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**The Construction of Political Corruption in *The Globe and Mail* from 1990 -2000**

**Stephen Wild**

Thesis submitted to the  
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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Department of Criminology  
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## ABSTRACT

Despite a loss of readership and revenue, newspapers, one of the main providers of new information to the public, continue to play a major role in helping to shape public debate about social problems. The news media is therefore one of the primary ways for claims-makers to distribute their claims to a large audience. By presenting the claims, the news media alters the claims and re-presents them. These new claims represent one possible worldview, and because of the news media's major role in public debate, these claims may be very influential.

A review of the research literature on political corruption shows that few media studies about political corruption have been conducted in Canada. Furthermore, the research literature uses a wide variety of different definitions for what constitutes political corruption, making it extremely difficult to compare and analyze different articles in the research literature.

I chose to examine how *The Globe and Mail*, which many people consider to be Canada's premier newspaper, perceived, reported, and describes political corruption. My goal is to explore how *The Globe and Mail* describes political corruption and presents claims-makers' claims, and how these claims may influence debate. I used a quantitative content analysis to analyze newspaper articles about political corruption published in *The Globe and Mail* from 1990-2000.

I found that numerous articles published in *The Globe and Mail* identified political corruption as a serious problem with serious effects on Canadians. Grand corruption in the Federal level of government was the most identified type of corruption, with favouritism as the main form. For quotes, *The Globe and Mail* primarily used State sources and alleged offenders. The structure of Canada's political system was identified as the primary cause of political corruption, while solutions were constructed to include either increased accountability or stronger laws. The information provided by *The Globe and Mail* usually came from others sources, and there was very little independent investigation of claims.

These results show that *The Globe and Mail* presents a limited debate about political corruption. The focus on presenting State viewpoints may limit discussion of other possible causes and solutions, and this limited discussion may result in ineffective legal responses.

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## INTRODUCTION

On November 13, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced a public inquiry to examine the relationship between former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and German lobbyist Karlheinz Schreiber. Schreiber, who was going to be deported back to Germany to face criminal charges,<sup>1</sup> alleged that he had given Mulroney \$300,000 (Mulroney claimed \$225,000) after coming to an initial agreement with Mulroney when Mulroney was still Prime Minister (Mulroney claimed it was shortly after). The money was to be for Mulroney's lobbying on behalf of Thyssen Industries, but the two men dispute whether Mulroney did any work. Mulroney claims he was paid to lobby foreign governments; Schreiber claims it was to lobby the Canadian Government, which would be a direct violation of Mulroney's own Conflict of Interest Code.<sup>2</sup>

As I write this introduction, the full public inquiry has not delivered its final report, due December 31, 2009.<sup>3</sup> That report will mark the end of a public spectacle that unfolded in the news media. Both Mulroney and Schreiber testified before the inquiry, and the news media followed their every word. CBC NewsWorld, a cable TV channel devoted to 24-hour news, pre-empted its regular programming to show both Mulroney's and Schreiber's testimonies.

The Mulroney-Schreiber affair is just one event in a long list of political corruption scandals, many of which were reported by the news media. Like the numerous political corruption scandals before it, the Mulroney-Schreiber Affair helped bring political corruption into the forefront of public debate: What happened? Who was involved? When and where did it happen? Why? How does it affect us? What can we do about it?

---

<sup>1</sup> Schreiber was deported back to Germany on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009. (*Schreiber in German jail* (2009, August 3). Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2009/08/03/schreiber-germany003.html>.)

<sup>2</sup> *The Mulroney-Schreiber Affair: Our Case For a Full Public Inquiry*. (2008). Retrieved on April 30, 2009, from <http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/committee/392/ethi/reports/rp3376356/ethirp05/ethirp05-e.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Commission of Inquiry Into Certain Allegations Respecting Business and Financial Dealings Between Karlheinz Schreiber and The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney. (2009). *Tentative Timeline*. Retrieved on April 30, 2009, from <http://www.oliphantcommission.ca/English/about/schedule.php>.

The news media provides the main forum to answer these and similar questions. Thus, the news media is one of the main influences on the public definition of political deviance (Roshier, 1981, p. 40). By choosing what to read and watch, the audience tells the media what stories and events are important. The news media then works with its audience to help construct reality and provide a public forum for the audience's beliefs (Chermak, 1994). This establishes "the rules of the game" (Owens, 2001, p. 660) and provides a common perception of right and wrong. Through recognizing and reporting deviance, the news media and its audience help to publically establish the relative limits of acceptable behaviour.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the news media considered the ideal task of journalists to be investigative reporting (Sanders & Canel, 2006, p. 456) and the discovery of unethical behaviour. The news media, however, has shifted away from the ideal of careful investigative reporting and now focuses on sensationalist reporting, whereby the news media reports any suspected misconduct before it attempts to find the facts (Savigny, 2004, p. 229). This change has altered the type of news the public receives (Altschull, 1984, p. 273). The public has begun to receive infotainment, news that is designed to entertain (Chinball, 1977).

By looking at the news media's construction and definition of government wrongdoing and political corruption, we can help create an understanding about claims-making and the news media. My thesis examines *The Globe and Mail* and its construction of political corruption. My primary focus is on *The Globe and Mail* and the first and second stages of the social problems process (claims-making and media coverage). Using a quantitative methodology to explore and describe aspects of political corruption reported by the news media in Canada, I look at news stories about Canadian government misconduct and determine whether they fit the conceptual definition of political corruption. My research, though concentrated on *The Globe and Mail*, will

help broaden our understanding of how the news media describes political corruption in Canada and, therefore, how that description might guide debate. I want to explore how the written news media describes political corruption. I will test the following major research questions:

1) *How did The Globe and Mail construct political corruption between 1990 and 2000?*

I have broken my question down into sub-questions, each of which involves a particular part of *The Globe and Mail's* description of political corruption. The first sub-question deals with the idea of objectivity and how *The Globe and Mail* classifies political corruption. The second involves what level of government *The Globe and Mail* identifies while describing political corruption. The third involves whether the corruption is grand or bureaucratic. The fourth asks what behaviours of political corruption *The Globe and Mail* identifies. The fifth asks who provides quotes. The sixth involves the evidence provided by *The Globe and Mail*. The seventh involves whether *The Globe and Mail* provides facts and describes political corruption. The final two sub-questions involve the causes of political corruption and the potential solutions to the 'problem.'

- *When discussing political corruption, what tone does The Globe and Mail use when it describes political corruption?*
- *When discussing political corruption, what level of government does The Globe and Mail identify?*
- *When discussing political corruption, what type of corruption does The Globe and Mail discuss?*
- *When discussing political corruption, which of the following behaviours does The Globe and Mail identify: bribery, fraud, favouritism, conflict of interest, embezzlement, extortion, abuse of power/breach of trust, or vote-buying?*
- *When discussing political corruption, which of the following quote sources appear in The Globe and Mail: alleged offenders, government officials, experts, victims, members of the CJ system, or other?*
- *Concerning political corruption, what type of evidence appears in The Globe and Mail?*

- *How does The Globe and Mail provide facts and describe acts of political corruption?*
- *What does The Globe and Mail identify as the primary cause of political corruption?*
- *What does The Globe and Mail identify as the solution or primary prevention method for political corruption?*

There are four chapters in this thesis. Chapter 1 is a literature review looking at political corruption's history and current research into the phenomenon. I develop a conceptual definition of political corruption and define it as an act committed by a State actor who uses their offices' authority for private gain and causes harm to the impartiality principle (Kurer, 2005). I then examine the news media and its reporting of deviance. Finally, I explain my theoretical perspectives of social construction and labelling.

Chapter 2 refers to my research questions and details the methodology I used to collect and analyze the newspaper articles. I also describe my method of data collection and analysis, and then define key concepts. Chapter 2 finishes with a look at my methodological strengths and limitations.

Chapter 3 provides my analysis of the sample and a discussion of the results. I use a quantitative content analysis to detect trends in *The Globe and Mail's* coverage of political corruption. I found that *The Globe and Mail* published 94 news articles, around 70% of which were hard news articles, with roughly 80% of all articles published in Section A.. I also found that grand corruption in the Federal level of government was most identified form of corruption. To make this claim, *The Globe and Mail* relied mainly on State sources to identify favouritism as the main behaviour of political corruption. *The Globe and Mail's* sources also claimed that the main cause was structural, but recommended tougher punishment to prevent corruption. *The Globe and Mail*, however, used second-hand evidence to support their claims, and appeared to

provide little independent verification. I provide all these results in a series of different sections and tables.

Finally, chapter 4 features my conclusion that *The Globe and Mail* uses mainly State sources to describe political corruption as grand corruption that primarily affects the federal government, as primarily structural in nature, and as solvable by using harsher punishment. Chapter 4 explains the implications of how *The Globe and Mail* describes political corruption and how that description might guide debate and influence criminal law. Finally, Chapter 4 finishes with my recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER 1: POLITICAL CORRUPTION, THE MEDIA, AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

### **HISTORY**

Fifty years ago, political corruption was a barely researched phenomenon. Today, most theorists consider it a major problem impeding economic and social development, all while undermining democracy (Andvig, Fjeldstad, Amundsen, Sissener, & Søreide, 2001, p. 38). Many supranational organizations agree. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations (UN), and the Organization of Economically Developed Countries (OECD) have all published papers identifying political corruption as a major problem.

The academic literature on political corruption covers a variety of behaviours that vary widely depending on the time and place (Kurer, 2005, p. 225), which makes it difficult to research the history of political corruption. That said, here is a brief history, featuring selected cases that best illustrate the appropriate themes, of political corruption.

### ***A Brief History***

Many of the earliest surviving reports of political corruption are from ancient Greece. During the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, scholars wrote that corruption was a widespread problem with politicians routinely levelling complaints of corruption and bribery against their opponents (Taylor, 2001a, pp. 55-56), just like politicians routinely do today. Athenian political groups would do anything necessary to win a vote, such as bribing other voters and threatening opponents (Breed & Seaman, 1971, p. 642). It was also normal for the wealthy to use patronage and distribute public funds to achieve political influence (Mitchell & Rhodes, 1996, p. 12). It is difficult, however, to determine the extent of bribery and corruption in Athens because the most

commonly used word that described bribery is identical to the one that described gift-giving (Taylor, 2001a, p. 53; Bratsis, 2003, p. 11). As well, many ancient gift-giving practices would also be considered corrupt by today's standards (Slootjes, 2006). That illustrates the difficulty of discussing political corruption across different times. But it does help to show us that even the Greeks, who are often considered to be the best practitioners of democracy, still had problems with corruption (Breed & Seaman, 1971).

Abuses of power in ancient Rome were also a normal part of politics (DeLorme Jr., Isom, & Kamerschen, 2005, p. 705) and helped lead to the Roman Empire's downfall (MacMullen, 1988). Bribery likely influenced government officials and might have determined electoral victors (Lintott, 1990, p. 2). Emperors and leaders of ancient Rome had great difficulty reducing the amount of corruption, despite their persistent efforts (Monks, 1957, p. 748). Both the Greeks and the Romans had laws against bribery and embezzlement (Taylor, 2001b, p. 155; Lintott, 1990, p. 3). The Roman Empire used harsher and harsher anti-corruption measures each time it weakened (Daley, 1998, p. 128), but people simply found a way them (De Haan, 2000, p. 36; Jurdjevic, 2004, p. 611). Even today, many political corruption cases in democracies follow this pattern: any time a major scandal occurs that weakens public trust in the State, the group running the State introduces tougher anti-corruption legislation.

Reports of corruption continue throughout history. In 16<sup>th</sup> century Florence, one group after another controlled the city by rigging elections and having friends and family as potential candidates (Jurdjevic, 2004, p. 609). In Florence, officials sold public offices, bribery of public officials was rampant, and the use of public office for personal gain was ubiquitous (De Haan, 2000, p. 35). That fits with the norms of the time. Public office was considered to be private property. As long as public office holders used their offices in a way that did not offend their



superiors, they could do whatever they wanted with their authority (Theobald, 1990). In France during the Middle Ages, for example, someone leaving public office usually ‘donated’ it to a relative or sold it to the highest bidder; there was a tax on the sale of these offices, just like private property (Theobald, 1990, p. 28; Gill, 2003, p. 87). Today, however, political office is not private property. It is public property.

During the Middle Ages, many people who held a government office received little to no pay and thus resorted to bribery and embezzlement to survive (Orr, 2006, p. 292). Serving the State was a duty, not a privilege. Senior government officials knew about low-level corruption, so they permitted it to occur. By today’s definitions of political corruption, public servants in this era would have been horribly corrupt (Fischer & Lundgreen, 1975, p. 460). The same thing happens in many developing countries today. Developed countries, however, pay their public office holders a good wage and frown on the use of political corruption.

In Britain, reports of bribery and corruption increased heavily during the 1600s. Becoming an elected official, especially a Member of Parliament (MP), went from something that officials considered a burden to something that officials considered a privilege (Orr, 2006, p. 289-290). As a result, public offices gained increased authority. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, for example, British Prime Minister Lord Bute secured votes for a Treaty—traditionally the purview of the monarchy—by giving out cash payments or government contracts to those who would vote to support it (Theobald, 1990, p. 25). When the State expands into new areas, corruption may result.

Along with increased authority came increased scrutiny. Critics of the British Government began to report more cases of abuse of power and corruption (Harling, 1995, p. 128). Many elected officials in the United Kingdom owed their victory to political corruption

(Hoppen, 1996, p. 558). MPs also gave out government jobs, and in some cases cash, to constituents in exchange for votes (Lehoucq, 2007); the number of people who could legally vote was small, so there was a good return on investment. Opposing MPs pointed out the corrupt acts and demanded that something be done (Lehoucq, 2007). After intense debate, the British Government introduced secret ballots to reduce political corruption (Crook & Crook, 2007). With the introduction of secret ballots, it became much more difficult for politicians to buy votes because they could no longer guarantee their investment was worthwhile (Theobald, 1990, p. 26).

### ***Political Corruption in Canada***

Political corruption was present almost from the beginning of Confederation. Sir John A. MacDonalld, Canada's first Prime Minister, resigned in 1873 after opponents alleged he accepted bribes and campaign donations from *Canadian Pacific Railway* to use in the 1872 election (Berton, 1964). *Canadian Pacific Railway* was competing with other companies to build an expensive railway system connecting all of Canada, and these contracts were worth a lot of money (Berton, 1964). This is a continuing theme through Canadian history: corrupt behaviour is correlated with expensive projects, especially if the project has little oversight. The allegations and resulting scandal against Sir John A. MacDonalld helped lead to the defeat of his Conservative Party in the next election (Morton, 2005). *The Pacific Railway scandal* was the first time in Canadian history that a political corruption scandal helped to lead to the defeat of the ruling party. It would not be the last.

Some politicians tried to limit the personal relationships between politicians and lobbyists and turn those relationships into bureaucratic relationships (Thorburn, 2001). While Alexander MacKenzie was Prime Minister, for example, he had a secret staircase built in the Parliament

buildings so that he could avoid favour-seekers (Morton, 2005, p. 17). After the corruption allegations against MacDonald, Mackenzie tried to avoid the appearance of corruption, so he made the lobbyists and favour seekers deal with the bureaucracy. But try as the government might, there was no way to remove all personal relationships. MacDonald returned to power in 1878 and the allegations of corruption returned. During the 1880s and 1890s, for example, there was a scandal involving the railways, MPs, and the Department of Public Works (Simpson, 1988, pp. 136-138); some MPs and members of the Department of Public Works accepted money and other valuables in exchange for awarding contracts (Myers, 1976), but that was normal for the time. These scandals helped lead to laws to try reduce political corruption, such as making it a criminal act to bribe a Canadian public official (German, 2002, p. 249). Major scandals leading to anti-corruption legislation specifically target the type of corruption that inspired the legislation is a recurring theme throughout Canadian anti-corruption history (Greene, 1990).

Allegations of favouritism and bribery plagued Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier and his administration (in office from 1896-1911), and the public outrage eventually resulted in the dismissal of some public servants (Kernaghan, 2003, p. 88)—just like many scandals today. In 1926, for example, Jacques Bureau, the Customs and Excise Minister, promoted a known bootlegger to a senior ministry position. Bureau was also accused of using his political influence to protect Customs Officers who were believed to be smuggling alcohol into the United States (Morton, 2005, p. 19). The opposition party accused the ruling party of corruption, which resulted in a scandal. The Prime Minister fired Bureau, but then immediately appointed him to the Canadian Senate (Morton, 2005, p. 19). A short time later, Prime Minister Mackenzie-King was involved in another corruption scandal. This scandal involved allegations of improper

campaign contributions and gifts to MPs and Senators (Donovan & Winmill, 1976). During the 1930s, Mackenzie-King received numerous 'gifts' including \$225,000 from Peter Larkin so that King could "live in a manner appropriate to the owner of Laurier House" (Malvern, 1985, p. 18).

Noel (2001) argues that during the first 100 years after Confederation, patronage was useful and effective at creating and building the Canadian political system: political parties needed a way to encourage public participation. A change in public opinion, however, has resulted in patronage becoming unacceptable. While no administration has been free of allegations of patronage (Simpson, 1988), there has been an increase in cases that the public considers unacceptable. After becoming Prime Minister, for example, Louis St. Laurent was accused of using large amount of political patronage while in office, which helped lead to his defeat in the 1957 election (Simpson, 1988, p. 143). Pierre Trudeau heavily used patronage during his time as Prime Minister (Simpson, 1988, pp. 331-354). During the 1984 federal election, Brian Mulroney challenged Prime Minister John Turner's use of patronage (Malvern, 1985), but then almost immediately began using patronage after being elected. During Mulroney's reign as Prime Minister (1984-1993), for example, his administration faced continuous allegations of patronage and corruption (Kernaghan, 2003, p. 93).

Mulroney's Cabinet Ministers and their political assistants faced numerous conflict of interest charges (Greene, 1990, p. 233), but were re-elected in 1988. In 1986, for example, Sinclair Stevens, a Minister in Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's Cabinet, was forced to resign over conflict of interest allegations when a company related to him received a \$2.6 million loan (Cameron, 1994, pp. 163-164). MP Michel Gravel was forced to resign after being charged with 50 counts of influence peddling and fraud; he later pleaded guilty to several charges (Cameron, 1994). Roch La Salle, another Minister, resigned in 1987 during an RCMP investigation into

allegations that he demanded and accepted bribes in exchange for government favours (Cameron, 1994).

Not all corruption in Canada is limited to the Federal Government. Shortly after Saskatchewan became a Canadian province (which occurred in 1905), the Saskatchewan Liberal Party used public servants as party employees, patronage appointments, and selectively awarded business contracts to buy votes and therefore keep themselves in power (Reid, 1936). Archer (1985, p. 178) writes that there were graft and corruption charges against the Saskatchewan government in 1916. In the 1920s, before it became a Canadian province, Newfoundland had many problems with corruption (Noel, 1976). In the early 1920s, an Ontario politician was involved in a scandal featuring bribery and favouritism (Simpson, 1988, p. 229). In 1946, the Supreme Court found that Quebec Premier Duplessis abused his power when, because of the owner's religion, he ordered the liquor licence of a Montreal bar owner to be cancelled and not renewed (*Roncarelli v. Duplessis*, [1959] S.C.R. 121) Duplessis was also well known for awarding jobs and contracts in exchange for votes (Quinn, 1963). In 1986, the Nova Scotia Legislature expelled an MLA after he pleaded guilty to fraud for falsely claiming expenses (Holtby, 1987, p. 12).

Detailing every known case would be extremely difficult. Therefore, this was just a very small sample of political corruption cases and scandals. It helps show that political corruption is not a new phenomenon. Political corruption may be an ancient phenomenon, but it that has rarely had the same definition throughout history.

## **CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION**

### ***What is Political Corruption?***

Over time, many authors have tried to define the term ‘political corruption,’ resulting in a wide variety of definitions (Orr, 2006, p 290). Some involve very specific behaviours. Others are broad and encompass a wide variety of behaviours.

Corruption is defined by *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2009) as the “impairment of integrity, virtue or moral principle; depravity, decay, and/or an inducement to wrong by improper or unlawful means, a departure from the original or from what is pure or correct, and/or an agency or influence that corrupts.” Another way to define corruption is the use of entrusted power for personal gain (Søreide, 2002, p. 2). The word ‘corruption’ originates from the Latin term ‘corruptus,’ which means ‘to break’ (Nicholls, Daniel, Polaine, & Hatchard, 2006, p. 1), which symbolizes the break of public trust that occurs when a public office holder commits an act of corruption. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime ([abbreviated as UNODC], 2003) describe how there is no universally accepted definition of corruption. Instead, corruption encompasses a variety of different behaviours and varies according to region, culture, country, and time. Deviance is culturally relative, so what is acceptable in one culture may not be in another (Andvig *et al.*, 2001, p. 46; Ericson *et al.*, 1987, p. 5). In the Chinese culture, for example, it is a normal practice to give a gift *before* asking for a favour (Parks, 1997, p. 976). From a western perspective, this practice appears to be corrupt.

Corruption exists in both the public and private spheres (Bratsis, 2003, p. 10). The public sphere deals with public resources and the public good. Public resources and public good are two very vague terms. At the heart of both terms is the concept of ‘the public.’ The public often refers to the people of a city, province, or nation-state (Hannay, 2005) or to an aggregate group

of people (Dewey, 1954). The public was best defined by Dewey (1954), who argues that the public:

is organized and made effective by means of representatives who act as guardians of customs, as legislators, as executives, as judges, etc., care for its especial interests by methods intended to regulate the conjoint actions of individuals and groups. Then and in so far, association adds itself political organization, and something which may be government comes into being: the public is a political state. (p. 35)

The public is “cared for by ‘officials’ while representatives oversee the interests of those of the public who are not in any particular transactions” (Hannay, 2005, p. 23). Therefore, those employed by the State bureaucracy, like members of the civil service or elected officials (Kernaghan, 2003), are charged with watching over the interests of the public and, thus, are called ‘public officers’ while the offices they hold are called ‘public offices.’

The actions of those in public office affect private interests. Dewey (1954) states that “[i]t is not without significance that etymologically ‘private’ is defined in opposition to ‘official,’ a private person being one deprived of public position” (p. 15). Therefore, a private person is either a) not employed by the State or b) is employed by the State but is not acting in the official capacity of a State employee. Taking this another step, private interests are those interests that do not directly coincide with the function of public office as a guardian of the public.

When corruption occurs in the public sphere, it is political corruption (Bratsis, 2003, p. 10). Political corruption, at its most basic level, is the use of public resources belonging to the State by someone employed by the State for private gain, including private gain for friends and family (Andvig *et al.*, 2001, pp. 22-23; Offe, 1997). Our current definitions of public resources, private interests, and political corruption relate to the rise of the State and the idea of a meritocracy.

The State is a form of power relations (Foucault, 1997, Redman, 1990). In its simplest form, the State is a visible form of the social contract (Nelson, 2006), where people agree to give

up some of their freedom in exchange for protection and social order (Rockman, 1990, p. 26). The State, in theory, uses this power for the best interests of society (Gill, 2003, p. 9).

Max Weber (1919[2008]) provided one of the most influential definitions of the State (Gill, 2003, p. 2; Nelson, 2006, p. 7; King & Kendall, 2004, p. 74; Redner, 1990, p. 638), defining it as an “organization that (*successfully*) *claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory” (p. 156, emphasis in original). Weber believed that the State could not be defined as the result, but rather as the method needed to reach that result: the use of physical force (Nelson, 2006, p. 7). Weber (1919 [2008]) believed that all States are founded on force. Thus people perceive the State as the only organization with the legitimate ‘right’ to use physical force. Therefore, citizens of a Nation-State give up their right to use violence and gain the State’s protection, but as a result, citizens place a large amount of trust in the State. Any other organization can only use as much force as the State permits; otherwise, it could be a crime (Held, 2005, p. 185). The State’s authority and the right to use physical force are, in theory, only able to exist within a certain area that is recognized by people both inside and outside of the territory (Held, 2005, p. 176; Gill, 2003, p. 5).

Ruling purely through the threat or use of physical force is ineffective, so other principles must be present to justify and legitimize the rule of the State (King & Kendall, 2004, p. 225). Weber (1919 [2008]) argues that there are three pure types of legitimate domination or authority: rational grounds, also called legal authority; traditional grounds, also called traditional authority; and charismatic grounds, also called charismatic authority. Legitimate domination results from a mixture of all three types (King & Kendall, 2004, pp. 224-226) and is the key Weber’s definition (Nelson, 2006, p. 8; Redman, 1990, p. 640).



Under rational grounds, claims of legitimacy result from a legally established impersonal order. Obedience belongs to the office, not to the individual occupying it (Gill, 2003). Rational grounds, argues Weber (1919 [2008]), is the primary method through which the State achieves legitimate domination (Dobel, 1978, p. 966). Rational grounds are most effective when the majority of the population accepts the rule of law, the principle where:

[a] citizen, no matter what his or her transgression, cannot be denied the due process of law. It therefore regularizes the relationship between citizens and their government. No individual or institution is above the law, no one is exempted from it and all are equal before it. No government or administrative official has power beyond that awarded by law. (Jackson & Jackson, 1998, p. 152)

Therefore, everyone is supposed to obey the law; people are not immune because of their position in society. The public is most likely to obey laws and the rule of law when laws embody the public's beliefs and values (Dobel, 1978, p. 966).

There are two final grounds for legitimate domination. Under traditional grounds, authority is the result of long-held traditions and customs (Nachmias & Rosenbloom, 1980, p. 4). The final rationale of legitimate domination is charismatic grounds, which involves domination through a person's exceptional character, heroism, or sanctity (Weber, 1919 [2008], pp. 157-158). Under charismatic grounds, people follow the leader because of who the leader is. In the past, the State was seen as property of the head of the State (usually a king), not property of the public (Theobald, 1990).

In earlier times, the leader hired the staff based on personal connections, and they were replaced when another person came to power (Weber, 1919 [2008]). The State's staff existed to serve the head of the State. The result was a lack of efficiency (Nelson, 1996). It was out of a need for increased efficiency that a professional civil service slowly began to develop (Reid & Kurth, 1989, p. 41). They established policies and procedures, becoming more professional with

clearly defined roles (Nachmias & Rosenbloom, 1980), and began hiring based on merit instead of political support (Ward, 1963; Doherty, 1991, p. 239).

What came into existence was a 'bureaucracy.' Established through laws, rules, and regulations, a bureaucracy is hierarchical and impersonal (Goodsell, 1985; Nachmias & Rosenbloom, 1980, pp. 12-13; Knott & Miller, 1987, p. 94; Kamarck, 2007). Citizens rarely know whom they are dealing with and are unlikely to meet the top managers. Private and public income and resources are separate (Olsen, 2005; Johnson, 1992; Lane, 1995, p. 3) because the law limits the operation, mandate, and authority of the human actors who occupy the established offices.

The State, therefore, is a bureaucratic organization for accomplishing the tasks assigned by political leaders for the benefit of the public and whose authority is limited by law (Olsen, 2005, p. 12; Lane, 1995, p. 2; Johnson, 1992). In the modern State bureaucracy, bureaucrats must obey the rules and avoid "arbitrary action and action based on personal likes and dislikes" (Olsen, 2005, p. 5). The public expects bureaucrats to be impartial and to use general rules when dealing with the public or with other's in the State apparatus (Olsen, 2005), an idea called the "impartiality principle" (Kurer, 2005, p. 223). Members of the public should receive the same treatment regardless of their race, sex, age, or any other characteristic. When a member of the public does receive special treatment from a State employee, the State employee may be accused of misuse of authority (Kurer, 2005, p. 223).

That use of State authority is political corruption. Political corruption, then, occurs when State actors use their offices' authority for private gain and cause harm to the impartiality principle (Kurer, 2005).

### ***The State and Government in Canada***

To prevent corruption and abuse of power, Canada has a government that operates (theoretically, at least) in the following manner. At the head of the State is a government, the body given the authority to make laws (Whittington & Van Loon, 1996, p. 4). To help prevent the government from abusing its power, Canada and its provinces use the three-power system made famous by Montesquieu in his book *L'esprit des lois*, (Dawson & Dawson, 1989, pp. 6-7; Gill, 2003, p. 4). Montesquieu's original theory recommended three branches—the executive, legislative, and judicial branches—that are ideally influenced by the rule of law and completely independent of each another. In reality, the branches overlap (Gill, 2003, p. 4). The idea is that each branch acts as a check on the others and prevents abuses of power (Dawson & Dawson, 1989, pp. 6-7).

The executive branch is 'the government,' drawing its members from the legislative branch to form the Cabinet, which heads all the State's departments and is responsible for the daily administration of the State (Dawson & Dawson, 1989, p. 6). Members of the executive branch are MPs selected by the Prime Minister (or Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) selected by the provincial Premier) to form the Cabinet (Whittington & Van Loon, 1996, pp. 156-157). Employees of the State Bureaucracy take their orders from the government (Lane, 1995, p. 2).

The Legislative branch is elected by the public and is responsible for amending, passing, or repealing laws (Dawson & Dawson, 1989, pp. 6-7). If the Cabinet is unable to maintain the confidence of the Legislature, the Legislature can dissolve the Cabinet, resulting in an election and possibly a new government (Whittington & Van Loon, 1996, p. 156). In Canada, the Cabinet

usually consists of members from the political party with the most seats, while the rest of the legislature is filled with members of opposing political parties (Dawson & Dawson, 1989, pp. 6-7).

Operating outside the Cabinet and the Legislature is the judiciary. The judiciary is responsible for interpreting the law, and thus forms courts that provide an avenue to solve disputes (Dawson & Dawson, 1989, p. 7). The wages of the judiciary are paid by the State, but the judiciary is (theoretically) politically neutral (Whittington & Van Loon, 1996, pp. 687-690). Of the three branches, the judicial branch is often considered the “guardian of the rule of law” (Jackson & Jackson, 1998, p. 152). Therefore, the judicial system is supposed to be beyond the influence of politics. Without the rule of law and the judicial system to interpret it, “the [S]tate – or the mob – can arbitrarily determine who possesses property” (Uslaner, 2008, p. 39). In Canada, the judicial system is only responsible for *interpreting laws*. It is the executive and the legislative branches that are responsible for passing laws (Jackson & Jackson, 1998, p. 152).

### ***Public Office***

In Canada, public office only exists within the executive or legislative branches, each of which establishes rules governing the use of a public office’s authority (Olsen, 2005, p. 1). Political corruption occurs when that office’s authority is misused (Langseth, 1999, p. 3) or when that office’s behaviour violates the office’s mandate or ‘expected’ behaviour (Hodess, 2004). While discretionary authority rests with the public office, political corruption occurs between the human actors that occupy public offices (Hodess, 2004; Kamarck, 2007; Gill, 2003).

While the concept of a *professional* public office and bureaucracy is a relatively new idea (Andvig *et al.*, 2001, p. 47; Theobald 1990, p. 43), public administration has been around since

ancient times (Inwood, 2009). Public office and public administration are connected; you cannot have one without the other. They exist as civil service, a term used to describe the institutions and personnel of the State (Inwood, 2009). Thus, the civil service, which is also called the public service, exists to serve the public (Lane, 1995).

Because of the professionalization of the civil service, argue Bailie and Johnson (1991, pp. 158-159), public opinion regarding ethical behaviour by public officials has changed. In earlier times, using the 'perks' of public office for personal benefit was acceptable because the office, and any authority or resources associated with it, was considered private property (Theobald, 1990, p. 28). As public office became more professional, it began to be viewed as public—not private—property (Theobald, 1990). The public began to expect minimum standards of behaviour. In essence, the public began to allow people to hold public office and use that office's authority and discretion (Knott & Miller, 1987).

### ***Grand and Bureaucratic Corruption***

Political corruption, which occurs when State actors use their offices' authority for private gain and cause harm to the impartiality principle, can be further divided into two types: grand corruption and bureaucratic corruption (Andvig *et al.*, 2001, pp. 10-12). Grand corruption involves State employees, like elected politicians, who have the power to make laws. Bureaucratic corruption involves State employees who are not responsible for passing laws, but instead are involved in the basic day-to-day operation of the government. Conversely, grand corruption involves those who make laws or policy and tends to affect the public through indirect means; bureaucratic corruption involves mid to low-level employees who are employed by the

State. Bureaucratic corruption is what the average citizen is most likely to directly experience and thus believe is ‘political corruption’ (Andvig *et al.*, 2001, p. 11).

Many studies argue that two actors are required for corruption to occur: the corruptor and the corrupted (Offe, 2004, p. 78). Certain types—embezzlement, theft, fraud, extortion, and conflict of interest—only require one (Kurer, 2005, p. 225; UNODC, 2003). According to Andvig *et al.* (2001, pp. 8-10), political corruption exists in five main categories: bribery; embezzlement, theft and misappropriation of resources; fraud; favouritism; and extortion. The UNODC (2003) adds conflict of interest, abuse of power, and vote-influencing to the list, for a total of 8 behaviours.

### ***Behaviours***

Bribery and graft are bestowing of a benefit, which can be anything, on someone in exchange for undue influence on a decision (UNODC, 2003, p. 47; Draft United Nations Handbook on Practical Anti-Corruption Measures for Prosecutors and Investigators [hereafter referred to as Draft UN Handbook], 2005). Bribery involves actors *offering* payment to influence a decision while graft involves the decision maker *requesting* payment (UNODC, 2003, p. 47). Payments include money, job offers, political appointments, favours, food, social program access, or clothes, just to name a few (Pfeiffer, 2004, p. 77). Canadian citizens consider bribery the most obvious and ultimate form of corruption (Langseth, 1999, p. 5; Mancuso, Atkinson, Blais, Greene, & Nevitte, 2006, pp. 191-192; Draft UN Handbook, p. 47). In Canada, the bribery of public officials is a criminal offence punishable by jail time (Lafontaine, 2006, pp. 6-7).

Embezzlement, theft, and misappropriation of resources involve the theft of money, information, or resources by someone who is entrusted with them (United Nations Guide For

Anti-Corruption Policies [hereafter referred to as UN Guide], 2003, p. 31). In cases of embezzlement, a public official steals from the funds that the public entrusts him or her to disperse (UNODC, 2003, p. 31). Misappropriation of resources involves using resources for something other than their intended purpose (for example, using a government vehicle for personal use) (UN Guide, 2003, p. 31). Embezzlement and misappropriation of resources are theft, which is a criminal offence in Canada (Lafontaine, 2006, p. 9).

Fraud involves someone using misleading information to obtain something such as prestige, information, money, or resources (UN Guide, 2003, p. 31). Fraud rarely occurs alone. Public officials may use fraudulent means to mask other behaviours of political corruption (UN Guide, 2003, p. 31). For example, a public official who embezzles money and creates fake invoices to hide their activities would be guilty of embezzlement (for stealing money) and fraud (creating fake invoices). Another example of fraud involves public officials claiming meals with their friends as business meals. Fraud is also a criminal offence under Canadian law (Lafontaine, 2006, p. 9).

Favouritism involves a wide variety of behaviours. It means that a public official gives preferential treatment towards a person or organization, regardless of merit (UNODC, 2003, pp. 49-50). Favouritism is problematic because biases interfere with the appropriate and accepted way of executing the duties of the office. Favouritism includes preferential treatment, patronage, nepotism, and clientelism (Draft UN Handbook, 2005, pp. 26-27). For example, continually awarding contracts to a company regardless of past performance or the bid provided would constitute favouritism. In Canada, the *Conflict of Interest and Post Employment Code for Public Office Holders* (2006) defines preferential treatment and provides penalties for engaging in it, but

preferential treatment is not a crime in Canada. However, if severe enough, preferential treatment can fall under the category of breach of public trust<sup>4</sup> (Lafontaine, 2006, p. 7).

Extortion occurs when someone uses threats for personal gain (UN Guide, 2003, p. 32). It can involve public officials threatening to use their authority against someone, or it can involve someone threatening a public official. A public official threatening to expose someone's criminal record if that person does not pay a bribe is a good example of extortion. In Canada, the Criminal Code identifies extortion as a crime.

Conflict of interest occurs when a public office holder's public and private interests converge (Rose-Ackerman, 1996). The *Conflict of Interest and Post Employment Code for Public Office Holders* (2006) describes conflict of interest as a public office holder's private interests having precedent over the public interest. For example, if a public office holder awarded a contract to a company that they own stock in, then that is a conflict of interest. In Canada, the *Conflict of Interest and Post Employment Code for Public Office Holders* (2006) defines conflict of interest and provides penalties for those who violate the code. Certain forms of conflict of interest are considered criminal offences (Lafontaine, 2006, pp. 8-9).

Abuse of power occurs when a public office holder uses their authority in such a way to obtain an undue advantage for themselves or others (UN Guide, 2003, p. 33). Abuse of power, however, does not have to involve violating rules or laws. A good example of abuse of power is when a public office holder gives a contract to a company they used to work for. Abuse of power technically not a crime in Canada but is categorized as 'breach of public trust' (Lafontaine, 2006, p. 7).

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<sup>4</sup> Breach of Public Trust occurs when "an official acted, or failed to act, in a manner contrary to his or her official duties and benefited from this act or absention" (Lafontaine, 2006, p. 7).



The final behaviour is vote-influencing, which occurs when elected officials, or those supporting them, do something to constituents that affects how the constituents vote (Pfeiffer, 2004, p. 76). The purpose is to convince constituents to vote a certain way, by either voting for a certain candidate or refraining from voting (Pfeiffer, 2004, p. 76). In Canada, vote-influencing is illegal and includes bribes, threats, misleading information, excessive spending during elections, electoral law violations, and so on. It is punishable under the *Canada Elections Act*.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Effects of Political Corruption***

Public officials must execute their duties properly and only use their power for the public good (Greene, 1990, p. 246). This idea has led to the establishment of laws and ethical standards for public office holders, and in turn, citizens have come to hold public officials to a higher standard (Greene, 1990, p. 246). What is acceptable in private life is not acceptable in public life.

In other cultures, political corruption has become an acceptable practice. After enough time, corruption becomes culturally accepted norm (Brovkin, 2003, p. 197) and thus the only way to accomplish tasks. As such, it only causes a problem when outsiders who do not know the rules become involved. Not knowing what to do, outsiders may be “cheated out of their assets, fall prey to swindlers and extortionists, get robbed by police, or invest in phony banks or companies” (Brovkin, 2003, p. 196). Thus, the introduction of outsiders results in the formation of new informal rules regarding corruption, which may then be transferred to the local population.

Some authors argue that corruption can be considered beneficial (Johnston, 1986, p. 459). For example, bribes may provide needed income in cases where the State cannot afford to pay its employees. Nepotism could also be used to increase employment, providing jobs to those who

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<sup>5</sup>The statute is available at: [http://www.elections.ca/loi/ref/legislation\\_e.pdf](http://www.elections.ca/loi/ref/legislation_e.pdf)

would otherwise be unemployed (Bayley, 1996, p. 728). Bribery may also decrease uncertainty, making investment more likely because businesses believe that they can pay to keep government regulation of the briber's business to a minimum (Leff, 1964, p. 11). If the State is weak, bribery "may be a short-term way to hold the system together and prevent violent disintegration" (Rose-Ackerman, 2008, p. 328).

Regardless of whether it is culturally acceptable, many authors believe that political corruption threatens democratic and economic development (Langseth, 1999, p. 2), especially where corruption is widespread (Morris, 2003, p. 675). Rose-Ackerman (1999, p. 29) argues that political corruption, for example, drives up the cost of doing business.<sup>6</sup> Public servants overlook the best economic decision by focusing on who provides the best bribe (or who they can steal the most from), which results in increased economic difficulty and government spending (Søreide, 2002, p. 1). Political corruption also threatens the State's source of revenue: taxes (Andvig *et al.*, 2001, p. 43). If the State cannot collect revenue or collects the revenue but then loses it through theft, the State cannot use that revenue to provide other services to the public.

Corruption can threaten democracy by distorting the central functions of government (UN Guide, 2003, p. 36). Political corruption can "render political systems illegitimate" (Andvig *et al.*, 2001, p. 44). Rational-legal rules stop influencing the functioning of the State (Miller, 2008; Theobald, 1990). Political corruption "touch[es] on the very legitimacy of the [S]tate itself" (Theobald, 1990, p. 16). Abuse of State authority "produces an entirely alternate set of relationships based on money and blood that lead inexorably to precisely the sort of intimacy that it is the duty of the modern [S]tate to prevent" (Miller, 2008, p. 133). This abuse "prevents healthy political development, [and] it also undermines the ideal of the secure, healthy (innocent)

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<sup>6</sup> The cost of corruption is extremely difficult to calculate. Corruption is usually carried out secretly; as a result, most economists who study political corruption rely on equations and computer calculations to produce an *estimate*.

state–citizen relationship” (Miller, 2008, p. 17). In short, the State stops operating on behalf of the public. Instead, the State starts operating on behalf of those who can afford to establish a relationship with the State. The Canadian government considers political corruption such a threat to legitimacy that they have passed ‘whistleblower legislation’ (Thomas, 2008). The goal of Canada’s whistleblower legislation is to promote ethical behaviour of State employees who may have knowledge of political corruption. The legislation is protects State employees who come forward with allegations of ‘government misconduct’<sup>7</sup> from retaliation by their employer, which helps to increase transparency (Thomas, 2008). The idea is to get information about political corruption sooner, and thus limiting the damage to the State’s legitimacy.

### *Causes*

Because of the perceived harms, many organizations (e.g. The World Bank, OEDC, The UN, and so on) want to reduce the arguably high cost of political corruption (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999). To reduce the amount, these organizations believe that they must understand where political corruption comes from. The causes of corruption are complex and difficult to measure (Andvig *et al.*, 2001, p.1). Theories about the causes of political corruption collapse the complex influences on political corruption, producing two categories of theories: the macro perspective, which involves the functioning of the system, or the micro, which involves the rational choice of individuals (della Porta, 1996).

One of the more common macro theories, called culture theory, involves corruption as part of the social culture (Morris, 2003, p. 675). Corruption becomes so embedded in the political culture that there is virtually no way to remove it because continual socialization in political corruption results in the internalization of it as an acceptable practice (della Porta,

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Government misconduct’ is often used as a blanket term for any unethical activity by State employees.

1996). For example, corruption was widespread in the former Soviet Union because it was needed for survival; it became internalized and after the Soviet Union collapsed, corruption continued (Brovkin, 2003). While this theory explains why corruption continues, it fails to explain why corruption started in the first place.

Another macro theory is that the State structure encourages and supports corruption (Rose-Ackerman, 1999, p. 72) through indirect means like low wages, a lack of penalties, and a lack of enforcement, all of which lead to the civil service being considered low-status (Tanzi, 2002). This theory can help explain why corruption starts and, if combined with culture theory, may help explain why corruption continues.

These two theories look at the system as a whole. While they explain corruption from this standpoint, they do not explain why an individual chooses to engage in corrupt acts (della Porta, 1996). De Graaf (2007, pp. 49-50) believes there are some micro theories that explain corruption: the rational choice theory (also called the ‘bad apple theory’<sup>8</sup>) and the mistake theory. Under the rational choice theory, individuals perceive the gains of a corrupt act to outweigh the costs and risks of being caught (Rose-Ackerman, 1978). Essentially, corruption is the result of individual moral faults, leading individuals to take advantage of the office’s benefits (de Graaf, 2007, pp. 49-50).

On some occasions, however, political corruption is the result of a simple mistake. Political officials perform an innocent action that ends up violating the rules (Greene, 1990, p. 253). This is most likely to occur when rules are complex and, thus, difficult to understand (UN

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<sup>8</sup> The idea of ‘bad apples’—that some people purposefully get into politics to abuse their power—constitutes more of an ideology than a theory. However, some theorists use the term ‘bad apples’ to help explain rational choice theory. So for the purposes of my thesis, the term ‘bad apples’ involves rational choice theory because individuals make the rational choice to abuse their power.

Guide, 2003, p. 57). As a result, individuals do not make the rational choice to commit an act of political corruption. Instead, corruption occurs due to a violation of the law.

In Canada, definitions of corruption usually involve the rational choice ('bad apple') theory, so any act of corruption weakens the public's trust in public office holders. A poll conducted by Leger Marketing (2004) found that 95% of Canadians trusted nurses (who are usually employed by the State), 75% trusted judges, 49% trusted public servants, and only 14% trusted politicians. Despite Canadian's distrust of public servants and politicians, international surveys report that international business leaders consistently perceive Canada as having little political corruption (Lambsdorff, 2007, p. 325). Saying Canada is completely free of corruption, however, would be inaccurate and based on faulty assumptions (Gibbons, 1976b).

### ***Prevention***

Preventing political corruption is not an easy task. Numerous guides have been published, each detailing how to reduce political corruption. *The United Nations Guide for Anti-Corruption Policies* (2003) details numerous ways to reduce corruption: increasing transparency, building an independent judiciary, creating effective laws, and increasing accountability. Increased transparency involves an independent news media examining the actions of public officials, which helps to reduce opportunities for corrupt officials to avoid detection (UN Guide, 2003, p. 41). 'Whistle-blower' legislation is also a form of transparency because it encourages people with knowledge of wrongdoing to come forward (Thomas, 2008). An independent judiciary means that public officials cannot interfere in police or court investigations; public officials are also not above the law. Creating effective laws requires public officials to create easy to understand laws that cover every possible avenue for political corruption (UN Guide, 2003, p.

57). Laws, for example, should clearly describe what behaviours constitute a ‘conflict of interest’ (Atkinson & Mancuso, 1985, p. 464). Laws will be ineffective unless there is increased accountability, which means that public officials are held accountable for their own actions.

It was during the 1990s that corruption in democracies became defined as a problem (Collier, 2002, p. 1). Before this, corruption was considered a problem that affected developing and underdeveloped states, not Western democracies (Bull & Newell, 1997, p. 171). Now, many multilateral and supranational organisations, like the United Nations, began trying to fight political corruption (Søreide, 2002, p. 1; Andvig *et al.*, 2001, p. 1; Theobald, 2002, p. 435; Collier, 2002, p. 2). Whereas political corruption was once accepted and considered as part of doing business, it started to come under increased scrutiny from supranational agencies, the public, and the government. There are numerous reasons for this change, and the news media has been helpful in educating and bringing political corruption to the attention of the public.

## **THE NEWS MEDIA**

### ***What is the News Media?***

The mass media is a collection of different mediums (ways) of transmitting something, like information, to an audience (Romanow & Soderland, 1996). Content is not important in defining the media; it is *how* that content is sent. The mass media is about reaching as many people as possible (Romanow & Soderland, 1996). There are five factors that define the mass media: a focus on reaching a large number of people; a distributor standing between the originator of information and the recipient; a lack of direct feedback; an almost one way flow of information; and a group of professionals working in an institutional framework who collect, process, and disseminate information (Siegel, 1996, pp. 19-21).

There is a section of the mass media called the ‘news media,’ which is dedicated to providing previously unknown information to the public. A sixth factor helps define it: a focus on the now (Siegel, 1996, p. 19). The news media—newspapers and news magazines, collectively referred to as ‘the press’; television, such as news broadcasts and 24-hour news channels; radio; and the internet—allows people to see things and gain information occurring outside of their personal sphere (Siegel, 1996). Most people do not have direct knowledge of political corruption, so the news media provides a method for the public to learn about political corruption. The news media reports new, previously unknown, information (hence the name ‘news’), and only brings up old information if it is required to make sense of what is being reported. In many cases of political corruption, for example, the news media will report on the newest occurrence and then bring up old occurrences as ‘proof’ that the newest occurrence could have been predicted. The news media can report on an old event, but it only does so if the event is a recent discovery (Tuchman, 1978, pp. 23-24). This helps to provide a guide or map of the world, a framework that allows people to make sense of things.

The news media employs journalists, who collect, analyze, verify, and report information including current events, people, trends, issues, and problems (Ericson *et al.*, 1987). Journalists consider themselves the public watchdog, reporting on the deeds and misdeeds of those in power (Peters, 2002, pp. 44-45; Brunetti & Weder, 2003, p. 1801; Francke, 1995, p. 110). Siegel (1996, p. 28) writes that the news media is widely considered ‘the fourth estate:’ an outside check and balance on the three branches of the State. They accomplish this task through supervising the other three branches and reporting that information (Siegel, 1996, p. 28; McNair, 1998, pp. 19-20). The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees the freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press, allowing the news media to report information about the State.

The news media considers the right to criticize the State and report its misdeeds as a social responsibility (Peters, 2002, p. 44). Thus, it considers itself the public watchdog, looking out for the little guy.

### *Newspapers*

Newspapers, with a long and illustrious history, have been around in Canada since before Confederation (Royal Commission on Newspapers [RCN], 1981, p. 136). While the printing press has been around since the fifteenth century (Bassam, 1968, p. 1), the first English language newspaper, the *Oxford Gazette*, did not appear until 1665—almost 200 years later (Fetherling, 1990, p.2; Allan, 2004, p. 10).

Newspapers and the printing press made their way to North America because of intense persecution facing those who operated the printing presses (Fetherling, 1990; Allan, 2004, p. 12). Anyone involved with printing a paper, especially if it criticized the government, ran the risk of violating the law (RCN, 1981, p. 47). Freedom of the press, the right for the press (or anyone) to criticize the government, was essentially banned (Taras, 1990; Romanow & Soderlund, 1996, p. 4). Therefore, newspapers had a difficult time reporting cases of political corruption. When newspapers tried to report political corruption, the government would often seize the printing press and place the printer in jail (Thompson, 2000). Unfortunately, settlers fleeing to North America sometimes found persecution and freedom of the press in the colonies worse (Fetherling, 1990, p.2).

Initially, there were only one or two printing presses in Canada, both of which were used almost exclusively for religious purposes (Bassam, 1968, p. 1). Soon, new newspapers appeared in the Thirteen Colonies (now called the United States of America). Continued persecution led



some newspapers to migrate to Canada (Fetherling, 1990). The *Halifax Gazette* was Canada's first newspaper, first printed in 1752 (Desbarats, 1996, p. 3). Shortly thereafter, many other newspapers, with an average length of four pages, began appearing (Desbarats, 1996, p. 8). Despite the appearance of newspapers in North America, there were still few subscribers, so early printers relied on government contracts to earn a living, printing newspapers on the side (Bassam, 1968, p. 4). This made reporting political corruption difficult. If the printer angered the government, the printer would lose their livelihood. Because printing newspapers was (and still is) an expensive business, big business began to purchase and consolidate independent newspapers (RCN, 1981).

After Confederation, many of the early newspapers were not as independent, impartial, or neutral like they could be considered today (Desbarats, 1996, p. 20; Fetherling, 1990; Taras, 1990, RCN 1981, p. 136). Political parties owned or openly supported different newspapers (Taras, 1990; Ward, 1963, p. 6). As a result, claims of corruption or political wrongdoing were normal and, in many cases, unsubstantiated. Many newspaper owners also donated money to political candidates (Ward, 1963, p. 7). For many candidates, the only way to run was to have the backing of a big business. Most cities had at least two newspapers, each owned by different companies and each supporting a different political party or candidate (Taras, 1990). Headlines were obviously partisan and many of the stories were libellous, with opponents being attacked outright (Fetherling, 1990, p. 42; Stewart, 1980, p. 14; Taras, 1990). "Behind every successful politician was a newspaper doing his dirty work; behind every proprietor or editor, a politician, or group of politicians, offering support" writes Fetherling (1990, p. 79).

During the early 1900s, newspapers gradually began shifting away from politicians and political parties, becoming more independent (RCN, 1981, p. 136; Schudson, 1995, p. 199;

Taras, 1990; Rutherford, 1982). They began to amalgamate and the number of newspapers began to shrink while increasing in size (RCN, 1981). As size increased, so did the infrastructure and resources required to publish a newspaper (Fetherling, 1990, p. 107). While advertising had always been around, it began to grow in importance (Desbaretts, 1996; Taras, 1990). It slowly became prohibitively expensive for political parties to fund newspapers (Fetherling, 1990).

The expenses required to run a newspaper further resulted in big businesses controlling even more newspapers (Taras, 1990). ‘Newspaper chains’ developed, with many newspapers in different cities being owned by the same company (RCN, 1981, p. 1; Herman & Chomsky, 2002, p. xiii). Since businesses owned the newspapers, the public was concerned about businesses being too concerned with profit instead of news gathering (Borden, 2007, p. xi). In response, journalists became more ‘objective’ and ‘neutral’ in their political reporting (Allan, 2004, p. 22; Borden, 2007, p. 3). Reporting associations arose, developing new and different norms for reporting (Olson, 1966; The Canadian Press Association, 1976). Because journalists relied less and less on political parties and politicians to provide information, they could begin to fact check their stories (Canadian Press Association, 1976, pp. 89-94). This led to the ‘impartial’ reporters, which quickly became a big selling feature (Fetherling, 1990).

Radio and television also led to changes in newspaper reporting (McNaught, 1940; Allan, 2004, p. 26). When they were first developed and utilized, critics argued that they were unacceptable mediums for the news (Allan, 2004, p. 26). Proponents argued that radio and television allowed the public to hear about and see the news as it was happening, allowing events to be seen intimately (Taras, 1990). By the 1960s, public opinion surveys showed that TV and radio were now the main sources of news for the public (Taras, 1990) and that newspapers were beginning to suffer. At the time many newspapers, especially in large cities, had two editions

(morning and evening), but to save money many newspapers combined their morning and evening editions into one edition (RCN, 1981) resulting in fewer reporters and decreased space for news.

Due to the increasing centralization of news media ownership and its removal from governmental interference, politicians and the media developed an antagonistic relationship (Giglioli, 1996; Taras, 1990). The Watergate Scandal strengthened this antagonistic relationship, and the media became more inclined to search for and publish the potentially compromising activities of State employees and public office holders (Thompson, 2000, p. 110). While the introduction of new mediums such as television and radio had resulted in change, it was the Watergate Scandal in the early 1970s that resulted in the biggest change in media reporting tactics (Thompson, 2000, p. 110).

The growing popularity of the internet also influenced reporting tactics. During the early 1990s, the internet was largely unknown to the general population (Allan, 2004, p. 173). Several Canadian newspapers, including *The Globe and Mail*, held online editions of their daily paper and online databases of their published articles (RCN, 1981, p. 186). The size and cost of computers meant very few people could access the internet and these online databases. However, the development of the personal computer allowed the public to access the internet (Desbarats, 1996, p. 257) and therefore online editions of the daily newspapers featuring viewpoints from all around the world (Levy, 2008, p. 170). Some newspapers saw the potential for greater profit and quickly included publishing articles on the internet (Desbarats, 1996, p. 256-261). The internet, like television, also allowed for near live reporting because an article could be written and posted online within minutes of a major event occurring (Allan, 2004, p. 172).

Tumber and Waisbord (2004b, p. 1148) write that the internet has made it easier to disseminate ‘news stories’ that are not fact checked and filled with gossip and rumours. Before the internet, these news stories would not have been published because established news organizations would have fact-checked the stories (Allan, 2004, p. 186). Others, however, note that the internet’s ability to circumvent established news organizations is a bonus because many news stories that would have been ignored can now be easily published (Williams & Delli Carpini, 2000, p. 62).

People select what to read, listen, and watch—all of which help to shape their views of the world (Spitzberg & Cadiz, 2002, p. 128). By choosing what to read, listen, and watch, people help decide what is important enough to deserve coverage. Of these various forms of media, the news media is one of the main ways that the public gets information, particularly about crime news (Ericson *et al.* 1987, p.1). News of deviant and criminal behaviour is vital to the news media in Canada (Dowler, Fleming, & Muzzatti, 2006, p. 832) and the ‘objective’ reporting of deviant behaviour occupies a large amount of space.

### ***Objectivity***

The news media, according to McNair (1998), produces a “*selective* account of reality” (p. 77, emphasis added) because of the journalist’s and newspaper’s ideological view of the world. Lippman ([1922] 1965) notes that there is a difference between truth and news: “[t]he function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men act” (p. 358). In short, writes Johnson-Cartee (2005), this means that news is how news assemblers

“produc[e] narratives that place actors and their actions into some meaningful web of social experiences based on the news assemblers’ own world views” (p. 185).

As a result, ‘objective reporting’—absolute, 100% unbiased reporting—is a myth. Objective news portrays reality in the form of ‘neutrality’ by balancing different perspectives and showing the different sides of an issue (Tuchman, 1972, p. 665). Despite the numerous number of perspectives on any given issue, only some, often direct counterpoints of one-another, may be displayed (Fishman, 1980, p. 54; Tuchman, 1976, p. 1066). These differing perspectives are chosen based on their ability to connect with the reader (Chibnall, 1977). Perspectives that are too far outside the mainstream perspectives are unlikely to be published.

The outcome is that the news media attempts to be fair and objective within the confines of sellable knowledge (Chibnall, 1977). News becomes a commodity with ‘objectivity’ as one of its major selling points (Fetherling, 1990). Audiences want to be entertained, so ‘objectivity’ slowly gives way to giving “the readers what they want” (Chibnall, 1977, p. 160)—infotainment.

Even though ‘objective reporting’ may be a myth, news organizations still strive for the notion of ‘objectivity.’ For the news media, objectivity becomes the process used to obtain information and to present that information in the most depersonalized method possible (Tuchman, 1976; Ericson *et al.*, 1987). As such, the reader should not be able to discover the writer’s real opinions. Objectivity is the news media’s attempt to present several sellable viewpoints and counter-viewpoints that are likely to entertain the reader. Accordingly, the demands of balanced coverage (Tuchman, 1972) play a major role in selecting news stories that create and spread beliefs about crime and deviance.

### ***Selecting News Stories and Sources***

For the news media, reporting political corruption is similar to reporting other acts of deviance. Crime and newspapers are intertwined. Crime provides newspapers something sensational to report, thus helping to increase readership and making newspapers dependent upon it (Sherizen, 1978). Only some crime, however, is newsworthy (Cavender & Mulcahy, 1998, p. 698). The more sensational the story, the more powerful and famous the figure, the more scandalous the actions, and the more serious the deviance, the more likely the story will be published, thus giving a distorted view of crime (Ericson *et al.*, 1987, pp. 139-178; Graber, 1980, p. 6; Barak, 1994). The focus on the powerful and scandalous is one of the reasons why political corruption can be such a compelling story—it contains both (Thompson, 1997). The news media, however, usually fails to provide enough information to provide context, and thus educate its target audience about crime (Sherizen, 1978).

Willis (2007, p. 74) argues that the news media publishes crime news only after it passes through several gatekeepers, both inside and outside of the news media. A failure to pass means articles will not be published (Ericson *et al.*, 1987; Kim, 2003, pp. 354-355). Since the news media only reports a small number of stories, a general filtering process exists: all committed acts of deviance become all known acts, all known acts to all newsworthy acts, and all printed-as-news acts (Sherizen, 1978; Chermak & Chapman, 2007, p. 351).

The first group is all committed acts of deviance and is the largest group as it includes all deviant acts (Sherizen, 1978). This group is so large that publishing every act is impossible; something must happen to filter out stories. This leads to the second group, which involves all known acts of deviance (Sherizen, 1978). Also large, this group loses many deviant acts because many acts remain hidden, which is true for cases of political corruption (Fishman, 1980, pp. 32-

33). Journalists learn about deviant acts one of several ways: 'sources,' people who supply the journalist with information; official reports, like police or government reports; direct observation, though it is rare that a journalist will directly witness a deviant act; and previously published material (Cribb, Jobb, Mckie, & Vallance-Jones, 2006). Most journalists obtain information about deviant acts through State sources, called 'official' sources, like law enforcement or government employees (Welch, Weber, & Edwards, 2000; Sherizen, 1978). In response, State agencies have begun heavily investing in PR (Public Relations), giving out easy-to-understand knowledge in the form of press conferences or press releases (McNair, 1998, p. 6; Bird, 1997, p. 4).

Though official sources tend to dominate the news (Tuchman, 1978, p. 4; Fishman, 1980, p. 51), journalists also rely on other sources of information. Journalists use experts, senior leaders, victims, and alleged offenders, only occasionally using other sources (McNair, 1998, pp. 143-161). Every source brings a different spin to information, so journalists will try to use more than one source per article (Tuchman, 1978, p. 90; Savigny, 2004, p. 229). Experts provide context, senior leaders offer advice, and victims and alleged offenders bring emotion (Ericson *et al.*, 1987, pp. 282-296). In almost all cases, journalists consider the statements of high-ranking persons to be more valid, and thus 'truer' or 'more accurate,' than other sources (Sigal, 1973; Ericson *et al.*, 1987, p. 283).

After journalists discover deviant acts, they sort them into two categories: newsworthy acts or non-newsworthy acts (Sherizen, 1978). Deciding which acts are newsworthy is not science but 'gut-instinct' (Allan, 2004, p. 56), and reporters and editors take numerous factors into account (Chermak & Chapman, 2007, p. 351). Strange, unique, violent, dramatic, and shocking deviant acts with negative consequences are far more likely to be published than

mundane, boring acts—especially if a power figure is involved (Johnston, 1979; Davidson, Boylan, & Yu, 1982, p. 101). Crime news is about drama (Sacco, 1995, p. 144). Thus, if a story contains drama, like a conflict between a villain and hero, then the story is at the peak of its potential (Ericson *et al.*, 1987, p. 51).

Finally, some of these newsworthy deviant acts are chosen to be published (Sherizen, 1978). Several other criteria help to choose what articles the news media publishes. First, the news media considers whether the article is factually correct (Ericson *et al.*, 1987, pp. 282-296). Second, the news media thinks about any potential consequences, like a lawsuit against the newspaper (Robertson, 2007, p. 110). Third, the news media considers whether anything prohibits them from publishing the article, such as laws (Robertson, 2007, p. 109; RCN, 1981). Finally, the newspaper decides if there is enough space to print the article (Roshier, 1981, p. 40; Rock, 1973, p. 75).

For the news media, choosing the appropriate story is important because they believe that they are the self-appointed representatives of the public (Ericson *et al.*, 1987, p. 7). Reporting deviance is about disclosure. It is also about telling an entertaining story that provides information to the public to get them to see something they have not seen before (Ekstrom & Johansson, 2008, p. 61; Bennett, 2007, p. 52). That is the goal of infotainment: to provide information to the audience in an entertaining fashion. Presenting the story in an entertaining way can help attract members of the audience who might otherwise overlook the story in favour of other stories.

The news media sees themselves as one of the key monitors of the public good (Stiglitz, 2008, p. 140), so they feel they must look out for the public interest (Ericson *et al.*, 1987, p. 7). The news media sees its job as reporting what the public needs to know (Ericson *et al.*, 1987, p.



7) (Spitzberg & Cadiz, 2002, p. 129). Thus, the more a person influences the public, the more likely a story about them is going to be reported (Ericson *et al.*, 1987, p. 142; Fishman, 1980, p. 95; Sherizin, 1978). Therefore, reporting political corruption is a duty and is nothing new in media communication (Triandafyllidou, 1996, p. 379).

### ***Reporting Political Corruption***

Theorists debate the news media's influence on the ethics of people in public life (Francke, 1995, p. 110). Evidence shows that it has little influence on the ethical actions of public office holders in many parts of the world because anti-corruption laws and regulations are ineffective unless helped by an independent and free news media (Robertson, 2007, pp. 108-109; Brunetti & Weder, 2003, pp. 1801-1802). In many countries the media is either State-owned or subject to laws and censorship, preventing them from reporting political corruption and thus making it easy for corrupt officials to avoid detection (Peters, 2002, p. 44). Sometimes, an independent news media will purposefully avoid reporting on political corruption (Vaidya, 2005, p. 668), especially if they are involved. For example, in Peru during the 1990s, media executives took bribes from Peru's President, and occasionally other government officials, to prevent published stories about political corruption from appearing (Conaghan, 2002, p. 115).

Since the news media informs the public about non-observable phenomenon (Strömberg, 2001, p. 653), it is the primary way the public receives information about public officials (Statham, 1996, pp. 512-513). Large information imbalances between citizens and public officials can lead to political corruption (Stiglitz, 2008, p. 142), but a free media reduces that information imbalance, leading to increased accountability and decreased political corruption (Lederman, Loayza, and Soares, 2001). Research by Brunetti and Weder (2006, pp. 1820-1821)

suggests that a negative correlation exists between the level of press freedom and the level of corruption, with greater freedom of the press linked to lower levels of corruption. Therefore, countries supporting a free press with guaranteed freedom of speech and expression tend to have lower levels of political corruption because the news media helps keep public officials accountable (Ofosu-Amaah, Soopramanien, & Uprety, 1999), fulfilling the news media's as the fourth estate (Francke, 1995, p. 110; Sanders & Canel, 2006, p.454). In Canada, research suggests that the news media is the public's valuable ally reporting on and exposing political corruption (Bailie & Johnson, 1991, p. 159).

However, the news media might be less interested in exposing political corruption than other types of deviance because investigating and reporting it is expensive and time-consuming (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004b, p. 1144). Political corruption, according to Sanders and Canel (2006, p. 458), often has a high profile, which makes reporting it a big risk. It often takes weeks or months of careful research to produce a story, and the facts must be "corroborated by [at least] two sources" (Savigny, 2004, p. 229). Corroborating facts is difficult in corruption cases because corrupt officials try to remain undetected and act how the public expects them too (Thompson, 2000, p. 29). Reporting political corruption can also fail to increase sales, cause expensive lawsuits, and anger powerful government officials and their friends (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004b, p. 1144). Some reporters may even have their lives threatened (Conaghan, 2002). Conaghan (2002) again provides the example of Peru, where journalists who questioned the government were threatened.

The news media may also be apprehensive about reporting political corruption because of how they obtained the information. In many cases, reporters obtain information from unofficial and anonymous sources, political opponents, co-conspirators, or revenge-minded individuals

(Sanders & Canel, 2006, p. 464). Any resulting information could be biased and result in lawsuits (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004b, p. 1144). “In the interest of self-protection, the exposure of scandals needs to be foolproof” (Liebes & Blum-Kulka, 2004, p. 1153). Therefore, facts must be airtight.

When the news media does report political corruption, it can quickly become a scandal (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004a, p. 1032). Scandals, by their nature, only exist if people know about them (Giglioli, 1996). Scandals result from someone discovering that powerful individuals engaged in covert actions, either legal or illegal (Barker, 1994, p. 350), that violate social norms (Liebes & Blum-Kulka, 2004, p. 1153). The term ‘scandal’ is hard to define, but Thompson (2000, pp. 13-24) defines scandal as an act that transgresses certain norms, involves secrecy, enjoys the disapproval of others, features publically voiced disapproval, and damages reputations. Reporting political corruption does not always result in scandals, and scandals do not always involve corruption (Thompson, 2000, pp. 28-30). Giglioli (1996) writes that only a few cases of political corruption become scandals, and the news media always play an important role in constructing them. In North America, the news media often describe the same situation using the terms ‘corruption’ and ‘scandal’ interchangeably (Thompson, 1997).

When discussing any issue, the media adopts a certain way of analyzing and reporting it. This is known as a ‘frame,’ and it guides the discussion of the problem and solution (Giglioli, 1996; Slothuus, 2008, p. 1; Allan, 2004, pp. 55-59; Bennett, 2007, p. 170; Valkenburg, Semetko, & De Vreese, 1999, p. 550). News frames make it much easier for the reporters, the editors, and the readers to understand a phenomenon. Many industrialized countries enjoy high levels of personal freedom and liberty, leading their news media to favour frames focusing on individual choice (Giglioli, 1996).

For political corruption, there are two frames: the moral frame and the technical frame. While the moral frame focuses on individual choice, the technical frame focuses on social structure (Giglioli, 1996). These frames help develop an accurate understanding of the ‘proper’ rules, roles, and requirements of public office (Owens, 2001, p. 660). Giglioli (1996) argues that the news media prefers the moral frame because there are heroes (the investigators), villains (corrupt public officials), and victims (the public)—the makings of a great drama and thus a great story (Sacco, 1995, p. 144). This frame also allows sources to suggest an ‘easy fix’: removing the corrupt official (Giglioli, 1996). Unfortunately, by utilizing frames, the news media simplifies political corruption, making the phenomenon academics study different from what the public sees.

### **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

The theoretical perspectives chosen to examine political corruption as presented in *The Globe and Mail* from 1990-2000 are the social constructionism framework and the labelling framework. The primary theoretical framework for this thesis is social constructionism, particularly the construction of a social problem as developed by Spector and Kitsuse (1987) and refined by Loseke (2003) and Best (2008).

#### ***Social Constructionism***

Social construction does not focus on the objective truth. Instead, it focuses on how humans subjectively interpret and understand the world (Gergen, 2003). People establish their interpretation and understanding through history, social forces, and ideology (Searle, 1995). The

process of understanding is the result of “active, cooperative enterprise of persons” (Gergen, 2003, p. 15). People work together to establish meaning.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that people create knowledge and understanding through interaction and socialization, primarily through language. Using language, humans develop an understanding of the world based on categories (Loseke, 2003). Language and categories are not static, but change and shift based on new discoveries and develop new words or meanings. This is called social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Social construction assumes humans *attach* meaning to words or objects, which makes meanings subjective (Loseke, 2003, p. 19; Searle, 1995), thus makes it possible for multiple meanings to exist (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Holzner, 1968, p. 7). One’s words and actions do not occur alone. A greater context—such as a cultural, political, economic, or social context—gives words and actions meaning (Burnier, 2005, p. 499). In this sense, argue Ogle, Eckman, & Leslie (2003, p. 2), meanings are both subjective (they reflect the ideas, thoughts, contexts, and experiences of the people who construct the meaning) and objective (these people perceive those meanings as true).

Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain that because of these subjective meanings, knowledge is continually changing. True becomes false; unacceptable becomes acceptable; deviant becomes acceptable; acceptable becomes deviant, and so on. Knowledge, particularly about social problems, cannot be understood as an objective condition. Instead, it must be understood as a historical process. Therefore, social problems do not become problems until constructed as such. What exists is a process, a way of constructing a problem.

### ***Construction of Social Problems***

Social problems do not objectively exist as social problems. Social problems become defined that way through the activities of people, a process called 'the claims-making process' (Spector & Kitsuse, 2001; Best 2008). According to Spector and Kitsuse (2001, p. 78-81) and Best (2008), the first stage of the claims-making process involves group activities that define a social condition as a problem. A group (or groups) called claims-makers identify a social condition that they consider a problem (Best, 2008, p. 15; Kitsuse & Spector, 1973, p. 415). Once identified, the claims-makers define how it is a problem by defining what behaviours are involved, who is involved, how it affects society, what it costs, and what the benefits of fixing are. The claims-makers then describe the problem to an audience, a specific group that claims-makers are trying to convince that a social problem exists (Loseke, 2003). The claims-makers must convince the audience that the widespread, troubling social condition exists, and that it should and can be changed (Loseke, 2003; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994, p. 89).

The claims-makers who identify, define, and describe the social problem cannot be just any random collection of people. The audience must consider them legitimate, so claims-makers must have a source of social power (Best, 2008, p. 15). For example, an audience will trust a group of scientists over a group of drug addicts. Claims-makers generally fit into two categories: expert and activist. Expert claims-makers are those who the audience recognizes as having special, extensive, authoritative knowledge while activist claim-makers are involved with social movements, groups pushing for change (Best, 2008, pp. 18-20).

The second stage of the claims-making process is media coverage of the social claims, with media coverage being the most effective way of reaching and educating an audience (Spector & Kitsuse, 2001, p. 145; Loseke, 2003, pp. 40-41; Best, 2008). Spector and Kitsuse

(2001, p. 145) write that “the way the press and the media are handled is important to the life history of any social issue,” which is one of the reasons that claims-makers appear legitimate and respectable (Best, 2008, p. 20). Illegitimate claims-makers are unlikely to receive effective media coverage, preventing their message from getting out. The mass media often alters the primary message before presenting it, making it less complex and easier to understand. This is why the mass media is usually considered a secondary claims-maker (Best, 2008; Loseke, 2003, p. 44).

Audiences are crucial to the construction of social problems (Spector & Kitsuse, 2001, p. 145; Loseke, 2003, p. 25). Social conditions only become social problems after the claims-makers persuade and convince the audience that the claims are believable and important (Best, 2008). Since not all audiences have the same amount of power or vote on a subject, there exists a *hierarchy of audience significance* (Loseke, 2003, p. 28). Simply put, some votes are more important, making them important in defining a social problem. Loseke (2003, p. 28) gives the fictional example of school uniforms being used to reduce gang violence. Claims-makers would need to convince the school board, not the parents, teachers, or students (unless they start claiming school uniforms would increase violence), that school uniforms would reduce gang violence because only the school board can make a rule requiring students to wear uniforms.

This is the stage where initial counter-arguments are most likely to appear (Best, 2008, p. 50). In some cases, claims-makers may ignore these counter-arguments or say that these counter-arguments ‘prove’ that opponents do not care about the problem and are therefore not taking the problem seriously (Loseke & Best, 2003). In most cases, the success of the claims-makers relies on how effectively they can refute opposing arguments. If the claims-makers are unable to effectively refute opposing arguments, then it is unlikely the claims-makers’ claims will be accepted by the audience (Loseke & Best, 2003).

During the third stage, an official organization or institution, convinced by the claims-makers' arguments, begins measuring public concern (Spector & Kitsuse, 2001, p. 148-151; Best, 2008). These agencies are interested in the size of the problem, how an incident affects certain groups, and so on. This interest by official agencies often provides legitimacy for the claims-makers' arguments (Spector & Kitsuse, 2001, p. 149). For example, claims-makers could claim that 'this is such a problem that even the government has recognized it.'

This leads to the fourth stage, where agencies begin to develop their own solutions or implement the claims-makers' solutions (Best, 2008, p. 21; Blumer, 1971, p. 304). The focus is about dealing with the complaints, even if that manner has not been proven effective (Spector & Kitsuse, 2001, p. 148-151). This is the stage where broad, abstract solutions are implemented through changes to laws, regulations, and rules (Best, 2008; Blumer, 1971, pp. 304-306). This stage is completed when the problem is "domesticated and routinized by some agency that has a vested interest in dealing with the complaints" (Spector & Kitsuse, 2001, p. 151).

This leads to the fifth stage. Social workers, police officers, and other front line officials must find ways to implement the broad, abstract policies (Best, 2008, p. 22). This is difficult because the real world is complicated and messy, not simple black and white. The front line workers must decide how to implement the theoretical and abstract solutions of the claims-makers in a practical manner (Best, 2008, p. 227).

The sixth and final stage of the social problem process is the policy outcomes stage, where the practical implementation creates a reaction (Best, 2008, pp. 22-23). Implemented policies can never truly solve the entire social problem but can help reduce its size (Best, 2008). Outcomes vary from completely removing the social problem (in a perfect world) to making the problem much worse (Best, 2008).



Woolgar and Pawluch (1985) accuse social constructionism of ‘ontological gerrymandering,’ which allows authors to “‘get on with’ the argument and remain oblivious to the critical points...; this boundary makes it possible to live with tension and contradiction” (p. 223). Best (1993, p. 124)<sup>9</sup> argues that it is okay to use an inconsistent theory if it provides a useful means of obtaining information.

### ***Labelling Theory and Claims-making***

Lemert (1951, p. 8) argues that people and groups are separated in numerous ways, resulting in various social reactions to unwanted behaviours. Social rules, created by social groups, define appropriate situations and expected behaviours (Becker, 1968). Rules, however, do not develop in a vacuum. They develop through social interaction and the development of social norms, which are accepted ways a group expects a person to act (Becker, 1968). These rules are not static; they change with time and location (Schur, 1971). These rules may be formal or informal, with formal rules being the recorded version(s) of traditional rules and informal rules being unrecorded rules (Becker, 1968, p. 2). According to Stark (1976), human actions consist of two basic elements: an internalized group habit and the ability of a person to go against that habit.

Labelling occurs when someone breaches a social norm and society reacts to that breach (Becker, 1968, p. 9) by applying a label to the act or person (Dotter, 2004, p. 4). The person who is being labelled does not have to commit a deviant act (Williams & McShane, 2004, p. 144). Society simply has to *believe* that the person has committed a deviant act. Labels can only exist,

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<sup>9</sup> See also: Best, J. (1995). *Images of Issues: Typifying contemporary social problems* (pp. 242-254). New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

however, if the rules are enforced (Becker, 1968, p. 2). Labels can include being untrustworthy, deviant, delinquent, criminal, and so on (Becker, 1968).

Erikson (1962, p. 308) writes that the social audience is the most important variable involved in labelling. Schurr (1971, pp. 12-13) lists three levels of audience: society, which consists of different groups and interests that meld together and help form the rules governing behaviour; individuals, who have daily interaction with the rule breaker and continually label that person; and finally, official and organizational agents of control who are responsible for the implementation of society's broad rules. The social audience decides, by seeing if an act violates its social norms, if breaking the rules constitutes deviance (Schurr, 1971, p. 12-13; Erikson, 1962; Becker, 1968, p. 9; Williams & McShane, 2004, pp. 144-145).

For my thesis, labelling theory is based on three main assumptions. First, a deviant act is not necessarily a criminal act. Criminal acts only occur when the act violates the Criminal Code (Schrag, 1971). Crime is a social construction. Claims-makers identify norm-violating behaviours that they consider so harmful to society that those behaviours must be outlawed (Dotter, 2002, p. 434). If influenced by the claims-makers, those in control of the State will pass a law limiting a person's right to engage in those behaviours, attaching punishments for those who do engage in them. Therefore, the Criminal Code only contains those behaviours that lawmakers are convinced are extremely harmful. Social norms "are rarely expressed as a firm rule or official code" (Erikson, 1962, p. 310). Thus, most deviant behaviour is not criminalized.

Second, committing a deviant act does not make a person a deviant; the application of a label does (Schrag, 1971). People violate social norms all the time, but that is not enough to classify them as either deviant or non-deviant. They must commit an act of deviance and be caught, which starts the labelling process. People, however, may modify or reject the labels, but

that can be extremely difficult (Becker, 1968). Strong labels can become the primary way others view the individual—people become blinded to other characteristics. The label becomes an individual's master status (Becker, 1968; Williams & McShane, 2004, p. 148; Hughes, 1945, p. 357).

Third, labels colour society's view of an individual's past, present, and future actions (Schurr, 1971). Once the label is applied, people begin to examine the deviant's present and previous actions a different way, reinterpreting these actions to fit in with the 'known facts' (Goffman, 1965). Past actions become warning signs that point to the deviant's master status (Schurr, 1971). Present and future actions become interpreted according to the label; people wonder if the deviant's actions are those of someone who is innocent (Williams & McShane, 2004). Therefore, innocent actions can become viewed as deviant. Once a person is labelled, claims of innocence can become 'proof' of deviance (Goffman, 1965, p. 141).

Labelling theory, then, applies to both acts and individuals. If someone commits an act that is labelled as corrupt, that person could become labelled as corrupt. And if someone is labelled as corrupt, for example, then that person's future behaviours could become viewed as corrupt. The person committing the act matters just as much as the act itself.

### **SECTION CONCLUSION**

Political corruption is a nebulous concepts that contain many different definitions that have changed through history. With the rise of the rational-legal bureaucracy, political corruption, which occurs when State actors use their offices' authority for private gain and cause harm to the impartiality principle (Kurer, 2005), has become an issue that the public considers extremely important. Theorisits argue about the causes and effects of political corruption, but

most theorists agree that political corruption threatens the legitimacy of the State and causes economic harm to the public. Studying the causes and effects of political corruption is difficult, however, as actors engaged in political corruption attempt to keep acts of corruption secret.

When acts of political corruption become public knowledge, they may be reported by the news media. By choosing what to read and watch, the public helps the news media shape the types, styles, and meanings of news reports about political corruption. The news media attempts to maintain balanced coverage by providing multiple sides of an issue. Personal biases and structural and organizational constraints, however, make it impossible to cover every aspect of a story. The news media is only able to provide selected coverage (McNair, 1998).

The news media, then, engages in the social construction of reality and provides a window into areas that the public would normally be excluded from. Using the news media, the public can witness events from afar and be involved in events when they are not there. The news media and the public engage in socially constructing political corruption, so researchers cannot use the news media to explore every angle about political corruption. We can study how the news media reports political corruption, and we can use that data to understand one aspect of the social construction of political corruption.

## **CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

My thesis consists of one general research question:

- 1) *How did The Globe and Mail construct political corruption between 1990 and 2000?*

This question is designed to help explore how political corruption is reported in *The Globe and Mail*. In order to answer that question, we need to know three things: what types of corruption do the articles talk about? How do they talk about political corruption and what do they say? And how do the articles support their information?

First, we need to know what the articles talk about. Political corruption is a nebulous concept, but it can be broken down into a few areas to help increase our understanding. Political corruption contains eight different behaviours, so we need to know which behaviours *The Globe and Mail* discuss (bribery, fraud, favouritism, conflict of interest, embezzlement, extortion, abuse of power/breach of trust, or vote-buying). We also need to know what type of corruption it is (grand or bureaucratic) and what level of government employees them (federal, provincial, or municipal). And finally, we need to know what the causes political corruption are (individual, mistake, cultural, structural, or none) and what the possible solutions are (accountability, laws, transparency, independent CJ system, other, or none).

Second, we need to know how the articles talk about political corruption and what they say. When journalists write a news article, they often try to use multiple sources (alleged offenders, government officials, experts, victims, members of the CJ system, or other) and report about more than one side of an issue (Tuchman, 1978, Ericson *et al.*, 1986). With political corruption, we need to examine the articles to discover who the sources are and, in turn, whether

the sources consider political corruption a problem (Do the articles have a serious, not serious, or neutral tone?).

Finally, we need to know how *The Globe and Mail* supports the information it provides. Does *The Globe and Mail* provides evidence (yes or no) and describes facts (yes or no)? We also need to determine what type of evidence *The Globe and Mail* provides (individual, referenced, or none). Therefore, my major research question is broken down into smaller questions:

- 1) How did *The Globe and Mail* construct political corruption between 1990 and 2000?
  - a) When discussing political corruption, what tone does *The Globe and Mail* use?
  - b) When discussing political corruption, what level of government does *The Globe and Mail* identify?
  - c) When discussing political corruption, what type of corruption does *The Globe and Mail* discuss?
  - d) When reporting political corruption, which of the following behaviours does *The Globe and Mail* identify: bribery, fraud, favouritism, conflict of interest, embezzlement, extortion, abuse of power/breach of trust, or vote-buying?
  - e) When discussing political corruption, which of the following quote sources appears in *The Globe and Mail*: alleged offenders, government officials, experts, victims, members of the CJ system, or other?
  - f) Concerning political corruption, what type of evidence appears in *The Globe and Mail*?
  - g) How does *The Globe and Mail* provide facts and describe acts of political corruption?
  - h) What does *The Globe and Mail* identify as the primary cause of political corruption?
  - i) What does *The Globe and Mail* identify as the solution or primary prevention method for political corruption?

After selecting research questions, researchers must to come up with hypotheses to predict what they will find. Hypotheses are predictions that show the link between the independent and dependent variables (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002) and allow researchers to present the “link between theory and data” (Palys, 1997, p. 59). Hypotheses, however, are limited in their usefulness. Hypotheses are most useful in laboratories where conditions can be strictly controlled (Palys, 1997). The real world is an open system with many uncontrolled and uncontrollable variables. Prediction in the real world “becomes an impossible task” (Palys, 1997, p. 62). For that reason, I have chosen not to make hypotheses.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the methodology used to explore and explain *The Globe and Mail's* coverage of political corruption. There are three subsections, each focusing on a specific area. The first defines and operationalizes the concepts. The second discusses the chosen method to answer my research questions. The third describes the research limitations and strengths.

### ***Operationalization and Data Analysis***

I chose to examine the first two stages of the claims making process, claims-making and media coverage. These two stages are important in the claims-making process (Best, 2008) and are important in keeping political issues in public debate (Greene, 1990). My main interest was how *The Globe and Mail* provided and framed the claims-makers' claims. Based on this, I developed nine categories to examine the articles. These categories were not "merely arbitrary or superficial applications of irrelevant categories" (Berg, 2001, p. 241) but based on previous research.

### ***Type of News Article***

I coded news articles on several characteristics including type, location, word count, and date. I classified newspapers articles as one of six types: news articles, editorials, columns, letters to the editor, other, or unknown. News articles dealt with up-to-the-minute new information while editorials were opinion pieces written by the newspaper's editorial staff. Columns were opinion pieces, often analyzing a situation, not written by the editorial staff. Letters to the editor

were articles written by non-journalists and published in the newspapers 'Letters to the Editor' section. 'Other articles' were articles like human-interest stories, sports, entertainment, etc., that could not be classified into the previous categories. And 'unknown articles' contained articles that could fit into multiple categories.

I also coded the sample based on the page number (where it appeared in the newspaper) and length, both supplied by *Canadian Newsstand*. Both length and location help to determine the relative 'importance' of an article. I also coded for the date, making it possible to analyze trends over time.

### ***Tone***

Tone refers to how the news articles portrayed political corruption. Articles are coded to have a 'serious,' 'not serious,' or 'neutral' tone. 'Serious' toned articles implied political corruption was a serious problem, 'not serious' toned articles suggested corruption was not a problem, and 'neutral' articles did not have an identifiable tone. Tone was established through the author's use of words, statistics, and quotes. For example, articles that talked about pervasive corruption were coded as 'serious' while articles talking about the lack of corruption were coded as 'not serious.'

### ***Level of Government***

Level of government was coded as one of three categories: federal<sup>10</sup>, provincial, or municipal.<sup>11</sup> The federal and provincial levels of government were created by the *Constitution Act 1867*. There is only one federal government, but 10 provincial and three territorial: British

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<sup>10</sup> The federal government is also referred to as 'Ottawa'

<sup>11</sup> Also includes the bands governing Aboriginal Reserves.



Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon Territory. The provinces establish municipal governments. For my study, municipal governments also include aboriginal band councils.

For the purposes of this study, I excluded acts of corruption directly involving law enforcement because there is some confusion as to what level of government they represent.<sup>12</sup> However, because they investigate cases of political corruption, law enforcement are excellent sources of 'official' information to the news media and thus are included as sources of information in part of my analysis. Members of the Canadian Forces and Canadian Coast Guard are also excluded because they may also be utilized in a law enforcement manner. Judges, who receive their salary from the State, are technically independent of the State (Dawson & Dawson, 1989, p. 7) and were also excluded.

### ***Corruption Type***

Acts of political corruption were coded as 'grand', 'bureaucratic', or 'unknown.' 'Grand' corruption was any corruption involving an elected official, 'bureaucratic' corruption was any State employee who was not an elected official, and unknown could not be classified due to lack of information. People directly employed by any political party, even though they may have a large amount of influence in the political system, were also excluded because they are not directly employed by the State. Instead, private organizations employ these people, and as such, political party employees lack State-granted authority. Therefore, political party employees are not directly involved in the day-to-day running of the State and the use of the State's authority.

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<sup>12</sup> For example, police officers employed by the RCMP could be contracted out to either the federal, provincial, or municipal level of government but still receive their salary from the federal level of government.

Because articles could talk about multiple behaviours, it was possible to have multiple types of corruption as well. As a result, article could have mentioned grand corruption, bureaucratic corruption, or both.

### ***Behaviours***

Behaviours of political corruption were coded into one of nine categories: ‘Bribery/graft,’ ‘theft/ misappropriation of resources/embezzlement,’ ‘fraud,’ ‘favouritism,’ ‘extortion,’ ‘conflict of interest,’ ‘abuse of power,’ ‘vote-influencing,’ or ‘unidentified.’ ‘Bribery/graft’ was the giving (or request) of anything in exchange for undue influence on a decision made by someone in public office. ‘Theft/ misappropriation of resources/embezzlement’ involved the stealing or misuse by a public official of any resource he/she is entrusted with. ‘Fraud’ was the use of misleading or false information to obtain something. I defined ‘favouritism’ as the demonstration by a public official of preferential treatment regardless of merit; it included the behaviours of patronage, neopotism, clientalism<sup>13</sup>. I coded ‘extortion’ as occurring when a public official threatened or used their authority to cause some form of harm unless that official was provided with something. ‘Conflict of interest’ occurred when a public official’s private and public interest converged. ‘Vote-influencing’ arose when a public official did anything to influence the outcome of a vote. ‘Abuse of power’ involves a public official using their power or resources to obtain an undue advantage for themselves or others in a manner that cannot be classified into one of the other categories. Behaviours remained ‘unidentified’ if there was not enough information to classify them into one of the other categories or if the article discussed political corruption without mentioning any behaviours.

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<sup>13</sup> I also looked for the terms patronage, neopotism, and clietalism because these are the primary names used to describe favouritism.

It was possible for a behaviour to be classified into more than one category. For example, if a political official stole money by using a fake invoice, it was classified as both ‘theft/misappropriation of resources/embezzlement’ (because the official stole money) and ‘fraud’ (used a fake invoice, and thus lied, to get the money). Therefore, it was possible for articles have multiple behaviours.

### ***Sources***

I classified sources based on their title and relation to political corruption. Articles that did not feature quotes or sources were coded as possessing ‘none.’ If articles possessed quotes and sources, they were classified into one of six categories. ‘Alleged offenders’ were those, or their spokespersons, that the article implied were directly involved in political corruption, unless that person was considered to be a direct victim. ‘Government’ sources were those employed by the State but who were not alleged offenders, victims, or members of the criminal justice system. Members of the criminal justice system (CJ) included police officers, lawyers (only if they are directly involved in the prosecution or defence of an individual), and judges. CJ was its own category because its members occupy a special position as enforcers and interpreters of the criminal code. Members of the criminal justice system often investigated alleged cases of political corruption and decided whether or not an act warrants criminal charges. ‘Experts’ were defined as individuals not employed by the State who possessed unique or special knowledge (university professors, for example). ‘Victims’ were defined as those who were *directly* and *negatively* impacted by political corruption. Those who could not fit into any other category were defined as ‘other.’

While analyzing sources, I also looked at how sources described both the victims and the offenders of corruption. I also included how the article described victims and offenders, as the description is often based on information from sources.

### ***Description and Evidence***

Articles were coded based on descriptions and evidence. Articles that provided independent evidence were coded as ‘Independent.’ Providing independent evidence meant that the article had to provide some form of evidence (eg. Documents obtained by....) other than simply trusting their sources. If the article referenced its sources, but does not provide any independent evidence, it was coded as ‘referenced.’ Articles that did not provide any evidence were coded as ‘none.’

Articles that provided a detailed description of political corruption will be coded as “description.’ The description must be fairly detailed and allow the reader to understand what happened. If there is no description, or if the description is not detailed enough, articles will be coded as ‘none.’

### ***Prevention and Response***

Forms of prevention were coded as ‘accountability,’ ‘laws,’ ‘transparency,’ ‘independent CJ system,’ ‘other,’ or ‘none.’ ‘Accountability’ was coded when articles recommended increased enforcement, increased responsibility, and increased liability. ‘Laws’ were coded when an article recommended the passing of new laws, rules, or treaties. ‘Transparency’ was coded when articles recommended the State be more open and allow the news media or internal auditors more access to files. ‘Independent CJ system’ was coded when articles suggested that public officials have

less influence in the justice system. 'Other' was used when suggestions could not be coded as any other category, and 'none' was coded when there were no suggestions to prevent political corruption

### ***Causes***

The causes of political corruption was coded as 'none,' 'individual,' 'mistake,' 'cultural,' or 'structural.' When *The Globe and Mail* suggested that political corruption was the result of an individual's rational choice, it was coded as 'individual.' If an article suggested political corruption was the result of a error, like the misunderstanding of a law, it was coded as 'mistake.' 'Cultural' occurred when articles suggested that corruption was a result of the political atmosphere. 'Structural' occurred when articles suggested that the design of the political system was the cause of political corruption. If no cause was suggested, 'none' was selected.

### ***Method***

My methodological approach is a quantitative content analysis examining published newspaper articles about political corruption in *The Globe and Mail* from 1990-2000. Silverman (2000) argues that there is both a quantitative and qualitative aspect to social research: the quantitative aspect can be used to measure numbers, thus giving a 'precise' reading, while the qualitative aspect can be used to find themes, biases, and patterns that may be hidden within the content. Silverman (1985) argues that researchers who rely solely on a qualitative methodology are missing a large amount of data. Therefore, using a quantitative research method is similar to asking closed-ended questions while a qualitative research method is similar to asking open-ended questions (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002). I selected a quantitative approach because

researchers who use basic counting techniques can give readers a better overall view of the data (Silverman, 1985), and that overall view is useful when beginning to explore a phenomenon.

Based on the arguments of Silverman (1985), I used a quantitative approach to help detect trends and provide context. My quantitative approach covered the number of articles published and about what topic, how many articles a year, and how many articles about what topic.

I chose to employ a content analysis because it involves gathering and then analyzing the content of text, pictures, movies, videos, or any other form of media to determine what messages, symbols, ideas, and themes are contained within. Content analysis is concerned with a message and its who, what, when, where, why, and how (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002; Neuman *et al.*, 2004). Because the media influences the public's perception of crime (Ericson *et al.*, 1987, p. 1), the way in which it constructs political corruption is important.

### ***Data Collection and Sample***

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008, I conducted a search on *Canadian Newsstand*, "Canada's most complete online newspaper research tool" (ProQuest Multimedia, 2009, para. 1), for news articles about political corruption published in *The Globe and Mail* between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1990, until December 31, 1999. I chose *The Globe and Mail* because it has been published continuously since the 1840s, featuring a strong focus on both national and international politics (The Globe and Mail, 2009). Since the 1980s, it has been printed by satellite plants in all 10 Canadian provinces and two Canadian territories, and was effectively Canada's only national newspaper (RCN, 1981, p. 186; Bird, 1997, p. 12).<sup>14</sup> It is also a leading newspaper in terms of utilizing online databases to store published articles (RCN, 1981, p. 186). The front page of *The*

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<sup>14</sup> It was Canada's only national newspaper until Conrad Black created *The National Post* 1998 (Cobb, 2004).

*Globe and Mail* usually contains two or three major news stories and one large photo relating to the headline story, but until 1998, *The Globe and Mail* rarely used colour. Inside the newspaper, there are many smaller stories and photos across the newspaper's different sections: Canada, politics, world, sports, arts, finance and business, and opinion.

I chose the years 1990 – 2000 because it was during this decade that political corruption became defined as a major social problem (Andvig *et al*, 2001, p. 1, Collier, 2002, p. 1). Even though it would take years of negotiation, it was on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2000, that the United Nations General Assembly “recognized that an effective international legal instrument against corruption...was desirable” (UNODC, 2009, para. 1).

Articles in *Canadian Newsstand* appear word-for-word as they would have when originally published, but without the organizational layout of a newspaper. Despite this, *Canadian Newsstand* allows users to save or email news articles, allowing for easy storage.

To answer the first major research question, I conducted a keyword search, using the definitions developed in the literature review, with numerous combinations because I was attempting to find as many articles as possible. My full list of search terms was developed based on the behaviours described in my literature review. The search terms are listed in Appendix A. Including synonyms during the keyword search would have been extremely difficult and time consuming, likely leading to numerous false positives.<sup>1516</sup> The search returned 799 articles, which became 94 articles after removing duplicates and false positives. Any article about political corruption in Canada was included, no matter how briefly it covered the subject. I used

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<sup>15</sup> There are numerous synonyms for each word, particularly since most forms of political corruption are illegal and therefore, extra effort is made to disguise it. A bribe, for example, could be: fee, donation, gift, tax, surcharge, expense, loan, contribution, buyoff, kickback, grease money, reward, compensation, perk, advance, present, award, favour, and so on. Therefore, using synonyms will likely result in a large number of false positives.

<sup>16</sup> A false positive occurs when a test declares a result to be positive when the result is actually negative. Thus, a false positive declares that something is present when that something is not.

this approach because, despite the brief coverage in some articles, each article that contained a reference to constructing political corruption helped with constructing the meaning behind political corruption. I recorded each article's information<sup>17</sup> on a data sheet (Appendix B) before beginning analysis, then entered it into a *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheet, which made it easier to compare articles and information. To ensure that the coding scheme was appropriate, I tested it on 10 randomly selected articles that were published before 1990. I randomly recoded several articles at a later date to ensure that I achieved the same results. Any sayings or symbols that were initially unclear were recoded several times throughout the coding process to ensure consistency.

### ***Limitations***

In every study, no matter how careful, there are limitations and threats to validity. Due to time constraints, I used a digital search engine to find appropriate articles, possibly missing those not listed in the search results. I tried to reduce this risk by using multiple search terms, but there is still a chance that some articles are missing. I used the conceptual definitions I developed in my literature review as the guide for my search. Therefore, the research results likely reflect my definitions. I tried to decrease this risk by using the terms 'government,' 'corruption,' 'misconduct,' and 'political' in different combinations<sup>18</sup>, but there is a chance that I missed other behaviours that *The Globe and Mail* consider to be political corruption. For example, if an article talked about vote-influencing but did not use any of my search terms, then that article would not appear on my list of returned hits. Thus, my sample is a purposive sample and may be skewed (Carney, 1972, p. 47).

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<sup>17</sup> Including date, author, title, word count, page number, tone, behaviours, etc.

<sup>18</sup> The full list of search terms is under Appendix B.



One of the major limitations of using *Canadian Newsstand* is the lack of visual representation of the articles. Articles on *Canadian Newsstand* appear in a straight-forward top-down format. The layout of news articles is important (Berger, 2007), but articles published in *Canadian Newsstand* lack the images, physical organization, and text formatting of the original articles published hard-copy in *The Globe and Mail*. Because I was unable to analyze the physical layout of the articles, I could only analyze the text, possibly missing other messages.

One of the major limitations to my study is the unit of analysis. I am analyzing newspaper articles, and can therefore only analyze what is published. I cannot analyze the decisions leading up to the articles publication, nor can I analyze unpublished articles.

I also limited myself to studying just *The Globe and Mail* because it is one of Canada's premiere English-language newspapers. While other newspapers have influence, *The Globe and Mail* is one of the most influential in terms of politics (Siegel, 1996, p. 141). *The Globe and Mail* has an entire page devoted to Parliament Hill, which may bias my results. Political corruption may be reported differently in other newspapers such as the tabloids or French-language newspapers. Therefore, the results of this study should not be generalized to other newspapers or mediums.

### ***Strengths***

There are many advantages to using a content analysis. First, a content analysis allows me to examine a process that occurs over a long period of time (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002, p. 295). Second, my content analysis involves written texts, which are very unlikely to change over time (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002, p. 295). Third, a content analysis allows me to examine 'reality' as it was perceived at the time the articles were written (Carney, 1972, p. 55). Fourth, a

content analysis allows me to examine the newspapers articles for themes that may be underlying the explicit content (Carney, 1972, p. 47), which allows me to examine articles for both what they say and what they omit.

A content analysis also has the advantage of being structured and allows me to gather information in a systematic manner (GAO, 1996). This helps to prevent errors and also helps to increase the accuracy of coding. A content analysis also gives me the opportunity to go back and recode articles and compare them with one another, which also helps to prevent errors and increase accuracy.

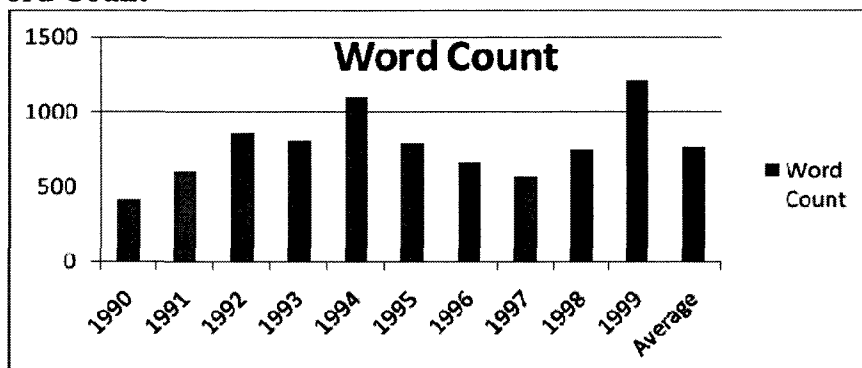
### CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### ARTICLE DESCRIPTION

I selected 94 published articles during the 10-year period between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1990, and December 21, 1999 for my study. Seventy-eight (83%) of all articles were in the first section of the newspaper (Section A). The number of published articles ranged from a low of four (4%) during 1992 to a high of 16 (17%) in 1991, with an average of 9.4 per year. The majority of articles, 59 (63%), were published prior to 1995 and 18 (19%) were published in the last three years.

The articles varied in length with the shortest a mere 50 words and the longest 3846; the average was 767. Yearly averages varied from 413 (in 1990) to 1210 (in 1999). Despite the dramatic difference in length, longer articles did not always mean better quality reporting about political corruption. In several articles, such as those written by Segal<sup>19</sup> and Peterson<sup>20</sup>, only a small portion of the article is devoted to talking about political corruption. Other articles, like *Welfare fraud slips through the cracks*<sup>21</sup>, begin describing one idea and end up discussing political corruption.

**Figure 3.1: Word Count**



<sup>19</sup> Segal, H. (1996, January 02). It's 1996. Do you know where your optimism is? *The Globe and Mail*, p. A15.

<sup>20</sup> Peterson, O. (1990, November 15). Protest. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A23.

<sup>21</sup> Welfare fraud slips through the cracks. (1997, April 22). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A7.

News articles were the dominant category with 65 (69%) articles published. The next largest was columns/opinion pieces with 16 (17%) articles, followed by six (6%) letters to the editor, four (4%) editorials, two (2%) others, and one (1%) unknown. News articles ranged from a high of 9 out of 11(82%) of yearly articles published in 1995 to a low of 5 out of 11 (45%) in 1993. Columns/opinion pieces had a high of five out of 11 (45%) articles published in 1993 and a low of 0 (0%) in both 1997 and 1998.

**Table 3.1: Article Categories Sorted by Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total:
News	10 (11%)	12 (13%)	2 (2%)	5 (5%)	10 (11%)	9 (10%)	4 (4%)	4 (4%)	4 (4%)	5 (5%)	
Editorial	1 (1%)	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)	
Column	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	5 (5%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	0	0	1 (1%)	
Letter to the Editor	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0	
Other	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	
Unknown	0	1 (1%)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

- Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

For article location, 78 (83%) were published in Section A of the newspaper. Sixty news articles out of 65 (92%) were published in Section A while nine out of 16 (56%) of columns were. For news articles placed in Section A, 11 (17%) were on page A1, which is the first page of the newspaper. Including those news articles that were placed on page A1, 34 (52%) were placed within the first five pages of Section A. For all articles, 11 (12%) were placed on page A1 and 36 (38%) were placed within the first five pages. The highest percentage of articles in Section A appeared in both 1990 and 1995 when 100% of all articles appeared in Section A. The year with the lowest percentage was 1993, when only 6 (55%) published articles out of 11 appeared in Section A.

**Table 3.2: Number of Articles Divided by Year and Section**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total:
A	14 (15%)	12 (13%)	3 (3%)	6 (6%)	11 (12%)	11 (11%)	5 (5%)	5 (5%)	4 (4%)	7 (7%)	
B	0	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	0	0	0	0	
C	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	
D	0	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	4 (4%)	1 (1%)	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0	
E	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0	0	0	

- Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

The increased coverage at the beginning of the study period was unexpected and not predicted by the literature, because the international community, for the most part, did not begin defining political corruption as a serious problem until the mid-to-late 90s (Søreide, 2002, p. 1; Theobald, 2002, p. 435). One of the more common explanations for this focus provided by the articles in my sample is that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and the Conservative Party, who held a majority government until defeated in the 1993 federal election, were corrupt.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, he warranted more coverage. Another explanation provided by the sample states that, for whatever reason, the public did not like Brian Mulroney. One article states that he was an “unusual personality in the Canadian political landscape. He was more American...”<sup>23</sup> And a third reason was that the Conservatives did not know how to properly act once they were elected; they were hungry for power after being the Official Opposition for years and, once in power, used it to reward their friends.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Stevie Cameron’s bestselling book *On the Take: Crime, Corruption, and Greed in the Mulroney Years* argues this point. That book and its argument are mentioned in several of the sample articles.

<sup>23</sup> Delacourt, S. (1995, February 04). Patronage: Friends in high places. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A1.

<sup>24</sup> Simpson, J. (1994, November 25). No government has been immune to the sweet seduction of patronage. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A22.

The more likely explanation is a mixture of all three: because they were out of power for many years, the Conservative Party was eager to reward their faithful supporters by awarding patronage positions and doing business with them. Beginning in the late 1980s, there was an increased number of reported scandals in the media (Greene, 1990, p. 233). Mulroney was losing popularity and his opponents used minor scandals as proof of his and his party's inability to govern. For this reason, minor scandals that would have received little-to-no media coverage suddenly began to receive more, leading to more hard-news and opinion articles being published. However, there could be another reason entirely. How authors select news stories about political corruption, for example, is an area beyond the scope of this thesis and requires much more research.

The majority of articles, 65 (69%), were hard-news articles. After discounting sports, weather, and entertainment, hard-news articles make up the bulk of a newspaper's non-advertising print space (Lacy & Bernstein, 1988). The majority (60 out of 65, 92%) of all news articles appeared in Section A because Section A is the primary area for articles relating to politics and crime. Section A is not just for hard-news articles but also columns, letters to the editor, lifestyle pieces, and human-interest stories. Other sections of *The Globe and Mail* include sports, lifestyle, entertainment, and so on—all areas where one is unlikely to find information about politics and crime. While hard-news articles about other topics may be placed in these pages, they are likely considered to be of lower importance than articles placed in Section A (Cohen & Young, 1973, p. 103).

Page A1 is the first page people see when looking at a newspaper and is the most important (Cohen & Young, 1973, p. 103), so placing articles about political corruption in Section A shows that *The Globe and Mail* considers political corruption important and

marketable. The articles on page one are supposed to attract a reader's attention, draw them in, and convince them to buy the newspaper. Therefore, articles on that appeared on page A1 of *The Globe and Mail* were much better researched than other articles.

The hard-news articles used the standard inverted-pyramid style of reporting. Beginning with the headlines, this style places the most relevant or important news at the top and continues placing less and less relevant information as the article finishes; the information at the end of the article is the least relevant (Desbarats, 1996, p. 9). The headline should be able to attract the reader's attention and give them the main point of the article without having to go any farther (Andrew, 2007, p. 28). This method has been heavily critiqued,<sup>25</sup> but is still widely used (Desbarats, 1996, p. 9).

For political corruption cases, this poses a major problem. Because headlines are naturally sensationalized and often inaccurate, preferring attention-grabbing phrases to accuracy, they paint an incorrect picture of the article. Leventhal and Gray (1991) acknowledge this and argue that there is a negative correlation between how much of the article someone reads and how they perceive the headline: the more they read, the more inaccurate they find the headline. For example, the headline for an article in this study was "Monsanto Denies Bribery Allegation." The article, however, is less about Monsanto offering a bribe and more about scientists' testimony in front of a parliamentary committee.

### **TONE**

Of this study's 94 articles, 50 (53%) had a serious tone and portrayed political corruption as a problem. This is far greater than the 36 (38%) whose tone was neutral and over five times

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<sup>25</sup> For example, see: Westley, B. (1980). *News editing* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

higher than the eight (9%) whose tone indicated political corruption was not serious. The percentage of serious tone articles fluctuates throughout the 1990s, rising to over 50% of all published articles until the 1995. During 1995 and 1996, the number of neutral-toned articles outnumbered serious-toned articles. From 1997 onward, the number of serious-toned articles rose again.

For serious-toned articles, 40 (80%) were placed in Section A while the remaining 10 (20%) were in Sections B, C, or D. For articles coded as not-serious, six (75%) were placed in Section A; the remaining two (25%) were placed in Section D. For neutral-toned articles, 36 (90%) were placed in Section A while the remaining four (10%) were placed in Sections B, C, D, or E.

**Table 3.3: Tone Divided by Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
Serious	5 (5%)	9 (10%)	4 (4%)	5 (5%)	8 (9%)	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)	6 (6%)	
Not Serious	0	1 (1%)	0	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	0	1 (1%)	
Neutral	9 (10%)	6 (5%)	0	4 (4%)	4 (4%)	6 (6%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	

- Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

For news articles alone, 26 (41%) had a serious tone while 34 (53%) had a neutral tone. Only four (6%) news articles had a not-serious tone. Three (75%) editorials possessed a serious tone while one (25%) had a neutral tone. Almost all columns, 14 out of 16 (88%), were written with a serious tone while two (12%) were written with a 'not serious' tone. No columns had a neutral tone, but because columns are written to voice an opinion, they are expected to be biased. Five (83%) letters to the editor were written with a serious tone, one (17%) was written with a not serious tone, and none were written with a neutral tone. Two (67%) of other articles were



coded as being written with a serious tone while the other one (33%) was coded as being written with a neutral tone. The lone unknown article (100%) was coded as written in a neutral tone.

In 1990, nine out of 10 (90%) news articles were written in a neutral tone. While the percentage of news articles written in a neutral tone fluctuates, from 1997 onwards the majority of news articles had a serious tone. Columns, however, remain virtually unchanged throughout the 1990s. Only once in each 1993 and 1996 were columns with a tone other than serious. One column about patronage, written after Prime Minister Brian Mulroney had retired, states “Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has no legal choice but to maintain the structure of Parliament by filling vacancies in the 104-member Senate.”<sup>26</sup> The Prime Minister has no choice; he must use patronage.

Writing in 1996, Hugh Segal proudly mentioned that Jeffery Simpson’s book showed that “the past 20 years reflect much less corruption of public purposes for private gain in Canada than the preceding decades did.”<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, he does not expand on his argument and only talks about political corruption for one paragraph. This was a continuing trend—*The Globe and Mail* rarely reported positive news. Thus, while Segal’s counterclaim that political corruption is becoming less of a problem did manage to be reported in *The Globe and Mail*, it was overpowered by claims to the contrary.

Almost all of the letters to the editor talk about corruption in negative terms. Only one (17%) letter says anything to the contrary. Written to clarify the selection of five new Canadian Ambassadors, it says that “the government has always reached outside for some especially qualified people.”<sup>28</sup> The author considers patronage as a useful tool that allows the government

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<sup>26</sup> Thorsell, W. (1993, June 05). Mulroney doomed to be stuck with the patronage label. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D6.

<sup>27</sup> Segal, H. (1996, January 02). It’s 1996. Do you know where your optimism is? *The Globe and Mail*, p. A.15.

<sup>28</sup> Brown, G. (1993, July 03). Choosing diplomats. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D7.

to select individuals who possess useful skills that can help implement the government's agenda and represent Canada.

Of the remaining four articles, three (75%) were classified as "other." The first article is a book review focusing on the year's political books (the author published a book on Canadian political corruption called *The Spoils of Power*).<sup>29</sup> The second and third are human-interest pieces about an activist<sup>30</sup> and a lobbyist,<sup>31</sup> respectively. These three articles are among the longest in the study: the book review was over 3000 words while the interest pieces were over 1900 and 3800, respectively.

Tone was not explicit in many hard-news articles, but more subtle. Hard-news articles are supposed to be present each side of an issue equally (Tuchman, 1972, p. 664). Thus, journalists try to make hard-news articles appear as unbiased as possible. However, hard-news articles end up demonstrating bias implicitly through several methods such as the selective use of words/quotes and selective coverage (Fishman, 1980, p. 128). In *The Globe and Mail*, these quotes often came from State sources, and these quotes often shaped the frame that defined the issue. The result is that around 40% of hard-news article provided one main point of view while appearing balanced. A good example involves two articles by Cameron. Both articles have little regard for exploring the other side of the issue of patronage. Cameron takes the role of a primary claims-maker and writes that Prime Ministers fill certain positions with "an assortment of wives, widows, dear friends, confidential secretaries and aides,"<sup>32</sup> who "are well-rewarded for their support over the years."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Simpson, J. (1994, December 31). Simpson takes swipe at this years political books. *The Globe and Mail*, p. C.24.

<sup>30</sup> York, G. (1991, August 5). Tory foe may typify country's mood. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A1.

<sup>31</sup> Barber, J. (1999, November 01). The handyman can. *The Globe and Mail*, p. C1.

<sup>32</sup> Cameron, Stevie. (1993, June 05). A haven for wives, widows, and very good friends. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D3.

<sup>33</sup> Cameron, Stevie. (1993, June 05). Rewards. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D1.

**Table 3.4: Tone and Article Type Divided by Year**

		1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
News	Serious	1 (1%)	5 (5%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	5 (5%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)
	Not Serious	--	1 (1%)	--	--	2 (2%)	--	--	--	--	1 (1%)
	Neutral	9 (10%)	5 (5%)	--	4 (4%)	3 (3%)	6 (6%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)
Editorial	Serious	1 (1%)	--	--	--	--	--	--	1 (1%)	--	1 (1%)
	Not Serious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Neutral	--	--	--	--	--	1 (1%)	--	--	--	--
Column/Opinion	Serious	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	--	--	1 (1%)
	Not Serious	--	--	--	1 (1%)	--	--	1 (1%)	--	--	--
	Neutral	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Letter to the Editor	Serious	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	1 (5%)	--	--	--	--	--	1 (1%)	--
	Not Serious	--	--	--	1 (1%)	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Neutral	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	Serious	--	1 (1%)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1 (1%)
	Not Serious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Neutral	--	--	--	--	1 (1%)	--	--	--	--	--
Unknown	Serious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Not Serious	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	Neutral	--	1 (1%)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

- Percentages may not add up due to rounding
- To make this chart easier to read there is a "--" instead of 0 if there are no articles in a category

### LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT

The 94 articles yielded 97 instances of identifying (or not identifying) different levels of government. The federal government was mentioned in the articles 61 times (63%), followed by the provincial government at 22 (23%) times, and the municipal government at 10 times (10%). The level of government was unidentified in only four (4%) of the articles. Yearly, the federal government was mentioned over two times more often than its closest competitor with the exception of three years: 1990, when federal and provincial were each mentioned eight times; 1997, when they were each mentioned twice; and 1999, when each was mentioned three times.

Most articles identified one level of government. In 1990, however, two (2%) articles mentioned two levels of government while in 1999 there was one (1%) article that mentioned two levels of government. These three articles (*Vander Zalm to join Alberta in GST Challenge*,<sup>34</sup> *Background: Conflict of Interest Loose in Alberta*,<sup>35</sup> and *Martin Refuses to Level with Us*<sup>36</sup>) identified the federal and provincial levels of government.

**Table 3.5: Level of Government by Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Federal	8 (9%)	9 (10%)	3 (3%)	8 (9%)	11 (12%)	10 (11%)	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)
Provincial	8 (9%)	4 (4%)	0	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (3%)
Municipal	0	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	0	2 (2%)	0	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
Unidentified	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)

- Articles may identify more than 1 level of the government
- Percentages are based on 94 articles and may not add up to 100% due to rounding

<sup>34</sup> Vander Zalm to join Alberta in GST challenge. (1990, October 22). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A4.

<sup>35</sup> Background: Conflict of interest rules loose in Alberta. (1990, November 27). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A8.

<sup>36</sup> Spector, N. (1999, February 18). Martin refuses to level with us. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A18.

There was an overwhelming focus on the Federal government because, for most of the 1990s, *The Globe and Mail* was Canada's only national newspaper. It has an entire page devoted to Parliament Hill, and several reporters whose job is to report on the Federal Government (Cobb, 2004). This focus meant that many politicians considered *The Globe and Mail* to be Canada's premiere newspaper. It was, and still is, one of Canada's most influential newspapers (Siegel, 1996, p. 141).

*The Globe and Mail's* focus on the Federal Government is explainable for other reasons. The Federal Government is among Canada's largest employers. In 1995, it employed around 380 thousand people (Naczka, 2007, p. 5) and had 295 Members of Parliament (Mutimer, 2003, p. 21). This means that the Federal Government was, numerically speaking, more likely to have cases of bureaucratic corruption than the government of an individual province or city. That means that the cases are more likely to be discovered and thus more likely to be reported. For my study, 18 out of 22 articles (82%) that talked about bureaucratic corruption referred to the Federal Government. In addition, Canadians from every province and territory pay taxes, so therefore corruption in the Federal Government can affect all Canadians and not just those who live in a province like Alberta or Ontario. Thus, corruption in the Federal Government is more likely to receive coverage.

### **CORRUPTION TYPE**

The 94 articles I examined in this study resulted in 95 mentions of grand and/or bureaucratic corruption. Three articles failed to identify any type of corruption. Grand corruption was identified seventy-three times (78%) while bureaucratic corruption was identified 22 times (23%). The type of corruption was unidentifiable in three (3%) articles. Between 1990 and 1995,

64 out of 73 articles (86%) talked about grand corruption. After 1996, the number of articles talking about grand corruption decreases. In both 1998 and 1999, bureaucratic corruption was identified more often than grand corruption. The highest percentage of articles covering political corruption was in 1998, when four out of five articles (80%) identified bureaucratic corruption.

**Table 3.6: Type of Corruption by Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Grand	12 (13%)	14 (15%)	4 (4%)	11 (12%)	12 (13%)	11 (12%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (3%)
Bureau- cratic	2 (2%)	4 (4%)	0	0	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (4%)	4 (4%)
Unidenti- fied	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)

- Articles may identify more than 1 type of corruption
- Percentages are based on 94 articles and may not add up to 100% due to rounding

The news media is looking for the big stories (Tuchman, 1978, p. 21). Canadians felt that they are “entitled to the...highest quality public administration,”<sup>37</sup> so they see distortions of the central functions of government as particularly heinous (Mancuso *et al.*, 2006, p. 23). Grand corruption becomes a big story because it involves a distortion of the central functions of government, thus becoming a threat to democracy (UN Guide, 2003, p. 28-29). This perceived threat to democracy makes it extremely likely that *The Globe and Mail* will report cases of grand corruption.

Grand corruption is also more likely to be reported because elected officials will attempt to use cases of grand corruption to hurt their opponent’s chances at re-election (Ericson *et al.*, 1989, p. 12). This can only happen if the public, who vote elected officials into office, have reasons to avoid voting for a certain candidate; the easiest way to disseminate these reasons is to

<sup>37</sup> Feschuk, S. (1998, January 31). Labour relations chief dismissed. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A4.

use the news media (Siegel, 1996, pp. 27-28). Given the Canadian public's dislike of political corruption (Mancuso *et al.*, 2006, p. 191), revealing it through the news media would likely hurt a candidate's chances of re-election.

### **BEHAVIOURS**

The 94 articles in the study's sample produced 136 instances of identified and unidentified behaviour divided into 9 categories. Favouritism was the dominant behaviour, occurring in 35 articles (39%). Conflict of interest was mentioned in 32 articles (34%), followed by bribery in 28 articles (30%), abuse of power/breach of trust in 18 articles (19%), fraud in 11 articles (12%), embezzlement in three articles (3%), and vote-influencing in one articles (1%). Extortion was not reported at all. Behaviours were unidentified in nine articles (10%).

Bribery was reported in every year except 1992. Fraud was not reported from 1992 to 1995 and averaged around one mention per year in other years. Twenty-six out of 35 mentions (74%) of all mentions of favouritism were prior to 1995; favouritism was mentioned 31 times (89%) by 1996. There were no articles containing mentions of favouritism in 1997 or 1999. Most mentions of conflict of interest occurred before 1995 (72%, 23 times). There was no mention of it during 1997 and 1998. Embezzlement was only mentioned in 1996, 1997, and 1998 (once each year). Abuse of power/breach of trust was unmentioned in 1996 and 1997. In 1999, however, it was the second most mentioned category, being identified four (29%) times.

The primary behaviour identified was favouritism, followed by conflict of interest. Conflict of interest and favouritism are vague terms and each covers multiple behaviours. Bribery, in contrast, is considered to be the ultimate form of political corruption and is straightforward and easy to define: someone gives something to someone else who is in public

office in exchange for a favour (Mancuso *et al.*, 2006, p. 98). This definition limits the uses of the term ‘bribery.’ Conflict of interest and favouritism are not as limited and can be interpreted different ways by different articles, so these words were very versatile.

**Table 3.7: Behaviour by Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Bribery	2 (2%)	7 (7%)	0	1 (1%)	4 (4%)	6 (6%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)
Fraud	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
Favouritism	4 (4%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	8 (6%)	9 (10%)	5 (5%)	2 (2%)	0	2 (2%)	0
Conflict of Interest	5 (5%)	7 (7%)	2 (2%)	2 (1%)	7 (7%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	0	0	5 (5%)
Embezzlement	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0
Extortion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abuse of Power/ Breach of Trust	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	0	0	2 (2%)	4 (4%)
Vote-influencing	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	0	0	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	0

- Articles may contain more than 1 behaviour
- Percentages are based on 94 articles and may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Favouritism involved, almost without fail, patronage. A few articles describe patronage as necessary, saying that patronage allows the government to select those with special skills.<sup>38</sup> For the rest, patronage means that people are chosen “based primarily on political connections”<sup>39</sup> and are “well-rewarded for their support.”<sup>40</sup> The articles considered patronage bad, so they usually saw anyone appointed to a patronage post as unworthy. These articles consider skills and qualifications secondary; previous political connections are more important. One article summed

<sup>38</sup> Brown, G. (1993, July 03). Choosing diplomats. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D7.

<sup>39</sup> Cameron, Stevie. (1993, June 05). A haven for wives, widows, and very good friends. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D3.

<sup>40</sup> Cameron, Stevie. (1993, June 05). Rewards. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D1.



it up: “[i]t begs the question if any of these [political] appointments are based on merit or just political connections.”<sup>41</sup> A 3095 word article, the second longest in the study, only looks at the relationship between patronage-post recipients and their relationship with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The article lists numerous recipients and their political connection, but never once mentions any useful skills or important qualifications.<sup>42</sup>

Conflict of interest cases were, with one exception, also described as inappropriate and bad. They predominantly involved elected officials who were seen as using their power to “influence public policy that may affect their public investments.”<sup>43</sup> Despite describing numerous conflict of interest cases, *The Globe and Mail* only directly defined ‘conflict of interest’ once. Other articles provide enough information to allow readers to come to their own definitions. There could be several reasons for this: articles being edited and sections being cut out, articles may be attempting to be objective, or articles being written for a more educated audience who know the definition.

Actual conflict of interest was not important for most of these articles. Instead, it was “perceived conflict.”<sup>44</sup> Perceived conflict exists where “a ‘reasonably well informed’ person is left with the perception that the elected official cannot adequately perform their job because of their private interests.”<sup>45</sup> Therefore, there does not need to be an actual conflict—just the appearance of one. Because of a divide between public and private interests, it is easy to perceive of someone who “mixed his private business affairs with his public duties.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, “deviance is

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<sup>41</sup> Cernetig, M. (1998, February 6). Guilty of misconduct, Liberal quits plum post. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A3.

<sup>42</sup> Cameron, Stevie. (1993, June 05). Rewards. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D1.

<sup>43</sup> Time for Mr. Getty to tighten conflict rules [Editorial]. (1990, November 29). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A24

<sup>44</sup> Background: Conflict of interest rules loose in Alberta. (1990, November 27). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A8.

<sup>45</sup> Laghi, B. (1996, April 22). Alberta conflict law could be extended. *The Globe and Mail*, p. E5.

<sup>46</sup> York, G. (1992, February 22). Conflict of interest. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D2.

in the ‘eye of the beholder’” (Williams & McShane, 2004, p. 144), which makes public opinion the most important determiner of what actions constitute ‘conflict of interest.’

*The Globe and Mail* constructed conflict of interest as two separate problems: an ethical problem and an efficiency problem. The articles saw elected officials, even in perceived cases of conflict of interest, as being influenced by their own financial interests instead of the public good: if something was seen as good for the elected official then it was bad for the public. None of the articles, however, went in depth about the ethical issues.

Then there was the problem of efficiency. An editorial states that “[q]uite apart from ethical consideration, the problem of a minister continuing to do business while serving in the government is the powerful likelihood of the minister being distracted.”<sup>47</sup> The articles imply that elected officials who fail to devote their full attention towards their job cannot do their jobs properly. Therefore, the public suffers. The public’s development of this view, argues Doig (1996, p. 38), was concurrent with the development of merit-based bureaucracies. It was interesting that only private interests were a threat to efficiency. Nothing else that may distract elected officials was a problem: divorce, illness, family issues, personal issues, and so on. These may be problems in other articles, but they did not appear in this study.

Most of the articles featuring bribery dealt with one of three incidents: the Conservative Government under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, including allegations that Mulroney was paid money because Air Canada purchased airplanes from Airbus Industrie<sup>48</sup>; immigration consultants attempting to purchase immigration papers<sup>49</sup>; and City of York Aldermen being charged with “accepting secret commissions.”<sup>50</sup> Each incident was reported in multiple articles.

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<sup>47</sup> Time for Mr. Getty to tighten conflict rules [Editorial]. (1990, November 29). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A24.

<sup>48</sup> Koring, P. (1995, November 20). Accounts frozen in bribery probe. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A1.

<sup>49</sup> Oziewicz, E. (1996, November 24). Consultants charged with bribery. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A7.

<sup>50</sup> Ferguson, J. (1991, November 01). Municipal politicians, developer charged. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A1.

Over half of bribery articles, 15 out of 29 (52%), covered former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and his Conservative Government, with seven out of 15 (45%) related to Airbus Industrie. Three articles (10%) were about immigration consultants attempting to buy immigration papers. Finally, another three articles (10%) of bribery articles were about City of York Aldermen accepting money to award a garbage collection contract.

Articles about abuse of power and breach of trust were vague. The term ‘abuse of power’ was usually contained in a quote, but the articles, however, did not define what abuse of power meant. Claims-makers who used the term usually used it as a catch-all to express their displeasure at someone else’s actions. Fraud was also used as an unexplained catch-all term. However, unlike the term ‘abuse of power,’ fraud was also used to identify what criminal charges were laid. Three articles mention embezzlement but only one article used the term. The other two articles described behaviours that resembled embezzlement. Finally, a lone article described, but did not use the term, vote-buying.

### **SOURCES**

Those allegedly involved with political corruption are the most commonly quoted source, appearing in 37 articles (41%). Government sources were quoted in 35 articles (38%), other/unknown in 22 articles (23%), and criminal justice personnel in 12 articles (13%). Eight articles quoted experts (8%). Victims were quoted the least, appearing in seven articles (75%). Thirty-three articles (35%) contained no quotes. Of those articles containing a quote, the majority (61%) contained a quote from alleged offenders while over half (57%) contained a quote from a government official. Experts appeared in 13% of the articles. Victims were the least

quoted category, appearing in only 11% of articles containing quotes. Twenty-two (36%) articles contained quotes from those who could not be classified into any of the other categories.

There were 37 quotes indicating, either directly or indirectly, that political corruption is “deplorable”<sup>51</sup> and “unacceptable”<sup>52</sup> because being “in a position of trust makes [political corruption] worse”<sup>53</sup> than other actions. Many of the quotes condemning political corruption come from those, such as elected officials in opposing political parties, who stand to gain something from describing the horrors of political corruption. This is because heavy media coverage often brings out those who have similar claims and want to advance an agenda (Best, 2008, p. 70). The goal is frame alignment, where claims-makers attempt to introduce their frame (or view) to other frames to try to generate more support (Best, 2008, p. 70). The quotes condemning political corruption usually appeared in the beginning or at the end of the article, but very rarely in the middle.

**Table 3.8: Sources by Category and Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Alleged Offenders	5 (5%)	9 (10%)	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	7 (7%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)
Government	1 (1%)	6 (6%)	2 (1%)	6 (6%)	6 (6%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	4 (4%)	4 (4%)
Experts	0	2 (2%)	0	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	0	0	0	1 (1%)
Victims	0	2 (2%)	0	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	0	0	3 (3%)
CJ	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	4 (4%)	0	3 (3%)
Other/Unknown	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	6 (6%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
None	8 (8%)	6 (6%)	1 (1%)	6 (6%)	2 (2%)	4 (5%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)

- Articles may use multiple sources
- Percentages are based on 94 articles and may not add up properly due to rounding

<sup>51</sup> Cernetig, M. (1998, February 6). Guilty of misconduct, Liberal quits plum post. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A3.

<sup>52</sup> Cernetig, M. (1995, August 17). Harcourt returns Sirhota to post. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A5.

<sup>53</sup> Cordon, S. (1997, February 22). Tory imprisoned for role in scandal. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.

The articles also contained 14 quotes saying that political corruption “isn’t a huge problem facing the country.”<sup>54</sup> Most of these quotes were buried in the middle of the articles, surrounded by quotes describing political corruption as bad. The recency effect suggests that readers are likely to remember the information at the beginning and end of an article, forgetting information in the middle (Murdoch, 1962, p. 482). This tactic of selectively using and positioning quotes can influence the tone of the article. Because both sides of the issue are covered, writers can assure their editors that the articles are balanced.

This sounds like a secret plot: authors purposefully writing articles in this manner to influence an innocent reader’s beliefs. In truth, articles formatted in this manner are the result of many decisions that are unrelated to controlling the reader’s beliefs. Authors and editors choose quotes based on who the quotes come from and what the quotes say (Ericson *et al.*, 1987, pp. 282-296). Quotes from people considered important, powerful, or knowledgeable are more likely to appear in articles than quotes from people lacking those qualities (Sigal, 1973). Politicians, who were responsible for a large number of quotes in this study’s articles, are considered legitimate sources of information because they have power and authority (Ericson *et al.*, 1989, p. 173) and thus were more likely to appear than John Doe from Toronto. Only two articles in the study, one about Glen Kealey<sup>55</sup> and the other about Alberta’s Samson Cree Aboriginal Reserve,<sup>56</sup> contained quotes from ‘regular’ or ‘average’ people. This served to limit how political corruption became defined. Political corruption, in essence, becomes defined by ‘the elite,’ those who have some form of legitimacy.

The news media’s position as the public’s ‘protector’ is difficult. Not only must they make money for their stockholders, but they must also be a civil institution capable of earning

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<sup>54</sup> York, G. (1992, February 22). Conflict of interest. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D2.

<sup>55</sup> York, G. (1991, August 5). Tory foe may typify country’s mood. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A1.

<sup>56</sup> Cheney, P. (1999, April 24). How money has cursed Alberta’s Samson Cree. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A1.

public trust (Owens, 2001, p. 660). Therefore, they must select quotes and articles that are important to the public and, at the same time, will attract the public's attention (Ericson *et al.*, 1987). It is a very careful balance. If the news media selects important but uninteresting news, they risk losing money and angering the shareholders; if they select sensational but unimportant news, then they run the risk of angering their audience. Therefore, while newspapers claim to be independent and unbiased, their coverage is heavily influenced by the sources they use (Ericson *et al.*, 1989, p. 5). Thus, the news media must be very careful where they obtain information.

News agencies such as newspapers are allies of legitimate institutions like the State (Tuchman, 1978, p. 4), because it makes newsgathering easier. Quotes from legitimate institutions can quickly come to dominate coverage and immediately obtain legitimacy simply because they come from a legitimate institution (Yoon, 2005, p. 762). Despite the noted dangers, journalists rely on State sources for information (Fishman, 1980, p. 85-88). State sources were cited in 41 articles (44%). Out of those 41 articles, six (15%) cited both government spokespersons and members of the criminal justice system. In almost every case, members of the criminal justice system described political corruption as a problem.

Government spokespersons fit into two categories: elected officials or department spokespersons. Elected officials, with few exceptions<sup>57</sup>, characterized political corruption as a major problem. Political corruption was seen as “sleazy”<sup>58</sup> and “unacceptable behaviour.”<sup>59</sup> Elected officials routinely called on political leaders to “fire the unethical [politician].”<sup>60</sup> Department spokespersons, on the other hand, did not act as primary claims-makers in the traditional sense and rarely engaged in defining political corruption. Instead, they explained the

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<sup>57</sup> The article by York – ‘York, G. (1992, February 22). Conflict of interest. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D2.’ – is probably the best example of this.

<sup>58</sup> Partridge, J. (1991, April 12). Tory-linked lobbyist to push Telesat appeal. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.

<sup>59</sup> Howard, R. (1995, February 17). Masters under fire for personal spending. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A4.

<sup>60</sup> Canada watch: Weiner accused of nepotism. (1993, July 13). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.

circumstances surrounding perceived cases. These explanations, because they come from a State employee, are provided with legitimacy (Yoon, 2005, p. 762). The stories crafted by these spokespersons were often the primary explanations utilized by the articles. In this way, State sources were the primary claims-makers and the articles authors became the secondary claims-makers. By combining the quotes from various sources, the articles' authors altered the original claims.

By using mainly State sources, however, it is difficult for newspapers like *The Globe and Mail* to adapt a highly critical perspective; they risk losing access if they displease their sources (Dowler *et al.*, 2006, p. 843). By not adapting a highly critical perspective, *The Globe and Mail* helps to entrench the idea that quotes from State sources are accurate. Therefore, if quotes from State sources are accurate, then quotes from other sources must be not as accurate or completely inaccurate.

This is what happened with quotes from alleged offenders. Quotes from alleged offenders usually came after the explanations provided by State employees. These quotes came at the end of the article, the usual location for unimportant or explanatory information (Desbarats, 1996, p. 9). Because information supplied by others came first, alleged offenders became stigmatized. Readers, therefore, perceive alleged offenders as trying to hide something (Goffman, 1965). As a result, quotes from alleged offenders come across as hollow and defensive, and readers take this as proof of a person's deviance (Goffman, 1965). The counter-claims of alleged offenders, in this case, are overpowered by the claims from the primary claims-makers.

Experts were quoted when study articles needed someone to provide context and explain public reaction. Each expert was identified by their affiliation (all but one were affiliated with a university) and research specialty. *The Globe and Mail* did not use experts as lone claims-

makers. Instead, experts provided context for the claims issued by other claims-makers, who were usually State sources. Victims, though only quoted in seven articles, each responded by denouncing political corruption.

The final category of quote sources, 'other/unknown,' fit into three categories: senior members of professional associations like the "Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers,"<sup>61</sup> senior members of anti-corruption or other groups like Samson Cree "band elders,"<sup>62</sup> or senior members of businesses like the "president of...KPMG Investigation and Security, Inc."<sup>63</sup> The selection of senior members from each of these organizations fits with the source selection by newspapers. People occupying senior positions are seen as knowledgeable and legitimate, so their statements carry more weight (Yoon, 2005, p. 763). Just as statements from scientists are seen as more authoritative and legitimate than drug users, statements from a company president carry more weight than statements by a secretary.

### **EVIDENCE AND DESCRIPTION**

Of the 94 articles in this study, 31 (33%) contain no evidence to support their claims. Of the remaining 64 articles, 59 (92%) featured evidence gathered by others, although only nine (10%) featured evidence independently gathered by *The Globe and Mail*. No articles featuring independently gathered evidence appeared in 1990, 1992, 1993, or 1997. The only year where each article provided evidence that supported the claims in the article was 1996.

Only 12 articles out of 65 (18%) referenced where they obtained their information. Just nine articles (14%) provided independently verified evidence. The remaining 46 articles (71%) referenced evidence provided by another source.

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<sup>61</sup> Sallot, J. (1994, August 31). Liberal named to London post. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A2.

<sup>62</sup> Cheney, P. (1999, April 24). How money has cursed Alberta's Samson Cree. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A1.

<sup>63</sup> Stueck, W. (1999, October 27). Canada among cleanest in world bribery survey. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A13.



**Table 3.9: Evidence by Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Independent	0	1 (1%)	0	0	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)	3 (3%)
Referenced	4 (4%)	12 (13%)	2 (2%)	6 (6%)	9 (10%)	7 (7%)	5 (5%)	4 (4%)	4 (4%)	6 (6%)
Unreferenced	10 (11%)	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	5 (5%)	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)

- Articles may contain more than 1 type of evidence
- Percentages are based on 94 articles and may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Seventy-one articles (75%) provided a description of either political corruption as a whole or about a specific case of political corruption. Out of 65 news articles, 51 (78%) provided a description. Twenty-three (24%) did not provide any information. Articles that did not provide a description of political corruption averaged 386 words, roughly half the average length of articles in the study.

While one can claim that the heavy levels of description and use of evidence fits with *The Globe and Mail's* motto of providing “Canada's best and deepest coverage of national, international and business news” (Globe & Mail, 2009, para.1), it is misleading. Over three-tenths (32%, 30 articles) in the study contained claims where no evidence was provided to back up information. While newspapers fact-check articles and are careful not to publish any claims that may lead to lawsuits, they are not immune to error. The failure to provide evidence prevents other people or organizations from being able to accurately confirm the information in the article. This failure can result in inaccurate information becoming ‘fact.’ Inaccurate information can remain in the news cycle and produce labels that are difficult to remove. Newspapers can issue an apology, but by then the damage to a person’s reputation is done. Accusations are public; apologies are buried. The result is that the whole situation becomes known only in hindsight (Dotter, 2002, p. 434-435).

**Table 3.10: Description by Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Yes	7 (7%)	13 (14%)	3 (3%)	9 (10%)	12 (13%)	10 (11%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	7 (7%)
No	7 (7%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)

- Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

For their news articles, *The Globe and Mail* heavily relied on evidence gathered and analyzed by other sources. Newspapers have been using this method for many years (Rutherford, 1982). If you use independently gathered evidence as a guide, then for *The Globe and Mail* an intrepid reporter (or two) crusading against corruption is more myth than reality. For articles in this study, most of the information and quotes are provided by either government officials including members of opposing political parties, those involved (which were usually quotes of denial), or the police.

### **CAUSES**

Out of 94 articles, 41 (44%) identified at least one cause of political corruption resulting in 52 identified causes of political corruption divided into four separate categories. The most identified cause was structural, appearing in 26 (28%) articles. The next most identified cause was cultural, appearing in 14 (15%) articles. Individual choice was next, appearing in nine articles (10%). The least identified cause was personal mistakes, which appeared in only three articles (3%). Most articles, 43 (56%), did not identify any cause of political corruption.

Even if both the cultural and individual choice categories (23 mentions combined) are combined, *The Globe and Mail* were more likely to identify structural reasons (26 mentions) as the cause of political corruption. The media utilizes two main frames for viewing political corruption: the moral frame and the technical frame (Giglioli, 1996). While other researchers

have identified the moral frame as easier for newspapers to use and thus more likely to be used to describe political corruption, *The Globe and Mail* identified structural causes as the main reason for patronage. For some jobs, the constitution requires patronage, and therefore patronage was the most identified behaviour that was a result of the political structure. Thorsell, for example, writes that the “Constitution requires any government to appoint senators.”<sup>64</sup> Therefore, patronage is needed, and when used properly it is not corruption.

**Table 3.11: Causes by Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Mistake	0	1 (1%)	0	0	2 (2%)	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural	0	3 (3%)	0	1 (1%)	7 (7%)	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)
Structural	5 (5%)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	4 (4%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
Individual	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	0	0	0	2 (2%)	2 (2%)
None	8 (8%)	11 (12%)	1 (1%)	6 (6%)	3 (3%)	10 (11%)	4 (4%)	4 (4%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)

- Articles may contain more than 1 cause
- Percentages are based on 94 articles and may not add up to 100% due to rounding

The primary claims-makers, however, did not fully identify or define how the structural causes influenced political corruption. This led *The Globe and Mail* to become a secondary claims-maker and alter the initial claims. “As society becomes more complex, audience members are frequently confronted by news dealing with topics about which they know very little or nothing” (Johnson-Cartee, 2005, p. 16). *The Globe and Mail* provides a way for the audience to learn about the world.

<sup>64</sup> Thorsell, W. (1993, June 05). Mulroney doomed to be stuck with patronage label. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D6.

Writing about the corporate financing of politics, Terrance Corcoran mentions that “if we continue with the current system, it’s hard to see where change can come from.”<sup>65</sup> He very well could have been writing about solutions offered by *The Globe and Mail*.

### **PREVENTION AND SOLUTIONS**

Out of 94 articles, 30 (32%) mentioned something about preventing political corruption. The most common solution or method of prevention was stricter laws, covered in 16 articles (17%). Twelve (13%) advocated increased accountability while three articles (3%) advocated a more independent criminal justice system. Seven articles (7%) suggested other ways to reduce political corruption including holding “a wide ranging public inquiry,”<sup>66</sup> having patronage positions “advertised through the Canada Gazette,”<sup>67</sup> establishing “a national securities regulator”<sup>68</sup> to help reduce bribery, educating citizens so they are “well informed,”<sup>69</sup> and altering “the perverted power relationship” on aboriginal reserves by having Ottawa “give its contribution.... directly to individual aboriginals....so money spent by the band would be coming directly out of [band members] pockets.”<sup>70</sup> No articles suggested increased transparency as a solution to political corruption.

While *The Globe and Mail* identified stricter laws as the most common form of prevention, several articles in the study identified some problems. The first problem, acknowledged in one article, is the focus required to pass a law. Unless there is a larger amount of attention on a problem, potential solutions become stagnant. “There is no staying power to see

<sup>65</sup> Corcoran, T. (1993, July 24). Save democracy – halt corporate funding. *The Globe and Mail*, p. B2.

<sup>66</sup> Waddell, I., & Gogolek, V. (1991, August 08). Something’s rotten in Ottawa. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A15.

<sup>67</sup> Freeman, A. (1993, September 21). Ottawa advertises plum jobs. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A2.

<sup>68</sup> Bribery, at home and abroad. (1997, December 17). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A20.

<sup>69</sup> Spector, Norman. (1999, February 18). Martin refuses to level with us. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A17.

<sup>70</sup> Power to the aboriginal people. (1999, April 27). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A14.

something through unless there's a hot issue to fuel it"<sup>71</sup> claims the article. Governments only pass laws concerning political corruption after a major scandal, when there is public pressure for change (Greene, 1990, p. 235) and various groups are attempting to advance their agendas (Dowler *et al.*, 2006, p. 842). For example, the 'calls for change' identified by Laghi<sup>72</sup> and York<sup>73</sup> occurred after a controversy.

**Table 3.12: Type of Prevention by Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Accountability	1 (1%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	0	0	1 (1%)	0	2 (2%)	2 (2%)
Laws	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	0	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	0	2 (2%)
Transparency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independent CJ system	1 (1%)	0	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0	0	0	1 (1%)
Other/Unknown	0	1 (1%)	0	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0	2 (2%)
None	10 (11%)	9 (10%)	1 (1%)	7 (7%)	12 (13%)	11 (12%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)

- Articles may contain more than 1 method of prevention
- Percentages are based on 94 articles and may not add up to 100% due to rounding

The news media, then, helps to drive policy change or maintain the status quo. Policy is influenced by citizens' beliefs, which are, in turn, influenced by the media (DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2008, p. 79; Best, 2008). The news media is an excellent agenda-setting source, telling its audience what to think about (Johnson-Cartee, 2005, p. 17). In the process of telling the audience what to think about, the news media suggests how to think about it (Loseke, 2003; Jonson-Cartee, 2005). As result, news media coverage is extremely important in getting support for anti-corruption measures such as laws.

<sup>71</sup> York, G. (1992, February 22). Conflict of interest. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D2.

<sup>72</sup> Laghi, B. (1996, April 24). Alberta's conflict law could be extended. *The Globe and Mail*, p. E5.

<sup>73</sup> York, G. (1992, February 22). Conflict of interest. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D2.

Hastily passed anti-corruption laws create rules that are designed to prevent the type of corruption that inspired the law. The result is a complex system of (usually vague) rules that are difficult to understand. Rule violations are more likely to occur, which creates the perception of more political corruption (Greene, 1990, p. 253). This leads to public outrage, then more rules (Greene, 1990, p. 253). These hastily passed laws can result in people treating all political corruption equally, so “all sense of proportion” can disappear amid the “running down a wounded member of the pack.”<sup>74</sup>

The second problem concerns the people who are responsible for legislating anti-corruption laws. *The Globe and Mail* acknowledges this problem: “every time MPs come to the point of seriously looking at what [laws concerning political corruption] all means, they get subjective and think about their own position.”<sup>75</sup>

However, the claims published by *The Globe and Mail* were unable to convince lawmakers that political corruption was a social problem worthy of solution. During the 1990s, the progression of political corruption through the six stages of the social problems process was halted at stage three. The claims-makers were unable to convince policy makers that political corruption was a problem. The public may have believed political corruption was a problem, but they did not appear convinced it was enough of a problem to warrant change. Therefore, the public did not heavily pressure policy-makers for change.

Despite these two problems, *The Globe and Mail* considered anti-corruption laws useful in preventing political corruption. In terms of policy implementation, “the most obvious way to change policy is through law” (Best, 2008, p. 194). Policy changes, however, do not always take the form of changes to law. *The Globe and Mail*, by focusing on changes to law, overlooks other

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<sup>74</sup> Rusk, J. (1994, August 19). Background / Cabinet resignations. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A9.

<sup>75</sup> York, G. (1992, February 22). Conflict of interest. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D2.

possible avenues for policy change. The problem with most rules and laws governing political corruption is they are not useful because they are vague, so replacing them with easy to understand laws seems like an ideal way to prevent it (Greene, 1990, p. 253). Easily understood laws make rule violations due to misunderstandings less likely. Therefore, there is less likely to be political corruption.

Accountability, the other major style of prevention advocated by several articles was divided into two forms. The first form of accountability was keeping “bad apples”<sup>76</sup> from becoming public officials. The articles argued that political corruption would be reduced if by only “squeaky clean”<sup>77</sup> individuals were allowed in politics. The second form of accountability involved making those in public office responsible for their actions. In order to promote accountability, public officials must be held responsible for their actions and face consequences if they violate the law. “Allegations of wrongdoing... [must be] appropriately resolved.”<sup>78</sup>

Only two articles advocated an international approach to reducing political corruption. While seven articles suggested different ways to reduce political corruption, their suggestions would likely not prove effective at reducing it. Establishing a political inquiry could uncover other instances of corruption and recommend solutions, but it would be up to the government to implement them. Establishing a national securities regulator and altering the power relationship between Ottawa and Aboriginals require changes to law. Both would likely take many years to implement. Finally, educating citizens requires large amounts of money, time, and citizen participation that make it difficult to implement.

Media outlets, such as newspapers, prefer simple themes because simple themes are easy to research, easy to describe, and easy to understand (Tuchman, 1978, pp. 192-195; Ericson *et*

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<sup>76</sup> Delacourt, S. & McInnes, C. (1993, July 29). ‘Bad apples’ can’t run, Chretien says. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A4.

<sup>77</sup> York, G. (1992, February 22). Conflict of interest. *The Globe and Mail*, p. D2.

<sup>78</sup> Cheney, P. (1999, April 24). How money has cursed Alberta’s Samson Cree. *The Globe and Mail*, p. A1

*al.*, 1987, p. 140). The more complex the theme, the more difficult it is to research, the more difficult it is to explain. The more difficult something is to explain, then the more space it will require. That leaves less space for other news, pictures, or advertising. To generate sales, newspapers must appeal to a wide audience and cover many different topics (Romanow & Soderlund, 1996, p. 14). The more complex or specific the subject, the more readers the newspaper loses. For all these reasons, newspapers support simple solutions to complex problems. Evidence provided by my study supports Dowler *et al.*'s (2006) assertion that "the only message that appeals to media outlets is one supporting harsher measures....or strengthening laws" (p. 842).

The focus on strengthening laws was interesting. *The Globe and Mail* identified structural causes as the main cause of political corruption. Most of the laws *The Globe and Mail* recommended, however, did not involve altering the political structure. Instead, the laws focused on deterrence—the idea that tougher punishments would result in fewer cases of political corruption (Liu, 1986, p. 215).



## CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

The news media is one of the public's main educators on issues related to crime (Garofalo, 1981, p. 334; Johnson-Cartee, p. 6). The news media does not influence everyone, nor is it the sole source of information for any one person (Garofalo, 1981), but a growing body of literature argues that the news media's construction of social reality does have an impact on issues such as deviance, social problems, and public policy (Ogle, Eckman, & Leslie, 2003, p. 26; Robertson, 2007, pp. 108-109).

My study was an attempt to understand some of the basic issues involved with the social construction of political corruption. My goal was to increase our understanding of how political corruption is reported in the news media. In order to study corruption and how it is reported in the media, I did a content analysis using the constructionist perspective. Constructionism was an effective framework for analyzing *The Globe and Mail's* reporting of political corruption and allowed me to observe and examine how *The Globe and Mail* constructed the notion of political corruption during the 1990s. I was able to analyze both the explicit material (GAO, 1996). In that regard, I was able to analyze both what was said.

I found that claims-makers were able to begin constructing political corruption as a problem, but the content of the claims-makers varied. Some claims-makers argued that only certain types of corruption, like patronage, were a problem, while other claims-makers said that other types, like conflict of interest, were the problem. These competing claims may have made it difficult to classify any type of political corruption as a problem.

Even though most claims-makers identified corruption as a problem, several claims-makers issued counter-claims saying that it was not. Claims saying that corruption was not a problem were overpowered by claims that corruption was a problem. In this case, however, the

counter-claims may have provided enough doubt about corruption being a social problem that the claims-makers were unable to convince enough of the audience that political corruption was a problem.

*The Globe and Mail* gave space to the primary claims-makers to allow them to express themselves. The space provided by *The Globe and Mail*, however, was limited, so claims-makers were required to express themselves succinctly. This succinctness meant that comments were to the point and without nuance: political corruption is bad and unacceptable.

With the rise of the rational-legal bureaucracy, political corruption has shifted from something that was once acceptable to something that is now unacceptable (Andvig *et al.*, 2001). This shift followed the shift in the public's perception of the role of State employees, and the Canadian public has become very sensitive to the issue of political corruption (Mancuso *et al.*, 2006): the mere perception of it is enough to start a scandal that can destroy reputations and ruin careers (Thompson, 1997).

Because of its secretive nature, political corruption is very difficult to discover (Bull & Newell, 1997). Organizational constraints may increase the likelihood that certain types of deviance (such as political corruption) are more likely to be reported than others (Ericson *et al.*, 1987; Tuchman, 1978). Corruption's secretive nature also makes it difficult to investigate. Many times the only people who know about an act of political corruption are the corruptor and the corruptee. As a result, independently investigating and confirming political corruption is difficult. The news media must rely on those claims-makers who have access to the information.

*The Globe and Mail's* view of corruption, then, represents the claims made by claims-makers with the greatest level of access to *The Globe and Mail*. *The Globe and Mail*, like most members of the news media, primarily relied on State sources for quotes and information. Quotes

from State sources have legitimacy because they come from State sources, and thus State sources were the primary claims-makers in defining corruption as a social problem. Relying on State sources may make it easier for the news media to gather and report information (Tuchman, 1978), but it limits the influence of other sources. These limits were evident with *The Globe and Mail's* minimal use of other sources as a framing device. Those involved in corruption were quoted more often than State sources, but their quotes appeared to be defensive. Thus, the views of State sources dominated coverage, and as such dominated how *The Globe and Mail* constructed and reported political corruption. For *The Globe and Mail*, political corruption was something that threatened the legitimacy and healthy functioning of the State.

By adopting the State source-centred view, *The Globe and Mail* also adopted the State sources' views on the causes and prevention of political corruption. This caused *The Globe and Mail* to construct the causes and prevention of political corruption in a manner similar to State sources. Research from Giglioli (1996) argues that the news media constructs political corruption as a moral fault. *The Globe and Mail*, however, constructed political corruption primarily as a structural problem. The cause of political corruption was the rules, laws, and regulations that permitted the Canadian State to function. This provided a very interesting area where *The Globe and Mail* could have discussed many different possible solutions to political corruption. The solutions offered by *The Globe and Mail*, however, fit into the one main category defined by the primary claims-makers: deterrence. *The Globe and Mail* recommended solutions that focused on creating tougher laws, which fits within Ericson *et al.*'s (1987) and Dowler, Fleming, and Muzzatti's (2006) arguments that the news media prefer simple narratives and solutions.

This disconnect between the cause and prevention of political corruption could lead to ineffective forms of prevention. To prevent political corruption, lawmakers influenced by *The*

*Globe and Mail* may resort to passing laws with more severe punishments. These laws would likely prove ineffective at reducing political corruption with structural causes.

The focus on singular causes and prevention measures also serves to limit debate, which means “journalistic quality is affected” (Rogers & Thorston, 2003, p. 672). Newspapers have limited space, so any space that focuses on one issue becomes unavailable for another. The focus on one form of prevention, harsher punishments, limits the space available for discussing other forms of prevention. This may limit public debate on other useful options for preventing political corruption and, in turn, produce a limited understanding of political corruption. *The Globe and Mail*’s focus on corruption in the Federal Government, for example, could give readers the that political corruption rarely exists in provincial or municipal governments.

*The Globe and Mail*’s lack of discussion may also influence other papers. Many other Canadian newspapers follow *The Globe and Mail* and use the stories provided in it as a guide. As a result, *The Globe and Mail*’s use of the harsher punishment paradigm may influence other newspapers to provide stories that focus on harsher punishments.

Adopting a State source-centred view also influenced the how *The Globe and Mail* gathered and presented evidence. In this case, *The Globe and Mail* relied on evidence gathered by State employees, which fits with *The Globe and Mail*’s use of State sources. The news articles published in *The Globe and Mail* relied on information obtained from MP’s, police officers, or State-spokespersons. These actors also provided the interpretation of that evidence that *The Globe and Mail* used in its construction of political corruption. Facts are important, but so is the context (Ericson *et al.*, 1987).

By using mainly State-centred sources, *The Globe and Mail* provides a limited view of political corruption. The main State sources used by *The Globe and Mail*, politicians, have an

interest in how political corruption is defined. Many politicians have a personal and professional interest in maintaining the status quo. These politicians, for example, may want to leave the structural causes in place so that they can gain political points now and have access to the same loopholes in the future.

All of these factors—the reliance on State sources and their interpretation of evidence, the minimal gathering of independent evidence, and the reliance on simple narratives—came together to influence *The Globe and Mail's* description of political corruption. Thus, when discussing political corruption, *The Globe and Mail* used a serious tone. This serious tone was evident through the selection and placement of quotes and the coverage that negative news received.

*The Globe and Mail* reported political corruption as grand corruption that affected the Federal Government. Except for conflict of interest, the behaviours presented by *The Globe and Mail*—the other behaviours include favouritism, bribery, abuse of power, fraud, embezzlement, and vote-influencing—are the same behaviours that were in the past considered political corruption, all of which were illegal. Codified conflict of interest rules, however, first appeared in 1964, so they are relatively new (Greene, 1990).

The major difference between the political corruption today and political corruption in the past is public acceptance (Greene, 1990). In the past, political corruption was acceptable until it crossed a threshold. Today, the mere appearance of political corruption is unacceptable, let alone political corruption itself. The news media's focus on the same long-time behaviours—favouritism, bribery, abuse of power, fraud, embezzlement, vote-influencing, and conflict of interest—and the lack of public acceptance for political corruption will ensure that the same behaviours will remain unacceptable in the future.

The changing nature of news reporting and the need for news organizations to get ‘the exclusive’ means that there is going to be an increased push to get news out the door, especially if it will lead to increased sales. As a result, claims-makers who have easy access to the news media will become even more influential. These claims-makers will continue to define political corruption, which will lead in the future to new definitions.

My thesis explored the news media and claims-making. I have added to our understanding of how political corruption is reported and what is involved in reporting it, but further research needs to be done. Other English-language Canadian newspapers—such as the *National Post*, *Toronto Star*, or *Ottawa Citizen*, for example—may paint a very different picture of Canadian political corruption. As well, I did not analyze French-language newspapers. This could be a fertile ground for study, as Siegel (1996) argues that the focus of the French-language media is different from the English-language media. Many large corruption scandals, like those under Premier Duplessis, may have also influenced French-language newspapers.

While newspapers are still one of the public’s main sources of news, television and the internet are now the primary source of news for the majority of the population (Desbarats, 1996, p. 24). Television and the internet present information in a very different format than newspapers (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004b, p. 1147). As a result, information about political corruption may be presented differently as well.

The news media occupies a unique place in society because it acts as both a check on State power and a distributor of State information (Ericson *et al.*, 1987). Struggling to produce profit, newspapers will likely begin producing more infotainment news while simultaneously reducing their ability to conduct deep, detailed investigative journalism. Increasing concentration of ownership and continuing changes to the news media’s format make it likely that the news

media's balancing act will become even more precarious in the future. This changing nature of newspapers will also provide another interesting area to research. By conducting research into these areas, we can help build a body of empirical evidence and hopefully increase our understanding of the news media's role in the development of social reality.

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**APPENDIX A**  
Search Terms

Political corruption and Canada  
Corruption and Canada  
Government Misconduct  
Government and misconduct  
Political and misconduct  
Bribery and government and Canada  
Graft and government and Canada  
Conflict of interest and government and Canada  
Extortion and Canada  
Abuse of power and Canada  
Embezzlement and government and Canada  
Theft and Government and Canada  
Fraud and government and Canada  
Patronage and Government and Canada  
Nepotism and Government and Canada  
Favouritism and government and Canada  
Vote-buying and Canada  
Vote-influencing and Canada



**APPENDIX B**  
Coding Scheme

Publication Date: \_\_\_\_\_ ProQuest ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Pg #: \_\_\_\_\_

Corruption Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Desc: \_\_\_\_\_

Tone: \_\_\_\_\_ Behaviours: \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

Sources: \_\_\_\_\_

Causes: \_\_\_\_\_

Prevention: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence to support choices (eg. Quotes from the article):