"How do we Better Prepare for the Future?":
Political Ambivalence and Income Guarantees in Canadian Media

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ABSTRACT

Economies in the globalized world are undergoing rapid changes due to automation. These changes have exacerbated wealth inequality in many nations, prompting calls for more effective poverty reduction strategies. In Canada, one of these proposed strategies is an income guarantee for low-income earners. This type of policy has been used successfully in other parts of the world; however, it has been met with both strong support and resistance in Canadian politics. Thus, this opposition provides an avenue through which to study how this debate is framed in the news media to influence public opinion. Through a qualitative content analysis of Canadian newspaper articles, this research demonstrates how the news media employs arguments from both neoliberal and social welfare ideologies in the debate around the viability of an income guarantee. This paper argues that in order to gain traction in a political landscape currently characterized by neoliberalism, supporters of social welfare models must appropriate elements of neoliberal ideologies to produce effective arguments. This appropriation creates an ambivalence for social welfare advocates, as they must incorporate some of these beliefs in order to gain support and enact real change toward poverty reduction.

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The question posed in the title of this paper is, "how do we better prepare for the future?". This question comes from an opinion piece about the closure of the GM car assembly plant in Oshawa in December of last year (Perry, 2018). In this piece, the commenter wonders if our nation has the knowledge it needs to adapt to the automation trending in our economy. We live in an age where innovation and automation are creating changes in the economy at unprecedented levels (Bregman, 2016; Forget, 2018). The growth of capitalism and globalization has restructured the labour market such that stable, full-time, high-paying employment is harder and harder to come by (Standing, 2012; Stanford & Vosko, 2004). As a result, the wealth gap in many developed countries is expanding, contributing to higher levels of poverty and prompting calls for welfare reform (Forget, 2018; Bregman, 2016; Luxton & Braedley, 2010). Governments are always concerned with being prepared for the future. However, in this age of economic uncertainty how to best prepare for this future is equally as uncertain. That being said, income guarantees are currently one of the policy options being considered in Canada to help prepare for our future.

This research project analyzes the current Canadian political climate as it relates to income guarantees. Specifically, this paper looks at how the news media makes arguments about the implementation of an income guarantee policy. The focus is on the political ideologies used as justifications throughout these arguments, and what this says about Canada as a nation and its values. This research is grounded in both social welfare and neoliberal political ideologies, in the sense that Canada has promoted and enacted policies that align with both ends of this political spectrum (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006). Social policy in Canada today is primarily characterized by neoliberal ideologies, which favour less government interference in market regulation and an

emphasis on individual self-reliance as opposed to reliance on government aid (Harvey, 2007; Ferguson, 2010). In contrast, social welfare policies put more emphasis on collective rights, and state responsibility for market regulation and the provisioning of social services (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006).

Canada has experimented with income guarantee policies in the past, for example, from 1974 to 1979 the "Mincome" project provided a basic income to residents of Winnipeg and Dauphin, Manitoba (Forget, 2018); however, this policy initiative has recently regained attention in the media due to provincial government interest in exploring the viability of income guarantees, as well as increased advocacy by groups such Basic Income Network Canada and their provincial affiliates. As such, this project aims to capture the political context within which this kind of policy is currently being discussed. I conducted this project by performing a qualitative content analysis of Canadian newspaper articles on the income guarantee debate. Articles were analyzed to understand to what extent this discourse is in line with current neoliberal or social welfare ideals to gain a clearer understanding of how deeply entrenched neoliberal beliefs are in light of Canada's recent favouring of neoliberal social policies (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006).

The goal of this project was to understand not only how the news media uses political ideologies as justifications, but more so to reveal the extent to which neoliberal ideologies have become entrenched in the Canadian consciousness. Therefore, I also used framing theory to analyze how news media try and influence public opinion about this debate through the stories and opinion pieces they choose to publish (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993). My aim is to provide insight into which aspects of these ideologies are most salient in value-laden debates, such as those about income guarantees. My findings indicate that when considering a nation-wide

income guarantee there is disagreement about what our moral responsibility is as a nation and how governments should prioritize social spending, as well as what work means to Canadians and how much value it should hold in our lives. With that in mind, the research question guiding this project was: How do Canadian news media use neoliberal and social welfare discourses as justifications for or against income guarantees?

Income Guarantees

The terms universal basic income and basic income guarantee are used interchangeably throughout the literature. For the purposes of this project this policy will be referred to simply as an income guarantee (IG). IGs are a type of policy initiative under the umbrella of cash transfers. Cash transfer policies are used most notably throughout South America, South-Western Africa, and East Asia (de Sardan & Piccoli, 2018; Hanlon, Barrientos, & Hulme, 2010). Cash transfers can be provided by the state through social policy, as is the case in Mexico, Brazil, and other South American programs, or through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which is more common in African nations (de Sardan & Piccoli, 2018). Most cash transfer programs are conditional, in that recipients must meet specific requirements to continue receiving funds. For example, under Mexico and Brazil's policies, families must ensure their children attend school and receive regular medical checkups (de Sardan & Piccoli, 2018, p. 95, 114). Sometimes the condition is that a household must be earning a specified low-income. In countries like Malawi and Niger, NGOs work directly with community members to determine who is most impoverished and will receive funds (Hanlon, Barrientos, & Hulme, 2010, p. 113; de Sardan & Piccoli, 2018, p. 309). The logic of cash transfer programs is that it recognizes that poor people know what they need better than governments, and directly providing money to the poor allows them to spend the funds as they see fit to address their most immediate needs (Hanlon,

Barrientos, & Hulme, 2010, p. 47). As a result, cash transfer policies remove the paternalistic and untrusting nature of other government aid programs.

Broadly speaking, cash transfer programs employed across the globe have been widely successful in reducing extreme poverty and malnutrition in vulnerable populations (Hanlon, Barrientos, & Hulme, 2010, p. 5-6). Cash transfers have allowed recipients to earn income through individual entrepreneurial endeavours and afford basic necessities like nutritious food and safe housing, and the money injected into local economies promotes further economic growth (Hanlon, Barrientos, & Hulme, 2010, p. 2). The success of cash transfer programs in South America, Asia, and Africa has prompted many other countries to consider incorporating this type of policy into their poverty reduction strategies. IGs are a type of cash transfer where a universal non-means tested payment is made to every citizen earning below a specified low-income cut-off. They are conditional in that recipients must be low-income earners. In most North American models, this guaranteed income is provided tax-free and replaces other social welfare payments or tax credits previously provided by the government (Healy, Murphy, & Reynolds, 2013, p. 117), or portions of the guarantee are taxed-back to the government in higher earning households (Forget, 2018, p. 12). Advocates often position IGs as a way to restore the relationship between work and human dignity, a relationship lost in the decades since neoliberalism came to the fore.

As Sennett & Cobb claim in their 1972 work *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, individuals in the lower classes of capitalist societies face a host of indignities. In particular, these indignities come in the form of lack of respect from higher classes, as well as lack of access to education or opportunities which could improve their social position (p. 28-9). In the contemporary world, these indignities are still present, especially so in neoliberal societies which understand social

rewards as directly tied to individual efforts (Harvey, 2007, p. 65). Supporters present IGs as a solution to these indignities, insofar as a guaranteed source of income would provide low-income individuals with the means to pursue the education or training needed to qualify for jobs they previously could not access due to class constraints (Healy et al. 2013, p. 119). Social science scholars maintain that despite what many economists argue, the introduction of an IG would not discourage people from partaking in paid labour (Hanlon, Barrientos, & Hulme, 2010; Bregman, 2016; Forget, 2018). In fact, Forget (2018) argues that wages are not the primary factor motivating people in the labour force; people are happier and will work harder and longer performing work they feel provides them a sense of structure and purpose (p. 82, 84). Throughout this research project, I also considered how contestation over the impacts of an IG on the labour force played out in political discussions.

A principal argument in favour of IGs is their potential to alleviate poverty and wealth disparity (Mulvale & Frankel, 2016). Healy et al. (2013) highlight many of the changes IGs could produce in various societal spheres. IGs would provide all citizens the opportunity to participate in productive activity, thus, promoting social empowerment in that individuals are free to pursue educational and entrepreneurial endeavors. Economically, IGs can help evenly distribute the tax burden to all citizens and eliminate means-tested social welfare benefits which often result in continuous cycles of poverty (p. 117-8). Debates are often centered around providing independence and freeing people from the "indignity" of welfare benefits, in that they help destigmatize the notion of relying on state transfer payments through their universality (Forget, 2018). Both Mulvale & Frankel (2016) and Healy et al. (2013) highlight the potential for IGs to address the precarious state of wage labour as citizens will no longer be dependent on traditional full-time jobs that are becoming increasingly less available.

Existing studies that have conducted a political discourse analysis of Canadian poverty reduction strategies have focused on the provincial poverty reduction plan in Ontario (Smith-Carrier & Lawlor, 2016) and homelessness reduction in Toronto (Johnstone, Lee, & Connelly, 2017). In their respective studies, these authors confirmed that current poverty reduction strategies contain neoliberal characterizations in their language. For example, Johnstone et al. (2017) found that the meta-discourse surrounding Toronto's homelessness strategy was one wherein the homelessness program was presented as a short-term service that provide individuals the opportunity to learn how to be self-sufficient (p. 1453). These programs ignored the complex social nature of homelessness and approached the problem from a position that services would not be necessary once individuals learned to take care of themselves. Likewise, Smith-Carrier & Lawlor (2016) found that the most frequently recurring theme throughout Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategies was the idea that poverty could be reduced if citizens could reach their full potential (p. 112). In this context, "potential" was presented as "the responsibility of citizens to economically contribute to Ontario's prosperity to be socially included" (Smith-Carrier & Lawlor, 2016, p. 112). Furthermore, the authors found that the recent expansion of poverty reduction strategies was the result of public advocacy for more efficient programs and not from government intervention (Smith-Carrier & Lawlor, 2016). We see, then, from these studies that there is evidence of deeply entrenched neoliberal ideals in current poverty reduction discussions. I hope to contribute to this conversation through my project by focusing on the specific poverty reduction strategy of income guarantees in a Canadian context. An analysis that looks at several provinces, as opposed to just one, can help uncover which political ideologies are most often employed by social and political actors when defending or discouraging policies like an IG.

Neoliberalism

To understand the context within which the idea of incomes guarantees emerged, one must also understand how neoliberal ideologies reshaped how our society views work, and citizens' rights to work. Many concepts make up the political ideology now known as neoliberalism, and in social science literature, the term neoliberalism is often used to denote many different things (Ferguson, 2010). Ferguson (2010) argues that in its truest sense "neoliberalism" refers to the "macroeconomic doctrine" that favours privatization of enterprise and suspicion of state interference in market matters (p. 170). However, "neoliberalism" today has become a label frequently applied to any state policies and practices that have disproportionately benefited the owners of capital and contributed to wealth disparity and poor living conditions of the lower classes (Ferguson, 2010, p. 170). There is a difference, then, between a country that has fully embraced the neoliberal doctrine versus a country that promotes neoliberal policies. Harvey (2007) argues that a total neoliberal state is not realistically possible under democracy; thus, one can only speak to what extent a nation has embraced neoliberal ideologies and policies. For the purposes of this project, I am not referring to Canada as a country operating under a neoliberal doctrine, but as a nation which promotes certain neoliberal beliefs and policies, such as the privatization of previously public services and the scaling back of social benefits.

Critical to neoliberalism, and this project, are the ideas that the state should not interfere with market regulations or the provisioning of social benefits (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006, p. 3; Harvey, 2007, p. 183). Under these beliefs, the responsibility of the state is to create conditions in which citizens are liberated to pursue entrepreneurial skills through private property, free markets, and trade (Harvey, 2007, p. 2). Harvey (2007) argues that since its inception in the

1970s, neoliberalism has taken hold, at least to some degree, in every country of our globalized world, and as such, "has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world" (p. 3). Neoliberalism is inherently connected to capitalism in that the neoliberal doctrine is "a system that promotes expansions of wealth and allows people the freedom to pursue wealth," and those benefitting from this system view competition in the pursuit of wealth as a naturally occurring social good (Luxton & Braedley, 2010, p. 7-8). Stanford & Vosko (2004) assert that capitalism "required the emergence… of a free market" (p. 4); therefore, the relationship between capitalism and neoliberalism cannot be separated.

Moreover, a process of responsibilization occurs in so-called "neoliberal states" whereby state governments gradually reduce the social services and benefits they offer to populations, shifting the burden of social security and alleviating poverty from the state to individuals or non-governmental agencies (Stanford & Vosko, 2004, p. 10). In the Canadian context, neoliberalism became entrenched in our policy practices beginning in the 1990s (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006, p. 4). Since that time, the federal government has increasingly withdrawn funding from social welfare entitlements and turned towards more punitive means-tested benefits (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006, p. 5). Many provinces organize their financial assistance programs for low-income earners around the notion that poor people must prove they deserve assistance. Recipients must regularly provide evidence of all financial activity to caseworkers, prove that they are actively looking for work, and are in danger of losing income assistance if they earn too much income in a month (Forget, 2018, p. 24-5). Coupled with the increased difficulty many poor citizens face in accessing social welfare benefits is the expanding flexibilization of the labour force, another element of neoliberal philosophy, which has coincided with and facilitated

the rise neoliberal policies in Canada and other globalized countries alike (Standing, 2012; Stanford & Vosko, 2004).

Labour Market Changes

Stanford & Vosko (2004) define labour market regulation as the "laws, institutions, policies and cultural attitudes that organize and constrain the relationships and practices of paid work" (p. 5). Labour market regulation under capitalism and neoliberalism requires a flexible labour force. As such, creating a flexible labour force requires regulating the market by reducing collective bargaining rights and income-security programs, and promoting precarious forms of employment to benefit employers in the neoliberal system (Stanford & Vosko, 2004, p. 11). Indeed, flexibilization is positioned as a benefit to free markets as it allows employers to adapt to changes in supply and demand quickly. Employees in this arrangement are at the mercy of employers who are free to hire and fire and reduce employee benefits as they see fit to maximize profits according to current market conditions (Stanford & Vosko, 2004, p. 12-3).

Hatton (2011) does an excellent job of outlining how North America accomplished this "flexibilization" process through the creation of temporary employment. Temporary workers revolutionized the working world by providing employers with the ability to increase their profits by avoiding costs related to staff training, sick days, holidays, and health benefits (Hatton, 2011). By taking care of the recruiting and training process, temp agencies can charge companies more to use temporary workers than if the companies had recruited and hired the workers themselves. Additionally, temp agencies pay lower wages to temp workers, thereby keeping labour costs low for companies themselves (Hatton, 2011, p. 11). One of the ways temp agencies created this shift in the labour market was by framing full-time permanent employees as a liability to a company's profits. Employers should, therefore, cut these costs wherever they could

to keep their businesses afloat, and thus the use of temporary workers flourished in industries across North America (Hatton, 2011, p. 4, 82). Income guarantees are touted by some supporters as a way to address the problems flexibilization has caused for workers. However, the predominance of temporary work over full-time employment is not the only force driving wealth disparity in today's labour market.

Automation is a growing presence in the current configuration of Canada's labour market. From a social welfare perspective, the process of automation further exacerbates wealth disparity as the low-paying, less desirable jobs held by those in poverty are replaced by robotics and artificial intelligence (Forget, 2018, p. 64). Business owners and entrepreneurs benefit from automation through decreased production costs and improved efficiency, as well as savings on wages previously paid to humans. Additionally, capitalists pay little attention to the masses of unskilled workers left without prospects for income. However, from a neoliberal perspective automation is something to encourage and another feature of free markets. In response to concerns about increases in unemployment, neoliberal thinkers argue that automation will create swaths of new jobs in the form of technological creation, programming, and maintenance (Forget, 2018, p. 65; Bregman, 2016, p. 82). From this view, automation encourages innovation and opens up possibilities for production in new markets, as people are free to use their ingenuity and creativity to create new forms of productivity in the labour market (Forget, 2018, p. 65).

Historian Rutger Bregman (2016) notes that fear and anger over automation is not a new phenomenon; it has been occurring since the Luddite revolts in the 19th century when the power loom replaced hand-weavers (p. 75). The problem in today's political climate is that automation is occurring on such a grand scale and at such a fast pace that economic growth cannot keep up, thus, the owners of capital make more and more profit while employing fewer and fewer workers

(Bregman, 2016, p. 81). In this age of economic uncertainty, then, income guarantees are positioned as a solution by those on both sides of the political spectrum. An income guarantee can provide relief and security from poverty for those displaced by automation (Forget, 2018). Additionally, it ensures that the masses continue to consume all the new products created by the companies embracing the new technologies (Bregman, 2016). One of the significant consequences of automation, flexibilization, and the subsequent devaluing of full-time permanent work is the creation of a new form of social class, famously named by Guy Standing (2012) as the precariat.

Precarious employment occurs in vast numbers in countries embracing neoliberal ideologies because of the features discussed previously such as market regulation and privatization. Standing (2012) argues that the precariat class is at the bottom of the social hierarchy in our globalized world and lives in increasingly dangerous conditions due to their lack of job and wage security (p. 591). Precarious workers have little chance of achieving upward mobility or job security, while the ever-increasing use of part-time and contract work ensures the continual expansion of the precariat class (Standing, 2012, p. 592-3). Ultimately, neoliberal policies and the creation of temporary and precarious working conditions have resulted in millions of people being considered "working poor" (National Council of Welfare, 1978). Working poor refers to those families where 50% or more of their annual income comes from earned wages; however, they still fall under federal low-income cut-offs determining poverty lines (National Council of Welfare, 1978). The re-introduction of income guarantees into the discussion on how to address this disparity is also a reaction to the alarming numbers of working low-income families created by these precarious working conditions. Accordingly, how the media portrays the labour market, the precarious nature of work and the expansion of automation

into low-paying sectors of the economy will lend itself to determining how deeply entrenched neoliberal ideas are in the current climate.

Framing Theory

Framing theory is an integral approach to this project as it is centered around discourse disseminated through the media. Goffman (1974) asserts that experiences are given meaning through the process of applying frameworks, and the framework we apply to an experience shapes how we describe and understand it (p. 21, 24). Likewise, Entman (1993) describes framing theory as the way information is transferred to human consciousness through various mediums to influence thoughts (p. 51-2). The process of frame analysis, then, helps to understand how people organize and attach meaning to their experiences based on the frameworks they employ (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993). According to Chong & Druckman (2007), the audience develops or reorients how they conceptualize an issue based on values presented in the media (p. 104). Framing is used by social actors and the media to make certain aspects of reality more or less salient. In doing so, the media identify a specific problem for the population, offer a moral judgment, and then recommend solutions for this problem (Entman, p. 52).

In conducting analyses of news media content Altheide & Schneider (2013) emphasize the importance of differentiating between the frames and themes within your unit of analysis. Whereas frames are considered to be the "parameter[s] or boundar[ies]" that define which topics will or will not be discussed and how they are discussed, themes are the recurring set of ideas presented within that particular frame (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p. 52-53). In a political context, McCombs & Shaw (1972) note that for most citizens in today's society the only contact they have with politicians and political issues is through the media (p. 185). It is argued that

news media works as a mediator between political competitors, in that they are said to be endorsing particular politicians based on the stories they choose to run (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 109; Entman, 1993, p. 55). Politicians can, therefore, use the media to communicate and mobilize their voters based on specific values they highlight in their speeches and platforms (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p.106).

That being said, audiences do not mindlessly follow what the media tell them. Framing effects can be reduced when audience members hold strong predispositions that are in opposition to the messages the media convey and are also more likely to follow news reports that align with their own beliefs (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 112). Conversely, McCombs & Shaw (1972) found that people are more likely to agree with the media's overall reflection of critical political issues, regardless of personal party affiliation (p. 184). As such, the consequences of framing by the media can range in effectiveness regarding how much influence they hold over an audience. The themes explored above such as neoliberal and social welfare policies, as well as the regulation of the labour market are frequently a part of conversations about IGs in the Canadian context. As such, they are also elements included in the framing processes of politicians and community members alike. As my research question focuses on exploring how political ideologies find expression in contemporary discussions of IGs, framing theory will be critical in this examination of how different actors frame this topic. Thus, I will incorporate all these theories into my analysis to demonstrate how political and community actors frame conversations about IGs through news media, and how the political justifications employed aim to influence public opinion. In doing so, this research project will shed light on how deeply entrenched certain political ideologies are in the social lives of Canadians. Moreover, by

analyzing how these conversations are taking place, it will illuminate what is of most concern for Canadians, not only in implementing this policy but how it can impact our future as a nation.

METHODS

Source Collection

My research focused on a qualitative content analysis of print news media exploring current political discussions surrounding the policy potential for an income guarantee. I focused not solely on who the actors were in these discussions, but rather, the themes within their discussions. I looked specifically at the extent to which these discussions were characterized by neoliberal ideologies, social welfare ideologies, or a combination of political ideologies, to further political arguments and agendas. The data for my research was comprised of online newspaper articles, both news and opinion pieces, that covered political discussions of income guarantees. To allow for variations between regions throughout Canada I left my search open to all articles published in Canadian newspapers, as opposed to focusing on specific areas or publishers.

I gained access to the newspaper articles through the *Lexis/Nexis* and *Factiva* online newspaper databases. I focused my search on articles published since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took office in November 2015. My specific search range was November 1, 2015, to December 31, 2018. I selected this range because conversations about IGs have been quite prominent throughout Canadian politics in the past few years and I believe they have escalated since the Liberal government gained the majority. While conversations about IGs have been ongoing in Canada for several years, I focused on this specific three-year period to represent the most recent political discussions about this policy option.

In searching for articles, I first conducted a broad search for the terms "income guarantee" and "basic income." As previously mentioned, these kinds of policies are frequently referred to as both universal and basic income guarantees, therefore, by using the terms "income guarantee" and "basic income" I aimed to capture all articles on these discussions using either term. I then sorted through all articles that included these key terms and selected those articles which reported on comments made by political actors as well any opinion pieces or editorials written by community members. I excluded those articles which merely announced local meetings to consider participating in pilot programs, or articles discussing IGs implemented in other countries.

Past honours students have found that a collection of 100 articles was suitable for qualitative content analysis (see Humphries, 2015 and Cruddas, 2017), therefore, I also aimed to collect this amount. My initial search yielded a total corpus of over 3000 articles from both databases and I used purposive sampling to refine this amount down to 100. I eliminated all articles which did not focus directly on arguments about IG policies or those that only briefly mentioned IGs as part of a separate discussion. This was determined by an initial surface scan of the article to identify the central subject of the article. Due to the fact that the same article is often published in several different regions, I encountered a vast number of duplicate articles in my sample. Ultimately, after sorting through these duplicates I had a total sample of 99 articles. Of this 99, 62 of my articles were opinion pieces and the remaining 37 were news articles.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Once I gathered my collection of sources, I began coding for specific terms. There are two types of content analysis coding strategies I employed to analyze my articles. The first is a "keyword in context" analysis which looks at the words surrounding your specified keyword to

understand which concepts and themes are most important to the speaker (Palys & Atchison, 2014). This method of content analysis was beneficial for identifying the political themes present throughout these articles. By looking at the sentences around the mentions of incomes guarantees I was able to identify not only the keywords I needed to code for important themes, but also the specific contexts within which these articles discussed income guarantees. Furthermore, Palys & Atchison (2014) note that this method is particularly useful when performing content analysis on media coverage as it allows the researcher to see the terminology most often employed around the specified keyword(s) (p. 308). As such, I considered it the best method with which to conduct my research. A second method I used is a traditional content analysis wherein the researcher codes for specific terms throughout entire articles to understand the "themes and valuations that are present" (Palys & Atchison, 2014, p. 309).

Altheide & Schneider (2013) recommend starting with "pre-coded" categories you expect to find during your analysis but to remain aware that these categories will take on "refined meaning" (p. 46-7) as your research progresses. Therefore, conducting both the keyword-in-context and traditional types of content analysis, I began with a set of themes and phrases I planned on coding for, but I also remained open to identifying new keywords and themes that frequently appeared throughout my data. In these methods of content analysis, I coded for both manifest and latent content. Manifest content refers to those aspects of the data which are readily visible on the surface, whereas latent content refers to the underlying content of data that is understood by looking at the context of the content (Babbie & Roberts, 2017, p. 249). As such, my specific themes were not fully apparent until the first two rounds of coding were completed.

I started by coding for manifest content such as the headline of the news story, publishing date and what kind of actor was speaking in the story. For my latent content analysis, I looked

more in-depth at the context surrounding these actors' comments. Was the actor speaking in favour or opposition of an IG? What reasons did they give to support their position? Was there an economic or social justification provided? Are specific political ideologies explicitly mentioned in these discussions? These are the kinds of questions I used to guide my analysis. I identified these themes by looking at the phrases surrounding my keywords to understand how an actor used arguments about IGs to further their apparent position. See Appendix A for my final coding guide. Each article was coded three times, with each subsequent round of coding recording different relevant aspects of the article.

Following content analyses conducted by previous honours students (see Humphries, 2015), as well as the advice for creating coding protocols provided by Altheide & Schneider (2013), I used an Excel spreadsheet to record the information gathered from my articles. In the first round of coding I collected the manifest surface content of each article, and in the second and third rounds of coding I aimed to capture the latent content. In the second round, I identified the specific phrases used by authors in their arguments to justify their positions. The types of justifications I looked for were economic, bureaucratic, human rights, or labour market concerns. In the third round, I then coded the broader context within which actors employed these arguments. In terms of the political leanings of articles, I coded 35 as strictly social welfare leaning and 17 as strictly neoliberal leaning with the remaining articles in the sample combining ideas from both political ideologies. Generally speaking, news articles were more likely to be coded as social welfare leaning or combining ideologies, and opinion pieces frequently combined ideologies as opposed to adhering to only one side. By the end of my coding process, I had identified two major recurring themes: moral responsibility to either the Canadian people or economy and governmental spending priorities, and disagreement on the cultural value of work.

As mentioned in the methods section, the results of my coding process revealed two very clear themes. While these two themes are distinct in and of themselves, they nonetheless are intricately related to each other, and it was not uncommon for both major themes to be brought up in one article. The two themes I identified are: moral responsibility and governmental priorities, and disagreement on the cultural value of work. Generally speaking, there were often two distinct perspectives presented through the articles in terms of supporting or opposing an income guarantee. For example, within the first theme, moral responsibility and government priorities, the debate was more clearly divided between strongly neoliberal and social welfare beliefs. However, within the second theme of cultural disagreements on work this divide became less obvious, and it was more common that justifications for IGs were made using elements of both ideologies to argue different end points. This is the ambivalence that I refer to in the title of this project, whereby many news articles and opinion pieces put forth social welfare arguments, but they could not fully separate themselves from neoliberal beliefs. To interpret this ambivalence, I draw heavily from Ferguson's (2010) work on the "uses of neoliberalism".

Moral Responsibility & Government Priorities

The Social Welfare Understanding

The first theme I identified was the idea that Canada as a nation has the responsibility to either enact or not enact an IG based on understandings of morality and obligation to the population. This theme was present in nearly the entire sample of articles. It was clear that IGs are a morally polarizing issue, but to whom this moral responsibility is directed was contingent on the political justifications employed. Here, social welfare justifications dominated, with the majority of articles deeply concerned with the rates of poverty in Canada and how an IG can

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address them. There was a sense of urgency in these articles that warranted a collective effort on the part of citizens and government bodies alike to address this crisis. In one opinion piece, a medical officer from Ontario boldly claims "I think we cannot afford to not act. Poverty is killing us. It is not only the poorest among us who are affected, but all of us" (Sutcliffe, 2017, para. 3). Comments like these appeal to our shared sense of morality by positioning poverty as an issue impacting the rich and poor alike. Poverty was often presented as a threat that should be taken seriously instead of brushed aside as someone else's problem. This idea of poverty as a universal threat was brought up in another opinion piece submitted by a police officer, "We are valuing each group more or less than others, while those who exist in each group do so through mostly no fault of their own. We all could become disabled or struggling for employment" (Weber, 2016, para. 3).

Framing poverty this way aims to generate widespread support for IG policies by getting people to think about how an IG can benefit society as a whole. This was also accomplished in other articles by comparing an IG to other universal rights considered integral to the Canadian identity. Advocates from the Basic Income Canada Network asserted that "our defining narrative will be when we establish that having a basic income for all is no different – and no less important – than when we established universal health care more than 50 years ago" (Benns & Regehr, 2016, para. 9). Another advocate from a Toronto Council of Women group echoes this sentiment, believing this type of social assistance "really treats a basic income level as a right, along with the rights of health care and education" (Firth, 2016, para. 11). Social welfare arguments are employed here by emphasizing that our responsibility as a nation is to help those in need, to restore their dignity. Using other universal programs like healthcare and education work to show audiences that equal access to resources is already part of the fabric of Canadian

values. Therefore, implementing an IG is just another way that we as a collective can take care of our citizens.

What these examples demonstrate is that for those arguing from a social welfare standpoint, there appears to be no reason to not enact an IG. In fact, it would be morally reprehensible for a country with the means to provide this income to not move forward with it. Articles favoring this view were more common in my sample than articles holding a neoliberal stance. Supporters using social welfare justifications do so by framing IGs as a policy initiative that builds on the existing foundation of our cultural values and practices. Drawing on our shared humanity and our government's history of inclusive, universal policies works to frame IGs as something new, but not entirely different, therefore making this issue more readily acceptable to the population (Goffman, 1974).

The Neoliberal Understanding

Discussions about the costs of this policy were more common throughout neoliberal leaning articles. What was most interesting about this kind of justification was the level of detail provided for the audience depending on the viewpoint of each article. The Parliamentary Budget Office estimates that the cost of providing an IG to every citizen in the country would be $76 billion annually (Forget, 2018, p. 150). However, the costs of current social assistance programs and the overall costs of poverty to our healthcare system is also estimated at between $70-80 billion annually (Monsebraaten, 2016, para. 9; Peason, 2016, para. 17). Advocacy groups like Canada Without Poverty have claimed that an estimated $30-40 billion could be saved annually on healthcare costs alone by eliminating poverty (Peason, 2016, para. 18), while Evelyn Forget (2018) asserts that another $30 billion could be saved by reallocating social assistance funds currently targeted at working age Canadians into an IG (p.150). The costs of this policy, then,

were a central piece of many arguments in my sample. In neoliberal leaning articles, the economic viability of this policy was often a determining factor in declaring opposition against IG.

Whereas proponents of social welfare ideals argue for an IG on the basis of an obligation to help those in need, those favouring neoliberal beliefs framed IGs as a bad policy for governments. Throughout these articles economic justifications dominated, and while morality was explicitly invoked, the concern was undoubtedly about government spending on those in poverty. Articles incorporating these beliefs did not dispute the fact that poverty levels are indeed dire, however, they spoke about IGs in the context of being economically irresponsible. For example, financial columnist Eric Reguly (2017) writes, "let's not forget about the costs for a moment. A basic income is not the *morally correct* socioeconomic strategy" (para. 17, emphasis added). The immorality of IGs from this viewpoint stem from the belief that simply providing poor people with money is a band-aid solution and will not solve poverty on a grand scale. An economics professor at the University of British Columbia shared this concern stating, "not only would this plan be unimaginably expensive, but it's hard to see why there would be any social gain that would begin to offset the costs" (Milligan, 2015, para. 6). Throughout these articles the costs of the program were positioned as what should be most concerning to the Canadian population, and not the staggering numbers of people currently living in poverty.

This differential framing between neoliberal and social welfare leaning articles was accomplished by only discussing certain aspects of the costs. When using economic justifications, nearly every neoliberal leaning article mentioned the proposed $76 billion cost of the national IG program. However, not a single neoliberal article in my sample mentioned how much poverty costs federal and provincial governments per year. I found that neoliberal leaning

articles frequently left out details that were provided in social welfare articles, while the reverse was not present in my sample. In this way, these neoliberal articles were one-sided and potentially misleading, in that audience members with little knowledge of government expenditures were being given the impression that the $76 billion needed for the project would have to be generated out of thin air. The cost, then, became an end in itself. It was frequently given as the only reason needed to oppose the program, as illustrated by the quotes included above. Conversely, social welfare leaning articles frequently cited the costs of poverty alongside the estimated cost of the program, making a clear effort to demonstrate that there were many ways to reconfigure social spending to make an IG work. This selective use of detail highlights the fact that for those in opposition to IGs, the priority of our government should be lowering social spending, not addressing poverty. Funding an IG, then, becomes the morally wrong choice because it wastes billions of dollars in public funds on a program perceived to have little impact on poverty.

Morality plays into these arguments through an element of suspicion around the universal nature of IGs. These suspicions were tied to decreased participation in the labour market. One of IGs staunchest opposers, Eric Reguly (2016), warns Canadians that, "any idea that sees no one suffering and everyone gaining just might not be the right medicine for society, let alone credible" (para. 1). For neoliberal thinkers like Reguly, it is immoral to provide a universal payment because this provides a disincentive to governments to invest in economic growth that pulls the impoverished into the labour force. Poverty from this viewpoint is due to the lack of gainful employment. Ergo, people who have become impoverished after being laid off or struggling to find higher-paying work will not benefit from getting free money. This is reflected by economists Charles Lammam and Hugh McIntyre (2018) who state that "a cash transfer with

no restrictions may either exacerbate the problem or not address why someone is stuck in poverty" (para. 24). Lammam & McIntyre (2018) further argue that the drawbacks of an IG are that they discourage participation in the labour market. This drawback is framed as highly detrimental to Canadians, while the focus of concern is on people who have fallen on hard times due to lack of employment, not on those stuck in deep, cyclical poverty.

The belief in these neoliberal leaning articles was that governments should focus on stimulating economic growth that pulls low-income earners in, thereby creating an inclusive labour market that fosters a more balanced income distribution than what the country currently experiences. Returning again to the importance of framing theory in relation to political debates, the values expressed in this debate came down to what do we *want* as a nation (Goffman, 1974; Chong & Druckman, 2007). How an IG did or did not line up with our national values were central to these arguments. From a neoliberal stance it appears we want to keep social spending under control, and that we value participation in the labour market over expanded government aid. However, from a social welfare stance we are told we want a fair and just society. Taking care of our fellow citizens and ensuring everyone lives a healthy, dignified life are of utmost importance to us. It is clear, then, that the presence of both neoliberal and social welfare ideologies has produced conflicting representations of our values within the news media. While I found evidence of strong neoliberal values entrenched in our consciousness, social welfare beliefs are used more frequently in this debate, and these arguments are being reformulated in new ways in this seemingly paradoxical landscape.

Disagreement Over the Cultural Value of Work

Social Welfare's Appropriation of Neoliberal Ideas

As was shown in the analysis of the first theme, neoliberal critiques of IGs are largely centered around concern for decreased participation in the labour market. Concern for economic growth and participation in paid labour were still important factors within social welfare arguments; however, the way social welfare supporters use work within their justifications is where the ambivalence that is fundamental to my project becomes apparent. Contrary to assumptions in many of the neoliberal articles in my sample, advocates for IGs do not also advocate for the elimination of paid labour (Bregman, 2016; Forget, 2018). Rather, their arguments are based on the necessity of re-evaluating how we think about and value paid labour in our society. Wrapped up in these social welfare arguments was the idea that our current social assistance programs are ineffective because ideas about who deserves government aid are based on a willingness to work. Neoliberal policies have served to put work at the forefront of all conversations about social assistance. As one income guarantee supporter from Kingston passionately stated, "we also need to move past treating paid labour as the sine qua non of social worth, gender equality, the essence of a person's identity or the only means of subsistence..." (Power, Pickard & Young, 2017, para. 11). For supporters of an IG, they see this policy as a way to revolutionize welfare policies, as it separates the ability to work from deservingness and puts the emphasis back on helping people simply because they are in need.

These articles did not challenge the idea that work brings purpose or value to people's lives, but they recognized that people allocate this value differently based on their personal circumstances. In one news article Rob Rainer, the chairman of the Ontario Basic Income Network, puts forth that:

> a society with a universal basic income… would also need to change its thinking about
> the value of working on things that don't make money. Why is it work to be paid to look

after some[one] else's children and not work when you look after your own… We need

to reconceptualize work and start to value work that is not readily amenable to the paid

labour market. (Hale, 2017, para. 17-8)

In this way, work remains central in the relationship between government and citizens, but these

advocates are trying to remove the obligatory aspect often inherent in cash transfer policies. For

example, Mexico's Oportunidades cash transfer program is characterized as one of co-

responsibility, wherein responsibility is relocated to individual households to meet specific

requirements to receive aid. As a result, the cash transfers in these kinds of policies are framed as

a gift, to which citizens receiving the funds are now indebted to reciprocate through fulfilling the

requirements of eligibility (De Sardan & Piccoli, 2018, p. 92-3).

In the North American context, neoliberal supporters frame IGs in the same way, as a

benevolent gift provided to citizens who are then indebted to government. As such, work

becomes the duty of recipients to perform in order to continue qualifying for aid (Forget, 2018,

p. 23). This is exactly the type of policy that social welfare supporters are arguing against.

Instead of conceptualizing IGs as a gift from the government, this side of the debate frames it as

a mission of social justice (Forget, 2018; Bregman, 2016). Thus, the universal, unconditional

nature of IGs endorses this need to rethink how work relates to social assistance, as the goal of

this kind of policy is to help people because they need it and not to promote work as the only

producer of value or human worth. Although these articles encourage us to reconceptualize how

work should be defined moving forward, it is the fact that they so often included work in their

arguments that leads to their ambivalent nature. These arguments are considered ambivalent

because they combine elements of both social welfare and neoliberal ideologies. This is

expressed in another news article addressing concerns about automation in which Rob Rainer

again warns that "large-scale automation means we need to reimagine what productivity looks like and few of us will be immune" (Eichler, 2017, para. 11), maintaining that "basic-income programs allow recipients to explore options not available to them if they are struggling to survive, such as retraining or new job options" (Eichler, 2017, para. 18). On one hand, supporters in these articles are arguing for an IG based on the basic belief that people have the right to a dignified existence, yet on the other hand, they are still subscribing to the idea that work does, and should, continue to provide value in people's lives.

James Ferguson (2010) explains that in order for political groups in opposition of neoliberalism to make effective critiques they need to move beyond the simple act of condemning neoliberal policies because they favour capitalists and reproduce inequality (p.166). Supporters of social welfare, or other anti-neoliberal ideologies, must be more creative in how they campaign in a world where the relationship between worker and nation-state is taken for granted and assumed to be inherent in social policy decisions (Ferguson, 2010, p. 169). One of the creative ways that social welfare supporters can do this is by creating what Ferguson (2010) calls "new arts of government" by appropriating certain neoliberal beliefs and reframing them to meet their needs (p. 173). This is clearly represented in this project, as social welfare advocates appropriated the neoliberal prioritization of paid labour and included it in their arguments.

These articles absorb the common neoliberal critique that policies like an IG would devalue paid work and lead to mass unemployment, arguing instead for the continued reliance on paid labour and expansion of what kinds of labour should be paid. Ferguson (2010) refers to this appropriation as making "game moves", where political ideas originally used for one purpose can easily be adopted for another purpose by an opposing political system (p. 174). By including the promotion of paid labour into their arguments it counteracts what many neoliberal supporters

use as their rationale for resisting IGs. The ambivalence, then, rests on the fact that because Canada has openly embraced many neoliberal beliefs, social welfare supporters often have to appropriate some of these beliefs into their own arguments to gain traction, as opposed to relying solely on traditional welfare-state arguments used in the past. These supporters then run the risk of having their arguments misinterpreted by the audience or appropriated again by neoliberal supporters as evidence for their side of the debate. Nonetheless, for social welfare supporters this appropriation is often the only viable avenue for ensuring their arguments are heard and taken seriously in political debates.

Neoliberalism's Reliance on the Worker

Whereas I identified that social welfare supporters needed to borrow from neoliberal beliefs in their arguments, I did not find any articles where the reverse was true. Articles favouring a neoliberal stance frequently employed the same argument against IGs, that being the need for widespread participation in the labour market. As previously mentioned, this opposition was framed largely under the assumption that an IG would result in mass unemployment and dependence on the government. This was exemplified in an opinion piece by economists Charles Lammam and Hugh McIntyre (2018) who fear that, "the transfer doesn't have a work requirement – even for able-bodied recipients – which raises serious concerns about the potential to encourage dependency on the government and discourage people from improving their situation through gainful employment" (para. 9). These articles continually pushed the idea that participation in paid labour keeps society functioning, therefore, all able-bodied citizens have a responsibility to participate in the labour market. Consequently, there was a great fear among commenters that if people could survive off an IG they would choose, en masse, to quit working entirely.

Work, therefore, was positioned within these articles as one of our strongest cultural

values because it provides purpose in our lives and connects us to wider society. Relating to the

previous theme of morality, there was also the proposition that IGs are dangerous because they

threaten the very well-being of our nation by devaluing work. For example, two members from a

policy think tank in Ottawa argue that, "the basic income model has various problems

including… undervaluing the broad-based benefits of paid work… These anti-work effects seem

to manifest themselves over the long-term in the form of changing attitudes, behaviours, and

norms about work" (Lee Crowley & Speer, 2018, para. 6-7). We see, then, how for those

strongly opposed to IGs their defence is centered around what work provides for citizens, and

what workers provide for the nation. In their eyes work was the ultimate solution to poverty and

any policies that jeopardize the value of work are too dangerous to even consider. The

commenters quoted above went on to further argue that, "we know that work is good for people

who are capable of it. Work is itself a benefit. It's good for the mind, body, and soul. The push

for basic income fails to account for this *humane insight*" (Lee Crowley & Speer, 2018, para. 9-

10, emphasis added). Not only is an IG immoral because it discourages work, but it is also

inhumane because Canadians will suffer in a world where work does not provide purpose.

The contrast between neoliberal and social welfare arguments becomes clear when

looking at it from this cultural perspective. Those opposing IGs on neoliberal grounds fear how

an IG will change our culture, holding deep concern for the future of our economy in a world

where work is not necessary for subsistence. In this way an IG policy creates more uncertainty in

a future already characterized as such. Contrarily, social welfare supporters view IGs as an

opportunity to reshape our cultural values to fit our current reality (Forget, 2018; Bregman,

2016). Work does provide purpose to people, but it does not always provide money enough to

survive. By expanding our understandings of what paid labour looks like it gives people the freedom to pursue the work they want without fear of falling into poverty. The expectation on both sides is still that people will take part in some form of labour to be productive (Forget, 2018; Bregman, 2016; Hanlon, Barrientos & Hulme, 2010). The neoliberal side, however, maintains that productivity disappears when the relationship between income and labour is weakened. Thus, adapting to the anticipated onslaught of automation requires stronger commitment to paid labour as a way to foster innovation and create a more inclusive labour market.

What these neoliberal arguments also make clear is why there is such ambivalence on the part of social welfare justifications. The most dominant argument running through neoliberal articles were concerns about work and how to increase participation in the labour market. Because we live in a society largely characterized by neoliberal ideals, this concern is shared by many citizens throughout the country as these values have been regularly promoted in policy decisions for decades. There is no ambivalence on the part of neoliberal thinkers because they understand that blocking the implementation of an IG is both good for the economy and those in poverty. Social welfare supporters, however, must incorporate work into their broader arguments about social justice and human dignity to compete with the strong neoliberal opposition to this kind of policy. It appears, then, that social welfare supporters of IGs are gaining an understanding that their best "game move" is to reinforce the idea that an IG can inspire innovation and productivity in people once they are freed from the burdens of poverty. It will be interesting to see how this ambivalence plays out as the "arts of government" (Ferguson, 2010, p. 173) continue to change as this policy debate continues in the future.

To situate my findings at the end of this project I once again return to my research question: How do Canadian news media use neoliberal and social welfare discourses as justifications for or against income guarantees? Broadly speaking, my analysis demonstrates that neoliberal political arguments are most often used to argue *against* the implementation of income guarantees, and social welfare political arguments are most often used *in favour* of income guarantees. The critical finding in answering my research question, however, is the fact that social welfare supporters frequently made use of critiques from the other side, incorporating them into their own justifications to make a stronger argument for the implementation of an income guarantee. This is notable for two reasons; the first being that I did not find evidence of neoliberal supporters borrowing from social welfare ideologies in their arguments, and secondly, this supports Ferguson's (2010) claims to the ambivalent nature of criticisms toward neoliberal policies. Social welfare supporters absorb neoliberal critiques toward policies like IGs and use them as "game moves" in political debates to bolster their arguments and expose the weaknesses of neoliberal ideals (Ferguson, 2010, p. 176).

That being said, because I only looked at 99 articles in my project, the results of my analysis cannot be said to be generalizable to the entire landscape of Canadian news media. However, there was a lot of consistency throughout the 3-year period I analyzed in terms of arguments and justifications. Therefore, I think it is possible my sample is reflective to some extent of the population's current mindset, in the sense that I believe the articles in my sample demonstrate that social welfare values are still deeply entrenched in the Canadian consciousness, despite the recent trend of neoliberal social policies. I did find there were two distinct sides in this debate, and while both sides held similar concerns in relation to moral responsibilities and work, these

arguments were justified in very different ways. This further solidifies the idea that a true

neoliberal state is not possible in democratic nations (Harvey, 2007) and provides concrete

evidence for how this ambivalence exists and is expressed in a country that has openly embraced

the neoliberal doctrine.

Moreover, my project shows that the rhetoric around income guarantees is flexible, which

lets people use it to justify different ideologies. This is imperative to note because on the surface

the articles in this sample appear to be distinctly favouring social welfare arguments; however, a

deeper analysis illustrates how social welfare supporters are picking and choosing elements of

neoliberalism to use against its proponents. Importantly, this has an impact on how this policy is

framed for the audience, as this ambivalence is translated through the news media. The

differential framing of this debate by supporters of opposing ideologies indicates that this debate

will continue to be a contentious one, as each side presents a different understanding of the value

of this policy. Nonetheless, in this sample, social welfare justifications were used more often

than neoliberal ones. Neoliberal ideals, then, while dominating political practice, may not be as

firmly rooted in Canadians' everyday lives as some scholars suggest (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006;

Luxton & Braedley, 2010).

Whether or not the audience is aware of this ambivalence between political ideologies

provides another avenue for future research. My analysis also suggests that future social policy

decisions will have to incorporate elements of multiple ideologies, as my sample implies that the

general population seems to be disillusioned with, or at the very least strongly divided about,

strong neoliberal policy practices. Future research would do well to further investigate the extent

to which this ambivalence is present among those in political power, as this project was largely

limited to everyday citizens. No one can predict what Canada's economy will look like as

automation continues to grow. What is clear is that rates of poverty are getting worse and a

solution needs to be found. Ultimately, it can be argued that the debate about income guarantees

in Canada puts elements of both neoliberal and social welfare ideologies to work, with the goal

of making social assistance work for our society in this future of uncertainty.

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First round of coding:

1. Numeric identifier

2. Headline

3. Publishing newspaper

4. Date

5. Reference

6. Main actor(s) in story

7. Summary of article

Second round:

8. A phrase capturing the attitude of actor(s) toward IGs
9. A phrase capturing the actor(s) justification of attitude

     - i.e. economic, bureaucratic, human rights and dignity etc.
10. A phrase capturing the perceived benefits/disadvantages of IGs

11. Political leaning of the article (either SW, NL, or combination of both)

     - How do the attitudes, justifications and perceptions of IG in article align with either ideology

Third round:

12. Frame: poverty issue, labour market issue, or government capability issue

13. Themes: moral responsibility, government priority, or shifting cultural values about labour and work

14. Sub-themes: more specific quotes and phrases pertaining to the major themes