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**A Discourse Analysis:
The Media Construction of Judy Rebick and Ovide Mercredi**

by
Katherine Manson

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty
of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the
for the degree of
Master of Arts
School of Canadian Studies**

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
August 1994**

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of Judy Rebick and Ovide Mercredi"**

**submitted by Katherine Manson, B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts**

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August 1994**

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I examine the major ideological discourses that contribute to the meaning constructed in The Globe and Mail's representation of Ovide Mercredi (Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations) and Judy Rebick (then president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women) during the campaign leading up to the 26 October 1992 plebiscite on the proposed constitutional amendment. Ideological discourses contributed to the identification of Mercredi and Rebick as newsworthy individuals, to the privileging of particular aspects of their activities and concerns, and to the production of preferred readings of their participation in the plebiscite campaign. Although not guaranteed acceptance by any or all of the news audience, this preferred reading presents for The Globe and Mail's readers an interpretation that tends to reproduce the dominant ideology that simultaneously naturalises forms of social inequality based on race and gender while maintaining the illusion of an objective press reporting on a society built on consensually held social values.

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INTRODUCTION

To sign off for the day, Lloyd Robertson, CTV's news anchor, says, with an air of confidence, "...and, that's the kind of day it was today." Robertson is signalling to his audience that all the important news has now been disseminated; they are now informed. The CTV network news and other news media sell themselves as the means by which we can sift through the immeasurable events and information bits to become informed. How do the news media carry out this process? Do they reflect back to us the values we hold as a society or are they participating in defining those values? How do they decide what individual members of Canadian society and disparate groups (both socio-economically and geographically defined) want to know? How does Lloyd Robertson know that "that's the kind of day it was"?

My interest in news grew from my own attempt to become informed about the "Charlottetown Accord." The Accord, named for the city in which it was negotiated, was a comprehensive package of proposed amendments to the Canadian constitution negotiated by the ten provincial premiers, the leaders of the two territorial governments, four national First Nations organisations, and the federal government, represented by the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, Joe Clark, in

the summer of 1992. A nation-wide plebiscite¹ was held on 26 October 1992, in which voters either accepted the entire package with a YES vote or rejected it holus bolus with a NO. As a member of the audience that the news media serve, I pored over newspapers and listened to radio reports and political panels on CBC Radio's Morningside, hoping to find the information that would allow me to make an informed decision in the 26 October 1992 plebiscite. Rather than finding the elusive knowledge in these reports, I began to question the form, structure and content of the news reports during the plebiscite campaign. Why did the news coverage of the plebiscite turn out the way it did? While most aspects of the amendment and the ratification process were of interest to me (I have an unusually large capacity to consider the constitution, even for a Canadian), my attention was drawn to the self-government provision of the Accord and NAC's opposition to the entire package. Because of the Yes/No construction of the campaign, it appeared that I could either support the Accord as a recognition of First Nations' right to govern themselves or reject the Accord as a threat to women's rights and the federal government's ability to create future social programs.

As I scanned The Globe and Mail, and other news media, for information, I began to notice that the news reporting of

---

¹ It was a binding referendum under provincial legislation in Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia.

these two aspects of the plebiscite was centred almost exclusively on two individuals: Judy Rebick, then President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and Ovide Mercredi, Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. While I continued to use the news media as a source of information about the Accord, I wondered about the process that had contributed to such an emphasis. Why did the news coverage of self-government and opposition based on perceived threats to women's rights focus so completely on two individuals? It is from this question that the original idea for this thesis sprang; to study the processes that contributed to producing The Globe and Mail's representation of Judy Rebick and Ovide Mercredi. Both played significant, high profile roles on either side of the debate during the plebiscite campaign. Rebick, in her role as NAC president, argued against the entrenchment of the Accord for a variety of reasons, including the process used to produce it, while Mercredi, one of the negotiators, strongly endorsed the Accord².

During the campaign, there seemed to be no end to the information available to potential voters, but I felt less informed as each day passed, less able to make a decision. In this thesis, my objective is to consider how information became news within the particular context of The Globe and

---

² In the final stages of negotiation, Mercredi and the other "non-governmental" negotiators were returned to observer status.

Mail's coverage of Rebick and Mercredi's involvement in the plebiscite campaign. How did the social, economic and ideological context of news construct the Judy Rebick and Ovide Mercredi that I, as a member of the audience, came to know during the campaign?

While I began this as an exploration into the construction of meaning in news, it also became an analysis of the construction of gender and race in the mainstream media. I selected Rebick and Mercredi as the subjects of analysis because they represent (both in the images of them in the press and as high profile activists) constituencies not historically part of constitutional negotiations. How did the press convey the multiplicity of interests, that at times were in conflict with each other, as the campaign progressed? For my purposes, comparing the press coverage of Rebick and Mercredi allowed me to address various aspects of the ideological underpinnings of the news.

Both Rebick and Mercredi are representatives of social groups that have historically found themselves outside the mainstream political culture. But, since the patriation of the Canada Constitution Act, 1982 women and citizens of the First Nations had established themselves as important social forces. The range of "legitimate" constitutional negotiators was forever changed. During the plebiscite campaign, Rebick and Mercredi became identified as the public voices and faces of those interests. The tensions between Rebick and

Mercredi's positions became most clear when the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) challenged the legality of the plebiscite in federal court. NWAC argued that Native women were not represented by any of the four First Nations organisations involved in the negotiation of the self-government package. Mercredi, one of the negotiators, stood by the process; Rebick, an outsider, whose organisation had not been a participant in the negotiations, made the NWAC exclusion a central part of the NAC opposition to the Accord. Specifically, my questions become, what are the representations of Rebick and Mercredi? Are they different when they are placed on opposite sides of this constructed debate?

Before proceeding to a brief outline of the chapters that follow, I wish to comment on the limitations of this analysis. By examining the news coverage within the English-speaking Canadian press, I am examining the construction of meaning in the news within a culturally specific context. Ideological discourses also contribute to the production of preferred readings within the French language news, but the two communities have developed from different historical, cultural and social conditions. Journalistic practice and dominant ideologies influence the form and content of news differently in the two news cultures. An investigation of a particular aspect of news as it appears in The Globe and Mail is further limited to an examination of a particular discursive site. A

wish to present a sharply focused analysis necessarily produces a partial examination of some of the factors contributing to the construction of meaning in the news.

In Chapter One, I describe the methodological path I take in this analysis. As an interdisciplinary study, the analysis benefits from scholarship from a variety of fields. Within the study of mass media, a vast literature exists that examines, among other things, how consent is manufactured, how hegemony is negotiated and how reality is constructed through the production of news. The combination of hurried professional journalists, a tradition of professional practices and the socioeconomic context in which they work creates the news we receive. What combination of circumstances, shared assumptions and values unite to create stories, framed in a particular way? How do we come to recognise news as news? Unable to examine or identify all factors that contribute to the framing of news, I use a methodological model to examine how the application of dominant ideological discourses contributes toward encouraging preferred readings by the news audience. I end the chapter with a description of my research plan. In this research plan, I identify both the process by which I gathered that news sample and the model I use to investigate it.

Chapter Two provides the historical context for the campaign. In this section I produce historical sketches of recent Canadian constitutional negotiations, beginning with

the period that led to the patriation of the Canada Constitution Act, 1982 and its companion document, The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. I weave into this brief history of the attempts at constitutional renewal thumbnail sketches of the institutional histories of the organisations that Rebick and Mercredi lead, placing particular emphasis on their activities relating to constitutional negotiation. I have structured this section in a manner that I hope highlights the evolution of both NAC and the AFN's mandates and their increasingly active roles in the process of constitutional renewal (either as active participants or as active opponents, protesting the process). In this chapter I make no attempt to provide an exhaustive interpretation of the recent constitutional history, but shall merely draw the reader's attention to important, defining events that helped shape the particular situation of the plebiscite campaign and the positions that helped define the roles Mercredi and Rebick played in it.

In Chapter Three I apply the analytical tools described in Chapter One. I examine the influence of ideological discourses on the representation of Mercredi in The Globe and Mail during the campaign. I suggest that the news reporting of Mercredi was informed by the application of ideological discourses. In particular, I consider the role of six ideological discourses: the ideological discourses of objectivity, election news, constitutional renewal,

race/aboriginality, self-government and gender.

In the fourth chapter of this analysis, I examine some of the ideological discourses involved in The Globe and Mail's representation of Judy Rebick. While several of the discourses examined in this chapter are the same ones described in relation to Mercredi, it is their particular relevance to the news reporting of Rebick that I consider here. I have selected five discourses on which to comment: the discourses of objectivity, election news, "woman's interests," "women's interests," and the treatment of feminism as an oppositional discourse.

In a final section, I shall link some aspects of the two analyses together. When beginning this project, I wondered whether the reporting of Mercredi and Rebick was influenced by their positions on the Accord. Did a social and political climate that appeared relatively sympathetic to Mercredi's concerns contribute to the production of a representation that was qualitatively different from that of Rebick? I also wondered if the news representation of Mercredi, a participant in the negotiation of the Accord and one of its active supporters, would be substantively different from that of Rebick, whose organisation opposed the Accord. I shall use the final section of this analysis to address these and other questions that result from the two previous chapters.

CHAPTER ONE

Theory and Methodology

Introduction

There are a variety of ways to examine news, to consider its role and its place in our society. Some news analysts study the role of the journalist; issues of objectivity, professional distance, and balanced versus advocacy journalism inform their work. Some focus their attention on the audience response and examine the role of the active reader and other analysts privilege the organisation which produces the news. As described in the introduction to this thesis, I shall examine the role ideological discourses play in influencing the construction of meaning in the news. Rather than focusing my attention on the person, organisation or professional skills that make the news, I shall consider the form it takes and the ideological context that helps define both its form and content. What type of information becomes news, how does it get shaped so that consumers of news recognise and accept it as such? What particular means of making sense of the world is privileged in this form?

In this chapter, I shall first review the literature that is relevant to my research questions. My purpose is not to provide a comprehensive review of the literature on news. Instead, I use the first section of this chapter to map the

process by which I came to this particular analytical model. Because no single theoretical or methodological framework was a perfect fit for my purposes, I have drawn from a variety of sources, producing an interdisciplinary study. I shall use the second section of this chapter to describe my research plan and to explain my own approach. I examine the representation of Mercredi and Rebick through an exploration of the ideological discourses that encourage a preferred reading of their participation in the plebiscite campaign.

What is news?

The first, and most obvious question I need to answer is "what is news?" One of the ways to begin a study of news is to examine the qualities that appear inherent to news, that make events newsworthy. Do all news stories share particular qualities? How do journalists (and others involved in the production of news) recognise that one bit of information is news while the others are not? These qualities, described as "news values" are discussed by scholars of news in a variety of ways. While there is no universally accepted exhaustive list, it is generally accepted by media analysts that news is considered to possess a variety of characteristics, or "news values" that separate it from non-newsworthy information. News values also provide a mechanism which allows journalists to quickly sort through, process and select the news from the vast amount of information made available to them.

For example, a news story must be just that, it must be a story, with a beginning, a middle and an end. (This point will be given a more nuanced treatment later in this section). In her analysis of the mainstream media interest (or lack of interest) in the 1960s or "second wave" feminist movement' in the United States, Gaye Tuchman argues that 1960s feminist activism, involving consciousness raising and activities geared towards effecting long term social change, did not comfortably fit into the news story form, and therefore, was not given much representation in the news (Tuchman 1978: 140). Further, much of the feminist movement's work did not involve an identifiable event, an action taking place within a time frame acceptable to mainstream news coverage. The lack of closure in feminist activity made it an awkward topic for the mainstream press to cover.

Other news values include those described by Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge in "Structuring and Selecting News."

1. **frequency:** The time frame needed for the event to unfold itself and acquire meaning.
2. **threshold/absolute intensity/intensity increase:** An event becomes news if it is of significance, if it is bigger, louder, more significant than similar events. For example, an unusually violent murder will receive more attention in the news than others.
3. **unambiguity:** The event with the clearest interpretation will receive preferred treatment, while complex, or less clearly good or bad events do not fit the news model well).

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³ The increasing fragmentation, diversity and multiplicity of feminist voices makes this an awkward term, but is the one Tuchman used in her study.

4. **meaningfulness/cultural proximity/relevance:** A combination of factors make an event or issue meaningful enough to become news. An event must be considered important or relevant to the perceived audiences of Canadian news if it occurs in a culturally dissimilar place. Events that occur in a culturally similar place (such as another Northern industrialised nation) need not rank as important to be meaningful to Canadian audiences. US elections receive more news coverage than elections occurring in countries that do not resemble Canada, unless the elections possess qualities that make them unique, such as the first elections to be held in a country for a particularly long period of time.
5. **consonance/predicability/demand:** A range of expected forms of news exist, those that reinforce, or reify the audience's expectations of society. Election news coverage will remain fairly constant, from election to election, and from news producer to news producer.
6. **unexpectedness/unpredictability/scarcity:** Acting as a balance to the preceding news value, the unexpected (the unusual or rare) occurrence is also caught in the news net. It is here that the cliched occurrence, "man bites dog" becomes identified as news.
7. **continuity:** An event or issue that is defined as news will continue to be defined as news, even after the amplitude of its significance diminishes.
8. **composition:** News is composed of a variety of categories, such as local, national, political, international events, with the news net catching some of each, but not too much of any of them. The particular composition will differ among news institutions, depending on the expected needs and wishes of its audience.
9. **reference to elite nations:** Related to cultural relevance, most news refers to elite nations. This is not unusual given that the actions of various social and global elites appear to be more consequential than those of the non-elite.
10. **reference to elite persons:** Similar to the above news value, the elite centred character of news privileges the actions of elite persons over those of the non-elite.
11. **personification:** This stems from a cultural preference, found also in the form that news takes. It means that as a society, we prefer to read about individuals' actions rather than those of institutions. For example, news

coverage of activities of the Ontario government will focus on the involvement of the Premier or the appropriate Minister, not a large anonymous bureaucracy.

12. **reference to something negative:** Bad news is more readily reported than good news because it more easily fits the other news values (such as unambiguity, threshold, meaningfulness, unexpectedness) (Galtung and Ruge 1973: 69-70).

The "media frame" is another way of explaining the selection process in the creation of news. Todd Gitlin defines "media frames" as

persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual (Gitlin 1980: 7).

Related to the idea of distinct news values, the adoption of a media frame means that journalists choose to report on topics that have a place in the established media frame, that is, that have a history of newsworthiness, so as to be easily identified by the audience as news (Gitlin 1980: 7). Further, journalists will consistently interpret a newsworthy topic in a way that will have a certain resonance for its audience (Gitlin 1980: 7). Even those who would place themselves in ideological opposition to the mainstream society will recognise both the topic and the interpretation. Tuchman explains the idea of news as a frame as analogous to a professor describing her day. The professor selects from the happenings in her day. She then interprets them, and describes them in a manner that has relevance to her listener (her husband) and to her life (Tuchman 1978: 6-7). Whether using the idea of news values or identifying news as a frame,

it is important to consider the production of news. The production of news is a negotiated process that involves both the producers and consumers of news and occurs within a particular historical, social and ideological context.

In Inventing Reality, Michael Parenti describes framing as a series of techniques through which news producers misrepresent the voices, concerns and values of a dissenting public. His identification of the specific forms that framing takes is instructive and illuminating. Parenti first identifies headlines as a means by which news organisations encourage their audiences to accept a preferred perspective on an issue by using language that is either misleading or at least ideologically charged (Parenti 1986: 220). Another method of framing the news is through placement, both on the page and within the newspaper (Parenti 1986: 220). A story that appears above the fold on the front page of a broadsheet newspaper is identified as more important than one found near the back of the newspaper, buried in a corner. Besides the context in which the article appears, its content also will display evidence of media framing. Parenti refers to several ways by which social conflict is neutralised in the mainstream press.

In accordance with the canons of good journalism, reporters are supposed to balance their stories, tapping competing sources to get both sides of a dispute. However as we have seen, even when statements from both sides are presented, they are often not accorded equal space, positioning, and framing. Furthermore, the rule overlooks the fact that both sides may not be all sides, and that important but less visible interests, extending

beyond the confines of the immediate issue, are habitually shut out of the news (Parenti 1986: 218).

What others call news values, Parenti re-labels as "methods of misrepresentation," arguing that these news values create a false balance. For example, applying equal blame to participants with unequal or different roles in a conflict constructs a false balance or equality in the story (Parenti 1986: 219; Hall 1990: 19). News values, or "methods of misrepresentation," contribute to the production of a news frame which influences the form and content of news. These are some of the factors that help us recognise news as news.

What is the role of news?

My point of departure for this next section shall be the notion that news is not a simple reflection of the world, but is a means of making sense of the world. The next issue I wish to explore is the complex role that news plays in our society. What is the role of news? While there are a variety of ways to answer that question, the responses tend to fall into one of two models of explanation of the mass media and power structures in society: the liberal-pluralist and the critical paradigms. For those subscribing to the liberal-pluralist approach, a paradigm that dominated North American media studies until the 1960s, the mass media are autonomous, independent watchdogs of other social institutions, possessing a sense of accountability and responsibility to their audiences (Hackett 1991: 53). In this approach, power is an

observable entity, found in decision-making situations, and is "diffused, shared among contending and overlapping interests" (Hackett 1991: 52). In the liberal-pluralist view, the social and political structure through which power is exercised is "fluid, flexible and open to competing groups," but a society-wide consensus around basic social values keeps this competition within socially acceptable boundaries' (Hackett 1991: 53). Within the theoretical model of liberal-pluralism there is no "theory of ideology and its links with power structures, no theory of structural contradictions within the capitalist paradigm that emerged during and after the 1960s" (Hackett 1991: 56). Because it cannot explain the power imbalances in society and the role ideology plays in maintaining these imbalances, the liberal-pluralist model has weaknesses as a theory charged with explaining the role of mass media in our society.

In the 1960s, a new paradigm of media studies emerged. Scholars adopting a critical approach wished to explore the

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' According to Hackett the values accepted by consensus include the following: individual liberty, free enterprise and the prerogatives of property ownership, patriotism, representative government, the competitive pursuit of individual and self-fulfilment (53). Hackett argues that this consensus is not quite as seamless or apparent in Canada as it is in the United States, citing Gad Horowitz's 1979 description of the historically derived "fragments" of socialism and conservatism embedded in Canadian political culture as explanation for the lack of unified Canadian liberalism. To a certain extent, the overwhelming acceptance of liberal individualism found in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada outside Quebec dates the Horowitz thesis.

functioning of consensus described by the liberal-pluralists. Those scholars working within a critical framework argued that the consensus was a false one, built not on shared social values but, on the interests of an elite. How does a social and political structure that clearly serves a small elite continue to function? What role do media institutions play in its maintenance and how do they do it? Theories of ideology and hegemony are used to help explain the mechanisms by which social institutions, including the mass media, maintain this social order.

Patricia Marchak describes ideologies as

screens through which we perceive the social world. Their elements are assumptions, beliefs, explanations, values, and orientations. They are seldom taught explicitly and systematically. They are rather transmitted through example, conversations, and casual observation (Marchak 1975: 1).

We identify with particular ideologies; they are one of the means by which we understand our place in society. The mass media are one of the means by which ideologies are maintained and sustained. Developing out of the same social conditions dominant and counter ideologies will emphasise different values and assumptions to explain the social world (Marchak 1975: 2). For example, even though they both explain and verify individuals' experience of industrial society, liberalism and socialism use the idea of "freedom" very differently. In liberalism, freedom is connected to individualism and the free market; in socialism, freedom is identified with the collectivity and "equality of condition"

(Hall 1990: 9). Both liberalism and socialism are used as the "screens through which we perceive the social world." Those using the screen of liberal ideology perceive the "free individual" working within the "free market" of capitalism. In a socialist interpretation, industrial capitalism creates "new barriers to collective freedom" (Marchak 1975: 7). Because ideologies allow us to interpret our social world, individuals with the same material experiences may view these experiences very differently.

Some critical theorists have used Antonio Gramsci's particular interpretation of the role of ideology in the maintenance of social inequality. I have drawn primarily from Stuart Hall's interpretation and application of Gramsci's work to the field of critical media studies. Within a Gramscian interpretation, ideologies should not be evaluated on their accuracy (Hall et al 1978: 48). Ideologies should not be confused with fact or truth, but should be judged according to their functions and efficacy in binding together classes and class fractions in positions of dominance and subordination (Hall et al 1978: 48). "Ideology serves to 'cement and unify' the social bloc" (Hall et al 1978: 48). A successful ideology does more than provide a means for individuals to explain their world, it binds these individuals together by providing explanations of dominance and subordination. For example, liberalism is the most successful or dominant ideology in our society, not because it is the most accurate,

but because it is accepted and believed by the people it describes.

Linked to the idea of ideology is Gramsci's notion of hegemony. Hegemony "includes the ideological but cannot be reduced to that level" (Hall et al 1977: 48); it involves persuasion from above and consent from below (Hackett 1991: 56); and most important, it is "based on voluntary and spontaneous 'consent'" (Hall et al 1977: 51). According to Hall et al, Gramsci did not reduce hegemony to merely "the domination of the ruling class through ideology" as described by Gitlin (Hall et al 1977: 48; Gitlin 1980: 9). Instead, they suggest that Gramsci considered ideological domination as only one aspect of class conflict and relations (Hall et al 1977: 49). "Hegemony not only invites acceptance of a dominant ideology; it also inhibits the emergence of alternative or oppositional ways of making sense of the world (Hackett 1991: 57). The elites who benefit do not directly produce the ideology. Instead, the ever-changing hegemony is maintained by those who "specialize in cultural and ideological production," including the mass media (Hackett 1991: 58). While it is open for debate whether Hall, Gitlin and other critical media scholars accurately represent Gramsci's ideas, their debt to his work must be noted. It provides a framework for understanding how a social order that privileges a very few of its members continues to survive.

In a related way, Parenti comments on the role of the

mass media and other social institutions as

the purveyors of its cultural myths, values, and legitimating viewpoints. To the extent that news producers- -from publishers to reporters- -are immersed in that culture, they may not be fully aware of how they represent, evade, and suppress the news (Parenti 1986: 240).

Most who subscribe to the critical approach to media studies would agree that the mass media do support and are supported by the hegemonic ideology, but critical theorists diverge when considering how this takes place. Considering the acceptance of a hegemonic ideology by the members of a society (both those involved in its transmission, such as journalists, and those who receive it through the mass media and other social institutions), neither Gramsci nor the critical theorists that follow him wish to portray the people disadvantaged by a hegemonic ideology as dupes, unable to recognise their own oppression. Rather they wish to recognise the complex and dynamic qualities of hegemony.

While all critical media theorists agree that the media play a role in manufacturing the consent needed to maintain social control, they do present different arguments on how that consent is engineered. Gaye Tuchman, among others, has produced work in which she studies news in terms of its culturally specific qualities (Schudson 1989: 275-9). Tuchman compares the qualities of a news story with those of a fairy tale, asserting that culturally specific codes in each determine its form (Tuchman 1978: 5). For Tuchman, news values are examples of symbolic codes, patterns that are as

specific to a particular culture as those of a culture's fairy tales (Tuchman 1978: 5). The news values and media frame both have a cultural resonance that contributes to the constructed reality of news and simultaneously supports and is supported by the hegemonic ideology that permeates society. The form and content of news are inextricably linked.

S Elizabeth Bird and Robert W Dardenne apply some aspects of Tuchman's approach to the study of news in their article "Myth, Chronicle, and Story: Exploring the Narrative Qualities of News." Like Tuchman, they suggest an approach to the study of news that considers news as "culturally constructive narratives" (Bird and Dardenne 1988: 67), but do not "negate the value of considering news as corresponding with outside reality" (Bird and Dardenne 1988: 69). Bird and Dardenne do not categorize news as journalists do (into hard/soft dichotomies and more detailed categories as described in Tuchman 1978: 47-9), but study news as a unified whole, arguing that only through such an examination can the themes and patterns be made clear, themes and patterns that the usual categorization of news into hard/soft, important/interesting dichotomies obscures (Bird and Dardenne 1988: 69). If news is studied as myth or folklore, its social role, the role the mass media play as a social institution becomes clearer, because, [t]hrough myth and folklore, members of a culture learn values, definitions of right and wrong, and sometimes can experience vicarious thrills- -not all through individual tales, but through a body of lore (Bird and Dardenne 1988: 70).

To link this approach back to the news values I referred to earlier, Bird and Dardenne provide a means of understanding why the specific news values identified above exist. They identify the cultural heritage of those particular qualities that seem to arbitrarily occur in news by arguing that they are part of the mythical narrative (Bird and Dardenne 1988: 70). They also indirectly link the news values to a dominant ideology by arguing that when news is examined as myth or narrative, its role in reproducing and explaining the "natural" order of society becomes clear. At the practical, everyday level, news values allow journalists to do their jobs within the time and space constraints in which they must work, but the mythical qualities of news also rely on these news values (Bird and Dardenne 1988: 73). "Myth has meaning only in the telling; cultural themes and values exist only if they are communicated," and news values act as the symbolic codes providing the form in which the telling should occur (Bird and Dardenne 1988: 74).

Myth also acts to reassure its audience, to make the unknown fit within the framework of the known. Tuchman calls this the "routinization of the unexpected" (quoted in Bird and Dardenne 1988: 75). Michael Schudson argues that "the power of the media lies not only (and not even primarily) in its power to declare things to be true, but in its power to provide the forms in which the declarations will appear," (quoted in Bird and Dardenne 1988: 81). Bird and Dardenne's

work contributes to an understanding of the news forms by emphasising the interactive, interdependent nature of news narrative and by identifying the ideological character of the stories told. They are not universal narratives. Within their role of reassuring an audience, or routinizing the unexpected, certain myths will have more resonance than others. These tend to be linked to a hegemonic discourse. This hegemonic discourse is one that is maintained through repetition of the myth in the form of news.

In a related discussion, John Hartley, in his book Understanding News, considers the nature of news as a discourse. Hartley defines discourses "as the different kinds of use to which language is put" and the sites where "language systems and social conditions meet" (emphasis in original, Hartley 1982: 6). Discourses are necessarily ideological because they provide language with culturally specific meaning. Hartley suggests that if news is examined as a discourse, we can understand its role in reproducing the hegemonic ideology.

News comes to us as the pre-existing discourse of an impersonal social institution which is also an industry. As 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 the news (Hartley 1982: 5).

Hartley's examination of news as discourse identifies the ideological nature of both its form and content. News exists as a discourse that both incorporates the values, assumptions

and beliefs connected with the hegemonic ideology and provides space for other discourses that are connected with this ideology. The codes and conventions of news both define what information will become news and what the preferred interpretation of this information will be. While Hartley does not suggest that all members of a society interpret codes in the same manner, he does argue that the hegemonic ideology plays a significant role in producing an interpretation of the news that becomes an almost "common sense" or naturalised understanding of news topics.

In "The Social Production of News," Hall et al describe their method of analysis for Policing the Crisis, an examination of the ideological constructs at work in the British news reporting of mugging. They approach their study by exploring some of the factors contributing to the tendency of news to reproduce a society's dominant ideology. For example, the authors suggest that the combination of the presentation of news as objective fact and journalists' need to work within the pressures of deadlines produces a "systematically structured over-accessing to the media of those in powerful and privileged institutional positions" (Hall et al 1978: 58). This occurs because time constraints force journalists to rely on a relatively small number of "credible sources." Credibility is often established through individuals' role as official spokespersons for social institutions such as government, business or organised

"interest groups" (such as labour unions) (Hall et al 1978: 58). Over-accessing affects not only the presentation of perspectives of a segment of society as objective fact, it also helps shape what journalists consider worthy of news coverage. The authors caution that while these and other circumstances produce a "tendency towards ideological closure," but this closure is not complete. Instead, they state "the prevailing tendency in the media is towards the reproduction, amidst all their contradictions, of the definitions of the powerful, of the dominant ideology" (Hall et al 1978: 65). The approach that I have chosen to employ in this analysis draws from the method described in "The Social Production of News," In the next two sections, I shall identify analyses that examine how the social construction of gender and race has informed the meaning constructed in news.

Feminisms and a Gendered Discourse

Feminist theorists of news add another dimension to the study of news, (or several dimensions given the wide range of views they express). To fill the gap they find in both the liberal-pluralist and the critical approaches to the study of news, feminist scholars of news examine the role that gender plays in the form and content of news. Qualitatively different from the above paradigms, this work does more than add women to the analysis, it changes its focus, it raises different questions, and identifies different issues for

discussion. Feminist analyses allow me to interrogate the role that the social construction of gender plays in the representations of Mercredi and Rebick. In this section I do not intend to provide a universally applicable definition of feminism or to outline the definitive feminist approach to the study of news. Instead, I wish to use it to describe how a feminist approach to the study of news differs from other approaches.

Before beginning a review of some of the feminist scholarship in the study of news, I wish to define what I mean by "feminist" in this project and how a feminist approach differs from others. There is no universal feminism, but efforts to define and explain feminism usually boil it down to a combination of strains: liberal, socialist (and/or marxist) and radical (or cultural)⁵. The benefit of this sorting is that it does not attempt to lump all feminist theorists into one camp, expecting consensus on approaches and goals. It is also useful in describing the political heritage of feminist theories and their differences from each other. The weakness of the separation is that it still attempts to categorise or compartmentalise both analytical approaches and analysts, not allowing for work that is informed by a variety of feminist positions. I have purposefully chosen not to

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⁵ Alison Jaggar provides an indepth discussion of the various theoretical forms of feminism and their political heritage in her Feminist Politics and Human Nature. Totowa NJ: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983.

identify one strain of feminism as the primary source of my critique, but instead wish to draw on the words of Angela Miles to describe what feminist means in this context.

Feminism can...best be seen as a particular perspective on the whole of our society and not just as a perspective on 'women's issues' as they have been defined (quoted in Stone 1992: 46).

Using this definition of feminism, feminist analyses of news differ from non-feminist not just in the subjects they examine but in the way they approach those subjects.

In "Rethinking Women and the News," Liesbet van Zoonen identifies some of the problems she has found in much of the research on women and news and proposes new analytic forms that will do more than repeat the truism of women's under-representation both as subjects and producers of news. Finding weaknesses similar to those of the liberal-pluralist approach, van Zoonen argues that much of the Dutch scholarship (and other international research) of women and the news has identified two options for correcting the gender imbalance in news (van Zoonen 1988: 42-3). While in other ways they appear mutually exclusive, the two options share the assumption that an increased number of women working as journalists will "change" news (van Zoonen 1988: 42).

For advocates of both options, change means improvement⁴. One form suggests that an increased number of women journalists will create a "re-evaluation of 'feminine' journalism" which would encourage a valorisation of "feminine" or "soft news," arguing that women bring a qualitatively different perspective to news, and "[a]ccording to this line of argument, the more women journalists there are, the more will 'femininity' in the news be valued rather than, as now, given a lower status" (van Zoonen 1988: 42). The second option recommends that women journalists work towards breaking down the categories and the stereotypical representation of women within the industry by rejecting assignments that place them within the traditional category of "feminine" or "soft news" (van Zoonen 1988: 43). These seem to be mutually exclusive plans. The first does not challenge the polarised categories of feminine and masculine, but recommends a journalism that privileges the traditionally denigrated

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⁴ van Zoonen refers to various studies in which change means a range of forms of improvement:

(a) 'Change' means more balanced, progressive and less sex-stereotypical reporting (Butler and Paisley, 1980; Ceulemans and Fauconnier, 1979; Meritt and Gross, 1978; Whitlow, 1977)

(b) 'Change' means a re-evaluation and an increase of 'soft' news and the 'feminine' approach (Diekerhof et al., 1986a; Neverla and Kanzleiter, 1984)

(c) 'Change' means a redefinition of the sex-typed news values operative in the selection of women's issues (Robinson, 1978)

(d) 'Change' means more spokeswomen/female guests (NOS, 1984; Jensen, 1982; Diekerhof et al., 1986a) (van Zoonen 1988: 42).

feminine form. The second dissolves the categories and eschews any thought of biologically determined perspectives. van Zoonen argues that neither of these options are supported by much empirical evidence because neither of them critically examine the "male-female differentiation" or the means by which it is constructed and reproduced in the news media.

Both the options emphasise the role that individual journalists play in the production and the content of news. Neither challenge the hegemony of liberalism or question the dominant ideological discourses found in our society and reproduced in the news media. Citing key works using the critical approach to news studies, van Zoonen effectively questions the assumptions on which both these options for change are based. Instead, van Zoonen argues in favour of analyses that benefit from the separate scholarships of feminist theory and critical communication studies. Through this combination, van Zoonen suggests that

women's studies could benefit from an incorporation of knowledge from communication studies about, for instance, the autonomy of the communicator or the social construction of news...For communication science it means that the existence of gender-differences (and very much related: power differences) is recognized and is given a regular place in research questions about newsproduction and newscontent (van Zoonen 1988: 51).

The research of Rakow and Kranich (1991), drawing from both feminist theory and communications studies, examines the representation of women in television news (both in news production and news content). Rakow and Kranich draw on the work of Hall and Hartley, and extend Bird and Dardenne's

analysis of news as narrative. They incorporate an analysis of the role of gender into both the content and the approach of their study. In response to the question asked by Bird and Dardenne: "Whose Story?" Rakow and Kranich argue that "[f]ew working from a cultural studies perspective have thought to answer the question with 'men,' and feminist critics have focused on fictional visual narratives and advertisements" (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 11). Their intention is to bring together cultural studies and feminist studies to produce an analysis that benefits from both.

Combining quantitative content analysis with a semio-logical approach similar to that used by Hartley⁷, Rakow and Kranich argue that women's under-representation both as producers of news and within news content means that their participation, when it does occur, carries a special meaning (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 12). They do not argue that women bring different values and qualities of femininity to the discourse of news. Instead, they suggest that socially constructed and culturally specific ideas of gender and women contribute to the way women are portrayed in the news media (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 12). For example, their quantitative content analysis confirms earlier research that found that, in

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⁷ Rakow and Kranich acknowledge that Hartley and others who study news from a critical perspective have identified news as a masculine world, based upon masculine values. They quote Hartley on the subject: "News is not only about and by men, it is overwhelmingly seen through men" (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 11).

the rare times that women do have speaking parts in the narrative of news, they do so

either as an anonymous example of uninformed public opinion, as housewife, consumer, neighbour, or as mother, sister, wife of the man in the news, or as victim- -of crime, disaster, political policy. Thus not only do they speak less frequently, but they tend to speak as passive reactors and witnesses to public events rather than as participants in those events (Holland 1987: 139 quoted in Rakow and Kranich 1991: 14).

Most relevant for my purposes is their analysis of the representation of feminists within the masculine narrative of news. Rakow and Kranich refer to feminists used as news sources as "unusual signs." "In order for a woman to occupy a position as a speaking subject who speaks for women, she must signify as "feminist," a particular and unusual kind of "woman" (emphasis in original, Rakow and Kranich 1991: 17). There are several issues of concern uncovered in the results of Rakow and Kranich's examination of feminist representation as in the news. First, because so few stories include feminist comment, on the vast majority of issues the news audience does not have the benefit of a feminist analysis (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 18). Second, because men seldom speak on behalf of women, issues of particular importance to women, or events whose results would affect women specifically do not receive much news coverage. Finally, because

[f]eminists who do appear on screen generally represent liberal, mainstream feminist...[and s]ince only one feminist generally appears in a story, the implication is that feminism is a homogeneous ideological position, that there is only one way to frame the problem under discussion, and that only someone designated as a feminist by her institutional affiliation is aware of and

dissatisfied with women's social place. Her ritualized appearance gives the illusion that the news organisation has fulfilled its obligation to provide balance and expert testimony (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 18).

Related to the assumption that all feminists think the same is the assumption that all feminists are white. Most feminist sources are white women from easily identifiable, predominantly white organisations. Rakow and Kranich, therefore, argue that "feminism appears to be a movement for and about white women, and the perspective that women of colour bring to analysing issues of gender is all but invisible in network television news" (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 20). Presenting feminism as a homogeneous ideological perspective ignores the diversity of women and their material experiences and it reproduces the racist social context in which women of colour must live (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 20). Further this presentation of feminism within the news as a unitary perspective leaves feminists open to challenge by other feminists who do not share their particular analysis of an issue. In a rather confusing turn, after being constructed in the news as representing a unitary perspective, feminist sources will be challenged for not representing the views of all women, or even all feminists.

In her book Femininity in Dissent, Alison Young critically examines the news coverage of the activities of the women of the Greenham Common peace camp of the 1980s (Young 1990: 166). While she examines a subject similar to that considered by Hackett, Young's approach helps demonstrate the

fundamental differences between feminist and non-feminist scholarship. Young labels her interdisciplinary methodology "synergism" because the combined effects of the various approaches she draws from "is greater than the sum of their separate efforts" (Young 1990: 10).

Drawing from the fields of criminology, media studies, sociology, social theory (especially poststructuralist deconstructionism), Young also situates herself within the context of her study. It is here that Young exemplifies a fundamental quality of feminist scholarship. In a subsection of her introduction entitled "Reading (As a) Woman," Young explains her role in the subject: why she chose it, how she came to define her approach and its purpose. Describing her identity as a feminist critic, Young explains that

examining the press coverage of the Greenham protest provided an important means to fight back at the structures of oppression...[and that a]s a feminist, [she works], through this book and in other ways, to transform, specifically, the relations of power, representation and signification between men and women (the production and evaluation of masculinity and femininity as categories) (Young 1990: 10-1).

Further, she anticipates the arguments of those who will dismiss her analysis as "yet another 'biased' product, too subjective, irrational, emotional" (Young 1990: 9). Young acknowledges the risk of producing a scholarly work that is open to such criticism, but also argues that feminism's seriousness and centrality to late twentieth century industrial life render it a legitimate analytical perspective (Young 1990: 9). Young herself is a part of her

interdisciplinary method, her existence and self-identity as a feminist does more than work along side the fields of study that comprise her methodological approach.

Racist Ideology and News Discourse

Just as feminist approaches identified a gap in critical media studies, analyses of media representations of people of colour transform the discussion by insisting on the multiplicity of identities and intersection of sites of oppression. For the purposes of this study, I shall draw from the work of critical media scholars who examine the racist underpinnings of news. Hartley's comment identifying news as a masculinist discourse could be adjusted to say that news is not only about and by white men, it is also overwhelmingly seen through white men. In this section, I shall sketch out briefly some of the scholarly literature that addresses the means by which race and racism are constructed and reproduced in the ideological discourses found in the news. I shall, in fact, draw from two bodies of literature to provide a base on which to apply my analysis of The Globe and Mail's representation of Ovide Mercredi and Judy Rebick. Just as assumptions of maleness informs the representation of both Mercredi and Rebick, assumptions of whiteness informs their representations. First, I shall draw from the work of communication scholars who examine the construction of race, and the role of the mass media in reproducing racism. Second,

I shall apply the insights of scholars who consider specifically the construction of the "Indian" or the "primitive" in North American society. Not all of the literature that I shall identify in this section was written by those working within the field of media studies. I have drawn from a wide range of scholarship to describe the news coverage of First Nations Peoples generally, and Ovide Mercredi, specifically, within the Canadian context.

In Racism and the Press, Tuen van Dijk distinguishes between historical and contemporary manifestations of racism. In its historical context, racism is the result of real or perceived differences of bodily appearance, especially skin colour, being used as a means of categorising peoples and establishing a hierarchy of races that placed white, north-western Europeans at the top (van Dijk 1991: 25). "European ideology of racial superiority was often used to motivate, explain, or legitimate the exploitation, oppression, or extermination of non-European peoples of other 'races'" (van Dijk 1991: 25). Most members of contemporary society no longer subscribe to the biological determinism of early forms of race classification. van Dijk questions the argument put forward by some, that because races have been scientifically proven to not exist, racism does not exist (van Dijk 1991: 25). He equates this argument with one that would signal the end of Christianity with the proof that God did not exist (van Dijk 1991: 25). This analysis is consistent with Hall's

interpretation of the role of ideology. An ideology's success is not based on its accuracy but on its ability to present a partial, and perhaps contradictory, explanation of the world as a universal one.

In the post-World War II period¹ a contemporary form of racism supplanted the ideology of racism based on biological difference. Race, as a social construction, continues to "be associated with moral or socio-cultural evaluations that may be expressed in other terms" and continues to be found in public discourse (van Dijk 1991: 26). In its contemporary form, racist ideology is found in the media and other discursive forms explicitly or implicitly instilling the belief in the "moral, political, cultural, or technological superiority of white, western 'civilization'" over all others, including those of individuals and groups who have migrated to north-western countries' (van Dijk 1991: 26). van Dijk defines contemporary racism as

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¹ This is an approximate period division and does not necessarily exist as a clear cut break in all individuals' thinking. Some members of north-western European societies would have challenged the taxonomies of race before the middle of the twentieth century and some individuals continue to subscribe to them. This only identifies a change in the dominant ideology of race from one with a perceived biological base.

² As I noted above, one of the few weaknesses I find in van Dijk's analysis of the role of the mass media in reproducing racist ideologies is his lack of attention to the specificity of the effect of white supremacy on the First Nations, the non-immigrant communities.

a complex societal system in which peoples of European origin dominate peoples of other origins, especially in Europe, North America, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand...[which]...may take many forms of economic, social, cultural and/or political hegemony, legitimated in terms of, usually negatively valued, different characteristics ascribed to the dominated people(s) (van Dijk 1991: 24).

Another way of describing the means by which racism continues to pervade a society that no longer subscribes to the biological hierarchy of races, is through the "common sense" understanding of racist ideology. Drawing on the work of Stuart Hall and Gramsci, Errol Lawrence identifies the role common sense thinking plays in the insidious nature of ideologies, the method by which they become automatic or naturalised means of understanding the world. Lawrence argues that common sense (defined by Gramsci as an "'eclectic and unsystematic'" way of thinking that accumulates contradictory knowledges within itself) is involved in maintaining the power of racist ideologies, and therefore, the privilege of white, north-western European peoples (Lawrence 1982: 48). Common sense thinking is used to make sense of everyday, practical experiences in individuals' lives (Lawrence 1982: 49). Common sense thinking informs the production of the preferred readings of ideological discourses by "naturalising" socially constructed categories such as race. "Through the mechanism of this 'naturalization process' the social construction...is collapsed into biological differences" (emphasis in original, Lawrence 1982: 50).

Hall examines the application of racist stereotypes in

the British mass media in his "The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media." Hall bases his exploration of the racism of the British mass media on three central points. First, he, like many of the other scholars referred to here, stresses that the media must be acknowledged as "part of the dominant means of ideological production" (emphasis in original, Hall 1990: 11). Arguing against any reductionist or overly simplified description of the role of the media in reproducing racism, Hall cautions that "if critics of the media subscribe to too simple or reductive a view of their operations, this inevitably lacks credibility and weakens the case they are making because the theories and critiques don't square with reality" (Hall 1990: 12).

Second, Hall distinguishes between "overt" and "inferential" racism. Overt racism exists in the media when "favourable coverage is given to arguments, positions and spokespersons" who provide openly racist arguments or who advance openly racist policies (Hall 1990: 13). What Hall refers to as inferential racism includes naturalised representations whose racist premises have become unquestioned assumptions (Hall 1990: 13). For example, the news reporting of First Nations peoples tends to focus on certain topics which include the poverty of life on a reserve. While this is the material existence for many First Nations peoples in Canada, in the absence of other discourses of aboriginality, it becomes a naturalised representation that contains sub-

discourses of substance abuse and "criminal activity" such as "smuggling." While not overtly justifying the oppression of people of colour, inferential racism provides naturalised representations that do explain the power imbalance without implicating those in positions of power.

Finally, Hall suggests that over time a culture develops a "grammar of race," comprised of several "base-images" that direct both the overt and inferential racism found in the mass media and other social structures (Hall 1990: 15). One "base-image" Hall describes is that of the "native" (Hall 1990: 15). As a base-image stereotype, the native is a two-sided one, in which either the noble savage or barbarous warrior stereotype provides the base on media content is produced.

Approaching the subject in a manner reminiscent of one used by Robert F Berkhofer Jr. in The White Man's Indian, Daniel Francis describes the heritage of what Hall calls the base-image of the native as it is found in the Canadian grammar of race. While all forms of racism stem from the folk taxonomies used to justify the cultural genocide of colonialism, settler societies, such as the one built by EuroCanadians, direct a particular form of racism towards the indigenous peoples of our countries. This form of racism is not based on xenophobia and the arguments about the economic costs of immigration but on generations of ignorance and state administered abuse. Ignorance has not precluded the

representation of First Nations peoples in EuroCanadian popular culture, but Francis argues that this representation has never been accurate, so he describes it as "imaginary."

Francis suggests that the "imaginary Indian" is the sum of generations of image production from Paul Kane in the 1850s to the present. After seeing an exhibit of the work of George Catlin, an American artist, that documented the lives of many of the First Nations living in what had become American territory, Kane set out to capture on canvas the First Nations of Canada before they vanished (Francis 1992: 17). The "Vanishing Indian" is the image that prevailed until after World War II and surfaced again in the 1960s with the environmental movement (Francis 1992: 57). Francis suggests that the image survived for so long, longer than it was possible to support it with any physical evidence, because it was just too attractive and convenient to relinquish (Francis 1992: 57). The idea that the First Nations were doomed to cultural, if not actual, death appealed to activists, who used it to berate their governments for their inhumane policies, to social critics who used it as a sign post of the inhumanity of industrial society, and, to racists who used it as evidence of the supremacy of white European society (Francis 1992: 57). "For everyone, the most important thing to know about Indians in the century before World War II was that they were disappearing. When Canadians said, 'Indian,' they meant doomed" (Francis 1992: 57).

Just as the idea of the Vanishing Indian was an imaginary one, so too was the Indian that Paul Kane and others went to find. Kane and other artists (and later social scientists such as Marius Barbeau and Diamond Jenness) hoped to discover the lives of First Nations as they had been before contact with Europeans. Bringing to their work preconceived ideas about those lives, they were all disappointed by what they found, and some, like Kane and photographer Edward Curtis¹⁰, rearranged their subjects to present the desired image (Francis 1992: 21, 41).

Kane was a documentary artist, but he worked within certain conventions and manipulated his images to suit the demands of these conventions. Though he was praised for his accuracy, he often added details of setting and landscape to highlight the romantic flavour of the scenes, and he sometimes 'cheated' by adding clothing and artifacts foreign to the Indians (Francis 1992: 20-1).

Francis argues that this practice demonstrates an ideological component in Kane's work, the legacy of which is found in the stereotypical representations of First Nations' peoples in contemporary Canadian mass culture, including the news media.

Research Plan

My purpose in the first section of this chapter was not to produce a comprehensive review of the literature that

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¹⁰ While documenting the lives of First Nations peoples in the United States, Curtis lacked the flexibility of paint on canvas. So, he not only arranged his subjects in such a way as to erase the evidence of contact with mainstream society he provided his First Nations subjects with props so they would more closely resemble what he thought their lives would have been before contact with Europeans (Francis 1992: 41).

examines the construction of meaning within the news, but to highlight some of the key arguments in the relevant works. I shall use this second section to briefly sketch out the underpinning research plan for the analysis that follows. I began this project to explore some of the qualities of the particular aspects of the news coverage during the Charlottetown Accord campaign. Why did the reporting of First Nations and feminists revolve almost entirely around Ovide Mercredi and Judy Rebick? Why did it take the form it did?

Critical analysts of news agree that ideology plays a role in producing both the form and content of news. A variety of methods have been employed to interrogate the ideological content of news. In the analysis that follows, I shall examine the ideological discourses that run through The Globe and Mail's reporting of Mercredi and Rebick. Discourse analysis provides the benefit of both textual and contextual analysis (van Dijk 1988: 176). Although discourse analyses present the results of examinations of particular discursive sites as evidence of more generalisable tendencies, they attempt to avoid the methodological dangers of both content analysis and semiotics. Efforts to describe the message of media, and particularly of news, have tended to employ one of these two forms. In her critique, Woollacott identifies the weaknesses of these two methodological forms.

Content analysis is based on a quantitative appraisal of the manifest qualities of media texts by sorting the

information found in the texts under examination into conceptual categories (Woollacott 1982: 92). This method allows for the "systematic investigation of a whole range of material," but cannot capture the ideologically charged meaning of a text because of its emphasis on the manifest or denotative qualities (Woollacott 1982: 92). Conversely, she argues that a formalist approach, such as semiotics, is inappropriate to produce generalisable results about the ideological content of media texts (Woollacott 1982: 101). As a result of the full scale appropriation of semiotics by a range of media analysts, "the production of 'readings' becomes an end in itself," producing plausible but idiosyncratic readings, not generalisable conclusions (Woollacott 1982: 103). It is my hope that through an analysis of the ideological discourses running through The Globe and Mail's reporting of Mercredi and Rebick during the plebiscite campaign, I am able to negotiate past the pitfalls of these two forms.

I shall now outline the process by which I produced the data sample on which I base the discourse analysis that follows. After narrowing the time frame under question to the actual 47 day official campaign, I then had to decide from which newspapers I would draw my data. I chose to focus my attention on The Globe and Mail for two related reasons. First, The Globe and Mail identifies itself as "Canada's National Newspaper" and would claim to be the national "paper

of record." Second, it holds a position of power and influence in media and political elites, that is, what is reported in The Globe and Mail tends to have an impact.

In a research report for the Royal Commission on Newspapers (the Kent Commission), Frederick J Fletcher examined the influence of newspapers on public affairs. His comments on the role of The Globe and Mail in public affairs reporting provide evidence of the paper's influence.

The overwhelming dominance of the Globe and Mail can be clearly documented; it is read by nearly three-quarters of the country's top level decision-makers right across Canada and at all three levels of government. More than 90 per cent of media executives read it regularly and it tends to set the agenda for other news organizations, including The Canadian Press, which provides much of the public affairs coverage in the smaller dailies (Fletcher 1981: 30).

In a news environment dominated by television and dependent on credible sources, The Globe and Mail possesses a reputation that enhances its influence with both its news audience and the people and organisations on which the news media report. David Taras quotes The Globe and Mail's national political editor, Hugh Winsor, as saying that The Globe and Mail's "good, gray respectability" means that a story gains a certain amount of import when The Globe and Mail reports on it (Taras 1990: 88). During election campaigns, political parties recognise and work within the print news media environment that privileges The Globe and Mail by allowing access to party leaders to The Globe and Mail before journalists from the other "national" newspapers (Gilsdorf

and Bernier 1991: 27). It is within the context of this dominance, combined with the power newspapers wield in framing the issues in elections (or election-type events such as plebiscites or referenda) that I shall examine The Globe and Mail's representation of Judy Rebick and Ovide Mercredi. While voter behaviour studies do not indicate any direct connection between newspaper reporting and election result, researchers agree that "news media, through their selection and presentation of news, can reinforce voting decisions, help to form images of leaders and parties, and influence the selection of issues and the tone of the campaign, all in ways that may work to the advantage of one party" (as quoted in Fletcher 1981: 80). More recent research echoes Fletcher's findings and further states that "the most politically involved, that is, the most interested, the strongest partisans, the consistent voters, and those who actively take part in the discussion of political matters, are most likely to seek more information" in the news media (MacDermid 1991: 87).

As I noted in the introduction, I chose to consider the representation of Rebick and Mercredi because The Globe and Mail and the other mainstream media concentrated their coverage on these two individuals in their reporting of the Accord's effect on First Nations or women's interests. I located the articles that comprise my sample through a series of computer aided and manual searches. I used The Globe and

Mail's online database, Info Globe¹¹ to produce a preliminary data sample through a keyword search. A relevant article would be one that linked two concepts together: the constitutional amendment and either self-government or feminism. In an effort to cast the widest net possible, to identify the greatest number of relevant articles, I used a variety of key words in the search strategy. An article would be caught in the search net if its text contained any of the key words¹².

The original sample produced through this preliminary search was culled through a subsequent Info Globe search that limited the scan for key words to the headline and the lead paragraph. This strategy was based on the inference that journalists write their stories in the form of an inverted pyramid, placing the story's main topic at the top of the article (several articles later added to the smaller sample were originally missed at this point). This smaller sample was augmented with another computer-aided search through the Canadian Business and Current Affairs (CBCA) cd-rom database,

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¹¹ I originally planned to examine the "national edition" of The Globe and Mail. Because the newspaper indexes its Metropolitan Toronto Edition on Info Globe, I have instead examined this edition. While there are differences between the two editions, a story defined as of national concern would appear in both editions, perhaps appearing in different positions in the newspaper.

¹² The full list of key terms includes the following: "Rebick," "NAC," "National Action," "women," "feminism/t/s," or "Mercredi," "First Nations," "aboriginal/s," "native/s," "Indian/s," "self" (to capture references to self-government) in conjunction with "accord," "referendum," or "constitution."

manual search of the Canadian News Index by subject heading (these were the same headings as the key words used in both the Info Globe and CBCA database searchers, and by manually scanning microfilm copies of The Globe and Mail published during the relevant time frame. I recognise that although I have made every effort to produce as complete a sample as possible, I have undoubtedly missed some relevant articles and these unavoidable omissions may weaken the analysis that follows.

CHAPTER TWO

Historical Context: The Assembly of First Nations, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Canadian Constitution

Introduction

Rather than attempt to produce comprehensive histories of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) within the history of constitutional negotiation in Canada, in this chapter I shall identify some of the key themes and events that link these three. This shall be only a sketch with a particular agenda; to set the stage for the 1997 plebiscite campaign. My aim is to trace the involvement of NAC and the AFN in the constitutional debate in Canada so as to identify the means by which they came to their 1992 positions. Because I consider these histories of NAC, the AFN and the process of constitutional negotiations to be inextricably linked, I shall weave the three together, grounding the narrative in the significant events, issues and themes of their interrelated histories. Both NAC and the AFN exist as nongovernmental umbrella organisations mandated to improve the status of their constituencies; I shall, therefore, describe the periods in which both NAC and the AFN have involved themselves in the many attempts to amend the Canadian constitution.

Beginning with the circumstances in which NAC and the AFN came to exist, I shall trace their activities surrounding the

constitutional negotiations over the past twenty years, describing the two organisations' activities during the 1979-81 period, when what was to become the Canada Constitution Act, 1982 (including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms) was negotiated. I shall then move onto the 1987-90 period, known as the Quebec Round, the period that produced the ultimately unsuccessful Meech Lake Accord. Finally, I shall consider the lead up to the plebiscite campaign of 1992 in which both NAC and the AFN played an important role. I have established the boundaries of this historical sketch as the period from the official creation of NAC and the AFN until the 1992 campaign for the convenience of my study. Neither this time period, nor these two organisations, represent the entire scope of activities of feminists and citizens of the First Nations in electoral politics; nor was amending the constitution the only, or even primary, activity of either NAC or the AFN. I am cognisant of my position, here, looking back, selecting events and individuals of importance to construct a narrative. I have assembled this narrative, this interwoven story, in such a way as to identify the origins of Rebeck and Mercredi's positions on the Charlottetown Accord, to place them, as representatives of their constituencies, within their historical and political context.

National Action Committee on the Status of Women

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women was

originally created by Canadian feminists to monitor the federal government's response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (Morris 1983: 93). The Royal Commission was struck in 1967 and finished its work in 1970 when it tabled its Report. In 1972, the Committee for the Equality of Women, the group that had originally convinced the Liberal government of Lester Pearson of the need for the Royal Commission, reconstituted itself to hold a conference (Appelle 1987: 49). Laura Sabia, whose work had been central to the creation of the Royal Commission, chaired the 1972 Strategy for Change conference in Toronto (Morris 1983: 93).

Two generations of feminists attended the conference that ended with the resolution to create an umbrella organisation (originally the National Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women, the organisation's name was changed to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women in 1973) whose mandate would be to monitor the government's implementation of the 167 recommendations of the Royal Commission (Morris 1983: 93; Appelle 1987: 49).

From the beginning, the organisation that would become the institutional, public voice of the Canadian women's movement¹³ consciously attempted to broker the interests of members of traditional women's organisations and the newer

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¹³ The increasing fragmentation, diversity and multiplicity of voices of Canadian feminists makes this a troubling and awkward term, a topic on which I shall comment later.

feminist caucuses (Appelle 1987: 22). But even the Strategy for Change Report, the final text released after the 1972 conference, was accompanied by a minority report prepared by a self-identified "radical caucus of women." It advocated a strategy of direct action that included strikes, demonstrations, boycotts. As evident in this example, NAC has never completely accommodated all member groups on all issues, with all strategies (Vickers et al 1993: 74). The mostly Toronto-based executive members agreed on the objectives of NAC, stating that "'NAC does not duplicate nor supersede established organisations. It is non-profit and non-partisan. NAC serves as an educational and communications link for women in Canada who are striving to improve their status and to change the traditional attitudes and habits of prejudice towards women.'" (Status of Women News, Summer 1973, quoted in Vickers et al 1993: 74). Never far from internal strife, division and ideological conflict, NAC has, over the past twenty years, become the institutional voice of Canadian feminists with an enlarged mandate:

1. To unite women and women's groups from across Canada in the struggle for equality;
2. To develop feminist positions on public policy and present these positions through briefs, research papers, and lobbying; and
3. To sensitize the public to women's issues through media contact, public meetings and forums, and publications (NAC brochure, 1986, quoted in Vickers et al 1993: 74).

NAC's internal structure, membership base, leadership and

funding affect its ability to complete the tasks set out at the Strategy for Change conference and described in the 1986 membership brochure. NAC, "particularly at the national level, organises itself so that it is viewed by government as stable, cohesive and continuous" (Appelle 1987: 51). To this end, Appelle suggests that NAC's internal structure, one that resembles that of an institutionalised interest group conveys the qualities of stability, cohesion and continuity to successive governments (Appelle 1987: 51).

By employing the "top-down" structure characteristic of institutionalised interest groups, NAC signifies the importance of a relationship between major decision-makers and NAC leaders (Appelle 1987: 58). As an organisation, NAC combines elements of both institutionalised and issue-oriented interest groups because it has adopted a top-down internal structure for itself, but it also includes many issue oriented groups as members. These two qualities converge at the Annual General Meeting which acts as an important point of connection for the general membership and the executive which is constitutionally empowered to run NAC throughout the year (Appelle 1987: 58-60). While it is important to recognise the role of the AGM and the annual lobby day that ends the meeting

period", it is the internal structure of NAC, the executive and its make up that allows NAC to "both respond quickly to an ever-changing government agenda and to continually mold (sic) itself to the needs of its constituencies" (Appelle 1987: 63).

While the size and composition of the NAC executive is subject to change, it defines the priorities of NAC, serving as the public voice of the Canadian women's movement. Because the executive performs this duty, and because the top-down structure assigns a disproportionate amount of responsibility to the executive, the questions of who acts as an executive member, whom the executive represents, and most importantly who acts a president are important concerns for NAC (Appelle 1987: 54). As NAC's membership expanded throughout the 1970s, the organisation's ability to mobilize and represent the specific interests of the women outside central Canada became an issue and regional representation on the executive was pursued (Appelle 1987: 54). By 1986, thirteen of the 25 executive positions were filled by regional representatives, elected by member organisations from the particular regions (Appelle 1987: 54). For instance, NAC member groups from Alberta would elect the Alberta executive member; that elected

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¹⁴ On the final day of the three day AGM and Conference, members of each of three major political parties are invited to discuss issues of concern with the NAC membership. Questions put forth to the Members of Parliament are devised and submitted in advance. On lobby day NAC delegates meet face-to-face with the MPs and NAC receives public attention through media coverage of its activities.

representative would then be charged with representing the particular concerns of Alberta women to the other executive members, and to the organisation at large.

NAC's claim to represent the women of Canada is weakened by its uneven representation of other, non-regionally based communities of women (representation of working class women, women of colour and immigrant women has historically been low, and only recently- -especially during Judy Rebick's term as president- -been addressed). NAC attempts to act as both an interest group lobbying governments and the private sector for improvements in the status of women in Canada and as a "new parliament of women," providing a site for all women's voices to be heard (Appelle 1987: 48). Because it attempts to provide both forms of representation, NAC and the executive members must attend to the diversity of the organisations housed under the umbrella of NAC and the political culture in which it is trying to effect social change.

One of the ways NAC attempts to balance the interests of the diverse member groups and accommodate the various ideological strains of feminism is to select for itself leaders deemed most appropriate for the time. NAC founding mothers recognised that the "president clearly sets the tone for the organisation, both internally with regards to the membership, and externally, with respect to the government and the public at large" (Appelle 1987: 125). They therefore structured a president selection process that encourages

informal networks to select leaders with the skills needed at the time. The three major political parties in Canadian federal politics at the time were represented in the first three NAC presidents. From 1972-4, Laura Sabia was the first NAC "chair" (the term president was not universally adopted until after Kay Macpherson's term ended in 1980). Sabia's close connection to the Progressive Conservative Party, her Catholicism and devotion to free enterprise did not find her wide support (with NAC member groups or the Liberal federal government), but her tenure as president gave the fledgling organisation a strength in profile (Vickers et al 1993: 183). Sabia's strengths and connections became NAC's strengths and connections. From 1974-5 Grace Hartman was simultaneously NAC's president and the president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, bringing to NAC an important link with union women and to the union movement generally, clearly deviating from the Sabia executive (Appelle 1987: 130). Lorna Marsden, a sociologist at the University of Toronto (now president of Wilfrid Laurier University), active supporter of the Liberal Party and third NAC leader from 1975-7 is credited with strengthening NAC's structure, its national character and its links with government (Appelle 1987: 132). Because NAC's constitution does not allow for electioneering (its founding mothers worried that open campaigning for executive positions would privilege the articulate and those with resources), informal networks attempt to maintain a balance (or at least

a see-saw equilibrium) of interests represented by the executive and more importantly by the president. This internal adjustment and re-balancing becomes important when analysing the media representation of Judy Rebick with regards to questions of legitimacy and accountability. President from 1990 to 1993, Rebick was the first full time, paid NAC president.

Assembly of First Nations/National Indian Brotherhood

Like NAC, the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB, the forerunner of the Assembly of First Nations) exists in part because its founders wished to respond to a federal government initiative. While organisations promoting the unity of First Nations have existed in Canada since 1919, the NIB was formed in 1969 in response to the infamous White Paper on Indian Policy¹⁵. The National Indian Council, founded in 1961, split in two after the 1968 Indian Act consultation meetings emphasised different perspectives and objectives of two

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¹⁵ Proposed, but never implemented, Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, popularly known as "the White Paper," was presented to Parliament in 1969. Its principal author, Jean Chretien, then Minister Responsible for Indian Affairs and Northern Development, promoted the policy as the means to eliminate the Indian Act as the legislative control of First Nations. While First Nations leaders agreed that the Indian Act was a paternalistic and racist document and should cease to control the lives of aboriginal peoples, they opposed the assimilationist qualities of the "White Paper" and successfully challenged its implementation. Harold Cardinal of the Alberta Indian Association wrote Citizen's Plus (often referred to as the "Red Paper") in which he described his opposition to the "White Paper."

distinct political groups. Metis and non-Status Indians lobbied for equality through equal treatment with non-natives, while the First Nations (defined constitutionally as "Indians" or Status Indians) sought governmental recognition of the terms of treaties. The latter group sought a "Citizens Plus" status appropriate to their unique position in Canadian society (Ponting et al 1980: 198). As the "organised, federal-level political voice of status Indians," the NIB/AFN may appear to do the same work as lobby groups representing ethnic and racial minorities to the federal government, but the NIB's primary objective is the right to "Indian self-determination" (emphasis in original) (Ponting et al 1980: 195).

As a federation of provincial and territorial organisations (PTOs), the NIB/AFN's internal structure produces a presidency without much power and a regional representation that is constantly open to challenge (like NAC, the NIB claims to speak for all members of a constituency across Canada, so if the nations of Alberta show their disapproval of NIB policy by separating from the organisation, the NIB claim may be undermined). Ponting et al describe the objectives of the NIB in its early period as the following:

- a. To assist the Provincial and Territorial Organizations (PTOs) and to work towards a solution of problems facing the Indian people;
- b. To operate as a national body to represent the PTOs and to disseminate information to them;
- c. To study, in conjunction with Indian representatives

from various parts of Canada, the problems confronting Indians and to ~~make representations~~ to the government and other organisations on behalf of the PTOs;

d. To assist in retaining Indian cultures and values;

e. To act as a national spokesman for the PTOs throughout Canada and;

f. To secure the enforcement and fulfilment of all Indian treaties and of the aboriginal rights of Indians (NIB Constitution and General Bylaws, quoted in Ponting et al 1980: 199, emphasis in original).

Like the first three NAC presidents, the first three leaders of the NIB brought different skills and resources that helped establish the institutionalised voice of the First Nations in Canada. Walter Deiter, who through his involvement with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians was part of the group that created the NIB, was the first president (Ponting et al 1980: 198). From the time he was made president in 1968 until his election was challenged by George Manuel in 1970, Deiter devoted much of his time and personal resources (he supplemented the NIB funds with personal loans) to the creation of an organisational structure that the PTOs could accept (including the constitution referred to above and the establishment of formal connections among the PTOs that recognised the diversity of interests of the First Nations represented by the PTOs and prevented them from undermining each other) (Ponting et al 1980: 199).

Unlike the leadership selection process of NAC, the NIB/AFN has since the beginning engaged in a highly politicized (and even acrimonious) process. Deiter's term

as president was challenged as invalid by a group who supported George Manuel (Ponting et al 1980: 199). Manuel, a member of the Shuswap nation, was elected president at the 1970 General Assembly on a technical point. A faction based in the Prairie provinces' PTOs successfully argued that because the NIB had not been incorporated with the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, it had not existed as an organisation until that General Meeting, making Manuel the first president of the NIB (Ponting et al 1980: 201). NIB president Manuel's salary was paid by the Indian Association of Alberta (IAA), as part of the arrangement Manuel made with IAA president Harold Cardinal when he agreed to pursue the presidency on behalf of the Prairie faction. He set out to mould the NIB into a stable organisation that was considered legitimate by both the government departments from which it received its funds and the international indigenous communities. Manuel was founding president of the United Nations World Council of Indigenous Peoples (Ponting et al 1980: 203). Ponting et al identify Manuel's presidency (1970-6) as a key period of the NIB, describing it as a period in which early differences were put aside and the organisation, in conjunction with its member groups worked towards producing policy and a much closer working relationship with the federal government. In 1974, Manuel and Cabinet Minister John Turner reconvened the Joint NIB/Cabinet Committee (JNCC), a hopeful endeavour (Ponting et al 1980: 206). Manuel hoped this

would signal the beginning of a new era of cooperation and good will between the NIB and the federal government.

Building on the structure Manuel shaped during his terms as president, the third president, Noel Starblanket (fired as a member of the NIB staff during the early Manuel "restructuring" period) hoped to establish the NIB as effective lobby organisation (Ponting et al 1980: 211). From 1976 until the end of his presidency in 1980, Starblanket involved NIB in a variety of issues on a task force basis. Starblanket established committees whose participants came from the PTOs to explore options for change to the material existence of First Nations peoples. One area that Starblanket considered important was creating an NIB position on the renewal of the Canadian constitution. "Starblanket's establishment of a Canadian Indian Constitutional Commission to consolidate Indian views on the constitution reflected the growing conviction that Indian rights should be enshrined in any patriated or revised Canadian constitution" (Ponting et al 1980: 211).

What I have attempted to demonstrate in the preceding discussion is the changing structure and focus of the two organisations as their roles have been unfolding throughout the past twenty years. NAC was created by Canadian feminists to monitor the government's response to and implementation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women's recommendations. It then evolved into a more comprehensive, institutionalised

organisation that attempted to develop policy that reflected the concerns of a myriad of feminist interests. Similarly, the National Indian Brotherhood was formed to provide a space for status Indians to lobby government for more favourable policies, but became the site for action around self-government. I have also attempted to indicate the importance of the internal structure of the organisations and the individuals who led them in defining the role these organisations came to play. In the next section I shall describe how the activities of NAC and the NIB during the 1979-81 period of constitutional negotiation informed their later involvement in the Charlottetown Accord negotiations and the plebiscite campaign.

NAC and the Canadian Constitution

Neither the members of NAC's executive, nor other Canadian feminists, placed the constitution high on their list of priorities until 1979. Divorce law appeared on a list of fourteen areas the federal government was willing to relinquish to provincial control in an effort to appease the Parti Quebecois government that had been elected in 1976¹⁶ (Hosek 1983: 284). Fearing that this would create a patchwork, an uneven and easily manipulated system like that

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¹⁶ After a 1979 First Ministers Conference on the Constitution, only divorce law remained. The premiers and the Prime Minister could not find consensus on any other jurisdictional area.

found in the United States, feminists in English-speaking Canada outside Quebec argued against the decentralisation of family law (Hcsek 1983: 284). Feminists residing in Quebec did not express the same concerns; they had more confidence in the Quebec government's progressive attitudes and more confidence in their own ability to influence policy in Quebec.

When the short-lived government of the Progressive Conservatives under Joe Clark gave way to another period of Liberal rule under Pierre Trudeau in 1980, the process of patriating Canada's constitution and installing within it a charter of rights and freedoms continued with a vengeance. Constitutional renewal was not a new issue in Canada, nor was the idea of a charter of rights new to Trudeau. He had produced a policy paper in 1968 as Minister of Justice in which he advocated a "Canadian Charter of Human Rights," but it was not adopted by the First Ministers (Greene 1989: 38-9). In the period between this first attempt and the patriation process that began in 1979, the Canadian public became more informed and involved in producing a charter that would protect groups with special needs (Greene 1989: 39). During the 1980 referendum campaign in Quebec, Trudeau had convincingly argued that if the people of Quebec voted against proceeding with negotiation of a form of sovereignty-association, he would initiate major constitutional reform in Canada, reform that would appreciate the specificity of Quebec's existence within the Canadian federation (Greene

1989: 39).

While Canadian feminists and their representative organisations did not unanimously or unambiguously support the adoption of a charter of rights, many considered it inevitable. A group that became known as the Ad Hoc Committee of Canadian Women on the Constitution decided to involve themselves as much as they could in the construction of a charter of rights rather than have it thrust upon them. NAC did not orchestrate the lobby for the inclusion of gender equality rights in the proposed charter, but there are several issues that make this an important time for NAC, both in its representational development and how it informs NAC's later involvement in constitutional renewal.

The Ad Hoc Committee of Canadian Women on the Constitution was created at a lunch meeting in Toronto on 27 January 1981, attended by women representing a range of feminist organisations, drawn together by their collective worry over the treatment women were receiving at the hands of the federal government (Kome 1983: 43). This concern grew out of a series of events which followed the federal government's announcement of its plans to patriate the constitution. First, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Lloyd Axworthy, had cautioned women to refrain from public criticism of the federal government's constitutional proposals (Kome 1983: 34). In fact, in a public address Axworthy gave at a Person's Day celebration (which was also

a NAC mid-year meeting on the constitution), he suggested that women "take a 'leap of faith' and trust that the federal government knew what was best for women" (Kome 1983: 34). When he was criticised for the patronising tone of his remarks, Axworthy compounded his offense by responding in an increasingly condescending manner (Kome 1983: 34). Second, when the NAC delegation presented their brief to the hastily convened Special House-Senate Joint Committee on the Constitution, Senator Harry Hays' comments to Lynn McDonald (then president of NAC), Jill Porter, Betsy Carr and McPhedran included the following:

I want to thank you girls for your presentations...We're honoured to have you here. But I wonder why you don't have anything in here for babies or children. All you girls are going to be out working and who's going to look after them? (quoted in Kome 1983: 36).

The final event that cemented feminist resolve to participate in the patriation process was Axworthy's unilateral decision to cancel a planned conference by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) on women and the constitution (Kome 1983: 39). Fearing that the conference would embarrass the federal government, Axworthy recommended regional conferences instead of one highly publicised conference hosted by a federal government advisory council (Kome 1983: 39). Advisory Council president Doris Anderson (whose public image had been established as Chatelaine editor) resigned over the Axworthy decision. The Ad Hoc Committee was formed primarily to organise an

alternative conference, the Butterfly Conference¹⁷, held in Ottawa on the 13-4 February weekend of 1981. It was attended by over 1300 women and gave notice to the federal and provincial governments that Canadian women would not quietly accept their pronouncements.

Even though NAC as an organisation was not directly involved in these events, its position on the constitution and as the largest feminist lobby group was directly affected by their results. Membership in the Ad Hoc Committee and the NAC executive (both present and past) overlapped, providing the former with the resources available to NAC and a direct connection with the largest non-governmental feminist organisation. The Ad Hoc Committee and the constitutional debate had a destructive effect on NAC. While the Butterfly Conference was a resounding success, the acrimonious debate that ensued during the conference (there was no consensus on the advisability of entrenchment of gender equality; for example, women of the First Nations represented by the Native Women's Association of Canada preferred adoption of native self-government to the promotion of gender equality within the Canadian constitution) spilled over to the NAC Annual General Meeting of 13-14 March 1981 (Vickers et al 1993: 115). Resolutions adopted by AGM delegates calling for Axworthy's resignation and a re-evaluation of the role of the CACSW were

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¹⁷ The monarch butterfly was chosen to symbolise the new era of feminist activity and feminists flocked to the conference like Monarchs to Mexico.

seen by the Federation des femmes du Quebec (FFQ) membership as irreconcilable with the Quebec position on the constitution (Kome 1983: 72). NAC not only lost 115 000 members when the FFQ withdrew, it also lost its claim to represent all Canadian women (Kome 1983: 72).

As the patriation period progressed, NAC became more opposed to the government position. NAC president Lynn McDonald, who was not involved in the Ad Hoc Committee and was not convinced that a Charter of Rights and Freedoms would benefit Canadian women¹⁸, was replaced at the end of her term at the 13-4 March 1981 AGM by Jean Wood who took an increasingly hard line against the government (Kome 1983: 75). More division on the NAC executive ensued with the creation of two equally powerful factions, one supporting a plan towards financial self-sufficiency and one that advocated actively soliciting funds from any source, government or otherwise (Vickers et al 1993: 116). This division would not be healed until the acclamation of Doris Anderson as president at the 1982 AGM (Kome 1983: 100).

After securing entrenchment of gender equality in the

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¹⁸ McDonald's short article from Canadian Forum clearly outlined her view of the Charter. She emphatically argued that a charter of rights, protecting individual rights and liberties, would harm the position of women in Canadian society because those who would interpret the rights, that is, the judges and lawyers, were overwhelmingly middle aged, middle class white men (McDonald, 1981: 17-8).

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms", NAC needed to heal its internal rifts. The selection of Anderson was significant for several reasons. Anderson was seen as non-ideological, a pragmatist whose work would be supported by a wide range of groups; her relationship with the media (developed during her tenure as Chatelaine editor) and strong communication skills would be of benefit to NAC; her business experience had provided her with much needed management skills; and she had a history of involvement in equality issues (Appelle 1987: 141). Most important, Anderson was seen as one who could heal NAC. She described NAC in 1982 in the following way:

When I became president, the organization had gone through an awful lot of turmoil and both sides thought I was acceptable. They were looking for someone from the outside who was not from either camp. One camp comprised

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" The result of the lobby led by the Ad Hoc Committee of Canadian Women on the Constitution was two sections of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms:

Section 15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

(2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Section 28. Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

Section 15 would be subject to the override (the so-called "notwithstanding" clause), section 33, but section 28 would not; hence, gender equality was to be absolute in Canada.

the 'expansionists' who were accused of left-wing political union domination, while the other group were considered old liners and contained more business women. There were still people on the executive from both camps (quoted in Appelle: 1987, 142).

NAC survived the period, but not without casualties. The FFO membership returned to NAC, only to withdraw again in 1988 over NAC's position on the Meech Lake Accord. The adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms within the patriated (and renamed) Constitution Act, 1982 gave a sense of closure to women's involvement with the constitution, a sense of victory, though not one without costs.

AFN and the Canadian Constitution

As I noted earlier, the National Indian Brotherhood, during the presidency of Noel Starblanket, had developed an internally cohesive position on the constitution in 1978 and a permanent committee to proceed with it. The organisation did not exhibit the same ambivalence towards the constitution as did NAC. The lobby embarked on by the NIB and two other federal level native political organisations successfully entrenched aboriginal rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (a similar result to the women's lobby), guaranteed them at least two First Ministers Conferences to discuss aboriginal self-government, but most important (especially for these later negotiations) the lobby successfully challenged the "two founding nations" thesis of Canadian development.

When the plan to unilaterally patriate the constitution was announced in September 1980 by Prime Minister Trudeau, the NIB argued against any changes to the constitutional position of First Nations without their participation (Ponting et al 1980: 214). Finding the federal government unreceptive to their concerns, Starblanket orchestrated a trip to England. "NIB's plan called for a trip to England by three hundred Indian chiefs, elders, and band councillors to lobby the British Parliament, Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, and Queen" (Ponting et al 1980: 214). While the tangible results of this lobby were not substantial (they received little support from the British Parliament) the threat of the activity appears to have encouraged the federal government to afford the NIB a "limited participatory role" (as opposed to observer status) in the 1979 First Ministers Conference on the constitution (Ponting et al 1980: 214). Members of the NIB hoped that this participation would become normalised and that the NIB would achieve its objective of achieving greater authority for Indian governments through revisions of both the constitution and the Indian Act (Ponting et al 1980: 215).

Although this objective was not achieved, the NIB-led negotiations yielded two significant results. First, the Charter included explicit recognition of "existing aboriginal rights". However, the wording of the respective sections of

the Charter was a disappointment to NIB²⁰. The recognition of aboriginal rights was a type of success, but members of the NIB felt that the broad definition of "aboriginal" (including Inuit, Metis, non-status and status Indians) undermined importance of treaty rights and denied the historic role of First Nations' relationship with France, Britain and the Canadian federal government (Moss 1980: 86). The wording was decided without NIB involvement and the NIB (and other First Nations) considered it another example of the federal and provincial governments' lack of respect for First Nations, a continual source of frustration for First Nations negotiators (Erasmus 1993: 133). By reneging on the proposed wording of the relevant sections of the Charter, the premiers and the

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²⁰ 25. The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginals of Canada including

(a) any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763; and

(b) any rights or freedoms that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired

35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

(2) In this Act, "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Metis peoples of Canada.

(3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

Section 25 (b) and section 35 (3) and (4) are the product of the Constitution Amendment Proclamation, 1983.

Prime Minister were deemed by the NIB as untrustworthy and disrespectful of First Nations.

The second symbolically-important result of the NIB lobby was the guarantee of at least two First Ministers Conferences to discuss aboriginal self-government. The two became four. In 1983, the first conference was used to clarify the terms of sections 25 and 35 of the Charter (Erasmus 1993: 134). Many negotiators were hopeful that the ensuing conferences would produce a working model of self-government, but after one day of the final conference in 1987, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney threw his hands in the air and claimed defeat. They still lacked a functional definition of self-government, and the federal and provincial governments could not be expected to proceed with implementation of so nebulous a plan.

Georges Erasmus, Grand Chief of the re-named Assembly of First Nations²¹ until 1991, refers to the constitutional process as a "dead-end," devoid of the possibility of any real change (Erasmus 1993: 131). Erasmus argues that the post-patriation period (1982-7) was one in which First Nations "seem[ed] to be included in the constitution" but Prime Minister Mulroney's refusal to continue the process signalled the end of that period (Erasmus 1993: 134). Because the

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²¹ According to Paul Chartrand, the 1982 name change from the National Indian Brotherhood to the Assembly of First Nations signifies the beginning of a clearly articulated period of Aboriginal nationalism. It is not so much an appropriation of a newly popular term "First Nations" but an articulation of the historic relationship of First Nations with the British crown and then the Canadian state.

series of First Ministers' Conferences were ultimately unsuccessful and because they were discontinued quite dismissively by Mulroney, Erasmus suggests that the process had been an empty gesture meant to wear First Nations down with consultation and negotiation (Erasmus 1993: 134). The sense was that there was no real intention by the federal government to establish First Nations self-government. Less than a month later, the next proposed amendment to the Constitution Act, 1982 was conceived with an undefined term, "distinct society" included as the description of Quebec's role within the Canadian federation. The irony was not lost on the aboriginal communities.

Because the Quebec government had not been a signatory to the agreement that produced the Constitution Act, 1982, the Constitution Amendment, 1987 (popularly known as the Meech Lake Accord) was negotiated to bring Quebec into the Canadian "family," in the words of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney "with honour and enthusiasm." Based on the proposals of the Quebec Liberal Party in 1986, the Meech Lake Accord addressed five basic issues: recognition of Quebec as a "distinct society," increased provincial control over immigration, increased provincial participation in the selection of Supreme Court justices, a decrease in federal spending power, and a provincial veto on constitutional amendments. This constitutional amendment held no promise for substantive gains for either NAC or the AFN, but affected their organisations

nonetheless.

NAC and the Meech Lake Accord

NAC played a similar role in the ratification period of the Meech Lake Accord²² as it had during the 1979-81 negotiations, but there are important differences in both the process and outcome. I shall focus my attention on these differences. First, because the Accord was negotiated by the First Ministers with little public consultation (and argued to be a "seamless web" that would disintegrate if re-opened for amendment), neither NAC nor any other groups contributed to the creation of the Accord. Second, the specifics of the Accord and the concerns raised by NAC magnified the differences between feminists in Quebec and those outside Quebec. Finally, there was no repeat of the massive women's lobby of 1981. Although the Ad Hoc Committee reappeared during the process and attempted to pass a resolution at the NAC Annual General Meeting to unanimously oppose the Accord, neither the Committee nor NAC generated a groundswell of interest.

Although the executive of NAC and the FFQ attempted to avoid a repeat of the internal crisis of 1981 by producing a

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²² The amending formula adopted for the ratification of the Meech Lake Accord necessitated that all legislatures pass the constitutional amendment in exactly the same form within three years of the first legislature's vote. So, because the Accord was accepted in a vote in the Quebec National Assembly on 23 June 1987, the timetable was set; the Accord must be voted into law by 23 June 1990, or it would fail.

compromise position paper acceptable to both feminists inside and outside Quebec, their attempt failed. While there were concerns raised with other clauses of the Accord, (for example, NAC argued for a clear definition of "national standards" before adopting a constitutional amendment that curtailed the federal government's ability to create new social programs, such as a child care program), it was the anticipated effect of the "distinct society" clause on the rights of Quebec women that became the most dramatic point of difference (Roberts 1988: 12). It was not that NAC (or other feminists) disagreed with the recognition of Quebec as distinct, they merely wanted gender equality explicitly protected (Roberts 1988: 12).

The issue of most concern both to member groups of NAC and to the FFQ membership was the process behind the Accord, argued to be undemocratic in nature, and the contemptible manner in which the members of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the 1987 Constitutional Accord treated women and their concerns (Roberts 1988: 12; Baines 1987: 807). Barbara Roberts recounts that

[r]epresentatives of Canadian women's groups note that with few exceptions, most politicians on the Special Committee or otherwise involved in the Accord have not taken seriously, responded to, or acted upon the concerns expressed by these groups about weaknesses, ambiguities, or possible dangers to national programs and women's equality rights in the Accord (Roberts 1988: 12).

These circumstances did not bring women together as they had in 1981, but drove them further apart. NAC and other

feminist organisations argued that the Accord detrimentally affected the gains of 1981 and, because they placed more trust in the federal government to protect and enhance the rights of women, they argued that the Accord must not pass. But the FFQ, and other Quebec feminist organisations, expressed less concern over the decentralisation of social programs (since the 1960s, successive governments in Quebec had been more receptive to feminist recommendations than either the federal government or the other provincial governments) (Vickers et al 1993: 276).

The result of the Meech Lake period was that the FFQ withdrew its membership from NAC again. It has yet to return. The Accord was not ratified, but this in no way appears to have healed the divisions between Quebec feminists and "rest of Canada" feminists. However, this period did inform the approach taken by NAC during the Charlottetown Accord negotiation period in which it established a more clearly articulated policy position on Quebec and its people's right to self-determination.

AFN and the Meech Lake Accord

Just as excluded, and perhaps more openly snubbed by both the process and the substance of the Meech Lake Accord than NAC, members of the Assembly of First Nations found a role nonetheless. The Accord was formally defeated by Chief Elijah Harper in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly on a technical

point of parliamentary procedure. Elected in 1981, Harper was the first Treaty Indian to sit in the Manitoba legislature. Ironically, Harper used the formal rules of the government derived from the European colonisers of Canada (those with whom Harper and his ancestors have been in conflict) to defeat a constitutional amendment that arguably ignored the First Nations.²³ In an article he wrote for The Parliamentarian Harper explained his actions

I was not simply saying "no" to the Meech Lake Accord. I was saying "no" to an entire constitution that did not respect the aboriginal peoples. I was saying "no" to a process that locked us in the back yards of our country. I was saying "no" to hundreds of years of betrayal and disappointment. I was saying "no" to a future of the same thing all over again. (Harper 1991: 181).

Harper did not vote no as a representative of the AFN, but his advisors included both Phil Fontaine (Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, one of the AFN's member organisations) and Ovide Mercredi (Vice-Chief of the AFN for Manitoba) and he had decided that "[i]t was time to help [his] people" (Harper 1991: 179). While it was the First Peoples that Harper had decided to help, his action was celebrated by all "Charter Canadians" who felt ignored by the Meech Lake process and who had feared that the Amendment would

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²³ According to a rule of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly all proposals to amend the constitution must be accompanied by a period of public consultation unless the legislators unanimously agree to waive this process. Harper merely voted "no" to the recommendation that the Manitoba legislators proceed directly to a vote on the Accord, without hearing the views of the public.

undermine the gains of the Charter²⁴.

NAC and the Charlottetown Accord

The 1990-2 period of constitutional negotiation, the result of which was the Charlottetown Accord defeated in a national plebiscite on 26 October 1992, was quite different than either of the preceding periods. In an effort to correct the secrecy and elitism of the Meech Lake process (the more cynical of analyses would argue that it was merely to silence the critics of the Meech Lake process) the federal and provincial governments consulted the Canadian public a great deal.

Kathy Brock divides the 1990-2 period into three phases. During the first phase Canadians were consulted by all governments. This phase began with two reports commissioned by the Quebec government: the Allaire Report of the governing Liberal Party and the Belanger-Campeau Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Quebec (Brock 1993: 29). Keith Spicer, seconded from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, chaired the federal government's Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future,

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²⁴ Political scientist Alan Cairns coined the phrase "Charter Canadians" to describe the social groups that identify with particular sections of the Charter, especially section 15 and section 25, 28, and 35. Cairns argues that to succeed a constitutional amendment must reconcile the interests of the Charter Canadians with the legislators who represent the traditional cleavages of Canada (regions and French-speaking and English-speaking groups).

consulting over 400 000 "ordinary Canadians" (Brock 1993: 29). The federal government produced a package of proposed amendments, Shaping Canada's Future Together, and invited response from Canadians through a travelling joint Senate and House of Commons committee, the Beaudoin-Dobbie Committee on the Renewal of Canada, and a series of constitutional conferences attended by "experts," from both government and non-governmental organisations and a select group of "ordinary Canadians" (Brock 1993: 29).

After the provinces and territories had completed a similar process (of varying degrees of comprehensiveness and enthusiasm) the second phase, the negotiations among the political elite, began. While this phase may outwardly resemble the negotiation of the Meech Lake Accord, Brock argues that it was, in fact different, both because the negotiations included the leaders of four nationally recognised aboriginal groups (the AFN, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the Native Council of Canada and the Metis National Council) and because the public was kept involved, at least as observers (Brock 1993: 29). The extensive round of talks that occurred between 12 March and 28 August 1992 produced what came to be popularly known as the Charlottetown Accord and ushered in the third phase, which was a non-binding referendum (or plebiscite) through which the Canadian electorate registered its opinion of the Accord (Brock 1993: 29).

NAC's involvement in the Charlottetown period changed as each phase progressed. As an organisation, and as a collection of interested individuals, NAC was very active in the first phase. It presented briefs to the Beaudoin-Dobbie Committee, produced comprehensive critiques of both the federal government's proposals and the Committee Report, and actively participated in (some say "hijacked") the conferences. Because Judy Rebick was the first paid, full-time president of NAC, she was able to provide high profile leadership, first as a critic of the federal proposals and then as a member of the "No" forces during the plebiscite campaign (Rebick also wrote many journalistic pieces, initially arguing for women's representation during the first two phases and then suggesting that women vote against the Charlottetown Accord²⁵). Because Rebick's request for NAC involvement in the second phase (the negotiations among the First Ministers and aboriginal leaders) was denied, NAC did not actively participate in the creation of the Accord (Brock 1993: 30). The NAC response to the Beaudoin-Dobbie Committee Report comments on this position as outsider.

Today the entire country sits and waits while male²⁶ politicians once again retreat behind closed doors to negotiate provincial interests. We have a sense of

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²⁵ See for example "Why Not Women?" in Canadian Forum. (October 1992): 14-5.

²⁶ This is an inaccurate description of the negotiators. Rosemarie Kuptana represented the Inuit Tapirisat during the negotiations and Mary Ellen Turpel was the primary constitutional advisor to Ovide Mercredi of the AFN.

foreboding that much of the work we and thousands of others did during the Constitutional Conferences will be lost in the power-brokering of politicians (Rebick and Cameron 1992: 1).

This position (that the process was being taken away from them and other "ordinary Canadians"), and NAC's subsequent active role in the campaign to defeat the Accord in the plebiscite vote (especially Rebick's active role on the "No" side), demonstrates the evolution of NAC as a political force. Vickers et al suggest that the character of NAC's participation during the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accord periods indicates a shift from a "status of women" approach to one of "feminist politics." They define this as a move from a largely liberal-feminist perspective, closely linked to political parties, to a more nuanced analysis of issues as they affect women (Vickers et al 1993: 274). NAC avoided the divisiveness of both the patriation and Meech Lake period by clearly articulating a position in 1992 which encompassed the "three nations" approach to Canada, recognising the First Nation as founding peoples (Vickers et al 1993: 274). Perhaps the long lead-up to the Charlottetown Accord allowed the NAC executive to anticipate it. Or, perhaps the involvement on the executive of many previously marginalised groups (immigrant women, women of colour, poor women, lesbians) lessened the Accord's potential to polarise NAC into camps of Quebec feminists and feminists from the "Rest of Canada." A wide range of perspectives and issues were heard, identifying problems with both the process and the content of

the Accord that did not polarise the member groups of NAC along linguistic or geographic lines. The fact that the FFQ had not returned to NAC as a member and that most Quebec feminists also opposed the Accord, also helped NAC avoid any confrontation. Whatever the reason, NAC was able to produce a thoughtful and comprehensive critique of the Accord (Vickers et al 1993: 277-8). Rather than attempting to maintain a multi-partisan position, NAC under Rebick appeared more nonpartisan (at least on the issue of the constitution), finding its own voice and developing its own position, rather than attempting to accommodate those of the government and other political parties.

AFN and the Charlottetown Accord

The Assembly of First Nations' participation in the Charlottetown Accord was nothing less than a coup according to many who have followed aboriginal politics in Canada. Elijah Harper's defeat of the Meech Lake Accord and the 1990 Oka Crisis have been identified by some analysts as the real impetus for the federal government proposal for aboriginal self-government in its 1991 proposals (rather than a recognition by the federal government of a need to redress historic injustices) (Jhappan 1992b: 7). While some have argued that the 1991 federal government proposal for aboriginal self-government should have been immediately accepted by First Nations, there were significant differences

among these proposals, the AFN's position and the final provision found in the Accord.

By the time Shaping Canada's Future, Together was released, Ovide Mercredi had been elected Grand Chief of the AFN. Elected in the summer of 1991, Mercredi was described as a moderate, a conciliator, able to move comfortably between native elders and the constitutional lawyers who were re-creating the constitution (Richardson 1991: 6). Mercredi used the constitutional negotiations as a means of moving forward First Nations' goals of autonomy. Led by Mercredi, the AFN and other First Nations organisations spoke directly to the weaknesses they saw in the self-government process described in the federal government's proposals.

Briefly summarised, these concerns focused on the two forms of limits placed on aboriginal governments and the form the government would take. First, aboriginal governments would be subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Jhappan 1992a: 129). While this provision would protect First Nations citizens against unconstitutional actions of the federal or provincial governments, some of the rights protected by the Charter could run afoul of the practices of First Nations employing traditional forms of government (Jhappan 1992a: 129-30). A constitutionally guaranteed right of each Canadian citizen to participate in periodic elections cannot comfortably coexist with an election process used by matrilineal societies in which a designated group of women

select a (usually male) leader (Jhappan 1992a: 130). Second, the proposal cryptically acknowledges that "'many federal and provincial laws of general application would also continue to apply'" (quoted in Jhappan 1992a: 129). Without detailed explanation of which laws in what circumstances, this limitation was unacceptable to the AFN.

Most important to the AFN was the designation of First Nations right to govern themselves as "justiciable" and subject to legal interpretation after a ten year negotiation period. Mercredi and the AFN reacted strongly against the federal government's failure to recognise First Nations as "inherently self-governing," with Mercredi stating that "we have to reject the federal proposal (Jhappan 1992a: 138). The important distinction between "justiciable" self-government and "inherent" self-government is the site of defining authority. For First Nations functioning under justiciable self-government the ultimate authority resides with the Canadian state and the laws produced are subject to Canadian law. This situation is analogous to the functioning of provincial governments which, according to the division of powers within the Canadian federal state, preside over areas of jurisdiction, but are ultimately subject to Canadian constitutional law as interpreted by the Supreme Court. Conversely, First Nations recognised as inherently self-governing possess the final authority and are seen as in a nation-to-nation relationship with the Canadian state.

Beginning in August 1991, the AFN engaged in a process through which residents of First Nations communities were consulted on a wide range of issues that pertained to self-government and the AFN role in constitutional renewal. A series of eighty community hearings and four constituency assemblies (Elders, youth, women and off-reserve Aboriginal people) produced a document called To the Source: First Nations Circle on the Constitution that was released in April 1992 (AFN 1992: iii). The Commissioners who conducted the consultations and produced the report summarise their findings as the following:

The people have said that two fundamental changes are required. First, AFN must take the position that the Canadian constitution should be rewritten to reflect First Nations principles and values of respect, caring, sharing, and strength. Second, we need structural changes to First Nations communities to ensure that the rebuilding happens at the grassroots level, and we need reimplementation of self-government for our people (AFN 1992: vii).

The report's recommendations focus on reclaiming the nation-to-nation relationship of First Nations and the two levels of government in Canada.

The proposed self-government provision found within the Charlottetown Accord was more comprehensive than the 1991 model, recognising self-government as an inherent right of all First Nations, rather than a legislative power delegated by the federal or provincial governments, awaiting judicial definition (Jhappan 1992a: 15). While leaders of four aboriginal organisations participated in the negotiations of

the second phase, when the specifics of the self-government plan and the other aspects of the Accord were set out, Ovide Mercredi, Grand-Chief of the AFN, provided a leadership role (and a focal point for both negotiators and the media). The ultimate defeat of the Accord put the future of self-government (and Mercredi's approach to it) in jeopardy.

Conclusions

What I have attempted to do with this chapter is contextualise the positions taken by Rebeck and Mercredi in 1992 by describing the circumstances that predated and helped shape them. I have provided these historical sketches to identify, in part, why they approached the plebiscite campaign the way they did, to describe how historical precedents affected their involvement and helped determine their positions. I have also described how NAC and the AFN have evolved and grown over the past twenty years. I have necessarily provided a partial picture of the roles NAC and the AFN have played, highlighting some events and ignoring others. I have not considered the complex situation of the women of the First Nations and the relationship they have had through their representative organisation, the Native Women's Association of Canada, with both NAC and the AFN. I have not provided an analysis of the positions taken or the roles played by the two organisations throughout the years, but have merely attempted to place them within their appropriate historical context, to set the stage

for the plebiscite campaign and the means by which they were interpreted in the news.

CHAPTER THREE

Making Mercredi

Introduction

When the campaign leading up to the 26 October 1992 plebiscite officially began on 9 September 1992, Ovide Mercredi was already known to the Canadian public. Since his election as Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) in July 1991, Mercredi had been the subject of cover stories in most newsmagazines²⁷ and his leadership had been written about in many Canadian newspapers, including The Globe and Mail. In the analysis that follows, I shall examine the ideological discourses that run through The Globe and Mail's coverage of Mercredi. I have chosen six ideological discourses to trace through the reporting of Mercredi. While other discourses could be found, I have selected these six because they allow me to examine the ideological content of the reporting from several angles. The first two discourses I investigate are linked and both could be housed under a "news discourse" umbrella, but I have separated them. The first, the discourse of objectivity, is almost naturalised within news reporting and as such, is an important

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²⁷ For example: "Drumbeats of Rage," in Maclean's (16 March 1992: 14-7); "Chief Justice," in Saturday Night (March 1992: 15-7); "Selling Self-government Through Guilt," in Alberta Report (13 January 1992: 8-12); "'Vive les autochtones libres!'" in L'Actualite (1er decembre 1991: 30-6).

underpinning to the credibility given to The Globe and Mail's presentation of Mercredi. News reporting of elections has evolved into a particular discursive form and the federal government's decision to frame the plebiscite into a "Yes/No" choice helped then frame the news coverage into an election form which subsequently contributed to the construction of Mercredi as the leader of the First Nations "team" or party. The third discourse I examine is the discourse of constitutional renewal and its emphasis on compromise and negotiations among statesmen. The fourth, fifth and sixth discourses considered are linked and contingent on each other. I examine the discourse of race or aboriginality as it applies to the representation of Mercredi. I then comment on the privileging of the discourse of self-government over all other aspects of race within the context of the Charlottetown Accord. Finally, I consider the discourse of gender as it applies to the representation of Mercredi within The Globe and Mail. Another naturalised, or invisible discourse, gender does not appear to have a role in the image of Mercredi, but in fact, pervades much of the form and content of the reporting.

Discourse of Objectivity²⁸

The first ideological discourse I examine, the discourse of objectivity, forms the base of our contemporary understanding of the role of news media in our society. Most clearly articulated in North America, the ideology of an objective press is based on a set of assumptions about journalistic distance and professionalism. The notion of an objective press becomes an ideological one because the objectivity presupposed to the functioning of quality news media is illusory. I shall examine several aspects of this ideological discourse in detail because this is an over-riding discourse that informs the representation of both Mercredi and Rebick. First, I shall identify some of the characteristics of the ideology of objectivity. Second, I shall examine the application of the discourse of objectivity within the context of The Globe and Mail. Finally, I shall demonstrate how the ideological discourse of objectivity informed the representation of Mercredi during the plebiscite campaign.

Journalistic objectivity is maintained by remaining neutral, distanced from a story or a particular aspect of an event; by drawing information from credible sources; by reporting only observable fact in a news story (and excluding

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²⁸ In her MA Thesis, CBC's and Radio-Canada's Structured Mediation of the Constitutional Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of the Journal's 'Untying the Knot' and Le Point's 'Le Nationalisme Quebecois', Michelle Gauthier's analysis of the ideological discourses at work in a related discursive site was instructive, particularly her examination of the ideological discourse of objectivity.

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PRECISION^{SM} RESOLUTION TARGETS

"subjective evaluations or opinions"); by presenting both sides of a story; and by presenting the information in a standardised form, the "news story" (Hackett 1991: 82). Dornan argues that "[t]he ethos of objectivity is essential to the creation of newspaper empires" that risk alienating either potential readers or government regulators if they appear "to propagandise the population" (Dornan 1991: 155). The combination of these practices within a context of concentrated ownership produces an ideology of objectivity so naturalised in contemporary North American society that it virtually disappears. Journalistic objectivity becomes ideologically informed because it presents a particularistic perspective as a universal truth or objective fact.

The consequences of the ideological discourse of objectivity are many. I shall highlight a few that refer specifically to The Globe and Mail. First, Taras and others have noted that a "right wing shift at the senior levels at The Globe and Mail in 1989 has reverberated throughout the newspaper" (Taras 1990: 48). A shift that included "institut[ing] sweeping changes in the news-room...to [make the newspaper] more appealing to an upscale, business-oriented readership" (Taras 1990: 9). But, it is the paper's "good gray [sic] respectability" that its own writers describe as the basis of The Globe and Mail's influence (Hugh Winsor quoted in Taras 1990: 88). As the "jewel in the crown of the Canadian newspaper industry" and the most prestigious holding

of the Thomson newspaper empire, The Globe and Mail exists within the context described by Dornan. The professional ideology of objectivity allows The Globe and Mail to represent itself as objective and impartial, thus avoiding any scrutiny of the particular interpretation it presents for its readers.

That "good gray respectability" comes from The Globe and Mail's long history as a "high brow" newspaper (this reputation predates the newspaper's present form; it originally referred to The Globe one of two newspapers that merged to form the newspaper that exists today). It also stems from The Globe and Mail's scrupulous adherence to the ideology of objectivity through professional news practices. An examination of the content of The Globe and Mail during the plebiscite campaign demonstrates the consequences of the ideological discourse of objectivity. First, while a newspaper's editorial and news content are considered to be two distinct entities, The Globe and Mail editorial support of the Accord demonstrates the ideological context in which the news content was produced.

It was not until 22 October that The Globe and Mail unequivocally announced its support for the Accord (under the headline "Yes to Diversity, Yes to the Accord), but this was not the first instance of editorial support. As the 22 October editorial notes, "[i]t is [The Globe and Mail's editorial] view, expressed in this column in recent weeks, that the Charlottetown accord maintains a rational balance

between individual rights 'guaranteed' in the Charter, and the recognitions of Quebec and the aboriginal peoples" (The Globe and Mail 22 October 1992: A30). Ten editorials published during the plebiscite campaign argued in support of various aspects of the constitutional package. While none of these editorials explicitly articulated support of the Accord, they were framed as arguments in favour of the content, or at least the intent, of the Accord. For example, the 3 October 1992 editorial responds directly to former Prime Minister Trudeau's criticisms of the Accord, arguing that "[the Accord] would be worth opposing if [Trudeau's analysis] were true. It isn't" (The Globe and Mail 3 October 1992: D6). On 14 October, the editorial noted that

Quebeckers should be sure that they understand one message from the rest of Canada about the outcome of the referendum. The possibility of negotiating a 'better deal' for Quebec within Canada- -meaning a greater transfer of federal powers to Quebec than exists in the Charlottetown accord- -is extremely remote...Quebec effectively asserted itself at Charlottetown, both as a province and as a pillar of Canada. The choice of Yes would be evidence of that achievement" (The Globe and Mail 14 October 1992: A22).

Although not acknowledging the source of the concerns, the 15 October editorial responds to the concerns raised by both the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and NAC, noting that "[s]ome people...feel that Charlottetown weakens the 'guarantees' in the 1982 Charter for aboriginal individuals who may live under aboriginal governments in Canada. The weight of the evidence suggests not" (The Globe and Mail 15 October 1992: A30). These examples are not presented to argue

that The Globe and Mail ownership or editorial staff shaped or determined the content of its news reporting. Rather, they are presented to demonstrate that the news content was produced in a particular ideological climate. Further, these editorials present arguments that are in "the national interest," therefore, The Globe and Mail can claim to maintain its objectivity and neutrality because the editorial decision to support the Accord is based on reasoned analysis of the evidence.

Another aspect of the ideological discourse of objectivity is the adherence to the journalistic practice of providing a balanced story. This practice presents two concerns. First, as Parenti argues "the rule [of providing balanced stories, employing sources from two opposing perspectives] overlooks the fact that both sides may not be all sides, and that important but less visible interests...are habitually shut out of the news" (Parenti 1986: 218). While at least partly constructed by the federal government's decision to frame the plebiscite in a Yes/No form, the news practice of providing balanced coverage tended to present it as a conflictual debate between two competing interests. This form tended to erase the differences between those placed on either side of the debate and focus the press attention on the quantity of coverage provided to each side rather than on the quality of the information disseminated to the news audience.

The ideological discourse of objectivity informs the

representation of Mercredi in several ways. First, by providing a discursive site that presents a particular perspective as universal, the discourse encourages a reading of Mercredi as the "credible source" on self-government. The combination of journalistic objectivity and pressures of deadlines produce news that revolves almost exclusively around the activities of Mercredi. While this presents one interpretation and one approach to the Accord, in the absence of alternatives, it is constructed as the universal perspective. In a talk at McGill University, "Mercredi warned that first nations 'will interpret a No vote as a rejection of the aboriginal people and their rights. There is absolutely no other way of looking at it'" (Picard 24 October 1992: A7). Because The Globe and Mail, and other news outlets, produced news reporting that centred on Mercredi, both the issues addressed and the perspective presented within the news appear to be objective fact.

The journalistic practice of producing balanced reporting also informs the representation of Mercredi. Balanced reporting is an aspect of the ideological discourse of news that further encourages the presentation of partial news coverage as a complete whole. News selection practices couched in terms of objectivity presented Mercredi's involvement as the entire news discourse of self-government and First Nations perspectives on the Accord. Attention to presenting balanced reporting further entrenched this focus.

Two sides are presented in the news reporting: Mercredi and opposition to Mercredi. On 8 October, The Globe and Mail published a report describing Mercredi's lobby of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

Ovide Mercredi appeared like a man betrayed yesterday as he met stiff resistance to the Charlottetown accord in his home province...He warned that Indian division on the Charlottetown package will undermine the all-too-soft support for the deal among non-native Canadians (Roberts 8 October 1992: A7).

Because the news frame had already been established, this report appears to represent the interests of member organisations of the AFN as the perspectives of all First Nations peoples. It is unclear if "Indian division" refers to deviation by any First Nations peoples or if it refers only to the position of the chiefs of Manitoba who were "set to reject the deal" (Roberts 8 October 1992: A7).

Discourse of Election News

A related ideological discourse is the reporting of the democratic election. The discourse of election news is significant, both because of the importance of periodic elections in liberal-democracies such as Canada, and the primacy afforded election campaigns by the news media. Because heterogeneous representative democracies provide their citizens with few opportunities to participate in their governance "[c]ampaigns are signal events in contemporary representative democracies" (Fletcher and Everett 1991: 181). The right to participate in periodic elections is entrenched

in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as one of the "Democratic Rights."

In specific reference to the process of constitutional renewal in Canada, Kathy Brock suggests that the decision to pursue ratification of the Accord through a "non-binding referendum" was an attempt "to address the problem of political legitimacy [because...p]ublic ratification deflected charges of elitism and illustrated the confidence of the leaders in the deal" (Brock 1993: 30). Thus, the election-type format of the Accord's ratification was chosen to reflect the importance placed on periodic elections as a form of democratic participation and to distance this most recent attempt at constitutional renewal from the previous ones, especially the Meech Lake Accord.

Partly influenced by the federal government's decision, the news media, including The Globe and Mail, quickly framed their coverage of the plebiscite into a discursive form that centred on the notion of an election. And, while voter behaviour research does not find conclusive correlations between news coverage and election results, "more than two-thirds [of respondents in a 1977 study of Ontario voters] turned to the media to find out the main issues in the campaign" (Fletcher and Everett 1991: 182). It could be assumed that The Globe and Mail's reputation for "good gray respectability" and as Canada's "newspaper of record" would afford it a position of influence in the discourse of election

news.

Frederick Fletcher and other media analysts identify several key aspects to the discourse of the election: the emphasis on providing "fair and equitable" coverage of the three main parties, to the virtual exclusion of minor parties; the focus on the party leaders at the expense of local candidates; the use of "horse-race" journalism; and a "negative tone" (Fletcher and Everett 1991: 195-9). It also tends to produce coverage that pits leader against leader. Perhaps a sign of the increasing dominance of television in election coverage, the discourse of election news tends to frame political parties (as represented by their leaders) as confronting each other (Fletcher and Everett 1991: 201). While no conclusive evidence is available, this trend seems to be linked to the media's general preference for "bad news" and the nature of television (Fletcher and Everett 1991: 201). Television seems to tend "'to seek out the confrontational aspects of party strategies'" (Soderland et al quoted in Fletcher and Everett 1991: 201). The combination of these factors results in a news discourse that emphasises the performance of relatively few individuals in direct confrontation.

The plebiscite coverage closely resembled the discourse of election news. Most significant was the focus on leaders and the "horse-race." A consequence of The Globe and Mail employing this discursive form to explain the plebiscite and

place it in a known context, was the construction of Mercredi as the personification of self-government. Horse-race journalism involves tracking the performance of high profile individuals, or leaders, and Mercredi possessed characteristics and qualifications that made him an appropriate choice.

Because the plebiscite was not fought on partisan grounds (all three main parties supported the Accord), the news media could not focus on the leaders of the three main national political parties as they would in a national election. Instead they turned to individuals seen to represent the interests of a perspective or issue embodied in the Accord (or opposition to the Accord). Almost without exception the news media selected Mercredi as the personification of self-government. Within the discourse of election news, Mercredi possesses many qualities that make him an appropriate choice. For example, as one of the negotiators, he possesses a legitimacy and connection to the Accord that makes him a credible source of information and analysis. As the elected leader of a First Nations organisation, he is seen to represent a sizable constituency with a vested interest in the ratification of the Accord. While many factors contributed to this selection (some of which I examine in greater detail in later sections of this chapter), what I wish to emphasise here are the consequences of applying the ideological discourse of election news to the plebiscite campaign. This placed the

campaign (and by association the Accord) in a recognisable context and it contributed to presenting the campaign within a particular news frame.

One of the consequences of this discourse is the virtual silence (within the news discourse) of other First Nations peoples, including those who also participated in the negotiations. For example, while there were 22 references to Mercredi in the 36 articles that referred to self-government in any substantive way published in The Globe and Mail, there were only three references to Rosmarie Kuptana, president of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. Second, applying the discourse of election news to the plebiscite frames the First Nations involvement into a body analogous to a political party. Similar to Fletcher and Everett's argument that "fair and equitable coverage given to the three main parties" tends to lump minor parties all together, attaching the issue of self-government to one individual lumps all First Nations together (Fletcher and Everett 1991: 195). As with elections, emphasis on the horse-race among leaders pushes the issues of concern from the front pages and perhaps almost entirely from the campaign. This is exemplified in The Globe and Mail coverage. Other than one long and extremely dense backgrounder (part of a five part series titled "Understanding the Referendum"), there was virtually no coverage of the substance of the self-government provision. The emphasis was on Mercredi's ability to "sell it" to his constituency and the wider Canadian

population.

Finally, the negative tone described by Fletcher and Everett is also apparent. Mercredi is often quoted as speaking directly to the criticisms expressed by those who oppose the Accord, both Natives and non-Natives. For example, when speaking to a contingent of Quebec chiefs considering boycotting the Quebec referendum or opposing the Accord, "Mr. Mercredi warned that if the agreement is defeated in Quebec, sovereignty could follow and the process of reconciliation between Quebec and the native communities would be broken" (Seguin 26 September 1992: A4). In response to an argument put forward by Phil Fontaine, Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, in which Fontaine asserted that even if the Accord is rejected, the self-government "offer is still on the table...Mr. Mercredi...suggested that this position is ludicrous, reckless and dangerous" (Roberts 9 October 1992: A4). With specific reference to NWAC and a number of AFN chiefs, on 14 October, The Globe and Mail reported that "[n]ative leaders have begun chipping away at the credibility of aboriginal groups that oppose the Charlottetown accord" (Matas 14 October 1992: A7). Matas further attributes to Mercredi and "other prominent native leaders" a confrontational comment that NWAC's legal action to stop the plebiscite stems from an interest "in promoting its own organization and not the concerns of traditional aboriginal women or aboriginal people" (Matas 14 October 1992: A7).

Mercredi is also portrayed as directly confronting non-Native opposition. In this aspect of the discourse of election news, Mercredi's comments are directed at both those high profile individuals opposing the Accord and non-Native Canadians. "Calling him an 'obstacle' to native people, Ovide Mercredi...challenged Reform Party Leader Preston Manning to a public debate" (The Globe and Mail 9 October 1992: A5) in response to Manning's "unsparing attack on the aboriginal self-government package" (Cernetig 5 October 1992: A1)". Late in the campaign, when speaking to McGill students, Mercredi "answered the complaints of many of the deal's opponents...and then sent them a challenge. 'Why should you tell me to wait, to wait until you perfect your society until our rights are recognized?'" (Picard 24 October 1992: A7). In this same article, Mercredi is reported as having also "warned [voters] that first nations 'will interpret a No vote as a rejection of the aboriginal people and their rights'" (Picard 24 October 1992: A7). The Globe and Mail traces Mercredi's activities encouraging support for the Accord, including his response to opposition, but does not provide nuanced, substantive analyses of the opposition or his responses to it.

Discourse of Constitutional Renewal

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²⁹ It is of note that the original Reform comment appears on page A1, but Mercredi's response appears on page A5).

As I noted in Chapter Two, the discourse of constitutional renewal in Canada has, until quite recently, revolved around the competing interests of governments and reconciling the interests of Quebec within the Canadian federal state. While the entrenchment of the Charter of Rights in the patriated constitution brought about a break in that discourse, the following "round" of negotiations (the Meech Lake Round) seemed to return it to its original form. There are several characteristics to the ideological discourse of constitutional renewal. I shall limit my examination to three aspects as they apply to the representation of Mercredi. First, I shall examine its ability (or inability) to accommodate the articulation of competing forms of nationalism (Canadian, Quebec and First Nations) within a discourse that emphasises compromise and unity. Second, I shall consider the portrayal of the Accord as a historic consensus among leaders. A compromise of such heroic proportions has never been produced and shall never occur again. My interest in this aspect of the discourse of constitutional renewal is two-fold: Mercredi's participation in this aspect of the discourse changes during the campaign and the over-riding metaphor of "unity" stems from this ideological discourse. Finally, I shall examine the description of First Nations involvement in the creation of the Accord. This aspect is not consistent with the description of the Accord as a historic compromise because it seems to describe First Nations involvement as a

good start. I wish to explore the internal contradictions of this ideological discourse and consider if they are reconciled within the text of The Globe and Mail.

Because it is not the focus of this analysis and because it has been examined in detail elsewhere, I shall not consider the tensions between Canadian and Quebec nationalisms, but shall only consider the capacity of the discourse of constitutional renewal to accommodate the interjection of a third form of nationalism. Like all ideological discourses, the discourse of constitutional renewal is not static and shifts with changes in the political culture. But, it appeared quite brittle when Mercredi began using the language of sovereignty to describe First Nations right to self-determination.

While the substance of the Accord may contain provisions to recognise the three forms of sovereignty and national identity, The Globe and Mail coverage appears to describe a conflict between Quebec and First Nations sovereignty. On several occasions the tensions between these two forms of sovereignty become part of the discourse. Although the AFN commissioners who produced To the Source recommended that "the French language and culture be recognized, protected, and promoted throughout Canada," there is no overt acknowledgement of Quebec nationalism in their document (AFN 1992: 54). Mercredi is quoted in The Globe and Mail using the apparent contradictions between Québec and First Nations' nationalism

and the residual tensions from the Oka Crisis to argue in favour of the Accord. "'I would rather deal with the government that is prepared to recognise our rights now [the Quebec Liberal government] than the government that tells you: 'I will deal with you after secession' [the Parti Quebecois]'" (Seguin 26 September 1992). On two occasions Parti Quebecois Leader Jacques Parizeau is brought directly into the debate. First, with reference to the First Nations request to determine the extent of First Nations support of the Accord by counting their votes separately from the general population, Parizeau "warned that he [would] oppose any special separate tally of votes. 'If there are people who don't want to vote, we can't force them...In Quebec, there's one referendum for everyone'" (Picard 25 September 1992: A5). Second, Ontario Premier Bob Rae interprets Parizeau's position. "'[H]e believes in sovereignty, but only for Quebec.'" (Mackie 15 October 1992: A7). This aspect of the discourse of constitutional renewal raises the spectre of the unknown properties of a sovereign Quebec, emphasising the tensions between the two forms of sovereignty and Mercredi's position within the discourse. By using Parizeau to speak on behalf of Quebec, (instead of Premier Bourassa) The Globe and Mail more clearly identifies the conflict between First Nations and Quebec sovereignty without jeopardising the Accord's recognition of both First Nations and Quebec right to self-determination.

Only once does The Globe and Mail address the tension of attempting to reconcile competing sovereignties within the Accord. In reference to resistance within the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Roberts writes that "Quebec, in the view of some Manitoba chiefs at least, is being accorded far too much sovereignty in the Charlottetown deal" (Roberts 9 October 1992: A4). While the comprehensiveness of the Accord and the complexity of the dynamics existing between these two competing visions of sovereignty (and interpretations of Canadian history) make the possibility of accommodating all concerns virtually impossible, there is little discussion of the internal contradictions of the Accord. Instead, the discourse of constitutional renewal encourages an interpretation of the Accord as a compromise able to accommodate competing nationalisms.

Second, the discourse of constitutional renewal appears to present the Accord as a historic consensus. Yet first Rae and then Mercredi speculate that "the Charlottetown consensus might even be improved if the accord is turned down" (Winsor 7 October 1992: A6). Joe Clark, responding to Mercredi's comments, declared that

[i]f the agreement that was struck with great difficulty under the best of circumstances is turned down, then trying to pull something together after a failure is next to impossible. There has been a unanimous agreement of 17 leaders on every constitutional issue that has been raised in the past decade, he said. 'That lightning isn't going to strike twice' (Winsor 7 October 1992: A6).

Clark also referred to Mercredi's notion as one that was

"taking a big risk with the country;" Bourassa calls it "'unrealistic'" (Winsor 7 October 1992: A6). This aspect of the discourse encourages an interpretation of the Accord as an unrepeatable miracle of compromise. Mercredi's participation in this discourse changes during the campaign depending on his position. When commenting on the weaknesses of the self-government package (the comments to which Clark's response is quoted above) and as an outsider to the process (the final package was produced without First Nations involvement), Mercredi does not participate in the discourse. He challenges it. But, when presented in his role as First Nations "Yes team" member, Mercredi subscribes to the discourse and responds to musings of a better or different deal with words that echo Clark's. In fact, Mercredi uses stronger language in response to Phil Fontaine's argument that the self-government package would be available for First Nations to continue negotiations even if the Accord was defeated. While Fontaine's argument appears consistent with Mercredi's earlier statements, Mercredi refers to this argument as "ludicrous, reckless and dangerous," signifying his participation in the discourse of renewal (Roberts 9 October 1992: A4).

The third aspect of the discourse of constitutional renewal I wish to examine considers the gains First Nations made both in being active participants in the negotiations and in the substance of the self-government provisions. Mercredi is particularly active in promoting this aspect of the

discourse. Especially when deflecting opposition from First Nations sources, Mercredi presents arguments such as the following: "'We have moved mountains, we have travelled great distances to be able to persuade governments to recognize the rights that are dear to the hearts of our people'" (Picard 25 September 1992: A5). He refers to the Accord as "not a small accomplishment...[, but] a major victory" (Seguin 26 September 1992). And he argues that "the Charlottetown accord presents real progress for native people in Canada" (Roberts 9 October 1992: A4). The self-government provision of the Accord is described as not perfect, but a significant step towards recognising First Nations place in Canadian society. The combination of describing the Accord as a historic consensus and "real progress" for First Nations is contradictory because if the "lightning will not strike again" then there will be no further progress for First Nations. But, the discourse is framed in such a way that these two aspects are used to support acceptance of the Accord, providing the context for common sense thinking: it will never be duplicated and it is a significant first step. Further, by using Parizeau (a high profile "No" activist) and Quebec separatism to signify the conflict between Quebec and First Nations self-determination, the ideological discourse does not examine any conflict in the substance of the Accord. The Accord is identified as a means of producing a reconciliation between Quebec and First Nations. While

Mercredi does not consistently articulate all aspects of the discourse of constitutional renewal, his arguments are used to maintain its place as one of the major ideological discourses of the campaign. Internal contradictions of the discourse are negotiated through privileging certain aspects of it at particular moments during the campaign.

The dominant metaphor that percolates through all the news reporting seems to emerge from the ideological discourse of constitutional renewal. The proposed constitutional amendment is seldom described as the result of "multilateral negotiations on the Constitution," but more often as an "agreement," "accord," "consensus," or "unity deal" on which "the fate of the country...rests." The Yes/No dichotomy of the vote encouraged the metaphorical description of the campaign as one for or against "national-unity" (Delacourt 24 October 1992: D1). Further, for romantic Canadian nationalists, the link to Charlottetown and the popular designation of the amendment as "the Charlottetown Accord" resonates with nostalgia for the first Canadian constitutional negotiations completed at Charlottetown, the negotiations that resulted in the creation of the federation of Canada. This dominant metaphor, combined with the tendency in electoral politics toward hyperbole, created the forum for dramatic statements referring both to the enormity of the endeavour to reach such an Accord and the potential consequences of rejecting it. Joe Clark refers to the agreement as

"lightning" that will not strike again (Winsor 7 October 1992: A6). Mercredi, himself, describes it as a "major victory" and says that First Nations negotiators "have moved mountains, we have travelled great distances" to produce the Accord (Seguin 26 September 1992: A4; Picard 25 September 1992: A5). The use of metaphor and hyperbole provides the campaign with an added sense of urgency and drama and helped shape a preferred reading of the campaign.

Discourse of Race/Aboriginality

The fourth discourse I shall examine is the ideological discourse of race which informed the representation of Mercredi. I shall focus my attention on how the construction of race, especially of First Nations peoples, affects the journalistic approach to reporting race and the impact this had on The Globe and Mail's representation of Mercredi. With the exception of Elijah Harper's role in preventing the Meech Lake Accord from being ratified, before the beginning the Charlottetown process, there was little precedent for discourses of race and constitutional renewal coexisting within news reports. Not surprisingly, the discourse of race that developed around Mercredi's involvement in securing ratification of the Accord employed many images similar to those identified by critical media scholars who examine the reporting of issues of race in news.

One of the ideological consequences of The Globe and

Mail's decision to track Mercredi's activities during the plebiscite campaign is the perpetuation of the notion of First Nations as a homogeneous group. In an argument similar to that of Daniel Francis, Parker Duchemin notes that

[t]oday most non-natives have firm preconceptions about a collective entity known to them as "The Indian." The operation of government policy, enshrined in the Indian Act has been predicated to a large degree on this notion of the basic similarity of native peoples (Duchemin 1988:18).

As Grand Chief of the AFN, Mercredi represents the legally defined group created by this policy: the Status Indian. While Mercredi is usually identified as either "grand chief" or "national chief" of the Assembly of First Nations in The Globe and Mail, there is seldom an accompanying explanation of what holding that position means in the larger context of aboriginal politics. The combination of the "preconceptions about a collective entity known...as "The Indian" and a general ignorance about First Nations politics and legal status contributes to an ideological discourse of race that positions Mercredi as the "leader," and therefore, the credible source.

Consequently, the focus of the news reporting is on the AFN. As with all ideological discourses found within the news, this one is informed by journalistic practices of news gathering. In the election-type campaign, The Globe and Mail tracked the performance of one significant individual and presented the issues in a relatively simplified form. The AFN's conflict-ridden ratification process (one in which the

AFN's representatives, the chiefs of 633 band councils, ultimately failed to either accept or reject the Accord) fit most closely with media's preference for bad news. The combination of these practices within an ideological discourse of race presented self-government and Mercredi within a known context and reinforced stereotypes.

Mercredi's institutional affiliation with the AFN also provides him a privileged place in the discourse because the AFN has become one of the "primary definers" in the discourse of race/aboriginality (Hall et al 1978: 58). Moving from presenting an oppositional discourse to one that is considered part of the dominant discourse, the AFN's role had evolved over its twenty year history. The AFN, as an organisation that was created to present organised opposition to the planned implementation of the "White Paper" in 1969, was involved in the ultimately disappointing First Ministers' Conferences on Aboriginal Affairs in the 1980s, and contributed advisers and support to Elijah Harper when he scuttled the last attempt to amend the constitution. The AFN, through Mercredi, participated in the negotiations that produced the Accord. In 1969, the AFN (then the National Indian Brotherhood) presented a discourse that was in direct opposition to the one presented by the government. In the plebiscite campaign, Mercredi represents an aspect of the dominant discourse. Hall et al note that the combination of deadlines and journalistic attention to balance and the use of

"credible" sources produces "systematically structured 'over-accessing'" of some individuals in "privileged institutional positions" (Hall et al 1978: 58). Mercredi does not hold this privileged position for all issues in all circumstances, but during the plebiscite campaign, he became the news media's aboriginal source for the "Yes" side. Like the objectivity that this practice purports to maintain, Mercredi's position as an "over-accessing" primary definer is illusory. Mercredi does not define the news discourse, he still must react to the dominant paradigmatic structures of the discourses of news and constitutional renewal.

Aside from his institutional affiliation, Mercredi possesses personal characteristics that provide him with a central place in the discourse. According to Duchemin, "natives are often seen by non-natives as caught between two juxtaposed worlds, the traditional and the modern" (Duchemin 1988: 19). While it may have been his "otherness" that attracted many non-native news media consumers to Mercredi, it is the constructed image of him within the modern world that provides him with a high profile during the plebiscite coverage.

Earlier coverage of Mercredi emphasised his use of traditional clothing and rituals and the ease with which he

moved between the "two juxtaposed worlds"³⁰. But, within the time frame of the plebiscite campaign, Mercredi is presented in a manner similar to a mainstream politician. While this presentation may not appear to have been informed by a discourse of race, it speaks to a privileging of certain aspects of Mercredi's racial identity in conjunction with the discourse of constitutional renewal. During the plebiscite campaign, there are no references to Mercredi's adherence to traditional ritual or the influence of Cree Elders in shaping his priorities. There is only one photographic reference to any First Nations ritual. A news photograph of a drum ceremony accompanies Matas' article on the beginning of the AFN meeting where the Chiefs failed to reach a decision on the Accord (Matas 15 October 1992: A5). Within the context of competing ideological discourses of race and constitutional renewal, what is newsworthy about Mercredi shifts.

Discourse of Self-government

Related to, and to a certain extent a sub-discourse of, both the ideological discourses of constitutional renewal and race, is the discourse of self-government. Just as The Globe and Mail reporting privileged coverage of Mercredi to the virtual exclusion of all other First Nations peoples, the

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³⁰ For example: "Drumbeats of Rage," in Maclean's (16 March 1992: 12-7); "Chief Justice," in Saturday Night (March 1992: 15-7); and "Out of His Shell and Soaring: Ovide Mercredi Fights to Banish Natives' Despair," in The Globe and Mail (Wednesday 6 November 1991: A1, 6).

discourse of self-government dominated the reporting. Almost all articles published in The Globe and Mail during the plebiscite campaign that refer to First Nations also refer to self-government. This includes a report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Platiel 8 October 1992: A12) and a description of a plan by Native Child and Family Services of Toronto "to begin licensing and supervising its own native foster homes" (Sarick 15 September 1992: A5). The only exception is the release of Amnesty International's report "The Americas: Human Rights Violations Against Indigenous Peoples" (Hossie 7 October 1992: A12). While it is not unexpected that the first attempt at constitutionally entrenching aboriginal self-government would be of primary interest to First Nations peoples, the dominance of the discourse of self-government demonstrates a shift in what is news. It also constructs self-government as "the native issue" to the exclusion of all others. This tends to essentialise First Nations existence (economic or social programs are not of concern) and offers a reading of the Accord's self-government provision as an immediately attainable corrective to the social and economic effects of colonisation.

The dominance of the discourse of self-government in coverage that focuses on Mercredi has several consequences. First, as an amorphous, relatively undefined term, self-government needs to be contextualised within the news to be

given meaning. While The Globe and Mail does not explicitly define it in a geographic context, the focus on Mercredi and the AFN (an organisation representing predominantly reserve-based First Nations) provides readers with a geographic interpretation of self-government by linking it to First Nations peoples possessing geographic communities to govern. For example, the Reform Party argues that "the accord would allow native people to set up governments that will be sovereign islands inside Canada" (Cernetig 5 October 1992: A1). This link of self-government with land simultaneously provides an interpretive context for the readers and erases the existence of most First Nations peoples from the discourse. For example, there is no discussion in The Globe and Mail of the consequences of self-government on "urban Indians." Nor are there many mentions of the three other constituent First Nations groups that participated in the negotiations: Metis National Council, Native Council of Canada (representing non-Status Indians); and the Inuit Tapirisat. Emphasis on self-government for a geographically defined group presents the issue in a discursive form that is more easily interpreted than one that examines all its nuances.

This interpretation is also one that works within the colonial framework and as such validates the framework even as it is describing its end. The "native leaders" Mercredi spoke to in various situations were all Band Council chiefs. The

Band Council is a form of government imposed on First Nations through the Indian Act. By imposing a homogeneous and foreign form of government on a diverse group of nations, with very different cultural, linguistic and government forms, the Canadian government, through the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, was able to establish a hierarchy of power through which it could control both the internal and external activities of the First Nations. The geographic land bases that Band Council chiefs control are government established and owned reserves. First Nations communities do not own the land on which they reside, it is crown land "held in reserve." The discourse of self-government validates the colonial framework even as it describes the means by which it will be dismantled. The framework itself is not questioned because the hierarchy it established is the one that is privileged in the discourse. Further, many of the concerns expressed by non-Natives opposing the Accord revolve around the extent to which First Nations self-government will conform to EuroCanadian government forms. For example, the Reform Party expressed concerns that "native people would not be obliged to hold democratic elections or raise taxes to support themselves and that they would have the power to block future constitutional changes that affect aboriginal people" (Cernetig 5 October 1992: A1). In response, Mary Ellen Turpel, Constitutional Adviser to the AFN, said that while "there's nothing that says there won't be

elections'...[Aboriginal peoples would] develop new forms [of government] that might blend in a system that might rely on hereditary chiefs or elders" as well as aspects of the British parliamentary system (Cernetig 5 October 1992: A4).

Discourse of Gender

Finally, I shall examine how the ideological discourse of gender affected the news reporting of Mercredi. There are two aspects of interest in examination of this discourse. First, I shall examine Mercredi's qualities, both personal and institutional, that are privileged in the masculinist discourse of news. Second, I shall examine how the discourse of gender affected the treatment given to the NWAC challenge to both federal government and the AFN. My interest revolves around societal assumptions about gender and race as they play out in the news.

Hartley writes that "[n]ews is not only about and by men, it is overwhelmingly seen through men" (Hartley 1982: 146). Self-government appears to be about men. Mercredi holds a position of power in a colonial framework that institutionalised a patriarchal hierarchy. Rakow and Kranich also note that "news is associated with the activities of the public sphere, the province of elites and men, who thus people the news" (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 12-3). Further, they note that women's absence from the public sphere provides the news media with "ready-made justification for women's absence from

news programs" (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 13). But, in the case of self-government, Kuptana held a position of authority in the public sphere, yet she did not receive much notice in The Globe and Mail. As an example of a discourse that is about, by and overwhelmingly seen through men, the masculinist discourse of news, in this context, traced the activities of a man. As a naturalised ideological discourse, this discourse does not openly direct the focus of the news, but merely places each new event or individual in a historical, social and culturally specific context. News coverage of Kuptana would have been an examination of an exception, a woman in a position of political power, and therefore, would have signified differently than the coverage of Mercredi. While the news coverage is about Mercredi, his successful campaign to become Grand Chief of the IFN is not part of the issue. Gender and the qualities of Mercredi that are privileged in the constructed image appear to disappear. The representation of Mercredi does not appear to be one informed by a discourse of gender.

Mercredi also possesses personal characteristics that place him comfortably within the masculinist discourse of news that is "cloaked in an ideology of objectivity and truth" (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 11). Both a charismatic leader and an "authoritative" source, Mercredi exhibits characteristics of both the male politician and the credible news source. In a poll questioning individuals about their trust of

politicians conducted by The Globe and Mail, Mercredi scored the highest, although "many people (14 per cent in Quebec and 30 per cent elsewhere) said they didn't know enough about Mr. Mercredi to give him a rating" (Winsor 9 October 1992: D4). Mercredi had been established in the news as a charismatic leader attractive to both Native and non-Native populations before the plebiscite campaign began³¹. Mercredi possessed characteristics that allowed him to fill a role appropriate to the masculinist discourse of news.

In reference to constitutional renewal in Canada, Donna Greschner writes that "[w]hat aboriginal peoples and women have in common, obviously and primarily, is aboriginal women" (Greschner 1991: 223). This was never more obvious than during the plebiscite campaign when the position espoused by Mercredi was in direct conflict with that of NAC and NWAC. Briefly, NWAC had two concerns; one was procedural and one was substantive. First, as an organisation that speaks on behalf of First Nations women, NWAC argued that the plebiscite was unconstitutional because the interests of First Nations women had not been defended during the negotiations. Second, NWAC requested that future First Nations governments be subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This request was not based on an attraction to individual rights and EuroCanadian

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³¹ See for example Johnson, "Grand Chief Ovide Mercredi: Charismatic Native Leader Has a Radical Message," Edmonton Journal (15 March 1992: A7) and Picard, "Out of His Shell and Soaring: Ovide Mercredi Fights to Banish Natives' Despair" The Globe and Mail (6 November 1991: A1, 8).

models of equality, but based on a concern that generations of colonisation, within a patriarchal framework, had instilled sexism within First Nations leadership that would infiltrate future aboriginal governments. NWAC's position was not universally embraced by all First Nations women. In fact, one of the aspects of the discourse surrounding the NWAC intervention was the number of First Nations women that disagreed with either the argument or the strategy NWAC employed.

It is of note that Kuptana, not Mercredi, acts as the respondent to the NWAC concerns in The Globe and Mail. Kuptana confirms that she and other Inuit women involved in the negotiations "'are satisfied that the equality rights of aboriginal women are not prejudiced by the Charlottetown accord'" (Canadian Press 24 September 1992: A10). She also says that "[t]he Native Women's Association of Canada does not represent all aboriginal women in Canada" (Canadian Press 24 September 1992: A10). This article also refers to the work of Audrey McLaughlin who "sought to reassure native women opposed to the constitutional proposals" (Canadian Press 24 September 1992: A10). Mercredi disappears from this discourse. He is replaced by women whose voices are used to challenge NWAC's position. This situation echoes the one described by Rakow and Kranich who argue that "women sources are usually pitted against each other, not to illuminate the issues at stake for women but to create a standoff of conflicting personalities"

(Rakow and Kranich 1991: 21). The ideological discourse of gender informed both the construction of Mercredi as the representation of self-government and established the parameters of the discussion around NWAC's intervention into the debate.

Conclusions

For those of us scanning The Globe and Mail for information about the Accord, we could consider the Accord a historic consensus of diverse interests never to be repeated again, an important and symbolic first step for adequate recognition of the place of First Nations within Canadian society, or a manipulative document that established a hierarchy of equality. The political and social effects of rejection of the Accord could be one of the following: the beginnings of the end of Canada and a step towards Quebec separation; the beginnings of a period of violence, roadblocks and demonstrations as First Nations express their frustration; an end to constitutional negotiations; a guarantee that constitutional negotiations would never end; the possibility of producing a better deal. While the range of interpretations seems extensive and almost exhaustive, my purpose in examining the ideological discourses present in The Globe and Mail coverage of Ovide Mercredi's role in the campaign was to identify preferred readings evident in the reporting. There is no guarantee that any or all of a news

audience will accept the preferred reading, but an analysis of the ideological constructs within the news identifies it as having an ideological role and perspective. Mercredi was constructed as the personification of self-government within reporting that privileged a discourse of self-government above all else.

The emphasis placed on the opposition Mercredi faced further framed the discussion into a polarised dichotomy, forcing readers to either accept or reject self-government, based on the word of Mercredi and several politicians who came to his defence when he appeared unable to convince even his own people of the benefits of the Accord. By the time the Accord is rejected, the distance between First Nations and non-Native Canadians has become even wider. Non-Native Canadians trust Mercredi more than our own politicians, and within his own constituency, he has experienced the same "Loss of Faith" as other leaders involved in the campaign (Delacourt 24 October 1992: D1).

CHAPTER FOUR

Rendering Rebick

Introduction

As the president and spokesperson of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), a national feminist organisation publicly campaigning against the package of the proposed amendments to the Constitution Act, 1982, Judy Rebick received a lot of press attention. Some of the news coverage was openly hostile, accusing Rebick and NAC of dishonesty in their claim to represent 3 000 000 Canadian women. In some instances the news reports in The Globe and Mail used the words of high profile feminists to challenge NAC's opposition of the Accord. Some of the coverage dismissed NAC as insignificant to the debate, a mere "interest group." How was the representation produced in The Globe and Mail? How was the representation framed toward producing socially, culturally and historically acceptable representations? I shall examine the dominant ideological discourses present in The Globe and Mail's reporting of Rebick during the plebiscite campaign. The primary purpose of this chapter is to explore the role ideological discourses played in producing the image of Rebick that was found in The Globe and Mail.

As I noted in Chapter Three, the ideological discourses of journalistic objectivity and election news are linked and are over-riding discourses that influenced the general

coverage of the plebiscite. Because I have already defined and situated these two ideological discourses within the context of the plebiscite, I limit my comments about these discourses to the reporting of Rebick. The third, fourth and fifth discourses I examine are inter-connected and flow from The Globe and Mail's emphasis on Rebick's pronouncement of the Accord as "a bad deal for women." The third ideological discourse I investigate is the discourse of "woman's interests." In this discourse, Rebick's opposition is challenged as not applicable to a universalised, homogeneous conception of women. It is of interest that this discourse is applied in an opposite form to the ideological discourse of race/aboriginality present in the representation of Mercredi. Mercredi's position is generalised to all First Nations peoples; Rebick's position is found to be ungeneralisable. In the fourth ideological discourse, Rebick's position is placed within the context of "women's interests." This discourse intersects with the third and uses the words of individual women to challenge Rebick's pronouncement. Finally, I examine the discourse of feminism as it applies to The Globe and Mail's reporting of Rebick. My interest in examining the role of the ideological discourse of feminism stems from its presentation as an oppositional discourse.

Discourse of Objectivity

As noted in Chapter Three, the objectivity attributed to

the news media is illusory. Within the profession of journalism, objectivity is presented as an intrinsic quality of news that is preserved by journalistic practices that ensure professional distance and balanced news reporting. Objectivity is an ideological discourse because it encourages news audiences to accept as objective fact, reports necessarily produced within and informed by a particular ideological context. Further, both the selection and sorting of news stories appears to be the result of the application of an impartial practice. A story appears on page one because it is more newsworthy a story than one that appears on page five; both these stories outweigh the story that does not appear at all. News is constructed through processes that are presented as professional practices that maintain journalistic objectivity. The ideological discourse of objectivity presents the news values, those qualities that make an issue or event worthy of news coverage, as without ideological content. By presenting news as objective fact, the ideological discourse of objectivity simultaneously erases the ideological perspective of the news content and justifies the absence of other perspectives.

The ideological discourse of objectivity informs The Globe and Mail's reporting of Rebick in several ways. First, it constructs the news report as objective fact, allowing a particularistic interest and perspective to be represented as a universal interest. Who and what became news was informed

by the access to and influence of various dominant groups in society. Second, it separates the ideological perspective presented editorially in The Globe and Mail from its news reports. This allows the newspaper to simultaneously challenge Rebick and (others campaigning against the Accord) and maintain its reputation of impartiality. Finally, journalistic attention to balanced reporting establishes Rebick as one of the opponents of the Accord, but does not allow for much coverage of the specificity of that opposition.

The Globe and Mail's reputation for "good gray respectability" and its self-proclaimed status as "Canada's national newspaper" place the newspaper in a privileged position among Canadian news media (Winsor quoted in Taras 1990: 88). This privileged position allows The Globe and Mail to present a particular perspective about Rebick, NAC and feminism that is shrouded in objectivity. For example, The Globe and Mail reports emphasise the number and range of voices that disagree with the NAC position. In an article published immediately after NAC announced that it would actively campaign against the Accord, representatives of the three (then) main federal political parties (Progressive Conservative (PC), Liberal and New Democratic Party (NDP)) all speak against the NAC position. "[NDP] Leader Audrey McLaughlin finds herself in the unusual position of being a woman politician who has to campaign against NAC" (Delacourt 15 September 1992: A4). Liberal Deputy Leader, Sheila Copps,

"is disappointed with the women's organisation for placing itself at odds with so many political women" (Delacourt 15 September 1992: A4). Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs, Joe Clark responds to the NAC decision by stating that "[h]is real worry is not interest groups, but 'mobilizing the vote' of more apathetic Canadians" (Delacourt 15 September 1992: A4). The news is framed in such a way as to focus on a reading of the effect of NAC's opposition. This report encourages a reading of the NAC position as isolated, especially from "political women" such as McLaughlin and Copps. It also describes the Yes side as a non-partisan collection of individuals that need not concern themselves with "interest groups" such as NAC. The assumption of the objectivity of The Globe and Mail and other news media is necessarily an ideological discourse both because news reports are accepted as objective presentations of fact, and because the terms of the objectivity are culturally specific. Therefore, both the content and form of the news is influenced by the ideological context in which it is produced.

At first The Globe and Mail's editorial support for the Accord was implicitly, not explicitly, stated. The newspaper published a series of editorials that argued in favour of particular components of the Accord, or addressed specific arguments rejecting the Accord. For example, the 15 October editorial spoke to the concerns raised by the Native Women's Association (NWAC) and supported by NAC. The editorial does

not mention NAC or NWAC but states that "[s]ome people...feel that Charlottetown weakens the 'guarantees' in the 1982 Charter for aboriginal individuals who may live under aboriginal governments in Canada. The weight of the evidence suggests not" (The Globe and Mail 15 October 1992: A30). On 22 October, The Globe and Mail explicitly announced its support for the Accord. While the link between a newspaper's editorial perspective and news content is a complex and circuitous one, The Globe and Mail's editorial support of the Accord establishes the particular context in which the news was produced at the newspaper".

One of the most significant contributions of the ideological discourse of objectivity to the reporting of Rebick is the journalistic practice of providing balanced reporting. As I noted in Chapter Three, this practice usually entails providing information from sources connected with both sides of an issue and producing something close to quantitatively equitable coverage of the two perspectives. But, as Parenti cautions, "the rule overlooks the fact that both sides may not be all sides" (Parenti 1986: 218). The combination of the Yes/No form of the plebiscite and the journalistic practice of balanced reporting produced coverage

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" Of note is the attention Rebick received in Letters to the editor, "Commentary," and editorial cartoons. While these sections of The Globe and Mail are neither news nor editorial comment, the selection of letters and opinion pieces is necessarily informed by the newspaper's understanding of its assumed audience.

of Rebick that focused on NAC's position on the No side. If comment on the reasons for NAC's opposition was included in a news story, it tended to appear at the bottom of the news story, the section less likely to be read. The combination of journalistic practices of balanced reporting and the presentation of complex issues in a simplified form does not allow for coverage that examines the nuances of an issue or event. The issue of interest was the unusual position in which NAC found itself. Rebick was presented as aligned (at least by association with "No") with the Reform Party and former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and in opposition to the NDP and former NAC president Lynn McDonald. The ideological discourse of objectivity, through the journalistic practice of balanced reporting, emphasised the irony of this situation without examining the mediated structure in which it had been produced.

Discourse of Election News

As an event that resembled an election, the news coverage of the plebiscite campaign took on the characteristics of election news. These characteristics include the attempt to produce equitable coverage of the main political parties; the focus on party leaders; "horse-race" journalism; and the "negative tone," perhaps the result of the influence of television (Fletcher and Everett 1991: 195-9). Because the NDP, PC and Liberals all supported the Accord, there was an

illusory non-partisan quality to the coverage which produced a need for new leaders on which the news media could focus their attention. As had happened to Ovide Mercredi, Rebick became known through the news media as the "leader" of a particular aspect of the Accord. But unlike Mercredi, Rebick did not become linked to one issue, it was her pronouncement of the Accord as "a bad deal for women" that propelled her into the news spotlight. In The Globe and Mail and other news media Rebick became synonymous with NAC which became synonymous with opposition to the Accord. There are two aspects of the application of the discourse of election news that I wish to explore. First, balanced reporting constructed a "No team" on which Rebick was clearly placed. Second, the "horse-race" journalism mostly involved tracking her performance against heretofore allies who disagreed with her position.

Unlike the loosely linked, multi-partisan group that produced the Accord and actively campaigned to encourage the Canadian electorate to support it, the group of high profile individuals identified as the Accord's opponents formed no coalition. They shared no assumptions or interests. NAC did not oppose the Accord for the same reasons as the Reform Party opposed it, who did not agree with the analysis on which Trudeau based his opposition, who did not have any concerns in common with the Parti Quebecois. This diversity of opinion and perspective notwithstanding, the news media's application

of the ideological discourse of election news constructed a "No team" of high profile individuals to track during the campaign. Given that neither the Canadian electorate nor news media have much experience with referenda or plebiscites, the application of the ideological discourse of election news provides the news audience (the electorate) with a familiar context in which to place the current situation. But, when the practices associated with the ideological discourse of election news are applied to the plebiscite campaign the various reasons different groups and individuals chose to oppose the Accord get lost in the horse race between "Yes and No."

In interests of maintaining "fair and equitable" coverage Rebick and Manning were often linked in news coverage of the activities of the "No team." For example The Globe and Mail report of NAC's decision ends with a brief comment on Manning's campaign activities (Canadian Press and Staff 14 September 1992: A1, 2). The following day, Richard Mackie's article described Ontario Premier Bob Rae's response to both NAC and the Reform Party's opposition (Mackie 15 September 1992: A4). While Mackie comments that Rae's "low key reaction to Ms. Rebick, a frequent political ally, was in sharp contrast to his eager attack Friday on Reform Party Leader Preston Manning," the article nonetheless contributes to the construction of the two-sided debate.

The balanced reporting of Yes and No also contributes to

a side story about the "strange bedfellows" of the "No team." There are several references throughout the campaign to the unique make-up of the "No team," referring most often to the political awkwardness of Rebick and Manning finding themselves on the same side of an issue. For instance, Geoffrey York begins an article detailing the differences among the various Accord opponents with the following statement: "If there is anything that unites the improbable coalition of opponents of the Charlottetown accord in English Canada, it is their fierce loyalty to the absolute principle of equality" (York 17 October 1992: D2). York goes on to explain that each of the three forms of opposition he describes (identified with Manning, Trudeau and Rebick) define equality differently. What is of interest is York's description of the "coalition of opponents" at the top of the story. The story appears under an editorial cartoon with the caption "Artificial Dissemination," which shows most of the high profile opponents of the Accord in one large bed (Rebick and Manning are beside each other), and Bloc Quebecois Leader Lucien Bouchard lurking under the bed. York refers to the different interpretations of "equality" as "contradictions" (York 17 October 1992: D2). The combination of York's opening paragraph and the cartoon could contribute to an interpretation of the "improbable coalition" as a false or "artificial" alliance.

The metaphor most associated with opposition to the Accord also contributes to linking all forms of opposition

under the umbrella of a "No team." In his statement to reporters to announce that the seventeen negotiators had reached an agreement, Prime Minister Mulroney included the following comment:

'I know that there'll be fights, and I know there are going to be challenges, and I know that the enemies of Canada will not be happy. And they're going to be out in full force. And they will encounter me and my fellow first ministers at every step of the road, fighting them off and fighting for Canada' (quoted in Fraser 19 September 1992: A5).

Mulroney later explained that the "enemies of Canada" to whom he referred were Quebec separatists, "whose political commitment is to destroy Canada," and not all critics of the Accord (Fraser 19 September 1992: A4). These attempts to clarify the statement were unsuccessful. This metaphorical designation provided a mirror opposite to the creators and supporters of the "unity deal" on which "the fate of the country...rests." Mulroney's clarifications notwithstanding, within the description of the Accord as a "consensus" and on "national unity" created to maintain economic and social stability, those actively campaigning in opposition could be viewed as "enemies of Canada." Whether it was intended to describe all opponents or not, it became such a metaphorical designation. Some opponents used it facetiously to mock claims that without the Charlottetown Accord, Canada's future was in jeopardy.

The second aspect of the application of the ideological discourse of election news on which I would like to comment

stems from the coverage's emphasis on leaders and the negative tone that accompanies it. In this discursive form, individuals are presented as speaking directly to the arguments put forward by their opponents. Fletcher and Everett note that political parties appear to be shaping their campaigns to fit into this form (Fletcher and Everett 1991: 201). Increasingly, party leaders' speeches contain comments attacking (and counter-attacking) the positions of the other parties. While I shall comment on this aspect of the news coverage of Rebeck in more detail later in this chapter, I wish to note here that the form in which it was produced was partly shaped by the structure of the plebiscite and ideological discourse of election news.

Those identified as speaking directly to the NAC position are most often individuals institutionally connected to organisations with a history of activism on issues of particular interest to women. For example, besides the instances I have already noted, articles detailing the response of McLaughlin and former NAC president Lynn McDonald to the NAC position appear in The Globe and Mail (Matas 26 September 1992: A13; McInnes 16 October 1992: A7). There is no direct comment from Prime Minister Mulroney, Mercredi or any of the other members of the "Yes team" (other than Clark whose response was that he did not think NAC would have "a material impact on the debate") (Delacourt 15 September 1992: A4). This situation is not repeated in other areas of the

coverage. For instance, the Reform Party openly challenged aspects of the self-government provision; Mercredi responded by challenging Manning to a debate "on the key issue of aboriginal self-government" (Cernetig 5 October 1992: A1, 4; The Globe and Mail 9 October 1992: A5). McLaughlin and Manning did participate in a debate. The application of the ideological discourse of election news simultaneously identifies Rebick as a leader, linked to a particular perspective on the Accord, a member of the "No team," while establishing NAC's position as secondary and only of interest to relatively narrow range of people.

Discourse of "Woman's Interests"

The third discourse I examine is the ideological discourse of "woman's interests." Within this discourse, women are constructed as a homogeneous group, sharing interests and perspectives. When The Globe and Mail quoted Rebick proclaiming that the Charlottetown Accord was "a bad deal for women," this ideological discourse became important to the explanation of the news coverage of Rebick. I wish to explore three aspects of the discourse of "woman's interests." First, it erases the differences among women and their material existences. The generic category "woman" also privileges one form of "womanhood" over all others. Second, it seems to establish Rebick as the spokesperson for this homogeneous group. She is, of course, unable to effectively

maintain this position. Third, because the news interest was in the response to Rebick's statement, the reasons behind the statement remain unarticulated until very late in the campaign.

While the NAC position is based on concerns about specific issues as they affect particular segments of Canadian society, it is Rebick's declaration of the Accord as "a bad deal for women" that becomes the lightning rod attracting most of the news coverage. The news coverage focuses on the reactions this statement receives, not the content of NAC's opposition. This emphasis could stem from the use of conflict to present balanced reporting. For instance, it could be considered as a balance between Rebick's analysis of the Accord and women who support the Accord's ratification. But, some scholars who examine the qualities of news discourse find other possible explanations. Hartley's comment is instructive: "News is not only about and by men, it is overwhelmingly seen through men" (Hartley 1982: 146). And, Rakow and Kranich explain the differential treatment of women and men within the news, both as sources and as newsmakers, through an examination of news as a masculinist discourse (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 11). Because so few women are present in the masculinist discourse of news, when they interject themselves into it, they are recognised first as women and then as participants in the issue or event reported in the news. The few women who appear as sources appear to

present the "woman's perspective on an issue or event (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 18). Presented within the masculinist discourse of news, Rebick's statement appears to present the "woman's perspective" on the Accord. This statement is immediately challenged by women whose perspectives differ with the NAC position and who do not find themselves represented in the homogeneous group "woman."

Rebick's position within the news as the personification of feminist opposition both increases the likelihood of the application of the discourse of "woman's interests" and the likelihood of it being challenged by a wide range of women. For example, in "Just Saying No," his description of three major arguments opposing the Accord, York subtitles his precis of the NAC opposition as "Judy Rebick and Feminist Groups" (York 17 October 1992: D2). Within the precis, York begins by writing that "Ms. Rebick and her supporters are convinced that the Charlottetown deal would jeopardize the social and legal rights of women," but all of the explanatory details of their position are attributed to Rebick (York 17 October 1992: D2). While this article may be the result of an interview (or from the interview that produced "Rebick Redux") it reinforces Rebick's position as the individual leader of this particular form of opposition.

As the president of the organisation identified as the institutional home of the Canadian women's movement, Rebick existed as an authoritative source for the news media before

the plebiscite campaign. Rebick and the other members of the NAC executive are referred to as the "leaders" of the women's movement (Canadian Press and Staff 14 September 1992: A1, 2). The designation of NAC as a "women's organisation" blurs the differences among women and fails to define feminists as a distinct segment of the population. This description encourages the interpretation of NAC as speaking on behalf of Canadian women. As an umbrella organisation of 550 organisations, NAC can claim a membership of three million women, but it must do so cautiously. In his profile of Rebick, York notes that while Rebick expresses ambivalence about identifying NAC's members as 3 000 000 women, the organisation's literature uses the figure without qualification" (York 26 September 1992: D4). The combination of these factors offers The Globe and Mail audience an interpretation of women as a homogeneous group led by Rebick, the president of "the most influential women's organisation" whose executive are the "leaders" of the Canadian women's movement.

Other than general concerns that the Accord could potentially limit gender equality rights and the federal government's ability to create new social programs, it is not

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³³ Because NAC members are organisations, this figure includes all the women who are members of all the 550 NAC member groups. The figure is distorted because women could be members of more than one group, producing an overlap. Also, the figure includes all the members of the YWCA and other large organisations that are not necessarily feminist in philosophy.

until 17 October that The Globe and Mail describes the details behind Rebick's comment. Until then the details of NAC's position are presented in general terms. For example, "The women's movement will push for a No vote in the Oct. 26 referendum because the constitutional accord puts women's rights and national social programs at risk, leaders said yesterday" (Canadian Press and Staff 14 September 1992: A1). The first article about the NAC opposition published in The Globe and Mail begins with this statement. It not only illustrates the application of the aspects of the discourse of woman's interests described above, it also demonstrates the simplistic terms in which NAC's position was disseminated to the news audience. The form in which NAC's position was presented may stem from the role of news to present complex issues in a simplified form, but it is also informed by the ideological discourse of woman's interests. The combination of news practice and aspects of the ideological discourse of woman's interests encourages a reading of NAC's opposition as easily refuted unsubstantiated assertions.

While the process of establishing Rebick as the individual voice of the constitutional interests of all Canadian women appears consistent with the construction of Mercredi as the personification of self-government, there are important differences. First, Rebick does not become connected with an essentialised aspect of the Accord, but a position on the entire package. Second, Rebick did not

participate in the creation of the Accord, so her connection to it is less complete. While her spectator status makes her opposition more likely (negotiators of an "Accord" would not be expected to oppose the result of their negotiations), it also weakens her authority. Further, the description of the Accord as a compromise for unity separates "woman's interests" from the "national interests." Third, The Globe and Mail's readers are more likely to be members of the group on whose behalf Rebick appears to speak, and therefore, are more likely to question both the construction of a homogeneous group and an individual woman to articulate its concerns.

Discourse of "Women's Interests"

The fourth discourse, the ideological discourse of "women's interests" differs from the third because it does not narrowly cast women as a homogeneous group. Instead, within this discourse women express different perspectives on the Accord. Rakow and Kranich found that on the rare occasion when more than one woman appear in a news report, they often appear on opposite sides of an issue (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 21). This story presentation does not "illuminate the issues at stake for women but...create[s] a standoff of conflicting personalities" (Rakow and Kranich 1991: 21). There are two aspects of the ideological discourse of "women's interests" that I wish to explore. First, I shall examine the presentation of individual women speaking against the NAC

position. Second, I shall consider the news treatment of the positions of NAC and NWAC. Although these are two distinct umbrella organisations mandated to represent the interests of different groups of women, they shared concerns about the Accord.

After NAC publicly announced that it would campaign against the Accord and Rebick was quoted in The Globe and Mail and elsewhere declaring it to be "a bad deal for women," many high profile women reacted to NAC's declaration. These women put forward a two-pronged argument in response to NAC's claim. First, NAC did not speak for all women and did not speak for them as individuals. Second, these individual women argue that close examination of the Accord has proven to them, and will prove to all women who read it, that the Accord does not limit women's rights or the federal state's ability to protect and enhance the status of women in Canada.

Two articles provide good examples of the application of the discourse of "women's interests" in The Globe and Mail. First an article published on 26 September describes the launch of the "Yes committee" in British Columbia. In this article, three women (Audrey McLaughlin and "two prominent women lawyers," Nancy Morrison and Maureen Maloney, both "founding members of British Columbia's Yes committee"), speak directly to the NAC opposition. McLaughlin, who is described as "[t]aking direct aim at criticisms levelled" by NAC, refers to the differing analyses of the Accord as "differences of

interpretation" among "women of substance" (Matas 26 September 1992: A13). Morrison "indicated that the decision to break with the national women's group was not easy for her," declaring that "NAC 'is not the enemy'" (Matas 26 September 1992: A13). Maloney says she hopes she is "not taken as having changed sides," explaining that she does not "really believe there are sides" but that all individuals must "look at this accord and think about whether or not it is good for the people of [British Columbia] and this country" (Matas 26 September 1992: A13). McLaughlin "has put her reputation as a woman breaking new ground in politics on the line" saying that if she "'believed that this accord were a step backward for women, [she] would not support it'" (Matas 26 September 1992: A13). This story does not provide an analysis of the Accord's potential effects on women's rights or future federal social programs, but examines the effect of a divide among women. While this format resembles "the negative tone" of election news, in which leaders respond to their opponents, it also places these women in direct conflict with NAC. The Accord, or NAC's opposition to it, has divided women and it is each other that "they take aim at" despite the fact that "NAC 'is not the enemy.'" It also reinforces individual liberalism by emphasising the importance of each individual's choice in the plebiscite.

Almost a month later, on 16 October, The Globe and Mail reported on a debate held between Rebick and former NAC

president Lynn McDonald.

As it has been for the country, the Charlottetown accord has proved to be a divisive issue among Canadian women, even those who are used to finding themselves on the same side of issues, such as Ms. Rebick and Lynn McDonald, former NAC president and NDP member of Parliament. They were pitted against each other at the debate yesterday (McInnes 16 October 1992: A7).

While this debate does not hold the same position of influence within the plebiscite campaign that leaders debates hold within election campaigns, this report is of interest because it exemplifies many of the qualities identified by Rakow and Kranich. For example, Rebick and McDonald are described as "pitted against each other," although they "are used to finding themselves on the same side of issues" (McInnes 16 October 1992: A7). Rakow and Kranich identified a similar story construction around feminist response to a US federal report on pornography. "[T]wo groups were presented as disagreeing with each other, not as holding different positions in relations to the Commission" (emphasis in original, Rakow and Kranich 1991: 21). Within the context of The Globe and Mail report of the Rebick/McDonald debate, the story construction is partly shaped by the format of a debate (another masculinist discursive form) and journalistic practices but it also encourages a reading that finds Rebick and McDonald in conflict with each other, not with the economic and social inequality of women that makes constitutionally protected rights to equality and federally funded social programs necessary.

The second aspect of the ideological discourse of "women's interests" I wish to examine is the news treatment of communities of women that are recognised as qualitatively different. For example, the position of First Nations women within Canadian society is qualitatively different than that of white women. First Nations women are subject to both racism and sexism, but can seldom identify their oppression as the result of one more than the other. The intersection of racism and sexism makes the lives of First Nations women qualitatively different from those of white women and First Nations men, but they share experiences of oppression with both groups.

As I noted in Chapter Three, the reporting of NWAC during the plebiscite campaign was quite separate from that of the APN and Mercredi. It was also quite separate from the reporting of NAC and Rebick, with two notable exceptions. First, in "Rebick Redux," York writes that "it was the concerns of aboriginal women such as Sandra Delaronde [NAC vice president who brought her grandmother's shawl and the prayers of Cree elders to the NAC executive meeting at which the decision to oppose the Accord was made]- -along with widespread fears about potential threats to social programs and equality rights- -that prompted the organization to take its politically risky opposition against the constitutional accord" (York 26 September 1992: D1). Later, York writes that NWAC is in an "increasingly isolated position" as First

Nations women's organisations begin to accept the reworded self-government provision as able to protect their equality within future aboriginal governments (York 9 October 1992: A4). York further states that "Ms. Rebick said her committee is taking its cue from NWAC and will continue to oppose the deal as long as NWAC is against it" (York 9 October 1992: A4). The centrality of "the concerns of aboriginal women" to the NAC executive decision and the fact that NAC was "taking its cue from NWAC" are mentioned only in these two articles. This separates NAC from a significant ally, an organisation mandated to represent the interests of First Nations women, and further encourages a reading of women as divided and embattled.

Feminism, an Oppositional Discourse

Finally, I wish to examine the emergence of feminism as an oppositional ideological discourse within the news reporting of Rebick. Neither "feminism" nor "feminist" are terms that appear in much of the news coverage. In fact, other than in "Rebick Redux" and "Just Saying No," where York describes both NAC and Rebick as "feminist," only the Ontario government and unnamed lawyers employed by both sides of the plebiscite debate are labeled feminist (Mackie 15 September 1992: A4; Matas 26 September 1992: A13). This does not mean that feminism does not inform the news reporting of Rebick because terms such as "women's movement" and "women's

organisation" are used in place of "feminism" in this context.

In their description of the social production of news, Hall et al conclude that "it seems undeniable that the prevailing tendency in the media is towards the reproduction, amidst all their contradictions, of the definitions of the powerful, of the dominant ideology" (emphasis in original, Hall et al 1978: 65). The dominant ideology of Canada melds liberalism with capitalism, privileging the rights of the individual within an industrial economic marketplace based on assumptions of the benefit of economic gain. Neither of these ideologies rule unchecked. Hegemony is maintained by rule from above and consent from below. This consent is won partly through providing state regulated balances to the excesses of either. Aspects of feminism run against the grain of this dominant ideology. Some feminists have argued that the "level playing field" of liberalism is an illusion and that the primacy of the individual does not allow for analysis of systemic discrimination. Feminists have also engaged in a critique of capitalism, finding it an exploitative and oppressive system in relation to women. Aspects of feminism, liberalism and capitalism will be in conflict in particular historical and social contexts when interpreted by particular individuals.

Feminism became an oppositional ideological discourse in this particular context for a variety of reasons. I shall focus my attention on two aspects of the plebiscite campaign

that could have contributed to feminism being treated as an oppositional discourse in The Globe and Mail. First, through Rebick's high profile position in the plebiscite campaign, feminism became part of constitutional politics. This moves it from its status in the news as an alternative discourse that examines particular issues, usually labelled "women's issues." Second, the two-sided structure of the plebiscite did not comfortably allow for "alternative" discourses.

I would first like to place this ideological discourse within its appropriate historical and social context by acknowledging, briefly, the existence of a "backlash" against the achievements of women, especially those associated with affirmative action and other state regulated means of adjusting social inequalities. Although it has been described in detail elsewhere, for instance in Susan Faludi's book, Backlash, I would like to acknowledge that the various cries of reverse discrimination, the end of the nuclear family and a social welfare system that has beggared Canada and other liberal democracies are directed at feminists and others whose ideological perspectives appear to jar against the social values held by mainstream society. Critical media scholars and others challenge the interpretation of a consensus of accepted social values. While evidence of the breadth or depth of this backlash is unavailable, I merely would like to acknowledge that it exists as a discourse that runs in direct

conflict to feminism".

As noted in Chapter Two, throughout its twenty year history, NAC has increasingly become identified as the institution representing the Canadian women's movement, or feminism, to the news media and government. It is not my purpose to evaluate the accuracy of this identification, but only to comment on it as a factor in encouraging a reading of feminism as an oppositional discourse. Returning to Miles' definition of feminism, she says that

[f]eminism can...best be seen as a particular perspective on the whole of our society and not just as a perspective on 'women's issues' as they have been defined (quoted in Stone 1992: 46).

Miles does not identify this perspective as solely or essentially held by women. She does not argue that women qua women will possess this perspective, nor does she necessarily preclude men from capturing it. While this understanding of feminism, as a world view or "particular perspective on the whole of our society," may not be controversial for many feminists, Stone argues that within the mainstream press, feminism would be most likely linked to "women's issues" (Stone 1992: 46). For example, in "Just Saying No," York describes "three major opposition groups" and their respective approaches to the idea of equality. He writes that "[f]eminist groups such as NAC has defined 'equality' in a way

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³⁴ Michele Landsberg suggests that the term "backlash" is inaccurate because it assumes an a priori "lash" of progress by and for women.

that includes the principle of affirmative action for women and visible minorities" (York 17 October 1992: D2). Not all feminists would define equality in such a way, but it provides an example of how Miles' definition of feminism could be applied to a material context.

Although the NAC executive may have based its decision to oppose the Accord on issues that it considered to be of central importance to women, it did so within an analytic framework that stretched beyond "women's issues." In 1979, the issue that served as the point of departure for the Ad Hoc Constitutional Committee was divorce law. Throughout the Meech Lake and Charlottetown periods, the inclusion of non-gendered issues, such as federal spending power, placed the discussion in a different discursive site. Feminist analyses of constitutional politics were no longer relegated to the private sphere, nor were they overwhelmed by liberal feminist approaches to equality. This interjection of feminism into the main issues of governance could be interpreted by someone not accepting Miles' definition of feminism as an example of NAC, and by association feminists, speaking out of turn.

A second aspect of the emergence of feminism as an oppositional discourse is the placement of the discourses within the context of the plebiscite campaign. For example, the construction of the plebiscite into a two-sided contest has the tendency to preclude the appearance of an alternative discourse. The connection of NAC with feminism and NAC with

"No" provides at least a superficial reading of feminism as an oppositional discourse.

The Accord was promoted, both by The Globe and Mail and its creators, as a historic compromise produced to save the country from destruction, therefore, any challenge to that preferred reading could be considered oppositional. This reading is not guaranteed, nor is it complete or consistent, because feminists, such as McLaughlin and McDonald did support the Accord. Feminism does, though, appear to challenge the process by which constitutional amendments are produced and the social values that appear in their content. Clark said that the Accord represented "a unanimous agreement of 17 leaders on every constitutional issue that has been raised in the past decade" (Winsor 7 October 1992: A6). Openly linking NAC to feminism and NAC to "No" encourages an interpretation of feminism as an oppositional discourse in this particular context. A combination of circumstances and other ideological discourses circulating contributed to a preferred reading of feminism as an oppositional discourse.

Conclusions

Although there is no guarantee that the preferred reading of news will be accepted by the majority or any of a news audience, ideological discourses play a role in the presentation of preferred readings. These preferred readings contribute to the maintenance of hegemony. The combination of

discourses that circulate in society and those that contribute to the production of news encouraged The Globe and Mail's audience to interpret Judy Rebick's involvement in the plebiscite campaign as in opposition to both the national interests and the interests of most Canadian women. Partly shaped by the construction of the Accord's ratification process into a "Yes/No" election-style event, various ideological discourses contributed to the production of this representation. The ideological discourses of objectivity and election news provided a news frame that focused on Rebick to the virtual exclusion of all other feminist opposition. The discourses of "woman's interests," "women's interests" and the presentation of feminism as an oppositional discourse further encouraged this reading. As the discourses of objectivity and election news construct Rebick as the voice of Canadian women, the final three dispute and finally reject her ability to fill this constructed role. This particular discursive site and its preferred reading appear consistent with analyses that house a variety of incursions against the socio-economic position of women under the umbrella term "backlash." Rebick's high profile within the news coverage of the plebiscite does not appear to have had any lasting effects; NAC has not retained a place in the news. The ephemeral quality of this attention could be partly explained by the end of the combination of circumstances that produced it (there have not been any further attempts to amend the constitution)

and by the ideological content of the reporting.

CONCLUSIONS

The Charlottetown Accord appeared to depart from the historical means by which constitutional amendments were attempted in Canada. Only after extensive public consultations and a series of multilateral negotiations was the package of amendments produced. No one individual could be credited with (or blamed for) the Accord's creation; no one individual could be blamed for (or credited with) the Accord's defeat. On 26 October, Canadian voters in most parts of the country rejected the Accord³⁹. I began this thesis asking two questions: what were The Globe and Mail's representations of Mercredi and Rebick? Are these representations qualitatively different because Mercredi and Rebick were placed on opposite sides of a constructed debate? Through an analysis of the major ideological discourses evident in The Globe and Mail's coverage, I have interrogated the representations of Mercredi and Rebick and have attempted to demonstrate one means by which the news plays a role in reproducing the dominant ideology. In this concluding section, first, I shall draw from this analysis to compare the applications of the ideological discourses to the representations of Mercredi and Rebick. Finally, I shall

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³⁹ Only the voters of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Ontario and the Northwest Territories voted in favour of ratifying the Accord. Only in Prince Edward Island did the majority exceed seventy percent (Cernetig 28 October 1992: A4).

place my analysis within the larger context of critical news analyses and identify areas for possible future research examining Canadian news media's ideological role.

In this analysis I have explored some of the factors contributing to the production of preferred readings of Mercredi and Rebick. In "The Social Production of News," Hall et al note "it seems undeniable that the prevailing tendency in the media is towards the reproduction, amidst all their contradictions, of the definitions of the powerful, of the dominant ideology" (Hall et al 1978: 65-6). Further, in his analysis of how the news media go about reproducing the dominant ideology, Hartley writes that "[n]ews is not only about and by men, it is overwhelmingly seen through men" (Hartley 1982: 146). These statements, in combination with van Dijk's comment that the press "contributes to the reproduction of racism in society," seem to suggest that the representations of Mercredi and Rebick would be influenced by different aspects of the same ideology. I would like to comment on the similarities of the representations through a brief review of the ideological discourses I examined in this analysis.

Mercredi and Rebick were identified as significant participants on opposite sides of a constructed dichotomy through a combination of circumstances, including the framing of the plebiscite into a Yes/No choice, aspects of the ideological discourses of objectivity and election news, and

the "news value," personification. As I argued in Chapters Three and Four, the representations of Mercredi and Rebick were both subject to the influence of ideological discourses that reproduced a dominant ideology. While Mercredi's support of the Accord provided him with sympathetic reporting, this representation is also informed by a dominant ideology and its racist underpinnings. Mercredi was constructed as the personification of self-government within a campaign that privileged a discourse of self-government above all else. Similarly, the construction of Rebick as the newsworthy individual connected with feminist opposition to the Accord influenced both the form and content of The Globe and Mail's treatment of that particular form of opposition. The representation produced examined the effects of the opposition more than the reasons behind the NAC executive decision.

Other ideological discourses analysed in this study influenced the representations of both Mercredi and Rebick. The discourses contributing to the construction of race and gender informed their presentations in the news. The masculinist discourse of news, described by Hartley and examined by Rakow and Kranich, contributed to the construction of Mercredi as a charismatic leader of First Nations peoples. By homogenising the presentation of First Nations peoples' lives and presenting divergent perspectives expressed by First Nations peoples as polar opposites (Mercredi and opposition to Mercredi), news media provided their readers with an

unambiguous interpretation of First Nations approach to the Accord. This interpretation is also informed by the dominant ideology that is a product of colonialism and is qualitatively different from the representation of non-First Nations people of colour.

The Globe and Mail's reporting of Rebick was also informed by the discourses that contribute to the construction of race and gender. In a society that privileges whiteness and identifies feminism with white women, Rebick provided the news media with an individual that fit the news media's interpretation of feminism. The ideological discourses involved in the construction of gender ("woman's interests," "women's interests," and the presentation of feminism as an oppositional discourse) contributed to the production of the media frame used to report NAC's opposition as an isolated position that was challenged by many Canadian women and feminists.

As I noted in the examination of the news treatment of NWAC's activities during the campaign, the construction of race and gender intersect in the lives of First Nations women and other women of colour. This is an area in need of further study. How do competing ideological discourses contribute to the representation of women of colour in Canadian society? My tentative conclusions echo those of Rakow and Kranich and others who suggest that when combined, the influences of the construction of race and gender, tend to erase women of colour

from news reporting. Only when participating in a newsworthy event do women of colour become part of the news. Although the NWAC activities were inextricably linked to both the AFN and NAC (and by association to Mercredi and Rebeck) neither the representation of Mercredi nor of Rebeck contained many references linking their involvement in the plebiscite campaign to NWAC. Within the context of news the First Nations women of NWAC were neither First Nations peoples nor women. It would be of interest to explore in more detail how meaning is negotiated and interpreted in news reporting of women of colour in a Canadian context.

I have not attempted to produce a definitive examination of the ideological role of news. I have analysed some of the major ideological discourses involved in the production of preferred readings of a particular discursive site. The purpose of this study was to explore some of the factors that provide news media with an ideological role in society. This study also considered how, through that ideological role, news contributes to the maintenance of a hegemony that privileges very few individuals. While this is not a comprehensive inquiry presenting definitive results, I hope it makes a contribution to the critical study of news within a Canadian context.

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