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POLICING THE EDUCATIONAL CRISIS: ENGLISH CANADIAN NATIONAL NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF THE QUEBEC TUITION PROTESTS

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Abstract

Using a critical discourse analysis, this research examines the coverage by Canada's two national English-language newspapers of the 2012 Quebec tuition protests. The goal was to uncover what relationships were formed and constituted by media when representing people challenging neo-liberal assumptions of payment for continuing education. The result, I argue, is similar to the conclusions of Stuart Hall et al. (1978) about the British press's coverage of muggings in the 1970s: media and the state form a reciprocal relationship in constituting an "ideological state-apparatus." The difference, however, is that when centred on an issue of pedagogy in late capitalism, new marketized actors and interests begin to emerge in the role of the state. As such, adults who challenge the reciprocity of the market and media – specifically when it comes to assumptions about learning, school, or education – become infantilized; they lack the supposed revelatory truths of the market and violate the norms of what I refer to as new debt politics.

Résumé

Dans un cadre d›analyse de discours critique, cette étude examine la couverture médiatique de deux journaux canadiens de langue anglaise à propos du mouvement de contestation étudiante contre la hausse des frais de scolarité du printemps 2012 au Québec. Cette analyse avait pour but de faire ressortir les liens formés et créés par les médias dans leur représentation des personnes qui remettent en question le présupposé néo-libéral dans le paiement pour une éducation supérieure. Je soutiens que le résultat est similaire aux conclusions tirées par Stuart Hall et al. (1978) au sujet de la couverture médiatique de la vague d›agressions de 70 en Grande-Bretagne : les médias et l›État forment un lien réciproque dans la formation de « l›appareil idéologique de l›État ». Cependant, il existe une différence lorsque l›enjeu est pédagogique et se situe dans un capitalisme tardif où nous voyons émerger des intérêts et des acteurs du marché qui prennent le rôle de l›État. Par conséquent, les adultes qui remettent en question la réciprocité entre les médias et l›État – précisément quand il s›agit des idées préconçues au sujet de l›apprentissage, de l›école et de l›éducation

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– sont infantilisés; ils ne possèdent pas la supposée vérité du marché et violent les normes de ce que j›appelle « les nouvelles politiques de la dette ».

Introduction

The events in Quebec referred to as *le printemps érable*, or the Maple Spring of 2012, came on the heels of many formative movements of social protest. Globally, the name played on the nomenclature of the Arab Spring, but also, locally, the Occupy movement still lingered and resonated with many of the Quebec protesters. *Le printemps érable* encompassed a series of student strikes at many of Quebec's post-secondary institutions. The major impetus for the strikes was a proposal, and subsequent implementation, of tuition hikes by the provincial government of Jean Charest, the premier at the time. The more public and reported-on events were the rolling street protests that, as the spring turned to summer, involved hundreds of thousands of citizens marching in various scales. Included in these protests were various members of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education and other adult education groups in the province. Two lingering images include the reuse[1] of red felt squares and the *casseroles* – the nightly neighbourhood coordination of the banging of pots. The red squares were usually attached to lapels and personal garments with safety pins. Alan Sears (2012) has noted that

> the red square worn by Quebec student activists and their allies is a playful and creative symbol, combining the idea of debt ("squarely in the red") with a traditional marker of militancy (red as the colour of insurgency). It takes the red of the old left and recasts it in a new context, linked to an emerging new left with its own questions, roadmaps and icons. (p. 215)

Before long, the iconic red squares also appeared in many other Canadian provinces – both as acts of solidarity and a way to protest tuition in those locations.

At the end of the winter it was in a separate province – in Edmonton, at the University of Alberta, to be exact – where Dr. Jennifer Kelly, who is professor and chair of the Department of Educational Policy Studies, publicly pondered why so little attention was being paid to the critiques that protesters were fostering both in Quebec and in other regions. Perhaps unbeknownst to her, Dr. Kelly's comments prompted my own personal mental enquiry, as well as the following scholastic inquiry, on the subject of the Quebec tuition protests.

As the events of *le printemps érable* progressed, one curiosity of the phenomenon – and potential, if not partial, answer to Dr. Kelly's query – was the nature of the newspaper media coverage. The newspaper reports published in English media for a national audience formed curious relationships between the reader and the people they portrayed. This did not go unnoticed by the public. A web-based volunteer collective called "Translating the printemps érable," for example, established a translation service whereby anglophones could access French media reports of the protests. Likewise, this did not go unnoticed by the English media (see Houpt, 2012). The impetus for establishing the collective was the drastic differences in how the protests were portrayed in English and French media.

To be clear, there is no shortage of tradition in critiquing newsmedia in the depiction of their subjects. Even within this study, some authors make a note of this. By creating,

1 This was not the first time the squares were employed as a symbol of tuition protests.

maintaining, reflecting, recirculating, or regurgitating discursive trends, newsmedia open themselves to social critique. This research, however, focuses on a specific aspect of representation. That is, this research asks: How are relationships about the concept of pedagogy portrayed when neo-liberal interests are challenged? Addressing this question is accomplished by examining the coverage of English national newspaper media through a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995, 2001, 2003; Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011; Gee, 2005), which attempts to enlighten the relationships mediated by the form of representation.

The phenomenon of the protest, I argue, offers tremendous potential for analyzing this question. Not only are the objects of the media's coverage involved in formal educational programs; not only do the protests explicitly tie notions of pedagogy – formal and informal – to societal practice; but the protest does so with a direct critique of neo-liberal assumptions of the economization of government, schools, and social life.

As the reader will see, the theoretical framework for this research draws heavily on the influential work of Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts's *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (1978). It was their analysis that highlighted the "reciprocity between the different parts of the control culture" (p. 76) – in this instance, the media and the state. The mechanism of reciprocity comes when "the media legitimated its coverage in evidence provided by the courts" (p. 76), but, as they continued,

> now the media themselves have become the "legitimator" of the control process. We are now at the very heart of the inter-relationships between the control culture and the "signification of culture". The mutual articulation of these two 'relatively independent' agencies is by this stage so overdetermined that it cannot work in any way other than to create *an effective ideological and control closure* around the issue. In this moment, the media – albeit unwittingly, and through their own "autonomous" routes – have become effectively an apparatus of the control process itself – an "ideological state-apparatus". (p. 76)

In light of these considerations, I conclude that the coverage of the protests polices a discourse of moral panic. In this case the panic is that those involved in the protest are unenlightened and infantile. By adopting the ideology and discursive trends of new debt politics, the national coverage aligned their discourse with legitimating neo-liberal ideologies surrounding debt. Therefore, this infantilization does not simply legitimize discourses in the papers as the mature voice of reason, but also posits adult students as deficient in a specific ideology seen as self-evident: a sacrosanct political creed assumed by valorizing some forms of capitalist indebtedness. Two distinctive, but related, steps form these discursive relationships. The first is the broader acceptance of new debt politics; the second is the specific delegitimation of those who would critique this ideology in education.

Study Method and Methodology

The newspaper stories that comprised the study sample were collected using the University of Alberta's Canadian newspaper database Canadian Newsstand Complete and Concordia University's Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies – both ProQuest tools that allow access to

newspapers. The search encompassed February 13, 2012, to September 4, 2012. The start date corresponds to the first student strikes in the province and the end date corresponds to the Quebec provincial election. Stories for the study were selected from the two national English Canadian newspapers, the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*. Stories from these two papers were specifically selected as they reach a national audience. Admittedly, in this day and age, the criterion that they reach a national audience is a bit tenuous, as one could argue that online access means people in British Columbia can easily access newspapers in, say, Nova Scotia. Further to this point, this research project discovered that many regional English newspapers did have numerous stories that met the search criteria – and, indeed, they could be digitally accessed across the country. Nevertheless, the sample was chosen from these two newspapers as they do have a scope, reach, and name recognition as prominent news media sources that add influence to their distribution. That is, the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* comprise an oeuvre of the national daily print media.

The search process for the newspaper stories involved filtering results based on Boolean operators. Within the study timeline, the phrases "Quebec AND student OR protest" were searched in all fields using the advanced search option. Within these parameters, a total of 271 stories were collected. From the *Globe and Mail*, 132 stories were returned and from the *National Post*, 139. These search parameters were used to conduct independent searches for the period February 13 to September 4. This data set further broke down as 159,228 words. Coding of this data was achieved using the HyperRESEARCH qualitative analysis software system.

It should be noted that some stories were not included in the study if they met the search parameters but did not substantively address the situation as an area of focus. That is, stories may have been excluded if the protests were mentioned only in passing or as a way of contextualizing contemporary events. Also, letters to the editor were included in the search results and data sample.

As delimitations of this study, some features of contemporary media not included in the data or analysis should also be noted. The first, and perhaps most obvious, is that the study focuses on national English print media. This should not be interpreted as a prioritization of media on a linguistic basis. Rather, it is a reflection of the inspiration for the study as to the relationship of English Canada with the student protests. The second is that this study does not reflect the nature of online comments that readers may consume or articulate if they read the stories online. Likewise, this does not speak to the importance of this aspect when it comes to the consumption of media.

Methodologically, this work was organized as a critical discourse analysis (CDA). As previously stated, approaches within CDA emphasize how social relationships are mediated by the histories and power of discourse. As such, CDA studies have attempted to articulate the connections between semiotics and social relations. Specifically, the underlying argument is that "we can only make sense of the salience of discourse in contemporary social processes by recognizing that discourse and society/culture are mutually constitutive," and that discourse "does ideological work" (Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011, pp. 370–371).

Theoretical Framework

As outlined in the introduction, this research is theoretically based in the neo-Marxist tradition of Hall et al.'s (1978) *Policing the Crisis*. As a seminal text in the fields of critical

theory, media studies, and cultural studies, the work challenged many dominant discourses about civil society. The authors acknowledged that a key portion of their work was based on Stan Cohen's (1972) notion of *moral panic*. While moral panics are not new, the impetus to study the phenomenon in the 1970s came about – for both Hall et al.'s and Cohen's projects – as there was an unsettling solvency about the nature and justification for the panics.

In the case of Hall et al. (1978), the moral panic that they sought to trouble revolved around a series of muggings in 1972–73 in the United Kingdom. As the authors noted, the crime of mugging and, indeed, the word itself, was introduced to public discourse as a new and foreign threat to society. This threat and subsequent panic revolved around a racialized and class-based discourse of urban violence. Far from innocuous, these discourses constituted a hidden curriculum of social control. The analysis by Hall et al. of the state's, the media's, and the public's role in the perpetration of this so-called crisis stands as a landmark for analyses of hegemony in civil society.

Theoretically, the *Policing the Crisis* project of the early 1970s drew upon three important traditions of critical theory. The first was the work of Paul Willis (1977). Willis is well known for his critique of the education system as it relates to the structural reproduction of class. Specifically, his publication of *Learning to Labour*, just the year before Hall et al.'s (1978) book, articulated the tenacious hold that capital and civil society had on learning – that is, the nature in which we learn to reproduce society.

Second, the authors drew upon Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1963) to describe the process whereby crises such as crime, or, in the case of this research, social protests, are constituted out of historical material conditions:

> Economic conditions…first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is already a class as against capital but not yet for itself. In the struggle…this mass becomes united and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle. (Marx in Hall et al., 1978, p. 356)

The third and final tradition used in *Policing the Crisis*, which I highlight here, was Antonio Gramsci's (1971) work. The authors noted that it was Gramsci who provided the basis for understanding the state's role in providing "an order *of cohesion*" (Hall et al., 1978, p. 202) in the face of capitalism's pressures on the population. In this way, they used Gramsci's well-documented perspective on hegemony: The state and capitalism would generate support by providing leadership. In modern states, they noted,

> this management of consent was not conceived simply as a trick or a ruse. For capitalist production to expand, it was necessary for the whole terrain of social, moral and cultural activity to be brought, where possible, within its sway, developed and reshaped to its needs. That is what Gramsci meant by the state "creating a new type or level of civilization". The law, he added, "will be its instrument for this purpose". (p. 203)

As such, capitalism maintains stability of a tenuous process through the back and forth of "coercion (domination) and consent (direction)" (p. 203).

This discussion also has interesting implications for education, as the facet of providing direction by the state is one that both Gramsci (1971) and Hall et al. (1978) compared to educational pursuits. The production of consent situates the state and the legal system as popular educators; "it operates according to a plan, urges, incites, solicits, and 'punishes'" (Gramsci in Hall et al., p. 203). Further to this, the theoretical mandate for *Policing the Crisis* was built on the notion that, within state support for capitalism, the popular educational endeavours of the state are most effective when they are the dominant activities of the state. As they stated, "Gramsci argued, the capitalist state functioned best when it operated 'normally' through leadership and consent, with coercion held, so to speak, as the 'armour of consent', for then the state was free to undertake its more educative, 'ethical' and cultural roles, drawing the whole edifice of social life progressively into conformity with the productive sphere" (p. 203).

The original *Policing the Crisis* project maintained a clear emphasis on the critique of the state. This was not simply to leverage a critique against a social structure; it was, in fact, a necessary description of the social structure as many theories had "no concept or theory of the state" (Hall et al., 1978, p. 194). Obviously, to articulate a theory of the state, with intent to reveal the nature of cultural control and reproduction specifically around the function of law and crime, is no small task. The authors chose to highlight Lemert's concept of "'societal control culture' (which) is, in Lemert's terms, the 'laws, procedures, programs and organizations which, in the name of a collectivity, help, rehabilitate, punish or otherwise manipulate deviants'" (Hall et al., p. 194). Lemert's approach was helpful for the authors as it identified that the various interests in the societal control culture are "linked, not only by their control function, but by their shared 'definitions of the world', their common ideological perspectives" (Hall et al., p. 195). A key feature of Lemert's concept was the emphasis on the power of these cultural connections to share and justify this ideological culture. This power to share and justify ideology did not simply manifest as a particular power of cultural connections facilitated by the state. Rather, it can be read, in part, as the power that facilitates the state. Also, this concept provided a necessary contextualization of power that eluded many transactional theories of the state. As the authors continued to describe,

> The notion of a "societal control culture", institutionally based, ideologically supported, with some stability and continuity over time, and reflecting the massively skewed distribution of power between law-makers and law-breakers, was of considerable theoretical significance in neutralizing the incipient tendency of "transactional" theories to operate in a historical and material void, denuded of the concept of power (and thus of the complementary concepts of opposition, struggle, conflict, resistance and antagonism). (p. 195)

While helpful for Hall et al.'s project, they moved away from Lemert's notion of the control-culture for an important reason: It does not adequately address the history of the "centers of power and their importance for the social-control process" (p. 195). As such, they noted that an emphasis simply on the control-culture approach "does not differentiate adequately *between* different types of state or political regime. It does not specify the kind of social formation which requires and establishes a particular kind of legal order. It does not examine the repressive functions of the state apparatuses in relation to their consensual

functions" (p. 195). The result of this consideration was a justification of the scope of their analysis. By examining the ways in which the control-culture considerations are juxtaposed with Gramsci's notions of hegemony, Hall et al. established a basis to consider the ways in which media and popular discourse are embroiled in the tensions of legitimation. That is, the phenomenon of mugging in the United Kingdom was studied "in relation to the state, the politico-juridical apparatuses, the political instance, the modes of consent, legitimation, coercion and domination – the elements which contribute to the maintenance of disintegration of a specific mode of hegemony" (p. 196).

As such, the usefulness of the level of analysis for this research project can be applied to popular newspaper reports in how these relationships of legitimation are constituted, challenged, and maintained in relation to issues of education. The state and media, in this analysis, do not simply take an educative component in leading consent for hegemony; the educative component is about the issue of education.

Research Themes and Analysis – Policing the Educational Crisis

So how are relationships about the concept of pedagogy portrayed when neo-liberal interests are challenged? The research themes drawn from the data demonstrate curious symbolic and linguistic components. To be clear, this research project is not one that explicitly comments on whether the newspapers are for or against aspects of the protests. Instead, the emphasis of the research seeks to enlighten how the paper's discursive trends mediate pedagogical relationships – and, in turn, establish a popular educational project of their own. This process realizes Hall et al.'s (1978) argument about media as the "'legitimator' of the control process" (p. 76).

I argue here that this mediation of relationships is enabled through two distinctive, but related, discursive turns. The first is the broader discursive and ideological context of *new debt politics*. Second – and manifesting from the broader context of new debt politics – the texts police the educational crisis through the infantilization of those involved in the protests. As such, the popular pedagogical project that is constituted through the texts comprises a distinctive contemporary form specific to education. I will begin by elaborating on how the texts legitimize new debt politics in their representations and conclude with the more specific findings on the infantilization.

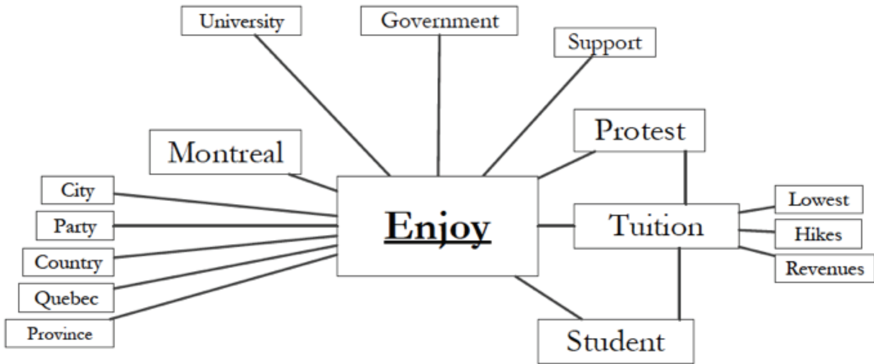
I employ the phrase *new debt politics* to describe and encompass many complex features of late capitalism. It has, however, at its core a fundamental primacy of legitimating some forms of indebtedness in, and for, education. To be clear, the ideology justifies debt as a progressive and even emancipatory social process. When coupled with higher education, financialized burden is transformed from a challenge to a rite of passage. Elsewhere (McGray, 2010), I have critiqued microcredit schemes, particularly those espoused by Muhammad Yunus, as advocating credit as a human right without consideration of how the simultaneous indebtedness constrains learning processes. Needless to say, the contemporary assumptions of financialized debt dovetail extensively with neo-liberal agendas. Tuition protests, specifically such as those detailed in this research, offer a test of new debt politics. Overwhelmingly the discourse surrounding the protests is one that focuses on the legitimation, or delegitimation, of debt and pedagogy. This is evident at the personal and collective scales. By this I refer to the role of both individual learners and the state as a funder of a social service. To reiterate, while the papers have varying stances and

include letters representing differing opinions on the nature of the debt, I argue that the extensive focus on the debate legitimizes such politics; debt, even when contested, becomes naturalized in ways that circumscribe our understanding of pedagogy. That is, the moral panic in this case revolves around pedagogy and debt.

As it is a fairly dominant ideology, it is normalized in a way that its salient features have a beguiling aspect. Nevertheless, we can see traces when the ideology of the new debt politics is violated. While many discursive trends justify the capitalist assumption of debt, there are also markers of *bad* debt. This is evident in cases where debt reaches a larger scale of social organization – usually the state – rather than a personal level. Here is the epoch of neoliberal ideology: Private accumulation is justified, as is private debt; collective ownership is not, nor is collective debt. It should be no surprise, then, that Peter Jarvis's (2010) analysis of this process relegated learning as the "handmaiden of industry, taking the raw material of humanity and turning it into the human resources that would drive the world" (p. 23).

Using Baker's (2006) technique of collocational networks,[2] we can demonstrate how the ideology of new debt politics manifests discursively. Take, for example, Figure 1, a collocational graph of the term *enjoy* (as well as variations such as *enjoys*). In it, one of the four closest collocates is the term *tuition*. It is related to two of the other four major collocates – *protest* and *student*. What is revealing about the discursive link of new debt politics, however, is that a prevailing trend in this coverage is the connection to *enjoying tuition*. Often these comments were evoked in reference to university students in Quebec paying the lowest tuition in the country. No longer does tuition simply need to be paid, but if it is the lowest payment of a capitalist system, one should also *enjoy* doing so.

Figure 1: Collocational Network of the Term *Enjoy*



Examples of this trend include a piece on July 26, 2012, for the *National Post* in which writer Tasha Kheiriddin commented on the student protests:

2 In this study, collocational networks were established by coding prominent themes to establish all occurrences within the study. Once all occurrences were identified, the 10 words before the term and the 10 words after were selected for each example. The collocates in each diagram were selected as they were the most frequent terms to appear through this selection process. Frequency of specific collocates is illustrated by the size of the text as well as the distance from the original term underlined in each figure.

> They terrorized fellow students in their classrooms, blocked access to class, planted smoke bombs in metro stations and shut down bridges and roads. And they justified it by saying that they were on the side of "democracy." That's not democracy – it's anarchy. The student movement was no "Arab Spring", as its leaders would have Quebecers believe. Unlike their Middle Eastern counterparts, Quebec students are not oppressed by dictators, tortured in jails, or unable to express themselves. Rather, they enjoy the lowest university tuition in the country and have a free college education to boot. (Kheiriddin, 2012)

Discursively, this piece offers a number of ideological links to the politics of debt. Of note, other than the links to enjoying tuition, are the remarks intended to connote alternatives with forms of government commonly seen as undesirable (anarchy) in North American culture.

Likewise, the *National Post* ran an editorial earlier in the spring (March 15) that made the same discursive link of *enjoying tuition*:

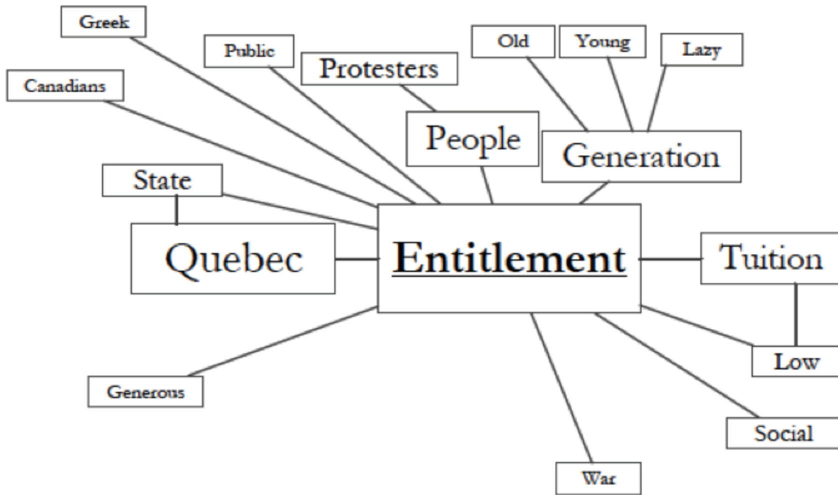
> Welfare-state policies don't make people happy: People simply adjust their expectations to the level of handouts, and get mad when they're taken away. So it is in Quebec, where students enjoy the lowest tuitions in the country. When the Quebec government announced annual increases of $325 over five years, student activists went nuts. ("On Montreal's Streets," 2012)

The authors smuggled in terms that justified the ideology of new debt politics flawlessly. If debt should be tolerated and legitimized, what better manner than to link this ideology with enjoyment? Also, the markers of bad debt (*handouts*, *welfare-state*) were linked to a conception of a public that is posited as being lulled and pacified by the existence of markers of bad debt. Neo-liberalism, as it directly relates to tuition, is at its most transparent here. Bad debt is of the state; good debt – the type that should not only be legitimized, but enjoyed – is of the person. The result is twofold. First, those who are on the wrong ideological side of debt politics are portrayed as duped into believing they are happy. Second, the resulting agency of people who do not accept new debt politics – as described in the final sentence – is that they would go "nuts." Not only should we enjoy debt, but this last sentence further concretizes the consequences of the alternative: Those challenging the ideology of neo-liberal debt have lost rational mental capacity.

Another discursive marker that polices the norms of new debt politics arises with the use of the term *entitlement* (Figure 2). The term was often employed pejoratively to describe those who thought that higher education fell into the category of a right. As such, it occupies a curious place in forming relationship to debt – specifically, tuition debt. In the collocational network, we see minor links to the term *Greek*. The spring and summer protests in Quebec followed much political and media attention of the austerity measures in Greece. This connection solidifies the relationships of those who are seen as bad capitalists. That is to say, those people who violate the taken-for-granted belief in debt as redeemer. Stronger connections, however, relate back to the word *tuition.*

In the research, those who are affixed with the label of entitlement are, obviously, actors who articulate challenges to debt politics. For example, not accepting debt is seen here as having a criminal component:

Figure 2: Collocational Network of the Term *Entitlement*



> The word "free" is code about who should pick up the tab, with students displaying a sense of entitlement to the contents of other people's wallets that would be comical if it weren't so alarming. Pickpockets used to show more respect for what didn't belong to them than some protesters do, who flock about like hysterical magpies, coupling atrophied judgment to a hypertrophied sense of self-esteem. (Jonas, 2012)

It is worth noting that, in the above quotation, questioning protesters' mental capacity is, again, a discursive strategy – this time using the term *hysterical*. Equally noteworthy is the manner in which this is enforced: the term *hysterical* is followed with a comparison with an animal (magpie) associated with scavenger – and therefore not legitimately productive – behaviour, but also, in itself, an animal with discursive relationships with limited mental function (think birdbrain). The link to the term *hysterical* also provides a connection to the next quotation that also emphasizes the term *entitlement*.

Both the previous quote, in pejoratively describing the protestors as hysterical – a term with a long and troubling gendered history about the state of the feminine mind – and the following, which adopts the discourse of *nanny state*, adopt gendered language: "Like France, Quebec is a nanny state. In nanny states, any reduction of entitlements is considered injustice. Grievance becomes a way of life for many radicals, and a little blood in the streets alleviates the boredom of continual protesting with nothing to show for it" (Kay, 2012).

I argue that as a result of the types of discourse exemplified here, the papers have complicated their defense of new debt politics by attributing contrary ideologies as feminine. The emphasis on linking the discourse of entitlement and the protests is a prominent theme. Here the terms are employed in various ways by the *Globe and Mail*: "People in the rest of Canada simply cannot understand why so many students would get so worked up over such moderate tuition hikes, which would still leave them with the lowest tuition in North America. Part of the answer is the entitlement mentality" (Wente, 2012). And

also, “Quebec Premier Jean Charest wavered in the face of 12 weeks of sometimes violent protests that convulsed downtown Montreal, and compromised with student leaders on the tuition increases. But he succeeded in sending a message that Quebec’s social entitlements will not last forever” (“The War over $325 a Year,” 2012).

Both national papers made the links. For example, the *National Post* also ran editorials that featured central use of the term:

> And in the meantime, order must be maintained. Violence should be met by a firm police response. Those found breaking the law should be punished to the fullest extent possible. Anything less will signal that violence is an acceptable option in Canadian public life, and add further to the absurd sense of entitlement that Quebec governments have too long fostered among the province’s coddled youth. (“Don’t Negotiate with Violent Students,” 2012)

As well as the following: “It is tempting to call for a general ‘crackdown,’ but Canadians know from unfortunate experience what can happen when police confront jumped-up, overly entitled young people. It could simply make things worse” (“The Ugly Side of the ‘Quebec Model,’” 2012).

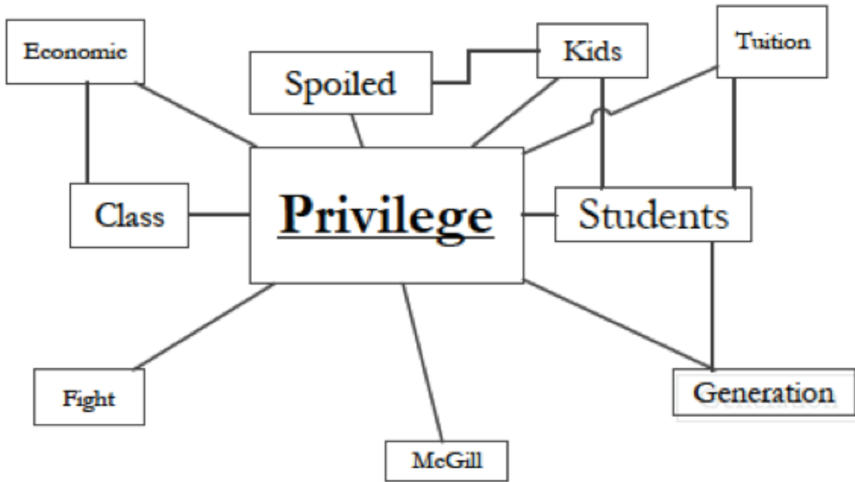
By tracing collocational networks, we can gain a sense of linkages between terms. This, as Baker (2006) argued, is key specifically when using corpora of newspaper texts. He noted that the reason is that newspapers in particular have a collaborative nature in their production and authorship. Also, there is a tradition of newspapers employing writers – especially for op-ed pieces – “specifically because they hold unpopular or controversial views” (p. 73). It is worth noting that the papers have included a number of perspectives on the events of the protests. Evident in the study samples are letters to the editors and various op-ed pieces that are sympathetic with the protesters; this warrants emphasis of a crucial conclusion of this research. The discourse and ideology that are policed through the papers – often by including counter viewpoints – are most powerful not through the specific position adopted by the papers, but by the process of legitimization of an ideology. In fact, policing the boundaries of this ideology are most effective when counter ideology is included as a debate. This introduction of sympathetic critique serves to stabilize the adopted ideology.

While I have attempted to trace how new debt politics are reproduced, sometimes unknowingly, by the newsmedia as legitimators of control processes, there is a more specific result found in this research data: through the ideological assumptions smuggled into the texts, the papers police the educational crisis through the infantilization of those involved. In the last collocational network (Figure 3), we can see how the concept of privilege both ties a specific discourse to debt politics and delegitimizes actors as childlike.

The last aspect of infantilization, I argue, is a specific consequence of the debt politics inherited by the discourses of the papers. In a manner of speaking, the ideology discussed in the first part of the research findings generates this phenomenon. As such, a key discursive component of debt politics also becomes linked to a generational disjuncture. Further elaborating on the connections are passages such as Gagnon’s (2012) article from the *Globe and Mail*:

> The province’s large labour federations financed the student rebels by handing them more than $60,000 – as if all unionized workers were on

Figure 3: Collocational Network of the Term *Privilege*



> the side of the privileged kids aiming for the high end of the job market. Many parents, even grandparents, were very vocal supporters of the strike, either because they would rather not have to pay more for their children's education or because they were trying to recapture their youth or because they were motivated by political convictions. Some even joined hands with stick-wielding masked militants to form picket lines around colleges and terrorize the students who had obtained a court order allowing them to continue their courses. (Gagnon, 2012)

Here there are not only obvious discursive links to corrupt youth, but parents that the author speculates as trying to avoid fiscal responsibility.

As a point on how pervasive the media become in policing the debates, in response to criticisms about where the parents (adults) of the protesting students were, even defenders of the protests picked up the theme. In a response printed in the *Globe and Mail*, one professor emeritus noted that many of the protesters were, in fact, adults:

> The answer to where the parents are is that they are outside marching, protesting and demonstrating in solidarity with, and admiration for, the inspiration and leadership these youth provide (Not A Class Act – letters, May 18). It's a privilege to be alongside students who are resisting the increasingly draconian measures that limit freedoms of speech, assembly and protest on and off campuses in Quebec. Bravas and bravos to them. (Lippman 2012)

Curiously, though, even in this defense there is a discursive schism between the role of adult and student. That is, no direct discursive links represent adults as students. The specific function of the discourse to infantilize capitalizes on a number of longstanding discursive and ideological traditions. While I argue that it is a result of the adoption of new debt politics, it also builds on the long-critiqued banking notion of education censured by Freire (1970). The connection here is the depiction of students as those with a deficit of knowledge

as opposed to complex human subjects with histories capable of problem solving. Just as the banking notion posited learners as incomplete vessels, so do the discourses of new debt politics. In this way we can see that the ideology adopted by the papers reflects dominant forms of banking knowledge.

Conclusions

The Quebec election in September 2012 saw a change of government. The Parti Québécois (PQ) defeated the Liberal Party to assume a minority government for the province. Pauline Marois, the leader of the PQ, repealed the tuition hike that had been a key factor in the student protests. While there are many differing lingering, and complex, opinions about the student protests, I argue that this research highlights an example of how the discourse of new debt politics has been introduced into popular discussions on pedagogy. A consequence of this is that agents who knowingly or unknowingly evoke these discourses introduce a number of phenomena. At a very specific level, the infantilization of those who would not accept the ideology of enjoying tuition or personal debt for education has disturbing consequences. It not only leverages the concepts of the banking system of education, but also relies on a long history of unequal processes of distribution and accumulation to justify access to higher education.

Also, these discourses police an educational crisis. The curious case here, though, is that the crisis is no longer indebtedness – as was a longstanding social issue – but lack thereof. The pedagogical program of the media then becomes one of teaching and policing the values implicated in the ideology. If this process, described by Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) as providing the spirit of capitalism, comes under fire, a moral panic is initiated. Here we see the most explicit connection to the work that inspired the theoretical lens of this study – Hall et al.'s (1978) *Policing the Crisis*.

The employment and reliance on the ideology of new debt politics are not specific to the tuition protests in Quebec. Many of the ideas and discursive traits identified here are beginning to be more transparent in other contexts. The reliance on this ideology as forming its own pedagogical project, though, shows no sign of slowing in policing the educational crisis.

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