

The 2005 Canadian Same-Sex Marriage Debate:
A Case Study Examining How the Press Presented the
Parliamentary Debate on Bill C-38

by

Rhonda Dene Walker-Sistie

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral
Affairs in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctorate of Philosophy

in

Communication

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

© 2012, Rhonda Dene Walker-Sistie



Library and Archives
Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-94235-2

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-94235-2

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Abstract

This dissertation presents an empirical study of how the Canadian media covered the Parliamentary debate over same-sex marriage in 2005. While marriage as an issue had been debated in Parliament for many years, the introduction of government legislation on this issue presented a significant new frame for analysis.

The research questions how newspapers presented that debate and uses a multi-step methodological approach that is informed by agenda-setting and framing theories and utilizes a content analysis and a discourse analysis. Three separate discourses are analyzed: the Parliamentary debate on Bill C-38, the press coverage of Bill C-38, and editorial coverage of same-sex marriage at the time of the debate.

The analysis of a selection of speeches delivered on Bill C-38 identified key attributes to contrast to the media coverage. The findings reveal what information was present, or not, and what choices were made by the media in their presentation of that debate. The findings demonstrate that the media coverage was neutral in tone, that issues were not presented in a substantive manner, and that a significant number of the sources presented, supported same-sex marriage, (the latter of which was unexpected).

A survey of the literature on the contemporary debate on same-sex marriage was undertaken alongside a review of other research approaches used to measure and analyze discourse to identify frames, any gaps related to understanding the issue of same-sex marriage, and shortcomings related to the study of political communication. This dissertation supports Soroka's (2002) argument that media agenda is a factor in how issues are covered, and that the role played by the media, on policy issues, will vary depending on the nature of an issue.

Further, the findings support political communication research by Miljan and Cooper (2003) and Soroka who argue that there is a pan-Canadian media agenda, with little demonstrable variance across ownership organizations, and that the press is neither a watchdog nor does it provide a forum for debate. The case study contributes to a better understanding of when, and how, the media will cover a policy issue, and when media agenda is likely to be a factor.

Acknowledgements

There are four very important committees to which I owe heartfelt appreciation. The first two are: my thesis advisory committee, chaired by Dr. Michèle Martin along with Doctors Josh Greenberg and André Turcotte, who guided me, challenged and supported me, and most critically, inspired me to write; and my thesis defence committee, with additional members, Dr. Luc Bonneville and Dr. Pauline Rankin, who together supplied the critical thinking and generative discussion that helped me to make further important linkages and articulate them to develop the final narrative of this research. Thank you, Michèle, for building both rich and dedicated committees and for believing this outcome was possible. You know almost better than anyone what it took to get here.

My third committee was made up of those I met through work who became more important to me than just colleagues. Janelle and Katarina, you both have given so much of yourselves to me over the years and constantly cheered me on in my academic pursuit. And Senator Dave Tkachuk, thank you truly for always supporting my personal goals and providing me the time I needed to follow these dreams. You also showed me how perseverance works when your heart is in the right place. How lucky am I to have worked with all of you.

Finally, and closest to my heart are the members of my fourth committee, made up of my close friends and family, who supported me beyond what seems reasonable and generously listened and cared when I needed them. The C7 own a piece of this as well as Blair, and some of my fellow academic peers, in particular Dragana and Paula, who all have inspired me with their different passions, ideas, intelligence and ability to overcome life's challenges in their own scholarly and life pursuits. Susan, your insight during the

last months of writing was deeply appreciated and helped me defend what I was trying to say even if I still don't see why semi-colons aren't used with ever-greater frequency.

In the end, however, my own personal goals have been achievable because of the love and steadfast support provided by my parents, Jim and Gladys Walker and my parents-in-law, Dorothy and Jim Sistie. I have been a needy, self-focused, and driven family member for too long but thank you for loving me anyway and seeing me through this goal. When I think about how much my husband Rob has supported me in this endeavor, the irony is not lost on me, that as I studied the literature on same-sex couples and society's grapple with rights and institutional change, how much he had to grapple with over the last few years in our own family institution. I am truly aware and appreciative of how fortunate I am in our partnership, that I have never had to fight for what I wanted, because of your commitment to me and my choices. Thank you for your support, love, and sense of humour, especially for making me realize that for you, same-sex means something different.

Finally, to Sofia, Gemma and James, I didn't know when I started on this path that you would be here, but I realize now that it was always for you, because of you.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	x
List of Figures.....	xi
List of Appendices.....	xii
1 Chapter: The Revealing Case of Same-Sex Marriage	1
1.1 Introduction: Same-Sex Marriage, the Press and Political Discourse.....	1
1.1.1 Problematique.....	7
1.1.2 Timeline of the Parliamentary debate on the issue of SSM.....	15
1.2 Framing the Contemporary SSM Debate.....	20
2 Chapter: Marriage Means So Much to So Many.....	25
2.1 Introduction: A Brief Overview of the History of Marriage.....	25
2.2 Key Issues and How They Have Been Presented	28
2.3 Scope of the Field and Contested Issues.....	31
2.3.1 The Charter of Rights versus Religious Freedom.....	31
2.3.2 Marriage as a Societal Institution: Evolution versus Erosion of the Family	36
2.3.3 How Selected Histories Influence Contemporary Politics	43
2.4 Discourse Matters: Various Communications Approaches and Issues.....	47
2.4.1 Framing Research.....	49
2.4.2 Content Analyses and Issue Salience	57
2.5 Paradoxes, Contradictions and Inconsistencies	64
2.6 Next Steps.....	69

3	Chapter: Considerations for a Theoretical Approach for SSM	72
3.1	Models of Political Communication	72
3.2	From Agenda-Setting to Attribute Agenda-Setting	75
3.2.1	Attributes, Issues and Frames.....	78
3.2.2	Sources	84
3.2.3	Elites and Ownership.....	89
3.3	The Role of the Media in Focus.....	92
3.4	An Integrated Approach.....	99
4	Chapter: Methodological Approaches	101
4.1	Options.....	101
4.1.1	Framing Analysis: An Overview and Criticism	103
4.1.2	Content Analysis: An Overview and Criticism.....	110
4.1.3	Discourse Analysis: An Overview and Criticism.....	112
4.2	Compelling Attributes.....	115
4.3	The Methodological Approach and Challenges to Resolve.....	119
5	Chapter: Where It All Comes Together	122
5.1	The Key Research Questions	123
5.2	How I Apply My Approach.....	125
5.3	Some Issues, Strengths and Weaknesses of my Approach.....	131
5.4	Selection of Arguments and Key Words	139
5.5	Press Selection and Decisions.....	145
5.6	Summary.....	152
6	Chapter: Groundwork for Meaning-Making	153
6.1	How the arguments stacked up	153
6.2	The Parliamentary Debate and the Political Back-Story	155
6.2.1	Arguments by the Numbers.....	158

6.2.2	Framing Questions and Attributes for the Parliamentary Speech Analysis.....	163
6.3	The Press Angle: Rationale and Key Questions in the Press Analysis.....	164
6.3.1	Overview and Rationale for Press Analysis	165
6.3.2	Key Questions and Guide for Analysis	174
6.4	The Speeches and the Press in Contrast.....	179
6.5	Conclusion: Groundwork for Meaning-Making	184
7	Chapter: Mediated Political Messages.....	188
7.1	Introduction.....	188
7.2	The Approach Revisited	190
7.3	The Research Questions Revisited.....	196
7.3.1	How did Newspapers Present the SSM Debate?.....	197
7.3.2	What Debate Could the Press Have Presented?	205
7.4	The Four Hypotheses Revisited	208
7.5	Other Research Questions and Concluding Observations	213
8	Chapter: Conclusion	222
8.1	What Do the Findings Say About the Role Played by the Press?.....	223
8.2	FRAMSLAS as an Approach	227
8.3	The Importance of Discourse.....	231
8.4	Other Avenues to Supplement the Findings for this Dissertation.....	232
8.5	Missed Opportunities?	233
8.6	New Avenues for Research.....	234
8.7	Concluding Ideas and Future Plans.....	235
	Appendices.....	239
	Appendix A - Synopsis of Media Clippings	239
	Appendix B - Detailed Editorial Coverage from February 17-May 12, 2005	245

Appendix C - Context for the Parliamentary Speeches and the Press Coverage	246
Appendix D - Initial List of Arguments from Parliamentary Speeches March 21, 2005	250
Appendix E - Sample of a Newspaper Coding Sheet	251
References	252

List of Tables

Table 1: Final List of Top Seven Arguments with Coding Criteria	141
Table 2: Top Seven Arguments with Examples from Speeches and the Press.....	144
Table 3: News Sources.....	149
Table 4: Categories of Coverage.....	150
Table 5: List of Initial Framing Questions for Speech Analysis	163
Table 6: Statistics of Prominence of Same-Sex Marriage Articles.....	174
Table 7: Summary of Tone, OSA, SME and C-38	176
Table 8: SSM Editorial and Opinion-Editorials February 17-May 11, 2005	177
Table 9: Parliamentary Arguments Featured in the Press Coverage	179
Table 10: Snapshot of Members of Parliament speech delivery and press coverage	181
Table 11: Parliamentary Arguments Featured in the Press Coverage	198

List of Figures

Figure 1: Article fragment for sourcing.....	86
Figure 2: Research Questions and Planned Analytical Approaches.....	124
Figure 3: Ghanem’s chart for framing and agenda-setting.....	128
Figure 4: Framing, Attribute Agenda-Setting and Content Analysis.....	129
Figure 5: Parliamentary Debate Arguments Chart.....	161
Figure 6: Arguments and Incidence by Percentage.....	161
Figure 7: Prominence by Page Number of Same-Sex Marriage Coverage.....	175
Figure 8: Relative Coverage by Parliamentarian of Total Parliamentarian Coverage....	183
Figure 9: Top Issues Covered by the Press.....	183
Figure 10: Incidence of Arguments by Week.....	199
Figure 11: Percentage of Articles with Sources by Tone.....	201
Figure 12: Intersection of Press Coverage Tone with Speeches Position.....	227

List of Appendices

Appendix A - Synopsis of Media Clippings	239
Appendix B - Detailed Editorial Coverage from February 17-May 12, 2005	245
Appendix C - Context for the Parliamentary Speeches and the Press Coverage	246
Appendix D - Initial List of Arguments from Speech Mar 21, 2005	250
Appendix E - Sample of a Newspaper Coding Sheet	251

1 Chapter: The Revealing Case of Same-Sex Marriage

1.1 Introduction: Same-Sex Marriage, the Press and Political Discourse

The same-sex marriage debate represents a unique circumstance in Canadian history where aspects of a significant social, religious, ethical, moral, legal and political issue have been framed by and into legislation. The legislative maneuver of the government resulted in concluding one part of a wider debate, even while other aspects of the issue continue to be debated or remain unresolved. Studying how this particular legislation was covered by the media is important because, like any government legislation, it signals a priority for the government of the day. As Soroka (2002) states, “Finished legislation is the clearest indicator of a government’s policy priorities, in that it represents those issues important enough to have motivated bill introduction, debate, possible committee discussion, and a vote” (p. 66). In this way, legislation provides a context for examining the work of the media and public policymaking together through a political communication analysis.

The media attention that the same-sex marriage legislation received provided a significant selection of press articles and editorials to study in order to determine what role the press played in the political and wider debate. My dissertation theoretically plots how the media covered the Parliamentary same-sex marriage (SSM)¹ debate through an analysis of press and editorial coverage. I apply a multi-dimensional

¹ For the remainder of this dissertation, *same-sex marriage* (hereafter referred to as *SSM*) is the term selected to represent the expressions: same-sex marriage, homosexual marriage, gay marriage, same gender marriage and lesbian marriage. Although each expression may carry a different value or meaning, including a personal meaning to individuals who are married, SSM has been selected for academic consistency only and in no way is intended to reflect a different meaning or value from the other terms.

theoretical and methodological approach that includes framing and agenda-setting and different methodological analyses. Among my findings, I demonstrate that the issue was rarely covered in any substantive fashion in the press. Frequently, when SSM did receive press coverage, it was presented in a neutral tone, which was not in any alignment with the debate that took place in Parliament. Theoretically, framing and agenda-setting help to merge two distinct fields, public policymaking and the media, and gain a better “understanding of the day-to-day relationships between the media, the public, and policymakers” (Soroka, 2002, p. 3). This type of approach also establishes evidence that supports a broader discussion about the role of the media in Canada and how its agenda varies, depending on the type of policy debate at question.

Soroka (2002) contends that it is essential to expand the agenda-setting process model to capture all of the directions of causality (how the media, public and policy agendas interact and affect each other) (pp. 10-11). He explains that this model operationalizes intra- and inter-agenda analyses, and encompasses the necessary “multi-directionality” of the media-policy link as well as the media-public link since it is vital to present a clearer understanding of how issues factor in agenda-setting analysis. Soroka reasons that understanding issues and their attributes will strengthen analytical findings (p. 15). To this end, he designs a new issue typology which draws from, and builds upon, the attribute agenda-setting approaches of Zucker (1978), and more recently Huegel et al. (1989) and Zhu (1993), who discussed different aspects of the important ideas of obtrusiveness, duration, abstractness and dramatic events (in Soroka, 2002, pp. 17-8). I will elaborate on these aspects later in the dissertation. Soroka argues that, “different issues will lead to different agenda-setting dynamics” (p. 15).

His typology divides issues into three different categories, prominent, sensational and governmental, hypothesizing that most issues will fit into one of these scenarios even if it is possible that an issue could exhibit “features of two issue types over time” (p. 20). The broader issue of SSM is distinct, but once it is categorized into Soroka’s typology, it becomes operationally manageable in terms of conducting an agenda-setting analysis.

This research applies a qualitative and quantitative methodological approach in the analyses of both the Parliamentary debate and the press coverage to ascertain when, and how, the media covered the debate, and more importantly, if any additional information was included in that coverage. The analysis is designed to submit new evidence with respect to traditionally-held views of agenda-setting by applying an updated approach to understanding agenda that has been described by McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (1997) as “second-level agenda-setting” (in Scheufele, 1999, p. 103) and employing Soroka’s new typology for issue definition.

Traditional agenda-setting has been concerned with explaining how the mass media influence audiences by questioning if the news matters and utilizing different forms of empirical testing (Burd, 1991, p. 293). Some, such as McCombs and Shaw (1991), have argued that the mediating function of the mass media accords it a power with respect to policymaking and cite Lang and Lang (1966) that, “the mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about...” (cited in McCombs and Shaw, 1991, p. 18). This points to why it is relevant to also question the role of the media, particularly in

light of the point made by McCombs and Shaw, that the media influence the salience of attitudes toward the political issues (Ibid).

Second-level agenda-setting also updates traditional approaches to agenda-setting because it demonstrates that framing is actually a part of agenda-setting, or an “extension” as described by Scheufele (Ibid). Scheufele designs a “process model of framing” which conceptualizes framing as a meta-theory that reflects “a continuous process where outcomes of certain processes serve as inputs for subsequent processes” (p. 114). This idea aligns with and supports my research approach as I argue that agenda is not a static concept and that if there is an interest in understanding the *effects* of agenda, it is essential to identify elements and outputs that demonstrate the *existence* of agenda.

To accomplish this, I established a cascading approach not dissimilar to a continuous process model described above that combines approaches where the output or results of one analysis become the input which informs further analysis. A visual rendering of this model appears later in the dissertation. Once the initial frame was established, i.e., the context for study and the parameters under observation, my analysis defined and identified specific attributes that are considered the output of the Parliamentary discourse. These attributes then transitioned from output to input as they were then used to analyze the press and editorial discourse, which in turn, became another output that offered some notable findings related to media agenda in terms of what was included, excluded and added to the media discourse.

Agenda-setting research has also contributed to a better understanding concerning which medium has a greater effect on its audience, television or newspapers,

as well as what types of issues work better in which medium. For example, Driedger explains that televised stories generally communicate less information, are more emotional in nature, and are constrained by time, unlike press stories which are more likely to provide greater detail, require greater mental effort to decode, and are constrained by space (citing Wanta, 1997, p. 776).

Before the legislative debate on Bill C-38² took place, a wider debate over marriage occurred in the public sphere, the courts, and in other forms of political debate including having played a role in at least one federal election held in 2004. In addition, a review of Parliament's *Hansard* indexing indicates that some significant debates over SSM took place during the 37th and 38th Parliaments. Today, the issue of SSM continues to briefly flare up every time a province, state, or country passes a related law, or when someone in Canada makes a public statement.³

The issue of SSM is intrinsically linked to a central, and some would argue fundamental, institution of modern society. As an institution, marriage is of central importance to religious tenets across almost all religions, and legally, it crosses provincial, territorial and national jurisdictions. The question remains whether the study of marriage can be considered relevant to political communications research and if so, what value does it constitute for researchers?

It has already been stated that SSM is a complex issue, however, once the federal government drafted legislation indicating that it was a policy priority, the issue

² *An act respecting certain aspects of legal capacity for marriage for civil purposes (the Civil Marriage Act)*.

³ See *Same-Sex rights in Canada*, CBC News, cbc.ca, Jan. 12, 2012; *Same-sex marriage law change addresses divorce*, CBC News, cbc.ca, Feb. 17, 2012; *Legislatures open same-sex marriage brawl on multiple fronts*, Fox News, foxnews.com, Feb. 18, 2012.

shifted to a different plane, permitting the application of a political communication approach that uses an issues typology. Understanding how this issue resulted in a significant Parliamentary debate and resulting media coverage, and how the *political* agenda may have deviated from the *media* agenda, are central to this inquiry. While not all policy issues will have a similarly high news value, studying this particular debate does provide information about issue dynamics and agenda, and leads to a better understanding of the role played by the media. The results are also useful when one considers that Canadians acquire information about the work of Parliament largely through the media. While the SSM debate took place at different sites of contest (such as in Parliament, in religious institutions, in legal contexts, in the public, and in the media), my research focuses on the political and media sites of contest and more precisely, on the legislative debate. My research approach establishes an operational context for this debate, having identified the issue as a singular priority for the government, and presents how that lengthy debate was reflected in press coverage across Canada.

While I focused on the Parliamentary debate on SSM in Canada, some historical and contemporary research related to the global nature of SSM as an issue offer relevant context and perspective since what occurs outside of Canada's borders can have an impact on that which occurs within its borders. Where appropriate, I will draw upon some of the discussion related to the treatment of the issue within the U.S. And later in this chapter, I will provide a brief overview of marriage to contribute to this study with a historical lens.

The next section discusses the problematique of SSM in terms of the press in Canada and Bill C-38 and how a theoretical approach can be designed to identify and understand the role the press played as it covered the Parliamentary debate on SSM, and how its coverage reflected a Canadian media agenda.

1.1.1 Problematique

How did the press, in the form of articles, columns and editorials, represent the debate on SSM and specifically shape the coverage of Bill C-38? How can the portrayal and representation of the debate itself be examined? What parameters can be applied to elucidate the various roles played by the press and the politicians, and what can be learned about the press agenda from such an elucidation?

I contend that evidence of the role played by the press in Canada will be made visible if the press coverage of Bill C-38 is contrasted to the Parliamentary debate on that legislation. While SSM is not an issue that can be easily generalized, it is possible to generalize the findings here because the government of the day tabled this complex issue as public policy and a government priority. Specifically, this research utilizes a multi-disciplinary theoretical approach to guide questions and findings revealed from the analysis of the different discourses. The research situates the contemporary political communication on SSM within the discipline of agenda-setting theories in order to formulate an explanation related to media agenda that expands upon work undertaken by other researchers who have studied how the press functions in Canada. By employing an approach described by Soroka (2002) as “using various hypotheses in tandem,” I will provide results that, as Soroka argued, will help to “improve predictions

of agenda-setting effects” (p. 19). Soroka’s definition of issues in terms of being prominent, sensational and governmental, helps to categorize different issues and determine whether media agenda, political agenda or another agenda will have a greater or lesser effect (pp. 20-21). In the case of SSM, it is reasonable to consider that as an issue, it falls somewhere within each of the categories, but more often, within the first two. Unlike a prominent issue, if an issue is sensational, it will have “little observable impact on the vast majority of individuals” (Ibid). When an issue is considered governmental, the expectation is that the media would rarely feature these issues. Soroka also states that sensational issues can be considered concrete whereas governmental issues are more abstract.

Regardless of whether one would describe SSM as concrete or abstract, sensational, prominent or governmental, my research will elaborate upon what the press were saying about Bill C-38 and SSM, what effects could be identified and measured, what was covered in contrast to what could have been covered, and why this debate remained abstract for most.⁴

The reason Soroka’s expanded agenda-setting approach is so important is it enables researchers to combine what are considered disparate fields of research, *political communication* and *media agenda-setting*, and establishes an empirical analysis which also provides measurable and replicable analysis. Using a second level

⁴ For context, data from Statistics Canada’s *Census* from 2006 show that there were approximately 45,345 same-sex couples in Canada, of which 7,500 or 16.5% were married. This number represents approximately 0.1% of all married couples in Canada demonstrating the affected stakeholder group is a minuscule percentage of the population. For another international example, in Sweden where a registered partnership law has been in place since 1994, there are at total of 700 registered partnerships (Fish, 2005: 33) which works out to less than 0.01% of the population based on a total population of 9 million.

agenda-setting approach combined with qualitative approaches that include framing and discourse analysis, as well as a content analysis, my dissertation provides empirical results that demonstrate what occurs when *Hansard* and the news media are studied and contrasted against each other.

Once the context to analyze the debate is established, this research compares and contrasts three discourses: the speeches from the debate on Bill C-38, the press coverage of that debate, and editorials on the issue of SSM. The methodological approach that I construct to analyze the Parliamentary discourse and any related press and editorial coverage, illustrates the dynamic interplay between these discourses. As part of a continuous process, in the frame that I establish, I consider the interaction between political elites and the resulting media discourse on the topic of SSM. My approach also reveals and supports arguments that there is a mutually dependent relationship between Canada's elected federal politicians and the press as exemplified in the SSM case study. My research does not consider how Canada's political institutions are structured in terms of federalism, but the conclusions that can be drawn from this research highlight the challenge that federalism presents to role played by societal institutions.

The civil marriage legislation was introduced by the minority Liberal government at its earliest opportunity (February 1, 2005) following the Supreme Court's response⁵ to the government's four questions concerning the constitutionality of SSM.

⁵ The Reference re Same-Sex Marriage [2004] 3 S.C.R. 698, 2004 SCC 79, was a reference question to the Supreme Court of Canada regarding the constitutional validity of same-sex marriage in Canada. The ruling was announced December 2004, following arguments made two months prior. In the *Reference*, the government asked the Supreme Court to respond to the following four questions: 1. Is the Act within

But it was not until the start of the Second Reading debate⁶ on February 16, 2005, which concluded May 4, 2005, that the most important political debate on SSM took place.⁷ This was the first time that government-sponsored legislation had ever been introduced on this subject even though there had been a number of occasions when the subject matter was discussed in Parliament and by a Parliamentary committee. Bill C-38 represented the first legally binding government position on SSM.

It can be argued that there was a great amount of media coverage generated by both the Supreme Court's response and the Parliamentary debate on Bill C-38 in contrast to the average amount of coverage that most government legislation receives. As a result of the extended amount of coverage, it is possible to gain additional insight into which groups outside of Parliament mobilized during the same period of time. Here, the idea of whether an issue is prominent or sensational will also dictate coverage. I contend that the issue was mostly sensational given that those Canadians potentially seeking a same-sex marriage total less than 1% of the Canadian population.⁸ Yet Soroka's argument, that a sensational issue is unobtrusive and concrete (which SSM is),

the authority of Parliament? If not, to what extent? 2. If so, is section 1 of the Act, consistent with the Charter? If not, to what extent? 3. Does section 2(a) of the Charter, guaranteeing freedom of religion, protect religious officials who do not believe in same-sex marriage? 4. Is the opposite-sex requirement established in the common law and Quebec law consistent with the Charter? If not, to what extent?

⁶Significant amendments can be made to legislation at this stage but once it is voted upon at Second Reading, the legislation is considered adopted in principle. In other words, major changes including additions to the legislation must be made at Second Reading. After the bill has been referred to Committee for study, only technical amendments and amendments within the existing context can be made; the only other option at Third Reading is rejection of the bill completely or, referral to another Committee for further study (this latter point rarely happens).

⁷ Since the House had not yet voted to accept the legislation *in principle*, which occurs at Second Reading, changes could still be proposed and would not be considered *ultra vires*.

⁸ In 2006, Statistics Canada identified 45,345 same-sex couples, 7,465 of which were married, which represents .28% of the population at that time. Retrieved from:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2012/09/19/census-same-sex-marriage-family.html> on January 11, 2013.

does not align with this case if one is considering SSM as legislation. I will explore this issue further when the meaning and findings are discussed.

Beyond defining how SSM fits into an issue typology, the research also probed how, and when, sources were presented in the media. Based on the number of witnesses who made representations to the House Justice Committee's special study of SSM in 2004 before the legislative debate took place, as well as those who participated in the House Committee study of Bill C-38 in 2005, demonstrate that, in fact, very few of these witnesses or potential sources received any press coverage. This raises the question of how spokespeople and sources fit into the press agenda since in the pages ahead, despite additional coverage and space for debate, the press analysis also demonstrates that the press did not feature experts or spokespeople from both sides of the debate.

The analysis of press coverage reveals that the Parliamentary discourse featured a range of arguments including legal, religious, political, and social concerns, however, for the most part, the press coverage centered around a discussion of which party could win an election if the government fell because of a loss of confidence. The findings indicate that overall, the press coverage was limited in terms of substantive issues related to the challenges around legislating SSM in Canada, which aligns with Soroka's research into agenda-setting that concludes that there is a reasonably stable press agenda in Canada that is relatively consistent for major issues across all regions in Canada (2002, p. 32).

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) express that in the U.S., the predominant form of coverage of political issues is presented in terms of a "horse race" (p. 43). Hallmarks of

this type of coverage include conveying information about who is ahead on an issue, and results in the covering of events that have a “more symbolic value [rather] than issue orientation” (p. 43). The authors also contend that this approach would cover an anarchist march by “emphasizing the marchers’ appearance over their message” (p. 47). This is pertinent to my research approach since the issue is political and while an official election campaign was not underway in the winter months of 2005, my findings will demonstrate that there was a great deal of horse race-type of coverage because of the minority government’s precarious position of power.

My analysis seeks to understand whether the press, when writing about the substantive issue of SSM, produced coverage that was balanced, neutral, or whether some form of media agenda-setting was evident. Further, it is important to validate the point that the role of the press is that of a “social magnet” for groups, and regions across Canada (Soroka, 2002, p. 45). Soroka’s research found that, “magnitude of attention across regions is often quite different”, however, “the salience of issues tends to rise and fall at the same time across the country” (Ibid). The case study on SSM meets the requirements of a national, prominent and salient issue. Therefore, it will be essential to consider the evidence in terms of Soroka’s findings.

In terms of issue salience, I had expected to prove that when the press described the issue in substantive terms, it featured a debate from Parliament that was a “fight for human rights”, followed by a framing of the issue in terms of how “any opposition to the legislation was due to a strong religious concern and belief.” Instead, as my findings demonstrate, very little space was provided by the press for a substantive debate. Moreover, when the issue was presented in terms of how it was debated in

Parliament, the data suggests that the press covered the issue the same way as Parliament in terms of key arguments, but with no additional evidence from third party spokespeople which would have resulted in balanced coverage. Yet, the majority of speeches in Parliament were opposed to the legislation, thereby revealing the existence of a media agenda. It is important to note that there is a difference between neutral coverage and balanced coverage. The former does not present the case in terms of an argument; the latter presents both sides of the argument.

Some, such as Haake, Campbell Musacchia, Roggenburg and Pollock (2008),⁹ have argued that it is within the press that issues of importance are dealt with in a more substantive way than in other forms of media. Others have discussed why different media lend themselves to different types of coverage and have a different effect on their audience (Soroka, 2002; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). Miljan and Cooper (2003) add to the discussion by explaining that searching for underlying media effects assumes that the media, by its choice of focus, will influence what the audience thinks about and how (p. 30). At the same time, the media's selection of issues also influences those who create public policy, as well as influencing where and how an issue is covered in the media (p. 31). This latter point is important as it highlights why it is relevant to study how the press covers a Parliamentary issue debate.

Soroka explains that "the television viewer is time-bound and is forced to follow a series of reports presented in rapid succession. The newspaper reader, on the other

⁹ Researchers such as Haake, Campbell, Musacchia, Roggenburg and Pollock, 2008; Wanta, 1997; and Driedger, 2007, all discussed that the textual nature of the press provides a platform for substantive discussion, on a daily basis. Magazines would fall into this category but in this case, do not have the daily and breadth of circulation for daily coverage of Parliament.

hand, may attend to the newspaper fare in his own time, at his own pace, and can reread and reexamine the information made available” (2002, p. 33). The ability of newspapers to repeat items also supports its potential role in dealing with more substantive issues (Ibid). It is important to note that while some have argued that “television, unlike newspapers, displays no agenda-setting effects” (Soroka cites McCombs and Shaw’s 1977 findings), there continues to be room for further research into television as a medium of significance in terms of its potential for agenda-setting (Soroka, 2002, p. 33).

It is important to study the media because not only do journalists present issues, but they also participate in the process by promoting certain values and ideas (Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 53). “The media mediates [...] by participation” (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1989, cited in Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 55). My research also questions if the press articulated¹⁰ a position in the debate, when this articulation occurred, what prominence was given to this articulation. Further investigation questions whether the articulation shifted in stance as the debate evolved over several months, and if one can argue that the debate evolved.

Over the course of time between 2003 and 2005, the issue of SSM sparked public demonstrations and debate both within Canada and globally, and included religious groups and social activists on both sides of the debate, the legal community and the scholarly community. This issue also provoked debate across many levels of government in Canada, such as between the federal government and provinces, particularly in Alberta, Quebec and Ontario. Asking what part of this was featured in

¹⁰ Such as through an editorial.

the press, mindful of Miljan and Cooper's (2003) explanation that as a society becomes better educated and wealthier, public policy will focus on "higher order" issues such as "human rights, feminism, and environmentalism", is also intended to highlight the substance of the press agenda (p. 56).

Some key questions offer a frame for the research that was undertaken: Did the press coverage reflect the construction of a discourse that privileged one side of the debate over the other? Did the coverage present any substantive issues, highlight any particular political elites or sources, or take a position for, or against, SSM? And will my research findings demonstrate that there was a difference between how various media outlets covered the government policy such as questioning its very legitimacy as opposed to providing a forum for debate over a legislative initiative?

By studying these and other questions concerning what was produced by the press at the time of the SSM marriage debate, and by applying a methodological approach that is multi-dimensional, my results provide evidence at a data and theoretical level to provide answers to my central research question,

How did newspapers in Canada present the same-sex marriage debate with respect to *Bill C-38 (The Civil Marriage Act)*?

The next section provides an overview of the timeline of the contemporary SSM debate in Canada.

1.1.2 Timeline of the Parliamentary debate on the issue of SSM

The first time that SSM was discussed in Parliament occurred in 1998, when a Member of Parliament named Svend Robinson¹¹ introduced a private member's bill¹² that called for the establishment of SSM in Canada. At that time, while working as a policy advisor for the Senate of Canada (from 1990 to 2008), I recall how the introduction of that Private Member's Bill was considered ground-breaking for framing the issue legislatively. M.P. Robinson's bill did not pass First Reading¹³, but it did mark the beginning of a Parliamentary debate that continued, on and off, until the passage of Bill C-38, in July 2005, almost seven and a half years later.

During the next seven years, from 1998 to 2005, a number of important legal and political events occurred in Canada. In 1999, a resolution was passed in the House of Commons by a vote of 216 to 55 in favour of preserving the definition of marriage as being "the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others" (McLellan, *Hansard*, June 8, 1999, p. 1110). That same day, the government also stated that it "had no intention of changing the definition of marriage or legislating same-sex marriage" (Ibid).

In March 2000, Justice Minister McLellan introduced legislation known as the *Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act*, which passed later that same year, and

¹¹ From British Columbia who served in Parliament from 1979 to 2004 and was a member of the New Democratic Party.

¹² Any Member of Parliament can introduce legislation for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Senate. The challenge is getting majority support for the passage of a Private Member's Bill. Very few Private Member's Bills become law as they do not often have the support of the Government or a majority of members. This in turn limits the amount of debate they receive, and therefore attention in Parliament.

¹³ Legislation receives three "readings", the First Reading introduces the legislation into the House of Commons for consideration; Second Reading is the debate on the bill that ends with a vote at Second Reading to support the bill in principle and most often refer it to an appropriate House committee for further study; and Third Reading is final debate in the House, before it is voted on and sent to the Senate for consideration.

provided same-sex couples, who had lived together for more than one year, access to the same benefits as common-law couples. The vote was 174 to 72 in favour of the *Modernization* legislation. Although it maintained the traditional definition of marriage, its passage marked a significant turning point in Canadian politics and law in terms of equality for same-sex couples. Additionally, the new law resulted in the requirement of amendments to 68 federal statutes to bring them into alignment with the new *Act*.

It is important to recognize that marriage in Canada is federally governed but without a specific Canadian statute because it is based upon British precedents dating back to 1866. Therefore, in the early 2000s, there were no Canadian legal precedents to deal with cases submitted to the provincial courts regarding SSM, highlighting a legislative gap.

Economically, it seemed that SSM was one of only a handful of issues¹⁴ that distinguished the governing Liberals from the Official Opposition at a time when many of the economic policies of both major parties appeared to be more or less similar. Legally, the federal debate in Parliament became more complex and urgent because some provincial courts were facing court challenges to allow same-sex couples to marry, which resulted in these courts putting their own cases forward to Ottawa, in essence, challenging the current federal *Marriage Act*'s ban on SSM and its constitutionality.¹⁵ Some other provinces reacted differently. Alberta, for instance, passed legislation affirming that the “notwithstanding clause” in Canada’s *Constitution*

¹⁴ Lang and Graves, 2012 also cite the decriminalization of marijuana and a Canadian-led effort to ban land mines globally as two other distinguishing issues.

¹⁵ Toronto was the first city to ask for clarification on the constitutionality of the *Marriage Act* in May, 2000 and British Columbia was the first province to ask for similar guidance in July, 2000.

Act would be used to avoid recognizing same-sex marriages if Ottawa were to amend the *Marriage Act* to include SSM.

From a religious perspective, in January 2001, the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto married two same-sex couples despite the fact that these marriages were not legally recognized federally. It was not until July 2002, when the first Canadian court, in this case the Ontario Superior Court, recognized SSM as lawful, stating that preventing gay (same-sex) couples from marrying was unconstitutional. This decision was also upheld by the Ontario Court of Appeal in June 2003.

In June of 2003, the federal government, following the Ontario decision, announced that it planned to introduce legislation to legalize SSM later that same month using language that distinguished between civil marriage and religious marriage that was intended to protect religious freedoms. Before introducing the legislation into Parliament, the federal government sent the draft legislation to the Supreme Court of Canada for a ruling on three related questions that asked: Did Parliament have exclusive legal authority to define marriage? Was the legislation compatible with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*? And, would the Constitution protect religious leaders, who did not want to sanctify SSMs, from persecution? In January 2004, the federal government submitted one additional question to the Court asking whether it was constitutional to limit common-law marriages to opposite-sex couples only. In what became known as the *Same-Sex Marriage Reference*, and almost one year later, in December 2004 the Supreme Court responded that the federal government could change the definition to include same-sex couples and religious leaders could not be compelled to perform SSMs. However, the Court did not rule on whether the change of definition

was required under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* explaining that defining marriage in law was the responsibility of Parliament (Denike, 2007, p. 75).

Less than two months later, on February 16, 2005, then-Prime Minister Paul Martin explained¹⁶ that the government was fulfilling a “commitment”¹⁷ with the introduction of Bill C-38 since the Supreme Court of Canada had responded to the SSM reference¹⁸ questions, and explained that such legislation was in keeping with the Court’s response (see Martin, *Hansard*, February 16, 2005). Opponents to the legislation argued that the Court, if it had been asked to rule on the constitutionality of “traditional” marriage, might have found that it was in fact constitutional, meaning that any changes to marriage could be considered unconstitutional (see Harper, *Hansard*, February 16, 2005). Given this, it seems that the intent to pass legislation on civil marriage was considered by some as the fulfillment of a political commitment to clarify a legal and social debate, while to others, it was viewed as a political maneuver, by political elites, to achieve a political goal, masquerading in the robes of a public policy goal.

When looking back at this Canadian political discussion on marriage and SSM, it is apparent that, during the late 1990s and early 2000s, Opposition members from the Reform Party (later reconstituted as the Canadian Alliance) which became the Conservative Party by December 2003, along with members from the New Democratic

¹⁶ During his Second Reading speech on Bill C-38.

¹⁷ This commitment was made during the 37th Parliament when then-Prime Minister Paul Martin first referred the four questions to the Supreme Court on the constitutionality of same-sex marriage. Some argued at the time that the commitment was a delaying tactic on an issue that divided the nation.

¹⁸ In the reference, while the Supreme Court was asked to provide an opinion on the four questions, it demurred on the fourth (which was added months after the initial reference) maintaining that same-sex marriage was not unconstitutional, a courtly sidestep around the question about the constitutionality of traditional marriage.

Party, viewed the institution of marriage as a central, important and symbolic social institution that had the additional potential to help define the difference between Opposition and Government members.

1.2 Framing the Contemporary SSM Debate

Two key questions that seemed to inform much of the Canadian Parliamentary debate on SSM marriage were: is marriage a human right and does marriage as an institution fundamentally change when it is broadened to include same-sex couples? In response to the first question, the United Nation's *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* does not list marriage as a human right, nor do any of its Conventions.¹⁹

The second question, how the institution of marriage may change if those with access to marriage included same-sex couples, is an issue that continues to be debated by social scientists, ethicists, religious leaders, politicians, and human rights activists, without a great deal of conclusive evidence found on either side. It also seems that, when studied closely, many of the foundational arguments that have been used in the various debates over SSM marriage seem to originate from a variety of different understandings of marriage and its origins.

While my research question is situated within an existing and contemporary framework of civil marriage in society that is linked to the white dress, the lifelong commitment, the combining and sharing of economic resources, and the establishment

¹⁹ Although one U.N. Convention, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* signed in 1979/1981, does specify measures for the advancement and empowerment of women in private and public life, and mentions marriage and the family. There is also nothing preventing Canada as a nation from defining and designating more practices as human rights beyond the scope of the *Declaration*.

of a family context that may include the future arrival of children, the broader issue of marriage is at once linked, and yet almost unrelated, to the policy issue framed by Bill C-38, depending on who establishes the dominant frame. Understanding that there are different constructions of the meaning of marriage is vital to understanding the complexity that underlies a modern debate over marriage. These different constructions informed the Parliamentary debate over Bill C-38, and they informed the individual values that are held by the journalists who covered the debate. When the meaning of marriage is used as a frame, it prompts questions concerning how different types of marriage, each with different motivations, can be reconciled within a single debate. My research does not privilege one idea or position over another, but accepts the inherent complexity that informed the Parliamentary, press and editorial discourses, a complexity that has a long history.

It is plausible to view the battle to redefine the institution of marriage to include more individuals such as same-sex couples, as a concatenation of different struggles and varied histories. But, the debate over Bill C-38 was much narrower. Legislatively, it resolved a legal problem that the federal government was facing; politically, it provided an opportunity to distract the public; and publicly, it seemed to provide a fairly sensational, salient and unobtrusive issue for the media to cover.

This dissertation does not question why there was a debate over the legality of same-sex couples uniting in matrimony in Canada (the Supreme Court's response was unanimous to the federal government's *Reference* questions in 2004, a response that clearly supported a division of equality rights from religious rights). Rather, it explores, in the chapters that follow, how certain media presented the political debate, and reflects

on the importance of the role of the media in light of the fact that Canadians get their information about Parliament and its Members, to the greatest extent, from the media. The research will also demonstrate that the press framed the debate by suppressing some viewpoints in favour of others for a number of reasons, and predictably so. The findings will demonstrate how the press do not re-present information such as the discourse of parliamentarians automatically, but that the news shared with Canadians is produced, packaged and re-presented differently than it was originally presented in Parliament. This packaging results in a different emphasis of the issue and marks an important opportunity to demonstrate a critical difference between the policy and media agendas.

This SSM case study probes the apparent inconsistency between what content is found in the discourses of Parliamentarians and that of the media in order to hypothesize about the role played by the press in terms of supporting, influencing and reinforcing the government. As Soroka points out, politicians influence, as well as are influenced by the press (2002, p. 69).

In addition to designing an approach to supply evidence in support of my central research question about how the press covered the SSM debate, the dissertation will also address other questions and ideas that came to light throughout my study since these filled in a number of gaps in my own initial approach and understanding of the issue in focus. Evidence of a press agenda can be demonstrated through the discourse and content analysis with an appropriate theoretical approach. As Miljan and Cooper argue, “news does not exist: it comes into being because it is produced by the media. To that extent, the media are agents in society as well as transmission belts” (2003, p. 11). The

research presented in the pages that follow, endeavours to underscore how the role of the media is important, but not in terms of informing or providing a context for debate. The additional questions that are considered with the central research question are as follows:

- HQ*1: The greatest amount of press coverage on the subject of same-sex marriage was largely unrelated to the debate on Bill C-38 because the press already supported the power structure of government. What was their agenda?
- HQ2: The greatest amount of issue-based press coverage portrayed the debate in terms of a moral issue, whereas the greatest amount of parliamentary discourse was concerned with legal arguments. Why?
- HQ3: Initial positions taken by the media, for or against SSM, did not change over the course of the public debate regardless of the evolution of the debate that took place in Parliament. What are some potential reasons why?
- HQ4: Parliamentarians were largely unsuccessful in having their key messages carried in the press coverage, except for the leaders of each political party. Was this in part because the press coverage that was related to Bill C-38 was mostly about the process of Parliamentary debate, and not about the substance of the arguments made in Parliament?

*HQ = Hypothetical question

A theoretical approach that combines framing and second-level agenda-setting reveals how the press characterized the debate in contrast to what was presented in Parliament because it provides a context for interpreting the information that was included in the coverage. This dissertation develops a methodological approach that is informed by agenda-setting theory. This approach will be elaborated upon more fully in Chapters Three and Four, following the literature review in the next chapter. In Chapters Five, Six and Seven, I reveal and detail the results of my study and findings, probe for new meaning from these findings and discuss the theoretical and

methodological underpinnings. Chapter Eight will comment on what was learned through this analysis and consider avenues for future research.

The case study that follows is limited to the case of SSM, but where it is generalizable is in how a social policy debate was framed and managed by Parliamentarians and the media. It is anticipated that the utilization of framing and agenda-setting combined with the discourse and content analyses will provide additional support for the arguments made by Soroka and other researchers who have found that an integrated framework approach helps to bridge the gap that exists between media, public and policy agenda-setting theory and research (Soroka, 2002, p. 5).

The next chapter provides a brief overview of the history of marriage and reviews the current literature on the subject of SSM across a number of themes of inquiry in order to demonstrate the wide-ranging debates that have taken place, in a number of fields of study, on this issue. This review highlights the inherent complexity any discussion of SSM entails. Following that, a collection of communications research on the subject of SSM will be examined in order to draw from and develop both frames and attributes to plot in the theoretical and methodological approach that is expanded upon in Chapter Three.

2 Chapter: Marriage Means So Much to So Many

This chapter presents both an overview of the history of marriage to establish the context to understand the contemporary discussion of marriage, and it examines the academic literature on the subject of same-sex marriage (SSM) with a narrow lens through which to ascertain and evaluate how different issues have been presented throughout the various studies found in the literature to determine what key discussion points had a critical mass outside of Parliament and the press. Once the key points are identified, it is also useful to define which points could have been debated and covered in Parliament and in the press. Given the abundance of literature for both the historical overview and the review of academic literature, works selected provide an enumeration of the range of issues while at the same time, contribute to the establishment of a frame in which to consider the contested issues. At the center of this dissertation is the consideration of Bill C-38. Therefore, literature that provides information concerning legal, political, economic and social issues is the most significant. In terms of the scope of the literature review, however, I will also provide an overview of some of the more individual and psychological issues addressed that have driven individuals to seek various legal and political decisions concerning SSM. The issues and works that follow are intended to not only reveal the site of contest or what is at stake, but also how the debate has been articulated so differently, by so many.

2.1 Introduction: A Brief Overview of the History of Marriage

Urlin (1913) draws from the works of several key anthropologists such as Howard,

Hutchinson, Westermarck, Fustel de Coulanges, and E. Crawley, turn of the century anthropologists of renown at the time of her writing, to inform her historical analysis of the marriage customs of some of the principal nations of the world. Her survey of recorded history provides an example of an early anthropological approach to the institution of marriage, and some evidence pertaining to origins. According to Urlin, "...the best authorities are in dispute over the question as to the primitive nature of the marriage bond. According to some of these, marriage was unknown among the earliest races. When there is historical evidence, citing Westermarck, Urlin states that marriage seemed to occur among uncivilized tribes where the strongest man could "take from any other man his existing wives, or his daughters, and add them to the number of his own wives" (1913, p. 3).

According to Urlin's research, the earliest form of marriage was group-marriage, that later may have evolved to individual marriage through the practice of capturing women from other tribes. These newly captured women were likely seen as the property of the conquering people who, instead of adding them to the head-tribesman, kept them as property (1913, p. 5). She surmises that ancient marriage seems to have taken three different forms: marriage by capture, marriage by choice, and marriage by purchase (1913, p. 10). She also conducts an interesting discussion related to customs that developed later where young girls prepared dowries in the years before marriage, which highlights an early indication of a disassociation or de-linking from who these young women eventually would marry. This latter point supports the idea that the institution of marriage itself, historically, was greater than the individuals who participated in it.

In Ancient Egypt, family life appears to have been highly respected which is evidenced by the finding that “a man’s mother is often placed beside him in his tomb as well as his wife” (Urlin, 1913, p. 29). Larsson Lóven points out that in the Ancient world, legal marriage was not everyone’s right, and that individuals had to be citizens to have the right to marry which was seen to provide social and legal status, as well as legitimacy to children born of a married couple (2010, p. 1). For the Ancients, a woman’s main duty was to bear children, and being a mother resulted in an elevated social status (Ibid). This implies that one form of marriage was intended to exclude those who did not intend to have children and entire classes of individuals who were not considered citizens. Considering that some researchers, such as Schmitt Pantel (cited by Larsson Lóven, 2010, p. 2), have argued that marriage and sexual life played a significant positive role in the careers of prominent men in history, these arguments, taken together, point to the importance of marriage as an economic and legal institution.

In terms of the customs and ceremonies from Ancient Greece and Rome, Urlin argues that marriage for these civilizations was linked to religion through the sacrament that symbolized the transfer of the bride to her husband’s household. Here, a central idea of marriage was the “hearth”, as the center of the home, with the utilitarian concept of fire at its very center (1913, p. 25); love was not part of this idea. Interestingly, this idea is in stark contrast to one of the key themes she identified in her study of primitive marriage, where the ideas of possession and ownership figured prominently.

Finally, and much later, marriage seemed to become a legal institution comprised of written contracts intended to distinguish marriage from other, non-legal relationships. Some Roman laws in late antiquity did not allow marriages between

individuals from different ranks within the social hierarchy, with restrictions also applied to the inheritance rights of children born into these different circumstances (Evans-Grubbs, 2010, p. 90).

The modern debate over marriage is complex and these different ideas of early marriage demonstrate that different advocates for different types of marriage may have had justifiably different ideas motivating their position and arguments.

2.2 Key Issues and How They Have Been Presented

Over the last decade or so, the same-sex marriage (SSM) debate has spawned an enormous body of research, opinion and commentary which is found throughout academic journals, the media, books, government documents and legislation, court decisions, and within religious treatises on the institution of marriage. What is evident from a literature review of this subject is that the debate remains topical in many fields of study and features a number of unresolved and contested positions.

While couples may marry through both a religious ceremony and a civil ceremony, it is the latter that is legally binding. The civil institution of marriage, separate from the religious institution, has implications for all levels of governing and law in Canada, in particular with respect to estate law, divorce law, economic benefits for spouses, privacy rights, care and nurturing benefits, and death benefits, to name but a few. For those who govern civil marriage, powers are divided among different administrative levels such as municipal, provincial, and federal, and vary by nation. Therefore, the debate over SSM traverses each of these levels, intersects with various religious tenets and sacraments, both within nations and at an international level, and

even impacts relations between nations in the context of bilateral and multilateral agreements that deal with human rights²⁰ (Fish, 2005, p. 32). In addition to the frameworks that exist because of various international agreements, Western nations²¹ also share common law as a legal framework, participate together in world organizations that recognize individual rights such as the United Nations, and are signatories to many other declarations, protocols and treaties that recognize the principles of equality of individuals and a protection of individual rights.

One contributor to the complexity of the issue is the number of legal challenges that arise from the different same-sex arrangements in different countries. Some examples of these challenges include: same-sex couples traverse borders for employment or personal reasons, move their permanent residences, own property in other jurisdictions, or merely desire a social recognition of their personal choice and status as a same-sex couple. A complete study of the legal implications of these particular issues is outside the scope of my dissertation, but reflecting on some of these

²⁰For example, there are world organizations that include the recognition of individual rights such as the United Nations. Many nations are also signatories to declarations, protocols and treaties that enshrine a recognition of the principle of equality of individuals and a protection of individual rights such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, in which the basic principle of equality and non discrimination with respect to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, forbids “distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” is set out in Article 2 along with the proclamation of “the right to life, liberty and security of person, a right essential to the enjoyment of all other rights as set out in Article 3. Article 3 also introduces other articles in which other civil and political rights are set out, but important to this thesis are those articles regarding the right to marry and to found a family such as Article 22. Article 22 also introduces Articles 23 to 27, in which economic, social and cultural rights, the rights to which everyone is entitled “as a member of society” are set out, characterizing these rights as indispensable for human dignity, and indicates that they are to be realized “through national effort and international cooperation”. (Retrieved March 3, 2006 from: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/2/fs2.htm>).

²¹ Over ten countries worldwide and several American states currently have some form of same-sex union that includes same-sex marriage and they are: Germany, Belgium, Finland, Spain, Portugal, France, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Greenland, Hungary and Great Britain. The Netherlands was the first country to allow same-sex marriage (no legal distinction between hetero- and homosexual marriage). One of the problems the EU has faced is dealing with the portability of those laws between nations (Fish, 2005, p. 33).

ideas presents issues whose existence impacts all fields of study, and in particular, helps to articulate some of the reasons why legislators in Canada proposed the solution they did.

Thus, the academic literature on SSM can be broadly categorized into five fields that reflect the major themes of inquiry: 1) psychological analyses pertaining to individuals and their sexuality and/or acceptance in society; 2) sociological and anthropological discussions of effects and normative impacts of SSM on individuals and in society; 3) political science in terms of SSM as a goal of a minority group in society with political economic considerations; 4) communications research including public opinion research and trends regarding SSM and the increasing liberalism of public-policy making; and finally, 5) legal discourse on SSM, and critiques of legal discourse in terms of rights and equality.

Within each of these five fields, a wide-ranging debate has taken place concerning various issues surrounding SSM such as: fairness; equitable treatment; equitable access to benefits, how the history of marriage fits into the debate, and how religious rights and beliefs fit within the context of the governing of society, since the institution of marriage has both civil and religious aspects. All of these fields and issues contribute to how SSM has been framed differently by those who have participated in the debate.

Finally, the literature review revealed a number of paradoxes related to marriage within the surveyed literature that will also be discussed before concluding. This chapter divides the five fields of research into two main groups, communications research in one group, and all of the other fields presented together in a second group. I

begin with this second group and have organized the material by issue or debate in order to provide a brief synopsis of key research contributions for a pan-literature perspective.

2.3 Scope of the Field and Contested Issues

This section will review the research conducted in fields other than communications to develop a base of understanding of the scope and significance of the issue itself that may have informed the development of Bill C-38. To manage the volume of available research, and for organizational purposes, this section is divided into three subsections around key debates or concerns related to SSM: 1) human rights versus religious beliefs, 2) societal institution of marriage in terms of evolution versus erosion of society, and 3) how selected histories influence contemporary politics.

In some cases, a portion of the research discussed in one subsection could also fit into another. An example of this is the research included in the societal institution discussion, where there are works relating to family law, which also fit into the section that reviews the legal discourse concerning rights. In this instance, I chose to keep the theme of “the family” as an issue separate from other issues related to equality even though there is a great deal of legal discourse devoted to equality for families.

2.3.1 The Charter of Rights versus Religious Freedom

In Canada, the most significant debate related to SSM is the human rights versus religious freedom debate. In the academic literature surveyed, the work of all researchers concerned with rights appeared to tacitly recognize that the key debate over SSM is whether or not it should be a human right. As a result, there is a great deal of

research addressing the issue of equality, which by its very definition serves to frame the debate in those terms. A great deal of discourse also arises from the pursuit of legalization of SSM at multiple levels of government around the world.

The equal rights movement identifies definitions as part of the problem, so advocates employed a strategy of redefining marriage. But researchers such as Cere (2004) argue that redefining the institution would mean that gay people would be participating in a heterosexual institution, and that the redefinition would change the institution from one that supports “heterosexuality and heterosexual identities” (McWhorter quoted in Cere, 2004, p. 14). This argument does little to quantify²² the effects on the gay population, but instead, focuses on the impact on the majority of the population through the use of survey statistics. This paradox will be revisited later in this chapter.

Much of the legal discourse is concerned with legal opinions or reviews of precedent-setting cases concerning anything directly or indirectly related to SSM. Topics span the spectrum of life and include cases as diverse as: the settling of estates for same-sex couples legally recognized in one country who also own property in another country which does not have a similar recognition of rights, highlighting the

²² Statistically, Canadian survey research indicates that 88% of young Canadians still wish to marry, 88 % want to stay with the same partner for life and 92% want to have children. These results fly in the face of the facts that 40% of marriages currently end in divorce, even while marriage rates have dropped from 7.1 per thousand in 1987 to 5.1 in 1998; further, 40% of married couples in 2001 were childless, with a national birth rate of approximately 1.5 in 2001, down from 4.0 in 1960 (in Cere, 2004, p. 17-8). Statistics Canada published data in 2011 that demonstrates about 48.5% of the adult population in Canada was married in 2006 (as opposed to single, separated, divorced, widowed or living in common law) which is the first known time in Canadian history that the percentage was under half. According to *CanWest News Service*, the figure was 50.1% in 2001 and more than 60% during the 1980s. Retrieved from <http://www.divorcemag.com/statistics/statsCAN.html> on February 27, 2012.

different interpretations and treatments of SSM in terms of its portability²³ (Bailey, 2004; Fish, 2005), matters concerning the family (Bala and Bromwich, 2002), labour agreements (Brown, 2003), and several different cases concerning discriminatory laws that affect same-sex couples such as employment or pension laws.

Mello (2004) discusses the progress and impact of decisions regarding SSM in the state of Vermont and how different politicians articulated the issue in terms of civil rights, morality, religion, and the sanctity of heterosexual marriage. While his book is classified here as part of the legal discourse on the topic, his work goes beyond the consideration of the legal issues as he investigates and describes the political and cultural environment in which the legal decisions were made. Mello's work in particular, points to the benefit of extending the analyses of various cases and court decisions beyond the legal sphere to a more comprehensive "interdisciplinary" approach.

Vaughan (1999) looks for evidence to support claims (and criticisms) that the Supreme Court in Canada has become more activist. He points out that Canada's *Constitution Act, 1982* and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* increased the powers of the judiciary (1999, p. 13). Vaughan demonstrates that while it is valuable to question whether the Supreme Court is imposing values and private perceptions, the Court is arguably also fulfilling its duty to Canadians as established by the *Constitution*. In other words, it is directed to do so by the language of the *Constitution*. To support this idea, others who have studied the subject of judicial activism have noted that any so-called

²³ One goal of the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is to guarantee portability of rights across nations.

judicial activism is one result of the trend of a growing liberalism in public policy (see Bala and Bromwich, 2002 concluding notes). In terms of elite commentary, one could argue that an increasing liberalism in public policy in fact has constructed a newer and stronger role for Justices which has in turn resulted in a weakening of the position of legislators in public policy-making.

Eskridge Jr. (2002) frames the SSM debate in terms of rights rather than morality, and situates his ideas within a political history of sexuality in North America. He addresses the issue of who qualifies for care and nurturing leave since the passage of the *Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act* (2000) in Canada, and he focuses on the idea of “equality practice” and how this idea compares and contrasts to the politics of sexuality. He argues that cultural values and attitudes toward sexuality have changed over the last century signifying an evolution of social norms through the progression of types of issues, i.e. gay equality rights, gay marriage, etc. His review of a number of different civil union laws in different U.S. states and Canada reveals how jurisprudence has become more liberal and what the practice of equality means in a postmodern society.

Numerous researchers have embraced the challenge of unraveling the complex concepts and scenarios associated with individual and human rights, particularly with respect to equality and the rights associated with the “orderly pursuit of happiness” (with reference to the *Charter*). For example, one author discusses how the courts have responded to calls of discrimination by unmarried cohabitants in one province who continue to be excluded from a provincial law regarding matrimonial property rights (McClary, 2005). This is typical of how common law cannot easily respond to social

issues since its rulings are based on precedents. In the case of the Nova Scotia couple that McClary writes about, because the same sex couple is not married (*ultra vires* to the decision is the fact that the couple cannot marry each other), the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that they were not in fact discriminated against by being excluded from that provincial law.

Still others have argued that the right to marry is a human right based on equality rights described in the *Charter*²⁴ (for example, La Violette, 2002; Eskridge, 2002) and other rights protected by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* which either require the legalization of SSM (Wintemute, 2004; Eskridge Jr., 2002) or preclude the acceptance of SSM (Somerville, 2003).

Stewart (2004) studied the court decisions for four key cases²⁵ related to the history of same-sex couples and civil marriage, discussions of procreation and different models of child-rearing families, the landscape of competing theories of gender and adult relationships, and what he describes as the most recent legal passion concerned with equality which he ties to rights and dignity. He argues that while the courts have redefined marriage, at the same time they remain constrained by precedents. He also explains that judges are not trained or educated in such a way that they could govern or make determinations that are social in nature. In the cases that Stewart studied, he notes

²⁴ Equality rights are described in Section 15 of the *Charter* stating that 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 (in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability). This section helps ensure every individual is considered equal under Canadian law and that governments don't discriminate against certain groups in its policies and programs. Over the years, the courts have extended the section to include other grounds of discrimination, such as sexual orientation (Retrieved September 15, 2012: <http://www.mapleleafweb.com/features/canadian-charter-rights-and-freedoms-introduction-charter-rights>).

²⁵ *Goodridge, Baker, EGALÉ and Halpern.*

that the courts “[accorded] no preference for marital sexual relations, above all other kinds of sexual conducts” (2004, p. 63). He also seemed to believe that overall, the courts’ “judicial performance disappoints” (Ibid). In other words, Stewart found that the courts’ decisions regarding SSM were deficient in the “final resolution of the genderless marriage issue” and if they had followed equality jurisprudence, they would have sustained man/woman marriage as a “private protective purpose of society’s deep logic of marriage...” (Ibid). Stewart concludes that the opinions provided in each of the cases never clearly defined “what constitutes a social institution and, hence, any clear conception of what, if anything, changes an institution and of what the consequences of such changes might be” (2004, p. 75). This research raises several questions, in particular, who in society benefits from equality jurisprudence.

2.3.2 Marriage as a Societal Institution: Evolution versus Erosion of the Family

The sociological and anthropological literature on SSM is quite varied, including phenomenological studies, which discuss the experiences of those who have struggled for SSM and a recognition of their feelings legally and psycho-socially (Alderson, 2004), and literature that examines attitudes toward homosexuality, both increasingly more tolerant (in Canada, Smith, 2005) and stable in their critical opinion (Yang, 1997). There is also a body of literature that could be described as one that analyzes the normative effects of the debate: on society (Cere, 2004), on families (Farrow, 2004), on children (Somerville, 2004), and on the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Morton, 2004). Freeman’s (1999) article could be grouped here, or in the next section that deals with political and political economic literature since he theorized that a

normative argument for allowing SSM is consistent with liberalism, even when proponents of liberalism are opposed to SSM, highlighting one of many paradoxes that accompany the SSM debate (p. 1).

Although debates concerning different legal, religious and political aspects of SSM have been prominent for a number of years, little is known about the couples themselves and how they have “constructed their relationships” as they plan to get married²⁶ (Alderson, 2004, p. 108). Alderson utilized phenomenology (an approach that is focused on an individual’s meaning-making as the quintessential element of the human experience) as his theoretical approach to demonstrate that gay and lesbian individuals who marry will likely be psychologically and physically healthier, and that establishing a committed relationship could be part of a final developmental stage in identity acquisition (Alderson, 2004, p. 120). Additional research on this topic was conducted by MacIntosh, Reissing, and Andruff (2010) to find out how same-sex couples who got married after the 2005 legislative changes were doing. They conducted interviews with 15 couples to determine their levels of relationship satisfaction and to see if they had lower attachment-related anxiety compared to heterosexual couples. Studies like this are important because it is the experience of the minority stakeholders in the SSM debate that are considered, stakeholders who may not have had a strong voice at the political, legal or societal level.

In a collection of essays (Cere and Farrow, 2004) that defends the idea of traditional marriage, the central theme is concerned with the welfare of children and how they will be raised. The essays discuss how the debate has been shaped by politics

²⁶ Alderson (2004) interviewed 43 individuals who wished to get married in a same-sex ceremony.

(McKay, 2004), what the possible effects are on children (Somerville, 2004) and how the *Canadian Charter of Rights* can be interpreted in defense of traditional marriage and why Section 33²⁷ of the *Charter* is important to democracy (Morton, 2004). In one essay, Farrow (2004) argues against the *Halpern*²⁸ decision of 2003 because it separated marriage and procreation. Farrow further argues that this trend must be reversed because decisions such as *Halpern* have actually changed marriage, in that contemporary marriage is different from that which existed before *Halpern*. These essays also argue that fathers and mothers matter to children, that the government should not promote same-sex families, and that the quest for SSM has misleadingly been painted by liberals as a noble quest, analogous to civil rights marches and the days of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Cere and Farrow, 2004, pp. 2-3).

One theme prevalent in some of the political economic research is how specific economic issues affect same-sex couples such as: tax penalties, the financial impact of divorce on families, and equitable access to benefits. The economic benefits of marriage are analyzed by researchers who found that married couples face higher tax penalties (Ashbee, 2001); still, others have found that married people have higher incomes even after they get divorced (Bedard and Deschênes, 2005) highlighting the

²⁷ Known as the *notwithstanding* clause.

²⁸ In *Halpern et al. v. Attorney General of Canada et al.* (June 10, 2003), the Court found that the dignity of persons in same-sex relationships was violated by the exclusion of same-sex couples from the institution of marriage concluding that the common-law definition of marriage as “the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others” violates Sec.15(1) of the *Charter*. The remedy to correct the inconsistency was to declare invalid the existing definition of marriage to the extent that it refers to “one man and one woman”, and to reformulate the definition of marriage as “the voluntary union for life of two persons to the exclusion of all others” in order to achieve the equality required by Sec.15(1) of the *Charter* but to ensure that the legal status of marriage was not left in a state of uncertainty. The Court ordered the City of Toronto to issue marriage licenses to the complainant couples and ordered the Registrar General of Ontario to accept for registration the marriage certificates of Kevin Bourassa and Joe Varnell and of Elaine and Anne Vautour.

dilemma of marriage, different interpretations, and who may have access to this institution.

Although marriage is the subject of the debate, it is also important to include a discussion of divorce and its impact and effects, since divorce, according to some research, continues to be on the rise. This statistic concerning divorce marks a fundamental shift in society and points to one significant reason for an economic decline in the status of women and children (Bedard and Deschênes, 2005, p. 411). These researchers highlight their important finding that “ever-divorced women live in households with more income per person than never-divorced women” (Ibid). In other words, marriage is a “central determinant of economic status for women and their children” regardless of whether that marriage ends in divorce (Ibid, p. 412).

Some of the feminist research investigates the social and personal²⁹ space between single heterosexual moms and lesbian mother couples (Lapidus, 2004). Other research on SSM (and some of the arguments against it) is tied to discussions of other forms of marriage such as polygamy or polygyny.³⁰ I cite these examples because some of the arguments carried in the Parliamentary debate and previous House Committee hearings flagged the “slippery slope” rationale that argued the legalization of one new form of marriage would surely lead to others. While it is reasonable to explore the

²⁹ One academic recounts her personal experience of getting married to her lesbian partner and how everything but nothing changed (Reid, 2005).

³⁰ For example, Majeed (2004) explores both same-sex marriage and polygyny in the context of questioning the norms surrounding a “traditional” family. Majeed underscores the usage of societal assumptions on what is decent, moral and traditional through her own academic journey to understand the dynamics of the debate surrounding the structure of the family in contemporary society. Majeed is not the first to do this (her research relied upon the work of Dannin, 2002; Rouse, 2004; and Gibbs and Campbell, 2003), but her article is written in such a way as to bring some balance of perspective to a contentious debate by considering the paths that Western culture with a traditional Judeo-Christian world view has traveled in terms of changing societal institutions.

social impact and meaning of other forms of marriage from a scholarly perspective, most proponents of SSM did not dilute their campaign discourse in support of SSM by widening the debate to include other forms of marriage.³¹

Eskridge Jr. (1996) argues that changes to case law to include SSM would have a “civilizing” aspect on those that joined a societal institution such as marriage. His key position is that “Americans are romantics...[and] the attractions of marriage maintain a powerful hold on our imagination and aspirations ... that same-sex marriage is natural and just”, as it derives from Ancient myths, the Middle Ages, Imperial China and even Judaic scripture’s same-sex unions of ancient Egypt (pp. 1-6).

The institution of marriage is also not merely concerned with the bond established between two individuals because there are broader implications socially, economically and legally for families, spouses and children. As such, the literature also includes research on family law³² and the integration of former laws designed for heterosexual families, such as immigration reunification laws (La Violette, 2004), laws pertaining to collective agreements and freedom from discrimination in the workplace (Brown, 2003), and adoption and legitimacy laws regarding the rights of children (de Mino, 2000; and Ashbee, 2001).

³¹This appears to have in turn prevented most opponents to SSM from successfully bringing polygamy into the debate on SSM framed as a prelude to consider once SSM is legal on the grounds of poor taste even when the claim is valid, at least academically, considering some studies show that, for example, polygyny is spreading among African American Muslims. According to one researcher quoted by Majeed, while the phenomenon and practice of polygyny fulfills the directives of the teachings of Islam there may also be economic reasons driving the trend as well, a trend that sociologists should be interested in when concerned with marriage (of any sort) as an important social institution (Majeed, 2004, pp. 78-9).

³²For an excellent overview of the evolution in family laws in Canada, see Bala and Bromwich, 2002.

A central theme in the family law literature is the changing description of the family accompanied by changing legal concerns discussed at length by Calder (2005) in her review of a family law textbook concerned with a number of family law cases in Canada³³. However, for the most part, the literature is limited to a discussion of common law and legal precedents such as La Violette's research (2004), concerning how Canadian immigration policy was designed for heterosexual Canadians who wished to sponsor their spouses as family class immigrants, and that although the government intended the amended immigration policy to include the sponsorship of gay and lesbian partners, policy weaknesses remain that could impede same-sex immigration.

La Violette's (2002) examination of how establishing registered partnership models could be a solution for adults who wanted to establish relationships with formal obligations, sheds light on some of the policy options that governments and courts have considered. La Violette outlines many different partnership models found around the world, identifies their pros and cons, and classifies her research into two broad categories, "Marriage Minus" schemes, and "Blank Slate Plus" schemes, names chosen to reflect what motivated the type of model (2002, p. 119). What is of particular interest is her explanation of the genesis of different partnership models, whether they originated from law-makers or from the private sector, and the different contexts on which they depend, as in constitutional, legal, social and religious contexts.³⁴ Finally,

³³ *Families and the Law in Canada: Cases and Commentary* (Toronto: Emond-Montgomery Publishers, 2004).

³⁴ While her article's main emphasis is registered partnerships, La Violette (2002) discusses them in terms of their relevance to same-sex marriage, whether they are virtually the same in some jurisdictions, or how they would still be useful in jurisdictions that removed restrictions on SSM.

La Violette's research provides important subtext to some of the arguments identified in my research that are used to support or deny SSM rights. She explains that although legally registered partnerships are almost interchangeable with marriage in many cases, the social differences between the two types of recognized relationships can be quite substantial as in circumstances where sometimes registered partners "were denied critical rights relating to children" (2002, p. 125).

Brown's (2003) research³⁵ on issues surrounding gays and lesbians in the workforce, and how Canadian labour organizations have fought (or not) against discrimination, contributes an empirical measurement approach in a field that previously had little data of this nature. Because Brown notes that previous research was weakened due to small samples and a lack of both theoretical frameworks and empirical testing of hypotheses, he applies an accepted model in industrial relations systems analysis to test four different hypotheses using a few select independent and dependent variables from a data sample of over 1076 Canadian collective agreements (2003, p. 647). While Brown's research is restricted to labour agreements, his rationale for quantitative analysis has broader significance when studying this issue.

³⁵ His research demonstrates that in order for the issue of same-sex benefits to become a reality, labour agreements first had to contain anti-discrimination language (acknowledgment that there is a problem). Out of all the agreements he analyzed, only 2% contained same-sex benefits and these were more likely to appear in public sector organizations rather than private sector organizations (Brown, 2003, p. 658). Brown also found a gender split when it comes to supporting or not supporting equality issues for gays and lesbians which makes sense in that the public sector is populated by a larger percentage of women which explains why the public sector was more likely to have anti-discrimination clauses in its labour agreements.

2.3.3 How Selected Histories Influence Contemporary Politics

Some researchers³⁶ look specifically at the politics of the SSM debate and compare public policy in Canada to that in the U.S. in order to determine why policy outcomes have been different in two nations that share a common language, culture, system of law and similar religious heritage. Smith (2005) proposes a “historical institutionalist” approach as one way to explain that the establishment of political institutions and policy legacies shape the direction and guide the development of social movements which can explain the divergence of legal history between two nations (Pierson and Skocpol, 2003, described in Smith, 2005, p. 226). An approach such as this demonstrates an important difference between the “defensive posture” that has been taken in the United States legislatively and the approach that was taken in Canada. The author points out that the Canadian debate has been more frequently portrayed as a noble fight for human rights. Smith asserts that changes and differences in public policy cannot be explained by public opinion or by political culture alone (Smith, 2005, p. 227). This assertion has particular merit when one considers that even with Canada and the United States’ shared contexts of culture, language and law, the “gap has [still] widened substantially” on gay rights issues between the two countries (Ibid, p. 227). Overall, this approach to understanding the gap between the two nations provides a useful perspective, but it is also somewhat limited. It catalogues the differences

³⁶ Smith (2005) looked specifically at the politics of the SSM debate and compared public policy in Canada to the U.S. to better understand why the policy outcomes have been different in two nations with so many similarities. Smith went back to 1969 when Canada repealed its sodomy laws to find a critical point of difference from which have evolved different anti-discrimination laws and quite different rates of application of those laws between the various states and provinces in the two nations (p. 226). In Canada, sodomy is no longer a public issue whereas in the U.S. it remains an important area of public policy, with the last state sodomy laws only repealed by 2003.

between nations and describes policy and legal changes over time which does not explain what motivates the changes themselves.

The political science and political economy literature feature research on the impact of political decisions on economics, and vice versa, and how both proponents of and opponents to SSM utilize political and economic arguments to support their cases. The main debate found here describes how liberalism is changing, seen through the example of increasing support for SSM. Of note, when the arguments in support of SSM are not rights-based, economic circumstances are often cited, either to avoid the murky ground of moral argumentation and the complexity of non-secular debate, or to persuade society of the importance of SSM with some sort of economic “bottom line” rationalizing.

One theme that appears in both the political and sociological literature is concerned with political and legislative definitions of civil marriage. For example, Davis (2005) discusses how the Canadian *Civil Marriage Act* legislation continues to define marriage in heterosexual terms even while it seems to imply an “acceptance” of homosexuals who are willing to join a “straight” institution. In other words, rather than changing legislation to meet individual needs and difference, some could argue that the *Civil Marriage Act* implicitly encourages homosexuals to conform to a heterosexual lifestyle.

Ashbee’s (2001) research recounts changes in U.S. public policy since 1969 regarding four different marriage-related policies: the marriage tax penalty, illegitimacy, SSM and divorce laws. He argues that, while the marriage movement has achieved some success, most notably in the passage of a few new public policies, there are

significant “differences among those involved in advocating reform, as well as the character of contemporary public opinion [that] may inhibit radical policy change” (2001, p. 510). Specific to the discussion of SSM but also tied to his points about how the family has changed, Ashbee discusses how the U.S. 1996 *Defense of Marriage Act* (DOMA) sought to define traditional marriage as a heterosexual union. He notes that the legislation received broad support from Republicans, and the Democrats “did not overtly oppose the measure” so the bill passed in the House of Congress by 342-67; and in the U.S. Senate, less than one-third of Democrats voted against it³⁷ with Democrat President Clinton signing it into law (2001, p. 515). Ashbee draws attention to the fact that the DOMA was a political response to “judicial decisions and legislative moves in certain states” (p. 515). Clearly Republicans saw the issue as an electoral opportunity since he notes that passage of such an *Act* split the Democrats and solidified Republican support. It is useful to consider whether there are parallels between the U.S. experience and the legislation, political circumstances and timing of the debate that took place in Canada.

Some of the explanations Ashbee offers are interesting, in particular what motivates public policy in areas such as SSM and how public opinion has changed over time, however, much of what he discusses is not accompanied by any quantitative and comprehensive data. Instead, the examples he uses in his commentary can be read as narrow and selective in support of his thesis even though he appears to have drawn from a number of different organizations, stakeholders and researchers. One way to expand

³⁷ In Canada, a parliamentary vote of 216-55 in the House of Commons reaffirmed the historic definition of marriage in 1999 under Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin.

upon this research would be to analyze all legislation pertaining to the “marriage movement” during the Clinton years in order to quantify what percentage of policy could be linked to this movement. The years before President Clinton (when the President was a Republican), or after could also be studied in terms of the legislative agenda for comparison purposes. Like other researchers, Ashbee points out the difficulty in determining what truly motivated these policies since equality, the economy, morality and the family were all arguments used in the debate over the DOMA and other marriage movement public policy. Significantly, his research is still pertinent as witnesses to the 2012 Presidential Election Campaign can attest that the issue of SSM and the DOMA³⁸ continues to play a role.

Finally, Matthews (2005) argues that it has been legal decisions in Canada that have shaped public opinion on SSM. He uses, as his data, survey results from three Canadian Election Studies, 1993, 1997 and 2000, and his results demonstrate how Canadians have increased their support for SSM from 37% in 1993 to just over 50% by 2000 (2005, p. 841). While sociological changes in attitude have played a role in spurring legal change, Matthews contends that it is politics that has been of “pivotal importance”, and not sociological effects (p. 842). Therefore one could say that court decisions have led public opinion but it has been politics that has instituted the pace of change. This research highlights the importance of the policy debate as a key agent of change.

³⁸ DOMA and the President’s position on its constitutionality has been discussed, see: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/08/defense-of-marriage-act-3_n_1866830.html.

2.4 Discourse Matters: Various Communications Approaches and Issues

“...the politics of definitional discourse is not just a quibble over words. Definitions matter. They constitute and define authoritative public knowledge. We ‘define’ social reality into existence and we define it out of existence...”
(Cere, as cited in Stewart, 2004, p. 77)

What is important for the discussion within this dissertation is having a better understanding how societal institutions can be constructed by their underlying definitions, and how discourse contributes to that construction. Discourse matters to media, politicians, the courts and others; what is not clear is the way in which it matters. This section takes a closer look at some ongoing research related to how different discourses about marriage are framed in the media and a range of communications approaches already taken to understand those discourses. For example, a number of researchers have drawn comparisons between voters and key parts of election platforms, newspaper circulation and public opinion, source dominance and audience reaction, to name just a few. The following selection is intended to begin to address the need for an integrated theoretical approach.

Communications research topics related to SSM were found through an electronic search using the terms “same-sex marriage”, “Canada”, and “gay marriage” in four key databases: Communications and Mass Media, CBCA, CPI.Q and Communication Studies. This search generated approximately 485 scholarly articles, mostly clustered around the period of 2004-2005, and the most relevant articles were often duplicated across the databases resulting in fewer than 45 key articles for my research. Overall, articles were concerned with fairness and equality issues with an emphasis on accessibility to the institution of marriage and removing any impediments

to achieve this. Since Bill C-38 passed in July 2005, a few new articles have been published which reviewed how the media covered the issue. While none of these articles contrasted the discourse in the Parliamentary debate to press coverage in Canada, a number of them used a framing approach and media analysis that informed my research.

In terms of how and why people hold opinions on political issues, according to Brewer, there is agreement among researchers that this is dependent upon “whether public debate offers one undisputed interpretation or two competing (equality versus special treatment) interpretations of the value [shaped by political knowledge]” (2003, p. 174). In other words, when citizens are faced with competing points of view or arguments regarding a political issue, individual values play a role, however, this does not discount the idea that values can be shaped by political information. Some, such as Miljan and Cooper (2003), argue that “the mass media play a major role in the lives of most North Americans” and “are an essential constituent of modern life” since the public relies upon and trusts the news media to provide information on public policy issues. This lines up with a perspective that assumes public policy is the “outcome” of a dialogue between the public and their “political institutions to which they accord legitimacy” (2003, pp. 11-12). Some scholars such as Iyengar and Kinder (1987) have also argued that the public uses shortcuts to form opinions on complex public policy matters (as cited in Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 29). These different ideas speak to the need for an approach that can be flexible enough to capture how the public interprets or is likely to be affected by information, depending on the nature of the information. Sometimes values play a role, sometimes it is the mass media that plays a role, and

other times it is the results of a dialogue between the public and their political institutions over information presented by the news media. Finally, if matters are complex, the public will use “shortcuts” to form an opinion. In the next subsection, I provide an overview of how the research of others has addressed these different factors that impact the public’s interpretation through a broad category of different framing research approaches.

2.4.1 Framing Research

Iyengar and Kinder (1987) describe the effects of framing certain news items on audiences (as cited in Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 30). In 1996, Nelson and Kinder published research that found how issues are framed “moulded public understanding of the causes of problems and of the merits of alternative solutions” (Ibid). Miljan and Cooper also cite research by Graber (1984) that found that often, audiences would “forget the factual basis for the conclusions they retain about a [political] candidate [as] media facts are converted into politically significant feelings and attitudes” (p. 30). And so numerous approaches to framing³⁹ have been applied by researchers to better understand what affects the audience’s opinion and how different frames in the media may condition or stimulate group discussions. In the review of current research on SSM, the articles below consider how stories on SSM are framed in different media and how certain framing can present information as factual or “given”, even when it is based on a constructed or one-sided view of reality.

³⁹ The strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical approach to framing will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

Boyle and Schmierbach (2005) use the idea of strategic frames⁴⁰ in order to understand how SSM was portrayed in the American press through their study of SSM media coverage in 2003. On November 18, 2003, the state of Vermont became the first state to recognize gay marriage based on the position that to not do so would be discriminatory under that state's constitution. Boyle and Schmierbach consider whether the press coverage presented the issue as a political strategy, or a moral or rights-based debate, and analyze their data using strategic frames (2005, p. 2). To improve the precision of strategic framing, their approach included the description of "patterns of attributes and actors as well as the associations between these elements" collected from twelve daily key, elite, agenda-setting newspapers in the U.S.⁴¹ (2005, p. 2). The idea of attributes adds a further level of analysis to their quantitative data, and is an approach which contributed to the development of my theoretical approach.

Boyle and Schmierbach's analysis is important because of the level of detail they provide, the approach they used for analysis, and specifically, their design of a mechanism for determining who the different actors are as well as what information these actors provided, in terms of opinion, information or action. They found that over 40% of the data collected represented political reasons and actions, which can be interpreted to mean the media place a great deal of importance on political reasons and

⁴⁰ They draw on the literature outlined originally by Entman (1993) and Pan and Kosicki (1993), but more specifically, utilize the approaches of Cappella and Jamieson (1997) and Valentino, Beckman and Burh (2001) who describe strategic framing as a technique that enables researchers to "focus on the ways politicians maneuver for voter support and political capital" (Boyle and Schmierbach, 2005, p. 3).

⁴¹ Their search terms were: ("same-sex" OR gay OR homosexual) AND (marriage OR unions OR wedding) (2005, pp. 10-11), restricted to staff-generated content with no duplication, editorials, opinion columns nor letters to the editor. In all, a diverse sample with no more than 20 articles from one paper provided a final 145 articles for coding at two levels, the story itself and a paragraph level for the first 25 paragraphs of a story.

actions, not just moral or practical reasons, stating that “it appears that media coverage was often focused on understanding same-sex marriage in political terms” (2005, pp. 15, 19). My research will also present the most reported reasons for supporting or opposing SSM in Canada. They also found that 20% of all coverage was comprised of opinion, 20% of all articles contained political actors (second only to material put forward un-sourced), and rarely were average citizens who were affected by the issue used as sources (2005, p. 16). Finally, the contribution of activists as part of the press coverage cannot be underestimated as they made up more than 15% of all quoted sources, in contrast to judicial figures who were rarely used as sources. For my dissertation, it will be important to pursue the idea of types of sources, how much of the coverage was related to politicking, and to compare which attributes appeared in the press in contrast to what appeared in Parliament.

Matthews (2005) utilized a framing approach to chronicle the “persuasive effects” of legal judgments (p. 843). Matthews’ research contributes to what was a void in Canadian research on SSM by his addition of a quantitative approach to analyzing public opinion data on this topic. He is also at the forefront of scholarship regarding this matter by moving beyond questioning the role played by the courts and demonstrating empirically in his research that there are framing effects in the media.⁴² Additionally, his analysis of Canadian court decisions and their timing in terms of election results and public opinion surveys is quite useful. While he argues that it is “difficult to imagine another plausible argument that could account so well for so many

⁴² Some variables he tests for include political membership, regional habitation, gender, age, and education.

aspects of the empirical pattern [of the increase in support for SSM]” (2005, p. 862), he concludes that opinion did not “move until the message of the courts was clarified and picked up by the legislatures” (p. 863), thus acknowledging the important role of the public policy debate.

Haake, Campbell, Musacchia, Roggenburg and Pollock (2008) conducted an analysis of how the political debate in the United States was framed by the national press, finding there were two dominant frames, one that supported the legalization of SSM because it was a human right, and one that called for a complete ban on SSM because marriage is a heterosexual tradition and the inclusion of same-sex couples in this tradition would erode its integrity. They contrasted the resulting press coverage to the community characteristics of a number of U.S. cities including cities with different levels of employment, education, access to health care, crime rates, and so on, applying a model known as the community structure approach. The authors argue that newspaper research is important because newspapers are “inter-media setters and are a precursor to what will be talked about on television and the internet. Newspapers are also read by community leaders, politicians...” (2008, p. 1).

Of Haake et al.’s twenty-one hypotheses, of particular interest is their research concerning how favourable coverage of SSM would increase if there was a greater proportion of Catholics and Protestants, in contrast to a decrease in favourable coverage if the population engaged in devotional reading and evangelicalism was proportionately higher (2008, pp. 14-5). In terms of how they organized their research, their analysis considered the prominence of the issue and defined that prominence by location of the article, its length, headline, and accompanying photos or graphics. They also focused

on the initial five paragraphs of articles, “consistent with the inverted pyramid style that guides journalists in putting what they consider to be most important [...] at the beginning [...] because most newspaper readers do not read far beyond an article’s first five paragraphs”, citing research by Fedler, Bender, Davenport, & Drajer, 2001; and Fico and Cote, 2002; (2008, p. 16). As I will discuss later, their approach is consistent with how I conducted my newspaper content analysis.

Price, Nir and Cappella (2005) studied how three different social groups reacted during a discussion about equality and morality in order to draw conclusions about the relationship between citizen discussion and media discourse on civil unions. Their research was intended to discover the extent to which issue-frames were presented in the media in terms of the different values of equality and morality “resonated differently among groups of varying political leanings” (Price, Nir & Cappella, 2005, p. 183).⁴³ The three different groups studied were: a homogeneously conservative group, a homogeneously liberal group and a heterogeneous group with individuals from across the political spectrum. They found that “across all group types, the balance of arguments tended to oppose gay civil unions” even though there were differences within each group of the types of arguments articulated (p. 198). They also found, not unexpectedly, that group type and the language used in the discussion concerning

⁴³ Price, Nir and Cappella (2005) were seeking to generate group discussion in order to analyze the tenor and position of the group in its entirety on differently framed issues, and then contrast the findings from each group to the others. The groups did not meet face to face, but rather, in real time, electronically and in fact, the day of the discussion on civil unions, there were technical problems that prevented six groups from participating, resulting in a total of 50 group discussions each comprised of approximately five participants for a total of 235 participants. The technological element of their research presents another form of discussion mediation that the authors do not investigate although they do acknowledge its potential strengths and weaknesses including the fact that this particular discussion had the lowest participation at twenty-nine percent.

equality and morality influenced the rise in the number of supporting arguments, and that some frames had a greater or lesser effect on generating supportive arguments across group types (p. 198). In other words, language such as “marriage for homosexuals” versus language about “civil unions” triggered about four times more pro-argumentation in liberal groups than in conservative groups (p. 199). The researchers contend that the framing manipulation they imposed *did* affect group discussion, but group ideology also had an effect. The lessons taken from this research, on variables, ideology and framing, support my understanding of the potential impact of different words and phrases that could be applied to the press coverage on SSM.

Liebler, Schwartz and Harper (2009) examined press coverage of the SSM debate during the U.S. Presidential Election in 2004 to determine why the traditional-marriage frame set the parameters of the debate, even while the press coverage itself more often framed the SSM debate in supportive terms. They also expected that the framing of SSM would not change over time. In addition, their approach reflected a “multi-method strategy” because they combined a quantitative frame analysis, a quantitative content analysis, and a further critical textual analysis on a subset of the quantitative sample in order to provide greater depth to their results (2009, p. 654). They used framing as a “bridging model” in order to connect several fields of study and types of study. One key point that they make is that the media tend to produce content aligned with hetero-normative ideals (2009, p. 656).

Liebler et al. (2009) acknowledge the weaknesses in framing analysis, and in particular, the challenge of linking media frames to the issues of political and social power, and more directly, the challenge of operationalizing frames in media texts since

often the content being analyzed is often not visible. Their solution is to employ a multi-method approach with clear definitions which represents an important update to framing analysis and demonstrates the continued potential for framing as a contemporary approach.

Ju credits Iyengar's "episodic framing"⁴⁴ approach for allowing his research to determine that the *New York Times*' editorial ideology supported SSM. He questions the appropriateness of a newspaper such as the *Times* taking such an ideological position because it is "regarded as one of the most prestigious papers in the U.S. and thereby is expected to reflect a wide scope of the ideological spectrum in society" (Ju, 2005, p. 2). This research was also supported by later research conducted by Li and Liu (2010) who found that, at the center of a controversy, even prestigious newspapers would more likely frame issues in an episodic way (about lifestyle and personal interest, rather than in a thematic way, informed by the underlying public policies). These approaches identify how the press presented the social policy issue in the U.S. I will return to these ideas in my own analysis.

Ju's work also highlights the autonomous role that the media can take, in particular through the use of framing devices such as mythic and narrative language as were used in editorials about proponents of, or opponents to, SSM.⁴⁵ He explains that

⁴⁴ Iyengar (1991) argues that episodic framing of a social issue should attribute responsibility to individuals. In this case, extending social understanding of SSM as an acceptable way of life may be expected by the episodic framing that Ju identified in the SSM debate (2005, p. 12). Ju explains that the results of episodic framing depend upon whether the issue is a pre-evaluated social issue or one that is controversial (2005, p. 12), an approach that will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

⁴⁵ For example, opponents to SSM invoked rationales that SSM "violated natural law" (Ju, 2005, p. 8) and argued a constitutional amendment may be required to protect the family since it is "the most basic, essential and sacred component of society" (Ibid). Likewise, proponents of SSM likened their position as a struggle not dissimilar to previous civil rights movements demonstrating, as Ju describes, "a pursuit of

the use of myth helped to demonstrate the *New York Times*' support for SSM during the period studied, a support that was rendered visible in his analysis of the particular mythic language employed to describe opponents to SSM, such as the President of the United States, who was "whipping up intolerance but calling it a sacred cause" (2005, p. 10) in editorials. He also uncovered narrative that compared the present with the past, in effect proposing that SSM fits in with a constructed narrative that demonstrates that an evolution of society has taken place.⁴⁶ How this idea fits with what we already know to be the constructed history of marriage and whether the issue is presented this way in the Canadian press, will also be addressed.

Li and Liu (2010) look at how a selection of U.S. newspapers framed the SSM debate for one month, from February 5 to March 7, 2004. Their research seeks to understand how source use, the working context of newspapers, and media frames impact fairness and balance of coverage. They also note that, "the limited number of empirical studies that looked at media coverage of homosexual issues suggest prejudiced media" (2010, p. 75). While their content analysis found that "unbalanced" coverage has decreased over the last 50 years, it seems that coverage still appears to legitimize one viewpoint while marginalizing the other, citing Bennett, 2000 (2010, p. 75). They look at the construction of both thematic and episodic frames, adopted from Iyengar (1990) in the newspaper coverage, and argue that newspapers at the centre of controversy would be more likely to use episodic framing, while newspapers outside the

human virtues" which fits with his description of one particular side of bipolar liberalism: reform liberalism (2005, p. 9-10).

⁴⁶ Ju makes this evident by citing the "stunning change" in racial attitudes towards miscegenation between 1958 and 1977 (2005, p. 15) in numerous articles, and the use of statistics concerning the percentage of the population who knows someone who is gay in 1986 and in 2004, to demonstrate that an evolution of opinion had taken place (p. 15).

controversy would be more likely to report on trends, public policy and changes in views related to homosexuals and SSM (2010, p. 81). Their findings, that almost 90% of articles contained sources from both sides of the debate, the overall greatest percentage of coverage by U.S. newspapers was fair and balanced, and the working context of media hardly impacted balance and fairness are important. My own findings will also address this issue.

2.4.2 Content Analyses and Issue Saliency

Ju's (2005) contextual analysis of the *New York Times* examines "the ideological⁴⁷ feature in the news coverage [of same-sex marriage]" in any articles and editorials that appeared over one month beginning on February 12, 2004 when marriage licenses first started to be issued to same-sex couples in San Francisco (2005, p. 2). Ju expected that the *Times* would contain stories about the SSM debate in the form of social dramas containing what he describes as the "undercurrents of bipolar liberalism flow[ing through]" (p. 8). Within social dramas is the idea of familiarity which Ju explains is a framing device found in the SSM debate: if the public has a greater familiarity⁴⁷ with the personal lives of same-sex couples (such as ordinary activities like cutting the grass and walking their dogs), then it might be more supportive of SSM (2005, p. 12). Ju concludes that in addition to covering the opponents' and proponents' positions in the debate through articulated social dramas, the news media also have a "more autonomous role ... in preserving or cherishing ideology ... that [favours a]

⁴⁷ Ju asks "which ideological stance in the bipolar liberal tradition has more affect on the *NYT* news coverage of the gay marriage issue", anticipating that his study of ideology featured in the selected articles would yield a response (2005, p. 10).

recognition of same-sex marriage” in electing to portray the lives of same-sex couples in ways to promote societal familiarity (2005, p. 17). I will be seeking evidence in my analysis to this autonomous role and emphasis of ordinariness in the Canadian press coverage.

O’Donnell (2004) argues that three particular myths are most often utilized in the Australian press coverage of SSM: evolution/revolution, the apocalypse, and, the surrogate child. His study demonstrates that these myths are used to construct the SSM debate and also link to a set of larger cultural issues. He explains that the myth of evolution/revolution underlies much of the discourse of those activists in support of SSM and that this myth highlights the inherent tensions in the contemporary gay and lesbian movement, which grew from a radical (revolutionary) liberation movement in the 1970s to a mainstream (evolutionary) political lobby today.

O’Donnell surveyed important Australian and international publications between July 2003 and October 2003, three months that featured major political statements by then U.S. President George Bush and then Australian Prime Minister John Howard, and religious statements issued by the Vatican (2004, p. 9). This research is innovative in how the author defines marriage as a cultural ideal (achieved, aspired to, or falling short of) that is illustrated through myth. His study of how the story of SSM⁴⁸ was told through myths demonstrates the power each myth has in terms of its capacity to promote or suppress ideals or actions, and that these myths are prevalent precisely

⁴⁸ O’Donnell also discussed two other stories: the story of Princess Diana and the marriage of Mary Donaldson, the real estate agent from Tasmania who married Prince Fredrick of Denmark.

because a key news value is conflict⁴⁹ (2004, pp. 18-25). In the chapters that follow, I will use myth, narrative and metaphor as one part of my list of attributes to provide greater qualitative context to the content analyses that I conduct.

The theme of constructed discourse is central to Thorpe's (2005) research which looks at the construction of the SSM discourse, the "truths" it relied on and the consequences of that discourse in a paper that analyzes articles from gay and lesbian newspapers across Canada between June 2003 and April 2004. Her analysis reveals the presence of recurring themes such as human rights, equality, and progress, and the identification of certain "truths" that help to define "Canada as a nation existing as leader and savior within an imagined family of nations" (Thorpe, 2005, p. 15). Thorpe demonstrates how the construction of a SSM myth can persuade readers that SSM is a necessary vehicle for gays and lesbians to be respectable and upstanding citizens (2005, p. 17).

Research concerning the role played by the "Op-Ed" (opinion editorials) in national newspapers about SSM is demonstrated by Day and Golan (2005) to reflect a lack of diversity in both source selection and issue stance. They argue that among international press research, there are few studies that examine the role of the press as one that fosters public debate except perhaps in emerging media systems such as in Romania and South Africa, and the few that do, appear to concentrate on the press's ability to foster political participation rather than debate (Day and Golan, 2005, p. 61). Day and Golan measured Op-Ed pieces from the *Washington Post* and the *New York*

⁴⁹ O'Donnell explains that, "it is a conflict format [that] imposes on the news what issues are selected, what sources are used and which events are chosen" (2004, p. 25).

Times over a period of five years, from January 1, 1999 to December 31, 2003, for their coverage of three issues: the death penalty, gay marriage and affirmative action (2005, p. 61). Their framework utilized an agenda-setting hypothesis that argued coverage of specific issues may influence the public agenda or at least attribute saliency (citing McCombs and Shaw, 1972; and Golan and Wanta, 2001).⁵⁰ They looked at the balance between the number of guest columnists and newspaper columnists, as well as whether or not guest contributors were selected whose views either supported or opposed those of the papers' columnists. Like Ju (2005), they found that the *New York Times* Op-Ed pages were highly supportive of SSM with no real difference between columnists and guest contributors. The *Washington Post* on the other hand, did not allow for much diversity of opinion on SSM (Day and Golan, 2005, p. 69). These findings highlight the paradox of the role of the press and suggest that this role is greater than that of relaying information to citizens. The approaches taken here also suggest that it is possible to generalize findings from research into coverage of emotional and social policy issues.

Scheufele, Hardy and Wang (2005) endeavor to uncover what influences voter deliberation through data collected through a national telephone survey conducted in October and November 2003 (p. 12). They use "gay marriage" as a key determinant of public deliberation because they believe this issue has cultural and moral dimensions that will reflect strongly-held views by the public. While they were interested in the public deliberation side of the debate, and not how the debate was framed by elites and the media, the way they consider different determinants and variables is potentially

⁵⁰ The selection of the three issues was the result of their salience in the most recent presidential election of 2004 where the debate between Democrats and Republicans has been centered on family values, culture, faith and how people should live their lives (2005, p. 63).

useful for an analysis of press coverage. These researchers found that in terms of fostering public deliberation, information gathered from newspapers “was positively related to willingness to listen to a conflicting point of view” since newspaper readers are often provided with two sides of an issue, unlike television news that tends to only present one side of an issue (2005, pp. 21-2). This latter point also provides a good reason for studying press coverage of an issue such as SSM at a time when opinion polls (in 2004) were fairly split on the matter.

Hester and Gibson’s (2007) case study uses the SSM debate during the U.S. Presidential Election in 2004 to compare the agenda-setting effects of national and local media on public salience with results indicating that there is a high variation between the effects from local and national media, and that local media “exert a stronger agenda-setting influence when the issue is both local and national” (p. 299). One of the interesting elements of their research is the discussion of obtrusiveness and unobtrusiveness. They explain that, “agenda-setting effects are more likely to occur with media coverage of those unobtrusive issues with which people do not have direct personal experience. Because of [a] lack of expertise, individuals must rely on mass media for information and [an] interpretation of these issues” (2007, p. 301). Over the period of one-year, the researchers found a total of 395 stories in three national U.S. newspapers. Consistent with their findings, my research considers SSM as an unobtrusive issue which means that the audience could be “subject to strong agenda-setting effects” (2007, p. 312). The issue of obtrusive versus unobtrusive will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Three’s discussion of agenda-setting.

Another study by Gibson and Hester (2007) looks at audience opinion with respect to press coverage from American prestige newspapers in order to measure the public's perception of the credibility of these papers, which may result in those papers having a greater influence on their readers. In this study, the researchers reproduced one article in three different ways. They changed the nature of the sources (from official types, to activists and students) on one side of the debate in one version, and on the other side of the debate in another version. In a third version of the same article, the sources were given balanced coverage both supporting and opposing SSM. The audience which was exposed to anti-gay official sources, to the surprise of the researchers, did not agree with the coverage, and the results demonstrated that when the balanced article was being considered, the audience was more likely to support SSM.

One final article explores the idea of issue salience in the context of elite and public preferences in Canada. Pettinicchio (2010) cites McCombs and Shaw who argue that "the media is likely the only means by which the public, which does not participate in day-to-day politics and therefore is not aware of new political developments, receives information about political events" (2010, p. 130). His central argument is political elites frame marriage as an equality rights issue, and anti-gay politicians and interest groups are unable to reframe the issue as a moral or religious issue because Canadians are divided, and relatively uninterested in the issue. He compares conditions in Canada to the United States in order to understand why the debate has occurred differently, and identifies the following reasons: unlike the U.S., the definition of marriage is a federal responsibility, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* provides a new "tool" with which to challenge the government, Canada's federal policy-making is highly centralized,

Canada's legal system is highly decentralized which means decisions made at the provincial court level can pressure Ottawa to follow suit, and finally, the way our government and legal system is organized actually limits the potential for anti-gay marriage organizations such as the Christian Right, to wield power (pp. 127-8).

Pettinicchio also explains that when Canadians are interested in an issue, research demonstrates that political parties will likely follow through on their promises (2010, p. 130). If Canadians are uninterested in an issue, then interest groups may have a greater influence with politicians. He also addresses how some frames are held in higher "esteem" by both elites and the public such as the example of the equality frame which may be used to provide an issue with greater resonance (p. 132). His research measures public opinion through the collation of a number of opinion polls and he selected the *Globe and Mail* and its coverage of gay marriage from December 2002 to July 2005 to contrast to those polls. He also compared the policy in political party platforms and examined the testimony from interest groups who appeared before two Parliamentary Committees between December 2002 and April 2003, and then another Committee from May to June 2005 as they discussed the issue of SSM, and the deliberation of Bill C-38 (p. 133). He underscores that since SSM was not really salient in the media (the governing Liberal Party made no reference to it in either its party platform or the Speech from the Throne), the only way the legislation could have passed was through the support of institutional activists and powerful political elites (2010, p. 147). This point also highlights the question of how agenda-setting may have played a role, at the intersection of public policy and the media.

In summary, drawing from the communication research described in this section and armed with the importance of SSM as a legal, economic, cultural and social debate, there is good evidence to support the use of a theoretical approach that involves some form of framing analysis and agenda-setting combined with a methodological approach to analyze the different discourses, to determine how the press covered the Parliamentary debate on SSM. The next section will discuss some of the inconsistencies present in the debates over SSM which, on the one hand, contribute to its distinctiveness, but on the other, could be resolved or mitigated somewhat by the application of a particular research approach.

2.5 Paradoxes, Contradictions and Inconsistencies

Together, the breadth of the legal discourse on the subject of SSM as well as the number of social, cultural and religious issues that factor into this discussion, demonstrate the significance of this topic as an avenue for academic inquiry. This literature review has highlighted some key research and findings, but has also flagged a number of issues that require further investigation. Looking more closely at some of the academic literature devoted to a critical discussion of the actual legal discourse associated with SSM through this lens reveals some of the inconsistencies found in different legal decisions, often for political reasons (Eskridge Jr., 2002). Machacek and Fulco (2004) conduct an examination of the explanations that accompany several U.S. court decisions concerning homosexuality and gay rights. They argue that including these explanations “exert a powerful influence on public discourse about controversial issues” (2004, p. 767). The idea that the courts use explanations to add context to legal decisions reflects a blurring

of responsibilities and agendas between the courts and the executive branch of the government. The fields of law and politics and their associated discourses when studied together, present a complicated picture of the SSM debate. While applying an interdisciplinary study to this debate is one solution that could bring these seemingly disparate fields together, this work would fall outside the scope of my current research.

Machacek and Fulco's research was prompted by public accusations of judicial activism around court actions related to marriage in the United States. Machacek and Fulco argue that the Court is "increasingly [assuming] a role once enjoyed by churches in American civil society" (2004, p. 768). While the researchers do not explain theoretically how Court decisions influence public discourse, they do argue that the Court "sometimes leads, and sometimes follows shifts in public opinion", which results in a dialogue more than a "settling of matters once and for all", and that this dialogue establishes a "common public language" for discussing contentious issues (p. 777). Although the authors do not go beyond citing the shift that has resulted from "the increased role of the federal government in regulating social life and the more 'activist' Supreme Court that resulted from the New Deal revolution" (p. 778) in their analysis, they do add greater understanding of what types of debate are found in public discourse.⁵¹ In their words,

The data also suggest that the constitutional-legal language of individual rights defined by the courts is prevailing over a language of moral consensus defined by religion and that, to the degree that a constitutional-legal language does prevail as the language of public discourse, it tends to favor gay marriage. (Machacek and Fulco, 2004, p. 781)

⁵¹ They found that legal language makes up the largest percentage (32%) of public discourse and is overwhelmingly in support of SSM, unlike religious language which makes up 18% in their analysis, and where most (66%) are opposed to SSM (p. 780).

Machacek and Fulco also state that even “religious objections to same-sex marriage are often translated into constitutional-legal language for the purpose of public debate, and they are less likely to be grounded on a presumption of moral consensus” (2004, p. 782). They trace the evolution of the definition of marriage in the U.S. as one that has shifted from a “normative understanding of sexuality, marriage, and family life derived from Protestant Christian religion” to a definition of marriage described in *Goodridge*⁵² as a “public reality [that] must be defined in secular, legal terms” (2004, p. 783). This is evidence of a specific point in time in the United States when legal discourse (including its precedents) has posited marriage as a secular institution and disestablished its religious definition.

Another interesting approach to the legal impact of SSM came from de Mino’s (2000) discussion of a Texas court’s unsuccessful challenge (*D. WL. v. MJB. C, 23*) to the constitutionality of a “sex-based difference in reproductive rights”.⁵³ De Mino is

⁵² *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* held that the state of Massachusetts’s *Constitution*’s liberty and equality guarantees renders the man/woman marriage unconstitutional because there is no “rational basis” for continuing it: 440 Mass 309, 798 NE2d 941 (2003) [Goodridge].

⁵³ The state of Texas passed a constitutional amendment specifically barring sex discrimination known as the “Equal Rights Amendment” in the 1970s even though the U.S. *Constitution* does not contain such a provision. In *D.WL. v. MJB. C, 23*, the defendant in an involuntary paternity action complained that the Texas Equal Rights Amendment prohibited the selective imposition of involuntary parenthood on men. In other words, he argued that a woman’s right to abortion creates a legal schism between the act of intercourse and childbirth. Given this and since the decision to carry a pregnancy to term belongs to the woman, he argued that the man should not be forced to support the child if the woman chooses to give birth. The court disagreed and gave two reasons: one, that the decision to bear children is a fundamental liberty, and two, that the U.S. Supreme Court has also held that illegitimate children have the same rights to support as legitimate children. De Mino found inconsistencies in the legal discourse such as the first reason that the court gave regarding bearing children is a separate issue from paternity. The complainant did not contest the woman’s right to give birth and become a parent herself, but sought to disclaim legal paternity of a child already born. The court’s second reason at first appears more consistent, but de Mino found that it too was ultimately unconvincing since a legitimate child, as much as an illegitimate one, runs the risk of having only one parent if the biological father has the right to disclaim parenthood. Even though in this particular case it was an unwed father who tried to escape parental duties, the court had to deny his equal rights claim in this case or it would have jeopardized state policies dealing with support

cited here to demonstrate that the legal discourse contains a range of legal opinions that can sometimes be shown to be contradictory and/or inconsistent to other decisions that may be related directly and indirectly to SSM. As the details of this case demonstrate, the courts appear to have a great deal of latitude when ruling on sex-based matters, demonstrating the lack of uniformity in laws and therefore in elite discourse.

Considering how many U.S. states have legalized SSM is an example of this legal inconsistency that can have real effects on individuals who may live in one state, work in another and have family in a third, as one simple perspective on a complex issue.

Chapman contributes to the discussion of paradoxes with her critique of legal discourse on SSM found in three different provincial cases including the *Halpern v. Canada (A.G.)* case⁵⁴ (2002, p. 424). The decision in *Halpern* reversed an earlier decision made in *Layland v. Ontario (1993)* at which time the definition of marriage, as the union of opposite sex partners, was upheld. In her paper, she examines three provincial cases, in British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario, where the heterosexual definition of marriage was being challenged. It is noteworthy that she herself was also a member of the legal team representing EGALE in the British Columbia case in 2001.

It has been argued elsewhere that the judges in many of these cases are not social scientists, and cannot make rulings outside the scope of jurisprudence whereas Parliament, as the body elected to represent the public's beliefs, values and morality, is

payments from biological fathers at the very least. So as de Mino pointed out, the court's reasoning was flawed but it still ruled logically given current social policy. This entire area of discourse would be interesting to study further in order to uncover reasons beyond precedents and legal reasoning that contribute to common law.

⁵⁴ In *Halpern*, the Ontario Provincial Court ruled that the common-law rule barring SSM was unconstitutional because it violated Section 15 (1) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (as cited in Chapman, 2002, p. 424).

charged with the task of finding a balance between what Supreme Court Justice Blair has described as the dilemma of “conflicting societal interests” (as cited in Chapman, 2002, p. 438). While Chapman argues that the legal discussion should be restricted to constitutional grounds and that Parliament is not the appropriate place to rule on SSM, she does present the dilemma faced by both legislators and the courts. How can an issue that has legal, economic, social, moral and many other aspects be resolved; who or what has ultimate authority in Canadian society?

A key finding in my review of the legal discussions on SSM is that even when legal argumentation is used to support SSM in Parliament or in the press (such as a reference to *Goodridge*, as pointed out by Machacek and Fulco), researchers demonstrate that this does not mean that legal opinion is what leads public opinion; rather, current research demonstrates that sometimes the Supreme Court merely provides the locale and language for a dialogue on a contentious issue.

Another issue identified as a paradox is that of how the definition of a societal institution is presented, including who may participate in such an institution (Cere, 2004). This was a strategy employed by some opponents to SSM who argued that according rights to SSM couples would result in a redefinition of marriage itself. I highlight this argument not for its substance but for the kind of tautological reasoning that it reflects because it did appear again during the legislative debate. It could also be considered an example of where survey statistics can paradoxically contribute to both sides of a debate depending on how the issue is defined.

Also important to consider is the salience of SSM as a case study, such that when the SSM debate is framed in terms of “rights”, does the debate’s scope widen to

include not just those seeking SSM for themselves, but all members of society who believe their moral autonomy should be acknowledged and protected as a component of full citizenship? This helps to support the initial problematization of this thesis, that an integrated study of the SSM debate in the form of the press coverage of Bill C-38 has a generalizeable value for understanding how political policy and the media intersect on social policy issues.

While the approach taken for my dissertation derives from the liberal and pluralist tradition as described by Miljan and Cooper (2003, p. 12), it is accepted that Freeman makes a good point that liberalism itself is sometimes a paradox in that SSM is consistent with liberalism, even when proponents of liberalism are opposed to SSM (1999, p. 1).

And finally Day and Golan's (2005) research reveals that prestige newspapers such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* appear to hold contradictory positions and different ideologies when articles from 2003 to 2005 are analyzed. This brings into focus the role of the press, especially the prestige press, in terms of if and how it sets the agenda, and if it fulfills a particular role in society. Given that each of these newspapers held different positions on SSM, one could argue they fill different roles.

2.6 Next Steps

A search of the electronic dissertation database in 2012 indicates at least 41 different theses concerning the subject of SSM, which suggests SSM is still a topic of interest.

One significant gap I identified in current research is that most of the academic

literature, while providing numerous arguments found on both sides of the debate, appears to either provide support for those who seek SSM, in terms of equality, or remains neutral on the possibility of SSM. In other words, the academic discourse itself seems to side with proponents of SSM. This dissertation does not attempt to resolve this perceived imbalance, but acknowledges the challenge upon self-reflection that it is difficult to examine agenda when one is part of the structure itself, with values and ideals informed by the framework of liberalism. My research approach that is described in the next chapters is intended to contribute empirical evidence concerning the debate as it appeared in the political and press discourses. By providing this evidence, my research contributes to greater understanding of how this case study provides evidence related to how agenda-setting contributed to the resulting press coverage.

There are currently no completed Canadian studies that directly contrast Parliamentary discourse with press discourse on this issue, which could provide empirical evidence related to whether or not the press present elite discourse to their audience. It is possible, as suggested by some, that audiences seek shortcuts to understand multi-faceted policy issues; but other research, such as Machacek and Fulco's (2004) work, has found that "religious objections to same-sex marriage are often translated into constitutional-legal language for the purpose of public debate, which certainly appears to be complex. Add to this Boyle and Schmierbach's (2005) findings that 40% of the coverage appeared to be "focused on understanding same-sex marriage in political terms", with another 20% of coverage made up by opinion (p. 19), and one is led to hypothesize that the greatest emphasis of SSM press coverage in Canada was likely in terms of politics and not issues.

The research that follows is intended to clarify the role played by the Canadian press in terms of the debate over SSM. Backing up and considering SSM as an unobtrusive issue and seeking evidence for the ideas around framing, sourcing, agenda, and issue salience, situated in the context of the role of the press and constraints on the press in terms of journalistic practices and ownership, are what frame the next chapter.

The next chapter will review a number of approaches related to political communication and how the idea of agenda can be operationalized in order to provide support for the integration of public policy and press coverage in my analysis of the issue of SSM.

3 Chapter: Considerations for a Theoretical Approach for SSM

The literature review in Chapter Two provided an overarching context for understanding numerous aspects, challenges and paradoxes that are part of the contemporary public debate over same-sex marriage (SSM). To narrow the focus and answer the central research question of how the media presented the SSM debate, a theoretical approach is required that will help to organize those elements that were made visible by the methodological approach as it was applied to the three discourses. This chapter explores different political communication models and approaches in order to justify the theoretical underpinnings of the approach used for this case study.

3.1 Models of Political Communication

There are numerous approaches and models that can be used to study political communication and a number of these provide important considerations for the study of the media discourse on same-sex marriage (SSM). Some researchers might approach the study of how the media covered SSM by applying a propaganda model (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) lens; others might consider how SSM was a critically important and contested debate by drawing from Wolfsfeld's research that produced the political contest model (1997; 2003). I argue that an updated agenda-setting hypothesis, that includes a framing process model, will provide the requisite theoretical underpinnings needed to understand the role of the media in this case study. The discussion about the expanded approach to agenda-setting along with other approaches to political communication reviewed in this chapter proposes that attribute agenda-setting is an

appropriate approach to apply in the case of analyzing the Parliamentary and media discourse around the SSM debate as long as it is accompanied by some clarity around definitions.

Before elaborating upon key aspects of my theoretical approach, a short discussion about relevant ideas from the propaganda model and the political contest model are appropriate because some of these have informed the discussion of why it is essential to understand agenda.

Miljan and Cooper described the propaganda model as being devised by the “best-known media analyst of the cultural critical school” (2003, p. 21) (referring to Chomsky), and that it supports studies concerning the relationship between governments and the public with regard to policy development and public opinion. Herman and Chomsky designed the propaganda model to explain how “consent, in a free society, is manufactured via the manipulation of public opinion” (in Klaehn, 2003, p. 366). With respect to my dissertation, this model provides value in that it argues that the media play a role *by* reproducing the arguments of the powerful because the media are organizations owned by powerful economic elites, and that information featured *in* the media has been filtered⁵⁵ to best reflect the interests of the elite, with other voices filtered out through a variety of controls. With respect to the case study of SSM, a

⁵⁵ Herman and Chomsky explain how the propaganda model works through an elaboration of five filters. They point out in their *ownership filter*, that in the case of the United States, the top media companies focus on responding to shareholders, directors and bankers, which inflicts continuous pressure on the organization itself to increase market share and profitability. Their second filter derives from the ownership filter and is described as the *drive for profit* (1988, pp. 14-18), which, in the wake of deregulation, for some, continues to be persuasive. Third, the idea of *sourcing* (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, pp. 18-25) acknowledges that sources have an impact on content. Two final filters, *flak* and *anticommunism*, are intended to explain what information is carried in the media and how it is conveyed (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, pp. 26-31).

consideration of government propaganda on its own is outside the scope of this research. It is, however, relevant to consider the government's production of supporting communication materials, how the media presented that material, how it may have informed the framing of the issue in Parliament by government members, and if that framing was reflected in the press or editorial coverage.

The political contest model⁵⁶ theorizes about what role the news media play in "unequal political conflicts" (Wolfsfeld, 2003, p. 81), such as: protests, terrorist acts, riots, and rebellions, etc. because the news media provide "the central arena for political conflicts" (Wolfsfeld, 1997, p. 2). This model is designed to capture the dimensions of the relationship between the media and the political process. While the model focuses on unequal political conflicts including "public confrontations between a government and at least one other antagonist in which the state has a significantly superior amount of coercive resources at its disposal" (p. 81), elements of it provide an understanding of different aspects of the SSM debate, such as who received coverage during protests and rallies. An important strength of this model is how it distinguishes between two types

⁵⁶ Wolfsfeld's model rests on five arguments: one, the power of influence belongs to the existing political framework over the news media; two, authorities, or elites with resources, hold a key level of control over the political environment; three, there is variation in the role of the news media in political conflicts; four, competition between antagonists occurs along structural and cultural dimensions; and five, the argument that incumbent stakeholders such as authorities have advantages in media coverage does not exclude challengers from occasionally overcoming obstacles to also use the media as a tool of influence (2003, pp. 82-5). Some of the particular merits of these arguments are that they acknowledge the role of the media varies in different political contexts, and that the media has some influence on the political process, although not necessarily a determining role. These arguments also provide a mechanism to view conflict as a site of contest, which improves upon approaches such as the propaganda model since conflicts always have more than one dimension (moral, social, political, legal, economic, etc.), and help to uncover some of the processes at work at this site of contest. Since authorities never have exclusive access to the media, challengers can compete with them, either through mistakes made by the authorities (p. 83) or, because challengers can take advantage of "anti-authority frames" established by the media for use by those who have the resources and skills to utilize them (p. 84), which together provide more evidence towards understanding influence.

of antagonists who are either strong or weak, the latter of which are divided into those with low-cost access to resources controlled by the government and those who do not have such access. This model also provides a window into the importance of the role of the news media in politics, understanding that “competition over the news media ... is part of a larger and more significant contest among political antagonists for political control” (1997, p. 3; 2003, p. 81). This explanation justifies the importance of a study of the role played by the media with respect to important issues. It is also of value to heed what Wolfsfeld describes as the structural and cultural principles underpinning his model that distinguish between a contest over access (structural) and a contest over meaning (cultural) (2003, pp. 84-8). This argument raises the question of whether the SSM coverage can be defined as limited to a structural discussion or was there a media forum for a debate over the meaning of the new legislation.

3.2 From Agenda-Setting to Attribute Agenda-Setting

This section provides an overview of the key elements of the theoretical approach employed in this dissertation as well as highlighting important considerations in the development and application of the approach.

Chapter One introduced the discussion of how agenda-setting theory has been expanded to include new means to analyze manifest content and to operationalize these findings into a process model to enable the integration between political and media agendas. The idea of understanding agenda is tied to the measurement of media effects research which goes back to studies that looked at the effects of movies on audiences as far back as 1929 (Blumer, reprint 1970, as cited in Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 24),

studies of direct effects that resulted in the two-step model that described the influence of opinion leaders (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Berelson et al. 1954, both cited in Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 25), and more recently, studies that looked at how the media set agendas, particularly during elections (Entman, 1989, p. 77 as cited in Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 27). What these studies have in common is an underlying belief that there are measurable effects on audiences derived from what the media produce.

Other related effects research has investigated the public's use of shortcuts to form opinions on complex public policy issues (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987 as cited in Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 29). Price, Nir and Cappella explain that it is widely accepted that the news media establish the terms of public debate through framing (2005, p. 180), and that the media winnow the debate of elites down to a reduced field of information. Yet, it is from this field of information that citizens acquire much of their knowledge with which to deliberate specific issues or form opinions. What motivates the media to share some but not other information?

Numerous researchers have employed different approaches to agenda-setting research over the last four decades in response to the desire to understand role, motivation and effects, going back to Cohen (1963), who proposed in his research on the press and foreign policy, "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (as cited in Dearing and Rogers, 1996, p. 12). McCombs and Shaw (1972) were first to coin the phrase "agenda-setting" in their research concerning the role of the mass media during a U.S. presidential political campaign in 1968 in which they argued that, "the mass media set the agenda of issues for a political campaign by influencing

the salience of issues among voters” (McCombs, 2004, p. 4). Their hypothesis tested two sets of evidence: the issues of greatest concern to voters, and the pattern of news coverage found in the media consumed by those voters. They believed that research could validate the existence of a causality that would explain whatever was emphasized in the news would become important to the public (2001, pp. 4-5). Through a random survey of voters, they determined which issues were important, and then contrasted these to the data they compiled from national news sources which included television, newspapers and magazines where they ranked the number of stories per issue.

Dearing and Rogers opine that, “Every social system must have an agenda if it is to prioritize the problems facing it, so that it can decide where to start work. Such prioritization is necessary for a community and for a society” (1996, p. 1). Agenda-setting research helps to demonstrate by whom and how, and with what powerful resources, this goal is achieved. Their research describes agenda-setting as a competition between “issue proponents” who vie for the media’s attention.

According to Dearing and Rogers, the existence of a media agenda is the result of a “dynamic interplay”, and an issue is “a conflict between two or more identifiable groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of positions or resources” (1996, p. 2). These definitions help justify their own research and add some clarity to previously murky areas in agenda-setting research. Most importantly, Dearing and Rogers theoretically connect the different agendas of the media, the public and policy-makers.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ The policy agenda could also be considered the political agenda to capture the work of politicians who have both a public agenda and a policy mandate in order to explain the salience of certain issues and why

In addition, Dearing and Rogers (1996) reference Harold Lasswell⁵⁸ when they explain that the role⁵⁹ of the media is one of surveillance and correlation. In other words, the mass media, public groups, and policymakers each have discrete “attention frames” or periods of time during which they pay attention to certain issues and that it is the media who direct attention to issues, resulting in a “correlation” role of the media (Dearing and Rogers, 1996, p. 11).

A key strength of agenda-setting research is its compatibility to other communication concepts and theories such as stereotyping, image-building, gate-keeping, and status conferral (in which someone who receives increased media attention becomes celebrity-like) (McCombs, 2004, p. 86). Stereotyping and image-building are instances of what McCombs refers to as “second-level agenda-setting” where specific attributes have an increased salience and contribute to greater understanding of the subject under scrutiny. Studying how the media define reality through attribute agenda-setting has only become a focus recently, even though it was first raised by Lippmann in 1922 (Takeshita in McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997, pp. 15-27; Soroka, 2002).

3.2.1 Attributes, Issues and Frames

More recently, agenda-setting research and its related methodologies have become increasingly more sophisticated and refined. Yet, as Takeshita explains,

they are higher or lower on the public agenda which in turn influences policy-makers.

⁵⁸ Harold Lasswell was a political scientist who is often considered to be the first communications scholar in the Western world based on the communications research which he published in 1948 for the government of the United States, in which he asked, “*who says what to whom via which channels and with what effect*”.

⁵⁹ Lasswell was influenced greatly by Hitler’s use of radio in Nazi Germany, as well as his own experience in the U.S. Office of Communication during World War II.

understanding how the media mediate between the “external objective reality and our social reality” is still one of the enduring problems of mass communication research (in McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997, p. 15).

Today, the idea of issue salience helps to expand traditional agenda-setting because it captures work related to gate-keeping and attribute agenda-setting. The power of this approach is that it links the idea of attributes to framing. McCombs, who quotes Tankard et al. (1991), explains that “a frame is the central organizing idea for news content, supplies a context, and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration” (in McCombs, 2004, p. 87). By attaching agenda-setting to framing, a qualitative approach is combined to a quantitative analysis which will provide greater detail concerning the role played by the media. Scheufele’s (1999) continuous process model puts into operation what these researchers theorized, that framing and agenda-setting continuously provide inputs and outputs that are linked.

Most agenda-setting discussions now consider how media coverage affects both *what* the public thinks about, and *how* the public thinks about it, according to Lang and Lang (Ghanem, 1997, p. 3), reflecting an analysis of how the specific *attributes* of an object or issue or topic are expressed and how these influence public opinion (McCombs and Evatt, 1995 as cited in Ghanem, 1997, p. 3). The attributes emphasized in the news are considered “second-level⁶⁰ agenda-setting effects” and study both how an issue or object covered in the media *affects* the way the public thinks about that

⁶⁰ Some researchers refer to *attribute* agenda-setting as a “focusing level” (Noelle-Neumann and Mathes, 1987) or “frames” (Iyengar and Simon, 1993).

object, and how an issue or object covered in the media *affects* the *salience* of that object on the public agenda (Ghanem, 1997, p. 4). The focus on *attribute salience* has helped second-level agenda-setting research develop beyond traditional agenda-setting and a quantitative approach of counting how often issues are raised. With second-level agenda-setting, the measurement of the existence of attributes and their salience provides a means to examine the *impact* of news.

Soroka (2002) writes that,

Agenda-setting dynamics are often multidirectional. Media and policy agendas often interact, for instance, each affecting the other as issues rise and fall in significance. It is incorrect to assume, as much past work has done, that the media agenda leads the public agenda. In some circumstances, the public will affect the media agenda, and models of agenda-setting effects will often need to take this possibility into account. It is also true that the direction of effects changes across issues, and information on issue attributes can help predict the directions of influence that are most likely. (pp. 117-8)

Soroka's research looked at different issue types to determine how the media and policy making interacted. In this work, Soroka defined whether issues were prominent, sensational or governmental in order to determine how agenda was a factor in each different context finding that, in the case of prominent issues, "real-world indicators will lead the media, public, and policy agendas. In cases of sensational issues, the media drive the agenda, and for governmental issues, it is most likely that the policy agenda leads the media and public agendas (2002, p. 118). As Soroka notes, these issue types are not "mutually exclusive" and it is possible that certain issues would move between agendas. SSM could be one such issue, but what we learn about the different categories is instructive and leads to a clearer understanding of the dynamics of different agendas with respect to SSM which is likely prominent at times and sensational at other times.

Some others such as Miljan and Cooper (2003) have articulated that the media's role has increased in importance in the information age because they are in the middle of the political process, they provide information, and shape the way people think about the world (p. 11). In terms of agenda, Miljan and Cooper explain that while the degree of media influence may be contested, what is clear is that "politicians and policy makers *believe* the media have an influence on public opinion (p. 11).

One notable and relevant caution raised by Brewer (2003) is that despite an increased availability of news sources for consumers, including internet sources, the final result has not been an increase in sophisticated citizenship.⁶¹ Instead, a parallel rise of the media's independent agendas has occurred alongside the independent agendas of political elites. And researchers⁶² have argued that theories on agenda-setting introduce more inconsistencies than conclusions. What has remained consistent in the body of research on agenda-setting is the idea that the role played by the media is still central.

Weaknesses such as readers' choices and how new issues receive a privileged position (or prominence) even when they are not as important as other issues, are highlighted by Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan (2002) in their study that analyzes

⁶¹ Brewer found that "politically knowledgeable Americans based their opinions on moral beliefs" which he described as counterintuitive. One would expect the reverse to be true: if a concept such as equality is complex, it would stand to reason that increased knowledge should result in less emphasis on moral traditional reasoning, not more, as Brewer found. Brewer's research is also important because he contrasted the importance of the "content of the frames available to citizens within mass media coverage at the time [of the debate]" (2003, p. 175) with previously-held individual values. Brewer did not investigate whether or not the information provided by elites is mediated through a privileging or suppressing of information as it is passed on to the public.

⁶² On agenda-setting theories, see McCombs and Shaw, 1972, and Wanta, 1997, pp. 1, 7; Iyengar and Kinder proposed issue salience to have a direct effect in Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan, 2002; and on the framing analysis of Entman [1993], see Scheufele, 1999, and the ideas of D'Angelo, 2002 as discussed in Boyle and Schmierbach, 2005; as well as Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan, 2002.

“attribute agenda-setting” to understand why the media cover some issues in greater depth than others. The ability to generalize and predict agenda through agenda-setting analysis continues to be challenged by dynamic changes in the political and media environments, a point which is highlighted by Soroka’s caution that issues can move between agendas and rise and fall in prominence.

Soroka summarizes previous research into agenda-setting and highlights how issues had been analyzed in terms of different hypotheses such as obtrusiveness, duration, abstractness, and dramatic events (2002, pp. 16-19). In short, obtrusiveness deals with how individuals will rely on the media if they have little direct experience with a given issue; duration captures the argument that, “the longer an issue is on the agenda, the less chance there is for media effects” due to the public’s limited attention span, and the longer an issue is on the agenda, the more people have made up their minds; the abstractness hypothesis, while not as popular as the obtrusiveness hypothesis, states that, “agenda-setting effects should be larger for concrete issues than for abstract issues” because abstract issues are difficult for the public to “visualize” lessening the potential for media effects (p. 18). Citing Yagade and Dozier (1990), Soroka explains that “individuals find it difficult to attach salience to something they don’t understand” (2002, p. 18). Media coverage of dramatic events will contribute to agenda-setting if the events contain conflict. Citing Wanta and Hu (1993), Soroka states that, “stories with little conflict produce weaker agenda-setting effects” (p. 19).

Each of these four hypotheses approaches the study of issues in different ways and can contribute to “predicting the magnitude of public agenda-setting”, according to Soroka, however, not enough previous research has linked the hypotheses into a process

or typology (2002, p. 31). By examining the links between these hypotheses in terms of whether an issue is prominent, sensational, or governmental, Soroka contends that this approach will, “explain, and possibly predict, agenda-setting causality” (p. 31).

In terms of frames, Wolfsfeld argues that interpretive frames such as those described by Gamson (1989) can help make sense of the relationship between those who are trying to tell their story (antagonists), and those who are providing the environment for telling the story (news media). The theoretical usefulness of frames is captured in Gamson’s explanation that frames are a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue (in Wolfsfeld, 2003, p. 88). Wolfsfeld (2003) further elaborates on the idea of frames by explaining that since the news media utilize the shallowest frame and antagonists have a great deal of symbolic meaning in their frames, one can easily see the gaps that can exist as frames get translated into news coverage.

McCombs (2004) argues that attribute agenda-setting can be linked to framing and defines framing as,

...the selection of – and emphasis upon – particular attributes for the media agenda when talking about an object. In turn, as we know from the evidence on attribute agenda-setting, people also frame objects, placing varying degrees of emphasis on the attributes of persons, public issues or other objects when they think or talk about them. (p. 87)

This definition of framing is broad in that it includes individual frames, media frames and issue frames. But this also reflects how useful a framing approach can be, for different research approaches. Most importantly, McCombs describes the convergence of framing with attribute agenda-setting as a significant advance in the explanation of media effects because it “underscor[es] the special status held by certain attributes,

frames, in the content of a message” (p. 87). McCombs also draws attention to the enduring challenge of applying a consistent definition to framing, but contends that combining it to agenda-setting theory will help “sort out some of the definitions and draw[...] distinct and useful boundar[ies]” (2004, p. 89).

3.2.2 Sources

In terms of sourcing, theoretically, the idea of inclusion encircles certain sources with credibility, giving them a privileged status which in turn infers that what they say is accurate and based on truth. This systemic, reinforcing mechanism within journalistic practices regarding sourcing also reinforces those with power and reproduces the dominant ideology. It is only when a well-resourced challenger arrives on scene or some significant deviant behavior occurs, that the site of contest will actually contain an opposing position, and even then, it will likely be portrayed in opposition to what has already been established as “reasonable”. This idea demonstrates how, on the one hand, the journalistic requirement for balance is satisfied, but on the other how the existing hegemony continues to be reinforced.

One argument that Herman and Chomsky make that is particularly germane to my research is that not all news and sources are equal. Herman and Chomsky point out that some sources and their positions are “readily accommodated by the mass media” (1988, p. 31) because they are considered ‘establishment’ sources; others are perceived as being dissidents, and weak or unorganized, which impacts the treatment or coverage of the information they provide. Likewise, the authors argue that dissident sources are “at an initial disadvantage in sourcing costs and credibility, and often do not comport

with the ideology or interests of the gatekeepers and other powerful parties that influence the filtering process” (Ibid). This means that dissident sources would not receive the benefit of equal play or support by the media.

Sometimes, however, dissident sources can still play an influential role in media coverage. Ericson et al. (1987) discuss how journalists define deviance and articulate the boundaries around appropriate media behaviour (p. 3). How journalists define “common sense” and which spokespersons are presented as credible represents an interpretation of reality and requires what Ericson et al. describe as, “systemic relations among journalists and their sources” (1987, p. 9). The media have a choice in the language and tone that they use to refer to topics or sources, and that choice can reflect either a worthy or unworthy portrayal⁶³ of topics and sources. Miljan and Cooper’s (2003) analysis of Supreme Court decisions and media coverage provides an example of how the media presented the issues of homosexual rights and women’s rights more positively, demonstrating who they considered “worthy” (p. 149). As they note in one example, media coverage of the *Egan*⁶⁴ Supreme Court case presented far more positive coverage and attention even when the case was lost. An example of journalistic phrasing that describes sources as well as the space given to worthy sources is below:

⁶³ Consider the use of terminology such as “freedom fighters” or “terrorists”, a use that could depend on the ethnicity of the people being described or how the article lined up with the current ideology of the state.

⁶⁴ The media presented the case results as a win in terms of ending discrimination on the basis of homosexuality, even though the claimants were not successful in winning pension benefits.

Figure 1: Article fragment for sourcing

Debates Apr 12 Apr 13-19
1118-185
6-569107

positive

SE Canada Wire
HD PM hails same-sex win Looks away as 34 Liberals support Tories' civil-union bill

BY CNS
WC 580 words
PD 13 April 2005
SN Winnipeg Free Press
SC WFP
PG a3
LA English
CY All material copyright Winnipeg Free Press, a division of FP Canadian Newspapers Limited Partnership. All rights reserved.

LP
Tim Naumetz OTTAWA — Prime Minister Paul Martin and Justice Minister Irwin Cotler looked the other way yesterday as 34 Liberal MPs supported a Conservative same-sex marriage motion that Martin and Cotler said violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Manitoba Government → Martin refused to comment on the decision by a quarter of his caucus to back a Conservative motion attempting to amend government legislation that would define marriage as the legal union of any two people.

TD
The motion, which would have limited marriage to the union of a man and a woman while establishing a separate civil union for same-sex couples, was defeated 164-132, as four Conservatives joined with the majority of Liberals to oppose it.

A handful of Bloc Québécois MPs supported the motion, while Manitoba NDP MP Bev Desjarlais, who previously said she would vote against the Liberal legislation, abstained.

"I believe Canada passed a very important test today," Martin said. "We are a nation of minorities and we cannot pick and choose rights."

Cotler played down the Liberal defections, saying the high number had been expected. "The was a vote on the rule of law, a vote for equality rights, a vote for minority rights," he said.

Cotler and Martin refused to respond when it was pointed out the Liberals, who supported the Conservative motion, were in effect voting against the government's position that equal access to marriage is guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Winnipeg → **AMX Muntzer**, spokesman for a lobby group supporting the bill, predicted Conservative Leader Stephen Harper will have a difficult time explaining his party's position in an election campaign should the minority government soon topple over the sponsorship scandal.

He also said same-sex marriage is legal in seven provinces and the Yukon territory, and Harper will be challenged to explain his position on the Charter of Rights. Muntzer added Harper's position may make it difficult to broaden support for the party.

→ "Folks who don't like gay people are already voting for the Conservatives," said Muntzer.

Conservative MPs Belinda Stronach, James Moore, Jim Prentice and Gerald Keddy sided with the Liberals against their party's motion. All four have previously said they support the same-sex marriage bill.

see the date 2004 for record

More than 3,000 gay couples have tied the knot in Canada since courts cleared the way.

posting

Harper says he supports economic rights for same-sex couples, but says most Canadians want traditional marriage preserved for heterosexuals. But most constitutional lawyers say that would undermine the equality rights of gays and lesbians.

Conservative justice critic Vic Toews said his party is ready to debate the issue on the hustings.

"Canadians have not been heard on this," he said. "This issue is not going to go away."

Page 118 of 185 © 2011 Factiva, Inc. All rights reserved.

Young and Soroka (2012) explore the validity of an automated sentiment analysis in contrast to manual sentiment analysis which is intended to uncover tone in political communication. They argue that, “Political discourse cannot be reduced to mere factual information - the tone of a text may be as influential as its substantive content” (p. 205). Their research draws on a number of other studies⁶⁵ that have focused on the tone or sentiment expressed in news content and political communication because they argue that “affect” is “a central component of individual decision making and political judgment generally, as well as the processing of media information in particular” (Ibid). They also argue that “negative affect appears to be particularly prominent in the human psyche, and in politics” (Ibid) which demonstrates the critical importance of finding an analytical approach to quantify tone.

Clearly the use of sources provides important context concerning how an issue is covered, but the propaganda model goes too far in arguing that there is an overarching media strategy that reflect a homogeneous ownership agenda. More likely, journalistic routines and the effects of the professionalization of political communication, the rise of flak organizations, and theorizing about the continuing influence of any commercialization on news content in what has become a global flow of political information, together combine to contribute to an explanation concerning which sources are utilized most frequently (Maarek and Wolfsfeld, 2003, pp. 1-4). In this way, the

⁶⁵ Young and Soroka (2012) cite Elster (1999); Hall (2002); Marcus (2000); Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen (2000); Neumann, Marcus, Crigler, & MacKuen (2007); and Walzer (2002) on the role of emotion in politics generally. On the processing of media information, they cite Detenber and Reeves (1996); Lang, Dhillon, and Dong (1995); and Newhagen (1998). In terms of the affect of negative tone, they point to research by Bloom and Price (1975); Fair (1978); Ito, Larsen, Smith, and Cacioppo (1998); Kahneman and Tversky (1979); Quattrone and Tversky (1988); and Soroka (2006).

political contest model conceives of the struggle between political antagonists⁶⁶ and the news media as each side working to exploit the other while incurring the least amount of cost. To operationalize this approach, Wolfsfeld directs us to the formula based on power dependency theory where the “relative power of either side is determined by the value of its services divided by its need for those offered by the other” (p. 84).

Wolfsfeld also states that in order to maintain news value, particular deviant behaviour has to continue to occur to maintain any coverage that it receives, whereas elites will always continue to receive coverage by virtue of the fact they are elites, regardless of the nature of their announcements or policies.⁶⁷ As an example, Wolfsfeld cites the capacity of U.S. Presidents to receive free airtime, get quoted directly, and in general receive respectful treatment. Alternatively, Presidents rely on the media to promote their image and convey their messages on policies (2003, p. 85).

In his research, Greenberg⁶⁸ argues that the political contest model provides a way to describe elite conflict over policy and how other groups outside of elite groups can participate in the process which is helpful context for analyzing results on source use. Greenberg reiterates Wolfsfeld’s point that, while news access may be “structured and hierarchical to the extent that powerful groups and individuals have privileged and routine entry into the news itself and to the manner and means of its production”, notions of groups of influence will not provide a consistent interpretation of the shifts

⁶⁶ Wolfsfeld notes that when “elites plan strategy, make decisions or carry out policies, it is considered news” but, there are other ways to “get in the game” besides being an elite (2003, p. 85).

⁶⁷ Wolfsfeld (2003) explains that political control does not always require the news media when he highlights the fact that those who have direct access to decision-makers can work without media attention. In other words, influence occurs without media involvement or acknowledgment. Wolfsfeld also criticizes scholars who treat the political world as a “given” or as a stable, level playing field since he argues that the political world is constantly “in flux” and this is why it is so difficult to predict (2003, p. 87).

and dynamic nature of policymaking and media access (from 1980 referenced in Greenberg, 2005, p. 239). Therefore, another approach is required that will integrate the ideas of public policymaking, media access and how, in turn, the media present issues.

3.2.3 Elites and Ownership

Entman argues that elites have little choice but to manipulate journalists if they wish to succeed politically, and that these elites cannot afford to debate complicated truths publicly (1989, p. 20). Instead, he explains that news organizations end up depending on elites who, in turn, are providing their own “spin” in support of particular goals. The research discussed in later chapters will demonstrate that what was provided by the media about the SSM debate was overall quite limited, with little to no debate over any “complicated truths”.

Miljan and Cooper (2003) declare that any “notion of a necessary influence of media ownership on media content ought to be treated as a scientifically testable hypothesis” (p. 17). Their own findings do not support the argument that ownership in Canada has exhibited any particular effect on the work of journalists in contradiction to the position or values held by individual journalists. Rather, they argue that, “coverage of public policy issues in the Canadian media reflects journalists’ opinions to a far greater extent than the views that cultural critics presume to be held by manager or

⁶⁸ Greenberg (2005) applies aspects of Wolfsfeld’s approach to his study of the politics and press coverage of Ontario’s hydroelectricity restructuring between 1995 and 2002 to “examine two dimensions of the news media’s role in driving and problematizing policy agendas” (p. 239). Greenberg also tells us that the “role of news media is [...] potentially contradictory: facilitating and consolidating elite control over policymaking and the construction of a dominant discourse on the one hand, while operating as a space for framing contests and the articulation of alternative or oppositional policies and interpretive frameworks on the other” (pp. 234-5).

owners” (p. 167). This means that what journalists cover and write is influenced by their own set of values.

It is helpful to highlight an argument that came out of criticism for the propaganda model, which contends that there is a tension between different elites and that elites are not necessarily a homogeneous group. In this way, Members of Parliament as political elites, not only have varying levels of authority, but as many of their speeches reflected, they have differing views on other elites such as Canada’s Supreme Court (legal elites) and their own role in the legislative process in terms of how they represent their constituents.

The propaganda model maintains that the media fulfill a propaganda function that sees them “in service to business” (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, p. xi), however Miljan and Cooper argue this is not really the case in Canada (2003, p. 47). My research findings indicate that the coverage that is produced may seem to be in alignment with a political-corporate agenda, but it also seems likely that it is the institutional and corporate constraints as well as the demographics of the journalists themselves, that are what resulted in the coverage. Other scholars have argued convincingly that if a press “position” is evident, it has likely come from the journalists themselves who are part of the institutional framework and share the same values that support the established social order even while questioning current government decisions within that order. There is little evidence that mainstream journalists in Canada question the overall legitimacy of the order supported by government (Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 55).

Miljan and Cooper (2003) also disagree with Chomsky's idea concerning the effects on media content of a concentration of media ownership because this idea fails to take into consideration the existence of flak organizations not funded by corporations. To buttress their point, Miljan and Cooper point to a number of organizations that self-identify with the Left in Canada and receive coverage, as an example, which undermines any argument about the problem of the concentration of ownership (2003, p. 22).

The assumed role of elites in the consumption and production of media requires further discussion. In fact, Sparks notes that while the top tier media are owned by elites, their messages do not seem to be directed at elites (2007, p. 75). It is also debatable whether elites are a "homogeneous body" (Sparks, 2007, p. 71). This argument helps to dispel the idea that elites could work together for any shared capitalist benefit, especially since the nature of capitalism provides for competition amongst business owners. If elites do work together, it is not through a coordinated conspiracy but, more likely, the structure of the system causes them to work toward shared goals and shared position in the top tier.

Other research findings indicate that media content is made up of an array of positions, debate and criticism not necessarily aligned with the political leanings of the corporate ownership (Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 167). Finally, because of the interlocking relationships between ownership, management and social circles in Canada, it is also a fact that the media self-censor without coercion (Klaehn, 2003, p. 359).

3.3 The Role of the Media in Focus

Miljan and Cooper argue for the importance of the role played by the media, and that it is not only linked to the role of a facilitator, but also by the content itself, that is produced by the media. In their words, “the media are agents in society as well as transmission belts. Media analysts have said that the media change opinions, form opinions, and mould moral and social behaviour” (p. 11).

And so, how is the role of the media interpreted, understood and viewed by contributors to, and consumers of, its resulting products? Another way to pose this question is to ask what role do the media play in Canada, as they present, comment and re-present political debate and elite discourse? While it is beyond the scope of my dissertation to analyze public opinion on the perceived role of the press, my inquiry did commence from questions related to the expectations and generally-held views of the role of the press. Edmund Burke, the Irish philosopher and politician from the 1700s, is credited with first referring to the press as the “fourth estate” and noting its importance as a “watchdog” on the other estates.⁶⁹ Some historians explain that the idea of a free press that acts as a watchdog on the power of government, took hold shortly after that time, across the industrialized world (Stone and Banning, 1997, p. 2).

In Canada, and other industrialized countries, the state relies on those who are “agents of cultural production” to present it as legitimate and achieve consent, according to Habermas (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987, p. 40). Therefore,

⁶⁹ The word “estates” refers to the way the population was divided for governing in a number of countries in Europe, England, Scotland and Scandinavia. For example, France, before the French Revolution in 1789 was divided into three estates which included: the clergy, the nobility and the commoners or bourgeoisie.

sometimes the media play a crucial role in the policy process, however, as Soroka would argue, this is not always the case, depending on the nature of the issue. Today, Greenberg (2005) cautions that it is a challenge to capture the evolving shift towards neo-liberal governance in policymaking and the role that the media play in this evolution. In referencing Foucault, Greenberg explains that the media's role provides a discourse that is both an instrument and effect of power, and is also a "point of resistance, and a starting point for an opposing strategy (Foucault, 1978, pp. 100-1 in Greenberg, 2005). This is not a contradiction to Soroka or others who have studied the role of the media. Rather, these points reflect that in some cases, the media may have a determining role, but in other cases, outside forces exist and may exert power.

When explaining the media's contribution further, Greenberg cites Stuart Hall who argued that, "the media shape and organize popular consensus by 'masking and displacing' relations of domination and control, by 'fragmenting and individualizing' collective values, and by imposing an 'imaginary unity' on the social totality (Hall, 1977, p. 337 in Greenberg, 2005). This organizing and masking role played by the media, at minimum, contributes to shaping the frame within which public discourse can take place, at least some of the time. Also, it infers, by inclusion, what the press considers to be "reasonable talk" (citing Hall, 1986, p. 12, in Greenberg, 2005), i.e. sources. Taken together, these ideas highlight that an additional contribution is made to the debate when content is produced or provided that is not simply a reflection of the debate that occurred in Parliament.

Entman (1989) argues that most frequently, the media emphasize the “horse-race”⁷⁰ between politicians, such as who is leading in public opinion, or who voted, and in what way, rather than covering issues more substantively. This type of coverage can be referred to as process or political coverage, and reveals that in these instances, the media do not question the underlying principles of different political positions on various issues. Political process coverage, when evident, substantiates Entman’s claim that the primary product of the media is not ideas, but news (1989, p. 22).

The role of the media is surely paradoxical then, as it would seem to be impossible to concurrently share facts, actively seek information, please the market and be autonomous, in any consistent manner. Countermeasures, such as editorials, regular features and columns, hard news and soft news, as well as opinion-editorials and letters to the editor, are intended to provide balance, but in the end, with the constraints faced by sources, elites, media outlets, commercialization, and ownership, there is little evidence that demonstrates the existence of a watchdog role of the news media. At minimum, one could argue that the media’s ability to influence is variable at best since its ability to leverage and harness power is debatable, at least in any consistent manner.

While the idea of being a watchdog became entrenched as one of the first principles of press journalism, and in spite of the fact that as a principle, it may continue to govern the work of many journalists today, critics over the last few decades have argued and continue to argue that the press no longer fulfills a watchdog role. Yet, some continue to argue that “news discourse is one of the important means by which a

⁷⁰ See Entman (1989, pp. 34-6) and discussion of research concerning coverage of election campaigns and candidate coverage where positive and negative coverage are measured to determine if some candidates in an election receive more and better coverage than others, and how this results in their electoral success.

society comes to know itself” (Ericson et al., 1987, p. 15). These inconsistencies are reconciled by Soroka (2002) whose differentiation between different types of issues, allows that the press can play different roles depending on the issue.

Weiderman (2009) highlights arguments around both a “guard dog role” and “lapdog role” for the media. The guard dog role is described by Donohue, Tichenor, and Olien (1995) as, the “media perform as a sentry not for the community as a whole, but for those particular groups who have the power and influence to create and control their own security systems” (p. 115). In other words, as Weiderman explains, the guard dog approach assumes that media reflect the interests of dominant groups and that the media will, in a highly homogeneous community, protect and maintain the local power establishment (citing Donohue et al., 1995, p. 116). In one example, Weiderman highlights the press coverage from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* that contained apologies for their coverage of the Iraq War and the lack of questioning of the claims of former President George W. Bush that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (in Weiderman, 2009, pp. 51-2). In doing so, Weiderman demonstrated that press coverage reinforced the power of dominant groups. If this is true, one could expect the SSM press coverage to be found to, for the most part, support SSM and furnish sources in support of SSM.

With respect to the lapdog role, Weiderman explains that some have argued that “the press is completely submissive to authority, lacks independent power, is oblivious to interests except for powerful groups, and frames all issues to align with the perspectives of the highest powers in the system (Donohue et al., 1995, cited in

Weiderman, 2009). If this were the case, one would expect SSM coverage to not carry the arguments of opponents to the legislation.

All three canine metaphors have served as ways to consider the role of the media, but recent scholarly opinion in Canada argues that it is more reasonable to attribute the news media with a partial role in “triggering and widening political discussion among citizens” (Kim, Wyatt, and Katz, 1999, in Price, Nir, and Cappella, 2005). This partial role does not pertain to any manner of watchdog, but rather is a partisan type of role intended to incite the public to action, express a particular position, or as a forum, where ideas are revealed, discussed and debated in order to reach a common good, all of this in spite of how journalists see their own work. As Ericson et al. point out, journalists are somewhat constrained by their news organizations, but journalists themselves are also “central agents in the social construction of reality” (1987, p. 356). In fact, journalists will more likely concentrate on information related to deviance and control which seems to “give values the appearance of objectivity” while at the same time, the journalist is shaping “moral boundaries and contours of social order, providing an ongoing articulation of our senses of propriety and impropriety, stability and change, order and crises” (Ericson et al., 1987, p. 356).

Ericson et al. also describe that what the media actually cover is much more limited than what classical liberal theorists have argued because of a number of constraints such as the powerful sources that impact the work of journalists who in turn most often privilege these versions of reality. As a form of public political discourse, the news is very restricted because of time and space limitations, as well as limitations related to any depth of knowledge that journalists could reasonably have on a broad

range of issues, and some organizational constraints exist because of the individual nature of media institutions (1987, pp. 360, 363). Taking these points together, the news appears to provide commentary on how things should be done and whether some other positions or ideas are “out of step” with this perspective.

Since I question the role of the media with respect to its coverage of the Parliamentary debate on SSM, a number of Entman’s ideas about paradoxes cited in Chapter Two support findings from the research discussion that I conduct in subsequent chapters. According to Entman, one could expect that media coverage of significant events would not question the government from a substance perspective. So, while journalists counter criticism by arguing that they “hold up a mirror to reality” (Entman, 1989, p. 8), it will be interesting to discuss my findings in this context since it appears that both the media and its critics are correct: while the media do influence and sometimes inject bias into their reporting, they also do hold up a mirror to reality that both presenting and re-presenting the news. Understanding the power of journalism in modern politics and how it fulfills the requirements of democratic citizenship⁷¹ means one must study how the media fulfills this responsibility to democracy. One way this can be accomplished is by analyzing news content from a content and discourse perspective which would assist in revealing the constructed aspects of the news while

⁷¹ More targeted work completed by researchers such as Cappella and Jamieson (1997) demonstrates that cynical journalism fosters cynical citizenship, which renders implicit the idea that the media play a constructing or shaping role in terms of public debate, although to what degree is debatable since some findings indicate that the Internet, for example, has provided opportunities for greater civic engagement while others (Putnam, 1995 in Maarek and Wolfsfeld, 2003, p. 4) have argued convincingly that with an increase in leisure time since the 1950s and the advent of television, individuals have become less engaged civically. Dropping voter turnout at national elections is often linked to democratic or sophisticated citizenship; the question is whether the result is because of increased or decreased sophisticated citizenship.

taking into consideration the institutional features of the media itself (i.e., the effects of gate-keeping on the final news story) (Swanson in Maarek and Wolfsfeld, 2003, p. 14). Conducting research that encompasses both the data and its context⁷² will underscore how the media environment may cause changes in political journalism. These changes, along with marketing strategies and a sophisticated use of communications that combine to manipulate journalists and at the same time cause journalists to struggle against the manipulation⁷³, are elements of the evolving “modern publicity process” (in Maarek and Wolfsfeld, 2003, pp. 21-2).

One final point about the role of journalists is raised by Miljan and Cooper (2003) who argue that Canadian journalists have come to rely increasingly on journalists themselves for interpretations of the news, citing media election coverage and the related discussions of policy issues (p. 32). Journalists have in some instances become part of the news, whether by design or not. One example cited by Miljan and Cooper is coverage of the departures of two celebrity journalists from their news organizations (p. 33). Another example is the coverage that the media gives itself

⁷² Context can include the “increased competition in proliferating traditional media, the increasing commercialization of media and the rapid growth of so-called cybermedia” (Swanson in Maarek and Wolfsfeld, 2003, p. 14).

⁷³ This manipulation-based evolution is another reason that the media have become more cynical toward politics. In fact, the desire of journalists to wrest control of a story from politicians is also apparent in studies that have found that “only 17 percent of campaign news was devoted to what the politicians were saying” (Blumler & Kavanaugh, 1999 in Maarek & Wolfsfeld, 2003, p. 23). In contrast, some researchers argue that “the relative absence of policy issues is not the fault of the media...if the campaign has been lacking in substance...party strategies share the blame” (Maioni, Whyte and Goodyear-Grant, in the *Globe & Mail* June 25, 2005 reviewed press coverage of the 2004 Canadian Federal Election using numerous points of analysis in terms of tone and bias (negative or positive), issues versus horserace coverage, and media analysis of voting.)

during elections such as stories about the journalists themselves as they cross Canada while covering the campaign trail.⁷⁴

3.4 An Integrated Approach

This chapter investigated, sifted through and critiqued a number of political communication theoretical approaches in order to determine what key considerations and approaches to integrate into my study of the press coverage of the SSM debate. Each approach contributed some ideas for further consideration and to the development of my theoretical approach, either through its main aspects or through criticism of the approach itself.

The challenge with models such as the propaganda model and the political contest model is they describe how victims and stories may exist and that coverage of these stories provides a sort of dichotomization in terms of winners and losers, worthy and unworthy, but they do not provide a means to operationalize the inputs and outputs of framing and agenda. And while Herman and Chomsky focused on explaining media effects with a rationale that an overarching corporate strategy is systematically employed by individual editors and owners in the production of news and entertainment exists, other research (Soroka, 2002; Miljan and Cooper, 2003) demonstrates that

⁷⁴ An interesting and visible example of the media's own agenda occurred during the 2004 and 2006 Canadian federal election campaigns when major Canadian media outlets established their own campaign tour buses, which indicated that a struggle over the traditional control of the news agenda during an election campaign was taking place between the media and politicians. It seemed to result in a more negative construction of the campaign news as the interpretive frameworks used by the media seemed to discount the substantive content of politicians' statements and actions and instead focused more on both the media's and politicians' difficulties arising from "being on the road", even including weather reporting from the road.

empirical results are more inconsistent than definitive on this point. But the political contest model's use of framing analysis to demonstrate gaps in news coverage is helpful because it elaborates upon how frames provided by antagonists are "full of symbolic meaning" in contrast to the media's use of only the shallowest frames.

To respond theoretically to the question concerning how the press covered the SSM debate, the application of a second-level agenda-setting approach that considers attributes or particular arguments, will demonstrate what was presented in the different discourses and allow for an understanding why and how the coverage differed from the Parliamentary debate. I also accept the arguments by researchers such as Soroka (2002) and Miljan and Cooper (2003), that there is a media agenda in Canada, and that ownership has only a small role in directing that agenda.

The next chapter reviews different options for a methodological approach to integrate with my second-level agenda-setting analysis.

4 Chapter: Methodological Approaches

Berg's research on qualitative research methods (2001) argues that different academics approach their work from two sides: some begin with a theory before research approach, and others begin with the research before determining the theoretical approach. Berg also explains that qualitative research can move back and forth between the two, and that the research process necessarily combines both understandings and approaches.

4.1 Options

In Canada, it is a reasonable assertion that most journalists believe that they have a responsibility to provide information on the policies and events of the day in a fair and balanced manner. Research by Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1987) and Miljan and Cooper (2003) studied the work of journalists in Canada and the environments within which they work. Their findings had different focuses, but both could be situated within a school that argues that journalists are part of a "knowledge society" in Canada, they contribute to a media agenda in Canada, and they themselves are affected at different times by other agendas at work such as a public policy agenda, or a corporate agenda (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987, p. 11). The question that remains is what role do journalists play in this kind of context, and how is that role manifested by the resulting coverage of Bill C-38 and the same-sex marriage (SSM) debate?

This is the starting point of my examination into how information related to SSM was shared with Canadians through the press with a particular emphasis on how details of the Parliamentary debate were shaped and shared with Canadians. The

following questions establish the initial frame or context, and also demonstrate the key areas of concern that are the focus of my research: What is the role of the press? How did the coverage look in contrast to the Parliamentary debate? What interpretation can be assigned to the coverage based on expectations of the press and constraints that govern press practices?

The 2005 SSM policy debate in Canada can be described as a site of moral and cultural contest that contained rival sets of discourses. I approach the study of this issue by trying to capture and measure the role of the media through the study of specific discourse carried in Parliament, in the press, and in editorials. As I describe at the end of this chapter, I utilize a methodological approach to reveal particular aspects of the discourse carried in the press in order to provide evidence to help to construct my theory about the discourse and role of the press. Some have argued that these discourses are “rival discourses” and that they can be understood as ways that different controversies are covered in the press. Bockock (1997) uses the example of the debates over pornography and the recognition of homosexuality to explain that many of the controversies over sexual practices encompass rival discourses. These rivals clash because on the one hand, some discourses are comprised of a “secular liberal philosophy” with a tendency to emphasize human rights and individual liberties while others are used by “moral campaigners” who argue for a return to a moral and “pure” life, recanting the moral permissiveness that has been emblematic of the post-war period (1997, p. 5). This idea explains the agenda behind some of the discourses, but what is needed is a method to analyze the discourses used in the SSM debate to determine if this debate can be similarly characterized.

A discussion of different methodological options follows that includes framing, content analysis, and discourse analysis, in order to determine which combination of methodological tools will be applied in support of my dissertation's theoretical approach.

4.1.1 Framing Analysis: An Overview and Criticism

As the literature review demonstrated, the concept of framing regularly appears in communications research discussions and is frequently tied to analyses that use agenda-setting research. It can also be linked conceptually to other terms such as: schema, priming, bias, indexing and cultivation⁷⁵, which are inherited from diverse fields of study such as mass communication, psychology, sociology, ethnology, and so forth. As scholarship has attempted to measure the persuasion, effects and contribution of media on society, framing analysis is often cited in examinations of the "mediation" role of the press.

⁷⁵ The term *schema* specifically relates to what individuals bring with them cognitively when presented with information in the media, i.e., their individual frames. *Priming* is a process intended to activate schemas. Some have argued that priming is interchangeable with the idea of framing in that both ideas are extensions of agenda-setting. Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan tell us that priming is the "impact that agenda-setting can have on the way individuals evaluate public officials by influencing the thematic areas or issues that individuals use to form their evaluations" (2002, p. 8). *Bias* is also a relevant concept to consider since how an issue is framed is a form of structural bias. Bias occurs when a complex news story is compressed to conform to space restrictions, resulting in the omission of details that could shift opinion. The existence of bias also reveals some evidence of value-laden judgment which makes forming generalizations difficult. One method that takes structural bias into consideration is the application of framing analysis. Elaborating upon the structural bias that is present in a given media will not reveal ideological intent but there is still an academic benefit to defining an existing process or situation. For example, uncovering structural bias can point to structural constraints that will prevent weaker antagonists from benefiting from what coverage and focus result from positive bias (i.e., Herman and Chomsky's propaganda campaigns). The concepts of *indexing* and *cultivation* relate to frames taken in their totality and the expression of media effects where the public gets a distorted impression of reality, such as crime rates, because of media over-reporting ("if it bleeds, it leads"). Both of these concepts contribute to a specific structural bias in the presentation of material, but again, not a necessarily ideological bias. This is relevant to respond to the idea that the media promote "a reality" that the public takes as its standard view, even when this standard view is far from actual reality.

Goffman (1974) articulated the concept of framing in order to give researchers both a *concept* and an *approach* to theorize about communication. Goffman's concept of the frame is linked to the paradigm of knowledge (the cognitive, pre-conceived understanding) that a person applies to different types of media content such as advertising.⁷⁶ Takeshita notes that several researchers (Minsky, 1975; Bateson, 1972; Watzlawick et al., 1974; and Tversky and Kahneman, 1981) also use the term "framing" to explain the "perspective a person applies to define an event or a problem" (1997, p. 23). Takeshita also argues that the approach taken by these other researchers is different from Goffman's approach in that the way a problem is framed can affect people's preferences about the problem.⁷⁷ This idea points to the duality of framing where sometimes the frame comes first, but other times, it is the agenda that sets the frame. Thus, framing has multiple definitions and starting points, and can be connected to research at different stages in the process, i.e., inductively or deductively.

Entman integrates these ideas in his framing research (1989; 1993) stating, "Framing is the selection of a perceived reality in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (1989, p. 52). In other words, there is a duality in framing where both sides of an agenda may be subject to framing analysis, but from different disciplines with a different hypothesis and focus of study. At the individual level, Entman ascribes to framing the idea that something takes place when individuals

⁷⁶ When an individual applies an advertising frame to what they are reading, it means they assume that the communicator is trying to sell something.

⁷⁷ This is still relevant today when one considers that public opinion pollsters and analysts believe that how a question is framed will lead the reader or viewer to respond in a certain way or choose certain answers.

mentally make sense of information that is presented to them. Here, individuals apply “mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide” an individual’s processing of information (from Entman, 1993, p. 53). My dissertation does not probe individuals’ perspective on SSM, however, it is helpful to distinguish between different approaches to framing as I seek to establish some clarity around definitions and my approach.

Scheufele also addresses the duality of framing and looks at the difference between psychological and sociological framing. He elaborates on this by distinguishing between media frames and individual frames (1999, p. 106), both of which “are embedded in political discourse” (p. 106). In other words, media frames can include the intent of the sender but may also contain unconscious motives found in routine journalism already mentioned in the description of concepts such as bias and indexing because of the contribution of the psychological framing of individuals (from Entman’s idea of “mentally stored clusters of ideas”, 1993, p. 53).

Ghanem (1997) highlights research that demonstrates how framing can be considered along two dimensions in order to capture the idea that messages are both *cognitive* (this category would explain if the audience and media think about an issue the same way) and *affective* (to better understand the audience’s emotional reaction to the news item) (Gamson and Modigliani (1989) in Ghanem, 1997, pp. 11-3). In my analysis, it is difficult to generalize along either of these dimensions given the initial framing is derived from the speeches of parliamentarians that may or may not have been following a specific plan, however, the discussion of dimensions underscores the added complexity, and potential for further complexity, when using framing as a form of analysis. These dimensions and ideas related to cognitive and affective framing would

be particularly applicable and useful if the relationship between the press and its audience was the focus of my research.

Scheufele's design of a process model of framing helps to address the various approaches to framing, and brings further discipline to framing methodologically (1999, p. 114). He illustrates his continuous process model by asking the following question, "what kind of organizational or structural factors of the media system, or which individual characteristics of journalists, can impact the framing of news content" (p. 115). Other proposed refinements to framing have built upon a psychological approach, coming up with analyses in terms of episodic and thematic framing,⁷⁸ as one example (Iyengar and Simon, 1993). Cognitive scientific research has contributed to this field of study by explaining that, how information is presented, in positive or negative terms, will greatly affect people's choices and reactions.⁷⁹ Of these refinements, applying both a process view and considering the potential for episodic framing, provide support for the development of my methodological approach.

Brewer (2003) views frames as tools of elites, intended to be discovered, accepted, and adopted by citizens in their decision-making. He also attaches the idea of value to frames, questioning whether or not competing value frames within public debate encourage greater public deliberation. His research findings call into question

⁷⁸ Iyengar and Simon (1993) studied the effects of Gulf war coverage on the public's support for American foreign policy, and were concerned with how the public reacts to the way TV news depicts the issue through episodic and thematic framing. They explain that episodic framing depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances or specific events in a "visually appealing," live coverage manner (1993, pp. 367-8), whereas thematic news framing puts public issues in a more general or abstract context, with a backgrounder-type of report directed at general outcomes or conditions and frequently featuring 'talking heads'" (pp. 367-8). Of the two types of framing, Iyengar and Simon found that news networks rely heavily on episodic framing to report on public issues.

⁷⁹ The idea of questionnaires and surveys with leading questions can highlight this point.

whether there is really diversity and competition in public debate or any rational and thoughtful deliberation on the part of the public. For researchers interested in empirically measuring the possibility of a sophisticated audience, a field of study known as public deliberation⁸⁰ questions the impact that reasoning and deliberation have on the public's opinion regarding public policy issues and debates. As Brewer's research⁸¹ concludes, however, "political knowledge shaped the effects of values on opinion about gay rights when - and only when - the public debate offered a frame for the value that was both undisputed and sufficiently prominent within media coverage for citizens to receive" (2003, p. 194). In other words, he determined that the media established what could be considered an acceptable framework for the discussion of gay rights, and it was this framework that established what the acceptable values were in the context of SSM.

Others have found that the framing of ethical or moral concerns can utilize a range of values with varied effectiveness.⁸² Some researchers would like to understand and evaluate the extent to which the media shape people's cognitions because the information they gain from the media helps them to evaluate that information and form

⁸⁰ Scheufele, Hardy and Wang (2005) try to reveal the determinants of a citizen's participation in public affairs. And Gamson reminds us that there "are clearly moments when people do take it upon themselves to do more than evade or transcend the terms and conditions of their daily lives and behave as collective agents who can change them. At some level, they harbor a sense of potential agency." (2001, p. 61)

⁸¹ Brewer searched articles between 1990 and 1997 using the citation "gay rights" in the headlines. To identify competing values, he examined party platforms, court opinions and recent accounts of the politics of gay rights from which he found two values that were expressed in conflicting terms: equality rights (where value frames were either in support of equality or against), and traditional morality (where the frame was cast as either anti-gay rights morality or pro-gay rights morality). His main conclusions were that the anti-gay rights morality frame appeared to be relatively uncontested in the media whereas the pro-gay rights equality and the anti-gay rights equality frames were "both prominent features of the debate" (p. 180).

⁸² Dearing has conducted numerous case studies into abortion, the automobile industry, nuclear power and war with Iraq finding a range of values and frames utilized, some more effectively and prolifically, than others (2001).

moral judgments (Takeshita, 1997, p. 25). This latter approach shifts the orientation of focus from political elites to the media and provides helpful background to my study, given that it is an ethical and moral issue for some.

Price, Nir and Cappella (2005) looked at how *groups* relate to media discourse and utilized framing techniques from a psychological perspective to determine how various frames may condition group discussions on the subject of gay civil unions.⁸³ They also accept the notion that it is the media that establish the terms of public debate through the provision of story lines or frames, but add to this idea that researchers should use a psychological conception of framing to help narrow the focus on the specifics of news coverage. This would help determine what type of frame is used and how different frames influence an individual's⁸⁴ perception of issues. For example, they argue that the initial manipulation (first frame used to start group discussion) will end up being mainly responsible for the overall discussion results. Two key points arising from this research highlight how the ideas of values and the role of individual psychological frames embedded within individuals both assist in establishing intellectual shortcuts for individuals when they are faced with stories containing rival discourses. The focus of this dissertation is not on how individuals are affected by the news, however this research demonstrates that not only do the media and political elites

⁸³ Their study differs from other research into individual responses to framing because they studied group responses to different frames.

⁸⁴ Instead of measuring the content of media frames, others such as Wanta, situate agenda-setting measurement on the individual who "consumes, uses and processes information" (1997, p. 5) in his development of a *media conformity score* and *agenda-setting susceptibility* (1997). Wanta's research, unlike mine, is from the perspective of the individual and demonstrates advancements in agenda-setting analysis by providing us with data and terminology to support the theory (although he cautions that results can still be misleading when comparing different respondents and their correlation results to media coverage of issues). Certainly it seems that a greater psychological perspective of second-level or attribute-agenda setting may yield more testable results for a media analysis and partially respond to persistent concerns regarding message framing.

contribute to the framing of issues, but that individual values and psychological frames are also important dynamics in what constitutes frames of knowledge.

One challenge with framing is its deceptive appearance of being an uncomplicated methodology to manage with the application of a few definitions and some imprecise understanding of the paradigmatic context in which it rests. This view is rather simplistic, but it helps to explain how the extensive reference to frames and framing in political communications research can lead to this type of assumption. As some researchers have remarked, framing has suffered from a “scattered conceptualization” (Entman, 1993 in Scheufele, 1999, p. 103) arguing that this is a key obstacle for framing to overcome.

To resolve this obstacle, Scheufele proposes that framing research should work from a “meta-theoretical perspective” by placing framing within a larger field of study, to be utilized to explain effects. This maneuver helps to clarify some of the inconsistencies in the definitional use of framing and has the potential to help contribute to a defensible research approach.

Wolfsfeld had described interpretative frames as a “central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue” (2003, p. 88). This idea would work well with second-level agenda-setting. Accepting the idea that framing is a continuous process and that outcomes from one part of the process can become variables in another part of the process, it therefore makes sense to consider utilizing a framing approach in combination with another approach such as agenda-setting.

4.1.2 Content Analysis: An Overview and Criticism

Content analysis analyzes manifest content and can also render visible both included or excluded content if the research is conducted with consistently applied criteria. This is important since what is not included can be as important to the researcher as what is included. Studying manifest content also helps researchers avoid any charges of subjectivity and selectivity that are raised when other more qualitative approaches such as ethnography are used (Berg, 2001, p. 241).

Content analysis is most powerful in its capacity to provide measurable data for studies allowing for replication, over time and space, by other researchers using the same criteria. Berg makes an important point that content analysis can also include narrative analysis which has qualitative aspects. Applying narrative analysis to a content analysis will add a qualitative feature to a project that will yield measurable data and may help reveal inferences or effects, although the researcher would still need to provide some corroborating evidence to support this type of analysis (Berg, 2001, p. 242, refers to Holsti, 1969, p. 598).

Berg (2001) explains that inferences can be formalized through “analytical constructs” which help reveal something measurable between texts. If a researcher has cause to believe that some meaning can be derived from a specific text such as a newspaper and its coverage of an event, speech or occasion, approaching the text by way of a content analysis will help quantify the data and establish the parameters for that quantification. This methodology is also useful if the planned study has many

texts, enabling the researcher to determine how often⁸⁵ the press refers to a certain subject, where the subject is discussed within a newspaper, the length of the articles, and so on. Content analysis has become quite sophisticated with the use of data management tools and new technology that enable the processing of enormous amounts of information and assist in complex statistical measurement. In fact, this methodology is so widespread that many analytical constructs can now be taken for granted such as analyzing word frequency, or article length, location and incidence when a researcher is building a case for certain hypotheses.

It is well-documented that conducting a content analysis requires the researcher to explicitly describe and determine levels and units of analysis, accompanied by an explanation of how the results will assist in responding to the research question. The researcher then “codes” the texts according to the scale and criteria design with coding units as simple as identifying every time certain words appear in the text, and where, over a specified period of time. The approach taken by the researcher is either inductive (in order to determine the themes for coding, the researcher immerses herself in the text to see what is there), or, deductive (a researcher applies a pre-determined plan to the texts to see what is there).

One of the important advantages of content analysis is it can be conducted “unobtrusively”, in that no interviews, notification of subjects or laboratory work are required (Berg, 2001, p. 258). It is also considered to be cost effective in contrast to

⁸⁵ Frequency is a key form of analysis for subtopics, i.e., the number of times a topic or subtopic appears in the media. The placement or presentation of the topic is also important to study but difficult to measure.

other types of research as well as being very useful for studying large amounts from data, either over time or space, or both. The findings of a content analysis have the potential to provide information related to trending. That being said, one of its key weaknesses is that it cannot explain causal relationships, such as answering questions about why the media chose to use certain words and publish certain stories on certain subjects.

4.1.3 Discourse Analysis: An Overview and Criticism

It would seem entirely appropriate to apply a discourse analysis to the data gathered in support of this dissertation given that the speeches or discourse of Parliamentarians make up one half of the initial dataset, and how the print media represented these speeches, makes up the other half. In addition, given that these speeches were delivered several years ago as well as the accompanying press coverage, apart from listening to or watching archived files from the House of Commons and recording what was seen and heard, reviewing the discourse created by *Hansard* is a useful alternative.

One of the hallmarks of discourse analysis is how it complements other forms of research. A cursory review of journal articles indicates how an extensive collection of studies from psychology, cultural studies, linguistics, sociology, politics, anthropology, and so on, have all benefitted from some level of discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis can be described as either a method or a paradigm (Hammersley, 2003, p. 751). Either way, discourse analysis draws from conversation analysis and semiotic theory, it questions how a speech is constructed and delivered,

and how, in its delivery, it constitutes a new text that is imbued with the world view of the speaker and whomever interprets or hears the speech. Hammersley draws the link to Kant to highlight the idea that that “the mind plays an active role in constituting ‘the world as it appears’ in our experience” which emphasizes the psychological contribution that framing makes to discourse analysis (2003, p. 757). Discourse analysis can help to understand how social phenomena and reality are constructed, and “demonstrates *how* things come to be as they are, that they could be *different*, and thereby that they can be *changed*” (2003, p. 758). This latter point brings discourse analysis closer to the idea of critical discourse analysis.

Hammersley (2003) also explains that discourse analysis is reflective of two different methodological commitments: the first, discourse analysis refuses to view actors as controlled or even guided in their behaviours by substantive, distinctive and stable mental characteristics such as ‘attitudes’, ‘personalities’, ‘perspectives’, or ‘strategic orientations’ or rather, that actors are treated as individuals who employ cultural resources that are publicly available, and do so in contextually variable ways. In other words, their resulting behaviours are not contingent on something particularly related to being an elite member of society, as one example.

The second methodological commitment is discourse analysis refuses to treat what people say about the social world as a source of information about the world because what and how information is shared and how it is constructed, is more relevant (Hammersley, 2003, p. 752). For my methodological approach, I am also not particularly concerned with the specific information shared by the sources quoted in the press coverage of SSM. Instead, my focus lies with the context of the sources in that

coverage including which sources were selected, along with any descriptive language used to introduce and include them in the coverage.

Chouliaraki explains that the moment a news story is constructed and ‘made to mean’ by the media, it is a discursive practice of media (2000, p. 295). As illustrated during the discussion of the theoretical models, the media construct social processes from a privileged perspective, cueing audiences to preferred meanings while suppressing others. While this does not include any audience “*a priori* understandings of news meanings”, the idea of the media playing a shaping role that reinforces the state is not unreasonable (Morley, 1996, as cited in Chouliaraki, 2000, p. 295). A more critical analysis of discourse with power as a focus would be required to discuss power dynamics between the state and the press. Here, I am looking for evidence of agenda that may be made visible with an analysis of the discourses. “The concept of discourse points at the fact that mediated language practices do not simply relay or ‘talk about’ a reality that occurs ‘out there’, but that they actually constitute this reality, in the process of communication” (Chouliaraki, 2000, p. 295). This focus on the process to understand how the media re-contextualized and represented other discourses is my central focus.

Van Dijk (2006) articulates the challenge in determining how best to analyze a discourse fragment, that while defining a speech as a “communicative event” is helpful, the speech should also be studied from grammatical, argumentative, interactional and other dimensions. He notes that there is less agreement concerning the impact that the environment, where a speech act takes place, has on the speech itself. In other words,

defining and analyzing the context of a speech act is a difficult endeavour and one that does not have interdisciplinary agreement among academics.

One response to Van Dijk's concern is to apply a multidisciplinary approach that includes a form of discourse analysis as well as a discussion of the content and an analysis of its social context or how it is framed (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 161; Fairclough, 1996, p. 5; Fairclough, Graham, Lemke and Wodak, 2004). While the idea of analyzing the social context moves discourse analysis again in the direction of critical discourse analysis and the field of cultural theory, it is helpful to my research to add a qualitative aspect to my methodology.

4.2 Compelling Attributes

One could argue that linear measurements will result in two-dimensional findings, and that there could be some loss of validity to those findings as soon as the presence of a third or more factors are identified including a complex and varying frame. With respect to measuring texts related to SSM, this means that it is not enough to plot the arguments made in Parliament directly to what arguments were carried in the press. It is also important methodologically to identify and measure where possible, any outside factors that could have impacted or contributed to the press coverage of SSM. Some of these factors could be: corporate ownership, regional location, availability of sources, deadlines, and whether there were other competing newsworthy issues taking place or occurring at the same time. Each of these factors may have individually or

cumulatively⁸⁶ had an impact on the amount of coverage dedicated to Bill C-38.

Therefore, determining agenda is not an exact science. I will proceed with an approach to measure a number of defined factors to see if together they tell a story about the SSM press coverage.

One way to view the SSM discourse is through what McCombs describes as compelling arguments (2004, p. 92). McCombs explains that the idea of compelling arguments can be used in combination with second-level agenda-setting and framing analysis to increase our understanding of how issue salience is passed on to the public (2004, p. 92). One way to identify these types of arguments is through attribute agenda-setting. Focusing on arguments puts into focus the many different types of arguments used in discourse including, legal, religious, political, psychological, mythic, and so on.

But what is compelling about the argument and how can an argument's "compelling-ness" be studied? By its very nature, an argument is intended to persuade or compel someone to agree with the stated idea. There is a great deal of research directed to understanding what compels behavior in psychology, anthropology, and media effects, and while it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to elaborate on the nature of this research, it is instructive to try to identify compelling language in the texts that I am using for my research. Gathering information about the different ways and devices that made the SSM arguments compelling, such as tapping into values, beliefs, and the use of myths, metaphors or narrative language, will help to identify what the Parliamentarians framed as important in the debate. In my research, I am not looking at

⁸⁶ Gonzenbach and McGavin's example of measuring the weather explains that if one is able to identify all the relationships that determine weather and measure them precisely, then weather prediction is possible (cited in McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997, p. 130).

the meaning of the arguments to determine what is right and wrong. Instead, I will be examining which debates were used most frequently, as a measure of what Parliamentarians thought was most compelling. Then, I will take this list of compelling arguments and search the press coverage for any similar arguments. This approach will help to explain which particular arguments were compelling and will provide evidence in consideration of my hypothesis that questions whether the ideas of Lule and others about the presence of myths in the media were relevant to this debate in Canada. Consequently, I identified myth as one of the searchable attributes along with six other defined attributes that will be elaborated upon in the next chapter. As some have argued, storytellers are familiar with the existence of the twenty-six myths identified by Barthes (1974) commonly found at the center of our own stories that help us to understand ourselves and the world around us. But it is the addition of a single word, or partially-concealed reference to a myth, in journalists' stories, that has the power to add inference and meaning to content that may not be explicitly stated.

Krippendorff describes narrative as a device that,

...creat[es] worlds that narrators and their listeners can imagine and make present to themselves and to each other, and perhaps live within. These worlds need not be identical; a story may not be the same for unlike listeners – as evident in their subsequent retellings – but may be understood nevertheless. (2009, p. 161)

Krippendorff also points out that narratives always are incomplete, may be reproduced selectively, may merge various stories into one narrative or divide one into several, and that they may open spaces for voices heretofore unheard (2009, p. 161). His description

of six different types of metaphors⁸⁷ suggests that their elaboration may provide a greater awareness of the operation of communicative devices in a text, that these socially-agreed upon devices actually generate meaning.

As we saw in the political contest model, language is used by the news media to provide a “narrative structure” by providing an authoritative account of actors and events and by thematically organizing information in ways that “serve both their own professional interests and the cultural sensitivities of their audience” (Wolfsfeld, 2001, p. 240). This speaks to the idea of values and how the media create texts that align with these interests. Another researcher explained that sometimes myths are used by the media because they “constitute and saturate a narrative by providing a continuous storyline, a list of accepted players and an interpretative framework for an event” (Lule, 2001, p. 355). Therefore, myth can be considered as a device or a technique that helps to provide greater comprehension when issues are large or complex (such as terrorism). Here, the media use myths to make the discussion real for readers, casting, “consciously or unconsciously, modern experience in terms of myth” (Lule, 2001, pp. 5-7). Lule’s definition of myth draws greatly on the work of Barthes (1974). Lule’s discussion of mythmakers and what is sacred and societal, is intended to provide evidence that myths can provide models for human life, expressing ideals, ideologies, values and beliefs.

⁸⁷ Krippendorff’s metaphors include: the container metaphor (where language is a container of thoughts); the hydraulic metaphor (relating to flows, fluid, channels, pipelines or mechanical terms to describe communication); the control metaphor (persuasive appeals, compelling arguments, potent communications, powerful documentaries); a transmission metaphor (messages are translated, decipherable, replicable, and returnable); the war metaphor (everything referred to in terms of a contest such as indefensible claims, attacking weak points, demolishing arguments, shooting down of arguments, etc.); and the dance-ritual metaphor (habitual, daily behavior which is cooperative, public, including an unconscious awareness of rules like beginning with how are you and ending with goodbye, etc.) (2009, pp. 51-62).

Researchers such as Ju (2005) and O'Donnell (2004) have analyzed mythic and narrative discourse in the media finding that when particular mythic language was used in editorials about SSM, it was possible to determine the ideology espoused by a media outlet (O'Donnell, 2004). While Barthes defined myth as a type of "social shorthand", researchers have also suggested that myth and narrative can function as heuristic devices (O'Donnell, 2004).

4.3 The Methodological Approach and Challenges to Resolve

The review of approaches and related research supports my multi-disciplinary approach that combines agenda-setting with framing and content analysis along with a consideration of specific attributes or arguments to also include a discourse approach. In particular, I will search for instances of mythic and narrative language in the Parliamentary and press discourses as part of my consideration of the main compelling arguments used.

A number of challenges also remain unresolved as I select a methodological approach. How can I ensure that my research results will be free from bias? How do I elaborate upon how media routines are related to the provision of news? How can I methodologically explain non-routinized news practices once they become evident? How can any measurement of effects be theoretically demonstrated?

In all the approaches reviewed, a recurring criticism regarding clear definitions was present. As noted earlier, several researchers argued that a multidimensional approach to study both agendas and sites of contest would be most fitting since the subjects and objects of study are complex and generalizations might unintentionally

overlook what is actually taking place. In particular, second-level agenda-setting considers multi-dimensions because of the level of attributes and it complements other research approaches such as framing. Researchers such as McCombs and Shaw (1991), Dearing (2002) and Ghanem (1997) all proposed applying framing analysis to help to generate what attributes are relevant in the contexts being studied.

A multi-step approach will still need to work actively to mitigate the weaknesses of each individual theory and approach, although there is support for the idea that the combination of approaches and theory may rule out some of these weaknesses (Krippendorff, 2009; Riffe, Lacy and Fico, 2005; Ghanem, 1997; McCombs & Shaw, 1991; Fairclough et al., 2004). Dearing (2002) proposes combining framing analysis and attribute agenda-setting along the lines of a multi-platform approach or a “multi-method research design” (2002, p. 485), and explains that conceptually combining issue salience (attribute agenda-setting) and issue portrayal (framing) makes sense but the capacity to operationalize this is challenging. He argues that using framing in combination with agenda-setting also requires an understanding of the interdisciplinary paradigm within which they are both found (2002, p. 486).

The challenge of reflexivity remains and unavoidably continues to influence my own perceptions of what is important and relevant in the selection of attributes or subtopics to study, or even the identification of frames. Admittedly, a stricter adherence to meanings and rigorous analysis will only partly resolve this challenge. That being said, Krippendorff recommends embracing the confusion, contradiction, variety and even chaos, while at the same time avoiding “reductionism” or “individualism” and continuing to work towards developing integrated theories that can “pinpoint precise

links between [...] concepts in truly transdisciplinary approaches [essential]to the critical study of discourse in society” (1995, p. 460).

This chapter has provided an overview of different methodologies to establish an integrated approach to apply to my study of political communication and the media. By proposing an approach that combines framing, agenda-setting and content analysis with the addition of a discourse analysis approach, the relative strengths of each can be leveraged while minimizing individual weaknesses. Thus, my dissertation adopts a blending of approaches that includes agenda-setting and framing analysis through an argument analysis that utilizes compelling attributes is one way to leverage complementary approaches and minimize criticism that arises concerning the limitations of each of the approaches on their own.

5 Chapter: Where It All Comes Together

Since most Canadians do not visit Parliament in person to sit in the public gallery in order to listen to the speeches delivered by those representatives that they elect, there is a general expectation that the press corps (and other media outlets) who cover Parliament pass along the relevant aspects of those debates. My research conducts a comparative analysis of what was actually said in Parliament with the resulting press coverage in order to examine whether this expectation is true. My methodological approach also seeks to better understand how the press can function as a mediator of messages received by looking more closely at its role in the SSM debate to determine whether there was a discrepancy between what was delivered in Parliament and what was delivered to Canadians in 2005.

Same-sex marriage (SSM) is a complicated issue, touching on religious beliefs, ideas of the family, cultural traditions, societal structure, our *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and our laws. As already noted, there are a number of different theoretical and methodological approaches that could be applied to study the debate depending on what information is being sought. My review of scholarly debates concluded that the best opportunity to reveal the press contribution would be to combine certain approaches in political communication. I argue that using a combination of framing analysis and second-level agenda-setting, as well as the application of a content analysis to study both the texts within the Parliamentary discourse and newspapers, will provide evidence to demonstrate which themes were used in the debate and whether these were covered in the press.

My combined methodological approach, which I have labeled with the acronym FRAMSLAS, to signify the framing and second-level agenda-setting contributions, is both quantitative and qualitative in order to strengthen the results of my research and help mitigate criticism related to researcher bias, objectivity, and comprehensiveness. The next section elaborates upon how my central research question and hypotheses will be answered using this approach and will also provide support for why SSM is a good choice for a case study.⁸⁸ I will describe how I conducted the research and explain the rationale and justifications for decisions made regarding the use of different media and theoretical approaches. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of additional questions that arose during my research.

5.1 The Key Research Questions

As I have outlined briefly in previous chapters, my central research question seeks to understand how the press framed the SSM debate that took place in Parliament between December 2004 and July of 2005:

How did newspapers in Canada present the same-sex marriage debate with respect to *Bill C-38 (The Civil Marriage Act)*?

Through an analysis of the key arguments and themes from the Parliamentary debate, I will demonstrate that the press did not portray that debate in its coverage, and instead, show that the press presented the debate differently compared to how it was delivered. I developed the following guide to explain my choices of approach or combination of approaches to respond to my research questions:

⁸⁸ Even though SSM is not comparable to more generalizeable issues of concern to Canadians that regularly turn up in national polling data such as the economy, or the state of health care in Canada.

Figure 2: Research Questions and Planned Analytical Approaches

Question	Theoretical Approach	Methodological Approach
<p>How did newspapers in Canada present the same-sex marriage debate with respect to <i>Bill C-38 (The Civil Marriage Act)</i>?</p>	<p>Agenda-setting theories of Soroka (2002); Miljan and Cooper (2003); and Entman (1989); McCombs (2004); and Dearing and Rogers (1996).</p>	<p>Using framing analysis, establish the context for the study, or the larger frame, which means describing what the context was for Parliamentarians and the press through two framing analyses;</p> <p>Discourse approach that identifies key attributes in both the Parliamentary discourse and the press coverage to be used in a content analysis;</p> <p>Compare and contrast the key arguments to create a third body of data; and</p> <p>Consider specifically the use of narrative, myth and metaphoric language, as well as use of sources, or editorials.</p>
<p>The greatest amount of press coverage on the subject of same-sex marriage was largely unrelated to the debate on Bill C-38 because the press already supports the power structure of government. What was their agenda?</p>	<p>Agenda-setting research that discusses journalistic practices and press agenda.</p>	<p>Content analysis of newspaper articles.</p> <p>Content analysis of editorials to determine when and where the editorials were published.</p>
<p>The greatest amount of issue-based press coverage portrayed the debate in terms of a moral issue whereas the greatest amount of parliamentary discourse was concerned with legal arguments. Why?</p>	<p>Agenda-setting research to explain why.</p>	<p>Framing analysis to position the issue for Canadians as a moral issue.</p> <p>Content analysis to consider how the issue was presented differently in Parliament and in the press.</p>
<p>Initial positions taken by the media, for or against SSM, did not change over the course of the public debate regardless of the evolution of the debate in Parliament. What are some potential reasons why?</p>	<p>Agenda-setting research that discusses media agenda in Canada and how the issue of SSM may be considered as either a prominent issue or a sensational issue, which will result in different coverage.</p>	<p>Content analysis to determine “position” of articles, whether neutral, for or against SSM by looking at sources used, specific choices of descriptive language, and overall tone.</p>
<p>Parliamentarians were largely unsuccessful in</p>	<p>Agenda-setting research that articulates why the press</p>	<p>Framing analysis for current context and potential competition for newsworthiness.</p>

<p>having their key messages carried in the press coverage, except for the leaders of each political party. Was this in part because the press coverage related to Bill C-38 was mostly about the process of Parliamentary debate, and not about the substance of the arguments made in Parliament?</p>	<p>would more likely cover a policy issue from a “horse-race” perspective rather than from a substantive perspective.</p>	<p>Content analysis that measured which Parliamentarians received coverage, and which arguments were represented in the press.</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

As the guide above indicates, each question cited above requires the application of different approaches to first determine the context in which the Parliamentary speeches were delivered. Then, what other legislation was being discussed during that Parliamentary session, what else was newsworthy at the time, how one could describe the political environment for the major political parties in terms of electoral support and plans for the next federal election, and how ownership and regional location of press outlets may have played a role in covering the debate, were each addressed by the subsequent combination of approaches.

The next section will describe how I conducted my research including the many decisions I had to make, along with the rationale I used to make those decisions.

5.2 How I Apply My Approach

To begin my study into the coverage of Bill C-38, I began in Chapter Two with a brief overview of the history of marriage in order to establish a broader context for understanding the contemporary discussion of SSM. Within that context, I outlined a number of questions to define the framework of the speeches delivered in Parliament:

how were the speeches presented, by whom, and in what context, namely, what was occupying Canada's parliamentarians at the time of the SSM debate, or what else could the media have reported on, if not SSM. This framing approach draws from Entman (1989; 1993) who defines framing as, "the selection of a perceived reality in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (1989, p. 52).

Following my initial framing approach, I began to establish the terms and conditions for conducting a content analysis because I wanted to measure the compelling arguments of Canada's parliamentarians with a particular focus on the types of arguments used in order to "see" how language was used in the speeches. To analyze the speeches, I coded every speech delivered on Bill C-38 for the existence of the top seven recurring, compelling arguments. Initially there were many more arguments found in my first review of a few of the speeches, but as I looked for patterns in the debate, I was able to group a number of different types of arguments together, and eliminate other arguments which occurred only rarely.

As with the Parliamentary analysis, I also began the press research using a framing analysis. I expected that my application of a framing analysis would identify the existence of conditions that had an influence on the coverage, i.e., unconscious choices by journalists that can play out in routine journalism, or issues such as bias or ownership. To start, my own perspective of the media was aligned with Gitlin's argument that, "media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse" (Gitlin, 1980 in Ghanem, 1997, p. 6). This means that media frames

serve a purpose, not just in the presentation of inert information, but by adding emphasis, or by excluding other material. While it is frequently not possible to see what is not included in different texts, in the case of this body of work, because of the contrast to the Parliamentary discourse, it is possible to determine what information the press excluded from its coverage.

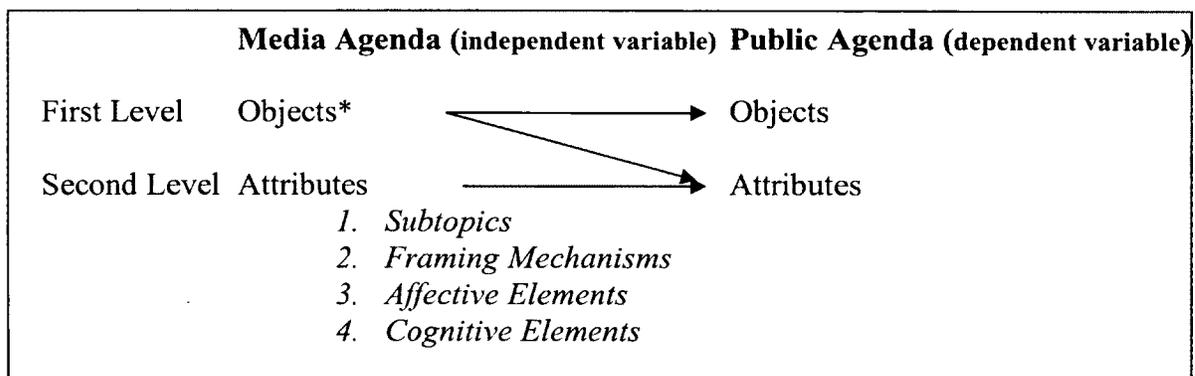
In my press framing analysis, I also posed one of Scheufele's key questions, "what kind of organizational or structural factors of the media system, or which individual characteristics of journalists, can impact the framing of news content" (1999, p. 115). Ericson et al. (1987) discuss in great detail different aspects of the work of journalists such as constraints related to the routines and structure of newsrooms; how journalists have a number of occupational ideologies related to their work such as interpreters of reality, investigative reporters or writers whose purported objectivity helps limit criticism and supports their own legitimacy, and so on. Robinson (2007) describes the work environment of journalists as one that is a "complex institutional setting in which organizational hierarchy, position, length of service, and extent of authority are more important than individual values in determining news output" (p. 220). My research adopts these ideas by building them into a clearer understanding the media frame and what may inform a media agenda.

After establishing the theoretical frames, the next step was to theoretically ground my approach. I argue that an agenda-setting approach, in particular attribute agenda-setting, helps to bring some definitional clarity to aspects of the SSM debate. And as Soroka explains (2002), the importance of an agenda-setting approach is also

that it integrates ideas about the political process, policy making and the role of the press in Canada.

Ghanem (1997) outlines how framing and agenda-setting can be combined and presents a figure in his text to diagrammatically explain this idea. In it, he demonstrates how framing and agenda-setting work together at two different levels, one which works at the manifest content level, and a second that derives from the first level and from which one can understand what elements make up “attributes” that provide meaning to objects.

Figure 3: Ghanem’s chart for framing and agenda-setting

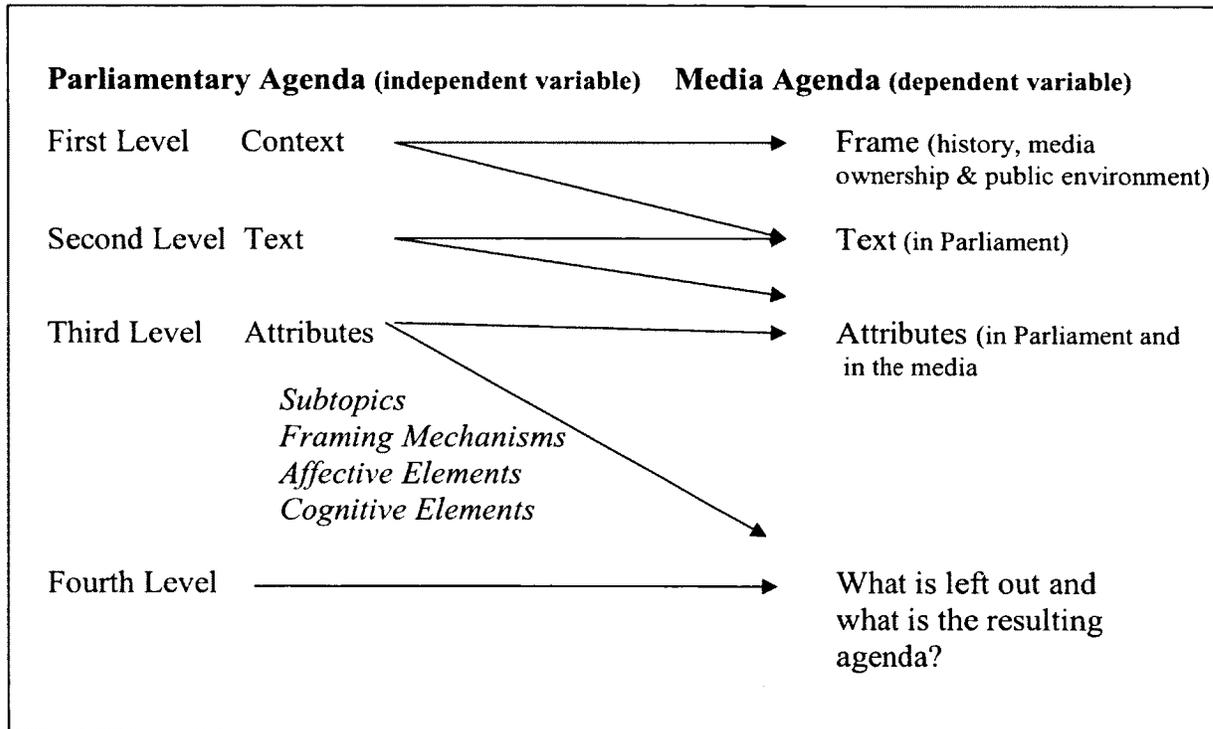


*Ghanem defines texts as objects.

Ghanem’s (1997, p. 11) model is a good fit to my research and demonstrates the start of a continuous process. However, I propose adding some additional detail to reorient its focus for the case of SSM, to Parliament and the press, and to expand the definition of the different elements in his model. The following presents an updated version to

Ghanem's model which is intended to reflect further levels of inquiry which I have added to expand on the role played by framing and agenda-setting.

Figure 4: Framing, Attribute Agenda-Setting and Content Analysis



The consideration of the type of language used in the attributes such as references to values, ideals, myths and narrative, can also provide greater information about what is occurring at the site of contest. In particular, ascertaining whether the media employed any specific attributes, either from the Parliamentary debate, or added new language in its own coverage of the debate, will generate a richer analysis and provide evidence to support the ideas of media agenda.

Together, the application of two frames, the identification of specific attributes and the greater elaboration of the attribute of myth, provide a map of the information that was presented to Canadians including what was both manifest and what was not. It

is the content analysis that will identify the specific language and information contained in the press coverage, and when it is compared to the Parliamentary discourse, that which did not make the press debate will be revealed. The measuring of this information will enable me to determine whether the press “took a position” on the issue itself, either through editorial coverage, or some analysis of the balance of the coverage.

Before closing this section and elaborating on what is in and out of scope in the next section, one final point is essential to explain my rationale for studying the newspaper coverage of this issue, rather than other forms of media such as televised news coverage. As Haake et al. explain, newspapers can be seen as “inter-media agenda setters,” and in this way establish what will be discussed on television and in the internet. In addition, newspapers, as a medium, limit “visual uncertainty” which makes them attractive texts for media analysis (Haake, Campbell, Musacchia, Roggenburg and Pollock, 2008, p. 1).

Researchers such as Driedger,⁸⁹ have compared news coverage in the press and on television by looking at issues that were considered high risk (such as the *E. coli* outbreak in Walkerton, Ontario where lives were lost when the groundwater drinking supply was contaminated) (2007, p. 777). One point that could be raised is that sometimes print collections are not the best choice for analysis because they have minimal visuals and a limited ability to provide feedback on the impact of overall coverage of a situation which includes both print and televised media. However,

⁸⁹ Driedger wanted to determine whether there are times when one news format can be used as a “proxy measure” for another, particularly since print collections are much more accessible to researchers over time.

because the SSM debate would not be considered a “high risk” debate, nor was there a rationale requiring visuals to tell the story, it is reasonable to rely on print coverage to answer questions about how the media shared information with Canadians in this case. In the case of high risk events, one would expect significant televised coverage, especially for information that can be visually presented, such as that which has a highly emotional nature (Wanta, 1997). While any televised news coverage of the SSM debate would have provided a different kind of context, there was in fact minimal televised coverage to analyze because television news faces the challenges of time constraints and the restricted ability to present a news format that is compelling while sharing issues visually and succinctly. While the SSM debate may have received some limited television coverage, most often it was the print media that provided news space for the development of ideas and processes related to this debate.

5.3 Some Issues, Strengths and Weaknesses of my Approach

To provide greater context and to support a framing approach, in Chapter Two, I presented an overview of the varying histories of marriage. To provide additional context to what was a study that took place a few years after the fact, I conducted a review of the national headlines to observe, in the media discourse, what the government agenda was at that time, between elections. And I designed a model to illustrate how framing and the different discourses that I studied, worked together within a broader political communication context. Each of these three contexts provides a frame to study the SSM debate and will sharpen the focus of my research.

To understand what is within the context of the third frame, earlier I provided an overview of current agenda-setting research in Canada. From that overview, I demonstrate that ownership⁹⁰ does not influence media coverage as much in Canada as it may in other nations. However, Miljan and Cooper explain that “clearly the Canadian media do focus on the negative side of the news (2003, p. 47) and that the role of the media in this country is to promote a specific kind of change, not to “denigrate and criticize the government” (p. 49). Therefore, for the most part, journalists themselves operate in an independent manner from their media ownership with some exceptions (p. 13).

Because I am interested in how the press covered the Parliamentary debate, I use the idea of attributes as a way to expand agenda-setting and then compare and contrast those attributes to what was in the press during the debate. My approach to attributes was to include arguments that appeared frequently, contained a range of values, and used statistics to persuade. I also applied the idea of narrative analysis in two ways: one, in the developed list of attributes, I included any references to myths, metaphors or apocalyptic language; and two, in the press coverage, I identified instances where descriptive language was used to introduce sources or ideas in the coverage, something that I have labeled, ‘journalistic input’.

My approach also needed to be flexible enough to address what other issues were included in the press coverage, not simply whether the press covered the Parliamentary debate or not. To achieve this, a content analysis is the most suitable

⁹⁰ Miljan and Cooper conducted a content analysis of newspapers before and after Hollinger Corporation acquired them to determine if the ownership change was the cause of change in content. Their findings are described as “inconsistent” (2003, p. 16).

methodology, but required some refinement. The addition of narrative analysis added a discourse approach as I considered the use and replication of specific arguments, as well as details concerning sources who were either for or against SSM. These refinements were intended to determine what was either added to the press coverage, or not, and whether the tone of the coverage could indicate that the press was presenting a particular position.

To establish my list of attributes or arguments, I coded an initial number of speeches to identify the key arguments. Once the preliminary test was completed, I reviewed the key arguments to select those which were either the most prominent or, those which were particularly salient arguments, for further analysis. I revisited all of the Second Reading speeches and coded each to establish the incidence of arguments arising out of the Parliamentary debate. In addition to the list of arguments or attributes, I also looked at how the arguments were used, in terms of whether they were in speeches intended to support or oppose the legislation.

Before describing how I conducted the press and editorial analysis, I need to elaborate upon why I used myth as a searchable attribute in the discourses. I believed that myth or some form of narrative was used by Parliamentarians to persuade, even when logic or factual accounts were not part of the argument. I will describe this as the use of a fear tactic or some form of prophesizing. I also believed that myth and narrative would likely be used by some Members more than others. Finally, I questioned whether the press would also use myths or other narrative language and devices, either by repeating what was said in Parliament, or in order to provide additional information. I hypothesized that if the press used these devices, that this

would indicate the existence of a press agenda. Narrative analysis is often used in sociology because it is a way to capture both the meaning of a story and how it is told (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997 in Marvasti, 2004). Following that logic, I planned to utilize the concept of myth and narrative language as an attribute rather than as an object to ensure that I was not privileging this idea over any of the other attributes identified as having a frequency or relevance to the research.

The choice of particular words and arguments, the selection of certain sources, and any additional media commentary found within the articles, help to draw together a message about inferred meaning and agenda. By noting the exclusion of key Parliamentary arguments from the press coverage, or which key speakers did not receive media coverage, I produce data from which to draw conclusions about media agenda.

With respect to my content analysis approach, it is a key point that texts are stable and do not change over time. This allows a content analysis to be conducted immediately or at some future date, which is helpful in this kind of research. But this also raises the multi-faceted issue of how time plays a role in this research. For example, some context might be lost over time, while other context might only be revealed with the passage of time. And perhaps it might have been useful to conduct the study of the debate immediately upon its conclusion, but generalizations as well as predictability might also have been limited.

The issue of time lapse, namely the span of time during which the issue was covered, has been identified as a potential weakness that is difficult to measure. The resulting texts from the press coverage of SSM could have been affected by a type of

ennui that occurs when an issue continues to be present in the media over a long period of time. According to Wanta, it is difficult for the media and public to sustain interest in an issue beyond four weeks, yet for some issues, it can take a number of weeks to a maximum of four months to establish salience or a wider understanding of a complex topic (1997, p. 14; 1997, p. 69).

Another point for consideration that Wanta makes is that interest in an issue⁹¹ fades even if the issue itself is serious in nature and continues to remain unresolved. This could have an effect on the tone of coverage of an issue that spans several months such as SSM. I would also add to this idea that, when conducting a discussion of media agenda-setting, it is important to be aware that over time, the multiplicity of factors related to agenda increases. In other words, a speech in February may initiate a discussion in the media that same month but, by the time the issue is addressed in May or June, the reasons why the media report certain information, or why certain politicians make specific points in their speeches in May or June, may not reveal direct links or demonstrate clear agenda-setting by one party or the other.

A strength of the four month media snapshot of my research into the SSM debate is that the debate was long enough to identify any trends in coverage such as whether or not different journalists and media outlets identified a position for or against the legislation, whether certain politicians garnered more coverage than others (i.e., political leaders versus backbenchers), and whether any particular behaviour, sources, or events gained sustained coverage. Additionally, it was possible to contrast the extent

⁹¹ In Wanta's example regarding the environment, he notes that the public gets tired of hearing/reading about the same problems without seeing appreciable improvement even while the severity of the problems remain causing media coverage to lapse (1997, p. 25).

of the coverage to the number of Parliamentary speeches to determine whether or not there was parity in emphasis.

The focus of this dissertation on SSM narrowed the frame of analysis to coincide with the Second Reading debate on Bill C-38, which is also the most important period of debate for legislation in terms of establishing the scope of what is included in the bill. Once a vote has taken place at Second Reading, a bill can no longer be changed in any substantive way as changes would be considered *ultra vires*.⁹² Members of Parliament can still amend legislation at the Committee stage which normally⁹³ occurs after Second Reading, and even at Third Reading, but only amendments that are considered within the scope of the bill would be ruled in order and be eligible to be voted upon.

The issue of researcher bias is a significant issue to address when any research project is undertaken. While I am using existing data retrieved from *Hansard* and archives of the Canadian news media, the critical perspective that initiated the original questions about the role of the media and the research process I pursued, reflects my own bias⁹⁴ concerning elite support and coverage in the media. I have tried to mitigate

⁹² In other words, before the vote at Second Reading occurs, there is still an opportunity to bring forward other considerations that might not have been initially considered part of the legislation, but once the bill is voted upon at Second Reading, the scope of the bill becomes fixed. Amendments after that could only include minor and technical-type changes.

⁹³ There are cases where legislation is sent for committee study before Second Reading with the expectation that the comprehensiveness or scope of the bill will be improved upon before it is returned to the House or Senate.

⁹⁴ While I was already familiar with research on journalistic routines and practices, and had some understanding of the impact of neo-liberalism on a country's media institutions, I wanted to design a case study to determine if this knowledge would be reflected in Canada with media coverage of Parliament as a key criterion. As an urban-raised, white, university-educated female, studies and polling have shown that I am likely to have a bias in favour of issues such as abortion and gun control, and a bias against traditional conservative positions such as capital punishment. Polling such as that conducted by Compas describes women voters as showing a significant preference for moderate and left-of-centre political parties while men are much more inclined to support conservative regimes (David Olive, *National Post*, March 20, 1999, p. 4).

the challenge of bias by establishing clear definitions and criteria to apply to my research so that another researcher could arrive at similar conclusions. That being said, my qualitative approach also allows for perspective and interpretation. Instead of considering this to be a weakness, I argue that a reflexive approach to this research contributes important value. I have questioned why I think the way I do, and when I established the research questions for this thesis, I reviewed them again after conducting a preliminary analysis to ensure that there was evidence to support the initial conclusions I had drawn.

Another challenge is the potential for an increase in the possibility of error, or escalation of weakness, which is heightened by the use of an approach with numerous steps and criteria, each with competing definitions, a caution raised by Ghanem (1997). Compounding this is the fact that few others who have conducted research in this field, have utilized a multi-staged process such as FRAMSLAS in combination with critical discourse analysis in current published communication research. This is likely due to the complexity and costs of applying multiple approaches, steps, definitions and methods to understand the resulting data, as well as the questionable results and potential for replicability or generalizeability. To undertake a discussion about apparent and latent meaning, as well as the processes and power relations therein, likely requires a more complex approach despite any shortcomings related to generalizeability. It would be very costly for a research organization to undertake a multi-step, combined quantitative and qualitative research project without some guarantee of the reliability of the results. In addition, if such a study were undertaken through a funded enterprise, the research approach might also include inter-coder reliability training and additional

materials designed to ensure that the research findings could withstand scrutiny. The research approach taken for this thesis is intended to minimize the problems of inconsistency in concepts and definitions since these are criticisms often present in framing and agenda-setting research.

The decision to provide an overview of the history of marriage at the beginning of the thesis was intended to add context situating SSM in Canada, and to establish a specific and delimited framework for my dissertation. A different approach would be to apply a different initial lens or frame such as the socio-political context within which we find ourselves in Canada, referencing a discussion about the ideas and constraints of liberalism⁹⁵ on our media and elite communication. Although I am not exploring the socio-political culture of Canada in this thesis, my research results will be a comment on this culture.

With respect to determining who or what sets the agenda, there are many factors and considerations that would be impossible to explore exhaustively. For example, a speech delivered in February may give rise to a newspaper article that same month, but not necessarily. An article could appear many months later, depending on the news and public agendas. When an article does appear on the same subject that seems related to the speech in February, it would be difficult to determine a direct causality because there are so many possible influences on public debate and public issues. In addition to those influences, other unrelated events taking place outside of Parliament could dominate the media and eliminate space for media coverage of a Parliamentary debate.

⁹⁵ See research by Ju (2005) who explores the idea of liberalism as a frame for understanding how journalism defines, interprets and conveys ideologically controversial issues such as SSM.

The opposite is also true: media space can quickly become available if suddenly someone famous married someone of the same sex, raising the profile of the issue in another sphere. This thesis began with the premise that the act of making a speech sets the agenda from a subject perspective. Determining if there is a disparity between the speeches and the media coverage is the essence of this thesis. Probing any disparity and analyzing the artifacts for inference, tone, bias, and attributes will provide the data for consideration and discussion in the next chapters.

The remaining sections of this chapter will outline the specific parameters, measures and procedures that I developed including key decisions that I made and justifications of these decisions, to support my methodological approach.

5.4 Selection of Arguments and Key Words

While the debate over SSM in Canada began before Parliament formally debated Bill C-38, as an issue SSM seemed to peak in 2005 in the months leading up to the passage of Bill C-38 (*the Civil Marriage Act*) on July 20, 2005. In total, there were fifteen days of debate in the House of Commons on this bill, and on any particular day, there were as many as thirty speeches (the average was closer to twelve per day with some days having fewer than six). In total, there were 228 speeches⁹⁶ delivered on Bill C-38 in the House of Commons over the course of several months, with 168 of those delivered at Second Reading.

⁹⁶ A number of speeches ran out of time on the first day they were delivered, so they continued to a second day. For the purposes of this study, the speech was only identified once even if it had two different dates (and sometimes not consecutive calendar days) listed in *Hansard*.

I identified key and recurring arguments throughout all of the Second Reading Parliamentary speeches⁹⁷ on Bill C-38, beginning with the speeches of the leaders of each political party and other parliamentarians. As noted, the most important speeches about legislation occur at Second Reading. Therefore, every speech delivered on Bill C-38 at Second Reading was selected and coded to determine the specific and recurring arguments to conclude whether it was in support of, or against the legislation. This coding included whether there was any evidence of the use of mythic or metaphoric language, the incidence of its use, and contrasted against legal or moral-type arguments, or in combination with those arguments. Before finalizing the list of arguments, an initial selection of articles was reviewed to determine the instances where arguments were presented in the press to establish what level of coverage was provided by the press of the Parliamentary debates. The initial review demonstrated that only a few arguments seemed to appear in the press so the approach to analyzing the press was expanded to include other information which will be described in the next section. The following table summarizes the final list of arguments for coding the political texts with criteria:

⁹⁷ As an aside, it is worth noting that the verbal communication of Parliamentarians is recorded in *Hansard* and maintained as a permanent written text for Canadians. Interestingly, members of the press who produce articles that reference these speeches communicate in a written form thereby transposing the verbal communication to written. Another research opportunity might consider the impact on the spoken debate that written communication has. Any of the visual-only and verbal tone conveyed during a speech is not easily captured in the resulting version of *Hansard* which should be considered when weighting the evidence. Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2006) point out there are special problems associated with measuring verbal communication because of the challenge of capturing inference, inflection and tone (p. 66).

Table 1: Final List of Top Seven Arguments with Coding Criteria

	SSM Arguments	Coding Criteria
1	<i>Charter of Rights and Freedoms (for or against)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reference to <i>Charter</i>, rights, legal cases, court decisions, protection of rights;
2	Religion (tradition, evolution, history)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reference to religion, history, passage of time, evolution or improvement, what we have learned from the past;
3	Myth/Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any inference to myths, narrative, heroics, fear, strong language, prejudice, declarations, missions;
4	Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May include any surveys, polls, facts, research by others, economic arguments;
5	Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to voting in the House, what Members have said in the past, elections, how constituents may feel, responsibility as a Parliamentarian;
6	Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to personal beliefs, opinions, personal values*; Reference to children, procreation, family stability; Discussion of what other countries or societies are doing; Reference to the kind of society we live in, how we interact, our social values
7	Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to intimacy, human contact, interaction, love.

*the heading “society” captures a wide spectrum of arguments, but from the preliminary analysis, there was a disparity in types of personal and social arguments. Once the preliminary analysis was completed, it made sense to group social issues into one category that ranges from personal to family and, more broadly, the kind of society in which we live.

In order to code an argument in a speech, every paragraph of the speech was reviewed to identify the overarching key point in that paragraph in order to uncover what the speaker was arguing. Although the initial list⁹⁸ of arguments was extensive, I reduced it to the top seven most recurring arguments and collapsed a number of similar arguments into those seven in order to continue to reflect the fact that the argument was made, while also increasing the possibility that there could be a reflection of those

⁹⁸ For a complete list of the initial arguments identified, please refer to *Appendix E* which summarizes all of the arguments initially identified from the preliminary analysis of two days of speeches from which *Table 1* was created.

arguments in the press. For example, when a subject such as the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was raised, regardless of the context, I tracked it as a Charter argument. Speakers could have used references to the Charter to support their position for or against the legislation. Some examples of Charter arguments are as follows: “I rise in support of a Canada in which liberties are safeguarded, rights are protected and the people of this land are treated as equals under the law”, said Prime Minister Paul Martin, February 16, 2005; “The Supreme Court did not say that to maintain the traditional definition of marriage would be unconstitutional”, argued Paul Steckle, March 21, 2005; and, “We cannot be indiscriminate in our use of the law, choosing to protect the rights of some groups and failing to protect the rights of others”, argued Robert Thibault, March 21, 2005.

Another argument that appeared with great frequency had to do with the *evolution* of understanding, i.e., the reason SSM is acceptable in society today is because society has evolved: “...it is a pleasure for me to speak on Bill C-38. I cannot help but think that, somehow, we are witnessing a bit of history unfold and times change,” said M.P. Réal Menard on March 21, 2005; or “Women were kept out of public life for thousands of years. They still are [...] in many countries” said the Leader of the Bloc Québécois Gilles Duceppe on February 16, 2005; and “Over time, perspectives changed. We evolved and we grew and our laws evolved and grew with us”, said Prime Minister Paul Martin on February 16, 2005.

A number of arguments that I identified during my preliminary⁹⁹ review as separate arguments ultimately seemed to be related when I went back to my research question and hypotheses for consideration. These were the originally separate categories of history and tradition. As my research progressed, it became difficult to differentiate between these arguments when I was searching for evidence of agenda-setting, therefore I combined them into one category, “religion”. Further, in order to capture some of the ideas that were presented differently but may have similar roots, I expanded some argument categories such as “statistics” by linking ideas that at first were not obviously linked such as economics in terms of individual benefits and also costs to taxpayers, where it appeared that certain statistics were identified to give greater credibility to the position of the speaker. Since the use of statistics, in this way, was intended to persuade listeners, I therefore considered it an argument.

Finally, in order to integrate the qualitative analysis into the content analysis, my preliminary idea of searching for mythic language needed to be expanded to include other forms of narrative language. At first, I had hypothesized that many of the political speeches used mythic language such as parables, biblical stories, stories of heroism and heroic language, as well as apocalyptic language and messages intended to instill fear. Upon closer review, it seemed that often single words were used to refer to mythic stories such as references to courage, bravery, time-honoured traditions, the chosen path, a special light, or even references to “fear” (even though there is no mortal danger), without completely restating a known myth or story. Therefore, the category

⁹⁹ The preliminary review of speeches from March 21, 2005 represented more than 10% of all speeches delivered on Bill C-38 so the selection of this date was a strong representative sample.

of argument “myth” was broadened to include single words or inferred meaning that appeared as mythic or narrative language.

With the shortened and renamed list of arguments, I then conducted a second analysis of all the arguments utilized during the March 21st debates. This refined list of arguments with examples can be found in the table below:

Table 2: Top Seven Arguments with Examples from Speeches and the Press

	Argument Category	For SSM	Against SSM
1	Charter	<p>“The courts in seven provinces have decided this is a right...” (<i>National Post</i>, May 3, 2005);</p> <p>“Reading that judgment [2003 ON Court of Appeal that declared it unconstitutional to exclude homosexuals from marriage], it was evident that this was part of that bigger story of respect” (<i>Globe and Mail</i>, Mar. 12, 2005).</p>	<p>“Canada’s highest court has not required Parliament to amend the traditional definition, nor has gay marriage received protection under the Charter...” (<i>National Post</i>, Apr. 29, 2005).</p>
2	Religion (incl. tradition, evolution and history)	<p>“A group representing Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Muslim, Quaker and several Christian denominations held a news conference...to show its support for same sex marriage” (<i>Nat. Post</i>, Apr. 12, 2005).</p>	<p>“He has urged Canadian Sikh MPs to vote against the legislation lest their co-religionists “fall prey to this practice” (<i>Nat. Post</i>, Apr. 25, 2005).</p> <p>“We also opposed the government’s bill because it is a clear threat to religious freedom” (Harper, February 16, 2005).</p>
3	Myth/Narrative	<p>“ In the life of parliamentarians, there are times when we are called upon to strive for higher ideals and to embrace change that often challenges long held and deeply entrenched beliefs” (Silva, March 21, 2005).</p>	<p>“We heard from the justice minister in 1999 that notwithstanding those changes, which were promised never to happen, there would at least be the protection of marriage” (McTeague, March 21, 2005).</p>
4	Statistics	<p>“Poll shows majority support gay marriage” (<i>Montreal Gazette</i>, April 22, 2005).</p>	<p>“The vast majority believe that the traditional definition of marriage should not be changed” (Warawa, March 21, 2005);</p> <p>“Marriage is now dead in Denmark and 61% of children are born outside of marriage” (McKay, March 21, 2005); and</p> <p>“Two out of every three Albertans</p>

			oppose homosexual marriage” (<i>Edmonton Journal</i> , April 4, 2005).
5	Politics	“Mr. O’Brien had referred to a female colleague [...] who disagreed with his position, as a “dumb blond bimbo” (<i>Globe and Mail</i> , Apr. 15, 2005).	“We [Conservatives] are a party of diverse opinions and we are allowed a free vote, unlike Liberal cabinet ministers” (<i>Edmonton Journal</i> , Feb. 17, 2005).
6	Society (incl. children)	“Procreation has already ceased to be a necessary condition of, or purpose for, marriage” (<i>Montreal Gazette</i> , Feb. 27, 2005). “...immigrants who come here, [...] feel free and are free to practice their religion, to follow their faith and to live as they want to live. No homogeneous system of beliefs is imposed on them.” (P. Martin, February 16, 2005).	“...I think traditional marriage is the best institution to rear and protect children” (<i>Edmonton Journal</i> , Apr. 12, 2005). “Will this society be one that respects the longstanding basic social institution of marriage...” (<i>Vancouver Sun</i> , Feb. 23, 2005). “Permitting same sex marriage would take us in the direction of post-liberal European states such as the Netherlands...this simply isn’t something I can support” (<i>National Post</i> , April 19, 2005).
7	Sex	“As long as love shared by same sex partners is not recognized as something totally normal and acceptable, this suffering will continue” (Duceppe, February 16, 2005).	“Each one of these describes a different kind of conjugal relationship, but only one is marriage” (Williams, March 21, 2005); “...serve the intimacy needs of adults” (McKay, March 21, 2005); and “...will we have a vote in this House to allow a mother to marry her son...” (Asselin, February 16, 2005).

The next section elaborates upon the approach taken with the press coverage and how I compared and contrasted that coverage to the Parliamentary speeches.

5.5 Press Selection and Decisions

The *preliminary* electronic newspaper assessment conducted, used the search terms “same-sex marriage”, “marriage”, “civil marriage” and “gay marriage”, and yielded

close to two thousand articles from all national and regional newspapers ranging from columnists, hard news and editorials, to letters to the editor. In support of the content analysis and based on agenda-setting theory, I made a selection of national and regionally-representative newspapers, including both official languages. This selection was also intended to represent a variety of media ownership, and be representative of major regions across Canada. The newspapers I included in the selection had a high paid circulation in contrast to other papers from their region.

I also decided to exclude letters to the editor. The inclusion of letters to the editor in newspapers represents a deliberate decision, often made by a senior journalist or editor, and is a vehicle intended to provide a counterbalance or support for the editorial and media owner's position (Torres da Silva, 2012, pp. 251-2). I elected to exclude letters to the editor for contrast to the Parliamentary discourse because the writers of the letters are not necessarily members of the media so would not be expected to have any responsibility to Canadians in terms of a press role. Another reason I excluded letters is that a consistent identification of elites and particular sources is not possible because of the practice of including an individual's name and city only to identify a particular letter-to-the-editor.

In total, with the selection of specific national and regional papers, the final selection of articles totaled 382 clippings. Most of these are unique articles, although there are some instances of duplication which have been included. For example, on February 17, 2005, the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *National Post* both ran an article by Tim Naumetz (the *Winnipeg Free Press* article was approximately 50 words shorter but otherwise the articles were almost the same) with completely different headlines:

National Post: Minority rights depend on bill's passage: PM; Harper assails "blindly ideological interpretation of the Charter of Rights"; and

Winnipeg Free Press: Same-sex fight begins; Martin, Harper square off as contentious debate opens in Commons.

In addition, there were some articles that originated from a wire story and some appeared as duplicates when a writer such as Grant Robertson was picked up across multiple papers (see *National Post*, May 3, p. A7, *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 3, p. A6, *Montreal Gazette*, May 3, p. A10). I decided to count each article regardless if it was a duplicate because my goal was to understand what information was being shared with Canadians, wherever they live.

In order to maintain a correlation between the speeches, the press and my question concerning the press coverage of the debate, I wanted to ensure that the coverage I used had as direct a link as possible. To ensure that the most relevant newspaper articles were captured by the search, after each Parliamentary debate, at least seven days of coverage was surveyed, which was intended to allow journalists time for research, writing and filing articles directly related to the debate or the subject of SSM. Another benefit of the minimum one-week time range was that it allowed for the inclusion of editorial opinion as a direct reflection of the position of the media ownership. Originally, I had intended to only consider the press coverage on the day that immediately followed each debate, but my preliminary review of this coverage resulted in too few articles. For the most part, I expected the coverage to be fairly stable with a weekly review. It is also important to note that the press coverage did not include the actual day of the debate, even though there was often a great deal of coverage that day in anticipation of the debate. The day of the debate was not included

because what was *actually said* during the Parliamentary debate could not have been included in the articles themselves.¹⁰⁰

To test for Parliamentary arguments in the press coverage, I used the same top seven arguments taken from my initial list of over 30 that I coded in the Parliamentary speeches. At the same time I was searching for the existence of these arguments in the press coverage, I also coded for additional information such as where the articles were positioned in the press, their length, their frequency, whether they appeared to be positive, negative or balanced in tone through the use of specific language that is positive or negative, and whether sources were used to comment on the subject, and how often. Finally, I tracked whether the press covered the issue of SSM without referring to the Parliamentary debate to try to understand more about the press agenda and how this particular issue was presented to the public. To this end, any other story angles or information linked to SSM were noted and will be discussed in a later chapter.

My media search included both English and French press since the debate being analyzed was both national and cultural, the institution where the speeches were delivered is completely bilingual in nature, and Canadians with a French mother tongue make up approximately 20.5%¹⁰¹ of the national population. For the purposes of this thesis, one major French language daily, *La Presse*, was used to represent the French language media.

¹⁰⁰ Today, journalists file stories for online editions so it would be appropriate to include debate days in any current research of issues.

¹⁰¹ This number is based on a national population in 2007 of 32,976,026 and 6.7 million Francophones (Retrieved from Statistics Canada on March 4, 2009: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4151287-eng.htm>).

The final selection of newspapers was intended to provide a clear picture of the debate as it was carried in the press across Canada, with a consideration of differences in ownership and region. It is worthy to note that Francophones also read English press although to what extent is difficult to quantify (consider that an English daily, the *Montreal Gazette*, has the 3rd largest circulation in Quebec yet the Anglophone population in Quebec is approximately 8%¹⁰²). The following table enumerates the media outlets analyzed, by region and ownership:

Table 3: News Sources

Media Sources	Region represented	Ownership
<i>National Post</i>	National	CanWest Publishing
<i>Globe and Mail</i>	National	Bell Globemedia
<i>Vancouver Province</i>	British Columbia	CanWest Publishing
<i>Calgary Sun</i> *	Alberta	Quebecor
<i>Saskatchewan Star Phoenix</i>	Saskatchewan	CanWest Publishing
<i>Winnipeg Free Press</i>	Manitoba	F.P. Cdn. Np. Ltd.
<i>Toronto Star</i>	Ontario	Torstar
<i>La Presse</i> *	Quebec	Power Corporation
<i>Montreal Gazette</i>	Quebec	CanWest Publishing
<i>Chronicle Herald</i>	Atlantic Canada	Halifax Herald

*the search engine for *La Presse* and the *Calgary Sun* was more limited so only articles that appeared in the first 20 pages of each edition were selected for this research.

One research question that emerged after the preliminary analysis of speeches was related to how the print media could “translate” actual elite discourse into a written text. As Foucault has suggested, representation is merely that, a “re-presenting” of some “thing”, not the “thing” itself (*The Order of Things*, 1989). I will comment further on the differences between the content of the speeches that were verbally delivered and the press coverage of those speeches. While some could argue that the speeches were designed to garner media attention, having worked as a policy advisor

¹⁰² See <http://www.cna-acj.ca/en/aboutnewspapers/circulation>.

and speechwriter, this was not always the pre-eminent consideration for speech design. Rather, the ability to put forward an argument in support of a political party’s position, and to respond to what the Members from opposing parties had said beforehand, and were expected to say after, were often drivers for speech design and the context for further debate.

To address the idea of how the Parliamentary discourse was translated by the press, I coded the media texts to answer three questions: one, was there a reference to the legislation itself that would have linked the article to the Parliamentary debate; two, were outside sources used to provide balance, support or other opinion in the press; and three, was there any evidence of journalistic input in terms of tone, bias, or support for SSM or the article’s subject matter. The following table provides specific examples to demonstrate what these key categories revealed through the analysis:

Table 4: Categories of Coverage

		Tone of Coverage seems to support SSM	Tone of Coverage seems to be against SSM	Balanced Coverage
1	Legislation reference (underlined)	“The bigger risk for Harper may be that voters will prove cooler than he expects to some key policy pledges. Most notably, he risks a Charter of Rights challenge with his promise to undo the <u>law legalizing same-sex marriage</u> ” (<i>Toronto Star</i> , Mar. 22, 2005).	“Six Liberal MPs spoke out against the <u>government’s same-sex marriage legislation</u> yesterday including two parliamentary secretaries who have been among Prime Minister Paul Martin’s staunchest supporters” (<i>National Post</i> , Mar. 22, 2005).	“The decision to assume the label “marriage” would be left to the partners involved, who may seek ratification of their decision by a member of the clergy, or by their communities of friends [...] depending on their unique conception of marriage” (<i>National Post</i> , Mar. 23, 2005).
2	Outside sources	<i>Chronicle-Herald</i> referred to Concerned Canadian Parents organization in an article	<i>Torstar</i> reported on highest Sikh authority chastising Sikh Canadian MPs who were	No example in preliminary review

		that talked about a negative campaign against two MPs who were voting against the legislation (Mar. 25, 2005).	supporting the legislation (Mar. 28, 2005).	
3	Journalistic input, bias, positioning	“despite the anti-gay crowd” (<i>National Post</i> , Mar. 28, 2005).	“grew impassioned” and “stern lecture by revered religious leader...” (<i>Torstar</i> , Mar. 28, 2005).	“secular event”, “romantic love”, “haven” (<i>National Post</i> , Mar. 23, 2005).

The press clippings that made up the body of media evidence included columns and articles written by staff writers (since these opinion leaders are tied to the media where they are featured, by contract), articles written by other contributors such as heads of organizations, clergy, activists, academics, and editorials which demonstrated the position of the media management. It would have been interesting to identify if any additional arguments or features appeared with a significant incidence in the press coverage that was not significant in the Parliamentary debates. Moreover, I did count duplicate articles in the analysis because even if the same story appears in different papers (such as in the *National Post* and the *Star Phoenix*), it was still being seen by different people regionally.

To inform the content analysis, I also considered a number of other questions to help organize the data further, such as: on what page did the articles appear; in what paper did they appear; how many articles and which journalists covered the debate; did different newspaper owners present the debate differently; was there a discernible regional difference in the presentation of the debate; and, what arguments were most often presented in the press. For this last question, I considered whether the press

presented any corroborative arguments, journalistic opinion or opinions from sources, and whether they refuted the arguments covered in any way.

Once the two bodies of data were identified and compared to each other, I reviewed the findings to determine whether the press coverage had the same emphasis as the Parliamentary speeches. In other words, while clearly some days in Parliament were dominated by the debate on SSM, was this issue dominance reflected in the press?

5.6 Summary

In this chapter, I began with an elaboration of my key research questions through the development of a guide and how the various research approaches aligned with these questions. I also explained the process I followed along with some discussion about how others have formulated and applied agenda-setting theories. I also considered the merit of my approach in light of its strengths, weaknesses and challenges for theorizing. I elaborated upon how I arrived at my list of compelling arguments along with the criteria I used when analyzing speeches and the press for the presence of these arguments.

The next chapter presents my specific findings with respect to the key research questions and provides the data required to consider the meaning of these findings, which I will address in the subsequent chapter.

6 Chapter: Groundwork for Meaning-Making

6.1 How the arguments stacked up

The findings from my application of an integrated theoretical and methodological approach concerning the Parliamentary speeches and media coverage related to SSM are presented in this chapter. In the sections that follow, I explain how the press presented the same-sex marriage (SSM) debate to Canadians, as well as how the editorials reflected the newspaper's position, in order to determine if there is evidence of a media agenda, and what that agenda may have been. This research applies aspects from the issues typology described by Soroka (2002), combined with the framing approach described in my earlier chapters, that reflects the work of Entman (1989), and follows the interdisciplinary approach discussed by McCombs (2004), Dearing (2004), Van Dijk (1995; 2006), and in particular, aspects of Scheufele's (1999) continuous process model for framing.

According to Soroka's (2002) issue typology, it is reasonable to define SSM as a sensational issue, given that few in the population would be affected by the legislation. However there is also a case to be made for considering SSM as a governmental issue because it is unobtrusive for the most part, and did not "present exciting or dramatic elements" (p. 21). Sensational issues provide the greatest opportunity for media agenda-setting. Governmental issues, on the other hand, could have some effect on the public agenda, but for the most part, the media would likely carry "government-led issue cues" (p. 22). To add to the issue type, Soroka stated that each of the four hypotheses, obtrusiveness, duration, abstractness and dramatic events, would play a

lesser or greater role depending on the issue type. In addition to being largely unobtrusive, SSM had been discussed in the media for a long time because of the number of legal challenges and human interest stories. Wanta's research into duration identified a four month period as being the maximum for the development of issue salience. This would also be true in the case of SSM. Once the issue was discussed in the media longer than four months, the public would have generally made up their minds and be less likely to be influenced by a media agenda. Abstractness is not really relevant as a hypothesis in this case. But the dramatic events hypothesis could be a valid consideration for any high profile events linked to SSM. On reflection, there were few instances during the debate that qualified as a "dramatic event," therefore, the agenda-setting effects of this hypothesis would most likely be limited.

Finally, the content analysis approach, as described in Chapter Four, not only analyzed manifest content, but provided a means to identify the existence of compelling arguments, particular positions and tone, and whether the press shared other information about the issue such as through different sources, story angles and a particular overall tone, in order to establish a base of understanding concerning a press agenda.

It is important to note that the resulting data from the compare and contrast approach is *new* information, such that it only exists in the process of analysis and would not be visible to another researcher unless the same criteria and methods were applied at each stage of research.

The following sections outline the Parliamentary debate analysis results, the press analysis data, and the results that arose once the two data sets were compared and contrasted to each other.

6.2 The Parliamentary Debate and the Political Back-Story

My analysis of the Second Reading debate speeches revealed a number of thoughtful and well-crafted arguments, either in support of SSM or against. The analysis also revealed a number of speeches that were less well-crafted and persuasive, although they may have been impassioned. While the greatest number of speeches were delivered in opposition to SSM, this statistic alone does not necessarily reflect the balance of opinion towards the issue since the goal of many of those who spoke against the bill was not just to put their position and arguments before Canadians; their primary or secondary objective may have been to prolong¹⁰³ the debate.¹⁰⁴ Bill C-38 was a highly-charged debate, and in many cases, was highly personal with a number of speakers who, while not necessarily wishing to prolong the debate, likely felt compelled to contribute their own arguments to the public record.

Members of Cabinet were expected (whipped) to vote with the government, otherwise Liberals and Conservatives were free to vote according to their conscience or how their constituents wished.¹⁰⁵ Members of the Bloc Québécois and the NDP were expected by their leadership to vote in support of the legislation although it is unclear if

¹⁰³ Prolonging debate is one strategy employed when certain parties or parliamentarians are against certain legislation and wish to drag out debate long enough to jeopardize its passage such as when an election is called. This was the context and a possibility for Bill C-38. Prolonging debate also raises the profile of a bill and allows the media more time to cover it as an issue. Further, prolonging debate can allow more Members of Parliament to speak to an issue, which also would achieve the previously stated objectives.

¹⁰⁴ Additional speeches during Second Reading also included a debate on a Conservative motion which sought to define marriage as being between one man and one woman. This maneuver by the Conservatives was intended to prolong debate and require Members of Parliament to vote, therefore publicly admit their individual position on the definition of marriage, a vote and position that could impact support back in the constituency.

¹⁰⁵ There was an enormous letter-writing campaign, numerous petitions were sent to Parliament, and MPs were on record stating no issue had ever caused such high and passionate input from constituents before.

these were whipped votes, party positions, or caucus decisions. Of all the political parties, it was the Liberal Party that had the greatest number of votes contrary to its leader's position (34 or more voted at various stages, against the bill). In all other cases, less than a handful of members voted against their leader's position. This is important because the current government was a minority and having a large number of its members voting against its position put its governing mandate at significant risk of failure. It is well known in Canadian politics that, like family, party membership discusses its differences behind closed doors, however, when it is time to vote or speak publicly, a united front is what works best. It is also more acceptable for opposition parties to not have unanimity in voting since the repercussions of a vote of non-confidence only affect the party in power.

The back-story of much of the Parliamentary debate is also quite interesting and provides important context when framing the debate. The Conservative party representation in Parliament during the debate was the result of a merger between the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance Party (formerly the Reform Party) that took place in 2003. And while the formal merger was completed in 2003, it can be said that many of the Members of Parliament who had been part of two different parties previous to the merger still identified with their previous political party. The Liberal Party held federal power in 2004 through a minority government and had tabled a Federal Budget in late February 2005. At the same time, the Gomery¹⁰⁶ Commission

¹⁰⁶ Formally named the *Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities*.

that had been established in 2004 to look into fraudulent advertising spending, was becoming more sensationalized¹⁰⁷ (for Canadian politics).

Apart from the work of the Commission, there was not a great deal of other key government legislation making its way through Parliament during the winter and spring sessions of 2005. Therefore, the tabling of Bill C-38 could reasonably be seen as part of a government strategy to occupy the Opposition and to develop SSM as a “wedge issue” to keep the myth alive that the Conservatives were “scary” (see Diane Francis, *Financial Post*, May 10, 2005). It can also be asserted that during the period of time that Bill C-38 was debated, the political landscape was relatively unstable in Canada from the combination of newly-formed political parties, the first minority government in 20 or more years, and the undertaking of the Gomery Commission.

Some researchers have explained that the government framed the issue of SSM in terms of equality rights (Rudnicki, 2009, p. 131). This legal and human rights framing of the issue dominated the language in the speeches of parliamentarians who supported SSM, and as both Brewer and Rudnicki stated, this ability to frame the issue has been called one of the most important tools that political elites have at their disposal” (Brewer, 2004, p. 176; Rudnicki, 2009, p. 131). However, SSM was, and still is to some degree, an emotional issue that touches on a number of socio-cultural-religious values. As a result, there was a greater likelihood that there would be deviant behaviour¹⁰⁸ in the form of right-wing, fundamentalist, or left-wing commentary, which

¹⁰⁷ Testimony in 2005 seemed to suggest that there were linkages between decisions made by different Cabinet ministers and the former Prime Minister himself; as well, details were emerging concerning millions of dollars spent in questionable deals, unknowingly funded by the Canadian taxpayer.

¹⁰⁸ The heated public discussion that took place between two Liberal MPs underscores the point – Pat O’Brien called one of his Liberal colleagues a “blonde bimbo” which lessened his credibility as someone

also could have provided a sensational angle for media coverage. As Shoemaker explains, the media show us what is normal by highlighting what is deviant (1996, p. 46).

6.2.1 Arguments by the Numbers

While the original list of arguments identified in the Parliamentary speeches had as many as thirty different arguments, I distilled that list into seven different arguments as outlined in Chapter Five. To reduce bias, specific criteria for the arguments were elaborated upon (also in Chapter Five) to capture data as objectively as possible. Finally, one test case was conducted with an academic peer who was trained to review and code speeches according to the criteria for the list of arguments, in order to test the validity of the proposed criteria by comparing results. The test resulted in a moderate variance between results on what constituted narrative or politics which will be discussed in the next chapter, however other arguments with the supporting criteria, resulted in similar findings (greater than 80% corroboration). The criteria were clearly defined to improve the reliability following the test case results.

The following is the list of seven key Parliamentary arguments and a brief summary of their findings:

- *Charter*: This argument was the government position and rationale for the legislation and quickly became the argument to beat. Almost every speech articulated a position that was for or against the idea that SSM is a human right. The second main argument (determined by incidence) related to the *Charter of*

who was unhappy with the government position on Bill C-38. He had been quite public in his contemplation about leaving the Liberal Party and potentially crossing the floor of the Commons. A number of articles that reference SSM covered this story.

Rights, was the number of lower court decisions that made SSM legal in different jurisdictions across Canada, and internationally.

- *Tradition*: This argument was most often representative of the religious position, usually against SSM, as well as arguments that stated the traditional way of doing things is the best way. Arguments against tradition most often cited an evolutionary theme, such as society has advanced, that things have improved over time and the granting of SSM is on that same continuum of evolution.
- *Statistics*: As the chart following this section demonstrates, overall there were few facts used in the debates because research at the time was not conclusive whether there would be harm to society as a whole, or to children, if SSM was legalized. For example, statistics with respect to those who self-identify as considering marrying a same-sex partner, do not exist. There were a few “subject matter experts” such as lawyers and academics quoted during the debates, but for the most part, these experts and statistics were not a major part of the overall debate. It is interesting to note that facts are persuasive when available, and were used most often by the Opposition. It will be interesting to view this in the context of how the debate was portrayed by the press.
- *Society*: Many parliamentarians spoke to the impacts on society, societal values, other societies in other countries and their own personal values. Also in this category, were discussions about marriage being the cornerstone to society, and that marriage provides stability to families and children. Most society arguments for SSM referred to “what kind of society” Canadians would want to live in; most spoke against the harm that would come to society and its members if such legislation became law.
- *Politics*: It was expected that politicians would have political-type arguments in their speeches, however, it was somewhat surprising to note that the Parliamentary debate was not as highly politicized nor as rancorous as anticipated. This could have been a strategy to give the appearance of credibility on the part of some (such as the Opposition). This could also mean that politicians are more generally underestimated when it comes time to make a meaningful contribution to important issues. The number of arguments that were political were still quite high, as expected, with many parliamentarians emphasizing decisions by the different party leaders such as the Liberal cabinet “whipped” vote and the New Democratic Party’s caucus position to support Bill C-38. There was very little, however, of what could be considered “petty arguments” except for numerous arguments concerning past positions of different members of the Liberal party such as the Deputy Prime Minister, and the former Prime Minister¹⁰⁹ (and it is debatable whether it is petty or not to

¹⁰⁹ There had been earlier votes in 1999 in which Members of Parliament to a great majority, voted in support of the definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all

raise the fact that some completely changed their position on an issue within a few short years).

- *Sex*: On one hand, SSM seems to be linked to human sexuality, but on the other hand, SSM is also about a societal institution. There were far fewer arguments that addressed human sexuality than anticipated. The greatest incidence of “sex arguments” were raised by Members of the Opposition who suggested that marriage should not be about physical relations between two adults, but rather it should be an important, child-rearing institution in society. Proponents of SSM, however, also spoke about love and meaningful relationships that merit recognition in society as equal to heterosexual marriage.
- *Myth/Narrative*: While this was intended and defined as an argument, it became clear after the analysis of speeches was completed, that it most often seemed to support another argument. In other words, references to myths, or inferences to fear or heroism, were supporting arguments. These findings will be looked at more closely with examples to better understand the role played by narrative language in this analysis.

The following two charts capture both the number of arguments calculated from the Parliamentary speeches as well as the number of arguments as a percentage of the total from each speech individually. The first calculation portrays the total number of arguments stated in Parliament. The second calculation illustrates the emphasis identified in the speeches which one could argue should have influenced the media coverage of the speeches:

Figure 5: Parliamentary Debate Arguments Chart

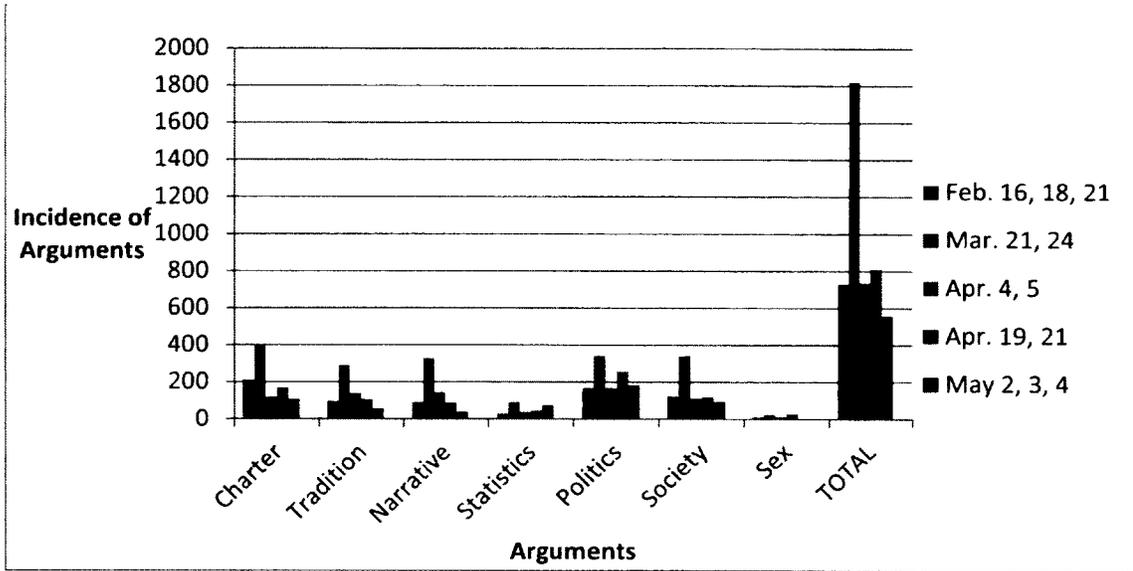
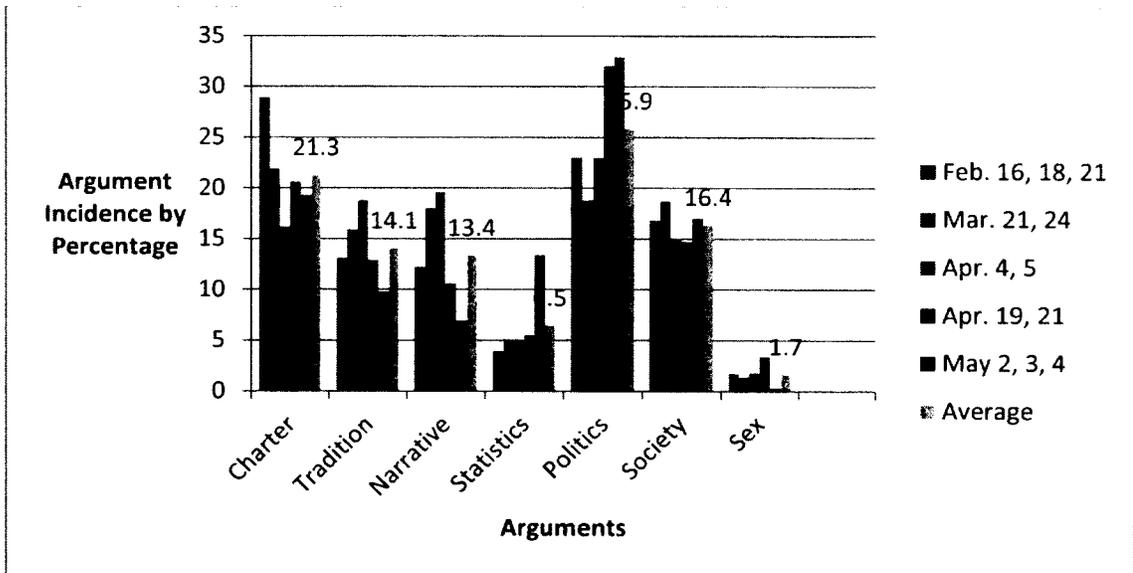


Figure 6: Arguments and Incidence by Percentage



Both calculations would be worthy indicators of what could have been covered by the media. Later in the chapter, both of these calculations will be contrasted to the press coverage from the same period of time (in the seven days following the day of debate to allow for media preparation and production). Of the 168 speeches that were delivered during Second Reading, only 17 were delivered in February, 59 in March, and then virtually the same amount, between 25 and 38 speeches, in each of April, May and June.¹¹⁰

In summary, as the charts demonstrate, consistently across all of the weeks of the debate, the highest occurring arguments had to do with politics followed by *Charter of Rights* or legal arguments. In the early weeks, Charter arguments were used more frequently, but as the debate progressed, the highest incidence of arguments seemed to have been political arguments. The chart by percentage also indicates that while the early debates featured a high amount of legal-type arguments, followed by politics-type arguments, as the weeks progressed, however, more politicians relied on politics-type arguments. During each week of debate, arguments linked to society were consistently raised, more often than debates about tradition or narrative arguments. Finally, as the chart demonstrates, arguments related to sex were employed less than 2% of the time, consistently. It will be interesting to contrast these findings to the incidence of arguments that appeared in the press later in this chapter.

¹¹⁰ Speech length varied in that the speeches by the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition were 40 minutes in length; the speeches by the other party leaders were 20 minutes in length which is standard Parliamentary procedure. Following those speeches, other Members of Parliament are usually given 20 minutes to respond to legislation, however, because of the number of Parliamentarians who indicated they would be speaking on Bill C-38, debate limited speeches to 5 minutes each starting April 4, 2005.

6.2.2 Framing Questions and Attributes for the Parliamentary Speech Analysis

In order to discuss political agenda, manifest or not, it was important to establish a sociological frame through which to understand the context of the speeches that were delivered and by whom they were delivered. In the table below, I summarize the list of initial framing questions used to analyze the Parliamentary speeches in *Hansard* and provide the resulting data divided by political party:

Table 5: List of Initial Framing Questions for Speech Analysis

Political Party	Findings By Percentage				Total
	Lib	Con	Bloc	ND P	ALL
Number of Speeches	47	107	9	8	171*
Percentage of total number of speeches	27.4	62.5	5.2	4.6	100
How many arguments were made about sex?	15	53	11	4	83
Who used mythic/fear-inducing language the most?	187	426	20	44	677
Who used Charter arguments the most?	421	493	54	36	1004
Who used the most political arguments??	179	885	27	45	1136
Who used the most traditional, evolutionary, historical arguments?	264	355	36	30	685
How many speeches were against the position of their party leader?	18	2	1**	0	20/21

*This number includes 3 speeches that were a continuation from a previous day of debate. The actual number of speeches at *Second Reading* is 168.

**It was not possible to determine whether M. Thibault was speaking for or against the legislation in his speech of April 4. He went on to vote against an amendment to the Bill at Third Reading (with the Government) and then against the bill at Third Reading (against the Government).

By depicting my results as a percentage of the total number of arguments by speaker, by debate date, I illustrate what tone and argument were most prominent that day. Further, the use of a percentage measurement is intended to lessen any variance between speakers since some individuals (although not many politicians) are more succinct in their language than others. And this approach helps resolve the issue of multiple

arguments being used in a single paragraph, that make the same point, without skewing my overall results.

In one example, according to my criteria, Member of Parliament Nina Grewal, recited 62 arguments in her one speech. Another researcher might have only coded 28 arguments depending on how one resolves the issue of multiple arguments found in one paragraph intended to make a single point. In other words, my coding often revealed several arguments in a single paragraph even if the entire paragraph was intended to make a single point.

In a number of speeches, there were frequent cases of arguments that combined more than one idea. One example of this can be found when SSM was described as “a legal right regardless of the teachings of the Catholic Church”. In this example, the argument could have been coded both as a Charter argument and a religious argument. This approach resulted in more rather than less data which incidentally also provided a greater opportunity for corroboration with the data that was uncovered and identified in the press. In essence, the overall quantity of arguments in any specific category is not the most important finding; what is important is their initial identification, their incidence in relation to each other, and finally, what story the politicians would tell Canadians *if* their messages were not mediated.

6.3 The Press Angle: Rationale and Key Questions in the Press Analysis

Before analyzing the individual articles and editorials, I looked at the overall context of the debate and its coverage by considering key newspaper headlines in the national media at the time of the debate. This headlines review was also used to identify topical

issues during the winter and spring of 2005 and accompanied a review of key legislation and other debates that took place during that Parliamentary session. The results of these reviews can be found in Appendix C which features an overview of the media context and the Parliamentary session from February to June, 2005.

This next section reviews the main rationale and considerations for the press coverage analysis.

6.3.1 Overview and Rationale for Press Analysis

Every article selected was reviewed and coded to establish the context for that article by identifying its prominence, key points, and whether it was comprised of any third party information or subject matter experts. Articles were also coded in terms of how closely they were linked to the Parliamentary debate on SSM, and whether any editorial or journalistic opinion could be uncovered within the articles themselves through a search for any narrative language.

As Miljan and Cooper have pointed out, journalists do have a significant amount of control over their product (2003, p. 45), and, because the media most certainly uphold the dominant liberal ideology of democracy (Miljan and Cooper, 2003, p. 53), it is expected that they will frame their stories in a way that does not question the government's legitimacy. My findings indicate that even without explicit support for Bill C-38 and SSM through editorials or categorical language found on the front pages supporting C-38, the greatest percentage of press coverage in Canadian newspapers implicitly supported SSM from the beginning of the debate. As Rudnicki¹¹¹ pointed out

¹¹¹ Rudnicki examined three weeks of press coverage of SSM leading up to the opening of the Bill C-38

in her research, “newspapers hardened their editorial positions” immediately after February 16, which was the date when the party leaders presented their positions on the legislation (2009, p. 148).

It is also valuable to take a closer look at the editorial positions of the various newspapers to first identify what was in that discourse, and second, to determine if there was a difference between media outlets in terms of position and timing of arrival at that position. While some journalists (such as Douglas Fisher, *SunMedia*) charged that the media had only taken one position, Rudnicki’s research demonstrates that at the very start of the debate, there were different editorial positions taken: the *Globe and Mail* came out early in support of SSM; the *National Post*, *SunMedia* and several *CanWest* papers were opposed; and a number of Maritime papers were supportive as were the *Toronto Star* and the *Montreal Gazette* (2009, p. 148). Moreover, her research provides an additional frame to a Parliamentary debate that had just begun in contrast to the media “entrenching” of position that appeared to take place. In addition, all of the editorials in Rudnicki’s research covered the common themes of equality rights and freedom of religion, themes that also emerged in my research.

My press analysis included information such as whether Members of Parliament were mentioned, length of the article, and the page number of the article in order to understand which Parliamentarians were newsworthy and how prominently the media chose to feature the story. The tone of coverage was also a critical question in understanding agenda since I wanted to determine if the press generally supported the tone of the debate or not, or whether it even covered the debate. Further, I was

debate on February 16, 2005 to determine whether the government’s framing of SSM “successfully penetrated [the] media” (2009, p. 132).

interested in determining whether an article was balanced or took a position, for or against SSM, and whether this position was overt and clearly stated, or more subtle, with an identifiable position evident through the kind of quotes used, or how certain Parliamentarians were described (using positive or negative descriptive language). I created a template and research guide to conduct the press analysis. This approach considered each article in a holistic manner as well as applying an established set of codes to measure certain aspects of each article to contrast to the Parliamentary speeches, and to the other press coverage as well. Appendix E provides a sample coding sheet.

To minimize researcher subjectivity, I developed specific criteria to guide determinations whether the SSM coverage was for (positive), against (negative) or neutral (no expressed opinion). In many cases, articles began as positive for SSM and then ended on a neutral note, or conversely, they started out neutral, but ended negatively towards SSM. To resolve this ambiguity, in cases where it was not completely clear if an overall article fit into one of those three categories in its totality, or if it appeared to combine different positions on SSM, it was coded 'neutral'.

Another issue that I resolved related to which articles to include and exclude since many articles were about much more than SSM. By coding every single article that made even a passing reference to SSM for tone (as long as there was some kind of substantive discussion in the article), I was able to substantiate how the debate was presented to Canadians. My initial survey of the press coverage indicated there were many articles; what I did not know initially was whether SSM was covered in any substantive way. For example, one article described a number of activities that took

place across Canada on Canada Day and included a reference to one individual who was so unhappy with the SSM debate that he burned a Canadian flag. I decided to include this article in the analysis. Another article that referred to SSM subject matter in a list of television programs was not included because there was no journalistic opinion or reporting in any way, such as that which is found in hard news, columns or editorials.

Since I decided to include articles where there was often only a brief reference to SSM, such as Paul Samyn's in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 5, p. A1, "Liberals call in fraud squad," the coding of other story angles (OSAs) became quite important as a frame. A story about polygamy and research related to polygamy was included in the research gathered and coded OSA if the words SSM appeared within it. These articles were included because my framing analysis argues that often the other story angle *is* the message since the journalist and editor chose to tell the story in that particular perspective. It also bears keeping in mind that newspapers have limited space and many competing issues from which to choose for their coverage. It is meaningful if even the slightest reference to SSM makes the final edit in an article. Including articles that are tracked by OSA contributed to determining how the press portrayed the debate.

Not only is measuring articles for their story angle important, but capturing whether or not the article was specifically about the legislative debate on SSM, or the idea or topic of SSM in society, is also important. This distinction is highlighted in the Samyn example referred to above where it was not until past the halfway mark in that *Winnipeg Free Press* article, that an M.P. was quoted as saying, "We would much rather fight an election on corruption than same-sex marriage or Kyoto." This was the

only reference to SSM in an 800-word article yet important because it reflects that the discussion of SSM was topical even if it was merely a passing reference during other unrelated (and sometimes related) discussions.

A different example, unrelated to this thesis, will help to illustrate this point further: For years after the World Trade Centre Towers were destroyed by terrorists, any reference to the need for additional security and terrorism almost always contained a reference to the World Trade Towers bombing, even when the articles themselves were not about that particular occurrence. In fact, it would have seemed unusual not to refer to the towers when discussing terrorist threats, safety and security because that particular act of terrorism came to define how the United States viewed its security in the world, and represented more about the cultural and societal differences between the West and the East. Similarly, discussions in the press about issues and events related to families, marriage, benefits, society, and so on, while the SSM debate was underway in Parliament, often included some reference to the concept of SSM without commenting on the debate before Parliament. These were also included in the analysis because they represent a contribution to the public debate on SSM and press coverage.

Probing the idea of balanced coverage in terms of SSM should also include the idea of third party experts, sources or subject matter experts (SMEs) such as academics or lawyers, opinion leaders, and spokespeople on the issue. This category would also include people with some standing in the community such as religious leaders or heads of organizations. During the debate, it appeared that a number of organizations “sprung up” to participate in the public forum debate, such as the Religion Coalition for Equal

Marriage Rights and Concerned Canadian Parents,¹¹² to name just two. I attributed members of these groups SME status since they were actively speaking out in an organized manner and quoted in the press.

The use of SMEs or sources are important tactics to better understand how journalists and their editors put forward an opinion or position on an issue without explicitly stating their own opinion. In fact, as Shoemaker and Reese (1996, pp. 35-6) explain, the use of sources supports the idea that the media are neutral themselves, presenting “from nobody’s point of view” (from Altheide, 1976, p. 17 in Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 35). Other studies have shown that the news is dominated by “knowns” 76% of the time such as political officials and well-known people while unknowns occupy approximately 20% of coverage and include victims, protesters, voters and participants in unusual activities (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 49). This is supported by the work of Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1987) who explain that sources themselves “function like reporters in the sense that they prepare accounts already tailor-made for both their own purposes and the journalist’s purpose of news communication” (p. 9). Sources are a key element in establishing frames as researchers such as Pan and Kosicki (1993) note. And some researchers have defined different types of sources such as authoritative sources (Ericson et al., 1987) and discussed in depth how sources and elites affect news content including the presence of challengers and antagonists (Wolfsfeld, 1980).

Gans (1979) demonstrated that the major activities covered in the media were government conflicts or disagreements, decisions, proposals, ceremonies, protests,

¹¹² For example, a Google search on November 11, 2011 could not find any web references to this organization.

crimes, scandals, and so on (cited in Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 49). This would imply that any coverage of the SSM debate would likely include government officials and organizations as sources, and that most articles would deal with the process around the debate and any impediments or social dramas related to the debate.

Articles with only one spokesperson were coded along the same lines as that spokesperson's position. For example, Alex Munter was a widely-quoted third-party spokesperson in support of SSM; therefore an article that quoted him with few or no quotes from any other organization with a similar level of credibility but, on the opposite side, was considered positive towards SSM.

Studying the descriptive language used in an article is another way to determine tone and intent in a newspaper article. The language that is chosen may reflect the journalist themselves, including their personal characteristics, attitude and professionalism. While it has been demonstrated by researchers that the typical journalist does not reflect the typical American citizen in terms of education and cultural background (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p. 102), it is very difficult to determine how the characteristics, attitude and professionalism of a journalist affect the content they produce. The following is an example of how a text could be read and coded for journalistic input. The material within the square brackets is added for the purposes of this explanation:

Harper spoke at a rally against SSM legislation [rally seems lawful, unlike an unlawful *protest*] – the rally had 4000 on a Sunday on Parliament Hill – he was working that day [working on a Sunday has credibility], there were lots of people [not hundreds], and he spoke clearly about issue [made a clear, possibly convincing case].

Therefore, specific language, such as that provided above, contributes to the discourse presented to readers. How a narrative analysis searches for words that infer some meaning over others is what the example above is intended to highlight. In that example, one could infer that opposing Bill C-38 is reasonable since so many others do and the main spokesperson, in this case, Stephen Harper, is credibly presented. It is relevant to note that Harper was presented as “speaking at a rally” [not an “anti-SSM protest], and he was speaking to “supporters and demonstrators” [not protesters]. This article can also be compared to another newspaper that covered the same story. In the second article, language such as “anti-SSM protest” was found, which in contrast appears to be negative towards those who were at the “event” in the first instance.

Editorials and opinion-editorials also demonstrate the writer’s position and in the case of editorials, the position of the newspaper itself. For example, Claire Hoy wrote in the *National Post*, February 17, 2005, p. A20, that the media were not providing a balanced view of the debate. Therefore, the positions of different newspapers were classified through an analysis of editorials and opinion-editorials.

Headlines¹¹³ also provide information concerning the position of the article and sometimes the media ownership since they are not always written by the journalist or

¹¹³ Jeffrey Simpson, July 2, 2005, *Globe and Mail*, p. A15: “Who’s cherry-picking rights now, Mr. Martin”- article is about needless debate in Parliament since lower courts have already ruled on SSM, and argues that if M.P.s had principles, they could have chosen to express their position clearly and if against the bill, invoked the notwithstanding clause of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which allows an opting out of national legislative responsibility for a period of time until there can be further debate on the subject for that province. Instead of criticizing the Prime Minister for his position, the journalist criticized the Prime Minister in comparison to how he voted on other issues. John Ivison, February 17, 2005, *National Post*, p. A6: “Decorous Harper disappoints opponents: The essence of moderation instead of wild-eyed frothing” – headline is what contains the journalist’s opinion, not what the article was about. Article almost seemed disappointed at the decorous approach – “When he took us all back to 1866...” – us is underlined for emphasis. The journalist felt that Harper was speaking to everyone in the room or Chamber, not just those present on the floor of the Commons. In the article, both Martin and Harper’s most important argument was recounted, including how they disagree with the other’s position, but in

reporter, but inserted instead by editorial staff. Headlines and subheadings become even more influential when one cites studies that indicate most readers do not read far beyond an article's first five paragraphs (Fedler, Bender, Davenport & Drajer, 2001; Fico & Cote, 2002, both cited in Haake et al., 2008, p. 16). The "inverted pyramid" style referred to by Haake et al., dictates that a journalist would put the most important information at the beginning of an article in response to the readership trend. In addition, a framing analysis could consider when a headline matches an article, when it seems to infer a different position than the article, and when it does not really refer to the subject that is included in the body of the article at all. It is also noteworthy to consider when an article is repeated in different newspapers, but appears under a different headline. In my thesis, while a number of variations in headlines were noted, the specific analysis of each headline in contrast to the articles will not be part of this analysis.¹¹⁴

The following section reviews the questions that guided the analysis of the 382 press articles.

admitting that Harper's speech was 50 minutes long (the journalist notes this just past the halfway mark in the article, it appears that a number of other arguments were possibly made in that speech and likely in Paul Martin's speech that were not covered in the article. On February 17, 2005, the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *National Post* both ran an article by Tim Naumetz (the *Winnipeg Free Press* article was approximately 50 words shorter but otherwise the articles were almost the same) with completely different headlines: *National Post: Minority rights depend on bill's passage: PM; Harper assails "blindly ideological interpretation of the Charter of Rights"* and *Winnipeg Free Press: Same-sex fight begins; Martin, Harper square off as contentious debate opens in Commons*. Clearly the national paper situated rights as the key debate issue which was also Martin's central argument whereas the Manitoba paper positioned both leaders on equal footing without reference to a key argument. On April 10, an article by Eric Beauchesne appeared in two papers with different headlines and different additional content: *Montreal Gazette*, p. A1: *Federalism in peril: Harper: Liberals to blame. Opposition leader attacks Martin at rally opposing same-sex marriage* and in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, p. A3: *Harper rips Grit 'corruption' But won't say if Tories ready to bring down government*. The *Winnipeg Free Press* article was significantly shorter (501 words) compared to the *Montreal Gazette* article (806 words) which included information from a third-party subject matter expert political scientist Antonia Maioni.

¹¹⁴ For further discussion, see research completed by Schwartz (2010), Haake, Campbell, Musacchia, Roggenburg & Pollock, (2008) and Andrew (2007).

6.3.2 Key Questions and Guide for Analysis

The issue of prominence has been discussed by many researchers and is an important part of my findings. I argue that it is relevant to know if articles concerning SSM appeared in the first few pages¹¹⁵ of the newspaper and if significant “real estate” was devoted to these articles. I define prominence in this study as articles that appear in the first five pages of a newspaper. Their prominence also increases if they are in the pages on the right side (or odd pages) and above the fold, rather than on the left side (inside pages). There is also additional prominence when a graphic or photo accompany the article. Finally, editorial coverage can indicate prominence as well. The two figures immediately below indicate that when the debate received first section coverage, it would most often be a front page story, however, by far the greatest amount of coverage was not found in the early pages, but rather 69.8% of the time, the articles were found after page A6 and often not even in the first section of the paper.

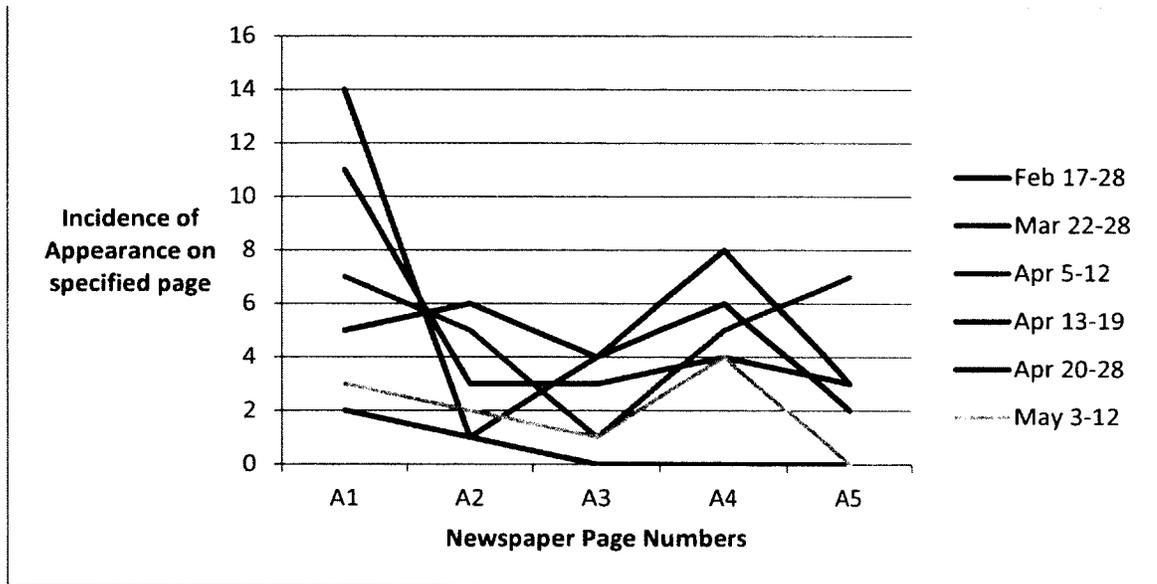
Table 6: Statistics of Prominence of Same-Sex Marriage Articles

Weeks	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6+	Total	Editorial pages	Average Length
Feb 17-28	5	6	4	6	2	101	124	23	621
Mar 22-28	2	1	-	-	-	16	19	4	514
Apr 5-12	7	5	1	5	7	40	65	10	564

¹¹⁵ It is reasonable to expect that the first few pages in a newspaper are devoted to issues of national or regional concern, depending on the publication. Ericson et al. discuss how assignment editors determine what gets covered and where in a newspaper (1987: 197-9).

Apr 13-19	14	1	4	8	3	39	69	6	589
Apr 20-28	11	3	3	4	3	39	63	3	728
May 3-12	3	2	1	4	-	32	42	6	669
Total	42	18	13	27	15	267(69.8%)	382	52	614

Figure 7: Prominence by Page Number of Same-Sex Marriage Coverage



Over 70% of the articles contained at least one source. In the articles that were coded positive for SSM, the sources quoted were overwhelmingly “for” SSM. In the articles coded against SSM, there were no sources found either “for” or “neutral” towards SSM. In the articles coded neutral, there was a balance between use of sources with most (23) being neutral (pollsters for example), followed by 15 against, and then 10 “for”. As is demonstrated by table 7, which provides a summary of the tone, story angles and SMEs (sources) found in the coverage on SSM, the vast majority of articles were coded neutral and most were about something other than SSM. Of all the articles

in the selection about SSM, less than half referred to the debate in Parliament though their publication coincided with the debate.

Table 7: Summary of Tone, OSA, SME and C-38

	Positive Tone*	Negative Tone	OSA**	SME***		C-38	Total Articles
				For	Against		
Actual	108	37	305	40	32	186	382
Percentage of total	28.2%	9.6%	79.8%	39.6	31.6	48.6%	100%

* 62.2% of the articles were coded neutral in tone

**OSA: Other Story Angle

***SME: Subject Matter Expert which occurred 101 times and made up 26.4% of all articles

The following table summarizes specific information about the editorial coverage of the SSM debate in terms of the balance of the articles, their regional affiliation and whether they were featured in a national or other newspaper. I argue that an editorial in a national newspaper is more significant because of the newspaper's geographical coverage and circulation than one found in a local newspaper¹¹⁶ (a more detailed chart is found in the Appendices) although my newspaper selection includes both types of newspapers. This point reflects the case made by Miljan and Cooper (2003) that the big-city papers are the agenda-setters. It would stand to reason that the big-city editorials would also be more important. This idea is not without debate however, since local opinion leaders could also be influential with the local population. My research does not contrast the national press to regional press, but rather treats the press as a

¹¹⁶ While this point carries a certain persuasiveness, it can be equally argued that Canadians may be more influenced by a local opinion leader in their local paper, rather than an opinion found in a national paper that has little to no influence on their day-to-day lives. While Canada's population is found mostly in major cities, Canadians and their Members of Parliament are divided by their geographical position, and represented that way as well.

whole. I note the importance of editorials since media themselves describe editorials as part information and part advocacy,

“Editorials should include material that [...] readers haven’t had before. It shouldn’t just be our opinion on a story that’s already appeared. We try to add some new material, we try to organize material that may have appeared in several different parts of the paper on several different occasion, bring it together to give it some body, some direction.” (Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1987, pp. 299-300)

Table 8: SSM Editorial and Opinion-Editorials February 17-May 11, 2005

Week	Tone	West	Central (incl. QC)	East	National Post	G&M	Total by Tone	Total Editorials	Total Articles
Feb 17-28	Positive	2	3	-	-	6	11	23	124
	Negative	2	-	-	1	-	3		
	Neutral	2	4	1	2	-	9		
Mar 22-28	Positive	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	19
	Negative	-	-	1	-	-	1		
	Neutral	1	2	-	-	-	3		
Apr 5-12	Positive	1	1	-	2	-	4	10	65
	Negative	1	-	-	2	-	3		
	Neutral	2	1	-	-	-	3		
Apr 13-19	Positive	-	-	-	1	1	2	6	69
	Negative	1	-	-	-	-	1		
	Neutral	1	2	-	-	-	3		
Apr 20-28	Positive	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	63
	Negative	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Neutral	-	1	-	1	-	2		
May 3-12	Positive	1	-	-	-	-	1	6	42
	Negative	3	-	-	-	-	3		
	Neutral	1	1	-	-	-	2		
TOTAL		18	15	2	9	8	52	52	362

Based on a total of 382 articles, less than 14% were editorials. Of this total, the regional results were too few to sustain any inter-regional comparison beyond establishing a hypothesis for further study. However, the national press results are interesting in that one national paper took an early position, in support of SSM, and consistently maintained that position. The other national newspaper took a moderate to negative position towards SSM at first but later in the debate seemed to produce editorials also indicating support for SSM.

Another way to consider press agenda in contrast to a political agenda, is to determine which political elites, i.e., Members of Parliament, were mentioned in the press, and whether these mentions appeared in positive or negative-toned articles. The majority of the press coverage focused on Opposition Leader Stephen Harper, then Prime Minister Paul Martin, and was then followed by coverage related to Members of Parliament who spoke out against their leader and party's position. Moreover, there was no indication or representation in the press of any substantive arguments produced or raised by Members of Parliament. Even the Justice Minister, who tabled the legislation, did not receive significant coverage in contrast to other Members of Parliament.

Now that the Parliamentary speeches have been analyzed and coded, and the press articles have been selected and coded, the next section discusses the final undertaking of the methodological approach which is the contrasting of data.

6.4 The Speeches and the Press in Contrast

In the design of my research approach, I argued that new data would arise in the process of comparing and contrasting the parliamentary speech arguments to the press analysis, and that this new data would reveal information about the processes that are not immediately visible until a holistic view is taken of both parts of the analysis. For example, during the week of March 21st, there were two days of debate in Parliament that saw a record number of speeches delivered, yet the media coverage from that period of time is much less than the initial week of the debate (February 16) or from later debates that took place in April.

The results of the press analysis indicate that the media rarely relayed (or represented) any of the arguments made by politicians to Canadians at the time of the debate on Bill C-38.¹¹⁷ While my approach to coding articles followed the same process of coding speeches, there were in fact very few articles that carried any arguments in the press coverage. If any arguments were identified in the press, they were most frequently related to the *Charter*, religion or politics, and many of the “politics” articles were linked to process-type arguments. The following is a tabulated summary of the arguments carried in the press:

Table 9: Parliamentary Arguments Featured in the Press Coverage

Argument	Number of Articles that featured an Argument By Week					Total
	Feb 16	Mar 20	Apr 4	Apr 12	Apr 19	May 2
						6 wks.

¹¹⁷ It is possible that key arguments concerning same-sex marriage were carried in the press before the Parliamentary debate on Bill C-38 took place, but the data analyzed was limited to the same period of time.

Charter	27	4	21	11	2	5	70
Religion or evolution	20	3	19	5	5	6	58
Narrative	19	2	13	2	2	8	46
Statistics	9	2	3	10	2	8	34
Politics	18	-	12	13	4	14	61
Society	22	2	7	3	1	7	46
Sex	3	-	5	-	-	1	9
TOTAL Number of Articles	124	19	65	69	63	42	382

It is also instructive to contrast entrenched press positions via the amount of coverage that was either positive or negative to SSM to determine when the press rendered its decision on whether or not to support the legislation, understanding that the vote on Second Reading did not take place until May 4, 2005. In addition to the number of positively- and negatively-toned articles, noting the incidence of editorials underscores when the media position appeared to be decided or firm. Recognizing that the press determined a position for or against the idea of SSM early in the debate helps to explain why there was a greater emphasis on Members of Parliament in the coverage during the later weeks of debate (see Rudnicki, 2009). In addition, my analysis demonstrates that there was a continuing greater emphasis on “other story angles” over time, as well as procedural-type articles related to who was voting and how, rather than a substantive discussion of any of the arguments that were being presented before Parliament, many for the first time. The findings concerning other story angles was not unexpected given Wanta’s earlier cited research that suggested keeping the public’s interest in an issue longer than four weeks is difficult. Nor were the findings related to the procedural-type coverage, articles that I refer to as process or “horse-race”.

The following table provides a snapshot of how twelve Members of Parliament were covered in the press in contrast to when they spoke in Parliament, including how often they were mentioned in the press coverage:

Table 10: Snapshot of Members of Parliament speech delivery and press coverage

M.P.	Speech date(s)	Percentage of Articles where MP is mentioned	Selection of Dates of Coverage
Paul Martin	Feb 16	22.7	Feb 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 26, Mar 22, Apr 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, May 5, 6, 9
Stephen Harper	Feb 16	28	Feb 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, Mar 22, Apr 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, May 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12
Tom Wappel	Feb 18, May 2	7	Feb 19, Mar 22, Apr 14, May 3
Irwin Cotler	Apr 21	4.7	Feb 17, 18, 19, Apr 12, 13
Jack Layton	Apr 5	3.6	Feb 17, 24, Apr 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 25, May 5, 9
Richard Marceau	Feb 21	.5	May 4
Gilles Duceppe	Feb 16	3.6	Feb 17, 24, Apr 7, 11, 12, 13, 19, May 5
Belinda Stronach	Apr 19	5.2	Feb 18, 20, 24, Apr 13, 14, May 4, 5, 7, 12
John McKay	Mar 21	.5	Mar 22
Gerald Keddy	-	2.3	Mar 25, Apr 13, 19, May 5
Pat O'Brien	Feb 21, May 3	6.8	Feb 22, 26, Mar 22, 24, Apr 12, 13, 15, May 5, 6
David Kilgour	-	6.5	Apr 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, May 6

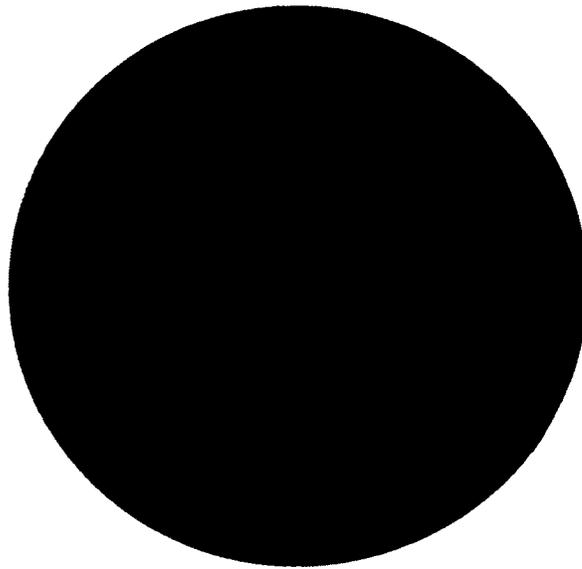
As the table above indicates, only rarely were Parliamentarians covered in the press, and then only certain ones received coverage (there were 309¹¹⁸ Members of the House of Commons in 2005). The Leader of the Opposition received the most coverage (28% of the articles referenced Harper), followed by Prime Minister Paul

¹¹⁸ <http://www.parl.gc.ca/MembersOfParliament/MainMPsCompleteList.aspx?TimePeriod=Historical&Language=E> retrieved September 30, 2012.

Martin (22.7% of the articles), followed much less often by Pat O'Brien and David Kilgour, (6.8 and 6.5% consecutively - two Liberal members who were opposed to the government position and were considering leaving the Liberal caucus), and Belinda Stronach, a former Conservative leadership candidate who opposed the Harper position (5.2% of the articles).

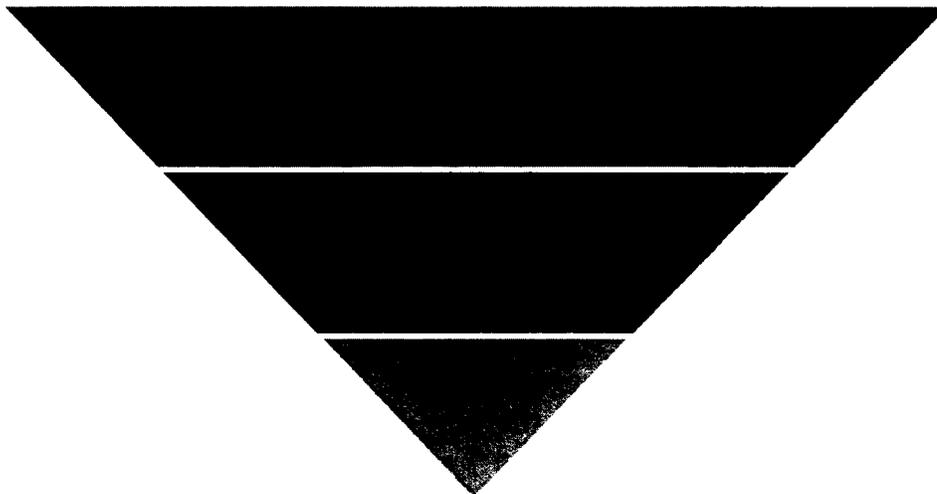
While the table does not indicate the substance of their arguments, my findings indicate that rarely did any of these particular Members of Parliament receive coverage as a result of the substance of their speeches. Most often, they were cited or quoted because of another story angle or if the article was about a process-type of issue such as whether the governing party had enough Members to win a vote, or if the Member cited was voting against the position of their caucus. And while there were a few other M.P.s mentioned, when they were it was most often only in passing, and only in reference to their inclusion in a group of M.P.s holding a certain view or position (see for examples MacCharles, *Toronto Star*, February 19, p. A06; Naumetz, *National Post*, March 22, p. A8).

Figure 8: Relative Coverage by Parliamentarian of Total Parliamentarian Coverage



And when Parliamentarians were cited, there was rarely a link to any arguments made in Parliament, but when there was, it was in the following order:

Figure 9: Top Issues Covered by the Press



6.5 Conclusion: Groundwork for Meaning-Making

Through the analysis described in this chapter, I have demonstrated a number of ways that the media agenda can be revealed or rendered visible. My methodological analysis identified how the discourses were framed and contrasted the analysis of each of them, to each other. These results indicate, regardless of the framing efforts of the different political leaders or Members of Parliament from different political parties from the Parliamentary discourse analysis, that if and when an indication of framing was found in the press discourse, those frames defined the discourse in one of the following ways: in terms of who should govern the country, therefore not questioning the validity of SSM at all, or in terms of a natural change, such that the proposed change to the institution of marriage would accord new rights to individuals who had been previously excluded from that institution.

My identification of factors, such as an understanding of the broader Canadian news context and the overall Parliamentary agenda, have provided a context for the research I have conducted. In terms of the findings of this chapter, each dataset individually returned some relevant results related to the overall research question that seeks to understand how the press portrayed the SSM debate to determine what role it may play in Canada in policy debates.

The 168 Parliamentary speeches and the selection of press clippings were examined with a view to determining the role of the media and if a media agenda was evident. The findings of the Parliamentary analysis enabled the creation of a list of seven key arguments which contributed to the criteria established for the analysis of the press clippings. However, after a preliminary press analysis was conducted, it was

determined that the scope of the approach needed to be broadened to include other questions such as the tone of the overall article, how sources were used, if other story angles were present in SSM articles, and if, how and when specific media outlets put forward their own opinion.

Once the Parliamentary data were contrasted to the press analysis, a third dataset was created. The findings indicate that there was a variation between what seemed important to Parliament and what was important in the press. What is missing is as important as what is present, and what was presented that was in addition to the debate, is also important. In other words, the lack of substantive representation and portrayal of the Parliamentary arguments is an issue for future consideration as well as the actual press coverage, which seemed to mostly include procedural information such as the potential to win or lose a vote, or how Members of Parliament were likely to vote. What was not included in the overwhelming majority of press coverage was a discussion about the meaning and value of SSM and how a change in the law could or would affect Canadians broadly (*if* it would affect them). The data demonstrate that the press were mostly seized with speculation about the future of the minority Liberal government, and therefore provided little if any information or justification for the passage of C-38 as a human rights issue.¹¹⁹

The evidence presented in this chapter also indicates that the press coverage of the Parliamentary debate did not reflect the debate nor were key messages about SSM shared with Canadians. Therefore, how can the role of the press be characterized and

¹¹⁹This generalization is supported statistically, but it is also important to acknowledge that certain press opinion leaders, such as Chantal Hebert and Jeffrey Simpson, did weigh into the issue with strong editorials that did discuss the ideas of human rights and societal impact.

how is this reconciled to what researchers have articulated as the role played by the press in Canada? Did the press play a role by determining the agenda around the debate such as in what context SSM could be discussed, by whom and how the Parliamentary debate was presented and did this role align with a broader media agenda in Canada?

Responding to these questions using the evidence provided demonstrates that the role of the press was that of a conduit for government-led issue cues. In this case study, the role of the press was not to inform, but to merely keep the issue on the front pages of newspapers. It is not clear if the press played a determining role with respect to the agenda around the debate, but if the issue is accurately defined as a governmental issue, the press would have little effect on agenda. In terms of a broader media agenda, a deliberate media agenda is not evident except for a general support of the institutional framework and use of institutional sources.

Defining SSM as a prominent, sensational or governmental issue helps establish what type of coverage could be predicted and lays the groundwork to apply such an approach to other legislative issues. With these parameters, it is possible to consider future complex legislative issues this way and apply this approach to understanding what the resulting coverage will be. The process model complements the issue typology approach by providing guidance on inputs and outputs, enabling the researcher to systematically capture and code disparate aspects of the SSM debate including: the history of marriage that informed different Parliamentary positions, the role that ownership plays, or not, and the role of the press in a Parliamentary policy debate.

As my findings indicate, the press coverage was not commensurate with the emphasis that Bill C-38 received in Parliament in terms of importance and in terms of being practically the sole legislative mandate for much of that Parliamentary session. Also noteworthy is which Parliamentarians received coverage, and which did not. For further context, it is relevant to note that the Official Opposition formed a minority government six months after the conclusion of the debate.

This analysis also provides evidence concerning expectations in terms of what information will be used by the media. As the evidence demonstrates, the most important stories about SSM were found within other stories.

My research also provides support for the conclusion reached by McCombs and Shaw that, “evidence that mass media deeply change attitudes in a campaign, is far from conclusive” (1991, p. 17). Therefore, the role played by the media in this case study demonstrates that there is a complex dynamic between how active the media are in agenda-setting, the power of political elites to set the agenda and an existing public opinion that is rooted in personal values. The evidence also implies that there was a government agenda, and that the media maintained a certain perspective on the issue in line with a separate media agenda. My findings also demonstrated that media ownership played little to no role, providing further evidence to statements made by Miljan and Cooper (2003) and Soroka (2002). Finally, my research demonstrated that, in this case study, even if the media agenda was different than the government agenda, the coverage itself never questioned the legitimacy of the government, which demonstrates the interconnectedness of the press and the government.

7 Chapter: Mediated Political Messages

The primary product of the media is not ideas but news. (Entman, 1989, p. 22)

News coverage not only provides citizens with an account of the important issues and events of the day, but, in light of the strategic importance that discourse can have for future courses of action, it is also a field in which political actors who double as news sources struggle to influence how those issues and events will be reported. (Greenberg, 2003, p. 1)

7.1 Introduction

If the primary product of the media is news, and the media hold a privileged position in Canada with privileged access to Parliament, one can begin to understand that why the media continue to hold this privileged position is not because of the information it shares, but rather the role it plays in supporting the social order and providing legitimacy for that order.

My study of the media product in terms of same-sex marriage (SSM), contrasted to the political discourse that partially informs it, can help deconstruct its key elements in order to address ideas concerning commonly-held beliefs about the role of the media in Canada. The objective of this dissertation has been to demonstrate through an analysis of press coverage of a particular political discourse and debate, what choices were made by the press and how these choices shaped information in a certain way before it was shared with Canadians. Studying the press for its coverage in 2005 made sense given the profile of the debate and power of the press at that time. If a new study of Parliamentary discourse were to be undertaken, consideration would have to be given to determining which media would be most relevant to study given the importance of television and the increasing importance of online media sources.

These are not new ideas but the integrated approach I used allowed for the contrast of the Parliamentary debate discourse to the related press coverage, and provided evidence in support of what researchers such as Soroka (2002) have described as the liberalist and pluralist model of communication. These researchers have explained that there is a media agenda in Canada, although the media does not always work in the service of state interests. Nor does the media agenda reflect one particular and unified perspective on policy issues. What it does reflect is a media tendency to cover issues in a similar manner, relying on authoritative sources, focusing on process-type or horse-race issues and a general support of the legitimacy of the government structure, even if the media may question the current viability of one political party over another.

The central finding of this dissertation is that the press did not provide a forum for contested debate over SSM in the sense that some have described the role of the press. Instead, the results of this case study indicate that the press, for the most part, did not really report on the political discourse related to SSM. The data pointed to the establishment of different press positions with respect to SSM without any apparent discussion of what informed those positions. My focus on *how* the press covered the debate rather than *why* it produced the coverage it did, is intended to provide evidence for understanding the type of coverage that a policy debate can expect to receive. This focus on press coverage across the country provides a frame and an opportunity for future policymakers or those who seek to influence policy to understand when and how the press would even cover an issue.

Further, not only did the press seem to establish a position early on in the debate, but it reinforced its position with sources and press angles almost completely unrelated to the nature of the debate that took place in Parliament. It could be argued, and Rudnicki's (2009) evidence supports this idea, that the press arrived at a position based on a debate and narrative that preceded the Bill C-38 debate.

This chapter elaborates upon the findings that were presented in Chapter Six and what these findings mean with respect to the role of the press in Canada.

7.2 The Approach Revisited

A number of Members of Parliament referred to the original definition of marriage in their speeches as going back to the beginning of recorded history (see J. Kenney, February 21, 2005, p. 3778; P. Szabo, February 21, 2005, p. 3783 and G. Breitzkreuz, March 21, 2005, p. 4346) because it seemed logical to them to begin a discussion of marriage in Western society and potential changes to marriage in that society, as well as the role that marriage plays in society, from that starting point. I have already discussed how philosophically, written history constructs meaning. Therefore, one must consider written history as a "constructed" starting point. While my research could try to understand what pre-dated the discursive construction of marriage, the salient point for this dissertation is that the initial frame I have applied is within the context provided by Nietzsche that no "thing" is to be found at the origin. From this position, my academic inquiry presents an initial frame analysis that there are different understandings of the meaning of marriage. It is important to note that a line of inquiry that questions the historical conditions of society does not necessarily begin from a point that some would

consider a “natural” or a pre-existing condition. Therefore, a historical lens established by my approach will “...[not] find a more secure foundation but [will] show the fragility of historical forms and raise awareness of complexity, contingency and frailty of historical forms and events to which traditional history has attributed a stability” (Smart, 1983, p. 76).

Both the speeches of parliamentarians and the coverage in the press appeared to be informed by a tacit acknowledgement that there was indeed a “starting point” for marriage, however unclear or unknown. At no time in the speeches or in the press coverage reviewed for this dissertation was there a mention of the philosophical challenge that there is no actual “origin” of marriage. Without that acknowledgement, the debate in Canada was, therefore, based upon a number of different premises or assumptive “starting points” including: marriage is to raise children; marriage exists to support a loving partnership; marriage provides a stable structure to build a healthy society; marriage is an economic best practice for a successful life; marriage is first and foremost a religious practice; and/or, marriage is a human right.¹²⁰

Stuart Hall’s elaboration of the limitations of democratic pluralism includes a discussion of consensus and how those who do not conform are considered deviants and are stigmatized, which reinforces the dominant hegemony (in Makus, 1990, p. 498). Makus also highlights the point that there is no such thing as a natural consensus. Therefore, whoever defines what is discussed in the public arena helps construct a

¹²⁰ Given the government introduced legislation that it intended to pass, it might have been helpful for the government to articulate one particular position and build support and understanding for this position, however, given the apparent strategy was not to lengthen debate (since there were far fewer government members who spoke to the legislation) and the philosophical question was not covered in the communications products (Rudnicki, 2009, Annex H), it is not surprising that an articulate debate concerning human rights did not appear in the public sphere.

consensus on a particular issue. Additionally, the more natural things appear to be, the more legitimacy they will have, according to Hall (Ibid). In terms of the SSM debate, by covering the debate from a procedural perspective, the press never questioned the legitimacy of the government system, nor did it question any political party's right to govern. Therefore, it follows that at no time did the press question the rationale for bringing about a legislative change to marriage. This helped establish a government narrative on SSM that appeared to be natural, such that the idea of SSM could be defined in the "taken-for-granted grammars of culture" that Hall explains are, in fact, ideological constructions. In this way, the debate could then be successfully framed by the government, and would result in those who opposed SSM, as being defined as outsiders or deviants for not agreeing with the consensus. However, if those opposed¹²¹ to SSM had power, they might have been able to "disarticulate" or disrupt the constructed dominant meaning, thereby offering an alternative and a new space for the emergence of resistance.

Opinion poll results demonstrate that most Canadians hold a moderate, if not cynical, view that acknowledges that elected Members of Parliament try to represent their constituents. It is doubtful, however, that Canadians believe that Parliamentary debate is expected to persuade other Members to change their positions since virtually all Members of Parliament are members of a Parliamentary caucus which dictates a position on most legislation that Members are encouraged to reflect in their voting behaviour in the House. It is also likely that Canadians assumed that important

¹²¹ An opposite reading of this idea is there were those who opposed SSM in Parliament, who did not receive press coverage. As already mentioned, the Official Opposition went on to form a minority government less than six months later – perhaps the lack of coverage of some of those deviant voices helped the Opposition to form government.

legislation would be covered by the media, including key speeches, if not in their entirety, perhaps through questioning in scums outside of the House after Question Period which, would then be an opportunity to frame the issues and highlight key points.

The research and analysis of the Parliamentary speeches demonstrated that several Parliamentarians did struggle over how to best represent Canadians through their participation (or not) in this particular debate. For example, the question of religious belief versus what the majority of a constituency wanted, was a challenge for a number of Members of Parliament, including the Prime Minister at the time. Questions were also raised related to: the tyranny of the majority, the role of religion in our society, the role of an elected official (voice of the people, or there to *think* on behalf of the people), and the role of political party positions when these positions conflict with moral and religious beliefs, to name just a few.

It was to be expected that some of the media coverage would pick up and cover conflicts between members within political parties who appeared to be “offside” because this would be considered sensational. One such example occurred when Pat O’Brien, a Liberal Member of Parliament, who was quite outspoken in his opposition to SSM, not only contradicted his leader’s position, but contravened what appeared to be the strategy of, “if you don’t agree, just don’t speak about it publicly”. This was in contrast to the point made during the speeches of the Leaders that M.P.s had been told that Bill C-38 was open to a free vote. When the bill was voted on at Second Reading, 35 Liberal M.P.s voted against it, a number more than double the number of Liberal M.P.s who spoke against the bill in the House of Commons (there were 18 Liberal

speeches in total, a number which included some Members who spoke twice, on amendment and on the Reading itself). The analysis demonstrates that there was very little coverage of Liberal M.P.s who opposed the legislation except for three (Kilgour, O'Brien and Wappel), which added up to less than 15% of those who actually opposed the legislation, and demonstrated that opposition with a vote against Bill C-38.

In addition to the analysis of what was covered in the press, as a final lens, “what else” was shared with Canadians was measured through an analysis of sources, editorial opinion, other story angles, and a specific focus on any journalistic commentary or descriptive language used in the articles themselves, in order to answer more completely the question about *what* was “portrayed and re-played” for Canadians. This final lens was applied and intended to qualitatively magnify the meaning of particular attributes and commentary, as well as to quantify these attributes to contribute to a discussion of overall incidence and possible effect.

For context, it was also helpful to try to understand the political agendas and strategies¹²² employed in Parliament, as well as outside the debate to help guide the line of academic inquiry and hypotheses. Regardless of what position the Parliamentarians were trying to convey, however, it was critical to determine what and how the press covered the debate since Canadians rarely attend Parliament¹²³ or follow it closely and directly any other way (through CPAC,¹²⁴ for example).

¹²² One communication document produced by the Justice Department (Rudnicki, 2009: Annex H) reveals that there was a strategy to get third party support for a particular political position, outside of Parliament.

¹²³ One public opinion poll conducted in 2004 by the government entitled “Listening to Canadians” found that 84% of Canadians heard about the Throne Speech through the media in contrast to the 7.5% who listened to it directly or read it (cited in Pettinicchio, 2010, p. 130).

¹²⁴ CPAC: Canadian Parliamentary Affairs Channel.

Another important consideration was related to whether the press was uniform in its presentation of the topic, such as across regions and nationally. I treated the press as a single entity for the most part, with regional representation covered by a single media outlet. It could be argued that the press in different provinces might have presented the debate in Parliament very differently from each other. That being said, researchers such as Miljan and Cooper have argued convincingly that it is the big-market papers that are the agenda-setters, which was reflected in my approach to selecting papers based on circulation (2003, p. 68). More precisely however, in their research on “who staff Canada’s media”, they explained that while there was a difference between how small market journalists presented stories, in contrast to larger market journalists, the “higher profile colleagues” would be the opinion leaders (2003, p. 67). Other research had shown that local can be influential on issues of local and national importance, but the data presented in this case study do not support this idea.

In terms of Canada’s two languages, Soroka points out that any differences between English and French language press coverage of issues do not seem to outweigh the similarities (2002, p. 35). In terms of French language press coverage versus English language press coverage, they found that English-speaking journalists have very little in common with their audiences, but that French-speaking journalists do in terms of religious beliefs, education, marital status, children, and occupational factors (p. 94). Soroka notes that “for most issues, salience [...] is not markedly different from that for English newspapers” (2002, p. 40).

With respect to ownership, the press selection took into consideration a range of media ownership, in national as well as in regional papers, however, the results do

not speak to any particular ownership perspective. Rather, I have taken the position articulated by Miljan and Cooper who stated that media outlets “will not offend their readers on a daily basis” because they have a product to sell, and the Hollinger “before and after” analysis demonstrated inconsistent or “statistically insignificant” results concerning any presence of ownership bias in the press (2003, p. 95). While the issue of concentration of ownership was key to the propaganda model, and continues to be raised in a number of studies of the media in Canada including Commissions of Inquiry such as the *Special Senate Study into the Mass Media 1970* (known as the Davey Report) and the *Royal Commission on Newspapers 1981* (known as the Kent Commission), Soroka argues that the issue remains “unproven” since “a variety of studies find no relationship between newspaper ownership and newspaper content in either the US or Canada” (2002, p. 40). In the end, there seemed to be a greater difference between the two national newspapers at the beginning of the debate, but the regional papers seemed to provide a range of views.

7.3 The Research Questions Revisited

How did newspapers in Canada present the same-sex marriage debate with respect to *Bill C-38 (The Civil Marriage Act)*?

The central research question contains many elements, and a number of different approaches could be applied to respond to the questions asked. The section that follows elaborates on the different elements of this question, how my approach resulted in findings, and what they mean.

7.3.1 How did Newspapers Present the SSM Debate?

Media discourse can be considered to be quasi-pedagogic in that it shares information in a certain way with the purpose of informing. As Shoemaker and Reese point out, the mass media can perform this “educating” function while transmitting lessons to society about perceived norms (1996, p. 29). My results of the coverage analyzed do not support the idea that the press ‘educated’ in the truest sense of pedagogy, although the act of sharing select and constructed information did occur. My research substantiates that, coupled with the fact that “public relations has been one of the greatest growth industries both within government and business”, the media often covered what has been produced by communication experts (Underwood, 2001, p. 106). As Underwood noted, and based on the communications strategy document that Rudnicki had as an annex item, for SSM, if the media reproduced anything, it is reasonable to assert that coverage was sometimes linked to press releases and communication strategies that it received from “self-interested sources” (Underwood, 2001: 106). I did not test for this specifically but it would be valuable to contrast the communication plans produced by the Department of Justice to the language found in the press coverage to see if there was “message success” for the government.

Through his discussion of political promotionalism, Greenberg elaborates upon the role of journalists and the ‘ideal’ functions fulfilled by the news media in democratic society (2003, p. 55). Beyond the ideal assumptions of the activities of the Fourth Estate, there is a belief that the media “not only set the agenda for the news of the day, but that news coverage also has significant ‘ideological effects,’ i.e. the news supports the interest of elites and naturalizes them as the interests of all, even if this is

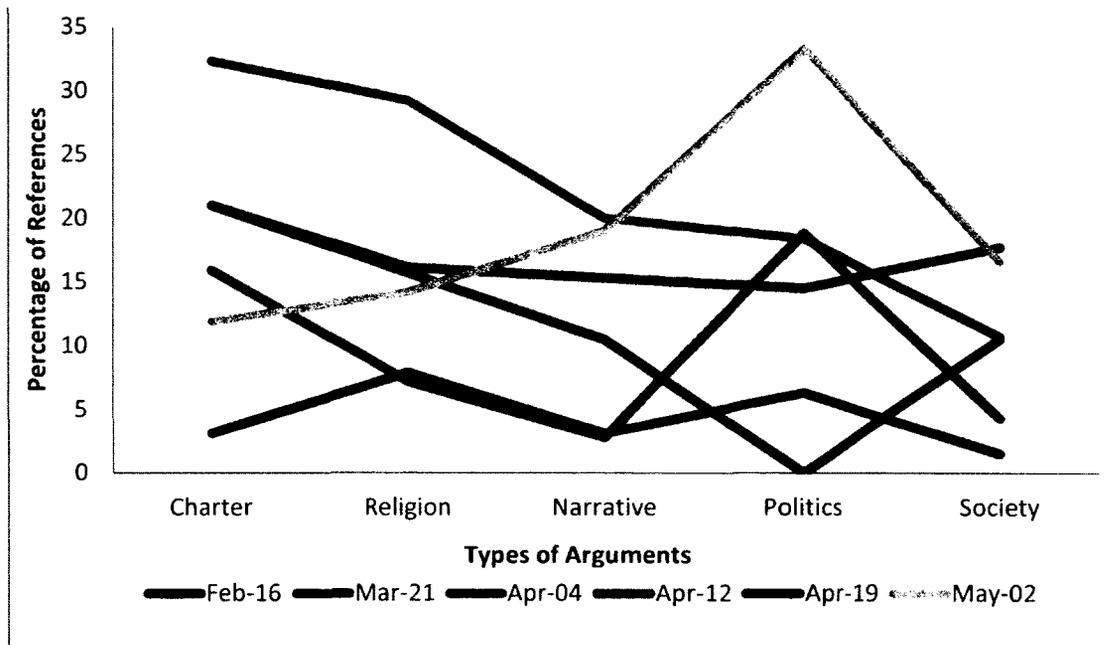
done without intention” (Greenberg, 2003, p. 55). My evidence supports this point in that the press coverage included the views of the political leaders and very few others, and the lack of questioning or debating key issues over equality, for example, in the media demonstrates that the press automatically supported the government’s intention to pass Bill C-38 into law.

The press coverage content analysis of the SSM debate found that most arguments used in Parliament were related to the *Charter*, followed by political arguments, and then by religious or evolutionary arguments . The press coverage rarely presented any specific arguments made by politicians. When it did cover specific arguments, the greatest amount of this coverage occurred during the first two weeks of debate on the legislation. The data from table 11 can also be plotted in terms of the percentage each argument appeared in the press over each week of coverage analyzed. The chart that follows this table presents the trend in argument incidence.

Table 11: Parliamentary Arguments Featured in the Press Coverage

Argument	Number of Articles that featured an Argument By Week						Total
	Feb 16	Mar 20	Apr 4	Apr 12	Apr 19	May 2	6 wks.
Charter	27	4	21	11	2	5	70
Religion or evolution	20	3	19	5	5	6	58
Narrative	19	2	13	2	2	8	46
Statistics	9	2	3	10	2	8	34
Politics	18	-	12	13	4	14	61
Society	22	2	7	3	1	7	46
Sex	3	-	5	-	-	1	9
TOTAL Number of Articles	124	19	65	69	63	42	382

Figure 10: Incidence of Arguments by Week



It is not surprising that the press coverage reflected little substantive discussion given what researchers such as Miljan and Cooper (2003) have argued, that the role of the press is “to promote a specific kind of change, often by means of mobilizing the administrative capacity of the state” (p. 49). Therefore, the coverage that I reviewed cannot be described as passive even if it seems that the Parliamentary discourse did not include substantive information and persuasive evidence. The press were still somewhat actively mobilizing an administrative capacity by how they framed the issue for Canadians.

In terms of the story angle, the findings demonstrate that while the debate raged on in Parliament, the most significant amount of coverage of SSM (79.8%) featured another story angle, rather than the Parliamentary debate. While there were references to the debate in almost 80% of SSM press coverage, quite frequently the references

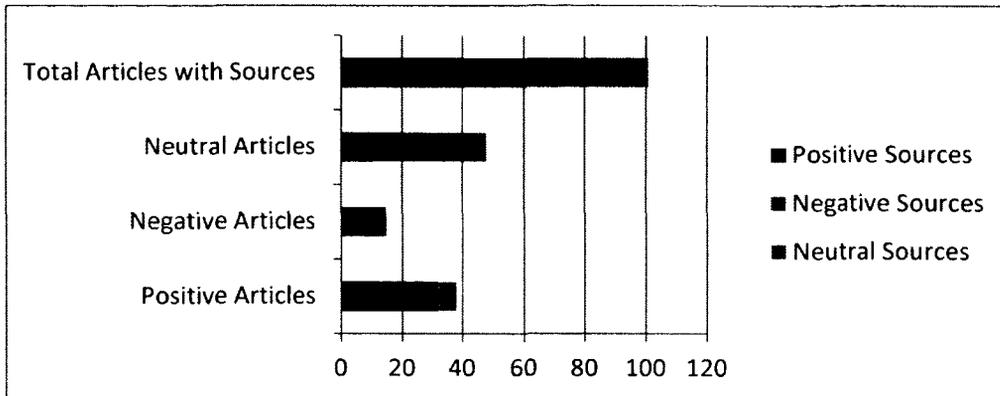
were brief and in passing (see Samyn, *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 5, 2005, p. A1: Liberals call in fraud squad; Ware, *Chronicle-Herald*, March 25, 2005, p. A1: ‘Nasty’ flyers target Keddy). One way to interpret this is that the press was “mobilizing” Canadians by keeping the issue present in the coverage without questioning the validity of the legislative approach to SSM. The evidence demonstrates that the media supported change without discussing the details of the expected change.

The sourcing analysis in a more general way speaks to how the press portrayed or presented the debate. In terms of portrayal, for example, the articles that were coded positive for SSM featured sources who were overwhelmingly “for” SSM. In the articles that were coded as being against SSM, no sources were cited who were “for” or “neutral” towards SSM. And in the articles coded as being neutral, there was a balance between use of sources with most (23) being neutral (pollsters for example), and then 15 “against” and 10 “for”. These results speak to how the press elected to portray the debate, although sourcing will also be discussed in the next section to address choices made in the presentation and re-presentation of the debate in the press coverage.

In fact, when an article was coded negative towards SSM, no outside sources were found in the selection reviewed who supported SSM. Given that a high percentage of articles were coded as neutral (62.2%), and that only 9.6% were identified as negative, it is not necessarily generalizable across all media to argue that source selection was a regular tactic to shape position. However, this point should be flagged as potential evidence that, when articles were clearly in support of the Government position, that by far the greatest percentage of sources quoted, supported the government position, and of all the sources identified in the debate, whether they were

for or against SSM, it was clear that the greatest majority of source utilization was in support of SSM, which reflects journalistic shaping of the debate. The following chart summarizes my results relating to source coverage:

Figure 11: Percentage of Articles with Sources by Tone



From my analysis, it can also be argued that the press rarely used outside sources but more often quoted Members of Parliament, and often on both sides of the debate. This would support the “process” emphasis in the coverage rather than providing supporting arguments for one of the positions. On the other hand, the evidence also demonstrates that when a third party spokesperson was quoted, most often it was in support of the legislation which provides some information concerning press agenda. The use of government (and Opposition) sources (Members of Parliament) underlines the point that the press provided a general support for the social order, and in addition, I believe that because these sources are members of the political elite, it was easier for them to get coverage. These sources are able to supply important ready-made material to the press who rely on this information to fill in and substantiate coverage

that otherwise faces limitations such as systemic and institutional behaviours¹²⁵ linked to working for a profit-driven organization, pressures of time, and other phenomena such as pack journalism.

The evidence above concerning sources also leads to questions concerning the neutrality of the press.¹²⁶ In Canada, the idea of a press bias could have an impact since almost all Canadians would only have access to the Parliamentary debate through the media. Some researchers have studied press coverage in contrast to public opinion polls on the issue of SSM (Pettinicchio, 2010) to determine if there is a correlation. Pettinicchio asked if an issue that is salient in the media is also salient in the public (2012, p. 130) which is yet another approach to considering press agenda. In fact he found the issue was not salient in the public.

There were in fact very few articles where more than one source was present with opposing views with the following notable exceptions as examples to the contrary: Adams, *Globe and Mail*, February 19, 2005, p. A10 featured sources from both sides of the issue in coverage related to the Famous Players advertisement issue; as did Carlson, *Winnipeg Free Press*, February 22, 2005, p. A3 concerning correspondence that Members of Parliament were receiving on the issue of SSM.

Finally, in the selection of articles analyzed for this dissertation, there were few examples of sources featured who spoke out against SSM. It is possible that letters to

¹²⁵ Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1987) provide an overview of the newsroom culture at a newspaper as well as interviews that capture journalists' own views about how they do their jobs (pp. 95-138).

¹²⁶ One study by Bozell and Baker, 1990, cited in Shoemaker & Reese (1996, p. 42) found that most positive articles and comments found in the U.S. press favour the Left" (in Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 42). However, others have looked at bias and found that the U.S. news media overall is fair and objective. Researchers such as Robinson and Sheehan (1983) analyzed CBS and UPI 1980 campaign coverage and found that most often journalists rarely make value statements about issues or assertions about candidate qualities and policies, and most often it was about the campaign's chances or game plan" (in Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 43).

the editor may have contained this contrary position but these were not part of analysis because determining organizational representation for the letters was not consistently possible. For the most part, the press coverage was concerned with process or a horse race-approach¹²⁷ to discussing issues of importance, rather than a consideration of the substance of the debate. This finding is supported by the idea that the media cover elections in terms of a race to win rather than by issues raised in the campaign (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996).

Interestingly, during each week of debate, the prominence of articles was fairly high, with the greatest number of articles appearing on pages A1 followed by A2 and A4 when they appeared in the first five pages. The majority of articles were not in the first five pages on average, but the volume of coverage still indicates that an important space was allocated to the debate in the press which could have provided an opportunity for Parliamentarians to get their key messages across to the public. However, with the substance of the issue only covered half the time, and in that half, the appearance of key arguments was quite low, the issue's prominence seemed to have more to do with sensationalism rather than public policy.

The media both present and re-present news to the public through a variety of channels. 'Present' is defined here as the utilization of the media outlet to relay particular information and is the result of a choice made by the media. 'Re-present' has two meanings: first, the media can reinforce political communication which has reached the public through other channels, by repeating it as news; and second, the media can

¹²⁷ Shoemaker & Reese (1996) refer to coverage of US election campaigns as predominantly coverage in terms of the race to win, and less often about the issues raised during the campaign (cited from King, 1990 and Major, 1992).

determine how to characterize that political communication content as it passes it along to the public.

There are several different factors that can contribute to how information is crafted before it is shared with the public such as: media corporate interests, intentional journalistic practices such as regular beats, unintentional journalistic practices such as pack journalism, and the profile and availability of sources. Journalistic routines and constraints, as well as how journalists work in “a position of structured subordination to the privileged and powerful because of the operational demands of news production”, place journalists in a relationship of dependency upon sources that are most often institutional (government or other societal elites) because they already have some credibility by virtue of their power, electoral legitimacy and expertise (Hall, 1977 as cited in Greenberg, 2003, p. 57). Therefore, what is ultimately presented and re-presented relies on the ideological position of the governing elites, elite ability to harness resources including the provision of ‘credible’ messages to the news media, and their actual relationship with the news media which both relies on the sharing of information and benefits from a privileged access.

It is at this point in the process that the decision is made on what to present and re-present to the public which, more often continues to be a “view of the world that is amenable to the interests of the state and private capital” (Greenberg, 2003, p. 58). This idea is supported by my data that demonstrate that sources, aside from Parliamentarians, were featured in 26.4% of the articles and were 2:1 times more often supporters of SSM, than not. In general, this reflects the shaping of an issue rather than an ideal portrayal of an issue that contains both sides of an argument. This does not prove that

there is a deliberate aspect to this shaping, but one must question the overarching results either in terms of balanced coverage or the expected role of the press.

As already noted in this section, instead of a focus on specific arguments, certain politicians were featured more often than others, which supports the journalistic routine of “horse-race” reporting. Here, my analysis again demonstrates that there was an opportunity for some political elites, more than others, to share their position with the public. But, at the same time, my evidence found that the volume of coverage of a particular politician did not translate into the dissemination of that politician’s key arguments or position. So while Stephen Harper clearly received the greatest amount of coverage, the focus of the press was not about his key arguments, but rather about his politics, his supporters and his political future.

7.3.2 What Debate Could the Press Have Presented?

The speeches in Parliament were not completely scripted, nor were they written together to present a coherent perspective on the debate, however, it can be assumed that there were strategies present within each of the caucuses to “manage” the debate. For example, the governing Liberal caucus had the support of the Department of Justice who wrote the legislation and prepared the communications strategy under the direction of the Minister of Justice. Further, the Department of Justice monitored the Bill’s progress through Parliament as well as how the media covered the event. Evidence of the management of the debate can be found in documents procured by Rudnicki (2009, Appendix H) for her thesis that included “questions and answers”, “speech modules”, “talking points for M.P.s”, “The *Civil Marriage Act* and Religious Freedom Lines”, and

a draft document entitled, “Communications Products and Services Post Tabling of the Civil Marriage Act”. This latter document contains a communications plan for Second Reading Debate of Bill C-38 and includes planned additional speakers (Members of Parliament), third-party activity, a plan for the Committee Hearings, speeches for the Minister and M.P.s, an M.P. Letter to send to constituents, as well as numerous daily activities such as the preparation of Question Period notes, meetings with other Departments and stakeholders, monitoring and analysis of the media coverage, and tracking information related to organizations for and against the legislation.

All of the communications documentation produced by the Department of Justice discussed above contributed to the framing strategy used by the governing Liberals and therefore reflects the views of those political elites who had the most institutional resources to support this viewpoint. It is also interesting to consider that while it is reasonable to assume that a number of the Members of the Opposition were receiving support from religious organizations and the public, ultimately very little of this information was shared with Canadians via the media as is demonstrated in my analysis of arguments and sources that in contrast to the amount of coverage represent a small percentage of that coverage. The research also demonstrates that it was positive sources that were utilized most frequently in the press which is not indicative of how many sources were for, or against, the legislation.

One can also reasonably argue that the volume of SSM speeches delivered at Second Reading - there were 168 of them - in contrast to the average number of speeches for other legislation normally delivered at Second Reading (as few as two and not usually more than 5-10), should have attracted more media attention, particularly

when the debate contained so many conflicting aspects. In addition, the same debate was taking place in other countries (such as the United States and Spain) and in other spheres in Canada (for example, the United Church was having an internal debate about whether the national congregation supported SSM or not, at a time when the Church itself was teetering on bankruptcy because it was no longer “united”).

One of my more critical findings was that, while the emphasis of press argument coverage mostly matched the order of incidence of arguments used in Parliament, the overall amount of coverage on SSM itself was much higher than any discussions of the legislation at all. Indeed, almost 80% of the articles carried in the press from the analysis conducted for this dissertation are characterized as having a completely different story angle than the Parliamentary debate on Bill C-38. While almost half of these articles did refer to Bill C-38, most were passing references which did not contain key arguments made by Parliamentarians.

Another idea that I raised in the last chapter, and that can be used to explain how political elites “advocate” a certain position is that of political promotionalism, as described by Jamieson (2001, pp. 323-8). This idea contributes to our understanding which issues are shared with Canadians in terms of government agenda. Greenberg defines political promotionalism as “the extent to which the government succeeded in terms of recruiting media support for its policy directives” (2003, p. 50). In other words, the government actively and strategically promotes policies and legislation that are a reflection of its own ideological commitment with the goal of orienting the view of Canadians in line with this same commitment. It is worth considering whether this was occurring at the same moment the press were determining what to cover. My

research was not designed to quantify how much of the press coverage reflects this idea of political promotionalism, but it is an example of a factor that may exist and work against a press agenda sometimes, and alongside a press agenda at other times.

Before closing, it is noteworthy to draw attention to my findings related to two of the arguments that were coded in the Parliamentary speeches: the use of statistics, and the discussion of sex. The evidence points to how statistics appeared in the press at a higher incidence or more often, than in Parliament, but sex was as rarely discussed in the press as it was in Parliament.¹²⁸

In the next section, I revisit each of the hypotheses that helped guide the research and analysis of my dissertation.

7.4 The Four Hypotheses Revisited

In Chapter One I outlined four hypotheses that supported my initial research question.

What follows is an overview of my findings for each.

HQ1: The greatest amount of press coverage on the subject of same-sex marriage was largely unrelated to debate on Bill C-38 because the press already support the power structure of government. What was their agenda?

The first hypothesis is supported by the data from a percentage perspective, but does not allow for greater understanding as to why this was the case, or even if this is an issue. It points to the idea that the press work to support the existing social order, but can also

¹²⁸ The subject of sex is a difficult one for Parliamentarians to discuss and often reflects on them personally in an unfavourable light, i.e. the discussion about exposition of Canadian artist Margaret Sutherland's depiction of Prime Minister Harper at the National Gallery of Canada, May 17, 2012. Member of Parliament Dean Del Maestro was seen as a "dud" according to CTV's Power Play with host Don Martin on May 17, 2012.

work to bring about administrative change. The fact that the coverage on SSM was mostly centered on activities taking place outside of Parliament (such as court actions and decisions, religious protests and demonstrations) does not address the idea of issue salience for the public or the press and how the two might be linked. While it seemed to some in political and legal circles that a very important debate was taking place in Parliament, it is also possible that there was not a great public appetite for greater detail.

HQ2: The greatest amount of issue-based press coverage portrayed the debate in terms of a moral issue whereas the greatest amount of parliamentary discourse was concerned with legal arguments. Why?

This second hypothesis questioned how the issues were portrayed by the press given a specific debate took place in Parliament and by whom, and did not prove to be accurate based on my findings related to the Parliamentary debate on Bill C-38. This question was intended to probe my initial understanding of why there could be a difference between the debate on the one hand, and the coverage of the debate, on the other. My approach, which compared the Parliamentary discourse to the press discourse is useful because it reveals the wide disparity between discourses overall in terms of the general issue of SSM. It also reveals that when the press referred to Bill C-38, there was some parity between how the issue was discussed in Parliament and how it was discussed in the press. My findings demonstrated that the small percentage of press coverage that did address the debate on Bill C-38, covered the key issues that had the greatest salience in the Parliamentary debate, in the same order, once the 'horse-race' or process angle was removed from the analysis. This point supports the idea of a press agenda that was not entirely separate from the government agenda in terms of the issue.

The hypothesis on its own was not supported by the evidence in terms of the moral arguments being featured in the press in contrast to legal arguments being featured in Parliament. My approach contained an attribute that considered narrative language as a way to determine whether arguments related to fear and religious condemnation were used by the press in the way that myths are sometimes used as a shortcut to explaining a complex issue and how one should think about it. In fact myths and narrative language as I defined them, appeared in the press less than they did in the Parliamentary speeches. In other words, after the political or process-type arguments, the most frequently-used Parliamentary arguments had to do with the *Charter of Rights* or legal arguments, and this was reflected in the press coverage, except at a much lower rate of incidence.

HQ3: Initial positions taken by the media, for or against SSM, did not change, over the course of the public debate regardless of the evolution of the debate in Parliament. What are some potential reasons why?

It is noteworthy that, while the Parliamentary debate occurred over four and a half months, a fairly lengthy period of time during which one could argue that public opinion might change, the press position was fairly entrenched from the beginning. The same was not true for editorials, however. While the press position remained entrenched, my analysis of editorials indicates that some media outlets did change their position from the beginning to the end. For example, of all the press outlets analyzed, the *Globe and Mail* had the greatest number of editorials in the first week of debate and every single editorial was coded in support of SSM. The *National Post*, on the other hand, had more editorials than the *Globe* but the coding demonstrated a balance of

positive, negative and neutral editorial coverage of the issue. The Western papers seemed to have the greatest amount of editorials with an equal number of negative and neutral editorials, and both outnumbered the positive editorials. These findings provide evidence in support of the argument that some media outlets did offer new opinions over time, and others featured a range of opinions consistent with the idea that the media provide a forum for debate. On the other hand, when the position did not change, in either the press or editorials, one would have to argue that no forum was present. These findings lead one to consider that different press outlets could play different roles in Canada, and that the editorial coverage is one way to demonstrate how these roles play out.

While my data demonstrated the different editorial positions of each of the newspapers, there was not enough information to discuss the results in terms of a national versus regional comparison. In addition, as one might expect, most editorials appeared in the first week of debate followed by the second most appearing during the last week of debate, but only in the Western coverage. The Central papers (Ontario and Quebec), which featured for the most part neutral editorials followed by fewer editorials in support of SSM, and no editorials against SSM, published editorials throughout the duration of the debate. In the East, there were too few editorials to see which way the papers were leaning and these were published around the mid-point of the debate.

In total, 19 editorials coded positive for SSM, 11 coded against SSM and 22 coded as neutral. One can see that the majority published were coded neutral, which would allow readers to make their own judgment based on the information shared with them for consideration. But almost the same number of editorials seemed to

support SSM which highlights the point that the press took a position even while the legislation was still being debated in Parliament.

If one had expected the press to play the role of a watchdog, evidence for this role might have been found in the editorial section of a newspaper. Yet, based on my findings described in Chapter Six, there was no unanimity amongst various press outlets (which is a positive finding in terms of a press role related to being an unbiased commentator on the political discourse), and while the greatest percentage, 42.3%, were coded neutral, almost 37% of the editorials were coded in support of SSM which does not seem unbiased nor impartial.

HQ4: Parliamentarians were largely unsuccessful in having their key messages carried in the press coverage, except for the leaders of each political party. Was this in part because the press coverage that was related to Bill C-38 was mostly about the process of Parliamentary debate, and not about the substance of the arguments made in Parliament?

This final hypothesis can be revisited for meaning and addressed in a couple of ways: first, by questioning which political elites were covered in the press, and then by identifying what were the key messages presented by the press about SSM – were these messages a repeat of what Parliamentarians were saying, or were they messages provided by outside sources or the media themselves?

Only a handful of Parliamentarians received the lion's share of coverage, starting with the Leader of the Official Opposition Stephen Harper, then Prime Minister Paul Martin, and followed by some of the more controversial Members of Parliament for their stance on SSM. Taking this information and corroborating it with the coverage related to the position and key arguments of all the political parties and their leaders

such as Jack Layton and Gilles Duceppe, one can see that the debate was indeed portrayed as a horse-race between only two of the parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, and that a smattering of interesting outliers such as Wappel, O'Brien, Kilgour, and Stronach, also received some limited coverage. This amounted to less than substantive coverage of the issue, particularly in light of how many Parliamentarians delivered speeches on SSM. It also shows that very few politicians had the ability, with respect to this particular issue, to influence the media agenda. This, together with my results related to how few articles even referred to Bill C-38, demonstrates my hypothesis is correct and raises two issues: one, that what was discussed in Parliament was not, for the most part, shared with Canadians; and two, when some of the political discourse was disseminated to Canadians, it was quite abbreviated and only a very small selection of issues was put forward in any substantive way. The press clearly relied heavily on Parliamentarians to provide source material for its coverage, and with little to no challenge in the press over the legislation, the role of the press clearly supported the government and government structure.

7.5 Other Research Questions and Concluding Observations

In Canada, as in the United States and other western democracies, at the same time that the traditional media have witnessed a concentration in ownership, the way in which news content is delivered has become quite fractured with the advent of the internet and other technological innovations that allow for news to be shared electronically through a variety of means and devices. There are no longer restrictions of location, so news has become a portable product in ways it never was before. The news itself has gone

through a revolution in formatting to comply with the new modes of delivery – opening information up on Blackberries and iPads, reading or watching news that was originally televised via media websites, or downloading electronic versions of newspapers that were originally submitted for a print format. Understanding that technological change can affect the content as decisions are made based on how information is packaged and how it will be conveyed is an important consideration when one is concerned with what content is shared with Canadians. Winseck (2010) describes this new environment as featuring “crosscutting dynamics” in one of his questions about whether new digital technologies pose threats to the traditional media or whether in fact a larger media economy is created with the advent of new technologies (p. 365). My dissertation is not concerned with how the debate was delivered using new technologies, but it is important to consider how the media ownership’s grappling with the different dynamics of the media can affect what information is chosen for “translation” and what is ultimately shared with Canadians on a social policy such as SSM. Any future research on debates in Parliament and media agenda will need to consider these dynamics which will add further factors for consideration. However, my methodological approach is flexible and could be useful in this case, because of the addition of framing to agenda-setting, and the addition of discourse considerations to content analysis. Further, the contribution of demonstrating how a policy issue can be framed and analyzed is not limited to the press, although the press continues to provide a forum for greater elaboration on issues and matters of interest. The explosion of online media, including traditional sources producing online content and the return of evening editions with

articles going on line before going to press, helps make the case that studying the press in some format, will remain relevant.

While I was preparing my methodological approach, a number of other questions arose which provide further context to the ideas I captured in my research:

- When elite discourse was presented by the press, what parts of that discourse were presented and how were they mediated?
- If balance is defined in terms of how much space is dedicated to each side of the debate, as well as sources for and against, along with an equitable amount of editorials, was coverage balanced within different media outlets? Overall?
- Did the evidence demonstrate that ownership was a distinct factor in how media outlets covered the issue or was a message the same across media on any given day of coverage? What explanations can be given to answer this?

The findings demonstrate that rarely was elite discourse presented by the press to Canadians, but when it was, as in the case of the Opposition members, often a source was utilized that supported the legislation, which then contrasted the Opposition member's position. Most often however, elite discourse was portrayed as a political debate between the governing Liberals and the opposing Conservatives, with the issue of same-sex marriage almost secondary to the discussion which was most often focused on electoral future considerations.

With respect to balance being measured by space, a number of articles were reviewed to see how many lines of coverage were dedicated to each side of the debate, and it seems to be fairly balanced when both sides were quoted or sourced, however, often, the coverage focused on only one angle of the issue and therefore dedicated the complete coverage to that politician or issue. Further analysis would be required to quantify this information.

Chouliaraki¹²⁹ sees the positive potential of the contemporary media in his examination of deliberative democracy that expands upon the ideas of Thompson (1995), Giddens (1991) and Habermas (1998/1997). Chouliaraki questions how contemporary media contribute to democracy when alternative, open-ended processes and new discursive possibilities that replace direct democratic processes, are offered (2000, pp. 293-4). This hopeful perspective sees an opportunity for “new forms of politicization and collective action” (Ibid) through the media. The question is whether the media as an institution, can capitalize on the opportunity of providing a platform and space for this deliberation or issue advocacy.

The specific selection of arguments that were covered in the press partially reflected how the press can constitute reality. Chouliaraki makes the point that, “mediated language practices do not simply relay or ‘talk about’ a reality that occurs ‘out there’, but that they actually constitute this reality, in the process of communication” (2000, p. 295). In other words, the generally accepted role of the press actually affords it more power, therefore, what the press choose to present is all the more critical when one considers its role in deliberative democracy.

Finally, the finding that demonstrated the range of editorials with a range of positions across the different media outlets supports the idea of an independent press in Canada and supplies further evidence to Soroka’s argument that there is little evidence that any concentration in ownership has affected or restricted media content (2002, p. 44).

¹²⁹ Chouliaraki studied what forms of political discourse and democratic practices that the media help constitute empirically to make sense of the internal properties of political discourse and to reconcile media production and reception.

My dissertation looked at the difference between a spoken debate in one environment and how parts of that debate were taken and translated into a print medium for dissemination. What I found was that the content and meaning changed for both journalistic-intended reasons, and technological reasons since voice cannot be shared in print. One example to highlight this point is to consider how the sarcastic tone of a Parliamentarian cannot be captured in the press unless it was elaborated upon with descriptive language in the text, and if the journalist covering the debate had relied on *Hansard* rather than attending the session itself, the tone would surely be completely lost.

My research and subsequent findings demonstrate that there is some participation by the press in a meaningful democratic debate. In fact the number of articles that coded neutral was higher than expected. For the most part, however, there was little interpretation or additional analysis offered by the press, which could have been provided through fuller coverage of specific types of arguments, or the utilization of more varied sources, and the provision of both of these in the print space that was allocated to the issue. As was seen in the analysis of prominence, the subject of SSM was given prominence by editors as it continued to be published in the first few pages of most newspapers, for the duration of its coverage, however, the rare discussion of specific arguments or issues in that coverage relegated the debate to a horse-race and therefore the press did not really provide a forum for contested debate.

There was also a fairly high variance between what was initially expected to be narrative language and what appeared in the speeches and then the press. From the work of Lule, Ju, O'Donnell and others, it was anticipated that mythic or narrative

language that was used by Parliamentarians would also appear in the media, even if only as an abbreviated approach to conveying complex issues and the complex meanings of those issues. It was also hypothesized that the media would apply myth or narrative to build understanding for otherwise shallow media frames, as a form of journalistic shorthand because of editorial constraints or as an indication of media agenda, as I described in Chapter Two. However, my findings indicate that mythic devices, such as references to apocalyptic predictions and fear-mongering about the demise of society if Bill C-38 was to pass, were employed to create social dramas during the Parliamentary speeches, and most often remained within the Parliamentary discourse. My research did not uncover virtually any mythic language, which was a completely unexpected result. The use of narrative language, described by Lule (2001), had seemed like an excellent means to describe the complex social, ethical, religious, legal and political issue that is SSM. If a more substantive discussion of SSM had been carried in the press, it is possible to theorize that there might have been a greater use of mythic and narrative language.

It was also hypothesized that additional arguments might have been carried in the press that did not appear or were not significant in the Parliamentary debate. The selection of press coverage studied revealed no additional arguments, however, what did appear was coverage related to how certain Parliamentarians were being treated by the public or by special interest groups. One example was the targeting of Opposition M.P. Keddy through a mailbox flyers campaign in his constituency because he was supporting the government position instead of his own political party. Other coverage

that was quite apart from the debate included special features on same-sex couples or homosexual individuals who wanted to get married.

Finally, with respect to sources, the results were somewhat surprising: the greatest number of sources quoted were coded in support of SSM, even in articles that were coded overall as neutral or negative. It had been expected that an analysis would still reveal a balance of sourcing across the nation and across media outlets.

In particular, the research of Li and Liu (2010) was persuasive in demonstrating how significant U.S. newspapers framed the issue of SSM and studied how source use, journalistic routines and media frames “affect fairness and balance of the coverage” (p. 73). The authors found that journalistic routines did not impact the fairness or balance of coverage, but that source dominance is related to the balance of coverage. My findings confirm their finding related to fairness in that the greatest percentage of the coverage in my analysis was neutral in tone, although for the percentage that was supportive of SSM, the sources were almost exclusively positive. Also interesting was their finding that stories that were framed thematically rather than episodically were more fair and balanced. Because their analysis studied one month of coverage, they acknowledge that this represented a limitation on their analysis because it “only looked at the coverage of a controversial issue at one key point” (2010, p. 87). That being said, they focused on how the coverage was framed in terms of episodic or thematic framing, and suggest that framing “has been found to exert powerful effects on judgment and choice” (citing Iyengar, 1990, in Li and Liu, 2010, p. 86). While I did not analyze my data specifically for thematic or episodic framing, my research aligns with their findings when consideration is given to the horse-race findings and the overall lack of key

arguments being presented in the press. My research, like theirs, suggests that the press in Canada, while presenting the issue in a balanced way for the most part, did not provide substantive information to Canadians. The press that the authors surveyed are also very different than the Canadian press where the New York Times would be considered prestigious press for Canada as well.

Another way to contrast my findings to those of Li and Liu (2010) is to consider how frequently C-38 was mentioned as a measurement of episodic versus thematic framing where it could be expected that discussion of a policy would code the coverage as thematic. My findings suggest that less than half the coverage during the period studied in my research discussed or even mentioned the issue of Bill C-38. This would align, therefore, with a more episodic approach to SSM coverage and support the findings of Li and Liu. On the other hand, the fact that little of the coverage discussed the policy issue substantively even when the legislation was mentioned by name, demonstrates that the press coverage in this study returned different results than those presented by Li and Liu. There was evidence in the Canadian coverage of some episodic framing, such as stories about couples and where their weddings were taking place. But the remaining coverage could not be defined as completely thematic given the paucity of substantive discussion. In the end, while their findings demonstrated a clear alignment between thematic frames having greater fairness and balance in contrast to episodic frames, when this analysis is transposed to my research, it highlights that there is a large gap or percentage of articles where the frames are neither episodic nor thematic.

The findings regarding source use did lend further support to the idea that the media continue to more easily quote spokespeople from organizations rather than individuals and their opinions as there were no individuals quoted in the press during the debate, in the coverage that was analyzed.

The next chapter will reflect back on the goals of this dissertation as well as propose some avenues that were opened up by this dissertation, or that arose during the course of the research conducted for this dissertation, for future study.

8 Chapter: Conclusion

If the media are the Fourth Estate, with privileged access to the Commons, is there not a particular responsibility that accompanies this privileged access and position? How does this responsibility fare against the concentration of media ownership, routine journalistic practices, and numerous other constraints faced by journalists in Canada? It is arguable that a debate seen as important to Parliamentarians should receive significant press coverage. Otherwise, one questions that if a Parliamentary debate receives little press coverage, what other purpose does such a debate serve and for whom are the speeches delivered? What role does the press play and is there a media agenda that dictates how it would cover a public policy debate?

This dissertation has offered some analysis of a particular public policy debate to explore how that debate was represented in a selection of press coverage. The underlying goal of my research approach was to better understand agenda, and to determine whether a political agenda set the media agenda, or was it a media agenda that shaped and determined what information was shared with Canadians. It is difficult to pinpoint every determining factor, but it was possible to take a close read of the resulting coverage of a particular Parliamentary debate and theorize what the drivers were for the press coverage and assess what was actually contained in that coverage. There have not been any studies that have contrasted a Parliamentary legislative debate to its related press coverage so it is also meaningful to consider some different ideas related to what actually becomes evident through the act of contrasting discourses.

This chapter reviews a number of key arguments made throughout the dissertation and then, to conclude, discusses new avenues for potential future research that either came to light because of my research, or avenues that were beyond the scope of my research such as a contrast of public opinion as a fourth discourse to the three discourses that were considered here.

8.1 What Do the Findings Say About the Role Played by the Press?

This case study contributes further evidence to our understanding of the role played by the press in terms of a public policy debate in Canada and helps to bring together the field of communication and policy studies by revealing how public policy can be presented by the media. While SSM is a complex case, and the findings from this case study may not be widely generalizable to all public policy topics, it is the combination of discourses against the relief of the history of marriage that provides an illustration of the Canadian press in action with some insight into the public policy process. Others have studied the constraints faced by journalists, the impact of media ownership, and the trend towards consolidation and greater concentration in Canada. These findings were taken as a given in order to focus on the operational role played by the press and how it presented and shaped information from a political debate.

In this case study, I have demonstrated how, over a period of several months, the press presented a position on a political issue and the evidence used for this position. Through my methodological approach, I have gauged how much of the debate was covered, and with what details, through a comparative analysis of the political

discourse with the press discourse. Finally, this research has demystified the role played by the press by presenting what was covered and shared with Canadians.

In Chapter One, I argued that the press covered the issue of SSM from a political process perspective, rather than providing coverage of the key arguments used by Parliamentarians during the debate. The early coverage began as a horse-race, and ended as a race to the finish. For this debate, the press did not provide a “contradictory space” (Greenberg, 2005, pp. 234-5), so much as a “competitive space”: very few political elites were given any prominence, but when their views or arguments were shared in the press, they were framed in terms of support for the race to power, and these views were supported almost exclusively by outside sources who supported the legislation.

The analysis demonstrated that the news media, for the most part, did not seem to question the underlying principles of the different political positions on various issues. This point reinforces Entman’s view that the primary product of the media is not ideas, but news (1989, p. 22). Therefore, there was little evidence that the press played the role of a watchdog. Instead, it seems that Weideman’s (2009) explanation of the idea of a press that is a sentry for powerful groups, known as the “guard dog role”, a phrase first coined by Donohue, Tichenor, and Olien (1995), may have a partial validity in this case study since this role reflects a media that supports dominant groups and helps maintain existing power.

At the same time, however, a guard dog role could not explain some of the findings related to how the press and editorials did not re-play the debate that took place in Parliament. The news media changed the discourse by constructing it in terms of a

race. While the findings demonstrated that the top occurring arguments from the Parliamentary debate also appeared in the press, these arguments shared space with sources who spoke in support of the legislation, and other story angles that provided human interest stories about couples who struggled for happiness, or fought legal battles, or businesses who decided to cater to same-sex couples through special event planning or even themed vacations. Both the sources and story angles contributed positive messaging in support of Bill C-38 even if it was not explicitly stated. Therefore, although the press may have provided balance in its coverage of Parliamentarians, it did not necessarily provide balanced coverage of the SSM issue.

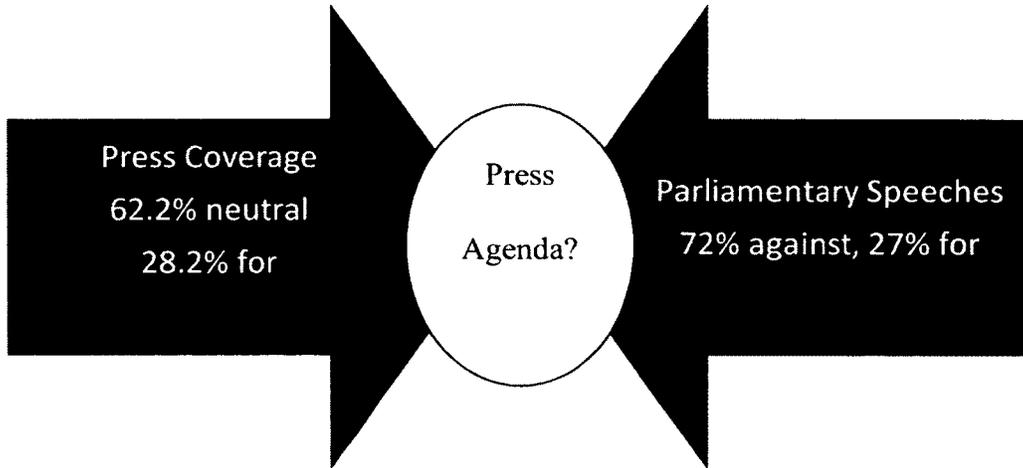
With respect to how political elites were represented, there was a paradox present: it seems that the portrayal of the government elites was not a favourable portrayal, such that the Prime Minister was most often portrayed as someone losing an election before it was called, and his Minister of Justice, the sponsor of the legislation, was rarely featured in any of the coverage as an authoritative source. And where one might have expected to see some persuasive and quasi-pedagogical discourse concerning the positive or negative aspects around SSM in some of the early coverage, there was none.

The idea and use of episodic framing was an unanticipated oversight in my analysis. It should have been expected that a human interest angle would have been a significant part of the coverage around SSM, which it was. Several articles described the struggle to get married, or religious groups' fear of the impact of SSM on their religious freedom. In each of these, SSM was described in terms of a story, and one that evolved over the course of the debate.

Essentially, this dissertation's findings supported the work of those researchers who would agree that the press does play a role in widening the political policy discussion. I found that what the press does not do, is broaden that discussion in any substantive way. If it did, one would have expected to see more in-depth research and analysis on the issue, perhaps with more academic sources and research, as one example.

In the previous chapter, I described my findings concerning how the press disseminated the political discourse. These findings were an important confirmation that some valuable information is provided by the press, although this information was of secondary importance to political or process-type arguments, which were the most frequently-used arguments made in Parliament. After those political arguments, a discussion of the *Charter of Rights* or legal arguments was carried in the press, just at a much lower incidence. For the most part, articles about politics, political behaviour and the potential to win an election, were the main angles presented by the press. It is important to note that the press did not emphasize any particular arguments differently than the emphasis I found in the Parliamentary discourse. This case study confirms the idea that the press coverage did not vary in terms of substantive content from the political discourse. This point requires further reflection, however, because the majority of speeches were delivered in opposition to Bill C-38, the majority of press coverage was found to be neutral. These analyses taken together can help define the press agenda. The following chart demonstrates the space where the press agenda can be observed as a compilation of the data found in the different discourse analyses:

Figure 12: Intersection of Press Coverage Tone with Speeches Position



8.2 FRAMSLAS as an Approach

The theoretical approach applied in this dissertation combined a form of agenda-setting with framing theory, anticipating that the press would establish the terms of the public debate on SSM and winnow that information down for the public's consumption. In addition, I had expected that the press would add new information for consideration through experts or other story angles. What was unexpected was the degree to which the field was winnowed down. I had believed that issues would have been dealt with in a substantive way, while at the same time, I expected that the media would side with the governing Liberals given the corporate leanings toward individual rights. What my methodological analysis revealed was that the field of information from which citizens acquire much of their knowledge was reduced substantially from what the

Parliamentarians presented resulting in few sources, fewer arguments and most frequently speculation about which political party could win a federal election. This is also significant in contrast to the idea that there were few ways to learn about the deliberations of Canada's Parliamentarians. At least that was the case in 2005. Since that time, it can be argued that there are more direct avenues to find out about what is happening through blog posts, RSS feeds, social media sites and other electronic subscriptions that deliver content directly to individuals. And many journalists have active twitter accounts where they tweet opinions that are for the most part, unedited.

Going back to the question of how much information was added to the debate by the press, my evidence indicated that the only information added by the media where some personal stories that reflected a struggle for happiness that speaks to the point raised by Ju (2005) about familiarity. For example, there was little to no coverage that shared research or the expertise of sociologists. Therefore, it seems that when the press recounted the debate, it was from a narrow perspective. Moreover, while the press had an opportunity to give a range of sources some credibility and news space, given time constraints and limited resources, the only sources my analysis turned up were those who were readily available and, for the most part, known entities, such as Alex Munter, a former municipal politician in Ottawa who became a spokesperson for SSM advocates. This finding fits with what researchers have argued about the media's reliance on the use of institutional sources over other sources.

Turning to the question of agenda-setting, this case study provides further evidence that while the media may have a certain degree of power to set the agenda, they do not do so in any focused or organized manner, largely due to journalistic

constraints and ownership directives, or management mandates to make a profit. What seems to appear, based upon the media analysis, is a general press agenda that supported the government, with coverage focused on the sensational or familiar.

As media ownership in Canada has trended towards greater concentration, the ownership holdings of different media outlets have proven to be a volatile industry according to Winseck (2010). And as different types of media have regularly changed corporate hands, the results have been significant changes to individual media outlets in terms of personnel layoffs and changes of direction as a result of the new consolidation. This alone would ensure that there is no overarching media agenda employed in a consistent way. Further to this point, my findings supported research provided by Miljan and Cooper (2003) that there was little evidence that ownership positions were a factor in how the press covered the debate.

The main work of this dissertation was the development and application of a methodological approach to analyze how the press covered a Parliamentary policy debate. The theoretical approach enlisted for this dissertation was a refinement of agenda-setting theory which facilitated finding meaning in attributes, not just objects. In other words, the methodology developed allowed for a deeper analysis to be conducted through the identification of arguments and meaning, not just the content itself.

The agenda-setting that took place was different from what was anticipated. On the one hand, it was expected that the press would shape the debate by taking a specific position, cover certain Members of Parliament and utilize certain arguments, sources and narrative language to “persuade” readers. In reality, the analysis identified little

agenda-setting in these respects, however, the analysis did show that the press took a position, regardless of where the debate was politically, and in the case of some media outlets, this position was taken early and did not change. In other cases, there seemed to be a balance between editorials and sources, and in neither case was there a difference by region; in fact both national newspapers analyzed had different initial positions.

Framing analysis and framing theory have different heritages depending on whether a sociological or psychological approach is taken. Both types of framing play a role in how a story is shaped although it was much easier to see sociological framing at work when issues relate to society and how we interact, or would be affected by couples having access to same-sex marriage, were carried in the press. If more narrative had been used in the press coverage, the psychological framing of the issue might have been more apparent. Also, interviews were not conducted for this dissertation, but if interviews had been conducted of readers or receivers of the press information, more information may have been available with respect to the psychological framing of the debate.

The use of framing established parameters of consideration, defining what was inside the scope of inquiry. The idea of SSM and how it is positioned as a topic very much depends on how the context is framed. When narrative or editorial language was identified in the press, such as “Harper attended a rally” versus “Harper met with protesters”, the framing of the context contributes meaning to the issue. In general, there is not a great deal of available research on the role played by myth or narrative as a persuasive device in the press in Canada. While some have identified mythic devices

(O'Donnell, 2004; and Ju, 2005) in stories about SSM, there seems to be little additional information with a focus on who exactly is using these tools and to what effect. This dissertation considered myth or narrative in terms of the attributes or arguments identified in the discourse analysis, which were then contrasted to the press coverage. Surprisingly, very little narrative language made the press coverage on this issue. For the most part, journalists did not provide a great deal of journalistic commentary or narrative language, but instead, were largely focused on the horse-race between the political parties.

8.3 The Importance of Discourse

When the Supreme Court Justices responded to the four questions posed by then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and said that SSM is not unconstitutional, they utilized a double-negative. When legal researchers discuss double negatives, there are precedents that show that a double-negative in Canadian, and British law, does not equate to a positive. In this case, responding that SSM marriage is *not unconstitutional*, is not the same as saying SSM marriage *is constitutional*. In other words, the discourse is imbued with meaning.

Who is saying what, matters; who was quoted, matters; and who was on what side, matters. By far the greatest percentage of sources quoted, supported the government position; and of all the sources identified in the debate, whether they were for or against SSM, it was clear that most were in support of SSM, which does reflect some journalistic shaping of the debate. The selection of certain Members of Parliament for coverage also reflects media shaping of the information shared with

Canadians. It is noteworthy that while the media were portraying the debate with sources in support of SSM, public opinion polls at that time continued to demonstrate that the majority of Canadians did not support the SSM legislation (see Pettinicchio, 2010, p. 135).

It was also apparent through the discourse and content analysis of the Parliamentarians' speeches that there was little to distinguish one member from another in the same political party – their speeches may have had a few different examples, but for the most part, little new information or research was shared throughout the debate. In fact, most of the debate could be described as a political maneuver to delay passage of the legislation. This is not uncommon, but for an issue of this magnitude, it seems that the real debate and reasoning must have taken place in the court system. This is ironic since the Supreme Court had responded that whether or not to have a law for SSM in Canada was the responsibility of the legislators, not the courts.

8.4 Other Avenues to Supplement the Findings for this Dissertation

It would have made an interesting contribution to the dissertation to interview SSM advocates or opponents, journalists and parliamentarians on this issue to get a greater sense of their different approaches, strategies and agenda. Analyzing written material, some of which was derived from speeches is adequate from a content analysis perspective but it misses information from a framing perspective and from agenda-setting.

It might have also been useful to determine who appeared as witnesses before the Parliamentary committees as representatives of organizations and individuals. Then

this information could have been contrasted to the sources that were featured in the press coverage to better understand who was considered credible by the press and whose views were shared with Canadians. Whoever did not get coverage would be an important finding.

8.5 Missed Opportunities?

One question that kept arising as my research progressed was the question of the audience. Repeatedly I asked myself how my findings affected the audience, what resonated with the audience, and did a certain approach used by the media, or by political elites, even matter to the audience. Clearly the audience is the third partner in the triad of media, political elites and the public when it comes to discourse dissemination: there has to be someone consuming what is being shaped and shared. Some researchers questioned whether the media coverage had an impact on public opinion and provided analysis of public opinion trends through numerous public opinion polls in contrast to media coverage (see Haskell, 2001; Li and Liu, 2010; Liebler, Schwartz and Harper, 2009; and Hester and Gibson, 2007).

From a socio-cultural point of view, a future research approach could take my analysis and contrast it to the trend¹³⁰ in public opinion on the issue of SSM as there were numerous opinion polls cited during the period covered by my analysis. A contrast such as this would have the potential to reveal whether the press coverage paralleled, preceded or followed any change in the pattern of public opinion over the

¹³⁰ As discussed in Chapter Two, Pettinicchio's (2010) research provides an example of how this could be done.

same period of time. For example, at the time of the debate in 2005, public opinion polls continued to show that Canadians remained divided on the issue.

This dissertation did not comment on the socio-political culture of Canada, yet the debate itself, the work of parliamentarians, the role of the press and public opinion are all factors in the socio-political culture of Canada and it is almost too much of a vacuum to not consider the nature of our democratic institutions and the checks and balances on our political elites. Some researchers such as Ju (2005) looked very closely at the impacts of liberalism on the media and its coverage of issues of importance. Still other researchers looked at audience deliberation, issue salience, and if any effects of media messaging could be identified in a study of the audience (Scheufele, Hardy and Wang, 2005; Wanta, 1997).

8.6 New Avenues for Research

As Haskell (2011) presented in his research, it would be interesting to contrast the poll results from the same period of time, including just before and just after, to the debate. Considering whether different geographic locations in Canada, rural and municipal, viewed the issue differently and if those views changed over the course of the debate, or soon after the law was passed is another research avenue that could be pursued.

It would also be instructive to step outside of Canada's borders and using a similar approach, analyze the press coverage in another country that also had a legal or political debate. The United States is an obvious example with the Defense of Marriage Act legislation that was introduced and passed in a number of States. One of my

questions would be how did the press in another country present the debate to its readers to see if the role of the press differed in different national contexts.

While this dissertation has been concerned with how the debate was presented by the press to better understand ideas about the role of the media and media agenda, using similar data, the material reviewed and presented here could also contribute to a greater understanding concerning the roles and the capacity of our political elites.

The methodological approach that I used to study the issue of SSM in this dissertation could also be replicated using a different medium of communication, such as television, to determine how the debate was covered in that medium, such as whether coverage was presented during news segments, or human interest programs, and what type of journalistic commentary, sources and other material was presented.

8.7 Concluding Ideas and Future Plans

It is 2012 and the many ways that issues arrive in the public sphere have expanded since 2005, if a new study were to be conducted concerning a Parliamentary debate today, it would be informative to consider social media and the Internet more generally, as well as online news sources, for coverage of the debate. Today the same journalists who published articles in 2005 are still publishing articles, but they are also tweeting, blogging and communicating their ideas in other ways, to individuals and to wider audiences. In particular, it would be interesting to measure what type of information is shared via the different sources and to what audiences, using a particular Parliamentary debate as the source of information. Some key questions could be whether the story that is shared through the press is shared differently online, on YouTube, in a blog or

tweeted. Another question that policymakers surely grapple with is how do political elites disseminate their messages, their Parliamentary debates and their positions on important issues, to Canadians today? Does it still make sense to provide privileged access to the traditional press and televised coverage and hope that the media agenda and resulting coverage will continue to support the social order? I would argue that it does continue to make sense, and that this case study provides an example of how the press would cover a public policy debate.

Further research could also consider how information is being packaged differently, and if this change affects the meaning of the information. In particular, currently many journalists are blogging and tweeting, but are these examples of journalism or journalists' personal opinions, especially if there is no overt editorial management of the content. It would be really interesting to contrast a press gallery member's article, blogs and tweets with a Parliamentary debate.

Finally, the issue of SSM remains a topic of interest such that public opinion polls continue to be published, as recently as July 4, 2012, about how Canadians feel. The poll, produced by Ipsos Reid, found that 62% of people believe same-sex marriage should be fully recognized and equal to conventional heterosexual marriage (Times Colonist, July 4, 2012). With these poll numbers, it is interesting to consider that the current political party in power fought against C-38 in 2005. It does not seem likely that the subject will be debated in the Canadian Parliament in the near future.

In closing, I learned from conducting the analysis for this case study that there is a media agenda in Canada that is visible when a policy issue that is debated in Parliament is contrasted to the resulting press coverage. The issue of SSM itself is not

generalizable, but once it became legislation, in the form of Bill C-38, it became framed by the Government as a priority part of its mandate. And I would argue, this framing then fit a complex social policy, legal, political and ethical issue into a neat legislative frame which then made its way through the Parliamentary process and passed in July 2005. If a researcher were to take the same theoretical and methodological approach that I did with SSM, and applied it to another complex issue that was turned into legislation, I would argue that the results would be surprisingly similar. The framing I employed, such as the discussion of ownership, added context, but it was not essential in the end, in terms of determining media agenda or the role played by the press. The history of marriage helped frame the complexity of the issue that was being debated, but specific references to the history of marriage during were not in evidence in either the Parliamentary speeches or the press coverage.

The analysis of the press coverage related to journalistic input and commentary, revealed how the language that was used to introduce sources or describe events, helped determine whether an article was for or against SSM. The data set that resulted from this analysis exposed further content linked to a press agenda.

This case study has demonstrated how the press covered a complex policy issue. Its generalizable merit is that the evidence provided in these pages supports the arguments and findings of a number of researchers who have argued that there is a pan-Canadian press agenda in Canada, and that the role of the press is not that of a watchdog. Although the issue of SSM has moral, legal, religious, ethical and political aspects, the evidence presented here has demonstrated that the media position was mostly consistent, and for some, entrenched from the beginning, in its support or

neutrality towards SSM once it became a policy matter. The analysis revealed that the press did not present what was argued in Parliament, nor did it present a balance of sources in the majority of coverage or any additional evidence to contribute to the debate on SSM as an important Canadian issue. As a source of information, the media provided coverage most often related to process types of issues and at no time questioned the validity of the institutional structure of government and the role of the media within that context.

This research concludes that it is reasonable to predict that the media follow a particular agenda, either deliberately, or *par hazard*, related to their role within Canada. Further, the evidence in this study indicates that the media are not likely to present significant evidence or sources to oppose a government policy position. Instead, it is expected that they would focus on process issues such as who is leading in the polls, or cover sensational issues for a short period of time. These findings provide a new example to contribute to the level of knowledge about agenda and framing in Canada that may be useful to those seeking to build support for certain new policy-making or raise the level of awareness for policies already before Parliament for deliberation.

Appendices

Appendix A - Synopsis of Media Clippings

Synopsis and Summary from Clips February 17-28:

- Different papers described the key arguments of the leaders during the first day of debate and seemed to establish the newspaper's position on SSM through how these initial leaders' speeches were covered. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, headlines seem to support the newspaper's position and are not always consistent when articles are repeated in the different articles analyzed. For example, the *National Post's* John Ivison reported that the "historic debate ... was a respectful exchange of views on the legislative merits of same-sex marriage, rather than occasion for an outbreak of partisan, moralistic mudslinging" (A6). In contrast, Tonda MacCharles, *Toronto Star*, A06, wrote that the debate descended from principled claims to partisan shots, and then into surprisingly nasty exchanges on the floor of the Commons. The barely veiled antagonism between Prime Minister Paul Martin and Opposition Leader Stephen Harper surfaced...". And in the *Globe and Mail*, Brian Laghi wrote about Harper's use of the phrase, "none is too many" which was the response of a government official when asked how many Jewish refugees should be accepted into Canada at the time of the Holocaust". The journalist referred to Harper as "dredging up 60-year old events". Interesting to note that while the quote is accurate concerning what the Canadian official said, it was not considered the Holocaust at that time. This article was entitled, "Bitter attacks open debate on same-sex". The Liberal position was on protecting minorities and that gays wanting marriage were minorities deserving of protection in accordance with the *Charter*.
- Articles highlight the Liberal position of protecting rights in accordance with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Conservative position that SSM is not a human right and but a civil union could be an alternative to offer legal rights to same-sex couples.
- Harper eschewed the lower court decisions of the seven provinces that have same-sex marriage legislation.
- Prime Minister Martin was dubbed "Mr. Dithers" by the *Economist* magazine.
- Coverage of provincial positions such as Conservative Newfoundland Premier Danny Williams who spoke out in support of the legislation, therefore in opposition to the federal Conservative position, because of his career support for minority rights and championing of social justice, Ontario legislature's passage of legislation dubbed "same-sex marriage legislation" even though it updates

over 70 statutes by changing gender-specific references like husband and wife to spouse, and.

- Articles then probed Harper's "none is too many" reference with different stakeholder and interest groups therefore adding these positions to the coverage.
- Some third party coverage included Hutterite communities speaking out against same-sex marriage legislation from four Western provinces, academic discussion of the issue in terms of being within the purview of Parliament or should marriage be reserved for religious institutions only (editorial in the *Globe and Mail*, February 22, 2005, p. A18), and coverage related to the battle within the global Anglican Church over cultural differences between countries on issues such as same-sex marriage where more liberal churches in the United States and Canada are in conflict with churches from Asia and Africa.
- Other coverage looked at what other MPs were saying about the subject such as Conservative Jason Kenney's comment about same-sex couples not being discriminated against because they could marry someone from the opposite sex, Liberal Charles Hubbard's comment that if C-38 passes, it will be brothers marrying brothers, and Liberal Pat O'Brien who is considered one of the strongest opponents to the bill within the Liberal caucus who said same-sex marriage is an oxymoron because it contradicts the true heterosexual nature of marriage.
- There were also some "human interest" stories about gay couples and business opportunity in catering to them and their disposable incomes, discussion about the matter of the Famous Players movie chain's pro-same-sex marriage advertisement paid for by the president of the corporation, coverage of the television show, *The Simpsons* and the town of Springfield's decision to permit same-sex marriage.
- There was some exploration of related issues (if these issues could be considered related, such as polygamy, research paid for by the Status of Women department to explore links between polygamy and same-sex marriage, some book reviews and play reviews with passing references to the subject of same-sex marriage, and the potential for a National Hockey League walk-out (or strike, depending on what side you are on!).
- Contrast Ottawa debate to what is going on in other countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States.
- Political discussion centered on preparation for the federal Conservative convention, the Ontario Progressive Conservative Convention and the Liberal upcoming convention, the upcoming government Budget and whether it will pass or will an election be called, and even the amount of mail that MPs were receiving from constituents including organized campaigns by organizations such as the Knights of Columbus based in the United States.

Synopsis and Summary from Clips March 22-28:

- Media citing who has been speaking out against the legislation, in particular, if from the governing party. Headlines sound like religious war (“Liberal MPs defy PM, decry same-sex marriage”, Tim Naumetz, *National Post*, March 22, p. A8; “Reject gay bill, Sikh MPs told”, Martin Regg Cohn, *Toronto Star*, March 28, p. A01).
- Some exploration into how marriage can have different meanings to different people, how countries have different tolerance which is measured by stance on same-sex marriage (“Trade, travel bind us to U.S.”, James Travers, *Toronto Star*, March 26, p. F02) and how the Conservative Party is defining itself in order to gain voter support (“Harper’s Tories struggle for focus”, Editorial, *Toronto Star*, March 22, p. A18).

Synopsis and Summary from Clips April 5-12:

- Numerous articles related to the Gomery Commission findings and potential for the Liberal government to lose a vote of non-confidence. If this were to occur, some articles probed the viability of the Official Opposition under the leadership of Stephen Harper (Tonda MacCharles, *Toronto Star*, April 11, p. A08). Other articles looked at potential defections from the Liberal party and how that would support the Opposition (Chantal Hebert, *Toronto Star*, April 11, p. A01).
- A rally of religious groups against same-sex marriage on Parliament Hill was pointed to as a platform for Harper as well as an example of growing support for the Conservatives in the face of the faltering Liberal government (Melissa Leong, *National Post*, April 5, p. A5). The next day, there were smaller rallies held by religious groups in support of the legislation (Elaine O’Connor, *Montreal Gazette*, April 11, p. A15) which did not receive the same prominence as the large rally on Parliament Hill in the coverage.
- Premier Ralph Klein’s government reversed its decision related to same-sex marriage until a decision was made regarding the federal legislation.
- There were a few articles about the role religion and religious groups play in society and whether they should participate in public discourse (*Toronto Star*, April 5, p. A22). There were also a few articles examining Pope John Paul’s legacy which included not resolving the tension between liberal Northerners and more traditional Southerner role of religion in public life, greater morality. Also interesting was article concerning the increase in legal decisions related to moral issues, supported by “members of humanist associations”, which have an ideology of real people, real situations, as a guide for making decisions (Michael Schulman, *National Post*, April 7, p. A22).

Synopsis and Summary from Clips April 13-19:

- Vote was held on Conservative motion to limit marriage to one man and one woman and established a separate civil union for same-sex couples. There were 34 Liberals that voted with the Opposition; 4 Conservatives voted with the government; one NDP abstained.
- David Kilgour, a Liberal MP quit his party. Rumours that other Liberals were thinking of doing the same thing. Voting down of this motion was seen as a hurdle successfully negotiated by the government. Another Liberal MP, Pat O'Brien criticized one of his female caucus members (in quite a low class way). Seems to be media disgust with what he said and not much reporting on what she said to provoke him.
- A lot of spring election speculation and what it might take to go to the polls including speculation that the Budget might not pass. Fair amount of media speculation by region and riding using position on same-sex marriage as a thermometer to gauge potential for success or failure.
- Most media coverage suggest that urban voters will not support Conservatives because of Harper's stand on same-sex marriage. Media cautioned Mr. Harper from relying on C-38 to gain electoral votes.
- Interest in who will replace Pope John Paul II.
- Interesting story angle on 2006 Census that will include same-sex spouse in the list of answers to questions about relationships. Statistics Canada spokesperson quoted as saying the move reflects the new reality in Canada. Inferred support for Bill C-38.

Synopsis and Summary from Clips April 20-28:

- A number of articles about the new Pope and speculation on his influence on the subject of "controversial subjects" such as same-sex marriage.
- Media questioning the importance and effect of Prime Minister Martin's special televised address to the nation.
- The *National Post* corrected the record on how many people attended the rally on Parliament Hill, from 4,000 quoted on April 11, to 15,000 in the April 21st article (well after the fact).
- Some discussion in the media about the right to religious freedom and what that means when religious leaders speak out against same-sex marriage such as Bishop Fred Henry, from Calgary.

- Consideration of the potential for Liberal success in forcing a vote before summer on same-sex marriage, as well as Liberal negotiations with the New Democratic Party to gain support for the Budget.
- Mention of Spain's passage of a same-sex marriage bill.
- Several articles covered the Sikh gathering in April and the attendance by political leaders.
- *The Globe and Mail* covered a story of four gay couples in New Brunswick who went to court to press for the legal right to marry (Jennifer Lewington, April 25, 2005, p. A5).
- Stories about former Prime Minister Chretien who was to be honoured in Philadelphia for his support of same-sex marriage.

Synopsis and Summary from Clips May 3-12:

- A number of articles covered the Conservatives' efforts to stall the bill with many parliamentary speeches. When the vote at second reading took place, 35 Liberals "broke ranks" and voted with the Conservatives against the bill, but it still passed to third reading. Passage at this stage was declared a "hurdle" by many media.
- Continuing media speculation on whether a spring election will take place.
- Overall coverage of Stephen Harper seemed to become more polarized with some media writing about his inability to form government because of his choice to support right wing agenda issues such as anti-same-sex marriage (Tory stand on gays scares votes, Diane Francis, *National Post*, May 10: FP2), and other media who clearly believe the Liberals were too scandal-ridden to continue governing, that the Liberals had lost their moral authority to govern (Why Harper has to pull the plug, John Ibbitson, the *Globe and Mail*, May 4, p. A4). Therefore, quite a bit of discussion of what could be election issues, why and why not the Gomery Inquiry, same-sex marriage and the Budget, would help the Conservatives form government.

The following is media analysis from Third Reading debate. Depending on total of articles for Second Reading, after Chronicle-Herald and Calgary Herald are complete, it may not be necessary to do the same kind of in-depth analysis. (The speeches at Third Reading have not been analyzed.)

Synopsis and Summary from Clips June 28-July 4:

- Spain became the 3rd or 4th country to adopt same-sex marriage legislation; those who said 4th were presupposing that C-38 was going to pass the Senate (which it eventually did a couple of weeks later).

- This context inferred in some articles that Canada was therefore ahead of other countries (this is not normally a Canadian value).
- Also a discussion about kind of debate each leader and party had. Harper's comments about the passage of C-38 being illegitimate because it carried the support of the Bloc Quebecois, received quite a bit of scrutiny. Some such as key journalists like Rex Murphy a popular CBC commentator, reflected that Harper "consolidated his negatives with the same-sex debate" (Rex Murphy, Globe and Mail, July 2, p. A15).
- Others argued that what Parliamentarians said at all was irrelevant since the courts in numerous provinces had already made the decision by making it legal (Jeffrey Simpson, Globe and Mail, July 2, p. A15).
- Jack Aubry article June 30: not about content of debate but about logistics; added comment that Canada would become the 3rd country to "recognize" same-sex marriage. This presumes that it exists already but would now be officially accepted in layman's terms.... "recognize" is a legal term but for those reading the papers.
- A number of articles about Alberta Premier Ralph Klein's outspoken position against same-sex marriage and how this has impacted the Conservative brand which hurts Stephen Harper's efforts to appear more moderate.
- End of Parliament commentary on how parties stand and how they should return to work in the fall: Bloc Quebecois's leader seen as smart, Jack Layton seen as strategic and in an upward trend for support; Harper seen as being in the same place electorally that he was when he became leader, even with the scandals that are impacted the Liberal brand; Prime Minister Martin seen as generally weak and the Mr. Dithers label from February has had staying power.
- No real analysis evident in the newspaper coverage of this issue, even as a wrap up story – no single story over the five months that enunciated each party's position with arguments, only a polarized debate of for or against;
- Some reference to the few states in the United States of America that have legislative support for same-sex marriage.
- Most of this group of articles featured speculation and discussion of passage of the government's Budget (which passed with NDP support).
- Some outside stories about a protester in Saskatchewan who burned a Canada flag because of the passage of the SSM legislation.

Appendix B - Detailed Editorial Coverage from February 17-May 12, 2005

Weeks	Tone	Van. Sun	Calgary Herald	Sk. Star Phoenix	Wpg. Free Press	Toronto Star	Mtl. Gazette	La Presse	Chronicle Herald	National Post	G&M
Feb 17-28	+		18		17	18, 24		26			17, 17, 18, 18, 19, 22
	-		18		27						
	~		26		25	21, 28, 28, 28					
Mar 22-28	+										
	-										
	~	22				22					
Apr 5-12	+		12			5				7, 7	
	-		10								
	~		5, 9			12					
Apr 13-19	+									14	16
	-		16								
	~		16			13, 16					
Apr 20-28	+										28
	-										
	~					27					
May 3-12			9					26			
			4, 8, 12								
			7				5				

Appendix C - Context for the Parliamentary Speeches and the Press Coverage

Debate	<i>Globe and Mail</i> National Headlines, Key Events, Newsmakers	Political context	Summary of C-38 speeches	Newspaper clips on C-38 summary	# of Articles
Feb. 16, 18, 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prime Minister Martin dubbed "Mr. Dithers" by <i>The Economist</i> magazine; -NHL cancels season; -SSM on A1; -Federal Budget was Feb. 23; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parliamentary session on Feb. 21 dominated by C-38 debate (eleven 20 min. speeches) -Question Period dominated by national defense and environment-related questions; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Feb 16 leaders presented their key arguments; -Bill Siksay spoke on behalf of Layton (due to illness) -Feb 18 one speech by key Liberal opposed to SSM Tom Wappel; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -papers covered leader's speeches from a "battle" perspective -speculation on how civilized the opponents would be -opening positions taken: Liberals upholding the Charter and Conservatives arguing for respect of tradition and that marriage not a human right; -discussion of laws in other countries, lower court decisions in Canada, and attempts to link issues of polygamy or de-link religious marriage from civil marriage, and some human interest stories (pro-SSM); 	124
Mar. 21, 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Air India 20 year anniversary; -Terry Schiavo coverage (euthanasia); -federal Conservative Convention; -Sponsorship scandal; -Smart regulation (to improve business with United States); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1st Conservative convention as a merged party; -Question Period was dominated by the Gomery Inquiry questions; -no other government legislation was debated; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59 10-minute speeches; -a number of key Members such as Ministers and senior Opposition members spoke out for and against the bill; -a number of SMEs were referenced; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -citing who speaking against legislation, especially if from governing party; -Headlines sound like religious war ("Liberal MPs defy PM, decry same-sex marriage", Tim Naumetz, <i>National Post</i>, March 22: A8; "Reject gay bill, Sikh MPs told", Martin Regg Cohn, <i>Toronto Star</i>, March 28: A01); -Some exploration into how marriage has different meanings for different people, how countries have different tolerance measured by stance on SSM ("Trade, travel bind us to U.S.", James Travers, <i>Toronto Star</i>, March 26: F02) and how the Conservative Party is defining itself in order to gain voter support ("Harper's Tories struggle for focus", Editorial, <i>Toronto Star</i>, March 22: A18). 	
Apr. 4, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pope John Paul II died weekend before Apr. 4; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -no other government legislation debated first 2 days of week; - Wed, Parliament of Canada Act and Department of Human 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -31 speeches (2 Lib for, 24 Cons against, 1 BQ for, 1 BQ against, 3 NDP for incl. leader Layton); -the Charter, tradition, society and politics were 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Numerous articles related to Gomery Commission findings and potential for the Liberal government to lose vote of non-confidence; -If this were to occur, some articles probed the viability of Official Opposition under leadership of Stephen Harper (Tonda MacCharles, <i>Toronto Star</i>, April 11: A08); -Others looked at potential defections from Liberal party and how that 	

		<p>Resources and Skills Development Act (each at Third reading) and Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act First reading;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -numerous petitions presented concerning marriage; -Question Period continued to be dominated by the Gomery Inquiry (Sponsorship Scandal); 	<p>arguments with greatest incidence;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -very few statistics or facts; -very few spoke about sex; -almost all had some narrative language in their speech (expected); 	<p>would support the Opposition (Chantal Hebert, <i>Toronto Star</i>, April 11: A01);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A rally of religious groups against SSM on Parliament Hill was pointed to as a platform for Harper as well as an example of growing support for Conservatives in the face of faltering Liberal government (Melissa Leong, <i>National Post</i>, April 5: A5); -The next day, smaller rallies held by religious groups in support of legislation received coverage (Elaine O'Connor, <i>Montreal Gazette</i>, April 11: A15); -Premier Ralph Klein's government reversed its decision related to SSM until decision made regarding federal legislation. -Some wrote about role religion and religious groups play in society and whether they should participate in public discourse (<i>Toronto Star</i>, April 5: A22); -Some articles examined Pope John Paul's legacy which included not resolving tension between liberal Northerners and more traditional Southerner role of religion in public life, greater morality; -Also interesting was article concerning the increase in legal decisions related to moral issues, supported by "members of humanist associations", which have an ideology of real people, real situations, as guide for making decisions (Michael Schulman, <i>National Post</i>, April 7: A22). 	
Apr. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -anti-Japan protests in Beijing; -Tiger Woods won Augusta Open; -Gomery Commission hearings (many articles on this subject); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Liberal MPs considering defection because of scandal; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -no speeches but voting on Cons. Motion; -QP dominated by sponsorship program questions; -2 other government bill C-43 (Budget implementation) and C-30 (Parliament of Canada Act); -session went almost to midnight; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Vote was held on Conservative motion (to limit marriage to one man and one woman, establishing civil union for same-sex couples); -34 Liberals voted with Opposition, 4 Conservatives voted with government, one NDP abstained; -Liberal MP David Kilgour quit his party; -Rumours that other Liberals also thinking of leaving; -Voting down of motion seen as hurdle successfully negotiated by government; -Liberal MP Pat O'Brien criticized one of his female caucus members (in poor taste)(interestingly, media didn't 	

				<p>report what she said to provoke);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Spring election speculation including speculation that the Budget might not pass and media analysis by region and riding using position on same-sex marriage as a thermometer to gauge potential for success or failure; -Most coverage suggested urban voters would not support Conservatives because of Harper's stand on SSM; -Media cautioned Harper against relying on C-38 to gain electoral votes; -Interest in who will replace Pope John Paul II. -Interesting story angle on 2006 Census that will include same-sex spouse in list of responses concerning relationships (Statistics Canada spokesperson quoted as saying move reflects new reality in Canada, inferring support for Bill C-38); -noteworthy that article in <i>La Presse</i> concerning Liberal MPs Kilgour and O'Brien leaving party did not mention SSM although English press did mention this issue; 	
Apr. 19, 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Vatican conclave; -speculation on new Pope (many articles on this subject); -potential for non-confidence vote in Canada; -continued anti-Japan protests in China; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Liberal MPs considering defection because of scandal; -intense speculation on potential federal election; -evidence of Liberal corruption as Gomery Inquiry underway; -no other government legislation debated; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -38 speeches (including many that were on the motion itself and repeats of earlier positions); -4 Lib for (incl. 3 Ministers), 3 Lib against, 2 Cons for, 25 Cons against, 4 BQ for; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -new Pope was selected, Cardinal Ratzinger -Opposition Days were suspended in the House of Commons causing an uproar -PM Martin addressed the nation in a televised address that was later panned for not saying anything -Canadian Tourism Commission campaign to attract gay tourists to Canada received coverage -gay couples in New Brunswick launched court battle -Sikh community had meeting with all political leaders in Toronto -a number of U.S. states have moved to recognize spousal rights for same-sex couples -more speculation about pre-election positioning, impact of Gomery 	63
May 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -4 days from British election; -most nutrition products break federal rules; -Tory MPs considering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -QP dominated by questions related to the Federal Budget and Sponsorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -26 speeches (1 Lib for, 3 Libs against, 22 Cons against); -on May 4, 2nd reading vote occurred and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A number of articles covered the Conservatives' efforts to stall the bill with many parliamentary speeches. When the vote at second reading took place, 35 Liberals "broke ranks" and voted with the Conservatives against the bill, but it still passed to third 	42

	<p>non-confidence vote; -Kentucky Derby hopeful; -Uganda in the news; -funeral in Iraq;</p>	<p>inquiry/scandal; -C-29 Patent Act received 2nd reading;</p>	<p>bill was referred to special committee for study (the Prime Minister promised MP Pat O'Brien that this committee could travel or hear witnesses from across the country as part of a deal to keep him in caucus); -overall speeches becoming highly political;</p>	<p>reading. Passage at this stage was declared a "hurdle" by many media. -Continuing media speculation on whether a spring election will take place. -Overall coverage of Stephen Harper seemed to become more polarized with some media writing about his inability to form government because of his choice to support right wing agenda issues such as anti-same-sex marriage (Tory stand on gays scares votes, Diane Francis, <i>National Post</i>, May 10: FP2), and other media who clearly believe the Liberals were too scandal-ridden to continue governing, that the Liberals had lost their moral authority to govern (Why Harper has to pull the plug, John Ibbitson, the <i>Globe and Mail</i>, May 4: A4). Therefore, quite a bit of discussion of what could be election issues, why and why not the Gomery Inquiry, same-sex marriage and the Budget, would help the Conservatives form government.</p>	
TOTAL					382

Appendix D - Initial List of Arguments from Parliamentary Speeches March 21, 2005¹³¹

- 1-Charter, equality, minority
- 2-Charter intrusion
- 3-tradition, fundamental institution
- 4-provincial laws precedents
- 5-moral values, personal beliefs
- 6-future consequences, fear, apocalyptic
- 7-evolution – anti-history
- 8-citizenship
- 9-polygamy
- 10-history important
- 11-freedom
- 12-religion influences but obligation more
- 13-UN, other countries
- 14-statistics to persuade
- 15-economic – shld have equal benefits
- 16 economic–cost to taxpayer
- 17-procreation, healthy families
- 18-needs of individuals (sex)
- 19-constituents
- 20-whipped vote
- 21-politics, positioning, electoral votes
- 22-SSM NOT a human rights issue
- 23-SSM IS a human rights issue
- 24-notwithstanding clause to override justices
- 25- proof, studies
- 26-What kind of an argument is a Chinese parable? More ancient, precedent to traditional definition of marriage??
Trumped tradition?
- 27-other: social experiment
- 28-religious freedom

¹³¹ This is an appropriate date for a preliminary analysis as there were 31 speeches delivered that day which represented a range of views and political representation.

CODING SHEET FOR NEWSPAPERS: Link to Parliamentary debate: (url) (page number)

Media	Times	Telegraph	Mail on Sun
DATE	Apr 12	Apr 12	Apr 12
Writer	John G. Cole	John G. Cole	John G. Cole
Prominence	A1	A1	A1
# of words	133	133	133
C-38 tie-in	1	1	1
MP's quoted/referenced	1	1	1
1. Number of Sights	✓	✓	✓
2. Reaction vs. Evaluation	✓	✓	✓
3. Narrative Language	✓	✓	✓
4. Statistics	✓	✓	✓
5. Quotes	✓	✓	✓
6. Society	✓	✓	✓
7. Sex	✓	✓	✓
8. Subject Matter Expert (SME)	✓	✓	✓
9. Other Story Angle (OSA)	✓	✓	✓
10. Evidence Evaluation Comment	✓	✓	✓
11. Example words	✓	✓	✓
12. Example phrases	✓	✓	✓
13. Position/negative tone	✓	✓	✓

References

- Alderson, K. (Summer 2004). A Phenomenological Investigation of Same-Sex Marriage. *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 13 (2), 107-22.
- Ashbee, E. (1999). Marriage, the Family and Contemporary American Politics. *British Parliamentary Affairs*, 54 (3), 509-25.
- Bailey, M. (October 2004). Same-Sex Relationships Across Borders. *McGill Law Journal*, 49 (4), 1005-1033.
- Bala, N. and Bromwich, R. (2002). Context and Inclusivity in Canada's Evolving Definition of the Family. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, 16, 145-80.
- Barthes, R. (1974). *Mythologies*. London: Lowe and Brydone (Printers) Ltd.
- Bennett, W. and Entman, R. (2001). *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Berg, B. (2001). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bocock, R. (1997). Choice and Regulation: Sexual Moralities. In Ken Thompson (Ed.). *Media and Cultural Regulation* (pp. 69-115). London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Boyle, M. and Schmierbach, M. (2005). Measuring Media Coverage of Same-Sex Marriage. *Conference Papers*, International Communication Association, Annual Meeting, New York.
- Brewer, P. (2003). Values, Political Knowledge, and Public Opinion about Gay Rights. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 67, 173-201.

- Brown, T. (Fall 2003). Sexual Orientation Provisions in Canadian Collective Agreements. *Relations Industrielles*, 58 (4), 644-666.
- Burd, G. (1991). Critique of Agenda-Setting Research. In D. Protes and M. McCombs (Eds.). *Agenda-Setting: Readings on Media, Public Opinion, and Policymaking*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Calder, G. (2005). Families and the Law in Canada: Cases and Commentary. *Canadian Journal of Family Law*, 22 (1), 101-16.
- Campbell, K. and Jamieson, K. (1990). *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cere, D. (2004). War of the Ring. In Cere, D. and Farrow, D. (Eds.). *Divorcing Marriage: Unveiling the Dangers in Canada's New Social Experiment* (pp. 9-28). Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Chapman, K. (2002). Halpern v. Canada. *Canadian Journal of Family Law*, 19 (2), 423-443.
- Chouliaraki, L. (2000). Political Discourse in the News: Democratizing Responsibility or Aestheticizing Politics? *Discourse & Society*, 11 (3), 293-314. London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Davis, H. (2005). The Difference of Queer. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 24(2/3), 23-6.
- Day, A. and Golan, G. (2005, February). Source and Content Diversity in Op-Ed Pages: Assessing Editorial Strategies in the New York Times and the Washington Post. *Journalism Studies*, 6 (1), 61-71.

- Dearing, J. (2002). A book review. In S.D. Reese, O.H. Gandy Jr., & A.E. Grant (Eds.). *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World. Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 2, 485-486.
- Dearing, J. and Rogers, E. (1996). *Communication Concepts 6: Agenda-Setting* (pp. 1-101). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- De Mino, W. (2000, Spring). From Bastardy to Equality: The Rights of Nonmarital Children and Their Fathers. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 31 (2), 231-62.
- Denike, M. (2007). Religion, Rights, and Relationships: The Dream of Relational Equality. *Hypatia*, 22(1), 71-91.
- Department of Justice. (November 2002). *Marriage and Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Unions: A Discussion Paper*. Government of Canada.
- Entman, R. (1989). How the Media Affect What People Think - and Think They Think. *Democracy Without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics* (pp. 75-88). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ericson, R., Baranek, P., and Chan, J. (1987). *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organizations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Eskridge Jr., W. (1996). *The Case for Same-Sex Marriage: From Sexual Liberty to Civilized Commitment*. New York: The Free Press.
- (2002). *Equality Practice: Civil Unions and the Future of Gay Rights*. New York: Routledge.
- Evans-Grubbs, J. (2010). Marriage Contracts in the Roman Empire. In L. Larsson Lóven, and A. Stromberg (Eds.). *Ancient Marriage in Myth and Reality* (pp.

- 78-101). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Fairclough, N., Graham, P., Lemke, J., Wodak, R. (2004). Introduction. *Critical Discourse Studies, 1 (1)*, 1-7.
- Fairclough, N. (1996). A Reply to Henry Widdowson's Discourse Analysis: a Critical View. *Language and Literature, 5 (1)*, 49-56.
- Farrow, D. (2004). Introduction: Canada's Romantic Mistake. In Cere, D. and Farrow, D. (Eds.). *Divorcing Marriage: Unveiling the Dangers in Canada's New Social Experiment* (pp. 1-6). Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Fish, E. (2005, Summer). The Road to Recognition: A Global Perspective on Gay Marriage. *Harvard International Review, 32-5*.
- Freeman, M. (1999). Not Such a Queer Idea: Is there a Case for Same Sex Marriages? *Journal of Applied Philosophy, 16 (1)*, 1-17.
- Foucault, Michel. (1978). *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction*. Translated by R. Hurley. New York: Random House, Inc.
- Fursich, E. (2002, Summer). Nation, Capitalism, Myth: Covering News of Economic Globalization. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 2*, 353-373.
- Gamson, W. (2001). Promoting Political Engagement. Bennett, W.L. and Entman, R.M. (Eds.). *Mediated Politics: Communication in the future of democracy* (pp. 56-74). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gans, H. (2003). *Democracy and the News*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ghanem, S. (1997). Filling in the tapestry: The second level of agenda-setting. McCombs, M., Shaw, D., and Weaver, D. (Eds.), *Communication and Democracy: Exploring the Intellectual Frontiers in Agenda-Setting Theory* (pp.

3-14). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gibson, R. and Hester, J. (Spring 2007). Effects of Sources in Coverage of Same-Sex Marriage. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 28 (2), 71-81.

Gitlin, T. (1980). *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left* (pp. 249-282). Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience* (pp. 1-39). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Greenberg, J. (2003). Promotional Communication and Reflexivity: Case Studies in the Media Politics and Problematization of Neo-Liberalism. *Doctoral Thesis (Sociology)*, McMaster University. Retrieved January 4, 2012 from Library and Archives Canada through the Scholar's Portal Website.

Greenberg, J. (2005). This news may come as a shock. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 30 (2), 233-258.

Haake, J., Campbell, K., Musacchia, L., Roggenburg, A., & Pollock, J. (2008). Nationwide Newspaper Coverage of Same-Sex Marriage: A Community Structure Approach. *Conference Papers – National Communication Association, 2008* (pp. 1-28).

Herman, E. (2000). The Propaganda Model: A Retrospective. *Journalism Studies*, 1 (1), 101-112.

Herman, E. and Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books.

- Hester, J. and Gibson, R. (2007). The Agenda-Setting Function of National Versus Local Media: A Time-Series Analysis for the Issue of Same-Sex Marriage. *Mass Communication & Society, 10* (3), 299-317.
- Hogg, P.C. and Thornton, A.A. (1999, April). The Charter Dialogue Between the Courts and Legislatures. *Policy Options, 20*, 19-22.
- Iyengar, S., and Simon, A. (1993, June). News Coverage of the Gulf Crisis and Public Opinion. *Communication Research, 20* (3), 365-383.
- Ju, Y. (2005). The Bipolar Liberalism Reflected in the New York Times Coverage of Gay Marriage. *Conference Papers, International Communication Association Annual Meeting* (pp. 1-21). New York.
- Kim, S., Scheufele, D., and Shanahan, J. (Spring, 2002). Think About it this Way: Attribute Agenda-Setting Function of the Press and the Public's Evaluation of a Legal Issue. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 79* (1), 7-25.
- Klaehn, J. (2003, August). Behind the Invisible Curtain of Scholarly Criticism: revisiting the Propaganda Model. *Journalism Studies, 4* (3), 359-369.
- Krippendorff, K. (2009). The Methodo-logic of Content Analysis. In F. Bermejo (Ed.). *On Communicating: Otherness, Meaning, and Information* (pp. 205-216). New York and London: Routledge.
- Lang, K. and Lang, G.E. (2002). Noam Chomsky and the manufacture of consent for American foreign policy. *Political Communication, 21*, 93-101.
- Lang, E. and Graves, F. (2012). Six Lessons from Canada's Path to Fiscal Virtuoso. *Policy Network*. Retrieved online: www.policy-network.net/articles/4115 on February 18, 2012.

- Lapidus, J. (July 2004). All the Lesbian Mothers are Couples, All the Single Mothers are Straight, and All of Us are Tired: Reflections on Being a Single Lesbian Mom. *Feminist Economics*, 10 (2), 227-36.
- Larsson Lóven, L. (2010). Marriage in Ancient Greco-Roman Sources and Societies. In L. Larsson Lóven, L. and A. Stromberg (Eds.). *Ancient Marriage in Myth and Reality* (pp. 1-24). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- (2002). Waiting in a new line at city hall: Registered partnerships as an option for relationship recognition reform in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Family Law*, 19 (1), 115-172.
- La Violette, N. (October 2004). Coming out to Canada: the immigration of same-sex couples under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. *McGill Law Journal*. Montreal. 49 (4), 969-1003.
- Li, X. and Liu, X. (2010). Framing and Coverage of Same-Sex Marriage in U.S. Newspapers. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 21, 72-91.
- Liebler, C., Schwartz, J., and Harper, T. (2009). Queer Tales of Morality: The Press, Same-Sex Marriage, and Hegemonic Framing. *Journal of Communication*, 59, 653-75.
- Lule, J. (2001). *Daily News, Eternal Studies: The Mythological Role of Journalism*. NY: The Guilford Press.
- Maarek, P.J. and Wolfsfeld, G. (2003). *Political Communication in a New Era: A Cross-National Perspective*. London, U.K.: Routledge.
- Machacek, D., Fulco, A. (Autumn 2004). The Courts and Public Discourse: The Case of Gay Marriage. *Church and State*, 46 (4), 767-85.

- MacIntosh, H., Reissing, E. D., & Andruff, H. (2010). Same-sex marriage in Canada: The Impact of legal marriage on the first cohort of gay and lesbian Canadians to wed. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality, 19* (3), 79-90.
- Majeed, D. (Summer 2004). "The Battle has been joined": Gay and Polygynous Marriages are Out of the Closet and in Search of Legitimacy. *Cross Currents, 54* (2), 73-81.
- Makus, A. (Fall 1990). Stuart Hall's Theory of Ideology: A Frame for Rhetorical Criticism. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 54*, 495-514.
- Matthews, J. (December 2005). The Political Foundations of Support for Same-Sex Marriage in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science, 38* (4), 841-66.
- Matthews, J.S. and Erickson, L. (November 2005). Public Opinion and Social Citizenship in Canada. *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 42* (4), 373-402.
- McCombs, M. (2004). *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion* (pp. 86-133). Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press.
- McCombs, M. and Shaw, D. (1991). The agenda-setting function of mass media. D. Protes and M. McCombs (Eds.). *Agenda-setting: Readings on Media, Public Opinion, and Policymaking* (pp. 17-26). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- McLeod, J., Becker, L.B., and Byrnes, J.E. (1991). Another Look at the Agenda-Setting Function of the Press. In D. Protes and M. McCombs (Eds.). *Agenda-Setting: Readings on Media, Public Opinion, and Policymaking* (pp. 47-60). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

- McNay, L. (1992). *Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender and the Self* (pp. 11-47). Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Mello, M. (2004). *Legalizing Gay Marriage*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Miljan, L., and Cooper, B. (2003). *Hidden Agendas: How Journalists Influence the News*. Vancouver, B.C.: UBC Press.
- Norquay, G. (November 2008). Cons Versus Libs: Lessons from an Election. *Policy Options*, 40-5.
- O'Donnell, M. (2004). Going to the chapel: Same sex marriage and competing narratives of intimate citizenship. *Pacific Journalism Review*, 10 (1), 9-29.
- Pan, Z. and Kosicki, G. (1993). Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse. *Political Communication*, 10, 55-75.
- Pettinicchio, D. (2010). Public and Elite Policy Preferences: Gay Marriage in Canada. *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, 42, 125-153. Retrieved January 7, 2012: <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1002175ar>.
- Price, V., Nir, L., and Cappella, J. (Summer 2005). Framing Public Discussion of Gay Civil Unions. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 69 (2), 179-212.
- Reid, C. (2005). Getting Hitched v. the Trashing of Marriage. *The Massachusetts Review*, 46 (2), 197-209.
- Reynolds, P. and Witte, Jr., J. (2007). *To Have and To Hold: Marrying and its documentation in Western Christendom, 400-1600*. New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.

- Riffe, D., Lacy, S. & Fico, F. (2005). *Analyzing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Robinson, G. (2007). A Review of: "Hidden Agendas: How Journalists Influence the News, by Lydia Miljan and Barry Cooper". *Political Communication*, 24 (2), 219-21.
- Rudnicki, D. (2009). Information or Persuasion: Government communications, the media and the same-sex marriage debate. *Master's Thesis*. Carleton University. Retrieved from Library and Archives Canada through the Scholar's Portal Website, October 3, 2011.
- Scheufele, D. (1999, Winter). Framing as a Theory of Media Effects. *Journal of Communication*, 103-122.
- Scheufele, D., Hardy, B., and Wang, Z. (2005). Defining Deliberation: Key Determinants and Distinct Dimensions. *Conference Papers, International Communication Association Annual Meeting* (pp. 1-35). New York.
- Schwartz, J. (2010). Whose Voices are Heard? Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Newspaper Sources. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*. Springer Science and Business Media, retrieved online November 6, 2011.
- Shoemaker, P. J. and Reese, S. D. (1996). *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content* (Chapters 3-5). London: Longman Publishers.
- Smart, B. (1983). *Foucault, Marxism and Critique*. London: Routledge.

- Smith, M. (April 2005). The Politics of Same-Sex Marriage in Canada and the United States. *PSOnline*. Retrieved from: www.apsanet.org. 225-8.
- Somerville, M. (2003). The other “rights question” in same-sex marriage. *Ottawa Life Magazine*, 6 (5), 19.
- Soroka, S. (2002). *Agenda-Setting Dynamics in Canada*. Vancouver, B.C.: UBC Press.
- Soroka, S., Maioni, A., Whyte, K., and Goodyear-Grant, E. (2004). How are the papers covering the campaign. *Globe and Mail Newspaper*. June 25, 2004. Retrieved 280604:www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20040526.elecmedia0528/BNPr.
- Sparks, C. (2007). Extending and Refining the Propaganda Model. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 4 (2), 68-84.
- Statistics Canada (2006). *Census*. Retrieved from: www.cbc.ca/news/interactives/same-sex-marriage/ssmarry on February 18, 2012.
- Stewart, M. N. (2004). Judicial Redefinition of Marriage. *Canadian Journal of Family Law*, 21(1), 11-132.
- Stone, G. and Banning, S. (1997). Public Perceptions of Newspaper’s Watchdog Role. *Newspaper Research Journal*. Winter/Spring/97, 18 (1/ 2). Retrieved from EBSCOhost May 24, 2005.
- Takeshita, T. (1997). Exploring the Media’s Roles in Defining Reality: From Issue-Agenda Setting to Attribute Agenda-Setting. In McCombs, M., Shaw, D., and Weaver, D. (Eds.). *Communication and Democracy: Exploring the Intellectual*

- Frontiers in Agenda-Setting Theory* (pp. 15-27). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Thompson, K. (1997). Introduction. In Ken Thompson (Ed.). *Media and Cultural Regulation* (pp. 1-7). London, England: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Thorpe, J. (2005). Redrawing National Boundaries: Gender, Race, Class, and Same-Sex Marriage Discourse in Canada. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 24 (2, 3), 15-21.
- Torres da Silva, M. (2012). Newsroom Practices and Letters-to-the-Editor: An Analysis of Selection Criteria. *Journalism Practice*, 6 (2), 250-63.
- Underwood, D. (2001). Reporting and the Push for Market-Oriented Journalism. In W. Bennett & R. Entman (Eds.). *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy* (pp. 99-116). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Urlin, E. (1913, reprinted 1990). *A Short History of Marriage: Marriage Rites, Customs, and Folklore in Many Countries and All Ages* (Preface, Chapters I-III). Detroit, U.S.: Omnigraphics.
- Van Dijk, T. (2006). Discourse, Context and Cognition. *Discourse & Society*, 8 (1), 159-77.
- Van Dijk, T. (1995). Interdisciplinarity. *Discourse & Society*, 6 (4), 459-60.
- Vaughan, F. (June 1999). Judicial Politics in Canada: Patterns and Trends. *Choices*, 5, 4-20.
- Wanta, W. (1997). *The Public and the National Agenda: How People Learn About Important Issues* (pp. 1-91). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Weiderman, G. (2009). The Watchdog Role of Newspapers: Newspaper coverage of Sinclair Broadcasting's announcement to air a one-sided documentary right before the 2004 presidential election. *Master's Thesis*, Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Retrieved on March 3, 2012: <http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi>.
- Whittaker, H. (2010). A Philosophical Marriage: Porphyry's Letter to Marcella. In L. Larsson Löven and A. Stromberg (Eds.). *Ancient Marriage in Myth and Reality* (pp. 43-54). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Winseck, D. (2010). Financialization and the "Crisis of the Media": The Rise and Fall of (Some) Media Conglomerates in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 35, 365-93.
- Wintemute, R. (October 2004). Sexual orientation and the Charter: the achievement of formal legal equality (1985-2005) and its limits. *McGill Law Journal*, 49 (4), 1143-1180.
- Wolfsfeld, G. (2003). The Political Contest Model. In S. Cottle (Ed.). *News, Public Relations and Power* (pp. 81-95). London: Sage Publications.
- (2001). Political Waves and Democratic Discourse. In Bennett, W.L. and Entman, R.M. (Eds.). *Mediated Politics: Communication in the future of democracy* (pp. 226-51). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1997). Introduction and Part 1. *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East* (pp. 1-73). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yang, A. (1997). The Polls-Trends: Attitudes Toward Homosexuality. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61, 477-507.

Young, L. and Soroka, S. (2012). Affective News: The Automated Coding of Sentiment in Political Texts. *Political Communication*, 29, 205–231.