RICH AND POOR DIVIDE: HOW PORTRAYALS OF THE POOR AND POVERTY IN NEWS MEDIA PERPETUATE STIGMA AND INEQUALITY

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A THEIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN EDUCATION
YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, ONTARIO

APRIL 2019

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Abstract

Discourses about people who are rich and those who are poor are pervasive in our society. Online news media is one of the ways in which these power dominated messages are disseminated. Forty online news articles from four major news outlets in Canada were examined using Critical Discourse Analysis. Questions about how the language used in these news articles perpetuates stigma for people who are poor were explored. The findings show that most news articles use some form of stigmatizing language that has a detrimental impact on how people living in poverty are perceived. Negative stereotypes were pervasive, especially in the more conservative leaning news organizations. Ways of changing this language, and methods for reducing stigma are investigated.

Keywords: Stigma, Inequality, Rich and Poor, Critical Discourse Analysis, News Media, Classism

This thesis is dedicated to the journalists who are fighting with compassion and using their platform to lessen the equality divide. It is also dedicated to all who have been marginalized and oppressed by the abuse of those in power who show their prejudice towards the marginalized through words, which has real effects on people's lives. When stigmatizing words flows through the media, and subsequently into the minds of the masses, we will always be there to push back, in solidarity, to resist the people who are destroying our world.

Acknowledgements

My sincerest gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Gaetz for his knowledge and guidance for this thesis. He allowed me to explore these difficult topics in my own way. Additionally, I would like to thank my second advisor Dr. Mary-Leigh Morbey for her insight. I would also like to thank all of the professors (including both supervisors) who have helped me with the wisdom to synthesize my knowledge in order to create this unique project. For my partner Andrew Lauzon, my close friends, and loved ones who have helped me as I struggled emotionally during the writing of this thesis, your unwavering support is greatly appreciated. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

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Chapter One - Introduction

The challenges and implications associated with growing income inequality; both locally and globally continue to be of interest to academics across multiple disciplines, journalists, activists and people in government. As people from different socioeconomic backgrounds become increasingly divided, research pertaining to income inequality, how it is socially constructed, and how it is reproduced become highly important. I am interested in examining what stories, perceptions and attitudes regarding income and class differences and relationships are reported, and how they are discussed through online news content. Using critical discourse analysis (CDA) methodology, some of the research questions I will be addressing include: What discourses surrounding income inequality are prevalent in online news media? How are people who are poor represented within these discourses? How do these web-based news outlets contribute to the stigmatization of people living in poverty? In what ways do class ideologies lead us to the evidence for and against what is being presented? And finally, how can we re-frame these discourses in a way that informs the audience and imparts critical media literacy knowledge about those living in poverty?

In this introduction I will provide the theoretical foundation for my thesis. Historical context is important for understanding how social classes have developed, and what theoretical positions exist. I explore how news discourses and power are intersectional. Finally, theoretical perspectives are given on how stigma has developed over time, in what ways, and how it is viewed today.

Understanding Social Class

Day (2001) wrote a comprehensive historical perspective on the development of social class. He suggests that "…the word 'class' refers to divisions in society" (p.2). In ancient Greece, social divisions were tied to wealth, occupation and categories of people. Greek society did not see these divisions negatively because people "knew their place" (Day, 2001, p.3). Roman society eventually had four ranks within their society, consisting of nobles, free men, slaves and other citizens. With the rise of Christianity came about ideas that social divisions were inevitable and included groups of nobles, clergy and commoners. Day suggests, that in seventeenth century England, class became more common because of

the prominence of the natural sciences, and within capitalism, there were fundamental changes within the economy which contributed to the idea of class. The societal turmoil moving into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as the French revolution, also contributed to the emergence of the term 'class' as a way of trying to understand the unrest.

The nineteenth century also provided some influential theorists regarding class. Prominent philosopher and economist Marx popularized the idea that society is divided into owners and non-owners, and capitalism exploits the non-owning class. Marx recognized social conflict arising out of class divisions, "…one class owned the means of production, while the other class owned nothing but their labour power, which they were obliged to sell in order to survive" (Day, 2001, p.6). Also during this time, social divisions were dividing internally, separating themselves based on labour skill levels and these tensions. Weber who was a German sociologist, differed from Marx as he incorporated social ideas of status and emphasized class as "…the constraints operating on a person's ability to earn a high income" (Day, 2001, p.10). Therefore, the social organization of class was being seen in terms of both economic and social factors.

Sociologist Porter (1965) offers two important theories regarding the purpose of social classes. He looks towards the philosophy of Marx who states that class being objectively defined leads to those within that class to become aware of their classness and can contribute to class cohesion. Sociologists Davis and Moore (1945) offered a publicly appealing theory because of its simplicity. They presented what is known as the functional theory of stratification, which says "…inequality is necessary and that people more or less arrive at the class positions which they deserve" (Porter, 1965, p.16). Both theories have been built upon and criticized over the years, yet at the very heart of each one lies the dichotomic relationship between rich and poor, that is perpetuated time and time again.

In 2011, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) launched one of the largest ever surveys on class, which boasted 161,400 online participants and asked over 50 questions (Devine & Snee, 2015). The online portion was in tandem with a national survey that both asked questions regarding economic, social, and cultural capital. From this study, researchers presented a new theoretical model of seven categories of

class that include the elite, established middle class, technical middle class, new affluent workers, traditional working class, emergent service worker, and finally, the precariat (Savage et al., 2013). Within these categories, there are varying amounts of high, moderate and low economic, social and cultural capital. The purpose of this model was for quantitative reasons to suggest how to measure social class and to understand how cultural and social boundaries work in Britain. Today, you can go onto the BBC website and answer questions on their "class calculator" to find out where you place within the seven class categories.

Porter (1965) argues that class boundaries are constructed arbitrarily and typically contain the following criteria, "…income, occupation, property ownership, and education…" (p.10). Other scholars may see social class as groupings of people similar to each other (Fairclough 1989), as older theoretical traditions, or tied to socioeconomic status (SES) (Milkie et al., 2014). Despite different ways of defining class, there are discourses that surround class. Zebroski (2006) argues that social class discourses include discourses of position (quantifiable factors), social relations, work and the workplace, cultural heritage, individual affiliation (class identity), and finally, discourse of witness (making social class visible). Zebroski suggests that the dominant discourse of social class involves "…hierarchies of income, education, and occupation, and there is a long tradition of social Darwinism that argues that we get where we are in these hierarchies through moral struggle, through survival of the fittest, the folks at the top being there because they worked hard and deserve to be there…" (2006, p.525). Beyond the meritocratic perspectives, social class identities become important. For some, they dictate "…how individuals act, who they think they align with personally and politically, and perhaps more importantly, who they think they are *not* like" (Milkie et al., 2014, p.554). This class awareness encourages people to see boundaries of difference, therefore leading to an "us versus them" worldview.

Some scholars believe social class to be an outdated concept and only useful when thinking about the past (Clark & Lipset, 1991; Nisbet, 1959). Several scholars disagree with this idea including Hout et al., (1993) who thoroughly reputed Clark and Lipset's claims. Hout et al., suggests three reasons that class is important for researchers: "(1) class is a key determinate of material interests; (2) structurally defined

classes give rise to – or influence the formation of – collective actors seeking to bring about social change; and (3) class membership affects the life chances and behaviour of individuals" (1993, p.261). Pierre Bourdieu (1987) questioned whether social classes are a scientific construct or if they were real. He suggested that those who have a realist stand will see class as empirically determined, by recognizing factors such as occupation or education level. Despite whether classes are perceived as real or not, Bourdieu points out that they "…are symbolic constructions oriented by the pursuit of individual and collective interests…" (1987, p.9). Researchers suggest that even though we may have argued class constructions out of existence, we still need to examine them because people experience class every day, and for those who it affects the most, class is very real (Kraus et al., 2011; Fiske & Markus, 2012; Porter 1965).

Day (2001) suggests that the idea of a classless society can be countered by two objections, "[t]he first is that inequality still exists and the second is that mass culture is the means by which the dominant class universalizes its values" (p.188). Porter agrees that inequality exists and that class differences contribute to how well we gain access to economic or political forms of power. He says "…[t]he structure of power reflects the structure of class, for class determines the routes and barriers to advancement up our institutional hierarchies (1965, p.6). Power structures and ideologies of meritocracy that people can just get ahead by working hard enough is the stealthiest forms of inequality (Milkie et al., 2014).

Power from dominant classes normalize rhetoric's that come across as common sense within society. Fairclough (1989) suggests that taking for granted institutional practices can legitimize power relations. "Practices which appear to be universal and commonsensical can often be shown to originate in the dominant class or the dominant bloc, and to have become *naturalized*" (p.33). The worldviews of the elites are the ones that become inherent within societal discourses. Porter acknowledges that Canadian intellectuals rarely include perspectives from those who are poor, and he says, "…[i]t was as though they did not exist" (Porter, 1965, p.6). The seemingly non-existent views from those with a lower SES shows that the ubiquity of expression comes from the top.

Finally, Foucault (1980) suggests that through forces of production, power maintains class domination. I assert that one of these forces is that of media. Media is one way that class dominance is perpetuated and normalized. Porter (1965) suggests that media standardizes the ideal middle class by dictating things like "…childrearing, homemaking, sexual behaviour, health, sports, and hobbies" (p.4). Additionally, he says that any ideas that conflict with these messages rarely get expressed since middle class ideals are both produced and consumed by the same group. While discourses involving the middle class can also provide insight into unequal ideas, the extremely wealthy (the ones which journalists write about to use for comparison to others) gives a more explicit representation about what is being said, as well as recognizing power dynamics that the middle-class discourses can offer. Furthermore, since many researchers have skipped over studying poor perspectives (Porter, 1965; Fiske & Markus, 2012), there is a greater need now, more than ever, to examine what is being said in mainstream media about those who are poor. As Bourdieu (1987) says, when you are in the middle, you are "…neither dominant nor dominated" (p.6). For the most part, the media has always been a conduit for the perpetuation of conformity. Elites determine what social values are appropriate for different classes which contributes to the cycle of class advantage.

News Discourse and Power

To understand news discourse, we need to look at what discourse is and how it will be defined for this thesis. Foucault has written extensively on ideas of discourse and power. Foucault sees discourse as several different concepts that are relational to one another, and they cannot be separated from power dynamics. He explains that "…there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse" (Foucault, 1980, p.93). Therefore, discourses cannot survive without people in positions of power dictating their ideologies to others and spreading those ideas throughout society. On an individual and societal level, these discourses contribute to our identities as people or as citizens. They construct what is seen as normal and discredit any perspectives that challenge that normativity. Power is defined as

"…privileged *access* to socially valued resources, such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, education or knowledge...Power involves *control*, namely by (members of) one group over (those of) other groups" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 254).

I present the working definition of discourse for this thesis by using critical discourse analysis (CDA) researcher Gee's definition. He considers discourse, with a capital "D" as "…a characteristic way of saying, doing, and being" (Gee, 2010, p.30). This definition is used to separate it from the more common definition of discourse which is spoken or written communication. More thoroughly, he suggests that Discourses "…always involve coordinating language with ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing, feeling, and with bodies, clothes, non-linguistic symbols, objects, tools, technologies, times, and places" (Gee, 2010, p.46). Hence, we are not separate from discourses; we can enact them, absorb them, perpetuate them, and challenge them.

One way that discourses can exercise power in our society is through mass media. British linguist Fowler (2007) suggests that newspapers "…and their ideological power stems from their ability to say the same thing to millions of people simultaneously" (p.122). Structural power involving people like celebrities, politicians, or institutions have access and control over news media. Their ideologies permeate what is being communicated through a reciprocal relationship with the mass media. Firstly, this imbalance of access leads to the silencing of counter ideas because they can become a threat to capitalism. Fowler (2007) suggests that news is a product, and that economic circumstances help to shape the ideologies of newspapers that includes advertising, people and companies who also own other commercial enterprises, the scale of news production, and finally, the economic and political climate that become invested in certain news organizations can be reflected in the writing portraying a particular worldview. Fowler gives an example of how newspapers write about royalty in England "…because the Royals symbolize hierarchy and privilege, and because emphasizing the 'naturalness' of hierarchy and privilege serves the interests of capitalism, in which the newspaper industry participates" (2007, p.20).

Secondly, the imbalance of access creates a need for researchers to analyze news to expose myopic discourses. CDA researcher Norman Fairclough (1989) recognizes that those in power attempt to

force an ideological common sense. However, there exists ideological diversity and researchers can interpret media texts in ways that can bring to light problems with making the public believe in these discourses. Van Dijk (1993) suggests that the analysis of dominance in discourse is not meant to see those in power as villains, but to understand how they have unique access to public discourse, along with how they attempt to influence the minds of the public. The marriage between language and dominance presents a site where discourses can be contested. Discourses must be critiqued and brought to light as they can impart information that some people are unaware of (Jäger, 2011, p.35). Power can effectively permeate society through the minds of the masses, "…enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to *change the mind of others in one's own interests*…managing the minds of others is essentially a function of text and talk" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 254). Lunt & Livingstone (2001) suggest that we fail to see the importance of media because it is normalized and ubiquitous in everyday life. Therefore, discourses from the media tend to be taken for granted. One must take a critical eye to what is being written or said by those in positions of power. CDA researcher Siegfried Jäger (2011) explains further,

> The (dominating) discourses can be criticized and problematized; this is done by analyzing them, by revealing their contradictions, and non-expression and/or the spectrum of what can be said and what can be done covered by them, and by making evident the means by which the acceptance of merely temporarily valid truths is to be achieved. Assumed truths are meant here, which are presented as being rational, sensible and beyond all doubt (p.34).

Researchers can analyze assumed truths that are perpetuated through news discourse. The ways in which the world is presented in the news are not only portrayed as truth, but they are done in a way that simplifies how we think about others. The news is presented as a "…a culturally organized set of categories, rather than a collection of unique individuals" (Fowler, 2007, p.92).

One of the discursive practices writers use involves distilling or essentializing language for their articles to become digestible for the masses. Fowler (2007) suggests that the reason for this is that "…the

meanings are more easily taught, learned and remembered, the objects and their relationships more readily recognized" (p.55-56). A non-musician can use the word guitar and only understand it at a basic level. However, a musician talking to another musician about a guitar will have a much more detailed understanding of what that term means. Are we talking about an acoustic or electric? What make and model is it? Since a guitarist has studied the instrument, they see the diversity within the umbrella term 'guitar' and know that no two are alike. They have looked under the surface both literally and figuratively. This is what we need to strive for as a society. Not taking what is being said to us at face value, and if we do not know or understand others, then perhaps taking the time to learn will lead to a more inclusive and empathetic public.

Stigma

The Greeks were the first to use the term "stigma" to spotlight those who were unusual or to draw attention to their bad morals via cuts or burns on the body (Goffman, 1963). Greek society included the custom of marking the bodies of slaves with stizeins – marks that would indicate their lower position in the social structure (Arboleda-Florenz, 2002). This type of branding would expose its bearer to several possible negative reactions, ranging from avoidance to exile (Coleman, 1986). Today, our attention shifts from a bodily branded mark to how we perceive and are perceived by others regarding various socially-defined labels. Several theories exist on how stigma is developed, including neurological perspectives (Amodio, 2014; Bos et al., 2013; Krendl et al., 2006), and evolutionary perspectives (Neuberg et al. 2000; Dovidio et al. 2008; Kurzban & Leary 2001). However, my focus will cover a broader perspective on how stigma is developed on a societal level.

Conceptualizing stigma has been problematic for many researchers over the years due to the lack of clear definitions (Link & Phelan, 2001). Goffman (1963) first described stigma as "…an attribute that is deeply discrediting" (p.3). Jones et al. (1984) talk about people with stigma as "the bearer of a 'mark'…" (p.6). Crocker et al. (1998) suggest that "stigmatized individuals possess (or are believed to possess) some attribute, or characteristic, that conveys a social identity that is devalued in some particular social context" (p.505). Other researchers have offered more broadly defined and detailed definitions.

Crandall (2000) says that , "…A stigma can be a deviant behaviour, physical characteristic, group membership, or moral failing that serves to disqualify the stigmatized person from full membership in a society, and cuts him or her off from normal social contact" (p.127). Stigma is a social construction more than an interpersonal process (Arboleda-Florez, 2002; Dovidio et al., 2000). Link and Phelan (2001) suggest that stigma is "the co-occurance of its components - labelling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination - and further indicate that for stigmatization to occur, power must be exercised" (p.363). This definition will be used in this thesis. Link and Phelan (2000) manage to incorporate the individual components while including the most important part of stigma and stigmatization: power. Moreover, they suggest that researchers should allow variation when it comes to the definition but to also be explicit in how they are using it.

Both stereotypes and prejudice are also a part of stigma; these terms also need defining. Prejudice and stereotyping tend to operate together (Amodio & Lieberman, 2009). Prejudice is typically defined as a "negative attitude" (Dovidio et al., 2000; Stangor, 2009) or dislike of people based on their associations with certain social groups (Amodio, 2014; Harris & Fiske, 2006). Stereotypes have traditionally referred to "…an assumed set of characteristics associated with a particular social group or type of person. Stereotypes are involved in stigmatization to the extent that the response of perceivers is not simply a negative one…but also that a specific set of characteristics is assumed to exist among people sharing the same stigma…" (Biernat & Dovidio, 2000, p.89). For the purposes of this paper, prejudice will be defined as both a negative attitude and a feeling towards people based on certain groups, while a negative stereotype will be defined as a set of characteristics associated with a group.

Goffman (1963) proposed three forms of stigma: abominations of the body (such as physical deformities), blemishes of individual character (such as mental illness, imprisonment, and homosexuality), and tribal stigmas (such as race, nationality, and religion) as transmitted through family lines. He is one of the most influential theorists regarding stigma. From Goffman's earlier work, contemporary research has built upon his ideas.

More recently, Link and Phelan (2001) suggest that there are five interrelated components that make up the concept of stigma: 1) Perceiving and labeling difference, 2) Labeled differences are linked to negative stereotypes, 3) Separation of the other, "us" versus "them," 4) Status loss and discrimination, and 5) Stigma is dependent on power. Once we have labeled and perceived others as being different, these worldviews become normalized within society. We use oversimplification to understand others, which leads to a complete disregard for seeing variability within groups. Ideas such as "People from (insert city here) are (insert negative label here)" are absurd, and yet we make these generalizations all the time. Once we have labeled someone and then linked it with a negative stereotype, a separation develops of our own identity and theirs. This is problematic because it denotes seeing someone else as a non-human (Goffman, 1963; Dovidio et al., 2000), which leads to rationalizing injustices and atrocities against fellow human beings. Link and Phelan suggest that once we perceive, label, and separate differences from others, a stigmatized person experiences status loss and discrimination, which can occur individually or structurally. Individually, people are disadvantaged when it comes to life chances (Link & Phelan, 2001, p.371); they may have hard time finding a job or a place to live. When stigmatized people are not directly discriminated against, then people may turn to indirect ways. Structurally, the stigma that impoverished people face can lead to higher educational barriers (Jury et al., 2017). Stigmatized groups that begin to accept society's normalized view of people with lower status will be "less likely to challenge structural forms of discrimination that block opportunities they desire" (Link & Phelan, 2001, p.375).

Finally, Link and Phelan (2001) explain the importance of power dynamics within the concept of stigma and how they seem unproblematic for people. Adam Hochschild's (1999) book *King Leopold's Ghost* clearly explains how colonial power can shape how we view others. King Leopold II committed genocide in the Congo, leading the killing and torture of millions of Africans. This display of power is significant because it shows that people in power with access to resources can literally kill other people based on their beliefs. If someone who is stigmatized by society views a king in a negative light, there would be no significant consequence to that king. But if a king sees a beggar as being less than human, then he has the power to jail, torture, or kill them. Link and Phelan (2001) conclude that "…what matters

is whose cognitions prevail—whose cognitions carry sufficient clout in social, cultural, economic, and political spheres to lead to important consequences for the group that has been labeled as different" (p.378).

Bos et al., (2013) provide a theoretical overview of mainly social psychological research that includes four types of stigma: public, self, stigma by association, and structural. They suggest that the origin of stigmatization "…lies in the cognitive representations that people (perceivers) hold regarding those who possess the stigmatized condition (targets)" (Bos et al., 2013, p.2). Within the public stigma sphere, there is exists representations of onset controllability (being personally responsible), perceived severity (can be fatal or disabling), perceived dangerousness, and perceptions of norm violation (deviance from social norms). Next, the self is implicated from these public stigmas through (a) enacted stigma (negative treatment), (b) felt stigma "…the experience or anticipation of stigmatization on the part of the person with the stigmatized condition" (p.3), and (c) internalized stigma (self-worth). Thirdly, stigma by association addresses those people who are not directly stigmatized, but who are impacted by association, Goffman (1963) calls this 'courtesy stigma'. Lastly, structural stigma plays a role in terms of how institutions within society add to or perpetuate stigmatizing conditions.

Pescosoldio and Martin (2015) put together a framework called "The Stigma Complex". This extensive framework captures both individual and societal components of how stigma can operate. Although this snapshot is somewhat essentialising, it is cohesive to study and allows us to see many of these processes together. Pescosolido and Martin (2015) take a systems approach here and realize that stigma comes from both individuals and society "…whose interonnections cannot be divorced from one another" (p.102). They build upon Goffman's idea that we are socially connected as the stigmatizer and the stigmatized. The biological, social, and behavioural aspects are also included within the individual dimension. As for society, the researchers show how media and social network characteristics are connected. This area also includes a national context. Both the individual and community sections come together to inform stigma in general and how we respond to it. Each aspect can contribute to our culture, how we approach treatment and institutional policies (for full review see Pescosolido & Martin, 2015).

Lastly, Fowler's (2007) explanation of homocentrism gives us an insight into how we stigmatize specifically through news discourse. He defines homocentrism as

> …a preoccupation with countries, societies and individuals perceived to be like oneself; with boundaries; with defining 'groups' felt to be unlike oneself, alien, threatening…the popular papers of the Right are obsessed with stories which cast 'them' in a bad light: trade unionists, socialist council leaders, teachers, blacks, social workers, rapists, homosexuals, etc., all become stigmatized 'groups', and are then somehow all lumped together… (p.16).

For example, neoliberal attitudes of individualism, privitization, government limitations, and that everyone has the same equal opportunities have been part of the stigmatizing process throughout the globe. Fowler (2007) suggests that the political climate in the 1980's, particularly under Margaret Thatcher, saw the depletion of resources and protections for vulnerable populations. This was seen discursively throughout the news media as propaganda, promoting individual responsibility and self-reliance. My research will examine if these ideologies are still represented today.

Summary

This thesis will analyze online news articles to answer the question: how do media representations perpetuate stigma and in turn contribute to the reproduction of class inequality? Critical discourse analysis will be used as the methodological lens through which this thesis will be presented. The range of issues presented will begin with income inequality, as this section covets the majority of news articles. I examine the different ways in which income inequality is being discussed in the media. Some of these media reports include research from world organizations such as Oxfam, as well as local think tanks that view the economic gap between the rich and poor as the defining issue of our time. Additional perspectives ask opposing questions such as: are concerns about income inequality being blown out of proportion? Will income inequality create a financial crisis? And is inequality morally good?

The section of income inquality also brings to light current discourses surrounding ideas of debt and the American and Canadian dreams, and how systemic factors play a major role in these figured worlds. This section also examines how research is used in the media and in what ways critical thinking can help to lessen bias when reading articles. Next, the section on health highlights the perpetuation of biological determinism and how wealthier people are treated better and offered more resources, than those who are poor. The health section also brings up an important discourse discussion surrounding drugs and alcohol. The stereotypical belief that people who are poor are stigmatized more than those who are rich is found to be perpetuated in news media.

Social mobility is also examined and reveals various perspectives on whether or not the general population can easily climb or fall down the economic social ladder. Wealth redistribution and taxation is explored, with questions raised as to whether or not we are doing too much or not enough as a society to redistribute wealth and taxes. Another issue that is examined is education. This section exposes issues of the effects of children's learning based on fundraising rules, whether or not their neighbourhood is affluent, and pressure for wealthy children to do well in school. Housing is also addressed and most of the news articles about this issue highlight the disparity of poor and wealthy neighbourhoods, beliefs in trickle-down economics, and how many Canadians may own houses, but their disposable income is lacking. This section covers discourses on affordable housing. I examine how building more affordable housing and social supports should be considered investments, not costs.

The next section explores news articles that present the reasons why the rich and poor are fundamentally different including negative stereotypes. This brings up the discourse conversation of blaming the victim, which presents how systems and individuals tend to blame people who are poor for their circumstances instead of understanding how both systems and individuals can actually contribute to the cycle of poverty. Employment is another issue examined. This section includes articles perpetuating negative stereotypes of youth employment, and the belief that it is ok for workers to be exploited. These articles reveal discourses surrounding sweatshops and the minimum wage debates. Celebrity is an issue that arises in the analysis, which exposesd the discourses surrounding how people become successful.

These discourses are explored, and critiqued. The final three issues examined with one article for each are on the effects of the Olympics on the poor in Rio, public transit issues depending on what neighbourhood someone lives in, and how income inequality can contribute to racial tensions in America. The extensiveness of these issues shows how pervasive beliefs of the poor are within news media.

Lastly, stigma may not be something that we can end, however this thesis examines different theoretical and practical examples of how researchers are trying to lessen stigma within society. I explore the goals for reducing stigma, why it is difficult to change, what role politics play in stigmatizing practices, and then I examine research that includes both micro and macro strategies for reducing stigma.

Chapter Two - Methodology

For my methodology, I will be using critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is one way to understand how power and discourse work in society. I will be offering a critical view of what is being normalized through news media in society to show how inequality is being perpetuated by powerful discourses. Van Dijk (2001) suggests that CDA "…focuses on the ways discourse structures, enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power* and *dominance* in society" (p. 353). Similarly, Wodak (2011) says "…CDA may be defined as fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (p.2). Not only does this include text producers, but also readers of that text who internalize and reproduce the ideologies that are presented to society in different ways.

CDA scholars understand that they play a part in advocacy for those who deal with social inequality (Gee, 2010; Meyer, 2011; Wodak, 2011; van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 1989). Researchers want to understand how discourses help or harm individuals dealing with social inequality. Therefore, through bringing some of these hidden (and not so hidden) ideas to light via their research, analysts hope to contribute to social change.

History

Linguists have researched the syntactic and semantic aspects of language (Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2008, p.7). However, this gives us only a limited understanding of language use in society. Halliday, a linguist from England, wanted to explore linguistic forms further. He developed a theory about systemic functional linguistics in which "…the form of language responds to the functions of language use" (Fowler, 1996, p.3). Researchers took Halliday's theory as a basis for what is known as Critical Linguistics (CL). CL arose from seminal works such as *Language and Control* (1979) from Fowler, Hodge, Kress, and Trew, as well as *Language as Ideology* (1979) from Kress and Hodge. Their aim was to examine language as a social practice and the interpretation of discourse (Fowler, 1996). In the early 1990s, after a symposium in Amsterdam, scholars van Dijk, Fairclough, Kress, van Leeuwen, and Wodak convened to discuss theories and methodologies of CDA (Wodak, 2011, p.4). From this

meeting, these scholars produced prominent works that included the launching of a discourse journal as well as books about language, ideologies, and power.

Current Critical Discourse Analysis Research

News media has been studied extensively regarding the ideologies of class bias (Chauhan & Foster, 2014; Rose & Baumgartner, 2013; McKendrick et al., 2008; Bullock et al., 2001; Sotirovic, 2001; Clawson & Trice, 2000). However, the scope of critical discourse analysis (CDA) research on social class discourses is minimal. Polito (2011) did a short study analyzing 40 blogs from university students by looking at how ideologies of power were presented within Philippine society. He found that there were 15 types of power referenced within the blogs and concluded that blogging can also be a way for building and maintaining societal power. De Melo Resende (2009) analyzed a memo that was sent around to tenants in a middle-class apartment building in Brazil regarding people who were homeless in the area. She found that the letter was written to disrupt any helping behaviours exhibited by the residents, such as handing out food, so that the people who were homeless would leave. She concludes that the memo minimizes homelessness as a social problem and reinforces perpetual social prejudices.

Huckin (2002) also produced a discourse analysis on homelessness. He outlines several textual silences such as speech-act silences, presuppositional, discreet, genre-based, and manipulative. His focus for the study was on manipulative silences, defined as those texts "…that intentionally conceal relevant information from the reader or listener, to the advantage of the writer or speaker…" (Huckin, 2002, p.351). Huckin collected 164 editorials, newspaper articles, letters to the editor, columns, and featured stories from major newspapers and magazines for the first month of 1999. He listed four main categories of topics from the data (including causes, effects, public responses, and demographic information) and broke down the discourses even further to include sub-topics such as domestic abuse, racism, and criminalization, among others.

Richardson (2008) conducted a critical discourse analysis based on Foucault, Barthes, and Said. He examined articles from several newspapers, both local and national, from January to December of 2007 that involved the area of Jane and Finch in Toronto, Ontario. He concluded that the dominant media

frequently shows this neighbourhood in a negative light. Stereotypes were rampant regarding violence and immigrants, with occasional challenges to these representations.

Rose and Baumgartner (2013) did not use CDA methods, however, their research involved understanding how media coverage has correlated with U.S. poverty policy from 1960 to 2008. They found that media discourse of poverty in the 60s offered structural causes of poverty as opposed to the gradual increase of individual blame from the 70s onward. These poverty frames of seeing the poor as either deserving or not drives public policy.

Jeppesen (2009) looked at anti-poverty discourses from the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) website and *The Toronto Star* on tenant rights. She is one of the very few researchers in this field who has lived experience. She compares the language and discourse of how tenant rights are presented and found that *The Toronto Star* article perpetuated binaries of the issue which include the deserving/undeserving poor, pride/shame, and dignity/stigmatization. She suggests that CDA research incorporate a wider range of texts to be studied and that researchers be active in their communities, working with those who experience oppression.

This compilation of CDA research of media and poverty shows the diversity of methods and analysis. For my thesis, I use a substantial amount of articles, not too little, not too many, along with thematic frameworks. This new approach fills a gap in CDA research about news discourses. I have lived experience and a history of volunteering within the homeless community and recognize that unique perspective that is often lacking in higher academic institutions.

Critical Discourse Analysis of Media

Historically, communications were perceived to begin from the sender, then the messages are passed on, and ultimately the messages are passively taken in by the recipient (Lunt & Livingstone, 2001). Lunt and Livingstone (2001) explain that, over time, researchers began to examine how people were receiving the messages, recognizing them as more active participants. Van Dijk (1988) explores ideas of news discourse categories and what they entail. He says most news items contain a headline and a lead that are used as an initial summary. Then the use of main events, within context, can be described

further by background information or an evaluation of the event. Van Dijk (1988) also suggests that news reports may have opinions despite the journalistic worldview that articles are objective. What makes the statements appear to be objective is how they support anecdotally what the journalist may have already mentioned. If the journalist says that a four-alarm blaze broke out in a downtown high-rise causing much panic, and those who were there mentioned that they were panicking, then there is more support for the story. Yet, not everyone may have been panicking, maybe only those whose quotes supported what was said were used in the report.

CDA researchers need to continually critique what is being presented by the mass media because these messages are something we consume daily (O'Keeffe, 2011). News from popular media outlets has been known to "…affect stock prices; lead to corporate collapses; cause falls of sales in products; result in the resignation of senior office-holders –even bring down Presidents" (Macnamara, 2005, p.1). On a personal level, we have memory processes that are engaged in representation, understanding, and retrieval of news information which can influence our knowledge of events and update our belief system (van Dijk, 1988). There are real effects on people from news media and that power dynamic should be appraised, especially when the messages are stigmatizing. Generally, news outlets tend to "…engage in positive presentation of dominant groups and negative presentation of subordinated social groups…" (Hollandar & Abelson, 2014, p.199).

An important aspect of my analysis will be examining what is not being said. Researchers understand how silencing, censoring, and excluding certain viewpoints from those who are stigmatized can contribute to inequality (Hollandar & Abelson, 2014; Zebroski, 2006; van Dijk, 1988; Fairclough 1989; Meyer, 2011). Fowler (2007) gives an example of how the image of an angry rioter is shown repeatedly, yet issues like unemployment or the lack of social services are never mentioned in the same articles. Therefore, my job as a CDA researcher with lived experience of growing up poor allows me the privilege of analyzing not only what is being said, but what information has not been considered or included.

Digital News Media

CDA analysts have been looking to the internet as an important place of discursive practice (Mautner, 2005; Vann, 2009; O'Keeffe, 2011). Online news content has also played a key role in economic, social, and cultural life (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009). With the prevalence of satire and alternative websites, there is a need to adhere to established news outlets for trustworthiness. For researchers, studying a source such as the BBC is more authoritative than Twitter, as the former has a regulated code of practice and ethics (Bednarek & Caple, 2012). Bednarek and Caple (2012) propose three reasons for studying news discourse. There is an abundance of information available, collecting articles is easy, and, since we consume plenty of it, we can learn about how it can influence us. They suggest that we share news information with others, that we potentially change our behaviours and beliefs depending on what we have digested from the media, and that the media can influence governments and institutions.

Validity

When researchers use CDA to analyze a social issue, they do not expect to portray "truth," but a representation, as they are already starting their research from a social issue position (Jäger, 2011). Some descriptive analysts will argue that CDA research is biased by the interests for tackling world issues. CDA analysts will argue that descriptive-only approaches avoid social and political responsibility (Gee, 2010). Gee argues that all discourse analysis needs to be critical, and language is political. Language use is how we create our culture and institutions. CDA recognizes that accusations of bias are "…part of the complex mechanisms of domination, namely as an attempt to marginalize and problematize dissent" (van Dijk, 2011, p. 96). When slavery was legal, it became normalized in newspapers throughout the United States (Gabrial, 2016). There were perhaps a few people during that time that said, "hmm, maybe this isn't right!" A CDA researcher back then would have taken a biased position (slavery is not good), gathered the news evidence (for and against) (Macnamara, 2005), analyzed the evidence (meaning and consequence of the content), and may have concluded that these discourses are harmful and perpetuate stereotypical beliefs for an entire group of people, which stigmatized them further. Fairclough (1989) also

suggests that researchers are opinionated investigators and that does not mean that analysts cannot argue rationally or support their research with evidence.

Gee (2010) discusses how context affects the meaning of written or oral observations and how the analyses are therefore subject to change the more context we give to particular texts. To make context related analysis more valid, the analysis needs to get to a point where "the widening appears to make no difference in our interpretation" (Gee, 2010, p.68) or similarly, "…when it reveals no further contents and formally new findings" (Jäger, 2011, p.51). This is not to say it is infallible, but this is a point where we are confident in making our claims that others can research, build upon, and critique if necessary.

Part of what makes an analysis valid is the answering of 42 questions that researcher James Paul Gee has compiled. The framework which I used is Gee's (2010) theory that validity for discourse analysis consists of four elements: (1) Convergence – how the 42 questions converge on supporting the analysis; (2) Agreement – the level of consensus from other native speakers and researchers of the social language used in analysis; (3) Coverage – can the data be applied to other related data; and finally, (4) Linguistic details – the arguments from the researcher show that the discourses being analyzed are linked somehow to grammar and language functions. Gee suggests that these are important aspects to making a discourse analysis valid because most answers to almost 42 different questions, observations from others, further data comparisons, and judgements of other native speakers and/or other researchers would be highly probable for convergence.

Using the internet for research presents its own challenges. Mautner (2005) presented different qualities for both opportunities and challenges that web-based research brings. With the accessibility, speed, and convenience of the internet comes a need for "principled criteria" for choosing what will be included in the data. She also pointed out that a wide range of voices and perspectives is a benefit for web-based research, however, this can bring difficulties with "identifying, categorizing, and selecting sources" (Mautner, 2005, p.816). The identity of the author of a particular piece of writing on the internet is not always clear, which is why all of my articles were from reputable sources and included author or organizational names. The search criteria were the same for each article, using the keyword terms "rich

and poor." Limiting web searches by including only articles from chosen news websites gave me a better focus to narrow down articles that are most relevant and popular.

Mautner (2005) also brought up the reliability challenge that web data is dynamic and texts are constantly changing. One problem she highlighted is that, when a piece of research is published, most of the data that researchers have collected may have migrated to another website, disappeared or have changed in some way. In my case, using news articles from well-established sources will cut down on any changes that one might encounter when, for example, studying discourses about products on company websites where changes to the text occurs more frequently. For replicability purposes, I included all citations with web addresses in the references section.

Methods

For my methods, I will be examining how the poor are represented in a media system of elite dominance. This will be achieved by analyzing articles from four major newspapers, both locally and nationally, that contain the keywords "rich and poor" through a Google search. The data will be kept current by covering forty articles between 2012 to 2016. Once collected, the data will be organized through Gee's (2010) seven building tasks which include significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems and knowledge. Themes will also be recorded for each article to help locate recurring discourses and their frequency.

Several researchers agree that there are many ways to do CDA and the methods are approaches or guides, not a specific formula (van Dijk, 1993, 2001; Gee, 2010; Fairclough, 1989; Meyer, 2011; Jäger, 2011; Hollander & Abelson, 2014). Van Dijk (1988) explains that recognizing themes of news articles is a good starting point for systematic analysis and that themes within news discourses are usually found in headlines which I have used. Keywords are also significant for CDA researchers (Vann, 2009). Therefore, I will examine the ways in which language and the terms "rich and poor" are used regularly within online news content and how those terms are filled with several other connotations through CDA.

Data Collection

PEW Research Center (2016a) reports that through "…audience analytics, survey data, and auditing of publishers' digital practices…" internet audiences are going to digital sources for their news. PEW (2016b) also reports that about 6 in 10 Americans get news from social media. This shows the relevance of digital news for many people as a source of information about the world. The types of online news sources that I will look at include news sources that are online but also in print. Political columnist McCullough (2016) explains that *The National Post*, and *The Toronto Sun* generally have a right-wing/conservative bias, whereas *The Globe and Mail* and *The Toronto Star* generally have a left-wing/liberal bias. These news sources have been chosen for analysis to provide inclusive political leanings with both local and national perspectives.

Bell (1991) offers three decisions that need to be made before choosing media for analysis, which are genres, outlets, and outputs. My genre was news article, and my outlets were from the *National Post*, *Toronto Sun*, *Toronto Star*, and *Globe and Mail*. To keep the data recent, my outputs were online news articles collected from a five-year period between 2012 and 2016. I used Google search with the terms "rich and poor." For example, the formula was "rich poor site:nationalpost.com" to only get results from that website, and I made sure that I was not signed in to my personal account to avoid selection bias. I included the first two pages of the search results, and the top 10 articles were chosen. Since I had 4 sources, the number of articles for analysis will be forty. However, some of these articles were discarded if they were irrelevant, therefore only applicable articles were chosen. An example of a discarded article could mention a recipe with a "rich" sauce and "poor" texture. For the purpose of this thesis, rich and poor are not defined by my own terms, but through the ways in which the articles are portraying those terms. The news articles generally use the term "rich" as having an abundance of money, assets and wealth, while "poor" is defined as lacking money, assets, and wealth. Further portrayals of "poor" are examined in the data analysis.

Chapter Three – Media Representations of the Poor and Poverty

For my analysis, I use Gee's (2010) guidelines for analyzing discourses. He suggests that researchers examine seven different building tasks. Each building task contains the following topics: significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems and knowledge. Within each of these seven tasks are various questions regarding situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds, intertextuality, Discourses, and Conversations. These 7 building tasks with 6 sub-questions total 42 questions. Gee (2010) affirms that not all questions will be asked depending on the research. Analysts need to understand that any unfinished questions can be used for critique from others. Some of these questions will not be addressed for this research. However, Gee's Conversations will be an important tool for this thesis. Gee (2010) uses the term Conversations with a capital "C" to mean when the words or sentences of a text brings out a current debate or theme happening within society. He capitalizes it in order to separate the methodology Conversation versus simply having a conversation by talking to someone. By analysing forty articles, with a specific focus on how stigma is reinforced, I offer a novel approach to this methodology that allows for multiple articles to be synthesized and compared from a broader scope. The following analysis consists of examining discourses used in forty online news articles from *The Globe and Mail*, *The National Post*, *The Toronto Star*, and *The Toronto Sun*.

My analysis is organized by a series of central themes which include Income Inequality, Health, Social Mobility, Wealth Redistribution and Taxes, Education, Housing, Rich/Poor Differences, Employment, Celebrity, Olympics, Public Transit, and Race. There are some overlapping topics within each theme. For example, Leung's (2012) article has the main theme of Rich/Poor Differences, but there is also mention of drugs and alcohol. Those subsections are examined through Gee's (2010) capitalized "C" Conversations in which the news articles mention a current debate or theme in society. The Education section does not bring up any Conversations, whereas the Employment section brings up two subsections, sweatshops and the minimum wage. The breadth of topics, in this data sample of forty articles, shows us how pervasive rich and poor discourses are throughout several aspects of life.

3.1 Income Inequality

Out of the forty articles I researched, eleven of them had income inequality as the main theme. It is not surprising that this topic boasted the most articles. President Barack Obama called growing inequality the defining challenge of our time (Eichler, 2012). We saw the rise of the Occupy movement in 2011 due to the rise in both economic and social inequalities and poverty has been on the rise in "advanced" countries since the 1990's (OECD, 2011; McCall & Percheski, 2010). Economies suffer when income inequalities are disparate. Research has shown that when the income of top twenty percent of rich people increases, GDP decreases, and when the income of the bottom twenty percent increases, GDP rises (Dabla-Norris et al., 2015). Income inequality is distressing for many because of the several consequences for those who are poor such as reinforcing their disadvantages, worsening physical and mental health, poorer education, loss of political agency and social cohesion. The news articles in this section on income inequality offer views that range from agreement that it is a problem to apathy.

The *Globe and Mail* article titled "Gap between rich and poor is the defining issue of our time: Broadbent Institute" written by Galloway (2012) presents income inequality as significant through ideas of politics, protest, policies, taxes, and power, with its broad impact asserted in the title itself. She frames the article through a political lens by mentioning the Occupy movement and the former NDP leader and Broadbent Institute founder, Broadbent. Next, she quotes a line from the report stating that "extreme economic inequality clearly undermines equal developmental opportunities and individual freedom since unequal economic resources give rise to significant imbalances of power" (Galloway, 2012). The article says the new report proposes policies that increase middle-income jobs, greater public supports for people with low incomes, more expanded public services, and tax changes to redistribute more wealth. These perspectives fall in line with left-leaning social concerns. No stigmatizing language was used.

Broadbent's (2013) *Globe and Mail* piece titled "Target the poor, not the rich, for real solutions to income inequality," offers a slightly provocative title as the words "target the poor" can invite several interpretations. If we saw the headline, but not the content, then how do we target the poor? We could be led to believe overly taxing the poor is good, akin to trickle-down economics. Targeting the poor could

imply ways of attributing personal blame for being poor. The title could have still been compelling without the vague negative implications of "target." Merriam-Webster defines "target" as "a mark to shoot at" and "something or someone fired at or marked for attack" and "an object of ridicule" (Target, 2018). The definition also includes "a goal to be achieved" further down the list, which is how the article is using it here. However, this is problematic as the term in general colloquial use can be understood as an attack. People who are poor are already too often the focus of discursive attacks in our society; we could do without headlines that imply they should be a "target."

Despite the clickbait headline, Broadbent focuses on what he considers to be five ways of addressing the problems of income inequality. Before he gets there, he discusses how we have focused on the rich so far; "[p]roposals range from moderating extreme CEO pay packages, to taking high incomes, to urging the rich toward robust philanthropy. Defenders of the rich in right-wing think tanks point out, accurately, that the results would be modest" (Broadbent, 2013). He adds, "[w]hile some are keen to discipline excessive salaries at the top of the range, the real problem is the low incomes at the bottom." Income inequality is not an either/or issue. The article divides ideas as solutions to income inequality. At the end he writes, "The problem is complex, but solutions are at hand." The whole article is divisive by suggesting that a need for greater focus on people with low incomes. The five ways he proposes as a way to mitigate the problem of income inequality include increasing the Canada Child Tax Benefit, enhancing the value of the Working Income Tax Benefit, restoring collective bargaining, supporting living wages, and enhancing protection of workers from "unscrupulous employers." These are good suggestions, but to dismiss the roles of those who are wealthy is irresponsible, at best.

Reporter Vieira's (2012) article "Ontario has greatest rise in rich-poor gap" from *The Globe and Mail* gives us one of the more balanced news articles for this thesis. He informs the readers of a report by the Ontario Common Front, a coalition of over 90 labour and community groups, that says Ontario has the largest increase for income inequality. Additionally, Ontario has the worst record for affordable housing and is lacking on public services funding. Vieira includes quoted statements from several prominent political leaders from all sides including Liberal, NDP, and Conservative leaders at the time.

His language use in the article does not imply judgement, nor does it paraphrase the Ontario Common Front's findings in a derogatory way, nor does he use pejorative terminology. This article is a good example for offering a balanced point of view.

As the title suggests, Whiting's (2016) article reports from Oxfam that the "Richest 62 people own same as half world's population." The article is on *The Toronto Sun*'s website, but the reporter is from *Reuters*. Assistant professor of Economics Zucman's work is mentioned in the article, stating that around $7.6 trillion dollars of individuals' wealth is in offshore tax havens. Oxfam's International executive director Byanima is also quoted in the news article as saying, "Multinational companies and wealthy elites are playing by different rules to everyone else, refusing to pay the taxes that society needs to function" (Whiting, 2016). The article goes on to mention research from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that the number of people living in extreme poverty has dropped by 650 million since 1981. The main reason for this is China which "accounted for half a billion people moving out of extreme poverty" (Whiting, 2016). This article does a good job of explaining the main points of the Oxfam report along with other prominent research on income inequality.

The Toronto Sun article "Has inequity in Canada been blown out of proportion?" by journalist Artuso (2016) reports about research conducted by Sarlo (2016) from the Fraser Institute. The article separates the ideas of income inequality versus consumption inequality. The article mentions that consumption inequality includes individual purchases, such as food and housing. The problem with the data presented is that there are inconsistencies in calculating consumption inequality. Researcher Will Wilkinson agrees that measuring consumption inequality is less dramatic than income inequality, yet he admits the data for consumption can be difficult to track, are less comprehensive, and cannot measure economic well-being, as well as that "nominal consumption does not necessarily track the value of the consumption to a consumer" (2009, p.5). Some researchers suggest that consumption inequality is similar in magnitude to income inequality (Aguiar & Bils, 2015), or that poverty decreased in Canada from 12.7% in 1997 to 7.7% in 2009 (Norris & Pendakur, 2015), or Sarlo reporting that "[t]he difference in standards of living between Canada's wealthy and poor remains largely the same as it did 40 years ago

when people's consumption is examined" (Artuso, 2016). Until there is a standard measurement for understanding consumption inequality, the data will continue to be malleable. Additionally, reducing an intersectional issue such as inequality down to numbers can depersonalize a very human issue. Wilkinson adds that a moral argument should be involved "...to show that there is some kind of injustice or wrongdoing..." (2009, p.12)

When you start with uncertain data, then your extrapolations as to causal factors from that data become questionable and potentially stigmatizing. The Fraser Institute's study author, Sarlo gives his beliefs as to why the consumption gap increases at a "far" slower rate of 3% over four decades: "The poor may be able to make purchases based on financial gifts or charity" (Artuso, 2016). This statement assumes that rich people do not make purchases from financial gifts, only people who have little to no income. Secondly, to highlight "charity" and "purchases" without specifics leaves an opening for interpretation. Does he mean charity purchases like food, entertainment, clothing, or childcare? Figured worlds in this case link ideas of how people who are poor are spending their money. Gee (2010) discusses extensively on how figured worlds are an important part of discourse analysis. He says they can be "…partly in our heads and partly out in the world in books, and other media and in other people's heads, people we can talk to" (2010, p.56). This idea is similar to Van Dijk's concept of frames as they "…represent the stereotypical and consensual knowledge people have about actions, events, and episodes in social life…" (1988, p.102). Paternalistic ideas about people with low-income and their spending leads to judgments about their purchases -- ideas of things that they don't "need" and ideas of what they "should" be spending money on, instead. Specificity is helpful. Furthermore, Sarlo says, "[o]lder people, who tend to earn more and may have paid off their homes, could be saving their money for retirement, while young people spend everything they're earning and more as they start out" (Artuso, 2016). Without any terminology used in this statement to show moderation, this statement is a perfect example of a sweeping generalization. Finally, Sarlo gives us another potential reason for a smaller consumption inequality gap, "[o]ne bank study concluded low wage earners are more likely to under report income" (Artuso, 2016). What bank? What study? Do other studies talk about how wealthy people underreport to

avoid paying more taxes? Again, this information is vague and figured worlds play a part in the interpretation by the reader. People could interpret that low wage earners do not report income to "take advantage of the system," something that wealthy people do as well (Whiting, 2016). Both the researcher and reporter of an article need to be clear and balanced in what and how they report.

Sarlo's research from the Fraser Institute downplays inequality by saying that standards of living for over forty years are barely unchanged. Some researchers from the Institute for Research on Public Policy offer a different perspective that Canadians are aware of growing inequality, that there is a broad academic consensus that supports it, and "[m]edia attention given to these opposing narratives might have contributed to confusion and some uncertainty about the extent to which inequality is growing and whether rising inequality is really a serious problem" (Green et al., 2017). The problem with downplaying inequality by saying it has barely changed over the years, whether you are making a distinction between consumption or income, is that it can lead to perceptions that everything is all right and we do not need to address the issue. Sarlo's report examines Canada as a whole. However, major cities like Toronto where millions of people live are showing that the income inequality gap is growing faster than both provincial or national averages (McDonough et al., 2015). There are a wide range of social problems that are less extensive in more equal societies, along with better physical and mental health (Wilkinson et al., 2010).

The article "Rich-poor gap could spark financial crisis" (QMI Agency, 2012), reports about research from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), a left-wing think tank saying that the rich and poor gap within Canada is widening and could lead to economic collapse. Most of the article presents perspectives from Osberg, a Dalhousie economist. At the end, QMI Agency says that the topic is controversial as to whether economic inequality can cause an economic collapse. The article says that researchers from Rutgers at the University of California argue that "...financial collapses tend to follow periods of loose-lending rather than periods of extreme inequality" (QMI Agency, 2012). There are no blatantly stigmatizing sentences in this article, however, there is a hidden Conversation that needs attention (See section Truth, Lies and Research).

Ballingall's (2015) *Toronto Star* article "New report warns of growing income gap in Toronto" addresses a report from the Toronto Foundation, whose mandate is to connect philanthropy with needs in the community. The Vital Signs 2015 report lists some data on several different aspects of life from transit to inequity gaps to the environment. The gap between rich and poor section says that the "…presence of middle-income residents has eroded across much of the city" and the article includes quotes from the Toronto Foundation's then-president, Rahul Bhardwaj, in which he says that Torontonians need to "…think in an integrated fashion about how we move this city forward" (Ballingall, 2015). The article continues to discuss the Toronto Foundation finding that jobs have been created, but the jobs are more precarious work. Bhardwaj says that an unintended consequence is that, in 2014 there were "[e]ighty thousand families on the waiting list for affordable housing [and] a million visits to the food bank" (Ballingall, 2015). Currently, the 2017 numbers report over 90,000 households on the waiting list (City of Toronto, 2017). On the plus side, the report says violent crime has dropped and Toronto is becoming a greener city. The news article ends by explaining that rising inequality is complex and is due to several factors, finishing with a quote from Bhardwaj saying "[t]here's never one silver bullet" (Ballingall, 2015).

Work and wealth journalist Mojtehedzadeh (2014) reports on a study from the Broadbent Institute in an article entitled "Gap between rich and poor greater than most Canadians think." The Broadbent Institute report conducted an online poll to assess Canadian perceptions on the income inequality gap. The results showed that Canadians believed the "richest fifth of the country own about 55 percent of wealth, and thought the poorest fifth held about 6 percent" (Mojtehedzadeh 2014). According to the article, the reality is that the rich controls almost 70%, while the poor has no share at all. Another interesting political finding was that 85% of people believed the government should intervene, with federal income taxes and higher corporate taxes. Mojtehedzadeh (2014) reports that three in four Conservative supporters see inequality as a growing issue. No stigmatizing language was used.

Hepburn's *Toronto Star* (2012) article entitled "Anne Golden's stern warning of growing rich-poor gap: Hepburn (opinion)" is one of the few articles in my research that clearly labels itself as an

opinion piece. He reports that at a Conference Board of Canada's dinner honouring her, Golden urged corporate bosses to do their part to help the growing income inequality gap. Golden is well respected in the business community and served as president of the United Way of Greater Toronto for 14 years. In her speech, she argues that "cities are most successful when citizens of all backgrounds and abilities are included in their economic, political, and social institutions" (Hepburn, 2012). Hepburn says that more CEOs have recently become involved in fundraising and philanthropy. This point is important to raise when having these discussions since the movement away from labour to increased profits for corporate executives has exacerbated income inequality (Brightman, 2014). If corporations are partly to blame, then pointing out those who are trying to make a difference in the gap is an important step.

Economy journalist Flavelle (2014) wrote an article "Canada's inequality growing: Stats Can" based on research released by the Broadbent Institute. Flavelle (2014) reports that the study from the institute shows "[t]he top 10 percent of Canadians have seen their median net worth grow by 42 percent since 2005..." and "...the bottom 10 percent of Canadians saw their median net worth shrink by 150 percent...their debts outweighed their assets." There is a problem when the topic of debt arises in news media. At the end of the article, Flavelle gives perspectives from global organizations such as the OECD who says that tax policies need to be more distributive and the IMF suggests that the growing gap could pose a threat to future economic growth. No stigmatizing language was used.

In 2013, *The Globe and Mail* produced a series called "The Globe's Wealth Paradox." Writer McKenna (2013) contributed an article to that series called "What growing income inequality is costing Canada's future generations." He says,

> The reality is that perfect equality is both unattainable and undesirable… Countries are all unequal, and that's generally a good thing. Inequality creates powerful incentive to work, to invest, and to get ahead. More income is the reward for success, which is spread to others when those at the top invest, start new businesses and hire more workers.

Examining the first sentence, in the context of our current globalized world, equality is most likely unattainable. However, believing that equality is "undesirable" is highly contestable. McKenna states that unequal countries are generally "a good thing" touting incentive to work, investments, and getting ahead. This statement simply rehashes neo-conservative trickle-down theories. The connotation of the paragraph simplifies how one can get ahead in society by working and investing without mentioning how unequal opportunity attainment, social capital, or systemic barriers play a large role in keeping people unequal within a society (See section on Employment). Later in the article McKenna does suggest wider factors for growing income inequality in Canada that include technological changes and how manufacturing jobs have been sent abroad. He acknowledges that lesser skilled workers are losing value over higher skilled jobs.

McKenna (2013) says, "The spillover effects from the success of the 1 percent has completely bypassed many communities, including Indigenous people and some new immigrant groups." The first half of this sentence manages to assume that there are "spillover effects" from the 1 percent. He suggests that spillover effects include "…when those at the top invest, start new businesses and hire more workers." He points out that Indigenous people and some new immigrant groups are bypassed by this idea of spillover. McKenna should have elaborated in what ways, or why? The myth that people can get spillover effects by having new jobs being created or new businesses popping up is naïve. For people who are stigmatized, new businesses or job creation will not be of any help if they are not considered hireable in the first place.

Debt and the American/Canadian Dream

Discussing the framing of personal debt is significant because of the beliefs that people who have little income do not know how to manage their money. They are regularly seen as solely to blame for their spending habits and are judged for what they buy with their money. These beliefs contribute to the process of stigmatizing people who are not wealthy. I will examine the news articles that discuss debt and ideas of the American or Canadian Dream.

At the end of Galloway's (2012) article he mentions that the Broadbent institute's report says, "in situations of extreme inequality, less wealthy consumers try to copy the spending patterns of the affluent, creating unaffordable debt and economic bubbles which burst causing recessions like the one that began in 2008." This statement is problematic for reinforcing personal blame. Saying "less wealthy consumers" *do* this *causing* this puts the blame on less wealthy people. Broadbent's (2013) *Globe and Mail* piece says "[d]reams of iPads, warm winter vacations, and luxury cars turn into reality for only one-third of Canadian families." Here, he mentions specifically what the "dream" is for some Canadians. In McKenna's (2013) article "What growing income inequality is costing Canada's future generations," he examines how income inequality affects Canadians generationally. One paragraph highlights a man, Naets, a 39-years-old post-Baby Boomer who represents the worries of the Canadian Dream passing those like him by. The article continues, "He and his wife earn 'well above' the national average. They have two children, one car, little debt and a modest suburban townhome." (McKenna, 2013). In the next two paragraphs, the news article discusses Mr. Naets' dream for a larger house, fears about more debt, and lack of retirement savings. He is quoted as saying "Compared to my parents, I'm way further ahead from a job point of view, I'm better educated, and I'm probably in a higher income bracket. But my standard of living is a lot lower than theirs was" (McKenna, 2013). Later in the article, McKenna reports on research from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by authors Berg and Ostry (2011). McKenna (2013) reports that the research says, "…greater inequality may make financial crises more likely as lower income-earners borrow more and save less in a race to keep up with lifestyles of those at the top…Canadians' ratio of household debt to income in recent years suggests many families are chasing a dream they can't afford."

These statements essentialize a more complex Conversation. If we examine other influences involved in debt and dream creation, we can begin to understand more systemic and institutional causes of debt. The figured world of the Canadian Dream in this news article gives us information on normative life in Canadian society, what is expected of Canadian citizens to have at a certain age, and what privilege looks like. The idea of the Canadian Dream is also an example of a situated meaning. Gee's (2010)

explanation of the situated meaning is when different language structures have specific meanings in multiple contexts. We need to define what the "Dream" looks like in our society. Robert Barsky defines the American Dream as "possessions (house, car, boat, money), lifestyle (leisure time, nuclear family, employment), political vision (freedom, liberty, democracy) and possible worlds (immigration, integration, mobility)" (1995, p.126). Harvard researchers Hill and Torres describe the American Dream as "the premise that one can achieve success and prosperity through determination, hard work, and courage—an open system for mobility" (2010, p.95). The situated meaning surrounding the Canadian dream can change depending on your life circumstance. The article presents a middle-class normative experience. People who live in poverty also yearn for the basics like affordable housing, food, heat or electricity, access to public transit, a better education, or affordable daycare. For many, the idea of a retirement fund is non-existent, and getting into debt is something already actualized. When normative beliefs around the Canadian Dream get perpetuated, those who are not wealthy may feel excluded. We begin to get a skewed perspective of what an average Canadian should look like, what they should have, and how they are made to feel unworthy if they have not achieved a certain amount of financial success. The American Dream, outside of the generally accepted definition, can also represent a propagandists construct, a domestic lie, and a self-serving paradox (Barsky, 1995, p.126). People cannot "get ahead" if the system is engineered to prevent them from moving forward.

We know that in capitalist cultures, the desire for financial success is an important aspect of society (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). After 9/11, President Bush was asked what Americans should do to cope with the tragedy. He told them to go shopping, and both homes and cars were bought in record numbers (Arndt et al., 2004). Research has shown that from early adolescence onwards, impoverished youth tend to be more materialistic than their affluent peers, which is linked to factors such as low self-esteem and marketing (Chaplin et al., 2014). There is a pressure from our institutions for people to spend money, whether it is government, marketing, or banks. The banking sector uses exceptional research methods to get to know their customers who could be financially vulnerable, but the policies in place do not recognize this type of target marketing when trying to protect people (Harrison & Gray, 2010). This is an

example of how the system pushes consumers to spend or receive credit but does not protect them. In the 1950s, credit cards were first introduced into American society. History Professor Calder suggests that "...modern consumers run the risk of being both deceived by consumerism and dragged along by consumer credit" (2009, p.33). This begins the power relationship between creditors and debtors which is at the heart of neoliberal politics (Lazzarato, 2012).

Poorer households have three main situations in which they use credit. These include acute purchases (e.g. birthdays, beginning of the school year, emergencies), everyday purchases (e.g. food, rent, bills), and institutional consequences for borrowing (e.g. loan payback, bounced cheques) (Hartfree & Collard, 2014). We know that low-income families are experiencing increased debt without many assets to offset the debt, which keeps them vulnerable when faced with a financial crisis such as job loss or illness (Wagmiller, 2003). Knowing this information can help dispel the myth that people who are financially poor "waste" their money on alcohol and tobacco (Evans, 2017), see section Drugs and Alcohol for further examination of this topic. Contrary to prejudiced beliefs, many people with low-income are exceptionally good with finances. They are very resourceful having to get their basic needs met on a daily basis with limited money, "such as bartering services, taking advantage of free or low-cost events and free samples, engaging in food-tasting activities, accessing second hand clothing, seeking support from family" (Reutter et al., 2009, p.303). Another point to mention is that the amount of psychological stress that is caused by debt creditors is great. Political science researcher Piotr Kowzan (2010) explains that people who are in debt may deal with a barrage of letters, text messages, manipulations from collection agencies, and threats of the consequences for not paying back their debt, and these tactics have even pushed people to complete suicide. He said that the neoliberal subjects who have debt are both encouraged to be in debt and are at the same time blamed for it.

Truth, Lies, and Research

The article "Rich-poor gap could spark financial crisis" (QMI Agency, 2012), called the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) a "left-wing think tank." The intent is to try to expose potential bias, which is admirable. However, when you brand a piece of research as left or right-wing, it

can also be interpreted as discrediting the legitimacy of the information due to perceived bias. We can examine an example of Gee's politics which he defines as the "distribution of social goods" (2010, p.19) to explore bias and the ramifications of political agendas. The Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA), under the Conservative government in 2014, audited the CCPA because they were believed to be biased. The Conservatives did not like what scientists, academics, and journalists were saying about the research on issues like climate change, as it did not fall in line with their political ideology. Over 400 academics tried to halt the audit saying, "the Conservative government is trying to intimidate, muzzle, and silence its critics" (Beeby, 2014). In 2006, Harper's government put into place several restrictions that controlled or prevented the unobstructed sharing of scientific information (Linnett, 2013). During Harper's time in power, there were investigations into seven different federal agencies from Canada's information commissioner because of complaints that government policies restricted federal scientists from communicating certain information to reporters, which violated Canada's Access to Information Act (Jones, 2013). The academics and experts who wrote to the CRA included people from several different fields. In the letter, they state that "…critical policy analysis does not equate with political activism, nor is it 'biased' or 'one-sided' as CRA has claimed. Researchers explore specific questions of interest, and then present the results of their research. Reaching a conclusion is not the same as bias" (Seccareccia & Rochon, 2014).

The educational programming network TV Ontario (TVO) provides a list of various think tanks in Canada, and specifies whether they are considered left, right, or centrist. The network also takes issue with labelling stating, "[t]he left, right and centre paradigms seem like an increasingly vague and even problematic way to view politics. There are plenty of people who hold views that could be considered both left and right at the same time…" (Clark, 2014). So how do people navigate what is factual and what is false or biased information?

When critically thinking about what we read in the news, we need to diligently evaluate whether the information is correct when presented by a labelled politically biased think tank. What about the content of the information? Is the information corroborated by others? Has the information been skewed?

The conservative policies of the Harper government fought against both academic and scientific communities on issues supporting climate change. The Fraser Institute purports that, “there is no clear evidence of the effect of anthropogenic CO2 on global climate” (Soon et al., 2001, p.8). However, we know that human-caused climate change is real. The only aspect in question from scientists is what is the exact percentage of scientists who agree? Some researchers suggest a 97% consensus saying that the papers "…rejecting AGW [Anthropogenic, or human-caused, Global Warming] is a miniscule proportion of the published research, with the percentage slightly decreasing over time…” (Cook et al., 2016). Compare this to Powell (2016), who suggests that there is a 99% unanimous view that AGW is true. When both academic and scientific communities have a high percentage of consensus, we can more easily dismiss ideas as left or right.

Another way to critically evaluate information is to compare reports from media outlets with one political leaning, to declarations on the same topic from think tanks that occupy a different political leaning. For example, do the findings of a left-wing think tank concur what a right-wing media outlet reports? Are there subtle differences in the way the facts are presented, or are the two sources making fundamentally different claims? The Conference Board of Canada is considered centrist and has several research topics examining how climate change needs to be taken seriously (Kabilan, 2015; Rao, 2016). Right-wing think tank C.D. Howe Institute says that a survey finding that most Canadians see climate change as a real issue which needs addressing is “good news” (Ragan, 2015). After examining the content of what the Fraser Institute reported and comparing their reports against several centrist and right leaning think tanks, we can conclude that the Fraser Institute is not a reliable source for information. The Fraser Institute receives millions of dollars in donations, and has ties with lobbyists from organizations such as the Koch Brothers charities, Eli Lilly among many others (SourceWatch, 2018; Hong, 2012).

Additionally, if we examine the Fraser Institute’s experts section, we will see an overwhelmingly high proportion of older white men. Specifically, the poverty and inequality researchers are all older white men. The term ‘white heteromasculinism’ refers to an intersectional system of subjugation that describes processes that reinforces the status of people who are “…white, male, able-bodied,

economically privileged, heterosexual, and cis-gendered (Mott & Cockayne, 2017). White hypermasculinity has been critiqued in both research and academic arenas for underrepresentation and marginalization of everyone who is othered through this normative dominance (Faria and Mollett 2016; Thomas, 2017; Peake and Kobayashi 2002). In turn, this leaves out different perspectives and experiences. This is an important point to address when considering how the Fraser Institute presents itself, what information they are reporting, and how lack of representation matters.

3.2. Health

Out of the forty articles I researched, five of them had health as the main theme. The second largest theme for this analysis, health and inequality has been studied to a great extent (Bergh et al., 2016). The relationship between poverty and health runs both ways, as poverty can cause poor health and poor health can lead to poverty (Wagstaff, 2002). This section explores hospital care, access to care, transplants, brain myths, and death.

The Washington Post (2015) article, on *The National Post* website, titled "Neuroscientists find that poor children have smaller brains than wealthy children, study says" reported on a study that showed a link between the surface area of the brain and family income. Specifically, the study reported that the surface area of the cerebral cortex was 6 percent smaller for children in families that earned less than $25,000 a year compared to children in families with earnings of over $150,000 a year. The areas of the cerebral cortex that showed greater prominence were tied to language, memory, spatial, and reasoning skills. The lead author of the study Sowell, is quoted in the *Post*'s article as saying that, "we've known for so long that poverty and lack of access to resources to enrich the developmental environment are related to poor school performance … now we can really tie it to a physical thing in the brain" (Washington Post, 2015). The next study mentioned in the news article is from researchers led by MIT's Gabrieli (Mackey et al., 2015). Gabrieli's team found differences in the cortical thickness of low- and high-income teenagers, as well as differences in standardized test scores. He highlights how powerful "...economic influences are on something as fundamental as brain structure" (Washington Post, 2015). This is the first time that the article offers a clear message that it is the environment of economics that can potentially be related to

brain thickness instead of the other way around. Gabrieli also observes that highlighting these differences may cause some people to politically condemn the poor, but he asserts an opposite viewpoint, saying, "I think we want to understand adversity and minimize adversity" (Washington Post, 2015).

The article outlines theories from the researchers as to why poorer children have smaller brains. The two theories from Sowell's research suggest lack of access to goods that lead to healthy development, and hypothesizes that poor families have more stress because of chaotic lives which can inhibit healthy brain development. Sowell also mentions that, during childhood, the brain can be molded by experience. Lastly, Mike Feinberg (co-founder of the Knowledge is Power Program) was asked about his perspective. He asserts:

> For the vast majority of children, there is nothing physically about them that sets them up for success or failure as they start school. There are certainly societal circumstances that make it easier or harder for that child to learn on any given day. And certainly, children in poverty are going to develop more physical issues as well if they're not taken care of. But are they able to learn? Absolutely. (Washington Post, 2015).

The Washington Post (2015) article contributes to the stigma of people who are poor in several ways. If a reader does not read the full article and only looks at the title (or even if they do), there is zero explanation as to how brain and genetic research works. This problem is exacerbated by having two researchers provide their opinions on brains and intelligence without any context, and withholding confounds. For example, within the news article, psychologist James Thompson says: "People who have less ability and marry people with less ability have children who, on balance, on average, have less ability" and he continues, "... we've known for years intelligence is inheritable […] the well-known genetic hypothesis has not even had a chance to enter the door in this discussion" (Washington Post, 2015). Polemicist, and known racist, Murray is brought into the conversation and says: "It is confidently

known that brain size is correlated with IQ, IQ measured in childhood is correlated with income as an adult, and parental IQ is correlated with children's IQ" (Washington Post, 2015). Without understanding brain research methods, this article can very easily lead people to believe in genetic determinism for people who are poor, thinking that they are dumb, that it is genetic, and that there is nothing that they can do about it. Most people do not have access to the original research papers to get the full scope of these arguments. Therefore, if these researchers mention briefly in their original research papers about environmental factors of brain development, it will be completely lost on the majority of readers.

To understand the issue of brain structures, research, and intelligence, we need to unpack what was said (and what was not said) by Thompson and Murray in this article. Firstly, we do know that intelligence is a heritable behavioural trait, but at the same time, all traits display environmental influence and "...heritability is not 100% for any trait" (Plomin & Deary, 2015, p.98). Both intelligence and brain structures are influenced by "...education, family environment and environmental hazards" (Gray & Thompson, 2004, 471). By not discussing environmental factors, Thompson and Murray omit vital information for readers. Secondly, sometimes the effects of genes may be interrupted in both positive or negative ways due to their environment, known as gene-environment (GE) interaction. There is still an ongoing debate regarding the effects of socioeconomic status (SES) on heritability and intelligence. Some studies find that SES can modify the heritability of intelligence in children, while others suggest that both low- and high-SES families have similar genetic effects, which can potentially be explained by their shared experiences (Hanscombe et al., 2012). Researchers have recognized several associations between SES and brain structure that could come from postnatal experiences "…such as family stress, cognitive stimulation, environmental toxins, or nutrition, or from corresponding differences in the prenatal environment (Noble et al., 2015, p.777). Noble and colleagues also state, responsibly, that results implying brain differences in lower income children should not lead to a fixed perception of brain development, as many factors can account for variation in brain structures.

Thirdly, much of the intelligence research on brain structures are done via MRI. We need to keep in mind that MRI studies offer *correlational* evidence, not *causal* evidence (Gray & Thompson, 2004).

Fourthly, saying that intelligence is heritable does not mean inevitability, nor does heritability within groups imply that "...group differences are due to genetic factors" (Gray & Thompson, 2004, p.477). Fifthly, researchers generally agree that standardized tests for intelligence omit several other types of intelligences (Gray & Thompson, 2004), such as "...creativity, wisdom, practical sense, and social sensitivity" (Neisser et al., 1996, p.97). If Thompson and Murray want to provide the genetic determinism argument, they also need to address the opposing information to provide people with a more balanced understanding. If we lead readers to believe that people who are poor have lower intelligence because it is genetic or inevitable, then this discourse can be used to justify political or social actions that negatively affect the group, or "...or justify the neglect of actions that could help to enhance it" (Gray & Thompson, 2004, p.471).

The National Post article by the Associated Press (2015) titled "Wealthy more likely to get organ transplants: study" reports on a study which examined people on multiple waitlists in the United States for heart transplants, along with waitlist outcomes and post-heart transplant survival rates. The article describes the research finding from cardiologist Givens and colleagues (2015) that "wealthy people are more likely to get on multiple waiting lists and score a transplant, and less likely to die while waiting for one" (Associated Press, 2015). The Associated Press suggests that the results of the study confirm that people who are rich benefit even though the system, in theory, should give organs to those who are sickest and who have waited the longest. People who are wealthy can afford tests and can travel more in order to get on multiple waiting lists. The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) manages the US transplant system and has considered changing the policy for limiting multiple waiting lists, but there has been pushback from people saying patients should have the freedom to travel to improve their odds (Associated Press, 2015). Nothing in the article could be considered stigmatizing, but it does raise a larger ethical debate about the roles that money, life, and death play in Western society.

The Toronto Star article "Rich-poor divide in Toronto's hospitals" by Goar opens by highlighting the discrepancy between public perception of hospital use and study results from team leader Glazier from the Centre for Research on Inner City Health (Murphey et al., 2012). Goar (2012) explains the

research findings that people who are perceived as taking up acute care space, and those with non-urgent issues, are typically people with little to no income, without family support, and with nowhere else to go. Glazier says that he does not know if the actual care from the hospitals is equitable, or if the hospitals lack resources to respond adequately to patients.

The study's methodology was interesting, as the researchers had to cross reference patient's postal codes with census information about household income. Goar did mention in the article that, unfortunately, the study excluded people who are homeless and that during the reporting period 4,817 of them had visited emergency departments. This exclusion and invisibility of people who are homeless in research raises issues, which are explored in the section on Social Mobility. The study took 20 of Toronto's hospitals and divided them into three categories of low-income, high-income, and socio-economic mix. Glazier and his team found that wealthy people used hospitals mainly for surgery and outpatient procedures, while people who are poor used them for emergencies, mental health services, basic medical care, and chronic and end of life care (Goar, 2012).

Where people decide to go for care depends on where they live, access to transportation, what treatment they need, and where their doctor practices. Therefore, those with low-income will use hospitals like St. Joseph's or Toronto East General, while wealthier patients head to the highly funded hospitals along University Avenue. At the end of the article, Glazier is quoted as saying that people who are poor are accessing health-care facilities that are in the greatest crisis and that those same people need "...the ability pay for healthy foods, buy medicines and live in a healthy place where they can receive home care" (Goar, 2012). This article could have benefited from providing a personalized story of someone who is poor to show what the barriers are like for the many Torontonians living in poverty.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) suggests that those who are wealthy are healthier than those with less money, as reported in *The Toronto Sun* (2016) article "Health gap between Canada's rich and poor remains" written by Davidson. He is succinct in his reporting of the methodology and health factors that were measured in the research. There were five groups studied over ten years based on their income. CIHI measured 16 health factors including chronic illness, smoking, obesity, and food

and housing access. Morris, who is VP of Research and Analysis at CIHI, was quoted as saying that the inequality between richer and poorer Canadians had a significant result and that "...the health of the poorest Canadians in relation to that of the richest is not getting better" (Davidson, 2016). Specifically, the three main health indicators that widened the gap between rich and poor were smoking, self-rated mental health, and (for people under the age of 75), issues with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (which were more experienced by the poor). The majority of health indications showed that the gap has either persisted or has gotten worse over time (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2015a). Davidson does mention that, in 2011, Canada agreed to the World Health Organization's Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health which pledged to reduce health inequalities.

The final news article for this section is called "Junk Science Week 2015: Death by one-percenter", found on *The National Post* website (Taylor, 2015). This article was written by Taylor, who was editor of *Macleans* magazine. This article is loaded with irony in that it is framed as a debunking of "junk science" yet it is, in itself, unscientific and arguably irresponsible. We begin by examining the drop head, also known as the sub-headline. This was most likely written by a copy editor, but they use Taylor's words from the article to say, "So this study says 40,000 Canadians will die this year because some Bay Street bastards cashed six-figure bonus cheques" (Taylor, 2015). If Taylor wanted to be "scientific" about his words, he should have read the study first before writing an entire news article about it, because nowhere in the study do any of the authors say things like "Bay Street bastards." Gee (2012) calls varieties of language that perform specific identities and enact certain practices "social languages." The use of Taylor's pejorative language as the average joe is his attempt to discredit the research. Journalist Lee (2011) offers this perspective:

> If I were writing news stories at a traditional newspaper, I would avoid using pejorative terms […] these terms bias the story […] The job of a straight news reporter is to describe the world accurately and in neutral language, allowing the reader to make up his own mind rather than trying to pre-judge political issues on the reader's behalf.

Since this lengthy article uses inflammatory language throughout, I will highlight only those points that attempt to usurp valid research claims, contribute to Gee's (2012) figured worlds of stereotypical claims about people who are poor, and engage in victim blaming. Taylor's (2015) opens the article by writing the following:

> You're standing on a downtown street corner feeling healthy and fit. Suddenly a one-percenter strolls by. He's sporting an Italian suit, a $200 haircut and a watch that costs more than your car. Still feeling healthy? Maybe not. Maybe the mere presence of someone wealthier than yourself is enough to kill you…Or at least that is what wild claims from Canadian public health officials and academics would have you believe. While the incoherent Occupy movement failed to demonize income inequality, the public health industry has since taken up the crusade. According to these taxpayer-funded inequality warriors, it's no longer personal risk factors that determine your health or longevity. Rather it's the gap between rich and poor that'll do you in. One recent report hysterically claims income inequality is responsible for 40,000 deaths a year in Canada. And the cure? Only a massive redistribution of wealth will save all those lives.

The first part of the block quote is simply a continuation of the drop head, reducing research to hyperbole that being near someone who is rich will kill you, which again, is not what researchers, academics, or public officials are reporting. Taylor labels research from public health officials and academics as "wild claims." A statement that insinuates that the information provided by public health and researchers is biased and not credible (See section Truth, Lies, and Research).

Taylor continues to discredit the Occupy movement, saying that it "failed to demonize income inequality." Taylor is being polemical by claiming the Occupy movement was "incoherent" and was trying to "demonize" income inequality. The economic crisis of 2008 started the turmoil that lead to

2009's highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression (Gerbaudo, 2018). Corporations have been taking much of the national wealth because of the financialization of the economy, and their growing political power (Hammond, 2013). This economic crisis has continued over time. Occupy was very clear about why it arose, as evidenced in the declaration, "we come to you at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments" (Declaration, 2011). Academics are also clear about the reasons for Occupy Wall Street as well, outlining the context for the movement, which began after many people fell victim to the financial crisis (Gerbaudo, 2018). Occupy was part of an international movement mobilizing against oppression at the time (Calhoun, 2013), and it began at a point when the propensity for economic and political systems to favour bank bailouts over tackling rising poverty rates was being recognized and spotlighted (Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012).

Taylor uses military metaphors, discussing the public health industry taking up the "crusade" and the work of "inequality warriors." It appears that Taylor is projecting his figured worlds of "demonizing" by using military terminology to portray people who speak out against income inequality as threatening. Using war-like words also situates people into a win/lose framework, but inequality is not so dichotomous that it can be explained by winners or losers of a "crusade." The healthcare field in general has had the use of military metaphors ingrained in its practice, such as the "war" on cancer, the discourse of "battling" cancer, or the image of patients as a "fighters" or "warriors." Registered nurse Rosanne Beuthin offers the perspective that military metaphors can have a negative impact on those who have cancer. Phrasing their illness as a battle or fight could make someone feel as though they're failing. As Beuthin says: "What is the potential emotional cost to [being at war]? ...the leadership and relationships imagined in this mindset are surely directive, not collaborative" (Beuthin, 2015). We know from research that the use of metaphors can impact the way we think and how we behave (Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011). When discussing serious issues, we should steer clear of using terms that degrade the other side, such as the phrase "inequality warriors."

Taylor criticizes public health officials, saying that they are trying to control the economy. He claims that their biggest obsession is income inequality (he also calls them "wonks" later in the article). He then mentions that an *Upstream* article written by York University Professors Raphael and Bryant (2014) lays the boldest claim against income inequality. Taylor quotes the researchers, asserting that:

> Raphael and Bryant claim, 'income inequality is…directly related to the deaths of Canadians on an almost unimaginable scale' They put total fatalities at 40,000 per year. 'The health effects of income inequality in Canada are like this 110-passenger jet falling out of the sky every day, 365 days a year (Taylor, 2015).

Raphael and Bryant got the 40,000 number from a Statistics Canada report which examined "cause-specific mortality rates by income inadequacy" (Tjepkema, Wilkins, & Long, 2013). Taylor (2015) proceeds to give reasons for why this number is so high, offering this perspective: "It could be a simple lack of resources. Low-income Canadians might lack the ability to successfully navigate the complexities of Medicare. It might also reflect the fact [that] lifestyle risk factors such as smoking, drinking, and lack of exercise are more prevalent among lower incomes." People with lower incomes tend to engage in health risk behaviours, however "risk behaviours do not entirely explain the gradient in health outcomes; other research suggests that socio-economic differences persists even when controlling for behavioural risk factors" (Tjepkema, Wilkins, & Long, 2013). Taylor's explanations for the deaths are an example of stereotypical victim-blaming. All of his suggestions place personal blame without any mention of institutional or systemic influences on health. He says people could "lack the ability" to navigate the health system, but sometimes it is not about someone's lack of ability. Sometimes it is the institutional processes themselves who make it difficult to navigate. For many, prioritizing food and shelter comes first before seeking medical attention. Sometimes, people do not have a primary care physician, they do not have identification or other documents needed for healthcare, or they have had several negative experiences associated with health facilities or professionals and are afraid to go. Taylor twists the

researcher's findings to say that, by their reasoning, "preventing those 40,000 deaths would require that all Canadians inhabit the top quartile of the income distribution" and that is "mathematically impossible." However, what Raphael and Bryant (2014) actually say is "*if* all Canadians were as healthy as wealthy Canadians, there would be *nearly* 40% fewer deaths from diabetes and *nearly* 20% fewer deaths from cardiovascular disease every year." Nowhere in this statement do they claim the answer to be requiring Canadians to all live in the top quartile.

At the beginning of the article, Taylor calls out "public health officials and academics" for making "wild claims" about income inequality and health. Not only is this statement overgeneralizing, but it is an attempt to discredit massive groups of people. At the end of the article, he then cites research from academics that agree with his view point. The contradiction lies in first dismissing academics and then using them to support his point. This is a solid example of confirmation bias, when we only seek out or remember information that supports our worldviews and ignore all other evidence to the contrary (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2016). His evidence is also conflated as some of his citations have to do with health in general, while others specifically look at mortality rates. Taylor (2015) says the following, "An exhaustive 95-page study in the *Milbank Quarterly* concludes that across numerous wealthy countries 'the evidence suggests that income inequality is not associated…with population health differences." Lynch et al., (2014) do offer evidence to support that there is little evidence in their literature review to suggest a link between income inequality and health in Canada. Firstly, the report was done in 2004 and much time has passed. Since then, there have been significant strides in research under this topic. Secondly, what Taylor's confirmation bias leaves out is other information mentioned by Lynch et al., (2014):

> The largely negative findings for the direct health effects of income inequality in no way contradict the large body of evidence that at the individual level those people with higher incomes also are healthier… Although we found little evidence to support a direct effect of income inequality on health, this should not be interpreted to mean the factors that drive unequal income distribution at the system level are not important to individual and

> population health. Reducing income inequality by raising the incomes of more disadvantaged people will improve the health of poor individuals, help reduce health inequalities, and increase average population health (p.81-82).

Taylor (2015) then cites another study by quoting their findings that, "no significant associations between income inequality and mortality in Canada at either the provincial or metropolitan area levels." The study he is referring to was done by Ross et al., in 2000, which is even earlier than the last study he mentioned. Also, important to note is that the study involved the same researcher from the previous paper, Lynch. Evidence from a metropolitan source, the city of Toronto, suggests otherwise. Researchers found that "From 2003/04 to 2009/10, males and females in low-income groups in Toronto experienced higher rates of premature death before age 75 compared to people in high-income groups" (Van Ingen, Khandor, & Fleiszer, 2015, p.18).

Taylor then cites a study from Ross et al., (2005), also older, and including the same researchers as mentioned in his previous two citations, Lynch and Ross. This is not to say that the research is not valid, but when providing evidence for your argument, it is more critically valid to use multiple authors and varying viewpoints. Finally, Taylor (2015) claims his last piece of evidence covers "the entirety of academic literature on the topic." He is referring to the *Oxford Handbook of Economic Inequality*. In his article, he quotes the researchers, "our reading of the evidence is that most studies of health and inequality find no statistically significant relationship either across countries or over time" (Taylor, 2015). What he decides to leave out is the very next sentence in the quote from the handbook, "However, the confidence intervals in many of these studies include both positive and negative values large enough to be of considerable practical importance. Precisely estimated zeros are the exception, not the rule. Drawing firm negative conclusions may therefore be premature" (Salverda , Nolan, & Smeeding, 2009, p.399).

In summary, Taylor's article is based on mortality rates and income inequality in Canada. He has provided four citations: three have the same authors, three are using older data, three are not specifically related to mortality rates, and finally, he uses confirmation bias to support his view by ignoring all

contrary evidence. He is spreading false information about income inequality and death. A major issue for all the studies mentioned so far in this health section that use Statistics Canada data for their research is the omission of potentially thousands of deaths. The CIHI study mentioned earlier says that they exclude people "…who do not state their income or provide a valid income or income range, as well as residents of the territories, are not assigned a household income quintile and are therefore not included in this analysis" (2015b, p.9).

The City of Toronto only started to track homeless deaths in 2016, and the process relies on agencies from across the city to report any deaths. The total number of deaths reported for 2017 sits at 100 people (City of Toronto, 2017a). The true number of deaths is still underreported since legal barriers exist which prevent hospitals from disclosing deaths to the city. People who are homeless do not submit household census information to the federal government when they do not have a home. Residents of shelters are enumerated during the census, but this only occurs every 5 years. Statistics Canada does not collect monthly or annual data on the number of homeless persons in Canada. Since we know that homelessness itself is the main risk factor for death (Cheung & Hwang 2004; Hibbs et al., 1994:308, Barrow et al., 1999:533, Condon & McDermid, 2014:3), then there are likely to be thousands of people who are poor who are not included in the data for researchers studying income inequality along with health and mortality rates.

Drugs and Alcohol

Stereotypes surrounding the use of drugs and alcohol by people who are poor are pervasive in the media (Clawson & Trice, 2000). If we examine this issue further, we find that the beliefs go beyond the realities of classism and drugs. In a *Globe and Mail* article (see section Rich and Poor Differences), reporter Leung lists five wealthy people and their net worth, along with quotes by them to show us how they think. She mentions Reinhart, an Australian billionaire who is quoted from an opinion article in *Australian Resources & Investment* magazine, saying "If you're jealous of those with more money, don't just sit there and complain; do something to make more money yourself – spend less time drinking, or smoking and socializing and more time working" (Leung, 2012). In a *Toronto Sun* article (see section

Rich and Poor Differences) titled "10 ways not to be poor," reporter Agar gives us one of his three steps for avoiding poverty, "Stay off illegal drugs and off alcohol if it causes problems in your life, according to other people. (Drunks are bad at self-analysis.) It is not too much to ask" (Agar, 2012). In Taylor's article (2015) he mentions that one of the reasons that poor people have higher mortality rates than wealthy people is because of the "lifestyle fact" that smoking, and drinking are more prevalent among low-income people.

These three examples demonstrate the pervasive belief that people who are poor drink and/or do drugs more than wealthy people and that is why they are poor. This stereotype is inaccurate. White, well-educated, middle- and upper-class people drink and/or do drugs, sometimes at a *higher* prevalence rate, and especially with youth (Luthar, Barker, & Crossman, 2013; Patrick et al., 2012; Song et al., 2009; Botticello, 2009; Diala, Muntaner, & Walrath, 2004; Galea, Ahern, Tracy, & Vlahov, 2007). The problem here is placing personal blame without any recognition of systemic and institutional influences. Marketing plays an important role in this narrative because ethics need to be considered, and it is a cog in the wheel of policymaking which can affect people in negative ways. Through extensive literature reviews, we have learned that the alcohol industry has been successful in preventing restrictions on how they market products to the public and they have misrepresented evidence using third parties to lobby (Savell, Fooks, & Gilmore, 2016). We also know that the alcohol industry markets to youth, claiming that their own self-regulation is already effective at protecting youth. However, researchers have found that self-regulation is not effective and that the alcohol industry is not protecting people who are vulnerable (Noel, Babor, & Robaina, 2017). The ways in which someone can become addicted to drugs and alcohol also depends on biological predisposition. One person could have a certain amount of alcohol and not become dependent, while someone else exposed to the same amount could develop a dependency, and at an earlier age (Ait-Daoud et al., 2001).

Taking a broader perspective on this topic, we need to look at the initial drives that cause us to want to be in an altered state in the first place. Escapism is a way in which people can escape their reality, and repetitive and unsatisfying life problems (Henning & Vorderer, 2001). People who live in poverty

should not judged for their choices to partake in mind-altering substances. Many people in general unwind after a hard day's work with an alcoholic beverage. People who live in poverty have a very difficult life, so why would they not want that option? The leading cause of death for people who are underhoused is substance use, potentially because they are more likely to use substances alone and have limited access to support (de Villa, 2018). People reading news articles might not fully understand the effects of addiction, marketing, policy, and the privileged position of escapism. Researchers found that terms referring to people who use drugs such as "addict," "alcoholic," and "substance abuser" induced more negative biases, unlike less stigmatizing and more positive terminology such as "person with a substance use disorder," "recurrence of use," or "pharmacotherapy" (Ashford, Brown, & Curtis, 2018). When talking about people who live in poverty and their potential use of drugs and alcohol, it's vital to be very clear and precise about the context. Otherwise, vague or victim-blaming statements will keep contributing to stigmatizing discourses about people who are poor.

3.3 Social Mobility

Out of the forty articles I researched, four of them had social mobility as the main theme. Social mobility is the capability to improve or lessen one's positions within a social class system (OpenStax College, 2012). There are two broad types of social mobility: intergenerational mobility, which investigates relationships between people and their parents by variables such as earnings, job positions, or education, and intragenerational mobility, which examines life variables throughout a person's own lifetime (Breen, 2004). Most of the research on social mobility focuses on the comparison between the father's occupation of the past and the son's occupation of the present (Bertaux & Thompson, 2017; Chen, Ostrovsky, & Pirano, 2016; Causa & Johansson, 2011), and partial population samples with a focus on people who are working (Zhang, Saani, & Chung, 2016). With this highly skewed gender research, and limiting population samples it is difficult to see the research as having real world validity at this point in time.

Csanady wrote an article for the *National Post* titled "People in lower income brackets generally get richer as they get older: Fraser Institute." Csanady (2016) gives the readers a background of a study

from the Fraser Institute which states that Canadians are upwardly and downwardly mobile, explaining that the "poorest 20 percent, the bottom fifth, nine of out 10 of them will move upwards on the figurative income ladder over a 10-year period." She also mentions that the study's co-author Lammam says that Canadians more often than not can "pull themselves up by the bootstraps" (see section on Employment). The next section of the article is a question and answer interview with Lammam (2016) on the study. Lammam tells Csanady that the study only looks at income from Statistics Canada, providing a snapshot of mobility. This is problematic since, as previously mentioned, there are thousands of Canadians in the lower to no income brackets that are excluded from the data.

For years, sociology researchers have understood that isolating statistics is a highly limiting way of collecting data on mobility. They suggest that understanding how family dynamics relate to different contexts "...can begin to discern what kinds of games families are forced to play, and what are the unwritten rules of such games" (Bertaux & Thompson, 2017, p.19). As Lammam says in the interview: "If you look at intergenerational mobility, where you are versus your parents' life...Canada is generally a highly mobile society when it comes to generational mobility" (Csanady, 2016). To get a fuller sense of this, one must study other variables of family life; race, education, gender, disabilities, and so on. Economic researchers are discovering the benefits of combining statistical information with interviews, and learning more about the people who have been reduced to numbers. For example, research from Kelly (2014) has shown that intergenerational social mobility has shown an upward trend among children of immigrants but that some groups are exceptions; the methodology for this conclusion combined statistics with interviews.

Since I have shown previously how the Fraser Institute's research is highly biased (see section Truth, Lies, and Research), let us examine another study looking at the same statistical information. Zhang and colleagues (2016) agree that there are limitations for making inferences about the population as a whole because they are only looking at people who file taxes. Additionally, they agree that future research should look at linking mobility with industrial and occupational information. Their results show the specifics of the data. They concluded that:

> ...absolute income mobility was higher from 1998 to 2012 than it was from 1982 to 1997....those aged 35 to 44 and those that from the lower income deciles experienced higher absolute mobility than other tax filers. However, the higher absolute mobility for the youngest tax filers has dropped since 2000. The results also indicate that relative mobility followed a downward trend over the last thirty years" (Zhang, Saani, & Chung, 2016, p.24).

What would be a more accurate and balanced statement from Lammam would be to say that, over time, some Canadians experience upward mobility and some Canadians do not. The data is not complete nor extensive unless it explores other variables within the story and can account for thousands, or potentially tens of thousands, of Canadians who do not file their taxes or census info. Some researchers believe that social mobility is difficult to achieve and study. Therefore, some believe it to be a myth (OpenStax College, 2012). Nearing the end of the news article, Csanady asks Lammam about public policy. He believes that governments forget about mobility when implementing tax or minimum wage policies. We examine his words further in the Taxes, Redistribution of Wealth, and Minimum Wage sections of this thesis.

The next article titled "Poor today, rich tomorrow: Permanent underclass in Canada is a myth, study reveals" written by Carlson (2012) for the *National Post*. This article was written based on a Fraser Institute study, but it is basically reiterating the same results as the previous study in Csanady's 2016 article examining tax returns over a 19-year period. Before getting to any information about the study, reporter Carlson takes the position that the study is fact. She gives examples of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau saying that almost all of the economic growth benefits have gone to a few wealthy Canadians. She also quotes the Conference Board of Canada's report that says only a few wealthy people have received economic gains and that "the average income level of the poorest group in Canada rose over the time period …but only marginally" (Carlson, 2012). This was done to set up a comparison next to

Lammam's research to show that Canadians cannot be blamed for all of this "false" information being reported.

Carlson gives us a neatly packaged story about Lammam's job experiences since he was 12 years old and how he worked his way up the ladder while attending university, eventually becoming a researcher for the Fraser Institute. She then states that Lammam's study shows that his experience is the "norm." Lammam says, "…people are continuously transitioning from low to middle to high income over time, and that's natural…My own experience is the normal Canadian experience." Lammam uses terms like "natural" and "normal" to show that his data is supposed to represent typical Canadians. There is no acknowledgment of any of the privilege he had in those few sentences: his background, being white, male, and cisgendered, and his ability to go to university. Despite Canada having a high upward mobility, we only have a 13.5 percent chance of attaining the top fifth of the income distribution (Chetty, 2015). There is a massive difference between someone already being on the top and falling to a lower income bracket (which could still mean they are rich), and claiming that the lowest to no income people who are not even included in the data can easily work their way out of poverty. The next few paragraphs tell us about policies regarding raising taxes, which is addressed in the Taxes section.

Finally, there were a few mentions from people with opposing views. Peggy Nash, New Democrat Party Member of Parliament, says of Lammam's perspective that his argument is convoluted, furthering explaining that income mobility and inequality are two different issues. A member of Occupy in Ontario, Quipp says Lammam's study is flawed, as the Fraser Institute is a right-wing group representing wealthy people. At the end, Carlson says "several social justice" groups did not comment on the study including the Council on Canadians and Canada Without Poverty. Reporting biased sources, and taking a side of that false information throughout a news article contributes to the media's role in perpetuating stigma through policy suggestions, distorted Canadian identities, and stereotypes of people experiencing economic inequality.

The next article examining the issue of social mobility includes the viewpoint of the same man as the other two articles. Lammam, along with MacIntyre, wrote a piece for the *Toronto Sun* titled "The rich

aren't the only ones enjoying economic gains." Not only do we have journalists reporting about the Fraser Institute, but we have Lammam himself writing the news article, which is the same study reported in Csanady (2016). Lammam and MacIntyre (2016) claim that the story that only the rich are getting richer and advancing economically is a fictional one. As in the Csanady article, he conflates economic inequality with mobility. The article continues to give biased statistics, completely disregarding potentially tens of thousands of Canadians who do not file taxes who are typically low-income earners, and uses methodology that does not look at the whole picture. The actual Statistics Canada (Zhang, Saani, & Chung, 2016) report states:

> These statistics are useful, but they provide little information on income mobility. While Canadian researchers have done much work in this area, the majority of the studies focused on the earnings mobility of the working-age population. As such, they draw only a partial picture of the economic mobility in Canada. This is because earnings are only one component of income, and the working-age population forms only part of the total population (p.24).

Lammam and MacIntyre end the article by saying, "we should celebrate the fact that we live in a society where the vast majority of us experience significant upward income mobility over the course of our lives – not spread false stories about how the 'rich' get richer." This gives us a clear example of how people's figured worlds can direct what they see in data and how they spin the information to meet their personal and political goals.

The last news article under the topic of social mobility comes from reporter Saunders for the *Globe and Mail* titled "The rich do get richer. Why can't the poor also get richer?" He opens the article by explaining that the rich get a lot richer and the poor get ignored "or we don't even know who they are." Saunders mentions a report from Oxfam which said the world's wealthiest one percent will have more money than the rest of the world combined, which is problematic because a lot of that money is not

getting taxed (Hardoon, 2015). Economics journalist Salmon is brought into the conversation to highlight that there are problems with the Oxfam report, revealing that the "poorest people in the world" are actually wealthy (Saunders, 2015). He says that the report measured wealth rather than income. Saunders gives an example of a wealthy Vancouver couple making a joint income of $360,000 a year with a million-dollar property; they would have been classified as being poor due to their net worth being several hundred thousand dollars in the negative. Milanovic from the World Bank analyzed income data from several countries to come up with an understanding of worldwide inequality. Saunders reports that Milanovic found that world inequality has been dropping because of growing incomes in China and India juxtaposed against stalling Western economies.

This data, Milanovic suggests, does not give us information on what is happening within countries, therefore we need to address social mobility. Saunders introduces professor Corak who has examined intergenerational social mobility. Corak found that China, Brazil, and Peru have become dramatically less poor, but that they are still poor. Canada and Scandinavia are places where social mobility does happen. Saunders ends the news article by saying that the poor "aren't getting any poorer, but if you want them to stop being poor entirely, you need a national project." Ending the article with a call for a national project makes the story seem unfinished. What does he mean by national project and what would the details look like? It is a vague statement that offers no specific solutions or starting points.

To reiterate, we have many news articles which claim that social mobility is prevalent in Canada due to our, as Saunders (2015) puts it, social safety nets and active governments. However, all of the data used to measure social mobility leave out the many people who live in poverty. If included, this data would drastically change the results. Wealthy people in these data sets have been shown to move down the ladder, yet details are not given in these news articles as to how much. If someone made $22 million and made "only" $10 million the next, they are still rich. The same applies to intergenerational measures. Data that has been collected has given us a glimpse into what is happening both locally and worldwide, yet we are not at a point methodologically where we can accurately track social issues like mobility and inequality. Until we start including all citizens in our data, we cannot believe those who claim to have all

the answers.

3.4 Wealth Redistribution and Taxes

Out of the forty articles I researched, four of them focused on wealth redistribution and taxes as the main theme. Some researchers claim that the Canadian tax system is doing a good job in not increasing poverty (Bibi & Duclos, 2010). Others are critical of the system, saying that the government's red tape is hard for some people to navigate (Beeby, 2017). Research from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that personal tax expenditures benefit the rich, not the poor (Macdonald, 2016). In the following articles, we will examine differing perspectives that claim that we should not tax the rich more, that we should tax the rich more, and that marriage also plays a role in taxation.

National Affairs columnist Walkom wrote a piece for the *Toronto Star* in 2012 called "Walkom: These high-income docs want the rich to pay." The drophead reads "A new organization of well-paid doctors thinks that they – and other high-income earners – should pay more in taxes." Walkom suggests that it is nice to see people standing up for a more progressive tax system and believes that conventional wisdom says progressive taxation is counterproductive. He cites a study from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives that examined Canadians tax rates between 1990 and 2005. They found that "the top 1% pay a lower tax rate than they did in 1990...slightly lower than that paid by the poorest 10%" (Lee, 2007, p.3). Doctors for Fair Taxation say that Canadians would have better health outcomes with a more progressive tax system. Walkom gives three reasons as to why this would be the case. Firstly, the government typically cuts health care when they run into fiscal problems. Secondly, poverty means poorer health. Thirdly, society does better when there is less income inequality. Cornell Economics scholar Frank (2016) also calls for a progressive income tax and says that conservative think-tank American Enterprise Institute agrees. In Carlson's (2012) article on social mobility, she says that the Occupy movement's protesters call for higher taxes on higher-income earners. She quotes Gregory Thomas from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation as saying that the "Occupy movement needs to be careful what it wishes for" and Carlson warns protesters that they will become those wealthy taxpayers one day. Walkom shows us that many people who are wealthy want to be taxed more in order to give

back to services that they themselves used to get to where they are. Carlson adds Fraser Institute's Lammam's opinion from their biased report that everyone will "gradually transition from low to high income over time." The anti-tax argument is prevalent through all political parties. Yet, wealthy people who are against policy change regarding taxes do not realize that the current system is not serving their interests (Frank, 2016). Walkom takes the opinion that there is nothing wrong with having the rich pay more in taxes because it is fair, and it works. This opinion piece runs into the same problems as other articles, leaving out counter-arguments that would create a more balanced perspective.

A *Toronto Sun* (2013) article, written by Postmedia, titled "Canada's Robin Hood redistribution" begins with the author writing that anytime there are "rent-a-mob" protesters, you will hear the line "Stop the war on the poor, make the rich pay!" The term "rent" implies some conspiracy where people are hired to protest. The term "mob" implies a crowd of people looking to cause trouble. Not only does this language try to discredit those who believe in a fair distribution of wealth, but it also attempts to paint them as violent or unruly. The author says that common sense tells us that the rich already do pay from data reported by Statistics Canada on the National Household Survey. The NHS reports that the top earners "paid out 42.1% of the nation's income tax" and, including government transfers and income taxes, people in the lower income distribution paid less income tax than they received government transfers. He continues to say that about 70 percent of Canadians "received some form of government transfer, however only 13% had government transfers as their only means of income (Statistics Canada, 2013). How data is presented can also affect perception. Another part of the NHS study shows that "…87.6% of total income that Canadians received was in the form of market income and the remaining 12.4% was in the form of government transfer payments" (Statistics Canada, 2013). Without this information included in the news article, we get a sense that the majority of Canadians are living off government assistance. To reiterate from the Walkom article, the study from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives that examined Canadians tax rates between 1990 and 2005 found the top 1 percent tax rate was a bit lower than the poorest 10 percent (Lee, 2007).

Near the end of the article, Postmedia (2013) writes that people who are benefiting from the redistribution of wealth are not "living up to their potential" and also writes "If there's a war on anyone, let's be honest, it's a war on the makers. Instead of going the socialist route, let's do more by boosting our economy. By creating opportunities. So we can all move forward together." Claiming that people who use government assistance are not contributing to society and not "living up to their potential" is incorrect. The belief that people who are poor are drains on the system and government dependent is not new. In 1846 during the Irish genocide, also known as the Great Famine, conservative Secretary of the Treasury in England Trevelyn believed that providing aid to the Irish who were starving to death would get them dependent on government, so he stopped supplying food aid (Hart, 1960). This belief of government dependency perpetuates a stereotype of people as "welfare cheats" (See section Minimum Wage). Secondly, note how the term "war" is being used. Postmedia uses it here to convey that the poor are the aggressors and the wealthy are victims. Finally, there is a juxtaposition between socialism and economic growth. Writing that "going the socialist route" by redistributing wealth is somehow contradictory to economic growth is an essentialist perspective. Canada is a country that redistributes wealth and the latest reports from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) 2018 shows Canada with an increase in GDP growth by 2.1 percent in 2018.

The main thrust of the article is the suggestion that wealthy Canadians pay a large amount of money in taxes and government transfers. Some of the information that the NHS reported was correct, however, Postmedia's news article left out some key points. Several researchers, statisticians, and other experts say the data is highly flawed and may cause harmful implications for policy (Grant, 2013). Another issue left out of the article was the question of tax havens. Over 3000 Canadian individuals and entities had their financial records revealed in a massive leak that has come to be called The Paradise Papers. Recently, Britain ruled that company owners that register their businesses in offshore territories, like the Cayman and British Virgin Islands, will have to make themselves public (Oved & Cribb, 2018). It would be nice to know how much the Canadian elite should be paying in taxes but are not. Journalists need to provide more balanced perspectives and refrain from using derogatory language. Without

accounting for these elements, negative stereotypes and figured worlds will remain less accurate and harmful.

Reporter Gunter for the *Edmonton Sun* has an article posted on the *Toronto Sun's* website titled "We already redistribute income - a lot." Gunter (2016) starts by calling out the federal Liberal tax policy, the Alberta provincial NDP government, and the Ontario Liberals for their belief that the rich are increasing their wealth at the expense of the rest of us, which, he says, is mostly untrue; this demonstrates a highly partisan angle. Gunter's prevalent belief that income distribution is unfair in Canada is due to "class envy" and "pandering politicians" which have fostered a "resentment of success." Writing that class envy is the reason that Canadians believe in fair taxation is essentialist (see previous section American/Canadian Dream). Claiming that lower-income Canadians resent success is speculative and how would that even be measured? Lammam says in Csanady's 2016 article on social mobility, "…the increased tax rates on successful Canadians are sending a negative signal to people…they are going to be punished for doing well." Economic researchers Marc Lee and Iglika Ivanova (2013) have this to say about punishing success:

> Some have defended market income inequalities and opposed redistributive policies on the grounds that that they "punish success" and that the well-off have earned their high incomes through hard work, shrewd investing, and superior entrepreneurial ability. However, this line of argument ignores the role of luck and chance in determining outcomes in today's economy: being born to "good" parents and provided with a nurturing environment in early childhood; gender, ethnicity, temperament, and looks; chance encounters and other accidents of fate. These factors have at least as much of a role in one's income as hard work. It is therefore just and fair to tax the beneficiaries of luck at higher rates (p.12-13)

Gunter (2016) continues his pejorative assessment by saying that "lefty academics" use economic

studies to support growing income unfairness and that bank executive Jim Prentice "caved into the fashionable idea that the poor and middle-class are being hosed." The term "caved" is used to imply some force of pressure to change one's mind and the term "fashionable" implies going along with the crowd, but if a perspective is backed up by evidence, then having an idea that is considered fashionable has nothing to do with its validity. Gunter continues his argument by claiming that "women's lib" has been largely responsible for growing income inequality because of what economists call assortative mating (Greenwood et al., 2014). This economic theory says that we marry people who are similar to us in education, therefore two university graduates are assumed to pull in more money than less educated couples. Gunter blames the liberation of women for income inequality and that is a detrimental (and biased) argument. If we wanted to place blame, would it not be the fault of men for not allowing women to work in the first place? However, that does not benefit the argument. A more balanced perspective would be to say that income inequality is multifaceted and has several causes (see section on Income Inequality), so claiming that women going to work is "largely responsible" is highly distorted and sexist.

Gunter writes that Justin Trudeau mentioned during his election campaign that middle-class wages have stagnated, and so Trudeau "did manage to get that sort of correct." Unlike most of the pejorative articles, this is the first one to give a sentence offering a counter viewpoint, albeit small. At the end of the news article, Gunter (2016) writes that upward mobility in Canada is healthy and that "punitive taxation of upper income-earners will only make things worse by stifling innovation and risk taking." There are two cognitive errors at play here. The wealthy believe that it would be harder to buy what they wanted due to higher taxes and they underestimate the role of luck in their lives. With these errors, it becomes hard for successful people to see the return on investment through public services or to see how the societal environments they were born into have helped shape their success (Frank, 2016) (see section Paths to Success). Overall, this article over-generalizes while not providing much support to Gunter's arguments.

The last article for this section is titled "Marriage' gap exists between rich and poor Canadians, new study shows" and is written by Anderssen (2014) for the *Globe and Mail*. Anderssen writes that

getting married is a smart retirement plan because of the presumed two income household that comes along with that arrangement. She reports on research from the Institute of Marriage and Family, which used Statistics Canada data to show that the marriage gap has widened by income and that people with higher incomes tend to be married or living in common-law relationships. Anderssen (2014) lists the recommendations from the study including "tax initiatives and youth education campaigns that promote marriage." The actual study from the Institute says that tax initiatives and youth campaigns should be considered by the government to promote marriage, and "...businesses should think about how their marketing portrays marriage, and how their workplace practices affect work-life balance. Both businesses and governments should consider ways to make marriage counseling more accessible" (Cross & Mitchell, 2014, p.25).

The language used in this study prompted me to dig deeper into the Institute of Marriage and Family. They have recently changed their name to Cardus Family. They are a Christian-based organization and that identity is demonstrated throughout their website, Cardus.ca. Specifically, the marriage section of the website has several articles promoting marriage as the answer to most of life's problems. This tells us that there is a strong bias and very specific agenda behind this organization, especially considering a large majority of people who are LGBTQ+ would be excluded from tax benefits because marriage for gay couples is still illegal in some places. When their policy recommendations suggest promoting marriage as an answer to society's financial woes, then we can understand that the information being presented is not balanced. Anderssen (2014) writes that "professional men married women who understood their role was to stay home. Today, like marries like – well-educated people with higher earning potential marry other educated people with higher earning potential." As in Gunter's article, this information is presented as causal as opposed to correlational. Anderssen ends the article by mentioning an organization based in the United States called the Hamilton Project. They also use pro-marriage language, but Anderssen offers their policy suggestions for maintaining "strong families" such as education and job-training support for low-income families and access to affordable child care (Greenstone & Looney, 2012). These suggestions are less about promoting marriage as an institution and

more about investing in people in general.

3.5. Education

Out of the forty articles I researched, three of them had education as the main theme. Education plays a large role for people who live in poverty. Extensive research has shown that low-income children do not perform as well as those from advantaged households (Ladd, 2012). Research has also documented the inequality issues surrounding low SES children that include poor health, limited language exposure and experiences in the home environment, lower birth weight, lower access to extracurricular and summer activities, lower preschool opportunities, access to better funded schools, and greater mobility between schools because of the housing market (Ladd, 2012). To counter the belief that low-income children are not inherently as smart as wealthy children, research shows that most low SES children can learn to a higher standard when given the opportunities (Smith & O'Day, 1992; Gunderson, 2013; Leffel & Suskind, 2013).

The *Toronto Star* article "Province's new school fundraising rules don't address rich/poor gap, say critics" was written by Winsa and Rushowy. The article discusses the Ontario government's new guidelines for school fundraising, requiring schools to provide annual reports to the community outlining how much money they raised and where they spent the money. For elementary schools, the funds have ranged from $7000 to $250,000 over a three-year period. The onus is being placed on the school boards to come up with their own guidelines to set fundraising limits. They quote Rivers, the press secretary for the Education Minister, saying that the ministry will be following up with the boards to ensure those standards are met (Winsa & Rushowy, 2012). The reporters mention that the government has not set out consequences for those who do not follow the guidelines, and the policy specifies that parents cannot use the fundraising money for learning, textbooks, or musical instruments used during school hours, but they can use it for playgrounds and sports fields.

There have been critics who observe that fundraising creates a system where poor schools cannot afford to bring in extra activities and wealthy ones can. Annie Kidder from the watchdog organization People for Education is quoted as saying that "There is over $540 million raised a year in school-

generated funds in Ontario...there is still no clear public reporting on how those funds are raised, how they're divided, and what they're spent on" (Winsa & Rushowy, 2012). One suggestion for closing the gap was pooling some of the money raised by a school so that it could benefit everyone, but that idea caused a negative reaction from parents, so it was dropped. The numbers for the Toronto public board show that the top 20 elementary schools collected $4.4 million dollars, whereas the bottom 20 schools fundraised $103,000. The reporters mention that this data is not relayed to the community. Since this article was written, the People for Education (2018) conducted a study and found that, despite the new requirements for community disclosure of how much is raised and how they are being spent, the gap between lower and higher poverty areas is growing. No stigmatizing language was found in this article.

Later in the same year, *Toronto Star* reporter Louise Brown wrote an article titled "Summer widens rich/poor learning gap." She writes about a study out of McMaster University by Sociologist Davies (2013), which shows that children from wealthy families have improved literacy rates over the summer because they spend more time with highly literate parents, while poor, less educated families lose about a month's worth of reading skill (Brown, 2012). During the school year, wealthy students are ahead by five months. The findings show that there is a need for reading help over the summer, as well as on weekends and after school for less affluent students, in order to lessen the learning gap. Children whose parent's highest education completed was at the level of high school found their literacy skills drop by a month, but parents with bachelor's degrees or higher saw an increase in literacy skills over the summer. Davies is quoted in the article saying that it is not just about affluent summer activities some children experience, but also "…the daily conversations that are sophisticated and expand children's vocabularies, and being read to regularly by seasoned readers" (Brown, 2012). Davies' research also sponsored around 60 summer literacy camps for low-income students and found that the two- to three-week programs improved children's literacy skill by about 1.5 months compared to those who did not attend. Davies provides a good piece of research, however, future research could look at alternative variables to summer learning deficits, such as whether those same low-income children spend more time with household responsibilities or if their parents are out working more. While Brown gives a well-written report, she

could include information surrounding what daily life is like for low-income families versus high-income families to provide readers a better picture of why low-income children do not get the time or exposure to literacy skills as much as wealthy children. This could benefit both researchers and journalists.

"The education gap: Poor little rich kids feel the heat" is a news article written by Freeland for *The Globe and Mail*. The title uses the terms "poor" and "little," both in ways that are demeaning, even if the copy editor is referring to the old movie *Poor Little Rich Girl*. The term "poor" can be perceived as pity in this context, but in a mocking way, as the next term "little" is meant to diminish wealthy children. This article is framed within a winner versus loser discourse, which she uses in the article. The term "loser" does not just mean losing something in a game context; it is also a disparaging term. This is similar to the previously mentioned Broadbent (2013) article which uses "target." Journalists should refrain from using terms that could be interpreted as an insult toward people who are already living difficult lives.

In the article, Freeland explains that wealthy families have the capacity to spend more on their children's learning and that research has confirmed this, which is also indicative of the problems with income inequality. She quotes researchers Kornrich and Furstenberg who say that wealthy children are advantaged because parents can spend more on childcare and education throughout their lives, therefore "inequality may lead to even greater increases in inequality in the future as advantage and disadvantage are passed across generations through investments" (Freeland, 2013). Freeland addresses problems for children from wealthy families who start their learning early on. Researcher Suniya Luthar says in the article that upper-middle kids are an "at-risk group" because of the amount of pressure they are under, which Freeland says is a parental response to a hyper-competitive world economy. The result is that children have goals the same, if not greater, than their parents; these goals are becoming harder to achieve. Luthar says that children also feel negative mental effects if they did not reach their goals, as they think "what happens to me if I fall behind? I'll be worth nothing" (Freeland, 2013). This belief system ties into the neoliberal belief that success is directly related to self-worth.

3.6. Housing

Out of the forty articles I researched, three of them had housing as the main theme. For those who live without housing, life can be harsh and often fatal (Barrow et al., 1999; Hibbs et al., 1994). Being that not having shelter can mean the difference between life and death, it has been a major issue for those living in poverty. However, cities just outside of Toronto, like Mississauga, are showing that the middle class can no longer afford housing (Newport, 2018). Statistics show that in Toronto that "…low-income neighbourhoods together made up about one-fifth (21%) of the Toronto neighbourhoods in 1980. By 2015, they made up 39% of all neighbourhoods. High- and very high-income neighbourhoods grew from 15 % to 19% (Dinca-Panaitescu et al., 2017). The housing divide between the wealthy and poor is apparent, so as you might expect, this is an important topic in the media.

Journalist Santokie (2015) wrote an opinion piece for *The Toronto Star* titled "The great divide in Toronto housing." The drop head reads "Housing markets of rich and poor are two completely different creatures occupying two completely different worlds." Santokie sets up the article by demarcating the housing worlds of the wealthy and the poor. She begins by explaining that the Toronto housing market is "overheated," and that consumers are being pressured to buy from market sellers low interest rates. Santokie questions, who is being left out? She highlights Toronto's 90,000 people waiting for affordable housing and those living in adverse living conditions with responsibility-deficient landlords. She wonders if there are bidding wars in low-income areas like Jane and Finch or Lawrence Heights. People that may not have the means to buy a house are struggling with meeting their basic needs of food, clothing, and affordable housing. They are deserving of home ownership, and community development policies to level the playing field.

Santokie brings attention to the lack of a standard definition of affordable housing and the fact that many attempts at creating inclusionary policies have failed. She mentions that MPP Milczyn has tabled a private member's bill that would give local municipalities more control over requiring new developments to include a portion of affordable housing in their projects. Four years later, that same Bill 39, the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, is still tied up in the legislative process having been referred to the Standing Committee. Santokie says the one upside to all of this, despite soaring housing

prices “ascending to the realm of the gods,” is that developers will continue to build condos for the visible housing market. Even though I understand the connotation of poking fun at the elite in this example, equating people who can afford to buy houses in Toronto to godlike status takes away their humanity and makes them appear infallible.

Santokie says that the lower income market will continue to be invisible due to the lack of political will and foresight to create integrated housing options for everyone. She mentions that one in five Torontonians are living in poverty, which leaves many of us excluded, especially people who are Indigenous or racialized, including immigrant women who face barriers to leaving violent situations when they cannot find affordable housing or secure employment. Shelters are only a temporary solution, and housing and urban planning also needs to consider poverty and inequality for long term success. Santokie writes that the average monthly income for single parent households in Toronto is $1,465, and if those people are working contract jobs, then housing interest rates are not important issues to be considered. She ends the article by saying, “we’re not just creeping toward a city divided into rich and poor neighbourhoods, we’re galloping there” (Santokie, 2015). A good addition to this article would include personalized stories about those who are living this reality.

A *Washington Post* article written by Badger (2016) was featured on the *National Post’s* website with the sensationalist title, “The poor are better off when we build more housing for the rich.” The drop head states “It’s supply and demand: Increase the sheer amount of housing and competition for it will fall, bringing down rents along the way to the benefit of everyone.” Badger writes that protesters against new market-rate housing fear this will attract more wealth and displace the poor. She suggests that people are skeptical about how building more new market-rate housing will benefit the poor. Badger offers evidence from the California Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) that claims between the years 2000 and 2013 in San Francisco, “places without much new market-rate construction have more displacement.” A political angle is present in Badger’s claim that in high-construction areas, there is less displacement “whether they have inclusionary policies or not.” She claims that new housing “filters down” to a more affordable status because housing becomes less desirable as time goes on. To address the LAO reports findings, University

of California Berkeley researchers Zuk and Chapple (2016) (whose data was used by the LAO for their report) responded with a research brief saying:

> …the development of market-rate housing may not be the most effective tool to prevent the displacement of low-income residents from their neighborhoods, nor to increase affordability at the neighborhood scale…What we find largely supports the argument that building more housing, both market-rate and subsidized, will reduce displacement. However, we find that subsidized housing will have a much greater impact on reducing displacement than market-rate housing (p.4)

Leaving out subsidised housing in the data skews the findings in the LAO report. This is another example of how leaving out data, such as leaving out people who are homeless in health data, gives a less accurate picture of inequality. At the end of the article, Badger says that we should not dismiss when affordable housing is demolished to build high-rises and then goes on to claim that, over time, the supply of new developments can keep rents low. This article is contentious in the same way that reporter Carlson's (2012) article took the side of Lammam's inaccurate Fraser Institute research. As a reporter, to write as though you personally support that research, especially when contrasting evidence is ignored, is problematic because in many media contexts, the blurring of opinion and so-called objective reporting is becoming more difficult to parse.

The last news article for this section on Housing is from Lyall (2016) titled "House rich, cash poor" from the *Toronto Sun*. Lyall reports that there is a dysfunction in the housing market for Toronto and surrounding areas. He mentions that the problem is not just for low-income earners, but for middle-class, double-income "everyday families" who are supposed to be able to buy a home and have money left over. Using the terms "everyday families" in the context of middle-class and double-income people perpetuates the normative discourse of what typical Canadian families should look like. Those who fall outside of these norms can be considered deviant and not normal.

Lyall writes about an analysis from the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA), who came up with a new measurement for housing affordability called the Shelter Consumption Affordability Ratio (SCAR). Smetanin is president of CANCEA and the co-author of the report. In his report, he says that the SCAR index "reflects both the consumption costs of satisfying shelter need, and households' actual disposable income after payments for taxes, food, clothing and healthcare are made" (Smetanin et al., 2015, p.5). Lyall (2016) quotes him in the news article saying that Canada's SCAR index is manageable, however "...there are a number of young, middle-class Ontarians under a lot of pressure at home because of a lack of spending power." Lyall reports that this research is the first step in recognizing that there is an affordability problem and that industry partners along with CANCEA will attempt to provide solutions with future research.

Affordable Housing

Badger's (2016) article on how building more housing for the rich will help the poor said that the LAO report concluded that increasing "private construction would do more to broadly help poor households than expanding small and costly affordable housing programs that can serve only a fraction of them." We know from Zuk and Chapple's (2016) rebuttal that this is not the case because of the omission of subsidized housing from the data. The belief in trickle-down economics within a housing context contributes to stigmatizing practices.

Badger uses the term "costly affordable housing." Several researchers have proposed that building affordable housing and supports for those who are poor is more humane and economically beneficial (National Council of Welfare, 2011; Gaetz, 2012; Latimer et al., 2017; Palermo, Dera, & Clyne 2006; Hwang et al., 2011; Patterson et al., 2008). When we can see benefits in the future, then costs should actually be considered as investments (National Council of Welfare, 2011). Therefore, the cost of prevention initiatives, affordable housing, and social and mental supports (if needed) should be framed as investments. Once achieved, people who were once living in poverty can now participate and contribute financially to society through working and buying goods.

Generally, there are six public services that are accessed by individuals who are homeless. These include "shelter, jail, prison, hospital, psychiatric hospital, and supportive housing." In a cost-saving analysis in Halifax, they found that a "savings of 41% per homeless person could be achieved by investing in supportive housing" (Palermo, Dera, & Clyne, 2006, p.4). People who are homeless and have severe addiction and mental illness cost the public system in British Columbia an average of "…$55,000 per year. Provision of adequate housing and supports is estimated to reduce this cost to $37,000 per year. This results in an overall 'cost avoidance' of about $211 million per year" (Patterson et al., 2008).

For Toronto specifically, another study wanted to determine if housed patients cost more or less per hospital admission than those who are homeless over a 5-year period in Toronto. They found that "…homeless patient admissions cost $2559 more than housed patient admissions" and patients using psychiatric services "…cost $1058 more than housed patient admissions" (Hwang et al., 2011). From a Wellesley Institute study, we know that taxpayers pay "two and one-half times as much for homeless shelters as for rent supplements. Shelters cost ten times as much as social housing" (Shapcott, 2007, p.4). A report from Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (2018) shows the annual cost for permanent housing is $21,957 per unit per year, while a shelter bed costs $31,032 per year. The At Home/Chez Soi project showed that the Housing First model saved $7,910 per year over the treatment as usual process (Goering, 2012). A Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) report tells us that 43.5 percent of rental households in Toronto "spend more than 30 per cent of their pre-tax income on rent. Toronto has the fourth-lowest vacancy rates and the third-most expensive rents in Canada" (2015, p.2). Finally, in an extensive 100-page report, The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis demonstrated the benefits of both repair and revitalization investments for TCHC. Their findings show benefits such as lower household energy costs, health costs, neighbourhood crime, and more taxation revenue, GDP, full-time jobs, private investment, and avoiding a potential of doubling Toronto's homeless population (2015, p.31-32). Emergency shelter services are still important and needed. We need to elect politicians who will see the evidence for both doing the right thing for and recognizing that providing prevention initiatives,

emergency services, affordable housing, and mental or social supports (if needed) are investments that will save us money, and lives.

3.7 Rich and Poor Differences

Out of the forty articles I researched, three of them had rich and poor differences as the main theme. Those who are wealthy and those who are poor do have differences and, as we have seen in this thesis, those differences can result in lowered opportunities, health problems, and even premature death. Problems arise when those who are wealthy impose harmful stereotypical beliefs onto society through policy or media. This is significant because we know that how poverty is portrayed has an effect on public opinion (Clawson & Trice, 2000). Through this section, we will see how those beliefs are subtle, and not so subtle, within news stories.

Journalist Leung (2012) wrote an article for the *Globe and Mail* titled "Yes, the rich really are different from the rest of us." She begins by telling the reader that if you want to think like rich people then stop thinking that money is the root of all evil. She goes on to affirm that wealthy people "think very differently" too. This perpetuates a divide between people, not just economically, but biologically as well. Every person on this planet shares some similarities and differences with others in the way that they think. When research reports about these differences between the rich and poor, we must recognize that they are not *causal,* which is how this news article is framing the information.

The article centres around author Siebold who wrote a book called *How Rich People Think*. Leung (2012) attempts to qualify Siebold's authority by explaining that he has spent several decades interviewing rich people, so therefore he knows for a fact that that rich people are different in "how they view themselves, their money, and the world around them." These three points will be examined further as we go through the article. Siebold compares what he has learned from most rich people he interviewed over time. Leung (2012) gives an example of how Siebold compares these thoughts to those of the middle-class, "the middle class focuses on money, the rich focuses on how to earn it; the middle class worries about money, the rich dreams about it; the middle class has a 'lottery mentality' believing their lives are influenced by luck...the rich has an 'action mentality' where they determine their own futures."

These are generalizing statements that disregard of any notion of diversity in populations. Siebold has an entire book with these types of phrases. What is repeated several times in the article is that if you keep thinking of money as a bad thing, you will never have it. Many people who are homeless think that money is great because it could buy them food, clothing, and shelter, and yet they still cannot seem to move out of poverty.

Later in the article, Leung talks about how Seibold became a millionaire (see section Story of Success). Subsequently, she quotes psychologist Kraus saying that people in lower classes tend to think about systemic powers, politics, and inequality, as being "determining factors and not [their] individual abilities." Leung says that psychologists found that wealthy people are more likely to attribute their outcomes to individual traits instead of outside forces. Kraus et al. (2012) wrote an extensive paper that examines differences between narrow categories of social class and how they can affect solipsism (individual-centred perspective of the environment motivated by internal drives) and contextualism (external perspective of the environment motivated by outside factors). While the findings do show differences empirically, we must be careful not to use them as the causal reason why people are poor, which Leung has done in this article. Kraus et al. (2012) suggest that future research needs to integrate concerns about culture and inequality with their theories and that collectivist versus individualist cultures need to be considered. They also assert that there needs to be a more ethnically diverse sample and that the study addresses the role of social mobility in class-based cognition, and those who move fluidly between classes. None of this was mentioned in Leung's article. She goes on to mention two other studies, one showing that people who are poor have heightened perceptions of threat, and the other, a study again by Kraus and colleagues, showing that wealthy people are less compassionate than people who are poor. Leung tries to mitigate the essentialism by saying "all this is not to say that the wealthy are selfish, and the non-wealthy are waiting around for the government to take care of them. Rather, the gaps in their thinking may help explain why they have trouble seeing eye to eye." By this point in the article, the damage is done, and the framing of "just think differently" has already been established. These types

of news articles are essentializing as they perpetuate deterministic beliefs about how people become rich or poor.

The next section of the article lists quotes from five people who are wealthy titled "A Wealthy Frame of Mind." Leung (2012) lists the wealthy person's name, their net worth, and a selected quote. Mitt Romney was first, saying about people who voted for Barack Obama, "There are 47 percent...who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe that government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, you name it. That's an entitlement." The three words to highlight here are dependent, victims, and entitlement. These reinforce stereotypes that people who live in poverty are "useless" members of society. These beliefs are explored in the Blaming the Victim section. As we saw in the Drugs and Alcohol, and Employment sections, Reinhart is quoted in Leung's article as saying, "If you're jealous of those with more money, don't just sit there and complain; do something to make more money yourself – spend less time drinking, or smoking and socializing and more time working" (Leung, 2012). Next is Warren Buffet who says, "Success in investing doesn't correlate with IQ. What you need is the temperament to control the urges that get other people into trouble with investing." The implication of this statement suggests that investing is how you get rich and that if you just control your investment urges you will get rich. If people do not have money in the first place, how can they invest? Those who have money to invest are still playing a game of chance no matter what their urges are. Research on stocks markets going back to the 60s has recognized this (Fama, 1965).

Leung quotes O'Leary as saying, "The only friend you are going to have when you are old and crusty is not your dog, not your kids but cash in the bank that is still going to love you." Here we have a statement that equates money to human love. According to O'Leary, one should make money because the people in your life will abandon you when you are old. Lastly, Leung quotes Nooyi as saying, "I had no safety net. If I failed, I failed. That kept me going." These isolated quotes are presented to the reader after discussing how rich people think differently. This context implies that if you think differently and do what these quotes say, then you can be rich, too.

Reporter Self (2012) wrote an article for the *Globe and Mail* titled "Daily habits are the difference between the rich and poor." She says the title is what author of *Rich Habits*, Thomas Corley, believes. The article mentions his "research" that shows wealthy participants use their free time growing their knowledge and expanding their networks, while low-income people "weren't doing much to improve their careers or uncover further opportunities for work and wealth." The list goes on. Wealthy people set five-year plan goals, they re-work their goals, they use positive thinking and affirmations tied to direct action, daily exercise, saving and living within their means, passing financial knowledge to their children, and "putting a team in place to help them manage their affairs." Corley also says that successful people work on self-improvement daily. Self (2012) ends the article by quoting Corley as saying, "Good habits are like a magnet for opportunity and wealth." What Corley fails to consider is that most of these actions require money in the first place. People who live in poverty have a hard time focusing on "growing their knowledge" when they do not know if they will eat, or if an injury will cause them to lose their jobs, or if they have to get access to childcare, or if they have to pay the heating bill, or if they need to buy clothing for their children. Corley's narratives overlook what life is like for those with little to no income. These get rich quick books are examples of blaming the victim, completely ignoring any structural systems that contribute to people being wealthy or poor, and disregarding any truths to how the poor live.

The next article comes from Agar's (2012) in the *Toronto Sun* titled "10 ways not to be poor." He starts off this article saying "the perpetually poor are not blameless" and that society's initiatives to help those who are poor will be for nothing "unless people want to change." This is now the sixth article that focuses on how those who are poor need to change, as opposed to understanding how structural systems can contribute to putting them there in the first place and keeping them there (see section on Blaming the Victim). Agar (2012) mentions that most people through their own efforts or from the help of others can overcome adversity, but those who are perpetually poor "don't do the things required of them to move up and out." He offers ways that he believes will get people out of poverty. Agar suggests that low-income

people can find ways to save by "foregoing $300 Nike shoes." I could not find any research to substantiate the claim that buying expensive Nike shoes is why low-income people cannot save money.

Secondly, he says to stop believing in the quick fix, that the lottery is not a "ticket to the future." He presumes that the lottery is a reason for staying in poverty. Research shows that people with low incomes play the lottery because being embedded in lottery-playing social environments is correlated with an increase in lottery play, and those who feel a lack of agency and futility in their daily lives will play more (Beckert & Lutter, 2013). However, this is not true across the board. Some working-class women have shown reluctance to spend money on the lottery if it affects their budgets in a negative way (Casey, 2003). Buying lottery tickets also gives people an imagined future of a change in social position (Bol, Lancee & Steijn, 2014; Beckert 2016). Some researchers suggest that rising inequality is a potential reason for an increase in playing the lottery and that macro explanations have been studied limitedly (Bol, Lancee & Steijn, 2014). Those who are wealthy in an unequal society will also gamble more to reinforce their status as being successful in society (Bol, Lancee & Steijn, 2014). And finally, lotteries can create substantial regressive tax revenues (Beckert & Lutter, 2013). Another perspective to address is that people who have gambling addictions are pitied and ridiculed, and society blames and stigmatizes them for their failure to be responsible, but at the same time "society provided the conditions for this social problem to occur" (Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013, p.234). All of this shows the complexity of understanding gambling through lottery play, and not just for those who live in poverty. What is not said is just as important as what is being said for people to be better informed on these stigmatizing claims. He does mention that he wishes the government did not advertise the lottery as being the answer to financial freedom, which I support. Advertising contributes to how people dream and spend (see section on Canadian/American Dream).

People living in poverty need to stop believing life itself is a lottery, according to Agar (2012). "Successful people weather the storms, while unsuccessful people see themselves as victims with no options" (see section Blaming the Victim). Agar says that low-income people need to learn to manage their emotions of hopelessness, frustration, and anger. Meeting life and death challenges day in and day

out, coping with social exclusion, trauma, and lack of supports, contributes to a stressful life (Wagner & Menke, 1991). Additionally, for people who are homeless or have low incomes to "manage" their emotions, they need the resources available to do that, which are limited (Wagner & Menke, 1991). Agar (2012) purports that poor people pick the wrong role models and "let unsuccessful people school them on ways of life." Again, I could not find research that substantiates the claim that people who are poor pick wrong role models. Structurally, there is no market for compensation to those who are considered good role models for spending their time in poor communities, therefore markets contribute to the economic and social segregation for keeping people in poverty (Bowles, Durlauf, & Hoff, 2011). Agar suggests that poor people need to stop setting low goals. Again, I could not find any research to suggest they do. Setting goals is a good thing for children with a low SES (Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014). Understanding goal setting in impoverished communities is important, but there is limited research. We do know that it is likely that, for many people who live in poverty, reaching their goals is dependent on being in a good financial position (Khalid & Hollingsworth, 2017).

Agar's (2012) seventh point is that poor people need to stop believing in wishing and hoping. It is like they are wishing "something for nothing." Contradicting Agar, researchers say that for those who were poor, using self-affirmations made them more likely to utilize benefits and services that were otherwise stigmatizing, and helped to remove threatening and distracting thoughts (Hall, Zhao, & Shafir, 2014). Agar (2012) continues, "Everyone has a moral responsibility to provide for themselves as much as possible." Theories surrounding moral responsibility are well-debated in the literature, going back to the times of Aristotle (Eshleman, 2014). For the purposes of Agar's statement, his implication is that people who are poor do not provide for themselves as much as possible. He opines that society is not "tough" enough with "those people" who are "accessing the labour of others, through taxpayer-supported social programs." Again, we see the stereotype of people who are poor as a drain on the system and the idea that they do not work (see section on Employment).

Agar (2012) leaves us with a "three-point program for avoiding poverty." Firstly, children should stay in school until they have obtained at least a high school diploma, stating that "it is not too much to

ask, we should make it more of a demand." We learned earlier that a basic income would help with that (Forget, 2011). Also, there are postsecondary homeless students who have their high school diplomas (Quaye & Harper, 2014). People with PhDs can also become homeless (Hallowell, 2011). He simply takes one aspect of life (education) and does not consider other factors that contribute to poverty. Secondly, Agar (2012) suggests that people should not have children until they are financially capable, and "to do otherwise is a form of child abuse. Anyone can fall on hard times, but if properly prepared before having children a person will recover for their own and their children's benefit." This figured world lends to the prevailing belief that mothers have more babies to gain more welfare benefits (Clawson & Trice, 2000). At what point is one "financially capable" to have a baby? How would that be determined? Then, there is the question of regulating women's bodies. Most women who are subjected to state intervention regarding their reproductive rights have backgrounds of trauma, drug addiction, mental illness, and developmental disabilities; therefore, through attributing responsibility to the woman alone, society absolves itself of the responsibility to provide health, housing, and other social supports (Flavin, 2008). Agar's line of thinking has continually recurred since the turn of the century with eugenics movements and policies. A woman's reproductive rights and her right to procreate "are distinct from whether or not she is or might be a "good" pregnant woman or "good" mother. These rights reside in her existence as a human being, along with the rights to control her body" (Flavin, 2008, p.29). Agar likens women who are poor that have babies to "child abuse." The Department of Justice Canada (2002) defines child abuse as "the violence, mistreatment, or neglect that a child or adolescent may experience while in the care of someone they either trust or depend on, such as a parent, sibling, other relative, caregiver, or guardian." They also suggest there is *no clear cause* of child abuse and that "regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, cultural identity, socioeconomic status, spirituality, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities or personality" any child could be vulnerable to being abused. Agar's statements are highly flawed and contribute to harmful prejudices in public opinion.

Lastly, Agar suggests people stay off illegal drugs and alcohol, which is examined in the Drugs and Alcohol section. Agar (2012) says that being in poverty is not an excuse to commit crimes and

"violent crime tends to emanate from impoverished neighbourhoods." He is trying to frame people who live in poverty as violent. Here is a quote from Thomas More's *Utopia*: "For if you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manners to be corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded from this, but that you first make thieves and then punish them." Agar concludes by reiterating the same rhetoric used throughout the article, that we need to "demand more from people who stay on public support for decades and for successive generations." Agar shows that he has little understanding of poverty issues and bases his opinions on negative stereotypes, not facts.

Blaming the Victim

> When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look into the reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or our family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like lettuce (Hanh, 1991, p.78).

Narratives of blame are "socially constructed accounts that attach judgmental and/or moral qualities to different groups to explain why advantaged people are advantaged and why disadvantaged people are disadvantaged" (Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013, p.322). Poverty is often framed "as personal failure and wealth as a personal achievement" (Bullock & Limbert, 2009, p.220). What is known in sociology as the "hidden injuries of class" are how these narratives can be so normalized that the victims can even blame themselves (Sennett & Cobb, 1972). We have victim blaming narratives in the articles from Taylor (2015), Leung (2012), Broadbent (2013), Galloway (2012), Self (2012), and Agar (2012). These victim blaming beliefs from journalists, and sometimes the researchers that they represent in their articles, shows us that a robust understanding of structural systems is severely lacking. William Ryan's (1976) book titled *Blaming the Victim* looks at the ways in which structural systems and individuals place onus on other individuals who have suffered from societal influences. He suggests that the agency of someone who is a victim is limited to condemning the original stressor or ignoring the continuing effect

of victimization. He says it is a clever "…ideology for justifying a perverse form of social action designed to change, not society, as one might expect, but rather society's victim" (p.8).

Psychology offers us a glimpse into how we attribute causes to why people behave the way they do. This is known as attribution theory. We can think someone behaves in a certain way because of internal attributions, (a person's personality or their character), and external attributions (the situation, or environment). For many people who live in poverty, internal attribution plays a role in how people are perceived. Aronson et al., (2010) explain further using an example of a panhandler:

> According to Fritz Heider (1958) we tend to see the causes of a person's behaviour as internal. So when a man asks us for money, we will most likely at first assume that he is at fault for being poor – perhaps lazy or drug-addicted. If you knew the person's situation – that perhaps he has lost a job due to a plant closing or has a spouse whose medical bills have bankrupted them – you might come up with a different, external attribution (p.104).

This idea is dichotomous, but it gives us a starting point to delve further. You might still think there are some situations where it was a "choice" for someone to be homeless because they "chose" to commit a crime, start taking drugs, got evicted because they were loud, insert internal attribution here. However, when you factor in structural systems that influence *how* people make decisions to act or behave in certain ways, then it is hard to revert to simplistic notions of behaviour, which we have seen throughout these news articles. Cognitive biases, how we produce representations of distortions compared to an aspect of objective reality (Haselton et al.,2015), is one way that these systems can negatively affect vulnerable populations. We see bias embedded in our institutions such as antidiscrimination laws (Bagenstos, 2007), judicial sentencing (Freiburger & Hilinski, 2013), our education textbooks (Provenzo Jr, Shaver & Bello, 2011), and in our healthcare system (Burgess, 2010). Paul Farmer's (1997) extensive ethnographic work in Haiti has shown that for many people "life choices are structured by racism, sexism, political violence, *and* grinding poverty" (p.263).

Most people who are poor are so because they do not have enough income, they do not have the power to access methods to gain more income, they are "too young, too old, too sick; they are bound to the task of caring for small children, or they are simply discriminated against" (Ryan 1976, p.140). Additionally, we know that neoliberal policies play a major role in income inequalities (Coburn, 2004; Stockhammer, 2015). However, institutional and systemic structures are not mentioned in any of these news articles that explore rich and poor discourses. People who live in poverty can feel as though they are seen as societal burdens, lazy, unmotivated, or stupid (Hall, Zhao, & Shafir, 2014; Reutter et al., 2009). The Angus Reid Institute (2018) recently released a report that said 72 percent of Canadians believe that people are poor not because of lack of effort, but because of circumstances beyond their control, and 65 percent say that wealthy people get ahead because they had more advantages in life, not because they worked harder. However, delving further into the demographics, we can see a cognitive dissonance emerging politically. Generally, people believe that circumstances beyond their control are at fault for people who are poor, yet 47 percent of people say that you just need to work hard to escape poverty. When breaking down political factors, Conservative voters think that the government is doing enough to help and 59 percent think you just need to work hard to escape poverty, while Liberal and NDP voters are the opposite (Reid, 2018). Unless we start recognizing how our figured worlds play into the culture of poverty, how biased systems discriminate against lower-income groups while exacerbating income gaps, and how blaming the victim perpetuate beliefs about people who are poor, then nothing will change.

From a psychological perspective, defensive attributions are ways for us to explain behaviours that avoid feelings of vulnerability and mortality (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2010). One way in which we do this is through a Belief in a Just World. This belief says that bad things only happen to bad people, and good things happen to good people, therefore people get what they deserve in life (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2010). You are less likely to make this attribution error if you have taken social science courses in university, as opposed to commerce courses, as you will be less likely to attribute poverty and unemployment to internal factors as opposed to situational factors (Guimond & Palmer, 1996). People use their just-world beliefs to explain increased inequality because it gives them someone to blame. "They

may blame people poorer than themselves, and they may blame themselves; they rarely blame the rich…just-world beliefs colour the way we interact with economically disadvantaged populations" (Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013, p.310). Politically, we know that people on the right tend to blame the victim, and people on the left tend to blame social and economic factors, and furthermore, people with right-wing views tend to hold stronger just-world beliefs (Bastounis, Leiser, & Roland-Levy, 2004). Tepperman and Gheihman (2013) suggest

> Those who have strong just-world beliefs find it difficult to reconcile that many people are not getting what they deserve, and that some privileged people are getting a lot more than they deserve. Accepting these facts requires them to change their ideas about their own lives and life in general, so people find it easier to deny the facts and to deny the scientific evidence that may suffer from unwarranted disadvantage and inequality causes sickness, crime, and war…the habitual ways of thinking and acting persist, through willful ignorance and inaction, because this persistence is easier and more psychologically comfortable than change (p.317).

The belief that people deserve to be where they are because they chose to be has real social effects through legislation and policy changes (Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013). People who live in poorer communities must deal with daily struggles that those who are wealthy take for granted, therefore they have little time and few resources to develop skills, get formal education, or gain the necessary social capital to do well in society (Hagan, 1993). We must recognize that people who are victims of society's failings, through biased thinking and systemic structures, should not be blamed without understanding the multifaceted ways in which they are influenced, obstructed, and stigmatized.

Expenditure cascades occur when people at the top create pressure for more spending by people at the bottom (Frank, 2016). Frank suggests that excessive spending on coming-of-age parties, large mansions, and multiple cars raise the standards of what is adequate to those in the middle and lower

classes. Children then become upset if their parties are not elaborate (for example, having professional clowns or magicians). He proposes that to avoid wasting money, we bring individual spending incentives closer to society's best interests by introducing a progressive tax as it "...would reduce the recent high rates of spending growth for mansions, cars, jewelry, and celebrations of special occasions. Not a shred of evidence suggests that such a change would make top earners any less happy" (Frank, 2016, p.143). These pressures are often unknown or overlooked.

3.8 Employment

Out of the forty articles I researched, two of them had employment as the main theme. Since the economic crisis of 2008, there have been employment concerns surrounding the number of stable, full-time positions versus jobs that are low-paying, high-risk, and offer limited mobility within companies (Jütting & Laiglesia 2009). Several factors that most people do not consider can contribute to instability in employment, such as how forced removal from their homes is a strong predictor of job loss for low-income people with (Desmond & Gershenson, 2016). The news articles covered in this section touch upon employment topics that include street youth, exploitation, sweatshops, and the minimum wage debate.

In 2014, Journalist Blizzard wrote an article for the *Toronto Sun* called "Still no place for squeegee kids on our streets." Blizzard offers her strong opinions at the beginning, then offers several expert perspectives contrary to her opinion, and then ends the article the same way she began. The beginning of the article starts like this:

> If a scruffy group of guys swarm my car at an intersection and, against my will, smear my windshield with greasy water, I'm a white, middle-class, bourgeois whiner if I object. That was the gist of a Queen's Park news conference Monday when a coalition called for Attorney General Madeleine Meilleur to scrap the Safe Streets Act (SSA).

In the first sentence, she specifically calls out a “group of guys” who “swarm” her car.. This article generalizes people by using language that induces fear, which Blizzard will return to later in the piece. The Safe Streets Act (SSA) became legislated in 1999 in Ontario. The Homeless Hub at the time was led by former attorney general Bryant, who was part of the group trying to get the SSA repealed. Blizzard writes that Bryant said that the SSA “is expensive and wastes valuable police time.” She tells Bryant’s story of how he was cleared of charges for the death of a bike courier Sheppard in 2010 and he eventually formed bonds with some people who were homeless. However, in the article Blizzard says, “street people.” Defining people by their housing status is harmful. Instead of writing “homeless people” or “street people” the term “people” should be presented first. The same should apply to terms like “drug users,” as it should be “people who use drugs.” People are not defined by their situations as that can essentialize their experiences and perpetuate stereotypes. They are always people first.

To Blizzard’s (2014) credit, she quotes Bryant as saying, “Where once I’d felt estranged from those who live and panhandle on the streets, afraid of the unknown, now I see only friends and neighbours – often in pain, sometimes full of misplaced anger, but always more generous and noble than I can pull off on the best of days.” Blizzard writes that she recognizes that he went from an attorney general to someone who advocates for “street people,” but says that his path is “wrong-headed.” Bryant says that he regrets not scrapping the SSA when he had the chance. Blizzard (2014) quotes the director of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Gaetz, who said, “One bad experience becomes something we generalize to everyone” and that the SSA enforced “$4 million of debt placed upon people living in extreme poverty” and 99% of the tickets go unpaid. Specifically, the SSA caused ticketing to people living in poverty to rise from 710 in 2000 to 15,324 in 2010 with a value of $4,043,280. The cost to Toronto Police of issuing the tickets over those 11 years was $936,019 and the clear majority of people who are homeless do not pay them back (O’Grady, Gaetz, & Buccieri, 2011).

Blizzard (2014) then quotes Birdsell, a lawyer for Justice for Children and Youth who said “We don’t need to fear people who beg or panhandle or who are so poor that they need to ask us for change.” After these perspectives, Blizzard proceeds to explain her own fears. “I fear swarms of men who are

younger and stronger than I am menacing me with dirty squeegees at intersections. That's what happened before the SSA." Despite all the perspectives that people who are living in poverty should not be feared, Blizzard does not internalize that information. She exaggerates the picture of squeegee kids using the term "swarm" as if people are somehow locusts? She genders them all as "men" because there are no women who squeegee? She portrays them as aggressive by using the term "menacing." These overgeneralized images that Blizzard creates perpetuates the stereotype that people living in poverty should be feared, which is wrong. In fact, people without a home are more often *victims* of crime and extreme violence than people who are housed (Novac et al., 2009; Reutter et al., 2009). She is afraid, which is something we can acknowledge. In a recent study from Yale University, researchers examined how perceived physical safety in conservatives affect their political views. Based on previous research that shows conservatives see the world as a more dangerous place than liberals do, the researchers had conservative participants imagine that they had a superpower that made them immune to physical harm. The results showed that conservative participants social attitudes (but not economic views) were more in sync with the liberal participants views, as opposed to the control group who just imagined that they could fly (Napier et al., 2018). There is a disconnect between simply learning about another group and changing your worldview. Some require specific strategies (see section on Reducing Stigma).

Unfortunately, Blizzard ends her article by saying "If squeegee kids want to work, let them go to a car wash." It is interesting how people say the stock response of "just get a job" but then when people do find ways to work, they are criticized. The belief that people who live in poverty should just get a job is a prevalent thought for many people. The common assumption is that people squeegee because it is easier than real work, or that they are lazy, but when asked if they want paid employment over 80% of them said yes (Gaetz & O'Grady, 2002). Getting a job is not so simple when you do not have certain privileges. Does the average person think about the privilege of housing, which entails a place to "eat, rest, sleep, and recover from illness or injury. More than merely a physical space, a home means having an address and a telephone, all of which help when looking for work" (Gaetz et al., 2013, p.243-44). Additionally, there is the understanding that many children who are homeless have a lack of access to

education and the social supports of parents, friends, neighbours, and teachers, who can also provide nurturing, mentoring, and potential business connections. “Young people who come from the worst backgrounds – who suffered physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at home, who left home at an early age and dropped out of school, and who have addictions challenges – are less likely to get regular jobs” (Gaetz et al., 2013, p.247). For those of us who have not had to deal with trauma, abuse, and lack of housing, food, education, transportation, social supports, and healthcare will not understand how these factors affect the daily lives of people living in poverty. Systemic and institutional roles are overlooked to people like Blizzard, who are unaware of the ways in which employment training programs fail us, or the criminalization of poverty, or how public use of spaces affect people. Employment prospects are even worse for those dealing with discrimination through racism, ableism, sexism, and homophobia. When we cannot see past our judgements and essentialize people’s experiences, then we are the ones who are contributing to the political and social barriers people face when looking for work. We perpetuate negative stereotypes and some of us even use a public platform such as a news article to increase the suffering of people who already lead chaotic and traumatic lives.

An article titled “Matthew Lau: Actually Pope Francis, it’s good for rich employers to ‘exploit’ poor workers” was written by Lau (2016) for the *Financial Post*, posted on the *National Post’s* website. The sub headline reads “The fact that paying minimum market wages can also boost profits for employers doesn’t make it sinful.” Lau begins by telling us that that Pope Francis “lambasted” employers who pay their workers low wages. This article has offered us two of Gee’s (2010) capital “C” Conversations (see sections on Minimum Wage and Sweatshops). He quotes the Pope as calling them “true bloodsuckers” who “live by spilling the blood of the people who they make slaves of labour.” Lau points out that the common theme from the Pope’s speech was exploitation and that the Pope tells a story of a woman whose employers told her that if she thought her wages were unfair, she could easily be replaced by lines of people behind her waiting for a job. Lau then says that if people who are poor are lining up to be exploited, “wouldn’t they be best served if there was more of it happening, not less?” The short answer to

this is no, but the whole article goes on in this fashion, so this argument will be addressed further at the end of the summary.

Lau gives us an example of the poor who are desperate for work in Cambodia, noting that some scavenge garbage (not unlike here). He quotes New York Times journalist Kristof as saying that jobs in sweatshops are a "cherished dream" and "an escalator out of poverty." Unfortunately, most people believe that poverty is simply based on economics. However, to fully understand poverty, one needs to understand the full scope. Pierre Sane (2001) from UNESCO says that poverty is not just economic, it is "considered to undermine human rights - economic (the right to work and have an adequate income), social (access to health care and education), political (freedom of thought, expression, and association) and cultural (the right to maintain one's cultural identity and be involved in a community's cultural life)." Like Blizzard's (2014) article, the argument that you can just get a job and "escalate" out of poverty is highly flawed.

A similar employment belief is mentioned in Leung's (2012) article where she quotes Reinhart as saying that people without a lot of money should spend "more time working." Stevens (2016) says that in 2014, those who are poor between 18 and 64 "who are not disabled or in school…51.8 percent worked for part of the previous year." For those who do not work, knowing about structural systems and daily life practices are imperative to understanding the full scope of employment. In Csanady's (2016) social mobility article, Fraser Institute's biased Lammam says that Canadians are able to "pull themselves up by the bootstraps" and that all you have to do is become educated, get a full-time job, and "work up the income ladder over time and do well for yourself independent of your starting point." This is a highly essentialist statement. People who live in poverty face several barriers to getting a job, such as lack of safe and affordable housing, income for purchasing hygiene, proper clothing and transportation needed to get and hold a job, education and training, compromised health, stress of a chaotic lifestyle, and weak social capital (Gaetz & O'Grady, 2013). Colonial and neoliberal practices continue to play a role in how society views those who work and do not work. It is unfortunate that we only value those who can

financially contribute to society, overlooking non-financial values such as volunteering, friendship, or simply being a person trying to live.

Sweatshops

At the end of Lau's (2016) article, he comments that rich employers should donate to social causes because that can help those who are "still in line at the sweatshop door…hoping to one day find themselves lucky enough to be exploited." Some researchers agree with the argument that sweatshops are a good thing (Powell & Zwolinski, 2012; Krugman, 1997; Bhagwati, 2007). However, most mainstream economists focus on market exchanges, which obscures oppressive practices in sweatshops (Miller, 2003). When looking at the debate as to whether sweatshops are good or bad, journalists and economists leave out several aspects of the story that need to be considered. The United Nations has suggested a human rights tripartite framework for transnational corporations to follow that includes moral, political, and legal factors (Arnold, 2010). After the 1970s, multinational corporations were incentivized to consider putting their manufacturing facilities in developing countries. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund provided companies with tax incentives and a less regulated environment (Miller, 2003). Those less regulated environments allow companies to commit human rights violations. It has been well-documented that some workers have found themselves locked away in heavily-guarded compounds, sometimes working fifteen hours a day, seven days a week, with money deducted from their paychecks from fines, and often experiencing sexual, mental, and physical abuse (Flanigan, 2016; Moure-Eraso et al., 1997; Miller, 2003). To be fair, not all companies engage in barbaric practices against their workers. Companies like Levi's Strauss, Motorola, and Mattel have put in place several measures for ensuring safe environments for their employees (Arnold & Bowie, 2003). Research has shown that creating standards in some sweatshops may decrease employment, but the gains include decent work, a lower gap in the distribution of income between worker and employer, and greater efficiency overall (Chau, 2016). Additionally, workers whose basic needs are met, both physically and mentally, have more energy, will be less absent, and less likely to come into work sick (Arnold & Bowie, 2003). There have

also been arguments on both sides that companies do not coerce people (Powell & Zwolinski, 2012) and that they do (Flanigan, 2016). However, one perspective is repeatedly overlooked.

When reading the literature on the economics, laws, and ethics of sweatshops, rarely does the research include how many of these countries became "developing" nations in the first place. Where are the perspectives of how hundreds of years of colonization from wealthy nations left many of these countries in dire conditions? We know that there are direct relationships between how governments and business policies affect the economic depravity, and the mental and physical health of people who have been colonized (Alfred, 2009). Given the chance to thrive on their own, colonized countries can "develop" themselves, without the Western belief that they need saving. The solar energy company Enersa, created by Haitians for Haitians, is a great example of this. People who claim that the only other options for people are to pick through garbage or engage in sex work are missing other alternatives. Perhaps one way to reconcile is for wealthy countries to give back some of what they stole in the first place through investments in local business development. The West does not need to paternally "save" those "over there," but there is a responsibility to recognize and act on how they had a major role in how these countries are doing economically in the first place.

Minimum Wage

Lau's 2016 news article mentions that "inflating wages past the market price for labour only leads to inefficiencies." These types of statements bring up another Gee (2010) Conversation, since the minimum wage debate has been prominent lately, especially in Ontario. Governments decide what the minimum wage for labourers should be based on provincial legislation. Ontario created an advisory panel consisting of representatives from businesses, workers, and youth groups to help inform the provincial governments decisions (Ontario Ministry of Labour, 2013). Through research, we know that left wing parties tend to set the highest minimum wages (Green & Harrison, 2006). We can see this reflected in the current political climate in Ontario. The liberal government instituted a $14 minimum wage increase in 2018, and one year later to increase it to $15 per hour. The newly elected conservative government has frozen the minimum wage at $14 while providing a provincial tax credit. Senior economist Sheila Block

(2018) says that the conservatives' plan would reduce both low-wage earners' direct income and "the amount of revenue that the province has to pay for the public services that they need to rely on: like public education, subsidized child care, and public transit." Tax credits are risky because employers could use the subsidy as a reason to cut wages and then pocket that money, so the minimum wage prevents this from happening (Manning, 2018). Additionally, political parties want to appear fair, so they study other provinces to see how they measure up (Green & Harrison, 2006). Therefore, despite community input, final decisions come from whichever political party is in power at the time without considering the best interests of workers, which causes concern.

Job loss due to the minimum wage increase is a concern for many. Several news outlets wrote about the results from a report by the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) (2017) suggesting that there would be approximately 50,000 jobs lost with the minimum wage increase. Some argue that several small businesses will be closing, yet the main employers of minimum wage workers are large firms, and the FAO (2017) report also suggests the following:

> a higher minimum wage would also raise labour income and increase consumer spending. Higher spending would then stimulate economic activity and lead to job creation. The jobs created from higher household spending would be expected to offset some of the loss in employment that would result from the higher minimum wage (p.3)

Unfortunately, evidence from the literature is conflicting as to the relationship between minimum wage increases and job loss (Suprovich, 2015; Manning, 2018). However, studies about the impact of earnings are clear that workers paid the minimum wage see their incomes increase, but so do those who were paid slightly above the minimum (Manning, 2018). The downside is that simply raising the minimum wage is not a good way to reduce poverty (Financial Accountability Office of Ontario 2017; Manning, 2018). Minimum wage jobs for many Canadians are their permanent jobs and the money they earn goes to supporting families, not just single-family homes (Suprovich, 2015). Research across several cities in the

United States has shown no significant negative employment effects of raising the minimum wage (Allegreto et al., 2018).

Additionally, people with less money put their increased wages directly into the economy, whereas the wealthy tend to save or invest their money (Suprovich, 2015), or, as we learned earlier, can put their money in tax havens. Money can also affect other aspects of society when minimum wage is not addressed. Researchers have suggested that crime rates due to income inequality in the United States are high because of their government policies, such as not addressing their low minimum wage (Wade, 2005). An important consideration in discussions regarding the minimum wage is the idea of a living wage. A living wage is the amount of income needed to raise a family and live within a specific community. The living wage for the city of Toronto was estimated at $18.52 in 2015 (Ontario Living Wage Network, 2018).

Ontario started a basic income pilot project, offering an annual income of $16,989 to single residents and $24,027 to couples who have no other outside income. The government is concerned with how a basic income can replace existing programs like Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, and are hoping to reduce poverty and stigma, encourage work, and increase health and education outcomes (Segal, 2016). A basic income project (MINCOME) was conducted in the 1970s in Dauphin, Manitoba. This was another example of the influence of partisan politics; after the project ended, both federal and provincial leaders, who were conservatives at the time, were not interested in continuing the program (Forget, 2011). So much of the research was left without analysis. Even though the economic climate was different from today, some researchers have examined the data and the results are interesting. Research has suggested that during the project, students were more likely to move on to grade 12 and had more community involvement, and hospitalization rates for accidents, injuries, and mental health declined (Forget, 2011). MINCOME also blurred the lines of undeserving and the deserving poor because participants were treated like people, as opposed to the more stigmatizing welfare system which can infantilize people (Calnitsky, 2016). A report from the Roosevelt Institute suggests that the

macroeconomy can grow under a federal universal basic income plan and the economy can withstand that amount of spending (Nikiforos, Steinbaum, & Zezza, 2017).

As for the critics of basic income, they believe that giving people money will cause them to not want to work. An underlying belief is that our default as humans is a natural disinclination to work if given the chance to avoid it. However, several people who make millions still work because they love it, not because they need more money. Forget (2011) explains that when given a guaranteed income, mothers and teenagers tend to work less. Some journalists and politicians would fail to mention that women worked less so that they could stay home longer with their babies and young children, while teenagers potentially had less pressure to work for their families and therefore stayed in school longer. Some wealthy billionaires also support basic income. Musk has suggested that a basic income will be necessary if artificial intelligence and automation takes over most of our jobs, and can create more equality in the marketplace, and Facebook founder Zuckerburg supports a basic income to inspire entrepreneurial creativity (Clifford, 2018).

The current conservative government has said they are scrapping the project, despite saying before the election that they would not. The conservatives say that the project does not help people on welfare to get jobs, yet 70 percent of the people in the program were already working at the time but still could not afford rent or food (Monsebraaten, 2018). Economist Milligan (2017) critiqued the program by saying that the cost was high and that, if implemented Canada wide, it could add another 5 points to the HST; he likened the project to a "scheme." However, he also says that Canada spends over 140 billion dollars each year on income transfer programs and we should be open to learn about other ways of delivering benefits such as basic income. Milligan's (2017) research suggests that low-income parents who receive a higher income spend more on food and shelter, and suffer less from depression which can benefit our economy in the long run. He also says that once we have the evidence, we can decide as a province if the benefits outweigh the cost. Sadly, the Ontario conservative government does not want the evidence. The project may be expensive at first, but it has been rolled out with much planning, not starting province-wide, but choosing a few communities to start with (Ontario Basic Income Pilot, 2018).

Stories have already been reported about how the program has helped those who are involved to get a job or go back to school, and its abrupt cancellation be highly detrimental (Paddon, 2018). When social cuts happen, they occur not where logic would dictate they should; they have the highest impact on those who are most vulnerable and who do not have much power to push back, which reduces our investment in the future (Frank, 2016). Four participants from the project have decided to sue the Ontario government for cancelling (Riley, 2018). Most recently, CEOs for Basic Income (2018) has signed a letter the Ontario government urging them to continue the project. When people create policies that compromise the health and well-being of individuals, we can say that they are committing a type of social murder. Frederick Engels (1993) explains what that may entail:

> When society places hundreds of proletarians in such a position that they inevitably meet a too early and an unnatural death, one which is quite as much a death by violence as that by the sword or bullet; when it deprives thousands of the necessaries of life, places them under conditions in which they cannot live—forces them, through the strong arm of the law, to remain in such conditions until that death ensues which is the inevitable consequence—knows that these thousands of victims must perish, and yet permits these conditions to remain, its deed is murder just as surely as the deed of the single individual; disguised, malicious murder, murder against which none can defend himself, which does not seem what it is, because no man sees the murderer, because the death of the victim seems a natural one, since the offence is more one of omission than of commission. But murder it remains. (p.84)

Today, researchers find that conservative policies promise economic equality for all, yet they are doing the opposite, by making "our society less healthy, more dangerous, less stable, more unequal, less fair, and more inefficient" (Chernomas & Hudson, 2009, p.119-120). It is unfortunate that people cannot see

the potential benefits of long-term government savings, providing dignity to people's lives, and granting us the opportunity to gather more evidence to make informed decisions about how we can help our most vulnerable citizens.

3.9 Celebrity

Out of the forty articles I researched, two of them had celebrities as the main theme. The culture surrounding celebrity has a long history and is greatly intertwined with identification and representation (Marshall, 2006). The influence of celebrity ranges from endorsements that affect political outcomes (Garthwaite & Moore, 2013) to a preoccupation with consumerism (Lewallen, Miller, & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). Their influence, along with what the media decides to write about, become important factors in understanding how they position those who live in poverty.

Ahsan (2016) wrote an article for the *National Post* titled "By telling their kids they're poor, Kunis and Kutcher are hoping they won't become 'assholes'." Ahsan reports that actress Kunis and actor Kutcher went on Australia's *Kyle and Jackie O Show*, where Kunis mentioned that she talks to Kutcher about getting their kids to understand the value of money. Kunis is quoted as saying, "…we both came from pretty solid poverty backgrounds and grew up very poor and are very much self-made, and are very aware of what a dollar is worth. Nothing's been handed to us" (see section Paths to Success). Ahsan (2016) also quotes Kunis as saying that teaching children at a young age that "…mommy and daddy may have a dollar, but you're poor…you are very poor, you have nothing. Mommy and daddy have a bank account." Here again is the belief that children born to parents with immense wealth, power, and privilege "have nothing." Ahsan then mentions Kunis' appearance on the *Conan O'Brien Show* where she talks about buying wedding bands off Etsy, to imply she is behaving like a non-celebrity. Poverty is not always viewed as a negative thing. Some people in power wear it as a badge of honour, yet at the same time essentializing it without recognizing how other factors are involved in becoming successful. He ends the article by saying they were expecting a second child in June of 2016. The article reads more like a gossip column, or a positioning of how to parent when you are a celebrity.

A *Business Insider* (2014) article posted on the *National Post's* website lists "15 billionaires who were once dirt poor." The article's drop head reads "From Oprah Winfrey to Ralph Lauren to Oracle's Larry Ellison, these rags-to-riches stories remind us that through determination, grit, and a bit of luck anyone can achieve extraordinary success." The article begins with the author saying that "wealth tends to create more wealth…some of the world's wealthiest people started out dirt poor…these rags-to-riches stories remind us that through determination, grit, and a bit of luck anyone can overcome their circumstances and achieve extraordinary success." Here we can recognize the essentialist belief of "determination, grit, and a bit of luck" as being the formula for success (see section Paths to Success). The article lists 15 people "who were once dirt poor" and these include Troutt, Shultz, Langone, Oprah, Khan, Kerkorian, DeJoria, Chang, Lauren, Pinault, Del Veccio, Soros, Ka-shing, Simmons, and Ellison.

Each of these entrepreneurs are listed in the article with their net worth and a small blurb about them. Let's look at two examples. The first is the blurb written about Troutt, which says:

> Troutt grew up with a bartender dad, and paid for his own tuition at Southern Illinois University by selling life insurance. He made most of his money from phone company Excel communications, which he founded in 1988 and took public in 1996. Two years later, Troutt merged his company with Teleglobe in a $3.5 billion deal.

What is not specifically mentioned is that Troutt is a white, able-bodied, straight male. Beyond that, reading the short biography blurb, we recognize that he had a father who was able to work, and he himself was able to work and had the educational background to get into university in the first place. These points are taken for granted in these narratives. Not a white male, Oprah Winfrey's blurb in the article says:

> Winfrey was born into a poor family in Mississippi, but this didn't stop her from winning a scholarship to Tennessee State University and becoming the first African American TV correspondent in the state at the age of 19. In 1983, Winfrey moved to

Chicago to work for an AM talk show which would later be called 'The Oprah Winfrey Show'.

Oprah as a constructed celebrity has different biographies, television broadcasts, interviews, and websites offering contradictory information about her life. One site says she was able to read at two and a half years old, and that she received scholarly guidance from her father when she lived with him (Encyclopedia of World Biography, 2018). If true, this would be a privilege that was not mentioned in the news article. Researcher Cloud (1996) mentions that Oprah's sister says that she did have a difficult childhood, but she was not desperately poor. Cloud suggests that the greater the contrast of Oprah's past and present, gives a more compelling narrative to the rags to riches story, an American Dream ideology that people ingest more easily.

Stories about people rising to success in the face of difficulty resonates with those of us in a society that praises individual perseverance. Critiquing discourses that surround poverty and wealth should not take away from the adversity people have lived through to get to where they are today. What is important is understanding how we are talking about the ways in which people can get themselves out of being poor with these sound-bite pieces of information. It is highly misleading and leaves out pertinent information about the realities of privilege and how we essentialize becoming wealthy.

Paths to Success

Successful people and their rags-to-riches narratives run rampant, as evidenced by the beliefs regarding being "self-made" and "nothing handed to us" in the Ashan (2016) article, or the "determination, grit, and a bit of luck" formula in *Business Insider* (2014). This biased thinking excludes anyone who has ever helped them along the way, how they look, mental capacity, what advantages they had but fail to remember or disclose. Leung (2012) writes about how Siebold became wealthy because he just changed his mindset. After his change in thinking about money, he bought a house near some billionaires to hobnob with wealthy people, yet he clearly had money in the first place to make that move possible. The success myth is regularly contradicted by race, class, and gender stratification within capitalist societies (Cloud, 1996).

Sociologists Tepperman and Gheihman (2013) explain the functional theory of stratification as certain positions in society have more functional importance than others (for example, a brain surgeon as opposed to a garbage collector). Rewards such as money and prestige are given to those who have the ability and resources to learn special skills. This theory suggests that social inequality is unavoidable, and this is a pervasive belief in our society. However, the theory has three major flaws: it ignores the inheritance of wealth and status; overlooks conflicts surrounding class, gender and others; and, lastly, fails to explain anomalies such as leaders of organized crime and sports heroes who are rewarded with high wages and social prominence while nurses and teachers are not (Tepperman & Gheiman, 2013). People who are successful often disregard the sometimes hidden economic, social, and cognitive challenges faced by those who are poor (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013)

What seems to be omitted from discussions about success are more hidden factors that people fail to consider. You become more successful in several aspects of life if you are considered beautiful by Western standards (Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013). Outcomes include better success in politics (Berggren, Jordahl, & Poutvaara, 2010), earning more money (Pfann et al., 2000), more successful fundraising (Price, 2008), perceptions of intellectual competence (Jackson, Hunter, & Hodge, 1995), better judgements from jurors (Mazzella & Feingold, 1994), more positive job-related outcomes (Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003), psychological well-being, and other life outcomes (Gupta, Etcoff, & Jaeger, 2016).

Inheritance also plays a significant role in whether people succeed. The common view is that inheritance is not a major force in the perpetuation of wealth but, in fact, it is highly influential for success (Harbury & Hitchins, 2012; Bowles & Gintis, 2002). People who gain an inheritance and prestige from their parents may not always possess the skills or inclination to contribute to the betterment of society, and we tend to forget that it is easier to get your second million than it is to get your first million, since the rules favour those who start with an advantage (Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013). Other rarely-mentioned factors significantly important to one's career success are access to social capital and social skills. Social capital includes access to information, resources, and career sponsorship, which are key

variables for career success (Seibert, Kraimer, & Linden, 2001). Social skills allow people to interact and communicate effectively. These social skills may lead to greater access to personal and business contacts, greater success when interacting with others, and ultimately the ability to "read others accurately, make favourable first impressions, adapt to a wide range of social situations, and be persuasive" (Baron & Markman, 2000, p.103). Beauty, inheritance, social capital, and social skills are important aspects of success that are often overlooked. People tend to disregard the effect of small chance events on success. Chance events can also have serious consequences. For example, being sick on the day of taking the SATs may result in a lower score and childhood experiences determine whether or not one will be exposed to things they may be good at or interested in. Other examples include birth order among siblings or the luckiest event: to be born in a highly developed country (Frank, 2016). Moments like these can significantly impact a person's success in life.

The idea that luck plays a major role in one's success is one that is often ignored (Lee & Ivanova, 2013). It is counter-intuitive to think about luck's role in success, as it can make the motivation to overcome obstacles more difficult (Frank, 2016). When determining whether we got ahead by skill or luck, or both, we love stories and we feel the need to connect cause and effect. Therefore, we believe that the past was inevitable, and we have a tendency to underestimate what else might have happened. Business author Mauboussin (2012) explains further:

> Even if we acknowledge ahead of time that an event will combine skill and luck, in some measure, once we know how things turned out, we have a tendency to forget about the luck. We string the series of events in a satisfying narrative, including a clear sense of cause and effect, and we start to believe that what happened was preordained by the existence of our own skill (p.38)

We use mental shortcuts to explain our world because it takes less cognitive effort. These heuristics rely on information that is more accessible from memory, which creates bias (Frank, 2016). Therefore,

successful people who only attribute their success to hard work and talent are biased because events that affect us in a positive way are easily forgotten while we remember more challenging events. Researchers call this headwinds/tailwinds asymmetry. Tailwinds are things that help businesses thrive and which are difficult to notice, and headwinds that are challenges, such as taxes and regulations, are more visible and memorable (Davidai & Gilovich, 2016). Many economic success stories stem from team efforts, so people taking full responsibility for their own success are taking more credit than they deserve (Frank, 2016).

Some possible reasons for why so many people dismiss evidence of the importance of luck in success are because it requires mental effort to hold contradictory views, it reinforces successful people's claim to the money they earned, and it also helps people to persist when encountering obstacles (Frank, 2016). We also tend to overrate ourselves and believe that we are above-average in a skill, like driving (Dunning, Heath, & Suls, 2004). These are all important factors to keep in mind when reading claims that people have become successful on their own or that they just had to work hard to get there.

3.10 Olympics

Out of the forty articles I researched, only one of them had the Olympics as the main theme. Cities that win bids to host the Olympics have inspired both praise and critiques (Kasimati, 2003). When poverty and inequality enter the equation, research gives us a more negative story. Researcher Kennelly has examined how the Olympics affected youth who are homeless and marginalized in both Vancouver and London. Her findings showed that youth surrendered to dominant notions that they did not belong in public spaces during the Olympics, which created fear and anxiety, and, secondly, a feeling of worthlessness for not obtaining Olympic jobs where the economic benefits are often exaggerated (Kennelly, 2003). For locals who do not want to be displaced, the fight against those in power is rarely successful (Short, 2008).

Reporter Barbassa (2016) wrote an opinion piece for the *Globe and Mail* titled "Rio's Olympian lesson: Good for the rich, disastrous for the poor." She opens the article by saying Rio's Olympic bid was the most geographically spread out, the most expensive, and had the greatest urban challenges of all the

contenders. Rio was experiencing great prosperity and stability at the time, however, they were also experiencing security, transportation, and pollution problems. Despite the cost, Rio was to become an example of how the Olympics could contribute to positive urban renewal.

In the years following the Olympic committee's vote, both the state and the city implemented several programs. Barbassa (2016) explains that the two most important programs were Morar Carioca, a housing improvement program, and the Units of Pacification Police (UPP), a policing program, which were promising to the *favelas*, or low-income communities. She highlights that at the end of the Olympics, the final cost was nearly $20 billion dollars, which mainly benefited the wealthy side of Rio. Research shows that this is typical of what happens in hosting cities, where the wealthy elites gain more of the benefits (Short, 2008). Contrastingly, in the favelas, 67,000 people lost their homes due to redevelopment projects. Barbassa (2016) highlights Vila Autodromo, close to the Olympic park, where residents have fought redevelopment to their homes for years, but now what remains is 20 homes "surrounded by a vast, and nearly empty, parking lot."

As for the UPP, the goal was to reclaim territory from drug dealers to reduce violence and crime, and the program seemed to be working with a reduction in violent deaths and other crimes. There was pressure to expand the program in time for the Olympics, but there were not enough trained officers or funds to keep up. Some communities like the Complexo do Alemao and the Complexo da Mare had military occupations, which led to conflicts with residents and claims of human rights abuses (Barbassa, 2016). By 2013, the crime rates rebounded and police were both killing and being killed. In 2016, the UPP was stalled and there are no plans for a future program. Barbassa suggests that hosting the Olympics reveals how local priorities, funding, and schedules affect most of the population in negative ways. She ends with a warning that Rio was an expensive lesson, and future cities should keep in mind the effects of hosting the Olympics. This article focused on the programs that the state and city put into place and how those programs affected both the rich and the poor. By keeping the topic free from subjectivities, there were no stigmatizing discourses to deconstruct here.

3.11 Public Transit

Out of the forty articles I researched, only one of them had public transit as the main theme. Other than in a few major cities, most people who use public transit are poor (Garrett & Taylor, 1999). Research continues to show that people with low-income are faced with major obstacles in improving their economic and social conditions due to of poor public transportation (Sanchez, 2008). Mobility is crucial for those living in poverty, therefore problems surrounding public transportation make it a social justice issue.

Columnist Keenan (2015) wrote an opinion piece for the *Toronto Star* titled "Transit should benefit rich and poor: Keenan" with the added drop head "A successful system is one that's better than taking a car, whether or not you can afford one." He begins by framing the transit issue as an either/or debate: is transit a social program or an amenity? Keenan then explains that the issue is a rather complex one. Understanding where the emphasis goes reveals "how we decide to spend on transit, plan transit, and provide service on transit." He writes that Toronto's Mayor John Tory says that we should invest in transit for those who cannot afford a car.

Keenan affirms that even "poor people" need to get around and that it is necessary for their lives. The term poor itself is okay to use. Though some object to the term because they find it jarring or uncomfortable, but that is exactly how it should come across (Kripke, 2015). However, again using the term "poor people" reduces people to their economic status. People are people first, beyond their labels.

Keenan looks towards the examples of New York, London, and uptown Toronto to highlight that wealthy homeowners can use the subway to get downtown; it is both faster and cheaper than a car. Those same people reap the benefits in their real estate prices, as houses on the subway lines have a higher value. He makes the case that when those who are wealthy take transit, they are helping to subsidize less affluent areas with their fares, are helping to alleviate car congestion, and polluting the city less. He suggests that a public transit system becomes successful when it offers greater benefits than driving a car, such as convenience, comfort, and affordability.

Another aspect to successful transit, he suggests, is focusing on where it is needed the most. Researchers agree that this is typically the poorest neighbourhoods (Giuliano, 2005; Garrett & Taylor,

1999). Keenan (2015) gives the example of spending a half a billion dollars on a project like the Union-Pearson Express that only takes a few passengers per week to and from the airport, while those in Rexdale are "waiting, and waiting" for bus service for their daily commutes. He ends the article by saying that we should not think of transit as an either/or situation. Building a system that is better than the alternatives is attractive to all people and services those who need it most; the long-term result will be positive growth for the city. This article provides a balanced opinion regarding how helping those in poverty can benefit the wealthy, which we have also seen in this thesis through investing in progressive taxes, basic income, affordable housing, healthcare, and education.

3.12 Race

Out of the forty articles I researched, only one of them had race as the main theme. The concept of race may never have been developed without imperial wars and colonization (Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013). Racial divisions are a significant factor in how our countries were constructed, supporting and justifying the advancement of white settlers and consolidating their economic and social power (McLean, 2017). We also know that some people have fewer opportunities than others because of their class, gender, age, sexual orientation, and/or their race (Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013). Several aspects of life can affect incomes for those who are racially marginalized. Among the incarcerated, people who are black and poor are overrepresented (Ryan, 1976). The criminal justice system affects black men most harshly and contributes to inequality systemically. The over-imprisonment of men who are poor and black conceals the extent of the issue, since they are not included in official statistics and, after release, black men who are poor face social stigma, hindering their ability to find and maintain jobs and the cycle continues (Western & Pettit, 2002). Research shows repeatedly that race matters in hiring practices. Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) found that people with white-sounding names on their resumes were 50 percent more likely to get a job interview than those with black-sounding names. In Canada, we see similar economic divides with our Indigenous population and they are the most likely of all Canadians to end up in jail (Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013). Canadians like to believe that we live in an equal society, yet we continue to marginalize racialized groups by enacting institutional racism. The way we typically

deal with this cognitive dissonance is to victim blame racial minorities for their troubles, so that we can continue to believe that we are all equal (Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013).

The article titled "Barack Obama warns that rich-poor divide will inflame racial tensions in America" was written by *The Telegraph* (2013), hosted on the *National Post's* website. The article opens by saying that Obama warns us that greater efforts need to be made to lessen income inequality or racial tensions will deteriorate. Obama says that stagnant wages and depressed incomes create anxiety and frustration, and that if people feel that they have to compete with other groups then things will get worse (Telegraph, 2013). The article mentions how the race debate continues in the U.S. after the acquittal of Zimmerman, who shot a young, unarmed, black teenager Martin. Then there is mention of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, which Obama said is fundamentally about economic equality; a march for jobs and justice, not just race.

The Telegraph writes that Obama is touring the United States to "push" his inclusive economic message. The use of the word "push" here implies force, so perhaps a more neutral term like "deliver" could have been used. The article mentions that Republicans want him to "get back to his desk" instead of making speeches. Obama has been open about his disappointment in the House of Representatives, controlled by the Republicans, for blocking gun reform, immigration reform, and budgets. The article ends with a quote from Obama saying, "There's not an action that I take that you don't have some folks in Congress who say that I'm usurping my authority. Some of those folks think I usurp my authority by having the gall to win the presidency" (Telegraph, 2013).

3.13 Summary and Analysis

Forty articles were contextualized, critiqued, and synthesized. The main themes included income inequality, health, social mobility, wealth redistribution and taxes, education, housing, rich and poor differences, employment, celebrity, Olympics, public transit, and race. The extensiveness of the themes shows how pervasive discourses on inequality and the differences between the rich and the poor are within online news media. Examining forty articles through this analysis gave this body of research a substantial survey of discourses compared to most other discourse analyses. Having the ability to organize

multiple themes and address real world issues makes this analysis a vital piece of research for journalists and readers alike.

Income inequality boasted the most articles and brought out further Conversations surrounding truth, lies, and research, along with debt and ideas surrounding the Canadian and American dream. Through the Lammam and MacIntyre (2016) article, we detect how researchers who write articles for news agencies operate under a strong bias towards their findings, without having any checks and balances in place. Perhaps news agencies could invest in research editors to help lessen the number of false claims made by other researchers. Journalists who report on research do a fairly good job of reporting the research, but sometimes they offer opinions that support invalid research.

Health, social mobility, and wealth redistribution and taxes were the next set of themes that were prominently represented in the data set. These themes have been researched considerably with regard to the rich and the poor. News articles that focused on aspects of health included biological determinism arguments, quality care, hospital access, organ donation, and death. All of which contribute to the well-being of those living in poverty. Next to income inequality, social mobility, wealth redistribution, and taxes, all have a financial foundation for situating policies and research surrounding inequity.

The *Washington Post* (2015) article about children and brain size offered us an example of failing to provide context surrounding research and citing controversial "experts" in order to create a less accurate portrayal of not only the research findings, but of how old scientific concepts can be twisted to support a political and ideological agenda. People who are poor were typically framed as having the personal ability to climb the social ladder. This obfuscates systemic factors, blames the victim, and reifies a neoliberal ideology. As for taxes, several articles offered as possible solutions to poverty that we either stop taxing the rich so much or start taxing them more.

The sections on education, housing, and rich and poor differences were represented through three articles each. News articles on education touched on framing wealthy and poor children as winners and losers, positioning children who are poor as not having the same opportunities and lower grades, which overlooks the fact that, given the chance, children who live in more educationally-deprived environments

can achieve a higher standard. Within housing, we saw how the misguided and outdated trickle-down economics argument is still being used by reporters. Quoting research without understanding it leaves out significant data, like that regarding subsidized housing, which is imperative for housing policy and helping the public to understand the facts. This tactic was also seen in the health, income inequality, and social mobility sections, where leaving out people who are homeless, or displaced from the data, creates a less accurate picture of what is really happening. Articles highlighting the differences between people who are poor and wealthy revealed simplistic notions of how to become rich, interjected with affirmations that those who are not wealthy just need to think like them in order to become so. A Conversation of blaming the victim arose from this analysis where discourses encompass thoughts that focus on the fault of the individual instead of understanding systemic and cultural influences.

Employment and celebrity were two themes represented in this analysis. Despite having only two articles to examine, employment brought up two Conversations including minimum wage and sweatshops. These are two major ways in which neoliberal ideology is disseminated within rich and poor discourses. Another Conversation arose from the articles on celebrities. Paths to success include various ways of essentializing how people become financially successful, from themselves and others. Important factors for success such as beauty, social and financial advantages, and mental abilities are typically ignored.

Lastly, one article each for the themes of the Olympics, public transit, and race were examined. The Olympics article showed how wealth and nationality displace those living in poverty under the guise of aid. Public transit continues to be an issue for people who are poor. This article was one of several that reminded us that investing in transit can also benefit the wealthy. Race and poverty are inextricably linked, this connection extends well beyond the scope of this thesis. What the article addressing race and poverty does well is to situate Obama's statements of race and inequality with respect to civil rights protests and the shooting of black men, however only briefly mentioned. As with all intersections, topics this complex are rarely able to be fleshed out in their entirety within a news article, which creates biased and limiting perspectives (Stuart, Arboleda-Florez & Sartorius, 2012). This is the challenge posed to

journalists who tackle these issues: to ensure that information is more accurately depicted in order to give people a better grasp on what is really happening. As a privileged reporter, it would help to provide perspectives outside of one's own worldview. News agencies could provide research fact-checking before going to print. And explaining how systemic structures and figured worlds play a major role in creating the problem offers us a starting point into how we can lessen the equality divide.

In regards to how stigmatizing each news organization was, both right-leaning, *The National Post* and *The Toronto Sun* had the most stigmatizing articles. This was expected since research shows that conservatives are less likey to want to reduce prejudice, they prefer to justify it (Jost, 2006).

	Low	Medium	High
National Post	2	1	7
Toronto Sun	4	0	6
Globe and Mail	5	3	2
Toronto Star	9	1	0

Number of stigmatizing articles per newspaper

Of the left-leaning papers, *The Globe and Mail* had more stigmatizing articles than *The Toronto Star*. Overwhelmingly, *The Toronto Star* had the least amount of stigmatizing articles. None of their articles had a high level of stigmatizing language.

My analysis shows that there is considerable bias in news media regarding poverty and people who are poor. Negative stereotypes are revealed such as the poor gamble their money away, or spend it on expensive shoes, do not think positively, have too many children, and are a drain on the system. If the poor simply picked themselves up by the bootstraps, no one would live in poverty. The figured worlds surrounding how we succeed in society are myopic and downplay many outside supports that people use to gain wealth. The analysis has shown that stigmatizing discourses are prevalent within news media and perpetuate the continued cycle of less accurate information and bias towards poverty and people who are poor.

Chapter Four - Reducing Stigma

Through Link and Phelan's (2001) definition of stigma, I have shown how the many micro and macro components occur together to create stigmatizing practices. First, some journalists label and then link that label to a negative stereotype. A good example of this is from the Blizzard (2014) article where she labels "squeegee kids" and then connects that label to fear based words like "menacing" and "swarms." The separation that happens creates an "us versus them" situation. Journalists erase identities as people by defining people by their housing status: "homeless people" or "those people." Next, news articles have shown to encourage ideas that can lead to systemic barriers, as shown in the Blizzard article where she argues for the Safe Streets Act to stay in effect, and in Badger's (2016) article saying that building affordable housing is costly. These harmful ideas have real life and death consequences for people who are living in desparate situations. I argue that the act of writing itself is a discriminatory practice. Journalists and news organizations have power, therefore ethics and responsible journalism must be exercised. We can learn to see how these media discourses, negative stereotypes, individual beliefs, social worlds, and systemic structures all work together to perpetuate stigma to prevent the cycle of poverty from breaking. So what can we do?

Examining stigma within news media has highlighted that we still have a long way to go before biases are lessend. Stigma contributes to suffering, so how can we try to reduce it? Challenging stigma can be done in certain circumstances, but this requires specific strategies. Understanding the history of stigma, its consequences for people, and communities that are stigmatized can aid in developing more effective ways to combat and reduce its effects (Parker & Aggleton, 2003). This section will address some of the current theories and strategies for both micro and macro levels of society, since stigma includes individual and structural levels of influence (Becker & Arnold, 1986; Cohen, Purdie-Vaughns, & Garcia, 2012; Parker & Aggleton, 2003; Link & Phelan, 2001; Stuart, Arboleda-Florez & Sartorius, 2012). Not all of these theories and approaches will be effective, and some only under specific circumstances. We still have a long way to go in understanding how to make a lasting and permanent change.

Goals of Reducing Stigma

One of the main goals for reducing stigma is to put others in a place of empathy, getting them to understand, even slightly, what it means to walk in the shoes of someone who is stigmatized (Corrigan & Kosyluk, 2013). Researchers Tepperman and Gheihman (2013) offer broad ways by which we can try to reduce stigma, which include raising awareness, forming social movements and self-sufficient communities, using social media, and spreading information via schools and/or churches. Specifically, they list four goals we should attempt to achieve when trying to reduce stigma. Firstly, there needs to be an awareness of how we categorize people through different characteristics such as age, race, ethnic ancestry, social class, and sexual orientation, since this way of thinking is typically lazy and prejudiced. Next, we need to examine how we place moral labels onto people (for example, as deserving blame or being unworthy) which continues to entitle the nonstigmatized to social advantages. Thirdly, we need to examine the structures of oppression and exploitation for those who are stigmatized. And lastly, Tepperman and Gheihman (2013) suggest that we need to be aware that there will be resistance from those who are being oppressed and stigmatized. Simply ignoring them will not make the problems go away, therefore we need to address the issues head on to find solutions. These are great starting points, but we need to delve further into understanding how change can operate in through both systemic and individual ways.

Why is stigma difficult to change?

Some may ask if it is even possible to effectively combat stigma since it is so pervasive. Power domination is so heavily embedded within stigma processes that it may seem hopeless to challenge it. People who are stigmatized can internalize and accept the dominant messages against them (Parker & Aggleton, 2003; Link & Phelan, 2014). When news media perpetuate stigmatizing beliefs by using stigmatizing language, the effects of negative labels on those experiencing stigma can include discrimination, exclusion, social rejection, stress, limited access to resources like health care, housing, education, and employment, poor mental and physical health, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, feelings of unworthiness and inadequacy, poor nutrition, and even suicide (Stuart, Arboleda-Florez & Sartorius, 2012; Miller & Major, 2000; Reutter et al., 2009; Swanson, 2001; Oexle et al., 2017). However,

under specific circumstances, not all people who are stigmatized see their stigma as a stressor (Miller & Major, 2000) and should not be seen as helpless. Despite this, as a society and as individuals, we continue to cause suffering for others. Some people who are stigmatized do not see how their situations are caused by injustices, therefore it may be more cognitively easier for them to deny that discrimination is happening than to admit they do not have much control (Major, 1987; Miller & Major, 2000). That is one way in which power domination works.

Since those in power benefit from stigmatizing others, they rarely give up their power unless there is some serious pressure from excluded groups (Campbell & Deacon, 2006). For those living in poverty, some have internalized negative stereotypical beliefs about others before they ended up living in poverty (Reutter et al., 2009) and sometimes it is those very people who are on the verge of poverty that denigrate those who are poor (Swanson, 2001).

When people who are continually stigmatized internalize power-dominated messages such as "a burden to society...lazy, disregarding of opportunities, irresponsible, and opting for an easy life" (Reutter et al., 2009, p.297), they have to find ways of coping. Some researchers posit ways in which stigmatized people can reduce "awkward moments." They suggest that stigmatized people should work towards feelings of self-acceptance and openness, and for those with a physical or other disability, they should work on their self-esteem to counter interaction anxiety (Hebl, Tickle, & Heatherton, 2000). The problem is that trying to cope with living in poverty is time-consuming, and physically and emotionally draining, for example, "by constantly watching for sales, phoning various agencies for assistance with basic needs, deciding which bills to pay in any given month, supplementing meager incomes with bottle-picking" (Reutter et al., 2009, p.303).

What most people do not understand is that living in poverty is a full-time job. People who live in stigmatizing conditions find ways of coping that can be both helpful and detrimental, some of which include avoidance, withdrawal from others, confronting discrimination head-on, helping others in need, mental, and behavioural disengagement, acceptance, denial, seeking out emotional and social supports, and hiding their financial situation (Reutter et al., 2009; Miller & Major, 2000). Just as nonstigmatized

people are varied in how they react to stress and to negative experiences, so are those who live with stigma. It is difficult to speak out and try to make changes when experience shows that you will be ignored or dismissed because of your poverty (Swanson, 2001).

Politics, Media, and Fear

Fear is a driving force for stigma, and fear is what gives it its strength (Coleman, 1986). People become afraid of difference, of what they do not understand. People who fear those who are stigmatized, will socially reject, avoid, or treat them as though they were "invisible, nonexistent, or dead... thus, irrational fears may help stigmatization to be self-perpetuating with little encouragement needed in the form of forced segregation from the political and social structure" (Coleman, 1986, p.226-227). We have seen this happen blatantly in the Blizzard (2014), and Agar (2012) articles from the right-leaning news outlet *The Toronto Sun*. Stigma is reinforced by fear, and there is no supporting evidence to suggest that knowledge alone can change prejudices that are deeply rooted in fear (Stuart, Arboleda-Florez & Sartorius, 2012).

Regarding the loyalty of his supporters, President Trump said he could "stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot somebody and [he] wouldn't lose voters" (Swaim, 2017). People become blinded to the policies and discourses created by people who are stigmatizers. The consequences allow those in power to gain resources, while damaging those with the least (Shildrick, 2018). Unfortunately, Ontario Premier Ford has started a Twitter account under the guise of providing "news" which spreads partisan agendas (McLaughlin, 2018). Some information being shared is completely false. The Council of Economic Advisors wrote a report from the White House to claim that since Trump has taken over "our War on Poverty is largely over and a success" (2018, p.29). This is simply not true.

The research on political influences on stigma is still new, yet some research has helped us to understand how to combat biases that perpetuate stigma. Political psychology repeatedly shows that people who are right-leaning in their views are typically less sympathetic to people who are not considered in their ingroup; they are less egalitarian and more closed-minded compared to those who are left-leaning (Prati et al., 2018; Proulx & Brandt, 2017). Francesca Prati and colleagues (2018) studied

whether right-wing participants would still hold onto their negative perceptions towards immigrants with social cognitive interventions, like multiple categorization (seeing people as complex) and counterstereotypic representations. These strategies tended to be more effective for people who were left-wing. Right-wingers were less likely to shift from biased heuristic thinking to seeing the individual, and were less likely to reduce their perceived threat from immigrants. However, Prati et al. (2018) also suggest that exposing children to the complexity of people "may help to prevent the development of fearful and prejudicial right-wing orientations" (2018, p.845). Compared to left-wing people, right-wingers typically do not care about reducing prejudice, they focus more on justifying it (Jost, 2006). However, it is more nuanced than that since, under some circumstances, the left can be just as prejudiced as the right (Proulx & Brandt, 2017). For example, left-wingers can favour justice and compassion towards immigrants, but they can sometimes oppose immigration because they believe it drives wages down and threatens organized labor (Prati et al., 2018). Researchers have found that for both left- and right-wing people, exposure to uncertainty can stimulate both intensity and strengthening of worldviews, however, when it comes specifically to external threat, it not only fosters right-wing beliefs, but also makes people more prone to perceiving threat (De Keersmaecker, 2017).

Similar to Gee's (2010) figured worlds, heuristic thinking refers to the way that we use mental shortcuts because they take less cognitive effort, which typically results in bias (Frank, 2016). Florian Arendt (2013) conducted a study specifically on how negative stereotypes in media can affect the strengthening of memory pathways in the brain, and how they can be easily reactivated by subsequent brief exposure. He gives us a good example of how stereotypical media priming can produce and activate heuristic thinking. If you read an article about a crime that was committed by a foreigner, it might "…activate specific concepts in the associative store related to the 'criminal foreigner' stereotype. Activation can spread from encoded concepts like robbery, gun, or shooting" (Arendt, 2013, p.833). Therefore, if the labels 'foreigner' and 'criminal' are activated at the same time, the memory pathways between these labels is strengthened. Those two labels become transformed into the biased thought 'foreigners are criminals.' Arendt (2013) found that when people read articles where foreigners were

presented as criminals, it influenced their explicit (overtly expressed judgements) stereotypes, as well as implicit (automatic, hidden) stereotypes. However, if people are aware of blatant stereotyping in the media, some will try to counteract the influence by modifying their judgements. Depending on the how much one was exposed to the stereotypical content, the explicit effects lessened. The implicit stereotypes were affected no matter if the media prime was overtly blatant or not (Arendt, 2013).

Arendt (2013) also examined how negation played a role in media stereotyping. Negation is the process by which individuals reading the news will recognize information that is false and attempt to negate the encoding of the information. For example, if you read an article and think to yourself "that's not true!" then it will help to disrupt the encoding of the information. He found that negation sometimes mediated the stereotype, even with implicit stereotypes. Unfortunately, negation takes "…processing time, intention, and cognitive capacity" (Arendt, 2013, p.836). When Arendt and colleagues (2015) specifically examined how right-wing populist political ads could foster anti-immigrant attitudes, the results showed that stereotypical advertisements did not influence explicit stereotypes, but did influence implicit stereotypes, even in critical recipients who negated the stereotypical content. Arendt et al. (2015) suggest that this is problematic because this ideology can threaten non-violent coexistence of citizens by perpetuating negative stereotypes. There is hope for countering these stereotypes. Ramasubramanian found that "media literacy training and exposure to counter-stereotypical media content are likely to reduce stereotype activation" (2007, p. 260). When participants received media literacy training, they were more likely to actively search for stereotype-disconfirming information. The research is still quite new in regard to media stereotype priming and its effects, but initial studies show that there are promising avenues to somewhat counter stigma producing discourses.

Micro Reduction Strategies

One of the most common attempts to reduce stigma within social psychology is to try to change negative beliefs (Stangor, 2009). Stereotypes and prejudice operate quickly and efficiently, and sometimes people might not be aware of how they are being influenced, nor intend for it to happen (Blair, 2002). People who are part of the system need to recognize that they may be part of the problem (Stuart,

Arboleda-Florez & Sartorius, 2012). Negative consequences can arise for those who are stigmatized, therefore it is important to examine how cognition of those perceivers can be changed. This change can occur by changing stereotypical content, changing how they are used in cognitive processing, or by changing the process of categorization (Crocker & Lutsky, 1986). One approach has been to try to change the perceived variability of groups or to show those who are prejudiced that their beliefs are not the norm (Stangor, 2009). Advocates are also encouraged to seek more affirming attitudes and affirmative actions to replace previous approaches. Affirmative action is justified because those with advantages within meritocracies are a part of the structural discrimination that continues to perpetuate inequalities (Corrigan & Kosyluk, 2013).

One popular intervention stems from Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, which states that, under certain conditions, intergroup contact is an effective way of reducing prejudice. The intergroup contact theory is based on the idea that without the prejudiced interacting with stigmatized people, they will not have the experience to see that their negative stereotypes are incorrect (Crocker & Lutsky, 1986). By engaging in shared identities, meaningful contact beyond group boundaries, and recognizing similarities, both ingroups and outgroups may start to see each other with less of an us-versus-them mentality (Stangor, 2009; Hebl, Tickle, & Heatherton, 2000). However seemingly straightforward, intergroup contact is a complex theory. If the group interactions were harmful or troubling in some way, then contact could have a negative effect (Pescosolido et al., 2008). Additionally, sometimes contact only happens once, rarely, or in private, which will likely not change the perceiver's stereotypical beliefs (Crocker & Lutsky, 1986).

Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of over 500 studies to see how prejudice could be reduced via contact hypothesis. They found three mediating outcomes that helped reduce prejudice which include learning more about the outgroup, anxiety reduction, and increased empathy and perspective taking. However, gaining knowledge about an outgroup was the least effective compared to the more emotional aspects of anxiety reduction and empathy. Contact is typically more effective when focusing on people in power positions, like landlords, employers, or health care providers. Corrigan &

Koslyuk (2013) recommend that "...employers need to interview people with mental illness for openings, consider reasonable accommodations, offer positions, and provide appropriate supervision that may include job coach participation" (p.135). Dijker (2013) suggests that when it comes to conditions that produce fear responses in perceivers of stigma, such as AIDS or schizophrenia, interpersonal contact should be a priority.

Another promising intervention is using counterstereotypes, which involve pairing groups that do not normally go together like a male flight attendant or a female construction worker. What happens when people are confronted with cognitively incongruent pairs? Researchers concluded that counterstereotypes led to a generalized humanization process towards those who are typically discriminated against (Prati et al., 2015; Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001). The reason this occurs is because there is a switch from less automatic and generalized thinking to a more attentive, systematic thinking process. Counterstereotypes can promote equality, but also improve cognitive flexibility to help them mitigate their everyday biases (Prati et al., 2015).

Macro Reduction Strategies

People who live in poverty are typically presented in media as the ones to blame for their circumstances. Rarely are policies and political decisions mentioned as being part of the problem (Shildrick, 2018; Tepperman & Gheihman, 2013). This thesis has shown how these societal influences can negatively affect those who are poor. If structural and systemic functions are mainly to blame, then what are some of the ways that these functions can work to reduce stigma?

One way in which people push back and create change on a larger scale is through protest movements (Link & Phelan, 2014). Protests help to bring injustices to light, and can bring people and communities together who are fighting for similar causes. If the numbers of protesters are great enough, then it may lead to legislative or other institutional changes; for example, protests in the 1960s helped to change women's roles in society (Becker & Arnold, 1986). However, some researchers suggest that movements may not always have a positive effect on public attitudes (Corrigan & Kosyluk, 2013), and therefore are not always effective.

Another potential way of reducing stigma is through socialization, by changing structures that shape social relationships (Pescosolido & Martin, 2015). Researchers Crocker and Lutsky (1986) suggest that one of the ways perceivers of stigma develop their thinking is through the socialization process. They suggest that since children are exposed to stereotypical material in books and television, removing these materials has been the typical way of countering stigma. However, Crocker and Lutsky (1986) propose that parents and other adults also need to examine the ways in which they have (and pass on) stigmatizing beliefs.

People who are stigmatized for being poor are consistently left out of the conversations in determining the policies or projects that affect their lives, which typically result in being unsuccessful (Swanson, 2001; Stuart, Arboleda-Florez & Sartorius, 2012). Judicial and political structures are supposed to be in place to help us prevent stigmatizers from achieving their goals through banning certain types of discrimination, and preventing them from acting on their prejudices (Pescosolido et al., 2008; Link & Phelan, 2014). A societal-level strategy to help reduce stigma is to increase legislation for these issues. For example, "laws mandate that new buildings must be constructed to be accessible to those in wheelchairs; non-discriminatory policies on hiring are ubiquitous in corporations and institutions…such advances are resulting in much higher visibility for stigmatized individuals in our society" (Hebl, Tickle, & Heatherton, 2000, p.298). There is some evidence to suggest that both judicial and policy interventions can be effective against stigmatization and discrimination (Parker & Aggleton, 2003).

The dissemination of information through educational institutions has also been proposed as a way of reducing stigma. Courses offer people, who have had little to no experience interacting with people different from themselves, a way to learn more about, celebrate, and help to destigmatize other groups (Hebl, Tickle, & Heatherton, 2000). Educational methods try to challenge inaccurate stereotypes by replacing them with more factual information (Corrigan & Kosyluk, 2013). Research has shown that students who participate in semester-long diversity courses can reduce their automatic biases towards others (Rudman, Ashmore & Gary, 2001). Some researchers have suggested that many people do not know what daily life is like for those who live in poverty, and that without that experiential knowledge, it

would be difficult for them to fully understand (Reutter et al., 2009). Promising research has been done through education and contact. Using a before-and-after survey design, researchers tested high school students for the impact of the Canadian Reaching Out anti-stigma program. They used indirect contact through videos that included people with schizophrenia, along with learning materials. Results were similar to other research that involved direct contact. When anti-stigma programs combine active learning approaches, along with indirect contact with people who are stigmatized, it can increase knowledge and foster more tolerant attitudes (Stuart, 2006). However, we are warned that, despite the benefits of educational methods, we need to avoid seeing the classroom as a sole solution to ending stigma since these issues are highly embedded throughout the wider society (Croizet & Millet, 2012).

Wolff et al. (1999) researched the impact on specific neighbourhoods that underwent increased social contact with those who are stigmatized, and how this reduced the intensity of the "Not In My Back Yard" (NIMBY) syndrome shown by their residents. They examined two different communities that were opening group homes that housed people with mental illness. There were surveys conducted before and after the experiment to learn about attitudes towards those who had a mental illness. The experimental area was in Streatham Hill, where an educational approach was tested. This educational component included videos and information sheets, a social component that included events with patients and staff, and a mixed component with a formal reception and informal discussions (Wolff et al., 1999). Herne Hill was the control area. They found that there were no significant differences in knowledge. However, they did find that there was a decrease in fear towards the patients, with more positive attitudes and behaviours towards them overall. Wolff et al. (1999) found that the education part of the campaign by itself did not lead to less fearful attitudes, it was the contact with patients that lowered fear responses. A more recent study was conducted by Amy Leigh Shearer (2018) in the same vein, and found that neighbours were generally well informed about mental health facts, and that both mental health literacy and close contact with a friend or family member with a mental illness led to more positive attitudes towards people with a mental illness, as opposed to contact with housing clients. Despite the early days of research, studies are showing promise that through systemic and structural changes, stigma might be reduced in both

individuals and through society.

Pinfold et al. (2003) conducted an experiment with some police in England using pre- and post-test surveys. They were testing to see if mental health training would help reduce stigma in police officers via their knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural interventions. Police attended two workshops that included group work and discussions, with both formal learning methods (PowerPoint presentations) and talks with individuals who are stigmatized. A review of the legislation surrounding the Mental Health Act was also reviewed. The results showed that a third of the police officers were positively impacted by the program, specifically regarding how to communicate with people who have a mental illness, and most police officers felt more knowledgeable afterwards. The program's goals for raising awareness with police was more successful than simply seeing people with mental health problems as violent (Pinfold et al., 2003).

The Carter Center Mental Health program has a fellowship program that takes ten journalists a year to create a mental health project (which could include articles, radio segments, books, and documentaries) that aims to reduce stigma and discrimination. Journalists are connected with mentors, mental health professionals to foster communication, and education surrounding reporting about mental health. One example of how this program has resulted in systemic change is a series of articles for *The Oregonian* by Roberts, where she revealed that some Oregon State Hospital workers had sexually abused children who had mental illness. Because of her report, new laws were created to address the issue (Palpant et al., 2006).

Stuart et al. (2011) evaluated a contact-based educational symposium that was created to reduce mental health stigma in journalism students. Students were exposed to presenters who had personal experience with mental illness. The presenters explained how they were impacted by stigma in daily life because of negative media portrayals. The symposium also brought together a mass media expert and a journalist to discuss the media's role in creating and maintaining stigma. The results showed that there was a reduction in stigma among students, especially in thinking that people with mental illness are dangerous and unpredictable. Half of the students also communicated that they would change the way

they reported stories about people who have a mental illness.

People in power are often the ones who control how poverty is publicly presented (Shildrick, 2018). The challenge for researchers is to better understand why people tend to reject rather than accept others, and why people belittle others instead of lifting them up (Coleman, 1986). We have examined contact hypothesis theories, counterstereotypes, negation, socialization, protest movements, educational, judicial, political, and law enforcement initiatives, and ways in which the media could help to reduce the perpetuation of stigma. The stigma reduction research presented here is still in the early stages and is challenging. Much more research, program evaluations, and prevention initiatives need to be assessed to find out what is most effective under various circumstances.

Conclusion

This thesis has provided a novel approach to critical discourse analysis by critiquing how a specific discourse is presented in the media, by using numerous articles to attain a more robust perspective. The pervasiveness of themes of inequality have shown themselves in the media through several areas of life, from housing to transit, from race to education, and so on. These expansive themes reveal how extensive powerful discourses about people who are poor run through our online media outlets.

I have identified some of the negative attributions that people make regarding those who are poor, which includes being a burden on the system, irresponsible spenders, and people who have addictions, which has also been found in other research (Reutter et al., 2009). These negative stereotypes continue to inform policy and are reflected in our institutions. Not only is this reflected in systemic processes, but in personal ones as well. Friends and family members have been known to hold these negative beliefs which contributes to the stigmatization of people who are poor (Reutter et al., 2009). Therefore, all levels of society, from micro to macro influences, contribute to stigmatizing people.

People in power continue to perpetuate stigma through many avenues. To feel superior, someone else must be perceived as being inferior (Coleman, 1986). Powerful individuals use stigma as a way to legitimatize their status through structures of inequality (Parker & Aggleton, 2003; Stuart, Arboleda-

Florez & Sartorius, 2012). Using the media is one way in which those in power can misrepresent others and further stigmatize them in subtle (and not so subtle) ways (Link & Phelan, 2014). This thesis was conducted to recognize and show how those ways manifest in society. President Donald J. Trump is an example as he freely uses derogatory and demeaning words associated with mental illness like "nut job," or "wacko," and has conflated mental disorders with crime and mass shootings (Harrison, 2018). The inappropriate use of these terms perpetuates stigma for those with mental illness (Pirkis et al., 2001). There is no coincidence that after Trump said that Mexicans are rapists and criminals (Storm & Martin, 2017), opined that African countries are "shitholes," made disparaging remarks about Muslims, and recommended preserving Confederate statues (Todres, 2018), the number of hate crimes in the United States increased (Müller & Schwarz, 2018; Potok, 2017; Levin, 2017). When people identify as one political party over another and engage in identity politics, they are boxing themselves under that label instead of seeing a more complex picture. As this thesis has shown, labelling and heuristic thinking leads to false judgements about our fellow human beings. The ways in which our brains operate takes cognitive effort to think beyond heuristic categories (Crocker & Lutsky, 1986; Arendt, 2013; Gilmour, 2015; Frank, 2016). Power has influence, and portrayals of those who are poor have an impact on public opinion (Clawson & Trice, 2000). Many political agendas in the media spread false information and distort research. This thesis has shown repeatedly how cutting social services and criminalizing poverty actually leads to both money and lives lost.

Some people in the media may feel as though critiquing language − and the avoidance of using certain language − would somehow compromise their freedom of expression or journalistic integrity (Stuart, Arboleda-Florez & Sartorius, 2012). The amazing thing about language is that we can still get across our thoughts and intentions by using less stigmatizing language. There is no loss of freedom of expression if you call an idea stupid, as opposed to using stigmatized terminology such as "retarded" or "gay." People who are stigmatized and who try to create these changes are typically dismissed, and are often accused of forcing a climate of political correctness (Miller & Major, 2000). This is one way that people keep others down; dismissing those trying to make a difference as being too sensitive. The people

who are against political correctness are usually the ones who are not being negatively affected or stigmatized.

If media is a tool for perpetuating political agendas (Swanson, 2001), and this thesis has supported this view, then how do we move forward? When views about people who are poor are normalized through individual, structural, and systemic avenues, then the cycle of abuse continues. Journalists, researchers, and news organizations also have the power to stop giving stigmatizers a platform and reduce stereotypical portrayals of people who are stigmatized. They can support people by providing more accurate information, and they can lessen the divisions between people by exposing and challenging negative stereotypes regarding stigmas (Hebl, Tickle, & Heatherton, 2000). News media can humanize people through their stories, get input from people with lived experience, reduce stigmatizing language, include accurate research translations, highlight structural and systemic factors, and show the broad scope of those who live in poverty, not simply stereotypical views and images of people sleeping on the street. See Mathieu's (2017) "Vulnerable women in Toronto find a safe haven at Sistering" article for a good example. These strategies will help immensely towards giving people dignity, minimizing false information, and lessening inequality.

Quantitatively, future psychological research should examine the effects of some of the strategies mentioned above in real world situations. For example, when articles from journalists that show the humanizing side of people who are poor include structural and systemic factors, compared to a control article, how does that translate into behavioural, affect, and cognitive changes? How does that start to affect the way people treat others, or affect how people vote? What changes occur in the brain, on a biological level? Over time, how are structures and systemic factors influenced by a more balanced and humane media output? These are not easy tasks, but we do have a starting point. Qualitatively, what other prominent discourses that pervade our society are being distorted by news media? How are people who are Indigenous portrayed in media versus white people? What are journalists saying, and not saying about people who are differently abled, either physically or intellectually? Future research into combatting stigma might look at both individual belief systems and examine how they are connected to different

systemic structures within society. Perhaps research might explore how the public responds to anti-stigma campaigns that specially highlight systemic effects on people who are poor to lessen the bias of victim blaming. Taking specific institutions and seeing how they are portrayed in the media would be interesting as well. For example, how are certain hospitals or schools represented depending on what neighbourhoods they are situation in? Critical discourse analysis offers an excellent method to explore these issues in depth.

The time for being divisive needs to end. We are killing ourselves and our planet at an alarming rate. Once we start treating each other as complex humans instead of simplistic labelled beings, then we will start to see how society can flourish, not deteriorate. We can support one another and begin to learn about each other's circumstances. Everyone deserves an equal opportunity; we must begin to recognize, change, and prevent harmful beliefs and behaviours. Only then, will everyone get to experience any of the hope that life has to offer.

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Appendix

Appendix: News Organization Chart

	Article Title	Author	Stigma Level
Income Inequality			
Globe and Mail	What growing income inequality is costing Canada's future generations	Barrie McKenna	Medium
Globe and Mail	Ontario has greatest rise in rich-poor gap in Canada: report	Gustavo Vieira	Low
Globe and Mail	Target the poor, not the rich, for real solutions to income inequality	Alan Broadbent	Low
Globe and Mail	Gap between rich and poor is the defining issue of our time: Broadbent Institute	Gloria Galloway	Low
Toronto Star	Gap between rich and poor greater than most Canadians think	Sara Mojtehedzadeh	Low
Toronto Star	Canada's inequality growing: Stats Can	Dana Flavelle	Low
Toronto Star	Anne Golden's stern warning of growing rich-poor gap: Hepburn (opinion)	Bob Hepburn	Low
Toronto Star	New report warns of growing income gap in Toronto	Alex Ballingall	Low
Toronto Sun	Rich-poor gap could spark financial crisis in Canada: Report	QMI Agency	Low
Toronto Sun	Has inequity in Canada been blown out of proportion?	Antonella Artuso	High
Toronto Sun	Richest 62 people own same as half world's population: Report	Alex Whiting	Low
Conversation: Debt and the Canadian/American Dream			
Conversation: Truth, Lies, and Research			
Health			
National Post	Wealthy more likely to get organ transplants: study	Associated Press	Low
National Post	Junk Science Week 2015: Death by one-percenter	Peter Shawn Taylor	High
National Post	Neuroscientists find that poor children have smaller brains than wealthy children, study says	Washington Post	High
Toronto Star	Rich-poor divide in Toronto's hospitals	Carol Goar	Low
Toronto Sun	Health gap between Canada's rich and poor remains	Terry Davidson	Low

Conversation: Drugs and Alcohol			
Social Mobility			
Globe and Mail	The rich do get richer. Why can't the poor also get richer?	Doug Saunders	Medium
National Post	Poor today, rich tomorrow: Permanent underclass in Canada is a myth, study reveals	Kathryn Blaze Carlson	High
National Post	People in lower income brackets generally get richer as they get older: Fraser Institute	Ashley Csanady	High
Toronto Sun	The rich aren't the only ones enjoying economic gains	Charles Lammam and Hugh MacIntyre	High
Wealth Redistribution and Taxes			
Toronto Star	Walkom: These high-income docs want the rich to pay	Thomas Walkom	Low
Toronto Sun	Canada's Robin Hood redistribution	Postmedia	High
Toronto Sun	We already redistribute income - a lot	Lorne Gunter	High
Globe and Mail	Marriage gap' exists between rich and poor Canadians, new study show	Erin Anderssen	Medium
Education			
Globe and Mail	The education gap: Poor little rich kids feel the heat	Crystia Freeland	Low
Toronto Star	Summer widens rich/poor learning gap	Louise Brown	Medium
Toronto Star	Province's new school fundraising rules don't address rich/poor gap, say critics	Patty Winsa and Kristin Rushowy	Low
Housing			
National Post	The poor are better off when we build more housing for the rich	Emily Badger	High
Toronto Star	The great divide in Toronto housing	Kara Santokie	Low
Toronto Sun	House rich, cash poor	Richard Lyall	Low
Conversation: Affordable Housing			
Rich and Poor Differences			
Globe and Mail	Daily habits are the difference between the rich and poor	Angela Self	High
Globe and Mail	Yes, the rich really are different from the rest of us	Wency Leung	High
Toronto Sun	10 ways not to be poor	Jerry Agar	High
Conversation: Blaming the Victim			
Employment			
National Post	Matthew Lau: Actually, Pope Francis, it's good for rich employers to 'exploit' poor workers	Matthew Lau	High

Toronto Sun	Still no place for squeegee kids on our streets	Christina Blizzard	High
Conversation: Sweatshops			
Conversation: Minimum Wage			
Celebrity			
National Post	15 Billionaires who were once dirt poor	Business Insider	High
National Post	By telling their kids they're poor, Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher are hoping they won't become 'assholes'	Sadaf Ahsan	Medium
Conversation: Paths to Success			
Olympics			
Globe and Mail	Rio's Olympian lesson: Good for the rich, disastrous for the poor	Juliana Barbassa	Low
Public Transit			
Toronto Star	Transit should benefit rich and poor: Keenan	Edward Keenan	Low
Race			
National Post	Barack Obama warns that rich-poor divide will inflame racial tensions in America	Telegraph	Low