

**REPRESENTATIONS OF POVERTY  
IN CANADA'S DAILY PRESS:  
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CONTENDING  
POVERTY PARADIGMS**

by

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**Representations Of Poverty In Canada's Daily Press: An Exploratory**

**Study Of Contending Poverty Paradigms**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which Canadian poverty is represented in mainstream Canadian news media. The examination begins with the dominant poverty paradigms that characterize current poverty discourse. These paradigms, identified as Individual Responsibility, Structural Responsibility, and the Culture of Poverty, help to structure the ways that poverty has been and continues to be articulated. The paradigm of Individual Responsibility suggests that the individual is ultimately responsible for his or her own socio-economic conditions. The paradigm of Structural Responsibility suggests that various socio-economic structures are responsible for the creation of poverty and the subsequent management of the poor. The Culture of Poverty paradigm and its Right Wing variant the Underclass suggest that due to isolation from the non-poor mainstream society, certain poor communities have developed a variety of specific and sometimes deviant characteristics and values that promote the reproduction of poverty within that community. This discussion is followed by a theoretical overview of representation, discourse, and the codes and techniques associated with the production of “objective” news. Here, this thesis discusses the importance of the inverted pyramid, frames of reference, primary definers, and constructed dichotomies. Finally, this thesis offers a content analysis of poverty articles as they appear over a 2-month period in The Vancouver Sun, The Vancouver Province, and The Globe and Mail, three large-circulation Canadian newspapers. Based upon this analysis, this thesis suggests that news media tend to reinforce beliefs associated with the paradigm of Structural Responsibility. This is due to such factors as news media’s preference for official and institutional interpretations of events and issues, the prevalence of stories about particular institutions and structural decisions, the dominance of stories written by generalists trained to recognize and maximize general newsworthiness, and the prevalence of event-based coverage.

## **Dedication**

To my mother, Faye Rafter, and the memory of my father, John Rafter, whose life-long commitments to social justice and equality of condition are undoubtedly reflected in these pages.

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## Introduction

Poverty is a widely recognizable condition. Mainstream exposure to the poor, from fictional characterizations and factual representation through entertainment and news media, to personal encounters with panhandlers and the homeless, facilitate general agreement that poverty is indeed a real phenomenon. This awareness does not mean that all members of society conceptualize poverty in the same way. Some view poverty as a choice; others view it as a condition forced upon the individuals. Still others view it as an economic necessity linked to the workings of the capitalist system. It is condemned, glorified, moralized, and historicized. And while many Canadians will never themselves be poor, most will experience the condition through a variety of media exposures.

News media are particularly important to conceptualizations of poverty. Celebrated as the ‘fourth estate’, news media are positioned and, perhaps more importantly, trusted to sift through the plethora of daily events in order to report those items deemed most important to audiences. Therefore, journalists have the hefty task of making sense of these events for audiences while simultaneously upholding the professional ideal of objectivity. For this reason, the way in which stories are told – that is, the representation of the event – is critically important to the presentation of poverty news.

This thesis is about the way in which Canadian poverty is represented in mainstream Canadian news media. It is not about defining poverty, an ideological activity laden with controversy and political promise. Nor is it concerned with characterizing the struggles of the poor, or documenting the injustices linked to economic strife. Instead, this thesis is about news-mediated portrayals of poverty and their connection to popular conceptualizations of the condition. In part, it is a test of the objectivity of news media, and in part is a study of the relationship between news and social discourses.

This thesis begins by establishing the current poverty paradigms that exist in society. These paradigms are ideological models that facilitate comprehension of conditions and concepts. They are what media scholars Robert Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao

(1998) explain as, "...a whole framework of enquiry including methods, concepts, propositions, theories, and blind spots" (p. 177). In this way, poverty paradigms are models of understanding that help to make sense of the complex condition.

While there are numerous ways in which poverty can be understood, this study is concerned with the three dominant paradigms present throughout academic poverty literature. These dominant poverty paradigms, having emerged out of longstanding competing ideologies and historical circumstance, are Individual Responsibility, Structural Responsibility, and Culture of Poverty and its Right-Wing version the Underclass.<sup>1</sup> These three paradigms provide insight into the ways in which poverty has been and continues to be articulated in dominant poverty discourse.

Before we begin our study, it is important to note that these dominant poverty paradigms share three defining characteristics. First, they all begin with the assumption that poverty, however it may be understood, exists. Second, all three paradigms assert that poverty is an undesirable and harmful condition. Third, each paradigm allocates blame for the existence of poverty to something or someone. It is in this last characteristic that differences between the paradigms emerge most overtly. Thus, to view poverty from within the limitations of each paradigm requires consideration of how poor people become poor and what can be done to alleviate this condition.

In addition to the discussion of paradigmatic characteristics, this thesis attempts to situate the paradigms in their historical context. Chapter 1 presents the paradigm of Individual Responsibility as emergent from classical liberal ideals and their articulation through the English Poor Laws, with particular emphasis on the Amendment Act of 1834. Chapter 2 presents the two competing paradigms, Structural Responsibility and the Culture of Poverty, as responses to classical liberal ideas of poverty, the perceived failings of the Poor Laws, and competing theories of structural inequality and social psychology.

Since this project is concerned with the way in which poverty is represented in Canadian news media, and in particular Canadian newspapers, it is necessary to examine

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that there are alternative attitudes that do not fall within the described paradigms, such as those that celebrate the poor for their assumed humility. However, while these perspectives may play a role in the construction of wider poverty discourse, they generally stop short of posing a threat to the dominant views, particularly because many are connected to or straddle dominant paradigms.

recent coverage of the issue. Chapter 3 introduces the news study by establishing the representational function of news. It provides a theoretical overview of discourse, representation, and techniques associated with the “regime of objectivity”<sup>2</sup>. Chapters 4 and 5 detail an analysis of news articles<sup>3</sup> pertaining to poverty as they occur in three popular Canadian newspapers: the Vancouver Sun, the Vancouver Province, and the Globe and Mail. Chapter 4 outlines the general characteristics of the entire sample, with emphasis on general topic areas and news values, and their relationship to the poverty paradigms. Chapter 5 examines two artificially constructed weeks for the types of poverty reported, accessed sources, and presented causes, effects, and solutions. Based upon this analysis, the study reveals which, if any, of the poverty paradigms is favoured by news media and therefore dominate popular news discourse.

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<sup>2</sup> The “regime of objectivity” is a useful term that refers to the processes and techniques associated with credible news reporting. It also reflects the understanding that all representation is subjective. It is a term used at length by Robert A. Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao (1998) in their book, *Sustaining Democracy? Journalism and the Politics of Objectivity*.

<sup>3</sup> This thesis is concerned with the representations of poverty in traditional news stories. These are stories, written in “inverted pyramid” format, demonstrate a clear attempt by the journalist to follow the “regime of objectivity” and to distance him/herself from the story. In this way, they are distinct from columns, editorials, and letters to the editor.

## **Chapter One: Liberalism, The Poor Laws, And The Individual Paradigm**

The dominant poverty paradigms that exist today are the result of longstanding representations of poverty articulated at official state and social levels. Much as today's globalized market economy emerged from the principles established by classical liberalism, so too do the poverty paradigms of today draw their origins from this period. Of the current dominant poverty paradigms, the Individual Responsibility paradigm is most directly related to the emergence of classical liberalism, its subsequent struggle with feudal toryism, and the establishment of the English Poor Laws, particularly the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. A brief examination of the poor laws reveals the historical ideology that characterizes this contemporary poverty paradigm.

### ***A Brief History: Liberalism and the Poor Laws***

Liberalism emerged against a backdrop of historical change. The 17<sup>th</sup> century brought with it the Enlightenment and its associated humanist principles. The idea that human beings were in fact rational beings in control of their own destiny signified a major break from the feudal approach that had been based on the idea that society had a relatively fixed natural hierarchy. The rise of reason and science only strengthened the move away from traditional messages regarding social structure and power.

Emerging in response to traditional conservatism and within a context of Enlightenment principles, liberal theorists sought to provide philosophical and ideological justification for the newly developing social and economic systems. Since the emergence of classical liberalism out of Europe in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, theorists such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill<sup>4</sup> developed and refined liberalism's defining elements, presenting the theory as a

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (1690), Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Jeremy Bentham's *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1859).

theoretical and social response to the conservative ideology of the ruling Tories.

Liberalism was posed as an ideology of liberation that could break the shackles of feudal hierarchy by asserting freedom and equality as natural characteristics of individuals.

Classical liberalism promoted equality among individuals. However, this version of equality was not all-encompassing. Instead of emphasizing ideals of equality of condition, the classical liberal view held that individuals were born equal in their ability to compete for unequal ends. Classical liberalism ultimately argued that hard work and perseverance would result in success and material rewards. Thus, as political scientists Joy Esbrey and Larry Johnston (1994) have noted upon reflection of the theoretical framework, “[t]he liberal is prepared to accept inequality *if* it is the result of hard work, or skill, or some other quality that makes the recipient of a privileged position deserving of that reward” (p. 90).

Classical liberalism also promoted the idea of freedom; specifically that human beings could control their own destinies (Horowitz and Horowitz, 1988, p. 190). This principle demonstrates a fundamental shift in attitude away from the church, and was largely fed by the humanistic principles and scientific method promoted by the Enlightenment. Previously, peasants had been indentured to both the aristocracy who housed them and the church who offered them salvation. They had not been owners of property but had been property themselves. In response, classical liberalism promoted the market as a space in which all members of society could participate and compete for property ownership. In principle, the market had no use for these established notions of power, but instead relied upon the rules of trade and competition. While class relations would persist, the ideology of classical liberalism held that they would be ignored by the invisible hand of the market. As the market economy began to grow, feudal relations diminished. Thus the shift from a society with a market to a market society took shape. The emerging market society was intrinsically linked to ideas of freedom, particularly in the form of competition.

Ideas of freedom also developed in the form of the commodification of labour. Feudal society had favoured a moral economy, in which the poor depended upon the charitable gestures of the upper classes. While the system entitled all members to basic subsistence, it simultaneously reaffirmed the moral superiority of the aristocracy through

their benevolence. The emergence of the market society saw the moral economy begin to vanish. Labourers no longer relied on the charity of the moral economy; instead, labour was viewed as “a commodity like all others, freely seeking its price” (W.A. Armstrong and J.P. Herzel quoted in Sherman, 2001, p. 9). Thus the freedom to sell one’s labour in the market place became a defining characteristic of freedom in general. This freedom was imbued with highly individualistic characteristics where success and failure were viewed as personal traits, distinct from the influence of greater society.

The ideals of classical liberalism appeared to be a clear break from feudal toryism. However, despite the promise of a radical break from the past, the former hierarchical moral society and the new market society were fundamentally the same in their support of a ruling class (Horowitz and Horowitz, 1988, p.8). While classical liberalism touted the ideals of liberation and equality, it used market logic to legitimize inequalities in society. Instead of claiming that inequality was necessary and divinely created, classical liberalism asserted that inequality was fairly distributed through market forces. It justified inequality by arguing that those who achieve wealth and status were better and harder working competitors. Equality of opportunity and not of condition became the mantra of liberalism, for each person was born with the faculties to compete and succeed. What one did with those faculties amounted to an individual choice, a choice that was rationally made and therefore solely the responsibility of the individual.

The implications of this new ideology extended beyond an explanation of wealth and into a justification of poverty. Just as wealth was seen as the result of individual achievement, poverty was increasingly viewed as a personal failure. Those who were poor or of lower classes were redefined as idle and apathetic. Their poverty was seen to be a result of their life choices, as if hard work might have helped them to achieve the wealth and status of the upper classes.

In addition, classical liberalism did not break the shackles of domination for the poor, but rather reframed them in terms of market competition and individual choice. Government and bureaucracy, both of which comprised of members of the elite classes, managed this new competition. At its heart, the shift to liberalism and the market society were characterized by the efforts of the elite to maintain their power and status (Horowitz and Horowitz, 1988, pp. 5-6). The hierarchical characteristics of the former dominant



feudal system were not discarded by the emerging market society, but were reframed by the ruling classes in terms of market logic. This process enabled power holders to retain control of the powerful institutions, while appeasing the desires of opposing forces.

The decline of feudalism and the rise of classical liberalism created a longstanding ambiguous relationship between morality, duty, and the economy. These tensions were present in policies developed throughout this period. Of particular interest to this study is their presence in the English Poor Laws. The Poor Laws, and specifically the Amendment Act of 1834, demonstrate clearly articulated shifts in the perceptions of the poor as a result of the changes in society.

The English Poor Laws demonstrated the complexity of the rise of classical liberalism out of the former paternalist state. The occurrence of more than one set of poor laws is telling of the ideological shifts characterizing society. As poverty historian Alan Kidd (1999) has stated:

In essence, there were two Poor Laws, one operating up to (and possibly beyond) 1834 and derived from centuries old notions of entitlement which were relatively broad and inclusive. The second gradually replacing the old system during the middle decades of the century and based upon a narrower and increasingly more punitive approach to adult applicants for relief. (p. 8)

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 is a demonstration of classical liberal ideas about poverty and is a clear articulation of the beginnings of the current paradigm of Individual Responsibility. To understand the importance of the shift in perceptions of the poor represented by the Amendment Act, it is important to briefly review the system from which the Amendment Act emerged.

The Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 was one of the first examples of the state's attempt to address poverty. An outgrowth of the Tudor poor laws, which had been primarily concerned with the legalities and permissibility of vagrancy (Slack, 1990, p. 17), the Elizabethan Poor Law was first and foremost an exercise in paternalism. Reflecting its feudal tory character, the Elizabethan Poor Law asserted that the church and state were morally obligated to offer relief to those in need, just as the poor were entitled to receive "the 'necessities' of life" (Kidd, 1999, p. 13).

The Elizabethan Poor Law was passed in response to a number of events. English crops had yielded numerous poor harvests at a time when the population had been steadily on the increase (Slack, 1990, pp. 11-12). Food shortages led to social unrest, threatening the stability of the empire. Eager to avoid social upheaval, the Elizabethan Poor Law was designed to silence dissent by offering relief to those who needed it.

The Elizabethan Poor Law also represented changes in public attitudes towards poverty that were accompanying the spread of market society and classical liberalism (Slack, 1990, pp. 11-14). Under this new market society and subsequent commodification of labour, poverty had been reframed as a condition resulting from unemployment. It was, in other words, the result of the failure to sell one's labour. This necessitated a shift in thought, from the primacy of community responsibility to provide for one another to a belief in the individual's responsibility to provide for oneself. The market necessitated the beginnings of a system of blame that placed the onus on poverty squarely on the shoulders of the poor.

While public attitudes towards poverty were changing, the former paternalistic beliefs in communal responsibility lingered, causing ideological tension. Even as market logic became increasingly acceptable, entitlement ideals remained well entrenched in public opinion. This tension resulted in a growing need to redefine ideas of poverty. In response, an attempt was made to discern who amongst the poor would or would not be deserving of relief. The belief that able-bodied individuals could and should be able to sell their labour began to dominate the discourse, and necessitated a distinction between the 'impotent' poor and the 'able-bodied' (Kidd, 1999, p.13). Those deserving of relief were deemed to be those whose poverty was considered to be no fault of their own. Those who were determined to be deserving of relief included the elderly, the infirm, widows, children, and many seasonal workers, while those determined to be undeserving of relief were unemployed able-bodied males. The distinction between those in poverty lay in a moral categorization, in that the deserving poor were involuntary victims, while the undeserving were lazy, morally corrupt individuals. This attitude was enshrined in the Poor Law Act of 1601 (Golding and Middleton, 1982, p. 10).

Finally, amid substantial social unrest and political change, the government sought to centralize power, and the Elizabethan Poor Law became an exercise in

centralized management. Indeed, the poor law can be seen as a concerted effort to involve Parliament and the court system in the daily business of the country.<sup>5</sup> The poor law necessitated a partnership between parishes and government whereby relief and correction would be their twin simultaneous aims.<sup>6</sup> The many parishes spread out across the country were considered to be front-line workers for the poor law, administering relief to the poor through face-to-face interactions. The government would collect relief funds through taxation and provide parishes with the poor relief funds for distribution. This funding relationship meant that parishes were directly accountable to Parliament.

By involving parishes in poor relief, the poor laws infused the capitalist ideas of market place competition with puritanical ideas of morality. Thus, unemployment became increasingly associated with idleness and sin, while hard work was perceived as a virtue. Sinners could be saved by hard work, and the state sought to provide mechanisms for the correction of the unemployed. This rationale led to the creation of workhouses in the Workhouse Test Act of 1723.

The workhouses were a relatively minor component of the old poor laws, but were to become an integral part of the Amendment Act of 1834. Workhouses were originally conceived of as short-term deterrents to poverty, and their labour was characterized as temporary and replaceable (Kidd, 1999, p. 34). The workhouses served as moralizing institutions, built upon principles of strict discipline and hard work, but they also served economic needs by providing cheap labour to industry. Those who were deemed able-bodied were required to labour in the workhouse in order to prove their worth, both economically and morally.

For two centuries, the Elizabethan Poor Laws remained in effect, and while they were moderately successful agents of relief in certain regions, they did not rectify the overall problem of poverty. Mismanagement of funds, crop failures, famine, and the rise in bread prices had increased the number of people on poor relief, resulting in a tripling

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<sup>5</sup> For more on this, please see Alan Kidd (1999) *State, Society, and the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England*. (Jeremy Black, Gen ed.). Houndmills. MacMillan Press Ltd.

<sup>6</sup> The involvement of the parishes was both practical and ideological. The existing proximity to and familiarity with the regional populations placed parishes in positions of trusted authority with locals, and thus sensible distributors of aid. A longstanding relationship between the church and state also meant that the state was familiar with and trusted the administrative capacities of the church. The involvement of parishes also revealed that the longstanding principles of the feudal society were not easily relinquished by the emerging market society.

of the cost of poor relief between 1784 and 1813 (Golding and Middleton, 1982, p 13). The industrial revolution in late 18<sup>th</sup> century England also added to the strains on poor relief. With the decline of the agricultural economy and the rise of industrial and factory work, there was a resulting major population influx into urban areas.

As quickly as urban poverty spread, so too did explanations for the condition. Strong proponents of laissez-faire economics were quick to condemn the poor laws, which they believed had been too lenient and had only exacerbated the problem. Reverend Joseph Townsend's (1971) work *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws. By a Well-Wisher to Mankind* written in 1786 clearly articulates this position:

... the provision, which was originally made for industry in distress, does little more than give encouragement to idleness and vice....These laws, so beautiful in theory, promote the evils they mean to remedy, and aggravate the distress they were intended to relieve. (p. 17)

Townsend's assertion that the well-intentioned poor laws promoted immorality was an increasingly popular sentiment amongst advocates of laissez-faire economics. As E.P. Thompson remarks, "[t]he breakthrough of the new political economy of the free market...was also the breakdown of the old moral economy of provision" (E.P. Thompson quoted in Sherman, 2001, p. 9). The scarcity of employment coupled with social instability and poor working conditions had begun to distance the classes from one another, which resulted in an unwillingness to promote charitable behaviour. These conditions also fostered ill will and competition amongst the working population, whose feelings of resentment were explained away by liberal views of self-interested human nature and puritanical morality. The state promoted the belief that the conditions of the working class were largely the result of class idleness, and further condemned this 'immoral' behaviour by arguing that the poor had become an unfair burden to the rest of society. This change in perception made it increasingly harder for the poor to be deemed worthy of relief.

Thus, in response to the perceived immoral and undeserving behaviour of the poor came a desire to improve the poor themselves. The state determined that the poor would be best aided by policies that encouraged them to curb their spending habits and

develop self-reliance and thriftiness.<sup>7</sup> Growing contempt of the poor and the relief system eventually led the Victorian government to review the existing Poor Laws, leading to the passage of the Amendment Act of 1834.

The Amendment Act is a clear articulation of the liberal tendencies and laissez-faire economics that characterized reforms at that time. It demonstrates, as poor law historian Alan Kidd states, the ‘liberal break’ from paternalism (Kidd, 1999, p. 5). The amended poor laws emphasized the liberal ideas that had gained ground in the preceding years with the rise of the capitalist economy, and reflect a firm commitment to trickle-down economics and free-market society. The laws sought to manage the poor in the most cost effective manner, while simultaneously punishing them for their immorality and idleness.

Morality was a key element of the Amendment Act, and representations of the undeserving poor as fundamentally flawed provided the basis for its moral positions. Communication and poverty analysts Peter Golding and Sue Middleton (1982) have outlined its moral theory and strategy, which stressed that challenges facing the poor could be addressed by changing the individuals themselves. First, the able-bodied poor needed to be “remoralized” through hard work and discipline (p. 15). The strict regulations of the workhouses and poor laws eligibility were seen to help to correct behavioral inadequacies. Second, the undeserving poor were exploiters of goodwill (p. 16). The Amendment Act would punish and correct the selfish, unappreciative, and abusive behaviour of the poor. Third, responsible relief would involve deterrence through heavy regulation. That is, aid should not be easily accessible, but instead test relative desperation (ibid). Finally, the poor were to be classified as deserving or undeserving of aid. This would enable the Amendment Act to remove able-bodied individuals from relief systems. Thus the deserving poor, consisting of the sick, the elderly, and children, were distinguished from the able bodied individuals, including the formerly deserving seasonal workers who had been reassigned an undeserving status due to changing economic logic (Kidd, 1999, p. 27). While the deserving poor remained

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<sup>7</sup> A leading proponent of this thinking, Fredrick Eden, author of *The State of the Poor (1797)*, once stated: “The miseries of the labouring Poor arise, less from the scantiness of their income (however much the philanthropist might wish it to be increased,) than from their own improvidence and unthriftiness” (F. Eden quoted in Sherman, 2001, pp. 91-2)

eligible for relief, the undeserving poor were to be corrected by the state through the enforcement of the existing Workhouse Test Act.

The workhouse was to be entered voluntarily by able-bodied individuals who required temporary relief. Workhouse labour was viewed as an exchange of labour for aid, while simultaneously training the poor to overcome their idleness (Kidd, 1999, p. 28). In order to emphasize their connection with market incentives, workhouse wages were set by the market, whereby workers would be paid no more than the lowest paid employee. This, it was believed, would both encourage workhouse workers to find paid employment, and deter individuals from seeking long-term state sponsored aid.

While there were subsequent amendments to the poor laws before they were abolished altogether in favour of the various social assistance and welfare programs, the attitudes toward the poor enshrined in the Amendment Act of 1834 are reflected in the current Individual Responsibility poverty paradigm. Not only did such legislation govern the way in which poverty would be managed; it also reinforced beliefs about deserving and undeserving behaviour, as well the assertion that conditions of scarcity are the result of individual's choices and actions.

### ***Paradigm 1: Individual Responsibility***

The paradigm of Individual Responsibility is firmly rooted in classical liberalism and emphasizes the competitive rational individual depicted in the Victorian Poor Law Amendment Act. As the name suggests, this paradigm presents a model of poverty that places the responsibility for one's condition squarely on one's own shoulders. That is to say, within this paradigm, there is only one source of blame for poverty: the flawed individual.<sup>8</sup>

At the heart of this paradigm is a belief that fair competition between individuals for resources, employment, and social status occurs regularly in our society. Espousing the values of meritocracy, it argues that those who work hard are deserving of every

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<sup>8</sup> This term, though present in an abundance of poverty literature, has been taken from Bradley R. Schiller (2001) *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination* (8<sup>th</sup> ed). Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall Inc.

success, while those who do not deserve the poverty that they find (Kidder and Fine, 1986, p. 52). This paradigm assures its followers that there is no inherent structural inequality in this world, but instead that inequality results from unsuccessful competition. Perpetuating what poverty scholar Sheila Collins (1996) calls a “myth of classlessness” (p. 25), this paradigm asserts that despite superficial economic disparity between individuals, each person begins life with the same opportunities for success. If individuals apply themselves through hard work and resourcefulness, they are likely to achieve wealth. However, just as wealth can be achieved through perseverance, poverty occurs when an individual refuses opportunities and squanders their talents. This perspective has been summarized by David Newman (2002) as the view that, “[i]f people who are financially successful are thought to deserve their success, because of individual hard work and desire, then the people who fail and are suffering financially must also serve their plight – because of their *lack of hard work and desire*” (p. 308). Poverty is therefore presented as the logical result of a character flaw.

The belief that the poor suffer from character flaws that interfere with their ability to participate in normal economic relations is a further component of this paradigm. There are three primary character flaws that the Individual Responsibility paradigm associates with the poor: that the poor have a tendency towards immorality; that the poor lack motivation and work ethic; and third, that the poor do not maximize their “human capital.”

The notion of the immorality of the poor can be traced back to Victorian ideals of the undeserving poor. This perception of the poor suggests that they are able-bodied individuals who choose to act irresponsibly and harmfully, often lying, cheating and acting violently (Collins, 1996, p. 32). While immorality is not generally asserted as the only reason for the individual’s poverty, it is believed to be a defining characteristic of the poor.

By asserting that the poor are immoral creatures, this paradigm accomplishes two things. First, this paradigm creates a distance between the poor and the non-poor. By asserting the shortcomings of the poor, this paradigm reaffirms normal social behaviour, and assumes a social norm that is responsible and vaguely middle class. Presented within this juxtaposition, the poor are portrayed as a class of individuals who ought to be

excluded from the behaviours of normal society. Secondly, this paradigm pits the poor against the non-poor by encouraging judgments about character and, thus, deservingness of aid. Carrying forward distinctions between impotent and able-bodied poor once articulated in the Victorian poor laws, this paradigm promotes condemnation for immoral behaviour and a withdrawal of aid from the undeserving poor. It therefore makes a fundamental distinction between those who cannot participate in the work force due to what are deemed 'acceptable' reasons such as physical or mental disability and those who are able-bodied but who are portrayed as lazy, irresponsible individuals who choose to collect aid because of an aversion to work.

The labeling of the poor as immoral by the Individual Responsibility paradigm is demonstrative of two further paradigmatic themes that have less to do with the poor and more to do with those who perpetuate the paradigm. That is, there is "...a fear of failure – collective or individual – and a loathing for people who fail" (Cheal, 1996, p. 25). Condemnation of the able-bodied poor on moral grounds and the distance it creates suggests a fear of failure held by advocates of this paradigm. The ideological distance between the poor and non-poor, along with the strong disapproval of poor people's behaviour suggests a hatred of the poor based on fear of failure rather than an irritation with the lifestyle. In this way, the poor serve as an ever-present reminder to the non-poor that failure to compete in society by becoming unemployed or falling below the poverty line not only results in limited material property, but also in exclusion from normal society. The label then facilitates the distance between classes and makes it more difficult to rid oneself of the stigma of poverty, the result being long-term condemnation as a failure as a human being.

This condemnation is also demonstrative of a growing resentment and, it can be argued, hatred of the poor, particularly in the perpetuation of negative stereotypes of the poor. Jean Swanson (2001), a well-known Canadian poverty activist, has called this process of perpetuating negative attitudes towards the poor 'poor bashing', and has written that:

...poor-bashing is when people who are poor are humiliated, stereotyped, discriminated against, shunned, despised, pitied, patronized, ignored,



blamed, and falsely accused of being lazy, drunk, stupid, uneducated, having large families, and not looking for work.... (p. 2)

These assumptions make it easier for the non-poor to blame the poor for their own condition and further distance themselves from the responsibility of providing aid.

The second major characteristic of this paradigm is the assertion that poor people lack the motivation to participate in the work force. In this paradigm, motivation is synonymous with success as commanded through hard work: “In schools and beyond, people are taught that individual outcomes derive from personal efforts. Social inequalities, we learn, stem from inadequate motivation or ability” (Kidder and Fine, 1986, p. 52). Proponents of the Individual Responsibility paradigm believe that poor people possess an inadequate work ethic. Much like the moralistic language of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the language of motivation in the market has come to signify worthiness in our modern capitalist society (Schiller, 2001, p. 5). The poor, it seems, choose not to compete. Instead, they are presented as making a rational decision to abstain from mainstream market relations, choosing to rely on others for their survival.

The Individual Responsibility paradigm also uses this notion of idleness to explain persistent poverty in families or social groups. It asserts that poor people suffer from a belief system that not only encourages idleness, but also discourages a strong work ethic. The poor therefore do not experience the benefits of hard work. Furthermore, the paradigm asserts that current welfare systems do nothing to combat personal idleness, but instead reward poor choices and market failure. Bradley Schiller (2001) speaks to this perspective when he states that, “[a]lthough the welfare system is an essential source of income support, it also creates moral hazards that “reward” undesirable behavior” (p. 280).

As a solution to the problem of poverty then, this paradigm tends to favour labour in exchange for financial aid. Workfare, or work for welfare, is one such solution. Workfare is presented as a system that teaches the poor the value of hard work and punishes their undesirable behaviour. Long advocated by right wing organizations such as the Fraser Institute, a prominent right wing policy institute located in Vancouver, British Columbia, workfare proponents have argued that if the poor refuse to seek out

paid employment, then they ought to work for aid.<sup>9</sup> If they refuse, aid should be withheld. Workfare also protects the remainder of society from exploitation by the poor by ensuring that the poor work for their state-provided wages. In theory, workfare will foster a work ethic amongst the poor by facilitating a respect for the labour market. To quote Linda Moreau, an activist with End Legislated Poverty in Vancouver:

“There’s this new language of the right....They say, ‘increase people’s attachment to the labour force,’ as if people get unattached because of their own bad attitudes or not wanting to get up in the morning or that welfare is such a wonderful free ride.” (L. Moreau quoted in Swanson, 2001, p. 13)

Finally, there is a further argument touted by this paradigm that suggests that the reason for poverty is that the poor have not maximized their individual potential. This argument is known as the theory of human capital.<sup>10</sup> This theory asserts that all individuals begin their lives with similar capabilities, including reason, personal talents, and the potential to work. This theory asserts that the determining factors in poverty are not individual abilities; instead “[t]he critical question is how much those abilities are developed and expanded via later *investments*” (Schiller, 2001, p. 5). Education is particularly important to the concept of human capital, in that education enables individuals to develop skills that make them more marketable and, therefore, more competitive.

The human capital theory makes three assumptions about work and reality that are fundamentally based upon complete faith in the marketplace (Schiller, 2001, pp. 5-6). First, it assumes that the marketplace will reward industrious, hard working individuals. In this approach, individuals who have invested in themselves through education and other specialized training are more deserving of financial reward than those who have not

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<sup>9</sup> The Fraser Institute, “Public Policy Sources: Returning British Columbia to Prosperity,” [http://oldfraser.lexi.net/publications/pps/47/09\\_social.html](http://oldfraser.lexi.net/publications/pps/47/09_social.html), accessed August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003

<sup>10</sup> Although the theory of human capital straddles the boundaries of both the Individual Responsibility and Structural Responsibility paradigms, it has been categorized as a component of the former. That is, while aspects of this theory speak to the structural imperatives of the capitalist system, specifically in its assertion that individuals must accumulate skills and education in order to compete more successfully in the marketplace, it is fundamentally defined by the individual’s decision to maximize their marketability. Thus, individual choice is the underlying characteristic that links the theory of human capital to the paradigm of Individual Responsibility.

(ibid). It contends the market will recognize this and act accordingly. Therefore personal wealth is directly linked to the individual personal preparation for the marketplace. The second assumption is that individuals make rational choices regarding personal investment (ibid). Those who have not maximized their potential are therefore personally responsible for that choice and the associated consequences (Kidder and Fine, 1986, p. 50). Finally, it assumes that opportunities exist, but that individuals must seek them out (ibid). The most industrious individuals will investigate opportunities out of a desire to succeed, while less industrious individuals will miss key opportunities. Again, the marketplace will reward those most deserving.

Upon reflection on the characteristics that make up this paradigm, there are a number of implications that ought to be addressed. First, this paradigm perpetuates the belief that society is composed of competing individuals. By creating a belief system that blames the individual for his or her own poverty or wealth, successes or failures, the individual is increasingly separated from the morality of the greater social collective. Furthermore, the system of blame distances the poor from the non-poor by fostering resentment towards the former. As this ideological distance grows, it becomes easier to explain conditions using stereotypes regarding individual attributes instead of observations about real conditions.

The second implication relates the kind of meaningful solutions suggested to poverty. Because the individual is to blame, and because this individual tends to be unmotivated or flawed in some way, solutions presented within this paradigm tend towards self-help. That is, if the poor individual can be taught the value of work, the necessity of seeking out opportunities, and the importance of giving up all vices, then that person may be rescued from his or her condition. Furthermore, this paradigm ignores any argument that places the blame of poverty on the greater society, thereby avoiding major social change and cost.

With these implications in mind, a third follows. Society is limited in what it can do for the poor. Society can provide welfare and charity, but most meaningful action must come from the individual. Thus, as Bradley Schiller (2001) has noted, according to this paradigm, “[t]he poor have only themselves to blame for not taking advantage of the opportunities society offers” (p. 7).

## **Current Articulations of Individual Responsibility**

Individual Responsibility continues to retain its status as one of the dominant paradigms in contemporary poverty literature. Despite challenges to its core principles by contending paradigms, two of which will be examined in the following chapter, Individual Responsibility continues to characterize the language of neo-liberal advocates and organizations. Among others, market liberal research institutes, such as The Fraser Institute, and various Right-Wing political parties and organizations in Canada continue to access and promote the logic offered by this paradigm. This is particularly evident in their comments about welfare and entitlement. Walter Block of the Fraser Institute once asserted, "...that unemployment insurance and welfare are too 'generous', that they promote unemployment, discourage people from seeking or taking low-income jobs and encourage people to collect unemployment benefits when they are not really unemployed" (Swankey, 1984, p. 16). Although his statements were made nearly 20 years ago, there is little indication that the Fraser Institute has shifted from his original position. For example, Christopher Sarlo (1994) of the Fraser Institute more recently argued that the welfare system in Canada must be rethought based upon principles associated with Individual Responsibility:

Simply raising the amounts given to recipients is not a solution. While it will improve their material comfort in the short term, it will make it more difficult for many to become independent. A significant increase in welfare rates will unquestionably suck into the system many who are currently working but have low incomes. (pp. 191-2)

Sarlo's argument indicates the presence of Individual Responsibility in contemporary Fraser Institute policies, as well as in current poverty discourse.

Various right-of-centre political parties also promote perspectives informed by the paradigm of Individual Responsibility. For example, a number of the founding principles of the Canadian Alliance Party (2002) reflect a fundamental integration of the paradigm.

We value self-reliance and self-sufficiency tempered by a commitment to care and provide for those who require assistance to achieve the level of independence of which they are capable, and for those who cannot provide for themselves. We believe families, communities and non-governmental

organizations are best placed to respond to individual needs on a personal basis. We will leave resources in the hands of those who are best able to help.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada (2002) also uses the language of self-sufficiency and individualism in their constitution, stating that, "...it is the responsibility of individuals to provide for themselves, their families and their dependents, while recognizing that government must respond to those who require assistance and compassion."

### ***Concluding Remarks***

As evidenced from the above discussion, the paradigm of Individual Responsibility has existed as a credible model of poverty for nearly two centuries. By favouring explanations that blame individuals for their poverty, this paradigm has worked to protect the state and the existing elite from the criticism that they ought to do more for the poor. By citing the immorality and laziness of the individual as the root cause of poverty, advocates of the paradigm of Individual Responsibility have created a discourse that not only explains the condition, but also justifies existing socio-economic inequalities, and reaffirms the positions of the elite.

When the defining characteristics of a paradigm are strongly challenged, the paradigm often loses its credibility. In this event, alternative paradigms are created to provide more satisfying explanations of the condition. Thus, the strength of a paradigm is revealed in its ability to withstand criticism, despite significant challenges to its core principles. The paradigm of Individual Responsibility has demonstrated its strength, and survives as the oldest of the three dominant poverty paradigms.

The next chapter will present the contending poverty paradigms, Structural Responsibility and the Culture of Poverty, including its right-wing version the Underclass. It will discuss their emergence at different points in time in response to the weaknesses of their paradigmatic predecessors. It will begin with a discussion of the history and characteristics of the Structural Responsibility paradigm. Following this, it

will briefly discuss those perspectives that straddle both the paradigms of Individual Responsibility and Structural Responsibility, and cannot therefore be classified as belonging to either. Finally, the chapter will discuss the emergence of the Culture of Poverty paradigm in response to all of the above, and its more recent right-wing characterization, the Underclass.

## **Chapter Two: Contending Paradigms: Structural Responsibility and the Culture of Poverty**

As previously stated, poverty paradigms have emerged in response to a number of factors. The paradigm of Individual Responsibility in particular appeared against a backdrop of an increased acceptance of classical liberal principles, the rising market economy, and the attempts of governing bodies to manage the poor. However, although the Individual Responsibility paradigm remains a dominant poverty paradigm today, it has not escaped unchallenged over history. Indeed, the two contending poverty paradigms, Structural Responsibility and the Culture of Poverty and the Underclass, each emerged out of dissatisfaction with the explanations for, and suggested solutions to, socio-economic inequality put forward by the Individual Responsibility paradigm. As will be discussed, the paradigm of Structural Responsibility first emerged out of struggles with classical liberal ideology and the observed failure of the Poor Laws to reduce the amount of poverty in society, while the Culture of Poverty and the Underclass paradigm and associated right wing theories of ‘the underclass’, emerged in response to perceived limitations of both structural and individual responsibility explanations for poverty. This chapter will present these paradigms as dominant alternatives to the paradigm of Individual Responsibility.

### ***Contending Paradigm 1: Structural Responsibility***

The paradigm of Structural Responsibility is a dominant poverty paradigm and the first of the two competing paradigms that are important to an examination of representations of poverty in the media. Structural Responsibility goes beyond the morality, tenacity, and work ethic of individuals, and instead places blame on dominant social and power structures. Its various versions place blame on a range of institutional

relations, including those that characterize governments, welfare programs, and the capitalist marketplace.

It must be noted that this paradigm is complex, and is not a simple reaction to the conservative paradigm of Individual Responsibility. Rather, we must avoid this false dichotomy by stressing that both right and left wing arguments fall within this paradigm. Furthermore, because this paradigm is politically inclusive, there is some overlap with the other dominant paradigms, from the conservative view that government aid only reinforces moral turpitude as displayed in the paradigm of Individual Responsibility to the social exclusion of the poor and the subsequent creation of sub-cultural communities as evidenced in the Culture of Poverty and the Underclass paradigm.

Prior to any discussion of the paradigmatic characteristics of Structural Responsibility, it is important to briefly situate its emergence. Although the broad acceptance of this alternative explanation of poverty was the result of many factors, three were of particular importance: widespread public dissatisfaction with the poor laws; the organization of the working class and the introduction of Marxist analysis; and the empirical studies of poverty conducted by Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree.

Although aspects of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 had been controversial from the onset,<sup>11</sup> broad public dissatisfaction with the poor laws did not occur immediately. Instead, the public's frustration grew out of a recognition that the Act had completely failed to reduce urban poverty as intended. Indeed, the conditions of the poor appeared to have gotten worse under the Act, particularly through the usage of the workhouses. The human composition of the workhouses had sparked controversy from the beginning, specifically in the apparent confusion over who composed the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. The inclusion of children in workhouses had outraged many Poor Law Commissioners who had advocated for the exclusion of children from principles of 'less eligibility', just as the inclusion of the aged, and the chronically ill in workhouses had begun to concern the general public (Rose, 1971, p. 161).

In addition, it had become clear that the amount of aid allotted to recipients was insufficient. As English Poor Law scholar Michael Rose has revealed, "many boards of

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<sup>11</sup> In particular, the composition of the workhouses and the inclusion of children, the aged, and the ill were of contentious issues amongst some of the Poor Law Commissioners (Rose, 1971, p. 161)



guardians were doling out small amounts of cash relief to able-bodied paupers, and leaving them to bring these inadequate allowances up to subsistence level by begging, stealing, or working at ill-paid jobs” (Rose, 1971, p. 222).<sup>12</sup> The State, it was argued, was only exacerbating the problem of poverty by refusing to provide enough relief to sustain poor individuals. Thus, it was becoming increasingly difficult for officials to argue that the poor were by nature idle and immoral.

The discontentment with the Act extended to the urban working class who had grown in size and become more organized in an effort to protect themselves against the harmful conditions under which they were forced to labour (Charlton, 2000, p. 69). The increased presence of the urban working class and their dissatisfaction with working conditions prompted demonstrations against the state’s policies, which directly affected the lower classes. Michael Rose (1971) argues that the growing working class discontent led to pressure for changes to the working conditions:

The mass demonstrations in London in 1886 and 1887, the emergence of trade unions amongst unskilled workers in 1889 and 1890, and the increased working-class electorate created by the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 helped to convince many people of the need for a more effective social policy to improve working-class conditions. (p. 235)

The working class also found ideological support in the newly emergent Marxist school of thought, which argued that the capitalist market society created and maintained the poor as a surplus army of labour in order to facilitate the functioning of capitalism (Robbins, 2002, p. 143). The existence of the poor, it argued, meant that workers were forced into continuous competition with each other for limited employment and reduced wages. This competition would benefit only the capitalist whose profits would increase due to their access to cheap labour. This Marxist analysis of working conditions provided a new understanding of social organization, and supplied the ideological foundations upon which workers could build a movement of resistance.

Marxist analysis was not only appealing to the working class, but also attracted a small number of young upper class members who were beginning to question the reasons

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<sup>12</sup> The ‘board of guardians’ was an annually elected group of officials whose role involved the distribution of poor relief.

for poverty. Of particular concern was the presence of poverty in a society wealthier than ever before. As Canon Samuel Barnett wrote in 1898, “[t]hey were conscious of something wrong underneath modern progress, they realized that free trade, reform bills, philanthropic activity and missions had made neither health nor wealth” (S. Barnett quoted in Rose, 1971, p. 235). The questions about modernization, social organization, and inequality raised by these individuals, paired with the growing discontent of the working class signified a break in popular support for classical liberal analysis, and a new appreciation of Marxist analysis of capitalist society.

This new consciousness was fueled by published accounts of poverty, as well a new academic interest in poverty studies. Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree’s empirical studies of poverty were of great importance to the establishment of the Structural Responsibility paradigm. Booth’s study of poverty between 1886 and 1903 was originally intended to dispel the claim in a socialist pamphlet that approximately a quarter of Londoners lived in poverty (Rose, 1971, p. 236). However, Booth’s results demonstrated that the pamphlet had underestimated the number of poor, finding instead that 35% of people living in East London were living in poverty, and that approximately a third of these people “suffered from acute ‘distress’” (Charlton, 2000, p. 54). Booth’s results were supported by Seebohm Rowntree’s 1899 study, which confirmed similar results in York. Booth and Rowntree “...were able to isolate the causes of poverty – low wages, unemployment and old age – over which the individual had little or no control” (Rose, 1971, p. 236). These studies acted to destabilize the poor laws by providing a credible alternative explanation for poverty achieved through scientific empirical analysis.

This emphasis on structural responsibility, paired with the rising consciousness of the working class and introduction of Marxist thought formed the early historical foundations of the paradigm of Structural Responsibility. We now turn our attention to the characteristics of the paradigm

Of the many aspects that structure this paradigm, we must consider the following inter-related dominant areas: the structure of labour market relations, the role of poverty in power relations, and the role of welfare and state aid. Each of these broad topics demonstrates the complexity of this second dominant paradigm.

The paradigm of Structural Responsibility is concerned with the structure of modern capitalist societies, and specifically with labour market relations. The implicit acknowledgement that employment, or the lack thereof, is fundamentally responsible for poverty is key to this paradigm. Therefore, to fully examine this version of the paradigm, we must pay particular attention to three concepts; namely the lack of well paid jobs, the skilling and de-skilling of labour, and the need for a surplus army of labourers.

The political economic argument that employment is central to poverty is based on the Marxist idea that capitalist societies require individuals to sell their labour in the marketplace in exchange for wages that will in turn be exchanged for basic necessities and luxury items also found in the market place. When employment is unavailable, poorly paid, or temporary, conditions for labourers are worsened and the likelihood that they will suffer from poverty is increased. As poverty scholar Robert Walker (1998) has stated, “[p]overty reflects the prevalence of low paid jobs and processes in the labour market that push people into unemployment and economic inactivity” (p. 42).

Poverty must then be understood as the lack of well-paid work. This position emphasizes the fact that the economy is unable to create such jobs, and is not primarily designed to do so (Kelso, 1994, p. 32). This lies in sharp contrast to the Individual Responsibility paradigm that stresses the existence of opportunities but argues there is a lack of motivation amongst certain individuals. In direct contrast, the Structural Responsibility paradigm argues that well-paid employment opportunities are limited, and that only a portion of those individuals who compete for positions will be successful. Poverty is, therefore, not the fault of poor people, but rather the fault of a system that lacks opportunities for the poor to escape their poverty (Burton, 1992, p. 26). With this in mind, advocates of this paradigm often assert that the best way to solve the problem of poverty is to create more well-paid employment.

Skilled and unskilled labour is important to this consideration of labour market relations, specifically in their connection to wage fluctuation. Since capitalism is conceived as an economic system based upon competition between industries and individuals, wages are seen to rise and fall in relation to the amount of competition there is at any point in time. When labour is bountiful, wages can be lowered. Conversely, when the number of individuals able to perform a specific task declines, wages increase.

The fluctuations of the labour market are thus seen to be largely responsible for creating unemployment and poverty.

The skilling of labour is a complex matter. With the rise in educational levels, the growing reliance upon technology, and the shift to the service industry in our economy, well-paid labour has become increasingly characterized by upskilling and reskilling. That is, labour that was once considered unskilled now requires much more training, as demonstrated through a college or university degree. For example, secretarial work now involves computer training including word processing programs, spreadsheets, databases, and Internet skills, in addition to Dictaphone training, telephone skills and typing abilities, not to mention numerous interpersonal and organizational abilities. The widespread use of technology has required the upskilling of the profession. With many people in competition for these positions, many already have the required training to fulfill the positions, making them highly competitive and negating the ability to command a higher wage. Thus labour is being reinvented, competition stiffened, and wages lowered due to the redefinition of skilled labour.

Those who cannot compete at this skilled level are shut out of the competition altogether. As poverty author David Cheal (1996) has stated, “[t]echnological revolutions did not benefit [the poor] but only excluded them from the new jobs from which they were not trained” (p. 24). The expectation of technological proficiency has further removed certain poor people from competition of well-paid employment, thus reaffirming social status and contributing to sustaining the prevalence of poverty in society.

Given that capitalism is ultimately concerned with profit, and that profit is the result of sale price minus expenses, it is in the interest of capitalists to control wages. As discussed, wages are regulated through the amount of competition for employment and based upon the skills required for the position. It has therefore been argued by the Marxist-Structuralist branch of this paradigm that a consistent level of unemployment will ensure the presence of competition. Marxists call perpetual unemployment a surplus army of labour, which increases profit for business by driving wages down. With this in mind, poverty is believed to be a necessary part of modern capitalist society, “...and not an unfortunate consequence of structural changes in the economy” (Kelso, 1994, p. 37).

This theory argues that welfare and government aid are important in controlling the surplus army of labour. The power holders use these relief programs to placate the impoverished masses, thereby avoiding any messy revolts against the established system. Welfare is an important component of this system not because it is concerned with creating financial equality in society, but because it reinforces the benevolent role of the state by providing for victims of the economic system. By doing so, the power of the state is secured through the peoples' consent to its authority. As poverty activist and author Jean Swanson (2001) has stated, welfare is "...designed to keep the poor from looting the rich, not a system to promote any kind of equality" (p. 30).

Welfare, or any form of government aid for that matter, also reinforces the control of wages. By setting the welfare wage at or just below subsistence levels, the poor and unemployed are persuaded to continue to search for paid employment, despite the low wages or degrading working conditions (Swanson, 2001, p. 30). Furthermore, it is a system that pits the poor against the poor for paid labour. This, in turn, keeps wages low because poor people are required to compete with one another, leaving them in a severely weakened position in negotiations for better working conditions. This argument is reflective of the historic roots of this paradigm, and the long-standing dissatisfaction with the actual capabilities of the relief systems.

The paradigm of Structural Responsibility also argues that poverty fulfills certain systemic requirements that go well beyond the control of wages and into the support of power relations that characterize society. In other words, the poor have a meaningful presence in society that benefits others, and therefore cannot be abolished. As Herbert J. Gans (1980) has stated in his article, "The Positive Functions of Poverty and Inequality":

...poverty also makes possible the existence or expansion of "respectable" professions and occupations, for example, penology, criminology, social work, and public health. More recently, the poor have provided jobs for professional and paraprofessional "poverty warriors," as well as for journalists and social scientists...who have supplied the information demanded since public curiosity about the poor developed in the 1960s. (p. 148)

Beyond ensuring that wages remain controlled and undesirable positions filled, the poor are therefore themselves a source of economic activity. Social services, welfare caseworkers, poverty activists, and many academic, government and private researchers all rely upon the poor for their professional focus (ibid, p. 149). Without the poor, many professions would cease to exist. Therefore, the livelihood of many non-poor individuals rests upon the existence of the poor.

This paradigm also argues that the poor are also required to perform a deterrent function in society. That is, the poor are can be labeled as undeserving social deviants. Their existence demonstrates to others the value of adhering to social rules and conventions. Similar to the moralized arguments presented in the Individual Responsibility paradigm, the poor are a constant reminder to others of the consequences of deviant behaviour. It is therefore in the interest of those who support the status quo to maintain the presence of poverty. Thus, as Gans (1980) states,

the poor can be identified and punished as alleged or real deviants in order to uphold the legitimacy of dominant norms. The defenders of the desirability of hard work, thrift, honesty, and monogamy need people who can be accused of being lazy, spendthrift, dishonest, and promiscuous to justify these norms, and ... the norms themselves are best legitimated by discovering violations. (p. 149)

The structural role of poverty is therefore not simply one of maintaining cheap labour, but rather one that maintains social stability, authority, and class relations. Mainstream society and dominant powers have a complex relationship with the poor. First, it is necessary to exclude the poor from normative social interaction and berate them for economic and moral failure. However, the poor are also included, albeit unofficially, in the processes of law and order. They represent a clear demonstration of failed attempts to challenge normative behavior. They inspire conformity by acting as symbolic threats to anyone who may consider deviating from approved socio-economic activities. The symbolic role of the poor is seen to be as important as their material presence.

In consideration of the structural responsibility for poverty, the paradigm argues that one cannot ignore the role of discrimination in society. Discrimination on the

grounds of race and gender means that certain individuals can be removed from well-paid employment opportunities.<sup>13</sup> Widespread discrimination is a component of the power structure, and is therefore a structural problem. In Canada, the disproportionately high number of Aboriginal peoples who are unemployed and poor connotes long-standing systemic discrimination that excludes Aboriginal peoples from normative mainstream interaction.<sup>14</sup> As Bradley Schiller (2001) has stated, “[e]ven in a relatively prosperous economy, discrimination creates artificial barriers between workers and jobs, leaving some individuals poor” (p. 280).

The Structural Responsibility paradigm and all its incorporated perspectives share the belief that poverty is a necessary part of our unequal social structure. Indeed, all versions assert that poverty is built into our economic system and social framework. Thus, as poverty scholar Michael Katz (1989) has noted, “Poverty is neither accidental nor an unavoidable part of modern industrial, or post-industrial, society; it reflects inequality deliberately perpetuated through the manipulation of wealth and power” (p. 169).

### **Current Articulations of Structural Responsibility**

Like the paradigm of Individual Responsibility, Structural Responsibility remains one of the dominant paradigms in poverty discourse today. However, unlike the former that tends to be espoused by neo-liberal and social conservatives, both Right- and Left-Wing social structures, political parties, governments, and community organizations access the logic of Structural Responsibility. Those most likely to access the radical aspects of the paradigm are anti-poverty organizations, and Left-leaning political parties. Jean Swanson (2001), former president of the National Anti-Poverty Organization and current member of End Legislated Poverty, a Vancouver-based anti-poverty coalition, articulates this perspective:

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<sup>13</sup> See for example Christopher Pierson. (1991). *Beyond the Welfare State? The New Political Economy of Welfare*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press. pp.69-92

<sup>14</sup> See for example Barbara Murphy. (2002). *On the Street: How We Created the Homeless*. Winnipeg: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing Inc. pp.81-84

If we stop blaming poor or other oppressed people for poverty, we can expose the policies, laws, and economic system that force millions of people in Canada and around the world to compete against each other, driving down wages and creating more poverty. With a clear view of what's really going on, we have a better chance of winning the struggle for a just society. (p. 8)

Additionally, Left-leaning political parties have articulated this perspective. Indeed, a resolution passed at the membership of the New Democratic Party of Canada (2003) demonstrates the adoption of Structural Responsibility.

**WHEREAS** no federal government has acted to implement Ed Broadbent's resolution to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000 even though that resolution received unanimous consent by the House of Commons more than 12 years ago; and

**WHEREAS** the divide between rich and poor is growing even larger; and

**WHEREAS** every individual citizen has a right to share in wealth our society produces,

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Federal New Democratic Party commit itself to establishing a Guaranteed Annual Income program as the way to eradicate child poverty and meet the basic needs of all citizens; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Federal NDP make a Guaranteed Annual Income program a major policy commitment in the next federal election campaign.

Right-of Centre provincial and federal governments, as well as official institutions who participate in the governance of society through law and policy, also tend to favour Structural Responsibility. However, their interpretations do not reflect Marxist or socialist analysis. Instead, their interpretations of poverty favour the impact of the state and its structures on the poor, and thus tend to favour a more liberal variant of the paradigm. These perspectives are often most evident when solutions to poverty or management of the poor are presented, such as official arguments that call for the funding of Legal-Aid programs, and the restructuring of welfare systems.



The diversity of political perspectives that access components of this discourse is telling of the paradigm's interpretive flexibility. Indeed, it would be a mistake to assert that this paradigm is inherently Left-leaning. Arguments that favour the impact of structure extend across the political spectrum. The apparent difference between the radical and liberal variants of this paradigm lies in historical outlook. That is, radical perspectives are clear to point out the origin of structural causations of poverty, whereas liberal perspectives are not as concerned with historical causation, but rather immediate structural management of poverty.

### **Borderline Perspectives**

In addition to the above paradigmatic arguments, there are other perspectives that appear to straddle both the paradigms of Structural Responsibility and Individual Responsibility. These borderline perspectives do not fit properly into any one paradigm because they blame social structures for individual choices that result in poverty. There are both right- and left-wing versions of this perspective.

The right-wing version assumes the classical liberal belief that individuals are rational and self-interested. However, it also assumes that the individual is caught in a problematic and stifling state structure that is responsible for teaching individuals to make particular choices. It therefore asserts that government programs have systematically destroyed poor people's incentive to find work, and that welfare, in particular, encourages idleness. Thus, "...much of the indifference of the poor toward working is nothing more than a rational response to the perverse disincentives built into many government programs" (Kelso, 1994, p. 137).

The left-wing version of this straddling perspective also reflects paradigmatic tension. Advocates of this perspective argue that poor people are degraded by the welfare system in two ways. They argue that the poor are treated as untrustworthy and abnormal members of society (Cheal, 1996, p. 29), highlighting the endless questions, personal reviews, and limitations on aid leaving the poor under a constant surveillance by the state. Left-wing advocates suggest that this treatment affects poor people's self-esteem, and negatively shapes their ability to find well-paid employment. In addition to

this, left-wing advocates assert that the receipt of welfare is a long-lasting stigma that a poor person has to carry with him or her. This mark makes them less desirable for hire and housing, and consequently reinforces their exclusion from mainstream society.

### ***Contending Paradigm 2: Culture of Poverty and the Underclass***

The third dominant poverty paradigm is known as the Culture of Poverty, and contains within it a right wing version called the Underclass. This paradigm emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in response to the perceived weaknesses of both the Individual and Structural Responsibility paradigms; in particular, in regards to assertions that individual idleness, relief systems, or market structures caused poverty (Townsend, 1993, p. 96). Closer examination of the borderline paradigmatic perspectives, which suggested that a mixture of both individual choices and social structures were responsible for the creation of poverty, resulted in greater consideration of the impact of surroundings and upbringing on life choices. A newfound interest in psychological analysis, and the arguments put forward by Oscar Lewis in 1968 and Peter Townsend in 1973 began to inform alternative explanations of poverty.

The Culture of Poverty and the Underclass paradigm is based upon two fundamental beliefs; first, that various cultures and sub-cultures make up society, and second, that individuals possess psychological traits that inform their actions. The underlying logic of this paradigm is the notion that poverty is cyclical, insofar as individuals are both the products and architects of their conditions, and it stresses the importance of outside assistance in the effort to save the poor from their self-perpetuated realities (Katz, 1993, p. 12).

The Culture of Poverty<sup>15</sup> was originally coined by Anthropologist Oscar Lewis in 1968 and later explored by poverty scholar Peter Townsend. It is a term that reflects the

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<sup>15</sup> Oscar Lewis did distinguish the condition of poverty from the culture of poverty, arguing that most poor people did not belong to a culture of poverty. However, Lewis's distinction appears to apply to the world poor and exclusion from a culture of poverty relates to the state's organization itself. That is, poor people who belonged to caste-driven or socialist societies might be poor but would most likely not belong to a culture of poverty, but the poor who belonged to societies with class systems most likely belong to a culture of poverty (Katz, 1989, p.18).

idea that poverty is not simply a matter of socio-economics, but rather a matter of culture. That is, the poor have been excluded from mainstream social practices for a number of reasons, including but not limited to their perceived immorality, deviance, and limited purchasing power. As a result of this exclusion, the poor are not hired for well-paying positions, they are excluded from political process, and they are stigmatized for their poverty and welfare receipt. This exclusion is also exacerbated by frequent physical isolation from the wealthier classes, "...because poor people [tend] to be concentrated disproportionately in certain, especially urban, areas..." (Townsend, 1993, p. 98). Due to this long-term exclusion, it is argued that the poor have lost the ability to identify with mainstream culture and accepted social values. In response, the poor have looked to each other for guidance and support, and in so doing have created their own sub-culture, complete with their own set of social values and aspirations to be passed along from generation to generation. Oscar Lewis therefore argued that, "...the culture of poverty [is] adaptive, a way of coping 'with feelings of hopelessness and despair which develop from the realization of the impossibility of achieving success in terms of the values and goals of the larger society'" (O. Lewis quoted in Katz, 1993, p. 12).

Poverty scholar Michael Katz (1989) has written extensively on this topic and has argued that those who have advocated the existence of a culture of poverty, "...placed in a class by themselves those whose behaviors and values converted their poverty into an enclosed and self-perpetuating world of dependence" (p. 16). Katz's statement speaks to a number of behavioral characteristics associated with the Culture of Poverty. For Oscar Lewis, these characteristics were clear. The poor do not or cannot participate in mainstream society because they are a disorganized group (ibid, p. 18). They are more concerned with survival than with political or social participation. This position was articulated by former B.C. Premier Mike Harcourt in an interview with poverty activist Jean Swanson regarding the exclusion of the poor from the Forum on Living and Working Opportunities in 1994. In response to a question regarding their exclusion, Harcourt answered that, "...poor people are less organized, have enough of a struggle just to survive, let alone be involved as activists, so in that sense they're less visible" (M. Harcourt quoted in Swanson, 2001, p. 13).

In his book, The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare, Michael Katz (1989) has summarized paradigm founder Oscar Lewis' arguments surrounding the attitudes of the poor that lead to their isolation from society. In particular, Lewis claims that the poor tend to be apathetic members of society who are hostile towards, and suspicious of, the mainstream society which excludes them. They are prone to feeling helpless, dependent, and inferior to others. They suffer from poor self-esteem, are confused about their sexual orientation, and tend to be fatalists. Many have difficult childhoods, and have become sexually active at a young age, often resulting in unplanned pregnancies both in and out of wedlock. Lewis claimed that poor men routinely abandoned women and children, reinforcing maternal family structures, but also stressed a firm cultural belief in male superiority. Finally, Lewis claimed that poor people tend to enjoy immediate gratification and lack impulse control, making them susceptible to drug and alcohol addiction, and promiscuity (p. 18).

From Lewis's depiction of the culture of poverty, it is evident that in this paradigm the poor are a highly troubled group whose cultural values run counter to those of mainstream society. The dominant mainstream values of self-control, motivation, and hard work are non-sensical to this culture of poverty, as they are rarely beneficial to member of the poor community. Further, different cultures define success differently. Success in mainstream society is the achievement of wealth, power, and stability through accepted channels, including the workplace, inheritance, and association. Lewis defined success in cultures of poverty as the achievement of respect obtained on the street, through deviant criminal, violent, and in the case of males, promiscuous acts.

Peter Townsend added to Lewis' analysis by stressing that the poor were not simply one type of people who possessed identical characteristics. Rather, he argued that the poor consist of various social minorities, which he defined as:

...individuals or families who have some characteristic in common which makes them off from 'ordinary' people and which prevents them from having access to, or being accorded, certain rights which are available to others, and who therefore are less likely to receive certain kinds and amounts of resources. (Cheal, 1996, p. 24)

In short, Townsend argued that poor individuals do not possess the same inherent characteristics, but are brought together through their exclusion and isolation from mainstream society. It is in this exclusion that Townsend argues the Culture of Poverty would emerge, and is therefore responsible for the associated general characteristics of the poor as listed by Lewis.

The Culture of Poverty presents the poor as entities that are kept separate from mainstream society through economic exclusion and psychological adaptation. The poor lower their expectations of life in an effort to negotiate between their desires and their realities. This paradigm asserts that the poor are rational individuals who respond to isolated socio-economic conditions with different social values and aspirations.

It is important to note that like the paradigm of Structural Responsibility, there are both left- and right-wing versions of this paradigm. When Lewis and Townsend articulated this argument, it was presented as a reasonable alternative to the problems of Individual and Structural Responsibility paradigms. It initially attempted to break from the flawed character argument promoted by advocates of the paradigm of Individual Responsibility by arguing instead that the poor are rational individuals who merely respond to their harsh environment. Similarly, it reclaimed a sense of agency lost in the paradigm of Structural Responsibility by asserting that individual psychology is the dominant factor in determining action or inaction. Thus, early advocates believed that if the psychological reasons for the cultural perpetuation of poverty could be understood, then official channels could implement public policy that would lend itself to the liberation of the poor from their self-made shackles, and poverty and deviance could then be defeated.

However, as Michael Katz (1993) has noted, “others with more conservative agendas turned the concept’s original politics on its head” (pp. 12-13). As the culture of poverty argument gained credence, right-wing thinkers began to use it to identify the further psychological proof that the poor are immoral individuals, undeserving of aid. The differences between mainstream society and the poor could be presented as evidence of a sick culture, one characterized by immorality and deviance. The individual characteristics could then be used to justify poverty by arguing that most poor individuals do not want to be part of mainstream society, but instead wish to enjoy the comfort of

their own troubled poor culture. Right-wing advocates of the culture of poverty therefore argued that welfare was wasted on the poor because it would only be used for immoral ends. Instead, they argued that what the poor really needed was rehabilitation in order to help them overcome the mental illness of dependency, and “offered [the poor] social work and therapy when they needed economic justice and political mobilization (p. 37). It was further argued that punitive action, such as incarceration and cuts to aid, ought to be taken against those for whom rehabilitation did not work.

It is this right-wing view that led to further consideration of what predominantly American thinkers have termed ‘the underclass’. The underclass is the much darker side of poverty, often used to describe inner city poverty, and stresses danger, aggression, crime, and unemployment as principal characteristics of this group. The underclass is different from the working poor, whose poverty may or may not be temporary. Instead, the underclass is a relatively permanent social fixture that is seen to be menacing to the decent human beings who make up society.

Ken Auletta’s (1982) book, *Underclass* is a defining work in the conservative definition of the concept. In it, Auletta observes that the underclass consist of four distinct categories of individuals:

(a) the *passive poor*, usually long-term welfare recipients; (b) the *hostile* street criminals who terrorize most cities, and who are often school dropouts and drug addicts; (c) the *hustlers*, who, like street criminals, may not be poor and who earn their livelihood in an underground economy, but rarely commit violent crimes; (d) the *traumatized* drunks, drifters, homeless shopping-bag ladies and released mental patients who frequently roam or collapse in city streets. (p. xvi)

For Auletta, poor people are not all members of the underclass, but all members of the underclass are ultimately poor. The poor cannot be understood as a cohesive unit, but must instead be understood as a large group composed of innocent victims of circumstance on the one hand, and immoral criminals and vagabonds on the other. In other words, Auletta’s underclass is a throwback to the undeserving poor of the Victorian era.

These undeserving poor are fully responsible for their conditions, and are largely beyond the aid of mainstream society. Members of the underclass are believed to be a violent, menacing element of society who may harm those who try to help them, and certainly use and abuse any public or private aid available to them. The underclass cannot be rehabilitated, and is therefore a great permanent expense to the remainder of society.

This conservative view of the underclass thoroughly dehumanizes its members. Proponents present the underclass as a group of ruthless, cruel, self-interested poor people who are willing to do anything to survive, and by all accounts, unwilling to change. This characterization of the underclass distances them from both the deserving poor and all other members of society.

The Underclass has, however, been presented in a more moderate light, which portrays it as a new form of poverty characterized by a lack of concrete social values, confusion over appropriate behavior, and an inability to escape socio-economic conditions. As poverty scholar William A. Kelso (1994) has stated, “[i]f a community thus becomes confused and sends out no clear cultural signals as to what is appropriate behavior, it may inadvertently create an underclass in which individuals suffer from the breakdown of traditional norms” (p. 40). In other words, if there is no clear moral behavior advocated by a community, the members of that community are in danger of making poor choices that encourage crime, promiscuity, and extreme poverty from which they may not recover.

By postulating the existence of a culture of poverty and an underclass, proponents shift the manner in which poverty is conceived in two ways. First, the existence of a culture of poverty or underclass necessitates a shift in focus, from socio-economics to individual psychosis and cultural bias. Advocates therefore, avoid a call for social change, and instead promote action that is intended to change the behavior of the poor themselves. A belief in the underclass also relieves proponents of the responsibility to create successful social programs, arguing instead that the failure of such programs is due to the fact that a small percentage of poor people are beyond the help of mainstream society.

## **Current Articulations of the Culture of Poverty and the Underclass**

The Culture of Poverty and the Underclass are articulated by a variety of organizations and individuals in our society. These paradigmatic interpretations are often present when comments about the poor are generalized in a way that presents them as an exclusive and alienated community. For this reason, advocates of the Culture of Poverty are a diverse group, ranging from sociologists and community or charity organizations attempting to treat the symptoms of poverty, to police officials concerned with minimizing criminal activity that characterizes the community.

The Underclass is often promoted as a valuable component of poverty discourse by the same neo-liberal and neo-conservative organizations that advocate aspects of Individual Responsibility, including Right-of-Centre political parties and research institutes. The Fraser Institute is an active promoter of the existence of the Underclass in its generalizations about the deviance of poor communities. For example, Christopher Sarlo (1994) makes the following generalizations about the homeless:

A motley collection of runaways, bag ladies, alcoholics and drug addicts, ex-mental patients, transients and eccentrics, they are our most visible poor. They sleep on park benches, under bridges, in stairwells and in abandoned buildings. They often hang out on our main streets and steal or beg for things they need.... Mistrust of "the system," personal pride, the excitement and spontaneity of street life, the perception that they would be pressured to find employment, and expected loss of freedom may be some of the more popular motivations [for their rejection of social assistance].  
(p. 183-4)

As demonstrated by Sarlo, these Right-of-Centre advocates promote the Underclass as an acceptable characterization of particularly deviant communities. In doing so, they access and promote versions of this paradigm.



## *Concluding Remarks*

The paradigms of Structural Responsibility and the Culture of Poverty, inclusive of its right-wing version the Underclass, have surfaced as strong alternatives to the conceptualization of poverty offered by the Individual Responsibility paradigm. Each contending model has emerged out of perceived weaknesses of their paradigmatic predecessor, and used newly articulated political and psychological theories to strengthen their foundation. Indeed, the inability of older paradigms to capture all views of poverty, as evidenced from our discussion of borderline perspectives, has acted to fuel the creation of alternative paradigms that would address these weaknesses.

These three poverty paradigms co-exist and dominate current poverty discourse. However, their co-existence is not peaceful; rather, they are in constant competition with one another to define the terms of poverty debate. Thus, their existence is largely dependent upon their acceptance in popular mainstream discourse. This necessitates deep reliance upon communication media that use the paradigmatic terms to communicate information to their audiences.

In order to determine which of the paradigms dominates mainstream news media, it is necessary to study the news medium itself. The following chapters will examine Canadian news media for their favoured representations of poverty. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 concern the ways in which poverty is presented in news media. It begins with a short discussion of the representational function of news, and is followed by a content analysis of articles related to poverty from three popular Canadian newspapers. This analysis will provide data regarding the current representations of poverty in news. Finally, this thesis will conclude by stating which, if any, of the dominant paradigms are present in news media and what affect this might have on current poverty discourse.

## Chapter Three: The Representational Function Of News Media

As evidenced from the preceding chapters, the paradigms of Individual Responsibility, Structural Responsibility, and the Culture of Poverty and the Underclass, dominate poverty discourse in Western society. As complex models of poverty, these paradigms compete with one another for discursive dominance. That is, the paradigm successfully accessed and accepted by the widest possible audience can be said to dominate the discourse. Thus, the more positive attention received by a paradigm, the greater its social appeal.

With this in mind, one cannot overstate the importance of news-mediated representations of poverty. News media disseminate information to large audiences on a daily basis.<sup>16</sup> The acceptance of news media as trusted sources of information is related to the widespread belief that these media report the truth. Indeed, news media are a credible information source in our society largely because they are understood to be in the truth business. As media scholar, Stuart Allan (1999) notes, “[t]ruth, according to an old journalistic saying, is the news reporter’s stock-in-trade” (p. 48).

However, the relationship between journalism and ‘the truth’ is not a simple one. At its core lies the expectation that journalists can distance themselves from events while simultaneously offering comprehensible coverage to mass audiences. This belief masks the representational function of the news, the complexity of social and professional discourses, and the extent to which objectivity is present to news media. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of these concepts in an effort to contextualize the importance of poverty paradigms to news media.

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<sup>16</sup> See for example W. Lance Bennett (1988), James Curran and Jean Seaton (1991), Robert A. Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao (1998), and Melvin L. DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1982).

## ***Representation***

*To represent, to mediate, to image – if we make into active verbs the nouns we use so commonly in communications and media studies – representation, media, image – we can see how powerfully the language we have at our disposal frames our understanding. (Geraghty, 1996, p. 265)*

Liberal assertions about news media have dominated much of the modern perceptions of the news industry in Western liberal democratic societies. The ideological ambiguity arising out of the contradictory beliefs espoused by liberal democracy, namely a mistrust of government but respect for authority, has positioned news media as the public ‘watchdog’ who looks out for the interests of society by monitoring the powers of government (Curran, 1996, p. 83). Through vigilant observation and investigation, the use of impartial objective language, and a distinct press freedom, journalists are expected to hold public officials accountable for their actions, help to create an informed populace, and protect the interests of society at large.<sup>17</sup> Such beliefs have dominated public and formal opinions of Anglo-Canadian and American journalism for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Advocates of this perspective have touted objectivity as a defining characteristic of professional journalism, asserting that, “...journalists can stand apart from events without influencing them and transfer the truth or meaning of events to the news audience by means of neutral language and competent reporting techniques” (Hackett and Zhae, 1998, p.84). Thus, they have argued that properly executed journalism provides an accurate reflection of the world through linguistic and visual representation, as though objective news coverage might mirror reality. By promoting the above traits, advocates have garnered credibility for mainstream news and solicited audiences’ trust in the news

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<sup>17</sup> The “watchdog” role of news media is fundamentally connected to its freedom from state intervention. Advocates argue that this independence allows journalists to fulfill their democratic role by objectively reporting the actions and decisions of officials, thus holding them accountable to the voting public. For further information, please see Denis McQuail (1996, pp.66-80), James Curran (1996, pp.80-119), James Curran (2002, pp.217-247), and Herbert J. Gans (2003).

product (McQuail, 1979, p. 81).<sup>18</sup> They are therefore able to argue that the world reflected by journalists is an accurate and unbiased representation of reality.

The conflation of reflection with representation is a significant weakness in dominant liberal perspectives of news media. To equate reflection with representation is to misunderstand the nature of representation and its relationship to news (Geraghty, 1996, p. 266). On the surface, representation appears to be self-explanatory. It is a basic communication tool practiced daily through our use of language, metaphors, and signs. At its most basic level, representation can be understood as the process of standing in for or referring to another (Redner, 1994, p. 24). It implies the ability of one entity, linguistic or material, to convey the characteristics and meaning of another.

In many ways this understanding of representation is both over-simplified and misleading. The above definition suggests representation can be equated with a general reflection of reality, as though proper representation is the reflection of the most important characteristics of its object of study. Thus, as Christine Geraghty (1996) states, "...the original is relatively unchanged by the process [of reflection]" (p. 266). This understanding implies linearity and faithful message exchange between points A and B (Hall, 1980, p. 128), and therefore assumes that language can and does reflect reality in an unaltered state.

However, representation is far more complex than this. Representation is a discursive function that links external signifiers, shared meanings, and subjective experiences. Representation does precisely what it claims: it re-presents reality in a number of ways with the intention of making the represented object meaningful (Cummins, 1996, p. 131). Representation is therefore not a mirrored reflection of the world, but a view that is mediated by external signifiers and serves a discursive function.

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<sup>18</sup> Audience accusations of bias in the news strongly suggest their trust that objectivity is indeed possible, a point discussed by Robert A. Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao (1998, p.86), Judith Lichtenberg (1996, pp.225-6), W. Lance Bennett (1988, p.2)

## *Discourse*

The concept of discourse provides further insight into the representational powers of language. Discourse has been broadly defined as, "...relatively fixed ways of using language and generating meaning in particular social and institutional settings" (Hackett and Zhao, 1998, p. 123). Therefore, discourses promote particular interpretations of the world through their use of language in order to share experiences, compare conditions, facilitate knowledge transmission, and prioritize social issues. As Stuart Hall (1980) has observed, "[r]eality exists outside language, but it is constantly mediated by and through language..." (p.131). Language facilitates the connection between subjective experience and external realities. In other words, language is a tool used by cultures to communicate; it is a sign-system designed to produce and reproduce meaningful communication between individuals.

Different conditions produce different discourses. Therefore, social groups may attach differing meanings to linguistic representations of reality. For example, the changes in the criteria for welfare eligibility in British Columbia may have multiple meanings, simultaneously signaling financial responsibility to the finance sector, and disciplinary action to the poor. Having experienced reality differently from each other, these groups interpret events using different discursive language, resulting in different understandings of the same event.

As individuals are subjected to many different conditions and discourses over their lifetimes, meanings ascribed to language become difficult to stabilize without particular rules or common codes that trigger shared meanings. Thus, discourses employ codes in order to facilitate communication (Hartley, 1995, p. 2). Codes are discursive conventions – recognizable structures – that enable users to make sense of reality; without them, there can be no intelligible communication (Hall, 1980, p. 131). Since language is simply a representational tool, codes are necessary in order for meaning to be shared. While codes cannot fully guarantee that the encoded meaning will be decoded precisely as intended, they do increase the probability that this will occur.

Individuals tend to accept these linguistic codes without question. As John Hartley (1995) suggests, "[i]t seems quite natural, and it is very much in our own

interests to go along with the rules and constraints for the sake of the benefits we gain from successful communication” (p. 2). The uncritical acceptance and usage of these codes has the effect of making language seem natural, as though reality and representational meaning are interchangeable. Thus, language is not reflective of reality, but rather serves a representational function in a culturally produced discourse (Hall, 1980, p. 132).

Indeed, discourses are not independent of actors, but are constantly produced by them. Actors define their own discursive boundaries; that is, they determine what can be understood through language based on shared communication and experiences. In this way, discursive language helps to make sense of the unfamiliar, whereby “[n]ew, problematic or troubling events... [can] be ‘explained’ by extending to them the forms of explanation which [have] served ‘for all practical purposes’, in other cases” (Hall, 1990, p. 75). In these moments of uncertainty, comprehension is linked to discursive speculation.

This is particularly relevant to a study of representations of poverty in news, since by definition, news media cover ‘new’ events and require audiences to decode coverage in preferred ways. News media rely upon the ability of audiences to recognize pre-established discursive codes in news stories that signal both particular meanings and objectivity. This aspect of discourse is tied to the ‘regime of objectivity’, a concept to which we will return later in this chapter.

Language signals the limitations of discourse and shared meanings. Stuart Hall (1980) has argued that, “...what we can know and say has to be produced in and through discourse” (p. 131). Our linguistic methods of representation make finite sense of reality. Therefore, discourses incorporate self-imposed limitations on our ability to understand and communicate. Our ability to do both is heavily dependent upon the application of intertextual understandings and ideological closure.

Intertextuality is a defining characteristic because discourses do not exist independently from one another; they comprise an interwoven tapestry of competing ideas, beliefs, terminology, and meanings. Thus, Foucault’s notion that, “...all statements are intertextual because they are interpreted against a backdrop of other statements” (Riggins, 1997, p.2) proves meaningful.

Furthermore, discourses are not stagnant and inflexible concepts. Rather, they are historically situated and rely upon previously accepted and constantly negotiated meanings (Fraser, 1997, p. 160). Their continued existence is dependent upon their ability to negotiate unfamiliar conceptual terrain through language and codes. History is not forgotten; rather, it is embodied in the changing character of the discourse.

Discourse also promotes ideological closure; that is, it "...establish[es] certain systems of equivalence between what could be assumed about the world and what could be said to be true" (Hall, 1990, p. 75). Ideological closure involves the promotion of a preferred understanding of reality, whereby alternate understandings are largely difficult to achieve (Hartley, 2000, pp. 42-3). These discursive actors must agree upon definitions of reality in order to make sense of the world and, consequently, to establish the 'truth' (Hall, 1990, p. 75).<sup>19</sup>

In understanding that representations and discourses are defining components of communication, it becomes clear that there can be no direct reflection of reality through language. Instead, language constructs reality through culturally specific representations, codes, and techniques.

### ***News Discourse and the 'Regime of Objectivity'***

Upon consideration of the defining characteristics of discourse – specifically its use of ideological codes and intertextual references to convey preferred representations of reality – it becomes clear that news itself is a discourse. Audiences come to expect news to be factual and objective. They come to recognize events, characters, and topics based on discursive codes present in news. As John Hartley (1995) notes, "[a]s we get used to its codes and conventions we will become 'news-literate' – not only able to follow the news and recognize its familiar cast of characters and events, but also spontaneously able to interpret the world at large in terms of the codes we have learnt from news" (p. 5).

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<sup>19</sup> To attempt to define "truth" would be to undertake a far more ambitious project than possible within the confines of this thesis. In absence of this discussion, we refer to Stuart Hall's (1990) explanation, whereby: " 'True' means credible, or at least capable of winning credibility as a statement of fact" (p.75).

With this in mind, we turn our attention to the codes that signal the defining feature of professional news: objectivity.

Objectivity has been to journalists what Loren Lind has called a “governing ethos, integral to its self-understanding” (L. Lind quoted in Hackett and Zhao, 1998, p. 8), and is a legitimizing concept with which news organizations would be hard-pressed to part. At its core, objectivity refers to the ability to impartially observe one’s surroundings. It is a concept associated with an empirical approach to observation (Saunders, 2000, p. 208); specifically, that facts ought to be observed and recorded by an impartial observer who will render the truth of an event visible. With regard to news media, the ability of a journalist to abandon personal bias is connected to his or her ability to report the truth. Thus, journalistic practices and linguistic codes that connote objectivity imply that the truth has been reported. This has the favorable result of garnering credibility for the news organization.

There has been much debate over the existence of objectivity. Many believe that objectivity in its most empirical form is a journalistic impossibility.<sup>20</sup> Journalists inhabit the same cultures as the rest of us and are therefore affected by them. They are paid labourers and most suffer the same financial strains as other members of society. They are conscious beings who experience reality from particular positions, and who speak socially situated languages. Professionally, journalists communicate these experiences through a shared professional discourse. All of these elements call into question the notion of journalists’ ability to be empirically objective.

Nevertheless, objectivity is a crucial part of journalistic integrity, and a characteristic upon which the modern profession is based. While several factors make empirical objectivity an unlikely occurrence, the practices associated with journalistic objectivity are very much alive. As communication scholars Robert A. Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao (1998) conclude, critical researchers cannot simply discard the concept as an impossibility, but rather must rethink the ways in which it exists. They argue:

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<sup>20</sup> See for example James Curran (2002); Robert A. Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao (1998); Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese (1996); Robert A. Hackett (1991); and W. Lance Bennett (1988).



In North America, for much of the twentieth century, the contours of journalistic practice have been shaped by what we call a *regime of objectivity* – an ensemble of ideals, assumptions, practices, and institutions – which has become a fixture of public philosophy and a supposed form of self-regulation. (p. 1)

In this way, the regime is a set of institutionalized techniques and codes that connote fair, accurate, and balanced reportage (Hackett and Zhao, p. 2). The techniques associated with this regime include:

- the use of the ‘inverted pyramid’ format;
- the application of frames of reference;
- deference to expert, official, and institutional sources as primary definers; and,
- the use of constructed dichotomies to create the appearance of fair reportage.

Prior to this examination, it is important to note that there are many additional factors that influence the press and the construction of news (McChesney, 1999; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Curran and Seaton, 1991; W. Lance Bennett, 1988). Indeed, as Shoemaker and Reese (1996) argue, there are multiple levels of influence on the news, including organizational and ownership structures, advertising pressures and target audience appeal, and to a lesser extent the personal beliefs and characteristics of individual media workers. While all of the above are important to a full examination of the news industry and the subsequent ideology embedded in mainstream news, this thesis is concerned with the representative function of news discourse and the direct manner in which the appearance of objectivity is achieved, and not the systemic and structural imperatives associated with ownership or other factors. Thus, for present purposes, the ‘regime of objectivity’ and the techniques associated with its application are examined.

It is useful to explore each of the above techniques in order to present a clearer picture of the regime of objectivity. The written format of a news story is an important component of the regime of objectivity. In fact, it is arguably as important as the information contained within the article. The repeated presence of this recognizable story-telling structure known as the ‘inverted pyramid’ establishes a discursive pattern in news reporting (Scollon, 1998, p. 197). The ‘inverted pyramid’ style of news reporting establishes codes that connote facticity by prioritizing information from most to least

important facts (Hackett and Zhao, 1998, p. 37). In this way, the central actors, location, and event description are addressed within the first paragraphs, while information deemed decreasingly important follows.<sup>21</sup> The ‘inverted pyramid’ is thus a strategic formatting technique that signals the most pressing facts for audiences.

The ‘inverted pyramid’ lends itself to the credibility of the news by asserting that the facts are accurately prioritized. The US based Project for Excellence in Journalism, an organization with the aim of establishing and clarifying standards for American journalists, has turned its attention to the changing nature of the concept of objectivity. In its article, “The Lost Meaning of Objectivity”, The Project for Excellence in Journalism (2003) states that the ‘inverted pyramid’ emerged as a process whereby objectivity could be achieved through the presentation of facts. It notes that in applying the ‘inverted pyramid’, “...a journalist lines the facts up from the most important to the least important, thinking it helps audiences understand things naturally.”

However, the ‘inverted pyramid’ is not a natural phenomenon that can guarantee accuracy. Rather, it is a tool that signals the importance of particular details over others deemed less important. Thus, the ‘inverted pyramid’ situates consciously filtered information as factually accurate, and this filtering is paradoxically presented as an impartial reflection of the event.

For journalists to render information meaningful to audiences, the ‘inverted pyramid’ must be coupled with appropriate news frames. In their analysis of framing devices, Robert A. Hackett and Yuezhi Zhao (1998) argue that they are, “...cues inviting but certainly not forcing readers to accept the ‘preferred readings’<sup>22</sup> embedded in news accounts” (p. 119). Frames are discursive tools used to organize random information into meaningful narratives in order to convey preferred readings, or particular interpretations, of stories to readers. They are “principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (T.

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<sup>21</sup> In addition, there are editorial benefits associated with the inverted pyramid’s prioritization of information. By presenting the least important information at the end of the article, editors can shorten stories quickly and painlessly if necessary (Desbarats, 1996, p.9).

<sup>22</sup> “Preferred readings” are those interpretations favoured by newsmakers. While this preferred interpretation cannot be guaranteed, the use of codes, frames, and other linguistic devices increase the likelihood that the story will be decoded in this favored way by the majority of targeted audience members. See for example John Fiske and Tim O’Sullivan (2000, pp.238-240); John Hartley (1995, pp.72-3); and Stuart Hall (1980, pp.128-138).

Gitlin quoted in Allan, 1999, p. 63). News frames are thematic structures that set the limitations of acceptable discourse by establishing, as Stuart Hall et al. (1978) state, “what the problem is” (p. 59). Once set, frames work to clarify the relevance of particular information. By applying frames to news, journalists are able to take advantage of popular beliefs and conventions, which allow them to report large quantities of information with minimal explanation (Hartley, 1995, p. 64). News frames give the appearance of natural, factual, and objective narratives.

Frames have a further purpose. By using popular language familiar to audiences as part of objective reporting, news media reaffirm the dominant beliefs and stereotypes held by mainstream society. This occurs because news frames naturalize particular social, economic and power relations by presenting them uncritically as part of the daily routine. Once these frames are applied, they are very difficult to alter (Allan, 1999, p. 71). In so doing, news frames reinforce the existing power relations by re-presenting them as factual backdrops for the reported events.

Another element in the journalist’s struggle for objectivity is their reliance upon institutional experts and official representatives as sources for their factual information (Hackett and Zhao, 1996, p. 44). These sources tend to belong to the upper echelons of credible professions and are used by journalists to speak for their respective professional communities in order to clarify events. Because of the pressure to provide impartial reporting, “media statements are, whenever possible, grounded in ‘objective’ and ‘authoritative’ statements from ‘accredited’ sources” (Hall et al., 1978, p. 58). As the major providers of credible information, these sources become the primary definers of the news. These sources not only provide information to journalists who in turn present it as fact, but also help to establish the preferred frames of reference by supplying selected information for audience consumption. By acting as the defining voices, these credible sources are able to selectively define the terms of coverage (p. 59).

The credibility of news sources is connected to social and institutional hierarchies. A ‘hierarchy of credibility’<sup>23</sup> suggests that individuals are ranked according to institutional and social positions, whereby, “...the members of the highest group are best

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<sup>23</sup> “Hierarchy of credibility” is a term originally introduced by media scholar H.S. Becker (1967), and used by subsequent critical media and cultural studies scholars. Stuart Allan (1999, p.68-9)

placed to define 'the way things really are' due to their 'knowledge of the truth'" (Allan, 1999, p. 68). Those at the top of the hierarchy are considered more credible as sources than their subordinate counterparts because their authoritative positions suggest that they are in possession of special institutional knowledge (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 181).

There are additional practical reasons for journalistic reliance upon these sources. First, since journalists cannot compromise their positions as objective observers, they are themselves unable to provide detailed analyses of events. They are, however, required to make sense of events for audiences. Journalists therefore rely upon sources for their ability to provide the required analysis for the promotion of preferred readings (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 130). Second, due to limited resources and deadlines, journalists are required to produce the news as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible. Institutional sources tend to be well organized and available to the media, often employing individuals to deal specifically with media in order to provide them preferred explanations of events (pp. 128-9). These institutions can provide credible information to journalists who are pressed by deadlines and limited resources (Hall et al., 1978, p. 58).

In his article, "Ethnic Minorities and the British News Media: Explaining (Mis)Representations," British journalism scholar Simon Cottle (1999) notes the results of such media behaviour:

When coupled with a professional journalistic claim to impartiality and objectivity which, ironically, is achieved in practice via the accessing of authoritative (that is, authority) voices, so the bureaucratic nature of news production is geared to privilege the voices and viewpoints of social power holders, and not those excluded from Britain's powerful institutions. (pp. 196-7)

Here, Cottle notes the impact of power on the construction of news. For reasons of access and organization, objective news is built on definitions supplied by those who control social, political, and economic resources (Hall et al., 1978, p. 58). These sources set the terms of legitimate debate. Therefore, oppositional responses must attempt to address these terms within the established discursive boundaries. These discursive limitations have a significant impact on the media's ability to represent issues concerning social struggle.

Finally, in an effort to strengthen their appearance of impartiality and fairness, journalists strive to provide a balance of opinion – ‘both sides’ of the story – in news articles. The juxtaposition of selected oppositional views as dichotomies is the major news routine used to signal fair coverage (Bennett, 1988, p. 118). However, as noted above, the oppositional voices included in the debate must fit within the established news frame. That is, they must appear to agree to certain defining information, including central actors and key events, and respond within the frame by using the established language. Opposition then only appears if the actors share a common discursive framework that can be carefully managed by news workers. Dichotomies are often media constructions designed to support the impartiality of the journalist and the fairness of the news story.

### ***The Importance of the Notion of Objectivity for Representations of the Poor***

The news media therefore do not present “a complete and unrefracted capture of the world” (P. Golding and P. Elliott quoted in Hackett and Zhao, 1998, p. 84). Instead, the world that is presented by the media is constructed. The constructed reality presented in news media is not necessarily the result of conscious efforts to reflect particular biases, but emerges through discursive and linguistic representations. Indeed, “...language ha[s] to be seen as the medium in which specific meanings are produced” (Hall, 1990, p. 67). It can therefore be asserted that if representation is the re-presentation of the world through meaning-generating systems, and if news is a culturally produced discourse intended to communicate meaning, then journalists can be said to be in the business of making meaning.

In recognizing the representational and discursive roles of news media, the liberal view that news can be reflective of the world is effectively refuted. Although journalists are employed to observe and record events, they cannot fully replicate the experience through representation, in part because these representations are informed by social discourses, and in part because journalists must employ discursive representations in

order to communicate with audiences. The reporter's stock-in-trade is not then truth, but the representation of a truth.

We can extend the impact of news representations to social discourse. Not only is news sensitive to external discourses in the creation of its own, but it is also an important contributor to popular discourse. As 'secondary definers'<sup>24</sup> of reality, news provides most of the trusted information of world events to society (McQuail, 1979, p. 81). The presence of "consistent pictures of the social world" (ibid) provides individuals with interpretive frames which they can employ to make sense of the unfamiliar in their daily lives. For this reason, an examination of representations of poverty in objective news is important in determining the dominant perspectives that impede efforts to generate social change with respect to the poor. It can be argued that if a poverty paradigm dominates representations in news, then it is likely that it dominates social discourse.

### **Implications for the Following Content Analysis**

Our above discussion establishes that the news media are not objective reflective tools. They employ discursive language to communicate with audiences. As components of the larger social community and professional observers of reality, journalists are aware of the common language and representational short-cuts that are used to communicate issues in society. Thus, it can be expected that journalists come into contact with and employ discursive language associated with the dominant poverty paradigms in their representations through news. Though news media may examine the issue of poverty from various positions reflective of the three dominant poverty paradigms, it is also expected that the news media would have a significant role in helping to define and establish the popular perception of the poor.

As we have established, the importance of the news media's portrayal of issues such as poverty is integral in gaining an appreciation for the role of the media in shaping the issues on which they report. The following chapter examines the representations of

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<sup>24</sup> Although used by a number of sources, this thesis has drawn this term from James Curran, Michael Gurevitch, and Janet Woollacott (1979, p. 27)

poverty in news articles. This analysis of news content is intended to see which, if any, of the poverty paradigms dominate news-mediated representations of poverty.

## Chapter Four: The Content Of Poverty News

As established in the preceding chapter, news media serve a representational function. The representations expressed in news media are the result of observational and communicative tactics on the part of journalists. That is, journalists attempt to represent events fairly, factually, and objectively to audiences. They also “translate” specialized discourses into familiar language, expressions, codes, and colloquialisms. Journalists rely on dominant understandings of issues and events in order to regularly communicate to mass audiences.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether news media, and in particular the press, favour any of the paradigmatic interpretations of poverty and if so, which ones. We are particularly interested in locating common structures, patterns, and themes present in news articles that could provide some insights by revealing whether the press subscribes to dominant poverty paradigms, despite their claims of objectivity. In order to do so, it is necessary to examine the representation of poverty in hard news articles.

In an age of multi-media, where digital communications are becoming increasingly popular, the reader may question the relevance of a study concerned only with the press. There are, however, a number of reasons for this selection. First, although it is well documented that the press has struggled to retain its relevance, particularly with the increased popularity of television and Internet news, it has remained a strong and healthy news medium in Canadian society (Kesterton and Bird, 1991, p. 29). Indeed, according to a 2002 national study conducted by the Newspaper Audience Databank<sup>25</sup>, the weekly circulation of daily newspapers in Canada was approximately 12,000,000 (NADbank, 2003, “Daily readership trends: Weekly Reach, 1998-2002). This is in relation to a national population that is estimated to be only 31 million people (Statistics Canada, 2003, “Demographic Statistics). In addition, the databank study noted that 54% of adults read newspapers daily, 60% on weekends, and 81% at least once during a week (NADbank, 2002, “Readership highlights: Study 2002) These numbers

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<sup>25</sup> National Audience Databank (NADbank) is a Canadian organization that conducts newspaper market research “...to assist in the buying and selling of newspaper advertising in Canada” (NADbank, 2003, “What is NADbank)



indicate that Canadian newspapers have maintained their presence as a significant information source, despite competition with other media.

It is notable that academic studies over the past decade have asserted the general decline of newspapers' relevance. Despite arguments put forward approximately twenty years ago by the Royal Commission on Newspapers (1981) that the press is influential in setting the public agenda, and acts as a major source of information for other news media due to more detailed coverage of events offered in its pages, scholars have begun to assert that the relevance of the medium is under threat. However, as Doug Underwood (1993) notes, competition from other media has forced newspapers to adjust in order to appeal to audiences, embracing a more reader-friendly format that capitalizes on "...brief, heavily packaged news items, extensive reader-service columns as well as redesigned coverage of community issues and themes and 'news-you-can-use' data..." (p. 151). In addition, Underwood notes that newspapers remain an important source of newsworthy information for other news media, such as Internet websites and television broadcasts. Therefore, although competition amongst various news media has threatened the relevance of newspapers, the press continues to retain its significance as a dominant news medium.

## ***Methodology***

### **a. Sample Selection**

In order to study the representations of poverty in mainstream print journalism, three large-circulation Canadian newspapers were selected for analysis. The Vancouver Sun, the Vancouver Province, and the Globe and Mail were selected based on their mainstream status and large circulation numbers, with the Globe and Mail leading at a daily circulation of 330,000 (with an estimated daily readership of 1 million) (Crawley, 2003), followed by the Vancouver Sun whose daily circulation is approximately 203,390 (The Vancouver Sun, 2003), and the Vancouver Province with a daily circulation of 167,746 (ibid). All papers are published six days per week, the Vancouver Sun and the Globe and Mail being published Monday through Saturday, and the Vancouver Province published Sunday through Friday.

In addition, these three newspapers were selected because they offer examples of three different forms of print news. The Globe and Mail provides an example of an “elite” daily, appealing to the well-educated, professional, and upper-income individuals. Comparatively, the Vancouver Sun can be considered a middle-market broadsheet, appealing to middle-income workers. Finally, the Vancouver Province is an example of a tabloid that emphasizes “human interest” news values. The three papers offer a sample of the variety of press available to the public on a daily basis.

In order to both limit the scope of the study and adequately represent news coverage in these newspapers, a consecutive two-month time period was randomly selected. Relevant articles were drawn from between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002 and February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2002, inclusive.

In addition to the above, three further limitations were imposed. First, the search was limited to the most overtly objective news sections of the papers. That is, only relevant articles located in the A section of the Vancouver Province and the Globe and Mail, and the A and B sections of the Vancouver Sun were included in the study. Second, in an attempt to study the way in which seemingly objective news represents poverty, the search was limited to hard news<sup>26</sup> stories only. That is, only articles written in ‘inverted pyramid’ format and/or which connoted factual, fair reportage were included in the sample.<sup>27</sup> By implication, editorials, letters to the editor, and other columns were excluded from the analysis. Third, as our study is concerned with representations of poverty in Canada, and our poverty paradigms are specific to western developed nations, it was appropriate to geographically limit our sample to include only articles about Canadian poverty.

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<sup>26</sup> For the purposes of this study, ‘hard news’ “[r]efers to timely or breaking news. Often in ‘inverted pyramid’ format: a factual style with the most important information first” (Bailey and Hackett, 1998, p.29)

<sup>27</sup> These limitations were imposed in order to limit our study to the most trusted news articles. This is not to suggest that audiences are universally uncritical of the news articles in newspapers, but to suggest instead that hard news is expected to be fairly and accurately reported. These articles do not, therefore, require the disclaimer of “editorial” or “letter” largely because they are expected not to reflect journalistic opinion.

## **b. Poverty Paradigms**

As the ultimate goal of this study is to determine which, if any, of the poverty paradigms are favoured by mainstream news media, it is useful to briefly speculate about the patterns of press content that would match each paradigm.

- i. *Individual Responsibility*: This paradigm asserts that the individual is responsible for his or her own socio-economic situation, and is therefore entirely to blame for his or her own poverty. Press content favouring this paradigm would likely imply a distinction between the ‘deserving’ poor, composed of individuals who are not to blame for their poverty, including but not limited to seniors, children, and victims of natural disasters, and the ‘undeserving poor’, composed of individuals whose harmful life choices, laziness, and lack of motivation have resulted in their poverty, including but not limited to the unemployed, welfare recipients, and the homeless. Press coverage matching the characteristics of this paradigm might also imply that non-poor society is taken advantage of by the ‘undeserving poor’. In addition, articles demonstrating a preference for this paradigm might also imply that poverty can only be overcome when the poor individuals are forced to self-motivate, and access sources who advocate for reduced government aid, stricter limitations on and monitoring of welfare recipients, and severe punishment for misuse of the system.
- ii. *Structural Responsibility*: Press coverage favouring radical and liberal variants of this paradigm might assert that socio-economic structures are responsible for the causation and/or management of poverty. In particular, such articles may suggest that the lack of well-paid jobs, the amount of competition for existing employment opportunities, and the increased demand for skilled labour exacerbate systemic inequalities.

While these articles will likely not distinguish between ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ members of the poor, they may imply that the poor are victims of systemic injustice. Additionally, articles matching the radical version of Structural Responsibility will likely suggest that capitalism and its inherent inequality is to blame for the creation of poverty, accessing vocal critics of the system as primary sources. Conversely, articles matching the liberal variant of Structural Responsibility may assert the importance of government and systemic structures in the management of and solutions to poverty, and access official and institutional sources to speak about these respective plans and roles.

➤ *Borderline Perspectives*: Press coverage that accesses the logic of both the paradigms of Individual Responsibility and Structural Responsibility, in that social structures are ultimately to blame for individual choices that result in poverty, are included here. This coverage will likely access sources, official or otherwise, to argue that poverty is the outcome of inefficient state structures, such as welfare, that destroy work incentive and teach individuals to become reliant upon the state for their well-being. Alternatively, this coverage may access sources or construct story-lines that speak to the stigmatization of welfare recipients, which makes them less desirable for hire and housing, and consequently reinforces their exclusion from mainstream society.

iii. *Culture of Poverty*: Press coverage favouring this paradigm will present specific poor communities as deviant groups, hostile to the non-poor, and distinct from mainstream society. Articles may cover these communities descriptively, and may access sources to speak about the pathology of these communities. Finally, articles may imply

that these poor subcultures are self-perpetuating, passed along from generation to generation, through their presentation of associated deviant behaviour, such as drug abuse or prostitution.

- *The Underclass*: Articles matching the characteristics of this paradigm generally stress danger, aggression, deviance, and unemployment as principal characteristics of these poor communities, and may be found in articles about drug addiction, homelessness, prostitution, and street crime. Additionally, articles promoting this paradigmatic perspective will stress the need for the protection of mainstream society from the dangerous deviance of the underclass.

### c. Search Procedure

The search process occurred in two parts. First, each newspaper was scanned via microfiche for articles about or relating to poverty. Since this study was designed to determine the presence of poverty paradigms, a broad and inclusive definition was required. Thus, poverty was broadly defined as “resource poor” in order to include articles about poverty, poor people (including poor families and poor children), low-income people (including working people and seniors), welfare and welfare recipients<sup>28</sup>, the homeless, and ‘street people’.

To strengthen the results of the initial microfiche search, a secondary search was undertaken. Using two computerized databases, the Globe and Mail CD-Rom database for Globe and Mail articles and the web-based Canadian Newsstand for the Vancouver Sun and Vancouver Province, the three newspapers were searched using key words related to our broad definition of poverty, and included “poverty”, “poor”, “poor people”, “low-income”, “homeless”, “street people”, “welfare”, “shelters”, and “panhandling”.

The analysis of the total sample occurred in three parts. The sample news articles were first chronologically indexed in newspaper-specific databases. These original

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<sup>28</sup> ‘Welfare’ and ‘welfare recipients’ were included as key words because of the relationship between poverty and welfare. That is, recipients of welfare must be considered resource poor in order to receive financial aid.

databases included the following general defining information about each article: the date of publication, day of week, page number, journalist(s), news source, geographical focus, and headline and sub-headline. Following this, the sample articles were examined and sorted into general topics and subtopics in order to detect patterns of coverage and newsworthiness. Finally, article headlines and news leads were analyzed for news values. Although the determination of news values is a highly speculative and subjective area of study, the sample articles were coded for their overt presence in order to determine the relative newsworthiness of poverty stories.

### ***Part 1: General Information***

Prior to any examination of articles for paradigmatic interpretations of poverty, it is useful to describe the defining characteristics of the sample articles. The microfiche and database searches yielded a total of 98 articles. Of this, 39 (39.8%) were from the Vancouver Sun, 29 (29.6%) were from the Vancouver Province, and 30 (30.6%) were from the Globe and Mail.

#### **a. Article location**

As this study is concerned specifically with news stories, only the news sections of the papers were analyzed. Traditionally, news items are presented in the A section of newspapers. In addition, the most newsworthy articles are likely to be placed within the first few pages of the paper, usually on pages A1 through A7 (Barton, 1981, p. 60). The stories deemed most interesting and important tend to be located on the front-page (p. 76).

Of the three papers examined in this study, only the Globe and Mail remains completely faithful to the traditional format. It presents its hard news items in the A section, and relegates all others to subsequent sections. The Vancouver Sun and Vancouver Province deviate from traditional formats. In contrast to the primary hard news section of the Globe and Mail, the Vancouver Sun presents hard news stories in

both its A and B sections. That is, in addition to the hard news presented in its A section, the B section, entitled ‘Lower Mainland’, consists of regional hard news stories.<sup>29</sup>

The Vancouver Province differs slightly from both the Vancouver Sun and the Globe and Mail in its presentation. In particular, the layout of the front page differs in that full news stories are not present here. Rather, it functions as a cover page, enticing audiences with interesting story leads, photographs, and a page number directory. Full news stories are contained within the paper. The most important news stories are placed within the first few pages of the A section in traditional format.

Articles about or relating to poverty were located as follows:

**Table 1: Article Location**

Newspaper	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8+	B1	B2	B3+	Total
Vancouver Sun (n=39)	20.5%	2.6%	2.6%	15.4%	5.1%	7.7%	-	2.6%	25.6%	2.6%	15.4%	100.1%
Vancouver Province (n=29)	3.5%	3.5%	10.3%	6.9%	3.5%	10.3%	13.8%	48.3%	-	-	-	100.1%
Globe and Mail (n=30)	16.7%	-	-	10.0%	10.0%	6.7%	10.0%	46.7%	-	-	-	100.1%

- ‘n’ refers to the total number of articles per newspaper coding for each sampling period
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

Of the Vancouver Sun articles, 53.9% appeared in the first seven pages of the newspaper, as did 51.8% of total Vancouver Province articles and 53.4% of the total Globe and Mail articles.

Of the total Vancouver Sun articles, 43.6% were located in the B section. Of this, 25.6% of the total, or 58.9% of the total B section articles, were located on page B1. This suggests that poverty and issues relating to poor people are often framed as regional issues, affecting and occurring in the local population. They are, therefore, often more appropriately presented in the secondary ‘Lower Mainland’ news section.

Like most issues and events covered by news, poverty received a dispersion of coverage, suggesting that at times issues were deemed more newsworthy than others.

<sup>29</sup> While there is distinct news value in the Vancouver Sun’s B section, the A section remains the news leader.

The spread of placement indicates that the importance of these stories fluctuates over time, and may be dependent on other factors, such as timeliness and relevance. We will return to this in our discussion of news values.

### b. Story Origin

The articles were examined to determine whether the majority of poverty articles were retrieved from a newswire or originated with staff journalists. The breakdown is as follows:

**Table 2: Story Origin**

Newspaper	Staff	Canadian Press	News Services	Other newspaper	News source not stated	Total
Vancouver Sun (n=39)	90.0%	-	-	2.6%	7.7%	100.3%
Vancouver Province (n=29)	79.3%	6.9%	3.5%	-	10.3%	100.0%
Globe and Mail (n=30)	93.3%	3.3%	-	-	3.3%	99.9%

- 'n' refers to the total number of articles per newspaper coding for each sampling period
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

Although a significantly higher percentage of Vancouver Province articles originate with external sources, the overall findings indicate that staff journalists are responsible for the majority of poverty-related stories. The question then becomes: is there a 'poverty beat' present in any or all of the sampled news? The dispersion of journalistic responsibility is as follows:



**Table 3: Journalists**

Vancouver Sun	Vancouver Province	Globe and Mail
18 identified journalists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 journalist was responsible for 15.4% of the total</li> <li>• 1 journalist was responsible for 12.8% of the total</li> <li>• 1 journalist was responsible 10.3% of the total</li> <li>• 3 journalists were each responsible 7.7% of the total</li> <li>• 4 journalists were each responsible 5.1% of the total</li> <li>• 8 journalists were each responsible for 2.6% of the total</li> </ul>	16 identified journalists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 journalists were each responsible for 13.8%</li> <li>• 5 journalists were each responsible for 6.9%</li> <li>• 9 journalists were each responsible for 3.5%</li> </ul>	13 identified journalists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 journalist was responsible for 16.7% of the total</li> <li>• 1 journalist was responsible for 13.3% of the total</li> <li>• 3 journalists were each responsible for 10% of the total</li> <li>• 3 journalists were each responsible for 6.7% of the total</li> </ul>
7.7% of articles written by unidentified persons	20.7% of articles written by unidentified persons	6.7% of the articles written by unidentified persons

News “beats”, or specializations, occur when journalists are employed to cover a particular topic or institution for an extended period of time. Due to consistent exposure to the topic and its key players, these journalists tend to develop both specializations and important contacts in the select area (Hackett, 1991, p. 106). In addition, “[s]pecialist reporters are arguably better able to grasp nuances and to distinguish the important from the merely dramatic...” (ibid). Thus, a journalist who specializes in a field is expected to have intimate knowledge of the subject.

The results of this examination are telling, and reveal that journalists lack poverty expertise. The relatively large number of journalists assigned to these stories indicates two notable characteristics. First, the majority of journalists present are generalists; that is, these journalists can be employed to cover any number of subjects (Bennett, 1988, p. 132. This ability of reporters to cover a multitude of topics suggests a mastery of the “regime of objectivity”; and as W. Lance Bennett (1988) has noted, the majority of these

generalist journalists “...pride themselves on their ability to cover any news story” (p. 132). However, the overwhelming presence of generalists indicates that they lack the intimate knowledge and contacts associated with specialization. Thus, although poverty receives news coverage, it does not necessarily receive significant and revealing long-term analysis.

The second notable characteristic is that poverty-related events tend to be covered as independent occurrences. The dispersion of stories amongst journalists suggests a certain disconnection that allows poverty issues to be treated as unrelated, thus justifying coverage by a multitude of journalists. Further, it indicates that these stories may be connected to other types of stories. The journalist may cover poverty as a characteristic of another event, such as street crime or prostitution, thereby avoiding detailed coverage of poverty itself. In doing so, poverty is represented as secondary characteristic that contextualizes a more prominent newsworthy event. This will become clearer in our examination of news topics.

### **c. Geographical Focus**

In order to determine whether newspapers presented poverty as a national, provincial, or regional issue, the articles in the sample were coded for their geographical focus. Articles presenting poverty as of national concern were coded as ‘national’, articles presenting poverty as affecting a particular province were coded as ‘provincial’, and articles presenting poverty in a regional or municipal context were coded as ‘sub-provincial’ and noted for their region. ‘Provincial’ and ‘sub-provincial’ articles were also noted for their affected province or region.

**Table 4: Geographical Focus**

	<b>National</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>Sub-Provincial</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Vancouver Sun (n=39)</b>	12.8%	41.1% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B.C.: 38.5%</li> <li>• ONT: 2.6%</li> </ul>	46.1% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Mainland B.C.: 41.0%</li> <li>• Okanagan B.C.: 5.1%</li> </ul>	100.0%
<b>Vancouver Province (n=29)</b>	-	51.8% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B.C.: 48.3%</li> <li>• ONT: 3.5%</li> </ul>	48.4% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Mainland B.C.: 41.4%</li> <li>• Okanagan B.C.: 3.5%</li> <li>• Toronto: 3.5%</li> </ul>	100.2%
<b>Globe and Mail (n=30)</b>	10.0%	40.0% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B.C.: 16.7%</li> <li>• ONT: 16.7%</li> <li>• AB: 3.3%</li> <li>• PEI: 3.3%</li> </ul>	50.0% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Mainland B.C.: 20%</li> <li>• Okanagan B.C.: 6.7%</li> <li>• Toronto: 23.3%</li> </ul>	100.0%
<b>Overall (n=98)</b>	8.2%	43.8% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B.C.: 34.7%</li> <li>• ONT: 7.1%</li> <li>• AB: 1.0%</li> <li>• PEI: 1.0%</li> </ul>	48.0% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Mainland B.C.: 34.7%</li> <li>• Okanagan B.C.: 5.1%</li> <li>• Toronto: 8.2%</li> </ul>	100.0%

- 'n' refers to the total number of articles per newspaper coding for each sampling period
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

The results of this analysis suggest that poverty appears more frequently as affecting provincial or sub-provincial levels than national levels. This is not to suggest that poverty does not appear as a national issue, but rather to suggest that it is more

newsworthy when it appears to affect or characterize local communities. Based upon the findings, it is tempting to speculate on the reasons for this dispersion. It could suggest that news media believe that audiences identify more frequently with the local level than with abstract national issues. Conversely, it may suggest that provincial and sub-provincial news stories are more frequently available to journalists than national news and therefore appear more often. It may also suggest that poverty has not been a dominant issue with which national institutions have engaged, and therefore has not been covered by national reporters. However, to more sufficiently argue the significance of the findings, this analysis would require comparison with the geographical focus of other issues and this area must therefore be left for further research.

## ***Part 2: Topic Area Breakdown***

Articles in the sample were analyzed and coded for general topics and subtopics present in coverage. By identifying topic areas, it was possible to locate consistencies and patterns in representation that revealed the types of poverty related stories deemed newsworthy. In doing so, it was possible to compare the defining characteristics of each topic area with those of the poverty paradigms, enabling the study to determine which, if any, of the paradigmatic representations of poverty appeared in news coverage.<sup>30</sup>

Nine general topic areas were identified in the sample, along with a number of sub-topic areas. They are noted in Table 5 in order of frequency.

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<sup>30</sup> Please see Appendix B for a summary of the paradigmatic dominance of each topic and sub-topic area.

**Table 5: Topic Areas**

<b>Topic Area</b>	<b>Vancouver Sun (n=39)</b>	<b>Vancouver Province (n=29)</b>	<b>Globe and Mail (n=30)</b>	<b>All Papers (n=98)</b>
<b>Government Funded Services</b>				
• Funding cuts and service restructuring	10.3%	6.9%	13.3%	10.2%
• Financial aid denied	10.3%	6.9%	6.7%	8.2%
• Seniors' bus pass	5.1%	17.2%	-	7.2%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>31.0%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>
<b>Vancouver Downtown Eastside</b>				
• Poverty/charity worker(s)	2.6%	-	-	1.0%
• Sex-trade	15.4%	20.7%	13.3%	16.3%
• Drug abuse	7.7%	-	-	3.1%
• Most at risk	-	6.9%	-	2.0%
• Displacement of the poor	2.6%	-	-	1.0%
• Combination of poverty, sex-trade, and drug addiction	-	-	3.3%	1.0%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>28.3%</b>	<b>27.6%</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>24.4%</b>
<b>Justice System</b>				
• Legal Aid	15.4%	-	16.7%	11.2%
• Poverty Lawyers	2.6%	-	3.3%	2.0%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>
<b>Homelessness</b>				
• Shelters	2.6%	3.5%	10.0%	5.1%
• Jail/criminalization	2.6%	-	6.7%	3.1%
• Non-financial	-	3.5%	-	1.0%
• As criminals	-	3.5%	-	1.0%
• Weather Dangers	-	-	3.3%	1.0%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>
<b>Welfare</b>				
• Structural reforms	5.1%	10.4%	3.3%	6.1%
• Impact of reforms	5.1%	-	-	2.0%
• Privatization	2.6%	3.5%	-	2.0%
• Fraud	-	3.5%	-	1.0%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>11.1%</b>

Topic Area	Vancouver Sun (n=39)	Vancouver Province (n=29)	Globe and Mail (n=30)	All Papers (n=98)
<b>Low Income</b>				
• Taxation	-	3.5%	3.3%	2.0%
• Personal development	-	-	3.3%	1.0%
• Wages	-	-	3.3%	1.0%
• Housing	2.6%	-	6.7%	3.1%
• Health services	-	3.5%	3.3%	2.0%
• Income gap related to violence	2.6%	-	-	1.0%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>
<b>Aboriginal Poverty</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	-	-	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	-	<b>3.5%</b>	-	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>Crimes Affecting the Poor</b>	-	<b>3.5%</b>	-	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.3%</b>	<b>100.3%</b>	<b>99.8%</b>	<b>99.6%</b>

- 'n' refers to the total number of articles per newspaper coding for each sampling period
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

### Topic 1. Government Funded Services

Of all general topic areas present in the sample articles, 'government funded services' proved to be the largest, making up approximately 25.7% of the Vancouver Sun sample articles, 31% of the Vancouver Province sample articles, and 20.0% of the Globe and Mail articles. Articles about 'government funded services' comprised 25.5% of the complete sample.

Stories contained within this topic area emphasized the provision and management of particular services provided by municipal, provincial, and federal jurisdictions that affect the poor. In many cases, these articles focused on lack of services or the inaccessibility of particular programs.

In examination of the characteristics of this topic area, the articles were further analyzed to reveal three sub-topics: '*funding cuts and service restructuring*', '*financial aid denied*', and the '*seniors' bus pass*' story.

'*Funding cuts and service restructuring*' is the first subtopic present in all three newspapers, and comprised approximately 10.2% of the entire sample. As indicated by the categorization, these articles concern structural changes to said services. This

grouping was largely comprised of articles about budgetary constraints and cost cutting measures undertaken by municipal or provincial governments.

In many cases, articles contained within this subtopic related directly to the B.C. government's announcement on Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2002 that it would be cutting provincial Ministry budgets and civil service jobs over the following three years ("Where the cuts", 2002; Lunman, 2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>; and Mickleburgh, 2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). In a full-page article published in the Vancouver Sun on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002, under the heading "Where the cuts will come: The following is a ministry-by-ministry breakdown of the B.C. government's plans to cut spending by \$1.9 billion over three years, while eliminating about 11,700 jobs," the extent of these cuts is detailed. The article also and include lists the responsibilities of each Ministry, past and proposed future budgets, boards and commissions, the number of full time-equivalent jobs, and planned job cuts by 2004-2005 ("Where the cuts", 2002). As a result, many government-funded services used by people in poverty became subject to restructuring or cancellation. The overwhelming presence of articles depicting these structural changes established the discursive framework for reportage of government funding and service cuts. Indeed, 'Black Thursday,' as it was labeled by news media (Lunman, 2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>), and the public response that it provoked, provided journalists with much fodder for news articles over the following weeks (Barrett, 2002, January 19<sup>th</sup>; McLellan, 2002; Steffenhagen, 2002, February 9<sup>th</sup>).

These articles established the power dynamic between principal actors. For example, although the government cuts were reported to affect "[a]s many as 11,700 public-service employees..." and many more low income people (Lunman, 2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>), the primary sources quoted by journalists tended to be senior government officials. By allowing official government sources to define the terms of debate, the news articles positioned the poor as voiceless victims of fiscal restraint. Despite widespread and diverse effects on the poor, they are represented as reactive to government action. Thus, the consistency in reportage within this sub-topic indicates that poverty and poor people become news only when they are affected by the actions or decisions of primary definers.

Other unrelated articles contained within this subtopic further supported this finding. Specifically, a Globe and Mail article regarding Toronto's city budget

establishes the same pattern of representation (Rusk, 2002, February 21<sup>st</sup>). The article covers the budgetary battle between Toronto mayor Mel Lastman and two of his left-leaning political opponents. In particular, Lastman is quoted as being unwilling to raise property taxes any higher than 4.6% in the proposed budget, while the “two leaders of council’s left-wing faction,” proposed to redirect city money to the transit, children’s services, hostel programs, and youth violence programs. Again, the primary actor and definer is Toronto’s top municipal official who establishes the terms of debate through actions and statements. His official opponents respond within the established discursive boundaries, and the poor remain the subject of discussion – victims of official actions who are left powerless in the wake of authoritative decisions.

Indeed, even in articles in which representatives speak on behalf of poor people, the poor are presented as respondents to a set of definitions and systemic conditions beyond their control. In one article, B.C.’s child and youth advocate speaks to the affects of budgetary cuts on children under the B.C. government’s care: “They are a floating statistic without a lot of explanation...That may well be a laudable goal in terms of having fewer children in care but it should be based on the needs of the children rather than an abstract target to reduce caseloads” (Barrett, 2002, January 19<sup>th</sup>).

The structural focus of this subtopic suggests the presence of the liberal variant of Structural Responsibility, particularly in its presentation of the poor as victims of the changing political economic structure. The lack of agency amongst the poor is telling of paradigmatic representations that portray poverty as symptomatic of an unjust system, and the poor as powerless victims. As the paradigm of Structural Responsibility suggests, poverty is perpetuated because of systemic inequalities, not because of individual choice or action.

The second subtopic was labeled ‘*financial aid denied*’ and contained approximately 8.2% of the entire sample population. As the category indicates, these articles present stories of individuals who require financial aid but have had been denied. The most prominent series of articles within this category pertain to the death of the Baulnes family. The family, consisting of two aging parents and their severely mentally and physically disabled adult son, became news when the two parents killed themselves and their son after realizing that they could no longer care for each other without outside



aid and places poverty as the central issue, noting the family had “fall[en] on hard times” (Matas, 2002, January 4<sup>th</sup>). One article explains:

Mr. and Mrs. Baulne had pressed the government for years to help them care for their son at home. Some neighbours were questioning yesterday whether the family would still be alive if the provincial government had not repeatedly turned down their requests. (Matas, 2002, January 4<sup>th</sup>)

This initial frame attempts to position the Baulnes family as victims of poverty and of government policies that, in not providing economic support, perpetuated their cycle into poverty and exacerbated already stressful circumstances. In this way, the initial frame is influenced by the paradigm of Structural Responsibility, not in its radical assertion that the economic structures create poverty, but that institutional structures exacerbate it.

Interestingly, while initial reports emphasized the contribution of the family’s financial situation and the lack of government financial aid, subsequent articles were quick to provide other frames which were clearly influenced by alternative poverty paradigms. To be sure, headlines such as “‘There’s no hope’: Tragic end for a desperate family” on January 4<sup>th</sup> pointed to poverty and lack of financial aid as major factors in the family’s decision to end their lives. However, the January 7<sup>th</sup> article “Tearful tribute for Kelowna family,” indicates the attempt by news media to reframe their initial claims. While they still assert that “dwindling financial resources” had been a factor in the death, a secondary argument suggested that the government was no longer the primarily to blame (Fong, 2002, January 7<sup>th</sup>). Two weeks later, a final challenge to the initial framing occurred in a Vancouver Province article, entitled “Behind their smiles: When determination proved deadly” (Tanner, 2002, January 20<sup>th</sup>). This article retold the story in language that suggested that individual decisions, depression, and isolation were to blame. Lack of government aid as the root cause of this tragedy was replaced by individual causes and family relationships, and thus interpretations informed by the paradigm of Structural Responsibility were replaced by interpretations informed primarily by the paradigm of Individual Responsibility.

Indeed, the evolution of this story is notable largely because it depicts the ongoing battle between paradigms and the instability of discursive dominance. The emergence of the paradigm of Individual Responsibility out of an initial structural rationale suggests that discursive dominance is ever-changing, particularly in news stories where discursive dominance is subject to negotiation or complete replacement depending on selected primary definers, available information, and popular discourse.

'*Senior's bus pass*' is the final subtopic area noted under 'Government Funded Services', and comprised approximately 7.2% of the total sample articles. There were no articles pertaining to this sub-topic in the Globe and Mail sample. The absence of the subtopic in the Globe and Mail may suggest that that issue was primarily defined as a local or provincial matter, unworthy of national coverage.

The 'seniors' bus pass' category contains stories directly related to the conflict between low-income seniors and the B.C. provincial government, which in a stated effort to cut \$1.9 billion from the budget, announced the end of subsidized bus passes for all but the poorest senior citizens. This decision rendered "29,303 seniors ineligible [for the bus pass], for a \$13-million annual saving" (Luba, 2002, January 30<sup>th</sup>). The series of articles chronicle the angry reaction of B.C.'s low-income seniors and various poverty activists to the government decision. In one article, a spokesperson for an anti-poverty organization is quoted stating that "[the proposal] targets the more vulnerable members of society and will result in a higher rate of morbidity among seniors just from the consequences of isolation both physically and psychologically" (Harnett, 2002, February 1<sup>st</sup>). The retraction of the proposal by the Premier is presented as the result of pressures exerted by low-income seniors in such articles as "Irate seniors force gov't to rethink bus passes" (ibid) and "Seniors' bus-pass petition off to a roaring start" (Luba, 2002, February 1<sup>st</sup>).

The 'seniors' bus pass' subtopic appears to be dominated by two paradigmatic perspectives: Structural Responsibility and Individual Responsibility. First, the seniors appear as victims of government generated policies beyond their control. Thus, their welfare appears dependent upon the decisions of government institutions, a position that is suggestive of the liberal version of Structural Responsibility. In addition, there appears to be consensus among news media that seniors are vulnerable members of society and not at fault for their poverty, a characteristic consistent with the paradigm of Individual

Responsibility in its pity for the ‘deserving’ poor. This categorization is consistent with the paradigm of Individual Responsibility. In this story, the government appears to be the aggressor, subjecting seniors to a policy decision designed to improve fiscal responsibility. Although the government is clear to distinguish the status of seniors, as noted by one official who states that they will “...protect those that are most vulnerable” (Luba, 2002, January 22<sup>nd</sup>), the distinction itself appears to be based on paradigmatic assumptions of worthiness. The government’s assertion that ‘most vulnerable’ seniors would not be affected paired with their official aim to reduce the 30,771 seniors who use the system by 29,303 makes evident the ideological assumptions made about the ‘deserving’ or ‘undeserving’ nature of the poor. In addition, the flexibility of the term ‘most vulnerable’ is apparent when both critics and government officials apply it; critics argued that all low-income seniors are vulnerable, while government applied the term to the poorest seniors. Although the definitions differ, there is general consensus that the ‘most vulnerable’ people ought to be protected in the Individual Responsibility paradigm.

Further, the retraction of the policy by government suggests the presence of a moral rationale consistent with the Individual Responsibility paradigm. In one article, the B.C. government appears to concede that seniors were mistakenly targeted in the war on excess spending, quoting Premier Campbell as stating that, “[i]t would be wrong to cancel the seniors’ bus pass....They’ll be there for you when you need them” (Beatty, 2002, February 14<sup>th</sup>). The moral language suggests two things: first that the government was responding to the public outcry against the policy as presented in news media; and second, that the government favours definitions associated with the Individual Responsibility paradigm and, as primary definers, set discursive boundaries.

## **Topic 2: Vancouver Downtown Eastside**

Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside is an area characterized by abject poverty, hard drug use and trafficking, sex-trade workers, budget hotels, and homeless people. Described by one journalist as being Canada’s poorest neighbourhood (Austin, 2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>), the Downtown Eastside is an area that provides much fodder to news media interested in producing articles about social deviance and extreme poverty.

Articles related to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside constituted approximately 24.4% of the total sample. Further examination of these articles revealed six subtopics.

Poverty in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside was rarely discussed in the articles as an issue in and of itself. Instead, articles contained within this subtopic tended to present poverty as a characteristic of the area. There was no attempt by journalists to disguise the area's poverty, instead using it as an appropriate backdrop for articles about charitable or deviant behaviour (Morton, 2002; Bolan and Kines, 2002, February 22<sup>nd</sup>; Todd, 2002).

The first of the sub-groupings was labeled '*poverty/charity workers*' and comprised only approximately 1.0% of the entire sample. The article portrayed the life and death of an elderly Christian poverty worker who had "...felt God was drawing her to serve the people in this part of the city" (Todd, 2002). In this case, the poverty of the Downtown Eastside appears to contextualize the poverty worker's activities, as is apparent in descriptive sentences that state that she prayed "...before going about her work in one of Canada's poorest neighbourhoods" (ibid).

The representations of poverty in this article indirectly favour the Culture of Poverty and the Underclass paradigms, particularly in their description of the poor. Although there are no value judgments about the worthiness of the poor, there is some allusion to the community as helpless, dependent, and potentially violent.

She repaired furniture smashed by clients, scrubbed floors, located long-lost relatives, lobbied governments, reached out for media support, arranged countless funerals and had knives put to her throat – all the while helping those without food, money or housing. (Todd, 2002)

In addition, the only discussion of causes of poverty appears in a brief description of the poverty worker's relationship with a left-wing city councillor, stating that "they sometimes locked horns because [the] left-wing [city councillor] wanted to focus on erasing the causes of poverty and [the poverty worker] concentrated on taking care of the disadvantaged" (Todd, 2002). The potential representation of poverty causes is, however, abandoned in favour of uncritical descriptions of poverty and her work in the community.

The second identified subtopic has been labeled '*sex-trade*', and included articles related to prostitution in the Downtown Eastside.<sup>31</sup> As noted in the table, these articles comprised approximately 16.3% of the entire sample. Poverty appeared in these articles as both a defining characteristics of '*sex-trade*' workers and of the area itself. Indeed, this is most apparent in such descriptive statements as "...the mean streets of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside" (Jiwa, 2002), "Vancouver's seedy East Hastings street" (Armstrong, 2002, February 11<sup>th</sup>), and, "skid-row women" (Armstrong, 2002, February 26<sup>th</sup>). In addition, these broadly negative characterizations of the area are also present in the representation of the sex-trade workers themselves. Generally presented as victims of abuse, drug addiction, and violence (Matas, 2002, February 8<sup>th</sup>; Tanner, 2002, February 24<sup>th</sup>; Fong and Kines, 2002, February 26<sup>th</sup>; Bolan and Fong, 2002, February 26<sup>th</sup>), sex-trade workers are represented as a pitiable group whose deviance was predictable due to their background. Statements such as, "She was already living in the Downtown Eastside and was in the sex trade when she was in the program [to help troubled young people find work].... 'Really, the odds were against her,'" (Fong and Kines, 2002, February 26<sup>th</sup>), indicate the general acceptance that particular cultural patterns govern lifestyles, and that these are practically inescapable. These characteristics indicate the dominance of the paradigm of the Culture of Poverty and the Underclass in this subtopic.

This discursive dominance is not, however, unchallenged. In an article, entitled "Cutbacks to force more women into sex trade: activists," an analysis of the relationship between poverty and prostitution is provided. Contrary to the other articles that present the poverty of sex-trade workers as a descriptive characteristic of the Downtown Eastside culture, this article suggests that "government cutbacks to welfare and other programs that help poor women will likely mean more are forced into the sex trade" (Bolan and Kines, 2002, February 19<sup>th</sup>). This article provides alternative interpretations of the relationship that are largely informed by the radical version of the Structural Responsibility paradigm.

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<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that due to the on-going investigation into the disappearance and murder of 50 sex-trade workers from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, which had begun to receive media coverage during our sampling period, '*sex-trade*' articles could constitute their own general topic. Therefore, in an effort to maintain relevance and consistency, articles about the sex-trade include only those articles that link the sex-trade with poverty.

The third subtopic identified was labeled '*drug abuse*' and comprised approximately 7.7% of the Vancouver Sun articles, or approximately 3.1% of the entire sample. These articles drew linkages between drug abuse and poverty. It is interesting to note that of all examined articles, reported events linking drug use and poverty all appeared to have occurred in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, indicating that the area is popularly characterized as deviant.

'Drug abuse' articles tend to be informed by the Underclass version of the Culture of Poverty. In particular, there are many notable comments about the violence and criminal activity associated with drug users in poverty (Morton, 2002, January 17<sup>th</sup>; Bohn, 2002, January 25<sup>th</sup>; Bula, 2002, February 22<sup>nd</sup>). One article in particular recounts the violent problems associated with the community:

The [city-run health centre for drug users], which is about the size of a large convenience store, had as many as 87 people in it at times and staff found themselves dealing with violent incidents that spilled in from the street or erupted between visitors.

The centre closed for renovations shortly after one visitor stabbed another Feb.5 over a remark about his race and sexual orientation. In an earlier incident, a man hit over the head in a nearby alley with a pipe staggered into the centre and collapsed, prompting rumours throughout the community that someone had been murdered there (Bula, 2002, February 22<sup>nd</sup>).

The news coverage tends to present these individuals as menacing, problematic, and socially harmful. In addition, journalists also note the extent to which city officials and volunteers have gone in order to offer support to this violent and disorganized community which often puts others at risk. However, the coverage is not limited to the hopelessness of the Underclass branch of this paradigm. Indeed, there are signs of the more positive aspects of the Culture of Poverty paradigm, particularly in relation to the programs available to the community.

The fourth identifiable subtopic relates to those residents who are '*most at risk*'. This subtopic only appeared in the Vancouver Province sample, comprising 6.9% of Vancouver Province articles, and approximately 2.0% of the total sample. This is the only subtopic contained within the larger topic area that directly provides some analysis

of the area's poverty. This analysis is largely informed by Structural Responsibility perspectives, particularly in relation to the creation of desperation among the area's residents (Austin, 2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). In one article, which recounts the reaction of poor people to the provincial government's restructuring of the welfare system, the article states, "[The Downtown Eastside Residents Association] president Ian MacRae...predicted a much sorer future for the neighbourhood, already Canada's poorest. 'People will lose their jobs and their homes...People are going to be more desperate'" (ibid). In a different article, structural arguments are made regarding the relationship between poverty and serious health problems; in particular regarding the need for proper funding for health services that offer treatment for the poor (Berry, 2002).

The fifth subtopic relates to '*the displacement of the poor*', and only appeared in the Vancouver Sun sample, comprising approximately 1.0% of the entire sample. The article reports the concern of some anti-poverty activists that poor people will be displaced because of the 2010 winter Olympics in Vancouver/Whistler. Indeed, the headline, "Activists worry over Games' Impact: One concern is that poor may face eviction in any redevelopment" (Bohn, 2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>), establishes the tone of the article, which voices concerns that poor people may be evicted if low-cost hotels in the area are destroyed in an effort to gentrify the area. Indeed, in this article, Structural Responsibility appears to be the dominant poverty paradigm present, not in terms of the cause of poverty, but rather of potential homelessness and victimization of the poor.

The final subtopic identified, appearing only in the Globe and Mail, and comprising 1.0% of the total sample, was difficult to label because it contained elements of 'sex-trade', 'drug abuse', and 'most at risk' subtopics. The article, entitled, "Prostitutes, addicts too strung out to care" (Gill, 2002), presented residents of the Downtown Eastside as detached, isolated, and deviant members of society. While the article appeared to concern the response of the area's residents regarding missing Downtown Eastside sex-trade workers, the article soon deviated from this topic in favour of portraying the general deviance of the community. The journalist describes the residents as having "more urgent matters to attend to" than the disappearance of sex-trade workers, "[I]like the woman down on her knees trying to inject heroin into her friend's neck as people walked by" (ibid). Accompanying the article is a large map of the

Downtown Eastside labeled, “Seedy side of town” (ibid). In addition, the journalist interviews a sex-trade worker who admits to having been violently attacked. Central to this article is the suggested difference between ‘us’, the reader, and ‘them’, the residents. This differentiation is fundamentally connected to the paradigm of the Underclass in its strong depiction of the community’s deviance and general isolation, as well as the apparent perpetuation of the specific practices by the members of the community.

### **Topic 3: Justice System**

The third general topic area identified was labeled the ‘Justice system’ and comprised 13.2% of the entire sample. This topic area broadly contained coverage of the justice system and its relationship to the poor. Upon examination, two subtopics were identified: ‘*legal aid*’ and ‘*poverty lawyers*’.

The ‘*legal aid*’ subtopic comprised approximately 11.2% of the total sample, and included articles directly connecting poverty to legal aid. In particular, these articles charted an on-going conflict over the social value of legal aid and the cuts to the program’s funding. The key players in this conflict are the Attorney General and those members of the legal community who support the program. As one article reports:

Attorney-General Geoff Plant is steadfastly refusing to reconsider his decision to dramatically cut legal aid despite a protest Monday that shut down all 60 legal aid offices in B.C. and a brewing standoff with the Legal Services Society. Plant earlier announced cuts of up to 40 per cent to the legal aid budget, which will eliminate free legal services for about 100,000 of the poorest British Columbians (Beatty, 2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>).

Central to this subtopic is the argument that people in poverty do not receive fair treatment by the justice system, largely because they cannot afford legal fees. As Canada’s chief justice states in one related article, “Providing legal aid to low-income Canadians is an essential public service.... It is not only the rich who need the law. Poor people need it too” (Tibbetts, 2002). At issue then is the appropriate amount of funding legal aid should be allotted in order to extend the justice system to all members of society.



This is not to suggest that these articles offered critical social class analysis. Instead, the majority of these articles detailed the professional relationships and responsibility of lawyers, judges, and politicians, mentioning low-income people in passing. Despite this, it is clear that liberal aspects of the paradigm of Structural Responsibility inform this subtopic. Although the causes of poverty are rarely addressed, the systemic perpetuation of injustice is the backdrop to the professional conflict. It is therefore a consistent component of the story when one union president is quoted, stating that, “[the] tax cuts introduced by the Liberal government, the vast majority of which go to corporations and the wealthy, are being done at the expense of the most vulnerable people in society. It is creating a divide between the rich and poor that we shouldn’t have in British Columbia” (Beatty, 2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>).

The second subtopic, labeled ‘*poverty lawyers*’, comprised only 2.0% of the sample. This subtopic comprised only one short article about the death of a lawyer who worked as an advocate for Vancouver’s poor people. “In his day,” the article reads, “Mr. Rankin was perhaps the most renowned lawyer in the province, taking on establishment foes. He defended the poor, natives, and the downtrodden, usually for little money.” (Mickleburgh, 2002, February 27<sup>th</sup>). Although the brevity of the article makes it difficult to locate paradigmatic interpretations, its usage of the terms ‘establishment foes’ suggests the representation of Mr. Rankin under the paradigm of Structural Responsibility.

#### **Topic 4. Homelessness**

‘Homelessness’ is the fourth topic area identified, and accounts for approximately 11.2% of the entire sample. This general topic area was found to contain five identifiable subtopics: ‘*shelters*’, ‘*jail/criminalization of homelessness*’, ‘*non-financial homelessness*’, ‘*the homeless as criminals*’, and finally ‘*weather dangers to the homeless*’.

The majority of homelessness stories fell within the subtopic ‘*shelters*’, and comprised approximately 5.1% of the total sample. Although many of these articles detail management and funding issues associated with shelter programs, the tone of these articles moves away from simple municipal and budgetary discourse towards a discussion of the identifiable traits of the homeless (Spencer, 2002; Rusk, 2002, February 19<sup>th</sup>; Rusk,

2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). Many references to drug and alcohol addiction (Bohn, 2002, January 4<sup>th</sup>; Rusk, 2002, February 19<sup>th</sup>; Immen, 2002, February 13<sup>th</sup>), and the general exclusion of the homeless from mainstream society (Rusk, 2002, February 19<sup>th</sup>), suggest the dominance of the Culture of Poverty paradigm, particularly in regards to depictions of the community itself. Furthermore, the shelter programs appear as treatments for the community that are designed to offer some support by retraining these individuals to re-enter the mainstream, but do not suggest that structural arrangements are to blame for homelessness. Instead, they suggest that individuals have become homeless through a series of individual choices and actions. This suggests that elements of the paradigm of Individual Responsibility complement the dominant Culture of Poverty explanations.

The second subtopic, labeled '*jail/criminalization*' accounts for approximately 3.1% of the entire sample. Articles under this subtopic present the argument that criminalizing homelessness might effectively combat the problem. Specifically, these articles cover the proposal by Jim Flaherty, a candidate in the Ontario's Progressive Conservative leadership race, to make homelessness illegal, and notes that, "...he would authorize specially trained police to gather people they suspect are living in public places and take them to shelters, addiction rehab centres, hospitals or jails" (Capannelli, 2002). In this case, it is difficult to identify the dominance of one paradigm over another, largely because the perspectives presented in this on-going debate differ so drastically, with one person advocating a campaign that would "sweep the homeless from streets and parks across the province," while the other criticizes it as "disgusting and inhumane" (Mackie, 2002).

The third identifiable subtopic was '*non-financial homelessness*', which might also have been labeled 'involuntary' or 'accidental homelessness'. Comprising 1.0% of the entire sample, this article referred to a specific story about tenants who had become temporarily homeless due to an apartment fire ("Tenants homeless", 2002). In this case, homelessness is portrayed as accidental, temporary, unintended, and tragic. This subtopic is consistent with the paradigm of Individual Responsibility in that these homeless people are presented as 'deserving' victims, and distinguished from other homeless people whose condition is the result of extreme poverty and unemployment.

The fourth subtopic presents the homeless '*as criminals*', and also comprised 1.0% of the entire sample. The article details the criminal behaviour and police apprehension of one homeless man responsible for a number of thefts ("Man charged", 2002). The central characteristic of the thief in question is his homelessness, which is consistent with the Underclass paradigm.

The final subtopic, labeled 'weather danger' also comprised 1.0% of the entire sample. The article communicated that Toronto police had issued a weather warning and asked that all homeless people move themselves to shelters over the following two-day period due to dangerously low temperatures ("Cold weather", 2002). As the purpose of the article is to notify all individuals of the dangers associated with extreme temperatures, it is very difficult to identify one poverty paradigm as informing the article.

### **Topic 5. Welfare**

The fifth general topic area identified was 'Welfare', and comprised approximately 11.1% of the entire sample. This topic area included coverage of the welfare system, welfare recipients, on-going and proposed welfare reforms, and welfare fraud. After further examination, the topic area was considered to consist of four subtopics: '*structural reforms*', '*impact of reforms*', '*privatization*', and '*fraud*'.

The first subtopic, labeled '*structural reform*', was comprised of articles that reported on-going and proposed welfare reforms. These articles presented structural reforms within practical administrative and budgetary frames, and frequently relied upon official government sources to contribute to this framework. One article about B.C.'s provincial welfare system demonstrates this in its news lead which reads, "Human Resources Minister Murray Coell says his budget will be cut to \$1.3 billion by 2004-5 from \$1.9 billion in 2001-2 – a 15-per-cent cut..."("Welfare rolls", 2002). Articles within this subtopic were primarily concerned with welfare reform, detailing the number of current welfare recipients, the cost of the system to government and taxpayers, and the bureaucratic rationale for change as defining story features.

To the extent that these articles discuss the effects of welfare reform, the presentation is limited. Due to a depersonalized and bureaucratic framework, this

discussion is confined to relative inconveniences that must be overcome. For example, in an article entitled “Welfare rolls must shrink, Coell says,” the article states:

[Minister Coell] announced the closure of 36 welfare offices yesterday but insisted that with computerized ‘service-delivery models’ such as kiosks, Internet-based applications and 1-800 telephone lines, ‘people can still access income assistance without having to travel or even meet face-to-face with a worker’ (“Welfare rolls”, 2002).

Given that this approach privileges the systemic logic of B.C. Liberal government, this subtopic is consistent with liberal variants of the paradigm of Structural Responsibility. This is not to suggest that the B.C. Liberal government argues that poverty is the result of structural inequalities. Instead, the articles source senior government officials to speak to the importance of systems designed to manage the poor, who appear as dependent on a welfare system requiring significant organizational restructuring.

In addition, the central actors in these news stories are government officials and ministries. They are presented as responsible for reorganizing the welfare system in order to ultimately deliver cost-effective service. The voices of those who use the system are conspicuously absent from these discussions, as though they are but an afterthought in the attempt to maximize efficiency.

The second identified subtopic picks up where the ‘*structural reforms*’ subtopic leaves off, and has been labeled ‘the impact of welfare reforms’. These articles present the ways in which individuals are affected by welfare reforms. ‘Impact’ articles compose a mere 2.0% of the total sample, and are only present in the Vancouver Sun.

The significantly low frequency suggests that the theme of effects is less newsworthy than discussion of government-initiated change and fiscal responsibility. In comparison to the frequency of the preceding subtopic and its presentation of official plans for service restructuring, the presence of any discussion of actual social effects is seemingly unimportant. This may be due to the accessibility of official sources. As discussed in the previous chapter, time and resources often dictate what stories and information will be reported in the daily copy. The frequent access of particular credible

sources is therefore a defining feature of news, in which news media allow these sources to define the terms of debate that influence both on-going and potential coverage. Articles about welfare reflect this. By seeking out authoritative officials to provide detailed accounts of the reforms, news media also allow said sources to define the event. In addition, they are able to act as the initial position against which selected competing positions may respond.

Articles within this subtopic share a defining characteristic; they tend to concern 'vulnerable' people, including single mothers, seniors, and those living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (Barrett, 2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>; Lunman, 2002, January 21<sup>st</sup>; Bula, 2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>). The particular vulnerability of these individuals is never explained or challenged within the articles, suggesting that the media are reliant upon popular 'common' morality associated with their depiction.

In this instance, Daniel Hallin's 'sphere of consensus' is particularly instructive.<sup>32</sup> The 'sphere of consensus' includes ideas, issues, and events whose meanings are generally accepted as commonsensical and non-controversial at all levels of society. This is not a sphere of critical analysis but of uncritical acceptance, and thus Hallin describes it as representing 'motherhood and apple pie' (Allan, 1999, p.69). Journalists who present such consensus ideas are able to present them as undebatable, and do not therefore compromise their apparent objectivity. Indeed, in this realm, there is no need for journalists to remain distanced observers; instead, they may become active promoters of consensus values.

In regards to the treatment of the poor in these articles, there is apparent consensus that certain identifiable individuals comprise the most vulnerable members of society. The categorization of these individuals is not presented as controversial,<sup>33</sup> nor do

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<sup>32</sup> The 'sphere of consensus' is one of three discursive spheres identified in news by critical media scholar Daniel Hallin, the other two being the 'sphere of legitimate controversy' and the 'sphere of deviance' (Allan, 1999, p.69).

<sup>33</sup> This is a defining characteristic of Hallin's 'sphere of legitimate controversy' in which issues are presented as worthy of debate. When presented in news, journalists tend to use impartial language and a balanced presentation of credible actors when portraying the events and ideas associated the 'sphere of legitimate controversy'. Further, these events frequently become news when they occur in recognized arenas of debate. This is the space in which the practices of objectivity are most evident (Allan, 1999, p.70).

journalists treat the ‘most vulnerable’ contemptuously<sup>34</sup>. Instead, this classification simply ‘is’.

The coverage of the ‘vulnerable’ poor connotes sympathy in the articles. This suggests that news media classify these poor as ‘deserving’. However, although the distinction between ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor suggests the presence of the paradigm of Individual Responsibility, this subtopic is a site of discursive struggle. The cyclical nature of poverty, a central characteristic of these classifications, is consistent with the Culture of Poverty paradigm, while the relationship between these ‘vulnerable’ poor and systemic structures is consistent with aspects of Structural Responsibility. For example, in an article entitled, “Single moms, seniors hit by changes to welfare,” the headline capitalizes on the common belief that certain individuals are particularly vulnerable (Barrett, 2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). Indeed, the specification of the ‘single moms’ and ‘seniors’ suggests the presence of the ‘deserving’ poor, a categorization associated with Individual Responsibility. However, the sub-heading, which states “Cuts designed to speed parents’ return to workforce,” demonstrates a discursive struggle, and instead suggests interpretations informed by a right-wing borderline perspective. Here, the lead suggests that the motivation of poor individuals has been harmed by welfare, and that now the state must force the poor to self-motivate.

The poor’s susceptibility to systemic changes is a consistent theme throughout the article, indicating the presence of the Structural Responsibility paradigm. Indeed, the article itself does not assert that the poor are idle. Instead, it strongly asserts the vulnerability of single parents and low-income seniors to structural change, and presents various effects as widespread and life threatening. In recounting the story of one single mother who expects to be harmed by the policy changes, the article states:

Single parents will be searching for work in the middle of a recession, which, she says, makes day care almost impossible to find.... ‘Most of us

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<sup>34</sup> This is a defining characteristic of Hallin’s ‘sphere of deviance’ in which issues are presented as indisputably unacceptable. The ‘sphere of deviance’ comprises political and non-political actors and behaviours that are viewed as harmful to both the individual and society, and are therefore rejected by the mainstream. Like the ‘sphere of consensus’, journalists treat deviant behaviour as universally undesirable; thus their representations do not rely upon the use of impartial language or the presentation of alternatives in order to convey objectivity (Allan, 1999, p.70).

don't want to be on welfare to begin with. There's just no other way of taking care of our children' (Barrett, 2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>).

Supporting comments by anti-poverty activists, who state that the planned changes will harm poor people, further strengthens this position, and adds to the strong presence of Structural Responsibility.

The third subtopic to be identified is '*privatization*'. Like 'structural reform', the focus of this subtopic is on the process of privatization of welfare, rather than the impact upon recipients. These articles provide details about the contending firm, including its professional background and previous business in Ontario, the expense associated with the process, and the number of people affected by privatization. Due to its preference for structural details and depersonalized nature, these articles tend to favour the paradigm of Structural Responsibility.

The last subtopic is labeled '*fraud*' and includes only one story, or 1.0% of the entire sample. The article briefly outlines the behaviour of one couple charged with criminal fraud. The information given in this article is limited to the crime, the jail sentences, the couple's current marital status (estranged), and the number of children they have. Interestingly, while the article is headlined, "Welfare fraud man faces new charges" ("Welfare fraud", 2002), the crime of interest is unrelated to the man's former charge. However, the explicit focus on the individual's criminality suggests that either the paradigms of Individual Responsibility or Culture of Poverty primarily inform the article.

## **Topic 6: Low Income**

Articles that referred to low-income people or low-income lifestyles were the sixth main thematic area identified. Low-income articles accounted for approximately 10.1% of the entire sample, and were further classified into six subtopics: '*taxation*', '*personal development*', '*wages*', '*housing*', '*health services*', and '*income gap related to violence*'.

The first identifiable subtopic was labeled '*taxation*' and comprised approximately 2.0% of the total articles. This subtopic contained articles that covered the effects of taxation on the poor. In one article, it was reported that, due to the current

system of taxation in British Columbia, low-income people will pay a disproportionately higher percentage of their incomes in taxes than upper-income people largely due to increased provincial sales tax, Medical Services Plan premiums, property taxes, and cigarette taxes announced by the provincial government (Inwood, 2002). Although the article offers little analysis of how this taxation might perpetuate poverty, it does lead to a criticism offered by the Opposition Leader who stated that, “[it’s] a pick-pocket budget that steals from B.C.’s poor and middle-income families” (ibid). Indeed, while the paradigmatic interpretations are difficult to isolate, it does appear to draw from the paradigm of Structural Responsibility, particularly in its presentation of systemic victimization of lower income people.

The subtopic labeled ‘*personal development*’ comprised only 1.0% of the total sample and dealt with the ways in which income levels may affect self-esteem. In particular, the article draws on a recently published academic study that revealed that “[w]omen who live in affluent neighbourhoods are far more likely to be dissatisfied with their bodies than those who live in poorer areas, regardless of their personal income...” (Picard, 2002). This report suggests that women in upper-income areas feel the pressure to conform to mainstream society far more than their lower-income counterparts, further suggesting a differentiation between ‘us’ and ‘them’. This perspective and asserted differentiation is clearly influenced by the Culture of Poverty, while the report’s findings offer academic evidence that further supports the credibility of the paradigm.

The third subtopic was labeled ‘*wages*’ comprised 1.0% of the total. The article comprising the subtopic referred to the increase in Prince Edward Island’s minimum wage, noting that “...Islanders working at minimum wage are well below the poverty line, despite the increase” (“Minimum wage”, 2002). The connection between low wages and poverty is a perspective based in the Structural Responsibility paradigm.

The fourth identified subtopic, labeled ‘*housing*’, contains approximately 3.1% of the entire sample. This subtopic is comprised of articles about the management of low-cost housing, and presented solutions to low-income housing crises based on public-private partnerships. While these articles provide detailed accounts of management (Immen, 2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>; Sandler, 2002), they also portray the experiences of low-income people, particularly depicting the victimization of low-income people by



management (Immen, 2002, January 28<sup>th</sup>). Indeed, as one news lead notes, “Self-esteem can take a beating when home is a source of frustration, fear and risk” (ibid). The poor are described in a number of ways, including “hard to house”, having “psychiatric or substance-abuse problems”, having “special needs”, as “drug dealers”, and “generally distrustful of people who own property” (ibid). It is through these particular characterizations that it becomes evident that principal discursive paradigm at work is the Culture of Poverty.

The fifth identified subtopic has been labeled ‘*health services*’, and comprises approximately 2.0% of the total sample. ‘Health services’ contains articles that depict the relationship between low-income people and provincial health services, with particular emphasis on the elimination of coverage and the move toward private care (Grindlay, 2002; Mahoney, 2002). The articles in this subtopic stress that by implementing a pay system, “needy people, senior citizens and the chronically ill would be less likely to seek physicians’ attention out of fear they couldn’t afford to pay for treatments” (Mahoney, 2002). Although there is little analysis present in the articles, their generalizations appear primarily informed by liberal variants of the paradigm of Structural Responsibility.

The final subtopic comprised only 1.0% of the entire sample, and contained one article that related the increasing income disparity in Canada to violent behaviour. In the article comprising the subtopic, the journalists cover the findings of a government advisory group specializing in terrorism. In particular, the group argues that “we must face the reality that poverty and the great gap between the haves and the have-nots in our society, within and between countries, is a core issue in this [Sept 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002 terrorist attacks] and many conflicts” (Beauchesne, 2002). The article details the relationship between poverty and violence, offering the structural analysis of the National Council of Welfare that states, “[w]hat’s happening is we’re polarizing people – the rich and poor – and people are fighting back” (ibid). This article is one of a select few to offer analysis of the structural causes and effects of poverty, suggesting that “in addition to fairness and justice, there are good economic reasons why we need to make better investments to reduce poverty now” (ibid).

### **Topic 7: Aboriginal poverty**

Articles reporting “Aboriginal poverty” comprised approximately 5.1% of the Vancouver Sun articles, or 2.0% of the total sample. This subtopic contained articles related to one specific story, in which a Vancouver MP warned that the poverty of segregated communities, as suffered by Aboriginal peoples in Canada, could lead to violence, and further suggested that First Nations youth may turn to the same violence that Palestinians have used against Israeli occupations (O’Neil, 2002, February 5<sup>th</sup>).

If you see kids in an impoverished native village, with three generations of welfare behind them and no hope for the future and they’re even moved to perhaps that most horrible statistic of despair, which is youth suicide, they are very vulnerable to someone coming in with a gun and a warrior ethic and saying, ‘Why waste your life? Be a martyr,’ [Minister] Owen said in an interview (ibid).

The presentation of young Aboriginal people as an alienated group who present a potential danger to non-poor society is consistent with aspects of the Culture of Poverty and the Underclass.

In addition, this position is juxtaposed against the Individual Responsibility paradigm that informs the comments of University of Calgary political scientist, Tom Flanagan, who states that “nothing is preventing people living on Indian reserves from moving off reserves to pursue opportunities... all you need to do is get in your car and drive” (O’Neil, 2002, February 5<sup>th</sup>). These comments appear midway through the story and are refuted by a number of sources, including First Nations leaders and the Minister himself, who suggest that the potential problem of violence is directly connected to the poverty of isolated Aboriginal communities whose alienation and poverty have not been properly addressed in treaty negotiations. Indeed, the article closes with the Minister’s statement regarding the poor community, in that “[t]he idea of just nailing treaties and then saying ‘It’s over with, let’s go on’ is unrealistic” (ibid).

### **Topic 8: Gender**

Articles within the “Gender” subtopic comprised approximately 1.0% of the entire sample. This article, located in the Vancouver Province, possessed two headlines.

The first, located on the front page along with the news lead, read, “Pay gap’s your fault, minister tells women” (McLintock, 2002, February 21<sup>st</sup>). The second headline, located on page A3 where the article is printed, reads, “Our work is done: Minister: Women’s-equality advocate says opportunities for men and women ‘exactly equal’” (ibid). The article reports an interview conducted with the Women’s Equality Minister, and focuses on her comments that assert the existence of complete equality in society, and her blaming of low-income women for their own poverty. “[Minister] Stephens said she agreed that the ‘rich get richer and the poor get poorer,’ adding that her advice to those who want to get a better deal from tax cuts is, ‘Well, then, make more money’” (ibid). It is evident that the featured Minister advocates the paradigm of Individual Responsibility, suggesting that the ultimate choice to be poor or wealthy rests with the individual. However, in recognizing the controversial nature of such statements, the journalist seeks out alternative comments. Indeed, the strongest response reported comes from a member of a women’s centre, whose perspective is clearly influenced by structural arguments:

That sort of thing could only come from a white woman safely insulated against poverty.... Does Stephens realize how tough it is for women of colour or aboriginal women to find housing and jobs? The fact that many women take part-time jobs is not by choice. Employers don’t want to given them full time work because they don’t want to give them benefits or sick pay. It’s another form of oppression (McLintock, 2002, February 21<sup>st</sup>).

The juxtaposition of these two perspectives suggests their discursive dominance in the realm of pay equity and gender discrimination.

### **Topic 9: Crimes Affecting the Poor**

Only one article is contained within this subtopic, accounting for 1.0% of the entire sample. The article from the Vancouver Province, headlined “Food-bank con man sent to jail” tells the story of a man who stole goods from food banks and resold them to stores for a small profit. The article makes clear than this crime is particularly harmful to “the most vulnerable people in our society... [t]he poor, the hungry, those who require assistance just to feed themselves” (“Food bank”, 2002). The focus of this article is on

the criminality of the act, and very little attention is given to the poor themselves, making it difficult to identify which paradigm informs the article. However, the apparent underlying characterization of these poor as desperate and ‘deserving’ in contrast to the criminal ‘con man’ by whom they are victimized suggests that it is consistent with the paradigm of Individual Responsibility.

### ***Part 3: News Values***

Newsworthiness is a vital component of stories that receive news coverage in the press. Each day, the world plays host to countless events that compete for coverage in news media, ranging from provincial budgetary concerns to international coverage of conflict. As professional storytellers, journalists must observe and report those events that are deemed most important. The role of the journalist is therefore to undertake a process of prioritization and selection, whereby only certain events receive coverage.

However, as Rob Anderson et al. observe, “[t]o say news is complex is to understate the problem. Every semester, journalism students struggle through assignments to ‘define news,’ handing them in to professors who are themselves unsure how to define news” (Anderson, Dardenne, and Killenberg, 1994, p. 39). Inevitably, the definition of what constitutes news is linked to the process of news selection, which is itself informed by professionalized beliefs about what constitutes a newsworthy event. If an event or issue possesses characteristics that connote newsworthiness, then there is a greater likelihood that they will receive news coverage. These characteristics are known as news values, “...the informal (largely unspoken) rules or codes of *newsworthiness*...” (Allan, 1999, p. 62), and are those traits that make events and issues notable. While certain traits may be inherent to the event, journalists more frequently construct newsworthiness through reporting techniques. Newsworthiness can be effectively achieved by emphasizing particular story angles that exploit or create news values. As John Hartley asserts, “...news is not made by echoing anything; it is made in the

telling” (Hartley, 1995, p. 46). It can therefore be asserted that poverty articles possess these news values.<sup>35</sup>

There is, however, much debate over the number and type of news values that can be observed. Since originating with media scholars Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge (1981),<sup>36</sup> news values have been redefined, renamed, added, and discarded by various theorists in an effort to more accurately monitor patterns of newsworthiness.<sup>37</sup> Although a valuable addition to the study of news, this continuous disagreement over decided news values indicates a notable problem for media scholars: that the process of isolating and coding news values is highly subjective, and dependent on the project at hand and the aims of the researcher.

This is not to say that since there is disagreement over news values, they should be discarded from news analysis. Instead, we suggest that news values can be identified with the expressed purpose of discovering what is newsworthy about an event. We must however qualify our claims by stating that identification of news values is fundamentally interpretative and, therefore, an imperfect process. As Tony Harcup and Deirdre O’Neill (2001) state, “[w]e must therefore...[preface] our findings with the health warning that reminds that ‘there is no objective or neutral way of deciding which categories should be used.’” (p. 266).

In an attempt to make this study relevant to contemporary news, we have drawn news values from three principal sources: Harcup and O’Neill’s (2001) contemporary set of news values, John Hartley’s (1995) *Understanding News*, and Kathleen Cross and Robert A. Hackett’s (1999) synthesis of traditionally identified news values. By drawing on all three of sources, we have established the modified set of contemporary news

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<sup>35</sup> An analysis of our sample articles did indicate that this was in fact the case. Further, the high percentage of stories with multiple news values connotes the relative newsworthiness of reported poverty stories, constructed or otherwise. Specifically, 59.1% of the sample possessed between three and five news values, while 30.6% possessed between seven and nine.

<sup>36</sup> Galtung and Ruge’s original study of three international events as covered in four Norwegian newspapers resulted in their conclusion that there are twelve identifiable news values. These news values are: ‘frequency’, ‘threshold’, ‘unambiguity’, ‘meaningfulness’, ‘consonance’, ‘unexpectedness’, ‘continuity’, ‘composition’, ‘reference to elite nations’, ‘reference to elite people’, ‘reference to person’, and ‘reference to something negative’. Their study has been regarded as the benchmark study of news values.

<sup>37</sup> See for example, Stuart Allan (1999); John Hartley (1995); Robert A. Hackett (1991); and Tony Harcup and Deirdre O’Neill (2001).

values which include ‘the power elite’, ‘celebrity’, ‘bad news’, ‘good news’, ‘magnitude’, ‘relevance’, ‘follow-up’, ‘unexpectedness’, ‘sensationalism’, ‘timeliness’, ‘unambiguity’, and ‘personalization’.

In our examination of news values, analysis was limited to headlines, sub-headings, and the introductory paragraphs of news articles. This occurred in order to examine the initial framing of poverty-related articles, as well as the primary news values used to capture audiences’ attention. It was hoped that by examining the introductory components of the articles, we could better determine the ways in which poverty-related articles were newsworthy, and whether certain poverty paradigms lend themselves to the maximization of news values. Table 6 below demonstrates the frequency of each news value in our sample.

**Table 6: Frequency of News Values**

Newsvalues	Vancouver Sun (n=39)	Vancouver Province (n=29)	Globe and Mail (n=30)	% of and Ranking in complete sample based (n=98)	
<b>Follow Up</b>	74.4%	65.5%	70%	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Bad News</b>	71.2%	48.3%	66.7%	<b>63.3%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Timeliness</b>	61.5%	65.5%	56.7%	<b>61.2%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Unambiguity</b>	53.9%	58.6%	66.7%	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Magnitude</b>	46.2%	51.7%	40.0%	<b>45.9%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Personalization</b>	38.5%	44.8%	23.3%	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Power Elite</b>	43.6%	20.7%	36.7%	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	38.5%	34.5%	30.0%	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Sensationalism</b>	25.6%	34.5%	23.3%	<b>27.6%</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Unexpectedness</b>	12.8%	17.2%	20.0%	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Good News</b>	20.5%	6.7%	10.0%	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Celebrity</b>	0%	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	<b>12</b>

As the central purpose of this study is to identify which of the poverty paradigms are present most frequently in poverty coverage, this examination looked to determine which news values could be connected with which paradigm. To better demonstrate this finding, each of the news values and its relation to the topic areas must be discussed.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Please see Appendix C.

### 1. Follow-Up:

'Follow up'<sup>39</sup> is defined by Harcup and O'Neill (2001) as "[s]tories about subjects already in the news" (p. 279). 'Follow-up' refers to the continuous coverage of a particular type of event or story line, and consistently ranked among the three news values in all but 'Low Income' and 'Crimes Against the Poor' topic areas. Its dominance in articles, regardless of paradigmatic favoritism, indicates that poverty news must generally be part of a continuing story in order to be deemed newsworthy.

### 2. Bad News:

'Bad news' is defined by Harcup and O'Neill (2001) as "[s]tories with particularly negative overtones, such as conflict or tragedy" (p. 279). In other literature, this news value is also known as 'negativity', and speaks to the idea that negative news is more interesting than positive news. Thus, as Hartley (1995) states, "bad news is good news" (p. 79). Indeed, its position of dominance in most topic areas, with the exception of 'Gender' and to some extent 'Homelessness', indicate that news is, in general, concerned with reporting the negative more frequently than the positive, regardless of topic.

### 3. Timeliness:

'Timeliness' refers to the fact that news is, by definition, about "new" information (Cross and Hackett, 1999, p. 15). Timeliness appeared among the top four news values in all topic areas except for 'Crimes Against the Poor', indicating that events associated with poverty must occur and be reported in a timely fashion in order for such news to be considered newsworthy, regardless of paradigmatic interpretations.

### 4. Unambiguity:

'Unambiguity' refers to the clarity of a story and the interpretive limitations imposed by reportage. Usually, these stories include a beginning and end, clear story development, and a strong portrayal of right and wrong (Cross and Hackett, 1999, p.

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<sup>39</sup> 'Follow-up' is designed to replace the traditional 'continuity' news value, defined as a "[t]he 'running story'. If an event is covered, it will continue to be covered for some time" (Hartley, 1995, p. 78).

15). 'Unambiguity' appeared as the dominant news value in 'Low Income', 'Homelessness', 'Gender', and 'Crimes Against the Poor' topic areas, and among the top four news values in all other topic areas where present. Interestingly, these topic areas sample the complete range of poverty paradigms, suggesting that a central news value of all poverty related news is clarity in reporting. That is, while the event itself may be subject to various interpretations, it is important for news media to frame the issue in comprehensible story structure, regardless of paradigmatic frame.

#### 5. Magnitude:

'Magnitude'<sup>40</sup> is defined by Harcup and O'Neill (2001) as "[s]tories that are perceived as sufficiently significant either in the number of people involved or in potential impact" (p. 279). 'Magnitude' was particularly prevalent in topic areas dominated by the paradigm of Structural Responsibility and the Culture of Poverty, such as 'Government Funded Services' and 'Low Income', indicating the effects of structural change are most often reported when they affect many people. However, 'magnitude' was also present in significant numbers of articles in topic areas dominated by Individual Responsibility, suggesting that poverty issues generally become news when the effects are widespread, regardless of paradigmatic interpretations.

#### 6. Personalization:

'Personalization' refers to the media's tendency to focus on individuals as the makers of news. This involves the reduction of conflicts and issues to the level of the individuals in order to simplify coverage. The use of one political leader to represent the position of a country is one example of this (Cross and Hackett, 1999, p. 16). Although present in most topic areas, 'personalization' dominated only 'Gender' and 'Aboriginal Poverty' articles. This might be explained by the fact that in both topic areas, the issue became newsworthy when commented upon by government officials representing departments and ministries. In addition, it consistently ranked between

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<sup>40</sup> 'Magnitude' replaces the traditional 'threshold' news value, which refers to the size of an event and its related drama.



fourth and seventh place in all other articles where present, suggesting that personalization is less connected to poverty paradigms than to newsgathering practices.

#### 7. Power Elite:

The 'power elite'<sup>41</sup> is defined by Harcup and O'Neill (2001) as "[s]tories concerning powerful individuals, organisations or institutions" (p. 279). That is, stories in possession of this news value refer to elite political or economic organizations and individuals. Its centralization on the structural elite suggested that this news value would be dominant in articles primarily informed by the paradigm of Structural Responsibility. Indeed, as expected, this value ranked first in articles about the 'Justice System', 'Gender', and 'Aboriginal Poverty', topic areas fundamentally informed by the paradigm of Structural Responsibility. However, it was also present in significant numbers of 'Homelessness' articles, a topic area dominated by the paradigms of Individual Responsibility and the Culture of Poverty. This presence can be explained by the simple observation that the 'power elite' are often used as primary sources of information, regardless of paradigmatic influences.

#### 8. Relevance:

'Relevance'<sup>42</sup> is defined as "[s]tories about issues, groups and nations perceived to be relevant to the audience" (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001, p. 278). 'Relevance' was present in all but the 'Justice System' and 'Crimes Against the Poor' topic areas, regardless of paradigmatic dominance. This suggests that poverty news must generally be made meaningful to audiences in order to be considered newsworthy.

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<sup>41</sup> The 'power elite', along with 'celebrity', replaces the traditional 'reference to elite people' news value. By distinguishing those who are politically, economically, and socially powerful from those who possess fame for entertainment purposes, we are allowed more specificity in coding. Harcup and O'Neill, 2001, p.278)

<sup>42</sup> 'Relevance' is a contemporary news value that replaces the traditional news values of 'meaningfulness', referring to cultural proximity and the ability of a story to resonate with the audience's experiences, and 'reference to elite nations', a similar concept that assumes that events about elite Western nations are important to mainstream audiences.

#### 9. Sensationalism:

‘Sensationalism’ refers to coverage of the bizarre and surprising (Cross and Hackett, 1999, p. 16). There is an element of high drama associated with the sensational.

‘Sensationalism’ ranked highest in ‘Vancouver Downtown Eastside’ and ‘Crimes Against the Poor’ topic areas, informed by the Culture of Poverty and Underclass, and the Individual Responsibility paradigm respectively. Although informed by different paradigms, both are informed by poverty paradigms that distinguish between ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor, suggesting the exploitation of this distinction to maximize the drama associated with morality and immorality.

#### 10. Unexpectedness:

‘Unexpectedness’ is defined by Hartley (1995) as ‘the unpredictability, or rarity, of an event’ (p. 77), and includes those events that appear out of the ordinary. Like ‘sensationalism’, ‘unexpectedness’ was most prevalent in ‘Vancouver Downtown Eastside’ and ‘Crimes Against the Poor’ topic areas. Again, although informed by different paradigms, both exploit the drama associated with the extreme conditions and immorality by presenting the events as surprising to the average viewer. This surprise further divides the poor from the average reader.

#### 11. Good News:

‘Good news’ has been defined by Harcup and O’Neill (2001) as “[s]tories with particularly positive overtones such as rescues and cures” (p. 279). Stories that possess this news value may be ‘feel good’ stories, but they may also indicate the assumption of a positive outcome despite the occurrence of negative events. For the most part, ‘good news’ scored low as a news value. However, its presence in small amounts in all but ‘Welfare’, ‘Aboriginal Poverty’, and ‘Crimes Against the Poor’ topic areas suggests that despite its propensity for negative stories, news does not completely exclude the positive from coverage, instead reporting hope as associated with tragedy. Indeed, it is worth noting that the majority of such ‘good news’ appears in regards to structural actions, such as municipal grants for homeless shelters, and the change of government policy regarding seniors’ bus passes.

## 12. Celebrity:

'Celebrity' has been defined by Harcup and O'Neill (2001) as '[s]tories concerning people who are already famous" (p. 279). This news value was not present in any of the articles, suggesting that poverty and poverty related issues are not generally associated with famous individuals.

The results of the examination of news values in relation to topic areas suggest that stories must possess news values in order to be published. However, there appears to be little relationship between news values and topic areas, which suggest that in many instances news values are created or emphasized in stories in order to increase their newsworthiness. As Harcup and O'Neill (2001) note, "we should be constantly aware that identifying news factors or news values may tell us more about how stories are covered than why they were chosen in the first place" (p. 277). Based upon our examination, it can be argued that while poverty paradigms do inform the coverage of poverty news, news possesses its own discursive logic largely based upon maximizing audiences and remaining competitive. Therefore, journalists may cover events or pseudo-events from any number of perspectives, but they must follow news logic and maximize newsworthiness regardless of paradigmatic influences.

### **In the Next Section**

In order to more fully examine the presence and function of the poverty paradigms in news articles, it is necessary to examine the articulation of poverty in the press. In particular, an examination of the articles for primary actors, types of poverty, and sources, as well as the dominance of cause-, event-, or solution-based coverage will provide some insight into the way in which poverty paradigms appear in the news. Thus, we turn our attention to a smaller selection of our sample in Chapter 5.

## Chapter Five: Deeper Readings: Actors, Sources, Causes And Solutions In The News

As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, dominant poverty paradigms inform particular topic areas of poverty news. In order to demonstrate the way in which these poverty paradigms inform news coverage, more detailed analysis is required. A study of the types of poverty reported, the primary sources accessed, and the presentation of causes, effects, and solutions provides further insights into the ways in which the dominant paradigms function in news. For this reason, two artificial weeks were constructed out of the original sample in order to allow for more detailed examination of the articles.<sup>43</sup>

### *Procedure*

To create the two artificial weeks, the total 98 sample articles from the Vancouver Sun, the Vancouver Province, and the Globe and Mail were grouped according to days of the week. After completing this re-categorization, random dates were selected from all weekdays, in which one Monday was randomly selected from all possible Mondays, one Tuesday from all possible Tuesdays, and so on until a complete 6-day week had been created.<sup>44</sup> All related poverty articles appearing on the selected days were included in our analysis. Once the first week was determined, the process was repeated, resulting in the construction of a second artificial week. In total, 35 articles comprised both weeks: the first consisting of 19 articles, and the second consisting of 16 articles.<sup>45</sup>

The constructed weeks were coded and analyzed for variables that would help to determine the ways in which poverty paradigms were activated in the news. These variables included: the types of poverty and poor people present in the articles; accessed

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<sup>43</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, our sample was selected from *The Vancouver Province*, *The Vancouver Sun*, and *The Globe and Mail* between the dates of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002 and February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Please see Chapter 4 for further details regarding sample selection.

<sup>44</sup> Due to the fact that the *Vancouver Sun* and *Globe and Mail* publish one weekend paper on Saturday, and the *Vancouver Province* publishes their weekend paper on Sunday, the two days were compiled under the heading 'weekend', to be selected from this pool.

<sup>45</sup> Please see Appendix C for total listing of articles in the constructed week samples.

sources; and reported causes and effects of poverty and solutions to poverty and related problems.

## ***Findings***

### **i. The Poor as reported in News Articles**

The constructed weeks were examined and coded for the type of poverty and poor people reported. In order to code for this category, articles were analyzed for the specificity of the poverty presented. In particular, the question was asked whether the article mentioned ‘low-income families’, ‘homelessness’ or something else? In many instances, articles specified more than one type of poverty or poor person. In these cases, these articles required multiple coding. For example, an article about panhandlers and welfare recipients would have been coded as possessing two references: ‘panhandler’ and ‘welfare recipient’. For this reason, the total number of references to ‘type’ exceeds the total number of articles in the sample.<sup>46</sup>

In total, 12 types of poverty and/or poor persons were identified. These are listed in Table 7. The labels used to identify the type of poverty and poor people originate with their appearance in the news articles.

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<sup>46</sup> Articles that presented multiple references to the same type of poverty, such as two low-income workers, or articles that repeatedly note one particular person were coded as a single reference.

**Table 7: Types of Poverty/Poor People and Number of References**

Types of Poverty/Poor People Identified in News Articles	Number of references for Combined Weeks 1 & 2 (p=62)
“Low income...” <sup>47</sup>	
• “people”(general) <sup>48</sup>	12.9%
• “workers” <sup>49</sup>	4.8%
• “seniors”	9.7%
• “families”	6.5%
• “children” <sup>50</sup>	4.8%
• “single mothers” <sup>51</sup>	4.8%
• “women”	1.6%
• “Aboriginal people” <sup>52</sup>	1.6%
Sub-total	46.8%
“B.C.’s poor” <sup>53</sup>	8.1%
“Homeless”	8.1%
“Welfare Recipient” <sup>54</sup>	6.5%
“Drug Users”	6.5%
“Sex Trade Workers”	4.8%
“Immigrants”	4.8%
“Disabled”	4.8%
“Criminal” <sup>55</sup>	3.2%
“Refugees”	3.2%
“The poor of the Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside” <sup>56</sup>	1.6%
“Panhandler(s)”	1.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- ‘p’= the total number of references to poor people for Weeks 1 and 2
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

<sup>47</sup> In some instances, “poor” replaced the prefix “low income”, such as in “poor children” or “poor families”.

<sup>48</sup> “Low income people” also included broadly characterized poverty, such as “the poor”. This is, however, distinct from “B.C.’s poor”, a category that draws an explicit connection to provincial poverty.

<sup>49</sup> “Low income workers” included direct references to workers in poverty, such as “poor workers”.

<sup>50</sup> “Low income children” included all references to children in poverty, such as “needy children” or “disadvantaged kids”.

<sup>51</sup> “Single mothers” also included references to “single moms”.

<sup>52</sup> “Aboriginal people” included all references to First Nations and Métis people as specified in articles, including the less specific and more derogatory “natives” and “native Indians”.

<sup>53</sup> Poverty was also coded as “B.C.’s poor” if the connection was explicitly provincial, such as “British Columbia’s poor” or “the poor of this province”.

<sup>54</sup> “Welfare recipient” also included references to welfare “clients”, “residence who collected welfare”, and those “on welfare”.

<sup>55</sup> Although many of the categories include illegal behaviour, such as “drug users” and “sex trade workers”, this category includes only those references to explicitly criminal acts, such as fraud or theft. Usually, the article involves the arrest or prosecution of an individual.

<sup>56</sup> This category includes references that specifically link the “poor”, “needy” or “disadvantaged” to the area.

As is evident, “low income” poverty appeared more frequently than any other category, comprising 46.8% of total references. These references were often specific to particular communities or individuals, including but not limited to working people, seniors, families, women, single mothers, children, and Aboriginal people. When used, this label broadly describes the condition of poverty, and may contain generic references to multiple individuals and communities as they may broadly include any number of individuals from the other categories. Thus, “low income” acts as a discursive code, allowing journalists to imply a multiplicity of characteristics, characters, and conditions within limited space.

The use of specific descriptive terminology, such as “welfare recipients” or “the poor of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside”, is indicative of the topic areas covered in the news. These terms connote linkages to other newsworthy topics, such as changes to the provincial welfare system or municipal proposals to deal with homelessness. However, descriptive terms used to identify the types of poverty in news articles are less indicative of particular poverty paradigms than of the flexibility of selected language used by journalists. They may use this flexibility to apply the most appropriate paradigmatic frame to their analysis. Thus, the analysis reveals that we cannot generalize that a particular type of descriptor is always related to a particular paradigm. For example, it would be false to state that the presence of “drug users” and “sex trade workers” indicate the Culture of Poverty paradigm in every case. Instead, the use of these descriptive categories of deviance is more likely suggestive of attempts by news media to maximize newsworthiness. Thus, their presence is more indicative of dominant news discourse than of poverty discourses.

## **ii. Sources**

As argued in Chapter 3, credible sources are fundamental to news and the “regime of objectivity”. Sources allow journalists to appear as distanced observers of the issue or event, while simultaneously injecting articles with credible analysis, specific meaning, and discursive direction (Hackett, 1991, p. 205). In many ways, sources shape news by providing discursive frames of reference. In particular, primary sources are able to provide explanations of events and issues that influence story logic. Therefore, sources

that favour individual, structural, or cultural explanations of poverty will influence press coverage accordingly.

The number of sources accessed throughout the articles was recorded and used as the constant against which percentages would be calculated.<sup>57</sup> In many cases, there were multiple sources used in an article. For this reason, the number of sources exceeds the number of articles. There were 63 sources accessed in the Week 1 sample, and 42 in the Week 2 sample. A total of 105 sources for composite two weeks were recorded. These are listed in Table 8.

**Table 8: Sources**

Source	Total Weeks 1 & 2 (s=105)
Law and Order	
• Lawyer	5.7%
• Attorney General	4.8%
• Legal Aid Society	4.8%
• Police	3.8%
• Judge	2.9%
• Canadian Bar Association	2.9%
• Legal Services Society	1.0%
• Legal Aid Ontario	1.0%
Sub-total	26.7%
Community Organizations	
• DTES violence against women organizations (Breaking the Silence Campaign (DTES Missing Women); DTES Women's Shelter; Via Nova Transition Society; DTES Missing Women Website)	3.8%
• Downtown Eastside Residents Association	2.9%
• Seniors' Organizations	1.9%
• Tenant Rights Action Coalition	1.0%
• Society Promoting Environmental Conservation	1.0%
• Carnegie Action Project	1.0%
• Vancouver Area Network Drug Users	1.0%
• Coalition of various community groups	1.0%
• Small Advocacy groups or noted individuals	2.9%
Sub-total	16.2%
Government official	
• Prime Minister	-
• Federal Minister	1.9%
• Provincial Premier	1.9%
• Provincial Minister	5.7%
• Mayor	1.9%
• City Councilor	2.9%
Sub-total	14.3%

<sup>57</sup> Articles that repeatedly source one particular person were coded as a single reference.



Source	Total Weeks 1 & 2 (s=105)
Low Income	
• Low income person	1.0%
• Friend of poor person	3.8%
• Family member related to poor person	2.9%
Sub-total	7.6%
Political Representative	
• MLA	2.9%
• MP	-
• Political candidate	2.9%
Sub-total	5.7%
Business	
• Small business person	1.9%
• Translink Spokesperson	1.0%
• BC Ferries Spokesperson	1.0%
• Toronto Community Housing Corporation	1.0%
• Canadian Taxpayers Association	1.0%
Sub-total	5.7%
Educational	
• Parent Organizations (Chair, Parent Advisory Council; Vancouver Inner-City Parent Group)	1.9%
• Vancouver School Board	1.9%
• Principal	1.0%
• Vice-Principal	1.0%
Sub-total	5.7%
Health	
• Medical Doctor	1.0%
• Chief Medical Officer	1.0%
• Vancouver Coastal Health Authority	1.0%
• DTES health worker	1.9%
Sub-total	4.8%
Union	
• Representative/spokesperson	1.9%
• President	1.9%
Sub-total	3.8%
Aboriginal	
• Federal Assembly of First Nations	1.0%
• West Coast Warrior Society	1.0%
• Union of BC Indian Chiefs	1.0%
• Neskonlith Chief	1.0%
Sub-total	3.8%
Academic	
• Professor	1.9%
• Social Planning and Research Council	1.0%
Sub-total	2.9%
General public	1.0%
Journalist	1.0%
Religious	
• Pastor	1.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.2%</b>

- s = the number of total sources for Weeks 1 and 2 combined
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

Police, judges, lawyers, and senior members of legal associations were included under the broad heading “Law and Order” and were the most frequently accessed sources, comprising approximately 26.7% of the total. The frequency of their appearance suggests that members of the ‘law and order’ community are considered to be highly credible sources. The information that they provide to news media is held in great esteem, and often provides the foundational or defining information upon which the article is based. The presence of these sources within the introductory paragraphs of articles demonstrates this framing power. Introductions to stories that read, “Attorney-General Geoff Plant is steadfastly refusing to reconsider his decision to dramatically cut legal aid...” (Beatty, 2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>) and “Vancouver police Inspector Ken Frail is bracing himself for changes for the worse in the Downtown Eastside...” (Bula, 2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>) clearly set the course of the article by allowing these sources to define the most pressing information in the inverted pyramid. Furthermore, the high percentage of “law and order” sources indicates their accessibility to news media, an important factor in enabling journalists to meet deadlines. Thus, these credible and accessible sources are able to define poverty news by using authoritative language of the state to set the terms of debate.

In addition, by allowing “law and order” sources to dominate news representations, poverty issues become contextualized as legal issues, to be treated or managed by the state in its many judicial forums. This framing may explain the greater appearance of poverty paradigms, such as Structural Responsibility and the Culture of Poverty, that favour interpretations in which poverty can be managed and controlled by state apparatuses.

“Community organizations” comprised approximately 13.3% of the total sources for the constructed weeks. The “community organizations” label included advocacy groups that promote social, economic, or environmental justice. These sources were primarily accessed to speak on behalf of poor communities to issues that might concern them (Bohan, 2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>; Luba, 2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>; Austin, 2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). Interestingly, “low income” people were accessed less frequently than “community organizations.” This finding supports the argument that organizations are more likely to be accessed than individuals because they are more accessible, credible, and identifiable.

As Herbert Gans (1980) has argued, “[r]eporters who only have a short time to gather information must therefore attempt to obtain the most suitable news from the fewest number of sources as quickly and easily as possible, and with the least strain on the organization’s budget” (p. 128).

However, despite the relatively frequent access of “community organizations”, the diversity of organizations selected to speak on behalf of the poor indicates a lack of consistency. Instead of returning to a few credible community sources, journalists accessed different organizations for every story. This may indicate a lack of organization on the part of community groups. The disconnection between related stories and inconsistent access of sources is also indicative of generalist journalists and an absence of poverty beat. Indeed, without a poverty beat, disconnection between related stories is expected. In any event, the resulting articles appear to use sources that provide narrow and at times conflicting analysis of the subject. For this reason, it is less likely that the journalists will take their paradigmatic interpretations from these sources, instead seeking out alternative credible and official sources to set the discursive frames.

“Government officials”, including Premiers, federal and provincial ministers, and municipal leaders, were frequently accessed as sources, comprising approximately 14.3% of the total sources for the constructed weeks. As might be expected, federal ministers were accessed to speak on behalf of the federal government, the Premier and various departmental ministers were accessed to speak on behalf of the provincial government, and the mayor and other city councillors were accessed to speak on behalf of municipal government. Thus, when these sources were accessed to comment on or define poverty-related issues, their explanations tended to be driven by government decisions, policies, and actions, such as in articles that read, “Toronto Council’s budget committee decided yesterday...” (Rusk, 2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>) and “Gordon Hogg, children and family development minister, confirmed this week that the \$5.2-million program...is being axed” (Steffenhagen, 2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>). As with “law and order” sources, the definitions offered by “government officials” tended toward structural changes and government-run programs aimed at alleviation of poverty, such as school lunch programs for poor children and bus passes for low-income seniors. This offers some insight into

why the liberal variant of Structural Responsibility appears so frequently as an interpretive frame.

It is also important to note that “government officials” were often accessed as sources for events that they created. For example, they were accessed to speak to past and present government decisions which were themselves reported as events. The creation of ‘pseudo-events’<sup>58</sup> in the form of official statements and policy decisions allow these official sources to define events at times when there is no spontaneous news event to define. This, in turn, prepares future news discourse around similar subjects.

“Low-income” sources, including friends and family of poor individuals, comprised approximately 7.6% of the total sources for the constructed week. In most instances, the friends and family were related to missing sex trade workers of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside and were accessed in order to provide personal information about the victims and the community.<sup>59</sup> These sources were often presented as living under similar conditions as the victims, having experienced both poverty and violence in their community. These personal experiences grant these sources credibility and allow journalists to use them to provide important and defining first-hand information that tends to be consistent with the Culture of Poverty.

“Political Representative” sources comprised approximately 5.7% of constructed weeks’ sources. The presence of political sources, such as MLAs, MPs, and political candidates suggests that poverty can be legitimately presented as a political issue, but only when political actors provide the framework and definitions. This activity securely situates political debate within a recognizable political arena. In accessing these sources, the news allows political representatives to define the terms of their own debates. Thus, the paradigmatic interpretations present in the articles are dependent upon the accessed political source who set the terms of the debate.

“Business” sources also comprised approximately 5.7% of total sources. These small business owners and large business representatives were never asked to comment directly on poverty itself, but instead were accessed for additional information about

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<sup>58</sup> ‘Pseudo-event’ is a term borrowed from Curran and Seaton (1991, p.265).

<sup>59</sup> For example, in Suzanne Fournier’s (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>) article, “‘Something must have happened to Dinah’”, the journalist quotes a missing woman’s roommate at length, noting similarity between the source and the victim in terms of living conditions, sex-trade, drug use, and personal history.

related topics, such as the potential effects of various employment strategies and service structures. The presence of these sources suggests that news media assume that business leaders possess expertise and can be called on to comment on issues related to poverty. Thus, while business sources do not comment on poverty directly, they offer evidence to support the interpretive frames.

“Educational” sources, including principals, vice-principals, and parent organizations, comprised approximately 5.7% of the total constructed week sources. These individuals and organizations were accessed only when stories involved educational concerns. Their presence in poverty articles appears to guide interpretations towards those informed by the paradigm of Structural Responsibility. For example, in one article announcing decreased funding for inner-city schools, educational sources provide a framework informed by liberal variants of Structural Responsibility:

“That money helps us level the playing field for students at risk,” said Marilyn Bradley, vice-principal of Macaulay Elementary in Victoria and the school district’s administrator of inner-city programs. “The government says it’s not cutting education but this is a huge cut to education....”

“These monies are critical to ensure education equity for all children,” [Vancouver School Board chairwomen Barbara Buchanan] said. “There’s no doubt that any reduction in this funding will have significant impacts on the educational programs of these children and youth” (McLellan, 2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>).

“Health” sources made up approximately 4.8% of the sources in the constructed week, and included medical doctors and health workers, as well as bureaucratic medical sources, such as representatives for the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the Chief Medical Officer. The use of these sources indicates the appearance in some articles of a linking between poverty and health. For example, in an article about treatment for tuberculosis in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, Dr. John Blatherwick, the chief medical health officer for the Vancouver/Richmond Health Region, is accessed as the definitive source for the story, stating that, “Blatherwick said latent, non-contagious tuberculosis can break down and become contagious, especially among the disadvantaged where poor housing and nutrition lead to general poor health” (Berry, 2002). As this article

demonstrates, these sources tend to favour structural interpretations because they assert that living conditions are connected to general health, in that “healthy people are at low risk” for disease.

“Union” sources comprised 3.8% of the total sources found in the constructed weeks. Like “community organizations”, these sources were often accessed to speak on behalf of low-income workers (Immen, 2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>). In addition, the placement of “union” comments suggests that they are often ideologically grouped with social justice organizations. For example, the statement that “Unions are worried about job cuts. Social agencies fear that a bottom-line approach will ignore tenants’ complaints and result in evictions and poor maintenance” indicates this grouping. By positioning unions as defenders of low-income workers, news media use unions as a legitimate counter-source to the positions put forward by business and government (Immen, 2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>; Beatty, 2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>, Luba, 2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). In positioning structural sources against one another, the paradigm of Structural Responsibility is asserted as the dominant framework.

“Aboriginal” sources also made up approximately 3.8% of sources found in the constructed weeks, and included representatives of the Federal Assembly of First Nations, the West Coast Warrior Society, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, and the Chief of the Neskonlith band. While Aboriginal sources could also belong to previously noted categories including community organizations or political representatives, their explicit identification as Aboriginal in news articles requires that they be noted separately. In general, these Aboriginal sources were accessed to frame stories about Aboriginal poverty. As poverty researcher Barbara Murphy notes, “[if] the fact that 17 percent of all Canadians live below the poverty line shocks us, the fact that twice that proportion of Aboriginal people live below the poverty line may make us realize that some are bearing the brunt of poverty out of all proportion to their numbers and beyond all considerations of fairness and human rights” (Murphy, 2002, p.81). It is within this socio-economic context that Aboriginal sources are accessed to speak to poverty issues and their consequences (O’Neil, 2002, February 5<sup>th</sup>; O’Neil, 2002, February 6<sup>th</sup>) Their Aboriginal status therefore offered further credibility to the stories.

“Academic” sources made up only 2.9% of sources. “Academic” sources appeared in the articles in two roles: to provide analysis of new research findings, and to present views that contested dominant government policies. In regards to the first finding, academic sources were accessed to explain the results of a study of women, body image, and income level (Picard, 2002). Regarding the second finding, an academic source provides commentary that challenges a government decision to restructure the welfare system, stating “I don’t understand how the state can actually refuse to provide assistance to someone who is shown to be in need of food, clothing and shelter if they have no income, they have no support...” (McInnes, 2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>). In this case, the academic source is not accessed for analysis, but rather as a credible alternative position, which indicates the legitimacy of academia and further demonstrates the requirement of journalists to provide ‘both sides’ of a controversial story in order to achieve objectivity, regardless of paradigmatic frame.<sup>60</sup>

“General public”, “journalistic”, and “religious” sources each made up approximately 1.0% of the total sources. These sources were accessed to provide opinions about an event, or comment on the life of a peer. As these sources did not dominate the direction of the article, but instead were accessed for additional information, they do appear to influence the paradigmatic interpretation only in their supporting statements.

### **iii. Cause, Event, and Solution Based coverage**

Since poverty paradigms establish patterns of responsibility, and news articles apply paradigmatic rationale to poverty coverage, it is important to analyze the articles for the appearance of causes, effects and solutions. The constructed weeks were examined in order to see if the press tended to favour cause-, event-, or solution-based coverage. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 9.

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<sup>60</sup> This is not to suggest that in every case, “academic” source are used in this way, but rather to demonstrate their primary functions in our constructed weeks.

**Table 9: Type of Coverage**

Type of Coverage	Percentage of Articles (N=35)
Events Associated with Poverty Issues	68.6%
Causes and Events	11.4%
Events and Solutions	5.7%
Causes, Events, and Solutions	5.7%
Causes of Poverty Issues	2.9%
Solutions to Poverty Issues	2.9%
Causes and Solutions	2.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100.1%

- 'n' = number of articles for Weeks 1 & 2
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

As is evident from Table 9, the vast majority of the articles tended towards event-based coverage. This result is not surprising given the nature of news. This focus results in little space being offered to an analysis of conditions or prospective solutions. Instead, coverage favours the immediacy of actions and decisions. Therefore, analysis is only present in these articles when sources accessed to comment on the event offer it.<sup>61</sup>

It is important to note that in “events and solutions” coverage, solutions were generally related to short-term conflict characterizing the event, and not to poverty as a long-term condition. Indeed, the only capacity in which long-term solutions were present was in discussions of changes to services, in which sources argued that poor people must be encouraged to develop a work ethic by state structures which will allow them to escape poverty, a perspective demonstrative of Borderline perspectives.

#### **iv. Responsibility**

The constructed weeks were examined in order to detect whether news articles held individuals or institutions responsible for poverty.<sup>62</sup> If responsibility was allocated, it was recorded, and the results are presented in Table 10.

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<sup>61</sup> This may, however, be related to the sample selection in that only articles located in the hard news sections were included in this sample. This process may have excluded soft news and entertainment pieces that offered more extensive coverage.

<sup>62</sup> Although this category appears highly subjective, requiring the identification of ideological closure through overall tone, it is a fundamental characteristic of the poverty paradigms. Thus, this analysis relied upon qualitative readings of the texts, descriptive language, and sources.



**Table 10: Responsibility**

<b>Parties Responsible for Poverty</b>	<b>Percentage of Articles (n=35)</b>
Not Addressed	77.1%
Poor Person and Government	11.4%
Society and Government	5.7%
Government	2.9%
Poor Person	2.9%
Society	-
Poor Person and Society	-
TOTAL	100.0%

- 'n' = number of articles for Weeks 1 & 2
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

As demonstrated in Table 5.4, 77.1% of articles did not address the issue of responsibility. This result indicates that poverty was presented as a freestanding characteristic of an event, existing without origin. An article about the 2010 Winter Olympics and its impact of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside demonstrates this presentation:

A coalition of advocacy groups wants to ensure renters in Vancouver's poorest neighbourhood aren't evicted if the Winter Olympics come to Vancouver and Whistler in 2010....

Jim Green, a former Downtown Eastside Residents Association organizer, said 1,000 people lost their low-rent rooms when Expo 86 brought tourists to Vancouver.

Green said that 12 of those homeless people subsequently died (Bohn, 2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>).

While the above article clearly asserts that the conditions of individuals are exacerbated by the decisions and actions of social-economic and political structures, it does not hold any original source responsible for poverty. While it is tempting to suggest that news is unwilling to address responsibility, this would be misleading. Instead, it is more accurate to state that in general the articles are informed by the Structural Responsibility paradigm, but the weaknesses inherent in event-based coverage detract from their ability to delve into discussions of responsibility.

“Government and individual poor people” were presented as responsible for poverty in approximately 11.4% of the articles. These articles tended to favour Borderline perspectives, in that welfare systems exacerbate the already problematic behaviour of the poor. In an article about changes to the provincial welfare system, comments connote this tension.

[Finance Minister Gary] Coell said the new requirement is a necessary incentive to help people get into the work force.

“If you say there isn’t a time frame and there isn’t a necessity, I think you’re prolonging someone’s length of time on government assistance” (McInnes, 2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>).

Although the original causes of poverty are generally left unaddressed in this article, the roles of government and the individual in the perpetuation of poverty are clearly stated. Thus, the borderline perspectives, which straddle the paradigms of Individual Responsibility and Structural Responsibility, are evident.

In addition, the remaining articles presented poverty as a problem perpetuated both by government’s cuts to program funding and the lifestyles of poor individuals. In one article, the reduction of funding for inner-city schools is condemned for its perpetuation of desperation amongst poor children and families. However, the article does note that the affected community is composed of individuals who do not speak English, and children “with attention-deficit and fetal alcohol syndrome” (Steffenhagen, 2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>).

A composite of “society and government” responsibility was also presented as contributing to poverty. Unequal social positions and income disparity were presented as issues to be controlled by government. One Vancouver Sun article entitled “Rich-poor gap fosters violence, group says: Canada not immune to own backlash, official warns,” demonstrates this divided responsibility:

“The resources in this rich country aren’t being shared in a way that allows, under the Charter of Rights, for everybody to achieve their goals,” [National Council of Welfare chairman, John Murphy] said....

“We wanted to show the public and policy makers that in addition to fairness and justice, there are good economic reasons why we need to make better investments to reduce poverty now,” Murphy said... (Beauchesne, 2002).

As the article notes, inequality is a condition related to both the social and government realms, the former through the creation and support of unequal wealth, and the latter for doing little to halt the inequality.

“Government” was held solely responsible for poverty in only 2.9% of articles. This article states firmly that, “[t]he tax cuts introduced by the Liberal government, the vast majority of which go to corporations and the wealthy, are being done at the expense of the most vulnerable people in society. It is creating a divide between the rich and poor that we shouldn’t have in British Columbia” (Beatty, 2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>). The blame is clearly shifted to the shoulders of government throughout the article.

“Poor people” are also held responsible for their own poverty in 2.9% of the articles. The article, concerned with homelessness management in Ontario, provides no analysis of conditions, but offers one quote in which a political candidate for the provincial Progressive Conservative party states that, “[l]iving on the streets is not an option. Call it tough love” (“Anti-homelessness law”, 2002). The quote suggests that people in poverty choose their lifestyles, and must therefore be to blame for their conditions.

#### **v. Noted Causes of Poverty**

Causes of poverty are directly related to responsibility. When a cause of poverty was noted in an article, it was recorded in order to detect patterns in presentation. The total number of causes mentioned over the constructed weeks is the constant in this analysis. The findings appear in Table 11.

**Table 11: Causes**

Causes	Weeks 1 & 2 (c=16)
Low wages	25.0%
Poor person's social group	12.5%
Job loss	6.25%
Individual choices/actions	6.25%
Limited personal initiative	6.25%
Drug use	6.25%
Welfare cutbacks	6.25%
Lack of government aid	6.25%
Taxation	6.25%
Racial discrimination	6.25%
Unemployment	6.25%
Government decisions	6.25%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- 'c' = the total causes of poverty mentioned in Weeks 1 and 2
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

Careful examination reveals that structural causes dominate all represented causes. These structural causes include “low wages”, “job loss”, “welfare cutbacks”, “lack of government aid”, “taxation”, “racial discrimination”, and “government decisions”. In particular, the prevalence of “low wages” as the most frequently cited cause suggests that if incomes could be raised, poverty would disappear. Indeed, as one such article states, “[b]ringing those at the very bottom upward can help society better manage health costs, reduce crime, increase labour productivity, and boost confidence in the economy...” (Beauchesne, 2002). By blaming low wages for the perpetuation of poverty, the article indicates that the paradigm of Structural Responsibility is the defining interpretive framework, particularly in its assertion that structural changes would ameliorate conditions.

Other articles identify the social groups associated with the poor and drug use as causes of poverty, thereby demonstrating the influence of the Culture of Poverty on their interpretive frameworks. These articles describe the particular characteristics of the communities and suggest that they are fundamentally to blame for creating and perpetuating poverty. As one such article describes, there are “...pockets of extreme poverty, with many more neighbourhoods of working poor, a high Aboriginal and immigrant population, rapid growth in some communities, an increasing number of

children with (fetal alcohol syndrome)...and many children living dangerous lives in the urban core...” (Steffenhagen, 2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>). By identifying characteristics responsible for the exclusion of the poor community from the mainstream, the article suggests that the community is itself responsible for exacerbating its own poverty.

Finally, the paradigm of Individual Responsibility is reflected by other identified causes. Articles such as “30,000 of 240,000 who are on welfare to lose it: New rules for eligibility to be introduced this year” which suggest that individual choices and actions, and limited personal initiative are responsible for the poverty of some individuals indicate the presence of this paradigm (McInnes, 2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>).

#### vi. Noted Effects of Poverty

Many articles identified effects of poverty. By effects, we mean those conditions and personal actions that appear to originate because of poverty. This is not to suggest that they are all, in fact, actual effects, but rather to demonstrate those effects commonly portrayed in the news. The results are contained in Table 12.

**Table 12: Effects of Poverty**

Effects	Weeks 1 & 2 (e=26)
Death	
• suicide	11.5%
• homicide	7.7%
	19.2%
Unconventional careers	
• Sex trade	15.4%
• Squeegee people	3.9%
	19.2%
Health problems	15.4%
Violence	15.4%
Homelessness	7.7%
Injustice (legal system)	3.9%
Crime	3.9%
Incarceration	3.9%
Drug abuse	3.9%
Positive body image	3.9%
More poverty	3.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.3%</b>

- ‘e’ = the total related consequences of poverty mentioned in Constructed Weeks 1 & 2
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

It appears that poverty is presented as being responsible for negative conditions. The proportion of stories linking poverty to death and generally deviant behaviour, including violence, criminal behaviour, drug abuse, and unconventional careers, speak to this overall negativity. Indeed, the majority of these effects indicate the presence of the Culture of Poverty paradigms in their specificity of conditions, suggesting that it is this framework that dominates when articles discuss effects of poverty.

It should be stated that there is some ambiguity regarding the sex-trade and drug abuse as effects of poverty. News articles are inconsistent in their presentation of the two, sometime suggesting that poverty drives people to these abuses, and at other times suggesting that they drive people into poverty. Thus, this finding suggests that the presented cause and effect is largely dependent upon the paradigmatic interpretations accessed by news media.

The Culture of Poverty paradigm may also explain that “positive” – or less negative – body image for women as an effect of poverty. The article in which this appears emphasizes the differences between wealthy and poor communities:

Women who live in affluent neighbourhoods are far more likely to be dissatisfied with their bodies than those who live in poorer areas, regardless of their personal income, a new Canadian study says.

“It is plausible that highly affluent neighbourhoods are characterized by a heightened sense of appearance investment, whereby people in general are more concerned about their body and appearance, and in which certain material features exist that facilitate investment in a person’s appearance...”

Poorer neighbourhoods likely show an absence of these features (Picard, 2002).

The article suggests that the neighbourhood – the community – is responsible for ultimate body image. This connotes a difference in personal values, a central belief of the Culture of Poverty paradigm.

The paradigm of Structural Responsibility also appears in the presentation of systemic injustice as an effect of poverty. The central theme associated with this effect is that people in poverty do not receive equal treatment by the justice system because they

lack the resources that would enable them to access lawyers to defend them in court. As one judge states:

‘Many people who come to court must represent themselves, - even in, sadly, criminal cases. The reason – no money.’ (Makin, 2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>).

This effect rests on the belief that the social system, as it is currently designed, is a system that perpetuates inequality. Thus, it is largely the structure that should be held accountable for injustice.

With regard to the remaining effects, specifically health problems, incarceration, homelessness, and cyclical poverty, there is no clear indication of any specific paradigm. Instead, they appear to support all three. For example, cyclical poverty may be the result of structural inequalities or community values. Alternatively, incarceration may be present as a result of individual criminal acts or systemic injustice. Thus, these effects are primarily indicative of journalistic flexibility regarding poverty paradigms, in that they fit within any of the dominant interpretive frames.

#### **vii. Events**

As demonstrated above, news about poverty tends towards event-based coverage. Therefore, poverty appears in news when newsworthy events occur. The constructed weeks were examined in order to reveal the particular event that caused poverty to appear in the media. They are demonstrated in Table 13.

Events themselves were counted and used as the constant in Table 13. The number of events exceeds the number of articles because news articles at times covered more than one event per story.

**Table 13: Events**

	Constructed Weeks (e=42)
Government Action	
• Service Restructuring	33.3%
• Initiative for Managing Poverty/the Poor	11.9%
• Funding for Health Services	2.4%
• Government Statement (controversial about Aboriginal poverty)	2.4%
Sub-total	50.0%
Justice System Conflict (amongst lawyers, judges, etc themselves) and Cases	21.4%
Housing Crisis	
• Restructuring of Ownership/Housing Board	4.8%
• Community Housing Initiatives (private-public partnerships)	2.4%
Sub-total	7.1%
Missing Women of the DTES	7.1%
Community Action	4.8%
Olympics	2.4%
Death	2.4%
Welfare Fraud	2.4%
Release of Academic Study (on income bracket in relation to body image in young women)	2.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- 'e' = the total events associated with poverty mentioned in constructed Weeks 1 & 2 articles.
- % may not total 100 due to rounding

Of the events-based articles, half of the noted events originated with government, specifically with a particular action, decision, or statement. Whether in the form of a controversial government statement or new policy pertaining to welfare, the event stemmed from the behaviour of government. The high frequency of events originating with government indicates that these sources possess the power to define and create events. The accessibility of these credible sources means that their presentation of decisions and general statements to the media is often presented as an event in and of itself. As stated previously, by creating these pseudo-events, government officials are able to define poverty within their preferred paradigmatic context. Journalists may then temper the presentation of these events with their own interpretive framework, resulting in articles informed by multiple paradigms.

With most other notable events, such as low-income housing crises, the Olympics, decisions related to the justice system, and the release of academic studies, the actions



and decisions of non-poor individuals defined the event. The study reveals that for these articles the majority of the events reported are deemed newsworthy in part because of their connection to elite or powerful actors who, in turn, provide definitions of the events. For example, events associated with the justice system tend to originate with the actions and decisions of lawyers and judges. Poverty is only seen to relate to the issues that underlie the reported event. It was the response of lawyers and judges and their ultimate protest against cutbacks to legal aid funding that received news coverage, not the impact of such a cut on the poor. The credibility of these legal professionals as sources enabled them to define events using particular paradigmatic frames; in this case, favouring the paradigm of Structural Responsibility.

Events that centre on poor actors and their advocates tended to receive less coverage overall than their non-poor counterparts. Although community action, such as demonstrations and forms of activism, are reported, they appear relatively infrequently when compared to government events. This absence of poor actors suggests that these individuals are not allowed to define events as frequently as the non-poor, which means that they are able to promote their favoured interpretive paradigms in news media less often.

### **viii. Solutions**

When solutions to related issues were presented in news articles, they tended towards the resolution of distinct social and political conflicts and were primarily event driven. For example, in a Globe and Mail article regarding the low-income housing crisis in Toronto, a number of short-term solutions are presented (Immen, 2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>). These solutions, including a proposed voucher system which would allow low-income renters to access private apartment housing at a reduced cost, address the immediate event, but leave long-term solutions unaddressed.

The limitations of these proposed solutions strongly suggest that news media favour event-based coverage, often at the expense of in-depth analysis and future predictions. Indeed, the lack of detailed discussion of potential long-term solutions points to the role of news media in promoting social conformity and the limitations imposed upon news discourse by pressures to remain objective. It is also likely that the

absence of a 'poverty beat' and general unfamiliarity with less obvious unofficial sources contributes to the inability of journalists to speculate or report potential changes. Additionally, the proposed solutions to existing conflicts take the place of long-range structural changes, which highlights the importance of immediacy as a defining characteristic of news.

### ***Editorials – An Organizational Perspective***

Although journalists are responsible for writing articles, we do not wish to overstate the power of the individual journalist in the creation of news. Doing so would falsely suggest that journalists allow personal bias to govern their reports, and would detract from the argument that news is an organizationally constructed discourse. For this reason, it is important to examine the wider context of newsroom control in this study of representations of the poor. Only in recognizing that news is a complex creation produced by profit-oriented organizations that are, "...goal directed, composed of interdependent parts, and bureaucratically structured" (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 144) can we fully understand the impact of organizational mandates on journalists. Indeed, journalists must be sensitive to the organization's mandate in order to produce a desirable news product.

While there are numerous organizational positions and structures that influence the production of news, editors are arguably the most directly influential on journalists. The role of the editor is to reflect and enforce the organization's mandate; editors "are accountable to management for the competitive market position of their news product" (Bennett, 1988, p. 134). While it is unrealistic to suggest that journalists have an editor-approved checklist to which they refer when confronted with problems of acceptable reporting, and naïve to claim that journalists passively accept overt editorial control (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 169), it is accurate to state that journalists undergo a process of newsroom socialization. Author W. Lance Bennett (1988) succinctly summarizes this relationship:

Novice journalists experience constant pressures (subtle and otherwise) from editors about how to cover stories. These pressures are effective because editors hold sway over what becomes news and which reporters

advance in the organization. Over time, reporters tend to adjust their styles to fit harmoniously with the expectations of their organizations. (p. 109)

In recognizing the role that editors play in influencing journalists in shaping the news, it is important to include a review of editorials: the space where the organization's mandate and favoured ideology are most clearly articulated. Editorials do not require the guise of objectivity. They are written by ownership representatives and are not held to the same standards as objective news articles. In fact, there is an expectation that editorials will reflect opinion. It is for this reason that they are properly labeled and placed in a separate section of the newspaper (Gans, 2003, p. 101). Although we recognize this distinction between editorials and traditionally 'objective' news, an examination of editorials allow us to gain further insights into the tendencies of the news to reflect preferred paradigms in these newspapers.

Editorials were drawn from the constructed weeks and qualitatively analyzed. There were a total of 24 Vancouver Sun editorials, 32 Globe and Mail editorials, and 11 Vancouver Province editorials. The difference in quantity between the papers can be explained by the fact that the Vancouver Sun and Globe and Mail frequently published two or three editorials per edition, while the Vancouver Province only published one per edition.

Of the identified editorials, only one Vancouver Sun and one Globe and Mail editorial refer to poverty in any way. In fact, these references are not direct, but instead are presented as after-thoughts that add little to the editorial commentaries. In the case of the Vancouver Sun editorial, comments are directed at those statements made by the Women's Equality Minister regarding the achievement of complete equality for women (McLintock and Wilson, 2002). The articles states:

*The Langley Advance News* says Women's Equality Minister Lynn Stephens made some purportedly impolite remarks that stated women in B.C. are now equal to men and for that reason, her ministry may be redundant.... Critics will point to [the Women's Equality Minister's] own ministry figures, which show a woman working full-time earns only 73 per cent of what an average man makes. But that figure is deceptive. It doesn't take into account statistical differences in education and work experience. Nor does it account for the fact that women

working full-time put in 38.7 hours a week as compared to men who punch 43.8 hours.... Our point is that Ms. Stephens...is close to the mark. And it would be perfectly legitimate for her to question the need for a ministry dedicated to women's issues in these tough financial times ("If minister did", 2002).

While this editorial deals specifically with comments related to low-income women, it glosses over poverty issues. Instead, it focuses on misperceptions of inequality, extending support for the abolition of the ministry. The position of the editor is clear: that equality of opportunity does exist, that women make less money due to their own life choices, and that the presence of low-income women does not justify state-structured support. For these reasons, it is clear that this editorial is consistent with the paradigm of Individual Responsibility.

The Globe and Mail editorial also presents poverty as a secondary focus. It is only near the end of the editorial, dedicated entirely to the Ontario Conservative Party leadership race, that poverty issues are presented:

A party dedicated to laying off workers, kicking people off welfare and dismantling government may find itself on the wrong end of public opinion, and vulnerable to defeat even if the Liberals and NDP pick up votes more by default than on their own merits ("To be Ontario's", 2002).

This passing reference to the poor suggests that poverty is not of great importance. While more sympathetic to poverty than the previously noted Vancouver Sun editorial, what appears to be of central importance is not poverty itself, but the potential response of voters to the Ontario Conservative Party. Despite the noted statements, it would appear that poverty itself is an issue largely unworthy of commentary.

Although there is limited attention to poverty in the two editorials, it is the general lack of poverty coverage that is more telling of organizational mandates. Editorials in all three papers consistently ignore issues related to poverty. Indeed, even editorials about British Columbia's highly publicized budget cuts and service restructuring, in which welfare and low-income people featured prominently, exclude all such references. Instead, these editorials focus on taxation, economic growth, pressures exerted by unions

on government, and the increase in medical premiums, ultimately arguing that government has few options on its path to fiscal responsibility (“Budget message”, 2002). Thus, the editorials dismiss any discomfort with the policies; as one Vancouver Province editorial states, “Campbell and Co. are likely to butt up against more obstacles along the road to a new, improved B.C. that’s open to business. But since when has change been easy?” (“Open for”, 2002).

The focus of editorials on government decisions, budgetary changes, and union negotiations suggests that these papers do not view poverty as a newsworthy topic in and of itself. Indeed, when poverty does appear, it is secondary to other issues. This editorial position is reflected in the articles themselves, which, as demonstrated in our analysis, present poverty as a newsworthy when it is connected to other topics.

Although the small showing of poverty in the editorials over the constructed weeks makes it difficult to determine which poverty paradigms are favoured by editors, it is possible to speculate about an organizationally approved poverty paradigm based upon related editorials. Specifically, editorials promoting the virtues of fiscal restraint and the wisdom behind budgetary cutbacks, in addition to the justification of gendered poverty exemplified in the Vancouver Sun editorial demonstrate consistency with the paradigms of Individual Responsibility and liberal variants of Structural Responsibility. This may help to explain the general dominance of liberal versions of Structural Responsibility among the articles.

## Conclusion

### *Remarks about the Study*

This analysis has offered a small window into the world of poverty news and the representations of poverty therein. The extensive examination of the articles has exposed the discursive paradigms that characterize representations of poverty in Canadian news media. In particular, the study has revealed that poverty news is subject to a multiplicity of primary definers and framing influences, including sources, newsworthy topic areas, news values, and techniques associated with the “regime of objectivity”. Thus, we have revealed that poverty news is presented through a variety of paradigmatic lenses.

This is not to suggest that the logics associated with the various poverty paradigms are accessed equally. Interestingly, this examination has revealed that poverty news is most frequently characterized by interpretations that favour liberal variants of the paradigm of Structural Responsibility. While it has been revealed that aspects of Individual Responsibility, the Culture of Poverty and the Underclass influence many articles, characteristics consistent with the paradigm of Structural Responsibility appear most frequently, which suggests that Structural Responsibility tends to dominate representations of poverty in the news.

Without proper explanation, this finding risks being misleading. At first glance, our conclusion that Structural Responsibility dominates news discourse seems to contradict the findings of related studies (Lens, 2002; Sotirovic, 2001; Swanson, 2001; Gilens, 1996; Iyengar, 1990; Golding and Middleton, 1982), which have largely asserted that poverty related news is characterized by beliefs associated with the paradigms of Individual Responsibility and the Underclass.<sup>63</sup> When speaking about the tendency of American news to reinforce these social beliefs, Shanto Iyengar (1990) claims that “...the well-documented tendency of Americans to consider poor people responsible for poverty may be due not only to dominant cultural values (e.g. individualism, self-reliance, etc.) but also to news coverage of poverty in which poor people predominate” (pp. 28-9). The findings of this thesis do not contradict the central assertions of the above studies. We

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<sup>63</sup> It should be noted that the majority of these studies have concerned British and American news media. No similar studies on Canadian media were found in a review of the literature.

concur that the professionalized practices and organizational mandates of news media generally reinforce market-liberal values. We also agree that the individualism associated with capitalist competition continues to characterize much of society and the language of news media. How then can we make sense of the dominance of Structural Responsibility, a paradigm that broadly refers to the influence of structures and institutions in the creation and articulation of poverty?

To partially answer this question it is important to note that our study suggests that Structural Responsibility dominated because of the profound reliance of news media on official and institutional sources. As Hall et al. (1978) has argued, “[t]he important point about the structured relationship between the media and the primary institutional definers is that it permits the institutional definers to establish the initial definition or *primary interpretations* of the topic in question” (p. 58). As purveyors of these primary interpretive frameworks, official and institutional sources are able to define events in ways favoured by authoritative structures. However, of equal importance is the way in which the sourced information is presented. The prevalence of these sources in news stories means that they not only act as primary definers themselves, but are also made relevant to the reported event in the construction of the story. In order to justify the frequent access of these sources, news must frame their comments in a manner that makes logical sense of the information. That is, if an institutional source is frequently accessed, then that institution must be presented as a relevant part of the story. Thus, the frequency of articles that present structural sources as central to the stories is directly related to the frequency of interpretations related to the paradigm of Structural Responsibility.

The dominance of liberal versions of Structural Responsibility can also be linked to the standardization of event-based coverage that typifies mainstream news. To assert the dominance of Structural Responsibility in poverty news does not mean that journalists routinely call for structural change, or that the news media portray the poor as a “surplus army of labour”. Indeed, stories about the conditions and causes of poverty cannot be properly analyzed within an event-based format. While not wholly absent from news

coverage<sup>64</sup>, articles that offer in-depth analysis of poverty require a demonstrated expertise regarding the topic, developed over time and through continuous coverage. As our research has highlighted, there is no identifiable ‘poverty beat’, and poverty-related news is reported by generalists who are trained to identify and cover newsworthy events. In the case of poverty news, this tends to result in the over-access of particular institutional sources and thematic frameworks that favour liberal variations of Structural Responsibility.

The absence of a ‘poverty beat’ is not surprising. Just as Golding and Middleton (1982) concluded in their study of the representation of welfare in the British press, poverty is not a major newsworthy topic (p. 68). It is a long-standing condition, not an immediate event, and lacks many of the desirable news values when presented as a solitary topic. Additionally, the maximization of news values in the construction of the story requires time, space, and analysis that may jeopardize apparent journalistic objectivity. For this reason, poverty is often presented in connection with other topic areas in which the combined news values can be maximized within traditional event-based coverage. Thus, poverty tends to receive news coverage only when connected to other more newsworthy topic areas.

For this reason, we can further conclude that these associated topic areas influence the dominant paradigmatic interpretations of poverty. Articles about government funding and its impact on the poor, for example, tend to be defined by institutional sources that favour more liberal versions of Structural Responsibility. Thus, the dominance of the liberal variant of paradigm of Structural Responsibility is directly related to the appearance of stories that connect poverty to structures and institutions.

Despite the fact that Structural Responsibility appears to dominate the coverage, we must be clear that it is not a monolithic paradigm. In many cases, its presence is tempered by complementary paradigmatic influences. These additional interpretations provide information about the poor, the community, and their behaviour that would otherwise go unexplored. Under the dominant interpretive umbrella of Structural Responsibility that tends to favour liberal variants of the paradigm, aspects of Individual

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<sup>64</sup> See for example Kim Bolan and Lindsay Kines, “Cutbacks to force more women into sex trade: activists: Women need more services to aid their recovery, pair say,” *The Vancouver Sun*, Feb 19, 2002: B3



Responsibility work to shift the paradigmatic frame towards interpretations favoured by Right-of-centre Borderline perspectives. In this event, structures and individuals are seen as equal partners in the perpetuation of poverty, whereby particular structures, such as welfare, may be seen to be responsible but only because they discourage the work ethic of the poor. Alternatively, when the Culture of Poverty paradigm complements the Structural Responsibility framework, it is used descriptively, offering insight into the characteristics of poor communities. Social and economic structures may have caused poverty, but it suggests that some poor communities have developed a number of defining characteristics due to their isolation from the mainstream.

There are general trends that can be perceived regarding the coverage of particular issues. While stories that detail government policies or systemic changes tended to be informed by the Structural Responsibility, those about Vancouver's Downtown Eastside were informed by the various contending paradigms. In these cases, the primary sources speak about the roles and characteristics of individuals and communities, signaling the use of alternative paradigmatic frames.

The dominance of liberal versions of Structural Responsibility is suggestive of an existing tension in news media between the belief systems of news staff and the organizational structures within which they work. As Golding and Middleton (1982) have asserted, "[j]ournalists very often regard themselves collectively as a body of liberal-minded moderates, safeguarding a commonsense view of political reality from which others (some politicians, trade union activists, intellectuals, lobby groups) frequently and dangerously depart" (p. 131). Although it would be incorrect to assert that the personal biases of journalists outweigh the professionalized news routines that favour particular definitions and news formats, it would also be problematic to suggest that journalists are not sensitive to a variety of political discourses. In particular, belief in the rights of citizenship and the tenets of liberal democracy characterize this political discourse (Laycock & Clarke, 2002; Hackett, 1991). It can be argued that Structural Responsibility allows journalists to tap into this belief system without compromising the credibility of the news discourse. By accessing particular official and institutional sources to speak about poverty and related issues, journalists locate responsibility for care of the poor with institutions that make up liberal democratic society, including

governments, the justice system, and the police. Using professional codes and techniques associated with the “regime of objectivity”, journalists are able to provide accounts of poverty management that are often sympathetic to the poor, despite the sources accessed. Structural Responsibility allows journalists to assert the importance of various social, political, and economic structures to the management of poverty. Thus, journalists who access the logic of Structural Responsibility are not concerned with historicizing the causes of poverty, but instead present poverty as an immediate condition to which structures and institutions are obliged to respond.

Based on the results of this study, one final conclusion must be noted. Despite its sensitivity to various discourses, poverty news remains a product of an organizationally determined discourse that is shaped by approved techniques associated with the “regime of objectivity”. In this way, the resulting representations of poverty tend to be driven by a partnership between sources that offer popular and official frameworks of interpretations, and a news discourse characterized by its own discursive codes. After recording the popular and official explanations of and assumptions about poverty, journalists shape representations to meet the requirements of news discourse, including codes, newsworthiness, and organizational demands. The resulting representations of poverty in the news are more indicative of the dominant poverty discourses accessible to journalists than actual observations of the condition.

### ***Reflections on the Limitations of Study and Potential Future Work***

In many ways, this thesis has been a first step in a much more ambitious and long-term project concerned with the complex relationship between news discourse, popular discourse, and social change. While it has provided the foundational footing for future studies of discursive struggles around poverty in Canadian news and society, it is limited in its ability to promote change. For this reason, it is important to reflect upon the value of this thesis and the future work arising from its limitations.

### **a. Discourse and Political Economy**

Initially, the concept of discourse was not expected to dominate the logic of this project. Indeed, at the onset of this study, a political economic approach to news media was deemed by this researcher to be the best, if not the only way, to fully appreciate the intricacies of the news institution. However, after examining news and poverty discourses, this initial position was reconsidered. Political economy, which is necessary for any complete study of media and power, misses the subtleties of language and discourse, in part because its focus lies in the institutions and their organizational constructs, and in part because its concepts of power are tied to this focus. Discursive definitions of power and the changing nature of social languages are simply beyond its scope.

Discourse and its relationship to news are equally important to any study of representations and power. The ways in which we internalize and articulate our beliefs are defined by discourses. In identifying the dominant discourses, or alternatively those assumptions promoted by dominant social actors, we can see the way in which power is constantly negotiated through language, and ideologies come to dominate and be challenged.

Future studies of poverty discourse and the construction of news should involve political economic analysis of ownership, funding, advertising pressures, and mode of address based upon target sales. By opening up these aspects of analysis, the connection between dominant ideologies, institutional conformity, and popular opinion will undoubtedly become clear. This type of analysis will likely provide access to any institutional entry points that might facilitate ideological resistance in mainstream news, and enable activists to decide whether democratized media are better mechanisms for promoting long-term social change.

## **b. Methodology**

The benefits associated with methodologies must always be examined in relation to their weaknesses. Content analysis is no exception. As Golding and Middleton (1982) have noted in their analysis of content analysis,

It is not a subtle technique and makes no pretence at capturing the nuances that permeate any piece of prose. It does, however, provide a reliable statistical summary of the prominent features of news coverage. (p. 69)

The strengths and weaknesses of content analysis lie in its primary ability to offer statistical data about a given subject. Content analysis offers needed information about terminology, placement, and tone associated with presentation of concepts. It also provides important primary information about the subject that can be documented, analyzed, challenged, and compared to the results of other studies. While the construction of categories and interpretations suggests that content analysis is far from an objective science, it is a necessary component of any study of news in that it offers tangible evidence of current and past trends in coverage.

Content analysis was selected as the primary research tool of this thesis after discovering a general absence of rigorous primary analysis of poverty news in a Canadian context. The vast majority of studies related to poverty representation are carried out within American and British contexts (Lens, 2002; Sotirovic, 2001; Swanson, 2001; Gilens, 1996; Iyengar, 1990; Golding and Middleton, 1982). The absence of such material provided an obstacle for a thesis concerned with the interpretations of poverty representations in Canadian news media. For this reason, an original study was undertaken that might provide a foundation upon which other studies of the topic might be grounded.

Future research would benefit from a variety of complementary explorations. Perhaps most obviously, future studies must examine more newspapers over a greater period of time. This tracking of changes over the long-term would provide valuable data regarding the continued representations of poverty. Additionally, interviews with journalists would provide clarification regarding their conscious or sub-conscious acceptance of discourses, reporting practices, and organizational mandates. Used

comparatively, interviews would offer insight into the constructive powers of news discourse. Large-scale surveys and more intimate focus groups involving members for the community would enable documentation of popular opinion about poverty. The results of such studies could be compared to results of our content analysis in order to determine the ways in which media representations affect public perceptions of the poor.<sup>65</sup> The results would allow for more complete theorizing about the impact of news discourse on social discourses.

A major limitation of this, and other studies of poverty representation (New Democratic Party of Canada, 2003; Swanson, 2001; Murphy, 2000; Capponi, 1997; Collins, 1996; Berrick, 1995) is the absence of the poverty voice. As demonstrated in this thesis, poor people are rarely accessed to speak about their own conditions, both in news media and in academic work. Indeed, the dominant poverty discourses are defined and promoted by the non-poor (Hurtig, 1999). The general acceptance and promotion of this paternalistic tendency and the exclusion of the poor from the construction of their own descriptive definitions have arguably only furthered the perceived ideological distance between the poor and non-poor, thus hindering the ability of anti-poverty organizations to garner public support for programs ensuring equality of condition. Future studies must survey and interview poor people to ensure that they are able to speak about their socio-economic conditions, their treatment by organizations and elite society, and existing dominant discourses. By engaging in this type of research, these direct experiences with poverty might be compared to popular representations in order to reveal inherent oversimplifications in popular discourse.

### **c. Spaces for Anti-Poverty Activism**

For anyone committed to social justice, the question that must be asked is, “to what use can this research be put?” Why study discursive representations of poverty in the news? The answer to this lies in the power of popular representations and their role in creating ‘common sense’. It is important for anti-poverty activists to recognize the discursive powers against which they are pitted. In acknowledging that dominant social

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<sup>65</sup> This suggestion for future work must be credited to Martin Gilens (1996).

discourses de-historicize poverty, and present it as a social problem best managed by official institutions, anti-poverty activists are likely to determine where there are discursive entry points, and if so which are best suited to their challenges.

Additionally, in recognizing the complexities of news discourse and the reasons for news media's promotion of particular positions, anti-poverty activists may be able to re-strategize their messaging. In understanding the discursive power of accessible institutional sources, anti-poverty organizations could attempt to present themselves similarly in effort to maximize their coverage. This tactic has had limited success when tested by the Vancouver based FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women & Children.

In *Understanding News*, John Hartley makes the point that timing is crucial if an issue is to get media attention.... [T]he media were busy looking for accredited sources they could interview and sources who would present another side to the issue. As a result, when we called the press conference, most media organizations we had contacted attended the event. (Jiwani, 1997)

Ultimately, the success of this strategy is dependent upon the ability to continue this type of activity over the long-term, signaling to mainstream media the accessibility of the organization.

Alternatively, recognizing the limitations and discursive power of news discourse may mean that anti-poverty activists will support the development and success of democratized media whose news framework tends to be more inclusive than traditional mainstream news. Here, anti-poverty and social justice activists are likely to find their discursive positions represented more frequently. By increasing the presence of radical versions of the Structural Responsibility paradigm in a variety of media, it can be argued that elements of mainstream news may be forced to respond as these voices become more accepted and profitable.

To conclude, this thesis has examined the ways in which poverty is represented in Canadian news media. In doing so, we have indicated how and why mainstream news favours particular paradigmatic interpretations of poverty. Thus, the purpose of this thesis has been to determine the reasons for the current promotion of paradigmatic

interpretations in the news. The task that now lies ahead is to determine the ways in which to effectively utilize this information to promote social justice and equality of condition.

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- Bolan, Kim and Kines, Lindsay. (2002, February 19<sup>th</sup>). Cutbacks to force more women into sex trade: activists: Women need more services to aid their recovery, pair say. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B3
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- Mickleburgh, Rod. (2002, February 27<sup>th</sup>). Crusading lawyer, 81, dies in Vancouver. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A5
- Middleton, Greg. (2002, February 11<sup>th</sup>). Missing woman's friend keeps families informed via website: Man who fell for Sarah deVries now 'driven' by search. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A7
- Minimum wage on rise in PEI. (2002, January 3<sup>rd</sup>). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6
- Morton, Brian. (2002, January 17<sup>th</sup>). Chinatown merchants blast addict centre: Area is scary, one shop owner says. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B7

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- Picard, Andre. (2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>). Where women live key to body image. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A12
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- Rusk, James. (2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). Committee restores \$1.5-million to keep shelter program. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A22
- Rusk, James. (2002, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002). Lastman seeks to limit tax increase to 4.6%: Stage set for battle between the mayor and left-wing councillors in final budget talks. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A24
- Sandler, Jeremy, (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). It's curtains for striping as Marble Arch hotel sold: As it turns 50 the landmark Seymour Street hotel is getting a new owner and a remake. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B1
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- Spencer, Kent. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). Cities want bigger slice of the pie: No [sic] enough comes back, says Own, despite the increased responsibilities. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A20
- Steffenhagan, Janet. (2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>). Inner-city schools to lose \$5.2 million: Program provides array of services to children in need. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B2
- Steffenhagan, Janet. (2002, February 9<sup>th</sup>). Clark offers trustees assistance but no cash: Times will be 'tough' for the next two years. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B6
- Tanner, Adrienne. (2002, January 20<sup>th</sup>). Behind their smiles: When determination proved deadly. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A8, A9
- Tanner, Adrienne. (2002, February 24<sup>th</sup>). 'I advised her not to go': She left the Roosevelt Hotel for Coquitlam and hasn't been seen since. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A4



- Tenants homeless. (2002, January 15<sup>th</sup>). *The Vancouver Province*, p. A4
- Tibbetts, Janice. (2002, February 2<sup>nd</sup>). Chief justice makes plea for more legal aid: 'It is not only the rich who need the law. Poor people need it too'. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A5
- Todd, Douglas. (2002, February 28<sup>th</sup>), May Gutteridge, worker with city poor, dies: The devout Christian in her trademark green beret helped those on the Downtown Eastside. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B2
- Two-year welfare limit proposed in Ontario. (2002, January 29<sup>th</sup>), *The Vancouver Province*, p. A22
- Welfare fraud man faces new charges. (2002, February 3<sup>rd</sup>), *The Vancouver Province*, p. A33
- Welfare rolls must shrink, Coell says. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>), *The Vancouver Province*, p. A34
- Where the cuts will come: The following is a ministry-by-ministry breakdown of the B.C. government's plans to cut spending by \$1.9 billion over three years, while eliminating about 11,700 jobs. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>), *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A6
- Wilson, Mark. (2002, January 6<sup>th</sup>). Help sought for families to care for disabled at home. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A2

## **Editorials**

- Budget message contradictory, unclear: Tax increases necessitated by large labour settlements undermine the message of earlier cuts to spending and taxes. (2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>), *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A20
- If minister did make those comments, she's close to the mark. (2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>), *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A18
- Open for business. (2002, February 14<sup>th</sup>), *The Vancouver Province*, p. A18
- To be Ontario's premier. (2002, February 14<sup>th</sup>), *The Globe and Mail*, p. A24

## Appendix A: News Articles (Date Order)

The following is a list of the articles analyzed in Chapters 4 and 5, along with its dominant paradigm.

1. Minimum wage on rise in PEI. (2002, January 3<sup>rd</sup>). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6 – [Structural Responsibility]
2. Grindlay, Lora. (2002, January 3<sup>rd</sup>). Cost of getting sick in B.C. goes up. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A14 – [Structural Responsibility]
3. Fong, Petti. (2002, January 4<sup>th</sup>). ‘There’s no hope’: Tragic end for a desperate family: Kelowna couple kill themselves and their disabled son. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. A1, A2 – [Structural Responsibility]
4. Gram, Karen. (2002, January 4<sup>th</sup>). More families in desperation: disabled advocate: Clients who cannot get the services they need talk of killing their families, agency head says. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A3 – [Structural Responsibility]
5. Matas, Robert. (2002, January 4<sup>th</sup>). Couple kill disabled son, themselves. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A4 – [Structural Responsibility]
6. Bohn, Glenn. (2002, January 4<sup>th</sup>). Shelter for homeless to open on North Shore: The 15-bed facility, to house both men and women, is almost ready. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B2 – [Culture of Poverty]
7. Fong, Petti. (2002, January 5<sup>th</sup>). Rights tribunal looking at issues that family linked to suicides. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A1 – [Structural Responsibility]
8. Matas, Robert. (2002, January 5<sup>th</sup>). Sympathy misplaced, advocates say: Despite personal tragedies, Kelowna couple murdered disabled son, rights groups say. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A4 – [Individual Responsibility]
9. Wilson, Mark. (2002, January 6<sup>th</sup>). Help sought for families to care for disabled at home. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A2 – [Structural Responsibility]
10. Fong, Petti. (2002, January 6<sup>th</sup>). Tearful tribute for Kelowna family: After murder-suicide, the surviving members of the Baulne family remembers his brother. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B2 – [Structural Responsibility/Individual Responsibility]
11. Makin, Kirk. (2002, January 8<sup>th</sup>). Funds for refugee legal aid drying up, Young warns. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A16 – [Structural Responsibility]

12. Mahoney, Jill. (2002, January 10<sup>th</sup>). Health reform could hurt poor, critics suggest: Say needy may avoid some necessary care. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A7 – [Structural Responsibility]
13. Makin, Kirk. (2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>). Lawyerless litigants slow wheels of justice. *The Globe and Mail*, pp. A1, A6 – [Structural Responsibility]
14. Immen, Wallace. (2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>). Housing board asks how to unload its job. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A14 – [Culture of Poverty]
15. Berry, Steve. (2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>). TB treatment among poor killed for lack of funding. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A11 – [Structural Responsibility]
16. Tenants homeless. . (2002, January 15<sup>th</sup>). *The Vancouver Province*, p. A4 – [Individual Responsibility]
17. Bolan, Kim. (2002, January 17<sup>th</sup>). More officers join missing women probe: Task force grows to 30 in bid to solve mystery of 50 missing females. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B4 – [Culture of Poverty]
18. Morton, Brian. (2002, January 17<sup>th</sup>). Chinatown merchants blast addict centre: Area is scary, one shop owner says. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B7 – [Culture of Poverty]
19. Lunman, Kim. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). Black Thursday job cuts rock B.C.: Massive layoffs in public service sector ‘right thing to do,’ Premier Campbell says. *The Globe and Mail*, pp. A1, A10 – [Structural Responsibility]
20. Fong, Petti. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). Easterners pitch welfare plan here. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A4 – [Structural Responsibility]
21. Barrett, Tom. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). Single moms, seniors hit by changes to welfare: Cuts designed to speed parents’ return to the work force. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A4 – [Structural Responsibility]
22. Where the cuts will come: The following is a ministry-by-ministry breakdown of the B.C. government’s plans to cut spending by \$1.9 billion over three years, while eliminating about 11,700 jobs. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A6 – [Structural Responsibility]
23. Austin, Ian. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). Biggest-ever job cuts ‘the right thing to do’: Restructuring ‘crucial’ to restore public confidence: Premier. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A6 – [Structural Responsibility]
24. Mickleburgh, Rob. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). Liberal B.C. a right-winger’s paradise. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A10 – [Structural Responsibility]

25. Spencer, Kent. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). Cities want bigger slice of the pie: No [sic] enough comes back, says Own, despite the increased responsibilities. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A20 – [Culture of Poverty]
26. Fournier, Suzanne. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). Multinational firm going for a piece of the welfare action. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A34 – [Structural Responsibility]
27. Welfare rolls must shrink, Coell says. (2002, January 18<sup>th</sup>). *The Vancouver Province*, p. A34 – [Structural Responsibility]
28. Lunman, Kim. (2002, January 19<sup>th</sup>). Price tag for B.C. layoffs millions above estimate. *The Globe and Mail*, p.A1 – [Structural Responsibility]
29. Barrett, Tom. (2002, January 19<sup>th</sup>). Cuts will hurt young, child advocate says: ‘You can’t cut more than 1,000 positions without having an effect’. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A4 – [Structural Responsibility]
30. McInnes, Craig. (2002, January 19<sup>th</sup>). Welfare reform: a trial: Minister says he wants 2 years to prove system will work. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A4 – [Structural Responsibility]
31. Tanner, Adrienne. (2002, January 20<sup>th</sup>). Behind their smiles: When determination proved deadly. *The Vancouver Province*, pp. A8, A9 – [Individual Responsibility]
32. Lunman, Kim. (2002, January 21<sup>st</sup>). Welfare reform comes to B.C.: Advocates for poor worry that slashing budget will harm society’s most vulnerable. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A4 – [Structural Responsibility]
33. Luba, Frank. (2002, January 22<sup>nd</sup>). Liberal bus-pass cuts slammed,” *The Vancouver Province*, p. A13 – [Structural Responsibility/Individual Responsibility]
34. Bohn, Glenn. (2002, January 25<sup>th</sup>). Regional approach sought for drug-abuse problem: Take services to suburban addicts, politicians say. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B6 – [Culture of Poverty]
35. Food-bank con man sent to jail. (2002, January 27<sup>th</sup>). *The Vancouver Province*, p. A50 – [Individual Responsibility]
36. Immen, Wallace. (2002, January 28<sup>th</sup>). Low-income tenants wary of monolithic structure: Social-housing residents are afraid new management won’t listen to their concerns. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A14 – [Culture of Poverty]

37. Two-year welfare limit proposed in Ontario. (2002, January 29<sup>th</sup>). *The Vancouver Province*, p. A22 – [Structural Responsibility]
38. Luba, Frank. (2002, January 30<sup>th</sup>). Seniors plan rally to fight bus pass cuts. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A19 – [Structural Responsibility/Individual Responsibility]
39. Steffenhagan, Janet. (2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>). Inner-city schools to lose \$5.2 million: Program provides array of services to children in need. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B2 – [Structural Responsibility]
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42. Brook, Paula. (2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>). He finds legal help for poorest of the poor: When need is great lawyers are more likely to work for free, Dugald Christie says. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B6 – [Structural Responsibility]
43. Luba, Frank. (2002, February 1<sup>st</sup>). Seniors' bus-pass petition off to a roaring start. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A17 – [Structural Responsibility/Individual Responsibility]
44. Harnett, Cindy. (2002, February 1<sup>st</sup>). Irate seniors force gov't to rethink bus passes: Alternatives to cutbacks will be sought, minister says. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B3 – [Structural Responsibility/Individual Responsibility]
45. Tibbetts, Janice. (2002, February 2<sup>nd</sup>). Chief justice makes plea for more legal aid: 'It is not only the rich who need the law. Poor people need it too'. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A5 – [Structural Responsibility]
46. Welfare fraud man faces new charges. (2002, February 3<sup>rd</sup>). *The Vancouver Province*, p. A33 – [Individual Responsibility/Culture of Poverty]
47. O'Neil, Peter. (2002, February 5<sup>th</sup>). B.C.'s rookie minister warns of potential violence: Owen likens young natives to Palestinian militants. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. A1, A2 – [Culture of Poverty/Structural Responsibility]
48. O'Neil, Peter. (2002, February 6<sup>th</sup>). Owen gets official scolding: But several native leaders back B.C. minister. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. A1, A12 – [Structural Responsibility]

49. Beauchesne, Eric. (2002, February 6<sup>th</sup>). Rich-poor gap fosters violence, group says: Canada not immune to own backlash, official warns. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A12 – [Structural Responsibility]
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52. Matas, Robert. (2002, February 9<sup>th</sup>). B.C. police lashed over probe: Farm tip ignored 3 years ago, woman says. *The Globe and Mail*, pp. A1, A4 – [Culture of Poverty]
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55. Armstrong, Jane. (2002, February 11<sup>th</sup>). Inquiry into handling of disappearances urged. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6 – [Culture of Poverty]
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59. Picard, Andre. (2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>). Where women live key to body image. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A12 – [Culture of Poverty]
60. McLellan, Wendy. (2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>). B.C.’s poor schools lose \$5.2m funding. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A12 – [Structural Responsibility]
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63. Immen, Wallace. (2002, February 13<sup>th</sup>). Shelter worker decries system: Homeless deaths sure to increase if city continues current practices, woman maintains. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A23 – [Culture of Poverty]
64. Beatty, Jim. (2002, February 14<sup>th</sup>). ‘I’m sorry,’ Campbell says as he warns of more cuts ahead: But he restores subsidies to seniors’ bus passes. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. A1, A2 – [Structural Responsibility/Individual Responsibility]
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66. McLintock, Barbara & Keating, Jack. (2002, February 14<sup>th</sup>). Seniors will get their bus passes back: Campbell. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A7 – [Structural Responsibility/Individual Responsibility]
67. Fournier, Suzanne. (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). ‘Something must have happened to Dinah’. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A6 – [Culture of Poverty]
68. Ontario: Anti-homelessness law ‘tough love’. (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A6 – [Structural Responsibility]
69. Mackie, Richard. (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). Bid to jail the homeless under fire: Cabinet minister running for premier’s job sparks outcry with plan to clean up Ontario. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A12 – [Structural Responsibility/Individual Responsibility]
70. Luba, Frank. (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). Passes or not, seniors taking bus to protest. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A20 – [Structural Responsibility/Individual Responsibility]
71. Sandler, Jeremy. (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). It’s curtains for striping as Marble Arch hotel sold: As it turns 50 the landmark Seymour Street hotel is getting a new owner and a remake. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B1 – [Culture of Poverty]
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73. Legal aid system deteriorating: report. (2002, February 19<sup>th</sup>). *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A6 – [Structural Responsibility]

74. Rusk, James. (2002, February 19<sup>th</sup>). Keep shelter programs, city told at budget talk. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A22 – [Culture of Poverty]
75. Bolan, Kim and Kines, Lindsay. (2002, February 19<sup>th</sup>). Cutbacks to force more women into sex trade: activists: Women need more services to aid their recovery, pair say. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B3 – [Structural Responsibility]
76. Inwood, Damian. (2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). ‘Poorest in B.C. will pay more’: Increased taxes more gov’t lies: MacPhail. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A5 – [Culture of Poverty]
77. Austin, Ian. (2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). Low blow to poor, protesters claim. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A6 – [Structural Responsibility]
78. Makin, Kirk. (2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). Lawyers planning legal-aid protest: One-day April work stoppage a protest against ‘ridiculously low’ rates of payment. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A8 – [Structural Responsibility]
79. Rusk, James. (2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). Committee restores \$1.5-million to keep shelter program. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A22 – [Culture of Poverty]
80. McLintock, Barbara and Wilson, Mark. (2002, February 21<sup>st</sup>). Our work is done: Minister: Women’s-equality advocate says opportunities for men and women ‘exactly equal’. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A3 – [Individual Responsibility/ Structural Responsibility]
81. Rusk, James. (2002, February 21<sup>st</sup>). Lastman seeks to limit tax increase to 4.6%: Stage set for battle between the mayor and left-wing councillors in final budget talks. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A24 – [Structural Responsibility]
82. Bolan, Kim and Kines, Lindsay. (2002, February 21<sup>st</sup>). ‘Street is fighting back’ in missing woman case: Police laud those who don’t normally help for offering assistance to investigators. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B4 – [Culture of Poverty]
83. Beatty, Jim. (2002, February 22<sup>nd</sup>). Legal-aid society fights cuts; A-G warns of dismissals. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A4 – [Structural Responsibility]
84. Makin, Kirk. (2002, February 22<sup>nd</sup>). Legal aid in peril, Ontario told: Funding shortfall leading to angry lawyers leaving filed, organization paper says. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A7 – [Structural Responsibility]
85. Bula, Frances. (2002, February 22<sup>nd</sup>). Pioneering drug-addict centre proves too popular: ‘Overwhelmed’ quarters undergoing renovation. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B3 – [Culture of Poverty]



86. McInnes, Craig. (2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>). 30,000 of 240,000 who are on welfare to lose it: New rules for eligibility to be introduced this year. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. A1, A5 – [Structural Responsibility]
87. McInnes, Craig. (2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>). Attorney-general fires legal aid board over spending dispute: Members refused to implement cut in budget, to \$54 million from \$88 million. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A4 – [Structural Responsibility]
88. Bula, Frances. (2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>). Police officer fears welfare changes will bring more crime, more violence: Inspector sees main impact on poor in Downtown Eastside. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A5 – [Structural Responsibility]
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90. Man Charged. (2002, February 24<sup>th</sup>). *The Vancouver Province*, p. A3 – [Culture of Poverty]
91. Tanner, Adrienne. (2002, February 24<sup>th</sup>). 'I advised her not to go': She left the Roosevelt Hotel for Coquitlam and hasn't been seen since. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A4 – [Culture of Poverty]
92. Jiwa, Salim. (2002, February 25<sup>th</sup>). Missing woman had 'feared for her safety'," *The Vancouver Province*, p. A4 – [Culture of Poverty]
93. Bolan, Kim and Fong, Petti. (2002, February 26<sup>th</sup>). Sereena Abotsway: A troubled life, but she always called home. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. A1, A3 – [Culture of Poverty]
94. Fong, Petti and Kines, Lindsay. (2002, February 26<sup>th</sup>). Mona Wilson: 'A sweetheart' trapped by drugs, prostitution. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. A1, A3 – [Culture of Poverty]
95. Fournier, Suzanne, Fraser, Keith and Jiwa, Salim. (2002, February 26<sup>th</sup>). Daughter phoned daily for 13 years: Draayers. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A3 – [Culture of Poverty]
96. Armstrong, Jane. (2002, February 26<sup>th</sup>). Missing women lured into car: Boyfriend of prostitute believed slain says two men were offering cash booze. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A7 – [Culture of Poverty]
97. Mickleburgh, Rod. (2002, February 27<sup>th</sup>). Crusading lawyer, 81, dies in Vancouver. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A5 – [Structural Responsibility]

98. Todd, Douglas. (2002, February 28<sup>th</sup>). May Gutteridge, worker with city poor, dies: The devout Christian in her trademark green beret helped those on the Downtown Eastside. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1 & B2 – [Culture of Poverty]

**Total Number of Articles Characterized by Each Paradigm:**

IR	SR	C of P (including the Underclass)	SR and IR	SR and C of P	IR and C of P	Not Coded	Total
4	50	30	10	1	1	2	98

## Appendix B: Paradigmatic Dominance of Topic Areas

Topic Area	Dominant Paradigm	Secondary Paradigmatic Characteristics
<b>Government Funded Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding cuts and service restructuring</li> <li>Financial aid denied</li> <li>Seniors' bus pass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structural Responsibility</li> <li>Structural Responsibility/ Individual Responsibility</li> <li>Structural Responsibility/ Individual Responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
<b>Vancouver Downtown Eastside</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poverty/charity worker(s)</li> <li>Sex-trade</li> <li>Drug abuse</li> <li>Most at risk</li> <li>Displacement of the poor</li> <li>Combination of poverty, sex-trade, and drug addiction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culture of Poverty, Underclass</li> <li>Culture of Poverty, Underclass</li> <li>Underclass</li> <li>Structural Responsibility</li> <li>Structural Responsibility</li> <li>Underclass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
<b>Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal Aid</li> <li>Poverty Lawyers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structural Responsibility</li> <li>Structural Responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
<b>Homelessness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shelters</li> <li>Jail/ criminalization</li> <li>Non-financial</li> <li>As criminals</li> <li>Weather Dangers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culture of Poverty</li> <li>--</li> <li>Individual Responsibility</li> <li>Underclass</li> <li>--</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual Responsibility</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> </ul>

Topic Area	Dominant Paradigm	Secondary Paradigmatic Characteristics
<b>Welfare</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural reforms</li> <li>• Impact of reforms</li> <li>• Privatization</li> <li>• Fraud</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural Responsibility</li> <li>• Structural Responsibility</li> <li>• Structural Responsibility</li> <li>• Individual Responsibility/Culture of Poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> <li>• Culture of Poverty, borderline</li> <li>• N/A</li> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
<b>Low Income</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taxation</li> <li>• Personal development</li> <li>• Wages</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Health services</li> <li>• Income gap related to violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural Responsibility</li> <li>• Culture of Poverty</li> <li>• Structural Responsibility</li> <li>• Culture of Poverty</li> <li>• Structural Responsibility</li> <li>• Structural Responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> <li>• N/A</li> <li>• N/A</li> <li>• N/A</li> <li>• N/A</li> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
<b>Aboriginal Poverty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture of Poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underclass</li> </ul>
<b>Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Responsibility, Structural Responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
<b>Crimes Affecting the Poor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: News Values Per General Topic Area

### Topic 1: Government Funded Services

News values	Vancouver Sun (n=10)	Vancouver Province (n=9)	Globe and Mail (n=6)	% of and Ranking in complete sample based (n=25)	
<b>Follow up</b>	100.0%	77.8%	83.3%	<b>88.0%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Timeliness</b>	100.0%	77.8%	83.3%	<b>88.0%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Magnitude</b>	70.0%	88.9%	33.3%	<b>68.0%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Bad News</b>	70.0%	22.2%	83.3%	<b>56.0%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Unambiguity</b>	60.0%	33.3%	66.7%	<b>52.0%</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Personalization</b>	60.0%	22.2%	66.7%	<b>48.0%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	60.0%	22.2%	50.0%	<b>44.0%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Power Elite</b>	50.0%	11.1%	33.3%	<b>32.0%</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Sensationalism</b>	20.0%	11.1%	33.3%	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Good News</b>	20.0%	11.1%	0%	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Unexpectedness</b>	10.0%	11.1%	16.7%	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Celebrity</b>	0%	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	<b>N/A</b>

### Topic 2: Vancouver Downtown Eastside

News values	Vancouver Sun (n=11)	Vancouver Province (n=8)	Globe and Mail (n=5)	% of and Ranking in complete sample based (n=24)	
<b>Bad News</b>	90.1%	87.5%	80.0%	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Sensationalism</b>	72.7%	75.0%	100.0%	<b>79.2%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Unexpectedness</b>	18.2%	12.5%	0%	<b>79.2%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Follow Up</b>	45.5%	87.5%	100.0%	<b>70.8%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Timeliness</b>	27.3%	12.5%	20.0%	<b>41.7%</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Unambiguity</b>	45.5%	25.0%	60.0%	<b>41.7%</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Personalization</b>	27.3%	75.0%	20.0%	<b>41.7%</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	36.4%	25.0%	20.0%	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Magnitude</b>	18.2%	12.5%	20.0%	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Good News</b>	18.2%	0%	0%	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Power Elite</b>	9.1%	0%	0%	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Celebrity</b>	0%	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	<b>N/A</b>

### Topic 3: Justice System

News values	Vancouver Sun (n=7)	Vancouver Province (n=0)	Globe and Mail (n=6)	% of and Ranking in complete sample based (n=13)	
Power Elite	71.4%	0%	100.0%	84.6%	1
Follow Up	71.4%	0%	83.3%	76.9%	2
Bad News	57.4%	0%	100.0%	76.9%	2
Timeliness	42.9%	0%	83.3%	61.5%	3
Unambiguity	28.6%	0%	83.3%	53.9%	4
Magnitude	42.9%	0%	50.0%	46.2%	5
Unexpectedness	14.3%	0%	83.3%	38.5%	6
Personalization	42.9%	0%	16.7%	30.8%	7
Relevance	28.6%	0%	16.7%	23.1%	8
Good News	14.3%	0%	16.7%	15.4%	9
Sensationalism	14.3%	0%	0%	7.7%	10
Celebrity	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A

### Topic 4: Homelessness

News values	Vancouver Sun (n=2)	Vancouver Province (n=3)	Globe and Mail (n=6)	% of and Ranking in complete sample based (n=11)	
Timeliness	50.0%	100.0%	83.3%	81.8%	1
Unambiguity	50.0%	100.0%	83.3%	81.8%	1
Power Elite	50.0%	33.3%	50.0%	45.5%	2
Follow Up	50.0%	0%	66.7%	45.5%	2
Magnitude	50.0%	33.3%	33.3%	36.4%	3
Personalization	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	27.3%	4
Relevance	0%	66.7%	16.7%	27.3%	4
Bad News	0%	33.3%	16.7%	18.2%	5
Unexpectedness	0%	33.3%	16.7%	18.2%	5
Good News	50.0%	0%	16.7%	18.2%	5
Sensationalism	0%	33.3%	0%	9.1%	6
Celebrity	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A

### Topic 5: Welfare

News Values	Vancouver Sun (n=5)	Vancouver Province (n=5)	Globe and Mail (n=1)	% of and Ranking in complete sample based (n=11)	
Follow Up	100.0%	80.0%	100.0%	90.9%	1
Timeliness	60.0%	100.0%	100.0%	81.8%	2
Unambiguity	80.0%	100.0%	0%	81.8%	2
Magnitude	80.0%	60.0%	100.0%	72.7%	3
Bad News	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%	54.5%	4
Power Elite	40.0%	40.0%	0%	36.4%	5
Relevance	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%	36.4%	5
Personalization	0%	40.0%	0%	18.2%	6
Sensationalism	0%	20.0%	0%	9.1%	7
Unexpectedness	0%	20.0%	0%	9.1%	7
Good News	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Celebrity	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A

### Topic 6: Low Income

News values	Vancouver Sun (n=2)	Vancouver Province (n=2)	Globe and Mail (n=6)	% of and Ranking in complete sample based (n=10)	
Unambiguity	100.0%	100.0%	50.0%	70.0%	1
Bad News	50.0%	100.0%	50.0%	60.0%	2
Magnitude	50.0%	100.0%	50.0%	60.0%	2
Relevance	50.0%	100.0%	33.3%	50.0%	3
Timeliness	50.0%	100.0%	16.7%	40.0%	4
Power Elite	50.0%	50.0%	16.7%	30.0%	5
Good News	50.0%	0%	16.7%	20.0%	6
Follow Up	0%	50.0%	16.7%	20.0%	6
Personalization	0%	50.0%	0%	10.0%	7
Sensationalism	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Unexpectedness	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Celebrity	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A

### Topic 7: Aboriginal Poverty

News values	Vancouver Sun (n=2)	Vancouver Province (n=0)	Globe and Mail (n=0)	% of and Ranking in complete sample based (n=2)	
Follow Up	100.0%	0%	0%	100.0%	1
Bad News	100.0%	0%	0%	100.0%	1
Timeliness	100.0%	0%	0%	100.0%	1
Personalization	100.0%	0%	0%	100.0%	1
Power Elite	100.0%	0%	0%	100.0%	1
Unambiguity	50.0%	0%	0%	50.0%	2
Relevance	50.0%	0%	0%	50.0%	2
Unexpectedness	50.0%	0%	0%	50.0%	2
Magnitude	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Sensationalism	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Good News	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Celebrity	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A

### Topic 8: Gender

News values	Vancouver Sun (n=0)	Vancouver Province (n=1)	Globe and Mail (n=0)	% of and Ranking in complete sample based (n=1)	
Timeliness	0%	100.0%	0%	100.0%	1
Unambiguity	0%	100.0%	0%	100.0%	1
Personalization	0%	100.0%	0%	100.0%	1
Power Elite	0%	100.0%	0%	100.0%	1
Relevance	0%	100.0%	0%	100.0%	1
Good News	0%	100.0%	0%	100.0%	1
Magnitude	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Follow Up	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Bad News	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Sensationalism	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Unexpectedness	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A
Celebrity	0%	0%	0%	0%	N/A



**Topic 9: Crimes Against the Poor**

<b>News values</b>	<b>Vancouver Sun (n=0)</b>	<b>Vancouver Province (n=1)</b>	<b>Globe and Mail (n=0)</b>	<b>% of and Ranking in complete sample based (n=1)</b>	
<b>Bad News</b>	0%	100.0%	0%	100.0%	<b>1</b>
<b>Unambiguity</b>	0%	100.0%	0%	100.0%	<b>1</b>
<b>Sensationalism</b>	0%	100.0%	0%	100.0%	<b>1</b>
<b>Unexpectedness</b>	0%	100.0%	0%	100.0%	<b>1</b>
<b>Follow Up</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Timeliness</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Magnitude</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Personalization</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Power Elite</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Good News</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Celebrity</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>N/A</b>

## Appendix D: Constructed Weeks Article Listings

Below is a complete list of the articles comprising the two constructed weeks. These articles were selected at random from the total sample as listed in full in Appendix A.

### Constructed Week 1

Monday:

1. Makin, Kirk. (2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>). Lawyerless litigants slow wheels of justice. *The Globe and Mail*, pp. A1, A6
2. Immen, Wallace. (2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>). Housing board asks how to unload its job. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A14
3. Berry, Steve. (2002, January 14<sup>th</sup>). TB treatment among poor killed for lack of funding. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A11

Tuesday:

4. Luba, Frank. (2002, January 22<sup>nd</sup>). Liberal bus-pass cuts slammed. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A13

Wednesday:

5. Inwood, Damian. (2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). 'Poorest in B.C. will pay more': Increased taxes more gov't lies: MacPhail. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A5
6. Austin, Ian. (2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). Low blow to poor, protesters claim. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A6
7. Makin, Kirk. (2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). Lawyers planning legal-aid protest: One-day April work stoppage a protest against 'ridiculously low' rates of payment. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A8
8. Rusk, James. (2002, February 20<sup>th</sup>). Committee restores \$1.5-million to keep shelter program. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A22

Thursday:

9. Steffenhagan, Janet. (2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>). Inner-city schools to lose \$5.2 million: Program provides array of services to children in need. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B2

10. Beatty, Jim. (2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>). Legal aid cuts will hurt the poor, A-G admits. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B7
11. Bohn, Glenn. (2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>). Activists worry over Games' impact: One concern is that poor may face eviction in any redevelopment. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B2
12. Brook, Paula. (2002, January 31<sup>st</sup>). He finds legal help for poorest of the poor: When need is great lawyers are more likely to work for free, Dugald Christie says. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B6

Friday:

13. Beatty, Jim. (2002, February 22<sup>nd</sup>). Legal-aid society fights cuts; A-G warns of dismissals. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A4
14. Makin, Kirk. (2002, February 22<sup>nd</sup>). Legal aid in peril, Ontario told: Funding shortfall leading to angry lawyers leaving filed, organization paper says. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A7
15. Bula, Frances. (2002, February 22<sup>nd</sup>). Pioneering drug-addict centre proves too popular: 'Overwhelmed' quarters undergoing renovation. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B3

Weekend:

16. McInnes, Craig. (2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>). 30,000 of 240,000 who are on welfare to lose it: New rules for eligibility to be introduced this year. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. A1, A5
17. McInnes, Craig. (2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>). Attorney-general fires legal aid board over spending dispute: Members refused to implement cut in budget, to \$54 million from \$88 million. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A4
18. Bula, Frances. (2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>). Police officer fears welfare changes will bring more crime, more violence: Inspector sees main impact on poor in Downtown Eastside. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A5
19. Matas, Robert. (2002, February 23<sup>rd</sup>). Legal-aid board for B.C. fired. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A9

## Constructed Week 2

### Monday:

1. Fong, Petti. (2002, January 7<sup>th</sup>). Tearful tribute for Kelowna family: After murder-suicide, the surviving members of the Baulne family remembers his brother. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. B1, B2

### Tuesday:

2. Fournier, Suzanne. (2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>). Grisly hunt reawakens families' old torments: Grieving nephew killed himself on hearing of search. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A7
3. Picard, Andre. (2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>). Where women live key to body image. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A12
4. McLellan, Wendy. (2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>). B.C.'s poor schools lose \$5.2m funding. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A12
5. Beatty, Jim. (2002, February 12<sup>th</sup>). Protests fail to deter A-G from legal aid cutbacks: All legal aid offices shut Monday as union slams 40% budget cuts. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A5

### Wednesday:

6. O'Neil, Peter. (2002, February 6<sup>th</sup>). Owen gets official scolding: But several native leaders back B.C. minister. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. A1, A12
7. Beauchesne, Eric. (2002, February 6<sup>th</sup>). Rich-poor gap fosters violence, group says: Canada not immune to own backlash, official warns. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A12

### Thursday:

8. Beatty, Jim. (2002, February 14<sup>th</sup>). 'I'm sorry,' Campbell says as he warns of more cuts ahead: But he restores subsidies to seniors' bus passes. *The Vancouver Sun*, pp. A1, A2
9. Bolan, Kim. (2002, February 14<sup>th</sup>). Sex-trade workers 'freaked out'. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A2
10. McLintock, Barbara and Keating, Jack. (2002, February 14<sup>th</sup>). Seniors will get their bus passes back: Campbell. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A7

Friday:

11. Fournier, Suzanne. (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). 'Something must have happened to Dinah'. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A6
12. Ontario: Anti-homelessness law 'tough love'. (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A6
13. Mackie, Richard. (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). Bid to jail the homeless under fire: Cabinet minister running for premier's job sparks outcry with plan to clean up Ontario. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A12
14. Luba, Frank. (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). Passes or not, seniors taking bus to protest. *The Vancouver Province*, p. A20
15. Sandler, Jeremy. (2002, February 15<sup>th</sup>). It's curtains for striping as Marble Arch hotel sold: As it turns 50 the landmark Seymour Street hotel is getting a new owner and a remake. *The Vancouver Sun*, p. B1

Weekend:

16. Welfare fraud man faces new charges. (2002, February 3<sup>rd</sup>). *The Vancouver Province*, p. A33