Running out of time at hyperspeed

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Introduction

Heather Menzies (2005) argues that Canadian democracy's present state is one oscillating between apathy and hysteria. The erosion of a democratic middle ground, for Menzies (2005), is directly related to the rise of an accelerated culture wherein citizens have no time to engage with one another. Menzies (2005) builds her argument on Robert Putnam's (2001) distinction between social bonding and social bridging. Bonding is a process of social reaffirmation between members of a fairly homogenous group while bridging involves dialogue amongst a collective of diverse interests (Putnam, 2001). The disappearance of bridging, combined with the increasing popularity of bonding, contributes to a widespread civic disengagement and the decline of community capital (Putnam, 2001). Indicators of civic disengagement include decreased voter turnout, weakened community ties, lowered participation rates in grassroots organizations and the disappearance of public spaces (Menzies, 2005; Putnam, 2001). Putnam (2001) attributes these developments to a shift in the values held by younger generations. While Putnam meticulously details how civic engagement has declined, his analysis does not include consideration of how changes to popular ideology have contributed to – if not all together steered – the decline (Steger, 2002).

This paper attempts to map the rise of neoliberalism – as political economic policy and related ideology – to provide the necessary context for Putnam's generational change thesis, examining the relationship between neoliberalism and civic disengagement. While Putnam's work focuses on American trends, this paper explores similar changes within a Canadian context. The components of civic engagement considered here include non-voting political activity, participation in elections, and participation in community activities. Neoliberalism refers to "a theory of political economic practices proposing that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets and free trade" (Harvey, 2007, p.22). Inherent in this paper's mapping is
the recognition that advancing the neoliberal project requires the continual increase in consumption demand, an increase which manifests through the acceleration of consumption practices and the creation of new markets (Harvey, 2010). Focusing specifically on the development of information and communication technology (ICT) markets, this paper details how this industry exploded in the mid-1970s (Dyer-Witheford, 1999) and has continued to expand since (Sciadas, 2006).

ICTs not only symbolize a new market, but a critical component to understanding declining civic engagement. There appears to be a positive correlation between ICT use and perception of time-poverty amongst users (Menzies, 2005; Sciadas, 2006). If poverty is defined as the condition of not having adequate resources to meet one's basic needs (A Dictionary of Sociology, 2009), time-poverty is the condition of not having adequate time to meet these needs. Perceived-time-poverty is a subjective experience of time pressure that does not reflect an objective lack of time. While not based on a real time deficit, perceived-time-poverty has real world consequences for the individuals experiencing it (Gershuny, 2005). This paper explores these consequences and considers how this perception can contribute to civic disengagement.

The effects of neoliberal ideology, ICT use, and perceived-time-poverty are then considered in relation to the online and civic activities of Generation C. Putnam (2001) identified that civic disengagement began with individuals born in the 1940, and increased amongst members of Generation X. If each generation demonstrates decreasing engagement, Canada's youth ages 15-30 should demonstrate diminished interest in civic activity. This paper explores how discourses shaping the identity of Generation C normalize and celebrate the abandonment of traditional civic engagement for individualized acts of consumption.
To illustrate how the often complex relationships between neoliberal ideology, ICTs, perceived-time-poverty, and Generation C manifest in popular discourse, three advertisements are discussed throughout this paper. As advertisements contribute to the shaping of individual’s consent for, and understanding of, the neoliberal political economic system, it is necessary to examine the cultural role that commercials play (Jhally, 2000). This research originally focused specifically on the advertisements for Bell Mobility and Rogers Wireless – as the two nation-wide Internet and telephone service providers in Canada. Previous ads for both providers offered a more comprehensive narrative regarding the relationship between the individual, the technology, and the online social world. However, recent ads for Bell and Rogers have been reduced in their scope, focusing solely on the new phones each company offers (see Image One). The emphasis on technological fetishization inherent in these new ads likely represents the companies’ response to the arrival of new service providers in Canada who are challenging the market’s oligopolistic structure. To capture the narratives previously shared through these advertisements, an older Rogers advertisement is included in this discussion. The other ads examined are Kotex’s interactive Ban the Bland campaign and Motorola Xoom’s Empower the People television commercial. These advertisements were chosen as they are exemplary of advertisement’s roles as a promoter of new markets, and celebrator of Generation C.
THE SPRING SMART SALE

SAVE ON A HUGE SELECTION OF THE HOTTEST SMARTPHONES

VISIT A ROGERS STORE TODAY & SAVE UP TO AN EXTRA $100 OFF

ONLY UNTIL MARCH 31 AT ROGERS

BLACKBERRY TORCH $99.99
BLACKBERRY BOLD $49.99
SAMSUNG GALAXY CAPTIVATE $49.99
SAMSUNG TOUCH $49.99

Rogers (2011)
Putnam Overview

*Bowling Alone* explores a paradox in American society. Despite statistical documentation demonstrating that, in the last three decades of the 20th century, there was no decline in average amounts of leisure time for Americans, this population seemed to no longer have time for traditional civic engagement and social activities (Putnam, 2001). Examining a range of potential causes, Putnam (2001) concludes that generational change has created the growing “anticivic contagion” (p. 247) responsible for the disengagement trend. While the baby boomer generation demonstrated declining interest in civic engagement, Putnam’s (2001) research identifies that disengagement really took hold with Generation X. However, Putnam’s unwillingness to consider the effects of changing political economic conditions on generational levels of civic participation limits his analysis (Steger, 2002). While recognizing that “chronic financial anxiety, increased time pressure, and enhanced working hours... partly account for declining social capital in America” (Steger, 2002, p. 272) Putnam neglects to examine the overarching political economic ideology that affects all these factors. This paper aims to provide the political economic context for Putnam’s generational change thesis, demonstrating the negative correlation between neoliberalism and civic engagement.

Neoliberal reordering

The social programs which define the Canadian welfare state – including medicare, the Canadian Pension Plan, and the Canadian Assistance Plan – developed out of a national push for equality in the 1960s and early 1970s (Osberg, 2008). At this time, poverty reduction was of such central concern for the Canadian and American governments that Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty and the Canadian federal government produced a pivotal poverty-reduction report (Osberg, 2008). In this era of Keynesian economic policy, the state’s role was that of a stabilizer and protector, functioning through regulations and social policy (McBride & McNutt, 2007).
The economic crisis of "stagflation" in the 1970s challenged not only this role of the state, but also the Keynesian consensus which informed it. The economic experience of this decade shocked Keynesian economists not only because it signaled the first post-war recession, but because the combination of high unemployment and high inflation contradicted the widely accepted Phillips Curve. Developed in the 1960s, the Phillips Curve purportedly explained an inverse relationship between rates of inflation and unemployment (Malsberger & Marshall, 2009). As North American production slowed and inflation rose, this model's validity was refuted. The most significant challengers to this model, and Keynesianism as a whole, were Milton Friedman's Monetarism, Robert Lucas' Rational Expectations, and the Supply Side economic model that would inform the policies of both the Reagan and Thatcher administrations (Malsberger & Marshall, 2009).

Supply side economics challenged two central tenets of Keynesianism: its macro analysis of national economies, and its concern with stimulating aggregate demand (Harvey, 2001). As such, supply side policies focused on addressing the micro – or individual – decisions to work, save, and invest (Malsberger & Marshall, 2009). Under this model, taxes and government interventions were seen as disincentives that prevented individuals from fully participating in the economy. Reagan's economic plan included income tax cuts, the dismantling of regulatory bodies, deregulation of the telecommunications industry, and reductions of government spending to alleviate such disincentive (Harvey, 2001). The economic prosperity generated by these changes was not distributed amongst American citizens, or even shared with their government. At the end of Reagan's presidency, the United States had its highest peacetime deficit while workers' wages had began to stagnate (Malsberger & Marshall, 2009).

Canada's neoliberal turn soon followed America's. While aspects of the welfare state were reduced in response to the economic downturn of the 1970s, a more comprehensive dismantling did not
commence until after the election of Brian Mulroney in 1984 (McBride & McNutt, 2007). The perceived logic inherent in the dismantling was reinforced by the two severe economic recessions in the 1980s and 1990s (Osberg, 2008). It is important to note that the neoliberal assault on Canadian social programs has been a much more gradual process than the American experience. Stephen McBride and Kathleen McNutt (2007) identify that Canadian governments, starting with the Mulroney cabinet, ushered in change using "techniques included transforming universal into selective programmes, tightening eligibility requirements, and imposing ceilings on programme costs or, alternatively, attempting to make programmes self-financing or subject to 'clawbacks' over a certain benefit level" (p.186). This gradual reduction of public services, combined with the long stagnation of wages created a (still) growing gap between Canada's lower and upper classes (Osberg, 2008). Increases in the median real income of Canadians ended in approximately 1979 (Osberg, 2008). From 1992 to 2004, the incomes for the top 5% of Canadians rose faster than all other incomes (Statistics Canada, 2010b). Osberg (2008) notes that over this twelve year period, the top 5% experienced a 43.6% increase to their household incomes, equaling on average a gain of $55,000 (in 2004 dollars). As a result, by 2008, the 20% of Canadians with the highest after-tax household incomes had, on average, an income 5.4 times higher than the lowest 20% (Statistics Canada, 2010b). Despite this growing gap being antithetical to the self-identity of "Canada the good" as a socially democratic nation (Hackworth, 2009, Osberg, 2008), there has been little resistance to the advancement of the country's neoliberal project. It is possible that the slowed pace of the changes prevented Canadians from recognizing the extent of the damage. However, in the current decade when glaring inequalities have become apparent, continued acceptance contradicts Canada's self-identity.

Returning to the American neoliberal experience offers further clues to the lack of dissent against the dismantling of Canada's social service system. While Canadians often define their nation as more
socially democratic than America's (Hackworth, 2009), the growing inequality inherent in the implementation of neoliberal economics even challenged previously held notions about the distribution of economic prosperity in the United States. As Frank (2000) explains, “in the decades after World War II, the distinguishing feature of American civilization was its great and evenly distributed wealth” (12). To understand how the citizenry transitioned (fairly) willingly into a new economic system wherein they shared a smaller piece of the prosperity requires examining what Comor (2008) describes as the third dimension of power, and how this power shapes conceptual systems.

Citing Lukes, Comor (2008) notes that understanding systems of power requires the consideration of three dimensions. While the first dimension understanding of power views a lack of quantifiable opposition as indicative of consent, the second dimension approach recognizes that the absence of dissent does not equal a contented citizenry but may be the result of conditions that prevent the airing of grievances. However, these approaches fail to explain “acquiescence in the face of demonstrable global disparities” such as those developing out of the adoption of neoliberal economic policies (Comor, 2008, p.20). The third dimension approach, then, recognizes that a lack of dissent is more likely related to “common sense norms that, in effect, deter or deny the capacity to resist. .. the absence of conflict may be the result of a form of power that shapes consciousness itself” (Comor, 2008, p.21, emphasis in original). Third dimension power manifests through social mythologies and norms that, in turn, inform conceptual systems.

According to Kamilla Pietrzyk (2010), “conceptual systems can be defined as interrelated, interworking sets of values, ideas, and beliefs that shape every individual’s worldview” (para 13). Informed by the reified, seemingly apolitical inputs of media, technology, organizations, and institutions, conceptual systems mediate an individual’s understanding of what is possible, and
desirable (Comor, 2008). Acquiescence to neoliberalism's systems of inequality was normalized and celebrated through the changing inputs which reconfigured popular conceptual systems for North Americans beginning in the 1970s (Frank, 2000). Harvey (2007) identifies that in the United States, "various threads of power intertwined to create [this] transition" to neoliberalism (p.29). The first step towards the "neoliberalism as common sense" discourse was the take over of Republican politics by corporate and financial powers in 1976 (Harvey, 2007). Followed closely by the combined with fiscal disciplining of government institutions and programs, these measures developed a neoliberal state, but still lacked a popular base of support (Harvey, 2007).

The initial attempt to gain the citizenry's support for neoliberal change was a populist narrative developed in tandem with the rise of Reaganomics (Frank, 2000). Devoted to raging against the "liberal media" and "welfare queens", this narrative appealed to the anger of the working class (Frank, 2000, p.26). This new mechanism for engaging blue collar voters, although popular, remained unable to capture popular support for neoliberalism. By the 1990s this narrative's allegiance to traditional values proved incapable of capturing the Gen X market, who resisted the discourse's moral outrage (Frank, 2000). The efforts of authors including Thomas Friedman, Kevin Kelly, Walter Wriston redirected the populist discourse away from traditional values to celebrating the market. Within this new discourse, welcoming neoliberal deregulation and globalization processes meant welcoming increased freedom for Americans (Frank, 2000). Books, television programs, and magazine articles came to proclaim that,

By its very nature the market was democratic, perfectly expressing the popular will through the machinery of supply and demand... In fact, the market was more democratic than any of the formal institutions of democracy – elections, legislatures, government (Frank, 2000, p.28).

Thus, the conceptual system of market populism and its tales of the free market as democracy 2.0,
was born. Through resultant discourses, individuals began to perceive of themselves as consumers, rather than citizens (Žižek, 2009).

The power of market populism is in its ability to return to the citizenry their sense of agency which neoliberal restructuring has undercut. Of course, in the new world order, this agency is to be expressed through participation in the free market, not via traditional avenues of civic engagement (Frank, 2000). As a conceptual system, market populism not only limits resistance to neoliberal advancement, it also encourages individuals to abandon traditional methods of civic engagement in favour of consumption-centric demonstrations of agency. This is the ideological shift inherent in, but not identified by, Putnam’s generational change thesis. Market populist discourse presents the citizenry with a permissive society. Žižek (2009) defines a permissive society as one in which individuals have an expanded scope of activities which they are allowed to perform without receiving any additional power. In the neoliberal society the expanded scope manifests through the array of consumption-based activities available to the citizenry. Any activities that seek to restore diminished power – such as that of organizing labour – or attempts to disrupt the global circulation of capital – such as anti-globalization protests – however, are met with ruthless force (Žižek, 2009)). Thus, the generational change identified by Putnam is likely the result of individuals adopting a market populist conceptual system through which they self-identify as autonomous consumers, rather than members of an active community.

The role of ICTs

Recent developments in the ICT industry, including the purported dawn of an Information Age and related Knowledge Economy, have been central to maintaining and extending consent for the neoliberal project. As Graham (1999) argues, the knowledge economy “may be seen as less a technologically determined phenomenon and more a political economy of language, thought, and
technology" (p.485) through which inequalities are hidden and personal identity is commodified. The technologies of this age have become the symbolic weapons of market populist discourse, as their proliferation is promised to upend hierarchies of power, returning control to the common man (Frank, 2000). Frank (2000) explains, "if the Web achieved anything... it was in its final blurring of the line between the People and corporate America" (p.148).

To suggest that ICTs play a crucial role in maintaining hegemonic order is not to suggest that this function is an inherent part of the technologies' designs. Here, it is important to consider the distinction Postman (2000) offers between a technology and a medium. "A technology is to a medium what the brain is to the mind. Like the brain, a technology is a physical apparatus. Like the mind, a medium is a use to which a physical apparatus is put" (Postman, 2000, p.47). Thus, the role that technologies play in advancing neoliberal objectives in North America represent how ICTs are employed as mediums within this environment.

ICTs have been invaluable in advancing financialization (Dyer-Witheford, 1999). As Harvey (2001) notes, "information technology is the privileged technology of neoliberalism. It is far more useful for speculative activity and for maximizing the number of shortterm market contracts than for improving production" (p.159). Beyond encouraging a departure from production to speculation, ICTs have also provided the infrastructure required to reshape global labour. The mobility these technologies afford, combined with their ability to support real-time international communication foster the development of systems of flexible accumulation wherein corporations disperse the components of their production processes around the globe (Hearn, 2008). While the results of this process for the laboring classes "[are] lower wages, increasing job insecurity, and in many instances loss of benefits and of job protections" (Harvey, 2001, p.76) for corporate heads, the process signals a powerful new option for extracting increased surplus value from processes of production.
The role of ICTs within the neoliberal project is not limited to supporting global circuits of capital. At the individual level, newly developed technologies have been marketed as essential life support systems. Comor (2008), quoting Ursula Huws, suggests “one way of summarizing the history of capitalism is to trace it as the gradual replacement of tasks performed communally and at home with things made by private interests for money” (p. 63). Certainly, the introduction and proliferation of personal communication technologies signals a milestone in this process. From the late 1970s forward, the personal communication technology market has become increasingly saturated with new essential additions and upgrades for the individual’s technological arsenal (Dyer-Witheford, 1999). Creating new markets for ICTs requires the privatization of previously public processes and spaces, as well as the commodification of the previously uncommodified.

Sciadas’ (2006) study of Canadians’ spending patterns details how the increased use of ICTs has led to an increase in ICT spending, as individuals strive to keep up with the technological demands of their new activities. Preceding the rise in spending, Weisberg (2000) documents that, in the 1990s there was a significant increase in the number of technology ads on television. This rise can be seen as an input seeking to reshape the conceptual systems of Canadians to include the “common sense” idea that personal ICTs are both necessary and desirable. Between 1997 and 2003, the average household spending on ICTs in Canada increased from $2118 to $2780 (Sciadas, 2006). Sciadas (2006) notes that this increase “is remarkable as it happened over a period where ICT prices plummeted” (p.18). Computer prices fell 10% between 2002 and 2003 alone (Sciadas, 2006). Thus, the increased spending is indicative of the purchasing of multiple new technologies to participate in digital culture, signaling participation in new markets.

The rise of online spaces and their associated technologies has advanced the fetishization of
The fetishization of information echoes in texts which champion the rise of the Information Age as an age of great enlightenment – based on the faulty premise that access to information will translate fluidly into knowledge, knowledge into democracy, and so on (Dyer-Witheford, 1999; Mosco, 2004). However, “more information does not necessarily lead to more knowledge” (Comor, 2002, p.240). As Preston (2002) suggests, the promise of the Information Age, “rarely extends beyond the cul-de-sac of an information-consuming, but ‘know-less society’” (p.234).

While the amount of information available has increased exponentially in digital spaces, this information is intended primarily for consumption. As such, the constant stream of information available in digital spaces encourages users to develop an appetite for sustained content consumption, less than constant knowledge production.

In addition to the fetishization of information, the digitization of social practices is central to their commodification (Mosco, 2002). Social networking sites playing a critical role in this process, although they were not created with the expressed purpose of assisting in the neoliberal project. Here, Castree’s (2009) observation about clock time is instructive. “Clock time was not created by capitalism... but it is assuredly central to this system’s mode of operation” (p.39). Within the neoliberal economic system, social networking sites are used to create new markets through commodifying the relationships that they support. These spaces also facilitate the commodification of the self, and of social relationships. Hearn (2008) explains that the process of creating an online persona, and performing socially through this identity involves “a form of self-presentation singularly focused on attracting attention and acquiring cultural and monetary value” (p.213). Again returning to Putnam’s generational change thesis, when individuals are focused on self-branding in the commodified social realm, civic engagement becomes a secondary concern unless it can be incorporated into the performance.
The advancement of the promotional self occurring within social networks not only creates potential new markets, but also does so in a way that addresses the needs of the current economy. Increasing resource scarcity threatens neoliberalism's impetus for continual growth (Harvey, 2010). However, online social relations contribute to a larger digitization project which "expands the commodification of communication content by extending the range of opportunities to measure and monitor, package and repackage information and entertainment" (Mosco, 2002, p.261). The content which users create and share can be monitored by marketers to improve the effectiveness of their communication with target markets (Dyer-Witheford, 1999; Hearn, 2008). Increasingly, corporations are inviting individuals to donate their content. This process of content soliciting makes online communication with consumers quite lucrative for corporations, as free content can be packaged and sold with a minimal input of socially necessary labour time (SNLT). SNLT is the time input "required to produce a commodity under the 'normal' conditions of production and with the 'average' degree of skill and intensity" (Castree, 2009, p.39). Profits are generated when the amount of SNLT required for production is reduced. The content generated in online spaces has excellent potential to support the extraction of surplus value by providing free inputs into the process of production.

Rising perception of time poverty

While claims of time loss rise (Abma, 2010; Menzies, 2005), the amount of daily leisure time for Canadians has remained virtually constant for the past thirty years (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2010). As data from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada does not account for Canadian leisure levels prior to the neoliberal turn, the use value of this data set is limited for this discussion. Following the rise of neoliberal economic policy, the distribution of leisure time became increasingly uneven with the largest portions going to workers coerced into early retirement, with highly educated, high wage earners working longer hours (Comor, 2000).
From the available data, what is known is that trends of increasing perceptions of time-poverty, paired with a maintained or increased amount of leisure time have been documented in the United States (Putnam, 2001; Sullivan, 2008; Szollos, 2009), Australia (Goodin, Rice, Bittman, & Saunders, 2004) and Britain (Burchardt, 2010; Gershuny, 2005; Robinson & Godbey, 2005). The number of individuals reporting heightened perceptions of time-poverty have risen continually during the past thirty years (Szollos, 2009). Comparing survey responses from 1965 and 1992, Wajcman (2008) found that the percentage of 18-64 year old participants who reported always feeling rushed increased from 24 to 38 percent.

Although perceptions of time-poverty are widespread, specific demographics are experiencing a time-poverty rooted in increased demands for time. These groups include single parents (Goodin et al., 2004), working mothers (Wajcman, 2008), and highly educated, high status individuals (Sullivan, 2008) whom Gershuny (2005) has named “the superordinate working class” (p.290). Goodin et al. (2004) note that these demographics are less likely to experience perceived-time-poverty, while young adults without children are the most likely to report it. This conclusion is supported by the recent Harris Decima poll reporting that an increasing number of Canadians under the age of thirty-five feel rushed and have increasingly less time to accomplish tasks (Abma, 2010, CNW Group, 2010).

Several conceptual models have been proposed to assist in separating experiences of perceived and real time-poverty. Szollos (2009) defines chronic time poverty as comprising an objective time shortage and a subjective feeling of being rushed. Goodin et al. (2004) distinguish between discretionary and free time: with the former equaling what is traditionally defined as leisure time, “time that is not allocated to either paid work, unpaid work, or personal care” (Statistics Canada, 2006, para 6.). Free time is then the time that is leftover for leisure activities, recognizing that individuals
frequently commit more time than required to their various forms of work (Goodin et al., 2004). The problem inherent in this model results from the “necessary time” values which Goodin et al. (2004) propose to define the appropriate amount of time allotted for each task – a problem that the authors recognize (Goodin, et al. 2004). While this study advances the much needed nuancing of leisure time definitions, the subjectivity inherent in ascribing “necessary” time to paid and unpaid work is problematic (Burchardt, 2010). Realizing this, Burchardt (2010) proposes an alternate conception whereby an individual’s decisions regarding how to allocate time are seen as constrained by available resources and responsibilities. Thus, if an individual has a substantial amount of financial resources and few responsibilities, he can opt to enjoy increased amounts of leisure time while the individual with inadequate financial resources must commit her time to secure the wage required to afford her basic necessities (Burchardt, 2010). This model is helpful for considering the role that neoliberal ideology plays in shaping perceptions of time-poverty through the individual’s recognition of what constitutes a resource and a responsibility.

In addition to these models, Wajcman (2008), citing Rosa, offers three categories for understanding how perceptions of time become accelerated: technological acceleration, acceleration of social change, and the pace of life. Technological acceleration refers to the increasing speed with which one can accomplish tasks, such as communicating with ICTs (Wajcman, 2008). Accelerating social change includes reducing the institutional stability of one’s family, community, and employment (Wajcman, 2008). Finally, accelerating pace of life involves the speeding up of the creation and distribution of cultural texts and the completion of tasks (Wajcman, 2008). An accelerated culture is one wherein technological acceleration and growing time scarcity occur simultaneously (Wajcman, 2008). The previously discussed explosion of the ICT market is indicative of technological acceleration. In a neoliberal society, where social security has been substantially eroded, social stability is radically reduced. So how has the pace of life accelerated to create an accelerated culture,
and how does this culture affect perceptions of time-poverty?

Perceptions of time are altered by the blurring of boundaries between personal and public life (Graham, 1999). As technologies from email to Blackberry Messaging increase the ability to communicate with one another continuously, regardless of time or distance, so too increases the expectation for immediate responses (Menzies, 2005). In the wired landscape, there is no such thing as time off. With the demand for constant communication, the labour inherent in these processes can quickly devour the discretionary time that was previously relegated for leisure. Further, constant communication fractures leisure time, which can lead to the perception that the total amount of time available is diminished (Wajcman, 2008). Robinson and Godbey (2005) suggest that the commodification of leisure practices in the digital landscapes increase perceptions of time-poverty as personal leisure becomes a publicly performed act of consumption. The consumption imperative inherent in leisure time within digital landscapes overwhelms one’s sense of free time (Robinson & Godbey, 2005).

As technological saturation and expectations for individuals to communicate continuously have increased, the practice of multitasking has become a necessary survival mechanism. The percentage of individuals reporting that they multitask “most of the time” increased from 37% in 1975 to 55% in 2001 (Robinson & Godbey, 2005, p.421). Kenyon’s (2008) study identifies that up to 95% of the population multitasks for one-third of the day, and that this amount increases with time spent online. Using time-diary data to capture the practice of performing two or more activities simultaneously, Kenyon (2008) estimates that “multitasking ‘adds’ on average more than seven hours to each day, totaling an addition of more than 50 hours to the average week” (p.303). This equals a 45% increase to the length of a waking day (Kenyon, 2008).
The performance of multiple tasks simultaneously impacts both perceived-time-poverty and participation in civic activities. Multitasking creates a new temporal experience of time density (Sullivan, 2008). This increased temporal density is exhausting, and can require individuals to disengage during their leisure time as a result (Wajcman, 2008). Kenyon (2008) notes successful multitasking is possible only with activities which demand less cognitive processing and attention. Social activities can be multitasked fairly easily while engaging with a complex problem is less conducive to this practice (Kenyon, 2008). Civic activities, such as engaging with nuanced social issues, or policy recommendations, lose favour with the multitasking masses as they cannot be performed simultaneously with other tasks.

Beyond considerations of multitasking, Gershuny (2005) and Sullivan (2008) suggest that perceived-time-poverty is, in fact, a social performance which seeks to assert status. The lengthening work day of the upper class has created a superordinate working class (Gershuny, 2005). This increased time demand for the affluent reshapes the “common sense” understanding of how time ought to be spent. Considering the celebration of billionaires in market populist discourses, and the related notion of the market as a meritocracy (Frank, 2000), perceived-time-poverty as performance becomes a plausible explanation for the rising reports of busyness. Further, Sullivan (2008) suggests that the performance of busyness extends beyond work time to leisure time. Individuals are increasing the density of their leisure experience, demonstrating a preoccupation with increasing the quantitative amount of leisure compressed into each experience, a “voraciousness” of cultural consumption” (Sullivan, 2008, p.15).

The densification of leisure time, multitasking, and perceptions of accelerated culture play critical roles in persuading consumers to accelerate their consumption patterns. Without accelerated
consumption, there is a crisis of production with the amount of goods produced exceeding the demand, thereby diminishing rates of profit return (Comor, 2008). As such, the new economy requires restless consumers with insatiable appetites for content and products alike.

The Rogers Wireless $10,000 Question commercial demonstrates how this imperative is communicated. In this spot, a promotional team is walking through the stands at a soccer game. The team poses a “$10,000 question” to the crowd (Image 2), which the first male character attempts to answer using his smart-phone to find the necessary information (Image 3). When his Internet connection drops (Image 4), the second character shouts out the answer. He then stands up, smart-phone raised in victory overhead as the crowd applauds (Image 5). While one is more successful than the other, both of the ad’s central characters are demonstrating their unending connectivity. Even while acting as spectators at a soccer game, the men are using their smart-phones to remain connected to the Internet. As such, they are multitasking as needed, densifying their leisure time. There is also an allegorical tale here, regarding a failure to maintain connectivity and the crucial need for speed as the second character manages to best the first with his fast, constant Internet connectivity. Reaffirming Gershuny (2005) and Sullivan’s (2008) suspicion, the man who succeeds in his performance of multitasking is celebrated.
Generation C

In 2004, Trendwatching.com announced that they had discovered a new generation: Generation C (Kalmus, Pruiulmann-Vengerfeldt, Runnel, Siibak, 2009). Since their unveiling, this new generation has been celebrated by marketers with an optimism that echoes the promises of connectivity made at the dawn of the Information Age (see Frank, 2000; Mosco, 2004). According to the enthusiasts at Booz & Company (2010),

As they grow up, this highly connected generation will live "online" most of their waking hours, comfortably participate in social networks with several hundred or more contacts, generate and consume vast amounts of formerly private information, and carry with them a sophisticated "personal cloud" that identifies them in the converged online and offline worlds (p.1).

Reviewing the available documentation about Generation C raises questions regarding the generation's attributes and authenticity. First, who is and is not a member of Generation C remains unclear. Trendwatching.com (2004, 2007) describes this group as not belonging to any one age cohort, a sentiment shared by Dye (2007) as she reports to her readers that Generation C, "they're you (and me)" (p.38). Other authors are more committed to the notion of age cohorts, defining Generation C as 21 and under (Booz & Company, 2010), 11-18 (Kalmus et al., 2009), or 13-29 (Nielsenwire, 2010d).

The lack of a working definition for this generation extends to the meaning of the "C". Originally, Trendwatching.com (2004) declared that it stood for "content". In 2007, however, they changed their position, and proposed that this was Generation Cash (Trendwatching.com, 2007). Beyond these suggestions, just about every word beginning with c that has a positive connotation has been suggested, including: connect, communicate, and change (Booz & Company, 2010); content, creation, and creativity (Kalmus et al., 2009); creators and consumers (Dye, 2007); with the broadest
suggestion coming from Dan Pankraz of DDB Sydney. In a speech at Nielsen's Consumer 360 conference, Pankraz told his audience that the C stood for “constant connectivity, collaboration, change, co-creation, chameleons, cyborgs, curiosity. But most of all, Gen C is the 'Connected Collective' consumer,” (Nielsenwire, 2010d, para. 2).

Pankraz’s comments illustrate a pivotal point about this purported generation. Above all, marketers celebrate this group for their capability to create content and consume avidly. Generation C promises to realize Toffler’s (1970) vision of the prosumer, intertwining practices of production and consumption. This is clearly the reason why marketers developed the notion of Generation C, as it is a mechanism for the market to define a generation and promote this identity back to the generation’s members. Moreover, this process of naming has allowed marketers to ascribe market-friendly attributes onto this group: specifically their eagerness to create content – thereby reducing the socially necessary labour time inputs into commodities sold to this demographic – as well as demonstrating the previously mentioned “voraciousness” of cultural consumption (Sullivan, 2008, p.15). The discourses detailing Generation C’s behaviours not only articulate technological optimism, but reinforce market populism: the avenues of agency open to this group are based in consumption, the new version of civic engagement.

Celebrations of the creative capacities of this group are harnessed in “democratic” content creation campaigns which encourage youth to create content for corporations as an exercise of personal empowerment and political engagement. A recent example of this is Kotex’s Ban the Bland campaign (Image 6). By contributing designs to Kotex for their line of feminine hygiene products, “you can make your mark on feminine care and the world around you” (KCWW, 2010, para. 2). Kotex continues its rallying cry by declaring that the time has come for women to be liberated from a culture that shies away from talking about sexual health (KCWW, 2010). There is an irony worth
noting here that a company which peddles its menstrual products with the more pleasant 
euphemism “feminine protection” has taken up this fight for frankness. Not surprisingly, the promised 
change that Kotex uses to engage young women in content creation has less to do with advancing a 
feminist agenda, and much more to do with advancing profits.

Positioning products with higher ideals is certainly not a new mechanism for generating sales. Jhally 
(2000) identifies that, beginning in the 1920s, advertising “started to connect commodities... with the 
powerful images of a deeply desired social life the people said they wanted” (31). Generation C-
directed campaigns reaffirm the conceptual frame of market populism, but also massage the 
audience’s self-identity to incorporate aspects of the Generation C identity. As Pricewaterhouse 
Cooper (2011b) explains, “companies need to anticipate, identify and provide what consumers want 
– or what consumers will realize they want once they experience it” (p.1). Kotex’s audience is 
encouraged to self-identify as subscribing to the Generation C conceptual system by recognizing the 
empowerment inherent in contributing free content to a corporate advertising campaign. Moreover, 
the audience can agree to participation recognizing that they have something unique to share. There 
is very much a celebration of the atomized actor connected to a community of atomized actors 
through the benevolent corporation inherent in the Ban the Bland campaign. As a result, this 
campaign not only celebrates notions of Generation C as creative content contributors, but also as 
individuals who understand communication and civic engagement as computer- and corporation-
mediated activities.

The rise of Generation C is not responsible for the decline of civic engagement amongst young 
Canadians. Rather, it symbolizes the advancement of a market populist conceptual system which 
directs individuals away from the public realm of civic engagement to the private realm of 
consumption. Generation C’s discourses further this transition in two ways: by reinforcing the
emancipatory narratives of the Information Age and market populism while accelerating perceptions of time for members of the generation. Through cultural texts including advertising, Generation C’s notions of being continuously plugged in and multitasking are normalized. Both the Kotex and Rogers campaigns base their narratives on an unnamed premise. Rogers assumes their audience shared the experience of the need for continual connectivity while Kotex assumes the recognition that new is best, allowing the audience to abandon traditional forms of civic engagement to seek empowerment through creating free content. By not naming the perceived need for continual connection, and the desire to employ new avenues of engagement, these ads relegate such notions to the realm of unquestioned “common sense”, thereby forming part of the audience’s conceptual system.
Make Your Mark on the Future of Feminine Protection

You can help color the plain world of period products. Share your vision with us and you could be one of three girls who will win a chance to work with Patricia Field.

Restyle Your Period Bag
Design a carrying bag

Add Some Flair to Your Protection
Design a pad

Show Off Your Personal Style
Create an inspiration board

(KCWW, 2010)
Generation C by numbers

While marketers profess to have a nuanced understanding of Generation C, there is little statistical information available to substantiate these suppositions. The lack of definition regarding who comprises this generation certainly limits the ability of researchers to assess the accuracy of Generation C’s constructed identity. In Canada, the only comprehensive documentation of this group is a 2009 study from the Centre francophone d’informatisation des organisations (CEFRIO). With the stated aim of providing a better description of the generation, their uses of technology, and the affects of this use on their world view, CEFRIO surveyed 2020 youths aged 12-24 via phone and Internet. Data collected from the 65 question survey was then compared against findings from Statistics Canada, NETendances, and Ipsos Reid (Réjean, 2009). Additionally, CEFRIO conducted five discussion groups after the survey to augment their findings with qualitative interviews. Based in Montreal, Quebec City, and Ottawa, these discussions involved 52 participants aged 16-24 (Réjean, 2009).

CEFRIO’s data, when contrasted against the NETendances report’s measurement of levels of ICT use amongst all Quebec residents, identifies that youth are the heaviest ICT using demographic in the province (Réjean, 2009). CEFRIO also documents an increase in the amount of time spent online by this demographic, from 13 hours per week, as previously identified by Ipsos Reid, to 16 hours per week (Réjean, 2009). Respondents aged 18-24 were more likely to be heavy Internet users. 40% reported spending more 21 hours or more per week online, compared with 25% of 12-17 year old respondents (Réjean, 2009). Aside from recording a spike in usage, which Réjean (2009) attributes to a continual trend of increasing time spent online, Quebec's Generation C members' behaviours resemble behaviours of members elsewhere.

What they did not resemble was the marketer-created identity of the generation. Quebec youth use
the Internet to communicate with friends, find entertainment, and search for information.

Respondents reported using the Internet to chat (74%), listen to and download music (72%), and participate in social networking sites (51%) (Réjean, 2009). As such, "au Québec comme ailleurs, les spectateurs sont plus nombreux que les créateurs" (Réjean, 2009, p.9). The most popular content creation process respondents reported doing in the previous month was writing a blog (19%), followed by uploading photos (13%), and uploading video (12%) (Réjean, 2009). The propensity to create content increases with time spent online, as 24% of heavy users – individuals who spend more than 21 hours per week online – had personal blogs, compared with 14% of light users – individuals who spend ten hours or less per week online (Réjean, 2009). Still, even content creation levels amongst heavy users are not indicative of a generation preoccupied with creation.

CEFRIÖ’s study included interviews with marketers (Réjean, 2009). These interviews further explain the impetus behind campaigns like Ban the Bland. Marketers recognize the importance of connecting with this generation to increase revenues. Drawing on ancient philosophy, agence BW president, Justin Kingsley explains the importance of interactive, content-generating advertising. “Confucius disait: "Dis-moi et j’oublierai; montre-moi, je me souviendrai; implique-moi et je comprendrai. En marketing, cela s’applique quand on veut rejoindre les jeune” (Réjean, 2009, p.21).

The push to engage youth in content creation has benefits beyond reducing the corporation’s inputs of SNLT. Only 49% of CEFRIÖ’s respondents ages 16-24 had purchased a product online in the three months prior to the survey. Amongst heavy users, however, this percentage increased to 58. Réjean (2009) identifies two factors which influence online consumption patterns: the belief that consuming online is more economical, and the amount of time spent online, with heavy users more willing to participate. If content creation increases individual’s time online, it may be able to increase their consumption.
Social networking sites have a specialized role in increasing online consumption for Generation C. Despite using the Internet to search for product information, the most influential factor affecting Generation C’s purchase decisions is friends and family (Réjean, 2009). Marketers recognize the need to penetrate these social ties, believing that viral marketing campaigns represent a successful option to reach this end. As marketer Seth Rodin explains, “allumez l’énigme qui enflammera les réseaux de consommateurs, ôtez-vous du chemin et laissez-les discuter entre eux” (Réjean, 2009, p. 26). Designing advertisement content which can be easily shared via social networking sites allows for these discussions to begin, connecting the influence of family and friends to products.

While participation in online consumer behaviour is on the rise, Generation C’s participation in traditional realms of civic engagement continues to decline. 46% of CEFRIOSO respondents do not vote consistently (Réjean, 2009). Despite celebrations of the Internet as a new political forum, 46% of female and 34% of male CEFRIOSO respondents reported never using the Internet to give their opinion on social or political questions. How they did direct their political energy was through signing online petitions and evaluating their consumption choices. 56% of discussion group participants had signed an Internet-based petition while 52% reported choosing products based on companies’ stated commitments to addressing social issues (Réjean, 2009). Beyond these activities, 58% of youth reported not participating in any causes, universal or local in scope (Réjean, 2009).
Evaluating CEFRIIO

Considering the positive correlation between time spent online, content creation, and consumption, explains marketers' celebration of the idea of Generation C as constantly connected co-creating chameleons (Nielsenwire, 2010d). Moreover, increasing individual's self-recognition within the identity of Generation C increases their likelihood of consuming online and creating free content. The notion proposed by Booz & Company (2010) that member of Generation C carry a primary digital device which keeps them wired into online networks 24 hours a day is less based in reality, and more based in the market developing new ways to secure future growth. Pricewaterhouse Coopers (2010b) report that increasing the customer engagement experience increases the consumer's willingness to pay for content. While waiting for Generation C to become more fully integrated into online spaces, marketers have already redirected their online advertising budgets to target youth where they congregate in social networking and photo uploading sites. Comscore (2011a) recorded a 15.6 billion increase in number of advertising impressions achieved through social networking sites, and 11.1 billion for photo sharing sites. As a result, advertisers are investing more money into promotions on these sites (Comscore, 2011a).

Comparing CEFRIIO’s study with other Canadian research assists in developing a clearer image of Generation C. While there are disagreements about who is included in the generation, various statistics mapping the behaviours and attitudes of Canadians ages 12-34 are considered in this paper. The rise of time spent online by Generation C members identified in CEFRIIO’s study matches data recently released by Comscore (2011a) showing that Canadians as a whole spent more time online and had more Internet visits per quarter than any other nationality. The increased participation in online activity has occurred in all income brackets (ComScore, 2011a).

More specific to Generation C, CANSIM’s time series data maps the rise in time spent online
amongst Canadians ages 34 and younger (Statistics Canada, 2010c). The percentage of young Canadians who accessed the Internet from any location – including home, school, and the library – increased from 88.9% in 2005 to 93.1% in 2007 to 96.5% in 2009 (Statistics Canada, 2010c). The length of time spent online has also increased. In 2005, 72.6% of the young Canadians online used the Internet for personal use at least once per day (Statistics Canada, 2010c). By 2009, this percentage had increased to 82.9% (Statistics Canada, 2010c).

While there have been significant changes to the number of Canadians online, and the amount of time they spend online, their online practices have not changed substantially in recent years. Email remains the most common online activity for Canadians in 2009 according to that year's Canadian Internet Use Survey (Statistics Canada, 2010c, Comscore, 2011a). Contrasting the lower content creation participation reported by CEFRIIO, 45% of Canadian Internet Use Survey (CIUS) respondents under the age of 30 reported “contribut[ing] content or to participate in discussion groups (blogging, message boards, posting images)” in the past twelve months (Statistics Canada, 2010, p.14). This is an increase over the 33.6% of 16-34 year old respondents in the 2007 CIUS who reported contributing content (Veenhof et al., 2008). However, the discrepancy between CIUS’s and CEFRIIO’s statistics could be explained by the increased time-frame provided CIUS respondents – twelve months rather than CEFRIIO’s three months. There is further discrepancy between the percentage cited by Kalmus et al. (2009) and CEFRIIO’s statistic, with the former arguing that 64% of youth aged 12-17 are engaged in content creation. Dye (2007) suggests that the percentage is between 33-50% for American teenagers. Ipsos Reid’s (2009) Interactive Report for the first quarter of 2009 reports that 31% of Canadians between the ages 18-34 uploaded videos in the previous three months, while 46% reported both playing online games and participating in online discussions. The variance of these statistics will be discussed further in the methodological considerations section.
The declines in voting identified by CEFRIO are indicative of a larger trend. Despite 55.9% of youth 18-24 reporting that they voted in the last federal election (Statistics Canada, 2011), data collected by Elections Canada (n.d.) reports much lower turnout. Young voter turnout was 37% in 2004, 43.8% in 2006, and 37.4% in 2008's federal election (Elections Canada, n.d.). In fact, "since 1984, estimated voter turnout of the two youngest cohorts has been lower than all other age cohorts" (Barnes, 2010, p.5). Blais and Loewen (2011) identify that this trend is not limited to Canada, but has also been documented in the United States, Britain, and Finland. Voter participation generally increases with age - a process known as the lifecycle effect (Barnes, 2010). An historical analysis of voter trends amongst younger Canadian cohorts, however, demonstrates a diminishing lifecycle effect wherein voter participation with these groups never rises substantially (Barnes, 2010).

Changes to patterns of non-voting civic participation are less clear than the voting decline. This is largely due to the definition used to measure this type of participation. Most analyses of non-voting civic participation in Canada are based on data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS). To gauge levels of non-voting civic activities, the GSS asks respondents to select all activities they have participated in during the previous year. The activities listed are: following the news daily; searching for information on a political issue; writing to a newspaper or politician to express an opinion; joining a political party; volunteering with a political party; signing a petition; boycotting a product; attending a public meeting; speaking at a public meeting; and participating in a protest or march (Milan, 2005). Focusing on searching for political information, contacting a paper or politician; volunteering for and/or joining a political party, Keown (2007) recorded the frequency of these activities amongst GSS respondents, sorting the results into age brackets. When considering the weight of these actions as equal, Keown (2007) identified that Canadians between the ages of 19-24 are 1.2 times more likely to participate in non-voting civic activities than citizens ages 45-64. Using the same GSS data, Milan's (2005) study breaks down participation in various activities by age to
demonstrate which activities are most popular with which bracket.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in non-voting civic activities</th>
<th>15-21</th>
<th>22-29 (reference group)</th>
<th>30-44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follow the news daily</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for political information</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote to a newspaper or politician</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed a petition</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycotted a product</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a public meeting</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke at a public meeting</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in a protest or march</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most popular forms of non-voting civic activity for Canadians between ages 15-29 in this data set are searching for political information, following the news and signing petitions (Milan, 2005). The 31 percentage point difference between the 15-21 and 30-44 age brackets, however, suggests that following the news may be falling out of favour with younger cohorts. Milan's (2005) sorting of activity popularity by age bracket is helpful for identifying which types of activity are becoming less popular.

Regrettably, the latter half of Milan's (2005) study is devoted to counting how many non-voting activities members of the various brackets reported completing in the year prior to the 2003 GSS. This analysis is confused by ascribing equal weight to the various tasks. While reporting that more than half of young adults completed one activity, with 35% reporting participation in two to four activities (Milan, 2005) does not indicate the level of participation of these individuals. The variation of level of commitment between a young adult who signs an online petition and one who does not is likely not that significant. As a result, the analyses of GSS data regarding the political involvement of young Canadians does not contribute much to the discussion of changing levels of engagement.

The rise of ethical consumption identified by CEFIRIO and explored by Turcotte does offer some
exploration into how the non-voting civic activities of Canadians are changing. Turcotte (2010) notes that from the mid 1970s to 2000s, boycotting was the form of non-traditional political participation with the biggest growth. Participation in this activity was informed by household income, as 44% of individuals with after-tax household incomes exceeding $100,000 choosing to boycott products, compared with 24% of individuals with incomes between $40,000-59,000 (Turcotte, 2010). This form of political action is associated with what Turcotte (2010) calls "post-materialist values" (p.22). These values centre around self-expression, with emphasis on autonomy, quality of life, and rebelling against political authority (Turcotte, 2010). What Turcotte identifies as post-materialist mirrors the values Frank (2000) recognizes as central to market populism. As such, the increase of ethical consumption should be seen as an extension of the conceptual system that encourages citizens to demonstrate their political opinion through market participation. The effectiveness of this conceptual system to inform behaviour is apparently on the rise with Generation C whose self-reported behaviours in CEFRIIO demonstrate an increase over behaviours previously recorded by the GSS.

While it is possible to document ethical consumption behaviours, time series measures of volunteerism are unusable for this investigation due to compulsory community service initiatives. Starting in Ontario in 1999, followed by British Columbia, the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Newfoundland and Labrador, high school students have been mandated to complete a set amount of community service in order to graduate (The Current, 2010). As a result, volunteer numbers for the younger half of Canada's Generation C cannot speak to a withdrawal from community participation. However, this legislating of mandatory service suggests that government officials may be aware of a decline in self-directed participation.

Beyond these problematic data sets, the analyses of Veenhof (2006), and Turcotte (2007) offer a statistical starting point for understanding the relationship between increased time online and
decreased civic participation. Veenhof’s (2006) analysis of GSS data related to Internet use and community involvement identifies a negative correlation between time spent online with amounts of time spent sleeping, working, watching television, and socializing. Most notably, Internet users who spent more than one hour online daily spent an additional 119 minutes alone per day (Veenhof, 2006). There was also a negative correlation between weekend use of the Internet and time spent with friends (Veenhof, 2006).

Analyzing four GSS cycles which focused on time use, Turcotte (2007) details changes in time spent with family between 1986-2005. In 1986, workers engaged in activities with their family members for an average of 4.2 hours daily (Turcotte, 2007). By 2005, this average decreased by 45 minutes to 3.4 hours (Turcotte, 2007). The percentage of workers who spent one hour or less with their family per workday increased from 9% in 1986 to 14% in 2005 (Turcotte, 2007). The amount of time that workers spent with friends also declined from 44 to 19 minutes, while time alone increased continuously from 2.2 to 2.9 hours per workday (Turcotte, 2007). Turcotte (2007) attributes these changes, in part, to the rise in eating meals and watching television alone – activities which were previously shared with the family. Despite these changes, 33% of workers “reported in 2005 that they would like to spend more time alone” (Turcotte, 2007, p.2).

Currently, there are no detailed data sets available with which to assess the level of perceived-time-poverty amongst Generation C. A recent Harris Decima poll reported that an increasing number of Canadians under the age of thirty-five feel rushed and have increasingly less time to accomplish tasks (Abma, 2010, CNW Group, 2010). Additionally, Goodin et al.’s (2004) study of perceived-time-poverty differences between demographics identified that younger adults without children had the greatest amount of discretionary time, but the greatest perception of time-poverty. Here, it is
instructive to consider that Pankraz claims that members of Generation C consume an estimated average of 13 hours of content per day (Nielsenwire, 2010d). Such avid consumption requires equally avid multitasking. If multitasking leads to perceived-time-poverty, as Sullivan argues (2008), this likely explains the heightened perception of time-poverty amongst younger adults, including members of Generation C (Goodin et al., 2004).

**Methodological Considerations**

Attempts to pinpoint levels of content creation amongst members of Generation C has proven difficult, as demonstrated by the variation in percentages reported. There are two important things to consider regarding this challenge. First, just as there is no working definition of who is included in Generation C, there is no universal definition employed when measuring content creation. Various researchers have included posting on blogs, uploading videos, sharing pictures, participating in online forums and playing games. However, there is no gauge here to ascertain whether any of these activities is generating content in a normative sense which is implied in Generation C's narrative. Rather than creating packets of information to share with other individuals online, it seems more likely that what is being measured by this question of content creation is how much of a digital trail from which marketers can extract data young users are generating. For example, the inclusion of uploading photos in the definition of content creation immediately skews the results. Any person who is active on Facebook – including 85.6% of Canadian Internet users (Comscore, 2011b) – is likely to have uploaded at least one profile picture. It is problematic to consider the performance of self-branding inherent in the uploading of photos to such spaces as creating content when it is really more a social performance. As such, any definition of content creation that includes uploading picture without specifying the intention or content of the upload offers an inaccurate data set.
Inaccuracy is furthered by the time-frames for which members of Generation C are expected to report their content creation. The twelve month time frame used by CIUS is so large that it increases the likelihood of participants overestimating participation levels (Gershuny, 2005; Robinson & Godbey, 2005). Robinson and Godbey (2005) argue that the only way to capture accurate data about online behaviours is through time diaries in which respondents document all of their activities in a 24 hour period. Such a research method also prevents the skewing of data by one time participation in content creation activities.

The ability to map a decline in civic participation in Canada is limited by the GSS' definition of non-voting civic participation, and how the related data has been analyzed by Keown (2007) and Milan (2005). Signing a petition online requires virtually no commitment while speaking at a public meeting or volunteering with a political party demonstrate much higher commitment. As such, these activities can not be grouped within the same GSS question.

Similarly, time use studies conducted by Statistics Canada should adopt Kenyon's (2008) methodological mechanisms for capturing multitasking data. As multitasking becomes increasingly common, data that does not document this behaviour will be an invalid representation of time use. For documenting perceptions of accelerated time, Szollos (2009) recommends replacing survey collection methods with time-diaries to increase accuracy of activity reporting. Adding beeper interviews – where respondents are paged to record their feelings at random intervals – allows for capturing the subjective perception of time-poverty that diaries and surveys accurately cannot collect.
Returning to Putnam

The fracturing of the media landscape into self-selected pockets of content has potentially decreased the political literacy of Generation C, and thus their level of engagement. As this group can opt to avoid or minimize exposure to political information, Blais and Loewen (2011) believe it is likely that this erasure reduces the ability of youth to navigate political discourses. Considering Kenyon’s (2008) discovery that tasks which demand increased cognitive processing and attention are less likely to be multitasked, the multitasking Generation C is likely to avoid political media in favour of media with a lighter cognitive load.

It is also worth noting that declines in youth voting in Canada began in 1984, during the ascent of neoliberalism and market populism. Similarly, the countries identified by Blais and Loewen (2011) as having experienced declines in young voter turnout have adopted neoliberal political economic systems – a connection which the authors note as a possible influence on the decline. While Frank (2000) accounts for the prevalence of market populist discourse in America, this paper is unable to account for the existence of such discourses in Britain and Finland. Blais and Loewen’s (2011) report that Canadian youth are “less likely to construe voting as a civic duty” (p.16) echoes the market populist propensity for replacing collective democratic activity with individual consumption-centric actions (Frank, 2000). However, the ability to connect the rise of neoliberalism with the fall of civic participation is limited by a lack of longitudinal, and attitudinal data (Blais & Loewen, 2011).

Despite this lack of data, the discourse persuading young adults to adopt the individualistic path of consumption is aptly documented in the recent advertisement, Empower the People, for Motorola’s (2011) Xoom tablet. Drawing on the dystopian themes explored in Apple’s famous 1984 ad, Motorola’s narrative takes a noticeably different turn. In the Apple commercial, one individual
liberates the masses from tyranny – symbolizing the optimism inherent in the Information Age discourses of the time. The arrival of the personal computer promised to liberate the masses by connecting them with knowledge (Mosco, 2004). Motorola’s advertisement, by contrast, focuses on individual gain. The commercial begins with a scene of a young man waiting on a subway platform (Image 7). None too subtly, he is reading George Orwell’s 1984 on his Motorola Xoom (Image 8). While the young man is wearing a gray sweater and black pants, everyone else in the ad is wearing a white jumpsuit, complete with white headphones – a reference to Apple’s iPod. After taking the train, the young man uses his Xoom to find a florist. He then returns to the train where his love interest, a young woman wearing the white uniform of the masses, appears. In their shared office building, he pines for her from his glass cubicle. Again making use of his Xoom tablet, the protagonist takes a photo of the bouquet of flowers he has purchased. He then imports this picture into an animation software, with which he creates a short cartoon of a boy giving a girl a bouquet (Image 9). This animation is then transmitted to the Xoom tablet in the woman’s glass cubicle. She watches it (Image 10), then looks up to see the young man holding the bouquet. She removes her (iPod) ear buds with a look of wonder (Image 11). The commercial ends with these white words displayed on the black background of a Xoom screen: “the tablet to create a better world” (Motorola.com, 2011).

This advertisement includes many of the elements of both market populism’s and Generation C’s narratives. Most notably, the protagonist is living in constant connectivity, with all of his activities assisted by technology, specifically his Xoom tablet. The masses in this commercial realize Pankraz’s vision of Generation C as cyborgs – as everyone is wired in with their ear buds. The protagonist is celebrated for his uniqueness, represented through his attributes including his alertness, his manner of dress, the plants in his cubicle. Moreover, his reading of 1984 and rebellion against the white uniform suggest that he is resisting some unseen authority – a central theme in market populist
discourse (Frank, 2000). The young man’s ability to create an animation demonstrates his prowess with content creation, the primary activity of Generation C according to marketing legend (Trendwatching.com, 2004). The protagonist decides that the monotonous drone of modern life is not for him, indicating his desire to create change. Here is where Motorola’s story diverges from Apple’s. The Xoom hero has no interest in liberating the masses. Rather, he is interested in liberating himself and his love interest. While this flies in the face of Pankraz’s claim that Generation C thinks as a collective (Nielsenwire, 2010d), it represents the emphasis on individuality inherent in market populism’s narrative. The liberation achievable through the market is an individual reward, not a collective one (Frank, 2000). Suggesting that the tablet is a tool for improving the world reaffirms both the notion that Generation C’s content creation, and the consumption of new products are the appropriate avenues for realizing change within a neoliberal society. In sum, this piece demonstrates how advertising reaffirms conceptual systems and attempts to sway the behaviours of Generation C.

There is a second element of the Motorola ad that deserves consideration. The use of white headphones speaks to the atomization that iPods have created. Bull (2005) explains that the use of an iPod creates “technologically mediated private realm[s]” within public space (p.354). While Bull (2005) reports iPod users cherishing the ability to carry a private realm with them, Motorola taps into the resultant alienation in their sales pitch. Linking modern alienation with from iPod use, Motorola demonstrates their tablet as providing a means to break out of this atomized existence. As such, the proliferation of one leisure technology has created a market for a new technology to mitigate the former’s unintended consequences. While promising to empower users “to create a better world” it remains to be seen what new markets the tablet might create.
Conclusion: Forgetting what democracy looks like

Inherent to the functioning of an accelerated capitalist system, and market populism, is the preference for the new, and disdain for the old. Democratic processes have not been exempt from this valuation. The Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) identify that there has been a recent decline of participation in “key democratic indicators” such as voter turnout (Abelson, Gauvin, MacKinnon, & Watling, 2006, p.7). Rather than demonstrating concern towards this trend, CPRN suggests that Canadian youth have the solution. In a document tellingly titled *Youth Culture is Renewing Democracy, One Click at a Time*, the CPRN (2009) reassures its readers, “in our consultations with youth, they define political engagement in personal terms – not along party lines” (p.1). This reassurance is supported by Veenhof et al.'s (2008) suggestion that “traditional measures of civic participation, such as voting or watching the news, may not capture th[e] new forms of community participation and public engagement” (p.5). As a result, Veenhof et al. (2008) argue that statisticians must create a new measure to document political engagement 2.0. The re-conceptualizing of political engagement extends to the notion of democracy as well. In his address at Nielsen’s Consumer 360 conference, Pankraz declared that online content creation equals the “democratization of creativity” (Nielsenwire, 2010d, para. 10). However, as Preston (2002) cautions, “when we look beneath the glossy surface of such slogans to seek some enlightenment about the nature, direction and causes of socio-economic change... we are generally disappointed” (p.232).

There is great danger inherent in conflating democratic values with market values. As Ronaldo Munck (2002) argues,

Markets [equal] democracy only in the simplest of neoliberal economics textbooks, and even their representatives on Earth, such as the World Bank, now recognize the limitations for capitalism of global free market liberalism... Growing consumer choice (in
the North) simply cannot be equated with democratic citizenship (p.13).

The behavioural patterns of Generation C, while not representing a full-blown manifestation of marketers visions, embrace market populist conceptual systems to an alarming extent. Reversing the civic deficit requires recognizing how these practices support the growth and spread of the "anticivic contagion" (p.247) which Putnam identified.
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