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Not Your Business: Pedagogical Lessons Of Activist Resistance To Neoliberalism In Canadian Higher Education

Jorunn Thordarson

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NOT YOUR BUSINESS: PEDAGOGICAL LESSONS OF ACTIVIST RESISTANCE
TO NEOLIBERALISM IN CANADIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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A Dissertation
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Jórunn V. Thordarson
August 5, 2016

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that has inspired my own. Thank you for telling me every single day that my voice matters. It is because of you that I now have the courage to stand up and use it.

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Ég elska ykkur öll.

DEDICATION

For my mom and dad:

With gratitude, respect and infinite love.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASSE	L'Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante ASSE is a Quebec student union founded in 2001 that works toward the democratization of schooling and argues for free higher education.
BILL 78 - Law 12	An Act to enable students to receive instruction from the post-secondary institutions they attend
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CDPDJ	Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse Québec Human Rights Commission
CEGEP	Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel CEGEP refers to the public system of colleges in Quebec.
CLASSE	La Coalition large de l'Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante CLASSE was a temporary coalition of student unions that was established with the aim of countering the proposed tuition hike and coordinating the Quebec student protests of 2012.
FECQ	Fédération étudiante Collégiale du Québec FECQ is a Quebec federation of college student unions that was established in 1990 after the notable strike in 1989.
FEUQ	Fédération étudiante Universitaire du Québec FEUQ is a Quebec federation of university student unions that was established in 1990 after the notable strike in 1989.
IRIS	Institut de recherche socioéconomiques IRIS is a not-for-profit research institute founded in 2000 that provides a progressive perspective regarding social and economic issues.
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament

NDP	New Democratic Party
PC	Conservative Party
PLQ	Parti Liberal du Québec The PLQ is a federalist provincial political party which in Quebec, as of 1995, exists independently of the federal Liberal Party.
PQ	Parti-Québécois The PQ is a separatist provincial political party in Quebec, which advocates for the secession of Quebec from Canada.
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
TACeQ	Table de concertation étudiante du Québec TACeQ is a federation of student unions formed in 2009.

ABSTRACT

The growing power and permeation of neoliberal ideology across all facets of social life has been instrumental in promoting and orchestrating a shift among Canadian post-secondary institutions towards a reductive view of schooling at the expense of a more liberatory vision of education. The aim of this study was to examine the connections between power, education, and democracy in relation to the neoliberal restructuring of higher education in Canada, while simultaneously exploring discourses of resistance to neoliberal hegemony. Using critical discourse analysis, this study begins by establishing the promotion and naturalization of neoliberal ideology within the policy landscape of Canadian higher education via four discursive manifestations: the reduction of education to a market function by emphasizing job training and curricular compatibility with labor market needs; the construction of students as economic entities or customers who are in the business of purchasing an education for their own personal, material gain; the commercialization of knowledge and research achieved via the establishment of formal linkages between post-secondary education and the private sector; and the trend to compensate for decreased public funding for post-secondary education by promoting “internationalization” which positions international students as a source of revenue generation and human capital. This study then documented the successes, challenges, and teachings of the largest and most recent student-led, grassroots-based movement in Canadian history--the Maple Spring of 2012--which launched a powerful counter-story to

the prevailing doctrine of neoliberalism in Canadian educational and social policy. In unprecedented collective action--and despite vilification by the state and media who variably pathologized student protesters as disengaged and lazy or violent and extreme--students used a local policy proposal to illuminate a global ideological shift threatening to transform and obliterate public spaces and services, while interrupting the dominant neoliberal discourse. By presenting a vision for education as a form of cultural politics and vehicle for social justice, this student movement defended institutions of higher education as public resources that serve the common good as opposed to profit-driven entities subservient to the market economy. Considered together, the findings from this study aim to contribute to the ongoing conversation regarding the role of higher education in democratic life and the link, however fractured and tenuous it currently may be, between activism and social policy.

CHAPTER 1

ROOT CAUSES & THE SOCIOLOGICAL SIN

They were two short words, offered in a seemingly spontaneous manner in an otherwise innocuous exchange between the leader of the Canadian Liberal Party, Justin Trudeau, and veteran journalist for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Peter Mansbridge: “*root causes.*”¹ It was April 15, 2013, just two hours after the world began to learn of the tragic bombings of the marathon in Boston, Massachusetts, that left three dead and another 170 people injured. The day also marked Trudeau’s first Question Period in the Canadian House of Commons as Liberal Party leader.² Sitting across from one another in Ottawa’s Parliament building, Mansbridge began by acknowledging that little was known of the events in Boston, other than it appeared not to be an accident, when he tilted his head and leaned in to ask: “you’re the Canadian Prime Minister--*what do you do?*” (Wolfe, 2013, para. 1).

Trudeau replied, in an unscripted manner with presumably no opportunity to

¹ The Liberal Party is Canada’s oldest federal party and is situated at the centre of the political spectrum. The Conservative Party was established in 2003 resulting from the merger between the right-wing Canadian Alliance (formerly known as the Reform Party) and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and was led by Stephen Harper from 2004 to 2015. Stephen Harper served as Prime Minister of Canada from February 6, 2006 until October 19, 2015.

² The Canadian House of Commons, established in 1867 with the proclamation of *The Constitution Act* (formerly known as *The British North America Act*), is a component of the Parliament of Canada and the body to which the Government of Canada is accountable. The House is made up of Members of Parliament who are democratically elected to represent each of the country’s electoral districts known as “ridings”. Question Period is a publicly broadcast session held in the House of Commons where the Leader of the Official Opposition (the party with the most seats in the House of Commons that is not a member of the government) and the members of other officially-recognized opposition parties are permitted an opportunity to “seek information from the Government and to call it to account for its actions” (House of Commons, 2010). It is broadly considered in Canadian society to be an important sphere of public accountability (Ulrich, 2011).

consult with his policy advisors, by stating it would be necessary to "look at the root causes" referencing marginalization and social exclusion as potential contributing factors, while reinforcing that the approach of a Canadian government under his purview would be to first ask "where do those tensions come from?" (Geddes, 2013, para. 14). In response to Trudeau's comments, Canada's Prime Minister at the time, Stephen Harper, stood outside of Margaret Thatcher's funeral in London and stated that terrorism should "prompt manhunts not soul searching" (Levitz, 2013, para. 1) and:

when you see this type of violent act, you do not sit around trying to rationalize it or make excuses for it or figure out its root causes. You condemn it categorically, and to the extent you can deal with the perpetrators, you deal with them as harshly as possible. (Berthiaume, 2013, para. 7)

Harper's position was reiterated in the House of Commons by Conservative MP Stella Ambler when she angrily condemned Trudeau's remarks and further demonstrated the considerable power of the Conservative Party to reframe the terms of a public debate via the discursive conflation of concepts like "explaining" and "excusing": "there is no root cause and no tension that justifies the killing and maiming of innocent civilians" (Hiebert, 2013, para. 4).

Media coverage, which exploded hours after Trudeau's comments were first televised, was quickly reproduced in print outlets, blogs, and social media, the vast majority of which emphatically sided with Harper and what was quickly shown to be the general sentiment of the Conservative Party. Trudeau was chided and mocked by right-wing pundits writing in major Canadian publications, his comments called "touchy-feely" (Kay, J., 2013, headline) and "misinformed", framed as indicative of his inability to

govern with appropriate “sensitivity and diplomatic maturity” (“Justin Trudeau and the problem with root causes”, 2013, para. 6), and ultimately lent credence to the Conservative caricature of Trudeau as a lightweight political dilettante. One scathing critique in particular, which garnered over a thousand online comments, admonished Trudeau for “mouthing these shallow, superannuated bromides of the left” (Kay, B., 2013, para. 10) thereby extending what began as a personal critique to represent a collective deficit of an entire political belief system.

No less than ten days later the debate was reignited and what had the potential (albeit minute) of becoming a substantive public dialogue regarding the geopolitical, socio-economic and cultural context of terrorism had definitively morphed into an ideologically-motivated denial that such a context even exists. In light of the recent criticism directed toward Trudeau regarding his comments on root causes, a reporter for the Canadian Press asked Harper when it might be appropriate to debate and discuss factors which contribute to the origin of so-called terrorist activities or the “radicalization” of Canadian youth. The Prime Minister paused and then responded:

In terms of radicalization, this is obviously something we follow. Our security agencies work with each other and with others around the globe to track people who are threats to Canada and to watch threats that may evolve. I think, though, **this is not a time to commit sociology** ... these things are serious threats, global terrorist attacks, people who have agendas of violence that are deep and abiding threats to all the values our society stands for ... I don't think we want to convey any view to the Canadian public other than our utter condemnation of this kind of

violence ... and our utter determination through our laws and our activities to do everything we can to prevent it and counter it. (Cohen, 2013, para. 2)

There are many hidden assumptions and beliefs embedded in Harper's comments above. First, the notion that sociology is something that one "commits" lends it an inherently negative connotation; it is framed as a violation of sorts. Following this phrase with the reference to "serious threats" implies that the practice of sociology is something of a luxury--a superfluous activity to be pursued only in relation to those issues of less social significance. There is also a kind of fear-mongering tactic employed in order to suggest that immediate and decisive action is the only thing that will keep Canada safe. There is no *time* for a sociological indulgence that would interrogate what safety or security means, which values are being defended, or what kind of new laws and activities might be employed to these ends.³

Importantly, these comments reflect the purposeful efforts by the Harper Administration to construct an overlap between those who are said to occupy a "radical" standpoint and those labeled "terrorist." This was witnessed in the Conservative government's position toward environmental, Indigenous, animal rights, and student activists whose movements are being increasingly surveilled and criminalized. For example, on June 3, 2014, the Government Operations Centre based in the nation's capital of Ottawa, Ontario, distributed an email to every federal department requesting information and assistance in "compiling a comprehensive listing of all known demonstrations which will occur either in your geographical area or that may touch on

³ For a discussion which speaks to the importance of problematizing the mainstream conception of 'security' refer to "The real meaning of security" by feminist author and activist Eve Ensler at: <http://www.feminist.com/resources/artspeech/genwom/eve.html>.

your mandate.”⁴ The email was subsequently leaked to the newspaper *The Ottawa Citizen* which reported that:

the Government Operations Centre has also been involved, as an intelligence clearing house, in compiling information on Aboriginal protesters. Tuesday's email, however, significantly expands its surveillance activities to include all demonstrations by any person or group ... last year the GOC was involved in coordinating a response to Aboriginal demonstrations against fracking. The GOC distributed a map of the area where the RCMP had conducted raids on protesters who had seized an oil company's vehicles. It also produced a spreadsheet detailing 32 planned events in support of anti-fracking. Those included a healing dance in Kenora, Ontario, a prayer ceremony in Edmonton and an Idle No More 'taco fundraiser, raffle and jam session' planned at the Native Friendship Centre in Barrie, Ontario, according to documents obtained through the Access to Information Act by the Aboriginal People's Television Network National News. (Pugliese, 2014, para. 6).

Ultimately, the Conservative government's efforts to monitor and demonize public protest were tied to its desire to equate dissenting viewpoints with “radical” or terrorist (and therefore criminal) activities. In 2013, the Harper Administration released a Counter-Terrorism Strategy titled “*Building Resilience Against Terrorism*” which defined radicalization as the “precursor to violent extremism” and a “process by which individuals are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that

⁴ The Government Operations Centre was established in 2004 by Public Safety Canada, the federal department responsible for coordinating national security and safety concerns across all government departments and agencies.

encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extremist views.”⁵

The Strategy included a section titled “Domestic Issue-Based Extremism” which labeled environmentalists, animal rights activists, and “anti-capitalists” as radical extremists:

although not of the same scope and scale faced by other countries, low-level violence by domestic issue-based groups remains a reality in Canada. Such extremism tends to be based on grievances—real or perceived—revolving around the promotion of various causes such as animal rights, white supremacy, environmentalism and anti-capitalism. (Government of Canada, 2013, Domestic Issue-based Extremism)

In this document, environmentalists were grouped together and subsequently equated with those who advance a racist, white supremacist ideology. Furthermore, environmental activists, the vast majority of whom advance a philosophy of peaceful protest and non-violent civil disobedience, were referenced in the Strategy alongside the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing which killed 168 people and injured nearly 700 more as well as the 2011 Norway massacre that left 77 people dead.

At the same time as this Strategy was released, Conservative MP Joseph Oliver wrote an open letter in his capacity as Minister of Natural Resources encouraging the “streamlining of the regulatory process in order to advance Canada’s national economic interest.”⁶ Importantly, this letter was strategically published on the federal government’s website the day before regulatory hearings regarding the controversial Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline project were set to commence. This 5.5 billion

⁵ Canada’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy can be viewed in its entirety at: <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rslnc-gnst-trrrsm/index-eng.aspx>.

⁶ The open letter by the Honourable Joseph Oliver can be viewed in its entirety at: <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/media-room/news-release/2012/1/1909>.

dollar project, which would transport oil from the Alberta tarsands to the west coast of Canada for export to Asian markets, has garnered massive outrage and protest from a range of First Nations communities, union groups, environmentalists and student activists. The Northern Gateway pipeline would essentially cross “1,100 kilometers of pristine wilderness, the sovereign territory of more than forty First Nations, the spawning grounds of countless millions of wild salmon, and the prime habitat of the rare Kermode bear, ending at a supertanker port opening on treacherous waters at the heart of the continent’s largest remaining stand of intact temperate rainforest” representing a “study in extreme ecological risk along every metre of its proposed route” and touching on “nearly every environmental issue ever held dear by the Canadian public” (Turner, 2013, 93). Without specifically mentioning Northern Gateway pipelines, Oliver’s letter admonished “environmental and other radical groups” that “threaten to hijack our regulatory system to achieve their radical ideological agenda”, meaning that anyone who would dare “dissent from the government’s position--to question it in any substantial way--was to side with foreign radicals, to conspire to commit treason” (Turner, 2013, 93). As the gap between “dissenters” and “terrorists” grows smaller, so too does the political center, rendering an increasing number of counter-hegemonic voices as violators of Canadian collective common-sense.

Ultimately, these efforts reject the idea that it is, in fact, both pragmatically and ethically desirable to investigate questions regarding root causes and implications of social issues, particularly when they are being discussed in the context of public policy. In the example detailed above related to the Boston Bombings, the logic employed by many federal government officials and much of the mainstream media denies that such

questioning can be done without becoming an apologist for violent crime and without suggesting that individuals responsible for violent acts should not be held accountable (Aunio, 2013; Geddes, 2013; Hiebert, 2013). Asking “why” in such a scenario is neither an explicit nor tacit endorsement of the issue in question, but is instead a fundamentally human pursuit based on the truthful recognition (and foundational tenet of sociological thought) that society and its associated ideological and material trends influence the beliefs and behaviors of the individuals who exist within its confines. Put very simply, people ask why, especially in the face of tragedy or pain, because they wish to better understand the world (at minimum) and learn how they might participate in its holistic improvement (at best). The subtext of this particular point was suggested to Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre by Canadian journalist Evan Solomon who asked what exactly is wrong with attempting to understand why people might become involved in terrorist activities.⁷ Poilievre responded quickly and succinctly by stating “Nothing, but that’s not the issue ... the root cause of terrorism is terrorists. That is how we respond” (Fitzpatrick, 2013, para. 7).

One could extrapolate this reductive and repressive logic that facilitates the complete erasure of context in order to speculate as to how far it actually penetrates the socio-political culture within Canada, but conjecture is unnecessary as relevant examples abound. This was especially evident in December of 2013 during a radio interview with

⁷ The Honourable Pierre Poilievre is a Conservative Member of Parliament appointed to Cabinet by Prime Minister Stephen Harper as Minister of State for Democratic Reform in 2013. As per his official website, his central objectives included “working hard towards strengthening our democracy” which he states will be accomplished via the interconnected policy goals of “leaving money in the hands of the people who earned it, not with the government who taxed it, delivering more of our public services through free enterprise and competition, and trading more with other free countries and standing with them against tyrants and terrorists” (Poilievre, 2014). In the 2015 federal election Poilievre kept his seat as a Member of Parliament for the Conservatives and is now a member of the Official Opposition.

Conservative MP and Minister of Industry, James Moore, where he was asked about a report that found British Columbia (his home province) has the worst rate of child poverty in Canada. Moore began this conversation by echoing the BC government's platform that capitalism and free markets function effectively as mechanisms of poverty reduction, invoking the neoliberal mantra that "a rising tide floats all boats" (Jeannotte, 2010, 303), and stating that the federal government should not "usurp the province's jurisdiction" on child poverty (Visser, 2013 , para. 9):

more Canadians are working now than ever before. A million net new jobs have been created across this country, and through economic growth, obviously you create more prosperity, more opportunity for everybody. We've never been wealthier as a country than we are right now. Never been wealthier ... obviously nobody wants kids to go to school hungry ... but is that always the government's job to be there to serve people their breakfast? Empowering families with more power and resources so that they can feed their own children is, I think, a good thing. Is it my job, to feed my neighbor's child? I don't think so (followed by an audible laugh). (Smith, 2013, para. 4)

According to Moore, citizens--even small children--are never subjects of circumstance requiring assistance and support; they are individual agents of choice solely responsible for their own well-being. Moore's invocation of the term "serve" positions people living in poverty as entitled and needy and reflects the Conservative position that just as the root cause of terrorism is terrorists, the root cause of poverty is poor people.⁸

It should also be noted that during his tenure as a Member of Parliament, Moore's

⁸ For research related to the criminalization of poverty in Canada refer to: Mirchandani, K. & Chan, W. (2008). *Criminalizing race, criminalizing poverty: Welfare fraud enforcement in Canada*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing Co., Ltd.

deference to jurisdictional issues was selectively invoked. In 2012, despite the fact that education is constitutionally defined as a provincial responsibility, Moore publicly encouraged all Canadian secondary schools to make history courses mandatory, which follows efforts of the Conservative government to reframe and whitewash the nation's history in accordance with a narrowly defined patriotism. When asked whether Moore might "take steps to cajole provincial education ministries to boost their emphasis on Canadian history, Moore replied: 'Maybe I just did'" (Mickleburgh, 2012, para. 8). The following year, the Conservative government established a House of Commons Canadian Heritage Committee to study the standards of history courses at primary and secondary levels of education in every jurisdiction throughout the country. To date, there has been no comparable pan-Canadian action on the part of the federal government to address child poverty despite the 1989 all-party resolution to completely eradicate its occurrence by the year 2000.

There was an immediate backlash toward Moore regarding his comments on child poverty, but a significant portion of the criticism referenced his lack of empathy or charitable spirit, especially given that the comments came during the holiday season. In this sense, the issue of child poverty was framed primarily as a question of charity requiring a series of individual responses as opposed to a significant human rights matter necessitating collective, structural and systemic change. In response to the influx of criticism, Moore took to his twitter account to defend himself, adamantly declaring he had been "lied about" and calling the story "ridiculous and quote out of context" (Visser, 2013). It was only when an audiotape of Moore's comments was posted online and the public could hear his words verbatim and listen to him laugh that he finally apologized.

However, it remains important to acknowledge the painful irony that the Canadian public was asked to believe that comments made by a publicly elected official should be understood in context when that person's political reputation is at risk, yet the social context in which people are born into poverty is not worthy of consideration when discussing the federal government's role in enhancing food security among Canadian children.

Considered together, the kind of comments as detailed above reveal a kind of purposeful anti-intellectual posturing, what Turner (2013) refers to as a "politics of pure posture" (p. 91), which is illustrative of a deep contempt for critical scholarship and research that subtly serves to strengthen the rationale for neoliberal and anti-democratic social policies. In this sense, many elected officials who are leading this nation can be understood as what Giroux (2013) calls "anti-public intellectuals" who "rail against public goods and public values; they undermine collective bonds and view social responsibility as a pathology, while touting the virtues of a survival-of-the-fittest notion of individual responsibility" (p. 43). Central to this effort is the tendency to bracket off social issues from the context in which they originate and reside, thereby facilitating the reconstruction of the government's mandate and the reprioritization of its services. Doing so within the context of animated debate functions efficiently to limit resistance and opposition:

The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum - even encourage the more critical and dissident views. That gives people the sense that there's free thinking going on, while all the time the presuppositions of

the system are being reinforced by the limits put on the range of the debate.

(Chomsky, 1998, 43)

Thus we can talk about how to get tough on crime and terrorism but not about its antecedents; we can talk about economic growth and prosperity, but not about those at whose expense it is actually achieved. According to University of Toronto philosophy professor Dr. Joseph Heath (2013), this tendency has actually become a political strategy that takes the shape of “antagonizing intellectuals so the Conservatives could position themselves as defenders of common sense” and was openly referenced by Harper’s former Chief of Staff, Ian Brodie, at a symposium at McGill University in 2009 in relation to criticisms of the federal government’s position on crime: “politically it helped us tremendously to be attacked by this coalition so we never really had to engage in the question of what the evidence actually shows about various approaches to crime” (Cheadle, 2009, para. 25). In this respect, when we limit dialogue and discourse, we also constrict what is possible in the way of analysis and action. Within this narrow sphere cultivated in an era of neoliberal hegemony, previously discrete categories are forcibly married blurring the boundaries between the public good and corporate profit, activists and terrorists, education and training, democracy and capitalism. A consequence of neoliberal ideology has been described by Giroux (2013) as a kind of market orthodoxy which:

translates all aspects of our personal and social lives into the context of commerce, the mode of critique that searches for the gaps between the socio-political configuration of the moment and the ideal of democracy to come is quickly becoming a thing of the past, replaced by a desire not for our collective

betterment and the public good, but for private gain of a distinctly selfish bent. (p. 27)

In order to counteract this trend and challenge the unimpeachability of market logic in defense of a robust and authentic democracy, what we need is more substantive dialogue and critical inquiry: more, not less, *sociology*.

In essence, what we require is a renewed, expansive and inclusive conversation centered upon two twin questions, namely--what exactly are our responsibilities to one another and how is it that we ought to live together? These are, as I understand them, not only inquiries of a sociological orientation, but are also foundational questions of critical education conceptualized as a form of cultural politics that “represents a version of our own dreams for ourselves, our children, and our communities” while importantly acknowledging that “such dreams are never neutral; they are always someone’s dreams, and to the degree that they are implicated in organizing the future for others they always have a moral and political dimension” (Simon, 1987, 372). As such, this conversation must be situated within a “larger project rooted in an understanding that critical education and democracy are the primary and mutually constituting elements of any society that can make a claim to promoting the health, justice, and equality of its citizenry” (Giroux, 2013, 20). What follows is a discussion as to how neoliberal ideology is colonizing educational discourse and reshaping the boundaries of Canadian democracy, premised on the belief that “education, like love” is a generative force and “where we go from here – chaos or community, barbarism or a revitalized democracy based on economic and global justice – depends on how we understand and name this political moment, and how we act or fail to act within it” (Ayers & Ayers, 2014, 95).

Statement of Problem

On a global scale, post-secondary institutions face intense pressure to restructure in accordance with the goals and values of neoliberalism and the private capitalist economy (Giroux, 2011). Neoliberalism can be understood as both an ideology and policy framework that emphasizes the “withdrawal of the redistributive state” by replacing the “collective rights of citizenship” with the rights of individual taxpayers (Fodor, 2013, 105), thereby overshadowing the focus on the public or common good. Research has shown that pressure for universities to succumb to the neoliberal agenda is primarily exerted through the interconnected projects of privatization, corporatization, and commercialization (Polster, 2010). This trend has been widely documented within the context of Canadian society (Polster & Newson, 2015; Turk, 2008; Tudiver, 1999), as well as throughout the world including the United States (Giroux, 2002), Australia and New Zealand (Marginson, 2004), the United Kingdom (Harris, 2012; Smith, 2012; Ball, 2012; Gopal, 2012; Holmwood & Bhambra, 2012; Olssen & Peters, 2005), Latin America (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002), Japan (Iwasaki & Moore, 2009), South Africa (Vale, 2011; Anderson, 2003), Greece (Gounari, 2012), Kenya (Wangenge-Ouma, 2008), and Zimbabwe (Hwami, 2010), among many other nations. Importantly, this trend is deeply connected to broader movements toward dismantling and privatizing virtually all other public services and spaces (Vincent, 2011). This extensive segment of research has interrogated the negative impacts of neoliberal educational policies as witnessed by the trend to privilege business and science programs at the expense of the humanities (Nussbaum, 2010), the reorganization of curriculum (Camicia & Franklin, 2011), the limiting of academic freedom (Woodhouse, 2009; Jeppesen & Nazar, 2012; Shore &

Taitz, 2012), professorial autonomy (Bose, 2012), student voice and dissent (Czerniawski, 2012), and importantly the ultimate erasure of a critical understanding of pedagogy and knowledge as an inherently political and personal project. This means that not only is the way we practice education being transformed, but so is our very understanding of the nature and purpose of education itself. Further still, this transformation affects more than how we teach and what we learn in our schools, but has serious consequences as to the kind of communities we are able to create.

Taken together, substantial evidence suggests that the global transformation of public post-secondary institutions into corporate educational institutions (Angus, 2009) is rooted within the proliferation of predatory transnational capitalism. Within this context, significantly less attention has been paid to theorizing strategies of resistance that may be utilized to inform unified movements for social democracy which can effectively push back against the permeation of neoliberal policy in the area of higher education. As such, this study interrogated precisely how neoliberal ideology is moving within and through Canada's system of higher education by looking at the largest and most recent student-led grassroots-based movement in Canadian history, the monumental uprising now referred to as "*Maple Spring*," in the context of a comprehensive review of current Canadian provincial higher education policy.⁹

The Maple Spring movement was a student protest movement that took place in the Canadian province of Quebec in 2012. The movement protested prevailing neoliberal fiscal and social policies, namely the movement toward the privatization of higher

⁹ The "Maple Spring" movement was given the name "printemps érable" in French for two reasons. First, it is meant to evoke recognition of the activist movements known as the Arab Spring of Egypt's Tahrir Square (printemps arabe) that took place the previous year. Second, it relates to the fact that Quebec is the world's largest producer of maple syrup, which begins to flow in the springtime.

education by decreasing government funding and increasing tuition fees, mounting student-loan debt, inequitable taxation policies which avoid raising corporate tax, and threats to intellectual freedom and student self-governance. Importantly, this movement began via the persistent efforts of a demographic frequently dismissed as apathetic, variably pathologized as either disengaged and lazy or violent and extreme, and largely absent from political discourse and policymaking. Through months of teach-ins, talking tours, marches and massive demonstrations, the student protesters embodied a participatory and inclusive approach to knowledge creation reflective of civic education in service of critical democracy. This social movement succeeded not only in stopping the proposed tuition increase, but it also contributed to the electoral defeat of the provincial Premier and the governing political party, prompted the resignation of two Ministers of Education, forced the repeal of an unprecedented piece of legislation that denied basic rights to organize and protest, and ultimately advanced a compelling critique regarding the state of Canada's democracy. Co-Spokespersons of CLASSE, a temporary coalition of student unions that was instrumental in supporting the Maple Spring movement, offered the following overview of its philosophical position:

ours is a broken system of democracy that comes up for air once every four years, in which politicians prefer the murmurs of business lobbyists to the voices of those they supposedly represent. Our faith is in direct, participatory democracy, which we practice in assemblies of thousands where every student can give input into the decisions that impact them. Our commitment to genuine democracy is a reflection of the type of society we seek to build: one that is more equal, not less,

and revolves around the needs of people, not corporations. (Robert & Reynolds, 2012, para, 11)

Connecting efforts to define and defend “accessible” education in Quebec to more general struggles for social justice across Canada, thus highlighting the inextricable link between education and democracy, remains arguably the most important teaching of the Maple Spring movement.

Research Questions

The fundamental research question examined through the course of this study was: In an era of globalization and transnational capitalism, how is neoliberal ideology moving within and through Canada’s post-secondary institutions to reimagine and discursively reconstruct the boundaries of Canadian democracy? In order to further interrogate this question, the following specific research questions were addressed:

1. How does official policy discourse (ministerial and institutional) represent the purpose of higher education in Canada?
 - a. How are issues of social justice, democracy, and equality understood, positioned and taken up within these representations?
 - b. To what extent, and in what ways, have neoliberal ideology and discourses of market fundamentalism permeated higher education policy in Canada?
2. What kinds of pedagogical lessons may be revealed through analysis of the Maple Spring movement and utilized to inform and strengthen broader resistance movements?
 - a. How did mainstream news media discourse represent the purpose of higher education in relation to the “Maple Spring” movement of 2012?

How were issues of youth activism, civil disobedience, and protest framed within these representations?

- b. What kind of counter-narrative might this movement offer regarding the role of higher education in Canada's democracy?

Study Scope and Design

Phase 1: Policy Review

Within Canada, education is constitutionally defined as a provincial responsibility, meaning that post-secondary education falls within the policy portfolio of provincial governments; there is no federal body that formally guides higher education policy at the national level (Shanahan & Jones, 2007).¹⁰ That which can be understood as a national policy agenda for post-secondary education in Canada is thus represented by the synthesis of common aims across provincial regions (Kirby, 2007). A unique opportunity for such a synthesis is found within the U15, which is a national association of Canada's fifteen leading research institutions. Therefore the first phase of this study entailed the critical policy analysis of the mission statements and strategic plans of each institution affiliated with the U15 (refer to Appendix 2 for a detailed list of this data sample). This analysis focused on uncovering to what degree, and in what ways, neoliberal ideology and discourses associated with market fundamentalism have been absorbed into key documents that oversee higher education policy and practice. Subsequently, a similar analysis was conducted of the mission statements and guiding documents (strategic plan, policy framework, business plan or annual report, as available) of the Ministries of Advanced Education within seven Canadian provinces, which

¹⁰ Pursuant to section 93 of *The Constitution Act*, 1867, provincial legislatures are granted exclusive authority to create and enforce laws related to the provision of education.

provide the governing policies for these institutions (refer to Appendix 3 for a detailed list of this data sample). Taken together, this analysis was used to create a kind of policy heuristic to provide an overview of notable trends within the current policy climate in Canadian higher education as represented by the U15.

Research by Turk (2008) suggests that there are significant parallels in the way that universities portray their policy objectives in service to democracy and social justice: universities are remarkably similar in characterizing their fundamental purpose as serving the public good by preserving, transmitting, and advancing knowledge. For the most part, they recognize that this requires institutional autonomy so that their educational and scholarly work cannot be redirected or halted because it offends powerful interests, be they state, religious, ideological, or corporate. (p. 13)

The earliest major work arguing that the link between universities and the corporate sector in Canada would erode the system's public mission was written by Newson and Buchbinder (1988) and called for an immediate public debate. This call was rejected by the majority of the academic community who perceived this growing relationship as temporary and inconsequential. It was asserted in the late 1990s that Canadian universities were somewhat insulated from pressures to succumb to the neoliberal agenda: "the Canadian case suggests that changes stemming from the emergence of a global economy do not have to be met by changes in national higher education policy which promote academic capitalism" (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997, 214). However, this research was followed up by Metcalfe (2010) who found that changes to the funding

landscape, coupled with emerging policy initiatives promoting marketization, demonstrated a notable shift in Canadian post-secondary education toward neoliberalism.

It can also be argued that neoliberalism has taken root in Canadian social and educational policy in a very subversive way, able to lurk just beneath the strongly-entrenched narrative of Canada as a peaceful, passive, and even self-deprecating nation; the “gentle giant” as it is referred to by many, especially in relation to its louder, boisterous, and sometimes self-congratulatory neighbor to the south. With this understanding in mind, the central aim of the first phase of this research project was to interrogate how deeply, and in what ways, the economic-utilitarian discourse associated with neoliberalism has permeated current Canadian higher education policy at both the ministry and institutional level.

Despite the fact that mission statements have become ubiquitous in the world of higher education policy, little research subjects the mission and vision statements of post-secondary institutions to structured intellectual analyses (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). The scholarship that does exist can be categorized into two varying camps (Lang, 1991). First, some contend that the analysis of mission statements is fundamentally limited as to what it can reveal beyond the level of rhetoric and political posturing (Chait, 1979; Davies, 1986; Delucchi, 1997). Conversely, others argue that mission statements play a critical normative role in legitimating an organization (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), as well as inspiring teachers, students and community members by broadly communicating a set of values and sense of shared history (Hartley, 2002), even if it may be difficult to measure the degree to which such statements inform the organizational and lived reality of an institution.

This study has primarily adopted this second way of understanding the importance of mission statements, acknowledging that they are informed by particular sociopolitical contexts and reflective of dominant ideological and discursive trends. However, it is critical to acknowledge that this does not necessarily mean that all content in such statements is operationalized or that the documents themselves encapsulate all institutional functions. This first phase therefore goes beyond looking at mission and vision statements to also analyze strategic plans associated with each institution and affiliated ministry. The inclusion of strategic plans has provided an important additional level of analysis and is especially relevant to the present study given that they were transplanted from the corporate world into the realm of higher education due to pressures associated with globalization, the rise of the knowledge economy, and associated movements toward accountability and quality assurance (Fain, 2007).

Phase 2: Maple Spring Movement

During the second phase of this study a critical discourse analysis was conducted on a comprehensive review of documents and news media coverage related to the Maple Spring movement from its emergence in early 2012 through February 2013. This analysis shed specific light on the degree to which neoliberal values have superseded the commitment to education for democracy in a particular case and reveal exactly what kind of discursive tactics are employed in practice with the aim of furthering and resisting the neoliberal political project. It is worth noting that at the peak of Maple Spring, in May of 2012, an opinion poll showed that sixty-two percent of Canadian students reported that they would likely participate in a similar student strike in their respective provinces

(Soltz, 2012). As was reported in an alternative independent Canadian magazine, the Maple Spring movement has shown that:

an entire generation of young people has taken up the politics of protest and is getting an education in the strategy and tactics of mass movements. Anti-capitalist consciousness is growing. And there's a budding movement of support for Quebec students spreading throughout Canada which may just harbor the promise of a coast-to-coast upsurge against the pernicious policies of the Harper government. (Canadian Dimension, 2012, para. 6)

Even the more mainstream centre-left publication *The Guardian* referred to the student uprising within Quebec as “the most powerful challenge to neoliberalism on the continent” (Lukacs, 2012, para. 2). As such, this study first established the penetration of neoliberal ideology into Canadian higher education and subsequently explored potential learnings revealed through the case study of the Maple Spring movement, presented as pedagogical lessons to inform and strengthen resistance movements struggling to reorient post-secondary institutions around the goals of democracy, social, and ecological justice in other regions throughout the country.

Significance of the Study

The overarching goal of this dissertation was to explore and examine the connections between power, education, and democracy in relation to the proliferation of neoliberal ideology within the landscape of higher education policy in Canada. The central research question, succinctly put, can be understood as this: “what is it we long for, then, in universities? And what part does neoliberalism play in shaping our longing, or in counteracting it – even obliterating it? What kind of social fabric is it that

neoliberalism envisages?” (Davies, 2005, 3). Viewed through the lens of critical social theory, this study engaged a structured rhetorical analysis (Winton, 2012; Leech, 2000; Edwards et al, 2004) of various Canadian higher education policy texts coupled with a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001) of a range of documents related to the Maple Spring movement. By exposing neoliberal ideology as the governing discourse of both Canadian higher education policy and the media coverage surrounding the Maple Spring movement, this study opens a space where alternative discourses, or counter-narratives, can come to life. Through these efforts, this study ultimately offers pedagogical lessons to inform and strengthen resistance movements struggling to reorient post-secondary institutions around the goals of democracy, social and ecological justice.

I believe that this research has significant value to the broader academic conversation currently underway, to social activist movements, and to me, on both a professional and personal level. Firstly, while a vast range of research has been conducted in this general area within Canada and throughout the world, there have been no studies that have focused on the U15 conducting the broad ministerial and institutional policy review as I have done. Further, there have been a limited number of studies focusing on the Maple Spring movement with the exception of a recently published special supplement of the academic journal *Theory and Event* which was dedicated in its entirety to the students of Quebec (Massumi, Barney & Sorochan, 2012). In addition, peer-reviewed articles published to date have examined the organizational strategies (Taylor, 2012) and creative protest actions (Spiegel, 2015) of the Maple Spring activist movement, while others provided critical commentary from the perspective of a professor in Quebec (Sawchuk, 2012), analyzed the student strike in the historical context of

educational reform in Quebec (Unger, 2013), in relation to student organizations (Begin-Caouette & Jones, 2014), and to the labour movement (Collombat, 2014). The present study adds to this collection of academic articles by contextualizing the Maple Spring movement within the neoliberal policy shift characterizing Canadian higher education.

Secondly, I believe that theory and research are never neutral, but instead are both inherently political and ethical pursuits:

non-critical, mainstream researchers are every bit as guilty of value-laden research as any critical inquirer. To assume a position which refuses to seek the structural sources of human suffering and exploitation is to support oppression and the power relations which sustain it. (Kincheloe, 1991, 38).

As such, the tendency for critical qualitative research to acknowledge values, subjectivity, and emotion is a strength rather than a deficit. In fact, Kelman (1968) noted that “research rooted in the dominant values of the society is less likely to be questioned about its scientific objectivity and yet more likely to suffer from the lack of it” (p. 72). In this regard, I have come to understand that academic research achieves its most significant value from the degree to which it supports, informs, and is informed by, actual movements toward social and ecological justice. It is hoped that this dissertation might contribute to academic scholarship of this kind. Thirdly, on a professional level, this research has complemented and strengthened my work as a senior policy analyst with the Manitoba provincial government as I struggle to learn how I might honorably navigate the world of public service in a landscape where neoliberal hegemony is (re)produced daily through a plurality of rhetorical and discursive strategies.

Finally, on a personal level, this research has assisted in refining my understanding of who I am in the world and how I am positioned in relation to structures and discourses of domination. The pursuit for this type of understanding has been an ongoing preoccupation of mine as I try to make sense of how the existential, material, and ideological conditions of the society in which I live correspond and relate to my own value system. In thinking through this, I have been compelled to confront the paradox of believing on the one hand in the inherent goodness of people, while also acknowledging that extreme levels of social inequality, violence, and exploitation continue to persevere at the same time that humanity maintains an increasingly precarious relationship with our natural environment.

My years in graduate school have afforded me the kind of figurative and physical room first called into being by Virginia Woolf in which I could read, think, and write about this concern and so many others. I was fortunate to encounter teachers who rejected traditional calls for disinterested scholarship and instead showed me that there is in fact space in the world of intellectual ideas for those nebulous and slippery concepts like love, passion, and pain (Ayers, 2014). During this time, I was taught to value, understand, and make theoretical connections and distinctions. I have wondered about Aristotle's separation of *sophia* and *phronesis*, pondered Arendt's differentiation between freedom and sovereignty, all the while exploring the co-implications of democracy and education watching as these concepts converge and diverge through various contexts and disciplines. I fell in love with theory--without privileging it over action--becoming increasingly fascinated by its ability to assist in revealing "how it is that discourse

colonizes us – gifting us with our existence and shaping our desires, our beliefs in what is right – the things we are prepared to die for” (Davies, 2005, 2).

My analysis of the discourses circulating around and within the Maple Spring movement and my attempt to ascertain what it might offer in the way of teachings for the world of policymaking and grassroots struggles for social justice is simply one reading and in no way is meant to represent the final words on this matter. Instead, it is offered in the form of this text as a “situated knowledge claim” based on “partial, locatable, and critical knowledge” (Haraway, 1991, 190) to the ongoing conversation regarding the role of higher education in democratic life and the link, however fractured and tenuous it currently may be, between activism and social policy.

In 2007, Alberto Manguel, a novelist who was born in Buenos Aires, raised in Canada, and now resides in France, wrote a brilliant book *The City of Words*, which explored how legends and stories can illuminate our understanding of intolerance and injustice. This book began, as good books often do, with Manguel telling the reader who he was and why he was writing. Within this introduction, Manguel confesses to a kind of perpetual bewilderment as he grapples with questions resulting from a “lifelong practice of haphazard readings”(p. 3) and the interplay of his engagement with countless disciplines. Almost apologetically, Manguel addresses the uneasy feeling he anticipates readers will experience after turning the last page of his book: “these talks will have something unsatisfactory about them because my questions must remain, in the end, questions” (p.3). While the world of academic scholarship importantly necessitates a kind of disciplinary focus that Manguel has not adhered to, I find his confession emblematic of a sort of valuable intellectual humility that the neoliberal university,

among many other things, staunchly prohibits. Manguel ends by reinforcing the importance of the work of “makers” the societal role of which is similar to that called for by Mills (1963), Said (1994), and Zinn (1997) before him:

makers shape things into being, granting them their intrinsic identity. Still in a corner of their workshops and yet drifting with the currents of the rest of humanity, makers reflect back the world in its constant ruptures and changes, and mirror in themselves the unstable shapes of our societies, becoming what Nicaraguan poet Ruben Dario called “celestial lightning rods” by asking over and over again “*Who are we?*” and by offering a ghost of an answer in the words of the question itself. (Manguel, 2007, 13)

It is ultimately with this question in mind, and with this type of spirit, that this dissertation has been written.

Description of Chapters

Chapter 1 of this dissertation has provided an overview of the background, purpose, scope, and significance of this study. The methodological framework is the focus of Chapter 2, which also details the study’s specific procedure, as well as the scope and analytical framework employed in phase one and phase two of this research. Furthermore, Chapter 2 provides an overview of various factors that were employed to enhance the integrity of this study and the trustworthiness of its associated findings (Guba, 1981; Lincoln, 1995). Chapter 3 reviews the literature relevant to this study, beginning with a contextual overview of neoliberal ideology, followed by a detailed examination as to how neoliberalism impacts and shapes the landscape of post-secondary education thereby limiting the possibilities for social justice and democratic renewal.

Chapter 3 further articulates the findings of phase one of the research demonstrating the majoritarian story (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) of neoliberal hegemony. Chapter 4 documents the counter-story offered by the Maple Spring case study that challenges the dominance of neoliberal ideology and provides important pedagogical lessons regarding the relationship between activism, policymaking, and the practice of education. Chapter 4 also includes a particular explication as to how the media functions as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971) that supports the austerity agenda and reinforces neoliberal hegemony. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of these findings by offering a reflection on both the epistemological and ethical risks of permitting a neoliberal cultural ethos to eclipse a commitment to democratic life and the pursuit of common goodness.

CHAPTER 2

STUDY DESIGN & METHODS

This study endeavored to uncover the constitutive effects of neoliberal ideology as it is manifest in the policy landscape of Canadian higher education while simultaneously exploring discourses of resistance to neoliberal hegemony. With these aims in mind, the methodological framework and the principles of the methodology--critical discourse analysis--are outlined below and discussed in relation to the theoretical framework while detailing how it was employed in the present study. The chapter concludes with a critical reflection of the researcher's social location and positioning.

Study Design and Methodological Framework

The research design utilized in this dissertation is rooted within a variety of fundamental principles of qualitative inquiry. The justification for the selection of a qualitative framework relates to the nature of the research questions and the desire to uncover the multiple complex functions of ideology and discourse. These aims cannot be adequately achieved by utilizing quantitative methods. Further, qualitative research is based in a constructivist epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and thus honors the interpretive and critical traditions of knowledge building (Thayer-Bacon, 1999). These traditions are particularly relevant to the present study because of its central focus on deconstructing the way that language is used within dominant discourses as a vehicle for neoliberal ideological hegemony.

Qualitative research first began to emerge within the field of education during the 1960s (Erickson, 1987), offering a counter approach to traditional or positivist research methodologies. Many social scientists emphasize the importance of viewing an overarching aim of qualitative research as the empowerment of people grounded in the pursuit of justice and democracy (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). Research of this sort should endeavor to create and disseminate knowledge that will not only describe and explain social phenomenon, but also contribute to the mutual reconstruction of a more democratic and equitable social order.

The practice of critical qualitative research thus entails focusing on a problem or an issue, collecting information by deep observation and engagement and asking thoughtful questions, interrogating assumptions, listening, analyzing and interpreting data in a variety of forms, and then acting in some way on what has been learned. The assumptions or principles which underpin such an approach to qualitative research--the things that a qualitative researcher assumes to be true about the social world--include the following: people experience the world in varying ways; these disparate experiences result in different ways of knowing and types of knowledge; that knowledge is socially constructed (Vygotsky, 1978) and when we engage in research we involve ourselves in a process where new meanings are inevitably constructed (Weedon, 1997); and whatever that meaning may be it is always partial, relative, and subjective (Harraway, 1991; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

This study adopts a case study approach utilizing qualitative ethnographic methods, focusing on the case of the Maple Spring movement contextualized within a policy review of fifteen post-secondary institutions affiliated with the U15 and seven

associated Ministries of Advanced Education. There is a broad spectrum of literature that can be used to inform the construction and implementation of a case study within the realm of educational research (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 2001; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). This study draws upon the approach articulated by Stake (1995) due to the focus on qualitative methods and differentiation between an “instrumental,” as opposed to an “intrinsic” case study. According to Stake (1995), an instrumental case study assists in refining our understanding of a particular theory or issue that was important to the researcher prior to learning about the case. Notably, in an instrumental case study the case itself is of secondary importance and is valuable to the degree that it assists in illuminating broader understandings of social phenomena. In contrast, the intrinsic case study reflects the researcher’s desire to cultivate a robust understanding of a specific individual case.

This case study reflects an instrumental approach because the primary motivation for this research stems from my concern, as articulated by Arendt (1968), that the “eclipse of the public,” including those common spaces where democratic citizenship and political engagement are taught and practiced, presents the most imminent threat to the promise of democracy. I believe that systems of higher education are one of the “public realms” to which Arendt is referring and as post-secondary institutions are compelled to frame their goals and narrate their institutional identities in accordance with the values of neoliberal ideology the possibilities for an engaged and robust democratic citizenry are diminished. The selection of the theoretical and methodological framework for this study stems directly from my overarching interest in the connections between education and democracy. Further, the Maple Spring movement can be understood as an important

historical occurrence which functions as a revelatory and instructive case study when viewed with an emphasis on the opportunities and obstacles that occur when the dominant neoliberal policy discourse is challenged.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Social Theory

This section begins with a review of critical social theory, the theoretical framework that underpins this study. It simultaneously defines concepts central to this dissertation, including objectivity, knowledge, education as a form of cultural politics, ideology and hegemony.

Critical theory has important historical ties to the Frankfurt School (initially titled the Institute for Social Research of the University of Frankfurt), which was established in the early 1920s in Germany with Marxism as its theoretical foundation. Notable social theorists associated with the Frankfurt School include Carl Grunberg (the Institute's original director), Max Horkheimer (the second director as of 1930), Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Eric Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and Jurgen Habermas. Broadly speaking, critical theorists seek to reveal and transform the relationship between knowledge and power by attempting to:

understand, analyze, criticize, and alter social, economic, cultural, technological, and psychological structures and phenomena that have features of oppression, domination, exploitation, injustice, and misery. They do so with a view of changing or eliminating these structures and phenomena and expanding the scope of freedom, justice, and happiness. The assumption is that this knowledge will be used in the process of social change by people to whom understanding their situation is crucial in changing it. (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, 146)

At the root of this important work is the recognition that the world is rife with crises of both human rights and ecological justice. Critical social theory has prompted the recognition that knowledge is never neutral; it is socially constructed and always contextualized by specific norms and interests. Early critical theorists approached this focus from a Marxist perspective which sought to overturn “false consciousness” in order to right injustices in particular ways, with a focus on economic structures and their function in creating and maintaining social inequities.

When the Nazis began the rise to power in Germany, the Institute for Social Research was moved to Geneva and then ultimately exiled to New York in 1935 where its theories and contributions became increasingly diverse. As a result, there are many important, but varying models of critical theory intersecting with numerous disciplines and social concerns including:

discussions of theories of capitalism, of the structure of the state, and of the rise of instrumental reason; analyses of developments in science, technology and technique, of the culture industry and mass culture, of family structure and individual development, and of the susceptibility of people to ideology; as well as considerations of the dialectic of enlightenment and of positivism as the dominant mode of cognition. As always, it was the hope of Horkeimer and the others that their work would help establish a critical social consciousness able to penetrate existing ideology, sustain independent judgment and be capable, as Adorno put it, ‘of maintaining the freedom to think things might be different.’ (Held, 1980, 38)

One important application of Marxist theory to the conditions of advanced capitalism is found within *The Prison Notebooks* (1971) written by Antonio Gramsci between 1929

and 1935. Gramsci concurred with Marx in his recognition of the struggle between the ruling class and the working class, but he disagreed with respect to the manner in which the ruling class was able to secure and maintain a position of power. The traditional Marxist theory of power suggests that the ruling class sustains a dominant position through the use of force and coercion. Gramsci critiqued this viewpoint suggesting that very subtle but pervasive forms of ideological control function to maintain and reinforce repressive structures. Gramsci thus identified two distinct forms of social and political control: domination and consent. This is where the concept of hegemony became central to Gramsci's analysis of class domination. Gramsci outlined hegemony as a kind of organizing principle whereby a particular system of values, attitudes, beliefs, and ways of knowing permeate the common sense understandings of everyday people in order that they act in ways that support and reinforce the status quo:

hegemony ... is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent. Indeed, the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public-opinion – newspapers and associations ... the State does have and request consent, but it also '*educates*' this consent. (Gramsci, 1971, 80, 259)

This has the effect of making the philosophy and belief system of the ruling elite come to appear as natural and inevitable.

Over time, conversations within critical theory have expanded beyond the focus of class inequality to include considerations related to gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, and nationality, among others, due to the important theoretical interventions made

initially by feminist scholars, and more recently by disability, critical race, Indigenous, and eco scholars. Although there are many important, and sometimes conflicting, contributions within the broad field of work referred to as critical social theory, a central focus is the deconstruction of processes used to constitute and legitimate certain ways of knowing and particular types of knowledge:

critical social theory and research rests on the rejection of naturalism (that social practices, labels, and programs represent reality), rationality (the assumption that truth is a result of science and logic), neutrality (the assumption that truth does not reflect any particular interests), and individualism. (Rogers, 2011, 4)

Thus, “knowing” is conceived of as much more than a technical matter – it is inherently a political matter. There are three forms of knowledge that McLaren (2003) suggests critical theorists distinguish between: *technical knowledge* – that which can be measured and quantified; *practical knowledge* – that which is the result of thoughtful and sustained deliberation regarding the social and historical conditions of the world; and *emancipatory knowledge* – that which aids in the pursuit of understanding how existence and relationships are impacted by unequal distributions of power and privilege. Related to the present study, the students of the Maple Spring movement demonstrated a commitment toward co-creating emancipatory knowledge by demonstrating how the proposed tuition increase was reflective of the government’s broader neoliberal agenda that has seen tax breaks for corporations and a systematic withdrawal from the provision of core public services.

There is an additional assertion that the concept of “objectivity”, associated with the paradigm of positivism, has often been used in the past to legitimize particular

belief and value systems. Within educational circles, this recognition has led to the important differentiation between teaching and pedagogy:

pedagogy refers to the integration in practice of particular curricular content and design, classroom strategies and techniques, and evaluation, purpose and method. All of these aspects organize a view of how an educator's work within an institutional context specifies a particular version of what knowledge is of most worth, what it means to know something and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical and social environment.

(Simon, 1987, 370)

In a sense, to make the shift from a focus on teaching as the transmission of knowledge to pedagogy as a way of cooperatively creating knowledge means acknowledging educational work as a form of *cultural politics*. This prompts the important recognition that there are those in positions of power capable of deciding what others ought to learn and what they ought to know (Bernstein, 1977; Apple, 2000).

Specific questions that critical theorists working within the field of education highlight include:

- Whose reality is being legitimated by this knowledge?
- Whose interests does this knowledge serve?
- Who may be excluded or marginalized by this knowledge? Why and how?
- How might we identify particular spaces for intervention and the creation of counter-hegemonic movement(s)?

Further to these questions, there is an emphasis on prompting the deconstruction of how everyday understandings of our place in the world and in relation to others are created

and lived out. Critical educationalists suggest that certain ways of knowing and associated types of knowledge specifically legitimize various class, gender and racial ideologies and thus have very real material consequences as to how people are permitted to move and live in the world. Ideology, as a theoretical construct, has been understood and employed in varying ways in the fields of sociology, cultural studies, feminist theory, and education. This concept is often associated with Marxist and neo-Marxist theory as it relates to false consciousness and class-based oppression within capitalist societies.

More broadly speaking, ideology can be understood as:

a complex set of ideas that attempts to explain, justify, legitimate, and perpetuate the circumstances in which a collectivity finds itself. It provides the basis for guiding behavior, making sense of the world, imparting meaning to life, instilling a common bond among group members, and explaining situations. Ideology provides a framework for organizing, legitimizing, and maintaining relations of power and decision-making at all levels in institutions and systems. (Henry & Tator, 2002, 246)

Critical social theorists hope that emancipation can occur when people are encouraged to think critically about their lives and governing ideologies, and learn to identify connections between individual problems and the social, political, cultural, and economic context in which they are situated (Freire, 1970). For this reason, critical social theory has been utilized as a theoretical frame underpinning a range of methodological approaches for studies with emancipatory and educational aims. Due to its focus on the related processes of both immanent and ideological critique (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009) that have the potential of highlighting discursive trends, rhetorical contradictions and the

dissonance between ideology and experience, critical social theory provides an appropriate and robust frame to view and analyze the manner in which institutions of higher education are being enlisted in the neoliberal political project. Throughout this research study, a range of critical theorists were continuously drawn upon to substantiate, illuminate, and extend various arguments and findings and, as such, this work is firmly situated within this important intellectual tradition.

Methodological Procedure: Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis is a research methodology highly amenable to my theoretical framework, key concepts of this study, and methodological framework as outlined above. The study of discourse, broadly conceived, has a long history and can be traced back to the writings of DuBois (1903), Wittgenstein (1953), Foucault (1969), Said (1979), Kristeva (1980; 1989), and Bakhtin (1981) among others. A concise and holistic definition of critical discourse analysis remains somewhat illusive because, according to van Dijk (1998) this type of scholarship is “not a specific direction of research” and thus lacks a “unitary theoretical framework” (p.353). The range of theoretical traditions which have had varying degrees of impact on the development of critical discourse analysis over time include discourse studies (Derrida, 1974; Foucault, 1969), systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978), critical linguistics (Fowler et al, 1979), and feminist post-structuralism (Butler, 1990).

Despite the varying theoretical and conceptual frameworks that have been utilized in the application of critical discourse analysis, there remains a shared belief in the relationship between discourse, power, and social inequality (van Dijk, 1993). Stuart Hall (1997) defines “discourse” as the production of knowledge through language that is

visible in a multitude of texts across a range of societal institutions. According to Hall, discourse is related to power because it informs the possibilities according to which social issues can be discussed and the manner in which people can act upon ideas:

discourses are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society. These discursive formations, as they are known, define what is and is not appropriate in our formulation of, and our practices in relation to, a particular subject or site of social activity; what knowledge is considered useful, relevant and “true” in that context; and what sorts of persons or “subject” embody its characteristics. (p.4)

There are multiple discourses present in society at any given time that compete to give meaning to the world, but not all discourses have equivalent power to shape our understandings and actions:

how we live our lives as conscious thinking subjects, and how we give meaning to the material social relations under which we live and with which we structure our everyday lives, depends on the range and social power of existing discourses, our access to them and the political strength of the interests which they represent.

(Weedon, 1997, 26)

As such, most forms of critical discourse analysis focus on the ways that discourse functions to reproduce structures of domination (van Dijk, 2001). Critical discourse analysts aim to articulate a critical theory of the social world, which is capable of naming, deconstructing, and challenging current distributions of power. This is achieved through

the systematic analysis of written and spoken texts to reveal how power and ideologies move through discourse to reproduce dominance and inequality (van Dijk, 2006).

Critical discourse analysis can thus be understood as a transdisciplinary research methodology which links together segments of text with discursive practices and then recontextualizes them in the broader historical, social, and political context. As articulated by Fairclough (1995) critical discourse analysis aims to:

systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (p. 132)

As such, this methodology requires that careful and continuous attention be paid to factors sometimes deeply buried within texts (in the broadest sense of the term) including ideology and dominance, as well as assumptions about justice and equality: “critical discourse analysis examines the way in which powerful gatekeepers in society influence social beliefs and values, and shape ideologies, through the standards they set for what is and is not acceptable, therefore revealing the power asymmetry in discourse” (Bhatia, 2006, 173).

Additional factors commonly considered include intertextuality and interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 2003). Intertextuality refers to the relationship between texts and is based on the recognition that every text is dialogical (Bakhtin, 1986), implying that they gain meaning through interaction and in relation to other texts: “all

texts, spoken and written, are constructed and have the meanings which text-users assign to them in and through their relations with other texts in some social formation” (Thibault, 1994, 1751). Interdiscursivity is related to intertextuality and refers to the multiple genres, discourses, and styles embedded within a text to articulate a particular message (Fairclough, 2003). Critical discourse analysts look to particular texts-specific pieces of discourse that can be analyzed-to uncover “hidden agendas” and ideological assumptions (Cameron, 2001, 123). Discourses are analyzed at both the micro and macro level. At the micro level, there is an attempt to identify and examine repeated or systematic patterns of language use. At the macro level, the focus goes beyond the bounds of the specific text to inquire about the text’s production and the social context in which the text was disseminated and interpreted. This allows for insights to be gained regarding how texts relate to one another and to varying modes and sites of production and interpretation in order to become powerful and informative discourses.

While important attention is paid to what is visible within texts, critical discourse analysis also focuses on examining texts for what is missing or strategically omitted. Foucault (1999) asserts the importance of looking at spaces of silence as a revealing component of discourse:

silence itself – the thing one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers – is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways

of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (p. 518)

To this end, critical discourse analysts seek out spaces of omission, silence, half-truths, implications, presuppositions, and ambiguity.¹¹ Interpersonal factors constructed and communicated through text are exceedingly important and include the subjective positioning of author and audience, tone, phrasing, and identity construction.

Ultimately, critical discourse analysis assumes social injustice and works in strategic resistance to it, often attempting to convey findings in a publicly accessible voice and form; it desires to affect change, inform movement, and inspire action:

it is not enough to lay bare the social dimensions of language use. These dimensions are the object of moral and political evaluation and analyzing them should have effects in society: empowering the powerless, giving voices to the voiceless, exposing power abuse, and mobilizing people to remedy social wrongs. (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, 449)

As such, critical discourse analysis works to reveal the multiple ways discourse can be coercive and the means through which it can be resisted by specifically looking at the function of language in relation to the manifestation and manipulation of power.

The critical discourse analyst then is tasked with a responsibility to adopt a sociopolitical stance where their particular perspective and objectives are clearly

¹¹ For example, Huckin (2002) defines textual silence as “the omission of some piece of information that is pertinent to the topic at hand” and articulates a five part taxonomy of textual elision. See: Huckin, T. (2002). Textual silence and the discourse of homelessness. *Discourse & Society*, 13(3), 347-372.

communicated, both in relation to their discipline and to the broader society in which they live and work. According to van Dijk (1993) this is, above all else, intensely political work:

although not in each stage of theory formation and analysis, their work is admittedly and ultimately political. Their hope, if occasionally illusory, is change through critical understanding. Their perspective, if possible, that of those who suffer most from dominance and inequality. Their critical targets are the power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice. (p. 252)

With this foundational understanding of the methodology in mind, the present study drew upon the eight central tenants of critical discourse analysis as articulated by Fairclough and Wodak (1997):

1. *Critical discourse analysis addresses social problems* – discourses should be analyzed in the context of a social problem or concern;
2. *Power relations are discursive* – dominant forms of discourse (e.g. policy and media) play a pivotal role in creating and sustaining inequitable social structures and relations;
3. *Discourse constitutes society and culture, as well as being constituted by them* – discourses have a dialectical relationship with the particular social and cultural context in which they exist;
4. *Discourse does ideological work* – discourses operate as a kind of conceptual space whereby ideologies are expressed and enacted thereby naturalizing a particular social order;

5. *Discourse is historical* – analysis of discourse is increasingly made meaningful by the degree to which it is understood in relation to its historical context;
6. *The link between text and society is mediated* – discourses and social practices are joined together in a mediated relationship, meaning that discourses manifest a range of intentions, assumptions, beliefs, and ideologies and interpretations of discourses produce varying attitudes, knowledges, and actions;
7. *Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory* – analysis of any single discourse can result in numerous (even contentious) readings and interpretations, none of which can be complete and authoritative; and
8. *Discourse is a form of social action* – critical discourse analysis is a paradigm demanding exploration which is reflective and reflexive and geared toward inspiring changes to consciousness and action. (p. 271-280)

Phase 1: Scope and Analytic Framework

The first phase of this research focused on analyzing the mission statements, guiding documents and strategic plans associated with fifteen universities that together comprise the national association of Canada's fifteen leading research institutions, the U15 (refer to Appendix 2 for a detailed list of this data sample). This review also included analysis of the mission statements and associated guiding documents (e.g. annual report, strategic plan, and/or policy framework) of the Ministries of Advanced Education associated with each U15-affiliated university (refer to Appendix 3 for a detailed list of this data sample). Taken together, this allowed for the identification of a broad overview of discursive and rhetorical trends within the current policy climate in Canadian higher education.

The stated purpose of the U15 is to further a vision for national academic and research policies within Canada. This organization began as a somewhat informal information-sharing network between the executive heads of ten universities in 1991. Over the years, both the mandate and the size of the U15 has grown and in 2012 the organization released a statement declaring its intention to become more formalized, creating the U15 Secretariat and appointing their first executive director, in order to offer a more “forceful voice” in the conversation regarding public policy goals. Specifically, the organization runs under the collective direction of the university executive heads, but has also recently established four sub-committees. These sub-committees include academic affairs, consisting of provosts of member universities; research, consisting of vice-presidents for research at each of the institutions; the data exchange network consisting of specialists at each institution; and a data exchange steering committee.

This organization was selected to provide the scope for the present study for a number of reasons. Firstly, the U15 has centralized the lobbying power of Canada’s 15 largest, research-intensive universities. The organization recently appointed a Director of Advocacy tasked with the responsibility of “developing and implementing strategies to support collective engagements with the Government of Canada and relationships with national and international academic, business and civil society organizations.” Secondly, although the U15 is not new, it is at a critical juncture where it is evolving and formalizing its vision for higher education in Canada. Finally, at the time of this writing there have been no academic studies of the U15, which represents a notable gap in the literature on higher education in Canada.

The specific policy texts that were included in the analysis during Phase 1 are detailed in Table 1 below. Each text was subjected to a structured rhetorical analysis, which is a particular kind of critical discourse analysis (Winton, 2012). Rhetorical analysis focuses explicit attention on the manner in which policies construct social issues, position their audiences, and frame the circumstances to which the policies relate. Specifically, the analytical framework used during this phase was comprised of each text's rhetorical situation (including exigence and audience) and five rhetorical canons (including invention, disposition, style, memory, and delivery) as outlined by Leach (2000) and Edwards et al. (2004).

Leach (2000) describes 'exigence' as a critical component of a text's rhetorical situation and defines it as the particular problem to which the policy aims to respond. This was uncovered by focusing on the way each policy presents the purpose of higher education in the mission statements, as well as the particular performance measures or indicators of success outlined in the strategic plans. To understand how the audience is positioned and mobilized I considered the style, structure, and content of each policy. The five canons of rhetoric were understood and addressed as follows:

1. *Invention* – includes a focus on the ethical, emotional, and rational appeal of each text;
2. *Disposition* – analyzes how each text is organized in relation to the argument being made within it;
3. *Style* – attends to the form of each text while focusing on word choice, popular phrasing and use of metaphors;
4. *Memory* – calls attention to how texts may incorporate and draw upon shared historical and cultural memories;
5. *Delivery* - focuses on how the central messages are communicated to the intended audience.

These elements were identified and categorized through multiple readings of each text and used to inform the final overall analysis related to the thematic, discursive, and rhetorical functions of this aspect of the policy climate within Canadian higher education.

Table 1: U15 – A Provincial & Institutional Policy Review

Provincial Ministry	U15 Affiliated University
<p><i>Alberta Ministry of Enterprise & Advanced Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and Mandates: Policy Framework for Alberta’s Publicly Funding Advanced Education System 2007 • Annual Report 2012-2013 • Business Plan 2014-2017 	<p><i>University of Alberta</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dare to Discover: A Vision for a Great University 2011-2015 • Dare to Deliver: Academic Plan 2011-2015 • Comprehensive Institutional Plan 2014 • Living Our Promise Initiative <p><i>University of Calgary</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes High: Vision and Strategy 2011-2016 • Mandate and Roles Document • Strategic Research Plan 2012 • Academic Plan 2012
<p><i>British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, Innovation, & Technology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18 	<p><i>University of British Columbia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Value Statement • Place and Promise: The UBC Strategic Plan 2012
<p><i>Manitoba Ministry of Advanced Education & Literacy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report 2013-2014 • Manitoba’s Post-Secondary Education Strategy 2015 	<p><i>University of Manitoba</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission, Vision & Values • Strategic Planning Framework 2011 • Taking Our Place: The University of Manitoba Strategic Plan 2015-2020
<p><i>Nova Scotia Ministry of Labour & Advanced Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the University System in Nova Scotia 2010 • Statement of Mandate 2012-2013 • Accountability Report 2013-2014 	<p><i>Dalhousie University</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Focus 2010-2013 • Vision & Positioning Statement • Strategic Direction: Inspiration and Impact 2014-2018 • Strategic Direction: Progress Report 2015

Table 1 Continued

Provincial Ministry	U15 Affiliated University
<p><i>Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening Ontario's Centres of Creativity, Innovation & Knowledge: A Discussion Paper on Innovation to Make Our University and College System Stronger 2012 Differentiation Policy Framework for Post-Secondary Education 2013 Results-Based Plan Briefing Book 2013-2014 	<p><i>McMaster University</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Plan: Refining Directions 2002 Forward With Integrity 2011 Institutional Vision, Mission and Proposed Mandate Statement 2014 <p><i>Queen's University</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission Statement Where Next? Toward a University Academic Plan 2011 Strategic Research Plan 2012-2017 Strategic Framework 2014-2019 Institutional Vision, Proposed Mandate Statement and Priority Objectives 2014 <p><i>University of Ottawa</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission, Vision & Values Destination 2020: The University of Ottawa's Strategic Plan Strategic Mandate Agreement 2014 <p><i>University of Toronto</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of Institutional Purpose 1992 Towards 2030: A Long-Term Planning Framework for the University of Toronto Towards 2030: A Third Century of Excellence at the University of Toronto Institutional Vision, Proposed Mandate Statement and Priority Objectives 2014 <p><i>University of Waterloo</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission & Value Statements Pursuing Global Excellence: Seizing Opportunities for Canada Sixth Decade Plan 2007-2017 A Distinguished Past – A Distinctive Future: Strategic Plan 2013 Strategic Mandate Agreement 2014 <p><i>University of Western Ontario</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission Statement Engaging the Future: Update on the Strategic Plan 2010 Achieving Excellence on the World Stage 2014 Strategic Mandate Agreement 2014
<p><i>Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation & Sports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Education Summit: Information Document 2012 	<p><i>McGill University</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission, Statement & Motto Principal's Report 2011-2012 Strategic Research Plan 2013 ASAP 2012-2017: Achieving Strategic Academic Priorities <p><i>Université Laval</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission, Vision & Values Annual Report 2011-2012 <p><i>Université de Montreal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission Statement Strategic Orientations 2011-2015
<p><i>Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan 2015–2016 	<p><i>University of Saskatchewan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission, Vision, Values & Goals Renewing the Dream: Strategic Directions 2002 Foundational Document: Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Update on Strategic Direction 2010 Promise and Potential: The Third Integrated Plan 2012-2016

Phase 2: Scope and Analytic Framework

The second phase of this research was comprised of a comprehensive review of a range of documents related to the Maple Spring movement. Specifically, this review included the following types of data sources:

- alternative and social media coverage;
- published interviews with leaders of the student strike;
- manifestos and statements in support of the movement by professors, youth groups, student and labor unions;
- provincial legislation (Bill 78 - An Act to enable students to receive instruction from the post-secondary institutions they attend (L.Q., 2012, c. 12 / Laws of Quebec, 2012, chapter 12) passed by the Quebec provincial government in response to the student strike); and
- responses to Bill 78 by the United Nations, Amnesty International, the Quebec Human Rights Commission, and the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

Each of the documents associated with the categories listed above are publicly available and were identified for inclusion in the present study through a purposeful sampling approach to data collection informed by the strategy of maximum variation sampling (Patton, 1990; Creswell, 2007). This sampling approach allowed me to incorporate documents that represented a diverse range of understandings and perspectives regarding the Maple Spring movement. This functioned to strengthen the findings of the study because “any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects” of the

phenomenon under study (Patton, 1990, 176).

These sources were analyzed in accordance with the five stage analytical framework for critical discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough (2001). This framework begins with a focus on a social problem that possesses discursive or semiotic aspects. In the present study, the social problem is the impact of neoliberal ideology on post-secondary education and the various pedagogical lessons that can be gleaned from the Maple Spring strike to inform and strengthen broader resistance movements. The second phase entails the identification of obstacles to the social problem under analysis (focusing on those aspects of the existing social order that create and sustain the problem) and also requires the examination of the discourse itself. This calls for an analysis of paradigmatic aspects understood as the choices of inclusion and omission made in particular texts, as well as syntagmatic aspects defined as the linking together of words, phrases, and clauses. Phase three of this analysis included careful analysis as to how the problem exists in relation to the present social order. This was achieved by examining how representations of student activism, civil disobedience, dissent, protest, democratic citizenship, and the purpose of higher education as presented by the Maple Spring movement relate to current power arrangements in Canadian society. The fourth phase identified by Fairclough (2001), identifying strategies to overcome obstacles to the social problem, is addressed in the concluding chapters of this dissertation. Finally, the fifth phase, a critical reflection on the researcher's social positioning and discussion as to how the research may contribute to emancipatory change, was considered and articulated throughout the duration of this study.

As a central part of Phase 2 of this research, I also collected and analyzed a wide-range of data specifically related to mainstream media coverage of the Maple Spring movement. In order to gather a wide range of coverage, two keyword searches of newspaper publications were conducted within the electronic database ProQuest using a date limitation of January 1, 2012 through February 2013. This limitation was selected as the Maple Spring movement began in early 2012 and because Quebec has witnessed numerous student strikes in previous years; this limitation would function to exclude documents not pertinent to the present study. For the initial search, the terms “student strike” and “Quebec” were used which yielded 975 newspaper results. In order to ensure that articles of interest were not inadvertently missed, a second search using the terms “maple spring” and “Quebec” was conducted which yielded an additional 51 results. These results were combined and cross-referenced to identify and exclude duplicate articles.

Results from each search were obtained in full-text format and examined for possible inclusion in the current analysis. Publications that contained the particular search terms but were not directly related to the subject were excluded. Articles that only had a peripheral connection to the subject, meaning those in which the substantive focus was not the Maple Spring movement, were also omitted. There were also a number of articles included in the initial sample that were not authored by journalists, but were instead letters to the editor. It should be said that these types of articles make an important contribution to the public discourse on a topic and may reflect ideological leanings of particular newspapers. However, these articles were removed from the sample because that op-ed pieces are not generally viewed to have the same discursive

power as “news” stories (Hier & Greenberg, 2002), which are authored by journalists who have particular occupational standards and requirements to which they must adhere.

The final sample for this aspect of the document review related to the student strike included 475 articles authored on the Maple Spring movement between January 2012 and February 2013 (refer to Appendix 4 for a detailed list of this data sample). The majority of articles were from a range of Canadian newspaper publications, including *The Gazette* (n=286), the *Globe and Mail* (n=57), the *National Post* (n=35), the *Toronto Star* (n=33), the *Ottawa Citizen* (n=26), and the *Vancouver Sun* (n=9). The remaining 30 articles are from various international publications including *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and the *New York Times*. Each article was reviewed and information related to each of the following components entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet: (1) overall tone of article – positive/supportive, high-level/neutral, or negative/punitive; and (2) specific topic(s) addressed – impact of the student strike on the economy/tourism industry, university practice, motivations/actions of protesters, relationship to social justice issues beyond university accessibility, and responses from government (legislation/law enforcement). From here, deeper analysis was conducted in order to reveal specific themes and discursive trends and strategies.

Triangulation, Trustworthiness, and Reflections on Positionality

Traditional criteria often employed for assessing the worth of academic research includes reliability, validity, and replicability (Taylor, 2001), which stem from a positivist approach to research requiring the creation of objective knowledge and findings that uncover predictable, causal relationships. The theoretical and analytical frameworks and constructs employed in this study critique positivism’s requirement of objectivity and

instead call for an understanding that all research and knowledge claims are situated, contingent, and reflexive. Importantly, this does not mean that qualitative research is random and without structure, rendering it impossible to evaluate. Instead, through the design and implementation of this study there are a number of alternative considerations and approaches that have been used to enhance the integrity of this research and the trustworthiness of its associated findings.

Firstly, I have sought to ensure data source triangulation (Stake, 1995) by drawing upon various kinds of data sources (i.e. provincial, national, and international policy texts, legislation, mainstream and alternative media coverage, personal narrative accounts, etc.). Secondly, I have applied “investigator triangulation” by drawing upon the expertise of my dissertation committee members through discussing and debating my analysis in order to highlight alternate interpretations of the data. Thirdly, this research is ‘rigorous’ in so far as it clearly describes and utilizes a systematic analytical approach revealed in the “richness of detail and the explication of the process of analysis” (Taylor, 2001, 321).

Finally, all findings from this study have been based upon a critical examination of the data included, the society in which the study occurs, and a critical awareness of my own positionality as a researcher. Michelle Fine (1994) has outlined three different positions that a researcher can adopt in a qualitative project with an ethnographic focus:

The **ventriloquist stance** that merely “transmits” information in an effort toward neutrality and is absent of a political or rhetorical stance. The position of the ethnographer aims to be invisible, that is, the “self” strives to be nonexistent in the text. The **positionality of voices** is where the subjects themselves are the focus,

and their voices carry forward indigenous meanings and experiences that are in opposition to dominant discourses and practices. The position of the ethnographer is vaguely present but not addressed. The **activism stance** in which the ethnographer takes a clear position in intervening on hegemonic practices and serves as an advocate in exposing the material effects of marginalized locations while offering alternatives. (Fine, 1994, p.17)

Throughout this project I attempted to embody the ‘activist stance’ as it best honors the central aims of the study. This required concerted efforts to unpack researcher positionality and subjectivity: “critical ethnographers must explicitly consider how their own acts of studying and representing people and situations are acts of domination even as critical ethnographers reveal the same in what they study” (Noblit et al, 2004, 3).

Deconstructing and analyzing my own positionality has compelled me to acknowledge my own power extending from various subjectivities while simultaneously engaging in a process of critiquing existing power relations and imbalances. I have attempted to embrace the kind of theoretical sensitivity referred to by Glaser & Strauss (1967) as the learnings and beliefs that researchers bring to their work through the interplay between their individual life experiences and disciplinary knowledge. These considerations allowed me to engage with and address a variety of fundamental questions essential to this kind of qualitative research with a critical ethnographic focus:

- How do I understand my own identity, purpose, intentions, and frame of analysis as a researcher and as a writer?

- How might I maintain fidelity to my own values, beliefs, and research philosophy throughout the duration of the research? What struggles might I expect to encounter?
- Who is this research responsible to and how might this be adequately demonstrated?
- How can I assess potential consequences or evaluate my potential to do harm through this research?
- Acknowledging that Canada is a settler-colonial state (Regan, 2012) means that I must go beyond offering a critique of neoliberalism that calls for a nostalgic (and misguided) return to the Keynesian welfare state because this wrongly assumes that there is a set of universally shared values that Canada can reclaim. As such, an integral question is formed: how do I ensure that my critique is not only anti-capitalist, but anti-colonial?
- How does the analysis and associated findings reflect “better, deeper, and more humane interpretations” (Gee, 2005, p. x) of the discourses under review and the broader implications of neoliberalism?
- How--in which ways or through what work--will this research make the most significant contribution to movements for educational equity and social justice?

Continuously reflecting on these questions, refining my answers to them throughout the duration of this research, and building them into the analytical process functioned to enhance this study’s ethical, moral, and methodological rigour.

This series of questions also compels me to place myself within the narrative of this dissertation by offering a reflection regarding my own positionality as a foundation

for the reader to better understand my work; how I have arrived here to place these words on this page. In critical qualitative research, the self is rightly understood as the “instrument that engages the situation and makes sense of it. It is the ability to see and interpret significant aspects. It is this characteristic that provides unique, personal insight into the experience under study” (Eisner, 1991, 33). Corbin & Strauss (2008) remind me that in order to adequately understand one’s experience it must be “located within and can’t be divorced from the larger events in a social, political, cultural, racial, gender-related, informational, and technological framework and therefore these are essential aspects of our analyses” (p.8). To avoid connecting self-reflection with the larger world leads to “self-referencing and worse, narcissism as truth; travelling outward without noting your own embodied heart and mind can lead to ethical astigmatism, to seeing other three-dimensional human beings as case studies or data, their lived situations reduced to the “field” (Ayers, 2006, 84). For these reasons, I offer my reflections on positionality within the context of what I understand to be significant markers of this historical moment and framed by the writings of theorists who have been my most formidable teachers.

Asking what one needs to know and how one ought to live in order to develop ways of being in the world that are more in line with principles of social justice and participatory democracy have become questions of central concern to my life. Exploring these questions has been an ongoing journey of learning, naming, acting and relearning (Freire, 1970). This reiterative process acknowledges my “self” as a researcher and writer as a provisional being always in development moving with the ever-changing tide of a world in constant motion. Existing in the wake of postmodern and poststructural

movements has left me with a somewhat tenuous and contingent conception of “truth”, which provides little in the way of comforting certainties:

truth is not one thing, or even a system. It is an increasing complexity. The pattern of the carpet is a surface. When we look closely, or when we become weavers, we learn of the tiny multiple threads unseen in the overall pattern, the knots on the underside of the carpet. (Rich, 1979, 187)

As a researcher who clings to the humanist ideal (Ayers, 2006) the effort to map the relationship between knowledge and truth, between ideological structures and material realities, between privilege and power, is never-ending. The strength to resist being locked into a kind of paralyzing relativism is found in Said’s (1994) description of the authentic intellectual who is positioned as:

neither a pacifier nor a consensus-builder, but someone whose whole being is staked on a critical sense of being unwilling to accept easy formulas or ready-made clichés, or the smooth, ever-so-accommodating confirmations of what the powerful or conventional have to say, and what they do. (p. 23)

It is from this stance--in this kind of liminal space--informed by my own standards of truth about human suffering that I have learned to speak truth to power.

My first lesson of such an act was learned from my mother. In 1976 she was a first time parent of my oldest sibling who is Indigenous and was adopted at the age of thirteen months. Like any new mother she was thrilled with the task of filling his nursery with books and toys specially chosen specifically for him. In searching for such things, she was confronted with the realization that they simply didn’t exist. There were no books, no dolls, and no action figures embodying little boys with brown skin. She bought

the books she could and sat down with a brown crayon and began to color in the margins of the children on each page. It wasn't until years later that I would understand this act as a small, but powerful opposition to a world that honors some people more than others. I learned that there are interlocking systems of power that dictate who can be seen and heard, who is visible and who is erased. Adrienne Rich (1980) speaks to the impact of these systems in her assertion that:

when those who have power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you, whether you are dark-skinned, old, disabled, female, or speak with a different accent or dialect than theirs, when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in to a mirror and saw nothing. Yet you know you exist and others like you, that this is a game with mirrors. It takes some strength of soul – and not just individual strength, but collective understanding – to resist this void, this nonbeing, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard. (p. 632)

Here Rich is telling us that our culture remains in the grips of various stories about some people's supremacy over others. These stories exist and remain at work whether we tacitly endorse them or explicitly reject them and as we move through the world we are called upon daily to consistently make choices about where we stand in relation to racist, sexist, and classist ideologies. Put differently, how we live each day--whether we choose to bear witness to the suffering of others or whether we opt to turn away--reflects our beliefs about the legitimacy of these stories and represents an inherently political act. I

have come to believe that our intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and literal lives depend on our collective ability to accurately name and together rewrite these stories.

Importantly, we must remember that this struggle is both external and internal because “the true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations that we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressor that is planted deep within each of us” (Lorde, 1984, 123). For white people, like me, the importance of this teaching cannot be over-emphasized. I am the beneficiary of centuries of inequality, which has afforded me countless privileges that I did nothing to earn (McIntosh, 1990). My privileged racial and class-based position has provided me access to an excellent education, given me relative confidence in my own personal agency and voice, while allowing me to live with a degree of security and comfort that is forcibly denied many other people. I believe the contention that we live in a society that unfairly allocates resources and opportunities along the lines of color and of class is simply beyond reproach. This acknowledgement compels me to adamantly reject the prevailing myth of meritocracy that would have us believe we all arrive in a neutral world with equal choices and equivalent chances.

My upbringing on a reserve in Northern Manitoba as a racial minority meant that I lived during my formative years experiencing the violent and destructive reality that stems from racist ideologies. This was, in no small part, why I was drawn to the humanities at a small liberal arts college for my undergraduate work where I delved into the related fields of sociology, women’s studies, and philosophy. Owing to these experiences, among others, my commitment to social justice is characterized by both intellectual and emotional engagement requiring an opening of my mind and heart to the enhancement of the human condition. This project is a kind of life’s work and its

achievement perhaps forever elusive-always just out of reach. But so too, I have learned, are the ideals of democracy and justice themselves because the “good” society is one which never considers itself to be “just enough, which questions the sufficiency of any achieved level of justice and considers justice always to be a step or more ahead. Above all, it is a society which reacts angrily to any case of injustice and promptly sets about correcting it” (Bauman, 2001, 63).

There are many ways, from countless social locations, that one can intervene and contribute to the collective project that aims to “correct” our world. I believe one of these spaces can be found within the intellectual community and that academic research has a moral and ethical obligation to hold the twin goals of human enlightenment and emancipation central by working to narrow the “gap between the products of scholarly activity and the needs of a troubled world” (Zinn, 1997, 500). As a researcher, I identify my approach as transdisciplinary and intersectional (Collins, 2000) variably drawing upon the fields of philosophy, feminist theory, neo-Marxist social thought, and critical social theory. An intersectional approach rejects binary thinking and suggests that relations of oppression are constructed via complex intersections among and between class, gender, and racial forms of subordination in which all people are implicated and affected. As such, I believe no single disciplinary frame is sufficient to understand the complex interplay between ideology and human experience. It is therefore through a range of fields with a relational approach that this study was conducted fueled by a “spirit of opposition, rather than accommodation” because the:

romance, the interest, the challenge of intellectual life is to be found in dissent against the status quo at a time when the struggle on behalf of the

underrepresented and disadvantaged groups seems so unfairly weighted against them. (Said, 1994, xv)

These are a selection of the foundational beliefs and experiences that shape my life as a citizen, student, and worker that together serve as the lens through which I approached this research study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodological framework, the principles of the specific methodology employed, and the theoretical framework that together function as a guideline for this study. Furthermore, the chapter has reviewed various factors employed to enhance the integrity of this study while outlining the researcher's social location and subjective positioning.

The following chapter begins by documenting a contextual overview of neoliberal ideology, with a specific focus on its manifestation within the Canadian socio-political sphere. It subsequently provides a review of relevant literature as to how neoliberalism impacts and shapes the landscape of post-secondary education thereby limiting the possibilities for social justice and democratic renewal. Chapter 3 further articulates the findings of phase one of the research framed as “discourses of domination” that demonstrate the majoritarian story (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) of neoliberal hegemony within the policy landscape of Canadian higher education.

CHAPTER 3

NEOLIBERAL IDEOLOGY & DISCOURSES OF DOMINATION

In April 2007, renowned Canadian writer Yann Martel sat down and began to pen the first of what was to ultimately total one hundred and one letters to Prime Minister Stephen Harper. One letter was sent every two weeks until February 2011 and each was accompanied with the gift of a thoughtfully selected text ranging in form and content, but invariably connected to the tradition of literature embodied through the novel, the short story, the play and the poem. Considered together, these letters can best be understood as a kind of pedagogical intervention posing one provocative question: “what sort of mind, nourished by what, do we want our leaders to have?” ultimately forwarding the argument that “literature ... is an essential element to a deeply thinking, fully feeling mind” (Martel, 2012, 1).

Martel’s concern that prompted this letter-writing project specifically relates to a moment in March 2007 during a celebration in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the cultural institution known as the Canada Council for the Arts.¹² The ceremony took place in the Canadian House of Commons, that grand and historic room in which “dreams and visions where we Canadians have worked out who and what we want to be,” and fifty artists--one for each year of the Council’s tenure--were invited to attend. The celebration began and ended in less than five minutes with the Minister for Canadian Heritage, Bev

¹² The Canada Council for the Arts is an arms-length crown corporation established in 1957 to “foster and promote the study and enjoyment of, and the production of works in, the arts” by awarding grants and fellowships to Canadian artists.

Oda, giving brief, robotic remarks coupled with a cursory gesture acknowledging the presence of the artists, followed by a fleeting applause that prompted this reflection from Martel (2012):

from the shadows into which we had been cast, I focused on one man. The Prime Minister did not speak during our brief tribute. He didn't even look up. By all appearances, he didn't even know we were there. Who is this man? ... What is his mind made of? How did he get his insights into the human condition? What materials went into the building of his sensibility? What is the colour, the pattern, the rhyme and reason of his imagination?. (p. 13)

From these questions came the idea to write a series of letters paired with a variety of books--ranging from Tolstoy to Orwell, Austen, Woolf, Camus and Kafka--to prompt in Harper the kind of contemplative stillness that only literature can provoke. In total, Martel received only seven replies and each formulaic acknowledgment was written on Harper's behalf by various civil servants; the Prime Minister himself offered not a word of response.

Although Harper as a person remains much of a mystery to the Canadian public, Harper the politician commandeered an undeniable stronghold on the reigns of the Canadian political landscape for nearly a decade, functioning to alter, rearrange, and refashion, in some ways perhaps irrevocably, the very fabric of the nation's identity (Martin, 2011; Nadeau, 2011; Gutstein, 2014). This impact can be traced to many legislative changes and policy initiatives, but Martel locates it specifically to Harper's indifference (even contempt) for literary culture evidenced by the federal government's

reduction of arts and culture funding by forty-five million dollars in 2008 (Benzie, 2008).

In response to criticism, Harper defended the decision by offering the following rationale:

when ordinary working people come home, turn on the TV and see a gala of, a bunch of people at, you know, a rich gala all subsidized by taxpayers claiming their subsidies aren't high enough, when they know those subsidies have actually gone up – I'm not sure that's something that resonates with ordinary people ... ordinary people understand we have to live within a budget. (Benzie, 2008, para. 3)

Contrary to Harper's picture of the Canadian artistic community as universally rich and privileged is the reality that the "ordinary" artist in Canada makes on average \$22,700 annually, which is less than half the typical earnings of the average Canadian worker (Hill & Capriotti, 2009). This figure almost exactly correlates to the low-income cut-off as calculated by Statistics Canada (2009)--or what is referred to in popular parlance as simply "the poverty line."¹³

What is problematic here is not that Harper attempted to convey his understanding of the interests of the ordinary Canadian citizen--that was, in fact, part of his job as Canada's highest elected official. The issue, instead, is how consistently he evoked the image of the average Canadian to rationalize his policy platforms and political decisions in the virtual absence of any evidence upon which to rest his various suppositions, opting only to reference those nebulous objectives like efficiency, effectiveness, and existing

¹³ The low-income cut-off (LICO) is an income measurement that has been widely used in Canada since the 1960s. The LICO is essentially a relative measure of poverty that is defined by Statistics Canada as an "income threshold below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income on the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family."

within budgetary constraints.¹⁴ This effort to construct common sense in a manner that appears natural and legitimate coincides with Gramsci's (1971) description of how hegemonic power is achieved via persistent coercive efforts rather than by force.

Harper first took power in 2006 under a minority government as a result of winning 124 of the 308 seats in Parliament (approximately forty percent of the total), thus marking the beginning of his ideological project of reengineering the nation he had historically referred to as a "second tier socialistic country" (Wherry, 2011) and a "Northern European welfare state in the worst sense of the term" (Russell, 2009). His approach during these early years resembled a restrained, incrementalist strategy that was rationalized by Tom Flanagan (one of Harper's advisors) in his suggestion that "small conservative reforms are less likely to scare voters than grand conservative schemes, particularly in a country like Canada, where conservatism is not the dominant public philosophy" (Martin, 2011, 47). In Harper's own words, his long-term objective was described as follows:

to make Conservatives the natural governing party of the country. And I'm a realist. You do that two ways ... one thing you do is you pull conservatives, to pull the party, to the center of the political spectrum. But what you also have to do, if you're really serious about making transformations, is you have to pull the

¹⁴ This strategy is reminiscent of cultural theorist Stuart Hall's analysis of Thatcherism as "authoritarian populism," meant to indicate the development of government policies based on strong connections with the market economy that capitalize on popular discontents in order to bring about a new moral order. Importantly, Hall articulated that authoritarian populism is "no rhetorical device or trick" and acknowledged instead that "it has a rational and material core. Its success and effectivity do not lie in its capacity to dupe unsuspecting folk but in the way it addresses real problems, real and lived experiences, real contradictions - and yet is able to represent them within a logic of discourse which pulls them systematically into line with policies and class strategies of the right" (Hall, 1979, 20).

center of the political spectrum toward conservatism. (Bloomfield & Nossal, 2013, 154)

One of Harper's first actions upon taking office in 2006 perfectly reflects his combined neoliberal and neoconservative ideological approach by appealing to the needs of individual citizens through the related discourses of choice and personal freedom. Whereas the Liberal Party had campaigned on a promise of instituting a national childcare program, Harper instead marketed a "universal childcare plan" that would offer families with young children an annual cash payment of twelve hundred dollars. Almost immediately upon winning the 2006 election, Harper cancelled the childcare funding agreements between the federal and provincial governments. These funding agreements, which were an integral first step toward creating a truly universal, accessible, affordable, and high-quality childcare program across the country, were replaced with direct payments to families in the amount of one hundred dollars per month per child (Sanger & Crawley, 2008)¹⁵.

These funding cuts to early learning and childcare were part of a significant and far-reaching series of cost reduction measures announced in September of 2006 totaling 1.2 billion dollars and ultimately impacting sixty-six federal government programs. Despite the fact that Canada at that time demonstrated one of the "lowest debt-to-GDP ratios in the industrialized world" (Hennessy, 2008, 41) and possessed a 13.2 billion dollar surplus, a wide range of historically significant publicly-funded government

¹⁵ In advance of the federal election scheduled for Fall 2015, the federal government announced a series of "family-focused" tax cuts including an increase to the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) of sixty dollars for all children under six years of age. This means as of January 1, 2015, parents receive \$160 per month per child for children under six. Further, the UCCB was expanded and now provides parents a monthly payment of sixty dollars for children and youth aged six through seventeen.

programs were not insulated from Harper's reach. Importantly, the vast majority of programs affected were those that possessed a social justice mandate.

Included among these cuts was a 5.5 million dollar reduction of allocated funds for the Court Challenges Program (CCP) that would inevitably result in its total eradication. The CCP was an initiative that provided funding to Canadian citizens in order for them to defend their rights in a court in relation to the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. This initiative had been widely accessed by women, gay and lesbian people, persons with disabilities, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities and refugees. Just four months before the cancellation of this program was announced, the federal government itself had showcased the CCP at a United Nations committee in Geneva as an exemplifier of Canada's commitment to preserving and enhancing human rights:

the CCP provides funding for test cases of national significance in order to clarify the understanding of the rights of official language minority communities and the equality rights of disadvantaged groups ... it is not possible for the government to support all court challenges, but this uniquely Canadian program has been successful in supporting a number of important court cases that have had direct impacts on the implementation of linguistic and equality rights in Canada.

(Canadian Council for Refugees, 2006, para. 12)

The cancellation of the CCP essentially ensures that only those with the requisite financial means are in a position to launch legal challenges regarding discriminatory and inequitable laws and practices. In response to criticism regarding the CCP's cancellation, Conservative MP John Baird defended the government's decision by stating: "I just don't

think it made sense for the government to subsidize lawyers to challenge the government's own laws in courts" (Sossin, 2006) thereby foreshadowing the Harper Administration's future efforts to stifle dissent and further marginalize some of Canada's most vulnerable citizens.

Other related cuts announced at this time included significant reductions in funding for the Status of Women, Youth Employment Program, Adult Literacy Programs, the Canadian Volunteerism Initiative, the Community Access Program, and the Canadian Policy Research Network. The cuts were ultimately rationalized by the federal government in its assertion that the programs were either not delivering value for their funding, the services could be performed outside of government more efficiently, or the programs simply failed to meet the needs of Canadians. No defensible evidence was ever relayed to substantiate these claims, and notably in the case of the Canadian Policy Research Network the opposite was actually true.¹⁶

In addition to cutting funding for various social programs and services, tax cuts were a central component of the Harper Administration's agenda. In 2007, the federal government announced a reduction in the corporate tax rate from twenty-two percent to fifteen percent to be implemented over a period of five years. In 2012, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty justified the cut by stating:

what we're seeing, despite the fact that we've reduced business taxes, is we're seeing our corporate tax revenue continue to rise. And this is further proof, if

¹⁶ An external evaluation conducted in 2005 by Social Development Canada declared that "the evidence points to the conclusion that the Canadian Policy Research Network (CPRN) has been successful in meeting its objective of informing the development of social and economic policy ... the greatest influence of the CPRN was on the government, academic and non-governmental sectors. Where CPRN is most effective is in influencing how policy makers think about problems ... CPRN has been effective at bringing forward the social agenda on many issues."

anyone needed it, that reduction of taxation creates more economic activity, more investment, more jobs. (Beltrame, 2012, para. 3)

Even this policy decision, however, was not supported by defensible data. In actuality, federal revenue generated from corporate taxes fell from forty billion dollars in the 2007/08 fiscal year to thirty billion dollars three years later and the government's own internal analysis revealed that corporate tax revenues would not reach forty billion dollars until 2016/17 (Beltrame, 2012).

Corporate tax cuts were accompanied by a series of "boutique tax cuts," including tax credits for sports equipment, children's fitness, and income-splitting for middle-income families (Fodor, 2013, 113). The income-splitting proposal, which would allow two-parent families with young children to reduce their tax burden, was framed and presented to the Canadian public as a mechanism to assist "ordinary families", but the main beneficiaries have proven to be primarily Canadian families with high annual incomes. Specifically, only families with two parents in different tax brackets and young children would be eligible, and a study conducted by the C.D. Howe Institute found that eighty-five percent of Canadian families do not meet this criteria (Laurin & Kesselman, 2011). The study further noted that this tax break actually contributes to economic inequality and does nothing for single parent families, while invoking a restrictive, heteronormative, gender-biased view of the nuclear family.

Further tax cuts initiated by Harper include his reduction of the GST from seven percent to five percent resulting in a reduction of federal revenue of approximately fourteen billion dollars annually and a limited capacity on the part of the federal government to pay for public programs and services. This cut was promoted as a

significant saving for individual citizens, but a study conducted by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives revealed that eighty percent of Canadians would have benefited more had the federal government maintained the level of GST and transferred the revenue to provincial and municipal governments to fund public services (Mackenzie & Shillington, 2009).

Harper won a second minority government in 2008 and in the 2011 federal election he led the Conservative Party to a majority government by increasing their number of seats in Parliament to 166 of 308 (approximately fifty-four percent of the total available seats). During his subsequent years in power leading a majority government, Harper consistently and ever more forcefully demonstrated his contempt for the welfare state by altering public policy in accordance with a market fundamentalist worldview informed by the elements of both neoliberalism and neoconservatism (Gutstein, 2014; Porter, 2012).¹⁷

Understanding Neoliberalism

Prior to a deep interrogation of the presence of neoliberal ideology within the Canadian context, a robust and detailed conceptual examination is required. Neoliberalism has been called the “defining political economic paradigm of our time” (McChesney, 1999, 7), and in its broadest sense refers to a complex assemblage of economic, social, and political values, ideas, processes, policies, and discursive representations (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004). In accordance with these aspects, which function on both individual and institutional levels (Plehwe, Walpen & Neunhoffer,

¹⁷ In Canada’s 42nd general election held October 19, 2015, the Conservative Party under Prime Minister Stephen Harper was defeated by the Liberal Party led by Justin Trudeau. Immediately following the election, Harper resigned as leader of the Conservative Party and Trudeau was subsequently sworn in as Canada’s Prime Minister on November 5, 2015.

2006), neoliberalism organizes the world in such a way that ultimately a “relative handful of private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize their personal profit” (McChesney, 1999, 7).

It was in the late 1970s and early 1980s that neoliberal market fundamentalism began to take root, first in Britain under Margaret Thatcher, then in the United States championed by Ronald Reagan, and eventually more subtly in Canada via the leadership of Brian Mulroney (Himelfarb & Himelfarb, 2013; Gutstein, 2014), ultimately coming to “dominate public discourse and the modalities of the state in one country after another” (Albo, 2002, 46). Importantly, various iterations of neoliberalism have appeared around the globe at:

different times and in different guises ... some states are only just now experiencing the first pressures towards neoliberalism (for example Chile), some have adopted it only in small part (for example Sweden) and others have deliberately and thoroughly installed neoliberal practices and principles over the last 20-30 years. (Davies & Bansel, 2007, 250)

In trying to understand the multifaceted phenomenon that is neoliberalism, it is helpful to think of it in terms of its three interconnected manifestations: (1) ideology; (2) a mode of governance; and (3) a policy package (Larner, 2000; Steger & Roy, 2010).

First, understanding neoliberalism as an ideology highlights its function as a way of thinking that has permeated virtually all social institutions and garnered significant support among a majority of individuals and groups within Canada and throughout the world. For the purpose of this dissertation, ideology is understood as a:

complex set of ideas that attempts to explain, justify, legitimate, and perpetuate the circumstances in which a collectivity finds itself. It provides the basis for guiding behavior, making sense of the world, imparting meaning to life, instilling a common bond among group members, and explaining situations. Ideology provides a framework for organizing, legitimizing, and maintaining relations of power and decision-making at all levels in institutions and systems. (Henry & Tator, 2002, 246)

With this definition of ideology in mind, an ideology that is neoliberal in nature functions to shape how we understand and what we emphasize in the historical trajectory of society, impacts how we experience and make sense of the world in its current state, and informs our aims and desires as to how we think the world ought to be. Advocates of neoliberal ideology contend that the market should be viewed as the single most important organizing and evaluative factor of all spheres of life including social, cultural, and economic aspects. In discussing the free market society Karl Polanyi (1944) stated, “instead of the economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economy” (p.60).

According to neoliberal ideology, the market is believed to be all encompassing and inherently efficient and as such will lead to the creation of maximum wealth and global prosperity (Przeworski, 1992). In response to rising levels of economic inequality increasingly noted throughout the world, neoliberals suggest that such disparities are due to a lack of effort or work on the part of some individuals, groups, and nations. Social relationships resulting from an unrestricted market are thus understood as an expression of an authentically free society--as the natural way things ought to be. This position

ultimately lays the foundation for the limiting of state intervention, community or union organizing, and social welfare programming (Hayek, 1944; Friedman, 1962).

Second, to understand neoliberalism as a mode of governance it is necessary to trace back the historical roots of this paradigm to its origination within the classical liberal economic theory of Adam Smith and the Manchester School (Palley, 2005). In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Smith argued for a free-market economy that would be permitted to operate with minimal government intervention asserting that “laissez-faire” ideals were required to support the growing economy. According to this argument, the state should be positioned as “invisible hands” supporting individual’s engagement with the market and advancing human well-being by “liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2007, 2). The primary function of the state thus becomes the provision of an institutional framework that preserves, protects, and privileges the autonomy of the market.

A neoliberal mode of governance is thereby heavily dominated by the values of competitiveness and individual self-interest (Steger & Roy, 2010) and accompanied by a process of “centralized decentralization” characterized by a:

sharp centralization of authority over decision-making and political management in the executive branches of the state--particularly to augment policing, war-making and market-enhancing administrative capacities--accompanied by an equally focused policy agenda that seeks to hollow out the redistributive role of the Canadian federal state. (Evans & Albo, 2008, 4)

Within this context, public servants become less focused on advancing a qualitatively defined conception of the public good and human well-being and instead devote the majority of their efforts to reducing government expenditures by subjecting all policies and programs to a quantitative cost-benefit analysis. This trend is often referred to as “new managerialism” that began in the early 1980s and continues to present day (Clarke & Newman, 1997; Deem, 2011). New managerialism ultimately pivots around the goals of transparency, accountability, and efficiency and is characterized by the transference of business and market values, principles, and practices from the private sector into the public sector. A central component of new managerialism involves the implementation and constant monitoring of performance measures that emphasize “efficiency, value for money and performance rather than democracy or legitimacy” (Ferlie et al, 2008, 335).

This leads to the third manifestation of neoliberalism, which is the reduction of public policy-making to those endeavors that “liberate the economy from social constraints” (Steger, 2002, 12). The policy package associated with neoliberal ideology includes the deregulation of the economy, liberalization of trade and industry, and the privatization of government-owned enterprises and services (Steger & Roy, 2010). This typically entails efforts to diminish the size and limit the mandate of government services while reducing tax levels for corporations, small businesses, and elite members of society and creating a climate of anti-unionization under the guise of enhancing productivity and increasing labor flexibility. As such, the scope of social service programming is diminished, as are any barriers to free trade. Neoliberal governments also work in concert with think tanks and external political institutions that endorse a neoliberal or

neoconservative ideology to rationalize, promote, and garner public support for these types of policy changes (Saurette & Gunster, 2013).

As previously stated, classical liberal economic theory is expanded within neoliberal ideology to position the economy as the governing mechanism of all aspects of society (Baez, 2007). This expansion means that not only are labor, goods and services commodified, but so too are human relationships, culture, and social institutions (Baez, 2007). At the level of the individual, this redefines citizens as “homo economicus,” a term often attributed to Adam Smith and used to present a view of people as isolated, rational beings whose motivations and actions can safely be assumed to reflect their personal material interests (Lemke, 2001). In this view, individuals are autonomous, rational entrepreneurs moving through the world as isolated consumers employing economic logic to assess the value of all choices:

since the individual is responsible for taking care of him or herself and not dependent on society, such selves, in being cut loose from the social, no longer have the same responsibility to the social. The emphasis of responsibility is shifted over to responsibility for individual survival. Survival is constructed not as moral survival but as economic survival. (Davies, 2005, 9)

According to Davies & Bansel (2007), the discourse that enables the shift from an emphasis on social welfare to an almost exclusionary focus on the expansion of the market economy--from a “social state” to an “enabling state”--includes both moralistic and fear-based elements:

its moralism reconstitutes any dependence on the state as a morally lesser form of being. The ‘social state’ thus gives way to the ‘enabling state’, which provides

individuals with knowledge, powers and freedoms to take care of themselves.

The state, in this new belief system, can (and should) no longer be responsible for providing all of society's needs for security, health, education and so on.

Individuals, firms, organizations, schools, hospitals, parents and each individual must all take on (and desire to take on) responsibility for their own well being.

The 'social' and the economic are constituted, in this discourse, as binary opposites, with the economic in the ascendant and the social representing all that good economics is not. (p. 251-252)

In a world structured in accordance with neoliberal ideology, social problems requiring collective resolution are rendered obsolete and reconstructed as individual challenges to be overcome through solitary efforts.

The Erosion of the Canadian Welfare State and Ascendency of Neoliberalism

During the Second World War, the Canadian government began to adopt an interventionist approach to governance recognizing that a strong social welfare state could assist with social and economic development, especially as it pertained to problems associated with the depression of the 1930s, increased urbanization, and industrialization. To this end, the federal government began the process of introducing a range of measures in the area of housing, veteran pensions, child care, assisting women to transition to the workforce, wage and price controls, and regulations for industry. After the end of the Second World War--but prior to the 1980s--Keynesianism functioned as the central economic paradigm in advanced capitalist countries (Fodor, 2013). Based on the theory of British economist John Maynard Keynes, who was writing in context of the Great Depression, Keynesianism advanced a positive perception of the state viewing it as a

mechanism to enhance employment opportunities and assist in reducing income inequality via a system of progressive taxation (Pressman, 2007). Keynes (1936/2006) concretely argued that “the outstanding faults of the economic society in which we live are its failure to provide for full employment and its arbitrary and inequitable distribution of wealth and incomes” (p. 341), and for three decades following the end of the Second World War it was generally accepted that:

the state should focus on full employment, economic growth, and the welfare of its citizens, and that state power should be freely deployed along side of or, if necessary, intervening in or even substituting for market processes to achieve these ends. Fiscal and monetary policies usually dubbed “Keynesian” were widely deployed to dampen business cycles and to ensure reasonably full employment. A “class compromise” between capital and labor was generally advocated as the guarantor of domestic peace and tranquility. States actively intervened in industrial policy and moved to set standards for the social wage by constructing a variety of welfare systems (health, education, and the like).

(Harvey, 2007, 10-11)

In Canada, the 1960s were a time when marginalized groups began to have an unprecedented voice within the socio-political arena. People began organizing themselves, fashioning a common agenda, making demands of the political system, and asserting their rights. Canada was also experiencing relatively full employment, prompting increased solidarity among the working class that resulted in a strengthened union movement and series of strikes (Swartz, 1981). The political climate of Canada, and Western countries more generally, was such that:

everyone was a Keynesian, a social democrat or some shade of Marxist. The idea that the market should be allowed to make major social and political decisions; the idea that the State should voluntarily reduce its role in the economy, or that corporations should be given total freedom, that trade unions should be curbed and citizens given much less rather than more social protection – such ideas were utterly foreign to the spirit of the time. (George, 2001, 184)

This climate unsettled Canada's corporate elite and the dominant perception was that their ability to function "successfully" in the pursuit of profit was being constrained by a number of factors including the power of the trade union movement and the social and economic policies created by the government as a result of public demand. Chomsky (2003) refers to this as a "crisis of democracy" as the business community began to experience the exercise of popular democracy as an impediment to economic freedom and expansion. The corporate community was steadily losing power and began to lament "overactive minority group representation, too much emphasis on welfare provisions, too much protection of workers, a top-heavy public bureaucracy, and too many critics in academia and the media" (Marchak, 1991, 106).

Evidence of this concern within the business elite was communicated quite explicitly and publicly in the Canadian context. Enoch (2007) has catalogued an important array of statements made by members of Canada's business community that capture this exact sentiment. For example, Jim Younger, vice-president of Steel Co. Canada, a corporation based out of Hamilton, Ontario, stated the following:

what we are witnessing is the implementation of the socialist slogan 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need' by the very means

advocated by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto for bringing about socialism in advanced countries. (as cited in Enoch, 2007, para. 7)

The fear of the impacts of “socialism” on private industries was echoed by the president of the Consumer’s Association of Canada (CAC) who cautioned that a:

generalized lack of public trust in the motives and programs of our great industrial enterprises may be laying the foundation for radical totalitarian political movements and make it relatively more difficult to create the climate for profitable and competitive enterprise. (as cited in Enoch, 2007, para. 8)

A more specific critique detailing the perceived difficulties for competitive enterprise as described by the CAC was forwarded by Alfred Powis representing the Noranda Mines corporation who suggested that the private sector is “increasingly subject to uninformed, but strident and highly publicized attacks which seem to have a pervasive impact on government policies” (Dobbin, 2003, 182).

Taken together, these statements made by members of Canada’s business community represent an intense fear of engaged, democratic participation on the part of the Canadian public:

democracy becomes a problem for the plutocracy not when it fails to work but when it works too well helping the populace to move toward a more equitable and favorable social order, narrowing the gap however modestly between the superrich and the rest of us. So democracy must be diluted and subverted.

(Parenti, 2007, 215)

However, simply making public statements of this sort would not have been adequate in terms of “subverting” democracy, limiting the demands of citizens, and impacting public

policy. In the 1970s, as solidarity among Canada's working class increased, the corporate community began to organize amongst themselves and fashion what Enoch (2007) refers to as a "strategic communications campaign" (para. 1). This campaign was designed to mobilize public and political support for private and competitive enterprise. In a concerted and deliberate effort to further the neoliberal ideological agenda, the interests of business were presented as synonymous with national or public interests. This was communicated quite clearly in a statement made by a representative of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce requiring that its members work to "improve the public's understanding of our true objectives – that the public interest is the foundation of commercial interest" (Enoch, 2007, para. 10). The Canadian Manufacturers Association echoed this need to transform the attitudes and values of Canadians in order that they would better correspond with the interests of the corporate sector by urging members to:

get across to the public what the free enterprise is all about. We must break down the misconceptions about profits which have been built up in the minds of many employees and their families, teachers, educators, students, and consumer groups. (as cited in Enoch, 2007, para. 10).

Specifically, the strategic communications campaign was enacted in two interrelated ways. Firstly, pro-market messages were disseminated through corporate-sponsored advertising campaigns and a number of corporate-funded think tanks that were established with the aim of presenting ideological interests as neutral, normative social facts. The president of Canadian company Baker Lovick Ltd., Alan Yeates, described the importance of utilizing the media and advertising industry in what would take the form of a "massive defense of the economic system" (as cited in Enoch, 2007, para. 11).

Since the 1970s, numerous think tanks have grown to be very influential in promoting a conservative vision for Canada and cultivating public support for various social policy changes (Abelson & Carberry, 1998; Abelson, 2000). Importantly, these policy networks are intimately connected with both Canada's corporate sector (Carroll & Shaw, 2001) and conservative politicians and political staffers (Saurette & Gunster, 2013). The Fraser Institute was established in 1974 in British Columbia and provides the most compelling example of this kind of Canadian think tank. The organization was created as a direct response to the social democratic policies of the British Columbia provincial government initiated by the New Democratic Party. The Fraser Institute's first director, Michael Walker, communicated the purpose of the organization as follows: "if you really want to change the world, you have to change the ideological fabric of the world." This statement explicitly recognizes that debates over social policy occur within a broader ideological and discursive context and it is this context that must be altered in order to achieve support and consensus within the realm of public opinion.

In 1997, the Fraser Institute commenced a five-year plan that endeavored to redefine the concept of "freedom" in the minds of Canadians in order that it would be understood as synonymous with market freedom. The organization began rating various governments throughout the world on an index in accordance with the degree to which they either promote or obstruct economic freedom defined in a manner that privileges the interests of the Canadian corporate sector:

the ideological bias of the Fraser Institute's approach to economic freedom is clear from the choice of variables considered by their index. An economy is free if the operations of private businesses and investors are relatively unfettered by

government policies, rules, or practices which undermine the flexibility, profitability, or sustainability of those operations ... it is not surprising that their index sheds relatively little light on the actual economic conditions experienced by the majority of humanity. (Stanford, 1999, 2-3)

During its forty years of operation, the Fraser Institute has gone to unparalleled ends to flood the public with its message regarding the supremacy of a market fundamentalist worldview:

in 2008 the institute ... reported a circulation of almost 80,000 for its monthly magazine and 72,000 for its student magazine, recorded almost 1 million visitors to its website (with more than 6.2 million pages viewed), and identified over 7,250 citations to its work in the media ... the institute was mentioned in 16,745 news stories in that year (of which 10,784 were online), had its op-eds published (or republished) 839 times in newspapers across North America, and had 1.9 million unique visitors to its website, with more than 17.2 million page views. (Saurette & Gunster, 2013, 230-231)

The Institute itself has boasted of their influence stating that the current provincial and federal public policy agendas “read like an index of past Institute publications. Many of the Institute’s ideas have become the consensus view on topics that are crucial for the economic well-being of Canadians.”

The second way that the Canadian corporate sector began to organize and project a unified position was by establishing the Business Council on National Issues (BCNI) in 1976, which was initially composed of ninety-three chief executive officers of Canada’s

largest and most powerful corporations.¹⁸ Importantly, the BCNI was modeled after the American Business Roundtable with the aim of moving beyond the traditional approach of lobbying for specific legislative changes and instead attempt to influence broader public policy (Laxer, 1981; Dobbin, 2003). The BCNI was established, in part, due to the perception that the federal government, under the Liberal Party leadership of Prime Minister Trudeau, was not likely to acquiesce to the demands of Canada's business community and the political party system was "too responsive to democratic appetites and too willing to sacrifice capitalist priorities in the face of democratic pressures" (Langille, 1987, 46). This concern was fueled by Trudeau's public pronouncement in 1975 that wage and price controls implemented to stabilize inflation as a result of the 1973 oil crisis "amounted to a massive intervention in the decision making power of economic groups, and it's telling Canadians that we haven't been able to make it work, the free market system" (Clarke, 1997, 11). In response, the business community definitively organized as a class and began to aggressively defend the free market system (Laxer, 1981). Clarkson (1991) has identified two key objectives of the BCNI during the 1980s:

first the BCNI wanted a Canadian-American agreement that would secure commercial access for Canadian exporters to the US market and guarantee their freedom to locate in any state. Secondly, on the home front they wanted the replacement of the social-democratic interventionist state by a regime that responded to the norms of the neoconservative ideology which had recently

¹⁸ In 2001, the BCNI renamed itself the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE) and as of 2015 the organization has over 150 members who lead companies that "collectively administer \$6 trillion in assets, have annual revenues in excess of \$850 billion, and are responsible for the vast majority of Canada's exports, investment, research and development, and training."

become the conventional wisdom among the elites of the OECD countries.

(p.113)

Over time, the BCNI became an increasingly formidable force in terms of impacting policymaking at the federal level (Dobbin, 2003). The 1981/82 recession reduced support for the Trudeau Administration's tendency toward government intervention (Fodor, 2013). At the same time, Clarkson (1991) identified a shift in public sentiment from an inclination to support state intervention toward a position that viewed "big government" as a central part of the problem (p.112). This shift was accompanied by an increasingly large segment of the Canadian population holding conservative perceptions regarding the efficacy and legitimacy of labor unions, the unemployed, and those living in poverty (Laxer, 1981), which, in turn, functioned to strengthen the platforms of right-wing Canadian parties:

the new right in Canadian politics gathered strength because the old economic strategy, with its balancing act between the private sector and public spending for social services, was causing growing resentment. The new right responded to the mood of the affluent segments of the population, no longer willing to put up with the pressures of high taxation. The targets of the right were public services and government spending. The ark of the covenant of the new conservatism was the free market system. (Laxer, 1981, 17)

Trudeau initiated a cabinet shuffle in September 1982 and appointed a finance minister whose background and positioning was significantly more amenable to the business community's agenda than his predecessor. Clarkson (1991) identifies this as an

important moment in the nation's shift from a Keynesian policy paradigm to one increasingly informed by neoliberal ideology:

the decisive watershed had been crossed ... for the remaining years of the Trudeau era, the BCNI told the government directly what it wanted. It provided a complete and detailed draft legislation for a new competition act that would accelerate, in the name of economic rationalization, Canada's already high level of corporate concentration. (pp. 114-115)

Later in the fall of 1982, the Trudeau government established The Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada to inform the government's economic agenda moving forward.¹⁹ The report from the Commission was not released until 1985--one year after Brian Mulroney led the Progressive Conservatives to power. Prime Minister Mulroney accepted each of the Commission's recommendations, which represented an unequivocal commitment to "neoliberalism as the superior policy paradigm. Markets were deemed more efficient than government intervention. Curtailing inflation was given priority over fighting unemployment. The report called for free trade and the cutting back of the welfare state" (Fodor, 2013, 108-109).

Mulroney was a key player in terms of accelerating the shift from a Keynesian policy paradigm toward neoliberalism in Canada. In December of 1984, Brian Mulroney stood in front of America's business-class elite at the Economic Club of New York and declared Canada "open for business," promising that the federal government, under his leadership, would function to "assist and not harass the private sector" (Murphy, 1984).

This political promise became the central theme of his administration. Mulroney

¹⁹ A royal commission is a formal inquiry into a matter of public concern. Royal Commissions are established by Order in Council under *The Inquiries Act* and ultimately produce a final report with recommendations for action for relevant governments.

instituted significant reductions in taxes for the wealthiest segments of the population (McQuaig & Brooks, 2011), introduced the Goods and Services Tax (GST) that replaced a former tax on manufacturers, and negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Mexico that essentially limited the ability of the state to regulate businesses and the market economy and effectively rendered the rights of citizens secondary to those of corporations (Laxer, 1998). Furthermore, over the course of his nine years as Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney reduced the federal government's contributions to health, welfare, and education from twenty-percent to fifteen percent (Fodor, 2013).

The Liberal Party won a majority government in the 1993 federal election under the leadership of Jean Chretien and this initially signified a potential reprieve from what had been an onslaught of neoliberal policy changes under the previous administration. The Liberals had campaigned on a promise to repeal NAFTA (although this was clearly never fulfilled) and the 1994 budget represented a notable shift in allocated funds back toward social programming (Clarkson, 2002). However, Prime Minister Chretien had given Finance Minister Paul Martin enormous autonomy and the 1995 budget demonstrated a definitive acquiescence to neoliberal ideology. Furthering the cuts instituted by the Mulroney Administration, the federal government announced in the 1995 budget a reduction in its contributions to health, welfare, and education from fifteen percent to nine percent over four years (Fodor, 2013). This announcement essentially “banished Keynesian notions from government rhetoric to an even greater extent than had his Tory predecessor. Deficit reduction was to be permanent, not simply confined to the upside of the business cycle” (Clarkson, 2002, 135). Echoing this sentiment, Barrow et al

(2003, p. 18) remarked that “Canada’s 1995 federal budget adhered so closely to neoliberal principles that even the Fraser Institute, one of the most conservative think-tanks in the country, observed that Canada now had one of ‘the most extreme free-market, pro-business economic policies’ in the world”. This budget was considered one of the “tightest” in Canadian history and appears to have followed direction issued by the International Monetary Fund to restore “business vitality” through drastically cutting funding for social programs, lowering tax rates, and introducing massive lay-offs to the civil service (Barrow et al, 2003, p. 18).

The 1995 budget also brought with it the elimination of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) and Established Programs Financing (EPF), which had been respectively instituted in 1966 and 1977 when government’s focus was on strengthening the provisions of the social democratic state. The CAP was essentially a cost-sharing agreement between the federal and provincial governments that specifically allocated funding and laid out requirements for the provision of social assistance programs. In a similar way, the EPF provided specific funding for provincial healthcare systems and post-secondary education.

In 1996 these two programs were folded into the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), which was a lump-sum amount of funding for welfare, healthcare, and post-secondary education that required no accountability from provincial jurisdictions as to how the funds were distributed. Importantly, the CHST would effectively reduce funding to the provinces by thirty-seven percent (a total of \$4.3 billion) by the 1997/98 fiscal year. Dobbin (2003) speaks to the impact of this funding shift:

the CAP and EPF enshrined the very philosophy of 1960s and 1970s nation building. That philosophy was universality, the principle that everyone, regardless of income, would receive key public services and that they would be paid for by progressive taxation. In this single move, Paul Martin ... signaled that the federal government was, with the stroke of a pen, reversing possibly the most important core principle of Canadian social democracy. The practical implications of the CHST were difficult to overstate, for the elimination of these two programs had the effect of freeing provincial governments from any commitment to the national project. (p.78)

Essentially, the CHST significantly diminished funding levels for social programs and higher education and also removed any direct influence the federal government would have on informing provincial government expenditures in these areas. The result has been that provinces across Canada, to varying degrees, have faced funding crises reducing their ability to deliver programs associated with the social welfare state.

Higher Education in an Era of Neoliberal Ideology

As neoliberal ideology secures a position as the dominant ideological paradigm within Canadian society, the world of higher education is subsequently experiencing a variety of related transformations. There has been a range of responses from the scholarly community to the increasingly prevalent trend for post-secondary institutions to restructure their aims and processes according to the needs of the market (Suspitsyna, 2012). Some scholars have argued in defense of this movement (Kerr, 2001; Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Newman, Couturier & Scurry, 2004), others have highlighted negative implications by detailing a pointed concern and critique (Bok, 2003; Slaughter &

Rhoades, 2004; Zemsky, Wenger & Massy, 2005), while others, including Giroux (2011), adamantly contend that it is an “assault” that threatens the very core of democratic life:

never has this assault on the democratic polity been more obvious, if not more dangerous, than at the current moment when a battle is being waged under the rubric of neoliberal austerity measures on the autonomy of academic labor, the classroom as a site of critical pedagogy, the rights of students to high quality education, the democratic vitality of the university as a public sphere and the role played by the liberal arts and humanities in fostering an educational culture that is about the practice of freedom and mutual empowerment. (Giroux, 2011, para. 2)

As Giroux highlights above, the shift toward neoliberalism in higher education encompasses a variety of facets. As such, relevant studies have approached this issue by examining the cultural shift in universities (Cote & Allahar, 2007), the expansion of neoliberal forms of university governance (Mizen, 2003), and the restructuring and deterioration of academic and scholarly work (Turk, 2008). Post-secondary institutions affected by what Slaughter & Rhoades (2007) have termed a regime of “academic capitalism” have been called the “enterprise university” (Marginson & Considine, 2000) and the “exchange university” (Chan & Fisher, 2008).

Although these critiques vary in terms of their analytical scope and content, they primarily pivot around a concern that neoliberalism ultimately requires the commodification of education through the reconceptualization of knowledge as a product to be marketed and sold by universities and bought by student consumers:

neoliberals are critical of existing definitions of important knowledge, especially that knowledge that has no connections to what are seen as economic goals and needs. They want creative and enterprising (but still obedient) workers. Flexibility and obedience go hand in hand here. Due to this, a creative and critical polytechnic education that combines 'head, heart, and hand' is not sponsored by neoliberals. The possible space for that discussion is closed down by an emphasis on an education whose role is primarily (and sometimes only) economic. (Apple, 2004, 190)

Canaan & Shumar (2008) identify two general goals that underpin the neoliberal transformation of higher education, namely that post-secondary institutions should competitively promote and sell their services within an educational marketplace and that the output of universities should be highly specialized workers with the requisite skills to assist the nation-state in competing on the global economic stage. These goals took root and began to gain traction during the 1980s as neoliberalism came to dominate the policy climate in most Western countries.

The infiltration of neoliberal ideology into post-secondary institutions has had important impacts on faculty and staff. There has been an increase in the use of part-time and adjunct labor (Slaughter, 1993, 1998; Arnowitz, 2000; Rajagopal, 2002) and a decrease in the inclusion of faculty perspectives in strategic, programmatic, and curricular decision-making within the university (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Rhoades, 2006). The reduction in public funding for post-secondary institutions that has accompanied the neoliberal turn has also led to a climate of competition for grant funding between scholars:

the research funded by these grants often poses little challenge to the neoliberal structure because it either neglects society as a primary unit of analysis or manifestly embraces prevailing human capital objectives. The focus on this research is often grounded far more in the idea of social and economic utility than in fostering democratic critique. (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2008, 30)

In many ways, these trends mirror the agenda set forth regarding the restructuring of higher education institutions by The World Bank (1998) in its call for:

either fewer and/or different faculty, professional staff, and support workers. This means lay-offs, forced early retirements, or major retraining and reassignment, as in: the closure of inefficient, or ineffective institutions; the merger of quality institutions that merely lack the critical mass of operations to make them cost-effective; and the radical alteration of the mission and the production function of an institution – which means radically altering who the faculty are, how they behave, the way they are organized, and the way they work and are compensated. (p. 22)

Studies have shown that faculty working at research institutions (Rhoades & Slaughter, 1997) and community colleges (Levin, 2006) have expressed a perception that their input pertaining to organizational decision-making has been limited as the needs of capital increasingly supersede the civic or moral aims of the institution.

Academic freedom of post-secondary educators is being increasingly limited under the regime of neoliberalism. For example, in 2011 the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) released a statement on academic freedom that was

unanimously accepted by the presidents of each member institution.²⁰ The statement failed to mention key components of academic freedom including the right of faculty members to advance a critique of their own institution. Also omitted from the statement was any provision that would protect faculty members from being penalized for “extramural utterance and action,” understood as the right to freely participate in public discourse without professional reprimand (CAUT, 2011). The limited definition of academic freedom put forward by the AUCC was opposed by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (2011) in an open letter:

with the growing pressure on universities to compromise their defense of academic freedom in the quest for financial support, we need a more expansive notion of academic freedom, not a more restrictive one ... a major problem in Canadian universities is not that too many people are asserting their academic freedom, but that too few are. (p. 4)

The CAUT (2011) report went further in their critique of the AUCC’s conceptualization of academic freedom, highlighting how it allows institutions the autonomy to interpret it according to their own “self-defined mission ... which would legitimize institutions imposing faith or ideological tests as a condition of employment, as long as such restrictive requirements are consistent with the institution’s mission” (para. 11).

Importantly, the AUCC’s statement limits and contradicts Horn’s (1999) conception of academic freedom in the Canadian university context that privileges truth-seeking and

²⁰ The AUCC Statement on Academic Freedom can be viewed in its entirety here: <http://www.aucc.ca/media-room/news-and-commentary/canadas-universities-adopt-new-statement-on-academic-freedom/>. Note: the AUCC officially changed its name to “Universities Canada” in April of 2015.

protects the right of scholars to offer a critique of their own institution while actively participating in public life.

Research has also highlighted the detrimental effect that neoliberalism in higher education has on the humanities and liberal arts by limiting their ability to promote social justice and democratic renewal (Nussbaum, 2010; Coleman & Kamboureli, 2011; Lye et al, 2011; Hyslop-Margison & Leonard, 2012). The implications of systematically devaluing the humanities have been highlighted by Nussbaum (2010):

if this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful, docile, technically trained machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements. (p.2)

Hyslop-Margison & Sears (2008) assert that overall "an education system designed to respond to the needs of the marketplace predictably appears radically different from one focused on preparing students for the responsibilities of democratic citizenship" (p.31). Specifically, a focus on fostering sustained democratic dialogue and debate regarding social issues is replaced with an emphasis on technical knowledge, job training, and the acquisition of marketable credentials.

Canadian Higher Education

Prior to specifically interrogating how neoliberalism has impacted the post-secondary landscape in the Canadian context, a brief overview of the organization of higher education in Canada is required. The post-secondary sector in Canada is extremely decentralized because the Canadian Constitution explicitly assigns responsibility for all levels of education to the provinces: "there is no national 'system',

no national ministry of higher education, no national higher education policy and no national quality assessment or accreditation mechanisms for institutions of higher education” (Jones, 2014, 1). Each of Canada’s provincial and territorial legislatures has therefore developed their own educational structure, resulting in essentially thirteen separate education systems within the country. For this reason, Glen Jones (2007), a well-known scholar in this area, has said “describing Canadian higher education is almost as difficult a task as defining the nation itself” (p.627).

At present, Canada is known for having an extremely accessible post-secondary sector with among the highest participation rates in the world, but this was not always the case. Prior to the Second World War, higher education institutions received a minimal amount of public funds and operated almost solely based on funding from the church and individual donations. This meant that a small minority of Canadians were able to attend university and those who did were primarily from the wealthiest of Canadian families (Canadian Federation of Students, 2012). After 1945, the federal government took a more active role in higher education by establishing the veterans benefits program that provided funding for those returning from the War to attend university (Jones, 2014). Over time, other groups throughout the nation expressed an interest in obtaining access to a university education. Between 1941 and 1951, even excluding the mass influx of war veterans, Canadian universities experienced an increase in student enrolment of nearly seventy percent (Cameron, 1991).

In 1951, based on recommendations from The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, the federal government began funding specific institutions directly based on each provincial population (Fisher et al, 2006, 22).

In response to the continued increase in enrolment across the country, the National Conference of Canadian Universities organized a conference in 1956 centered upon the perceived “crisis” in Canadian higher education.²¹ This prompted the federal government to commit new funding to support the growth of higher education institutions throughout the country (Jones, 2014). The federal government’s increased involvement in post-secondary education through the direct funding of institutions prompted resistance from various provinces who perceived this as an intrusion into an area of provincial jurisdiction. Due to this, funding by the federal government eventually took the form of grants allocated to provinces based on a share of total expenditures.

In a sense, this jurisdictional tension between the federal and provincial governments has continued to characterize the policy and funding landscape of Canadian higher education. According to Jones (2004):

Canada may be the only nation in the developed world that has never had a national university or higher education act, or even a government minister assigned responsibility for higher education. The federal government does play an important role in higher education policy, but it is a role that has evolved through the dance of federal-provincial relations to the frequently discordant tune of Canada’s constitutional debate. (as cited in Fisher, 2006, 1)

At present, funding for universities and colleges in Canada is derived from two main sources--federal and provincial government grants and tuition fees--but the ratio between federal and provincial funds and the ratio between total government grants and student

²¹ The National Conference of Canadian Universities was formed in 1911 to provide a forum where administrators could connect and discuss common issues related to higher education. The NCCU was rebranded in 1965 as the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and again in 2015 as Universities Canada.

fees has dramatically shifted in recent decades. In 1967, federal funding for post-secondary education was provided according to a 1:1 cost-sharing model that saw the federal government match every dollar that each provincial government allocated toward universities and colleges. In 1977, this cost-sharing arrangement was abolished based on the passage of the Established Programs Financing Act (EPF). The EPF organized the transfer of funds from the federal government to provincial jurisdictions for healthcare and post-secondary education by way of tax points and cash transfers. With respect to tax points, the federal government could transfer taxing authority to the provinces by decreasing corporate or personal tax rates that allowed for a provincial tax increase without raising the overall taxation level. Cash transfers embodied the direct allocation of funds from the federal government to provinces.

Importantly, although the intention was that these funding dollars were to be spent on health care and education, there was no legislative framework that set out exactly how the funds should be distributed: “for administrative purposes, the federal government assigned 67.9 per cent of the cash payments for health and the remaining 32.1 per cent for PSE without requiring that provinces allocate funding in that proportion” (Fisher et al, 2006, 40). Ultimately, the overall impact for provincial governments was that they were compelled to assume an increased proportion of the cost of social services as well as post-secondary education and opted to decrease funding for higher education due to growing costs associated with health care (Metcalf, 2010).

In an effort to respond to the deficit amassed during the 1980s, the federal government introduced the 1995 budget and subsequently initiated a forty percent reduction in cash transfers to the provinces for health, social assistance programs and

higher education. This took the form of replacing the EPF with the Canada Health and Social Transfer, which was essentially an amalgamation of federal funding for these three areas. A majority of provincial jurisdictions initiated cuts to the post-secondary sector that were frequently packaged and presented as part of broader austerity measures (Jones, 2014). For example, Ontario introduced deep cuts to higher education funding and proceeded to dramatically increase tuition fees. A notable exception was seen in the case of Quebec as the provincial government deliberately resisted increasing fees. The figure below illustrates the differences in undergraduate tuition fees by province in a graphic representation created by the Canadian Federation of Students (2013):

Figure 1: Undergraduate Tuition Fees by Provincial Jurisdiction



The Canadian Federation of Students (2013) has highlighted the decrease in government funding, coupled with the systematic increase of tuition fees across the country, as evidence of the “rapid re-orientation of Canada’s post-secondary education system away from a publicly funded model and towards a privatised, user fee system” (para. 1). A recent study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives concluded that tuition and other mandatory fees have tripled since 1993:

Government funding as a share of university operating revenue has declined from 77% in 1992 to almost 60% in 2002 to 55% in 2012. Over the same period,

tuition fees as a share of university operating revenue increased from almost 20% in 1992 to 33% in 2002 to over 37% in 2012. There is no doubt that as a result of decreased government funding universities are relying more heavily on private funding sources, particularly tuition. (Shaker & Macdonald, 2015, 7)

It is within this context that higher education in Canada has made a transition toward neoliberalism and what Slaughter & Rhoades (2007) call the realm of academic capitalism. However, it would be an over-simplification to suggest that this is solely due to the retreat in funding by the federal government. Polster (2004) has highlighted and refuted the contention that connections between academia and Canada's business community were a direct result of insufficient funding levels on the part of the federal government:

in truth ... the federal government did not abandon our universities to the industrial wolves: it handed them over to business with its blessing. Through a series of moves, government progressively ceded control over the nature and uses of university research to the private sector while the costs of university research were (and still are) largely borne by the public. (p. 179)

Over the years, the federal government has implemented and funded various individual initiatives that have had important impacts on the landscape of Canadian higher education. Jones (2014) identifies two specific ways that the federal government invested in higher education towards the end of the century: student financial assistance and research and development. With respect to student funding, the government established two initiatives in 1998. Firstly, the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation was established as a non-profit entity funded by \$2.5 billion dollars to

provide bursaries primarily for students demonstrating financial need. Secondly, the federal government created the Canada Education Savings Grant, which gave parents a twenty-percent top-up on their contribution to a Registered Education Saving Program (a tax-free savings account established in 1972 that can only be used for post-secondary education).

In terms of funding research and development across the country, the federal government established two large initiatives. The Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) was created in 1997 with the purpose of financing major infrastructure projects. The CFI covers forty percent of the project costs and the university applicant is responsible for securing the remaining sixty percent of funding from the relevant provincial government or a private-sector partner. The Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program was implemented in 2000 to award salary and research support dollars for positions within Canadian universities.

In addition to cultivating a climate of competition between post-secondary institutions, both the CFI and the CRC programs have unequivocally fostered closer relationships between Canadian universities and the private or corporate sector. Funding associated with the CFI is awarded based on a decision by a Board that is primarily populated by individuals who have publicly endorsed the alliance between academia and the business sector. This is also true of the Steering Committee that governs the CRC program. Research that is funded by corporate partners has a number of detrimental implications for the integrity of academic scholarship. Specifically, Polster (2004) contends that these federally-funded initiatives have restricted the ability of Canadian

universities to serve and protect the public interest by limiting the kind of scholarship that can be created:

as external funding of university research has shifted away from researcher-initiated projects and toward strategic and partnership projects, it is increasingly difficult for academics to pursue research questions that respond to the needs of particular social groups, such as disadvantaged groups that cannot afford to sponsor academic research ... as universities become more involved with corporate partners, they may become less likely to support researchers or research that are unsupportive of, or that threaten, the latter's interests. (p. 190)

As the public mission of post-secondary institutions is eroded, it is being subsequently replaced with a vision for higher learning that is informed and driven by economic objectives that include:

preparing people to be productive workers in professional and other occupations and research, which results in new products, new technologies and greater economic efficiency. As important as these objectives are, they stand in contrast to the cultural, moral, civic and broader intellectual purposes of education. (Skolnik, 2004, 4)

Pressure for universities to shift their focus to the needs of capital has come from a variety of places. For example, on September 16, 2013, the Canadian Council of Chief Executive Officers published an open letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper lamenting the fact that Canadian higher education does not have a national agenda.²² The CCCE

²² The full text of the CCCE's open letter can be accessed here: <http://www.ceocouncil.ca/publication/letter-to-the-right-honourable-stephen-j-harper-regarding-the-upcoming-speech-from-the-throne>

(2013) highlighted this as detrimental to the nation's ability to compete on the global economic stage:

in our view, the absence of a coherent national approach to education and skills development policy puts Canada at a significant disadvantage relative to other leading economies. The federal government has an important role to play in working with the provinces, educational institutions and the private sector to better align education and training with the skills our country needs to succeed and prosper in the 21st century global economy. We strongly encourage your government to take up this mantle by collaborating with key partners and using the policy levers within your jurisdiction to strengthen Canada's human capital advantage. (para. 10)

In March of 2015, the CCCE released a commissioned report authored by Dr. Ken Coates, a professor of public policy at the University of Saskatchewan, entitled Career Ready: Towards a National Strategy for the Mobilization of Canadian Potential.²³ This report includes a recommendation that post-secondary institutions in Canada be compelled to publish annual statistics on the employment and income status of all graduates with the aim of forcing institutions to “devote more effort to preparing students for their eventual move into the workplace, and would reward institutions and programs with better outcomes” (p.14). The assumption in this recommendation is that the only legitimate purpose or “outcome” of higher education is workforce development. The CCCE's (2015) report openly references this while devaluing the liberal arts tradition in its suggestion that “such an approach would likely steer more students toward

²³ The report can be viewed in its entirety here: <http://www.ceocouncil.ca/publication/career-ready-towards-a-national-strategy-for-the-mobilization-of-canadian-potential>

polytechnics and cooperative education programs. Fewer students would be encouraged to pursue generalist university degrees” (p.14).

Derisive reference in the report is made to the “sense of entitlement” among young people that suggests higher education should be accessible to all Canadians:

every marginally talented student in the country can get into a college and most can get into a university, even though many are ill-suited or unprepared for the experience. Canada needs to shift away from this open-access approach – based on the idea that everyone ‘deserves’ a degree, or at least the chance to try to earn one – to one that is based on achievement, motivation and compatibility with national needs. (p. 9)

In this sense, “national needs” are implicitly defined as the de facto requirements of the Canadian economy. As such, the report argues for a twenty-five to thirty percent reduction in university enrollment (while maintaining current government funding) and encourages government and businesses to provide financial incentives for labor market areas in high demand. All other disciplinary areas not deemed a priority should receive “little or no government funding” (p. 13). This report completely disregards the cultural or civic role of higher education and reflects the neoliberal tendency to conceptualize education as synonymous with skills training and labor market preparation.

In April of 2015, the CCCE announced the newly established Business Higher Education Roundtable with the aim of forging “greater synergies between research and teaching on campuses and the needs of Canadian employers as they adapt to the economy of the future” while also “strengthening research and innovation linkages between large

companies and institutions.”²⁴ The Business Higher Education Roundtable is led by 27 executives from the private sector and various post-secondary institutions and was developed by the CCCE in consultation with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), Polytechnics Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan), and The U15.

The U15 is an organization that was formally established in 1991 as a somewhat informal information-sharing network between the executive heads of ten universities (the organization was initially referred to as the “Group of Ten”)²⁵. At that time, the organization aimed to function in a parallel fashion to that of the Association of American Universities. In recent years, the U15 has grown in terms of its size and mandate, formalized its organizational vision, and is taking concerted steps to shape national social and educational policy.²⁶ At present the U15 includes fifteen member institutions located in seven provincial jurisdictions across the country:

Figure 2: U15 Research Institutions across Canada



²⁴ The full text announcement of the Business Higher Education Roundtable can be found on the CCCE website here: <http://www.ceocouncil.ca/news-item/business-leaders-and-post-secondary-presidents-launch-businesshigher-education-roundtable-to-improve-school-to-work-transitions>.

²⁵ In the mid-1980s, the executive heads from five research institutions in Ontario began meeting informally to discuss shared interests and concerns, especially as they related to funding for research. It is this coalition that was eventually formalized into the Group of Ten and then ultimately, the U15.

²⁶ The official website for the U15, launched in June of 2013, can be accessed here: <http://u15.ca/>.

In the words of the organization's first executive director, who was appointed in 2012, the U15 aims to enable Canadian research institutions to "speak with one voice, to advance the sound public policy that ensures our country succeeds in this globally competitive environment." Specifically, the U15 articulates its mission as follows:

The U15 intends to drive the national policy agenda and provide critical advice and analysis about higher education and research and development. We participate in national discussions concerning the research enterprise and government programs supporting research and development.

As such, the U15 represents an important opportunity to ascertain the manner and degree to which neoliberal ideology has permeated the bounds of Canadian higher education policy. There are three important reasons why the U15 is worthy of study. Firstly, the U15 centralizes the lobbying power of Canada's research institutions and aims to inform public policy. Very recently, the U15 has adopted a kind of lobbying focus by appointing a Director of Advocacy tasked with the responsibility of "developing and implementing strategies to support collective engagements with the Government of Canada and relationships with national and international academic, business and civil society organizations." Secondly, although the U15 is not new, it is at a critical juncture where it is evolving and formalizing its vision for higher education in Canada. Finally, at the time of this writing there have been no academic studies of the U15, which represents a notable gap in the literature on higher education in Canada.

For the purpose of this study, policies are understood as documents that simultaneously embody both text and discourse (Ball, 1993, 3) while acting as "windows onto political processes in which actors, agents, concepts and technologies interact in

different sites, creating or consolidating new rationalities of governance and regimes of knowledge and power” (Shore & Wright, 2011, 2). This understanding of policy has its roots in a critical approach to policy analysis developed over the last three decades that argues for a move beyond a more traditional rationalist approach to policy research. A rationalist approach to policy studies fails to uncover inequitable manifestations of power relations in processes of policy development and implementation (Ball, 1990; Taylor, 1997; Rizvi & Lindgard, 2010). A critical approach situates policies within the broader theoretical context of critical theory (Ball, 1990; Olssen et al., 2004) as well as the ideological and discursive context that encircles all social and educational policies. This encourages an explicit view of policies as sites where power operates (Allan et al., 2010) and provides the theoretical and methodological footing from which researchers can “speak with authority against misguided, mistaken and unjust education policy” (Ozga, 2000, 2).

With this understanding of policy in mind, each policy document was subjected to a structured rhetorical analysis, which is a particular kind of critical discourse analysis (Winton, 2012). Rhetorical analysis focuses explicit attention on the manner in which policies construct social issues, position their audiences, and frame the circumstances to which the policies relate. Specifically, the analytical framework used during this phase was comprised of each text’s rhetorical situation (including exigence and audience) and five rhetorical canons (including invention, disposition, style, memory, and delivery) as outlined by Leach (2000) and Edwards et al. (2004).

According to Leach (2000), “exigence” is a critical component of a text’s rhetorical situation and it is represented by the particular problem to which the policy

aims to respond. In this study, this was addressed through a detailed examination as to the manner in which each policy presents the purpose of higher education in the mission statements, as well as the particular performance measures or indicators of success outlined in the strategic plans. To understand how the audience is positioned and mobilized the style, structure, and content of each policy was considered. The five canons of rhetoric were understood and addressed as follows:

1. *Invention* – includes a focus on the ethical, emotional, and rational appeal of each text;
2. *Disposition* – analyzes how each text is organized in relation to the argument being made within it;
3. *Style* – attends to the form of each text while focusing on word choice, popular phrasing and use of metaphors;
4. *Memory* – calls attention to how texts may incorporate and draw upon shared historical and cultural memories;
5. *Delivery* - focuses on how the central messages are communicated to the intended audience.

These elements were identified and categorized through multiple readings of each text and used to inform the final overall analysis related to the thematic, discursive, and rhetorical functions of this aspect of the policy climate within Canadian higher education.

This phase of the study specifically studied how official policy discourse (ministerial and institutional) represented the purpose of higher education in Canada. Subsequently, I looked at how issues of social justice, democracy, and equality are understood, positioned and taken up within these representations. Finally, I analyzed the

policy documents for evidence as to what extent, and in what ways, neoliberal ideology and discourses of market fundamentalism have permeated higher education policy in Canada.

Phase 1: Principal Findings

Neoliberalism & Canadian Higher Education Policy

A structured rhetorical analysis of policy documents from U15 member institutions and their associated government ministries unequivocally reveals the dominance of neoliberalism and the related discourse of market fundamentalism in Canadian higher education. Specifically, the policies related to the U15 promote, consolidate, and naturalize neoliberal ideology within higher education policy by embodying four related discursive manifestations. First, this policy review reveals an established tendency to condense education to primarily a market function by emphasizing job training and curricular compatibility with labor market needs. Second, there was a common theme of constructing students as economic entities or customers who are in the business of purchasing an education for primarily their own personal, material gain. Third, a majority of policy documents encouraged the commercialization of knowledge and research achieved via the establishment of formal linkages between post-secondary education and the private sector. Finally, the trend to promote internationalization in post-secondary education was represented by institutions attempting to compensate for decreased public funding for educational programming by generating revenue from international student fees, while simultaneously promoting a view of international students as a source for “human capital.”

In advance of a detailed articulation of the four thematic findings, an overview of the type and structure of policy documents included in the present review is required. Over the last forty years, strategic plans have become a ubiquitous feature within post-secondary institutions and governing ministries of advanced education. Research has shown that strategic plans entered the realm of higher education due to pressures associated with globalization, the rise of the knowledge economy, and related movements toward accountability and quality assurance (Fain, 2007). They are now regarded as a firmly entrenched aspect of a university or government department's public profile and internal policy and planning portfolio. Strategic plans can best be understood as publicly available documents that consolidate and communicate information regarding an institution's mission, values, vision, priorities, actions, and anticipated outcomes. Simply put, strategic plans essentially answer four foundational questions from an institutional perspective:

1. Who are we?
2. Why are we here?
3. Where are we going?
4. How will we get there?

Strategic plans can offer a range of benefits including the cultivation of a sense of shared history, belonging and vision for the future; propose a clear definition of the institution's purpose while establishing related pragmatic goals compatible with the stated mission; provide a lens through which budgetary, policy, program, and curricular decisions can be filtered; and allow for the institution to explore and communicate their unique approach to higher education tailored to the specific needs of their local community. These

benefits are contingent upon the degree to which strategic plans are informed by the particular mission, vision, and value statements of the institution; generated by democratic dialogue and inclusive input that facilitates shared ownership by faculty, staff, students, and community members; able to demonstrate tangible progress toward strategic priorities and institutional commitments; congruent with budgetary plans; publicly available and written in concise, plain and accessible language; and accompanied by regular progress updates communicated to the broader community.

A review of strategic plans across a range of Canadian post-secondary institutions reveals that there are two primary types of strategic plans typically adopted by higher education institutions. The first type takes the form of a detailed overview of the institutional mission, priorities, key initiatives, and performance measures. These are lengthy, detailed documents that adhere to a standardized, formal template with structural components as detailed in the following table.

Table 2: Structural Components of University Strategic Plans

Component	Description
Preamble	The introductory section of strategic plans usually includes a letter from the Board Chair, letter from the University President, and a short contextual overview of the plan's intention and scope.
Mission	The mission statement constitutes an overview of the institution's purpose and focus. Note: mission statements can range in length from one sentence to multiple pages.
Values	The institutional values constitute embodied or aspirational principles of the institution that are typically conveyed in a bullet point list. They are not operationally defined. Common values expressed by post-secondary institutions include excellence, integrity, respect, collegiality, inclusion, diversity, accountability / transparency, and creativity / innovation.
Context	Contextual information may relate to the historical, social, cultural, and economic requirements of a specific geographical region and/or reference broader factors influencing higher education (i.e. funding shortfalls, increased competition for public, private and donor funding, labour market pressures, declining enrolment).
Process	A rationale as to why the strategic plan was initiated, followed by detail regarding the process employed is typically detailed. This includes which stakeholder groups were consulted, the mode of consultation, and stages / duration of the planning cycle.
Priorities	Strategic plans typically contain between three to eight strategic priorities that centered upon the following themes: student recruitment, enrolment and retention; fiscal accountability and financial sustainability; student support and engagement; environmental stewardship; building diverse and inclusive communities; and enhancing teaching and research. Each goal included an operational definition and information related to the kind of initiatives that would support each priority. Priorities are generally not ranked or listed in order of importance.
Performance Measures	Performance measures are metrics that assess the degree to which the strategic goals and priorities have impacted the organizational and lived reality of an institution. Some plans designate an office or specific position as responsible for particular priorities and performance measures.

The second type of strategic plan is a more concise, visioning statement that generally does not exceed fifteen pages. Relative to the comprehensive strategic plans detailed above, these more succinct statements tend to omit information related to the

social and economic context in which the institution exists. They also exclude the methodology section that details the consultation and planning process. Further, the section on performance measures is either omitted or only a synopsis of sample metrics is included. Importantly, these shorter strategic plans always make reference to business, academic, and research plans that provide supplementary detail regarding specific aspects of the university profile. Of the fifteen institutions included in this study, fourteen had a publicly-available strategic plan (Université Laval was the exception). When a strategic plan was not publicly-available--or the document was a short visioning statement--related institutional, academic, and business plans were included in the review to ensure that a comprehensive understanding of the institutional mission and priorities was obtained. Refer to Appendix 2 for a detailed list of this sample.

With respect to governing ministries of advanced education, the most recent strategic plan or policy framework document was included in this review. When a strategic plan was not publicly-available, annual reports and business plans were consulted. These plans consistently conveyed the same kind of information as strategic plans (i.e. mission, vision, priorities, and key results). Refer to Appendix 3 for a detailed list of this sample.

Naturalization of Neoliberalism via Four Discursive Trends

Taken together, analysis of the range of policy texts in Phase 1 of this study reveals four related discursive trends that function to naturalize neoliberal ideology within higher education: the reduction of education to a market-based function; conceptualization of students as economic entities; commercialization of knowledge and research; and internationalization. It must be acknowledged that these are complex,

lengthy policy texts and so these four themes are certainly not the only trends present and they are visible to varying degrees in the range of documents. With that said, these four themes emerged as the most common trends woven throughout the range of governmental and institutional policy texts.

The four thematic findings are in line with previous research that has documented the relationship between neoliberal ideology and higher education in Canada. For example, Gurrisi (2014) used critical discourse analysis to review a range of policy texts published by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, as well as mission statements from various institutions within Ontario and found that:

now, more than ever, university policy is moving in a direction that is embracing job training, vocationalism, and labor market orientation, which is causing the role of the university to distance itself from its capacity for social justice. This shift in higher education policy has a direct link to the rise and consolidation of neoliberalism in Canada's social, political, and economic spheres. (p.31)

Another Canadian study by Kirby (2007) analyzed four government-commissioned reports stemming from reviews of post-secondary education systems in Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, British Columbia and Alberta and found a “pervasive influence of economic globalization which is accompanied by an increasingly utilitarian, market-oriented ideological outlook on post-secondary education's *raison d'être*” (p.2) represented by the related themes of privatization, marketization, internationalization, labor market training, and quality assessment mechanisms.

Condensing Education to a Market Function

The most powerful theme to emerge from the present review was the tendency for the vast majority of governmental and institutional policy texts to conceptualize and present, to varying extents, the primary purpose of higher education in Canada as supporting economic growth via the development of a highly skilled and specialized workforce. In doing so, the view of education presented in these policy texts, and presumably the programmatic and curricular decisions that follow, fails to adequately incorporate the cultural and social needs of particular communities: “if the market is making the big decisions about the direction of education, then the community is not” (Engel, 2000, 30).

The focus on economic development as a central educational goal is best represented by the policy documents associated with the education ministries in Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan. Each of these policies included two sequential phrases: “meeting the needs of the labor market.” Fairclough (1995) and Ayers (2005) have highlighted how such phrasing functions to personify or humanize the market as an entity with human needs and thereby renders market requirements superior to principles of social justice and democratic citizenship. This discursive practice further teaches us that market needs are beyond the dictates of human control or intervention. Importantly, this logic implies that because people are not in control of labor market requirements, they are also not responsible for educational policies and practices that might be a cause or contributing factor to social injustice and economic inequality. In this sense, the government ministries responsible for higher education in a majority of jurisdictions surveyed were presented as acting in service to the market economy. Specifically, both

Alberta and British Columbia cited the “key role” their respective governments have in advancing economic growth.

Another important example of a government department policy forwarding a utilitarian, market-based conception of higher education is seen in the Differentiation Policy Framework released by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in August of 2014. This framework requires all Ontario-based universities and colleges to develop and submit a strategic mandate agreement that documents the way and manner in which post-secondary institutions are aligned with government priorities:

Differentiation strengthens alignment between regional development needs and defined institutional mandates. This will advance innovative partnerships and programs that serve the distinct Ontario communities to which institutions are connected, as well as broader provincial needs. This alignment will ensure that students graduate with skills that respond to local and provincial labour market needs. (p. 10)

According to a press release by the Ontario Government (2014), the strategic mandate agreements will “make sure institutions are connected to various levels of the economy--from local to global--so students can gain experience through opportunities such as co-op programs and applied research, helping them create new businesses or find highly skilled work that will benefit Ontario” (para. 3). The first required component of these agreements is titled “Jobs, Innovation, and Economic Development” and requires each institution to detail information related to their:

collaborative work with employers, community partners, and regions, or at a global level, to establish their role in fostering social and economic development, serving the needs of the economy and labour market, and promoting a culture of entrepreneurship. This may include, but is not limited to, the impacts of institutions' commercialization, innovation, and applied research activity on social and economic development. (p. 10)

This policy framework essentially threatens to limit the autonomy of post-secondary educational institutions to articulate their own policy, programmatic, and curricular priorities. The implicit warning stemming from this policy framework is that “only those programs and institutions which can demonstrate a commitment to government policy can be assured of future funding” (Noonan & Coral, 2015, 64).

At the institutional level, the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary both present tailoring higher education programming to the market economy as a goal driven and informed by public demand. For instance, the Academic Plan released by the University of Alberta begins by referencing the global recession and cites the pressure exerted on universities by governments and the broader public to “deliver solid returns on public investment” in education, “evidenced by success in educating and training workforces.” Similarly, the University of Calgary’s Institutional Plan includes a string of three clauses that definitively privileges the market’s role in setting the agenda for higher education. The first clause presents a kind of explanation as to the origin for this shift: “our city demands graduates”; the second clause describes the demand: “who are competitive in a global marketplace.” The third clause functions as a kind of warning that the province would suffer in the absence of educational programming tailored to

market requirements: “the shortage of professionals and skilled labor in the city and province is a key barrier to future economic growth.”

A critical approach to policy analysis brings with it an acknowledgement that policies are strategically crafted with the aim of appealing to a broad audience and garnering endorsement and support for proposed courses of action (Edwards et al., 2004). The policy documents surveyed position the audience as a homogenous group that shares an understanding that the current economic climate is, and ought to be, the primary factor in driving educational policy. This is achieved in part through continuous reference to the evolving requirements of the global economy. For example, the British Columbia government’s Service Plan states: “The world is changing and education must continue to evolve to keep pace. As a province, we need to adapt, seek out opportunities and respond to key factors influencing change including the economy, skills shortages, globalization and technology.” Instead of including evidence to support and elaborate on this claim, the policy document presents the link between the economy and education as a natural, self-evident truth. Further, there is no inclusion of information that would suggest this is a contested claim; alternate or critical approaches to educational policy and practice that would highlight the role of institutions in contributing to the social good are completely omitted. Table 2 below provides a representative sample of excerpts gleaned from the range of governmental and institutional policy documents reviewed that reflect the theme of condensing education to a market-based function.

Table 3: Condensing Education to a Market Function

Policy Level	Policy Source	Excerpt
Alberta Government	Roles & Mandates Policy Framework for Alberta's Publicly Funded Advanced Education System	" Alberta's future prosperity will depend upon our ability to compete within a global context , and advanced education providers have a key role to play in enhancing our competitiveness provincially and locally ... it is important that the system have flexibility in order to balance between the short-term needs of the labor market and the longer-term needs of a globally competitive and knowledge-based economy."
University of Alberta	Dare to Deliver: Academic Plan	"... the global economy is still recovering from a severe recession . Governments and members of the public will be looking even harder at universities to deliver solid returns on public investments as evidenced by success in educating and training workforces ."
British Columbia Government	Service Plan	" The world is changing and education must continue to evolve to keep pace . As a province, we need to adapt, seek out opportunities and respond to key factors influencing change including the economy, skills shortages, globalization and technology ... through our range of post-secondary institutions... the Ministry plays a key role in ensuring B.C. has the skilled workers needed to capitalize on economic opportunities and meet the labor market needs of the province."
University of Calgary	Comprehensive Institutional Plan	" Our city demands graduates , both domestic and international, who have a global orientation, who are competitive in a global marketplace , and who can adapt to diverse cultural, economic, and governmental environments. The shortage of professionals and skilled labor in the city and province is a key barrier to future economic growth ."
University of Montreal	Strategic Plan	"...to keep developing training environments that meet, on one hand, the most demanding criteria of scientific and academic excellence, and on the other hand, Canada's considerable needs for a highly qualified workforce ."
Nova Scotia Government	Government Mission	"... supports the development of a highly qualified workforce to meet labor market demand as well as the cultivation of knowledgeable, engaged citizens."
Ontario Government	Differential Policy Framework for Post-secondary Education	"Vision – Ontario's colleges and universities will drive creativity, innovation, knowledge, and community engagement through teaching and research. They will put students first by providing the best possible learning experience for all qualified learners in an affordable and financially sustainable way, ensuring high quality, and globally competitive outcomes for students and Ontario's creative economy ."
Ontario Government	Results-Based Plan Briefing Book	" Despite challenging economic times , Ontario will continue to invest in the post-secondary education sector to ensure colleges, universities and students have the resources they need. Investments in education and skills training play a critical role in preparing people for jobs that ensure future prosperity in the knowledge-based economy ."
Saskatchewan Government	Departmental Plan	"Post-secondary education is vitally important to meeting our labor market needs, supporting the growth of Saskatchewan's economy and enriching the life of communities across the province."

Conceptualization of Students as Economic Entities

A second theme revealed through analysis of the policy texts was the tendency to construct student learners as economic entities whose primary purpose of accessing higher education is cultivating personal capital and enhancing employability. In this sense, the value and educational success of students is defined primarily in relation to what they will ultimately be able to offer potential employers in terms of discrete, marketable skills. In the selection of excerpts presented in Table 3, students are depicted as a homogenous group; any individual needs, interests or talents are completely disregarded and replaced by the requirements deemed important by prospective employers. No information is included pertaining to the type of employment or range of fields that together inform efforts for student preparation. A further omission is any reference as to building the capacity, disposition or critical thinking skills that would contribute to a person's ability to continuously engage and contribute to a democratic society. Also absent is substantive interrogation of the responsibility of education in supporting holistic development, cultivating habits of imagination and creativity, an appreciation for the arts, as well as the ability to grapple with inescapable existential questions.

According to Ayers (2005), policies that present students as economic entities whose primary goal is to become and remain competitive in an ever-changing market economy are problematic because:

the discourse of economics colonizes the discourse of pedagogy. Because individual citizens are empowered only to meet the needs of employers and to promote their own self-interest, they fail to develop the critical citizenship skills

that are requisite to a democratic society. Under such circumstances, a naïve and acquiescent society may develop, deferring political decision making to an elite class of politicians who claim to act in the universal interest of a homogenous populace. (p.542)

In each excerpt detailed in Table 3, the needs of students are consistently presented as secondary to the needs of business or employers. For example, the Business Plan published by the Alberta Government begins by referencing the needs of the province, which are presented as labor market needs. The policy document goes on to cite the changing economy as the sole inspiration for its understanding of the learning requirements of the populace. With this rationale provided, the government states its intention to engage in efforts to strategically realign the post-secondary system with workforce requirements. The discursive practice of referring to students as “the workforce” is reductive and dehumanizing and reinforces the idea that all learners are part of the same homogenous group. There is ultimately a ubiquitous trend to allocate agency to students only in relation to what type of job they may pursue--and even then, their choices are limited to those identified by the business community as “in demand.” Finally, the prevalent mention of a “growing” or “changing” economy, or the need for “flexible” educational programming functions to preemptively rationalize any curricular changes as deemed important by employers and industry.

Table 4: Conceptualization of Students as Economic Entities

Policy Level	Policy Source	Excerpt
Alberta Government	Business Plan	“Alberta needs skilled and entrepreneurial people . As Alberta’s economy continues to grow and change, the knowledge and skills Albertans need are also changing. The ministry is taking a deliberate, strategic approach to evolve the advanced learning system and support development of the province’s workforce. With partners, Innovation and Advanced Education is working to support Alberta’s labor needs and to build a more efficient and relevant Campus Alberta whose graduates can thrive in the economy of today and tomorrow. ”

Table 4 Continued

University of Alberta	Comprehensive Institutional Plan	“Post-secondary education systems, and within them, research-intensive universities such as the U of A, are undergoing academic transformation in response to new opportunities and expectations concerning their role in society. Alberta’s and Canada’s needs for an educated citizenry and a skilled population are diverse, and each type of post-secondary institution makes its own contributions to meet these needs ... (our) degree programs develop graduates who bring a particular set of skills, competencies, and perspectives to colleagues and employers upon graduation. ”
University of Calgary	Comprehensive Institutional Plan	“As access to higher education has broadened, young people and their parents are becoming more astute consumers of higher education , and they are increasingly knowledgeable about opportunities in the university sector.”
British Columbia Government	Service Plan	“One of the major objectives of post-secondary education is to develop citizens with the knowledge and skills to fully participate in the economy and to be ready for jobs that are in demand ... training and education programs that are relevant and applicable to the ever-changing labor market needs are critical to ensuring learners have the skills and knowledge to be successful in their chosen career. ”
Manitoba Government	Manitoba’s Post-Secondary Education Strategy	“the strategy is aimed at meeting the main goal adopted at the Manitoba Skills Summit held by the Premier’s Economic Advisory Council in February 2013. That goal, to add 75,000 skilled workers to the provincial labour force by 2020 recognizes that critical thinkers, equipped with the skills and problem-solving capabilities, are vital to the future growth and prosperity of our province. ”
University of Manitoba	Strategic Plan	“We will enhance our reputation on the international stage, and provide our undergraduate and graduate students with an exceptional and transformative research experience to succeed in their chosen careers. ”
Ontario Government	Differential Policy Framework for Post-secondary Education	“The ministry will use the following system-wide metrics for all institutions: graduate employment rates; employer satisfaction rates; and number of graduates employed full-time in a related job. ”
Ontario Government	Results-Based Plan Briefing Book	“Good jobs in the 21st century require a good education. In the coming years, demand is anticipated to continue for university and college graduates and skilled trades workers. The aging population, global competition for skilled workers and continuing technological change in workplace technology is resulting in a heightened demand for workers with specialized skills and knowledge. ”
Saskatchewan Government	Departmental Plan	“Strategic priorities from the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: increasing Saskatchewan’s competitiveness; improving educational outcomes; and connecting workers and employers and investing in skills training. ”

Marketization: Collaboration Between Universities & Private Sector

Research has documented the increasingly prevalent trend toward marketization in Canadian higher education prompting scholars to make reference to the post-secondary climate in Canada as a quasi-market environment (Lang, 2005). Kirby (2007) states that marketization is signified by the displacement of “traditional academic-humanist values

and public and citizenship interests” with market principles, including “competition, profit and private-interest” (p.9). Marketization involves efforts to increase the marketability of knowledge and encourage the commercialization of research generated by post-secondary institutions. As universities struggle with the reality of systematic decreases to public funding for higher education, they are becoming increasingly reliant on private funding, donations and endowments (Gurrisi, 2014). This has spurred the creation of policies at both the government and institutional level that exemplify a commitment to neoliberal ideology, as presented in Table 4 below.

For example, McMaster University released a policy titled “Academic Revenue Generating Activities” in 2007 that encourages “the offering of revenue generating degree, diploma and/or certificate programs that increase the resource base of the University.” The University of Alberta’s strategic plan emphasizes the establishment of partnerships with business and industry. Similarly, the Institutional Plan released by the University of Calgary stresses collaboration with industry and goes further to state its intention to establish a professional development program for academics that would assist in commercializing knowledge. The University of Western Ontario’s Strategic Plan documents an increase in annual revenue generated by contract research with industry as a key performance indicator, which effectively presents collaboration with industry an inherent good in its own right.²⁷ A similar performance measure was also included in the Accountability Report released by the Nova Scotia government in its reference to partnerships with business and labor groups.

²⁷ According to Barnetson & Cutright (2000), performance indicators have a mediating function between objectives and outcomes and can best be understood as “conceptual technologies that shape *what* issues we think about and *how* we think about those issues by embedding normative assumptions into the selection and structure of those indicators” (p. 277).

The most explicit commitment to marketization was noted within the Alberta government’s Policy Framework in its stated intention to achieve the “highest sponsored research revenue” and ensure that university research provides tangible benefits to industry. Further, the Alberta government’s Business Plan framed attracting venture capitalists and generating multinational corporate investments a priority initiative for higher education across the province.

The University of Toronto’s Statement of Institutional Purpose released in 1992 declared a need to acquire funding from both public and private sources: “the University recognizes that the fulfillment of its mission requires an increase in the level of funding, public and private, and will work to bring this about” (p. 6). The institution’s more recent Strategic Plan references that, when compared to its peer research institutions, the University of Toronto acquires a lower proportion of its funding from industry-sponsored research and emphasizes that all partnerships will be considered “in the light of implications for academic freedom, reputational risk and social responsibility, and respect for existing collective agreements.” Out of the U15 institutions included in this review, the University of Toronto was the only school to highlight how efforts to commercialize research must be weighed against their potential impact on academic freedom and the integrity of educational programming.

Table 5: Marketization - Collaboration Between Universities & Private Sector

Policy Level	Policy Source	Excerpt
Alberta Government	Roles & Mandates Policy Framework for Alberta’s Publicly Funded Advanced Education System	“Within Canada, Alberta should work towards a target of having the highest sponsored research revenue , while at the same time, ensuring that the research benefits are transferred to learners, society, and economy/industry.”

Table 5 Continued

Alberta Government	Business Plan	“Priority Initiatives: Continue to attract researchers, venture capitalists and multinational corporate investment to foster a more innovative and entrepreneurial culture in Alberta. Develop new local, national and international partnerships that support growth and alignment in Alberta’s priority areas of investment, research and commercialization .”
University of Alberta	Dare to Discover: A Vision for a Great University	“ Foster partnerships with business and industry to advance mutual goals for supporting talented people through employment and internship opportunities for our students and access to life-long learning, identifying research challenges, and translating and disseminating our research outcomes.”
University of Calgary	Comprehensive Institutional Plan	“We will: institute a professional development program for scholars interested in commercializing knowledge ; review and improve our intellectual property policy and related procedures to support faculty and graduate students engaged in commercialization efforts; and collaborate with industries working in our priority research areas to secure crucial equipment needed to test or licence new protocols, products or techniques that would expand access to markets .”
Nova Scotia Government	Annual Accountability Report	“Measuring Our Performance - EDUCATE: Build a more responsive system of learning and training through partnerships with businesses, labour, institutions and service providers , preparing Nova Scotians for a prosperous future.”
Ontario Government	Differentiation Policy Framework for Post-secondary Education	“System-wide metrics will be developed ... focused on applied research, commercialization, entrepreneurial activity, and community impact (e.g., number of patents, number of licences, revenue from licensing, number of start-up companies and jobs created) .”
University of Toronto	Towards 2030: A Long-term Planning Framework for the University of Toronto	Compared to its peers, the University’s proportion of funding derived from industry-sponsored research is low. In responding to this opportunity, and more generally in relationships with investor-owned and non-profit partners, the University will follow its extant policies and consider all partnerships in the light of implications for academic freedom, reputational risk and social responsibility, and respect for existing collective agreements . The University will enhance its institutional processes for knowledge translation and commercialization of university discoveries with a view to ensuring that societal, academic and economic benefits are more consistently realized from the University’s excellence in research.

Table 5 Continued

University of Western Ontario	Engaging the Future: Update on the Strategic Plan	“The University has increasingly demonstrated a strong commitment to knowledge and technology transfer. Relative to 2005-2006, the value of contract research involving industry rose 31 percent in 2006-2007. The number of reports of invention from faculty increased by nearly 50%, to 61 that same year. And while licensing income for the constituent University dropped slightly to \$544,000 in 2006-2007, Western established three start-up companies in the energy and life sciences sector.”
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Internationalization & Students as Human Capital

Kirby (2007) has identified internationalization as a dominant trend in Canadian higher education and connects it to the proliferation of the discourse of economic utilitarianism. Research has shown that internationalization has become a ubiquitous policy priority of a majority of Canadian post-secondary institutions (Beck, 2008; Jones, 2009). The AUCC (2009) has stated that “many universities have an international reference in their strategic plan, several have internationalization strategies, but few have a systematic or comprehensive approach to integrating an international dimension to the teaching and learning that take place on campuses” (p. 7).

There are various manifestations of internationalization as it occurs within higher education policy and it has been broadly defined as a “process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2003, 2-3). With this definition in mind, it can be argued that some forms of internationalization serve to protect and advance the more humanistic rationale for higher education by creating diverse learning communities and facilitating cross-cultural exchanges (Cudmore, 2005). That said, internationalization can also be motivated by more economic-utilitarian objectives (Kirby, 2008). One specific and prevalent form of internationalization can be understood as efforts to attract and

enroll international students who are charged higher tuition fees that alleviate some financial pressures resulting from reduced post-secondary funding. Research has shown this occurs in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (Altbach & Knight, 2007), as well as in Canada:

Canadian colleges and universities offer post-secondary services to international students without public subsidization on a more or less full-fee basis. Charging far higher tuition fees to these students has provided institutions with an avenue for coping with the decreases in government funding over the past two decades. (Kirby, 2008, 10-11)

This strategy was included as a key recommendation in a report titled “Universities Matter: How Canada’s Universities Contribute to Economic Recovery and Long Term Prosperity” submitted in 2009 by the AUCC to the Canadian House of Commons Committee on Finance:

by attracting international students to study in Canada, universities play a central role in providing Canadians with connections to highly qualified people and ideas from around the world. The presence of international students enriches the learning experience of all Canadian students and also has a significant immediate economic impact in communities across Canada. New Government of Canada estimates show international students contribute \$6.5 billion annually to our economy. (p. 4)

The report highlights the trend toward internationalization within Canadian institutions as a priority of the federal government:

the priority Canadian universities place on the recruitment of top international talent has converged over the last several years with the government's agenda of attracting these students as a potential pool of high quality immigrants and skilled labour. (p. 4)

According to this report there are two reasons as to why attracting international students should be a central priority for Canadian post-secondary institutions. First, international students are seen as a key source for generating revenue that would, in part, compensate for the shortfall in government funding. Second, there is a view of international students as "human capital" that can function to fill gaps in the domestic workforce.

Both of the goals reflected in the AUCC report were clearly visible in the present policy review at the government and institutional level. For example, government policy in jurisdictions including British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan reference the significant economic benefits of internationalization. The policy documents of some institutions, including the University of Ottawa and McGill University, referenced enrollment statistics of international students as a key achievement or performance indicator. Other institutions, including the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary cited specific reasons for attempting to increase enrollment among international students over time. In the case of the University of Alberta, the rationale for seeking out international students was framed as the province's requirement for "human capital." Similarly, the University of Calgary referenced "declining labour-force growth" as the motivation.

Clearly, educational policies of government and research institutions present the development of human capital as a critical step in promoting economic growth and, as

such, view it as a key function of post-secondary education (Holborow, 2014). An early scholar in the area of human capital theory defined the term as:

The knowledge, information, ideas, skills, and health of individuals. This is the ‘age of human capital’ in the sense that human capital is by far the most important form of capital in modern economies. The economic successes of individuals, and also of whole economies, depend on how extensively and effectively people invest in themselves. (Becker, 2002, 3)

Human capital theory solidifies the connection between education and capitalism and privileges knowledge that is deemed to have value in the context of the labor market. In this sense, framing international students as human capital reduces them to a commodity, while also reinforcing a view of education that disregards any social dimensions. Table 5 below highlights a range of samples from this policy review that reflect the trend toward internationalization in Canadian higher education.

Table 6: Internationalization & Students as Human Capital

Policy Level	Policy Source	Excerpt
University of Alberta	Comprehensive Institutional Plan	“The attraction of international students will help address the province’s need for human capital for research, innovation, and highly skilled labour in a dynamic economy. Currently, international students and faculty members study and teach in universities and colleges throughout Alberta, but as mentioned above, recruiting and retaining more of these highly skilled individuals is critical if the province is to realizing immediate and long-term aspirations. ”
University of Calgary	Comprehensive Institutional Plan	“The recruitment of international students is increasingly recognized as an important element in a broader strategy for attracting highly qualified people to our country ... In the face of declining labour-force growth , attracting and retaining high quality students from around the world will help the province address challenges in the labor market. ”
British Columbia Government	Service Plan	“ Significant economic benefits accompany the increased internationalization of our education system. Students drive economic growth, create jobs, foster research and innovation and meet provincial labor market needs. Government launched the International Education Strategy in May 2012 and set a goal of increasing the number of international students studying in B.C. by 50 percent by 2016.”

Table 6 Continued

Manitoba Government	Annual Report	<p>“International students are key to Manitoba’s efforts to promote a socially and culturally diverse learning environment. International students also make significant economic contributions to the province. 2012 data indicates there are over 7,200 international students in Manitoba, 6,000 of them postsecondary, primarily from China, India, Brazil, and Mexico. The economic impact of these international students to the Manitoba economy is over \$229 million and 1,640 jobs.”</p>
Manitoba Government	Manitoba’s Post-Secondary Education Strategy	<p>“attracting international students to Manitoba is ... an important part of the provincial commitment to add 75,000 new workers. A new International Education Strategy will be developed this year in collaboration with all education stakeholders.”</p>
McGill University	ASAP 2012-2017: Achieving Strategic Academic Priorities	<p>“McGill embraces both internationalization and globalization in ways that inform every aspect of University life. Ours is one of the most international universities in North America, with 20 per cent of our undergraduate students, and an even higher proportion of our graduate students, coming from countries other than Canada.”</p>
Nova Scotia Government	Annual Accountability Report	<p>“Measuring Our Performance - Number of international students in universities in Nova Scotia: What does this measure tell us? Number of international students in universities in Nova Scotia relates to our recruitment success and quality of our universities. This is part of our international student strategy to attract and retain international students to support enrolment at Nova Scotia’s universities and Provincial population goals. Where are we now? Both the absolute number and percentage of international students in Nova Scotia’s universities has been increasing over the past five years.”</p>
Ontario Government	Differentiation Policy Framework for Post-secondary Education	<p>“As part of forming an institution’s profile and measuring progress [on student population], the ministry will use the following system-wide metrics for all institutions: number and proportion of international students enrolled in Ontario.”</p>
University of Ottawa	Strategic Plan	<p>“Globalization already affects every area of our lives. To further improve the student experience and to reach new heights in research and knowledge creation, we need to aim for greater internationalization... by 2020, we will double the number of international graduate students (from 700 to 1,400) and increase the number of international undergraduate students by 50% (from 1,500 to 2,250), for a total of 3,650 international students, or 9% of the entire student body.”</p>

Table 6 Continued

Saskatchewan Government	Departmental Plan	“Key actions: increase the number of international students studying in Saskatchewan and inform international students and scholars of pathways for them to relocate and work in Saskatchewan ... Performance Measure: number of international students studying in Saskatchewan – by 2020, increase the number of international students studying in Saskatchewan by 75% over the 2011 baseline to be established in partnership with the post-secondary institutions in 2015/16.”
Université de Montreal	Strategic Orientations	“The Université de Montréal has made internationalization a top priority in all of its activities . In addition to signing collaborative scientific agreements with university institutions in Canada and abroad, it works closely with over 50 countries around the world and receives some 4,000 foreign students each year from over a hundred countries. ”

**Institutional Mission Statements:
Hollow Rhetoric or Indicator of Discursive Ideological Struggle?**

The policy documents reviewed are complex and multifaceted texts and as such reflect multiple discourses, many of which extend beyond those characterized as neoliberal in nature. Specifically, various documents framed post-secondary education as a collection of public institutions where issues of social justice and democratic citizenship achieved through serving the public good are of primary importance. This was especially evident in the mission statements of U15 institutions retrieved from either strategic planning documents or annual reports.

There are oppositional viewpoints as to the legitimacy and utility of institutional mission statements. On one hand, Detomasi (1995) asserts that it is “widely recognized that most college or university mission statements are embarrassingly vague, and largely comprised of academic pieties, dull platitudes and odes of self-congratulation” (p.31). This sentiment has been echoed by Newsome & Hayes (1990) who view these texts as “amazingly vague, evasive, or rhetorical, lacking specificity or clear purposes” (p.29). Similarly, Barnett (1994) contends that mission statements are “either a statement of the

trite and bland, failing to demarcate different activities of institutions, or they are so detailed and specific that, if taken seriously, they would impede the autonomy of an institution's academic staff" (p.14). According to others, it is believed that these statements represent a public declaration of vision and values (Bangert, 1997) that provide insight into "values that institutions recognize as important" (Kreber & Mhina, 2005, 56) and an important lens through which various policy decisions can be filtered.

Analysis of the mission statements of U15 institutions reveals a strong rhetorical commitment toward the related goals of enhancing democratic citizenship and promoting social justice. The notion of community or public service was the strongest theme as detailed in Table 6 below. Some institutions, including the University of Manitoba and McGill University, articulated a relatively vague or generic commitment toward community service and did not elaborate on what this might entail. The University of Toronto, however, explicitly referenced "equal opportunity, equity and justice" as educational goals that are attainable only in the context of "radical, critical teaching and research." The University of Alberta and the University of Western Ontario both reference their institutions as existing to serve the "public good" and Queen's University similarly insists knowledge creation is to serve the "greater good." Both the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta include fostering citizenship as an educational goal and the Université Laval specifically cites promoting participation in "major world issues" as an aim.

Importantly, the mission statements utilize first person plural pronouns including "we" and "our" as a rhetorical strategy that prompts the reader to feel they are part of the community. An additional strategy to unite the audience is opting not to operationalize

key concepts like “public good”, “culturally enriched”, or “prosperous.” This functions to allow the reader to “project their own definitions on the undefined concepts and feel satisfied that their understandings are included in the policy” (Winton, 2013, 165).

Table 6 below highlights an excerpt from each of the fifteen institutions under review.

Table 7: Mission Statement Analysis

<i>U15 Institution</i>	<i>Excerpt from Mission Statement</i>
University of Alberta	...our vision is to inspire the human spirit through outstanding achievements in learning, discovery, and citizenship in a creative community, building one of the world’s great universities for the public good.
University of British Columbia	...creates an exceptional learning environment that fosters global citizenship, advances a civil and sustainable society, and support outstanding research to serve the people.
University of Calgary	... seek truth and disseminate knowledge ... with integrity for the benefit of the people.
Dalhousie University	...facilitate opportunities for our students, staff and faculty to connect with and serve our local, national and global communities.
Université Laval	...an open university that promotes dialog, cooperation, and the participation of its members in major world issues.
University of Manitoba	...create, preserve and communicate knowledge, and thereby, contribute to the cultural, social and economic well-being of the people of Manitoba, Canada and the world.
McGill University	...advancement of learning through teaching, scholarship and service to society.
McMaster University	...we inspire critical thinking, personal growth, and a passion for lifelong learning. We serve the social, cultural, and economic needs of our community and our society.
Université de Montréal	...provide intellectual, scientific and professional training, at all academic levels, that is relevant and evenly grounded in the new knowledge emerging from research, society’s needs and practice environments.
University of Ottawa	...give students a remarkable education, to enrich the intellectual and cultural life of Canada.

Table 7 Continued

Queen's University	to pursue wisdom and knowledge for the greater good of our communities and the world, while inspiring outstanding achievement in learning, personal development and public service .
University of Saskatchewan	...the University of Saskatchewan belongs to the people of Saskatchewan ... and will be a model of scholarly inquiry, a place where all ... can take pride in their commitment to this centre of excellence dedicated to the service of the people of Saskatchewan and Canada ... we will help society become more just, culturally enriched, and prosperous .
University of Toronto	...fostering an academic community...with vigilant protection for individual human rights, and a resolute commitment to the principles of equal opportunity, equity and justice ... these rights are meaningless unless they entail the right to raise deeply disturbing questions and provocative challenges to the cherished beliefs of society at large and of the university itself. It is this human right to radical, critical teaching and research with which the University has a duty above all to be concerned.
University of Waterloo	...with a common and contagious 'can-do' spirit and passion for creating and applying knowledge for the betterment of society .
University of Western Ontario	...creates, disseminates and applies knowledge for the benefit of society ... our graduates will be global citizens whose education and leadership will serve the public good .

Interestingly, the mission statements of U15 institutions present Canadian post-secondary education as having a social democratic focus to the complete exclusion of economic goals. This suggests that the transformation of Canadian universities into purely corporate environments serving economic ends is still partial and incomplete and the presence of neoliberalism in the policy texts represents only one discursive ideological formation (Fairclough, 1995).

Taken together, this analysis reveals that there is an ideological struggle currently underway between oppositional discursive regimes in Canadian higher education. This kind of tension was actually explicitly referenced in the University of Manitoba's Strategic Plan. This document references how the consultation process used to inform

the development of the plan revealed a strong consensus on the part of students and staff that the institution take care in balancing the needs of the market economy with maintaining the integrity of teaching and learning that holds serving the public good at its core:

The consultation sessions yielded a wide range of perspectives related to the changing role of universities, the context in which they are operating, and how the University of Manitoba should respond to these changes. Participants spoke about the need both to respond to change while remaining true to the University's fundamental purpose to educate, preserve, create and share ideas and new knowledge for the public good. They recognized the need to create greater connections between students' education and the workplace while expressing concern about a national skills discussion that appears to devalue the benefits of university education in favor of skilled trades. They also acknowledged the need to diversify funding sources while expressing concern about a focus on revenue generation. Though this range of perspectives highlights the need for balance in addressing diverse interests, what was consistent is a view that the University's academic principles must not be compromised, and that institutional resources, whatever their source, should be used so as to maximize their impact in support of the University's mission.

In this example we learn that the institutional mission is actually a collaboratively drafted organic document that has meaning to those who are a part of the educational community. It also demonstrates that students and staff are intimately aware of the pressures placed upon institutions to tailor their philosophy, programming and practice in

order to accommodate the demands of the capitalist economy. This speaks to the urgent requirement for scholars and activists to offer a sustained critique and alternate vision for higher education that pushes back against the ongoing colonization of educational policy by neoliberal discourse.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a review of literature relevant to this study, including a conceptual examination of neoliberalism, followed by an overview as to how neoliberal ideology impacts and shapes the landscape of post-secondary education in Canada. The findings of phase one of the research, presented via the analysis of governmental and institutional policy documents associated with the U15, demonstrate the majoritarian story (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) of neoliberal hegemony. These findings further suggest that post-secondary education in Canada can be rightly viewed as a site of ideological struggle between oppositional discursive regimes. The following chapter will document another counter-story offered by the Maple Spring case study, while simultaneously illustrating how the media functions largely as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971) that fuels the hegemony of the neoliberal political project. Ultimately, Chapter 4 argues that the Maple Spring movement effectively challenges the dominance of neoliberal ideology and provides important pedagogical lessons regarding the relationship between activism, policymaking, and the practice of education.

CHAPTER 4

IN DEFENSE OF THE PUBLIC: DISCOURSES OF RESISTANCE

“At this point in history the capacity to doubt, to criticize and to disobey may be all that stands between a future for mankind and the end of civilization”

(Fromm, 2010, 12).

The renowned author and activist Arundhati Roy (2004) insists "there is no discussion taking place in the world today that is more crucial than the debate about strategies of resistance" (p. 195). With respect to conversations regarding neoliberal ideology, the element of resistance is essential because an “overemphasis on neoliberalism as a dominating and hegemonic force reduces and marginalizes examples of successful resistance and entrenches neoliberalism's dominance” (Bargh, 2001, 262). A central part of effective resistance involves offering a robust and defensible critique of neoliberalism, but it must also include a sustained effort to highlight potential alternative responses:

if those of us who want an alternative to market values cannot identify ‘goods’ that we are willing to defend in terms that do not derive from the market, then we will lose not only the relative autonomy the university enjoyed during the first half of the twenty-first century but also the ability to conduct any business that does not turn a profit. (Poovey, 2001, 12)

The colonization of educational policy and practice by neoliberal discourse, as I mentioned in chapter 3, is well-documented and has far-reaching implications, including

the erosion of a critical stance toward pedagogy and knowledge creation as an inherently political project. Hanke & Hearn (2012) have conveyed the risks of replacing “publicly funded” education with “publicly assisted” education (p. 11) in the Canadian context. As public funding for higher education decreases across the country, tuition fees and student debt continue to rise, university faculty hold positions that are increasingly tenuous, academic freedom is limited, and research and teaching efforts are progressively evaluated in accordance with their value in the labor market.

Within this context, critical educators and cultural workers struggling to defend public education from austerity programs have two interrelated responsibilities: “to participate in movements that aim to create more critically democratic institutions in education and the larger society and to act as secretaries of these movements and institutions so that such successes are made visible” (Apple, 2013, 49-50). What follows is an attempt to document and communicate the successes, challenges, and teachings of one such movement--the Canadian Maple Spring of 2012--which was a massive student-led resistance project in the province of Quebec that launched a powerful counter-story to the prevailing doctrine of neoliberalism in Canadian educational and social policy.

The Maple Spring movement provides an important illustration of significant resistance to neoliberal hegemony because of the discrete successes of the student strike, which included stopping a proposed 75 percent increase in post-secondary education tuition fees, forcing the repeal of draconian legislation that denied basic rights to organize and protest, and defending higher education as a public resource. In addition, the movement epitomized collective social action that took the shape of creative, inclusive and public protest based on, and continuously informed by, local grassroots activist

campaigns. In this way, the students of Quebec brought to life an ethic of participatory democracy that has been all but erased from the formal political system to remind Canadians that meaningful social change is not a gift from above but a fight from below.

Review of Methodology

A wide range of documents related to the Maple Spring movement were analyzed in accordance with the five stage analytical framework for critical discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough (2001). This framework begins with a focus on a social problem that possesses discursive or semiotic aspects. In the present study, the social problem was the impact of neoliberal ideology on post-secondary education and the various pedagogical lessons that can be gleaned from the Maple Spring movement to inform and strengthen broader resistance movements. The second phase entails the identification of obstacles to the social problem under analysis (focusing on those aspects of the existing social order that create and sustain the problem) and also requires the examination of the discourse itself. This calls for an analysis of paradigmatic aspects understood as the choices of inclusion and omission made in particular texts, as well as syntagmatic aspects defined as the linking together of words, phrases, and clauses. Phase three of this analysis included careful analysis as to how the problem exists in relation to the present social order. This was achieved by examining how representations of student activism, civil disobedience, dissent, protest, democratic citizenship, and the purpose of higher education as presented by the Maple Spring movement relate to current power arrangements in Canadian society. The fourth phase identified by Fairclough (2001), requires the identification of strategies to overcome obstacles to the social problem. Finally, the fifth phase, a critical reflection on the researcher's social positioning and

discussion as to how the research may contribute to emancipatory change, was considered throughout the duration of this study and articulated in the concluding chapter. Specifically, this review included the following types of data sources:

- mainstream media coverage of the student strike including 475 articles published between January 2012 and February 2013 (refer to Appendix 4 for a detailed list of this data sample);
- alternative and social media coverage;
- published interviews with leaders of the student strike;
- manifestos and statements in support of the movement by professors, youth groups, student and labor unions;
- provincial legislation (Bill 78 - An Act to enable students to receive instruction from the post-secondary institutions they attend [L.Q., 2012, c. 12 / Laws of Quebec, 2012, chapter 12]) passed by the Quebec provincial government in response to the student strike; and
- responses to Bill 78 by the United Nations, Amnesty International, the Quebec Human Rights Commission, and the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

The following section of this chapter will provide an overview of the Maple Spring movement and detail the historical context in which this student strike occurred.

Overview and Historical Context of Maple Spring Movement

In February 2012, the Canadian province of Quebec witnessed the beginning of what would prove to be the largest and most significant student protest movement in the nation's history (see Appendix 1 for a detailed timeline). The strike lasted approximately

six months and at its peak involved more than 300,000 students (Spiegel, 2014; Nadeau-Dubois, 2015). Specifically, the student strike was organized in opposition to a proposed seventy-five percent increase in university tuition fees throughout the province. The proposed tuition increase totaled \$1625 and was to be spread over five years, which represented an annual cost for students of \$325 set to commence in the fall of 2012. The increase was officially announced as part of the March 2011 provincial budget by the sitting Premier, Jean Charest, leader of the Quebec Liberal Party, and represented an annual increase of 325 dollars over five years set to commence in the fall of 2012.²⁸ The Charest government presented the tuition increase as a requirement to keep universities “competitive” in a climate of limited public funding (Whyte, 2012). As Kirby (2007) points out, the replacement of public funds with individual user fees and other types of private or corporate funding has been the primary way that privatization efforts have been implemented in Canada. Martin & Tremblay-Pepin (2012) state that this shift does not encapsulate a decrease in funding for universities, but instead represents a modification of the “nature and source of the funding” (p. 21) and thereby renders universities beholden to the interests of corporate stakeholders and private industry.

Students in Quebec argued that the proposed tuition increase threatened to have profound consequences regarding the nature, accessibility and quality of post-secondary education throughout the province. In terms of the most basic and immediate impacts, the tuition increase would mean that many students would incur significant debt to

²⁸ The Quebec Liberal Party is a provincial political party situated at the centre of the political spectrum. Although the party has a history of advancing social democratic ideals (as witnessed in the era of the Quiet Revolution), in recent years the party has promoted policies that have limited the role of government in economic matters, while cutting taxes and expenditures for social programs. Jean Charest was leader of the federal Progressive Conservative Party of Canada for five years prior to becoming leader of the Quebec Liberal Party and Premier of Quebec in 1998.

finance their studies. Marshall (2012) provides a detailed and informative overview as to how this policy proposal would essentially compel students to a life caught in the perpetual cycle of debt and credit:

total student debt now stands at about \$20 billion in Canada (\$15 billion from Federal Government loans programs, and the rest from provincial and commercial bank loans). In Quebec, the average student debt is \$15,000, whereas Nova Scotia and Newfoundland have an average student debt of \$35,000, British Columbia at nearly \$30,000 and Ontario at nearly \$27,000. Roughly 70% of new jobs in Canada require a post-secondary education ... on average, a four-year degree for a student living at home in Canada costs \$55,000, and those costs are expected to increase in coming years at a rate faster than inflation. It has been estimated that in 18 years, a four-year degree for Canadian students will cost \$102,000. Defaults on government student loans are at roughly 14%. The Chairman of the Canadian Federation of Student warned in June of 2011 that ‘we are on the verge of bankrupting a generation before they even enter the workforce.’ The notion, therefore, that Quebec students should not struggle against a bankrupt future is a bankrupted argument. (para. 3)

A broader and less frequently referenced implication of tuition increases and high levels of student debt is articulated by Chomsky (2011) in his critique of debt as a disciplinary technique:

Students who acquire large debts putting themselves through school are unlikely to think about changing society. When you trap people in a system of debt, they can't afford the time to think. Tuition fee increases are a disciplinary technique,

and by the time students graduate, they are not only loaded with debt, but have also internalized the disciplinarian culture. This makes them efficient components of the consumer economy. (Chomsky, 2011 as cited in Hartlep & Eckrich, 2013, 82)

Hardt & Negri (2012) echo this sentiment in speaking of the controlling aspects of debt that functions to impede both personal and professional life choices and opportunities:

Debt ... disciplines your consumption, imposing austerity on you and often reducing you to strategies of survival, but beyond that it even dictates your work rhythms and choices. If you finish university in debt, you must accept the first position offered in order to honor your debt. If you bought an apartment with a mortgage, you must be sure not to lose your job or take a vacation or a study leave from work ... debt wields a moral power whose primary weapons are responsibility and guilt, which can quickly become objects of obsession. You are responsible for your debts and guilty for the difficulties they create in your life.

(p. 10)

Detailing and communicating the significant and wide-reaching impacts of the proposed tuition increase was of critical importance during the early phase of the student movement. This was also used as a way to start a conversation regarding the deeper transformation occurring within the broader society, which consistently sees the responsibility for public services shift to individual citizens.²⁹ Martin & Tremblay (2012) point out competing positions regarding this transformation:

²⁹ Student protesters made frequent reference to the call by Raymond Bachand, Quebec's Finance Minister, for a "cultural revolution" characterized by the implementation of new (or increase of existing) user fees on a range of public services. Bachand's plan for Quebec bears notable similarities to former Ontario Premier Mike Harris's "common sense revolution" that slashed public services like

from the standpoint of the capitalist elite, universities, teachers and students must be adapted to market conditions to stimulate economic growth. For others, however, this undermines the right to education, as well as the ability of societies to be self-governing and set their own goals, one of which would be to put the well-being of the community ahead of that of corporations and big money. This is the real meaning of the struggle the Quebec students are inviting everyone to join: a struggle to re-appropriate the commons against the dictates of neoliberalism. (p. 22)

This alludes to the contention held by students of the Maple Spring that the most appropriate and responsible vision for higher education begins with the acknowledgement that universities are public spaces that serve the common good as opposed to profit-driven entities subservient to the market economy. Neoliberal ideology serves the latter by creating the conditions whereby education is systematically privatized, corporatized and commodified. Governance structures of institutions are increasingly populated by members of the corporate elite who promote a vision of the university as a mini-corporation (Carroll & Beaton, 2009). Faculty members bear responsibility for larger teaching, research and administrative workloads, while an increasingly higher percentage of faculty are compelled to work on a contract basis with little job security and limited benefits. Curricular decisions are made by considering economic criteria like relevance and applicability to the labor market with less attention paid to educational considerations and the requirements of academic scholarship. University research is increasingly tailored to the needs of industry while less research is driven by the issues facing

health and education while lowering taxes under the rationale of economic stimulation and job creation (Ralph, Regimbald & St-Amand, 1997).

marginalized communities or others without the means to lobby for or sponsor research (Ayotte-Thompson & Freeman, 2012).

With this understanding of the political, social and economic implications of the proposed tuition increase in mind, a diverse coalition of student federations throughout the province called for an unlimited general strike to oppose the government's plan on February 13, 2012. Within a month, nearly three-quarters of the university and college student population in Quebec was on strike.³⁰ Months of petitions, teach-ins, talking tours, marches, massive demonstrations, and numerous provocative and militant acts of civil disobedience were organized at the grassroots level in accordance with an escalation of tactics approach. Considered in its totality, this movement constitutes the "longest and largest student strike in the history of North America" (Hallward, 2012, para. 1) and one of "the most powerful challenges to neoliberalism on the continent" (Lukacs, 2012, para. 2).

It is important to note that the conditions for this student movement were informed by a long history of struggles and strikes in Quebec that date back sixty years (Lafrance & Sears, 2012). The Maple Spring movement was a fight to preserve the accessibility and democratize the configuration of higher education that needs to be understood in the historical context of the Parent Report of 1968 and the significant socio-cultural transformation of the 1960s Quiet Revolution (Katz, 2015; Nadeau-

³⁰ Importantly, the decision of Quebec students to strike was made via student associations that operate in accordance with the principles of direct democracy where "decisions are made through general assemblies, debate and discussion, and through the votes of the actual constituents, the members of the student associations, and not just the leaders" (Marshall, 2012, para. 5). While the strike was in effect, most student unions held weekly assemblies to decide whether to remain on strike, which provided a regular and powerful forum to empower students and build the momentum of the movement.

Dubois, 2015; Ayotte-Thompson & Freeman, 2012).³¹ In 1961, Quebec Premier Jean Lesage initiated a royal commission on teaching and learning aimed at enhancing equity and accessibility within the education system. The Commission was led by Alphonse-Marie Parent and resulted in a lengthy report detailing a wide range of recommendations that reflected a vision for universities as a “communauté d’esprit et de travail” meaning a “community of work and spirit” (Drainville, 2012, 797). In this sense, the report unequivocally repositioned education as a right guaranteed to all as opposed to a luxury accessed by a minority of citizens. The report recommended an immediate tuition freeze as a first step in moving toward the creation of a free post-secondary system funded exclusively by tax dollars. The report also called for the establishment of a provincial ministry responsible for overseeing education, as well as a network of universities, and the CEGEP system.³² All institutions within this system were to include the perspectives of student and faculty in university governance related to both budgetary and programming decisions.³³

The issue regarding tuition fees has a long history in Quebec and the fact that the province maintains the lowest fees in the country can be directly attributed to the active political presence of students and their efforts to defend the legacy of the Quiet

Revolution:

³¹ The Quiet Revolution is a term used to describe a range of notable shifts that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s in Quebec including the establishment of a strong welfare state, the secularization of society (i.e. the transfer of control over health care and education from the Roman Catholic Church to the provincial government), and the unionization of the civil service.

³² The CEGEP system is a range of college institutions offering mandatory two-year programs in Quebec that focus on increasing post-secondary accessibility and enhancing academic preparedness. This means that students in Quebec finish high school at the end of grade eleven and then enter either the pre-university program or the technical program at a CEGEP before entering university or the workforce.

³³ For a detailed account of the Parent Report’s role in shaping the educational landscape in Quebec, refer to: Donald, J.G. (1997). Higher education in Quebec: 1945-1995. In G.A. Jones (Ed.), *Higher education in Canada: Different systems, different perspectives*. New York, New York: Routledge.

Here, the ideal of public education has been deeply embedded since the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, when the tuition freeze was instituted as a short-term compromise on the path to free university education. The education system born of those transformative years was the bedrock on which the reformers' vision of a just society rested and the avenue to expanding equality which would propel the newly awakened Quebecois nation into the democratic age. Since its birth, the student movement has assumed the mantle of defending this humanist vision of education, viewed as the heart of the social-democratic model. (Katz, 2015, 6).

In fact, insistent propositions by the provincial government to increase tuition in 1968, 1974, 1978, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1996, and 2005 were consistently met with fierce and organized opposition by student groups (Lafrance & Sears, 2012). Their presence has been an undeniable force in facilitating "access to higher education for working class Francophone students through the creation of the Quebec University network, improvements to the loans and bursaries systems, the cancellation of planned tuition hikes, and a decade-long tuition freeze from 1996 to 2007," (Palacios, et al, 2013, 7) as well as maintaining an ongoing conversation regarding the responsibility for higher education funding.

Strong student unions in Quebec are directly responsible for the successes of student movements across the province. Martin (2012) provided an overview of the various organizations that contributed to the Maple Spring movement, while specifically highlighting the role of Quebec's three student federations. Specifically, the three federations include the *Coalition large de l'Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante* (CLASSE) a temporary coalition between ASSE (a Quebec federation of

CEGEPs and universities formed in 2001 in the context of the anti-globalization movement) and non-member local associations that was established in 2012 to support the Maple Spring; the *Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec* (FECQ) a Quebec federation of university student unions established in 1990; and the *Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec* (FEUQ) a Quebec federation of college student unions established in 1990. There are extremely important differences in the three student federations worth noting. CLASSE operated in accordance with the principles of direct democracy, opting to utilize local general assemblies to facilitate discussion and generate collaborative decisions. In contrast, FECQ and FEUQ adhere to the principles of representative democracy meaning that they “grant greater decision-making power to the elected executives and accord relatively less importance to local general assemblies” (Martin, 2012, 27). Informed by the position of CLASSE regarding the importance of a fully subsidized education system, the federation presented the government with a budgetary plan for the province that would gradually see tuition fees completely eradicated. The FECQ and FEUQ lobbied the government to maintain existing tuition fees and increase loans and bursaries that would prevent the growing reliance on corporate funding. Acknowledging their differing philosophical standpoints and policy proposals, the three organizations worked in conjunction with one another and maintained a unified front to oppose the provincial government’s proposed tuition increase in 2012. Ayotte-Thompason & Freeman (2012) point out that this strong alliance was not present in historical movements:

in previous student strikes, the provincial government was successful in exploiting the differences between the FECQ, FEUQ and CLASSE to divide their

solidarity. This time, however, despite their differences, the three student groups have stayed united. This has meant that the FECQ and the FEUQ have agreed to attend only negotiations in which the CLASSE is permitted to be presented. (p. 5)

This kind of solidarity was pivotal in contributing to the Maple Spring's considerable power in opposing the provincial government's 2012 proposal for educational reform.

CLASSE played the most central role in mobilizing and organizing students in opposition to the proposed tuition hike. Promptly after the provincial government announced its intent to increase tuition fees in 2010 a petition was circulated that garnered over thirty thousand signatures (Katz, 2015). CLASSE then began facilitating numerous one day strikes and sit-ins that involved thousands of students (Palacios, et al, 2013). It was in February of 2012 that the student movement fully emerged in view of the broader public as an organized and formidable force (see Appendix 1 for a detailed timeline). Student associations at both the college and university level began holding general assemblies and "one after the other ... student associations began to vote in favor of strikes of varying durations, including for an unlimited strike until the proposed tuition hike was retracted" (Palacios, et al, 2013, 8). During the months that followed, Canada and much of the world watched as hundreds of thousands of students streamed into the streets. The majority of students proudly wore the "carre rouge" or "red square" that was quickly adopted as the movement's symbol to reflect the sentiment of existing "squarely in the red" due to mounting student debt (Katz, 2015, 75).

As student protesters showed no signs of backing down or diminishing their demands for the creation of a more accessible, equitable and democratic system of higher education, the response from Quebec police forces was amplified resulting in violent

clashes between law enforcement and students that saw thousands arrested (Christoff, 2012).³⁴ In March of 2012, CLASSE began organizing monthly marches centered on various themes including education, environmental justice, connections between the student strike and broader social issues, and neoliberalism and austerity policies (Ayotte-Thompson & Freeman, 2012). On May 18, 2012, the provincial government passed an unprecedented piece of legislation, Bill 78, which denied basic rights to organize and protest, curtailed freedom of expression, and instituted severe financial penalties for students, faculty, staff and unions should they participate in a protest with more than fifty people or along a route not approved in advance by police. This draconian piece of legislation did not deter protesters and instead they engaged in “casserole” demonstrations by “banging pots and pans in the spirit the cacerolazo, a form of popular protest practiced throughout Latin America in open defiance of fascist dictatorships and neoliberal austerity measures” (Palacios et al, 2013, 8).

The consistent marches coupled with creative acts of public pedagogy and civil disobedience orchestrated in the face of legislated state repression resulted in the student movement gaining support from citizens, labor groups, and other community-based organizations. According to Massumi (2012), Law 78 functioned to garner students more support from outside groups:

it strengthened the resolve of the striking students in their battle against tuition increases, while broadening support for their movement among other sectors of

³⁴ The 2013 report “Repression, Discrimination and Quebec’s 2012 Student Strike” written by the Ligue des droits et libertés, the Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante (ASSÉ) and the Association des juristes progressistes (AJP) states that over thirty-five hundred people were arrested between February and September of 2012. The full text of the report can be accessed here: <http://liguedesdroits.ca/wp-content/fichiers/repression-report-2012-final-web.pdf>

Quebec society. Rather than putting the movement to rest, it intensified it, pushing it toward the threshold of a general movement of contestation. (p. 1)

Ultimately, this exerted enough political pressure on the governing Liberal Party to call an election scheduled for September 4, 2012. The Parti Quebecois, who had supported the student protesters through the year, won a minority government and subsequently announced the cancellation of the tuition increase and repealed various sections of Law 78. In addition to these accomplishments, the Maple Spring movement was also effective at inserting into public discourse a compelling critique regarding the state of Canada's democracy and the authenticity of its commitment toward social and educational justice.

While the Maple Spring movement received unprecedented support and solidarity from various segments of civil society including university faculty, community-based organizations and labor unions, Canada's business community remained critical of the movement (Annis, 2012) and mainstream media adopted an oppositional stance and "consistently sided with the Quebec government, downplaying the significance of the tuition increases – even as they pertained to those students who could least afford them and for whom it would have the greatest impact" (Giroux, 2013, 520). The next section of this chapter provides an in-depth examination of the mainstream media's coverage of the Maple Spring movement.

Phase 2: Principal Findings

Negative Mainstream Media Coverage

The media information broker Influence Communication (2012) reported that the Quebec student strike garnered in excess of three thousand news stories from seventy-

seven countries throughout the world.³⁵ Blatchford (2012) noted that the “student crisis generated sixty-six times more foreign news coverage in two months than Canada’s entire mission in Afghanistan” (para. 3). The manner in which the media covered the Maple Spring movement is of critical importance because of the well-documented impact media has on manufacturing public opinion and consent (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

Citizens interact with media coverage of educational issues from a wide range of often overlapping standpoints including as students, former students, parents, educators, taxpayers and consumers (Cohen, 2010). Research that interrogates the representation of educational policy issues in the media highlights how public opinion is shaped when policy issues are “mediatized” (Fairclough, 2000) via the solicitation of support for various policy platforms and the assignment of responsibility for political issues (Inyengar, 1991). Hall (1997) identifies mainstream news media as heteroglossic discursive sites that function to continuously generate and reproduce various ideological positions. With this context in mind, this study employed a critical discourse analysis to ascertain how mainstream news media discourse represented the purpose of higher education in relation to the Maple Spring movement of 2012. Specific attention was paid to the manner in which issues of youth activism, civil disobedience, and protest were framed within these representations.

The news media sample included in this phase of the analysis totaled 475 articles authored on the Maple Spring movement between January 2012 and February 2013 (refer to Appendix 4 for a detailed list of this data sample). The majority of articles were from a range of Canadian newspaper publications, including *The Gazette* (n=286), the *Globe*

³⁵ Influence Communication is a media information broker based out of Montreal, Quebec, with a specialization in the “monitoring, summarization and analysis of printed and electronic media, especially the Internet and social media networks.”

and Mail (n=57), the *National Post* (n=35), the *Toronto Star* (n=33), the *Ottawa Citizen* (n=26), and the *Vancouver Sun* (n=9). The remaining 30 articles were from various international publications including *The Guardian* (United Kingdom), *The Independent* (United Kingdom), the *International Herald Tribune* (France), and the *New York Times* (United States). Each article was reviewed and information related to each of the following components entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet: (a) overall tone of article – positive/supportive, high-level/neutral, or negative/punitive; and (b) specific topic(s) addressed – impact of the student strike on the economy/tourism industry, university practice, motivations/actions of protesters, relationship to social justice issues beyond university accessibility, and responses from government (legislation/law enforcement). A systematic and principled subsequent analysis revealed six discursive trends and strategies in which students participating in the Maple Spring movement were demonized, dismissed, and disempowered by mainstream media. When considered in relation to one another, these discursive trends highlight how the media functioned as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971) that systematically discredited the Maple Spring movement and reinforced the hegemony of the neoliberal political project.

Criminalizing News Headlines

News media articles are a genre of discourse that must attract the attention of consumers quickly by providing information in a concise and intriguing manner. Teo (2000) identifies the headlines of news articles as a tool that communicates a brief overview of an article's contents, while also functioning to "orient the reader to process the text in a pre-determined direction" (p. 13). Bell (1991) refers to news headlines or

leads as the “story in microcosm” (p. 174). In this sense, news headings must convey a great deal of information using minimal words:

every word in a headline is carefully chosen and structured so as to maximize the effect of the headline. In this way, headlines often encapsulate the newspaper’s ideological values and attitudes, and analyzing the lexical choices and syntactic structures of newspaper headlines ... would allow the critical discourse analyst a peek into the underlying ideological meaning behind newspaper reporting. (Teo, 2000, 14)

A review of news headlines published by the mainstream media during the height of the Maple Spring movement reveals an established tendency to project on to student protesters a criminalized identity characterized by violence, disrespect, and destructive behaviors. For example, the student movement is pathologized as a whole by the headline “Give us peace, ordinary citizen tells protesters” published by *The Gazette*. First, this heading effectively renders student protesters as less than “ordinary citizens” and presents them as inherently deviant individuals. Second, by beginning with the phrase “Give us peace” the headline presents the position of those who opposed the student movement as rational and beyond question--who would dare oppose peace? Further, a simplified meaning of “peace” as the absence of social unrest is implied to the exclusion of a deeper interrogation of the concept that would connect struggles for social justice with protest movements. This point also relates to a headline published by the *National Post* that stated “Students’ ignorance is real danger: You can disagree with the law, but you can’t break it.” This headline presents a view of civil disobedience and related law violations as inherently problematic behavior stemming from ignorance and

belies any indication that the deliberate refusal to obey unjust laws has been critical (and successful) in a range of historical social movements.

News articles consistently used the word “violence” in their opening descriptions of student protesters. A headline from the National Post begins with a question: “Mediate democracy?” and then provides a response: “Quebec’s elected government can’t give in to violence.” This headline privileges the authority of the provincial government while depicting the violence of the student movement as an unequivocal truth. Further, the phrasing “can’t give in to violence” guides the reader to understand any efforts on the part of the government to listen and respond to the critique forwarded by students as an inappropriate acquiescence owed to their weak resolve. This evokes a traditional view of the state as all powerful and in control. Presenting violence as ubiquitous throughout the student movement was often done in the absence of an examination of which protesters participated in violence and what kind of violence occurred (i.e. property destruction or physical assault). Importantly, this presentation also neglected to unpack the reasons why protesters might engage in certain types of violence as an oppositional tactic and failed to consider state violence as violence.

The presentation of student protesters as a misguided group of entitled youth was evident across a range of publications. *The Globe and Mail* referred to the student protesters as the “Greeks of Canada” and *The Gazette* framed the movement as “about entitlements, not class struggle” centered on a primary goal of “cheap tuition.” Even more inflammatory and reductive than these two articles was the headline published by Macleans on June 4, 2012. The magazine featured a cover story titled “*Quebec’s new ruling class: How a group of entitled students went to war and shut down a province.*”

Over \$325.” The syntactic structure of this headline reinforces an image of student protesters as violent and advances a reductive portrayal of their motives by calling the organized opposition of students an act of “war” waged “over \$325.”³⁶ The reference to the dollar amount was meant to indicate the cost that would be incurred by individual students per year should the tuition increase be implemented. The headline refuses to provide the reader with any indication that the actions of students were the result of a robust and informed critique of austerity measures with neoliberal ideological underpinnings. Table 8 below provides a sample of news headlines that serve an ideological function by presenting an overall image of student protesters as violent law-breakers whose motives are based on selfish entitlements.

Table 8: News Headlines: Student Protesters as Entitled, Violent Youth

<i>Source</i>	<i>Excerpt</i>
Macleans	“Quebec’s new ruling class: How a group of entitled students went to war and shut down a province. Over \$325”
The Gazette	It’s about entitlements, not class struggle ; While the head of CLASSE espouses Occupy-style radicalization , most university kids want to keep their cheap tuition” “ Give us peace, ordinary citizen tells protesters ” “Unwitting protesters give Charest a political gift; Students ceded moral ground with violence ”
National Post	“Strikers need respect for democracy: Protesters care not for the rights of others ” “ Mob rule in Montreal” “ Radical never looked so good; Quebec student leader’s charm masks extremism ”

³⁶ The proposed tuition increase totaled \$1625 and was to be spread over five years, which represented an annual cost for students of \$325 set to commence in the fall of 2012.

Table 8 Continued

	“Tuition protests exceed threshold of tolerance ”
	“ Students’ ignorance is real danger ; You can disagree with the law, but you can’t break it”
	“Mediate democracy? Quebec’s elected government can’t give in to violence ”
Toronto Star	“Tuition protest violence escalates at Charest speech”
The Globe and Mail	“Tuition protesters are the Greeks of Canada ”

Reframing the Scope: Boycott not Strike

Research on media coverage has demonstrated an established tendency of news media to frame and present a social issue or event in a remarkably similar manner (Macgilchrist, 2006). Mainstream media coverage of the Maple Spring movement was no exception to this rule. This student protest was a massive political action spanning six months and involving hundreds of thousands of students, but the vast majority of mainstream media effectively condensed the scope and presented the student strike as a simple “boycott.” This linguistic choice by mainstream media was strategic and ideologically motivated and can be traced directly to the provincial government’s insistence on denying the student strike any kind of legitimacy:

the democratically organized walkout of hundreds of thousands was now, in the government’s insistence, a “boycott” – not the action of a social group asserting its rights, but a mere agglomeration of individual consumers choosing to refuse provision of a service. (Katz, 2015, 92)

The tactic of denying the student movement status as a legitimate strike stems from the belief that:

strikes occur within well-circumscribed juridical limits, when workers engaged in productive labor withhold that labor in order to achieve a better settlement with respect to their wages or work conditions than they would otherwise be able to achieve. Now, students, according to the argument, do not engage in productive labor. On the contrary, they are through their studies conferring a benefit upon themselves rather than others. Withholding the “labor” through which they confer this benefit upon themselves cannot therefore be seen as a “strike.” Rather, it should be seen as a “boycott,” as when consumers boycott a store because they want it to change its practices in some way or other. (Weinstock, 2012, para. 7)

This important analysis connects the government and media’s rejection of the student movement as a valid strike to the neoliberal logic that frames higher education as a private investment to be purchased by student consumers.

The media’s refusal to portray the student movement as a strike was visible in multiple publications within the news coverage surveyed. Importantly, this did not simply involve replacing the word “strike” with “boycott,” but instead took the form of explicitly denying (and even mocking) the student movement’s use of the term. For example, the word “strike” was often placed in quotations effectively calling it into question. CBC News published an article that infantilized student protesters and characterized their opposition as “playing hooky” and the Ottawa Citizen adopted a similar position by stating the students were simply “skipping classes.” The National Post explicitly referred to post-secondary education as a commodity and students as consumers in its analysis that aimed to discredit the student protesters’ use of labour movement tactics. Table 9 below provides a range of samples from a variety of news

sources that adamantly insisted the Maple Spring movement should not be given status as a legitimate strike.

Table 9: Reframing Student Movement as a Boycott not Strike

<i>Source</i>	<i>Excerpt</i>
CBC News	“ Students are on what they are pleased to call a strike. In other words, they are not going to class. This used to be called “playing hooky.” You cannot strike unless you hold something back that someone else wants – typically your labor. Students in Quebec are declining to receive a service many of them have already paid for. I’m not sure what this should be called but “shortsighted” is one term that suggests itself.”
The Gazette	“To be sure, you hear leaders speak grandly of the societal virtue of free university education, but what brings out the crowds is self-interest – the prospect of saving money. This is no noble cause.”
The Ottawa Citizen	“The students have been ‘ on strike, ’ i.e. skipping classes, for months.”
The National Post	“When striking workers demand and receive concessions from government, they are at least holding their own labour for ransom. The Quebec “strike” is being staged by consumers of a heavily subsidized commodity, i.e. education. Yet, absurdly, the strikers use the “scab” terminology and philosophy of the moribund labour movement...”
The Toronto Star	“Students have been boycotting classes for the past six weeks, and have taken to the streets demanding an end to tuition fee hikes.”

Over-Lexicalization: Low-Tuition

Another important way that mainstream media reiterated a common and reductive frame of the Maple Spring movement involves what Fowler et al (1979) refers to as over-lexicalization, defined as a way of infusing news media with ideological sentiments.

Fairclough (2001) refers to this linguistic tool as a process of “over-wording” (p. 115)

where the repeated use of various words or phrases that are either synonymous or semantically close in meaning constructs a particular story about an issue or event. The application of this analytical tool to the news media sample in the present study revealed that readers of mainstream news coverage were inundated with reference to the statistic that *even with* the proposed increase, tuition fees in Quebec would remain the *lowest in the country*. Continuous repetition of the phrases “so low,” “less than half,” “lowest in the country” and “below the national average” contributes to the over-lexicalization of the Maple Spring as an unwarranted social movement while reinforcing the status quo position that views higher education as a user-pay system. These phrases, gleaned from a range of publications included in the news media sample, are represented in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Over-Lexicalization: Low Tuition

<i>Source</i>	<i>Excerpt</i>
The Globe and Mail	“Quebec’s university tuition fees are so low that, even with an annual \$325 hike planned over the next five years – which would nearly double current rates – they would still be the lowest in the country .”
Bennington Banner	“The French-speaking province’s average undergraduate tuition--\$2,519 a year—is the lowest in Canada , and the proposed hike--\$254 per year over seven years—is tiny by U.S. standards.”
Macleans	“Meanwhile, the rest of the country has looked on, a little confused. The conflict is over what are the lowest tuition rates in the country , which at just \$2,500 a year is less than half the national average . Even with the proposed hikes of \$325 a year for five years, the fees would still be among the least expensive in the country .”
The Gazette	“Quebec tuition fees are among the lowest in Canada .”

Table 10 Continued

	<p>“The schools could have ensured that the pupils heard both sides of the issue. In addition to exposing them to arguments against the increases, the schools could have explained that Quebec’s tuition will remain the lowest in Canada even after five years of increases, that financial aid is available for disadvantaged students and that the tuition hikes have come in response to Quebec’s monster debt.”</p>
	<p>“Students are upset over the Quebec government’s plans to hike university tuition fees by \$325 a year over five years, bringing tuition to \$3,793 from \$2,168. Quebec has the lowest tuition fees in Canada.</p>
The New York Times	<p>“As is the case throughout Canada, Quebec’s colleges and universities are mostly publicly supported, and their tuition rates are set by the provincial government. Quebec residents pay the lowest rates in Canada.”</p>
National Post	<p>“Quebec plans to raise fees \$325 a year over five years, which will still leave tuition below the national average. In other Canadian provinces, tuition hikes that saddle students with much higher bills typically result in a peaceful ‘day of action’ before everyone heads back to class.”</p> <p>“Quebec students must pay their share. Even after Premier Charest’s proposed increases, the province’s tuition rates will be the lowest in Canada.”</p>

Generalization of Violence

Studies have documented the trend for news coverage of social movement protests to center in on the “actions and not the causes of protest” as well as “any violent and unusual incidents which have taken place, such as a confrontation with the authorities or the extreme appearance of the protesters” (Stamou, 2001, 654). One way that this occurs is through a process of generalization. Teo (2000) defines generalization as a means of projecting the description of a specific and defined group of people to a broader group that has two related functions:

on one level, generalization offers reporters a convenient means to ascribe certain key qualities to the main participants of the news discourse without encumbering the reader with tedious details; on another, the selection and repetition of a particular generalizing attribute also hints at an underlying ideology that might have motivated the choice. (p. 16)

In covering the Maple Spring movement, what might be considered “violent” actions and the destruction of property enacted by a minority of protesters was presented as representative of the actions of the entire student protest movement. This tendency was noted in the lexical choices made to describe student activists across a range of publications included in the sample. For example, student protesters were repeatedly referred to as “thugs” and media coverage was saturated with repeated references to violence, war, danger, extremist behaviors and students wearing masks. These news stories made no effort to contextualize the specific acts of vandalism or violence, specify the percentage of protesters that were engaged in such behavior, or determine the underlying rationale. The National Post suggested that any action on the part of the provincial government that might be categorized as acquiescence to student demands had the potential of prompting violence amongst other “minority groups.”

The homogenous categorization of the student movement as violent, dangerous criminals by mainstream media limits the reader’s willingness and ability to engage with the actual issues in question or empathize with the plight of students. Table 11 below provides a sample of excerpts from news coverage of the Maple Spring movement which serve to present a generalized presentation of student protesters as inherently violent and criminal.

Table 11: Generalization: Student Protesters as Violent Criminals

<i>Source</i>	<i>Excerpt</i>
The Gazette	“Mayor Gerald Tremblay said at a news conference that demonstrating is a democratic right, but citizens have the right to protection from rock-throwing thugs who vandalize businesses, disrupt traffic and commit violence . ‘When demonstrations repeatedly lapse into violence and acts of vandalism , not only are Montrealers made to pay the price, but the image of the city is tarnished as well,’ Tremblay said.” “Proposed city bylaw aims to unmask demonstrators; Citizens have right to be protected from thugs. ”
The Daily Mirror	“Student protesters stormed a university in Canada disrupting classes ... the activists, many wearing masks , arrived as classes were starting.”
The Ottawa Citizen	“ Violence at student protests reached new extremes Friday as the latest demonstration against tuition hikes resulted in smashed windows, damaged cars, 14 arrests and six people injured – including four police officers.”
The National Post	“ Violence ought to embolden a provincial premier to dig in his heels, not open talks. It is not unreasonable to worry that student successes might embolden other minority groups to pursue similar tactics. ”

Importantly, what went vastly under-reported by mainstream media were the excessively violent tactics perpetrated by police on unarmed student protesters that involved the deployment of tear gas, plastic bullets, baton strikes, pepper spray and sound grenades to break up protests (Katz, 2015, 112). One act of police violence that did make the evening news occurred in late January 2012 when a bystander caught a Montreal City Police Service officer punch a protester in the face and throw a woman to the ground. This incident occurred during an otherwise peaceful and lawful protest and was exposed on social media sites until it was picked up by mainstream news outlets, ultimately

forcing the policy to initiate a formal inquiry. This bias did not go unnoticed by members of the student movement, some of whom established a website “*Translating the Printemps érable,*” which was a “volunteer collective initiated in an attempt to balance the English media's extremely poor coverage of the student conflict in Québec by translating media that has been published in French into English.” One specific entry published on this site was a letter addressed “to mainstream media” that documented a very different experience of the student movement than that portrayed by populist commentators:

I have lived in my neighbourhood for five years now, and this is the most I have ever felt a part of the community; the lasting impact that these protests will have on how people relate to each other in the city is deep and incredible ... I come home from these protests euphoric. The first night I returned, I sat down on my couch and I burst into tears, as the act of resisting, loudly, with my neighbours, so joyfully, had released so much tension that I had been carrying around with me, fearing our government, fearing arrest, fearing for the future. I felt lighter ... This is what Quebec looks like right now. Every night is tear gas and riot cops, but it is also joy, laughter, kindness, togetherness and beautiful music. Our hearts are bursting. We are so proud of each other; of the spirit of Quebec and its people; of our ability to resist, and our ability to collaborate. Why aren't you writing about this? Does joy not sell as well as violence? Does collaboration not sell as well as confrontation? You can have your cynicism; our revolution is sincere.

(Translating the printemps érable, 2012)

This first-person account speaks to the failure of media to provide a critical and in-depth account of state-sanctioned violence in the face of student protest and is also demonstrative of the students' commitment to advancing their perspective, critique and learnings as part of this social movement.

Quotation Patterns

It is exceedingly common for news stories to cite specific quotations from individuals intimately involved in the issue or event being covered. These types of direct quotations can provide news stories with a nuanced, authentic and personal feel, but an over-reliance on quotations from certain groups can contribute to a one-sided portrayal of the issue:

the use of quotation becomes a gate-keeping device that admits only those in positions of power and influence while shutting out the opinions and perspectives of those deemed by society to be powerless. Thus, while the powerful are further empowered through quotation patterns that enhance their status and visibility, the systematic silencing of the powerless – the poor, the young, the uneducated, etc. – only further disempowers them. (Teo, 2000, 18)

Analysis of the news media articles reviewed in this study revealed the disproportionate inclusion of quotes from authority figures (government officials, police representatives and university administrators) as well as a reliance on quotes from students who opposed the strike.

When quotes from student leaders within the movement were included in the articles they were often left unexamined and were physically located at the end of the article--almost as an after-thought or addendum. For example, in articles that detailed

alleged violent behaviors or the destruction of private property by student protesters it was primarily the voices of business owners, concerned community members, and authorized spokespersons from the police force or government who were included.

The range of quotes included from elected public officials presented a picture of a calm and rationale government in control of the unruly and disobedient student protesters, as illustrated in Table 12 below. Repeated quotes reinforced the government's message that they would not compromise in the pursuit of requiring students to "pay their fair share" and reassured the public of their intention to restore "calm" and "security" to the people of Quebec. Comments from the Finance Minister were more inflammatory as he referred to student protesters as "Marxists and anti-capitalists" who were upsetting the provincial economy. Quotations by university administrators expressed concerns regarding whether any decreases in the financial cost of university would subsequently diminish its value. Taken together, these quotations reinforce the position of the state and others in power as the expert, authoritarian view to the exclusion of alternate viewpoints and perspectives.

Table 12: Quotes from Authority

<i>Source</i>	<i>Excerpt</i>
The New York Times	"It's time for calm to be restored. Quebecers have a right to live in security. " Premier Jean Charest
The Gazette	"Some students are opposed to it and it's their right, but we've made our decision and it's irrevocable ... we believe students have to pay their fair share ... it's hard to sit down with someone who says: 'I want a freeze and nothing else.'" Finance Minister Raymond Bachand

Table 12 Continued

	<p>“If I were a Quebec university president right now, I’d be terrified about what’s going on. If you’re trying to lure a professor to Quebec, it’s going to be a problem. If you have a choice between an offer in Quebec or elsewhere, you’d go elsewhere. Who’s going to want to go to Montreal? For McGill, Concordia and U de M, it’s a disaster. The damage is done.” Alex Usher, President of the Toronto-based consultancy Higher Education Strategy Associates</p>
	<p>“I seriously worry that by offering things cheaply you inadvertently create the idea they have little worth. It is vital for people to value the education they receive.” David Graham, Provost of Concordia University</p>
The Globe and Mail	<p>“Enough is enough,” Finance Minister Raymond Bachand said, noting the province is witnessing the “upset of the Montreal economy by groups of anti-capitalists and Marxists. It’s got nothing to do with tuition.” Finance Minister Raymond Bachand</p>
	<p>“This conflict has already lasted long enough. The patience of Quebecers has reached its limit. I want to assure all Quebecers that all means will be taken to ensure their security, the respect of our laws and also of our democracy.” Premier Jean Charest</p>

Another group of people whose perspective was disproportionately included via direct quotations are those students who actively opposed the strike. Quotations often framed the strike as an impediment to their learning and completion of their educational programs, as well as a threat to their physical safety. The inclusion of the phrase “a minority of students are holding these institutions hostage,” combined with numerous quotations from students that expressed concerns for their personal safety and references to “masked students” functions to reinforce the image of student protesters as violent and criminal. A sample of quotations that demonstrates this trend is detailed in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Quotes from Students Who Opposed the Strike

<i>Source</i>	<i>Excerpt</i>
The Gazette	<p>“It’s just getting to the point like, ‘OK, c’mon, something has to happen at some point because if not, we’re going to lose our session.”</p> <p>“If I have to miss my university year, it will cost me more than the tuition increases would have.”</p> <p>“Is UQAM, the university that probably had the greatest number of students supporting the boycott, finally getting tough with protesting students? Law student Leonie Gagne hopes so. As someone who didn’t support the boycott but lost her semester, she is more than a little angry with UQAM officials. She believes the university failed students who tried to attend classes and were blocked by masked students: ‘we need university directors who support education,’ she said. ‘We need a university that’s willing to say we’re going to teach.’”</p> <p>“It’s time to enforce the injunctions. Students need to know that blocking others from going to school is not an acceptable form of protest.”</p> <p>“I’d be lying if I said I was not concerned for my safety. I don’t understand why in order to assert their rights to education, they have the right to impede me from accessing the right to my own education.”</p> <p>“We want the public to know that not all students feel represented. A minority of students are holding these institutions hostage.”</p> <p>“We are onto our fourth week of the strike and I’m getting scared. Our exams have been switched to papers, we’re really pushing back material we should be learning, and we need to apply for internships.”</p>
The Wall Street Journal	<p>“All I want to do is get into my class and finish the course I paid for.”</p>

Textual Silence and Decontextualization

As a methodological approach, critical discourse analysis clearly necessitates a close review of patterns and themes that are visible within texts, but an examination of what is missing or strategically omitted from texts is also important. Van Dijk (1986) specifically relates the importance of examining texts for omissions to news media: “the ideological nature of discourse in general, and of news discourse in particular, is often defined by the unsaid. Information that could (or should) have been given is selectively left out” (p. 178). Huckin (2002) defines textual silence as “the omission of some piece of information that is pertinent to the topic at hand” (p. 348) and articulates a five part taxonomy of textual elision that provides an extremely important analytical tool to assist in examining texts for spaces of silence and omissions.

Of particular relevance to this study is Huckin’s conception of “manipulative silence” taken to mean those “that intentionally conceal relevant information from the reader or listener, to the advantage of the writer or speaker; unlike other types of silence, these silences depend for their success on not being noticed by the reader or listener” (p. 351) and as such, constitute the “most ideologically powerful form of silence in public discourse” (p. 347). An example of a manipulative silence identified in Huckin’s (2002) study includes an advertisement for a Jeep that focuses on the vehicle’s ability to maneuver effortlessly through rough mountainous terrain without referencing the excessive amount of fuel required for such travel.

Importantly, Huckin (2002) identifies how analyzing texts for manipulative silences presents a methodological challenge for discourse analysts to complete objectively. That said, the identification of “what could have been said yet wasn’t” (p.

353) can be revealed via detailed examination of the context in which the text in question originated and circulated. It is then important for the discourse analyst to assess whether the manipulative silences were intentionally deceptive by determining whether it is reasonable to believe that the author of the text under review had knowledge of the information that was omitted (Huckin, 2002; Van Dijk, 1986).

The omission of relevant contextual information from news media coverage functions as an impediment to the reader developing a holistic understanding of the issue in question and may be strategically orchestrated to serve particular ideological interests. Drawing a parallel in the framing of the Maple Spring movement with that of the Arab Spring that occurred the year before, Taylor (2012) argues:

the greatest misconception surrounding the events in Montreal was the perception of the protests as a spontaneous social movement that erupted into global consciousness. In fact, the groundwork behind the strikes, and to some extent the subsequent social actions, had been organized for years prior by a coalition of highly mobilized student activists and student union leaders. (p.7)

Silence on the part of mainstream news media regarding the extensive foundational work of student activists is largely to blame for this misconception. Activists had worked diligently for two years prior to the strike, beginning in 2010 when the government first announced the pending tuition hike, but the mainstream media accounts were virtually silent on this point. This sentiment was expressed by Ludvic Moquin-Beaudry, the Communications Secretary of CLASSE: “that’s what people from the outside don’t realize, that we’ve built a mass movement but we had a long reckoning. The preparation for this started long ago.” As part of this work, activist research was an essential

component of creating the conditions where students could formulate and present a robust and unified critique of the government's proposed policy on tuition increases. Choudry & Shragge (2013) highlight the importance of activist research and mobilization to the Maple Spring movement:

a notable example is a brochure written in French by researchers at IRIS, Institut de recherche socio-economiques, and translated into English. This pamphlet debunked eight arguments commonly used to promote tuition fee-increases. It was distributed across campuses, adapted in many different leaflets and flyer forms, and posted online in both languages. Yet while websites and social media may have communicated information quickly, these were not the modes of organizing through which most of the education and mobilization work took place in building this movement. Two years of painstaking hard work through meetings, one-on-one or small-group conversations, collective organizing, methodical planning, popular education, and learning-in-struggle built this movement. (p.13)

One of the spokespersons for CLASSE, Jeremie Bedard-Wien, referred to this work in the context of an escalation of tactics approach to grassroots activism:

every step during that escalation justifies the next one. You start with very small actions, small protests, petitions, easy stuff ... and at the same time you build structures that are empowering in themselves – general assemblies and structures of direct democracy. After several months each action that we held drew more and more people in, people that were ready to go back to their campuses and mobilize further towards the next action, or for the basic

principle. We were constantly mobilizing for over two years. (Taylor, 2012, 9)

The media failed to adequately provide information to the public as to the wide range of activities that were organized by student activists aimed at educating other students and citizens regarding the over-arching rationale and implications of the proposed tuition increase.

Equally as problematic, media coverage was saturated with a consistent refrain that Quebec maintains the lowest tuition fees in the country, but was overwhelmingly silent regarding the history of student strikes executed throughout the province over the last fifty years that were instrumental in keeping higher education affordable and accessible.³⁷

Huckin (2002) suggests that it is reasonable to assume that an “editorialist for a major daily newspaper can be expected to have substantial knowledge of the topic about which he or she is writing, and that a failure to mention important issues about that topic is therefore deliberate on the editorialist’s part” (p. 355). Because the media coverage included in this analysis stemmed from major publications, coupled with the fact that the student movement consistently communicated how the foundational work by activists and the history of student strikes were important aspects of the present student

³⁷ Exceptions to this trend are noted in this article: Seidman, K. (2012, May 26). Quebec protests have deep roots. *The Gazette*, A.9 that provides an overview of student strikes in Quebec since 1958, as well as this article: Perreux, L. & Seguin, R. (2012, April 14). Cracks show in student solidarity. *The Globe and Mail*, A.6. An additional article connected the student movement in Quebec to other protests against austerity measures in Canada and internationally: Seidman, K. (2012, May 3). From Ontario to New Zealand, protests in season. *The Gazette*, A.4.

movement, the Canadian mainstream media's failure to include this information can be considered intentionally deceptive.³⁸

In summary, six discursive trends and strategies functioned to delegitimize the purpose, aims and actions of the Maple Spring movement. Considered together, these trends reveal that the mainstream media presented a partial, often inaccurate, and overall harmful representation of the student movement and its associated aims. Importantly, the majority of stories included in this analysis were “news articles” and not “opinion/editorial pieces” which is evidence of the fact that even supposedly objective news coverage can be infused with strong ideological bents. In this case, the media functioned as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971) that fueled the hegemony of the neoliberal political project by supporting the state's austerity agenda. A summary of each discursive strategy is as follows:

- (1) News Headlines – the lexical choices represented in a majority of news headlines provided an overall characterization of the student movement as populated by violent, disrespectful, self-entitled youth.
- (2) Reframing – a large segment of news coverage portrayed the student movement as a “boycott” initiated over what was presented as a small cost to be incurred by individual students and not a legitimate strike based on a robust philosophical position regarding the impact of neoliberal policies on collective society, while reinforcing an image of student protesters as entitled, greedy, and misguided.

³⁸ International publications that were included in the analysis are excluded from the finding of manipulative silence as news stories published by international sources were likely the result of general news wires or AP reports.

- (3) Generalization – the violence and destruction of property perpetrated by a minority of protesters was extrapolated to represent the actions of the entire student protest movement.
- (4) Over-Lexicalization – the lexical cohesive device of repetition was employed by the media in presenting a simplified and incomplete analysis that Quebec tuition rates are the lowest in Canada. The consistent reiteration of this refrain, coupled with the persistent presentation of the protesters as a violent and unruly population, lent considerable credence to the government’s position that the policy proposal was warranted and the opposition of student groups was unnecessary and unreasonable.
- (5) Quotation Patterns – media reports largely drew upon quotations from students or other citizens who vehemently opposed the strike, presenting them as the majority position. Further, quotations from politicians and business leaders condemning the strike were conveyed in a manner that reinforced the dismissal of student protesters as the normative, rationale response.
- (6) Textual Silence & Decontextualization – media coverage failed to adequately capture the foundational organizational work conducted to support the strike and also neglected to connect the strike and the issues raised by protesters to the historical context regarding activist movements and critiques of austerity policies at the provincial or the national level.

The next section of this chapter will highlight how even in the face of the reductive and punitive mainstream media coverage as detailed above, the Maple Spring movement embodied a spirited and disciplined critique of market-based higher education informed

by neoliberal ideology. As part of this critique, the student movement argued for the creation of a post-secondary system conceptualized as a social right and centered upon the related goals of social justice, the public good and democratic citizenship.

The Cultural Politics of Education: Student Strike as Citizen's Struggle

A common placard held up by students marching through the streets during the Maple Spring read “la grève est étudiante, la lutte est populaire,” which is translated as “the strike may be about the students, but the struggle involves us all” (Hanke & Hearn, 2012, 18). This is a critical sentiment that communicates the clear pedagogical intent of the movement, while also demonstrating an understanding of education as a form of cultural politics for two related reasons. First, it points to the argument advanced by students that education is not an individual investment, but a public, collective good. Student protesters, labor union activists, segments of the academy, and various community groups joined together to advance the argument that:

university studies should not be seen purely as an individual benefit that students confer upon themselves in order to secure a competitive advantage upon entering the labor market. Rather, it is a collective benefit that society confers upon itself. Even from a narrowly economic point of view, we all derive benefit from having an educated workforce (and from the research that is conducted in universities). Any move in the funding of universities that takes us away from that understanding risks giving rise to a fundamental shift in our conception of what universities are for. The claim being made by the students and those that support them is that, at the very least, we ought to think long and hard before

taking steps that would move universities away from their social mission.

(Weinstock, 2012, para. 5)

The provincial government made numerous insistent declarations that the tuition hike was inevitable and even with the increase rates would be comparable to other jurisdictions within Canada. Students articulated an oppositional view and argued that the policy proposal contradicted the view of accessible and inclusive education as an engine for social equality and democratic renewal established during the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s (Spiegel, 2014).

Second, the statement points to the broader focus of the movement: this was not solely about policies related to post-secondary education. One of the spokespersons of CLASSE, Jeremie Bedard-Wien, referred to the tuition hike as the “tip of a broader iceberg of cuts to social programs” (Taylor, 2012, 12). The co-spokesperson of CLASSE, Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois (2015), stated that from the very outset of the movement:

students were referring to the redistribution of wealth, democracy and fiscal policy. The central issue was education. The fact is, however, that one cannot raise the question of education without initiating the larger debate on the ultimate aims of all our collective institutions, because education is at the core of a society’s social and cultural objectives. We were perfectly aware that a debate on access to university education opened onto a larger political and cultural confrontation. (p. 28)

The Maple Spring movement occurred in the context of increasing income inequality in Canada where the:

richest Canadian 1% has almost doubled its share of the national income pie – from 7% to almost 14% – over the last three decades. The average top one hundred CEOs’ compensation was \$6.6 million in 2009, 155 times the average worker’s wage ... 61 Canadian billionaires have a combined wealth of \$162 billion, twice as much as the bottom 17 million Canadians. (Campbell, 2011, para. 4)

Campbell (2011) attributes this rise in economic injustice to neoliberal policies that alienate young, working class, and otherwise disenfranchised people by eroding “an essential component of democratic governance: citizens’ trust in their government and their sense that we’re all in this together” (para. 42). It is this socio-political climate that prompted student protesters to connect their critique of the proposed tuition hike to other public policy decisions generated by the government’s commitment to neoliberal ideology, as reflected in the following statement by students:

The neoliberalization of higher education – the extension of the logic of capital into the university where students become clients bound to pay a “fair share” of the market value of their degree – arises from a crisis of capitalism, which produces an ever-intensifying search for new markets, new kinds of commodities, new kinds of production and consumption. The tuition fee hike is a direct manifestation of neoliberalism and demands forms of resistance that recognizes these links and acknowledges that the classroom and the boardroom are not separate spaces. (Anonymous, 2012, 13)

In this sense, students contextualized the tuition increase “as part of the growing burden of suffocating debt, government funding priorities that favor the financial and corporate

elite, Harper's ruinous transfer of public funds into an expanding military-industrial complex, and the imposition of corporate culture and corporate modes of governance on all aspects of daily life" (Giroux, 2013, 521). Student federations and unions produced and disseminated countless free educational texts that detailed the benefits of a fully-subsidized public education system, the impacts of corporate sector encroachment on the integrity of academic teaching and learning, as well as the racial and gender dimensions regarding the accessibility of higher education.

In order to advance the conception of higher education as an important sphere for democratic renewal and social justice while simultaneously connecting the critique of the tuition hike to broader neoliberal policies, student activists utilized research regarding post-secondary funding by the Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-economiques (IRIS), a local progressive think tank:

the combination of IRIS research and the outreach campaign led by student groups set the ground for a public debate about the commodification of higher education and the very notion of public good. The shift in framing the debate from a mere consumerist perspective to a broader socio-political discussion allowed students to gain support from a larger proportion of the population and from civil society organizations, including unions. (Collombat, 2014, 9)

Research conducted by IRIS documented the chronic under-funding of Canadian universities while also outlining the various negative implications of mounting student debt. With this foundational understanding, students were able to launch a range of important critiques detailed at length by Massumi (2012), including the trend for funds to be channeled away from pedagogical supports toward administration and management, as

well as the tendency for university research to be tailored toward the demands of industry:

the reasonable suspicion was that the increase would only further fuel the university's subsumption under the logic of neoliberalism, feeding greater "efficiencies" from even more top-heavy management, as well as more highly subsidized outsourcings for industry as the research funding system falls more and more completely under the imperium of the market. The issue of tuition was thus a wedge issue to open a wider discussion of the role of education in today's society, given the fait accompli of the null-and-voiding of the university's traditional liberal vocation as a seat of free inquiry and incubator of critical thinking, following upon its annexation to the 'knowledge economy.' (p. 4)

Students organized locally and utilized a wide range of pedagogical techniques, including teach-ins, talking tours, activist research groups, and student assemblies to bridge individual learning with social transformation. The Maple Spring movement had a clear pedagogical intent manifest as a desire to understand, name, critique, and transform inequitable structures and practices both within higher education and the broader socio-political sphere. For example, in a student assembly speech, Nadeau-Dubois (2015) challenged the province's assertion that increased tuition was necessary to ensure the financial viability of post-secondary education by situating this critique in the context of the government's recent policy decisions on economic expansion and corporate tax cuts:

if we accept this additional hike, tuition fees will have doubled since this government came into power. So the question is this: why do they want to increase our tuition fees? We're told it's because the universities are

underfunded. We're told that it's inevitable, that they must have more funding, and the only place where funds can be found is in our pockets. Isn't that odd, because as far as I can see there's lots of money in Quebec. It seems to me there's lots of money even in the universities. Enough, anyway, to be wasted on bad management, on advertising, on new buildings, and on lavish spending by university rectors. And the government, too, seems to have a lot of money. Enough, at least, for gifts to friends of the party and for handouts to the mining companies that will be profiting from Plan Nord;³⁹ enough money to lower the taxes paid by large corporations and by the wealthy. (p. 13)

Students used a wide range of creative, pedagogical strategies to engage each other and members of the broader public in dialogue about the impacts of the proposed tuition increase. For example, a daily protest event organized by theatre students from the Université de Quebec á Montreal occurred each morning when protesters dressed completely in red silently boarded the subway alongside commuters, which “allowed the trajectory to school to become visible as a shared public space maximizing peaceful yet politicized interchanges between students and those commuting to work” (Spiegel, 2015, 774). Additional artistic acts included dance students who moved in slow motion down main streets while chanting “don't slow down our education,” a group of students who posed in public spaces as if crushed under giant red cubes they had constructed in order to symbolically represent the student plight of being weighted down by growing debt, as well as Anarchopanda, a protester dressed in a giant panda suit who would spontaneously

³⁹ Plan Nord is the Quebec Government's plan (introduced under the previous Premier Jean Charest and revamped under the current Premier Philippe Couillard) to open up the unceded Indigenous territories of northern regions in the province for large-scale resource extraction projects that will use a substantial portion of public funds and predominantly benefit mining and forestry corporations, most of which are foreign-owned.

embrace protesters, community members, and police (Spiegel, 2015). These artistic and theatrical interventions represented a reclamation of the commons and further included students practicing “yoga in red” at public parks, while others hosted readings at public libraries. Importantly, this type of peaceful public protest also offered an alternate narrative to mainstream media coverage that tended to focus on the violence of student activists.

As the actions of student protesters continued to grow in range and magnitude while no progress was made at the bargaining table, the Minister of Education, Line Beauchamp, resigned from government on May 14, 2012. On May 18th the Charest government passed Bill 78 which restricted particular methods of assembly and protest, mandating that the date, time and location of all demonstrations involving more than fifty people must be approved in advance by police.⁴⁰ This Bill was viewed as legislated state repression by many groups including the United Nations Human Rights Council, Amnesty International, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, and the Quebec Human Rights Commission. A collection of approximately sixty Quebecois law professors published an analysis of Bill 78, referring to it as a “reprehensible distortion of the spirit of human rights charters” (Amnesty International, 2012, para. 8). Four days after it was passed hundreds of thousands of students and their allies marched through Montreal in what is now commonly referred to as the largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history. A reflection from student leader Jeremie Bedard-Wien highlights how the law which intended to reestablish law and order contributed to the escalation of

⁴⁰The full text of Bill 78 “An Act to enable students to receive instruction from the post-secondary institutions they attend” can be viewed here:
<http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=5&file=2012C12A.PDF>

protests: “the government’s refusal to negotiate, and refusal to negotiate on fair terms and to make sensible offers to students, served only to galvanize general anger towards them” (Taylor, 2012, 11).

The government’s legislative response to the student movement was a result of its failure to solicit the requisite public support for the proposed tuition increase. This was not lost on students including Rushdia Mehreen, a graduate student involved in the movement who recognized that Bill 78 was an attempt by the state to “create fear and to try force these unpopular policies on the population” (Christoff, 2012, para. 12). The power and persistence of the student movement revealed to government that the efficacy of efforts to subtly “educate the public’s consent” toward their self-described neoliberal “cultural revolution” was quickly eroding. In an effort to sustain ideological hegemony the state resorted to a combination of physical and legislative force. This quickly caught the attention of labor unions across the country whose right to strike had also been curtailed by governments in recent years. Aalya Ahmad, an employee of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers offered the following analysis:

In Canada, repressive legislation is targeting the right to strike, imposing heavy, heavy fines on unions for fighting back and undercutting collective bargaining. Imposing working conditions and wages on workers through back-to-work legislation, first with the postal workers, then with Air Canada workers, is an attack on civil liberties. In Quebec, Law 78 is part of this broader political environment, illustrating an incredible attack on students and professors, it’s essential for unions and people in Canada to support the struggle in Quebec against Law 78 because our struggles are connected. (Christoff, 2012, para. 32).

Importantly, the movement also prompted the creation of specific sub-groups that rallied in support of the students from a diverse range of important perspectives. The student strike was analyzed through a feminist lens by *Meres en colere et solidaires* (Angry mothers in solidarity), *Parents contre la hausse* (Parents against the tuition hikes), and *Tetes blanches, carre rouge* (Gray hair, red square) (Ostrovsky, 2012), as well as an anti-colonial and anti-racist perspective by Students of Colour Montreal:

the newly formed anti-racist student-of-colour, First Nations and international-student contingent ... was created specifically to respond to the widening racial, class and gender inequities in higher education and the job market, and to address the negative impact of zero-tolerance policies that disproportionately criminalize and increase the dropout rate of high school-aged youth of colour throughout Canada. In unison, the racially diverse group chanted the following slogans in English: “Education is a right, not just for the rich and white!,” “Racist, classist, sexist shit. Fuck your hikes, strike, resist!,” “We are young! We are poor! We won’t pay anymore!” and, finally, “I put a 187 [police code for homicide] on your 78, we don’t need your law to demonstrate!” While fearlessly chanting in a mixture of French, English and even occasionally in Spanish, secondary and post-secondary students, along with their parents, professors and labour-union allies, were protected from potential police intimidation by Black Bloc anarchists who positioned themselves on both sides of the march. (Palacios, 2012, 269)

The passage of Bill 78 into law resulted in a range of casserole demonstrations, which constitute another provocative example of the creative counter-hegemonic and pedagogical tactics employed by student protesters. These demonstrations originated in a

Facebook and twitter post from professor of political science, Fracois-Olivier Chene, which implored citizens to take to their balconies every night at eight o'clock banging pots and pans as a sign of opposition to Bill 78 and a symbol of solidarity with student protesters. The casseroles morphed into collective acts of civil disobedience when people descended out the front doors of their homes, streaming into the streets to join in marches rendered illegal as they occurred in the absence of an approved route and exceeded the legal number of participants. Katz (2015) offered the following reflection regarding the communal pedagogical impact of the casserole protests:

beyond the fight over tuition, beyond the confrontation between a government and the youth, the Printemps érable⁴¹ had become nothing less than the invitation to a deep-seated process of rebirth: a re-learning of community, a re-learning of popular sovereignty—indeed, a re-learning, in the most fundamental sense, of what politics means and can be made to mean again. (p. 130)

The casseroles prompted the creation of numerous neighborhood assemblies which witnessed citizens gathering to discuss and debate appropriate community-based responses to state-sanctioned repression. These assemblies--and the Maple Spring movement, in general--embodied an inclusive, horizontal and participatory structure and represented an alternative model to the exclusionary, hierarchal and divisive formal political system.

The Maple Spring movement also made creative use of a range of independent social media technologies to educate students and the public of the movement's analysis and demands, while also contesting the dominant portrayal of the protest in mainstream media and the treatment of student protesters by police. Twitter was the central

⁴¹"Printemps érable" is the French translation of "Maple Spring."

educational tool where articles, analysis, news, and videos created by students containing personal testimony of their perspective and experience were shared almost in real time on a range of issues related to the movement. Students followed the hashtag #manifencours (translated to mean “demo in progress”) to locate and join evening protest marches.

CLASSE published a range of educational documents including question and answer pamphlets outlining the rationale for the strike and implications of the tuition increase, as well as handouts on Bill 78 for protesters that detailed student rights in the context of the new legislation. One example of the innovative use of technology by student protesters was initiated by graduate student and artist Sophie Castonguay in “an interactive performance piece, entitled “Prêter l’oreille” (lend an ear), that invited participants to repeat the speeches and texts proliferating on the web in the public spaces of the city, allowing them to take over time and space collectively” (Spiegel, 2014, 784).

Specifically, Castonguay collected and recorded a range of speeches from student leaders and protesters that allowed time for the listener to repeat the phrases out loud and distributed the audio files for downloading and use during protest marches.

Collective acts of economic disruption called for by CLASSE were another important strategy of the movement and indicative of the movement’s anti-capitalist critique: “blocking economic centres that play a vital role in devising and implementing neoliberal policies was a logical progression from the disruption of the education system, one of the many sites of neoliberal transformation” (Anonymous, 2012, 10). This included obstructing access to the Montreal stock exchange, the Montreal office of Banque Nationale (Quebec’s largest bank), as well as a promotional event that doubled as a jobs fair for the Premier’s Plan Nord. Student protesters also occupied various

government offices (including the Minister of Education's office), city hall, courthouses, and orchestrated multiple bridge blockades during rush-hour traffic where suburban commuters were prevented from arriving at their downtown offices.

This broad collection of invitational and innovative pedagogical interventions that connected educational issues with social concerns, coupled with the government's reactionary and punitive response to the student strike, facilitated the establishment of strong alliances across various social groups including trade unions from the healthcare and education sectors, anti-poverty activists, and members of the environmental movement. In particular, the Red Hand Coalition--a network of approximately 80 community groups established in 2009 that advocates against cuts to public services--was a critical ally to the Maple Spring movement.

Despite warnings from university and college administrations that threatened faculty with disciplinary action or dismissal should they support the student strike (Massumi, 2012), many educators spoke out, submitted editorials, and marched alongside students and their allies. A Professor's Manifesto titled "*For the Protection of Democracy and the Right of Student Protest*" was circulated and signed by over six hundred educators that publicly supported the right of students to strike and reinforced a vision of university faculty as independent, public intellectuals:

We are professors at institutions of higher education. Our job is to open to our students' critical horizons that question reality and offer different world views.

We do not see ourselves as mere agents of the reproduction of the social order, and especially not as officers of the repression with which Quebec's state power

has decided to contemptuously attack the student community. (Professors' Manifesto, 2012, para. 1)

This kind of solidarity was also received from members of the Greek academic community who applauded the Maple Spring movement in a public letter as one of “the most powerful anti-austerity campaigns in the world” (Media Coop, 2012, para. 8). Academics and activists in Chile expressed similar support by declaring that “we are all Quebecois” (Occupy Wall Street, 2012, para. 1). A collection of two hundred activists, artists, musicians, actors, filmmakers, and public intellectuals released a similar public declaration that stated “we are with the students. We are together.” The Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University released a statement on tuition fees in Quebec that declared its commitment to the principles of the movement and detailed the specific impact that higher costs have on women, in particular single mothers and their children. Other feminist groups, including Quebec Native Women, La federation des femmes du Quebec (representing over two hundred community associations including shelters and unions), and the L'R des centre de femmes du Quebec, also made public statements of support (Ostrovsky, 2012, 3). Even former political leaders expressed opposition to the government's proposed tuition increase, as well as a critique of their response to the student protest movement, including Jacques-Yvan Morin (education minister from 1976-1981), Jean Garon (education minister in 1994), and Bernard Landry (former Premier of Quebec from 2001-2003).

Public Protest as Pedagogical Praxis

The students in Quebec who shaped the Maple Spring movement are rightly viewed as teachers of the broader public. In unprecedented collective action--and despite

vilification by the state and media--students used a local policy proposal to illuminate a global ideological shift threatening to transform and obliterate public spaces and services, while asking Canadians to seriously question what role education ought to play in our lives. In this sense, the Maple Spring movement attempted to interrupt the dominant neoliberal discourse and:

clarify for a broad swath of society that a tuition hike is not a matter of isolated accounting, but the goal of a neoliberal austerity agenda the world over. Forcing students to pay more for education is part of a transfer of wealth from the poor and middle class to the rich--as with privatization and the state's withdrawal from service provision, tax breaks for corporations and deep cuts to social programs.

(Lukacs, 2012)

In making this argument, students mobilized to bring education out of the classroom and into the streets demanding that the political system take them seriously and refuting the dismissal of young people as disengaged and indifferent.

To oppose the transformation of higher education into a service industry, students participated in collective social action that was based on, and continuously informed by, local grassroots activist campaigns. For students of the Maple Spring movement this experience involved subjecting status-quo ideas to intellectual scrutiny, forming and testing theories, dialoguing with others, developing an argument and defending it in public. This, in its own right, is a valuable kind of civic education that functioned to facilitate "profound learning about state power, the legal system, and the way different people enjoy different rights within it, the interests reflected in the mass media, the limits of liberal democracy, and the commodification / corporatization of education" (Choudry

& Shragge, 2013, 14). The students articulated this cross-disciplinary and intersectional critique, as well as their shared vision for an alternative future, in a collaboratively drafted document titled “*Share Our Future Manifesto*”:

This burden is one that we all shoulder...whether we are students or not: **this is one lesson our strike has taught us**. For we, students, are also renters and employees; we are international students, pushed aside by discriminating public services. We come from many different backgrounds, and, until the color of our skin goes as unnoticed as our eye color, we will keep on facing everyday racism, contempt and ignorance. We are women, and if we are feminists it is because we face daily sexism and roadblocks set for us by the patriarchal system; we constantly fight deep-rooted prejudice. We are gay, straight, bisexual, and proud to be. We have never been a separate level of society. Our strike is not directed against the people. We are the people. Our strike goes beyond the \$1625 tuition-fee hike. If, by throwing our educational institutions into the marketplace, our most basic rights are being taken from us, we can say the same for hospitals, Hydro-Quebec, our forests, and the soil beneath our feet. We share so much more than public services: we share our living spaces ... this is the meaning of our vision, and the essence of our strike: it is a shared, collective action whose scope lies well beyond student interests. We are daring to call for a different world, one far removed from the blind submission our present commodity-based system requires. (CLASSE, 2012)

Students demanded that the proposed tuition hike be understood as part of a class war which is witnessing heightened economic inequality, the systematic dismantling of all

public services, and the destruction of the natural environment for corporate profit dictated by global capitalism and executed in the name of human progress. In doing so, they forwarded a more inclusive, humane, and inspired narrative to inform the purpose and guide the practice of higher education.

Academic scholarship that focuses on studying social movements has produced a number of different typologies that can be used to assess the impacts and efficacy of a specific movement. An early and widely cited typology was produced by Gamson (1990) that distinguishes between acceptance (when a movement is deemed a legitimate stakeholder by the political system) and new advantages (when the specific goal that mobilized the movement is reached). Other scholars have critiqued this typology as it fails to account for scenarios when a movement does not reach its initial goal, but succeeds in other positive, yet unintended ways (Amenta et al, 2010). Kitschelt (1986) differentiates between procedural impacts (similar to Gamson's acceptance), substantial impacts (similar to Gamson's new advantages) and structural impacts (when the movement alters the structural conditions or context, like causing a change in government). Schumaker (1975) proposed five criteria to assess government responsiveness to the agenda and demands of social movements: access responsiveness (the willingness of authorities to meet with the group), agenda responsiveness (the issue is placed on the government's agenda), policy responsiveness (adoption of policy or legislation in line with protest group demands), output responsiveness (implementation of new policy or law), and impact responsiveness (degree to which the policy or legislative change actually impacts the original issue raised by the group).

By each measure detailed above, the Maple Spring movement was successful with respect to its most immediate demand, which was the cancellation of the proposed seventy-five percent tuition increase. In forwarding this call, the student movement was granted status as a legitimate and formidable stakeholder group by the Quebec provincial government, having their concerns subsequently placed as a high priority of the government's policy agenda. As discussed throughout this Chapter, there are a range of reasons that the student strike was successfully transformed into a large scale social movement including the coordinated, creative and sustained efforts of student federations and unions that included an ability to build broad coalitions, the definitive and strong culture of protest within Quebec, and the public, logistical and financial support of the labor movement. This context was pivotal in contributing to the various successes of the student strike, which included stopping the tuition increase and forcing the repeal of Law 78 that denied basic rights to organize and protest. The broader aim of the movement was to defend higher education as a public resource that serves the common good and intervene against the increasing corporatization of post-secondary education that results from the dominance of neoliberal ideology:

a first call--for free tuition--is supplemented by everything its proposition opens up, which in this case is nothing less than the rethinking not only of education, but of the force of the public in its ability to collectively rethink what is at stake in a world that increasingly instrumentalizes that which should never be instrumentalized: thought, creativity, pedagogy” (Manning, 2012, para. 2).

This call for a revolutionary shift in public consciousness is, by its nature, more difficult to measure. It is clear, however, that the Maple Spring movement proved that despite

neoliberal rhetoric there are always alternatives to austerity measures and massive public support can be cultivated when issues are contextualized within the reality of heightened economic inequality and the decimation of the social welfare state.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has documented the counter-story offered by the Maple Spring case study that challenges the dominance of neoliberal ideology and provides important pedagogical lessons regarding the relationship between activism, policymaking, and the practice of education. Importantly, this chapter has also reviewed the manner in which the media functions as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971) that fuels the hegemony of the neoliberal political project. The following concluding chapter discusses the implications of these findings by offering a reflection on both the epistemological and ethical risks of permitting a neoliberal cultural ethos to eclipse a commitment to democratic life and the pursuit of common goodness.

CHAPTER 5

ON THE THRESHOLD: HALF AGONY, HALF HOPE

“If I should choose a few words to describe the endless act of creation that is education, I should choose these: Education is a conversation about the meaning of life, as each sees some part of it, on behalf of everyone”

(Redfield, 1955, 59).

Review of Study Purpose and Research Questions

The overarching purpose of this dissertation was to interrogate the connections between power, education, and democracy as they relate to the infiltration of neoliberalism within higher education in Canada, while simultaneously exploring discourses of resistance to neoliberal hegemony. The dual focus on establishing the presence of neoliberalism and investigating modes of resistance was necessary because it is not enough to simply name or expose this transformation; we must also cultivate an understanding as to what it means to successfully organize and struggle in collective opposition. Specifically, the central research question examined through the course of this study was: In an era of globalization and transnational capitalism, how is neoliberal ideology moving within and through Canada’s post-secondary educational institutions to reimagine and discursively reconstruct the boundaries of Canadian democracy? In order to interrogate this question in a systematic and principled fashion, the following specific research questions were addressed:

1. How does official policy discourse (ministerial and institutional) represent the purpose of higher education in Canada?
 - a. How are issues of social justice, democracy, and equality understood, positioned and taken up within these representations?
 - b. To what extent, and in what ways, have neoliberal ideology and discourses of market fundamentalism permeated higher education policy in Canada?
2. What kinds of pedagogical lessons may be revealed through analysis of the Maple Spring movement and utilized to inform and strengthen broader resistance movements?
 - a. How did mainstream news media discourse represent the purpose of higher education in relation to the “Maple Spring” movement of 2012? How were issues of youth activism, civil disobedience, and protest framed within these representations?
 - b. What kind of counter-narrative might this movement offer regarding the role of higher education in Canada’s democracy?

Summary of Findings

As a first step in examining the central research question, official policy texts from seven provincial ministries of education and the fifteen post-secondary institutions affiliated with the U15 were examined to assess the ways that neoliberal ideology and discourses of market fundamentalism are embedded within the Canadian higher education policy landscape. This analysis revealed that the policy texts of U15 member institutions and their associated government ministries contain multiple references that endorse and support neoliberal ideology and the related discourse of market

fundamentalism. Specifically, this study established how neoliberal ideology is promoted, consolidated, and naturalized within higher education policy via four related discursive manifestations, detailed as follows:

1. **Reduction of Education to a Market-Based Function** – This policy review reveals an established tendency to condense education to a market function by emphasizing job training and curricular compatibility with labor market needs;
2. **Conceptualization of Students as Economic Entities** – There was a common theme of constructing students as economic entities or customers who are in the business of purchasing an education for primarily their own personal, material gain;
3. **Commercialization of Knowledge and Research** – A majority of policy documents encouraged the commercialization of knowledge and research achieved via the establishment of formal linkages between post-secondary education and the private sector; and
4. **Internationalization and Human Capital** – Finally, the trend to promote internationalization in post-secondary education was represented by institutions attempting to compensate for decreased public funding for educational programming by generating revenue from international student fees, while simultaneously promoting a view of international students as a source for “human capital.”

The research findings detailed above provide substantial evidence to the claim that public post-secondary institutions in Canada are being transformed into corporate institutions.

These findings are in line with a large body of research that has documented and

critiqued the neoliberal restructuring of higher education. Acknowledging that significantly less attention has been paid to documenting strategies of resistance that can effectively push back against the permeation of neoliberal policy in the area of higher education, the second step in this study focused on the largest and most recent student-led grassroots-based movement in Canadian history, the monumental student uprising referred to as the “*Maple Spring*.” This movement was analyzed to ascertain how mainstream media represented the purpose of higher education in relation to the student strike, as well as what kind of counter-narrative the movement offered regarding the role of higher education in Canada’s democracy.

The analysis of mainstream media coverage revealed six discursive trends through which students participating in the Maple Spring movement were dismissed and vilified.

A summary of each trend is as follows:

1. **Criminalizing Headlines** – A review of news headlines published by the mainstream media during the height of the Maple Spring movement reveals an established tendency to project on to student protesters a criminalized identity characterized by violence, disrespect, and destructive behaviors;
2. **Reframing the Scope: Boycott not Strike** – A significant portion of media articles denied the student movement the status of a legitimate strike and opted instead to frame it as a simple boycott. This linguistic choice was both strategic and ideologically motivated and can be traced directly to the neoliberal logic that frames higher education as a private investment to be purchased by student consumers;

3. **Over-Lexicalization: Low Tuition** – Media coverage continuously referred to tuition fees in Quebec as “so low,” “less than half,” “lowest in the country” and “below the national average” which contributes to the over-lexicalization of the Maple Spring as an unwarranted over-reaction, while reinforcing the status quo position that views higher education as a user-pay system;
4. **Generalization of Violence** – The violence and destruction of property perpetrated by a minority of protesters was extrapolated to represent the actions of the entire student protest movement;
5. **Quotation Patterns** – Media reports largely drew upon quotations from students, politicians and business leaders condemning the strike thereby reinforcing the dismissal of student protesters as the normative, rationale response; and
6. **Textual Silence & Decontextualization** – Media coverage failed to adequately convey the foundational work and research conducted to support the strike and also neglected to connect the strike and the issues raised by protesters to the historical context regarding activist movements and critiques of the provincial and federal austerity agenda.

When considered in relation to one another, these discursive trends highlight how the media functioned as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971) that systematically discredited the Maple Spring movement and reinforced the hegemony of the neoliberal political project by furthering a view of higher education as subservient to the dictates of the market economy.

Despite concerted and strong opposition by the state and mainstream media, the Maple Spring movement can be considered successful in multiple respects and offers

important teachings related to the politics and practice of resistance. First, it should be noted that the simple fact that Canada's corporate media variably dismissed the acts of student protesters as a symptom of juvenile naiveté or a terrorist's rage is testament not only to the power of neoliberal ideology, but also to the threat that such acts of organized, impassioned and sustained resistance pose. Among the many achievements of the Maple Spring, which included halting the proposed tuition increase, prompting the electoral defeat of the governing Liberal Party and forcing the repeal of repressive legislation that criminalized dissent and protest, its pivotal accomplishment was bringing the corporatization of higher education into mainstream, popular discourse. This was specifically achieved by the students' ability to present the critique regarding tuition as a window into the broader issues of university corporatization and associated neoliberal policy shifts at both the provincial and federal level. This facilitated powerful alliances between student organizers and labor unions, non-profit organizations, and broader activist movements centering on issues of economic, racial and environmental justice. A final pedagogical lesson of the Maple Spring movement is that a wide range of creative interventions are necessary to mobilize significant resistance, including teach-ins, marches, print publications (e.g. manifestos, online interviews), public assemblies, art-based protests, and more radical, militant approaches including economic disruptions and the occupation of public spaces. By presenting a vision for education as a form of cultural politics and vehicle for social justice and equality, this student movement made a definitive declaration that institutions of higher education are public resources that serve the common good as opposed to profit-driven entities subservient to the market economy.

Study Limitations and Future Research

As is the case with any academic study, there are a number of limitations that impacted the above findings to varying degrees. First, this dissertation relied solely on the examination of textual materials in terms of the policy analysis in phase one and the analysis of media accounts and other publications associated with the Maple Spring movement in phase two. Phase one of this study aimed to uncover the degree to which neoliberalism has taken root as an established objective of Canadian higher education. Policy documents in the form of university strategic plans and annual reports are designed to communicate a succinct summary of key policy objectives and initiatives to public and private funders, as well as to the broader community, thereby rendering them an appropriate choice of data. Only the final version of policy texts from ministries of education and post-secondary institutions that were published online and publicly available were included in the analysis. Because of this, I had no knowledge of the inevitable internal debates and discussion that would have preceded the publication of each policy text. That said, the published version can be considered the official account as each text was approved and sanctioned by the governing bodies of universities or ministers of education. Further, this study did not interrogate comparisons between policies in provincial jurisdictions or analyze how the disparate political contexts of provinces interact with efforts toward neoliberal restructuring in particular locations. This more specific interrogation is an avenue of future research worthy of pursuit. As a final shortcoming of phase one, I limited the scope of this study to Canada's largest, research-intensive institutions that together comprise the U15. Additional research might focus on a sample of smaller universities to ascertain the degree and manner to which

neoliberalism and associated projects of privatization and corporatization are shaping their realities.

Phase two of this study focused on the media's portrayal of the purpose of higher education viewed through the lens of its treatment of the Maple Spring movement, as well as what teachings can be gleaned from the student protest. The final sample of the media coverage of the student strike included 475 articles published over a thirteen-month period (January 2012 through February 2013). The majority of articles were from a range of Canadian newspaper publications, including *The Gazette* (n=286), the *Globe and Mail* (n=57), the *National Post* (n=35), the *Toronto Star* (n=33), the *Ottawa Citizen* (n=26), and the *Vancouver Sun* (n=9). The remaining 30 articles were from various international publications including *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and the *New York Times*. A limitation of this approach is the reliance on an electronic search engine (ProQuest), which meant that only articles contained within this database were included. However, this shortcoming is mitigated by the sheer volume of articles included, the fact that the sample included news articles from Canada's most widely circulated publications, and a rigorous analytical approach that necessitated continuous review until thematic saturation was achieved.

It should also be noted that I focused solely on news articles published by English media outlets that related to the Maple Spring movement due to my inability to speak French (the official language of the province of Quebec where the student strike took place). In a sense, this can be viewed as a positive aspect of this study as it directly responds to criticisms from student protesters that the English media in Canada was profoundly misrepresenting their struggle. That said, an opportunity was missed to

systematically interrogate the differences in media coverage between English and French news outlets, which presents an additional focus for future research.

A final limitation of phase two was the reliance on texts to the exclusion of interviews with leaders or others involved with the student strike. While interviews, surveys or focus groups each might have been an appropriate methodological choice for a different kind of study, I did obtain first-hand accounts of student protesters via the extensive review of alternative and social media coverage that included published interviews with leaders of the student strike as well as first-hand testimonials, manifestos and statements in support of the movement by professors, youth groups, student and labor unions.

An overall limitation of this study relates to the methodological approach of critical discourse analysis, which is--by nature and design--highly interpretive, subjective and thus vulnerable to critiques of bias. As I stated when documenting this study's findings in both Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, the discursive themes of both phase one and phase two are not exhaustive or meant to represent the sole or final reading of this particular dataset or the larger issue of the neoliberal restructuring of Canadian higher education. Henry & Taylor (2002) stated "discourses resonate with very dissimilar meaning and consequences for both the producers of the text and the diverse communities of readers" (p. 227). This important assertion was addressed throughout the duration of this study via efforts to make visible my data analysis process and the inclusion of extensive excerpts related to each finding in data tables. With this in mind, it should also be reiterated that the present study was not designed to answer or conform to any calls for neutral, unbiased or disinterested scientific research. As discussed in

Chapter 2, proponents of critical discourse analysis have highlighted the benefits of interpretive research and emphasized its utility as personal and political work that is as much a kind of activist scholarship as it is a rigorous and reflexive form of social scientific study. This study can therefore best be understood as a “situated knowledge claim” based on “partial, locatable, and critical knowledge” (Haraway, 1991, 190) aiming to contribute to the ongoing conversation regarding how we might repair the link between higher education and democratic life and the fractured relationship between activism and social policy.

Study Implications and Future Directions

The differentiation of education and schooling by Noonan & Coral (2015) provides a succinct and helpful lens through which we can best understand the ethical and epistemological risks resulting from the neoliberal restructuring of higher education:

Schools both enable students to develop and expand their capacities to imagine and think beyond the established limits of what ruling classes define as good, just, meaningful, and true, and at the same time try to produce citizens who confine their thinking and imagination to the ideological meaning of those norms.

Education builds critical consciousness and political agency, while schooling aims to keep students’ horizons confined to the given world, its class, racial, sexual, and gender hierarchies, its reward systems. Education enables students to expose social contradictions, schooling tries to keep people blind to their existence. (p. 51-52)

The growing power and permeation of neoliberal ideology across all facets of social life has been instrumental in promoting and orchestrating a shift among Canadian post-

secondary institutions towards a reductive view of schooling at the expense of a more liberatory vision of education. According to Canaan & Shumar (2008) there are two general goals that underpin the neoliberal transformation of higher education, namely that post-secondary institutions should competitively promote and sell their services within an educational marketplace and that the output of universities should be highly specialized workers with the requisite skills to assist the nation-state in competing on the global economic stage. This has resulted in a higher education system more focused on technical knowledge, job training, and the authorization of marketable credentials as opposed to preparing individuals for the responsibilities of democratic citizenship and generating research and knowledge in the interest of the public.

Newson, Polster & Woodhouse (2012) have highlighted a range of important interventions that have the potential to assist in reinvigorating the public mission of post-secondary institutions. First, they have pointed to the alternative federal budgeting initiative implemented by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) as a potential model for members of university communities to follow. Each year for over two decades, the CCPA has proposed an alternative federal budget based on input from a wide range of community-based leaders, activists and organizations:

the AFB starts from a set of social justice values--human dignity and freedom, fairness, equality, environmental sustainability, and the public good. AFB participants collectively develop a set of taxation and spending measures that reflect these values, and create a sophisticated and workable budgetary framework within which they are met. This framework acknowledges political and economic

realities but nevertheless produces a dramatically different result than the federal government's budget. (CCPA, 2016)

The CCPA refers to this annual initiative as an exercise that enhances both economic literacy and public accountability while demythologizing the budgetary process and creating “consensus amongst progressive civil society organizations and providing the policy fuel for popular mobilization.” If employed in a post-secondary institution, the benefits of developing an alternative university budget could include enhanced transparency of university funding sources (both private and public), increased learning by faculty, staff and students regarding the overall budgetary process, and a more equitable distribution of resources that better reflects the desires and needs of the university’s diverse constituents.

A second strategy articulated by Newson, Polster & Woodhouse (2012) is an alternative policy-making body comprised of a diverse range of faculty, staff, students, and community members that works outside and in opposition to the traditional top-down decision-making hierarchy of institutions. Newson, Polster & Woodhouse (2012) rightly point to the University of Toronto General Assembly (UTGA) as an inspirational model of alternative policy-making. The UTGA is based on a philosophy of self-governance and participatory democracy and describes its mandate as a:

collective response to the administration’s history of undemocratic and unfair decisions. We reject the ideas that students are Basic Income Units, that workers should lack job security, that corporations should have a say in education and research, and that the community does not have a place in the University. We aim to replace Governing Council with a genuinely democratic decision-making body-

-a body made up of the entire university community where each person has a voice and a vote. We're all in this together. We must realize now that all of us--students, faculty, workers, and our neighbours at all scales--hold legitimate claim to this institution. (UTGA, 2016)

The UTGA has held a conference on the implications of neoliberal restructuring on post-secondary education and hosts teach-ins on issues including the militarization of university campuses and the importance of organizing against austerity measures. A series of operational working groups address university governance, corporatization, economic accessibility, the use of campus space, and student-worker solidarity. The UTGA functions to build the kind of intersectoral partnerships both within the university and with external community members and organizations that were proven to be central to the achievements of the Maple Spring movement. Importantly, this body also addresses issues in a way that draws explicit connections between the privatization and corporatization of university campuses and the broader social, political and economic context and is worthy of inspiring similar actions on campuses across the country.

A final model highlighted by Newson, Polster & Woodhouse (2012) is the People's Free University (PFU) of Saskatchewan, which was a free and inclusive community-based education initiative established in 2002 by a group of students and faculty from the Educational Foundations department at the University of Saskatchewan. The PFU was operational for two years and included courses and workshops taught in various locations throughout the city on topics ranging from globalization to gardening, public law to the criminalization of dissent. Based on a philosophy of emancipatory

learning, everyone in attendance had a voice in shaping the curricular content and pedagogical approach to the subject matter.

While the three kinds of initiatives outlined by Newson, Polster & Woodhouse (2012) constitute activities that take place outside the traditional university structure, there have also been important interventions occurring internal to post-secondary institutions in Canada and beyond. For example, both Lakehead University in Ontario and the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba have recently introduced an Indigenous course requirement for all undergraduate students. This new university requirement is part of a broader movement across Canada to indigenize post-secondary education systems, which involves efforts to increase the number of Indigenous faculty, staff and students on campus; decolonize teaching and research practices; and integrate Indigenous epistemological frameworks into all aspects of university life.⁴² The requirement also responds to the report released by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015 that documented the stories of residential school survivors and provided 94 “calls to action” aimed at charting a path toward healing and reconciliation in Canada.⁴³

An additional noteworthy example is a course offered at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia called “Development and Activism” taught by Dr. Robert Huish where

⁴² Universities across Canada that have prioritized Indigenization include the University of the Fraser Valley, Simon Fraser University, University of Winnipeg, and the University of Regina, among others. Indigenization was defined in the University of Regina’s Strategic Plan as “the transformation of the existing academy by including Indigenous knowledges, voices, critiques, scholars, students and materials as well as the establishment of physical and epistemic spaces that facilitate the ethical stewardship of a plurality of Indigenous knowledges and practices so thoroughly as to constitute an essential element of the university. It is not limited to Indigenous people, but encompasses all students and faculty, for the benefit of our academic integrity and our social viability.”

⁴³ The full text of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s final report can be viewed here: <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=890>. The report acknowledges that education is the key to reconciliation and presents a central recommendation that all individuals studying to be teachers, journalists, medical professionals, public servants, and lawyers should learn about the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, including the residential schools system, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as treaties and Aboriginal rights.

students study the theory and history of social movements and are ultimately required to research, design and participate in social activism. The critical aspect of this course is that it deliberately takes students out of the classroom and into communities to learn, dialogue, mobilize, lobby, and protest on a social justice issue of their choosing. On a related note, two universities in the United States are offering specific courses on the history and political philosophy of the Occupy Wall Street movement. At the time of this writing, there is one post-secondary institution in North America--Brooklyn College--that has implemented a participatory budgeting process with the aim of having students develop and vote on financial allocation proposals. Each of these initiatives show promise in resisting the large-scale transformation of higher education into a training ground for corporate interests and could be tailored and implemented in local contexts.

Canadian higher education is in the midst of an ideological struggle between oppositional discursive regimes competing for its core. Even though at present, corporate interests and a market-based agenda are dominating the conversation regarding the purpose of higher education, we must remember that “there was never a golden age; schools have been repressive, classist, heteronormative, male, and White supremacist--and boring--for centuries. But they are also sites of resistance, creativity, and hope for they are where the project of democracy is worked out on the ground and in the flesh” (B. Ayers, personal communication, June 10, 2016). In this sense, educational institutions are--and always have been--contested spaces. And while the education system is not the sole mechanism where struggles for social change can be fought and won, it is a central space where we collectively assemble to decide how it is that we ought to live together:

While the university should equip people to enter the workplace, it should also educate them to contest workplace inequalities, imagine democratically organized forms of work, and identify and challenge those injustices that contradict and undercut the most fundamental principles of freedom, justice and respect for all people who constitute the global public sphere. Higher education is about more than job preparation and consciousness-raising; it is also about imagining different futures and politics as a form of intervention into public life. In contrast to the cynicism and political withdrawal fostered by media culture, education demands that citizens be able to negotiate the interface of private considerations and public issues, be able to recognize those undemocratic forces that deny social, economic, and political justice, and be willing to give some thought to the nature and meaning of their experiences in struggling for a better world. (Giroux, 2016, 104-105)

Understood this way, schools become what Freire referred to as zones of “untested feasibility” where we balance together on the threshold of “what is and what might be” (Ronald & Roskelly, 2001, 615). To reflect deeply on this profound yet simple question, we are reminded that while *schooling* might be about the standardized test scores of students, graduation rates of individual institutions, and the economic viability of a nation, *education* is about the security, health and happiness of real people, the pursuit of peace and justice, the protection of our natural environment, and the revitalization of our shared democracy. At this historical moment, it is imperative that educational efforts focus on making visible the relentless reduction of education to schooling--and specifically a program of schooling that is neoliberal and anti-democratic--and then work

upon the institution of schooling from within and from without for the larger project of social and cultural transformation.

APPENDIX I

Timeline of Major Events in the Maple Spring Movement

Date	Event
Early 2010	Premier Jean Charest announces intention to raise tuition fees by 75% over five years beginning in 2012.
February 13, 2012	Students vote in favor of a general unlimited strike.
March 22, 2012	200,000 students march in Montreal in what was, at that time, the largest demonstration in Quebec's history with the exception of the 2003 demonstration against the war on Iraq.
March 26 - 30, 2012	Economic Disruption Week
April 22, 2012	Membership of CLASSE unanimously votes in favor of civil disobedience and against any act of physical violence against another person.
May 4, 2012	Violent confrontations between protesters and police continue at a protest in Victoriaville, Quebec, where at least 12 people were seriously injured and over 100 were arrested.
May 14, 2012	Line Beauchamp, Education Minister and Deputy Premier, resigns from Government. Premier Jean Charest appoints Michelle Courchesne as Education Minister and Deputy Premier.
May 16, 2012	Premier Jean Charest and Education Minister Michelle Courchesne announce Bill 78.
May 18, 2012	Bill 78 passes into law.
May 22, 2012	Hundreds of thousands of protesters march in downtown Montreal and diverge from the planned route in defiance of Bill 78 and thus initiate the largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history.
June 18, 2012	United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, releases a statement expressing concern regarding Bill 78 and its restriction of "rights to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly."

Date	Event
July 2012	The Quebec Human Rights Commission condemns Bill 78 for undermining the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.
September 2012	Liberal Government of Jean Charest was defeated and the Parti-Quebecois was elected to a minority government. The PQ government subsequently rolled back the tuition increase and repealed Bill 78.

APPENDIX II

Provincial Policy Review

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APPENDIX III

Institutional Policy Review

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APPENDIX IV

Maple Spring Review: Mainstream Media Coverage

Activists reoccupy Victoria Square; No overnight stays are planned for four-day gathering. (2012, May 14). *The Gazette*, A.3.

Anti-protest law in Quebec backfires as locals rally to cause. (2012, May 26). *Irish Times*, 13.

Arrests concern Amnesty group. (2012, April 25). *The Gazette*, A.3.

Arson suspected at CEGEP Gerald Godin. (2012, April 18). *The Gazette*, D.4.

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Canadian GP faces protest. (2012, May 25). *The Independent*, 70.

CLASSE leader wins major award. (2012, May 24). *The Gazette*, A.8.

CLASSE vows not to tell students what to do on voting day. (2012, July 17). *The Gazette*, A.3.

Court asked to stop students. (2012, March 30). *The Gazette*, A.7.

Families, fools and 2-wheelers; Three tuition protest events on Sunday. (2012, March 31). *The Gazette*, A.6.

Four arrested in Montreal protest. (2012, February 17). *The Globe and Mail*, A.11.

High school students must limit strike, board says. (2012, April 27). *The Gazette*, A.8.

Idealists on the march. (2012, May 31). *National Post*, A.19.

Liberals, PQ spar over support for protests; ‘Opportunism’; No talk of cancelling sessions – schools will decide how to proceed. (2012, April 5). *The Gazette*, A.6.

Police, Quebec student protesters clash. (2012, April 30). *National Post*, A.7.

Protesting students join locked-out Rio Tinto workers in demonstration; Afternoon event follows clash with police at CEGEP. (2012, February 17). *The Gazette*, A.4.

Protesting the rise cost of higher education. (2012, February 3). *The Gazette*, A.6.

Quebec; Students arrested after office trashed. (2012, April 14). *The Ottawa Citizen*, A.4.

Quebec students, government resume negotiations. (2012, May 28). *Bennington Banner*.

Riot police push student protesters back. (2012, March 2). *The Gazette*, A.8.

Rookie NDP MPs get a reality check. (2012, April 30). *The Globe and Mail*, A.8.

Schools spent wastefully, students say. (2012, July 9). *The Gazette*, A.4.

Standoff ends as students allowed into school; Protesters block CEGEP entrance until deal reached. (2012, February 25). *The Gazette*, A.6.

Strike over tuition fees. (2012, May 17). *The Daily Mirror*, 8.

Student activist gets community service. (2012, December 6). *The Globe and Mail*, A.6.

Student group to disrupt return to classes in Montreal. (2012, July 10). *National Post*, A.6.

Students threaten to disrupt Grand Prix as talks deadlocked. (2012, June 2). *The Northern Advocate*, A.13.

Study session on strike methods. (2012, February 20). *The Gazette*, A.4.

Ackerman, M. (2012, May 11). The inner conflict of a student protester; Ethan Feldman says the strike isn't about tuition – it's about the future, power, and social priorities. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Ambroziak, A. (2012, February 29). John Abbott students vote today on strike. *The Gazette*, E.8.

Anderssen, E. (2012, October 6). The learning curve; Reinventing higher education. *The Globe and Mail*, F.1.

Aubin, H. (2012, March 27). Students have their priorities all wrong; Protesters would be on stronger ground if they focused less on saving money and more on financial-aid programs. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Aubin, H. (2012, April 7). Tuition protest futile; Student boycotters, saddled with bad leadership, march on slippery slope. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Aubin, H. (2012, April 19). It's about entitlements, not class struggle; While the head of CLASSE espouses Occupy-style radicalization, most university kids just want to keep their cheap tuition. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Aubin, H. (2012, April 24). Six miscues hamper students' cause; As the strike drags on, its leaders have suffered from blatant overconfidence and failed to engineer an adequate exit strategy. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Aubin, H. (2012, April 26). Three-day boycott a blight on CSDM; Instead of giving students a freebie, the school board should have used the student strike as a teachable moment. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Aubin, H. (2012, April 28). Charest on right track; Province handling student uprising well, as majority of Quebecers agree. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Aubin, H. (2012, May 8). Lessons to learn from tuition debacle; Quebec needs to do more to explain the growing debt as labour union-student alliance will make financial restraint more difficult. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Aubin, H. (2012, May 10). Boycotters put their futures at risk; The longer they hold out, the more they will be shooting themselves in the foot and weakening Quebec society in the process. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Aubin, H. (2012, May 26). Our blackened reputation: Tuition protest supporters skewing the facts in international press. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Aubin, H. (2012, May 29). The costly repercussions of protest; rambling Clangers who support the students are helping to hurt Quebec's economy and rule of law. *The Gazette*, A.2.

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Aubin, H. (2012, November 24). Sometimes playing nice doesn't work; Despite major victories protesting students are back in the streets. *The Gazette*, A.2.

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Austen, I. (2012, May 18). Canada: Quebec seeks to end protests. *New York Times*, A.10.

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Austen, I. (2012, June 7). The gloves come off in Quebec. *International Herald Tribune*, 2.

Authier, P. (2012, May 3). Lucien Bouchard among high-profile backers of Charest. *The Gazette*, A.4.

Authier, P. (2012, May 28). NDP on tightrope over protests; Party doesn't want to alienate students, but doesn't want to interfere. *The Gazette*, A.4.

Authier, P. (2012, August 2). It's do or die for Charest and Marois; Platforms clear as party leaders begin campaign. *The Gazette*, A.3.

Barmack, S. (2012, June 2). Protests gain momentum. *Toronto Star*, 2.

Beaudin, M. (2012, March 26). Students set sights on MNAs; Strategy intended to get Jean Charest's attention. *The Gazette*, A.7.

Beaudin, M. (2012, April 23). Prominent Quebecers urge end to tuition conflict; Group of 18 people presses government for discussion and resolution. *The Gazette*, A.4.

Beeston, L. (2012, June 30). Anarchopanda fights on; Professor Julien Villeneuve, the man behind the mask, explains Bill 78 battle. *The Gazette*, A.7.

Beeston, L. (2012, August 17). Future of student movement on the table; Three leaders hope youth issues will gain attention. *The Gazette*, A.4.

Beeston, L. & Seidman, K. (2012, June 28). Court rejects student challenges to Bill 78, bylaw. *The Gazette*, A.6.

Bherer, L & Dufour, P. (2012, May 24). Our not-so-friendly northern neighbour. *New York Times*, A.31.

Bherer, L & Dufour, P. (2012, May 25). Canada's Putin Lesson. *International Herald Tribune*, 6.

Boone, M. (2012, June 5). Canadiens, Grand Prix could keep protests off front page. *The Gazette*, A.8.

Bradshaw, J. (2012, February 15). Student group to boycott education summit. *The Globe and Mail*, A.5.

Branswell, B. (2012, March 22). High schools prepare for some students to join demonstration; Boards will remain open for business despite risk of classes being disrupted. *The Gazette*, A.4.

Branswell, B. (2012, April 6). CEGEPs face small window to save semester. *The Gazette*, A.4.

Branswell, B. (2012, April 12). CEGEP semester threatened; Revised schedule may force some to drop out. *The Gazette*, A.6.

Branswell, B. (2012, April 13). A permanent ban on pickets sought at Laval; Argues student organizations have no right to keep others from going to class. *The Gazette*, A.6.

Branswell, B. (2012, April 14). Go back to class, CEGEPs plead; Demands and debate aside, federation says they 'simply want to save the semester'. *The Gazette*, A.6.

Branswell, B. (2012, April 17). Close votes preventing a return to classrooms. *The Gazette*, A.4.

Branswell, B. (2012, April 18). Student fights for right to graduate in June. *The Gazette*, A.6.

Branswell, B. (2012, April 28). Quebec tuition hikes OK: poll. *The Ottawa Citizen*, A.3.

Branswell, B. (2012, April 28). Most Quebecers do not agree higher fees are obstacles to degree. *The Gazette*, A.6.

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Branswell, B. (2012, May 9). Deal voted down in show of hands at College Montmorency. *The Gazette*, A.6.

Branswell, B. (2012, May 12). CEGEPs resigned to classes in August; Even June won't be normal: Federation. *The Gazette*, A.6.

Branswell, B. (2012, May 23). Many students suffer, but not all; Organizer calls experience as good as any course. *The Gazette*, A.6.

Branswell, B. (2012, May 30). The school that said 'non' to strike; Year completed; As semester ends, decision dissected. *The Gazette*, A.3.

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Bruemmer, R. (2012, March 21). Public backlash part of the plan. *The Gazette*, A.4.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, March 23). Marches 'killing' downtown economy; Sixth week; Public continues to avoid city centre. *The Gazette*, A.3.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, March 24). Students vow to escalate pressure tactics; Unions to target politicians; Minister says position won't change, warns students may lose their semester. *The Gazette*, A.3.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, May 9). Groups find strength in numbers; Student demos are a lightning rod for myriad groups seeking to further their own social and political agendas, experts say. *The Gazette*, A.7.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, May 11). Quebec debates the "T" word; Were subway smoke bombs vandalism or a terrorist act? *The Ottawa Citizen*, A.5.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, May 11). Deepening the divide; Latest violence could entrench players in a never-ending spiral of oppression and dissent, McGill professor warns. *The Gazette*, A.7.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, May 18). Unions and lawyers take Liberals to task; Quebec Bar suggests governments use neutral mediators to resolve dispute. *The Gazette*, A.7.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, May 18). Ending term comes at a price; Ontario's 2003 experience with high-school double cohort 'was hell for everyone'. *The Gazette*, A.6.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, May 24). Protests are tapping into underlying discontent; Societal divide is uncovered; Opinion on emergency law is balanced equally between support and opposition. *The Gazette*, A.7.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, May 25). Masses making voices heard; Strike is the latest salvo in a decade-long debate about the future of Quebec society, prof says. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, May 29). Tuition fix may not be enough to end protests; Rallies against rising university costs evolved into other areas of discontent. *The Gazette*, A.3.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, July 19). Judge to rule on anti-protest law request; Collective wants appeal heard; Delay would leave students without their strongest tactic – spontaneous protests. *The Gazette*, A. 6.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 10). Nadeau-Dubois exits to take ‘long respite’; Takes shot at Charest in newspaper letter. *The Gazette*, A.8.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 11). Protest groups vow to continue fight; ‘Mobilization has grown’; Bill 78 available to prevent blockades when classes resume, Charest says. *The Gazette*, A.7.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 14). Time, money key issues for student voters; Most favour return to classes; Little commotion evident at many CEGEPs where students returned to school. *The Gazette*, A.7.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 15). Friday showdown looms at CEGEPs; CLASSE vows to block access; Three schools reopen with no disturbances reported. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 17). Charest faces tuition showdown; Back to school, back to conflict? While CEGEP students reject a walkout, many in university vote to boycott classes. *The Gazette*, A.4.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 17). Boycotts end at 3 CEGEPs; But U de M students vote to stay away. *The Gazette*, A.8.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 18). U de M promises fall classes; Rector says even if some students boycott, newcomers will be able to start their terms. *The Gazette*, A.7.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 22). CLASSE hopes protesters take to streets today; But numbers at recent gathering have fallen. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 22). Students vote to return to classrooms. *The Gazette*, A.2.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 24). Students to focus on UQAM protest; Boycott goes on; Teachers vote to cancel classes on case-by-case basis. *The Gazette*, A.4.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, August 30). Protests go quiet at U de M as classes cancelled; Anti-capitalist activists parade through downtown. *The Gazette*, A.10.

Bruemmer, R. (2012, September 1). It's up to students to find a way to end boycotts, UQAM says. *The Gazette*, A.10.

Bruemmer, R. & Dougherty, K. (2012, May 4). Counter-offer disappointing. *The Gazette*, A.4.

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Cherry, P. (2012, June 12). Khadir daughter's fingerprint found in minister's office: Police. *The Gazette*, A.2.

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Chung, A. (2012, April 21). Tuition protest violence escalates at Charest speech. *Toronto Star*, A.8.

Chung, A. (2012, April 28). Diplomas, graduation in jeopardy. *Toronto Star*, A.23.

Chung, A. (2012, May 12). Arrests made in smoke bombings. *Toronto Star*, A.4.

Chung, A. (2012, May 13). Suspects face terror charges. *Toronto Star*, A.2.

Chung, A. (2012, May 15). Quebec's education minister resigns amid student crisis. *Toronto Star*, A.1.

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