2008), establishes on what terms these immigration changes should be viewed. Despite the various social justice and human rights-based arguments put forward by critics at this time, the argument against the new rules given most weight in the *Post* is an economic one, that current immigration levels are not advisable given the present economic downturn. The critic given the most prominent position in the article is Sergio Karas.

> Sergio Karas, chairman of the citizenship and immigration section of the Ontario Bar Association, believes the list of skilled workers gives potential new Canadians the impression there are jobs when those jobs could soon disappear, a problem he says that will "create chaos."
>
> "We are going to be granting residency like lollipops and we're going to encourage them to come to Canada because they are on the list and we do not know, given the economic situation. We're giving them the impression that there are jobs to be had," he said (Crawford, 2008).

This article differs in tone in its overall negative portrayal of immigration. Where it is similar to other mainstream news content of immigration overall in Canada is in the presentation of jobs, the economy, skills and business as the central organizing ideas through which immigration as an issue should be evaluated.

4.1.1.2.1.1 Canadian immigration coverage overall

There was little coverage of the immigration rule changes in Canadian coverage. However, much of the remaining coverage in my sample also presented immigrants in relation to the economy and labour. As immigrants are portrayed as valuable only on economic and labour grounds it becomes easy to present this group of people as an homogenous group, and once this is done it becomes even easier to attach defining characteristics to the created group. Another *National Post* article 'Inclusive Offices are Better for Everyone' (Taras, 2008) demonstrates this. In the article immigrants are

referred to as a group and many generalizations are made. Quoting a recent University of Calgary study the author writes that 'acculturation is a slow, non-linear process' among immigrant workers, and that these workers experience a brief honeymoon period where they perceive Canadian business culture very positively, followed by a period of negative value acculturation that lasts for one to two years. The goal implicitly outlined in the article is to prevent the latter. The article focuses in particular on value assimilation and the extent to which immigrant employees remain 'at odds' with 'Western business culture'. The article ends by promoting interaction among locals and new Canadians to prevent groups from growing apart and to ensure tolerance of each other. In this article immigrants are presented as a group and depicted as in some way opposed to Western business culture although no details are given. Further, immigrants are portrayed as possessing values that differ from Western values, although again no specific details are provided. This coverage shifts the meaning potential for who these immigrants are in a negative direction and leaves the potentials to read into these depictions open. The only contribution presented that immigrants can offer is in their ability to work, and in their ability to assimilate to local business culture and values.

In the *Globe and Mail* there are a number of articles that provide profiles of successful immigrant entrepreneurs, these profile stories present these individuals as examples and models. A representative example is 'An Innovator in the Workplace' (Kelly, 2008). The article begins:

> "I feel sometimes that the greatest limitation to a woman's success are the limitations we women put on ourselves," says Ms. Hirji, who is of East Indian descent. "I'm all for breaking down barriers, for giving people, regardless of their gender or ethnicity, the chance to fulfil their potential."

And concludes:

> "I always tell people who come to me for advice that instead of focusing on what you look like, look at who you are and make the most of it. Think not of limits, but of creating maximum value from yourself, and everything you do."

From the beginning this article emphasizes individual responsibility, and in so doing reinforces the status quo. The article directly challenges the notion that women and immigrants experience discrimination in the workplace. We are to attribute Hirji's success to the fact that she took responsibility and removed any 'limitations' she was placing on herself. Racism and sexism are raised implicitly in the final paragraph in the reference to 'what you look like' but these concerns are brushed aside as emphasis is again placed on people creating 'maximum value' from themselves.

Among Canadian coverage of immigration and immigrants, the *Toronto Star* is an exception in that it did present stories from the perspective of immigrant families, and in

relation to immigrants and refugees seeking political or policy changes. For example, 'The Trauma of Raising Kids an Ocean Away' (Aulakh, 2008), 'A Mother's Tale Seen Through Eyes of Adversity' (Cordileone, 2008), 'Immigrants Saving for Education Study Finds' (The Associated Press, 2008), and 'Joblessness a Double Blow for Immigrant Family' (Baute, 2008) all focus on family challenges and so broaden depictions of immigrants beyond notions of workers / labour.

4.1.1.2.2 Immigration case study: UK, points-based system roll-out

In the UK there was more coverage overall referencing Government changes to the immigration system and the move to a points-based system of immigration which took effect 29 February 2008. There are significant differences in how each newspaper covered the change. The *Sun* had two articles, *The Times* had four articles, the *Daily Mail* had four articles, the BBC had seven articles, and the *Guardian* had fifteen articles. In total there were 57 articles in the *Sun* about immigration or immigrants and 154 articles in the *Daily Mail*, yet both news organizations had very little coverage about the impact of the new points system and what it would mean. One of the *Sun*'s two articles focused on how the new rules would mean those hiring illegal workers would be charged. The article is entitled '2yrs Jail if You Hire an Illegal' (*Sun*, 2008). The BBC, *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* also had a story on this topic. Both *Sun* articles about the changes connect immigration to illegality and criminality:

> Bosses who hire illegal immigrants face up to two years in jail under tough new rules. They could be fined £10,000 for every immigrant. And employers who want to hire migrants will need a license in future. The clampdown was unveiled as Gordon Brown pledged tighter checks on non-EU workers. A new Australian-style points system means only skilled workers will be let in. The PM said: "If you haven't got a skill, there's a case for us saying this isn't the time for you to apply." But the Tories said ministers need to set an annual limit on immigrants coming into Britain (*Sun*, 2008).

The emphasis in the above article is on enforcement. The term "illegal immigrant" is freely used in this article. This term is widely contested by activists in Canada and the UK who argue that it is misleading because it links immigration and migration to criminality.

The term "skilled worker" is not explained in this article, nor is it explained in coverage of the points-system in the *Daily Mail* or *The Times*. In both *Sun* articles the focus is on how the new rules limit entry to those with skills. The editorial entitled 'To the Point' (Editorial, 2008b) supports the changes, arguing that the rules are good because 'only those with skills we need will be allowed in'. The editorial further argues that Labour introduced the new rules because 'as we all know, immigration is out of control'.

These two articles demonstrate how the rationalizing frame changes shape in immigration coverage. Rationalizing frames manifest in some immigration coverage in a way that is similar to their presence in child poverty coverage, there is a similar emphasis on quantification and the economic cost versus benefits of immigration. But in immigration coverage, there are many different types of "costs" suggested or explicitly linked to immigration. In the *Sun* articles described above it is suggested that immigration is 'out of control' and there are too many immigrants living in Britain who do not have the skills Britain needs. The word "skills" in effect means the skills needed for particular types of jobs. The implication is that those without the "skills" that Britain needs are unemployed or will be unemployed and be a burden in the form of social and economic costs.

The other type of cost presented particularly in *Sun* and *Mail* coverage is that because of immigration there will be less available for those in Britain; less space, less services, less jobs, etc. An illustrative example of this is the article entitled 'England Will be Europe's Most Crowded Nation' (Slack, 2008a). Like coverage in the *Sun* the impression being given in this article is that immigration is out of control.

> England will be bursting at the seams within 25 years, with a fifth more people crammed in. Figures from the Office for National Statistics reveal there will be 464 men, women and children packed into every square kilometre by 2031, compared to 395 today….Mr. Clappison, a member of the home affairs select committee, said: "We urgently need to have a debate about how crowded Britain is going to become."….Immigration Minister Liam Byrne said: "These projections show what might happen unless we take action now." He said the Government was making sweeping changes to the immigration system, such as introducing a points-based system, to restrict the numbers who could come here to work and study (Slack, 2008a).

This article suggests that the number of immigrants in Britain is what is at issue in relation to the new points-system for immigration. The article is presenting the view that there are too many immigrants and that the country will be 'bursting at the seams' in 25 years. Rationalizing frames are also presented here through the quotes selected by journalist James Slack. Both quotes reinforce the sense of urgency conveyed in the article that action is required now to restrict immigration.

The Times, *Guardian* and BBC were the only news organizations in my sample to explain what the points-system is and how it works, although little detail is provided in *The Times* coverage. The new system is described briefly in the article entitled 'Smith Hails Points-Based System' (Ford, 2008). Like *Mail* and *Sun* coverage, this article places emphasis on the new fines charged to businesses caught employing "illegal" immigrants. This information is provided at the top of the article and therefore has been selected by

the journalist covering the story as the most important aspect of the new changes. The points system itself is described in the following lines:

> Highly skilled migrants who wish to extend their stay will have to have suitable employment. The points-based system will be tested for highly skilled migrants applying from India in April, and extended to the rest of the world by the summer. The system will then be extended to skilled workers with a job offer, students, and temporary workers. A tier for low-skilled workers is not planned while vacancies can be filled by migrants from Eastern Europe (Ford, 2008).

Again in this article there is no description of what constitutes "highly skilled" and what constitutes "low-skilled". It is assumed that readers will know automatically what this means. The new system, and this media representation of it, reinforces the idea that immigrants and migrants are valuable solely in their ability to work. *The Times* devoted more coverage to the impact of changes for businesses. The article entitled 'All Change for Students from Abroad Aiming to Work Here' (Hoare, 2008) focuses on how the new rules will impact MBA students and the financial district's ability to recruit those with MBA's from around the world. Unlike the *Sun* and the *Mail*, *The Times* did provide coverage that was critical of the new system. The article entitled 'Visa Fee Hits Arts Festivals' (Wade and Alberge, 2008) details how the new rules will prevent artists from being able to come to Britain.

The BBC and the *Guardian* provided the most extensive coverage of the new rules. Both published detailed accounts of how the new rules will work as a factsheet or via a Q & A. In the case of the BBC this was written by long-time home office correspondent Dominic Casciani and entitled 'Migration: How Points will Work' (Casciani, 2008). This article provides historical context, details how the system differs from the old system, and explains what the new five tiers are. The BBC and the *Guardian* are also the only two news sites to cover the legal challenge to the new rules by migrants already in Britain under the old Highly Skilled Migrants Programme. The group took the government to court over the new rules, arguing these rules were 'grossly unfair' and would mean 90 percent of those who arrived before 2006 would no longer qualify to remain in the UK. The *Guardian* also presented comment pieces that were critical of the new rules such as 'Celebrate Diversity: Not an Invented Britishness' (Legrain, 2008). The court story and the comment piece mentioned above run counter to the rest of mainstream coverage in that while they contain rationalizing frames, they also expand the frames present in coverage by including arguments that immigration should be a matter considered in relation to human rights. The *Guardian* comment piece directly challenges the logic behind the points-system, that the "highly skilled" should be treated any differently than the "low-skilled":

While the government's decision to allow the Poles and other new EU citizens to work here freely was brave and right, it has since produced one idiotic, knee-jerk, xenophobic immigration-policy initiative after another. The new skills-based points system, which is being phased in from the end of this month, slams the door on low-skilled migrants from developing countries. There goes the chance of admitting the father of a future Barack Obama….. Britain is inescapably diverse, not just thanks to recent immigration, but because human beings are all different. This is something to celebrate, not stifle (Legrain, 2008).

This comment piece is unique on several fronts. From the outset it associates immigration policy changes with xenophobia and therefore frames the changes as being the product of irrationality and hatred, and does not accept that the rules are based on reasoned and rational consideration. In this portrayal it is not immigration and immigrants who are out of control, but politicians and government officials. The article also presents immigrants as part of the "we" that is 'human beings' instead of a "them". Finally, immigrants are presented in this article as contributing to British culture, and so providing benefits that extend beyond economics. Nevertheless, this comment piece was the exception and not the rule across coverage.

Overall, there is an absence of voices critical of the new points system for immigration as being unjust from a human rights perspective, unfair to migrants, and as being overly limited in its views of the variety of contributions immigrants offer. It is common in coverage of the changes to quote Conservative Party representatives as arguing that the new rules do not go far enough to restrict and cut immigration and that there should be a cap on immigration, or for others to argue that the new rules are not flexible enough for businesses. Not present, with the notable exception of the articles indicated above, is coverage that presents the voices of those who argue that the new rules and the rhetoric surrounding them are a violation of migrant rights, discriminatory and exploitive. This is not because these voices do not exist. The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, the Migrants Rights Network and other organizations were all very openly critical of the new system before and during its introduction. Members of the Migrants Rights Network argued that the points system is highly flawed and that immigration policy should focus more on equality and social justice to empower migrants (MRN, 2008). Members were also critical of the policy and government rhetoric surrounding it as contributing to public perceptions of migrants as 'inherently criminal' (MRN, 2008).

4.1.1.2.2.1 UK Immigration coverage overall

The examples above demonstrate the extent to which coverage of the new rules focused on the "cost" of migrants to Britain, on the need to manage migrants

bureaucratically to ensure cost did not exceed potential benefits. This rationalizing frame exists across all UK coverage in my sample. Immigrants and immigration are most often discussed in terms of their "cost" to UK society in the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail*. A good example of this is the *Daily Mail* article entitled 'Translation bill for police in migrant cases rises to £24m' (Slack, 2008b). The article begins:

> Translation costs for police investigating crimes involving immigrants rocketed to more than £24million last year - an increase of 64 per cent since the expansion of the EU in 2004.
>
> Police say they are having to spend huge amounts of taxpayers' money on translators because many of the immigrants who commit crime, or are witnesses to it, speak little or no English.

The article goes on to provide a statistical breakdown of how much costs have increased in various regions and also year by year. The journalist then quotes Conservative Home Affairs critic James Brokenshire who argues 'This increased cost could have funded nearly 200 additional officers to crack down on crime'. The article concludes:

> In London, migrants are now responsible for more than one in five crimes. Around a third of all sex offences and a half of all frauds in the capital are carried out by the non-British citizens. The biggest offenders are Poles, who have flooded into Britain in record numbers since the expansion of the EU.
> The Met's translation bill is up 29 per cent, from £7,474,599 to £9,625,989.
> A Home Office spokesman said: "Government investment in policing has grown considerably over the past decade." He added that Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary, is considering whether migrants should contribute to a fund to provide extra financial support to public services, including policing (Slack, 2008b).

The article conflates translation costs with crime, presenting migrants as a burden and a danger. It is significant that an Association of Chief Police Officers report released later in the year (Dodd, 2008; BBC, 2008b) counters the claim being made here and argues that crime rates for migrants are the same as for the native born population. In fact crime overall had been noted to actually have gone down in 2008. In this article migrants are portrayed as a social and economic cost, and the article presents the opinion that migration is out of control and should be stopped. At no point in the article is migration presented as a benefit. Only the broadsheets, the *Guardian* and *The Times* present articles where immigration is referred to as providing benefits to the UK.

4.1.1.2.3 Summary: Immigration case studies

In summary, immigration coverage in both Canada and the UK emphasizes numbers, economics and jobs. However, coverage in both countries is very different in tone. In Canada, immigrants are presented overall as an economic benefit to the country. Immigration policy changes in both countries are discussed in reference to costs versus

benefits. But, in Canadian coverage, even though there is very little coverage of the actual rule changes, a social justice frame enters briefly through the quotes of NDP critic Chow. The new rules are criticized as classist and exploitive in their motive to attract more temporary workers. It is suggested in some Canadian coverage, through the political voice of Chow, that the "tiering" process of classifying migrants and giving some more rights than others is discriminatory and classist. In this brief snapshot and comparison of coverage of policy changes, there is more political dissent and opposition in Canadian coverage to the view that immigrants should be valued solely on economic terms. While this argument is not given extensive attention, it is mentioned briefly demonstrating that journalists view this interpretation of events as valid and newsworthy. There is not a similar dissenting political voice present in any UK coverage of the rule changes.

In the final sections of this chapter I move beyond a focus on the child poverty and immigration case studies highlighted above and detail some of the other significant findings drawn from my analysis of poverty and immigration coverage.

4.1.2 Individualization

In terms of all poverty coverage in my sample, the extent to which poverty was presented as a matter of individual responsibility differed by news organization.

Table 16: Percentage and number of articles presenting poverty as an individual's responsibility

News organization	Percentage	Number
Canada		
Globe and Mail	54	31
Toronto Star	18	24
National Post	59	10
Toronto Sun	41	12
CBC News online	9	1
United Kingdom		
The Times	30	28
Guardian	26	46
Daily Mail	40	29
Sun	30	9
BBC News Online	17	7

Numbers based solely on articles from poverty sample.

Among news organizations in relation to the poverty coverage sampled, the *Toronto Star* and the *Guardian* and the two public broadcasting sites are less likely to publish articles that place responsibility for dealing with poverty on the individual. The *Globe and Mail*,

the *National Post* and the *Daily Mail* possess higher percentages of articles that present poverty as an individual's responsibility.

4.1.2.1 Linking individualization and underclass depictions, Canada

In my Canadian poverty sample there were more depictions of the poor as an "underclass" than in my UK sample.

Table 17: Percentage and number of articles presenting "underclass" depictions of the poor

News organization	Percentage	Number
Canada		
Globe and Mail	33	19
Toronto Star	11	14
National Post	29	5
Toronto Sun	28	8
CBC News online	18	2
United Kingdom		
The Times	19	18
Guardian	12	21
Daily Mail	15	15
Sun	33	33
BBC News Online	7	3

Numbers based solely on articles from poverty sample.

In Canada, "underclass" depictions were referenced through portrayals of the poor in relation to crime, addiction, laziness, or depictions of where the poor live as undesirable and unsafe. The *Toronto Sun* opinion piece 'Handouts too Easy an Option' (Solberg, 2008) is a representative example of a presentation of "the poor" as lazy:

> [W]hat is the conservative vision of social justice. How do we help those who struggle in a way that encourages personal responsibility, independence and dignity? Until recently the approach had been to build big bureaucracies, and toss trillions of dollars at the problem which had the interesting and expensive effect of making the problem worse.
> I mean why work when you can sit at home, have babies and collect welfare or overly generous employment insurance year after year?

The "poor" being presented here are single mothers who receive social assistance. In the first paragraph the writer implies that those who are poor do not possess personal responsibility, independence and dignity. Thereby, the writer presents a characterisation of all those who are poor as separate and other. In the second paragraph, all blame for poverty is firmly placed on the individual, and poverty is presented as an individual's choice.

The *Globe and Mail* provided more coverage of poverty in relation to First Nations communities than the other papers. This coverage most often perpetuated negative stereotypes and was paternalistic. The focus of this study is not on the damaging, stereotypical and racist depictions of First Nations communities in the mainstream press in Canada, such a topic warrants its own study.[1] However, underclass depictions of First Nations communities are important in relation to overall poverty coverage because they represent some of the most extreme depictions of the poor as an "underclass". The article 'Has $5,000 destroyed this band?' (Matas, 2008) is an illustrative example of the very problematic nature of coverage of First Nations communities and given the lack of attention to this subject in the rest of the thesis it is discussed here at length.

The article discusses disagreements among Musqueam community members over band council spending, and focuses in particular on the outcome of a recently settled land claim which saw the band council receive $20.3 million. After receiving the settlement the band council distributed $5,000 to its members. The article focuses on political disagreements within the council and an upcoming election. The supplementary information attached to the article is what influences what poverty means in this case. Accompanying the article is a smaller piece titled 'The Fate of the $5,000'. This article begins: 'For the first time in recent memory, none of the Musqueam were on the welfare rolls in September….' It should be noted that only 5 percent (approx) of members of the reserve had been receiving social support when members received the $5,000 mentioned, while this opening line makes it appear that the majority of this community was receiving social assistance. The article sets up a binary between those who are clearly being portrayed as spending their money wisely on needed household improvements and necessities versus those who are negatively portrayed as spending their money frivolously on material goods. The article notes that one family bought a new TV and a leather couch and that 'By mid-November, Ms. McDonald was back at the food bank looking for groceries.' Highlighting the spending habits of one family in a community of over 1,000 can only be read as malicious whether that was the intended outcome or not. These depictions generalize and tap into stereotypes that the poor are irresponsible and do not know how to handle money, to save and spend wisely, and are therefore responsible for their poverty.

The other group most often depicted as an underclass were youth described as violent and/or criminal. In these stories poverty is presented as a cause of youth violence and crime, but there is little discussion of poverty or how and why it has been credited as

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[1] See Harding 2006 and 2008.

a cause of crime and violence. For example in the *Toronto Star* opinion piece 'Roots of violence grow in toxic soil of social exclusion' (McMurtry and Curling, 2008) emphasis is placed on the neighbourhoods where poor people live. These areas are described as seemingly 'designed for crime', where residents live in fear of violence. The authors note that the fears are well established and that:

> We heard about gun violence, violence around drugs and drug dealing, robberies on the street, swarmings, verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, gangs and claims of turf, attacks with knives, fights at school, violence in sports, domestic abuse, sexual assaults, dating violence and violence that flows from systemic issues such as racism, inequality and poverty.

The problem is that although poverty, inequality and racism are raised at the end of this visceral description, the description itself does more work investing who "the poor" are than in discussing the role poverty plays in their lives, how it is generated and how it is linked to violence and crime. In this case "poor people" living in this community are defined by the very problems being identified. As noted by Hall (1978: 118) descriptions like those in this *Star* opinion piece provide a form of rhetorical closure: poverty is positioned as causing crime and violence, but there are no discussions of the processes involved in generating poverty. Instead, rich and visceral descriptions present communities where poor people live as locations of danger, drugs, and crime. These descriptions 'stand in' for the actual analytical connections that are needed to make sense of the links made in content between poverty, crime and violence (1978: 118). Without such connections the descriptions of the places where people live provide implicit descriptions about the people living in these communities.

4.1.2.2 Linking individualization and underclass depictions, UK

The dynamics surrounding poverty coverage in the UK that might explain why there are less underclass depictions during my sample period are: the high number of very active and respected anti-poverty groups, that the government and the opposition parties agree that child poverty must be eradicated, and that much news coverage in my sample period is related to fuel poverty and seniors who have long been recognized as "deserving". When underclass depictions were present they were similar in some respects to underclass depictions in Canada in drawing on stereotypes of those who are poor as lazy, addicts, and fraudsters. For example, in commenting about the television series 'Jamie's Ministry of Food' *Daily Mail* columnist Jan Moir states (2008):

> To the north, a band of useless layabouts who drink beer. To the south, a band of useless layabouts who take drugs. In the middle, a seam of immigrants, migrants and global refugees who sue for millions the second anyone casts a bad word in their direction or threatens their human right to redistribute our taxes among

themselves in the shape of benefits. Really. It's no wonder we all spend so much time squabbling with each other.

Constructions of "the poor" as a group of people who will not work unless forced, as evidenced in the Moir opinion piece, has a long history and was codified in Canada in 1837 in the Houses of Industry Act and in the English Poor Law in 1834 (Blake and Keshen, 2006).

My analysis shows that it is much more common for underclass depictions to be presented in relation to migrants in the UK than in Canada.

Table 18: Percentage and number of articles presenting underclass depictions of migrants

News organization	Percentage	Number
Canada		
Globe and Mail	8	6
Toronto Star	6	9
National Post	8	4
Toronto Sun	32	9
CBC News online	5	1
United Kingdom		
The Times	37	44
Guardian	18	40
Daily Mail	61	94
Sun	67	38
BBC News Online	21	13

Numbers based solely on articles from immigration sample.

The discursive construction of a migrant underclass is different than the construction Katz (1995) identifies in American coverage in the 90s. While migrants are also depicted as lazy, criminal or morally corrupt, most often in UK tabloid coverage they are constructed as an underclass through suggestions that they refuse to integrate, are linked to extremism, and through being identified as "illegal". There are clear links being made in coverage between class and immigration. These depictions are not making reference to white collar workers nor are they the immigrants both Canadian and UK governments are referring to when they speak of "skilled immigrants"; the doctors, nurses, and entrepreneurs both are trying to recruit. Rather they are linking depictions of an undeserving poor to migrants in a slightly altered form as people who are depicted as costing Britain money and taking advantage of social services. The fact that research demonstrates the opposite is the case (Dustmann et al., 2009) seems to have little influence on this type of coverage.

An illustration of this type of depiction of immigrants as an underclass is found in a letter by Lord Tebbit, a former Tory chairman, published in *The Spectator* during my

sample period. His comments are widely quoted in the mainstream press. In *The Times* article '"We still have some way to go to win the electorates" trust, top reformer admits' (Coates and Elliott, 2008), Tebbit's letter is quoted: 'It was Blair who introduced uncontrolled, unmeasured immigration of people determined not to integrate, but to establish first ghettoes, and now demands for separate legal jurisdiction. In biblical terms, Blairism is the poisonous tree which can give forth only poisonous fruit and must be rooted out.' By using this language - that immigrants are uncontrolled and unmeasured – Tebbit creates a notion of elites who must control (to which he belongs) and immigrant masses who must be controlled and measured.

As demonstrated by the above example, underclass depictions often enter coverage through the quotes or arguments of others particularly politicians. In this way UK immigration coverage is unique in that much negative coverage of the issue is related to a political comment or event. To illustrate, in the *Guardian* article titled 'National: Cultural Sensitivity Putting Rights at Risk, Warns Cameron' (Watt, 2008), negative portrayals come via Cameron's statements. This article quotes Cameron's speech, in it he argues that a 'cultural cloak of sensitivity' is preventing figures in authority from protecting basic human rights for fear of upsetting ethnic minority communities. The article reads:

> In his strongest attack on multiculturalism, which he said had created a "cultural apartheid" by allowing communities to lead separate lives, the Conservative leader claimed that society was caving in to "extreme elements" who should be sidelined….
>
> Cameron said: "For too long we've caved in to more extreme elements by hiding under the cloak of cultural sensitivity. For too long we've given in to the loudest voices from each community, without listening to what the majority want. And for too long, we've come to ignore differences - even if they fly in the face of human rights, notions of equality and child protection - with a hapless shrug of the shoulders, saying, "It's their culture isn't it? Let them do what they want".

In this article Cameron portrays all immigrants negatively through his very broad generalizations. He uses the term extreme, which connotes ideas of terrorism. In the speech, as reported in the news, he turns to two specific violent cases as examples that in effect stand in for all immigrant families and generate images of these families as behaving violently. In this way an "us" and "them" divide is generated. The divide is further generated by the opposition created through Cameron's implication of conflict through the phrase 'we've caved in'. Further two anecdotal stories are used to argue that there are no rules or regulations in relation to immigration, and to make a larger argument that immigrants present a threat. In effect, immigrants in Cameron's language are

presented here as threatening human rights, notions of equality and child protection in the UK.

Negative stereotypes are fuelled by Brown and Smith through their green paper on citizenship and the arguments that citizenship must be earned, that Immigrants must learn English before being allowed to become citizens (suggesting that they won't unless forced), and that rewards should be given to people who 'integrate quickly'. This type of discourse influences coverage and overall discussions of immigration as in the *Guardian* article 'Migrants must earn citizenship says Brown' (Travis and Wintour, 2008). In this article Immigration Minister Liam Byrne is quoted as saying that people wanted newcomers to 'speak the language, obey the law and pay their taxes like the rest of us'. The latter two points suggesting that at the moment immigrants don't obey the law or pay taxes.

In the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* it appears to be an editorial policy to portray migrants as dangerous and threatening a British way of life, refusing to integrate, putting too much pressure on public services, being supported by taxpayers, and even as rapists and murderers. In the *Daily Mail* article 'How can they deport me?: All this loving daughter wants is to take care of her frail mother without a penny in benefits. So why is the Home Office which allows murderers and rapists to stay so determined to kick her out' (Weathers, 2008). This article provides a detailed account of this woman's story. A former member of the American military this woman is presented as the "kind" of immigrant Britain should be accepting. At the end of the article there is a concluding section 'And look who's allowed to stay'. In this section the cases of four migrants who have been convicted of crimes are described. The crimes, murder and rape as alluded to in the headline, are detailed. The overall effect is to portray migrants overall, through this description of particular individuals, as dangerous and a threat. Another example is the *Daily Mail* article 'What's the point of citizenship classes when we've already surrendered our national identity' (Phillips, 2008). Immigrants in this article, particularly Muslim women and men, are presented as an overwhelming threat to British identity and to social services.

> Unlike America, many immigrants come to Britain not to make money but because they are attracted by the welfare state upon which they become instantly dependent.
> Indeed, the welfare state has itself eroded the bonds of duty that underpin true citizenship.....
> It is astounding, for example, that the state now pays welfare benefits to the multiple wives of polygamous Muslim men.
> In thus effectively recognising polygamy, Britain is creating parallel legal jurisdictions.....

> Things like mass immigration which must be stopped; multiculturalism which must be abandoned; human rights law which must be abolished; the welfare state which must be remodelled; and membership of the EU which must be renegotiated.
>
> There are growing signs that David Cameron recognises at least some of this.
>
> If he can summon up the courage to take this agenda and run with it, he will find not only that he speaks for the nation he may save it.

In this article we see the isolation of immigrants as the source of Britain's problems. Muslim women and men are in particular "othered" in the description of this group of people as whole as a drain on the system. The solution to the "problems" identified as facing Britain is presented in the guise of David Cameron who is presented as almost a hero figure who can fix everything. The above coverage occurs despite the reality that immigrants make up roughly 10 percent of the total population, less than immigrant populations in Australia, Canada, Germany and the United States. Further, immigrants are less likely to be in social housing and immigrants from outside the EU are not entitled to social housing (Wadsworth, 2010a).

4.1.3 The significance of individualizing and rationalizing frames

Canadian and UK coverage of child poverty and immigration are dominated by rationalizing and individualizing frames. Of course rationalizing and individualizing processes and discourses pre-date neoliberalism, and have in fact been identified with the origins and development of capitalism (Weber, 2003; Bauman, 2001; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). In this sense the prefix neo is significant as it stresses that we are witnessing a revived and modified liberalism as doctrine, belief, practice and language. This modification manifests in contemporary news coverage.

In contemporary news coverage frames that rationalize package discussions in terms of quantification, calculation, cost-benefit analysis and instrumental reason. Frames that individualize package issues in relation to or through discussions that isolate specific individuals and groups avoiding thematic discussions, while also employing depictions that blame or place responsibility for poverty on the individual. The latter is unsurprising and supports previous analysis of poverty coverage in the United States (Iyengar, 1994; Gilens, 1999; Misra et al., 2003) and the UK (Golding and Middleton, 1982; McKendrick et al., 2008). The former has not been discussed in this poverty research. Rationalizing frames are most common in coverage where "the poor" being discussed are portrayed as deserving, or in immigration coverage where migrants are discussed in terms of economic cost or benefit. Individualizing frames are most common in coverage where blame or responsibility is being ascribed, or where the focus is on politics and political leaders as

the source of problems or solutions. These frames work in concert and both facilitate and reinforce market based processes of evaluation and schemas of thought, albeit this mode of thought is contested and must continually be re-asserted.

The case that I am making, through this detailed discussion and illustration of what contemporary news coverage of poverty and immigration looks like, is that in contemporary news coverage we see a re-coding of poverty and immigration via neoliberal rationalizations, thereby limiting how these issues are talked about, thought about, and responded to. The extent of poverty and inequality in Canada and the United Kingdom presents very real indications that the increasing financialization of these economies is not working for most people. This reality is obscured as these issues become defined through market values. Poverty, particularly child poverty, may remain an object of attention and continual discussion (as in the UK and Ontario, Canada), but when viewed through market-based criteria the issue is transformed into one that revolves around targets, the cost versus benefits of government action in economic terms and not in terms of social or human value or rights. Ongoing presentations of poverty in the news in terms of market criteria facilitate viewing the issue in terms of individuals and individual responsibility, a view that is easily shifted to blame. This is evidenced by the fact that the only poverty seeming to warrant collective response now is child poverty. There is a 'surface of transfer' (Senellart, 2008: 330): while people may continually talk about poverty in market terms they are not actually engaging discussions that pinpoint the causes of such high levels of poverty and inequality in Canada and the UK. For example, the identification of and responses to poverty reduction targets suggest that poverty is being dealt with, while the actual causes of poverty such as the continual drive for lower wages and increasing job insecurity (MacInnes, 2009; Ferrie 1999; Raphael, 2007) remain unaddressed. In relation to immigration there is a valuing of humans purely in terms of economics; the economic value immigrants bring to their new country. An ongoing practice of viewing humans in this manner implicitly renders undeserving and potentially a threat all those perceived to not possess the skills needed to meet economic expectations, such as asylum seekers and "un-skilled" migrants.

4.1.4 Avoiding oversimplification

In the above I have attempted to provide an overview of the two most striking findings that were the product of an analysis of 1,573 news articles (including print and online articles). These findings present significant overarching trends. While it is impossible to discuss all of the complexities of this content, a few points are worth

stressing. Despite the strong presence of rationalizing and individualizing frames influencing how poverty is understood, the *Star* clearly takes an advocacy position in relation to poverty, and in a number of comment pieces and editorials advocates for government action on poverty. Further, there is a tendency to mention, often via lists and in comment pieces, one or several social or economic factors involved in the generation of poverty in the *Star*. The most common factors raised included low wages, inadequate minimum wage, lack of affordable housing, lack of affordable childcare, unemployment, inadequate policies and benefits, and inequitable wages. When poverty was linked to social and economic factors in the *Star* and if mentioned in other mainstream newspapers, activists and in quite a few cases the NDP were often responsible for raising these arguments. This finding demonstrates the important role activists and the NDP play in challenging dominant discourses. As Table 19 demonstrates the differences in *Star* coverage were not simply a matter of the *Star* having more comment pieces and features than the other news organizations. The *Star* had a lower percentage of comment pieces than the *Globe*, *Post* and *Toronto Sun* and roughly the same percentage of features as the Globe. In the UK the *Guardian* must also be viewed as providing in many cases an advocacy position as regards poverty and so is distinct from other news organizations in its poverty coverage. In part this is due to a high number of comment pieces that reference poverty in the *Guardian*, although as Table 19 indicates at 36 percent the percentage of comment pieces in the *Guardian* is similar to the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail*. The *Guardian* was also unique in providing significantly more positive coverage of migration, and presents more advocacy oriented articles than the other news sites.[2]

Table 19: Percentage and number of articles by type (poverty and immigration samples)

Article Type	News		Comment and Opinion		Features		Sport and Entertainment	
	%	No.	*%*	No.	*%*	No.	*%*	No.
Canada								
Globe and Mail	**55**	71	**24**	31	**17**	22	**4**	5
Toronto Star	**60**	161	**23**	61	**16**	42	**2**	6
National Post	**47**	31	**35**	23	**9**	6	**9**	6
Toronto Sun	**67**	38	**28**	16			**5**	3
CBC News online	**86**	25	**3**	1	**3**	1	**7**	2

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[2] Good examples of this are 'Women locked up for being a teenage refugee' (Walter, 2008). In this story danger is not presented as something brought about through immigration or caused by immigrants, but in relation to what the women in the story have had to experience at the hands of authorities and while being detained in the UK. It is important to note that the article is written by a member of an advocacy organization. Another good example is 'Charities: New challenges: Nothing like the promised land' (Topping, 2008). This article details the difficult situation many migrants from Poland face and the activism among this group of people.

UK								
The Times	**48**	101	**26**	56	**13**	27	**13**	28
Guardian	**39**	153	**36**	142	**9**	37	**16**	62
Daily Mail	**56**	127	**32**	73	**2**	4	**10**	22
Sun	**58**	50	**37**	32	**3**	3	**2**	2
BBC News Online	**91**	94			**8**	8	**1**	1

However, there were also a number of articles in *The Times* that presented migration as a benefit.[3] Coverage of immigration in relation to Scotland was different in the *Sun* and in the *Daily Mail*. Immigration in relation to Scotland is discussed positively as are migrants. Given that politicians in Scotland encourage immigration, it is likely that positive news coverage is a reflection of positive political discourse on the issue. There were very few stories in the mainstream press overall that provided an immigrant perspective. Several were book reviews or articles in relation to Sathnam Sanghera's memoir *The Secret History*. Another is *The Times* article written by Sanghera who responds to Lord Goldsmiths report: 'English and education put me on the right path' (Sanghera, 2008). There is also the *Guardian* G2 article titled 'Noorjehan Barmania' (Barmania, 2008), in this comment piece Barmania criticizes the 'hoops' the government is making immigrants jump through to prove they want to live in the UK such as a new 'Life in the UK Test' for immigrants.

4.2 Poverty and immigration coverage online

My analysis demonstrates that in Canada and the UK online content most often mirrors offline content, and therefore there is little expansion of poverty discourses on mainstream news sites. These findings echo previous research that mainstream online news content differs little from offline print content (Tewksbury and Rittenburg, 2009; Barnhurst, 2008; Sparks, Young and Darnell, 2006; Hoffman, 2006; Li, 1998). In their analysis of Canadian online news in 2001 and 2003 Sparks, Young and Darnell found that the majority of news sites analyzed were still repurposing in-house news and using traditional print formats and medium specific conventions (2006: 23). My results suggest that little in this respect has changed in relation to poverty and immigration coverage. In Canada there is very little extra material online, and often in my sample period there was actually more print material than online material. In the UK most of the stories posted on news websites were also in the print version.

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[3] For example *The Times* article 'Visa fee hits arts festivals' (Wade and Alberge, 2008) discusses the new points-based system of immigration in a negative light. As does 'Influx of migrants brings a "brain gain" for the UK (Mostrous, 2008).

Table 20: Number of articles in the print and online mainstream news samples

News organization	Poverty		Immigration		Totals
Canada	Print	Online	Print	Online	
Globe and Mail	29	28	35	37	129
Toronto Star	69	63	65	73	270
National Post	11	6	37	12	66
Toronto Sun	24	5	22	6	57
CBC News online		11		18	29
United Kingdom	Print	Online	Print	Online	Totals
The Times	51	41	65	55	212
Guardian	49	127	91	127	394
Daily Mail	31	41	95	59	226
Sun	19	11	55	2	87
BBC News Online		41		62	103
Total					1573

Overall, there is more content available in the print versions of the newspapers than on their news sites. The exception is the *Guardian* which had significantly more content on the web than in print for both case studies. Much of the additional content on the Guardian website are comment pieces: 42 percent of poverty coverage online and 39 percent of immigration coverage online are comment pieces. Only 31 percent of poverty coverage in the print version and 26 percent of immigration coverage are comment pieces. Further, the BBC and the CBC websites now provide them with a fixed space to store print, visual and audio content.

The lack of multimedia use for most of my mainstream news sample is a reflection of the low status of poverty as an issue for these organizations. It may also be an indication that new multimedia is not being used for issue development, but to enhance or supplement coverage already considered newsworthy such as political debates, scandals, etc. It is worth noting that my sample comprises content from 2008, and that video streaming has now become a more common feature on websites (Stayner, 2009: 201). The *Globe and Mail*, the *Post*, and *The Times* do make use of web potentials but in other categories. *The Times* via Sky News for example recently provided a video recording of the Labour leadership TV debate. The *Globe and Mail* regularly provides a live question and answer session with an expert or a reporter and *The Times* does present the ability to take part in online live debates. The *National Post* does not provide much in the way of multimedia content, but does provide access to Global News videos. There is active use of video and photo galleries on the *Globe and Mail* and *Times* sites. Most news

organizations also often make use of the additional space afforded by the Internet to provide content that would not be published in their offline publications such as political speeches in full.

The above descriptions and my findings demonstrate that multi-media potential is being used but within pre-existing news norms which were developed for the mediums of print and television. It is entirely possible to develop web content about poverty that puts developments into historical context and provides much wider discussions. There is tension as news providers must provide content online because everyone else does and yet this content is free. News providers still need to ensure people buy newspapers so web content cannot surpass print content. Nguyen (2008: 55) notes that traditional news practitioners in the US in the mid-1990s were reluctant to pour resources into developing the marketing potential of online news to prevent it from competing with their more traditional and revenue raising formats. He argues that instead of adding original content, providers adopted a safer practice of reformatting already owned content to minimize cost. As a result the web's capacities for content, and presentation have been ignored (Nguyen 2008: 55). It is significant that all of the sites identified as providing unique and valuable supplementary material in my sample are not private business enterprises with the exception of the *Toronto Star*, the BBC and CBC being public broadcasters. The *Guardian* as mentioned earlier which although must operate commercially is owned by a foundation and funded by a trust. The *Toronto Star*'s coverage is tied to the paper's anti-poverty advocacy, and it is significant that the 'War on Poverty' page being identified as valuable now no longer exists.

The fact that most content on mainstream news sites is the same as offline content says a great deal about the dominance of news norms in terms of form and content. The similarities between online and offline content means that mainstream news sites extend, rather than open up, the dominance of individualizing and rationalizing frames. Previous research in the US suggests that online newspaper audiences are even more concentrated than print audiences (Hindman, 2009: 98).

> The internet does provide any citizen a *potential* audience of billions, in the same way that *potentially* anyone can win the lottery. In their enthusiasm, many have forgotten to do the math, and that math shows that the odds of hitting it big online are vanishingly small. Individually, each of the myriad sources that make up the long tail are insignificant; even together, they remain only a fraction of the content that citizens actually see (Hindman, 2009: 101).

Web traffic measurements indicate that major news titles also dominate online news attention in Canada and in the UK. The most popular news sites in Canada are, in descending order: CBC.ca. MSN, CNN.com, Google, Canoe.com, Yahoo.com, CTV.ca,

Globe and Mail, BBC.com, Radio Canada, *Toronto Star*, Sympatico, Canada.com, Cyberpresse.ca, and Reuters (Zamaria and Fletcher, 2008: 176). It is important to note that the search portals listed above often return mainstream news content reinforcing the dominance of these sites. Of the top twenty UK sites according to Alexa.com as of September 2011, only three are news sites and they are the mainstream sites: BBC (5), *Daily Mail* (17), and the *Guardian* (18). Finally, of the journalists, politicians and researchers interviewed most referenced mainstream news titles when asked what news sources they regularly turn to, although several politicians did mention regularly looking at political blogs.

While the web provides the potential for greater interaction and participation than has been the norm in print, television, and radio there is little opportunity for interaction on mainstream news sites. Previous analyses of interactive options on mainstream news sites in the United States and Europe indicates that this is the norm (Quandt, 2008; Schultz, 1999; Domingo et al., 2008). All of the mainstream news sites analyzed did provide the ability for readers to comment on some articles, but this option must be read as providing the ability to respond more than interact with the reporter or news organization. The linear commenting structure, in which one person posts comments after and below another and so on, makes it difficult for those engaged to enter into a discussion with each other. Therefore it is extremely difficult to make the argument that the news site itself can be viewed as a new site for public discourse. The limited option offered to respond means that comment space does not provide a viable option for those wanting to challenge, or counter mainstream news coverage.

Overall the fact that the new space afforded by the internet is not, for the most part, being used to present the news in new and interesting ways means the political potential of news sites is also limited. As Barnhurst argues (2002: 479), the form of the newspaper creates a familiarized product that also familiarizes and invites the public into a steady relationship with economic and political entities beyond journalism including civil society and the public sphere. The replication of print content online reinforces status quo relationships to the news, and hence politics. The news form he argues is a way of hailing the audience, because it records how news people imagine and approach their readers and viewers (Barnhurst, 2002: 479). To follow Barnhurst's line of reasoning, it is difficult to imagine how online mainstream news will reinvigorate democracy or open news discourses if the news itself in both form and content remains the same as its offline counterpart.

4.2.1 The exceptions and web potentials

As mentioned, while few sites provide extra or supplementary information in my sample the exceptions to this are the BBC, the CBC, the *Guardian* and the *Toronto Star* 'War on Poverty' page, all of which would often supplement stories with video, audio, backgrounders and factsheets. A good example of this in terms of the BBC is the article 'Migration Strains Rich and Poor' (Schiffers, 2008). This article provides links to stories detailing migrant experiences, a debate section of sorts where links to 3 different viewpoints on migration are presented, links to various migration backgrounder pieces including a fact file, an historical perspective and a jargon buster, and links to two BBC migration pages that provide a range of content including a migration map of Britain, statistics, etc. Similarly, the CBC article entitled 'Not Addressing Poverty's Root Causes Costing Ontario \$13B Annually' (CBC, 2008a) provides a link to a detailed piece entitled 'In Depth: The Poverty Line'. This page provides context not found in other mainstream news content. Included is an overview of the debates about the poverty line in Canada. The page also provides a list of further links to more background material. Some of the topics covered include the recession, minimum wage laws, and an interactive map detailing the 'fiscal health of governments across Canada'. The *Guardian* made significant use of multimedia to cover Brown's conference speech on 24 September 2008. The article entitled 'Brown Gets Up Close and Personal' included a video highlight of the speech, a link to an audio recording of the full speech, a link to the full text of the speech, in addition to coverage and commentary about the speech (Wintour, 2008). This kind of coverage provides greater access to the event itself. Previously it was very difficult for those on the outside of political parties to have access to party conferences. Coverage like this also provides those on the outside greater access to non-edited versions of events. The addition of this material did at times demonstrate how space could be used to add density to coverage. The significance of this content is that it is static, still available (with the exception of the *Star* page detailed below), and therefore can be used as a resource in ways that newsprint publications or broadcasts cannot given the ease of internet access.

The *Toronto Star* provided enhanced online poverty coverage through the creation of its 'War on Poverty' page that was part of the series. The page is discussed in detail because both the content and the space devoted to the issue demonstrate what can be done when a news organization takes on an advocacy position and adheres to a more radical news tradition. Most of the online articles in my *Toronto Star* sample contained a link to the *Toronto Star*'s 'War on Poverty' web page. This web page was launched when the *Toronto Star* began its 'War on Poverty' series in Jan 2007. The page was still ongoing as

of April 2009, but the page and this section now no longer exist. Overall there were links to approximately 50 *Toronto Star* articles on the page as of April 2009.

Fig. 1: Screenshot *Toronto Star* 'War on Poverty' page, top quarter of page

As illustrated the upper section of the page contains articles on the left and editorials in the right hand corner.

Fig. 2: Screenshot *Toronto Star* 'War on Poverty' page, bottom of page

A number of resources are presented in the right hand column on the page. These include graphics and reports that provide historical perspective, in addition to links to reports by anti-poverty advocacy organizations. Unlike other mainstream news sites, the *Toronto Star* uses its internet presence to provide a poverty resource via this site. Anyone reading a story about poverty, if interested, could link to the 'War on Poverty' page and be confronted with a range of material either demanding government action, or that provides justifications for government action. In providing various perspectives on the issue, multimedia, factsheets, backgrounders, related content, links to external sites and advocacy organizations, this poverty page provides an indication of what issue content on news sites could be. However, the fate of the site is also instructive.

The *Toronto Star* quietly ended its 'War on Poverty' series in 2009 and the page, a once valuable resource, is now no longer available. The reasons are unclear. Widely known as a paper which supports the Liberal party, it could be that the series was wound up once the McGuinty Liberals began facing a series of political scandals in 2009 and threats to their popularity. According to one *Toronto Star* reporter the series itself was a response to the newspaper bleeding red ink, and an attempt to return the *Toronto Star* to its advocacy roots so it could once again be distinct in the news market. It could be management decided the series had fulfilled its goal and run its course. The end of the series might also be credited to the management and editorial changes that happened in 2009 and the likelihood that with new leaders came new priorities. A number of sources interviewed for this thesis, as detailed in Chapter 5, argue that the significance of the series is that it focused government attention on the issue and with the work of advocates succeeded in getting government to respond to the issue.[4]

4.3 Historical analysis

An analysis of news coverage in the 60s and 70s provides a means to consider how contemporary coverage has and has not changed over time. As mentioned previously it was thought that coverage in this earlier period would reflect the different political climate of the 60s and 70s given the closer proximity of these periods to the welfare state expansions in both countries. As detailed in Chapter 3, there has been much political and policy emphasis on individual responsibility and competition since the 70s in the UK and the 80s in Canada. It was thought that comparing more recent coverage to coverage before the dominance of these modes of discourse might make it easier to see aspects of

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[4] Those interviewed who said they thought the Star's 'War on Poverty' series led to increased government attention on the issue included Ontario Poverty Policy Advisor Civil Servant H (Jan. 2009), advocate John Stapleton (Nov. 2008), Campaign 2000 Ontario Coordinator Jacquie Maund (Sept. 2009), and Voices from the Street Lead Facilitator Pat Capponi (July 2009).

contemporary coverage that might seem normal and be taken for granted by the analyst. The overall goal was to become more alert to what might be missing from contemporary coverage of poverty and immigration, and to how these issues could be covered differently.

Table 21: Number of articles in historical news sample by organization

News organization	Poverty	Immigration
Canada		
Globe and Mail	9	32
Toronto Star	12	33
Total		86
United Kingdom		
The Times	15	33
Guardian	20	29
Total		97
Overall Total	56	127

In total 86 articles were analyzed for the Canadian sample and 97 articles for the UK sample. Although the news samples from the late 60s and early 70s are small, they do provide significant indications of key similarities and differences. In summary, in this period there is a stronger presence of rights-based discourse. However, my analysis also demonstrates that there should be no romanticization of the past. Coverage is not dominated by the above, but its strong presence is significant. There are also similarities to contemporary coverage in the strong presence of rationalizing and individualizing frames although there is less intensity in the use of numbers in this earlier period. For example, while poverty calculations may be present in this earlier period, articles are not as frequently punctuated by numbers as they are in contemporary coverage. In this earlier period, as in contemporary news coverage, anti-poverty organizations like the Child Poverty Action Group and the National Council of Welfare play a major role in news coverage that is more collectivistic and not blame ridden. In both countries the proposals being put forward by these organizations, as covered in the news, are more radical in this earlier period and receive positive coverage. There is also an emphasis on responsibility and blame for poverty. Racism is evident in both this earlier and later period.

4.3.1 Social justice

Social justice frames are roughly as present in this earlier period as they are now but qualitatively these frames are different.

Table 22: Social justice frames in historical versus contemporary coverage

News organization	Percentage Articles 60s – 70s	Number of Articles 60s – 70s	Percentage Articles 2008	Number Articles 2008
Canada				
Globe and Mail	12	5	11	14
Toronto Star	31	14	23	24
United Kingdom				
The Times	18	9	9	19
Guardian	29	14	26	104

When invoked in 2008, social justice frames rarely raised issues of rights, equality and universalism. In 1975 the demand for action through government initiative as the fair thing to do was more often raised, as with for example the presentation of arguments that government should raise the housing benefit so people could afford to spend more money on food and improve their quality of life. The 6 March 1975 *Star* editorial 'Give all children a fair chance' is most indicative of changes in discourse. In this article the editorial board argues that there should be equal opportunities for all, and agrees with recommendations made by the National Council of Welfare's 'Poor Kids' report.

> The council suggests several measures to improve prospects for Canada's children who are born disadvantaged into poverty and then have those disadvantages compounded as they grow up in poverty.

> The basic one, and the toughest, would be to eliminate poverty. That's what the welfare minister's two-year review of social security has been all about; they are now at the nitty-gritty of deciding upon some form of guaranteed income system. The council argues persuasively that this should be in the form of a single negative income tax which ensures that no one lives in poverty but encourages people to improve their financial situation by working (Editorial, 1975).

The editor discusses the potential to 'eliminate poverty' as if it would be a tough thing to do, but possible. This line indicates a great deal about how things have changed. In 1975 in an environment where a guaranteed annual income was being debated and following three decades of welfare state expansion and the success of initiatives such as medicare and old age pensions, it seemed possible to eliminate poverty. This was in spite of the Council's finding that 24.5 percent of Canadian children were living in poverty at the time. In 2008 Campaign 2000 estimated that 11.7 percent of children were living in

poverty, roughly half the 1975 estimate, but there was no talk of eliminating poverty. The idea of eliminating poverty, while still a campaign goal, is rationalized into a target, as in their 2008 Child Poverty Report Card when Campaign 2000 speaks of 'poverty reduction'. In their 2008 anti-poverty strategy the Liberal Government of Ontario set itself the goal of reducing child poverty by 25 percent in 5 years. Also, in Canada there is more discussion of the rights of the poor in this earlier period. For example, the *Toronto Star* provides favourable front page coverage to the Mother's Union which is threatening to leave their children on the government's doorstep if support for lone parent mothers is not raised to the same level as that provided to foster parents (Mietkiewicz, 1975).

There is also more discussion of the rights of the poor in my earlier UK sample. In particular there is notable discussion of rights in connection to migration and immigration in this earlier period. A number of articles provide supportive coverage of the strike by 'Asian workers' over discrimination and lack of opportunities for immigrants working in the hosiery industry. *The Times* publishes a comment piece in relation to ongoing discussions and negotiations in relation to the EEC that is highly supportive of the rights of migrant workers. The article states:

> The theory is that freedom of movement constitutes a basic right for workers and their families. It guarantees workers the possibility of improving their living and working conditions and securing their social advancement. At the same time it helps to satisfy the economic requirements of the member states (Murray, 1973).

In this *Times* article there are discussions of migrant rights and the rights of workers, but there are also some of the rationalizing discourses that would come to dominate immigration coverage in 2008. To be sure, immigration in this earlier period in politics and particularly in the news in Canada and the UK is guided by concerns about the perceived economic benefits of immigration. However as with the above there are articles where human value is not reduced solely to economic value. Efforts to change the 'fiance's rule' which had been introduced to 'stop abuse of immigration laws' receives favourable coverage in *The Times* as it will 'bring reunion for hundreds of families split by the different national status of parents' and 'stop splitting existing families and facing British women with the dilemma of forsaking either their home country or their husbands' (*The Times*, 1973). Politicians are also criticized in the UK press for their inhumane treatment of migrants. The goal in outlining the above is to illustrate that there was an ongoing battle of ideas in this period and the presence of a stronger rights-based discourse made the nature of this battle different from contemporary coverage. The importance of rights-based discourses is that they not only appeal to ideas of commonality and equality among those living in a particular location, they can also

encourage such understandings. Rights-based discourses also promote ideas of human value and quality of life that extend beyond economic value.

4.3.2 Racism

Blatant racism is evident in *The Times* coverage in this earlier period in a way not evident in my contemporary *Times* sample, although it is present in *Daily Mail* and *Sun* coverage. In relation to debate in the House of Commons about new immigration rules and the recent expulsion of British Asians from Uganda *The Times* proposes in an editorial that to speed up the movement of Asians from East Africa 'without endangering racial harmony in Britain' that the British government should try to strike a deal with New Zealand, Australia and Canada so that this group of people could settle in these countries instead (Editorial, 1972). Clearly, it is the colour of the skin of 'African Asians' that is at issue. Racism is also evident in *The Times* comment piece 'A Reminder that Minority begins at home' (Heren, 1973). In this article Heren argues:

> Britain has only so many houses and schools. The capacity of the social services can be extended only so far. In nearly every case they are inadequate, and when they have to cope with new arrivals such as African Asians the native minorities, the poor, the aged and the incapable, must suffer.

In this article as with much later coverage in the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* immigrants are portrayed as a burden, a drain on social services and as costing Britain. However, the cost is presented here as being paid by 'the poor, the aged and the incapable'.

4.3.3 Responsibility

Content in this earlier period is similar in the emphasis on responsibility. Throughout coverage in the 60s, 70s and in contemporary coverage those depicted as poor are either implicitly or explicitly placed into deserving or undeserving categories demonstrating the durability of this binary. A labour frame is often connected to such categorizations. The deserving poor are those who work or who cannot work, the undeserving poor are those who "refuse" to work. While undeserving representations were not common in my historical sample they were present and tap into a long history of stereotypes about "the poor" as lazy, idle and not wanting to work (see Lister, 2004; Golding and Middleton, 1982; Fraser and Gordon, 1994). A typical example of this type of coverage from the historical sample is 'A Little Closer Look at the Idea of a Guaranteed Annual Income' (McDonald, 1975).

> No one denies that we have a responsibility to care for those who cannot work, for widowed or deserted mothers, for injured workers and for old people.

What is debatable is whether we have a responsibility for people who fail to discharge the responsibilities which are unquestionably their own.

The man who has more children than he can support may be in an unenviable position but he had more than a little to do with the cause of his predicament.

The man who prefers to draw unemployment benefits rather than take work which is beneath his qualifications may not be breaking the law but he is hardly doing his best.

The man who refuses a job because it is uninteresting or unpleasant or in a distant place will scarcely endear himself to his fellows who endure those conditions in order to sustain the economy from which he benefits.

In short there is a world of difference between providing an income for the few who are powerless to earn one for themselves and providing an income for everyone who earns less than a certain amount.

Poverty in this opinion piece is depicted as the result of individual failing, no connection is provided to structural or economic issues. Responsibility lies with the individual.

The historical analysis illustrates that rationalizing and individualizing frames were also evident in the 60s and 70s and so contemporary coverage must be viewed as an intensification rather than as a departure from historical coverage in this regard. The only significant difference between the two periods was in relation to social justice frames. Although quantitatively it appears that social justice frames show up at similar rates in earlier and later periods, qualitatively these frames are different in the 60s and 70s. There is more rights-based discourse in this earlier period. Of particular importance in terms of poverty coverage is that there are more arguments put forward in relation to the collective rights of groups of people. These arguments are seriously considered and in many cases supported by both right and left leaning newspapers. The next section demonstrates that social justice frames and rights-based discourses dominate alternative news coverage. An analysis of this coverage provides a means to assess how an increased presence of these frames could change the nature of poverty debates.

4.4 Alternative news content

Table 23: Number of articles in alternative news sample by organization

News organization	Poverty	Immigration	Total
Canada			
Rabble.ca	16	13	29
Mostly Water	4	7	11
United Kingdom			
Red Pepper	3	3	6
IndyMedia	2	8	10
Total			56

In his recent work, Fuchs argues that there is a need to connect theorizing about alternative media to social theory, and that alternative media should not only be understood in terms of their practice but also as critical media questioning 'dominative society' (2010: 174). Fuchs's conception of alternative media as critical media provides a means to consider not only the qualitative aspects of content but also how it functions. My analysis demonstrates that the content on alternative news sites is very different than much mainstream news coverage. While the extent to which alternative news sites can directly counter and challenge content on mainstream news sites is limited to the extent that audiences for these sites are limited, alternative news sites do as Fuchs suggests provide indicators of 'suppressed possibilities' and 'potentials for change'. Alternative news coverage of issues such as poverty and immigration provides an indication of topics, frames, and elements of discussions missing from mainstream news coverage.

Content on the alternative sites analyzed is tied to the fact that the sites' basic model is 'fundamentally different from and incompatible with profit-based corporate news organizations' (Dahlgren, 2009: 176). As previously mentioned the sites analyzed for this chapter include IndyMedia (UK), Red Pepper, Rabble, and Mostly Water. These sites were designed to be participative, help activists better inform each other and to mobilize people. That these sites view themselves as part of a wider community is evident in site structure and the large number of external links on these sites. Further, inclusivity is demonstrated in the provision of content on the Mostly Water site in English, Spanish and French. IndyMedia and Mostly Water are both open publishing sites, encouraging readers to create their own content. In the case of IndyMedia the practice of open publishing was established as in direct opposition to the hierarchies of corporate and mainstream media. A 'create' link is provided in Mostly Water's top banner. Hitting this link gives readers the ability to create by adding news or adding events. It is not necessary for readers to be logged in or registered before creating content. Also a series of guiding text and text boxes are provided to make it easy for readers to submit content therefore actively encouraging new participants. Similarly, with IndyMedia anyone can post content events or news, and guidance notes are provided. However, some content selection does exist as discriminatory content is removed (Platon and Deuze, 2003). Hyperlinks are heavily used on this site, linking readers directly to the organizations being discussed. Rabble and Red Pepper operate more like mainstream news sites in that they do not provide the opportunity for anyone to upload news or feature content. Both do however have active discussion forums where readers can initiate discussion topics. Rabble also provides a link to an "activist toolbox", which is described as 'a community

generated resource on rabble.ca where you can contribute events, actions, recommended websites, and participate in our new wiki style resource section'. As nonprofits Rabble, Mostly Water, IndyMedia and Red Pepper provide a link asking for financial support.

The IndyMedia content differed most in my sample from what is traditionally conceived of as news. IndyMedia content tended to provide reports from protests which were more like blog entries containing first person summaries and photographs, or campaign updates. An article titled 'The Counter Terrorism Bill 2008' (IndyMedia, 2008c) is a good example of how the site is used as an information source for activists. On this page activists explain the Counter Terrorism Bill in common language so others can understand not only what the Bill means but also what some of the implications of the new measures might be. At the bottom of the page the writers signal specifically where more work needs to be done: '[f]urther analysis of these provisions is needed by a person versed in control order legislation'. In this way the site and the document become a focal point for pooling knowledge and expertise and the page becomes a collaborative working document.

As Cook argues, alternative news sites operate by a different logic and are not bound by conventional news norms of objectivity and impartiality (1998: 5) in this way they may not be considered 'news' by some. Those editing or writing for alternative news sites clearly identify a political position and have a political agenda. When describing Mostly Water coverage of poverty issues, the Editor makes plain that the news organization takes a firm position on the issue. Their approach is informed by the view that:

> [P]eople are not poor because of their individual circumstances so much as due to economic policies and political decisions, decisions to cut welfare, decisions to make welfare harder to obtain, these are political decisions that have real effects. And one of the things that the corporate media does is they try to portray the causes of poverty … as either because people are unlucky, or lazy, or just not very smart. I wouldn't want to say that people's individual circumstances play no role, but the degree to which they can exercise choice is constrained by the economic and political system in which we live. And right now often for people it's a choice between welfare poverty or working poverty, because at the same time that we have seen cuts to welfare along with other regulations making it harder to get we also see an increase in employment instability.

Evident in this Editor's comments is that the site directly operates as a counter to mainstream media content. In this way alternative news content has more in common with radical press traditions than much content on mainstream news sites.

4.4.1 The dominance of social justice frames in alternative news content

Almost all content analyzed on alternative news sites presented information in reference to social justice and rights-based discourse.

Table 24: Articles in mainstream and alternative coverage with social justice frames

News organization	Percentage	Number
Canada		
Rabble.ca	72	21
Mostly Water	100	11
Globe and Mail	11	14
Toronto Star	23	24
National Post	14	62
Toronto Sun	14	8
CBC News online	21	6
United Kingdom		
Red Pepper	67	4
IndyMedia	90	9
The Times	9	19
Guardian	26	104
Daily Mail	1	3
Sun	1	1
BBC News Online	15	16

Based on all 2008 articles.

In part, this content is a direct response to and reaction against mainstream news coverage. All of the alternative news activists interviewed viewed mainstream news coverage as problematic and noted that they set out either directly to counter it, or to provide different kinds of coverage. Red Pepper Editor Hilary Wainright says the magazine makes a concerted effort to ensure issues are discussed within social justice frames.

> [I]n the face of an economic policy which is so almost consciously not about equality and social justice, you have to, and in the face of a reality which is so unjust, then in a way your whole rationale, your whole reason for existing is to make an extra effort to put social justice on the agenda, so in a way its linked to our very kind of being (May 2010).

How social justice was presented across these media did differ but overall the idea presented is that everyone should be treated fairly, equally and share in the benefits of society. Social justice frames are often bound together with critques of capitalism.

4.4.2 Capitalism critiques

Missing from most mainstream news coverage of poverty is any critique of capitalism or the present economic system and its role in generating poverty. Such

critiques are present in the alternative news content analyzed. In combination, a number of articles on these alternative news sites present critiques of Canadian and British capitalist economic systems as producing poverty and direct critiques of political action to date. In the Red Pepper article 'The Irresponsibility of the Rich' (2008) Lister calls for a need to change contemporary approaches to the issue and the terms of debate.

> One reason for New Labour's timidity is that even those who subscribe to a more egalitarian agenda fear that it will alienate the electorate. It is one of the paradoxes of public attitudes that surveys consistently show a large majority unhappy about the disproportionate rewards at the top and about the gap between rich and poor. Yet a much smaller and diminishing group supports redistributive policies to narrow the gap.
>
> This may be indicative of the limits of a policy of redistribution by stealth without a clear articulation of egalitarian values in mainstream political debate. If even a Labour government is not prepared to make the case for redistribution, then perhaps the public comes to believe the case is a weak one and that government does not have a legitimate role to play in narrowing the gap.
>
> If that is what has happened, then one of our main challenges is how to change the terms of the public debate and make the case for tackling inequality.

In this article Lister identifies the terms of debate as a key battleground in any attempt to reduce poverty. The article also explicitly connects inequality and poverty. Critiques of the levels of poverty and inequality in the UK are tied to a critique of government and how it has approached the problem.

> More generally, the government's unwillingness to acknowledge underlying structural inequalities, such as of class, gender and ethnicity, or how its own economic policy has fuelled inequality, particularly at the very top of the income distribution, means that economic inequality is slightly wider than when Labour came to power more than a decade ago.

Poverty and inequality here are put into social, political, economic and historical context. Further, through identifying government economic policies as fuelling inequality a specific causal factor is identified.

The Rabble article 'Free Markets Fail' provides a direct critique of capitalism. Much mainstream news coverage when linking poverty to the economic crisis presents the crisis as limiting the potential and resources of governments to address poverty. This article provides a different perspective and argues that the economic crisis demonstrates that a free market system not only does not work but causes poverty, and that markets fail. Duncan Cameron writes:

> For proponents of market economics, rooting out market imperfections such as trade unions, unemployment insurance and welfare payments, and relying on flexible wages instead was thought not only to cure unemployment, but in its wildest expression, say in the *National Post*, to provide a living wage as well. Except that falling rates of industrial unionism, and a weakened social safety net, increased inequalities, not to speak of re-introduced begging on the streets and widespread homelessness.

It turns out that, contrary to the *National Post*, price setting is not politically neutral after all. The market does not abolish power relationships: it facilitates the accumulation of market power in fewer and fewer corporate hands. The accumulation of economic power leads straight to the concentration of political power and allows corporate executives to increase their take of what we all produce, while reducing the share anybody else gets (Cameron, 2008).

The author goes on to argue that investment in public services fares better than investment in the market. When asked about what he tries to achieve when writing his columns, Cameron said he deliberately tries to counter the privileging of market values.

I think it's fraudulent social science to try to reduce everything to some sort of market calculation of preferences or utility. It is only one narrow dimension of what is a much richer human experience. So I bring in the richer. And I think at Rabble we try and go back to older traditions. Let people tell their stories, we want to hear from people who are getting hurt by the system (June 2010).

Cameron argues that the goal for Rabble is to reach people and organizations that are community based.

Unique in IndyMedia coverage in my sample was its attention to companies that are profiting from the UK government's practice of detaining asylum seekers. Three articles of the eight in my IndyMedia immigration sample focused on protests in response to the activities of specific companies: 'Exposed: Company that will expand Manchester Detention Centre' (IndyMedia, 2008a), 'SERCO picket London 8 March' (IndyMedia. 2008b), and 'The Harmondsworth Four Acquitted' (IndyMedia, 2008d). In the first case the person writing was actually a participant in the protest and states: 'We staged a short but noisy protest outside the Manchester offices of Carillion National Building, drawing attention to the planned expansion of the detention facility and of Carillion's involvement'. The second article also provides an account of a protest and photos. This article provides details about how SERCO profits from its detention and removal centre. The author writes:

SERCO may be a name that most people would not recognize, though increasingly around the world it is running their lives. Around the world, governments are turning to SERCO to run what used to be public services – hospitals, prisons, schools and even military services. In the UK, if you go to prison it may be run by SERCO, and you will be taken there in a SERCO van. SERCO also own and run Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre, where around 400 women and children seeking asylum are imprisoned.
Around 70% of the women there at any time claim they are survivors of rape. Conditions at Yarl's Wood are appalling, with inadequate food, racist and sexist abuse, and the profiteering from the sale of essential items… (IndyMedia 2008b).

IndyMedia provides the option for people to post additions at the end of articles. In the case of this article two people have posted comments in support of the protest and links that provide additional details about the company and why protest is needed. In

portraying asylum seekers as being exploited by a profiteering system of detention and deportation, this coverage counters *Daily Mail* and *Sun* coverage in particular.

This brief analysis provides ample indication that content on these alternative news sites meet Fuchs's (2010) conception of critical media. These sites bring our attention to very specific suppressed possibilities for existence that counter dominant representations and approaches to poverty and immigration. In practice these sites are collaborative and community oriented. Content on these sites, particularly on IndyMedia is not bound by news norms and there is a deliberate attempt by content creators to cover issues and events not covered by the mainstream media, or viewed to be not covered adequately by the mainstream media. Participation and activity are encouraged. Further, issues are discussed largely with reference to social justice and rights. Issues and events are also very often contextualized, with critiques of capitalism common. The existence of these communities and discourse brings promise and suggests that there is great potential in using notions of citizens' rights to counter efforts to construct individuals as only possessing responsibilities. However, we must be careful not to equate communication with influence.

These sites are not easily accessed unless individuals know where to find them or are not already viewing alternative publications that provide links to these sites. Compared to mainstream news sites, these sites have very low rankings in terms of popularity. Alexa.com measures site popularity by country, it does so by combining the average daily visitors to a site and the site's page views over a three month period. The site with the highest combination of visitors and page views is ranked highest in any particular country. According to Alexa.com Mostly Water ranked 88,076 and Rabble.ca ranked 4,055 among Canadian internet users. In the UK Red Pepper ranked 49,184 and IndyMedia.org.uk ranked 14,961. As a point of comparison in Canada the CBC ranked 28 and the *Globe and Mail* ranked 36. In the UK the BBC ranked 5, and the *Daily Mail* ranked 17.[5] Further, these sites do not often show up on page one or two of Google results, limiting their potential reach. Neither Rabble, Mostly Water, Red Pepper or IndyMedia turn up in the first ten pages of Google.ca or Google.co.uk searches using the keyword "poverty".[6] This is significant given the dominance of Google in Canada and the UK, and previous research in the United States and in Europe indicating that most internet users do not venture beyond page one of search results (Jansen and Spink, 2005, 2006). Further, the politicians and researchers interviewed for this project did not site any of the alternative news sites analyzed when asked what sources they regularly turn to for

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[5] These rankings are as of 24 Sept. 2011.
[6] Search conducted 6 May 2009 and 5 July 2010.

information. The possibilities and potentials for alternative media and their coverage of issues like poverty and immigration to influence mainstream news discourses and political actors is limited as long as they remain on the periphery.

4.5 Discussion and conclusions

Mainstream Canadian and UK coverage of child poverty and immigration are dominated by rationalizing and individualizing frames. In contemporary news coverage frames that rationalize package discussions in terms of quantification, calculation, cost-benefit analysis and instrumental reason. Frames that individualize package issues in relation to discussions that isolate specific individuals and groups, avoid thematic discussions, while also employing depictions that blame or place responsibility for poverty on the individual. The latter is unsurprising and supports previous analysis of poverty coverage in the United States (Iyengar, 1994; Gilens, 1999; Misra et al., 2003) and the UK (Golding & Middleton, 1982; McKendrick et al., 2008). The former has not been discussed in this poverty research. Rationalizing frames are most common in coverage where "the poor" being discussed are portrayed as deserving, or in immigration coverage, where immigrants are discussed in terms of economic cost or benefit. Individualizing frames are most common in coverage where blame or responsibility is being ascribed, or where the focus is on politics. The dominance of these frames can in part be explained by their congruence with news norms. In particular, news demands for facticity – largely numbers which give the appearance of being scientistic, precise and accurate; the journalistic emphasis on immediacy; the fact that the news must be new; the compressed style of information which, when combined with the requirement of "newness", lends itself to a-historicity; and the tendency to personalize stories as a method of engagement and narrative tool (Tuchman, 1978; Bell, 1991; Knight, 1982; Hall, 1993; Schudson, 2003).

But what is the political significance of the dominance of these frames? I would like to suggest that both facilitate and reinforce market-based processes of evaluation and representation, that these frames privilege neoliberal rationalization and approaches to these issues (Lemke, 2001; Brown, 2005; Foucault, 2008; Couldry, 2010). My suggestion is not that each article fully presents or for that matter embraces neoliberal ideology. Instead, news articles reinforce market values by repeatedly presenting certain pieces of information related to poverty and immigration as worthy of coverage over others. These pieces of information tend to be about cost versus benefits, economic rationales for action or inaction, numerical breakdowns, or individuals as opposed to collectives.

Poverty, particularly child poverty, may remain an object of attention and continual discussion, but when viewed through market-based criteria the issue is transformed into one that revolves around targets, the cost versus benefits of government action in economic terms and not in terms of social or human value or rights. Ongoing presentations of poverty in the news in terms of market criteria facilitate viewing the issue in terms of individuals and individual responsibility, a view that is easily shifted to blame. This is evidenced by the fact that the only poverty seeming to warrant collective response now is child poverty. There is a 'surface of transfer' (Senellart, 2008: 330): while people may continually talk about poverty in market terms, they are not actually engaging in discussions that pinpoint the causes of such high levels of poverty and inequality in Canada and the UK. For example, the identification of and responses to poverty reduction targets suggest that poverty is being dealt with, while the actual causes of poverty such as the continual drive for lower wages and increasing job insecurity (Ferrie et al., 1999; Raphael, 2007; MacInnes et al., 2009) remain unaddressed. In relation to immigration, there is a valuing of humans purely in terms of economics; the economic value migrants bring to their new country. An ongoing practice of viewing humans in this manner implicitly renders undeserving, and potentially a threat all those perceived to not possess the skills needed to meet economic expectations, such as asylum seekers and "un-skilled" migrants. Market-based thinking in these ways presents a shortcut so that economic cost versus justice, for example, becomes the first principle and factor involved in evaluating what the issue/event being portrayed means, its significance, whether or not it warrants action and if so what kind of action. The news I suggest, through its regular privileging of rationalizing and individualizing frames in relation to poverty and immigration, is both shaped by and shapes the extent to which market-based approaches to issues and 'calculative thinking' (Hall, 2011) are treated as of primary importance, "normal" and "rational".

These findings support the view that changing problematic representations and approaches to poverty and immigration which blame the individual and marginalize the structural causes of poverty requires much more than trying to ensure the media provide more positive images of poverty (Mooney, 2010). Analysis of historical coverage demonstrates the extent to which rights-based discourses are absent in contemporary coverage. Analysis of alternative news content demonstrates the extent to which social justice frames are missing from much of the mainstream poverty and immigration coverage. When social justice frames are combined with an emphasis on context and social and political critique the focus shifts to systems and structures leading to

inequality, and not to individuals as objects for blame. Anti-poverty activists and advocacy organizations such as the Campaign to End Child Poverty and Campaign 2000 are advancing these arguments in their work. Increasing and expanding the presentation of these arguments and social justice frames within mainstream news coverage would present a challenge to market-based approaches to the issues.

More historical, social, political and economic context is needed in poverty coverage. This argument is put forward with full awareness that such coverage requires structural changes and investment at a time when there are fewer journalists in Canada and the UK doing more, given ongoing cuts to newsrooms in both countries and increased new media demands (Waddell, 2009; Curran, 2010; Lee-Wright, 2010; Phillips, 2010). However, my results show that a news organization's structural commitments, and the space and time devoted to poverty coverage influences content. For example the *Toronto Star* and the *Guardian*, devote significant resources to poverty coverage. The BBC and the CBC, as mentioned above, take added steps to enhance online coverage. All are less likely to publish articles that place responsibility for dealing with poverty on the individual, and are more likely to present coverage within social justice frames. Immigration content on the BBC and in the *Guardian* is very different to coverage in the other mainstream news sites examined, both for example provided far more detail about the introduction of the points-system and what it would mean.

One way of addressing the shortcomings in poverty reporting in the UK and Canada would be to designate reporters to a poverty beat, as done by the *Guardian* and the *Toronto Star* during my period of analysis. Setting to one side, for the moment, the fact that this would require widespread public interest in the issue and so likely follow and not precede the success of an anti-poverty campaign, and that market-driven news organizations are unlikely to see such a move as attracting advertisers. Nevertheless, there is some precedent. Following the release of statistics indicating that millions of Canadians were living in poverty in 1968 and the establishment of a Royal Commission to investigate the issue, a number of newspapers across the country established poverty beats and devoted reporters specifically to cover poverty. The result, argues the National Council of Welfare (1973) in its report, was enhanced coverage that focused on the issues and not 'the myths'. This precedent reflects the benefit of structural change. If you devote a journalist to an issue and provide the needed resources, namely the time to generate specific specialist knowledge on the issue, this will reflect how often the issue is covered and most crucially how it is covered. Given the extent to which media coverage influences political action (Meyer, 2002; Soroka, 2002a, 2002b; Davis, 2010a, 2010b), it

is also likely that having reporters regularly generating well-informed coverage will lead to more political action on the issue.

History also demonstrates the influence a more radicalized mass media institution can have. The *Toronto Star*'s 'War on Poverty' series (2007–2008) did succeed in drawing political attention to the issue. Although the series has ended, it points to the significant role a news organization can play when it takes on a sustained advocacy position. More directly, the radical press of the nineteenth century did lead to 'cultural reorganization and political mobilization of the working class during the first half of the nineteenth century' (Curran, 1998: 225; Curran, 2003). Key are Curran's observations that the radical press aided in the institutional development of the working-class movement by publicizing meetings and activities, conferring status on movement organizers by reporting them and their actions, and by giving a national direction to 'working-class agitation' (Curran, 1998: 225). Activists are using alternative media and new technologies to inform each other about events and activities, the challenge is that unlike the radical press of this earlier period they do not have a mass audience. Without a mass audience, it is impossible to disrupt ongoing problematic representations and direct agitation in a national direction, which effectively means targeting and changing institutions, policies and practices.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the power dynamics at work within mediated political centres. I move beyond discussions of media content in order to detail the social processes and peopled interactions that constrain how poverty is talked about and responded to. I begin by making the crucial point, through drawing on interviews with politicians, researchers and activists, that obtaining news coverage is central to gaining political attention. This presents particular challenges when it comes to issues like poverty and immigration. As Silverstone argues, it makes sense to think of power as 'the differential capacity to mobilize meaning' (2005: 67). In this chapter I focus on the ability of think tank researchers, agents working within advocacy organizations and activists to be heard and also to solicit a political response. One's ability to access journalists and get into mainstream media coverage is one of the most significant ways to influence what poverty means, how the issue is constructed and to ensure some form of political response. While the media is a contested space, there are a number of processes and structures that in large part (pre)condition the kind of information that gets perceived as valuable and the sources who come to be trusted. Those who are heard typically occupy positions of authority and possess professional skills and the ability to adhere to news logic. Similar factors influence whether or not researchers, advocates and activists are able to get their messages directly to politicians. Recent events in Canada and the UK also demonstrate that the receptivity of politicians and journalists to the messages being voiced also influences access. By this I mean that when the interests of activists, journalists and politicians align, communications are encouraged more. Further, my results demonstrate that nation-specific issue dynamics, for example the presence or absence of well-resourced anti-poverty organizations, influence poverty politics. Finally, trust and personal contact play a significant role in the ability of individuals to access those in positions of power, but are also central to activists who are trying to build grassroots movements.

5.1 News influence on political action

Media management and communications strategy play a central role in politics and policy making in the UK and Canada (Murray, 2007; Kuhn, 2002; Deacon and Golding, 1994). Kuhn (2002) argues that there is interdependency between the media and

politicians and advisors, a relationship he describes as involving 'constant mutual adjustment'. Murray characterizes the Canadian media as 'third sector' interdependent policy players with growing roles in modern governance (2007: 526). But, precisely when and how the media can influence politics have stimulated a range of debate. Davis concludes that journalists and politicians move in over-lapping spheres as both contribute to issue agendas and policy debates, often to the exclusion of the wider public sphere (2007b: 96).

Agenda-setting researchers have and do attempt to identify the extent of media influence on politicians. There is some research indicating that the media have the ability to influence macro political agendas (Walgrave et al., 2008; Soroka, 2002a and 2002b), research also indicates that relationships between politicians and the media are contingent (Green-Pederson and Stubager, 2010). In their comparison of media coverage with political party priorities in Denmark, Green-Pederson and Stubager found evidence of a significant mass media effect on macro-politics, but also that parties would only react to media attention on an issue if it was decided to be in their interest (2010). Walgrave (2008) surveyed media and political elites in Belgium, he found clear support for previous research showing that the media affect the political agenda. Walgrave (2008) added that media influence in the Belgian context varies by issue, by party status and by politician. The arguments in this chapter are advanced with a full appreciation that power and mediation are integrally connected to ever-changing contextual dynamics. My results support arguments that media and political relations are contingent and that actors operating in both spheres influence each other. And when it comes to an issue like poverty, getting media coverage is often central to getting a political response.

Among those interviewed, there was absolute consensus that the news influences political action. All politicians, researchers and activists interviewed, with the exception of John Clarke for OCAP, relied on the news at some point to get political attention. Liberal Democrat MP Jenny Willott, who has worked for child poverty charities such as Barnardo's and as an MP for the last five years, argues that while media coverage will not necessarily influence what kind of policy is developed it will influence whether or not there *is* a policy response. For this reason politicians within and outside of government indicate in their comments that they consider getting media coverage on the issues they care about as part of their job. This was expressed most clearly by one Ontario MPP:

> [M]odern politics is about getting media coverage, I mean really it's that sad or that obvious…. nothing changes without media coverage, nothing. So really what the politician's job is, to be quite Machiavellian about it, is to get as much media coverage as possible about their issues – that's their job and that's their staff's job. And that's simply the way that we have evolved as a parliamentary system. Not

only media, but the media then helps to organize the grass roots. (Cheri DiNovo: NDP MPP and Immigration Critic, July 2009)

Similarly in the UK, Labour MP Frank Field describes the obtainment of media coverage as 'crucial because this government lives by the media'. He notes that '[I]t's important to get coverage not hopefully for one's ego… but because it's the only way to make those in power listen sadly'. It is significant that Field was interviewed in 2009 when Labour was still the governing party and so he is speaking about the need to get media coverage as a means to receiving political attention from members of his own party.

Several politicians interviewed noted that media coverage is important because it indicates to other politicians and those in decision-making positions that there is support for your cause:

> I think it [media coverage] is very important, particularly if you are on the campaigning end of it….If you are on the receiving end then it shows you where public opinion lies and it shows that there is public interest in something which makes a difference to how high up the political agenda it goes.

> [I]f it's an issue that the government, politicians, you are already working on, having some media coverage to show that other people think it's an issue as well kind of gives you validation to be able to get on with it. There are other issues where government is less persuaded where you need sustained coverage or sustained campaigning to actually point towards the need to do something about it (Jenny Willott, Liberal Democrat MP, Aug. 2010).

Even those possessing the ability to design and implement policy, such as Ministers, note that media coverage provides an indication of whether they are on the right, or the wrong, track:

> Immediate coverage is kind of a standard of importance. I mean if you get media coverage, by definition it seems as if you matter, and that it [the policy] is a priority, and you've helped to make it a priority. So media coverage matters, and it's – I mean it's the reinforcement that everybody needs. You may have your own strong opinions, but there's a point at which even with those strong opinions that you have you're still a little bit tentative because you don't quite know what the other person feels, and what media coverage suggests is that there are lots of other voices out there that feel just the way you do, and so it just, it emboldens you and gives you confidence (Ken Dryden, Liberal MP and former Federal Minister of Social Development, Sept. 2008).

In this case Dryden presents the media as providing a type of feedback. Given this line of argument it is easy to see how the media in some cases encourage or discourage action. Savoie (2003) argues that in this respect over the last thirty years the media have become political players in their own right.

Members of the think tanks interviewed echo the above comments and stress that media attention has served to ensure their issue was being talked about and placed on the political agenda:

There is a political reality that every morning elected politicians look at their local newspaper and look at the media newspapers and listen to the CBC and determine around their Caucus tables, Cabinet, etc. the issues of the day on the basis of what's in the news that morning. So it's harder to get your issue on the political agenda if no one's talking about it through the media. So the media is an essential forum for creating debate and awareness about your issue (Trish Hennessy, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Nov. 2008).

The notion of getting media coverage to provide a 'space' for politicians to move into was raised by IPPR Co-Director Lisa Harker:

[A]s a think tank our approach is to provide a strong argument for change, strong evidence for the nature of the problem and offer some policy solutions, and we partly did that through providing policymakers with the research analysis, but we also seek to create a space for policymakers to take action by gaining media attention (Lisa Harker, Co-Director IPPR, Dec. 2008).

The need to create discursive and policy space into which politicians can then move was also raised by Hilary Fisher, former director of the End Child Poverty Campaign, and John Stapleton, formerly a Canadian civil servant and now a consultant working with a number of anti-poverty organisations. Embedded in this notion of space are two important ideas. The first is that getting media coverage provides politicians with the justification for action. If an issue is getting news coverage, a sense or appearance of importance is immediately attached to that issue and all discussion pertaining to it. The second significant idea being put forward here is that the space created is a discursive one. Language about poverty in this case presents the opportunity and capacity for action; similarly an absence of discussion about poverty in the press can be viewed as a barrier to action.

The news also influences political action by predetermining how actors behave. As argued by Davis (2007b) and Fenton (2010), media savvy MPs and activists anticipate and act 'with future reporting in mind' (Davis, 2007b: 96). Dryden confirms:

[T]he media first of all is always there. I mean it's there with some kind of an understanding already. And so that's your reality, and you've got to deal with that reality. And if the reality works for you, that's great. If it doesn't work for you, then you've got other things that you need to do, and you need to find a way of generating a different understanding in the media as well (Ken Dryden, Liberal MP and former Federal Minister of Social Development, Sept. 2008).

Most revealing is Dryden's assessment that if your media is not working for you, you have to find a way of changing yourself, as well as changing media coverage. This suggests that if what you are doing or saying is not being received well by the media, there is a need to switch course and efforts made to get better coverage.

Davis's (2007b) interviews with government ministers and shadow ministers revealed that discussions of policy were frequently considered in relation to how they

would play out in the media, and that party leaders increasingly make policy decisions with future news headlines in mind. In like manner, a Labour MP interviewed for this project commented:

> Government in my view needs to be a bit less frenetic and there needs to be a bit less of initiatives coming from the centre.…They're always looking for things to feed the press, and a lot of these initiatives that lead nowhere – are dreamed up just to keep the press and particularly the tabloids, but not exclusively, happy, to give them something to do….

> Downing Street's become much more powerful, much more hands on. Blair had quite a lot to do with that; Thatcher had a bit to do with that. And perhaps it needed doing anyway, but perhaps it's gone too far. You know the Prime Minister has a foreign policy advisor, he has advisors on every main aspect so you know they kind of make up their own policy or they interfere in what the department is doing or they send instructions to the department (Labour MP A, March 2010).

One infamous event in particular illustrates the focus New Labour placed on media, noted in the above comment. After the 1997 election, Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell are reported to have brought together all of the heads of government information departments and to have told them that New Labour planned to put government communications at the heart of policy making (Oborne, 1999). Sir Christopher Foster, a former senior UK civil servant who worked under Major and Blair, argues that Campbell and Blair's reliance on 'new policy initiatives as the best source of good news' led to too many and an unmanageable number of initiatives (2005: 184-185). He argues that part of the unmanageability resulted from the fact that the initiatives were often not well thought through, and interest in them died once news coverage was achieved. As argued by Couldry, this type of media-driven policy development serves to reinforce greater centralization as policy initiatives emanate from the centre of government, and it also works against potentials for political debate and deliberation (2010: 84). In terms of poverty, this type of policy development means that in the determination of what type of policy is developed, anticipated news response is just as important as anticipated policy outcomes.

For those outside government, the likelihood of media pick-up influences strategy and the types of initiatives that are developed. NDP poverty critic Michael Prue notes that there are multiple ways his party tries to influence the government in relation to poverty, but getting media attention in relation to party activities on the issue is a challenge:

> We put out press releases which are very seldom if ever picked up, but we also have a network. We have a website and we have an email list that we send out to social welfare agencies and anyone who wants put on it, and we send out the questions and the responses from Hansard every time I ask a question on the issue, every time we put out a press release so that they know that somebody is trying to do it because they're not likely to read about it in the paper. I lobby hard in caucus

every morning to have a question on poverty put on the agenda. Now my own caucus is very supportive…; however, there is a limited number of times. They know there is no press pick-up. So when a party is looking for issues and things that they want to push, and that they want the press to pickup, we often go to other issues. And so I get to ask questions usually on slower days. And that's just the reality of what happens (Michael Prue, NDP Ontario MPP, Nov. 2008).

Prue's description demonstrates that there is a specific media approach that involves consideration of what will and will not get news attention, and also an effort to overcome media under-reporting of particular issues that involves contacting groups and constituents directly to let them know an issue of concern has been raised. However, the fact that poverty is not considered 'news' influences how often the issue gets raised. Prue's comments reflect a frustration at a lack of poverty coverage, but also the political context in Ontario. In 2007 and 08, as previously mentioned, the *Toronto Star* was running a 'War on Poverty Series', so there was a fair amount of poverty coverage in the news. Prue's frustration stems in large part from his view that when raising poverty issues the NDP seldom get covered in Ontario.

Matthew Taylor, a Liberal Democrat MP from 1987 until 2010 and appointed Lord Taylor of Goss Moor in Spring 2010, has extensive experience both as an MP and a political strategist. He registers the complexity of the situation:

Media influences strategic decisions, priorities, issue ranking both as politicians react to media coverage, and by how they anticipate media reaction to the stances and policy positions they take. Arguably it is now the tail that wags the dog, especially in an era where policy ideology is less significant to shaping party policy.

MPs are more often following an agenda than leading it. It is rare for party campaigns to set a new issue alive, far more often they are responding to concerns already gaining momentum. So at present Labour is putting itself into the tuition fees debate in so far as it can, and enjoying the impact on the Lib Dems – but the campaign is originated in a controversial government announcement and given profile by students (and other activists) demonstrating; it is also high profile because it is seen by the media as good copy, symbolises 'opposition to the cuts', and is of perceived interest to their readers more personally as it impacts sons and daughters of readers.….

So getting the right media coverage is very important to campaigners – it is the key way to influence policy if you don't have access to policy decision takers … (Dec. 2010).

From Taylor's perspective it is often the media leading the agenda with MPs following. But Taylor's example also demonstrates the complexities of the media/political relationship. Political action can be the stimulus for public response and action, which leads to coverage that then stimulates political response. His final point, that getting media coverage is crucial for campaigners to draw a political response, was acknowledged by all of the activists interviewed.

Activists and actors involved with think tanks report of having to shape their events and content in order to get media coverage. Former Ontario civil servant John Stapleton, who now operates his own social policy consultancy and has been active advising many anti-poverty organizations in Ontario, views media coverage as essential to influencing public opinion which then leads to policy action. But the results are nonetheless the same in that getting media coverage is the top priority. A campaign is successful, he contends, 'when you see it everywhere':

> I mean it's constantly covered, it's captured the public's imagination, it's on TV, it's in the news, and the fact that on Constituency Day, ministers and politicians, people are coming in and rather than talking about a crack in their sidewalk, or they want lower taxes and better services, they come in and they say that this is something that concerns them, what are we doing about these things, what are we doing about second-hand smoke, what are we doing about autism? … (Nov. 2008).

Media coverage, it is claimed, provides a visible indication that the issue has connected with the public. *Globe* Columnist Campbell describes the capture of media attention as almost a rite of passage, necessary to gaining political respect and attention:

> [I]n this community, if they can get earned media, what they call earned media, they can get stories written in the *Toronto Star* or the *Globe* or particularly television then they're treated with more respect by the people who run the government. I mean if they hold press conferences like that, which no-one goes to and they get no coverage it's pretty easy for a government that's juggling a lot of balls to say "well that one we don't need to pay attention to right now… good issue, fine, but it's not getting any traction so we can ignore it" (Sept. 2008).

Media coverage, in Campbell's view, provides a way for activists to hold politicians' feet to the fire.

In brief, these comments demonstrate that politicians, researchers and activists regard getting news coverage as essential to getting a political response. News coverage encourages politicians by providing them with an indication that they have public support, are on the right or wrong track, and it provides them with a 'space' for action, which is to say a justification to act. Lack of coverage effectively becomes a barrier to action since getting news coverage is necessary for researchers and activists to ensure their issue is being talked about and on the political agenda. Given the importance of getting coverage, it is not surprising that the news predetermines action, as actors to varying degrees structure events, actions and content in an attempt to get news coverage.

5.2 The need to 'fit' news expectations

Interviews conducted for this study demonstrate that in relation to poverty and immigration the most important factors influencing access to journalists include social

position, professionalization, holding established relationships and the ability to adhere to news logic; these factors often overlapping. There is a way to do things and a way to talk about issues that limit what is talked about and how it is talked about. This is not to say that in processes of negotiation the conditioning of journalist and activist or journalist and politician may not be mutual, but when one person is trying to get news coverage the tendency is to 'fit' news expectations. The table below provides a quantitative measure of how successful various organizations are in gaining news coverage. This table indicates how many articles, by newspaper (print and including Sunday papers) and public broadcasting websites, reference the think tanks and pressure groups listed. The Factiva database was used to search all newspapers and the website search engines were used to search BBC and CBC online news sites.

Table 25: Number of articles referencing think tanks and pressure groups by mainstream print newspaper and for the CBC and BBC websites in 2008.

Canadian Organizations	Globe and Mail	Toronto Star	National Post	Toronto Sun	CBC	Total
Canadian Centre for Policy Alt. (CCPA)	15	34	3	6	13	71
Fraser Institute	32	16	68	45	16	177
Campaign 2000	0	24	1	4	4	33
No One is Illegal	0	5	1	8	1	15
Ont. Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP)	3	10	1	9	2	25

British Organizations	The Times	Guardian	Daily Mail	Sun	BBC	
Inst. for Public Policy Research (IPPR)	40	66	18	6	59	189
Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)	74	155	58	3	47	337
End Child Poverty Campaign	5	17	0	2	8	32
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	33	85	9	3	21	151
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI)	5	7	1	0	5	18

The chart above demonstrates that research-based think tanks and organizations are far more likely to be referenced in news coverage in 2008 than the pressure groups. This in part may be down to output. Both Campaign 2000 and the End Child Poverty Campaign focus their work on specific annual events, while the CCPA, the Fraser Institute, IPPR, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and IFS produce and publish reports continually. These research reports often provide new information and in this sense would meet the news criteria for newness. The other most significant finding to be drawn from this table is that think tanks and research-based organizations like the Rowntree Foundation are far more likely to be referenced in news articles in the UK than is the case with similar

organizations in Canada. This may be in part due to the fact that think tanks and research-based organizations like Rowntree have a much longer history in the UK than in Canada and are in this respect more established and firmly entrenched in political and media traditions (Denham and Garnett, 2004; Lindquist, 2004). In Britain, although the term think tank did not become popular until the 1970s, the existence of groups working to bring about policy changes or cause a 'shift in the "climate of opinion"' date back to the nineteenth century (Denham and Garnett, 2004: 234). In comparison, 'Canadian think tanks are a relatively young group of organizations having only started to emerge in the early 1970s' (Lindquist, 2004: 164).

These results also suggest that some organizations are more likely to have their efforts covered by particular news organizations than others. Clearly the political leaning and the interests of each news organization plays a role in their receptivity to content from particular sources. For example, *Globe* and *Star* ratios in terms of the CCPA and the Fraser Institute were nearly reversible. The *Star* published 34 articles referencing the CCPA, while the *Globe* had just 15 articles referencing the CCPA. On the other hand, the *Globe* had 32 articles referencing the Fraser Institute while the *Star* had just 16. I would argue that these results are a reflection of the ideological leaning of both papers, with the centre-left *Star* being more sympathetic to content from the left-leaning CCPA. The right-leaning *Globe* was more receptive to the right-leaning Fraser Institute. Canada's most right-leaning paper, the *National Post*, cited the Fraser Institute in 68 articles in 2008. In the UK, the *Guardian* was more likely to cite the Rowntree Foundation than any other news organization. This is a reflection of the *Guardian's* interest in poverty. Overall, the IFS, IPPR and the Rowntree Foundation did receive a high number of references across all news sites searched with the exception of the *Sun*. Although the *Mail* did only have nine articles referencing Rowntree, an indication of this paper's lack of interest in poverty as an issue. The BBC online news site was also far more likely to reference work by think tanks than the CBC in Canada. Also in comparison, Campaign 2000 was referenced far more in the *Toronto Star* than any other Canadian news organization sampled. This is no doubt due to the *Star's* poverty campaign in 2008. In relation to the immigration focused organizations, it may be that the lack of research reports by the JCWI influenced their ability to get coverage. The JCWI had just one research report published on its website for 2008 and four news releases. Similarly, in Canada No One is Illegal Toronto is much more focused on direct action than gaining press coverage as detailed in this and the following chapter. This group released just two press releases in 2008.

In the following paragraphs I provide a more qualitative assessment of the factors that contribute to an organization's ability to get into the news. These findings are based on interviews with researchers and activists working for or alongside each of the above listed organizations.

5.2.1 Adhering to news logic

Policy Consultant Stapleton argues that in his experience the best way to get media coverage is to stop issuing press releases and work with the media 'effectively'. For him this means letting reporters and editors know ahead of time when a report is coming out and meeting with them beforehand to ensure that the report is understood. Speaking from his civil service experience, Stapleton argues the same approach should be taken with politicians and civil servants:

> [I]f you have something then you can, rather than doing something badly in a hurry, you can prepare it in a way to get it into the politicians and have it amply explained, you know, with pros and cons, options and that sort of thing. There's never time to do that when somebody issues a press release, and then it's out in the public two hours later and never gets a good hearing (Nov. 2008).

This kind of approach requires the skills to be able to present information efficiently and also the command of a significant enough position to be welcomed into newsrooms and into government boardrooms.

5.2.2 Responding quickly

Being someone the media calls upon to comment on a news story requires being known to the journalist, but also being known as someone who reacts quickly. In many cases, those working in research, advocacy or activism in possession of these skills have media training, or have even worked as a journalist. Montague had recently joined the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants at the time of our interview (June 2010). He notes that it is difficult to get into the news when 'you're calling them' but that journalists will call you when you are needed. To break into a news story Montague argues that as a first step they will try to obtain Press Association coverage:

> [I]f something looks quite big we'll put out a press release to the Press Association and hopefully the Press Association will take out the key quote, put that into their story and then that will stay in their story when it is reproduced by the national press. What you find is that if you get one moment of traction, so if you get one quote in one story in the *Evening Standard* or PA or BBC, everyone working on that story will read all the stories and they will find your name as the person to do the response quote and then they'll start coming to you. It becomes a sort of process of turbo that feeds into itself… (June 2010).

The extent to which the media operates at 'turbo' speed and 'feeds into itself' most often works against activists as will be discussed in the next chapter, however there are examples of where media speed and content cannibalism (Phillips, 2010) provides an opportunity for those on the outside to break into the news if they can manage to get picked up by one mainstream news outlet. Members of No One Is Illegal and Cameron from Rabble noted that when they manage to have their content picked up and quoted by at least one mainstream news source their story can spread far and wide. Hussan and Chu from No One Is Illegal cite an example that demonstrates that media content cannibalism can lead to activists being the initiators, rather than simply the respondents of a story. In response to what they called some very 'sophisticated spin doctoring' coming from present federal Immigration Minister Jason Kenny, the group wrote a story called 'Jason Kenney's Double Speak Exposed' (2009) to challenge his discourse. They then translated the story into 17 languages and had it printed in 12 of the many language newspapers in Toronto. Hussan underlines the goal as he asserts:

> So we were able to create this tidal sweep back without really engaging with mass media. But what it has resulted in is there have been multiple stories utilizing our research. If you just look up Jason Kenny you will see all of these stories that are utilizing our resources in the mainstream media even that people have taken on because we did so much work on it and had quotes that people could just use so that was also interesting because when you produce media it gets considered (July 2009).

The internet did facilitate the entry of the story into the mainstream media. Hussan notes that the story was published in the alternative Dominion online, and was then quoted and picked up by a couple of Montreal papers and then went mainstream. Cameron describes a similar situation. When Rabble covered George Galloway not being allowed into Canada, one of Rabble's reporters had contacts at the *Guardian*, who then picked up the story. As a result the Canadian press picked up the story from the *Guardian*. Cameron says he knows the Canadian press read Rabble, but claims they do not necessarily want to cite it, so in this case coverage in the *Guardian* enabled the story to spread.

For those regularly trying to get into mainstream news coverage, being able to act quickly is crucial. Montague observes that if 'you're late you don't exist'. A former journalist, Montague brings this experience to his new role as Press Officer for the JCWI. Of interest is that while other activists interviewed mentioned a need to try and slow things down, Montague is trying to speed things up at the JCWI, doing so as a way to increase their media presence. His comments point to the immediacy of the contemporary news environment. He argues that in this environment his iphone is 'extraordinarily important' because it means that 'work doesn't have to stop':

I got a phone call from the *Financial Times* when it was my day off that resulted in a page lead and we would never have been part of that project if I hadn't taken the call, and also email responses. I was saying earlier that time is crucial and the phone means that you are on it that second. You respond that second. You don't respond in an hour and a half. Some journalists might only want one response from one organization. I'm not too precious about another organization saying the right thing, but obviously it's helpful to us to get media coverage so if we have to be first that's useful and that's what the phone does. And the RSS feeds come into my phone, so I have the ability to know what's going on in the migration sector and in the media 24 hours a day (June 2010).

In this account Montague was able to get news coverage in the *Financial Times* because he adjusted his work schedule to that of the journalist. The speed of the news is such that one must be present in a story as it is rolling in order to 'exist'. Without achieving this presence, activists remain on the outside of news discourses and debates.

Similarly, as someone who was regularly called upon by the media to comment on issues, Red Pepper Editor Wainright speaks to the commitment involved. She stresses that breaking into news cycles requires having someone in your organization that possesses media knowledge, skills, time and resources:

[I]t takes a lot of effort and you've got to sort of dedicate your life to it....You've got to be in their rhythm, you've got to be able to respond to events, be on top of the daily news, have a line on everything that is sort of newsworthy and you know that's almost like a full-time job. You can rarely be involved on your terms so it's responding to them. I did that for a bit, but I didn't really want to keep it up because I wanted to do more writing and research of a more long-term kind. And it's hard to find people willing to do that, also people who the media will accept. I mean they accepted me, I think partly because I was a woman and because I'd had some media experience before so I could do it quite easily and come from a fairly, well I've built up a lot of social networks over the years, people who are in the media. So that's quite difficult to replace, so it's not been so easy to get younger people on there, which I'd like (May 2010).

These comments highlight multiple themes raised, and in this context time is again raised as a concern. As someone with media training and established relationships, Wainright was able to 'get into' the news. But this access came at a cost – namely time. Another cost highlighted here is that getting into the media meant sacrificing her ability to pursue her own interests. As she comments, you can rarely be involved on your own terms and are involved, instead, as long as you are responding to that day's news agenda. Her description of the need to exist within the mainstream media's rhythm points to speed as an ontological state, and thus more than just a need to be fast. As someone who once focused on getting into the media but now focuses more on research, Wainright describes the choice she made to move from this all-consuming state of being to a focus on research which provides more time for different kinds of thought and investigation; time of course being crucial to one's performance of these activities.

Describing why she shifted her focus from gaining media access to research, Wainright says:

> I felt the solutions to the problems we face needed slightly deeper thinking. So decided to spend more time on research and writing of a kind I hope is more engaged and then feeds into the magazine. The magazine has become more strategic than it used to be. I think everybody around Red Pepper is feeling the need for more strategic thinking rather than just responding to news.

This need for time to consider issues in greater depth led Wainright and the Red Pepper team to move from monthly to bi-monthly publication. Red Pepper, then, not only contests mainstream news content, as illustrated by Wainright, it opposes the ontology and pressures imposed by the mainstream media, an ontology that is made to seem a matter of choice.

5.2.3 Holding an established position

Relationships are often built over time, as detailed by Mike Brewer of the IFS who notes that relations differ by the type of media involved. The extent to which a source is known influences her or his ability to not only be called upon to respond to issues but to also initiate coverage:

> [T]he personal relationships will come with broadsheet journalists, economic correspondents, social affairs correspondents, welfare policy political people, they tend to not change their job that frequently and we rarely change our jobs, so it's easy to build personal relationships over a number of years. It's harder with television because they're kind of a faceless mask, rather the person you first talk to is a researcher or producer and you don't tend to talk to the presenter. I might talk to the television economic correspondent occasionally, but usually it's filtered through people, whereas journalists will ring you up directly. So personal relationships come mostly with broadsheets, but we do feature on radio, usually Radio 4, and television occasionally. I wouldn't know any tabloid journalists or even mid-market newspaper journalists at all (Sept. 2009).

Brewer's personal relationships with journalists taking the time to cover poverty issues is also a product of his own expert status, having worked on poverty issues for more than 10 years at the IFS and before this holding a position in the Treasury and its child poverty unit when first formed. Trish Hennessy of the CCPA reports a similarly direct relationship with journalists, however in her case this is clearly a product of her media training and ability to provide journalists with the information they need and how they need it. When releasing a report she says she gives a few reporters an advance exclusive to the piece so as to guarantee there will be coverage in the morning. She says she likes to work with reporters she knows, although she does approach cold contacts. Then on the morning the report is released, they post a news release on the Canadian news wire, and

she says that she will personally email and call various reporters who she thinks might be interested in covering the story.

Niels Veldhuis, Senior Economist at the Fraser Institute, notes that his organization has been very successful in getting media coverage:

> So, for example, if we look at 2008, we had about 7300 media hits…. Which if you take the amount of time that is on broadcast, and if you take the column length in newspapers, there's a standard they use in the media world which is called ad equivalency, which is what would you actually have to go out and buy to get that kind of exposure, so we had $11m in ad equivalency in Canada and reached a total Canadian audience of 260 million in 2008. So you know, if you take the Canadian population at roughly 30 million, we're hitting the Canadian populations all of several times in a year (Feb. 2009).

Velduis credits the Institute's media access to respect, the Institute's track record of 'getting it right', and the media being 'quite interested in what we have to say'. He notes that individual analysts do develop relationships with reporters, but that for the most part they issue press releases. Important to note is that the Fraser Institute was created in 1974 to promote the virtues of free-market economics (Abelson, 2007). Previous research has documented a right wing bias in the Canadian press (Hackett and Uzelman, 2003). A content analysis by Newswatch demonstrated that right wing institutes such as the Fraser Institute received 3 to 1 media hits versus left wing institutes in 1996 (Hackett and Uzelman, 2003). A further study found a similarity between the qualitative tone and style of the Fraser Institute's coverage and that of the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives, but that the Fraser Institute had quantitatively more hits: 5.4 to 1 than the left wing CCPA (Hackett et al., 2000: 204-205). The difference in media hits dropped after the CCPA opened a Vancouver office, but additional research indicated that the Fraser Institute was accessed in a wider range of topics and was 6 times more likely to have its research mentioned in news stories (Gutstein and Hackett, 1998: 9-10).

5.3 Access to politicians

Being able to access politicians and civil servants involves some of the same factors highlighted above, in particular professionalization and established relationships. Of those outside government, members of the think tanks interviewed were able on occasion to speak directly to politicians and civil servants. IPPR is known as the first think tank to be sympathetic to New Labour, with many initial members having strong ties to the party. Further, since its inception many IPPR staff have gone on to take up lead roles in the New Labour government (Schlesinger, 2009). Given these ties, Lisa Harker's ability to build relationships with civil servants is unsurprising, particularly since she was contracted by the government to evaluate its policy on child poverty. She notes that IPPR

has good and ongoing links with policymakers. In discussing the Jan 2009 report 'Nice Work if you Can Get It' (Lawton, 2009), Harker notes there were ongoing conversations with civil servants and policy advisors during the course of research, a flagging of issues for them and a sharing of their analysis. After the report was published it was sent to 30 or 40 policymakers along with a personal letter. Harker talks specifically about the unique policy position of think tanks:

> It means that if you, as long as your recommendations and your suggestions are based on solid evidence and knowledge and experience, and you have to ensure that you are really on top of what's happening and understanding the issues, but it does place you in quite an influential position because you are trusted by policymakers to provide pretty sound advice…. And policymakers do turn to think tanks for advice. We are often invited in for private discussions, for seminars and key research that we publish is used in policymaking to inform policymakers' thinking. We also look at kind of playing a brokering role so we can – it's not so relevant in child poverty but certainly on other issues where there's contested space, there's different views about what action should be taken and quite often a think tank can bring people around a table with different viewpoints and try and sort of identify a way through the argument (Dec. 2008).

Of interest is the policy advising overlap between Canada and the UK. Two sources interviewed in Canada, a journalist and civil servant, noted that Harker had advised the Liberal government in Ontario on its poverty strategy. Another reporter also noted close ties between Premier Dalton McGuinty's inner circle and the 'Blairites'. This information provides a glimpse of transnational policy circuits. The growth of transnational activist movements in response and resistance to neoliberalism is widely cited and discussed as being facilitated by new media (Chadwick, 2009, Dahlgren, 2005; Bennett, 2003). However the ties between the Blair and McGuinty circles that came to light in my interviews indicate it would be worthwhile considering how shared neoliberal policies and rhetoric are enabling overlapping circuits of policy development, and what role new media plays in reinforcing and strengthening the status quo.

Brewer of the IFS notes that they are on occasion called to provide advice. Some of Brewer's contacts resulted from his working in the Treasury before moving to the IFS. His comments that getting media attention is not always a priority or necessity are explained and take on great meaning when one considers that the IFS is able to directly present their information on occasion to public servants and politicians. Brewer sites the example of a report he drafted which detailed how to measure the time and effort persons on benefits and welfare spend collecting benefits and filling out forms. The report presented recommendations for policy, and when finished it was disseminated through the delivery of seminars within government departments.

This type of relationship with civil servants was not mentioned by the members of the Canadian think tanks interviewed. In the case of the CCPA this might be due to the think tank's historical alignment with the NDP (Hackett and Uzelman, 2003). When asked if the CCPA ever meets with politicians or civil servants, Hennessy replied: 'Well we're not an advocacy organisation; we're a think tank. Occasionally, we will get called in and requested by governments and politicians to brief them on our work. But we do not actively advocate and lobby in that respect'. Her response indicates that there are no ongoing ties between government and the CCPA, nor are there relations of policy building. When asked about the Fraser Institute's influence, Veldhuis responded:

> [G]enerally speaking the Fraser Institute has had a tremendous amount of influence. I mean the current policy landscape in Canada for a large part reads like our past publications, you know, whether it's on waiting lists for hospitals or looking at other European healthcare systems, whether it's increased school choice, whether it's reducing taxes. I mean all of those things are really issues that the Institute got involved with early on and made people aware of. So we've had a tremendous amount of influence in Canada (Feb. 2009).

These comments demonstrate that the Fraser Institute has been advocating policies that are in line with the overall turn to neoliberalism in Canada. But Veldhuis does not indicate that the Institute has direct access to MPs or policy makers, or is called upon to do briefings in the way the IFS admits.

This comparison between the think tanks in the two countries demonstrates that in the UK these organizations are relied upon as a policy development resource more directly and to a much greater extent. Think tanks in the UK are not only tapped for new policy ideas, they are also used as a testing ground by parties who on occasion run ideas by members of these groups. Further, members of these groups, like Harker, are contracted by government to oversee action on particular policy approaches, such as child poverty. Given their established position and the professionalized information produced, both the Canadian and the British think tanks clearly have ties to journalists in both countries. However, it is notable that British think tanks are far more likely to be referenced in news content suggesting they are actively pursuing media coverage, that they are producing more content, and/or that their content and the opinions of researchers are considered more newsworthy and relevant.

5.3.1 Access to politicians when interests align

Montague notes that the JCWI emails policy papers to MPs and that some of their work has been raised in committee debates, via those they have good relationships with and who are sympathetic to their cause. The inbox in Capponi's Blackberry demonstrates

the extent to which she has become a trusted source. Her access is also connected to the fact that poverty, up until 2008, was receiving much media attention, in part due to the *Star's* 'War on Poverty' series, the very organized and mobilized advocacy campaign on the issue, and the political attention being directed to the issue. At the time of our interview her inbox contained emails from senior *Toronto Star* journalists, a CBC journalist and a Senior Policy Advisor for the Ontario Poverty Strategy who she claims to always get back to her very quickly.

Relatively recent political dynamics in Canada and the UK have meant that activists have greater access to those in positions of political power than in previous times. Interviewees in the UK noted there was a dramatic shift in their access from the Thatcher/Major governments to that of Blair/Brown. Hirsch says that the Thatcher administration was quite hostile to social scientists '[a]nd so I had spent the first half of my working life just completely lobbing grenades into the ether really' (June 2009). In contrast, he says New Labour welcomed social scientists into the fold and even created the child poverty unit to pressure the government from the inside. Similarly, Capponi and Maund note that under the Harris Conservatives in Canada they were completely shut out; while under the Liberal Government they have been actively consulted. Both the UK government and the Ontario government have made child poverty a focus, the Liberals much later, and both have established poverty reduction targets. New Labour did reduce child poverty, although progress lagged and it did not meet its own targets. Overall poverty and inequality rates remain high, but Hills, Sefton, and Stewart (2009) argue that without the changes made by New Labour after 1997, income inequality and poverty rates would be significantly higher. In Ontario, a year after the Liberal Government introduced its poverty reduction strategy, the 25 in 5 group note improvements were made: including investments in child benefit and social housing, increased protection for temporary workers, and plans to invest in early learning. They also stress that the province will not meet its poverty reduction goal without bolder action, including social assistance reform, affordable public transit and working to reduce inequality (2009). The slow and halting progress of Liberal and New Labour governments leaves many questioning the significance of greater access and the links between access and co-option.

5.3.2 Access versus influence

Interviews with activists indicate they are adjusting and devising their strategies in order to also meet political demands for information, and information that is packaged in a particular way. As detailed below, the activists interviewed are highly critical of

adjusting content and events to gain media or political access and response. Several interviewees indicated that when politicians work with activists and researchers they encourage poverty issues to be presented in rationalizing terms. Hirsch's discussion of Rowntree's 'Estimating the Costs of Child Poverty' report indicates that quantifying the cost of poverty was encouraged by the charities and by government:

> I think having seen the success of the £4 billion we were encouraged both by the charities and actually by people within government, friendly people within government, to try to produce a single number on the cost. Yes because they thought this would be something which you could use and it would give it sort of justification and it helps to offset the fact that you are having to spend large amounts of money that you can see that it's costing you a lot (June 2009).

Hirsh notes that the report received a great deal of media attention and also became used by government in its own internal information sharing; the report being the first citation within an internal circular to stress why the Child Poverty Bill needed to be taken seriously across government.

The 25 in 5 group was established around the specific goal of reducing poverty in Ontario by 25 percent in five years (by 2013). This move was favourably responded to by government, as noted by a senior policy advisor on poverty reduction:

> 25 in 5 is actually a network of stakeholders, so it's organised not as a single entity but they came together to present a unified front on their priorities for the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
>
> The role that they played was really important because they were able to generate at least some public consensus about what the stakeholders wanted to see in the Strategy. So instead of dealing with, [all] the organisations that make up the 25 in 5 network…. instead of having [all those] different opinions about what all the priorities were, and not that we only listen to the 25 in 5 one, we met with a lot of groups, but they provided some consensus and some direction and some alignment to what some of the broader goals should be for the Strategy. Plus they also were a good venue through which the Minister and I could communicate some ideas to them (Civil Servant H, Jan. 2009).

The rationalization of poverty that is embodied in the very title of this organization is an issue. Does the naming of this group betray a further extension of neoliberal rationality? And/or is the emphasis of anti-poverty groups on quantifying and rationalizing poverty, and their ability to gain media and political access through this process, an example of 'repressive tolerance'? (Marcuse, 1969). The advancement of neoliberalism in Canada in the 70s and 80s coincided with poverty's political reduction to child poverty and a strategic decision by activists to target child poverty as a way of garnering positive media and political attention. In the beginning of this century, poverty is being even more narrowly defined to the matter of targets. Further, while Campaign 2000 and the Child Poverty Action Groups were focused on eliminating child poverty, 25 in 5 presents the

very modest goal of reducing poverty by 25 percent in 5 years, and by 50 percent in ten years. A focus on targets can be useful, but it also deflates a movement because it draws attention away from the issues, people and social justice arguments outlining why action is needed. Further, as climate talks, emissions talks and now poverty targets all make plain, shrugging off targets is easier than countering arguments for increased equality. There is also the very real potential that an emphasis on targets and the media focus on poverty numbers over more detailed considerations of causes and solutions serves to make the misery and injustice of poverty "tolerable" and "tolerated" by objectivising it and normalizing it. Piven and Cloward (1997) argue that the welfare state and the social supports it offers such as unemployment insurance serve to let off just enough "steam" as a result of the injustices produced in a capitalist system in order to maintain the status quo. It is possible that the emphasis on poverty reduction targets acts in a similar way. Groups are able to challenge the system in increments, by arguing for poverty reduction targets. These targets do get a significant amount of coverage and political attention while structural inequalities are permitted to continue and in fact be intensified as has been the case with the cuts to social services in the UK throughout 2010 and 2011.

These criticisms are made while keeping in mind the very real constraints poverty activists face and their own awareness of the strategic choices they are making. Voices from the Street's Capponi is convinced that much of the political and media access she and the group received came from the expertise available by members of the 25 in 5 group. Also evident in her account is the pragmatism involved in deciding to enter into negotiations with government:

> The way that we are working, is in a new way. So we don't work in slogans, we don't just tear things down. We made a decision to engage with government. I made a decision to be pragmatic and to try "lets see what we get out of these dudes because who the hell else is there?". The NDP is not coming to power and the Conservatives are going to kill us, right. So to me they're the only game in town. So it's a case of try to support them when they do anything that's good and when you need to prod, prod but with respect which is not an easy thing…

> To engage means you've got to risk, and it means, you know, we get criticized by people for being with government, you know we're told we're co-opted. But I look at what we've achieved and I look at what they've achieved and I'm content (July 2009).

Capponi argues that the strategic decision to work with government means walking a fine line and not being afraid to criticize when the government does not go far enough.

Providing a counter argument, Clarke argues that a lot of damage can be done under the guise that government is negotiating with activists:

The Liberals haven't as aggressively gone after the social safety net as Harris did, but what they've essentially done has consolidated the common sense revolution and allowed its impact to accumulate and deepen.

I mean in just about everything. There are more economic evictions going on, food bank usage has increased. The most basic things that they talked about although their initial promises were fairly nebulous but where there were any concrete stuff in their strategy they seem to do virtually nothing….Take The Safe Streets Act. I mean they actually campaigned against it and said they would repeal it if they were elected. Once they were elected they didn't just not repeal it they actually went to court to defend it against a constitutional challenge. Now, belatedly, they've done this round of hearings around poverty reduction and stated that the changing economy may mean that they're not going to move on it as much as they intended to. But the stuff that we are seeing is at best limited and in many ways regressive (Nov. 2008).

Politicians have long used co-option as a strategy to silence critique. As Clarke details, attention must be paid to the difference between rhetoric and action. During my interview with him, Rabble columnist and activist, Cameron (2010) described former Prime Minister Paul Martin as attempting to mute budget critique by inviting members of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives into small meetings that would last for hours in advance of the budget. I would argue that it is necessary to have both negotiated and non-negotiable approaches and that one need not rule out the other. As evident in the UK and in Ontario, negotiated processes of communication have ensured that poverty remains a topic of discussion and on the agenda, if not always being dealt with as a main priority by politicians.

No One Is Illegal says their attempts at direct challenge and refusal to be co-opted have led to journalists and politicians changing their language, replacing the word "illegal" to describe people with "undocumented" or "non-status". But they also note that much of their influence depends on the context and the ideological underpinnings of the party in power. So while the Ontario Liberal Premier has recognized that everyone should have access to an education regardless of status, the election of a Conservative government federally has made it increasingly difficult for them to stop deportations no matter how many people they can mobilize or how much coverage they can get for their campaigns.

Many anti-poverty activists interviewed are operating at two levels. On the one hand, groups like Capponi's Voices from The Street are working with politicians to try and influence policy directions, and on the other hand this group is annually training persons of low-income to be more effective activists. They are working on the street to mobilize local communities and help develop community leaders who can then go on to mobilize others. Despite its frustrations, negotiated action is recognized as necessary. The

activists interviewed want coverage of poverty that is detailed, considers the issue beyond the individual and draws connections to structural causes and solutions. But getting such coverage is very difficult. Activists like Capponi want to have the voices of those on low income in the news, but as she argues simply being represented is not enough. Capponi says Voices from The Street are regularly approached by the media for sources, but that people can be disappointed by media coverage:

> We don't coddle our guys, nor do we tell them what to say, so if they're going to deal with a reporter, they deal with the reporter. And they kind of know what to expect, but not always, sometimes it comes as a shock, but they get that this is the way that we get our stories out. What other way is there? (July 2009).

Capponi notes that access differs by newspaper, and while the *Globe* and the *Post* are nearly impossible to break into, she does find getting coverage in the *Star* much easier since the paper started its 'War on Poverty' Series. In her account, her access changed about a year after the *Star* started its series. She says she recognized the change immediately upon walking into a *Star* Editorial meeting and being warmly welcomed. She asked to write an opinion piece for the paper, and the request was immediately granted. She says she now has much better access to the paper; in fact she now publishes in a *Star-* affiliated blog. However, when talking about how poor people are covered, Capponi says she wishes 'they could just write the stories themselves'.

Hussan and Chu of No One Is Illegal note that by playing into demands for individual stories they could regularly get coverage (as discussed in greater detail in the following chapter), but that they do so only when necessary. Rather, he argues that in the organization's sixth year of existence, their priority is to build power, in their view a slower but more lasting project. Similar to the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, the group is trying to mobilize people and build counter-movements. When outlining what that power means, it is clear that No One Is Illegal is trying to develop an awareness of immigration issues that runs counter to mainstream media representations, and that they are for the most part bypassing the mainstream media in order to achieve this goal. The group instead focuses on producing their own media, new media use, and getting out to events and meeting people:

> We have two priorities. One is status for all. But when you say status for all it is incumbent that we are saying the processes that displace people simultaneously stop. That means war stops, that means occupations stop, that means economic repression stops, so it's not like some 24-hour formula that is going to happen tomorrow. The second thing is sanctuary city, building this city into a place that is safe for all people (…..) That translates into multiple types of campaigns and multiple types of consciousness shifting. We're trying to shift the entire discourse and that's like producing media, doing all of these things…. (Hussan)

I think we consistently keep talking to people, going out there and having that presence, that's how we continue to build. I think we keep doing that consistently and I always think that's our work, our ongoing work. Because I think it is also a cultural shift, the idea that no one is illegal and spreading that message far and wide (Chu).

Because it's not a name so much as an idea (Hussan) (July 2009).

Media campaigns, as detailed in this description, are multi-faceted. Also evident in the quotes is the different timescale the group is working on, and here No One Is Illegal is similar to Red Pepper. Hussan stresses here that the group's long-term goal is to shift consciousness.

5.4 Trust and personal contact

Despite an increased reliance on the internet for communication and as an information source, journalists, politicians, researchers and activists report that personal contact is most important for influence. As noted by Harker, co-director of IPPR, face-to-face contact is also crucial when trying to influence politicians or policy makers:

Well our website is very critical, so our research is published on our website, and we provide weekly email bulletins to key stakeholders, and so electronic new media has, I guess, become the backbone of what we're doing. I mean ten years ago, you would describe our main outputs as being published written reports, and we would be disseminating them by post. These days, the majority of our reports are published electronically and distributed by email. But in relation to advisers, ministers, civil servants, the face-to-face contact is the critical contact really, partly because of the sheer amount of electronic mail they're getting, to ensure that we have a chance to discuss ideas in some detail you really need a face-to-face meeting (Dec. 2008).

Despite the increase in deskbound journalism and increased reliance on email, journalists note that there is always more to be gained through face-to-face contact or telephone calls. As noted by *Guardian* Home Affairs Editor Travis:

I find face-to-face, talking to someone on the phone, they're always going to tell you something else. The basic journalistic question, the way you find things out is: 'Oh is there anything else going on? 'It's just still that basic journalistic point about talking to somebody. If you just do it in terms of writing then you're only going to get the answers to the questions you asked. You've got to create the space where people will tell you things they wouldn't necessarily tell you (Feb. 2010).

Personal contact, as detailed by Travis, provides people with an opportunity to tell you things they might not in an email. Engaging with someone directly, then, provides a means to have an unanticipated interaction.

Activists and alternative news journalists are careful to note that some of the most beneficial information they get is from offline sources. Montague, JCWI Press Officer,

says that if he really wants to find out what is happening he will talk to case workers in his office:

> I think really valuable research is stuff that isn't already pre-existing, so we'll also speak to other organizations and try and find case studies. First port of call is our own case work department because they are the chalkface. They know how policy is actually being implemented which you won't get on the website (June 2010).

Similarly, activists involved with No One Is Illegal stress that talking to people is crucial so they can make contacts and come to know information 'first-hand'. Hussan and Chu describe the group as very grassroots with campaigns in schools, health services, shelters, food banks, and within police services and post-secondary institutions. They also note that they work with labour unions and provide (often media related) support to other organizations to which their members belong, throughout Ontario, across the country and even internationally.

So while Hussan says that No One Is Illegal has a Facebook group, a YouTube channel, a website and that they send out weekly announcements via their listserv to 4,400 people, Chu submits: 'Those things would all be useless if we weren't actually out there in the community. I don't think it would mean anything if we were not out there in the streets'. Hussan agrees:

> It's imperative as you're [Chu] saying that we be present. We are a grassroots movement and the intention is to talk to people. If somebody is on our listserv it means somebody talked to them and got their email address and put it down. Because our website is essentially report backs of actions so we do something and then we report it…. We don't put out analysis pieces; we don't have a lot of writers in our organization who are going out and writing stuff and publishing it. We just are doing actions and building in the community and allowing the sort of public presence to emerge (Hussan) (July 2009).

In their description of new media use, Hussan and Chu stress that making contact with people and being present at events is their primary goal.

Although the JCWI is not as radical as No One is Illegal, Montague also argues that for them having a web presence is only useful if people know who you are and if the website is connected to a larger campaign. He says the website is a useful location for organizing training courses and to post policy work: 'The internet as a stand-alone, isolated thing is next to useless, but as part of a package of communications where you are getting your message identity across then it's really really useful'. Montague further observes that when it comes to building momentum, face-to-face meetings are crucial:

> You know you wouldn't have a two-hour phone conversation, and an email you'd limit the amount of info you were asking for because people tend to either reply or not reply, they won't half reply. And also trust and things like that won't be built up through viewing someone's website or taking down their policy document. So when you've got the resources and the time and the network then you should meet

in person....It's a lot more rich, the quality of it isn't tangible.... It's all of a different quality or nature to the internet.... There's something about human interaction that is so rich that if you really want someone to trust you and believe you then face to face is where (it happens)....[Y]ou need everything. If you are brilliant in person but your website's a bit shoddy that's going to damage the overall effect. But you can't run an operation without meeting people (June 2010).

Trust in the new media environment is as important in the activist community as it is in political and journalistic circles. In a manner, Montague's comments convey some of the discomfort that comes with the ease and access of new mediated communication.

The importance of direct contact and face-to-face interaction is repeatedly raised by activists for mobilizing, organization and influencing. In describing how the End Child Poverty Campaign used their website to lobby government in advance of the 2008 budget, Former Director Fisher also details a combination of online and offline approaches. To lobby politicians, she says the group focused on direct-level action and on asking people to write and contact their MPs and the Chancellor:

I think politicians are still in the envelope and paper stage. I think you need the younger politicians who understand and really get a handle on new media for it to make a difference. I've been regularly told by politicians that there's nothing like a letter, and in particular a letter from their constituents, and that's one of the things that we did try very hard to do was to encourage people to write to their MP to get their MP to lobby the Government, and I'm still getting back letters now from MPs who've received a response from the Minister in the Treasury who's dealing with child poverty to letters that we wrote to them that they subsequently lobbied the Treasury about before the Budget (June 2009).

For Fisher there is a place for the internet and a very important place for offline forms of contact. When strategizing for the End Child Poverty Campaign she notes that a highly important component was to have MPs who took on the role as child poverty champions. She notes that they got the Labour child poverty champion to focus on Labour backbench MPs. They managed to get a letter signed by 75 Labour backbench MPs which they then got published as an advert in the newspaper a week before the budget. She is certain that this was influential and helped the group ensure money was directed toward reducing child poverty in the 2008 budget, even despite the crisis.

5.5 The importance of context

The above examples speak to the similarities in Canadian and UK mediated political centres. However, there are a number of significant contextual differences influencing poverty issue dynamics. As previously mentioned, there is a much longer history of poverty measurement and research in the UK than in Canada. In relation to this, in the UK there are more well-resourced research bodies with poverty reduction goals, those which are established and recognized by politicians and the press to be authorities

on the issue. Politicians report that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Child Poverty Action Group have immense influence on the issue landscape. Speaking about his time on the Department of Work and Pensions Committee and their work on child poverty, former Conservative MP Paul Goodman notes that in his time on the Child Poverty Select Committee these two groups in particular were highly regarded:

> ….These groups would be right in front of the cue – they obviously would be working frenetically to make sure they keep their end up in the media that's part of what they do as well as everything else that they do. But their connections with government in its broadest sense were already very strong (Aug. 2010).

When asked why these groups are so influential, Liberal Democrat MP Willott notes that it is because they provide trusted information, propose solutions and backup everything they say with evidence:

> Both of those organizations they make sure that they absolutely know what they are talking about, they have done the research, they have the evidence to back it up, and that means that it carries a lot more weight. And they also keep going for a really long time on the same subject which means that they develop over time. You can see the progress that is being made and you can see how their proposed solutions develop over time as well….[T]hey are quite pragmatic in how they approach subjects and I think that's, you know, they are not just high-minded and unrealistic in what they are proposing … which makes them much more influential than they would be if they were sticking to high-level proposals (Nov. 2010).

Willott highlights a number of the factors already raised throughout this chapter, demonstrating that access is dependent upon a number of inter-related factors. Detailed here is how crucial it is that these groups provide trusted information and have established themselves as authorities on the issue of poverty. But also important is that they are provided information perceived as 'pragmatic' and not 'high-level proposals'. By pragmatic here Willott is presenting the position that the proposals being put forward are doable and therefore not radical.

There can be little doubt that the vast amount of research available on the issue, in combination with the continual presence of a strong left wing voice in the national media landscape on poverty via the *Guardian*, has influenced the salience of the issue in political terms. In addition, it is also significant that addressing poverty provided New Labour a means to connect to old Labour supporters. However, under New Labour poverty is dealt with largely with a view to it being the responsibility of the individual. This constant recourse to the individual and individualising reasoning and away from the societal and social explanation is commonly associated with a neoliberal interpretation of welfare, the role of the state and our place within it (see Chapter 3). Under New Labour there are no 'rights without responsibilities' and the government's role is that of 'enabler'

(Lister, 2003). Lister points out that New Labour extended the previous conservative government's managerialism as any new investment was accompanied by targets, audits and efforts to root out inefficiency (2003: 429). In the case of the coalition government, to date there has been a discursive emphasis on fairness (during the election), a budget that disproportionately harms those who are poor, and repeated stress on the idea that poverty is a 'culture'.

In Canada, the National Council on Welfare provides regular poverty research, as does Campaign 2000, both nationally and provincially, but neither provide the span and scope of output one finds with the Rowntree Foundation. Poverty is rarely discussed at all by the federal Liberals and almost never by the federal Conservative government. One of the quickest ways for poverty to gain more media and political attention would be for the Liberal or the governing Conservative Party (the two most popular parties in Canada) to take up the issue. When interviewed in 2008, Maund of Campaign 2000 detailed that to date it had proven impossible to get access to the federal Conservatives:

> Basically we've sought meetings with the Conservative ministers responsible. We have not been at all successful. We've even offered them a briefing on an embargoed copy of the National Report Card in Ottawa, and did not get a positive response…. At the last release of the National Report Card, November of 07, we invited a member from all the four federal parties to our press conference on Parliament Hill, and so they came, they all came except the Conservatives….

> The closest we've ever got, I met shortly after they were first elected with a person in the Privy Council, the staff person responsible for poverty, and the only reason I was able to get that meeting, I think basically, is because she comes from a faith background and our faith community contacts, someone knew her personally so I was able to get a meeting. She was very frank and said this is not, the issues that you're talking about are not, a priority on the agenda that the Prime Minister has currently sketched out – and yeah that indeed has been the fact, we've not been able to penetrate at all (Sept. 2009).

In part, the Federal Conservatives are able to ignore the issue of poverty because there is a lack of public pressure, and a lack of media attention at the national level. In Ontario the linking up of more than 100 anti-poverty groups into the 25 in 5 network and the *Toronto Star* 'War on Poverty' series led to swift, albeit inadequate, response from the provincial Liberal Government. It is significant that it was a Liberal Government that responded. The issue of poverty demonstrates very clearly the contingent relationship between the media and politics. What the UK and Ontario examples demonstrate, however, is that attention and more specifically political attention do not necessarily facilitate significant social, political and economic action of the kind needed to reduce poverty in any serious way.

In relation to immigration, there are a number of different dynamics in each country influencing news coverage and politics. According to the most recent census statistics for Canada, as of 2006 19.8 percent of the population is foreign born, while in the UK only 8.3 percent of the population is foreign born (2001 Census). The result is that immigrants have significantly more voting power in Canada. Particularly important in terms of federal politics is that immigrants make up tremendous proportions of the population in Ontario and Quebec, and given the number of House of Commons seats up for the taking in these provinces, the outcomes of voting in these regions can make or break the prospect of winning an election and/or mean the difference between a majority or minority government. These realities, in addition to the fact that Canada self-identifies as a nation of immigrants, make it quite difficult for politicians to appeal to or stir up anti-immigrant sentiment. In contrast, this is much more possible and indeed a practice in the UK, as evidenced by findings presented in the previous chapter and the most recent 2010 election campaign. Immigration is viewed as a vote 'loser' or 'winner' in the UK. Pitcher (2006), who surveyed the 2005 UK election campaign, argues that while overt racist discourse may be avoided, parties compete via their promotion of 'negative ideas of racial difference'. Similarly, Richardson (2008), who after surveying leaflets during the 2006 Bradford local election campaign, concluded that 'prejudicial ethnicist discourse' is not only a product of the far right but 'is incorporated by mainstream British political communications'.

A number of those interviewed noted the influence of tabloids on policy and immigration debate in the UK; while tabloids were not raised as an issue in Canada. One journalist interviewed said he thought the government made direct attempts to '*Mail* proof' issues. When asked about tabloid influence, Labour MP A commented:

> I would say it's virtually impossible to have any rational public conversation about a series of subjects now, one would be immigration and asylum, another would be taxation….There's whole areas now where the hysteria that can be organized can be so considerable that many politicians just fear to tread there….I don't think it's just the tabloids, I should say though it's clear what's happened in the last 10 or 15, maybe longer, years is the tabloid virus has escaped from the tabloids and is now infecting some of the broadsheets and some of the broadcast media (Labour MP A, March 2010).

What this MP is implying is that there are certain things that cannot be said about immigration. This represents a very real constraint on public debate and policy development. Important is that the MP who offered these remarks does think that migration is an important issue that warrants discussion; at issue are the pre-determined limits placed on discussion by what he refers to as a 'tabloid virus'.

Similarly, when asked about whether or not *Daily Mail* proofing issues is a political reality, Former Liberal Democrat MP and now a Lord, Taylor commented:

> Yes. The *Daily Mail* is hugely influential with swing voters (especially women), has a very clear highly politicised editorial policy, and this shapes a lot of policy stances…. [N]ot always (and it may be presentational changes, or substance) – but it is not only the reaction of the *Daily Mail* that is considered, there are lots of concerns from party members to voters to opinion formers to special interests....but the *Daily Mail* is part of the equation. Liberal Democrats (are) less concerned about the *Daily Mail* though than the other main parties, as proportionately fewer of its voters in this segment, and generally more policy and principle led (in the nature of third party more distant – till now – from power nationally) (Dec. 2010).

Clearly the *Daily Mail* is not the only newspaper influencing government policy, as detailed by Taylor, but the paper does possess considerable influence, as is clear by his first word and response: 'yes'.

The *Daily Mail's* influence is a product not only of its large circulation, but the influence it has on other tabloids. A *Daily Star* reporter refers to the *Daily Mail* as the "go to" paper for tabloid reporters:

> The *Daily Mail* really is the biggest political force newspaperwise, I know for the tabloids it is the must read. I mean that is the paper we would read in the morning.
> Q - And would it set your news agenda then?
> Oh big time, I mean literally the *Daily Mail* website is like a bible. A lot of copying and pasting and re-jigging of their stories (Reporter J, July 2011).

It is significant that while not disagreeing with the idea that UK governments try to '*Mail* proof' issues, in the opinion of former Conservative MP Goodman the now Conservative Liberal Coalition goes out of its way to '*Guardian* proof' issues. The point underlines the importance of having a range of positions represented in the press.

The extent of influence of the tabloids in the UK is evident in the political effort put into wooing them. Alastair Campbell's (2007) diaries are short on detail, but they demonstrate the anxiety and effort that went into wooing Rupert Murdoch. While Peter Oborne's work on Campbell, of which he spoke to more than 200 people, provides a detailed account of the New Labour effort put into 'taming the press' (1999).

In contrast, Canadian tabloids do not exert the same kind of political pressure. One *Toronto Sun* columnist's views on the subject are revealing. When asked if she tries to influence politicians, Blizzard said:

> I think that's probably where journalists and politicians and activists and others sort of where they don't really understand the job of a journalist. My job as a journalist is really to write for my readers and to inform them. I don't really write for politicians I think that would be a mistake because my readers are a much broader constituency than the politicians (July 2009).

No Canadian activists or politicians expressed the view that the tabloids in Canada were any more influential than any other newspapers.

5.6 Conclusion

Getting into the news or being able to directly speak to political decision makers about an issue such as poverty are influenced by social position, professionalization, possessing already established relationships and/or the ability to adhere to news logic. Organizations possessing these characteristics achieve the legitimacy needed to be taken seriously. As noted by Schlesinger in 1990, for non-official sources an 'aura of expertise' is still a necessity for groups to gain media access. The ability to adhere to news logic requires a professional skill set which includes the ability to respond quickly and being willing to adapt to news time. Success, as indicated by Montague of the JCWI, means being on call at all hours, and therefore able to take advantage of an opportunity when it arises. But success, as detailed by the Red Pepper's Wainright, is often limited and means being given the opportunity to present your opinion on the issue being covered and *not* the ability to set the news agenda. Being called upon often depends upon holding an established position, or being known to journalists as credible. Both situations require the group or individual to have been around for some time. Access to journalists and politicians is easier when the issue is already a topic of concern and when a group and journalist or politician's interests align. With respect to child poverty, this was the case for activists and researchers like Harker in the UK under a New Labour government. It was also the case for activists like Capponi, between 2007 and 2008 when the *Toronto Star* was running its 'War on Poverty' series and the Liberal government was responding to media and advocate pressure by developing a poverty reduction strategy. In both situations advocates and activists were able to keep poverty on the agenda, but they were doing so within a political climate that was relatively sympathetic.

The activists I interviewed argue that there is a need to get media attention and to also try to get political attention, but all of them are engaged in offline movement building. For example, for Fisher from the End Child Poverty Campaign it was essential to get 10,000 people in the street to protest, to lobby MPs directly and to initiate a letter-writing campaign. Members of No One Is Illegal and the JCWI stress that face-to-face contact is crucial to build momentum and to stay on top of what is happening on the ground, how people are being negatively affected by current policies and practices.

The contextual differences between Canada and the UK indicate potential next steps. The direct access to politicians achieved by IPPR and the IFS may be something

that an organization like the CCPA could work toward in order to achieve more direct policy influence. The fact that access is easier for advocates and activists when media and political interests align demonstrates the extent to which politics matters. A specific challenge to overcome in the UK is the dominance of the tabloids, particularly the *Daily Mail*. As a first step, it may be possible to mount a public anti-disinformation site similar to SpinWatch in the US. The influence of groups like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and CPAG demonstrate the need for anti-poverty groups in Canada to be better funded and so able to conduct poverty research on a scale and scope comparable to that in the UK. To facilitate this process it may be useful for the National Council of Welfare or even the CCPA to partner or establish connections with a university department, as Rowntree has done with the Loughborough Centre for Research in Social Policy.

This chapter has argued that there are a number of power dynamics influencing how issues like poverty and immigration are covered in the news and whether or not they receive political attention. I began the chapter by detailing the views of political actors, which collectively indicate that getting media coverage is essential to gaining political attention. The remainder of the chapter notes the skill sets, practices and strategies constraining political actors as they try and "get into" the news and to also access politicians directly. Having detailed the discursive constraints of news content in Chapter 4 and the structural constraints on political actors within mediated centres in this chapter, the remainder of the thesis focuses on new media. Interviews with those working within mediated political centres demonstrate that new media are having a profound effect on working practices and poverty politics. In the next chapter I look specifically at the implications of speed and new mediated news and politics.

Chapter 6

Speed: New mediated Canadian and British political centres

The previous chapter demonstrates that obtaining news coverage is central to gaining political attention, and that getting news coverage is not a simple or straightforward process. There are a range of news values and practices that influence one's ability to get into the news. In this chapter I argue that new media use is speeding up news processes and thereby intensifying news norms. The norms that I focus on which have particular bearing on poverty coverage are: news demands for facticity – largely numbers which give the appearance of being scientistic, precise and accurate; the journalistic emphasis on immediacy; the fact that the news must be new; the compressed style of information which, when combined with the requirement of 'newness', lends itself to a-historicity; the tendency to personalize stories as a method of engagement and narrative tool; the privileging of official sources which serves to embed dominant social relations and classist perspectives (Tuchman, 1978; Bell, 1991; Hall, 1993; Knight, 1982; Schudson, 2003). As I argue in the following section, when one considers the speed of contemporary news environments, the influence of these news norms and values takes on even greater significance in limiting how poverty is covered. This chapter aims to demonstrate how much harder it is in this newly compressed world of time and content abundance to do things in a way that would change the dominant discourses of poverty.

6.1 New media and political centres: The dominance of speed

Counter to early predictions and hopes that new media and particularly the Internet would enable a disruption of old power dynamics and reinvigorate democracy, my research findings urge an appreciation of how power is actually 'embedded in, and experienced through, new media' (Mansell, 2004: 100). Speed is at the heart of changing practices within mediated political centres. The instantaneity (Agger, 2004; Perigoe, 2009) of online news websites leads to more competition and the placement of greater demands on journalists, politicians and activists.

6.1.1 News and instantaneity

The news is being produced within 'an increasingly market-driven, competitive media environment' as journalists now must operate across media platforms and under increasing workload pressures to produce 24/7 cross-platform content (Gurevitch *et al.*,

2009: 173). New media such as the internet and mobile technologies have changed traditional news timescales. Concerns with the impact of technology on news timescales are of course not new and here it is useful to return briefly to Schlesinger's 1978 study of BBC production (revised 1987). As Schlesinger identifies, time has always been a foundational element in journalism and in the production of news. He identifies the stop watch and the deadline as crucial features of work. For Schlesinger, 'journalists are among those occupational groups in industrialized societies for whom precision in timing, and consequently an exacting time-consciousness, is necessary' (1987: 84). In this way Schlesinger viewed journalists as exemplary of our Western culture's fixation on clock-time. Journalists remain exemplary of our cultural fixation on time, but now within our vastly accelerated new mediated working environments demands are constant and they necessitate a living within instantaneity. While there may have been room for some contemplation and context within pre-existing news timescales, the news currently exists in a continual present. The internet, satellite television and mobile technologies have intensified news time. The news, continually updated, is available at all hours of the day. In this new news environment, journalistic practices are changing. Previous research in the UK paints a bleak picture: journalists within this new media environment are often deskbound and reliant on web sources versus traditional methods of news gathering (Davis, 2010b), are involved in practices of online news poaching (Phillips, 2010) and rely heavily on recycling newswire or PR copy (Davies, 2008); the latter a practice Davies (2008) refers to as 'churnalism'.

News audiences ten years ago expected news to be constantly available through broadcasting news sites such as CNN, BBC and the CBC, now it is also expected that Internet news sites continually update or 'refresh' stories throughout the day (Perigoe, 2009: 248). As one former *Daily Mail* reporter noted: 'When I worked at the *Daily Mail* you would have an hour to work on a story. I've done stories in half an hour. And if that information isn't right in front of you you're not going to have time to go and find it' (Reporter B, Sept. 2010). What this means in terms of poverty coverage is that in this environment driven by speed there is a reliance on sources that are known, but also now there is even less time and opportunity for general assignment reporters working to immediate deadlines to interrogate or contextualize the event being covered. For journalists who are not correspondents in the areas of poverty or immigration who are racing to construct content there is little time to interrogate or challenge the comments made by official sources or to do much more than report the poverty statistics being released by activists. As an illustrative example of the type of poverty coverage that is

most common, while the *Daily Mail* will write an article about fuel poverty and an ICM survey indicating that '[t]hree-quarters of Britain's pensioners think Ministers are not doing enough to help with rising cost of heating', poverty is only mentioned in passing. There is no discussion of pension levels, of whether or not the state of dissatisfaction is new or getting worse, of how the issue has developed over time, of what should be done to address fuel poverty, etc. In other words there is little context and critical interrogation. While a lack of context in much news coverage may not be 'new', my argument is that in the new news environment it is even harder to find the time to include context. Without context, for example any detailing of the issue in relation to larger social or economic factors or solutions, poverty is naturalized.

A Canadian broadsheet reporter describes the new media environment as one where competition exists at multiple levels:

> Today I'll go cover the Prime Minister at a scrum. I'll go back to the office and write a 150 – 200 word synopsis to throw out onto the web because we don't just compete on one platform now we compete against the wires because of the Internet. So we do a wire kind of story, nothing too floral, just something quick, dirty. And you write almost as though it were a weekly piece for the newspaper, in other words you give a more rounded perspective with perhaps some historical background on the issue…But you really won't have time to do that for the web.

> The buzz word, is this awful phrase, platform agnostic. In other words you've got to work on as many media as possible (*National Post* Reporter C, Nov. 2008).

As revealed in this quote, the first and most basic level of competition is speed. Speed takes priority over content quality as a 'quick and dirty' version of events gets 'thrown out' onto the web. While this reporter indicates that a different approach is used for the newspaper, my results indicate that for the most part online poverty content mirrors offline content, as detailed in my frame analysis chapter.

Journalists express mixed attitudes toward the web. A *Globe and Mail* columnist initially asserts that the move to online news had not changed his job that much. But with further elaboration he echoes the comments of other journalists that in the new news environment the demands are constant:

> During election campaigns you're feeding the beast at all times. But it's not so much whether it's had an impact on my work life or not, which has been marginal quite frankly, it's just that there's always stuff out there. Everybody else is updating stuff so you can't just sort of, you know, McGuinty gives a press conference at 9.30 and you think whoo-hoo, I'm set for the rest of the day. There will be reaction upon reaction upon reaction and you've got to stay on top of it all day. No, it's way, way different from when I broke into the biz. I mean then you talked about 12 hour news cycles and now there's no such thing as a news cycle anymore, it's constantly changing. Constantly (Campbell, Sept. 2008).

Understanding what it is like to work in the new news environment requires an appreciation of this sense of constant change, constant motion and constant demands. As noted by another Canadian broadsheet reporter.

> You can no longer go to a news conference and wait until the next day to write up the story. Why? Everyone else can also see the news conference, that dramatically changed for example how we covered the last election. We have lost our exclusivity (Marina Jiménez, *Globe* Immigration Reporter, July 2009).

These comments demonstrate the extent to which the Internet actually intensifies traditional news norms, in this case that the news must be 'new'.

The very foundational criterion that the news must be new poses a significant challenge in terms of poverty, as argued by a *Globe* columnist:

> There are only so many pages in a newspaper. There's only so much time that can be spent on a story, there's only so much story that will fit into the framework of news. You can't write the same story day after day after day. You can't even find, you know, Joan Smith doesn't know where she's going to pay her rent this month, you've read that story. You can't just keep doing the same story. So there's a limited, and there's a novelty factor that gets built into journalism and sometimes some issues lose that…. Now something will happen, some dreadful outrageous incident in which poverty plays a role, whether somebody is found dead in unfortunate circumstances and all of a sudden it refocuses, people say 'how did this happen in a rich province, in a rich country?' And it'll all of a sudden be revived and we'll have poverty for a few days, but the news media have a short attention span (*Globe and Mail* Columnist Campbell, Sept. 2008).

The challenge when it comes to poverty is that the issue is seen as 'old' news. The issue itself needs to be revived through a new event in order to make the news. My frame analysis demonstrates that often the 'new' element making poverty news is the presentation of new numbers or a connection to an individual's actions. But, the now 24-hour news cycle also shortens the life span of many stories. Two journalists described the need to continually update news websites as a way to keep the sites 'fresh' to attract readers back to sites multiple times throughout the day.

The focus on the new, often over depth, limits the extent to which poverty, as a matter of new media practice, could be discussed in relation to the economy or political and policy history. A Canadian online journalist interviewed described her working day as being confronted with deadline pressure 'every minute of every day', noting that she and others are updating the website 'constantly' and that she writes to deadlines every five minutes:

> What astounds me every single day talking to people is how uninformed we all are. I'm uninformed and I work in the news, which means that I read a little bit about something every single day and I still don't consider myself informed…I have to write about the situation in Tibet[1]. What do I know about Tibetan Monks,

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1 Event being described changed to Tibet here to ensure anonymity.

I have to learn it on the fly….In a 24-hour news cycle where your deadlines are 5 minutes and you have a million other stories that you need to write – because I'm not one writer on one story I'm one writer on five stories on average, plus I'm looking to do pictures, plus I'm looking to post wires, plus I'm listening –there's no time for me to actually sit there and be like 'please let me learn and understand about the situation in Tibet so that I can write a full detailed in depth article'. From a journalist perspective it sucks because you don't have the time that it takes to research and to really put into something. From a reader's perspective it sucks even more because they are really not getting anything. They are getting what I have time to put out….

The news environment now present is not doing the public a service, it is doing a service in that we are informed right away, we are informed quicker … but so what. We have to weigh the pros and cons. What's more important, knowing something the second it happens, or actually knowing something, knowing about it, knowing the issues (July 2009).

As this journalist makes plain there is a desire to provide in-depth coverage on any number of issues but there is no time for the research needed to put events and issues into historical context, to make the links between changes in poverty rates and policy decisions over previous decades, or to consider how things might be otherwise.

The desire to provide more contextual information was also expressed by a CBC journalist interviewed. He reported being frustrated on a number of levels at the speed that stories move forward. He says the accelerating speed of the news became most apparent to him in story meetings. He describes trying to pitch more contextual pieces and being told that he should be working on the next step and figuring out 'what's next':

Now some people are at work right now and they have not been watching Newsworld or Fox or CNN or whatever, they're not watching this 24 hours 7 days a week, so they don't know what's happened yet. We can't take them to the next step without bringing them first up to speed on what's already happened… Good stories were negated, stories that were too fragile still were pushed ahead because we needed to be seen to be getting onto the next step of the story. They were done maybe too soon to be developed properly, maybe the audience wasn't able to receive it properly. We sure felt good but we had been watching the news all day and the politicians or the so-called policy aids they were all feeling good or feeling crummy because they are all in it, it (coverage) spoke to that very specific world (Reporter I, July 2011).

The problem, argues this reporter, is that stories are being taken forward before people have a chance to grasp 'where we were'. His concern is that this leads to a superficial knowledge about the events being covered: 'The implications are a lack of depth, a lack of an ability for the average news consumer to just get up to speed on what the story is'.

A former *Daily Star* reporter interviewed noted that time constraints for him meant not only that there was no time to do research but there was a danger in doing too much research because it would lead to an over-complication of the issue:

Now if you think you are working an 8 to a 9 hour day, and you're trying to one minute investigate a story about a soldier being killed in Iraq, then you're trying to investigate at the same time a story about some celebrity getting caught with coke or something, but at the same time you're looking at a story about a politician who's trying to push through some, you know what I mean? You're juggling a lot of very, very different news items all at once. And that's not to say you have the whole 8 hours to do it because this all might land on your plate with 3 hours to go. There was definitely a 'churnalism' I think is the term used at the moment. Just pounding the story out with whatever facts lay in front of you, and when I say facts whatever information lays in front of you without really checking it or without wanting to check to be honest because you know you go checking and it becomes more complicated (Reporter J, July 2011).

This reporter argues that the impact of these kinds of time pressures is to undermine the journalistic process and leads to more 'churnalism' as stories get taken from other sites and have their words changed around and then re-posted. The internet also becomes a necessary tool for research and crucial to getting stories produced quickly.

Some of those interviewed, as will be discussed below, do have more time to work on stories, but this is rare particularly when it comes to poverty –an issue already not high in the news hierarchy. As one *Telegraph* reporter noted:

There certainly are (challenges to covering poverty) in my paper because it's just not very sexy. The *Guardian* have recently been doing huge features about what it's like to be living in poverty these days. They are very well done, but for papers like mine that have more of a conservative angle the idea is that readers just wouldn't be interested in reading that, because it's grim and it doesn't really relate to their lives, and they may have this idea that people are responsible for their own destiny and shouldn't be reliant on the state. If I put up a story like that it just wouldn't get in the paper (Reporter A, April 2009).

This reporter noted that having a political angle or statistics indicating how Britain's poverty rate compares to other countries makes poverty more newsworthy. He argues that the government's child poverty target has been a useful news hook because it enables coverage that focuses on the extent to which the government is meeting its goals.

Another factor placing time constraints on journalists is that they are now required to do more:

Yeah so I'll now often tell a story twice, shall you say, I'll do a new media take for the web, or advise a reporter on breaking news about how we should cover a story, I'll then ring people get reaction, sit down and read the documents, write a more considered piece for the afternoon, for example (Alan Travis, *Guardian* Home Affairs Editor, Feb. 2010).

In this account, breadth is sacrificed for speed and audience reach. The *Toronto Sun's* political columnist Carol Blizzard notes that increasing demands come at a time when journalists are being cut:

I'm sure you realize the turmoil that's going on in the industry, you have so much multitasking going on [now]. When I go out I very often do my own

photographs….But we also now, all of our reporters and I have been given a video camera because we do video for the internet. So everyone is very much concerned about doing a number of different things and we're much much busier. We have a lot fewer people doing a lot more stuff really. So we obviously can't get to a lot of the stuff that we would like to…. There is more demand for content. Everyone is filing through the day ….it used to be you'd have one deadline, well now that's out the door it's much more immediate (July 2009).

Blizzard's account demonstrates how journalists must master multitasking in order to survive in this new environment. She also notes that in addition to producing content more frequently throughout the day journalists also have to stay on top of continually changing information.

BBC Home Office Correspondent Dominic Casciani's account of a day in the life demonstrates the multitasking and time demands reporters working for multiple platforms must adjust to. Given the detail provided, he is quoted at length:

You can't understand the media unless you understand how the 24-hour news cycle works ….When I started as a journalist in 1995 out of University I had three deadlines to worry about, my first deadline was 11 in the morning the first edition of my local newspaper, my second deadline was 12:30 or 1 o'clock depending on the day, and my final deadline was 5 o'clock in the afternoon which was copy for the next days paper and that was it, perfectly manageable. Job done.

Last week I was in court on the decision on the Binyan Mohamed case ….This is how this day went, I got to court at 9 o'clock, the judgment was delivered at 9:30. I had to get copy into the system which meant basically filing some text into the BBC processing system so everybody in the BBC knew what had happened with that story as quickly as possible. So effectively that just becomes like a wire flash. You know Dominic Casciani at the high court says …. So back at base, that copy is filed, and on TV, radio and online. On TV and radio you've got presenters saying this just in we've heard from the High Court that something has happened online – right a ticker flash on it. This is at 9:30 / 9:45, I've got 15 minutes to get a story into the system for radio so I file my story live to the radio bulletin to one minute to 10, and then the producer at the office turns that around puts it up. One of my online colleagues was taping what I had actually said in my radio report and basically converting that into text. Parallel to that my colleague Daniel was outside preparing to broadcast on the news channel doing the TV side of it and then another colleague, because I was doing the radio bulletins piece at 10 o'clock, he was preparing to go live on radio so that I could step back and think again about how we were going to take the story forward. So literally as I came off air at, you know, 1 minute to 10, he then took over the mic and was put through to one of the studios to do some live talking to the presenter. That meant I then stood back.

I then get a call from a news organizer, which is effectively a news editor saying 'right we need this information on the story, we need this reaction, can you get that'? I said 'no someone else is going to get that'; we had a producer involved who was going to get that. 'Online wants an analysis can you do a "What does this mean" kind of piece, you know really breaking it down?' I started working on that piece on a deadline of about 11:30-12 o'clock, largely because our peak audience is 12 o'clock. We then realized that there was a particular document that we needed for everybody for all outlets that we hadn't actually been given by court so

we effectively had to go back to court and get this document so that everybody could get it.

Can you see how the day started to develop? It's constant, it's non-stop. It's a rolling process. Basically we got to the point by 1 o'clock where we'd been literally working flat out to serve as many outlets as possible across the BBC and took stock. We had time to go back to the office and think about what we were going to do to take the story forward for the evening bulletins on radio, the evening talk shows on radio, online was kind of done by then, what television we were going to do for the 6 o'clock and 10 o'clock news on television and critically how we were going to take the story forward if at all for the morning.

That's how the cycle works, it's literally nonstop. It's rolling all the time. Now if anyone wants to break into that cycle from the outside I'm not quite sure, you've got to move fast (Feb. 2010).

Within multi-platform newsrooms like the BBC there are increased demands, and in the first instance the objective is to get information out quickly. As a very experienced journalist and Home Affairs Correspondent, Casciani is well-equipped. But there is little doubt that speed and demands for content across platforms do not present much time for analysis as a story breaks. As Casciani's description of what it is like to work on a breaking story indicates, work is 'nonstop'. He details just how difficult it is for groups and individuals on the outside to break into news cycles. As noted in the previous chapter, this presents a significant issue for the anti-poverty or immigration activists who would challenge dominant approaches or discussions of the issue being covered. They are not as well resourced as official sources like government. It is a challenge for activists to be where the journalists need them to be, at the precise time needed and with a response ready.

Casciani's account also highlights that teamwork is necessary to provide the time needed for him to do an analysis. As a long-time Home Affairs Correspondent, Casciani possesses the necessary background and knowledge to write an analysis quickly. But in order for him to write a 'what does this mean' piece, it was necessary for someone else to be collecting reactions to events. However, having the time and skill-based resources required to provide greater depth in these new news environments is increasingly difficult given the ongoing cuts to newsrooms in the UK and across North America.

6.1.2 Journalists doing more with less

There are fewer people doing more. As an example, when BBC reporters moved into their new Multimedia Newsroom in 2008, the move was precipitated by efforts to cut costs and avoid duplication through bringing together the newsgathering efforts of TV, Radio and the Web (Lee-Wright, 2010). In the process, 300 journalist posts were lost. As journalists in both the UK and Canada have been required to respond to new media

demands they have faced increasing time and resource pressures due to newsroom cuts. As detailed by Curran:

> The rise of the Internet has also led to the hemorrhaging of paid jobs in journalism. The Pew Research Center estimates that in 2008 'nearly one out of every five journalists working for newspapers in 2001 is now gone' in the United States (Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2009). In Britain, a major regional chain, Trinity Mirror, reduced its staff by 1200 in 2008-9 (Tryhorn, 2009); ITV cut around 1000 jobs during the same period; and Northcliffe Media set a target of shedding 1000 local press jobs in 2009 (2010: 465).

In Canada the situation is no different. There has been a consolidation of news ownership going on for decades, but since the 90s when the Chrétien government eliminated restrictions on cross ownership there has been a new round of concentration via convergence (Waddell, 2009). Journalists across the country have been laid off as management thought more content could be produced by fewer journalists:

> The result has been a loss of expertise, critical analysis and context in reporting. When combined with increasing demands to file for multiple outlets, multiple times during the day (as all news organizations have become wire services on their Web sites), the result is that reporters know less and less about more and more. Those who want to research have no time to find much background about the story they have been given that day. That means every day is covered as a self-contained unit in which things that happened that day have never happened before and will never happen again.…[E]ven in a new medium like the Internet that thrives on creativity and imagination in presenting content, concentration of ownership means standardization (Waddell, 2009: 18-19).

Expertise, critical analysis and context are precisely the faculties needed in news coverage of poverty given its connections to social, economic and political structures and its implications at both the macro and micro level. Covering poverty-related events and reports as a 'self-contained unit' prevents the possibility for an anti-poverty movement to take hold because no information is conveyed providing people with the sense that things have been or could be otherwise. Discrete news coverage, focusing on particular people or isolated events, does not suggest the extent to which poverty is a collective problem requiring collective solutions.

6.1.3 News content: Speed and rationalization

More than three decades ago Tuchman (1978) identified 'facticity' as being at the core of news writing. And, as noted by Bell (1991: 202): 'at the core of facticity are numbers – the most verifiable, quantifiable, undeniable of facts'. He argues that journalists use numbers because they undergird the objective, empirical claim of news and also because they enhance the news value of a story through this appeal and the fact that they indicate precision and seriousness (1991: 203). In a news environment driven by

speed, numbers provide journalists with quick and easy content, particularly if that content is coming from trusted sources. In this way numbers enable a 'short-cut' for journalists, the quicker the news the more short-cuts must be used to construct content. Numbers, quantifications and statistics constitute and enable a short-cut to content creation because this information can be relayed quickly when it comes from trusted sources. Coverage of child poverty in particular is dominated by numbers reflecting the success that activists and advocates have in getting news coverage by playing into media demands for them. For groups like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Institute for Fiscal Studies, Campaign 2000, the Campaign to End Child Poverty, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and Voices from the Street, decisions to rationalize or to individualize information in order to get coverage are not made lightly, but are based on a form of strategizing that remains cognizant of the negotiations being made. Nevertheless, number-based strategies do present their own particular problems.

Getting media coverage is a priority for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and Donald Hirsh, Poverty Advisor from 1998 to 2008, says the media is considered from the beginning of each project. As detailed in Hirsch's account, providing arguments which quantify or rationalize is not always a necessity, but it helps. The report Hirsch refers to in the account below is entitled 'Estimating the Costs of Child Poverty' (Hirsch, 2008):

> The Rowntree Foundation has a process where they have an advisory group for each project and you start considering dissemination from the very first. So in other words you're sort of thinking 'how can this thing be presented?' But actually it starts before that, with projects, you're thinking about what the impact is going to be of this, and in thinking about what the impact is going to be you have to think about the way it can go down through the media. There's a lot of talk about *Daily Mail* proofing things and we can talk a bit about the kind of influence. It would vary from one thing to another, but the example I gave you of this £25 billion I mean that was almost like 'we need a number for the media' was the rationale for the whole project. Because we weren't really trying to find out any new information about what causes poverty or what measures might be taken, we were trying to get a measure of what it was costing us and therefore how you could justify spending money. And there the media is very important.
>
> ….It's also about a message that you are giving to government…. So it would be wrong to say that [we are] producing everything for the media, but to different degrees with different projects (media coverage) can be a very important part of it (June 2009).

In this description Hirsch offers that quantification is a media strategy. The value of a number, he says, emerges in its provision of a 'single top line message'. Having a number helps generate interest and makes information more digestible. This example also demonstrates a multifaceted approach. The cost of poverty estimated at £25 billion is quantified to get media attention and to shift the nature of debate to the notion that action

on poverty actually saves money. The combined strategy of quantification serves in this case to get news coverage and to also provide politicians with a justification for spending money to reduce poverty.

In Canada, provincial and national Campaign 2000 groups have been releasing annual report cards which contain statistical measurements of the extent of child poverty in Canada. The focus on children and the rationalization of poverty is designed to get media attention and to shame politicians into responding to the issue. These reports do get some coverage, but it is presently dependent on there being something new in the numbers themselves:

> Campaign 2000 has been releasing National Report Cards since the early Nineties, the coalition was formed in 1991, so to be honest the more the years go by the more the press kind of say to us 'oh so what's new in this story', and they say 'well is the number really up or is the number really down', and that's what they consider news. And if we say 'well we think it's news that the number has not changed, despite the fact that we've been having a really strong economy', we have a hard time pitching that to them, so I would say the media has become somewhat… what's the word?... not resilient. It's like they've become a little numbed to the release of the Report Card.

> If it's a slow news day or if we happen to have a certain spin, for example a few years ago when the Kelowna Accord was being signed in Kelowna, I think that was three years ago, we decided to release the Report Card which had a strong aboriginal focus that year in Kelowna at the same time as the hearings were being held. So we got more press coverage that year and we got kind of a different flavour to it because it was tied in to a topical issue of the time (Maund: Coordinator Ontario Campaign 2000, Sept. 2009).

Maund's comments demonstrate that relying on numbers to get coverage presents its own type of bind in that the numbers – and not the issue – become the news focus. Her comments also betray a frustration at and recognition of the need for a new strategy to make poverty newsworthy; however, it is unclear what this might entail. The situation is somewhat different in the UK in that New Labour set itself child poverty reduction targets. To this extent, whether or not the targets were met constituted the news.

The UK End Child Poverty Campaign's constituency figures did lead to coverage, quite a bit in the case of the BBC and the *Guardian*. In releasing numbers that were new, in so far as they provided a localized breakdown of poverty, the Campaign addressed the very challenge Maund highlights by presenting new information. Yet, while the group succeeded in getting into the news, coverage emphasised the numbers with very little discussion of the issue itself or how it might be addressed. With six articles in total, the BBC website provided the most detailed coverage of this report and the campaign activities. But the BBC article ''Millions' of UK Young in Poverty' (BBC, 2008c) demonstrates the limitations of coverage when the focus is on numbers:

> The Campaign to End Child Poverty is a coalition of more than 130 organisations including Barnardo's, Unicef and the NSPCC. According to its research, there are 4,634,000 children in England living in low income families, 297,000 in Wales, 428,000 in Scotland and 198,000 in Northern Ireland. It says 174 of the 646 parliamentary constituencies in Britain have 50% or more of their child population in, or close to, the poverty line. The parliamentary constituency with the highest number of children in or close to poverty is Birmingham Ladywood, with 81% (28,420 individuals).

Numbers take centre stage in this article. They do detail the severity of problem by providing a very localized breakdown of how many children are living in poverty across the UK. But again there is very little discussion provided within the article about the issue and what can be done. In part this is because the constituency numbers are the news, the article points to the constituencies with the worst poverty rates and details what those rates are.

6.1.4 News content: Speed and individualization

Much news coverage in my sample focuses on particular people. Individualizing a story can make it easier and therefore quicker to tell a story, but it can also take more time when used in feature pieces as a way to humanize an issue and build interest. As Lau notes, the news practice of personalizing stories or reducing events and issues to individuals is one of the most critiqued of news values (Lau, 2004). It is critiqued for some of the reasons that journalists find it so useful. As noted by one CBC reporter, personalizing a news story and/or reducing an issue to an individual provides a means of 'simplifying' and 'appealing to emotion':

> How do you tell all these stories, in all these ways, in all their uniqueness, in any way that's going to be intelligible for people, because people are already reading less anyway, they're reading shorter, you need to get them emotionally and you need to get them so that it is digestible…. It's hard to see how you could do anything otherwise in news media and do anything intelligible that people are going to pay attention to and actually take the time to read or listen to and then understand and process (CBC Reporter I, July 2011).

Personalizing or individualizing a story is in this account a way to grab the attention of audience members who are being perceived by this reporter as reading less and having less time and attention. It is also perceived as a way for journalists to make the vast amount of information on any topic 'digestible'.

Reporters at news organizations including the *Telegraph*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Toronto Sun* noted that covering poverty required having some 'hook' whether that be new numbers as indicated by a *Telegraph* reporter (Reporter A, April 2009) or a personal story as a means to engage a readership thought to have not much interest in poverty:

> To me if I'm going to write about poverty I'm going to write about someone's specific situation rather than the issue generally because I think that generally as an issue it's really hard to engage the reader in a discussion about poverty (Blizzard, *Toronto Sun* Columnist, July 2009).

Personalization in this way is a narrative tool. It's dominance in contemporary coverage is, I would also assert, directly linked to the increasing time pressures facing journalists. In most coverage in my sample, personalization provides a shortcut, as it enables a narrowing of focus which consequently saves time.

Activists interviewed expressed frustration at media coverage that personalizes or individualizes content at the expense of context. Capponi, of Voices from the Street, indicated that members from that organization could get their stories in the press but they were often frustrated with the resulting stories because these stories were not linked to a broader discussion of some of the structural causes of poverty or some of the solutions activists are fighting for. Similarly, Hussan and Chu of No One Is Illegal expressed disdain at the media practice of focusing on individual deportation cases and not linking discussions of deportations to ongoing debates about Canada's immigration system. Hussan and Chu said journalists would often come to their organization looking for 'some sort of crying child' or a 'broken family'. They say they meet these journalist needs when they need media attention to try and stop a deportation, but that because individualizing stories are the only types of stories that get coverage they don't focus much of their efforts on trying to get media coverage. Instead they focus on building a grassroots movement to challenge current immigration practices and policies:

> Deportations happen every day, they (the media) are always looking for either sensationalist stories or stories that have a lot of community support often get into the media, but they are not looking at deportation in a broader sense in terms of the immigration policy, or asking why this happening. It's just the individual story, so each experience is individualized and not connected to any system (Chu, July 2009).

They say that getting into the mainstream media is often dependent on how sensationalistic the story is or 'how much we're willing to sell ourselves'. When trying to stop a deportation the potential benefits of playing into media emphasis on individuals and sensationalism, namely increased public attention and pressure, are perceived to be too significant to ignore.

But not all content that personalizes and individualizes is the same. For the most part, as mentioned, this practice enables the production of content quickly, as stories focus, for example, solely on Brown and his child poverty promise or his speech to New Labour – Brown the man, his political prospects, his performance, etc. being the focus. However, I interviewed several veteran specialist reporters and columnists who regularly

cover poverty or immigration. They stressed that, for them, personalizing stories is a response to, and a means to counter, what they view as too much emphasis on numbers in poverty reporting and lack of context in immigration coverage. Focusing on individuals and telling their stories is a deliberate attempt to humanize in order to enable a better understanding of poverty and immigration. Comments from Gentleman, Goar and Casciani indicate that in personalizing an issue or event, they are trying to expand, in an illustrative fashion, the larger meaning of an issue. BBC reporter Casciani often operates under extreme time constraints, as indicated above, but as a seasoned reporter he also indicated that he is on occasion given an opportunity to do features. Goar and Gentleman stressed in my interviews that they are not operating under the same time constraints of many other journalists. Gentleman is a features writer for the *Guardian* hired to provide in-depth articles about poverty and inequality, in addition to other issues. Goar is a long-time columnist with the *Toronto Star* who says that she has effectively created her own position.

Both Goar and Gentleman expressed frustration at the focus on numbers in relation to poverty. But as Gentleman writes, humanizing poverty stories is a challenge. Upon returning to the UK after covering inequality in India and Russia, Gentleman reports that she was shocked by the high rates of child poverty in the UK and concerned about how little there was in the public domain about what poverty in the UK actually looked like. She set out to reach people affected by poverty through some of the many anti-poverty groups working on the issue in the UK. She found these organizations cautious about putting a journalist in touch with the people on whose behalf they are campaigning. While recognizing why the groups are concerned, Gentleman argues that humanizing poverty is crucial:

> [I]t's not very meaningful to know that one in three children – I mean that figure is slightly disputed but going with what the campaigners say – one in three children live beneath the poverty line doesn't actually mean very much if you're not really explaining in detail how it is to grow up in those circumstances. In this country there are a lot of preconceptions about what living on benefits means, and I think a lot of people are under the impression that it's actually a fairly easy existence. And so you have to put a human face or a detailed explanation of what it means to be existing on that level of money to really understand exactly what it means. I mean it sounds rather banal and obvious, but it's all very well campaigning on the issue, but if you can't explain why it matters.

> …[A]nd I think that there are a lot of misconceptions about what being poor now means, and people kind of thinking that if you have a television, if you've got somewhere to live, if you've got health care, you know, if you've got education, then actually everything is fine. And obviously relative to the situation in India say, it is, I mean it is a lot better. But it is all about being in a community and your own situ relative to other people. And there's also a very kind of finite level of

deprivation here which I think people are taken aback by once they're informed about it (April 2009).
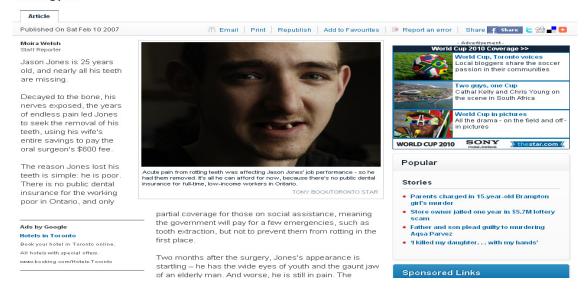
The efforts by journalists like Gentleman to move beyond numbers and illustrate what poverty looks like through a focus on individuals can have a powerful effect and lead to a more nuanced presentation of the issue than is commonly found in much coverage. The challenge is that such coverage is an exception and can have a limited impact as there is no larger body of poverty discourse within the mainstream news that presents the issue as the product of social, economic and political phenomena. Instead, an overall discourse of individual responsibility dominates much coverage which serves to direct how these human and personal stories are interpreted. This often leads to a focus on the individual being presented in an article as an exception, and thereby elides a focus on the overall issue, or at least a focus on the issue that is sustained, as the two examples detailed below demonstrate.

The example most cited by Canadians interviewed of how the news can influence political responses to poverty was the *Toronto Star* article about Jason Jones (Welsh, 2007b). It was used as an example by reporters in Ontario, including Goar and Monsebraaten, poverty consultant Stapleton, Campaign 2000 coordinator Maund, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' Trish Hennessy. The article, both its web and print version, was accompanied by a large close-up photograph of a 25-year old Jones, smiling with few teeth.

Fig. 3: *Toronto Star* website, Jason Jones story

Why is he out of work?
Jason Jones is a natural for a sales job. Trouble is, many people can't see past his mouth. Painful rot forced him to pull almost all of his teeth. This is the state of dental care for our working poor

Article

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Moira Welsh
Staff Reporter

Jason Jones is 25 years old, and nearly all his teeth are missing.

Decayed to the bone, his nerves exposed, the years of endless pain led Jones to seek the removal of his teeth, using his wife's entire savings to pay the oral surgeon's $600 fee.

The reason Jones lost his teeth is simple: he is poor. There is no public dental insurance for the working poor in Ontario, and only partial coverage for those on social assistance, meaning the government will pay for a few emergencies, such as tooth extraction, but not to prevent them from rotting in the first place.

Two months after the surgery, Jones's appearance is startling — he has the wide eyes of youth and the gaunt jaw of an elderly man. And worse, he is still in pain. The

Acute pain from rotting teeth was affecting Jason Jones' job performance - so he had them removed. It's all he can afford for now, because there's no public dental insurance for full-time, low-income workers in Ontario.
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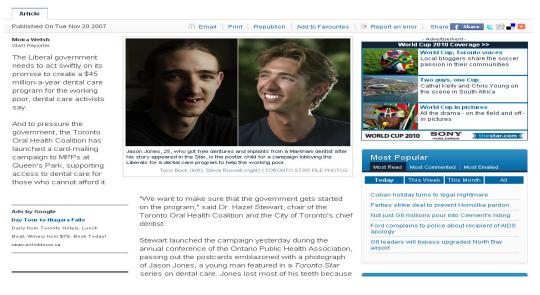
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The article explains that Jones could not get a job because he did not have teeth, and that he could not get his teeth fixed because there was no dental support in Ontario for the

working poor, and only limited support for those on social assistance. As a result, Jones was unable to get help when his teeth were rotting and used the last of his wife's savings ($600) to extract the teeth when they became too painful. The article used Jones's story to discuss the broader issues of poverty and dental care. The web version of the story provided a video of Jones and his wife being interviewed. Response to the story was swift. A dentist offered and did provide Jones with free care and new teeth; the transformation was covered on video on the website and in the paper.

Jones and his image were used by the paper, dental organizations and by activists to argue for a dental program for the working poor. Both his story and his image spoke directly to the injustice of poverty. They also demonstrated clearly a practical step that could be taken to help people escape poverty. The image and the logic behind the campaign proved difficult for the Ontario government to ignore, particularly in an election year. Facing an election (held 10 October 2007), and having promised to tackle poverty, in September 2007 as part of their election platform the Liberals promised a dental plan for the working poor. They were re-elected and announced the program in their next throne speech. However, they were slow to act on this promise.

Fig. 4: *Toronto Star* website, dental plan follow-up

Jones's image was returned to as both the *Star* and activists urged the government to act quickly (Welsh, 2007a). Years passed and by 2010 the *Star* had ended its 'War on Poverty' series. By June 2010 the Ontario government backtracked, announcing that it was no longer able to fund a dental plan for the working poor. Instead it would pay for dental care for poor children, but not their parents.

Similarly, in the *Guardian* article 'A Portrait of 21st Century Poverty' (Gentleman, 2009), Gentleman describes what poverty looks and feels like via single mother Louise Spencer. The article delineates explicitly the limited budget with which Spencer works to feed, clothe and house herself and her children, and precisely how she does so. Gentleman notes that the piece was not so much about the individual as about the entire situation of those living on benefits in Britain, and yet the story generated a lot of interest and support for the individual. Gentleman says she was surprised that the story raised a lot of money for Spencer, and also for the community centre mentioned in the story. Gentleman also received a call from the local MP saying she wanted to help Spencer. Gentleman notes that this call was a surprise as the local MP would know there are probably thousands of women in the same situation in that constituency.

The two examples detailed above demonstrate why personalizing and humanizing poverty alone will not lead to change. In the case of Jason Jones, he received free dental care and the provincial government, initially and after much pressure, did come forward with a dental programme for those living on low incomes in Ontario. To illustrate just one of the injustices faced by those who are poor in Ontario, Jones had to offer himself up to public scrutiny and put his "abnormality", his lack of teeth, on display. He had to negotiate the shocking effect of his appearance on a massive scale. Indeed few would be able, let alone comfortable in doing this. In the case of Jones, it is the powerful image of a young man with no teeth that stimulates action as opposed to the reality known to policy makers that many were, and had been, suffering similar circumstances for years. However, another way of looking at this example is that it is quite unlikely that Jones's story alone led to the government action initially promised. It is more likely that the new dental program promised was also, if not more so, a reaction to much advocacy and the fact that anti-poverty groups in Ontario were becoming animated and quite organized by 2007, and also to the *Toronto Star's* 'War on Poverty Series'. The series included Jones's story within a more generally focused and sustained campaign that for well over a year demanded government action on poverty and made poverty front page news. In the end Jones received help, but the many others in similar circumstances will not. In the case of Louise Spencer in Britain, Gentleman clearly set out to illustrate how difficult it is to live on social support, but the response generated involved more concern for the individual than for the issue, despite the journalist's efforts and intention. Even the MP, who as Gentleman notes would know there were likely thousands of other women in the same position, responded to the individual – and not to the issue.

The Jones story and the Spencer story were published by news organizations that have invested significant resources in covering poverty, the *Star* as part of its 'War on Poverty' series, and the *Guardian* by hiring a reporter to specifically cover poverty. Stories that humanize poverty, as these two stories do, can provide significant insight into the experience of poverty but the focus ultimately remains on the individual being discussed and not on the collective experiences of poverty. Further, feature pieces as the article in the *Guardian* and the sustained media focus on poverty as found in the *Star's* series are the exception and not the norm. As detailed in the frame analysis of Chapter 4, it is common for poverty coverage to be in a compressed style with an emphasis on quantifications, calculations or specific people to simplify the issue, to place an emphasis on 'newness' and to engage readers. The internet has intensified the influence of these news norms and values. Journalists are under increasing pressure to produce content quickly, to stay on top of information, to produce content continually for ongoing deadlines and to multitask. Faced with such pressures, there is a reliance on sources that are known and there is less opportunity for investigation or the additional work required to contextualize issues and events being covered. In this way the speed of contemporary news environments serves to reinforce poverty and immigration coverage that focuses on numbers and information in terms of an economic calculating logic. It is very difficult for groups on the outside to break into news cycles, those that are trying to do so are making the decision to quantify or personalize poverty and immigration in order to gain coverage. News norms in combination with new media driven production practices are limiting the extent to which different discussions about poverty or immigration could take place within mainstream news content. The structural constraints of news production combined with the ongoing dominance of neoliberal discourses reinforce the dominant hegemony of poverty, that poverty is a matter of individual and not collective responsibility and that decisions about whether or not to respond to poverty should be based on cost and not as a matter of equality. The instantaneity of media practices help sustain this understanding and approach to poverty, while simultaneously making it more difficult to dislodge it.

6.2 Conclusion

In the 70s Schlesinger was struck by how time dominates news production. The dominance of time also leads to the further extension of rationality (Schlesinger, 1987). In journalism, time has long been a means to measure job performance, but also news value. The more immediate something is, the 'hotter' it is (Schlesinger, 1987: 89). Further, time constraints structure and determine *what* is said and *how* it is said. This chapter has

sought to demonstrate that time currently has more influence in newsrooms than any prior period and, furthermore, that these demands are a product of new media use. Interviews with journalists interviewed in both countries reveal how online news in particular is creating and putting new pressures on journalists to operate quickly and efficiently. The cross-national similarities in journalist interviews demonstrate that new media and the now 24-hour news cycle are creating similar pressures in both countries. The intensity of media working practices are influencing the kind of information we receive and use as citizens to evaluate an important issue like poverty and political action.

'Internet time' influences news practices by creating a compulsion to continually produce and update content (Hassan, 2008). This influences whether or not an issue like poverty is covered, how it is covered and therefore what ideas circulate in the public domain. The now constant news demands for immediacy serves to reinforce traditional news values and practices. So for example journalistic emphasis on the facts, on the numbers, is heightened. There is also little time to provide contextual information. I suggest that this contributes to the dominance of rationalizations of poverty. Those who try to overcome rationalizing discourses often do so by humanizing or personalizing content. Gentleman argues that numbers about poverty are not 'meaningful' in that they do not indicate in any way what it is like to live in poverty. Others argue that personalizing content is a way to make people care about the events being covered (CBC Reporter I, July 2011), to put poverty 'in very real terms for people' in a way that makes it difficult to ignore (*Star* columnist Goar, July 2009). The challenge is that the impact of such coverage is limited to the extent that mainstream coverage focuses on individual responsibility or has no discussion of structural causes and solutions.

The deeply interconnected web of activity between politicians, activists and journalists, given the power of the media in contemporary politics, means that as journalists are driven by new media demands so are politicians and activists, as the following chapter will detail. In the next chapter my aim is to expand this discussion of speed and illustrate how neoliberal demands for workers to be flexible, to multitask, and to be adaptable are not codified and presented as rules to follow. The case is rather that workers are compelled to perform in this manner by the changes to their working practices and lives, changes which are themselves connected to the speeding up of work via information technologies. It is overly simplistic, however, to view new media use as producing only negative consequences. The following chapter considers, then, how new media are both productive tools and a burden to journalists, politicians, researchers, civil servants and activists.

The previous chapter outlined how new media use is speeding up news practices and is in the process reinforcing news norms, thereby limiting how poverty is covered. In this chapter, and in line with recent work (Davis, 2010c; Phillips, 2010; Fenton, 2010), I expand this discussion by detailing how new media use is changing the working practices of journalists, politicians, advocates and activists. There are positive outcomes: new media is making it easier for each of these groups to share and access information. The negative impacts of new mediated work are that individuals must increasingly deal with new information and deadline pressures in working environments where entrepreneurialism and individual responsibility are encouraged. Interviews indicate that it is the individual who has to be more efficient and flexible. The challenge is that as individuals adapt, little attention is paid to the implications of these changes or to the structural processes that are leading to increased demands (Hassan, 2008).

7.1 New media tools: The good

There is little doubt that the Internet provides politicians, researchers, civil servants and activists with a means to stay in contact with the public and to directly disseminate information. In this way those not able to get media attention can bypass the media and present information that is easily accessible.

7.1.2 The internet makes it easier to share information

NDP poverty critic Michael Prue says that the party's website and email network help them let people know what the party has been up to on the issue. NDP immigration critic Di Nova notes that she uses Facebook to stay in touch with supporters and that the social networking site enables her to hear about community events she otherwise would not come across.

A poverty advisor for the Ontario Government says that when developing their poverty reduction strategy and holding public consultations throughout the province they used the internet to keep people abreast of discussions:

> So for each of her fourteen meetings we had a Minster's or a Chair's Journal, sort of an issue summary, or we would write up a summary of what she had heard at

each of the meetings and post that online, so people could see then if they wanted to (Civil Servant H, Jan. 2009).

The advisor notes that otherwise, in their development of the poverty strategy, their use of new technology was not what he would call 'new'. The internet was used to fulfil a broadcasting role in communicating event details to those who could not attend meetings.

Organisations and think tanks such as the Fraser Institute rely heavily on the internet and their websites to publicize information. Director Veldhuis says that use of new media is 'absolutely critical' to their work:

> We get millions of hits on our website downloading all sorts of different publications, whether poverty or otherwise, and now increasingly we are getting into blogging. We have a new series of videos that we are producing called Fraser TV which are short clips based on our research that are both available on our website but also on YouTube. So increasingly we're trying to find ways to use the digital for the internet to communicate our research.

> The focus is getting our research out to as wide an audience as possible, and then of course historically we've relied traditionally on the media as the main vehicle to do that, and we're certainly seeing a shift, especially in the younger generation, towards the internet and newspaper circulations are obviously going down and the internet is fast becoming an area where many people get their news, so I think in that sense it's critically important to have a good presence on the internet (Jan. 2009).

Veldhuis's comments demonstrate that information is being packaged in multiple formats including video. It is also clear in Veldhuis's comments that the drive to develop new media content is in part fuelled by the general feeling that the internet will only increase in importance as an information source.

7.1.2.1 Transnational information sharing

There is promise in the emerging flows of transnational information sharing and organization building. Activists and alternative journalists interviewed turn to international sources for news and for ideas they are looking to organizations in other countries. New media is making this process possible. Capponi notes that Voices from the Street has been following what similar groups in Ireland and New York are doing. Wainright says that Red Pepper has good relationships with similar magazines in Italy, Spain and France. She is also part of an internationally focused organization called the Transnational Institute. However, in this case relationships are fostered by face-to-face connections, specifically during events such as the World Social Forum. Wainright also acknowledges that having an international audience has led Red Pepper to engage more with international issues. The newly international scope of the magazine is a strategic decision:

> We're living in an economy that's globally organized. Power is globally organized and globally coordinated, dominant power, so if we want to have a chance of democracy its got to be international, it's got to be global, so the more people are organized on an international basis, and the more informed on a global basis, the more chances we have of achieving that (May 2010).

The objective of international information sharing is, for Wainright, to support people who are connecting. There may be significant implications to the development of global relationships, and, as Wainright notes, what is needed to challenge present power structures is the development of international and participative global institutional structures.

Activists interviewed also stressed the role of new media in the maintenance of networks and mobilization; and in this way alternative news sites are tools as much as information sources. Those involved with alternative news organizations make clear that they do not conceive of their role as reporting 'the news'. Rather their goal is to provide people with information that leads to action. As the Editor of Mostly Water states:

> I doubt that the people actually making the decisions the movers and shakers, I doubt many of them read the site, but then again the site is not really for them. I think what we can hope to do is to give people, ordinary people, provide them with an alternative perspective on the roots of poverty and what can be done about it. And then what they do with that information is up to them, but I would hope that they would take action in some capacity even if it's just writing a letter to the editor or something (Jan. 2009).

Others interviewed from alternative news sites similarly claim that their target audience is not politicians or even journalists but other activists and the general public. As explained by Cameron:

> In a sense you have to have an idea of what's going on in the world before you can effect sustainable change and you have to have some understanding of the context we're in. And if you don't understand that you can go off in dozens of different directions. But once people begin to understand what the circumstances are, begin to develop a common analysis….The ongoing debt burden for Canadian families is such that if government austerity hits its going to be worse. And if you can get that idea planted widely enough then you can mobilize people against government, and in a sense it happens. Even Harper, whose initial reaction to the downturn in 2007/08 was to cut back, was forced by almost an outcry of public opinion to stop and in fact there have been some increases in spending (June 2010).

This idea of the need for a common and alternative analysis that leads to mobilization came up repeatedly in my interviews. As it did with Wainright:

> We try and influence the sort of thoughtful left, the left activists and thinkers who are searching for alternatives, who are not complacent. We're giving them information, we're sharing ideas, debating ideas, so we're kind of assuming that we're having an impact on them…. And I suppose we hope to influence and are taken up by the left within the mainstream media who then might make use of us, be helped by our coverage so its both activists and we're trying also to reach

young people who have got radicalized but who want something more substantial to nourish them (May 2010).

Unlike the Mostly Water Editor, Cameron and the IndyMedia contributor, Wainright notes that they also hope to influence MPs who are open-minded in the Labour and Liberal Party and that some MPs have contacted the magazine and specific writers for more information, an indication they are reading the magazine.

Although Wainright is cautious in saying that the magazine could not claim to mobilize people, she is careful to stress that their goal is to influence debate and stimulate new thinking. The goal is to 'give the left confidence' and promote alternatives:

> I think new thinking that's showing that there is an alternative to purely state-defined socialism that tries to pick up and develop the ideas that have been emerging but marginalized since the late 60s and early 70s. The sort of new left, feminist left, green left, trying to help that cohere really and develop into a strategic alternative. So we try to be quite internationalist and introduce ideas from different countries to a wider audience (May 2010).

Despite Wainright's caution against characterizing the magazine as a mobilizer, her comments make plain a desire for a more informed debate that contributes to social change. In this way Red Pepper is similar to the other alternative news organizations analyzed.

The accounts above, by politicians, civil servants, researchers and activists, demonstrate that a key function of the internet is that it provides them with the ability to produce and share information. In each case, however, someone accessing the information being shared would have to already know of the events and seek the information either through an organization's website or by contacting the organization and getting on their listserv. Given the obstacles for reaching a wider audience, for some the benefits of maintaining a new media presence are not entirely clear. Labour MP Frank Field notes that new media use has not led to increased news coverage:

> I just think the website, the jury's out for me. E-mails are wonderful although you get plenty you don't want. The website, my blog and all that works when it inter-reacts with the traditional media, and what I haven't discovered is, maybe it's a sort of reticence on my part, to say to a few journalists it's worth reading my blog. It's amazing isn't it that they don't. No last week there it was with 'Darkness at the Heart of New Labour', or whatever I called the blog, and yet you would have thought people would now regularly go back and look wouldn't you, what's his next piece, what have I missed in the other ones which I could ask him to make newsworthy now by just giving me a statement? None of that happens (March 2010).

Field expressed frustration and a level of incredulity at the fact that despite his increased ability to express his views via his blog, the expression of these views so seldom led to increased news coverage.

7.1.3 The internet makes it easier to access information

This study supports extant research indicating that journalists, politicians and researchers rely increasingly on the internet as a search tool and information source (Davis, 2010a; Phillips, 2010). Nearly all of those interviewed said they relied on the internet as an information source. For many this meant a reliance on Google. Robert Fife, CTV Ottawa Bureau Chief, details how research practices have changed:

> We used to go to the Parliamentary library or whichever library to do our research, but now basically the internet is so quick you can get a lot of the information off the internet. If I need to do research for certain stuff I may ask the Parliamentary library to get it for me, or when I was at a newspaper then the library at the newspaper to search for information for me, but nowadays you don't really need to do that anymore. You can pick and do all your own research just off the internet.

> I use Google a lot. If I need a more in-depth search, there is another means of getting it, but mainly I use Google. And then if there's not much going on in the summer, you've got to search the Government websites for stories. You know, you can find stories that are there that are sort of hidden. They will put reports on and audits and stuff like that they don't publish, and then you find them and they're very good stories…. I don't do it as much as I should, but there are lots of good stories on the web (Jan. 2009).

Fife's remarks portray the internet as a library and Google as a navigation tool. One of the advantages of online searching identified by journalists is that there is much more information available and research is quicker and easier. In this way the internet provides a way to cope with increased time pressures.

However, as mentioned in the previous chapter not all journalists operate under the same constraints. *Toronto Star* columnist Goar has more time to pursue research and for contemplation. She cites some of the job-specific advantages that have come with the introduction of new media:

> There's a lot more out there, there's a lot more email, there's Facebook, which I'm not very good at even yet. It does impose demands…. Mostly it's a benefit, things that I would once have had to make a phone call to find out, go to an encyclopedia somewhere to find out, go to a database somewhere to find out, normally I can just Google and get reliable information and not so reliable information, you need to be able to differentiate, but there's so much more coming at you, and where once I would go to 2 or 3 sources, now with the internet there the inclination is to check 30 sources which is a waste of time (July 2009).

Similarly, *Guardian* Home Affairs Editor Travis notes the importance of having quicker and easier access to documents.

> Well obviously the web, the ability to Google anything makes a huge difference, and theoretically it should actually raise the basic quality of journalistic information because I can now get hold of documents instantly and on screen in front of me in five minutes, stuff which previously we used to wave around as leaked documents from the heart of government. You know a consultation paper

> … which would reveal the policy options the government was considering you would regard that as a major exclusive leak, now it's on the website. I think it's led to an enrichment in that sense (June 2010).

These accounts demonstrate that for journalists the internet and Google are undeniably of use. Activists interviewed also stressed their reliance on the internet and on Google to access information:

> I Google all kinds of stuff continuously. I Google names that I don't recognize, if somebody gives a reference to something and I don't get a link to it I'll copy it and check it out and see where it leads me (Cameron, Rabble, June 2010).

> Google I use for everything, to search, check things, explore things, investigate. I don't rely on it but I use it an awful lot (Wainright, Red Pepper, May 2010).

> Yeah I use it every day for everything. *Guardian*, Google, this RSS Hub. That's it, they're the tools of finding out. You know you'll Google. I don't go to the UKBA website. I'll Google UKBA and what I want and it will take me to the right part of the UKBA website (Montague, JCWI, June 2010).

Professionals from all groups emphasize the speed and benefit of being able to access information and share it quickly and easily.

Activists argue that the ease of accessing information online can level the playing field in certain respects for those challenging political approaches from the 'outside'. Activists cite their increased access to documents online, particularly government documents, as an incredible benefit. Montague notes that the UKBA puts all of its statements and policy papers online and that this is very useful for the JCWI. The situation is similar for researchers. Hirsch states that he would not be able to work if not for the internet and email. A former journalist turned consultant, he says these tools allow him to work for remote clients and still feel part of the organization:

> Like everybody these days I'm on the computer all the time because of email, but I think that there is just a huge amount of information out there which an academic can use. I mean just to give you an example, in order to update this work on income standards it was fairly tight because we wanted to have it as updated as possible and get all the latest inflation figures in. On the morning the inflation figures came out I downloaded the data just from the public internet site and by the evening I had all the numbers updated. You didn't used to be able to do that; you'd have to send off for the publication. There's so much data available on the web now (June 2009).

Hirsch's account demonstrates that internet publication means that more people are able to read released information directly, analyze it and provide commentary of their own. This provides an increased opportunity for activists and advocates to, potentially, enter into debates.

Cameron, a long-time activist, describes the ease with which he can now access Statistics Canada information and analysis as compared to 30 years ago:

I can get the daily everyday directly, I can also rely on other people reading it through for me and telling me what these numbers are saying. So for instance it is very important for me to go to the press and economics forum and look at what the people who are writing there are saying about the latest growth figures or unemployment figures (I do that online. I didn't have access to that before). I did have the Stats Can Daily sent to my office… but now everybody can get it and now not only do I get it, I get commentary on it from other people. I might have phoned up one other person and say 'did you see that release from Stats Can on foreign ownership' – but now there's a forum on which these things are regularly discussed (June 2010).

As Cameron indicates, central to the processing of new information is a connected reliance on 'trusted' sources to make sense of that information. Further, he notes that he also relies on those who perform a 'curator function', and as an example describes an individual who sends out a list of social policy-related newspaper articles, and another person who sends out a weekly email with a list of Stats Can-relevant social policy publications.

The implications of the growing volume of information available and being shared online are, according to Cameron, that activists can now be as informed as those to whom they are applying pressure:

[T]he first major political action I was involved in and probably the biggest was the fight back against the free trade agreement…We had about a dozen people including people who had come in from Saskatoon at a trade union library in Ottawa. We read through the agreement…. In other words the time and the knowledge were all on the other side. Well now quite often, like the Afghan war for instance, we can accumulate more knowledge of what is going on in Afghanistan than the Canadian government can. We get it just as fast and the activists are just as well informed, if not better informed than people who are in government. MPs with their talking points, they really quite often don't understand the issues, and so the internet has helped activists be better informed and be informed at the same time or ahead of government on these important issues and on breaking stories. Everybody often starts at the same place and it didn't used to be the case. We just didn't have access to information the way we do now (June 2010).

As a long-time activist, Cameron speaks from experience about the changes in information gathering, and his anecdote is instructive. However, as part of this discussion it must also be noted that online research presents its own challenges.

7.1.3.1 The problems with online research

The increased ability to access and share information does not necessarily lead to concrete changes in policy or institutions. I share with Dean (2009) the position that access and influence must be differentiated. Further, the overarching reliance on Google as an information source is cause for concern. The apparent transparency of this search tool shrouds the fact that embedded in its structure is an algorithm that privileges internet

sites which are already popular. In this way more mainstream sources of information often dominate search results. Previous research suggests that the internet in fact reinforces traditional information hierarchies, rather than challenging them.

Hindman (2009) draws our attention to this on several fronts. He substantively details how politics are actually embedded in the 'search layer' of Google through its reliance on hyperlinks to determine page rank. And his analysis of web search and political websites leads him to the conclusion that a small percentage of sites receive the most traffic and that dominance is self-perpetuating. In this way a search engine like Google actually serves to centralize attention and focus it on known sources. This is cause for concern given Google's massive dominance over how we now search for information. In Canada, 57 percent of internet users use a search engine daily or several times a day to find information (Zamaria and Fletcher, 2008: 12). Google dominates search engine use: 91 percent of Canadians use Google most often and more than one in three Canadians have adopted Google as their home page (Zamaria and Fletcher, 2008: 171). Google continuously rates as the most visited site in Canada and the UK (Alexa.com). As already detailed journalists, activists, advocates and researchers all rely heavily on Google as a gateway to information. More research is needed to consider the impact of this reliance on Google and specifically how, as van Dijck argues, search engines like Google are becoming in effect co-producers of knowledge through their ranking and profiling systems (van Dijck, 2010).

7.2 Email and mobile phones: Tools and burdens

As noted by Dahlgren (2009: 173), there are 'large flows of socially relevant electronic information' now being shared between people and organizations that exist 'out-side of mainstream journalism'. Those interviewed noted that email is a central method of staying on top of information and sharing it with others. Email also serves as a means to filter information, meaning that people report relying on email from trusted sources to stay on top of and personalize information. Brewer was among several interviewed who said that most of his information arrives through email:

> I rely more on email alerts than proactively visiting the websites, I mean that's true for all of these things. I'm not the sort of person who sets aside time to go and look at websites. I don't regularly think 'oh there's something I must go and look at here'. If there's something I want to monitor I'll try to get some sort of new bulletin or alert sent to me (Sept. 2009).

In addition to this Brewer belongs to a number of listservs and receives email updates and daily news summaries from various organizations, including other think tanks, advocacy bodies and select committees. He also indicates that he occasionally registers himself as a

journalist for some sites in order to receive press releases direct from their sources. As such it is known sites and trusted sources that are being relied upon for information, despite the diversity of content available.

Similarly, Montague of the JCWI calls email 'essential' and says he sends out about 40 emails per day, including emails to MPs, to their membership and a bulletin to their membership. In terms of getting information in, he notes that he has subscribed to RSS feeds from the Migrant Rights Network and has also set up his own private RSS feeds for parliament to stay updated. He also says that invites to events now all come through email and that 'no one rings'. Members of No One Is Illegal note that news items are constantly being sent over their organizing list so that people can keep themselves updated. Hussan reports that friends email when something comes up to make sure the group has heard about it. Like many others, he also relies on Google alerts to stay on top of information about immigration.

Journalists report that email can be a good source for information, but add that even this somewhat managed resource presents its own challenges. Blizzard says that work has changed dramatically over the last decade, and she credits much of this to email:

> It's really good in a lot of ways because you get to hear from a lot more readers directly which is really useful but …I can come in some days and spend at least the first hour of my day just going through my emails, and I'm sure I miss, I get so many now almost that I can miss something that might be quite important (July 2009).

As indicated here even though email inboxes are being used as an information source, and do present a way for activists to reach journalists, email is being read within the time constraints mentioned in the previous chapter. Emails do have to be read quickly.

Emphasizing the pros, Casciani says that email is a tool that helps him cope with the increasing demands of the job. He relies on email alerts to let him know when MPs raise questions on issues he is interested in. He stays on top of what organizations, voluntary groups and councils are doing across the country, largely by getting himself on as many mailing lists as possible. Going through email alerts and newsletters via his blackberry is something built into and ongoing throughout Casciani's day:

> Inevitably if you're working in national news in my kind of job you've got to rely on email an enormous amount simply because you haven't got time very often to be chasing every individual of a story….I mean this thing here the blackberry, it's like the bane of everybody's life in one respect, but in terms of just keeping a broad overview of what's going on in stories I'm not necessarily covering on a particular day this is absolutely essential. To give an example here – the Refugee Council they send out this regular thing called the e-newsletter which is just basically a round-up of things they've been doing and stories they think are significant. [F]urther down here ICAR information center for asylum and refugees at City University, they send out this regular email and you know stuff like this is

really useful because when I've got downtime I'll sit there and pick through this stuff and say that's interesting that's not interesting and make a mental note of it (Feb. 2010).

As indicated Casciani will take the time to read correspondence from groups like the Refugee Council or ICAR, but this has to be done in downtime which there is not too much of. Evident here also is the omnipresence of the Blackberry, the way it creates increasing demands on time and also the way it is used to manage time and demands for attention. In noting that he surveys the immigration issue landscape through his blackberry and through his email during time spent waiting or in transit, Casciani reveals how much effort is put into making as many minutes of the day as possible productive and how little time he has. Spare moments, time spent waiting, must be used to stay on top of information. He continues:

> [T]he reality of the modern media is that there are an awful lot of stories which need covering and you have only got a finite amount of time as a journalist so you've got to find the most effective way of keeping across that information. This is why I always say to NGO's or anyone, 'feel free to put me on your mailing list, if I don't reply to your email it doesn't mean I'm not interested its just I've got 300 other emails on the same day that I'm reading'. But it's really important for you to make that step, try and contact journalists get your information out there otherwise we only hear one half of the story (Feb. 2010).

What is striking in this account is the sheer amount of emails Casciani receives daily. Other journalists interviewed also reported receiving a high number of emails, as did politicians. Casciani's account indicates the diligence required to stay on top of information, but also the extent to which those outside of established media and political circles have to compete with others to get attention. And it is likely that their information is being read within the context of many others in an email format on a desktop or mobile phone. The result is that information is contained within a platform that encourages the reading and discarding of information quickly. This therefore offers those on the outside precious little time to capture attention.

Information countering dominant approaches to poverty or immigration take more time to consider and work through. Reports and newsletters while not always long are often very detailed and processing and following up this information takes time. Consider Campaign 2000's 2008 Report Card. It contains very detailed recommendations of steps needed to reduce poverty. These include explanations about why there is a need: to increase child benefit, to raise the minimum wage, to address the lack of full-time work available, to improve Canada's employment insurance program, to ensure the availability of early childhood education and care, to develop affordable housing and make it available. Very little from this report was reproduced in news coverage of the Report. Of

the news sites analyzed, only the *CBC* and the *Toronto Star* linked coverage of poverty numbers to some of the recommendations being presented by Campaign 2000. But even in these cases the context presented in reference to these details was limited.

Former Conservative MP Goodman notes that in his 10 years as an MP there was an enormous increase in new media content, in the use of new media by lobby groups, a 'vast rise in email traffic' and a steep drop in old fashioned letters. In response he says that MPs had to alter their behaviour:

> I reckon by the end of my time I'd be spending an hour a day maybe reading websites, so it's an hour less for everything else. And most MPs would have broadly speaking hired more staff to deal with the increased email traffic and the rising consumer type demand from constituents (Aug. 2010).

Similarly, Liberal Democrat MP Willott notes that the steep rise in email has increased pressures since the instantaneous nature of email itself has now inspired people to expect an immediate reply, which is not possible. She also notes that that the ascendancy of email, particularly standard emails used by campaigns, means that this form of contact is not as effective as it once was:

> There's been a real phase of sending standard emails so I'll get 100 emails saying exactly the same thing which is helpful in that you know that there's that number of people who care about a subject. but it doesn't show that they really care about it because you know you stick your name and address into a form and it just sends a standard letter. Actually if you want to show that you feel strongly about something, sending a personal letter or email that you have thought about shows that you have taken the time and the effort to do it, and that's much more powerful as a way of lobbying an MP. I think that will develop more because I think people have got a bit blasé about the standard campaigning (Nov. 2010).

As Willott's comments indicate, the sheer ease and high use of email communication is in some cases working against campaigners. Particularly in campaigns that rely on the mass (re)production of emails.

In addition to staying on top of continually changing information and correspondence, political actors are now forced to deal with 'more spaces of mediation than ever before' and 'multidimensional impression management' (Gurevitch *et al.*, 2009: 174). Goodman's survey of the online content he regularly stays on top of throughout the day provides a good indication of how keeping abreast itself presents its own time pressure. When asked what websites he would look at former Conservative MP Goodman states:

> Everything from the newspaper websites, the *Guardian*, the *Daily Telegraph*, whatever. Nobody is picking the thing up in the morning because it's changing all the time. In my case the new conservative websites, Conservative Home which I'm now working for, Guido, Ian Dale, websites I've got particular interest in like Harry's Place, which is a kind of left website I was very interested in. Islam and Islamism is a subject I'm very interested in. And then all the journalists started

blogging, so you've not only got to read the *Daily Telegraph* website you've got to read Benedict Brogran chief political commentator. Recently I've got into twitter, which I'm looking at now. All these guys tweet referring you to their articles. You've also got a stream of stuff at the top of Politics Home which is a very good site that brings all this together, and I'm now looking at New Statesmen's blog, Liberal Democrat blogs. You know, how do you cope with all this (Aug. 2010)?

Goodman says the general effect of increased email correspondence and the need to stay on top of information is to draw MPs out of the chamber, which is the location for political debate.

New media and new media tools also increase pressure on politicians to be reachable at all hours. As noted by Taylor, who did not have a mobile phone when first elected in 1987: 'Then pagers came in. Then mobiles. Now smart phones give me on-the-move e-mail, texts, news, research, l diary, etc etc.... my most important and relentless servant/boss! And I can always be contacted, can always respond, can always be summoned'. This idea that the mobile phone is for politicians both a tool and a burden is also reflected in Marie Bountrogianni's account. Bountrogianni was Minister of various Ontario Government departments from 1999 to 2007. In her account the Blackberry changed from being simply a professional tool, when she was first elected, to a professional and personal tool:

> I had young children when I entered politics. I always say I raised them by cell phone and Blackberry – that's how I raised them. So it was not only a way to communicate and be able to travel and still keep in touch with my office, with journalists, particularly. I could be anywhere in the world and if a journalist wanted to talk to me, no problem, but it was also a way for me to stay in touch with my children (March 2009).

The downside, says Bountrogianni, is that when you rely on a Blackberry or mobile phone to such an extent you 'never really are away from it', and this inevitably leads to an extension of your workday.

Similarly, a former *Daily Mail* reporter describes how the convenience and ease of mobile technologies can be counter productive:

> I've experienced the other end of that… where the organization is using your technology that you've paid for, you know phone calls and text messages, every minute to the point where it's actually interfering with the job you're doing. I had a particular news editor who had to know everything immediately and always, which meant that when you were trying to interview someone or door knock a street you're spending as much time relaying information to the office as you are gathering information in the first place. So if you're not intelligent about it, it will become a hindrance. But that is the attitude, the attitude in the media sector is that you don't need sleep and you don't need to have a bath, you know you're always available (Reporter B, June 2010).

Here increased demands for communication, keeping others in touch and informed, place increasing constraints. Similarly, email and mobile technologies have led to increased demands on politicians.

Several politicians interviewed in the UK describe the relationship between politicians and the press as a battle. One even referred to it as a war. Another described the press as a feral beast. While the battle between politicians and the press is not new, one MP argued that the now 24/7 news cycle has led to an increased tabloid demand for victims and for scandal:

> [N]owadays tabloid journalism requires a constant supply of victims. It doesn't matter whether they are misbehaving footballers or actors or politicians, and god knows we've supplied them with enough of those in recent months. But there has to be a constant flow of victims. Or you can have heroes who are built up like Tiger Woods and then do something stupid and have to be destroyed. That's what tabloid journalism is about (Labour MP A, March 2010).

Whether or not the increased speed of news has contributed to an increased appetite for scandal is worthy of further investigation. This point does add another dimension to Meyer's assessment of the tensions of media time versus political time. Meyer argues that media demands for new information and the short time available for news content production run counter to the need in politics for considered debate and research. He argues that there is a tension between media production time demands and the time required for political processes (2002: 47). The suggestion put forward by MP A is that in addition to media demands for continually new information, there is also a specific and continual demand for scandal. More analysis would be needed to test whether or not this MP's assertion can be supported by evidence.

While Liberal Democrat Lord Taylor does not characterize the relationship between the press and politicians as a battle, he does think the speed of new media has increased the rate at which 'issues rise and fall' and that new media 'can gravitate to the extremes which old media did not'. So while noting that new media can be empowering and 'democratizing to a point' for active individuals and groups, he also raises the following concern:

> [T]oo much information at too fast a pace can ultimately disempower all but the decision takers in the sense of one-to-one influencing of constituents to MPs, whilst empowering the mass campaign by the angry and negative…. MPs hear a lot more from more sources now, but perhaps that makes them overly exposed to those who make that noise – who are not necessarily representative of most of us; and it may ultimately drown out more moderated discussion. In a sea of noise, how well do we hear (Dec 2010)?

Taylor draws our attention to how too much information at too fast a pace can actually be disempowering as it effectively blocks the potential for moderate discussion, providing

new constraints for political processes in the event of its own excess. Where is the space for moderate considered discussion and detailed interrogation in our contemporary media and political environments?

7.3 Conclusion

In both Canada and the UK, the internet and mobile technologies are presenting new opportunities for those inside and outside political centres to share information and stay on top of changing information. Journalists, researchers, politicians and activists report that they can access key documents more easily than ever before, and a wide range of content is now available in an instant. My research supports previous findings that the internet is proving most useful, particularly for activists, for organizing and sharing information. Previous research demonstrates that the internet facilitates a global protest politics (Chadwick, 2009; Dahlgren, 2005; Bennett, 2003). Bennett argues that digital network configurations enable permanent campaigns, the growth of broad networks and the communication of messages from desktops to television screens. There are numerous examples of how the internet is being used to coordinate global and local movements, for example its use by the People's Global Action Network to organize Global Action Days across continents in opposition to neoliberal globalization (see Fenton, 2008). Most recently, new media has been used very successfully by students across the UK to organize national protests and occupations. My research shows that activists in Canada and the UK are using new media tools to access and share information in a way that they argue makes them better equipped to engage and apply pressure on politicians in relation to poverty and immigration issues. But many who identify the internet's usefulness for activists are cautious in their assessment of its democratic potential. Bennett notes that the same qualities that make these communication-based politics durable also make them vulnerable to decision-making, control and collective identity (2003: 164). Dahlgren argues that while the internet offers viable possibilities for civic interaction it does not offer 'a quick fix for democracy' (2005: 154). Fenton stresses:

> Although it may facilitate mobilization, the democratic potential of the internet is not dependent on its primary features of interactivity, multiplicity and polycentrality, which are often celebrated and heralded as offering intrinsic democratic benefit. Democratic potential is realized only through the agents who engage in reflexive and democratic activity. It is an enabling device that is as susceptible to the structuring forces of power as any other technology… (2008: 238).

As detailed in Chapter 5, interviews with anti-poverty and immigration activists demonstrate that these players themselves only regard new media tools as useful when

they are combined with offline activity. Activists stress the benefits of new media when combined with grassroots mobilization.

The results presented in this chapter demonstrate that there is much cause for concern. My results suggest an overwhelming reliance on the internet as an information source in Canadian and British mediated political centres. This demonstrates the need to return to Margolis and Resnick's warning ten years ago that new media and the internet would likely reinforce old power dynamics as the established, privileged and wealthy take their advantages with them when moving online (2000: 312). Canadian statistics bear out this argument. In Canada 53 percent of people earning less than $24,000 a year do not use the internet. By contrast, it is used by 91 percent of people earning more than $95,000 a year (Statistics Canada, 2008). Further, 84 percent of those with some post-secondary education used the internet in 2007, while only 58 percent of those with less education used it (Statistics Canada, 2008). In the UK about four million people who suffer 'deep' social exclusion have no meaningful engagement with internet-based services, and those who suffer deep social disadvantages are up to seven times more likely to be disengaged from the internet than those who are socially advantaged (Helsper, 2008: 9). Almost all adults (93 percent) under 70 who have a degree or equivalent qualification are estimated to have internet access in their home, while only 56 percent of those with no formal qualifications have home access. The offline is being replicated online, with the difference that many who are poor are not participating online at all. The danger in this is that as the internet becomes relied upon as a 'cultural / informational repository' of ideas that feed public debate (Castells, 2008: 79), this repository holds the myth of being open while it is in fact dominated by the words and language of those enjoying higher education and higher incomes: those who are disproportionately the beneficiaries of present social and economic structures. This becomes particularly dangerous when one considers how this source of information is used to provide the 'ideational materials' for politics and policies (Giddens cited in Castells, 2008: 80), as indicated by my interviews.

There is a range of diverse poverty-related information online, and one challenge is for this information to reach a wider audience and decision makers given the reliance on Google which reinforces patterns of dominance and that commercial media receive most of the attention online as they do offline (Hindman, 2009). The second challenge is that in order to have an impact, those contesting or challenging dominant representations of and approaches to poverty have to get the attention of journalists, politicians and policy makers in an environment swollen with information. And the third challenge is holding the attention of those working within political centres who are reliant upon new media

tools designed to be read quickly and used as a means of managing information overload. My interviews demonstrate working practices of 'instantaneity' (Agger, 2004: 40). The danger as Agger points out is that living this way makes finding the time needed for meditation, thinking things through, debate and reasoning harder. While new technology provides new tools, like Blackberries, and new means of sharing information, such as listservs, emailed newsletters and Facebook event postings, these tools and modes of information are designed to be read quickly. Constantly changing information and new media tools force us to live in the present, to be continually multitasking in order to meet new media demands, but without questioning those demands. As Hassan argues, the danger is that we become less reflective, less critical and have 'less than a full picture of things' (2008: 220). Further, this type of mediated environment actually privileges dominant modes of thought; any discourse attempting to counter neoliberalism or challenge mainstream coverage of poverty finds 'time' working against it.

Rationalizing and individualizing discourses facilitate viewing poverty and immigration first and foremost through market-based criteria. Poverty and immigration become issues that revolve around targets and the cost versus benefits of action in economic terms. Coverage that personalizes or individualizes focuses on specific people as what is most important in relation to an event. Such coverage plays into the ongoing dominance of policies and practices that emphasize individual responsibility. Interviews with activists and advocates, detailed in Chapters 5 and 6, illustrate that those who want to engage and even instigate political discussions on poverty and immigration often have to speak within these neoliberal terms of rationalization and individualization. Rationalizing and individualizing frames reinforce each other to the extent that they are both shaped by and normalize the following neoliberal tenets that: 1) market logic should serve as the principle means for political, economic and social decision making and 2) the individual is responsible for her or himself and must make rational choices in order to fit market needs. Both frames run counter to discourses that would position discussions of poverty or immigration in relation to collectives, mutual dependency or social justice. Such counter-hegemonic discourses take more time to consider because they are not recognized as common sense, and as detailed in Chapters 6 and 7 it is very difficult for those mounting such counter discourses to be heard in a media environment with increasing time pressures. In this way the speed of contemporary mediated political environments is defining 'the rules of play' in a way that supports neoliberalism's dominance while also providing a barrier to its challengers (Fenton, 2003).

I set out to examine and compare news coverage of poverty in Canada and the UK, and to also interrogate how news content and the use of media influences the way that journalists, politicians, advocates and activists engage with and respond to the issue of poverty. I looked in particular at how news content, news production processes and new media influences actors working in Toronto Canada and London UK. Through a cross-national comparison I identify similarities in news content and in media and political practices that enable me to draw some general conclusions about the relationships between news content, neoliberalism, the expansion of digital media use and approaches to poverty.

8.1 Neoliberalism and new media use

Chapter 3 argued that neoliberalism is the overarching paradigm of our time influencing the political, economic and social contexts that 'feed into' processes of mediation (Siapera, 2010). Chapter 3 provides an account of how neoliberalism achieved a position of dominance politically and economically and also how it has been extended domestically, specifically in relation to child poverty and immigration. In the final section of the chapter I make the argument that neoliberalism also operates as a rationality and at the level of language, prescribing a 'way of doing things' (Foucault, 2008). In Chapter 4 I present the results of a frame analysis of news coverage of poverty. The frame analysis focuses on news coverage of children and immigrants as contemporary constructions of a "deserving" and "undeserving" poor. I analyse how the media covered similar child poverty and immigration events in Canada and the UK and also how poverty and immigration are covered generally in the weeks before and after these events. I found that rationalizing and individualizing frames dominate mainstream news coverage of poverty. Comparing mainstream news coverage to advocacy group materials, alternative news coverage and historical news coverage demonstrates the extent to which social justice frames and rights-based discourses are absent from much mainstream news coverage.

What this means in practice is that poverty is often packaged in a way that emphasizes quantifications, calculations, cost-benefit analysis and instrumental reason. Immigrants and immigration are instrumentalized, meaning that immigrants are discussed largely in terms of economic cost or benefit. Individualizing frames mean that articles focus on individuals as the source of poverty, or in the case of immigration as the source

of problems or solutions. Often attention is directed away from larger structural causes and solutions. I suggest that this coverage is a product of the dominance of news norms such as the demand for 'facticity', newness, the compressed news format, and the tendency to personalize stories to engage readers. I argue that the result is that this coverage privileges market-based thinking and approaches to these issues. News coverage in this way reinforces the extension of neoliberalism by reinforcing and embedding neoliberal rationality as a first principle and practice of evaluating issues such as poverty. The continual presentation of issues in economic terms, for example, reinforces the idea that government action in relation to poverty should first be evaluated in terms of cost. The repeated presentation of issues such as poverty as an individual responsibility or even as relating to individuals in isolation through the personalizing of content, reinforces the neoliberal tenet that individuals are solely responsible for meeting the needs of the market, and also for social risks such as the illness, unemployment, or low wages leading to poverty.

Through interviews with journalists, politicians, researchers and activists I aimed to better understand why news coverage is the way it is. The argument I put forward is not that all journalists or all politicians are so rooted in neoliberal ideology that they simply reproduce the rationalizing and individualizing frames that are conducive to neoliberalism. Rather, I argue that the speed of media environments serves to reinforce the very traditional news norms, such as demands for 'facticity', newness, a-historicity, compressed format, and personalization. Many of the journalists I interviewed in both countries emphasized a need to be continually 'feeding the beast' (Campbell, 2008) that is the internet and to get information up as quickly as possible. Journalists doing more with less are increasingly required to multitask in terms of media use, and to also stay on top of 'reaction upon reaction upon reaction' (Campbell, 2008). This intensifies the requirements and the amount of time that a story stays relevant, stays 'new'. Poverty presents a challenge because it is 'old' news. Further, journalists report that the instantaneous time pressures limit the extent to which they can do research, critically engage and add context to a story. Journalists argue that new statistics make a poverty story more newsworthy. Activists report being encouraged by media professionals and politicians to emphasize statistics and quantifications in their reports to get into the news and grab headlines, or to present individuals to make stories more engaging. I suggest that in intense new media driven media environments rationalizing and individualizing content can serve as a short-cut. With the caveat of course that not all rationalizing or individualizing content is the same, and when efforts are made to add contextual

information as done in many cases in *Guardian* and *Star* content in my sample, they do of course take longer to produce.

In Chapter 7 I broaden the focus and look at how new media use is influencing the working practices of politicians, activists and advocates in addition to journalists. As noted by Fuchs (2008), there is a contradiction between the opportunities offered by new media and the constraints it imposes. Through interviews I detail some of the opportunities and challenges that come with new media use. New media provides new opportunities for people to share information, and this is proving very useful for activists to build and share knowledge about issues and events. But, new digital media tools also create new demands and pressures that reinforce values of efficiency, immediacy and competition. The media driven time demands of contemporary media and political environments foreclose potentials for the deliberation and discussion that might lead to new approaches to poverty and immigration.

8.2 Cross-national comparisons

A cross-national comparison was conducted in order to be more sensitive to the commonalities and differences of news processes and poverty politics in both Canada and the UK. This comparison enabled the identification of similarities in news content in both countries, and also how digital technologies are influencing the working practices of journalists, politicians, activists and advocates. Observations about the similarities in content and working practices enabled me to draw some conclusions about how neoliberal discourses and approaches to poverty and immigration are produced and reinforced. A cross-national comparison also enabled more sensitivity to some of the nation specific characteristics and practices influencing poverty and immigration coverage and issue dynamics. The first conclusion to be drawn from the cross-national comparison is the important role activist organizations and research institutions play in bringing attention to the issue. Groups like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Child Poverty Action Group and the Institute for Fiscal Studies are more successful in getting coverage in the UK than in Canada. There can be little doubt that the vast amount of research available on the issue in combination with the continual presence of a strong left-wing voice in the national media landscape on poverty via the *Guardian* has influenced the salience of the issue politically. In Canada Campaign 2000, 25 in 5, the National Council of Welfare, and the CCPA all provide a significant and sustained campaign presence. It was suggested that one or several of these groups might want to

link up with a similarly interested university research department in order to take advantage of research resources.

It is also significant that addressing poverty provides New Labour a means to connect to old labour supporters. However, under New Labour poverty is dealt with largely as an individual's responsibility and any new investment in programs are accompanied by actions commonly linked to neoliberalism such as the implementation of targets, efforts to root out perceived inefficiencies and audits (Lister 2003: 429). Under New Labour there are no 'rights without responsibilities' and the role of government is as 'enabler' (Lister, 2003). In the case of the coalition government to date there has been a discursive emphasis on fairness (during the election), a budget that disproportionately harms those who are poor, and repeated stress on the idea that poverty is a 'culture'. Given the turn in the political poverty agenda, it will be essential for anti-poverty advocates to sustain getting media coverage despite all of the limitations outlined above if only to maintain the presence of some form of counter position within popular discourse however constrained. My research indicates that where social justice critiques are evident in mainstream media coverage these are often present via quotes from activists and advocates.

The challenge in this political environment will be to extend debate beyond rationalizing discourse. There is a need for more anti-poverty political voices quoted in the news who speak about the elimination of poverty as a matter of rights, justice and necessity and not just as a matter of costs versus benefits, or of individual responsibility. Further, a comparison of immigration coverage points to the importance of there being contestations at political levels in terms of immigration debates. While coverage of the move to create a fast-tracking system for "skilled" immigrants in Canada was brief, the issue of migrant rights and of the exploitation of temporary workers is raised in some news content through the voice of NDP immigration critic Chow. Chow asserts the ideas that migrant rights are important, need to be considered and that at the present time that temporary workers are being exploited. Although Chow is raising some of the same concerns as immigrant rights groups like No One is Illegal, she is the one who is treated as an authoritative voice and quoted. There was not a politician in UK coverage challenging the new rules as exploitive or putting forward any arguments based on migrant rights.

In relation to immigration, the political sponsorship of anti-migration discourse in the UK needs to be directly challenged. The cross-party promotion of negative ideas about migrants and "racial" difference as evident in the research by Pitcher (2006) and

Richardson (2008) presents a major obstacle to informed issue engagement. One reporter noted the paucity of debate on the immigration issue in the UK. He argued that the absence of a strong pro-immigration research based group enabled Migration Watch to dominate the tone of debate. Part of Migration Watch's success, in addition to its well connected membership, is that the organization provides the kind of numerical research as previously discussed that is able to get coverage. This reporter noted that there are pro-immigration groups in the UK but these groups often fulfil multiple roles simultaneously, including the provision of services for new migrants, and this makes it difficult to conduct the kind of wide ranging research needed. He noted that there used to be a trusted source at IPPR on the issue, but that this figure had recently left to take up work in the European Parliament. A nationally-based pro-immigration research body would likely provide an effective first step to challenging problematic immigration politics.

A number of those interviewed noted the influence of tabloids on policy and immigration debate in the UK, Tabloids were not raised as an issue in Canada. My analysis shows that it is much more common for underclass depictions to be presented in relation to migrants in the UK than in Canada. This is tied in part to the very different immigration history in Canada and the UK, most notably Britain's addition to the European Union and the free movement of European Union citizens has caused anxieties. But as noted, these anxieties must be read as misdirected reactions to the rising insecurity people are facing as a result of neoliberal global and domestic changes. There is a great deal of political focus on migration and immigrants in my sample period. The depiction of migrants as an underclass often entered news coverage overall in my sample via politicians as for example with Lord Tebbit who is quoted suggesting that immigrants are 'determined not to integrate', and who moved to the UK and established 'first ghettoes, and now demands for separate legal jurisdiction' (Coates and Elliott, 2008). Cameron goes further, suggesting in his speech on multiculturalism that Britain has been caving in to 'extreme elements' and that immigrants possess differences that 'fly in the face of human rights, notions of equality and child protection' (Watt, 2008). The then Immigration Minister Liam Byrne is quoted saying that people want newcomers to 'speak the language, obey the law and pay their taxes like the rest of us' (Travis and Wintour, 2008), the suggestion being that many are not at present. The *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* go further in their negative portrayals of migrants: 67 percent of immigration articles in the *Sun* and 61 percent of articles in the *Daily Mail* present underclass depictions of migrants. As previously mentioned, it appears to be an editorial policy of these news organizations

to portray migrants as dangerous and threatening a British way of life, refusing to integrate, putting too much pressure on public services, being supported by taxpayers, and even as rapists and murderers. Political discourse and *Daily Mail* and *Sun* coverage of immigration in particular needs to be directly challenged.

A cross-national comparison was also conducted between Canada and the UK because it was thought that the similarities in terms of social, media and political structure would enable a more sensitive consideration and comparison of the inter-relationships between phenomena (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). The comparison brings to the fore significant similar media and political practices that need to be addressed in order to improve the democratic processes in Canada and the UK, and in order for an anti-poverty movement to take hold. The following paragraphs offer some suggestions as to how these practices might be addressed.

8.3 The need for indignation and critique

In their evaluation of the 'new spirit of capitalism' Boltanski and Chiapello provide a useful analytical framework for assessing the relative political and social inaction in Western societies in the face of widespread poverty and inequality. They note that anti-capitalism is 'as old as capitalism itself' (2005: 36-37), as are critiques that the mass experience of poverty is a product of unjust social and economic circumstances and not individual failing. From the start capitalism has been challenged and critiqued as exploitive and oppressive to many, as destructive to social bonds and collective solidarity, as causing disenchantment, and as a source of poverty and inequality (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005: 35). The extent to which critiques lead to broad-based collective movements with the aim to concretely change institutions in addition to social and economic practices, as after the Great Depression, depends on there being two levels of critique. The first level of critique, the emotional indignation that people feel toward widespread injustices is and has always been present (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). The second level of critique, the one that exists on an argumentative level is more difficult. This second level critique is 'reflexive, theoretical and argumentative'. It is this level of argumentation that supplies the 'concepts and schemas making it possible to connect the historical situations people intend to criticize with values that can be universalized'. Therefore it is the second level of critique that provides the mental framework justifying action (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005: 37), and is necessary for a movement to take hold, grow in strength and membership. They argue that when critique is disarmed, it is disarmed at this second level. Boltanski and Chiapello view this

disarmament as being ideological, meaning that 'critique no longer knows what to say'. They are careful to note that disarmament does not mean that critique is present but physically neutralized in that it is 'not able to make itself heard' (2005: 41).

Boltanski and Chiapello's framework is useful in thinking through the significance of the findings presented in this thesis. In pointing to the importance of a second 'argumentative' level of critique they direct our attention to the need for an emotive reaction to injustice, but also to the need for an intellectual framework justifying poverty reduction. The widespread recognition that poverty is the result of unjust social and economic circumstances necessitates a capitalism critique. However, my results suggest an inter-relationship between ideological and physical disarmament, in fact I suggest that it may be impossible to separate the two. The disarmament of ideological critique is bound up with the physical neutralization of critique. The speed and limitations imposed by contemporary media working practices and new media use make it very difficult for a neoliberal critique to be presented in mainstream media content. Or to rephrase, the ability for an anti-poverty critique to emerge and take hold in the present circumstances will require changes at the level of discourse, and media and political practice. For example, in order for poverty coverage that places events or statistics in context journalists will need the time to do the necessary research into the political, economic and/or the social background, histories and significance of these events. In part this may require taking more time to find additional sources of information and interviewing more contacts. This will also require more time to reflect upon the event in question and the quality of information and sources on offer, and also to develop research strategies to gain additional relevant information.

8.4 Proposal one: Time as democratic principle

The media are essential to a functioning democratic system. Their normative role has been variously argued to: keep a watchful eye on political actors and processes of government (Lippmann, 1991); to provide a public sphere where citizens can keep themselves informed, deliberate and come to agreement on important issues (Habermas, 1989); or to enable agonistic dynamics, that is a place for a plurality of opinion and conflict, rather than an excess of consensus (Mouffe, 2005: 3). Embedded in each of these prescribed roles is time. Time is needed to perform the investigative functions necessary for the media to fulfil its watchdog role. Issues need to be publicly discussed and debated over a sufficient period of time, and people need to be provided with high quality information, in order for agreement to be reached. Considerable attention to an issue over

a considerable period of time is necessary for a plurality of opinion to be represented and to enable contestation to emerge. Further, the representative democratic political systems in Canada and the UK are built on the premise that the role of elected representatives is to reflect and deliberate on the processes of law and policy development.

My results demonstrate that new media use is speeding up the working practices of journalists, politicians, researchers and the activists who try to get media coverage on a regular basis. The emergence of now 24-hour news cycles in particular puts increasing pressures on journalists to operate quickly and efficiently. The computerization of contemporary working and private life, our constant connection to the internet, has lead to what Hassan (2008) aptly refers to as a dominance of 'internet time'. The need for news content to be continually updated and new in combination with the increasing workload pressures on journalists, means that it is less likely for an issue like poverty to be discussed in any meaningful way in relation to social and economic causes and solutions. The dominance of rationalizing frames in poverty coverage is in part a product of news demands for immediacy, as numbers from trusted sources fit news demands for facticity. The dominance of individualizing frames for the most part can also be explained by speed demands. Stories are manageable and more easily and quickly packaged when they are tied to a political figure or presented as related to an individual case.

In response to changing demands, politicians, researchers, activists and journalists are relying on new media tools to communicate and research. There is no doubt that the internet makes it easier and faster for each of these political actors to find and share key documents. For activists in particular the internet makes it much easier for them to share information and stay on top of recent events in a way not possible twenty years ago, as described by long-time Canadian activist Duncan Cameron. Activists themselves are very careful to be cautious in their assessment of new media's democratic potential. While they do stress the benefit of new media tools, they also note that online activity needs to be combined with grassroots mobilization. Groups like the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and No One is Illegal note that they get some of their most valuable information about how issue dynamics are changing through talking to people face to face.

Given the widespread use of the Internet, particularly Google, as a tool for research my results suggest that here there is cause for concern. While the Internet appears a transparent source of information, previous research demonstrates that it is dominated by those of higher education and higher income. The more the Internet becomes a primary access point for media and political professionals, there is a danger

that the voices and perspectives of those from lower economic and educational backgrounds will be absent from the 'idea pool' informing debate and policy. Further, previous research demonstrates that while it is true that there is in theory a wide range of content online, in practice Google reinforces offline patterns of information dominance as online attention is even more centralized on mainstream media sites than offline attention (Hindman, 2009). While new tools like email, organization websites, etc, make it easier for activists and researchers to publish content and disseminate it, the challenge now is for them to ensure their information reaches key political and media figures, is read and reflected upon in a working environment swollen with information and massive time constraints. In combination 24-hour instant news and the demands of mobile technologies place pressure on political actors to live in a continual present as they struggle to stay on top of information and are forced to multitask to meet new demands. The danger is that living in a continual present makes it harder to get a full picture of things. My findings support those of Davis, who argues that British politicians and officials 'are influenced by the social conditions of their occupations' noting that they 'lack the operational resources for keeping up with constituency work and developing depth policy knowledge. They suffer from information overload and a barrage of human/information exchanges' (Davis, 2010b: 157). Davis describes a situation in which shortcuts are taken in an effort to 'appear more productive' and fulfill the demands that have become unrealistic. In this environment neoliberal rationality with its privileging of numbers, instrumental reason, cost versus benefits analysis becomes a mental tool, an abbreviated framework to present and process information. This mental process of analysis is reinforced in practice as presenting information in this way also makes it easier to 'get' news coverage.

The increased pressures, particularly on time and the speeding up of work practices within mediatised centres mean that trust is all important. Further, those with access and those who are trusted are those who possess established relationships with journalists. While many have argued that new media provide a means to democratise media and political practices, in actual fact new media is intensifying work pressures. Under these pressures people tend to rely on who they know and who they trust. These practices reinforce ongoing processes of centralization and also contribute to the reinforcement of traditional hierarchies as those with professional experience who give the information desired when needed and in the shape required, which by and large means fitting news norms, having access and being trusted.

These findings lead to several specific conclusions. The first is that the speed of contemporary political and media working practices is going to have to be challenged.

There is a need for the recognition that time: time to think, time to research, time to debate, time to contest, will need to be "built" into media and political processes in some way. At present the speed at which new media technologies can process information is in many ways driving working practices. Time as a democratic principle needs to be incorporated into democratic processes and structures. Time for reflection may have to in some way be "written into" operational procedures.

In this environment there is little opportunity for investigation, considered deliberation, and issues are not in the public view long enough for there to be meaningful contestation. The problem is that on a systemic level the dominance of speed reinforces a neoliberal worldview, because speeding up media working practices in turn leads to more (albeit often the same or similar) information. The result, argues Hassan (2008) is that there is a tendency not to see the past anymore. This limits the ability to see issues like poverty as the product of structures and not simply as the product of individual decision making or as just the way things are. My results demonstrate that media and political changes will be necessary to ensure that working practices slow down. Time needs to be recognized as a fundamental element within democratic systems. The need to research, think, discuss, contest, and write must be privileged.

8.5 Proposal two: Media logic must be challenged

To argue that a 'media logic' increasingly influences politics, and that in fact we live in mediated democracies is not new (Davis, 2007b; Dahlgren, 2009; Corner, 2007; Louw, 2005; Corner and Pels, 2003; Meyer, 2002; Bennett and Entman, 2001). As Dahlgren summarizes:

> Regardless of how one evaluates the performance of the media, these institutions have become the major sites, the privileged scenes, of politics in late modern society….[T]he media are transforming democracy because political life itself today has become so extensively situated within the domain of the media, and because the various logics of the media shape what gets taken up in the media and the modes of representation (Dahlgren 2009: 35).

Assessing mediated politics from an issue based perspective provides a means to qualitatively assess the outcomes of the mediation of politics. There was near consensus among all those interviewed that getting news coverage was essential to getting political attention. Even politicians themselves indicated that this was the case. This is not the same as saying that the media dictates the kind of action taken. Rather, as noted by Liberal Democrat MP Willott, the media influence whether or not there is a policy response, not exactly what that response might be. MPs in both nations described getting media coverage as part of their job. Media coverage was variously described as a way to

make 'those in power listen', as providing a discursive and physical space for politicians to move into on issues, as a justification for action and as an indicator of public support. Gaining media coverage also confers respect and 'status' on activist organizations and other political actors further compelling them to increase efforts to get media attention. For politicians, media coverage provides a means to respond to issues of the day and to demonstrate 'action' is being taken. Similarly, policies are developed to get media coverage to again provide the public with a demonstration that action is being taken. The media focus of politics is contributing to an ever greater centralization of politics, as policies are being developed to get media attention.

The implications are profound in terms of poverty politics because while the widespread experience of poverty may be one of the most significant issues facing Canada and the United Kingdom, poverty is not new. Further, the kind of debate needed about poverty in order for the issue to be adequately addressed cannot be facilitated via mainstream media coverage given present constraints. In order for poverty to be recognized as a socially constructed problem with social solutions it would need to be discussed in reference to historical, economic and political context. Further, it would need to be discussed thematically versus episodically. Those politicians, like Michael Prue of the NDP in Canada, who would like to campaign on the issue of poverty risk not being covered in the news at all if they make poverty reduction a priority. For some like Prue, the awareness that poverty issues do not get news coverage is born of experience and not mere speculation. As noted by Taylor, media coverage influences how issues are prioritized. Further, outside of polling and constituency work, media coverage is used as an indicator of public opinion. Problematically, this means that market driven media 'stand in', in the absence of any other public opinion indicators outside of polling, as representative of public concerns. But of course the media do not 'represent' the position of all citizens. As noted by Taylor:

> [T]he media have a strong eye to their readerships interests, that means that it makes it very hard to promote policies that will impact negatively on readers. Or on the journalists and editors, who perceive themselves as "typical" even though they are generally in the wealthy and intellectual minority (hence 'middle England' and the 'squeezed middle' is thought of by news papers as including those at 40-50k salaries, twice the median income). Poverty stories do get aired, but solutions are usually unpopular unless they also help this 'middle' (and certainly don't hurt it) (Dec. 2010).

This situation in relation to poverty effectively means that the mediation of poverty leads to the narrowing of discussion to the present, and also to the limiting of policy priorities to those with perceived newsworthiness and not necessarily those that would in fact be most effective. Further, lack of coverage serves as a barrier or block to action. To return

to Hallin and Mancini (2004), while normatively the media may be considered in democratic systems to 'provide a running, day-to-day representation of the life of the community', in practice this is not the case. In relation to poverty discussions about policies that might benefit those on low income, potentially to the detriment of those of higher income, will rarely be presented in news coverage. And, while the political process provides a means to assess the extent to which politicians are adequately responding to key issues, there is no similar transparent check and balance for news content despite its essential function within contemporary democracies. Admittedly at this stage it is not entirely clear how this might be addressed.

However, one significant finding from this project is that there is a correlation between media ownership and the extent to which poverty is covered and how it is covered. Poverty coverage on the public broadcasting sites and by the *Guardian*, owned by the Scott trust, was different than their private corporate competitors. The exception to this was the *Toronto Star* which is run as a for profit private company. But, like the *Guardian* the *Star* was founded as a working class 'paper for the people'. The *Star* early editor and publisher Joseph E. Atkinson, himself born into poverty, used the paper as a vehicle to lobby for social reform. The paper maintains a series of Atkinson social justice principles. The *Guardian's* focus on poverty is demonstrated in the sheer amount of attention given to the issue. This news organization had more than double the amount of news articles devoted to poverty in my sample. Further, the *Guardian* had the highest percentage of articles in my British sample connecting the issue of poverty to immigration. The *Guardian* was also unique in my UK sample in often providing an advocacy position as regards poverty coverage via opinion pieces, and in providing significantly more articles that presented a positive view of immigration. Similarly in Canada the *Star* had more than double the amount of poverty stories. The *Star* also provided discussions of immigration in relation to poverty more than any other Canadian news organization.

There were also a number of similarities between the Canadian and UK public broadcasting sites. The BBC and the CBC had the lowest percentage of articles presenting poverty as a matter of individual responsibility, while the *Guardian* and the *Star* had the second lowest for their respective countries. The BBC and the CBC also had the lowest percentages of underclass depictions of the poor, with the *Guardian* and the *Star* again coming in second lowest. The BBC, the CBC, the *Guardian* and the *Star* also had the lowest percentage of articles with underclass depictions of migrants (albeit percentages were very low overall in this case in Canada). The *Star* was also unique in presenting

articles from the perspective of migrant families in relation to political or policy changes. While few news sites provided extra content in relation to poverty coverage, the BBC, the CBC the *Guardian* and the *Star* would all often supplement stories with content that provided contextual information. As previously noted, the BBC had the most content in relation to the End Child Poverty Campaign and its related content and events during my sample period, indicating that the publicly funded site was most accessible for activists and advocates. These findings demonstrate that publicly owned news organizations, and those owned by trusts or who have strong roots in advocacy principles and/or invest in poverty coverage provide more extensive coverage of an issue like poverty and in this way go further in meeting the democratic ideals held up for news organizations by providing needed content for public and political consideration. The coverage and attention by these organizations does influence the overall discursive tone of the issue, and in focusing on poverty (particularly with the *Guardian* and the *Star*) help to keep the issue on the political agenda.

There are those who are trying to humanize coverage in order to provide a more complex representation of poverty at news sites like the *Guardian* and the *Toronto Star*. This is significant and demonstrates that if journalists with the interest were given the ability to expand coverage and focus on the issue they would. It is important that both Gentleman at the *Guardian* and Goar at the *Star* note that they have been given significant autonomy to choose what they want to write about, and are working at papers that are interested in them doing poverty related work.[1] This autonomy affords them the time to develop relationships with a wide range of people working on the issue of poverty and to also become very informed on the issue, as evident in their coverage. One way of addressing the shortcomings in poverty reporting in the UK and Canada would be to designate reporters to a poverty beat. Proceeding with this idea of course requires setting to one side for the moment that this would require widespread public interest in the issue and so likely follow and not precede the success of an anti-poverty campaign, and that market driven news organizations are unlikely to see such a move as attracting advertisers. Nevertheless there is some precedent. Following the release of statistics indicating that millions of Canadians were living in poverty in 1968 and the establishment of a Royal Commission to investigate the issue, a number of newspapers across the country established poverty beats and devoted reporters specifically to cover poverty. The result, argues the National Council of Welfare in its 1973 report, was enhanced coverage that focused on the issues and not 'the myths'. This precedent reflects the benefit of

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1 As previously indicated it does not appear that the *Star* is as interested in poverty related coverage as it once was.

structural change. If you devote a journalist to an issue and provide the needed resources, namely time and the ability to generate specific specialist knowledge on the issue, this will reflect how often the issue is covered and most crucially how it is covered. Given the previous discussion about media coverage influencing political attention, it is also highly likely that having reporters regularly generating well informed coverage will lead to more political action on the issue.

8.6 Proposal three: New news for new times

Given the present crisis in the industry and the new mediated changes influencing how journalism is done, it is time to articulate the kind of news necessary for 21st century political dynamics. Changing news discussions about poverty will require a re-imagining and reinvention of the news. What this means is that news coverage of poverty will not change until contemporary news practices change. A re-imagining of the news would involve an assessment of the extent to which the mainstream news coverage now on offer provides citizens with the kind of information they need, and also more detailed considerations of how the news influences political processes. It does seem reasonable that as our social, political and technical environments and practices develop and change, we need to be conscious of the impact of these changes, whether they are desired, and if they are not meeting our democratic needs how they should be changed to do so. Changing technologies have enabled instantaneous news and this has led to an ever-accelerating 24-hour news cycle. This is coupled with increasing demands on journalists due to cuts that are in part a product of the internet's role in fragmenting the ad market. Any re-imagination of the news with the aim of improving news content will need to consider ways to ensure that journalists have more time to work, but also how to challenge the journalistic notion that the newer something is the hotter it is. Further, re-imagining the news will need to involve thinking of new ways to fund quality journalism, and to ensure there are funds directed toward structural investments in coverage of essential issues such as poverty. My research also shows the overwhelming reliance on Google as an information source. Steps need to be taken to investigate and communicate what the larger implications are of Google's informational dominance. Also, the immigration aspect of this study raises issues of accuracy. Surely, one of the most basic standards for news is that it should be accurate. The *Star* journalist interviewed for this project stated that information is regularly made up in stories about immigrants and this should sound alarm bells. There needs to be a stronger means to enforce the standard of accuracy than the current and rather toothless ability to submit a claim to the Press

Complaints Commission. At the very least there should be a means to challenge persistently inaccurate reporting.

We could also look to the past. As indicated by those interviewed for this thesis, the *Toronto Star's* 'War on Poverty' series while not radical did succeed in putting pressure on politicians to focus on poverty issues. The series points to the significant role a news organization can play when it takes on a sustained advocacy position. The role of the radical press of the 19th century also provides an interesting point of comparison concerning poverty coverage, although of course given the political aims of the radical press it was different than a commercially driven press with the primary aim of profit making. The radical press of the 19th century did lead to 'cultural reorganization and political mobilization of the working class during the first half of the nineteenth century' (Curran, 1998: 225; Curran, 2003). As Curran argues, the radical press did this:

> [B]y showing the identity of interest of working people as a class in their selection of news and analysis of events. By stressing that the wealth of the community was created by the working class, they also provided a new way of understanding the world that fostered class militancy. And by constant insistence that working people possessed the potential power through 'combination' to change society, the radical press contributed to a growth in class morale that was an essential precondition of effective political action (Curran, 1998: 225).

To link back to the idea raised by Fuchs et al. (2010) and Badiou (2010) what the radical press fostered was the emergence and development of the idea that equality was a right. Key also is Curran's observations that the radical press aided in the institutional development of the working-class movement by publicizing meetings and activities, conferring status on movement organizers by reporting them and their actions, and by giving a national direction to 'working-class agitation' (Curran, 1998: 225).

Activists are using alternative media and new technologies to inform each other about events and activities, the challenge is that unlike the radical press of this earlier period they do not have a mass audience. Without a mass audience it is impossible to 'disrupt' ongoing problematic representations and build a popular discourse that presents a different interpretation of why there is so much poverty in contemporary society, why our societies are so unequal and what can be done about it. Without a mass audience it is impossible to construct and direct agitation in a national direction, which effectively means targeting and changing the institutions that enable and sustain practices of exploitation through the 'flexibilization' of labour and low wages. It is also impossible to mount effective campaigns for affordable child care, education and social services. It is not enough to have protest occurring, and occurring alongside and in opposition to political processes. What is needed is an intervention into these political processes that

leads to change, legislative, policy and funding changes. To achieve this there must be widespread popular support and offline activity.

8.7 Proposal four: Advancing social justice critiques

In terms of news content, my frame analysis shows that news coverage of poverty and immigration are often rationalized and individualized. The presence of these frames have increased in their intensity since the 60s and 70s. These frames demonstrate the dominance of neoliberal modes of thought, but their presence is also a product of news values and practices that lead to this type of news presentation. There is a congruence between neoliberalism and news values that lead to the privileging of neoliberal modes of thought in the news, the very location where our world is represented to us. The particular news values that are congruent with neoliberalism are: news demands for facticity (largely numbers which provide the appearance of being scientistic, precise and accurate), the journalistic emphasis on immediacy, the fact that the news must be new, the compressed style of information which when combined with the 'newness' requirement lends itself to a-historicity, the tendency to personalize stories as a method of engagement and narrative tool, and the privileging of official sources which serves to embed dominant social relations and classist perspectives (Tuchman, 1978; Bell, 1991; Hall, 1993; Knight, 1982; Schudson, 2003).

Rationalizing frames present the issue in terms of quantification, calculation and cost versus benefit. In relation to immigration coverage migrants in Canada are often narrowed to discussions of their economic benefit, in the UK migrants particularly in the tabloid press are presented as a cost or burden. Individualizing frames present themselves in different forms by issue, and so it is useful to consider coverage of poverty and immigration separately. Poverty, when not being discussed in relation to child poverty or fuel poverty, is often presented as an issue that individuals have caused or that they need to deal with. The political emphasis on child poverty itself is tied to the fact that children cannot be viewed as responsible for their own poverty and so warrant government action.

The dominance of these frames is also a product of practices of individualization and rationalization that have been ongoing and linked to the rise of capitalism. The argument I have put forward is that in the present climate in combination all of these factors work together via the news to not only to amplify neoliberal modes of thought and practice (Couldry, 2010) but to daily re-inscribe and reinforce the market values and market criteria as dominant modes of thought and schema of analysis. This occurs for example when news coverage of immigration presents the issue in terms of the economic

benefit or cost of new immigrants, when news coverage portrays poverty as being caused by an individual, when poverty coverage emphasizes the quantifications of poverty without any links to wider social and economic causes or solutions. Each news article does not fully present or for that matter embrace neoliberal ideology. Instead, news articles bit by bit reinforce market values by reinforcing market based processes of evaluation and schema of thought. In this way neoliberal rationality becomes a part of culture, to return to Couldry's idea (2010) and gets embedded in daily life as market based approaches to issues become 'normal' and 'rational'.

This analysis of poverty and immigration coverage provides some indication of how and why neoliberalism has successfully achieved and maintained its hegemonic position. The ongoing presence of poverty and rising levels of inequality contradict notions that the capitalist system we live within is functioning and leading to a better standard of living for all. However, the continued presentation of the issue within rationalized terms silences potential discussions of injustice. News norms and values that reinforce a-historicity, lack of context and compressed formats serve as barriers to discussions that connect poverty and inequality to social and economic factors. In short it is nearly impossible in the present circumstances to have a mass public discussion that could lead to the identification of problems and solutions. Instead migrants are increasingly being blamed, or bearing the brunt of blame, for the frustrations experienced by many in UK. And it would appear that there is an attempt to create similar dynamics in Canada by the Conservative government.

The changes to media and political processes suggested above would most likely lead to content changes and enable an expansion of poverty frames in coverage. My research suggests that one of the most effective means to challenge the dominance of rationalizing and individualizing frames would be to intensify efforts to increase mainstream news coverage within the social justice frames being articulated by activists, particularly in relation to rights-based discourse. My analysis of historical coverage demonstrates that poverty and immigration were discussed more in relation to human rights in the 60s and 70s. Also, my analysis of coverage on alternative news sites demonstrates the strong presence of social justice frames and rights-based discourse on these sites. Given this, it is fair to assume that these frames could be most easily advanced in mainstream media coverage. Given the dominance of political figures as the focal point in poverty and immigration coverage one of the most effective means of getting social justice frames into content would be to have them advanced by a key political figure. This suggests the need for a wider strategy of shifting the terms of debate of key political

figures in popular discourse. Doing this would require even more well resourced and sustained issue campaigns.

8.8 Limits of this study and areas for future research

This research is limited by the temporal parameters of my investigation. The majority of my sources were interviewed before the 2010 election of the Coalition Government and, more importantly, the cuts that have since been announced. Most of my Canadian interviews were conducted while the *Toronto Star* was still waging its 'War on Poverty' series and while there was still much hope regarding the Liberal's Poverty Reduction Strategy in Ontario. Further, at the time of my interviews many of the effects of the economic crisis had not yet been fully identified. It would therefore be useful in this new political, economic and social climate to return to many of my sources and conduct follow-up interviews. Now is the time to go back, assess and detail the differences between new mediated access versus influence.

The study can also be seen as limited in that I did not look at television news or entertainment styles of programming given the dominance of TV. An analysis of television content was considered, but it was decided that analyzing television content in addition to print and online content would make the sample size too large and make it difficult to also conduct an interview analysis. At the outset it became clear that an analysis of television coverage with its reliance on visual images would necessitate expanding the textual analysis of print and internet coverage to also include an analysis of visual images in print and online, in addition to online video, in order to enable a comparison. It was decided that while such a comparison would be useful that it would make the sample of texts for analysis too large to do a detailed cross-national comparison. It would be valuable to investigate the extent to which TV representations are similar and different from the mainstream news coverage I analyzed.

Research for this study did flag up, but did not endeavour to answer, questions about how, in very detailed and practical terms, the media and usage of new media are influencing policy development in relation to poverty and immigration. My focus on poverty coverage and interviews with actors working in political centres demonstrates how processes of mediation are influencing media and political practices, and then discusses the implications of these influences. Politicians, activists, and advocates stress that getting media coverage on poverty and immigration is essential to getting a political response, lack of coverage effectively becomes a barrier to action. Given its perceived importance, it is not surprising that the news predetermines action as politicians, activists

and advocates adjust to news practices such as time pressures and shape their poverty or immigration related information to adhere to news norms. As a cross-national enquiry that addresses multiple fields of action, the sheer size of this project left little time to investigate the policy sphere, specifically how the media and new media tools are changing the way civil servants work and how policy is developed and implemented. Further, while the focus of this thesis was on poverty, my research on immigration supports the view that new forms of social stratification are being institutionalized in Canada, in the UK and in the US through changes to immigration legislation and policies and the language of 'skill' (Tannock, 2009). In combination, the speed of immigration changes being made, the level of their transnational similarity and their timing demonstrate that these changes are embedded in ongoing attempts at state restructuring.

In light of the above, I am in the process of planning a research project that will address some of the shortcomings identified. My next project will focus on the Balanced Refugee Reform Act (Canada, 2010) in Canada and investigate how new mediated practices influence the power dynamics of policy making, the development of this particular policy and its implementation. Given that the new immigration policies being introduced work to solidify social stratifications, this project enables me to maintain my interest in poverty but from another perspective. Through this project I also plan to explore the presence and influence of transnational political and governmental policy networks.

8.9 Contributions to media studies

This thesis provides several research contributions. Doing an issue-focused study on poverty politics, conducting a cross-national comparison and looking at news content in addition to the working practices of actors in mediated political centres provides a means to identify large scale, macro influences on poverty politics. It also provides a means to make links between news content and some of the structural characteristics of news production. I detail the mediated power dynamics between journalists, politicians, advocates and activists that appear to be (pre)conditioning the kind of poverty information that gets perceived as valuable and the sources who are trusted. Through interviews with journalists I detail how the internet is changing media production practices and leading to increased time pressures that intensify news demands for facticity, and the presentation of content that is compressed and a-historical and relies on personalization as a narrative tool. I detail how new media use is proving useful to actors within political centres, but is also intensifying demands on time and attention, doing so

to the detriment of debates about poverty and immigration. My analysis of working practices within mediated political centres demonstrates how hard it is in this new media environment for poverty and immigration to be portrayed in mainstream news content in a way that counters dominant representations.

This study contributes to previous work in the textual analysis of poverty coverage in its observation(s) of how rationalizing and individualizing frames dominate news coverage. It expands much previous work by providing a contemporary assessment and by comparing recent coverage with historical coverage with a view to discussing how discourses have narrowed. And a comparison of mainstream news coverage to alternative news content enables my work to introduce a new dimension into previous analyses of poverty coverage. In combination, my frame analysis contributes to previous textual analysis by detailing the frames that dominate mainstream news content and arguing that such frames dominate in Canada and the UK. Through a comparison of mainstream news coverage to historical and alternative coverage I point to significant absences in mainstream content, namely a lack of social justice frames and rights-based discourses. Finally, the frame analysis employed becomes unique in its comparison of print and online poverty coverage. This comparison speaks directly to, and challenges, previous work asserting the democratic potentials of online news by demonstrating the extent to which print and online content is identical. This aspect of the thesis would be of interest to researchers investigating online news content.

As mentioned, this research demonstrates that more work needs to be done to investigate the influence of new media use and media content on policy development. This project builds on previous research outlining the extent to which contemporary politics are mediated. The project outlines how processes of mediation present both boundaries to how poverty is talked about and specific challenges to those trying to get political responses and mount poverty reduction campaigns. Getting media coverage is essential to getting political attention, but getting media coverage requires on the one hand possession of and access to media skills, and on the other hand the ability and desire to adhere to media logic. This has lead some activists to pursue a two-pronged approach, one which involves a continual effort to get into the news when it is possible and desirable and an ongoing grassroots mobilizing effort, an effort now being aided by new media forms of information dissemination.

Chapter 6 engages directly with previous work in the area of media sociology. The extent to which new media use is speeding up the working practices of journalists is a particular concern when it comes to poverty coverage as less time for the production of

news content influences the extent and quality of content. My issue-focused analysis contributes a qualitative assessment of the impact of speed on content. Finally, as outlined in the opening sections of this conclusion, my results contribute to previous work in the area of democracy and communication by demonstrating just how difficult it is under present conditions for an issue like poverty to be adequately covered, and therefore to provoke the necessary discussion and political response within Canada and the UK. Given the present limitations in news coverage and in media practices, this thesis argues that there is a connection between discursive silences or absences in the news and the structural practices involved in news production. There are a variety of factors that have come together that exaggerate and reinforce neoliberal approaches to poverty. These factors include the dominance of coverage that emphasises the kind of calculative thinking that reinforces neoliberal approaches to poverty and stereotypical portrayals of a "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, and also the increased pressures in the new news environment as a result of digital technologies. The demands of 'internet time' intensify the very news norms that limit the way poverty is covered and the potential for journalists to find the time to report on poverty or immigration in a different way that would lead to an expansion of poverty debates in media content.

The aim in outlining these results is to inspire not pessimism, but action. As Harvey notes, it took many years for proponents of neoliberalism to move it from the margins to a position of dominance, we now face a similar struggle in our attempts to push back in the opposite direction (2007: 43).

Dear Jenny Willott MP,

 My work looks at how news coverage of poverty influences political debate, action and policy development. I am writing to see if you would be available for a 20 to 30 minute interview. It would be of huge benefit to speak with you given your work for charities such Barnardo's, your research experience, and your political experience particularly as Shadow Secretary and also as a member for the Work and Pensions Committee. I would be asking you for your thoughts on the relationships between the media, politics and policy.

 I come to this project with media and political experience - I have worked as a print reporter and a researcher for a television documentary series, I have also worked as a researcher for a political party in Canada. My PhD thesis compares Canadian and UK political environments.

 To date for this project I have interviewed journalists, civil servants, other politicians, and activists in both countries. These interviews will be used as resource material and quoted in my PhD thesis. They may also be used in future publications, a monograph, and presentations. I could anonymise your comments if preferred.

 I have deliberately kept this letter short but would be happy to provide you more details about myself or my work. I would provide you with my questions in advance of the interview. I can be reached by phone at xx or by email at j.redden@gold.ac.uk.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Joanna Redden

Sample of Interview Questions

Poverty Politics
Given your experience working as a politician and for charities, could you address the following question with both hats on: How important is getting media coverage to getting a political response to the poverty issues?

Do you think media coverage influences policy planning in relation to poverty?

On the issue of child poverty, what news sources and media figures would you say are most influential to the present and previous government?

People talk about the need to Daily Mail proof issues? In your opinion is this a political reality?

Can you talk a bit about what kind of influence you think organizations like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Child Poverty Action Group have? How important is the work of these groups in terms of influencing media and political debate?

Given the sheer amount of information available – how do you stay on top of poverty related information? How do you manage information overload?

How do you get a sense of public opinion on an issue like poverty?

When trying to influence poverty policy, how do you go about this? Who do you target? Is media presence necessary?

Does the policy process in relation to poverty need changing?

New Media
Has your use of new media changed since 2005? Are there more demands? Does new media make it easier to manage demands?

How important is the Internet to your daily work? To your research? Communications? To staying in contact with others? Does it matter that the internet is fast?

How important is your mobile phone? Has your use of it changed over the years?

A number of people interviewed to date have spoken about their work practices 'speeding up' in recent years as a result of new media, what are your thoughts about this?

There has been a lot of hope that the internet would enhance democratic practices by providing people access to more and a wider range of information. What are your thoughts about this?

In your experience has new media provided activists with greater access to politicians? Has new media increased the ability for activists to influence politicians? Policy?

Has it in any way influenced your communications with central government offices, officials and advisors?

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