
by

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Ruling Relations and Representation: The Toronto Star’s Depiction of NAC 1983-1997

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with objectified accounts as a form of knowledge which inform and shape our society. The focus of this work is on news accounts and how these accounts depict NAC, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, in particular ways. In order to unpack and deconstruct these accounts, a social organization of knowledge approach is utilized in this work. This approach, as developed by Dorothy E. Smith, enables a rupturing of how these accounts are put together by pointing to how “facts” are selected, assembled, and organized to produce a particular interpretation.

Objectified accounts come to us as “common-sense” or “neutral,” but as my inquiry reveals, they are highly ideological. Embedded in and integral to an account is the invisibility of the very work processes that go into its production. Traces of how the account was developed are lost and the account comes to us in its objectified form. Once these work processes are made evident, the ideological nature of these accounts can also become evident.

In investigating how depictions of NAC are socially organized in The Toronto Star, the aim of my study is to highlight the processes and practices that enter into the creation and dissemination of these depictions. While these depictions appear to be “objective,” they are underpinned by an ideological frame which shapes the account, dovetailing with what Smith (1990) calls an interpretive schemata through which reality is shaped according to the ideological frame. The ideological frame that shapes accounts of NAC
in *The Toronto Star* is that NAC only represents a narrow subset of women which serves to devalue the centrality of NAC as the leader of the women's movement in Canada. The aim of this work is to illustrate the processes and practices that go into producing these accounts that are shaped by this ideological frame.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE TOPIC

This thesis is concerned with an exploration of news accounts as objectified and taken for granted features in our society. These objectified modes are mediated to us in many forms—birth certificates, news reports, crime statistics, police reports, etc.—and appear to stand as autonomous claims, statements, and ideas about the social world. Thus, they can be seen as representing or referencing reality. Embedded in and integral to objectified forms of knowledge is the work of actual individuals in actual settings. This work involves various processes and practices, such as organizing, assembling, interpreting, and planning.

The work of individuals in creating and reproducing objectified modes of knowing is of central importance because such work takes root in and is shaped by relations of ruling through which our society is ruled and governed. Through such work, “objective” or “taken for granted” claims about the social world are organized and put together, forming the ruling apparatus of our society that governs not only what we know, but how we know about the world in the ways that we do. The ruling apparatus are those institutions of administration, management, professional authority, and of intellectual and cultural discourses, which organize, regulate, lead, and direct, the kind of society in which we live. (Smith, 1993)

As our society has become highly mediated, these relations of ruling are maintained largely in textual form, appearing as objective ways of knowing the world. These ways of knowing come to us as complete versions of reality; how it is that they are assembled, interpreted, and organized are lost. They are mediated to us as accounts of “the way that things are” or “the way that things ought to be.” Once an account is put together and disseminated, it appears to stand in relation to what Dorothy Smith calls an actuality, namely an event, incident or occurrence in reality, although how this relation is organized becomes invisible. As Smith states,
At some point the account is fully worked up; at some point it drops away the traces of its making (references to evidence, research, researchers, the technical processes involved, and so forth) and stands forth as an autonomous statement representing the actuality of which it speaks. (Smith, 1990: 74)

In exploring how objectified forms of knowledge are socially organized, the focus here is on news accounts — how they are put together and how they claim to represent and how they shape social reality. In order to unpack the work that goes into news reports, how this work is informed, assembled, and constructed, a social organization of knowledge approach will be employed in my study. This approach enables us to unpack how objectified forms of knowing, such as news accounts, are socially organized through various processes and practices, as well as enabling an understanding of how these forms of knowing shape social reality. Once these processes and practices within these accounts are accomplished, accounts are transformed into what can be known to us as “objective” or “taken for granted” features of social reality.

Since I wanted to look at how Canadian feminism has been put together and known in media accounts, I focused on NAC, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women because it is generally seen to be the umbrella group that represents Canadian feminism. While NAC may not speak for all Canadian feminists, Wine and Ristock (1991) point out that NAC is the largest coalition organization Canada to represent women’s concerns and issues.

The news reports that will be the focus of inquiry are those found in The Toronto Star. Since media are highly heterogeneous in nature, i.e., dominant, mainstream, alternative, etc., The Toronto Star will be looked at specifically because it can be regarded as part of “mainstream” media in that it does not cater to a specific audience; it has high readership and, as Siegel (1983) tells us, it is the newspaper with the highest circulation in Canada.

In short, the purpose here is to investigate how we know about representations of NAC in The Toronto Star in the ways that we do. A social organization of knowledge
approach will be utilized in order to unpack how we know about these representations in *The Toronto Star* by making visible the work that has been put into these representations. In adopting this approach, the aim is to recognize and understand how news accounts representing NAC are assembled and organized, and transformed into claims that appear to stand in for social reality.

The method of inquiry that informs this work, the social organization of knowledge as developed by Dorothy E. Smith, is a way of investigating how we come to know phenomena, like representations of NAC in *The Toronto Star*, in the ways that we do. What is meant here by “social organization” is illuminated by Jackson in her work on how news accounts are socially constructed. In the tradition of Smith’s approach, Jackson describes “social organization” thus:

...the term ‘social organization’ or ‘socially organized’ is used to identify a realm of organized practical activities in which social phenomena come into being with the appearance of objective features of the social world; it identifies an ‘ontological’ status of social phenomena. That is, these terms identify a domain in which ‘objects’ come into existence by being assembled, organized as phenomena, socially. They ‘exist’ as social phenomena only in the activities of people in which these forms are produced as appearances. They are fundamentally a social construction, and have no other existence other than their ongoing, social accomplishment. (Jackson, 1977: 4)

A social organization of knowledge approach is utilized in the present work for several reasons. Firstly, this approach enables us to unpack how social phenomena are put together and transformed into objective claims about the world. Since our society has become so mediated, objectified forms of knowing have become highly embedded within our consciousness. This approach reveals the mediated nature of knowledge production. As Campbell and Manicom (1995: 8) point out, this method of inquiry allows us to “find out how these objectified and standardized forms of knowing are put together, how they work in particular settings (often in ways not immediately visible to
people in the settings, a key feature of objectified forms of knowing.)” This approach thus recommends an in-depth exploration of how we come to know the world in the ways that we do, through unpacking the work that goes into the creation and reproduction of objectified ways of knowing.

Secondly, this method of inquiry allows us to recognize how objectified forms of knowledge govern and regulate our experiences and realities. This method of inquiry provides a way for us to understand how such ways of knowing can shape and manage our lives. Those who participate directly in the creation and reproduction of these modes of knowing, doing the work in organizations like hospitals, agencies, and schools, can come to understand how they participate in them, although one does not have to be directly involved in such organizations to participate in these ways of knowing. In short, these objectified forms of knowledge organize our daily lives, whether we participate directly in them or not, because we all have direct experiences with these forms of knowledge. As Smith (1987: 176) tells us, exploring how objective accounts of the world are socially organized “...requires that we understand them as generating various actual experiences, or rather, generating the everyday bases of actual experiences, in characteristic ways.” Because we are not conscious of how these modes of knowing come to be, we are also not conscious of how they can order and manage our lives, as they can appear as taken for granted and common-sense. In adopting a social organization of knowledge approach, a shift in consciousness can ensue so we can rupture these objectified modes and recognize how they govern our lives.

This approach, then, speaks to us as insiders of our social worlds, enabling an exploration of how these ways of knowing the world become the basis of our realities. Rather than separating what we know as individuals from what it is that we are investigating, as we have learned to do since the development of the social sciences, a social organization of knowledge approach can speak back to us, taking up our own locations in the world. This does not imply a shift from objectivity to subjectivity,
celebrating our own experiences and realities. Rather, the shift is one that is reflexive, namely, allowing us to recognize how our thoughts, actions, and perceptions come about in particular ways. As Smith (1990: 23-24) states,

We begin from our own original but tacit knowledge and from within the acts by which we bring it to our grasp in making it observable and in understanding how it works. We aim not at a reiteration of what we already (tacitly) know, but at an exploration of what passes beyond that knowledge and is deeply implicated in how it is.

As Smith points out, when we begin from our own knowledge of the world, we can locate the disjunctures between our own experiences of the world as insiders, and objectified forms of knowing. Our knowledge of the world has been socially constructed historically as inferior to objectified forms of knowledge. Our experience is frequently seen to be “biased” or “subjective” in relation to “pure” knowledge developed out of “scientific” and “objective” thought, which separates the knower from what can be known. Rather than devaluing our own knowledge of the world, a social organization of knowledge approach begins from our local realities, aiming to discover how these realities have been shaped by objectified, socially organized modes of knowing.

This notion that a social organization of knowledge approach can speak to us as insiders and as experts in our everyday social worlds is important because, as a member of the women’s movement, I can take my experiences and knowledge of the movement to locate the disjunctures between what I know through direct experience, and what can be known through media accounts of NAC. In brief, because this approach can look and talk back at me, validating my experiences and knowledge, I can begin to recognize that there may be disjunctures between my own knowledge and knowledge about NAC mediated to us through discourses like news reports in The Toronto Star. Smith (1990: 142) illuminates this point thus:
We are concerned here with a break in the social consciousness between how people experience, tell, and make sense of what is happening from within the particular times and places of their lived actuality and a formalized impersonal mode of knowing articulated in (and indeed an integral part of) an apparatus of ruling. This disjuncture is the focus of our inquiry.

Rather than separating my knowledge of the women’s movement from what I am investigating, a social organization of knowledge approach enables me to activate this knowledge as a basis for inquiry. I can thus locate disjunctures between this knowledge and objectified forms of knowledge. For example, while many accounts in The Toronto Star suggest that NAC is an organization consumed with racial infighting, making references that “mainstream” women in the organization feel silenced, as an insider of the women’s movement, I can say that this is not what NAC is consumed with. While looking upon my own knowledge of the women’s movement, I know that there have been “race” issues in the movement. I also know that many members of the women’s movement, like myself, are committed to eroding all forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, looksism, homophobia, ableism, ageism, and the like. Thus, I can take this knowledge as an insider and use it as a reference point to examine the disjunctures between my local knowledge and what can be known about NAC in news reports in The Toronto Star.

Although I am not a member of NAC, I am an insider in that I am a member of the women’s movement in Canada. Thus, I know, through my experiences, that the women’s movement is concerned with women’s struggles for equality and that NAC has been and remains an integral part of these struggles. Although the goals and mandates of NAC have shifted over time, as the organization attempts to become inclusive of such groups as immigrant women, refugees, and lesbians, the organization has always served as “a parliament of women,” lobbying for women’s rights. As Vickers, Rankin, and Appelle (1993: 11-12) state,
In our view, NAC’s existence as an institutionalized parliament of women has contributed to the effectiveness of women’s politics in Canada, despite its inability, during the period studied, to maintain effective links with the francophone movement in Quebec or to build effective links with women’s movements within the First Nations. NAC provided an arena in which many types of feminisms could interact. It provided the structures within which women with very diverse interests learned to engage in politics collectively.

This is not to say that NAC has not had its share of problems. While NAC has served as a parliament for women, calling for things like quality child care, the legalization of midwifery, free standing abortion clinics, feminist research and networking, ending violence against women, and a myriad of other agendas (Burt, 1995), there has been some literature about problems within the organization. For example, Lorraine Greaves, a former executive on NAC’s board of directors, calls NAC the most male organization in which she had ever participated. (Greaves, 1991) Thus, while NAC has been a central figure in challenging sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, and ableism within Canadian society, and promoting the rights of Canadian women, it also has its share of internal struggles. In this study, I am suggesting that The Toronto Star has represented NAC in particular ways so as to portray NAC as an organization filled with internal conflicts.

Thirdly, unlike most traditional methods that have been established within the social sciences, a social organization of knowledge approach is concerned with social change. While traditional or “proper” methods in the social sciences have been used to investigate and explain various aspects of social phenomenon, they have not provided us with tools to deconstruct how we know the world in particular ways. Since a social organization of knowledge approach allows us to recognize how we can participate in objectified ways of knowing, this approach makes us accountable in objectified forms of knowledge rather than the individuals or institutions through which power is mediated. It is only when we learn about how our everyday experiences are generated from common-sense and objectified ways of knowing the world that we can begin to question
how we too can be implicated in the reproduction of these ways of knowing and deconstruct them. As Smith (1987) asserts, in recognizing how our everyday worlds come to happen, we increase our capacity as sociologists to disclose (to women) how matters come about as they do in their experience, and to provide methods of making their work experience accountable to themselves and other women, rather than to the ruling apparatus of which institutions are a part. Indeed, the social change that can follow from a social organization of knowledge approach can be seen on a micro level because it begins with an awareness of how we, as individuals participate in objectified ways of knowing while aiming to deconstruct how these ways of knowing are put together in particular ways. This is accomplished through making visible the work that goes into these forms of knowing as well as how these forms of knowing can shape our realities in particular ways.

Fear of Feminism?

Before mapping out how this work will be presented and organized, I will briefly explain why the focus here is on The Toronto Star's representations of NAC. Prior to my commitment to and interest in feminism, I believed that it was a social movement that was unnecessary, unimportant, or undesirable. I believed feminists were, amongst other things, lesbian, angry, man-hating, militant, and radical. I then began taking courses in sociology that integrated feminist approaches and, to my surprise, I began identifying with some of the issues and ideas. I came to learn that the women's movement in Canada, as represented by NAC in many ways, had greatly contributed to challenging oppressive social practices, such as sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, and ableism through lobbying efforts, marches, and the development of feminist literature. Challenges to the many oppressions faced by Canadian women were brought forth by groups like NAC, paving the way for the legalization of abortion, reforming the old laws of rape and indecent assault and other sex crimes, and introducing pay equity laws, to name only a few. I also became aware that there remain a plethora of necessary changes.
and struggles ahead for the women’s movement in Canada, and we are no where at the point of equality, despite some recent claims that “the women’s movement is dead” or this is the “post-feminist” era, wherein women have gained societal power and groups like NAC have outgrown their relevancies.

I also learned that the women’s movement, through efforts of consciousness raising, ruptured the androcentric bias in the ways that we know the world as women. Through a continuously growing discourse on how we know and experience the world as women, we now recognize how our subject positions have been historically shaped in the interests of and through the perspective of men. Conditions that we have faced and continue to face have been identified through the work of the women’s movement not as individual pathologies (as some had previously theorized or believed, such as Freud, Kohlberg, and others), but rather as products of a sexist, racist, and capitistically organized culture with an inherent (white) male bias. As I learned about these phenomena, through literature put forth by groups like NAC, I had what many feminist theorists would call a shift in consciousness. I began to understand how the world worked in ways that oppress/ed me in my subject position — as a Jewish woman. As well, through this literature, I learned about my position of power, as a heterosexual, able-bodied, young, white woman, and realized that I must acknowledge this privileged position in order to challenge social practices that maintain the bases of others’ oppression.

Why was it, then, that I had believed the women’s movement in Canada was a negative phenomenon? Why was it that I had embedded in my consciousness what Estelle Freedman (1990), a feminist scholar and professor, has called a “fear of feminism”? What Freedman means here by fear of feminism is explained in an article published in The Women’s Review of Books. In discussing how, in a seminar she instructed, the students perceived feminism. She states:
I was surprised by the extent of what I’d call “fear of feminism.” Particularly the label “feminist.” Many of them agreed with the more liberal goals of the women’s movement - equal pay, access to the professions, political rights, reproductive choices. And many of course were concerned with issues of personal vulnerability, sexual violence. But being labeled a “feminist” smacked of radical, militant, and of course man-hating lesbians. (Freedman, 1990: 25)

While Freedman’s observations, coupled with the beliefs and ideas of my own about feminism do not mean that all or even most women have a fear of feminism, I think that this notion of fear of feminism exists for some individuals, men included. In fact, prior to this work, I spoke with several people, largely outside academia and many informed me that they perceived feminism as an extreme or irrational social movement. It is precisely these ideas and beliefs about feminism that I wanted to explore, in terms of where they come from and how they come to us in the ways that they do.

In order to locate the spaces in which beliefs and ideas about feminism can be produced or reproduced, I have chosen to look at media representations because media provide us with a great deal of knowledge and information about our social worlds. This does not mean that media are the only agents of socialization within our society, as agents such as the family, and the school, and increasingly cyberspace, can be powerful agents of socialization as well. However, media play a central role in creating and reproducing what it is that we know about social reality and how we know this reality in particular and often partial ways.

It is important to note that although in this work I am looking at news accounts about NAC, particularly in The Toronto Star, I am not saying that The Star or the media in general caused me or can cause others to internalize a fear of feminism or believe that feminism was or remains undesirable or unnecessary. The Toronto Star or media in general can not cause us to internalize certain perceptions and attitudes about NAC as representative of Canadian feminism, or about any other phenomenon. I am suggesting that representations and ideas about NAC within The Star or other forms of media can
create and reproduce a particular and partial way of interpreting what NAC is about and entails, which may play a role in how we know about feminist organizations like NAC in the ways that we do. While there is no way of determining precisely the extent to which the media can play a role in shaping our beliefs and attitudes, it is likely that there is some relation between how we know about groups like NAC and how NAC is constructed by the media, particularly more mainstream media, like The Toronto Star.

In addition, while I am suggesting that the media play an active part in shaping how we know about organizations like NAC, I am not stating that we all receive knowledge and information from the media in similar ways. Since our subjectivities are highly complex, informed and formed through a myriad of processes and practices, no two individuals receive any form of knowledge in precisely the same way. While there can be a particular or intended representation of groups like NAC within The Toronto Star, how these representations are received can be highly discrepant for two different individuals. The work of Stuart Hall has been widely noted on this terrain, illuminating the differential ways that media representations can be received by different individuals.

In his work on active audiences, Hall critiques the traditional model employed in studying media, namely the sender/message/receiver model because it implies a unilinear equation. Instead, he points out that there are different ways to receive or decode media: the dominant-hegemonic position, the negotiated code or position, and the oppositional code. (Hall, 1986) Dominant-hegemonic readings, according to Hall, are those that are in accordance with the intended or dominant message. A negotiated code or position for Hall entails accepting some of the knowledge and ideas produced and disseminated in the media while questioning or challenging other ideas and claims. On the other end of the dominant-hegemonic position is the oppositional code and this, according to Hall, implies a reading that challenges what the media are claiming or how they are claiming to represent social reality. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that while there may be
particular representations of NAC within *The Toronto Star* which may have an intended reading, individuals receive such readings in highly heterogeneous ways.

It is also important to note that in the present work, I am not suggesting that there is a monolithic representation of NAC in *The Toronto Star* or in other forms of media. As it will be outlined, there were and remain several representations of NAC in *The Toronto Star*. Some are central to issues of infighting, racially and otherwise, and some focus on NAC's inability to effectively challenge existing inequalities. While representations of NAC, as it will be illustrated, can differ considerably in their nature and thrust, I am not suggesting that these representations are monolithic or similar to other representations within other forms of media.

However, a crucial component of this work is that, while there is no single representation of NAC, there is what can be called an ideological frame at work, through which these representations are shaped and interpreted. Ideological frames refer to ideas and beliefs that underpin and shape objectified accounts and order our everyday worlds. While ideological frames appear to be common-sense or unbiased, they are, in fact constructed, assembled, interpreted, through the work of individuals in various settings. Ng clarifies what is meant by the term “ideological frame” in her work on multiculturalism as ideology, taking a Smithean approach. She states,

I use the term ‘ideological frame’ here to draw attention to the *accomplished* character of ideological thinking and processes. ‘Ideological frame’ does not simply refer to a bias or set of beliefs. It identifies ideologies as processes that are produced and constructed through human activities. They are ways in which capitalist societies are ruled and governed. Once an ideological frame is put in place, it renders the very work processes that produced it invisible and the idea that it references ‘common sense.’ That is, the idea(s) contained within the ideological frame become normalized; they become taken for granted as ‘that’s how it is’ or ‘that’s how it should be.’ (Ng, 1995: 38)
Ng illuminates how, once an ideological frame is produced and reinforced, claims about reality appear as objective truths about the social world by rendering invisible the human activities that go into producing such claims. I will show the ideological frame used in The Toronto Star to construct and interpret events and activities within NAC in chapters three and four.

About The Chapters

In analyzing The Toronto Star's representations of NAC, I discovered that there is a particular ideological frame at work, with several sub-frames that further extend a particular way of interpreting NAC. It is important to keep this point in mind while looking at the present work, because in some cases it may appear as though there is no relation between the sub-frames and the larger ideological frame. These sub-frames can shift dramatically, particularly during certain time periods. These shifts will be pointed out where pertinent. They are a part of and embedded in a dominant ideological frame, which will be discussed in later chapters in detail. Once the dominant ideological frame in The Toronto Star is identified, it will become possible to recognize the connections between the sub-frames, as well as their relatedness to the dominant frame, although they may initially appear unconnected.

Prior to exploring and investigating these sub-frames and the larger ideological frame within these sub-frames can be located and understood, there will be an in-depth discussion of what a social organization of knowledge method of inquiry entails. Thus, in chapter 2, I will explain the terms that will be utilized and employed throughout this work. This will include explaining what Smith has called an ideological circle, namely, a way of investigating how reality becomes recycled, objectified, and known to us in particular ways through enabling us to unpack to work that is made invisible in such forms of reality. As Smith informs us, "The practice and organization of ideological circles, integral to this form of social consciousness, coordinate and transpose actualities and the subject's experience of those actualities into the textual forms of the discursive
and institutional consciousness.” (1990: 172) The stages embedded in an ideological circle will be laid out and discussed in light of representations of NAC in *The Toronto Star*. Through exploring and unpacking the stages of the ideological circle, both what the ideological frame is and how it works to put forth a particular image of NAC will become evident.

I will also be reviewing relevant literature on media, to explain why the social organization of knowledge has been selected for my analysis. I will also look at what kinds of approaches exist for studying and exploring media so that the possibilities of a social organization of knowledge approach, in relation to other approaches, can be made evident. While there is a great deal of information on how feminists view media, there is a dearth of literature on how media interprets feminism in Canada. In this chapter I will draw upon some commonly used theories and give examples of where these theories can be found in the literature. These theories will then be critically analyzed in light of a social organization of knowledge approach to explain why this approach was adopted here.

Chapter 3 will be a summary of the articles that reported on NAC in *The Toronto Star*. I will be locating trends and patterns in the articles in terms of things like shifts in representation and sub-frames at work in interpreting NAC. I will also be provide some general information about the ways in which NAC is presented, namely physical characteristics, key words and phrases, and sub-frames which are embedded in a dominant frame. This chapter will allude to the specific ideological frame at work in representing NAC in *The Toronto Star*, through looking at the sub-frames and then explaining how they are connected to and shaped by a dominant frame of representation. Furthermore, since in Chapter 4 I will be textually analyzing a particular article in-depth, this chapter will provide a general overview of the articles in which to contextualize this particular article.
In Chapter 4, I will explore how ideological circles work to represent NAC in a particular article in *The Toronto Star* entitled, “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles.” Various stages in the circle will be discussed and looked at in light of how NAC is represented in this particular article. Here I will unpack how we know about NAC through the way it is represented in *The Toronto Star*. I will discuss the dominant ideological frame at work in representing NAC and how this frame becomes part of social reality. In Chapter 5, I will make some concluding comments about employing a social organization of knowledge approach in unpacking objectified accounts. My aim is to rupture how objectified forms of knowledge are put together so that we can stand outside them, taking up our own knowledge of the world.
CHAPTER 2

EXPLANATIONS OF NEWS ACCOUNTS

While there is some literature on how NAC has been represented in the media (not specific to The Toronto Star), much of this literature does not adopt a specific method of inquiry for understanding how such representations work. Indeed, most of this literature does not provide an in-depth or theoretical analysis of how these representations can be explained or understood. Because of the limited nature of this literature, it is extremely difficult, if at all possible to categorize or place this information within existing theoretical paradigms. Instead, this chapter will begin by looking at some of the general theoretical frameworks that attempt to explain how media works in creating, constructing or reproducing news accounts.

Much of the literature that exists on media and news accounts can be classified in terms of three major frameworks: functionalist, social constructionist, and Marxist. Although some analyses may incorporate two or all three perspectives in examining or explaining phenomenon such as news reports, much of the literature seems to explain how the news media work in terms of either their functions or how media shape or structure social reality. The prevalence of these frameworks can be seen as a sign of certain time periods, the functionalist paradigm having been prominent in the sixties, a Marxist approach prominent in the seventies and early eighties, and a social constructionist perspective central in the late eighties and nineties.

**Media as Providers of Social Reality**

A functionalist approach to news media looks at the role and function of the news media, providing individuals with news and information about everyday social reality. This paradigm stems directly from the work of Emile Durkheim, one of, if not the, founding father(s) of sociology. Although this is an oversimplification of Durkheim, he laid down the principles for “doing” sociology, equating social factors with social
behaviors and attitudes. In this approach media are viewed as providers of social reality, giving individuals in a society with the norms and attitudes to function in that society at a given time. Media, according to this view, are an agent of socialization, providing the information and knowledge to socialize individuals into functioning members of society. Like the family and the educational system, according to a functionalist perspective, media socialize individuals by producing and disseminating values, social norms, beliefs, and ideas about our social worlds.

Many functionalists have noted that our society has become increasingly fragmented, no longer having moral and universal "truths" or a religious foundation that binds all individuals. A functionalist approach asserts that the media function as a form of "glue" to bind us together within this fragmented society. Drawing upon the work of Durkheim, media can be viewed here as producing and disseminating a common morality that can hold us together, or what he called a collective conscience. A collective or common conscience refers to the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society, forming a determinate system which has its own life. (Durkheim, 1893 as cited in Ritzer, 1992) Thus, according to a functionalist view, media can be seen as providers of a collective conscience, bridging the fragmented nature of society by providing us all with a common or collective sense of what is going in the world. Functionalisists, then, see media as a provider of social consensus, namely a way of thinking and knowing that is shared by the majority of society. As Cohen and Young (1973: 342) observe,

The mass media provide a major source of knowledge in a segregated society of what the consensus actually is and what is the nature of deviation from it. They conjure up for each group with its limited stock of social knowledge, what 'everyone else' believes. (cited in Bilton, 1993: 543)

According to a functionalist view, then, media are seen as providing individuals with knowledge and ideas that have an underlying notion of consensus. This view can be seen
as similar to what Siebert (1963) has called a libertarian (or free market) theory of the press, namely a press that functions for members of society through processes of freedom and democracy. Siebert states a libertarian theory of the press focuses on freedom of information, helping to discover truths about society. Everett and Fletcher (1991) describe this libertarian or free market theory as focusing on the rationality of humankind, and the necessity of an unfettered and diversified ownership. Thus, the media can be seen, according to a libertarian view, as acting in the interests of society or consensus, informing and educating individuals, reflecting the ideas and attitudes of the common or the collective.

A functionalist view was prominent mainly in the sixties, when a great deal of literature emerged about how the media functioned. Harold Laswell, a pioneer in mass communication, for example, developed a theory that explained the three functions of the media: surveillance of the environment; correlation of the parts of society in responding to the environment; and transmission of the social heritage from one generation to the next. (cited in Wright, 1983) Siegel (1983) has also theorized about functions of the media, asserting that although the media can persuade, they function to inform, entertain, and educate individuals. What these works have in common is a focus on what the media provide us with, namely collective or seemingly collective views about social reality that hold us together.

Not surprisingly, a functionalist approach in explaining the news media has come under considerable scrutiny in recent years. Critics of this approach (and there are many) claim that media do not simply provide us with knowledge and information about social reality, or even reflect social reality. Rather, it has been argued (Bilton, 1993) that functionalists oversimplify the relations between individuals and media and that media are not a site of freedom of information or diversified ownership. Other theorists (Everett and Fletcher, 1991 & Siegel, 1983) have pointed out that the media can construct or structure social reality for us through various processes and practices. While
the critiques of a functionalist view can differ dramatically, there is some general agreement that a functionalist approach only explains how the media function to inform and socialize individuals, overlooking how media can shape or be shaped by relations of power and control.

Media and the Social Construction of Reality

Some of the central critiques of the functionalist view come from what is known as a social constructionist perspective, a framework postulating that discourses like media do not simply provide us with social reality; they interpret and construct a reality that we take part in as well. Social constructionist theorists also reject a functionalist view because it cannot take into account the notion of interaction, namely the processes through which individuals make sense of their social worlds. According to a social constructionist approach, the news media help us to make sense of social reality through producing and disseminating a version of reality, but they do not determine our social realities for us. Rather, central to this view is the idea that news media can construct social reality through interactional processes.

Since social constructionists examine the interactions between individuals and groups and forms of communication, such as media, there is a focus on how the media help us to make sense of our social worlds. The media are seen, in this framework, as a link between individuals and the construction and reproduction of social reality. In his work on how media portray minorities in a multicultural and multiracial society, Fleras points out how media can construct what we know about minorities. He explains,

Through the production and circulation of knowledge in the broadest sense of the term, the mass media represent a force for stability and consensus, as well as for conflict, contradiction, and change. The interplay of these concurrent forces provides the impetus in which reality is constructed and reconstituted through human interaction. The media thus occupy a mediating role in linking the outside world with our absorption of its symbols, meanings, and values. This mediating relationship with external reality is variable and reflected in the diverse images of the media
(as a "window" or "mirror" or "barrier") which are employed to capture the essence of this interaction. Few would dispute the salience of the media to guide, shape, and transform the way we look at the world ("perceptions"), how we understand it ("conceptions"), and the manner by which we experience and relate to it ("reality"). (Fleras, 1991: 349)

Through this focus on the interplay between the media and groups or individuals, media are seen as shaping our views, ideas, beliefs, perceptions, etc. about social reality. When this interplay is seen as biased or constructing social inequalities, such as the negative portrayal of minority groups, social constructionists look to the nature of how news accounts are produced as the cause of these biases or negative portrayals. Social constructionists point to the processes of news production or dissemination such as what Bilton (1993) calls selective frameworks and structures of interpretation. Selective frameworks are imposed and interpreted versions of reality which may exclude alternative interpretations or meaning systems. Structures of interpretation, according to Bilton,

...are established which serve as given frames of reference within which issues can be 'naturally' located. Alternative interpretations have to be able to operate within this framework or have to face a struggle for recognition and legitimacy with the cards stacked heavily against them. (Bilton, 1993: 550)

Another process that has been widely noted in a social constructionist view is what Siegel and others have referred to as "agenda setting." Siegel (1983) describes the process of agenda setting as the picking and choosing of the events that the media regard as important, deciding the issues of the day that are to receive public attention. It has been noted that the more public attention a phenomenon is accorded within media, the more important it is perceived to be. Thus, agenda-setting can, as Wright (1986) points out, play a role in influencing the public's beliefs about which topics are important through the amount of attention given to each topic. Similarly, the concept of "framing" has been employed in social constructionist approaches to understanding media. Framing
refers to the idea that it is difficult for those outside the political mainstream to receive coverage because issues passing onto the agenda of the media reflect the priorities and perspectives of officials. (Everett and Fletcher, 1991) It is through identifying these processes of interaction that social constructionist theorists tell us how media work in particular ways to shape what we know about social reality.

This view provides explanations of how relations of domination and inequality are embedded within media by pointing out the processes through which ideas and beliefs about reality are constructed and reproduced within the media. This approach also accounts for the interplay between individuals and groups, and the media in terms of how the former make sense of or construct reality as well. Thus, in this view, our social worlds are not determined for us; we are agents of our social worlds since we interpret and make sense of this reality that is constructed. However, while a social constructionist approach can point to how power relations can inform media processes and practices, this view does not provide us with major critiques of the social structures and relations of power that can take root in and shape how the media works. In other words, this view fails to critique and effectively deal with the larger social relations of power that are created and reproduced through institutions such as media.

**Media and the Reproduction of Dominant Ideologies**

The other framework that is commonly employed to understand the role of the mass media picks up on this critique of social constructionism by pinpointing power relations operative in media; it is known as a Marxist perspective. Although there are variations within the Marxist framework (e.g., neo-Marxist, conflict theory), its central premise is that discourses like media cannot be understood as separate from capitalistically organized social relations, which serve and benefit the ruling class by reproducing the ideologies of that class. Media are seen as creating and reproducing the ideologies of the
dominant class, through controlling both the forces of media production as well as the production of knowledge and ideas mediated through media.

One of the central notions within a Marxist analysis is that of ideology, namely, ideas and belief systems rooted in the material base of society that are coercive of individuals. How ideologies are mediated is through power relations between the bourgeoisie (the capitalist) and the proletariat (the worker), with the former, or those that control the forces of production also controlling the nature and flow of ideologies. The bourgeoisie, since they own and control the forces of production, also control the production of ideologies. The proletariat, on the other hand, since they do not control material and mental production, are subjected to the ideologies of the ruling class. Thus, Marxists would argue that the proletariat has a consciousness that is not of their own, a concept known within Marxist discourse as "false consciousness." Code (1993) describes false consciousness as the process whereby the proletariat accepts the received view as "natural," making it difficult for them to see the world from a perspective of their own class interests.

One of the ways in which the capitalist system is maintained, Marxists argue, is through expressing only those ideologies and beliefs that support the interest of the ruling class. Conversely, the ideas and opinions of subordinate groups are marginalized or silenced, not only because subordinate groups do not control material production, but also because these ideas and opinions could be seen as a threat to the ideologies of the ruling class in that they may expose "alternative" ways of knowing the world. Noam Chomsky, a widely noted figure in Marxist media studies, utilizes this notion of ideology to explain how it is that the mass media reproduce the ideas and beliefs of the ruling class while serving the interests of that class. Chomsky employs what he calls a "propaganda model" to studying media, whereby the media sharply delimit the bounds of the expressible and, in excluding dissent from entrenched, official positions, serve the
interlocking interests of state and corporate power. (Chomsky cited in Everett and Fletcher, 1991: 166)

A Marxist approach to studying media became more prominent with the development of modernity, namely a period in time characterized by social phenomena such as industrialization, capitalism, materialism, and concentration of ownership. For Marxists, increases in the concentration of media ownership and production is equated with a concentration of power, namely limiting power to the hands of a decreasing number of massive conglomerates. As many Marxists have argued, this increase in concentration of ownership relates to a decrease in the diversity of voices and ideologies in the media, because having fewer groups own and control media means that the production of ideas and beliefs within media will be limited to a number of groups or individuals. Thus, the likelihood of those groups with little social power to receive public attention becomes even more restricted. As Murdock and Golding (1977: 105) point out,

Concentration limits the range and diversity of views and opinions which are able to find public expression. More significantly, it is those views and opinions representing the least powerful social groups which are systematically excluded by the process of concentration. (cited in Bilton, 1993: 552)

For the Marxist, then, concentration of ownership implies a concentration of ideas and beliefs within the media, enabling those who own and control media conglomerates to present and express only their own ideas and beliefs while limiting the voices of less powerful groups.

**Extending Marx: The Social Organization of Knowledge Approach**

While a Marxist perspective can offer considerable insights and critiques of how media create and reproduce social relations and inequalities, it fails to take certain factors into account; it is these factors that a social organization of knowledge elaborates on. Marxism does not provide us with an adequate explanation of how we play a role in
the creation and reproduction of ideologies. It points to relations of power as reproducing ideologies without looking at our own practices and activities as knowers in the social world. Furthermore, it does not explore how ideologies take root in our consciousness, nor explain how ideologies are transformed into social consciousness. While Marxists have noted that ideologies are mediated through human activity of various kinds, they have failed to examine how these activities within these social relations become embedded within our consciousness.

Smith begins precisely where Marx left off, by exploring how it is that social relations inform our consciousness. In her development of the social organization of knowledge approach in sociology, she states

Although Marx views consciousness as inseparable from actual individuals, although he analyses ideologies as practices, and although he gives social consciousness a preliminary materialist foundation, he stops short at the investigation of the social relations and the organization of consciousness. But we need not. (Smith, 1991: 51-52)

As Smith tells us, the social organization of knowledge approach can extend Marx’s notion of ideology to explore how it is that social relations work to create and reproduce ideologies and how ideologies are organized within our consciousness. Thus, instead of examining the nature and form of ideology and its material base, as Marxism does, a social organization of knowledge approach extends this to examine the socially organized practices through which ideologies come about. When we begin to investigate how it is that ideologies become organized within our consciousness, as a social organization of knowledge approach calls for, we also begin to recognize how we can take part in the creation and reproduction of ideologies. Thus, we begin with our own knowledge of the world and try to discover how this knowledge enters into objectified forms of knowing and the social relations that take root in and shape these objectified forms of knowing.
As Smith (1990: 204-205) suggests, this insider’s approach “…directs us toward grasping how our local and particular moments are entered into extended, generalized, and generalizing social relations.”

Moreover, a social organization of knowledge method of inquiry implies an activist orientation that is not provided by Marxism, functionalism, and social constructionism. Since this approach investigates how broader social relations are implicated in what we know, it enables a form of activism, one that makes us accountable in how objective forms of knowing become organized and assembled. Rather than implicating institutions or the individuals or groups within those institutions, as Marxism for example would have us do, a social organization of knowledge approach enables us to look at how we are implicated in objectified modes of knowing through exploring the actual activities in doing so. As Campbell and Manicorn note, where others talk of practices and members’ practices, Smith talks of our practices as members, enabling a sociology with an activist enterprise, situated outside relations of ruling, while problematizing them. (1995) Thus, in adopting this method of inquiry, we can begin to understand how we take part in and reproduce objective forms of knowing, making ourselves accountable in these ways of knowing by examining our own practices and activities in doing so instead of critiquing the practices of institutions and the individuals within those institutions.

The Social Organization of “Virtual Reality”

Now that some of the possibilities of a social organization of knowledge approach have been delineated, I will outline what this approach is and how it informs my inquiry. This approach involves an investigation of how phenomena, such as representations of NAC in The Toronto Star, become socially organized and assembled through unpacking various stages involved in this organization. The term “virtual reality” comes directly from Smith’s work, illuminating the objectified nature of knowledge. Smith describes “virtual realities” this way:
The realities to which action and decision are oriented are virtual realities vested in texts and accomplished in distinctive practices of reading and writing. We create these virtual realities through objectifying discourse; they are our own doing. Employing them, we separate what we know directly as individuals from what we come to know as trained readers of texts. (Smith, 1990: 62)

Smith illuminates here the accomplished character of objectified forms of thought in discussing what she calls virtual realities. Smith has developed a distinct method of inquiry for investigating how “virtual realities” come about and how they come to us in the ways that they do.

A social organization of knowledge approach commits us to investigating how representations of NAC in The Toronto Star are assembled, interpreted, and organized, as well as how we know about them in the ways that we do. (Smith, 1987) It is aimed at unpacking these representations, through investigating the various stages involved in how they are put together and organized. Through exploring the stages involved in the organization of these representations, we can begin to make connections that are not immediately visible, such as how certain information is highlighted and other information is relegated to the periphery. In brief, through adopting a social organization of knowledge approach, we can begin to discover how The Toronto Star produces accounts of NAC, as well as what is not accounted for and omitted in these representations. Thus, while these newspaper accounts may appear complete and objective, the social organization of knowledge approach enables us to see the activities and practices that enter into the creation and reproduction of representations of NAC, that produces a “virtual reality” of NAC.

The creation of a virtual reality can be unpacked and understood through employing what Smith calls “ideological circles.” According to Smith,

Ideological circles transpose actual events, located in specific places and performed by real individuals, into the generalized forms in which they can be known, knowable
and actionable within an abstracted conceptual mode of ruling and organization. (Smith, 1990: 172)

As Smith points out here, ideological circles have an accomplished character, making invisible the activities and practices that enter into how they are created and reproduced. When we begin to unpack how ideological circles are put together, through identifying and exploring the different stages that enter into the circle, as Smith’s approach enables us to do, the accomplished character of objectified modes of knowing can become ruptured.

The Lived Actuality: Producing “What Actually Happened/ What Is”

Ideological circles often begin with what Smith calls the “lived actuality.” The lived actuality can be seen as a reference point for the constructing of an ideological circle. It may be an event, idea, claim, or the like that is used as a basis for the circle. Lived actualities are real occurrences in the everyday world; it is when they are referenced in an account that they are transformed into “what actually happened/ what is.” That is, they are seen in relation to an intended account, namely a claim about lived reality that follows in later stages of the ideological circle. Smith describes lived actualities this way: “In a sense, a ‘lived actuality’ never happens, for it is always lived; what is, happens, or has happened arises only at the point where a recording is made, a story is told, a picture is taken.” (Smith, 1990: 151) It is not the lived actuality that is of concern here as it is always lived, but rather “what actually happened/ what is” at the moment a recording is made or an account is produced. Thus, Smith uses the term, “what actually happened/ what is” to distinguish it from the actual lived reality of the everyday world.

It is important to point out that there is no way of knowing for certain what the “truth” or “reality” is in relation to “what actually happened/ what is.” There is no expert or official source to inform us about “what actually happened/ what is.” Once an account is
produced, the lived actuality is no longer recoverable because it is not recorded or made evident in the account. As Smith (1990: 157) suggests, “We do not suppose that there is one objective account of ‘what actually happened’ against which other accounts can be measured. The lived actuality remains a resource in memory in a relation through ‘what actually happened’ arises.” Thus, there is no way of identifying an “accurate” version of what really happened in the lived actuality, but we can identify what is done with the lived actuality, once it becomes “what actually happened/what is.”

**Encoding the Lived Actuality**

Once the lived actuality has been identified, told, reported, and the like, and comes to be known as “what actually happened/what is” in an ideological circle, it goes through what Smith calls various stages of encoding. The work of encoding describes an event in particular ways through the use of certain terms, ideas, phrases and assembly of logical connections. According to Smith (1990: 152), the process of encoding “…involves selecting terms and grammatical and logical connections that express the appropriate sequencing.” Encoding deals with the work of production, organization, and language use and can be seen as what Corner (1983) calls “the moment of writing.” Once the work of encoding is underway, the lived actuality is no longer taken in full, as a specific language and grammatical and logical connections are put in place to transform the lived actuality so that it becomes “what actually happened/what is” in relation to an intended account.

For example, if one was operating out of a sociobiological argument, terms like genes, hormones, and the like would be encoded to describe a particular phenomenon. A lived actuality would be encoded with certain terms and logical sequencing of “facts” to generate a particular view that supports sociobiological claims. Through the work of encoding, terms like hormones or proteins, or genes, as well as a particular sequencing of what happens to hormones, or proteins, or genes would be set in place. Since certain
terms and grammatical and logical connections are involved in encoding processes, the work of selection is of major importance. Thus, while terms like hormones, genes would likely be central in this argument, terms like environmental, social, or cultural would likely be omitted, unless the grammatical and logical sequencing of these terms was used in a way to undermine the importance of the latter terms. It is the work of encoding that selects how "what actually happened/ what is" will be defined and described and in accordance with the intended account.

The Work of "Particulars"

Often, during the processes of encoding, the work of certain individuals, usually those that can corroborate the account to varying degrees are identified. Smith calls the use of these individuals to corroborate or validate the account the "particulars." Although the encoding stage can work without referencing "particulars," in many cases, "particulars" are identified, quoted, referenced, to support what it is that is being claimed within an account or theory. Borrowing this term from the legal context, Smith describes "the particulars" this way:

The term "the particulars" identifies a moment intervening between the actuality as people have lived it and the completed account. It freezes for examination a moment (not always as distinctly apparent as it is in the legal context) at which the work of selecting, assembling, and ordering governed by the discursive schema is completed and an array of particulars has been set up that will go forward into whatever kind of account is finally made. Selecting and assembling the particulars involves a process of examining the informational resources to find those that are relevant to a particular scheme. (Smith, 1990: 160-161)

What Smith means here by account is the stage after encoding, wherein a theory is posited and a claim is being made. While accounts will be described in the next section in detail, the work of "particulars," as Smith informs us, often enters into the creation of a virtual reality prior to the account and often during the encoding stage. "The
particulars” are often present during encoding stages in order to offer some form of corroboration before the account is clarified. Because “the particulars” can corroborate the account or theory that is being claimed, they are often persons of authority, having “expert” opinions on what will be claimed in the account. As it will be illustrated in Chapter 4, in the newspaper accounts of NAC in *The Toronto Star*, there were several “particulars” referenced to support a particular representation. These particulars were “experts” on feminist activism and politics in Canada.

**Entering Textual Time: The Resulting Account**

Once the encoding stage is complete and, if there are “particulars,” they have been identified and quoted or referenced, textual time begins and an account is made. The account is a claim that can be seen as standing in for reality, which Smith calls “virtual reality.” What Smith means by textual time in relation to “virtual reality” is that point wherein the account is fully worked up; it appears to stand in relation to “what actually happened/what is” and it represents reality. She employs the term “textual” to illuminate how “virtual realities” are mediated to us through textual forms of knowing such as documents, licenses, reports, news accounts and so on.

At the point in which textual time begins and the account is generated, it appears as an “objective” or “factual” statement about reality, and the processes and practices through which it was created become invisible. Traces of how the account was generated are lost. The account appears to have a direct relation to the actuality that is being referenced. All that is visible is the *relation* between the actuality and the account. How it is that the account was made (for example, the omission of certain information or ideas) becomes lost. As Smith asserts,

At some point the account is fully worked up; at some point it drops away the traces of its making (references to evidence, research, researchers, the technical processes involved, and so forth) and stands forth as an autonomous statement.
representing the actuality of which it speaks. Indeed, at this point, as it enters "textual time," it can generate statements using different terms, provided that the original conceptual structure, temporal and spatial order (chronotopy), and so forth are preserved. Traces of how it came about that may have been in textual form, such as its previous drafts, corrections, alternative wordings, and so forth, which provide for scholars of literature an inexhaustible time of indeterminacies - all are obliterated. In textual time, the processes of working up the formulation are invisible. The account comes to stand for the actuality it claims to represent. In the contexts of the social organization of its reading, it becomes a virtual reality. (Smith, 1990: 74)

Thus, as Smith tells us, once textual time is entered and the account has been worked up, we are presented with a version of reality, namely a "virtual reality" wherein traces of how the account was made are forever lost.

**The Ideological Frame and The Interpretive Schemata**

The ideological frame shapes the account. The ways in which the account is interpreted, assembled, organized, and interpreted are produced by the frame, although this work is rendered invisible in the account. As Ng (1995: 38) states, "Once an ideological frame is put in place, it renders the very work processes that produced it invisible and the idea that it references 'common sense'.” Thus, the frame makes sense of the account and connections between the lived actuality, encoding, and "particulars" seem to follow in logical order.

The ideological frame dovetails with the interpretive schemata to "frame" reality. Schemata provide the parameters within which a "virtual reality" can be known. Schemata, like ideological circles, orient our attention, ideas and beliefs in particular ways. Because schemata provide the parameters for "virtual reality," some aspects of reality are made visible while others are marginalized and disqualified. Thus, schemata can be viewed like a grid that select out and filter certain aspects of social reality according to an ideological frame that is a particular and partial version of this reality.
Schemata can be located at both the beginning and final stages of an ideological circle. When schemata are at the final stage of the circle, a particular version of reality is presented through the ideological frame that shapes the account. Schemata are located at the beginning of the ideological circle when a schemata has been crystallized and further accounts are produced that fit the same schemata. When this occurs, the schemata select and order instructions as well as the criteria for appropriateness. (Smith, 1990)

Since the schemata do the work of shaping reality, once a particular interpretation is put in place, there are often other versions of reality that support the same schemata, although there may not be any apparent or visible connections between the various accounts. In other words, once a schemata or set of interpretations is established, there can be a tendency for further information and selection of "facts" that fit the schemata. (Scheffelit, 1987)

Thus, the schemata can be understood at both the beginning and final stages of the circle, providing the tools to select and organize how reality, or an aspect of it will come to be known.

The processes of ideological circles can be mapped out in the following diagram. This diagram is an adaptation from Smith. (1990: 152)
The first box, the lived actuality, represents the occurrence that is being recorded or referenced. The lived actuality then becomes encoded with a particular language and grammatical sequencing, and is transformed into “what actually happened/what is” that can be understood in relation to or intended by the account. “Particulars” are identified at this stage which also support the intended account. Within the account is the ideological frame which shapes how the account will be organized, assembled, interpreted, and presented. Following the account and ideological frame that shapes it is the interpretive schemata which can work at both the final stages of the virtual reality circle and at the beginning stages, feeding back into the processes of encoding to produce accounts that fit the same schemata. When a schema works to enter into the encoding stages, towards the beginning of the circle, the schema will have already been established, organizing how the circle is put together and organized. And although it may appear as though there is no relation between two virtual realities, once the schemata is made evident, we can begin to see connections that are not made visible. As Smith (1990: 162-163) writes, “The reader must know the schemata of the discourse to read connections that are not explicit.” Thus, it is the schemata that does the work of organizing, assembling, and making intelligible and logical connections in the circle, whether it be at the final stages or entering into the encoding stages of the circle. In short, through identifying the schemata, it becomes possible to recognize how the stages in the rest of the circle make sense of reality, being understood within the parameters of the schemata.
CHAPTER 3

INVESTIGATING REPRESENTATIONS OF NAC IN THE TORONTO STAR

Now that a social organization of knowledge approach has been outlined and mapped out, I will examine how NAC is represented in The Toronto Star utilizing this approach. Through this method of inquiry, this thesis seeks to explain how representations of NAC come to us in the ways that they do, through the highlighting of some information and ideas while marginalizing other information and ideas.

Since there is no single representation of NAC in The Toronto Star, I will provide a summary of representations of NAC in The Toronto Star and offer some general insights into how the articles are constructed. In the subsequent chapter, I will provide a detailed analysis of a particular article and point to how this article is socially organized through various processes and practices. While the article analyzed in the subsequent chapter mirrors some of the findings presented in this chapter, this chapter will provide a context in which to locate the article that will be used in the next chapter.

This chapter reports on my examination of a total of fifty-five articles that feature NAC in The Toronto Star in various ways. While NAC may have been mentioned in other articles, the articles that will be looked at and summarized in terms of content and findings were ones in which NAC and issues, ideas, and events related to NAC were the focus. Although NAC was established in 1971, the articles analyzed here are from 1983 onward. The time periods in which these articles can be located are summarized in the following table:

Number of Articles in Years

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The reason for beginning the analysis in 1983 is due to the lack of index available on NAC between the period from 1976 (when the Canadian news index was started), and 1982. Although there may be some articles that discuss NAC from 1971 to 1976, finding these articles would be too time consuming and haphazard.

**Introduction to Summary of Survey**

In this chapter, representations on NAC in *The Toronto Star* are examined and analyzed to provide background information and enable a more complete understanding of these representations for a social organization of knowledge analysis to follow. In adopting a social organization of knowledge approach, I will be looking specifically at one article in depth, and how it is socially organized. The purpose of this chapter is to contextualize this article by offering general insights about other representations, how they work and how they can be located within *The Toronto Star*. The findings in this chapter aim to offer insights into both what the representations of NAC are in *The Toronto Star* (there are several), and how these representations can be understood in a comprehensive way.

Several strategies were employed to analyze the articles. These include critically analyzing: 1) Central themes, issues, and events reported on about NAC in *The Toronto Star*; 2) How important or newsworthy the articles are in terms of size and other physical characteristics; 3) Key words and phrases used to describe NAC or ideas related to the organization; 4) The ideological frame and sub-frames, namely, belief systems that are used to interpret representations of NAC in *The Toronto Star*. These strategies will be discussed to provide an analysis of how NAC is represented in *The Toronto Star* and contextualize the article examined in the next chapter.

Before proceeding, it is important to point out that while there may be an overall ideological frame at work in interpreting representations of NAC in *The Toronto Star*, these representations are not uniform. While some representations of NAC were salient
at certain points in time, and picked up on extensively again, there is not one way in which NAC was or is currently represented. Rather, through analyzing both what representations of NAC are and how they can be understood within the parameters of The Toronto Star, what will become evident is how these representations are connected by a particular ideological frame. While there are several representations of NAC in The Toronto Star, in some cases appearing considerably discrepant from one another, it is the same ideological frame that assembles, organizes, and provides the interpretive schema for representations of NAC. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that although it may appear as though there is no common thread in these representations, once the ideological frame is identified, the representations can be seen as reinforcing the same or similar ideas and beliefs.

It is also important to note that there is no singular representation that remained constant over time. Rather, there were and are considerable shifts in focus over time. While some representations were repeated at various points in time, others may have been reported on for only a limited time span.

**Formats of the Articles**

In The Toronto Star (and I suspect in most forms of media), there are different formats for the articles, such as editorials and character portraits. These different formats frame the subjects in different ways. While in most areas, the articles will be analyzed in their entirety, I will point to differences in format where they are significant. By significant I mean a noticeable difference in the nature and thrust of the representation. For example, news reports often do not specify opinions and standpoints on particular issues or events whereas editorials do. For my purpose here, the different formats that produce significant differences are:
1. **News Reports:** Those articles that report facts or truths in a seemingly "straightforward" way can be classified as news reports. There is little or no evidence of ideological perspectives or standpoints in these articles as they appear to "tell it like it is," quoting individuals or groups and "observing" phenomenon. In some cases, there are no reporters cited in the articles; the articles merely read "Ottawa" as the source of the story. These articles, since they are represented as news, are most often located in the news section, namely the front page section, which is section A of *The Toronto Star*. While these articles can, in some cases, be found in other sections, such as Insight or FYI (for your interest), these articles most often are presented as "objective" reports about what is going on in social reality.

2. **Biographies/Character Portraits:** These articles tend to focus on a particular individual, pointing to the life events of that individual, usually within a particular context. This context can be an organization, such as NAC, a career, or type of commitment. Usually, and in order to be newsworthy, this individual has been or is given a high profile by the media. These articles are most often found in the Life Section of the newspaper, with their focus on the life or life events of an individual. While the news section is always section A in *The Toronto Star*, Life Section changes daily in terms of its location in the newspaper.

Since these articles seem to report on some of or most of the life events of a particular, high profile individual, there appears to be no overt evidence of ideological frames. These representations can appear as neutral and even complimentary, depending on who the individual in question is. However, I argue that in fact these articles contain an implicit ideological frame, via the use of various stylistic devices, such as by quoting the individual in reference to a particular interpretation of reality. Since this person can be considered high profile, or is constructed by the media as high profile, his/her opinions can seem important or accurate, which are used by the journalist to support a certain view.
3. **Opinion Columns**: These articles are by specified authors who delineate their ideas, beliefs, and opinions openly. In most cases, the author interprets a phenomenon, such as an issue or event, that is or has been newsworthy, and that has received considerable public attention. The interpretive frame here is highly evident; the author offers his/ her own personal interpretations and beliefs. These articles appear in a specific section of the newspaper; some of them appear on certain days or on certain pages. For example, Michele Landsberg writes an opinion column every Saturday on the front page of the Life Section. While there were only a few articles of this format in my study, these articles differ considerably from news reports, for example, and will be analyzed where they differ significantly from others in their nature and thrust.

**Analytical Strategy**

The following areas were analyzed in each article:

1. **Central Themes, Issues, and Events**: Media do not report on all themes, issues, and events that occur in everyday reality. Rather, there are selection processes at work, reporting on those themes, issues, and events that are considered newsworthy. As it was pointed out, particularly in the social constructionist explanation of news accounts, media often select and filter information and ideas through the processes of agenda setting, namely choosing the events and ideas that will receive a great deal of public attention.

   In many cases, the processes of agenda setting can take on a cyclical character: once a theme, issue, or event is considered newsworthy and receives considerable public attention, it is often reported on again at later times. As it will be illustrated, representations of NAC can be understood in this cyclical fashion, having certain representations appear and reappear at various points in time. Thus, in this section of the analysis, I will be looking at those themes, issues, and events that both were central at certain points and those that reappeared throughout the analysis.
2. **Physical Characteristics and Newsworthiness:** One of the central ways to decipher how important or newsworthy an article appears is to look at the physical characteristics of the article. Indeed, the mere fact that an article is present points to newsworthiness, but certain features such as where the articles are found in the paper, in terms of sections and size of the article further indicate how newsworthy a theme, issue, or event is in the newspaper. For example, an article located on the front page of the front page section that occupies half of the front page can be considered more newsworthy than, say, a relatively small article in the middle pages of the Entertainment section.

In this section, I will be looking at three components related to the newsworthiness of the articles. Firstly, I will be locating the articles within their respective sections, such as front page or news section, Life section and so on, as well as the page numbers in which the articles appear in these sections. Locating where in the newspaper the articles, in terms of both sections and where pages are found, can be an indicator of how important the editors perceive the articles to be. Clearly, those articles that are the most newsworthy will be on the first page of the front page or news section since the first page of the newspaper is immediately visible to readers. Secondly, I will be looking at the size of the articles and where applicable, and the size of the headings. In some cases, the headings are disproportionately large, and although the articles may be relatively small, the size of the headings can alter how important an article appears. Clearly, the size of the articles and headings relates to importance, giving the most important articles the most physical space in the newspaper. Finally, I will be looking for the presence of photographs or pictures because they can often be used to support a certain idea or issue. Photographs or pictures can be used as visual cues, signaling or summarizing to the reader what the article is about.

3. **Key Words and Phrases:** Within any discursive practice, a particular language is employed to describe particular phenomenon. By identifying what this language is in terms of tools like key words and phrases, it becomes possible to gain a greater
understanding of the ways in which such tools work. Certain words or phrases are often attributed to ideas, images, issues, events, and so on, often indicating how such things are to be perceived within that discourse. Once key words and phrases are made evident, it is possible to recognize that there is a particular language at work, that certain words and phrases are selected to describe a certain phenomenon.

Indeed, it is possible to identify key words and phrases within specific representations or articles. For example, if a certain word is mentioned several times in an article, it is likely that this term is intended to describe a particular phenomenon. When analyzing several representations, the key words and phrases at work become much more apparent. Thus, when looking at a collection of articles or representations, it becomes clear that terms or phrases mentioned frequently do not appear in a vacuum; there are intentions and interpretations at work in using certain terms and phrases and not others. As will be illustrated, there is a particular language used to describe NAC, pointing out, to an extent, how these representations are to be perceived by those that read The Toronto Star. Although some of The Star's readers may have what Hall (1986) calls an “oppositional reading” (see pg. 12), the intentions and interpretations of these representations become apparent through identifying the key words and phrases that are used repeatedly.

4. **Ideological Frames and Sub-Frames:** The media do not represent reality in full; they select certain aspects of reality and interpret, assemble, and organize it in partial ways. The ideological frame makes sense of and shapes the account, providing the parameters in which the account will be presented. As it was noted by Ng (1995: 36), ‘Ideological frame’ does not simply refer to a bias or set of beliefs. It identifies ideologies as processes that are produced and constructed through human activity.” Thus, ideological frames imply ideas and belief systems that are part of our consciousness and point to the work of human activity as the means through which these beliefs and ideas become embedded within our consciousness.
In looking at representations of NAC in The Toronto Star, I will be pointing to several sub-frames that can be understood within a particular ideological frame because representations of NAC appeared to be interpreted in different ways during different time periods. Indeed, some frames appeared and reappeared during different periods but, generally, there are several frames at work in representing NAC. As it was noted earlier, while it may seem as though there are no connections between these sub-frames, once the larger ideological frame is made evident, the relations between these different sub-frames can be understood.

Central Themes, Issues, and Events

There are several themes, issues, and events related to NAC that received considerable attention in The Toronto Star, most of which problematized the organization in some way. Approximately three out of four articles pointed to dilemmas and problems within NAC, seeming to portray NAC as a fragile or unstable organization. Some of the articles did highlight the strengths of the organization, but these articles were far less apparent and, in some cases, references were made to organizational difficulties alongside these more positive representations. While the themes, issues and events that appeared most often in the articles may have not been the central focus of many individual articles, collectively they were frequently mentioned or referenced alongside other themes, issues, and events. There are four themes, issues, and events that were central in representing NAC, many of which focused on internal struggles and problems.

Firstly, many of the articles concerned changes in presidency in the organization, totaling ten of fifty-five articles. Out of the four central themes, issues, and events, these articles appeared to represent NAC in the most positive light. Many of these articles pointed to what the outgoing president had accomplished during her term. For example, in an article on Sunera Thobani, NAC’s president from 1993-96, Thobani was described
by Judy Rebick, Thobani’s predecessor, as “a pioneer” who has made NAC “...an organization that is inclusive of women who were previously marginalized - women of color, immigrant women, and working class women.” (June 9, 1996: E1/2) As well, the goals and strengths of the incoming president were present in many articles. For example, in an article about Lynn Kaye, NAC’s president from 1988 to 1990, it was stated that Kaye was “...regarded as astute and knowledgeable on issues...” (May 24, 1988: G1/5) Some of these articles appeared in the Life section of the newspaper, and as it was mentioned, these articles problematize the organization, even if the president is painted as a strong and qualified individual. For example, in the article “Woman of Action” (June 9, 1996: E1/2) above, which commends the then president of NAC, Sunera Thobani as making “…a place for non-white women within Canada’s feminist movement...,” there were also references made to “NAC’s current struggles around race and representation.” Thus, while these articles did, in many cases, delineate past and present NAC presidents in complimentary ways, they also pointed to organizational problems alongside these positive representations.

Secondly, there was frequent mention of NAC fighting or constantly battling with other groups, often in ways that represented the organization as adopting extreme or irrational tactics in such battles. NAC was portrayed as battling against other women’s groups, such as REAL women (Real Equal and Active For Life – a pro-life, ultra conservative women’s group), and against Members of Parliament or political groups, particularly the Progressive Conservatives. In the case of the former, battles with REAL women, depictions of NAC’s fighting style appeared less extreme. For example, one article concerning NAC’s efforts to persuade the government to withhold funds from REAL women states that NAC “…strongly urges the Secretary of State to review the women’s program criteria to ensure that groups like REAL women can not have access to its funds...” (Jan. 3, 1987: B4) While this article does point to battles with REAL women, the articles concerning NAC’s battles with MPs or political parties painted NAC
in more militant ways. For example, in an article concerning NAC's efforts to have the Prime Minister listen to their concerns, the article commenced by stating that "About 150 irate feminists stormed Parliament Hill yesterday, disrupting committee meetings and demanding a meeting with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney." (June 18, 1991: A1/20) In another article pertaining to why the Progressive Conservative government considers NAC problematic, the article stated that if NAC wants to make more headway with the government, "...it would stop demanding the impossible and take a more pragmatic approach." (May 20, 1989: D4) Thus, while NAC's fighting style appeared slightly less militant when pitted against REAL women than with MP's or political parties, there was a clear representation of NAC constantly being in battle with others, and in many cases, battling in extreme or unnecessary ways.

There were also many articles that focused on a different type of battling within NAC: internal battles. In fourteen of the fifty-five articles, there was frequent mention of infighting within the organization, and how this infighting can undermine the abilities of the organization to maintain a united voice in which to raise important issues. These internal battles were represented in terms of general disagreements and in terms of "race" issues, in either case, pointing to problems in the organization. For example, in an article that pointed to many problems facing the organization, the article stated that "NAC faces several urgent dilemmas," such as "How to settle internal conflicts that have developed over race issues." Through pointing to these "dilemmas," NAC is represented in ways that undermine and problematize the strengths and abilities of the organization to achieve its goals and aims.

Moreover, there was frequent mention of the "fact" that NAC no longer represents the "mainstream" woman in Canada, namely the white middle-class woman. This focus began in May, 1989, when there were tensions between NAC and the Progressive Conservative government who was in power at this time. These tensions occurred because, with the PC party in power, the political climate posed serious challenges to
NAC, its image, and its funding. (Greaves, 1991) In fact, during the period from May 11, 1989 to May 20, 1989, four out of five articles introduced or emphasized the idea that NAC does not represent many Canadian women. For example, two of these articles quoted Barbara McDougall, the then Minister on the Status of Women as stating, "I don’t think the women in Canada have one voice,” and “I think that now women are finding other voices.” (May 16, 1989: A3; May 17, 1989: A26)

While the issue of NAC not representing all Canadian women was covered extensively during this period in May, 1989, this issue was picked up again in several articles around the time Sunera Thobani, the first non-white president of NAC, became the leader. For example, in an article entitled, “Back to Being Radical,” that concerns how NAC may be moving off into the margins, the article claims that “Mainstream woman are unsure of their role as the largest women’s lobby embraces the margins.” (Feb. 25, 1995: B1) After Thobani resigned and Joan Grant-Cummings, also a woman of color took over NAC’s leadership, many articles also pointed to this issue of NAC embracing the margins. For example, when Grant-Cummings began her presidency, there was an article suggesting that Grant-Cummings may have had an edge in the presidency because Thobani wanted her successor to be a woman of color. The article reads,

But the race issue followed the action committee to this year’s annual general meeting in Ottawa. Thobani wanted a woman of color to succeed her to guarantee that her work would continue. There was speculation that Grant-Cummings was the front-runner because of her race. (Armstrong, June 22, 1995: C5)

Thus, the issue that NAC does not speak for the “mainstream” woman in Canada was central during tensions around funding and around those times when women of color were gaining power within the organization.

My analysis shows that there is evidence of a continuous attempt to problematize the organization. Several representations point to the idea that NAC is facing considerable
difficulties, which can lead to a lack of organizational cohesion and NAC's inability to effectively challenge the social and political climate in which women face various forms of inequality. While there could have been a focus on gains made for many women through NAC related efforts, such as the introduction of pay equity laws, the legalization of abortion, and the provision of state-funded day care (to name a mere few), it appears that The Toronto Star only selected those themes, issues, and events that are indicative of problems in NAC. In doing so, The Toronto Star produces NAC's struggles, both within and outside, as newsworthy.

Physical Characteristics and Newsworthiness

While the mere presence of an article indicates some degree of newsworthiness, the physical characteristics of the articles indicate further how newsworthy an article is. Factors such as size of the article and where in the newspaper the article is located (front page, front page section, etc.) relate to how important an article is considered to be by the editor. However, not all physical characteristics work in accordance with one another in terms of how newsworthy they appear. In other words, while one factor, such as location, may indicate considerable newsworthiness, another factor, such as size of the article or size of the heading of the article, may suggest that the article is less newsworthy. Thus, there is no single factor that determines newsworthiness of an article. Rather, there are numerous factors that can point to how the importance accorded to a specific article or set of articles in the newspaper.

One of the major indicators signifying the newsworthiness of an article is location. By looking at both the section in which the articles are found and the page number in that section with the article, inferences can be made about the extent to which an article is considered important. The location of the articles can be summarized according to the following table:
Since the majority of articles, forty-one out of fifty-five articles were located in section A, the front page or news section of *The Toronto Star*, there is evidence that news about NAC is considered important newsworthy by the editors. However, as it was noted, in some cases, other factors can detract from the newsworthiness of the articles. For example, while the majority of NAC related articles were in the front section of the newspaper, only nine of the forty-one articles appeared on the front page of section A, which suggests that only a handful of articles were newsworthy enough to appear on the front page of section A (the most newsworthy location of an article).

When articles about NAC were in other sections, in sixteen out of fifty-seven articles, the articles were most often in the Life Section, which is less likely to be seen as important as the front page section. However, when these articles were located in sections other than A, in ten out of sixteen cases, they were on the front page of that section. These findings suggest that when articles related to NAC are not covered in the front page section of the newspaper, they are given more importance in other sections because, in the majority of cases, articles about NAC are located on the front page of that section, and the front page of a section is more visible to readers. Thus, although articles representing NAC are more often considered news more than anything else (they are in the news section), when the articles are in other sections, they appear more newsworthy.

The physical size and the headings of the articles can also indicate the extent to which an article is considered newsworthy. Those articles that are considered most newsworthy are likely to be accorded the more space and be given larger headings in the newspaper.
In order to classify the articles, I placed the articles within one of three categories. Since the number of clippings is higher than the number of articles, as some articles continued on to two pages, the total number here is seventy. The "small" category consisted of those articles that occupied no more than one-tenth of the page. The "average" category consisted of articles that were more than one-tenth of the page but no larger than one third of the page. The "large" category indicated those articles that occupied more than one third of the page, in some cases, even occupying the entire page. The headings were classified differently, only in terms of being disproportionately large in comparison to the size of the articles. This is because in some cases, the actual articles may have been of small or average size while the headings were extremely large in font. This phenomenon of disproportionately large headings may alter the extent to which an article may be classified as newsworthy in terms of size.

The number of articles within each category appear in the following table:

**Size Classification of the Articles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large size</th>
<th>Average size</th>
<th>Small size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is noted in the table, almost half, or thirty-three of seventy clippings were "average" size. There were more smaller size articles than larger size; the former amount to twenty-one articles and the latter amount to sixteen of the seventy clippings. And, while in most cases, there was a correlation between the size of the articles and the size of the headings, in fourteen of the seventy clippings, the headings were disproportionately large. There were no significant differences between small and average size articles when the headings were disproportionately large.
In the articles where the headings were disproportionately large, it appeared that there were common threads in terms of newsworthiness in this category. While the central themes, issues, and events in the articles tended to problematize NAC, those clippings with relatively large headings seemed to focus on NAC’s efforts to fight for women’s rights. For example, one of the disproportionately large headings read, “Women Won’t Be Silenced, Tories Warned” (May 12, 1990: A9), while another is entitled, “Feminists to Fight For Social Programs.” (June 12, 1994: A7) This trend, to focus on NAC’s efforts to fight for women’s rights in many of the relatively large headings, did not always portray these efforts in positive or effective ways. For example, two clippings were entitled, “Women Threaten to Boycott Violence Hearings” (June 8, 1992: A1) and “Women Boycotting Panel on Violence.” (Aug. 1, 1992: A10) Clearly, the mention of women threatening or boycotting can paint NAC as adopting extreme or ineffective tactics in fighting for women’s rights. Thus, those headings accorded the most size in the clippings and in relation to the size of the clippings in general were affiliated with NAC’s battles or battling styles, some of which appear to represent NAC’s battling styles as extreme or excessive.

The presence of photographs or pictures can also point to how newsworthy an article is considered by the editors of the newspapers. Photographs are visual cues and, since most of the newspaper is in print (in The Toronto Star at least), they can catch the eye of the reader. Thus, those articles that are accompanied by photographs can be seen as more newsworthy because they can receive more attention by providing readers with visual cues. Of fifty-seven articles, almost half, namely, twenty-eight articles were accompanied by photographs, indicating that these articles are considerably newsworthy.

Since pictures can be used to support or summarize the nature and thrust of the article, it is important to point to the content of these pictures. In the majority of cases, thirty-two of fifty-seven articles, there were pictures of incoming, present, or outgoing presidents and were of the biography or character portrait format, which suggests that
these individuals are considered important figures within The Toronto Star. The remainder of pictures were evenly distributed between NAC members marching in NAC related events and prominent political figures, such as Members of Parliament who were (or are) in conflict with NAC. In the former case, NAC members marching, the photographs seemed to represent the members in irrational or extreme ways, holding signs and looking as if they were shouting. For example, in an article entitled, “Tory MPs out in Full Force For Meeting With Feminists” (May 12, 1987: A11), that concerned the “...record number of Progressive Conservative MPs...” showing up for a meeting with “...Canada’s largest women’s organization after angry feminists staged protests...,” there was a picture of the women protesting with signs saying “Sisterhood is Powerful” and “Bye Bye Brian,” referring to the then Prime Minister of Canada, Brian Mulroney. In the latter case, photographs of MPs, the MP’s appeared to look distraught or frustrated when dealing with NAC related issues. For example, in an article about NAC’s efforts to discourage David Crombie, the then Secretary of State from giving REAL women government funding (which could undermine NAC’s credibility by having both groups appear as equally important when NAC is much stronger in terms of history, numbers, and rights for Canadian women), there was a picture of Crombie with his mouth open, his eyebrows raised, and his hands thrown up in despair. (Jan. 3, 1987: B4) Thus, the photographs that accompanied articles on NAC, when not of past, present or future NAC presidents, appeared to represent NAC as either irrational protesters or as causing distress to MPs.

Key Words and Phrases

Many of the articles have frequent mention of certain words or phrases, suggesting certain images, ideas, and opinions about NAC or specific members of the organization. While the terms “women” and “feminist” or derivations thereof were used in almost all of the articles, these terms will not be analyzed here in terms of frequency because they
do not offer insights into how NAC is represented. In other words, it is a given that NAC members are women or feminists so the use of these terms has little implication in the ways in NAC is represented in *The Toronto Star*. The key words and phrases mentioned most often (women or feminist aside) will be broken down into two categories: general findings which include both the articles and the headings together and, headings on their own. These articles will be analyzed separately because there were considerable differences between these two categories. For example, certain words and phrases were mentioned more often in the headings than in the articles in general or vice versa. It is important to keep in mind here that some of these words and phrases could be used several times in a specific article.

In both the headings and articles, the most common word used to represent NAC was "angry," or a derivation thereof (angered, angrily, etc.). In most instances, this term was used to describe NAC or some of its members, as in "a group of angry women." For example, in an article about the Progressive Conservative Government skipping NAC's annual lobbying session, the article states that "The country's largest women's group is angry." (May 13, 1989: A9) Another article claimed that "A group of angry feminists stormed into Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's home..." (May 11, 1987: A12)

The second most commonly used term was that of "battle" or "battles." This term was used to describe the actions of NAC members, being in "battle" with certain groups, such as REAL women and MPs, usually of the Progressive Conservative Party. For example, in an article about the NAC's concerns over New Right agendas, the article states that "This weekend, the NAC women will arm themselves, and the battle will begin..." (May 8, 1987: B1) In eleven of fifty-five articles, the terms "battle" or "battles" were employed. The term "radical" was the third most often used term at eight articles and, this term was often used to describe the actions and beliefs of NAC members. For example, in an article about Judy Rebick, the president of NAC from 1990 to 1993, Rebick she was called "...an old fashioned radical feminist." (May 11, 1990: B1/9) Other
terms or phrases that were mentioned in more than three articles but no more than six articles were that of “bitter,” “bitter infighting,” “infighting,” and “militant.” These terms and phrases were used to point to both what was occurring in the organization, namely infighting, bitter or otherwise, and how NAC’s actions and beliefs can be viewed.

In terms of headings only, the term employed most to represent NAC was “battle.” In five out of fifty-seven articles this term was used, as in for example, “NAC Fears Uphill Battle to Stop Rights Erosion.” (June 11, 1995: A5) Unlike the total sample of articles and headings combined, the headings did not point to any other key words or phrases that were statistically significant. In other words, most terms or phrases did not appear more than once or twice. The term “angry,” which was mentioned most often in the general findings, was only used in one heading: “Angry Feminists Storm Hill Demanding to See Mulroney.” (June 18, 1991: A1/20)

These findings indicate that the words and phrases used most often to represent NAC are used to describe NAC in ways that appear to be outside the political mainstream and as an organization with battles both internally and externally. The common use of terms, such as “radical” or “angry,” suggest that NAC is outside the political mainstream because groups within the mainstream would not be labeled “radical.” The frequent mention of “battles” and “bitter/infighting” suggests that the organization is constantly fighting both internally and with other groups. While these terms may be used most often because they can be considered newsworthy, particularly the term “battle” used most in the headings because it is eye catching and can make readers want to read on, these findings point to representations of NAC that do not mention any positive strengths of the organization. Thus, it appears that in The Toronto Star, those aspects of the organization that are problematic (e.g., bitter infighting) or extreme (e.g., angry, radical) are considered the most important in representing NAC.
Ideological Frames and Sub-Frames

The analysis shows that representations of NAC are constructed and interpreted through a particular perspective or set of beliefs. It has been made evident that there are interpretive practices highlighting certain aspects of the organization while other aspects are overlooked or glossed over. While there are several sub-frames that interpret, select, and assemble representations of NAC in The Toronto Star, there is a particular ideological frame at work to which these sub-frames are related. The ideological frame is that NAC only represents a small group of women which marginalizes the centrality of NAC as the leader of the Canadian women's movement. Since the next chapter is an in-depth discussion of the construction of an ideological circle I will not go into great detail here on the specific ideological frame at work in representing NAC. Rather, in the next chapter, I will provide a detailed analysis of how this frame shapes a particular article concerning NAC. In the next sections, only the sub-frames in representing NAC will be delineated so that they can be understood as part of the larger ideological frame that makes sense of the connections between these sub-frames. While there is a dominant ideological frame at work that is aimed at devaluing and problematizing the centrality of NAC (i.e. the women's movement), there were shifts in interpretation over time. Thus, the next sections will discuss these shifts separately, as sub-frames that are tied together by the overall ideological frame at work.

The dominant frame employed in representing NAC was the idea that NAC only speaks for a minority of women. This frame was put in place from the early stages, in the late 1980s of the analysis reporting onwards. During this time, an abundance of articles introduced the idea that women in Canada have many voices that cannot be subsumed under NAC's rubric. In particular, the then Minister for the Status of Women, Barbara McDougall, was quoted in several articles stating that women in Canada are now finding other voices. For example, in an article about the major problems facing Canada's largest feminist group, the article stated that Barbara McDougall "...hammered another
nail in NAC’s coffin by telling them flat out that they did not represent all the women in Canada when it came to the abortion issue.” (May 11, 1989: M1) McDougall was also quoted in other articles proclaiming “I don’t think the women in Canada have one voice,” and “I think that now women are finding other voices.” (May 16, 1989: A3; May 17, 1989: A26)

This frame, that NAC only represents a minority of women in Canada, was repeated in the nineties and during the time that Sunera Thobani took over NAC’s leadership. However, this sub-frame took on a different twist during this time, pointing to issues of race within the organization, which may be attributed to the fact that Thobani was the first woman of color to head Canada’s largest feminist group. When Thobani became president, there were several articles concerning NAC’s inability to speak to mainstream women because the organization, under Thobani’s leadership, was allegedly embracing the margins to such an extent that mainstream women felt alienated from NAC. For example, in a biographical article on Thobani that points to her accomplishments in making NAC more diverse, Jane Pepino, Toronto lawyer and member of the NAC related Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children, was quoted as expressing how she was unsure if there was still a place for her within NAC. Pepino was quoted as stating that

“While NAC has rightly brought attention to the plight of poor and underprivileged women, it has alienated a whole other group of women by saying we don’t need you,” Pepino says. “And it makes you wonder if what they really mean is we don’t want you. (Monsebraaten, June 9, 1990: E1/2)

This frame which reemerged during Thobani’s leadership that interpreted NAC as consumed with “race” issues remained while Joan Grant-Cummings, the current NAC president and also a woman of color, began her presidency. Several articles pointed to the idea that Grant-Cummings’ victory was a continuation of NAC’s shift toward the
margins established under Thobani’s leadership. For example, in an article about Grant-Cummings’ assertions that fighting racism and poverty are the primary goals for Canada’s largest feminist group, the article reads, “But some critics haven’t been so sure of NAC’s course. They worry the action committee has become too concerned with issues outside the mainstream.” (June 22, 1996: C5) There was even mention of the idea that Grant-Cummings’ victory was a result of the fact that she is a woman of color because Thobani proclaimed she wanted her successor to be a woman of color. In article that was allegedly about the erosion of social programs, there was mention that “Some observers speculated that Grant-Cummings had the edge because of her race” because Thobani “...has said in the past that she wants a woman of color to succeed her.” (June 16, 1996: A2) In such articles, while some of Grant-Cummings’ qualifications were mentioned, there was little reference to the fact that Grant-Cummings’ was NAC’s treasurer and only had one opponent: Catherine Laidlaw, a sixty-four year old white woman from Montreal who had not been active in NAC.

Indeed, NAC may not speak for all Canadian women. NAC has in recent years, particularly through the work of Thobani, sought to become more diverse and speak to women of color, lesbians, and other groups who are among the most marginalized in society. However, through this sub-frame, it appears that the organization has been or continues to be exclusionary and unable to speak to the “mainstream” Canadian woman. While there is no way of knowing for certain what the intention/s of this sub-frame are, my analysis suggests that this sub-frame interprets the realities of the organization so as to make it appear as though it does not and can not speak to “mainstream” Canadian women. It is not surprising to find this sub-frame used in representing Canada’s largest feminist group because, as Hawkesworth (1990: 11) notes, “Feminism is frequently depicted as a movement of interest only to women, or indeed as a private interest group devoted to advancing the interests of a narrow subset of women.”
The first sub-frame that was evident in the articles was that the organization is too consumed with internal struggles to accomplish any significant goals. This frame was maintained through frequent mention of dilemmas and weaknesses facing NAC while mentioning gains and accomplishments sporadically. This sub-frame first became apparent in 1988, when a handful of articles were published with regard to issues of infighting within the organization, pointing to the idea that NAC is too concerned with solving internal problems to deal with important social issues. For example, in an article that focused on the “bitter infighting” that erupted at NAC’s 16th annual general meeting, the article stated that “Meeting first-timers thought they were there to fight for issues, not with each other.” (May 18, 1988: A1/5) In another article about the then new president of NAC, Lynn Kaye, the article discussed the infighting by pointing to claims made by Lorraine Greaves, who dropped out of the election because, as the article claimed,

Greaves believed that NAC’s first and perhaps only priority was to re-organize itself even in a year when where many believe an election will be called and issues crucial to women such as free trade, abortion, and child care will be discussed in Parliament. (Dunphy, May 24, 1988: G1/5)

Thus, through this sub-frame, NAC’s efforts and goals appeared to be thwarted because the organization seemed to be too caught up in internal squabbles to accomplish anything significant.

This sub-frame was also sustained in the articles through pointing to the idea that NAC is too diverse or too fragmented to create a unified voice in which to create changes. This sub-frame emerged during the late 1980s when several articles interpreted NACs efforts and actions as impossible as the organization could not reach a consensus on major issues facing women because it was too fragmented. For example, in an article by Carol Goar (this article provoked some major responses by NAC members, including Judy Rebick who wrote an letter in response to this) about why the Progressive
Conservative Government spurns Canada’s largest women’s lobby, there was frequent mention of problems such as the inability to create a unified voice. The article states that NAC “...has become so large and ungainly that it has lost its ability to speak with one voice on most major issues.” (May 20, 1989: D4) In another article entitled “Shaky May Be Headed For A Fall,” also printed during this time concerning the myriad of problems facing the organization, NAC it states,

In some ways, NAC has been done in by its own success. It is too big, too diverse. With 589 member groups all being accorded equal say, achieving consensus has become nothing short of a miracle. In the case of such crucial issues as Meech Lake, the miracle didn’t happen. (Dunphy, May 11, 1989: M1)

Connections to the dominant frame are evident here in that this sub-frame interpreted NAC as being too consumed with conflicts about “race” in the organization to fight for social changes by pointing to. During the time when Thobani took over NAC’s leadership, a handful of articles suggested that conflicts over race issues have hindered the group’s ability to realize its goals and mandates. For example, in an article about how under Thobani’s leadership, NAC has silenced white women to such an extent that there were internal divisions in the organization that could impinge upon the group’s ability to fight all forms of oppression. The article states,

Were white women now the ones to be “silenced”? White women who had founded NAC, who has fought for the big equity fights on abortion rights, pay equity, and sex crimes reforms. They’d one it for Canadian women, so how were they suddenly racist, exclusionist, privileged? No matter how noble the intent, wasn’t NAC, in focusing on women’s different experiences, ultimately pitting them against each other? If so, that would benefit only the male establishment, not to mention the delight of their more active enemies elsewhere. (Hurst, Feb. 25, 1995: B1)

This focus on race issues continued well into the time when Grant-Cummings, Thobani’s successor, took over the leadership of the organization and several articles depicted NAC as being too focused on internal problems of race to reach its mandates. For example, in
an article concerning NAC’s goals to fight racism and poverty under Grant-Cummings’ leadership, there were several mentions of internal race conflicts, and how these conflicts hindered NAC’s ability to attain these goals. The article stated that

When Thobani was acclaimed in 1993, she too, vowed to fight poverty and racism, but got sidetracked with internal squabbling about racism within NAC. In 1995, Thobani was worn down by the attack - largely from within the organization - and lack of support. She wanted to leave but, instead of stepping aside, helped lay the groundwork for Grant-Cummings’ succession. (Armstrong, June 22, 1995: C5)

Through this first sub-frame, that NAC is too consumed with problems and dilemmas, such as internal fighting, racially and otherwise, and not being able to create a unified voice on major issues for Canadian women, it appears that the goals and mandates of the organization will not and can not be realized. Indeed, any organization has problems and difficulties, but in the case of NAC, this sub-frame interpreted the organization as being too caught up in organizational difficulties and fundamental problems to accomplish significant goals.

The second sub-frame at work in representing NAC was that of the organization adopting irrational, unnecessary, or undesirable attitudes and behaviors in their efforts to fight for women’s rights. Like the other sub-frames, this interpretation of NAC became evident in the late eighties when six articles pointed to the idea that NAC’s tactics are unimportant or irrational. For example, Carol Goar’s article, mentioned earlier, claimed that NAC’s “…tactics may have seemed avant-garde a decade ago, but now they are merely sophomoric.” (May 20, 1989: D4) This sub-frame also reappeared in several articles well into the nineties. Certain events in particular, such as NAC’s storming of Parliament Hill and when NAC voted to boycott a federal panel on violence against women, seemed to reinforce this sub-frame. For example, in an article concerning NAC’s march on Parliament Hill to see Mulroney, the then Prime Minister of Canada, the article stated that when NAC members were denied access to the main Parliament
buildings, “Rebick and her supporters then engaged in a bizarre scene of pounding their fists on the front doors of Parliament while shouting, ‘Open the doors’ and ‘Brian where are you?’” (June 18, 1991: A1/20) In an article about NAC’s decision to boycott the federal panel on violence against women, unless changes, such as increased representation of racial minorities were implemented, the article claimed that when Mary Collins, the then federal minister for the Status of Women, denied NAC’s requests, “She was greeted with angry howls.” (June 9, 1992: A1/22) In looking at these representations as well as the key words and phrases discussed earlier, which portray and describe NAC as an “angry,” “radical,” or “militant” group, constantly “battling” or having “bitter infighting,” it appears that NAC’s tactics are far from important, necessary, or appropriate.

Moreover, in some cases, this sub-frame, that NAC’s tactics are unnecessary or futile was maintained through suggesting that while women are gaining social power, NAC has remained a victim of the past, often fighting for women’s issues that are not representative of many contemporary women. For example, in an article concerning how NAC is victimizing itself by being all things to all women, the reporter stated that “...as society evolves, and women take a greater share of power, many want to shed the pink-ghetto mentality...” (May 17, 1989: A26) Another article pertaining to NAC’s inability to win battles for women states that “‘Times changed but NAC didn’t. A new breed of feminist woman agrees with NAC policies but not with its practices.’” (May 11, 1989: M1)

Through this sub-frame, it appears as though the organization is at risk of becoming irrelevant. These representations of NAC point to the idea that the organization can not achieve any significant changes because its tactics and methods for fighting for social change are irrational or not appropriate to women’s struggles in today’s society. But, as Wine and Ristock (1991: 3) point out, “Fortunately, in spite of the media’s wistful proclamations that ‘the women’s movement is dead’ or that ‘this is the post-feminist era,’
the women’s movement is still very much vital and alive.” Thus, while this sub-frame interprets NAC as being at risk of becoming irrelevant, other interpretations suggest that organizations like NAC remain necessary and important.

What these sub-frames indicate is that there has been and continues to be a larger ideological frame at work in representing NAC in The Toronto Star, that NAC only speaks for a handful of women which serves to devalue NAC as a central figure in the Canadian women’s movement. Through interpreting NAC as constantly being consumed with internal dilemmas, and adopting unnecessary, irrational or outdated practices, the organization appears to be unable to take leadership in the women’s movement. Through highlighting problems facing the organization, there was and is a continuous marginalization of the many gains made by NAC in the direction of women’s equality. NAC has been and continues to be the strongest group in Canada to lobby for changes for women, such as the introduction of state funded day care, the legalization of abortion, and ensuring safety standards in New Reproductive Technologies (NRTs), just to name a few. Only a handful of articles pointed to such accomplishments. There was only one article on NRTs, written by former NAC president, Judy Rebick that aimed to clarify where NAC stands on the issue of NRTs. (Nov. 26, 1990: A16) In only one article was the issue of pay equity the focus, pointing to the idea that pay equity laws are not working because, as NAC researchers found, the penalties for not implementing pay equity laws were not swift enough (although in the present day pay equity laws are much more effective and penalties are occurring.) (Dec. 22, 1990: A3)

This is not to say that some of the claims within The Toronto Star are entirely false. In fact, there has been documentation about some of the problems within the organization. For example, Lorraine Greaves (1991), a former NAC member who dropped out of the 1988 presidential election, proclaims that feminist process, namely inclusivity and increased tolerance and compassion, were missing from NAC during the time of her membership. However, there is evidence to suggest that there is a partial and
particular representation of NAC in The Toronto Star. Indeed, there is no objective way of deciphering the “truth” about what really occurs within the organization, but it is evident that the editors, reporters, and other staff of The Toronto Star have their own ways of interpreting what the “truth” is in relation to NAC. Through interpreting the actions, attitudes, and behaviors of NAC in ways that continuously marginalize the organization, there are selection processes at work, filtering out the accomplishments and strengths of the organization while highlighting problems and difficulties.

The purpose of this summary of representations have been to provide some background information on how these representations work and are socially organized within The Toronto Star. The processes of organizing these accounts are highly complex in nature. As it was noted, these processes are the result of human activity of various kinds that do the work of interpreting, assembling, and organizing what claims to represent “what actually happens” within the organization. In brief, the larger ideological frame and sub-frames at work in representing NAC do not just happen. They are the result of various processes and practices. The information here offers insights into the ways in which these representations are put together and constructed. The next chapter will provide an in-depth analysis to investigate the social organization of these representations.
CHAPTER 4

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I will analyze in depth a particular article entitled, “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles.” (May 27, 1996: A1/ A8) As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, textual analysis offers an in-depth way for investigating how textual reality is put together and socially organized in particular and partial ways. While all accounts are socially organized in different ways, any of the articles discussed in chapter three could form the basis of this textual analysis. However, I have chosen this text in particular because it is shaped by both of the sub-frames presented in chapter three: that NAC is too consumed with infighting, racially and otherwise to accomplish its goals, and that NAC is no longer necessary, important or desirable in leading the women’s movement in Canada. These sub-frames can be understood within the larger ideological frame at work in representing NAC, which is that NAC is increasingly being dominated by a small group of women, in this case, women of color, thereby marginalizing the concerns of mainstream women. This frame will be discussed and referred to throughout this chapter.

The approach used in this chapter, a social organization of knowledge approach is both a theory and a method of inquiry. This approach is a way of understanding how accounts, such as “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles,” can be understood or explained as well as providing a method for investigating and deconstructing how such accounts work. As a method of inquiry, a social organization of knowledge approach makes possible the rupturing the “taken for granted” character of objectified accounts as well as making visible the work that goes into such accounts.

Since there is no way of knowing for certain or in full what actually happened in reality, the evidence used in this chapter is the text itself. As Smith (1990: 157) points out, “We do not suppose that there is one objective account of ‘what actually happened’ against which other accounts can be measured.” What is of concern here are the
processes and practices that transform the lived actuality into “what actually happened,” as it is worked up and encoded in particular ways to produce an account that is shaped by an ideological frame. Once this ideological frame is in place, and an intended reading is put together, the frame becomes the interpretive schemata through which social reality is interpreted. It is precisely this version of social reality that will form the basis of the analysis in this chapter.

In the previous chapter, I alluded to the ideological frame at work in representing NAC in The Toronto Star. In this chapter, I will outline what the ideological frame and the various ways in which it works to present NAC in particular and partial ways. Through the ideological frame, the lived actuality or event is encoded in certain ways; “the particulars” are used to support the intended account which is embedded within the ideological frame. This frame then dovetails with the interpretive schemata to shape social reality and become what Smith calls “virtual reality” or “ideological circles, as these terms point to the recycled and worked up versions of reality.

In this article, the ideological frame is that NAC is increasingly being dominated by a narrow subset of women, namely women of color, thereby no longer representing mainstream women and mainstream feminism. As I will illustrate, this frame determines what was to be encoded, the selection and use of the particulars, the resulting account, as well as the interpretive schemata which intends a particular way of understanding NAC. In order to conceptualize how this ideological frame shapes this text in such ways, I will present the article in its entirety in order to refer to specific processes and practices of social organization.

Since the article will be reproduced in terms of how it appears originally in the newspaper, certain features, such as heading and photographs which cannot be reproduced here, must be clarified. As mentioned, the article is entitled, “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles,” with a sub-heading underneath that reads “Two Candidates Offer Wide Views.” On the continuing page of the article, A 8, there is a
second heading that reads "Racial Issue, Infighting, Consume Women's Group." There is also a photograph of Sunera Thobani, the president of NAC from 1993 to 1996, with a caption underneath stating: "Sunera Thobani: Says successor should be woman of color."

While the staff reporter cited is Maria Bonulawsky, at the beginning of the article, it states "OTTAWA" in bold letters, indicating that the official source of the article is from Ottawa which implies that the reporter was merely covering or observing "facts" and not interpreting the event in particular ways. However, as it will be outlined, the text is not merely observational or neutral, but rather, various processes of selection, interpretation, assembly, and organization are at work in the text. The article reads,

1. OTTAWA - When Sunera Thobani took over
2. Canada’s largest women’s group in 1993, she vowed to
3. give a stronger voice to minorities who were often
drowned out by the largely white, middle-class membership.
4. Now, as Thobani steps down and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women prepares to
5. choose a successor, some are wondering if she succeeded too well.
6. After three years of Thobani’s direction, NAC faces several urgent dilemmas:
7. - How to settle internal conflicts that have developed over race issues.
8. - How to retain influence with federal politicians
9. whose policies affect women.
10. - How to ensure the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels
11. - How to retain influence with federal politicians
12. whose policies affect women.
13. - How to ensure the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels
14. - How to retain influence with federal politicians
15. whose policies affect women.
16. - How to ensure the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels
17. - How to retain influence with federal politicians
18. whose policies affect women.
19. - How to ensure the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels
20. - How to retain influence with federal politicians
21. whose policies affect women.
22. - How to ensure the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels
23. - How to retain influence with federal politicians
24. whose policies affect women.
25. - How to ensure the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels
26. - How to ensure the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels
27. - How to ensure the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels
28. - How to ensure the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels
29. - How to ensure the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels
30. Thobani, 38, the first woman of color to lead NAC, says her successor should also be a woman of color, in order to continue her pioneering work.
31. One of the candidates is black: Joan Grant-Cummings, 36, who heads a women’s health centre in Toronto.
32. The other candidate is white: Catherine Laidlaw, a long-time anglophone feminist from Montreal.
33. The election at NAC’s annual general meeting June 14 to 16 in Ottawa will be pivotal. If the action committee fashions itself into a credible voice examining the impact of massive social and economic change, it
53. could do tremendous good.
54. But the challenge of its lead-
55. ership is to avoid spinning off
56. into the margins.
57. Since it was formed in 1971,
58. the feminist group has lobbied
59. on pensions, equal pay, violence
60. against women services and re-
61. productive issues.
62. Several years ago, it claimed
63. to represent some three million
64. women through its member
65. groups, big and small (there are
66. no individual memberships).
67. It does not currently provide
68. such estimates.
69. But under Thobani, the num-
70. ber of member groups jumped
71. from 550 to 670: the newcomers
72. include immigrant, refugee and
73. aboriginal organizations and la-
74. bor groups. Currently half the
75. members of the 26 member ex-
76. ecutive are women of color, up
77. from a handful three years ago.
78. As Thobani steps down from the
79. $59,000-a-year job, she can
80. legitimately claim that: “I have
81. brought a whole new generation
82. of women into NAC.”
83. The next step for the organi-
84. zation is a debate on how to
85. make itself anti-racist, she says.
86. However, this goal has created
87. the perception in some quarters
88. that NAC is now largely con-
89. cerned with immigrant and ref-
90. ugee issues.
91. “They have become a very
92. special interest lobby with a
93. much narrower focus than they
94. once had,” says former Reform
95. MP Jan Brown, who believes
96. the action committee has out-
97. grown its relevance as women
98. have made gains in society.
99. While it doesn’t appear any-
100. one has actually left NAC over
101. the race debates, there have
102. been mutterings of discontent
103. within some member groups
104. and a feeling among some wom-
105. en outside the committee that it
106. doesn’t speak for them.
107. “There were people who
108. didn’t feel comfortable having a
109. woman of color represent
110. them,” says Thobani.
111. Grant-Cummings, currently
112. NAC’s treasurer, says the in-
113. creased involvement of women
114. of color has made the commit-
115. tee more, not less pertinent.
116. Outside observer, Jane Pepi-
117. no, a Toronto feminist activist
118. says nobody disagrees that NAC
119. must reflect diversity. What has
120. troubled some white or middle-
121. class women is the sense that
122. only poor women, women of
123. color or lesbians can speak for
124. the downtrodden.
125. The public image of NAC has
126. deteriorated in the last several
127. years.
128. A year ago, members of the
129. committee hissed and shouted
130. down cabinet ministers who
131. had accepted their invitation to
132. NAC’s annual lobby of Parlia-
133. ment. When Immigration Minis-
134. ter Sergio Marchi tried to re-
135. spond to accusations that
136. Canadian immigration policy is
137. racist, he was bood.
138. And, two years ago, there was
139. a 60’s style “storming” of the
140. Parliament Buildings with
141. shouting, pounding on doors
142. and resisting security guards
143. when Reform Leader Preston
144. Manning wouldn’t meet them.
145. Financially, the government
146. cent of NAC’s $850,000 budget
147. has lost interest, about 23 per
148. comes from the federal govern-
149. ment - a mere pitance from
150. the 90 per cent funding it got in
151. the early days127. years.
152. The highlight of Thobani’s
153. tenure is a cross-Canada wom-
154. en’s march against poverty
155. which began May 14 in Vancou-
156. ver. Scores of women are travel-
157. ling across the country and it’s
158. expected that thousands will
159. take part in local rallies and

160. concerts along the way
161. But Glenda Simms, a black
162. woman who headed the now
163. defunct Canadian
164. Council on the Status of Wom-
165. en, says she’s more disturbed by
166. the infighting than she is im-
167. pressed with the group’s claims
168. of being inclusive.
169. Simms says the new leader
170. doesn’t have to be a woman of
171. color.
172. “It should be a person able to
173. relate to all kinds of women, ap-
174. peal to the Canadian public and
175. bring men on side as partners.”

The Lived Actuality: Referencing “What Actually Happened”

As it was noted in chapter two, the lived actuality is a real phenomenon in everyday
reality. In the text, the lived actuality is Thobani’s stepping down from her presidency at
NAC, and stating that she wants her successor to be a woman of color. Once the lived
actuality is used to reference an intended account, it is no longer taken in full and only
certain features are made available to us. Thus, while Thobani’s stepping down may
have included a lengthy speech or set of procedures (which is likely the case), all that is
made known to us is that she is stepping down and that she wants her successor to be a
woman of color. The stepping down of Thobani can be seen in lines 10 to 14, when the
article reads, “Now as Thobani steps down and the National Action Committee prepares
to choose a successor...” and her comment that her successor should be a woman of color
is stated on lines 32 to 26. The article states here that “Thobani, the first woman of color
to lead NAC, says her successor should also be a woman of color to continue her
pioneering work.”
As Smith (1990) points out, a lived actuality never happens because it is always lived. "What actually happened" derives from the lived actuality, selecting certain parts of the actuality, although it may appear as a complete version of an event or occurrence. The lived actuality is transformed into "what actually happened" at the point where a recording is made, a story is told, or an event is referenced and the lived actuality is no longer taken in full. For example, while Thobani may have presented a speech about her presidency or about issues facing women today, which would be the lived actuality in full, all that is made known to us is "what actually happened," namely, Thobani's stepping down and stating that her successor should be a woman of color.

Encoding Thobani's Statement

As it was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the ideological frame is set up to encode the actuality in particular ways. Thobani's statement becomes worked up and certain features of the event are selected and presented in accordance with the ideological frame and the intended reading, or interpretive schemata, namely that NAC is increasingly being dominated by women of color and no longer represents mainstream women. In order to encode this frame and produce an intended reading or schemata, certain features, such as terms, phrases, and grammatical and logical connections are selected. Sequencing processes and logical connections are of particular importance in order to provide linkages of ideas and "facts" that seem to follow in logical order.

The selection of certain terms and the ways in which they are presented are part of the encoding processes and can be seen at various points in the article, having Thobani's statement described or discussed in particular ways. For example, the term "woman of color" appears four times in the article (heading included). It is not only the term that points to encoding work, but also the ways in which the terms are used to suggest that woman of color are dominating the organization. On lines 74 to 77, the article mentions
that “Currently half the members of the executive are women of color, up from a handful three years ago.” Clearly, when the term “woman of color” is used here, it can be seen in relation to the ideological frame, encoding the actuality to point to the idea that women of color are dominating the organization. Similarly, Thobani was described on lines 30 to 32 as “the first woman of color to lead NAC,” and this can also be seen in relation to the ideological frame in that having a woman of color lead NAC indicates increasing power of women of color in the organization.

Another way in which the work of encoding was shaped by the ideological frame was through making references to the idea that NAC no longer speaks for mainstream Canadian women. For example, on lines 54 to 56, the article reads, “But the challenge of its leadership is to avoid spinning off into the margins.” This encoding work was also apparent through the suggestion that NAC is only concerned with issues that are of importance to women of color and others who are perceived to be “more oppressed” than mainstream women. On lines 86 to 90, the article states that the organizations goals to make itself anti-racist have “...created the perception in some quarters that NAC is now largely concerned with immigrant and refugee issues.” Similarly, on lines 19 to 29, there were several urgent dilemmas mentioned, one of which was “how to ensure that the organization remains relevant to woman at all societal levels.” (lines 27-29) Through the ideological frame, the encoded message is that only minority women have a voice within NAC through increasing domination of such women, and that mainstream women are now the ones to be marginalized.

There were also references to the idea since women of color are controlling NAC, there have been debates over “race issues,” debates which can be seen in relation to the idea that mainstream women now feel silenced at NAC. For example, one of the “urgent dilemmas” mentioned on lines 19 to 29 was “How to settle internal conflicts that have developed over race issues” (lines 20-22). The “race debate” was encoded again, later on in the article: “While it doesn’t appear anyone has actually left over race debates, there
have been mutterings of discontent within some member groups and a feeling among some women outside the committee that it (NAC) doesn't speak for them.” (lines 101-106)

The presentation of proper sequencing, a property of encoding, was also present in the article to reinforce the ideological frame. Once Thobani’s statement was encoded with certain terms, ideas, and logical connections, there were references to other events that can be seen in relation to this previous encoding work. In other words, in order for the presentation of "facts" or ideas to make sense, there must be a logical ordering or sequencing present so that such "facts" or ideas can be used to support the ideological frame in an appropriate manner. Conversely, if such "facts" or ideas were presented at the beginning of the article, prior to the selection and assembly of certain terms and ideas, these "facts" or ideas would not seem logical. This presentation of the appropriate sequencing is evident in the article when there is reference to a past event, namely the booing of Immigration Minister, Sergio Marchi when “he tried to respond to accusations that Canadian immigration policy is racist.” (lines 133-137) By encoding this past event, it appears as though there is a logical relation to the ideological frame of women of color dominating the organization because such encoding reinforces the idea that NAC is largely concerned with immigrant and refugee issues (which can be seen to be more important for women of color since mainstream woman are seen as “Canadian” and white).

The sequencing of encoding processes was also evident in that issues of importance to mainstream women were encoded in the article as no longer being pertinent for NAC. Once Thobani’s statement was encoded, the context was set in which to encode the idea that issues relevant to women at all societal levels are no longer central to NAC. The article reads, “Since it was formed in 1971, the feminist group has lobbied on pensions, equal pay, violence against women services and reproductive issues” (lines 57-61). After this statement was presented, there were no other references to such issues. Rather, as it
was noted in the previous paragraph, NAC related efforts were presented as being largely concerned with immigrant and refugee issues. Shortly after this statement about NAC’s efforts that are relevant for all women, there were references to the rise in member groups which “include immigrant, refugee, and aboriginal organizations and labor groups” (lines 72-74) as well as stating that “The next step for the organization is a debate on how to make itself anti-racist.” (lines 83-85) Through this sequencing, it appears that the issues affecting women at all levels of society have been marginalized since, according to the ideological frame, NAC is being dominated by women of color and no longer is concerned with issues for mainstream women. Clearly, once this frame is established, ideas and statements can then be presented that shape the intended reading of NAC.

**Supporting the Account: The Work of “Particulars”**

The “particulars” are selected during the work of encoding. “Particulars” are individuals who can be seen as “experts” and can provide “expert” information and ideas that give credibility to the account and support the ideological frame. In Smith’s work, she uses the term “particulars” in the context of the criminal justice system to describe the work of individuals who represent the actuality according to the resulting charge or account. In this work, she states, “The particulars represent the actuality intending the charge. Questions of truth and falsity, of guilt and innocence, are addressed to the particulars in relation to the charge. The “particulars” are organized by the charge intended.” (Smith, 1990: 160) In my work, the “particulars” will be analogous to the way Smith uses the term in relation to the criminal justice system.

In the article, “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles,” the “particulars” identified are “experts” on either Canadian feminism or Canadian politics, or both. They are Jan Brown, a former Reform MP; Jane Pepino, a Toronto lawyer and feminist activist; and Glenda Simms, former head of the now defunct Canadian Council on the Status of
Women. Both the selection of these “particulars” as well as the statements presented in the text by these “particulars” are used to substantiate and corroborate the account that follows and the ideological frame that constructs NAC as being increasingly ruled by women of color, thereby no longer speaking for mainstream women.

After Thobani’s statement was encoded in particular ways to suggest women of color are dominating the organization, and that “NAC is now largely concerned with immigrant and refugee issues” (lines 88-90), Jan Brown, former Reform MP, was used as a particular to refer to the idea that NAC’s focus has become so parochial that the organization may no longer be necessary. Brown was quoted as stating, “They (NAC) have become a very special interest lobby with a much narrower focus than they once had.” (lines 91-94) From lines 95 to 98, Brown was quoted again, stating that she “…believes the action committee has outgrown its relevance as women have made gains in society.” Having delineated the ideological frame, it is possible to see how this “particular” has been used in the text to support the frame: Brown implies that since the group’s focus has become so narrow, it is unable to lobby for issues affecting all women. Although Brown does not overtly refer to women of color as this allegedly narrow focus, given the previous encoding work that described Thobani’s statement as evidence of the group’s domination by women of color, Brown’s statement follows such encoding work as well as supporting the frame. Furthermore, while Brown does not state specifically which women she is referring to that have made gains in society, it appears as though she is implying mainstream women because NAC is represented in the text as only speaking “…for the downtrodden.” (lines 123-124) Although Brown does not necessarily support the ideological frame, once this frame has been outlined and the work of encoding can be seen in relation to this frame, it is evident that this frame is being supported by the words of this “particular.”

Jane Pepino, a Toronto lawyer and feminist activist, was also used in the text as a “particular.” She was quoted as saying that NAC only speaks for a narrow subset of
women, thereby marginalizing the concerns of mainstream women. It is interesting to note here how the account becomes objectified and taken as neutral as Pepino was identified as an outside observer, even though she clearly has her own ideas and interpretations about the organization. In the text, it stated that “Outside observer, Jane Pepino says nobody disagrees that NAC must reflect diversity. What has troubled some white or middle-class women is the sense that only poor women, women of color or lesbians can speak for the downtrodden.” (lines 116-124) By using this “particular,” the frame is further substantiated as Pepino points to the idea that NAC is going too far in reflecting diversity because mainstream women, who she refers to as white or middle-class women, have been troubled by feeling that they have lost their voice at NAC.

Another “particular” identified in the text was Glenda Simms, a black women who headed the now defunct Canadian Council on the Status of Women. As it was noted, both the selection of the “particulars” as well how they are used to give credibility to the account and substantiate the frame are of central importance. Since it was stated on lines 161 to 165 that Simms is a “…black woman who headed the now defunct Canadian Council on the Status of Women,” Simms’ assertions serve as a powerful resource to interpret “what actually happened” in accordance with the frame, as she is an “expert” on both women’s issues and issues for women of color. Thus, Simms’ statement that “…she’s more disturbed by the infighting than with the group’s claims of being inclusive” and that she thinks “…the new leader doesn’t have to be a woman of color,” but “…should be a person able to relate to all kinds of women, appeal to the public and bring men on side as partners” (lines 165-175) gives great credibility to the account. In fact, Simms’ comments undermine Thobani’s statement that her successor should be a woman of color, rendering the increase in the power of women of color in NAC unjustified. Clearly, the work of this “particular” crystallizes the ideological frame in suggesting that
the domination of women of color within NAC makes it increasingly difficult for such women to relate to all kinds of women and appeal to the Canadian public.

**Entering Textual Time: The Resulting Account**

As it was noted in chapter 2, the account is an idea, belief, or way of knowing the world that stands in for reality; it is “virtual reality” in Smith’s terminology. What Smith means by “virtual reality” is a socially organized and assembled version of reality that appears in objectified textual forms. Once textual time is entered and reality comes to us in its “virtual” forms, “...events in the ordinary world are reconceptualized and entered into documentary reality.” (G. Smith, 1988: 171 cited in de Montigny, 1995: 217)

When textual time begins, there are various processes and practices that enter into the account, although these processes and practices are not made visible to us. In other words, the work of assembly, selection, and organization that goes into the creation and maintenance of the account becomes lost once textual time is entered and the account comes to us in its full objectified form. Since the account comes to us as textual or objectified reality, it appears to be neutral and objective. However, once the account is deconstructed and the work that enters into the account is unpacked, it is possible to recognize that accounts are, in fact, highly ideological; they are put together in particular ways to give a particular reading of reality. This reading is shaped by the ideological frame and the interpretive schemata. By identifying the processes and practices that enter into the creation of the account, the ways in which this reality is partial and particular are made visible.

Since the processes and practices that enter into the account are not made visible, the account or point in which textual time begins seems to stand on its own; the context and the historicity of the lived actuality, encoding processes, “particulars,” and assembly of facts are seen in relation to the intended account. The lived actuality is no longer taken in full, but rather transforms into “what actually happened” as a certain feature of the
lived actuality. The work of encoding seems to make sense of the actuality, although the selection of certain terms and grammatical and logical connections becomes lost. The “particulars” are juxtaposed together to appear as though all of the work of the “particulars” occurred simultaneously; in fact, both the context and the historicity of such work is not made visible to us. It is likely the case that the statements in the text made by the “particulars” were not originally intended to be a response to Thobani’s statement, and such statements were likely to occur at different points in time, even though it appears in the text as if these statements occurred simultaneously.

Once the account is worked up, it seems to make sense of the lived actuality which has become “what actually happened,” as it now stands in direct relation to the account. Since “what actually happened” is central to the idea that women of color are gaining positions of power within NAC, or should be according to Thobani’s statement, the account that follows draws on this idea in relation to problems that have arisen in light of it. The account points to “several urgent dilemmas” (lines 18-19) such as “How to settle internal conflicts that have developed over race issues” (lines 20-22), “How to retain influence with federal politicians whose policies affect women” (lines 23-26), and “How to ensure that the organization remains relevant to women at all societal levels.” (lines 27-29) Clearly, the account points to the idea that through Thobani’s statement, women of color are dominating NAC, and through such domination, “urgent dilemmas” have arisen. These “dilemmas” point to internal problems that have ensued through marginalizing mainstream women because NAC has become conceptualized through the account as no longer being relevant to women at all societal levels. Once the account is brought forth and textual time begins, Thobani’s statement appears as a logical sequence of ideas and events, so that NAC can be seen to be dominated by women of color; through this domination, race issues and struggles of the marginality of mainstream women have followed.
The frame need not be an overt statement, written in a single phrase or sentence. In fact, it can be presented in subtle ways that may be more effective to produce an intended reading because evidence of ideological persuasion detracts from the "objective" or "neutral" appearance of the frame. This can be seen in the article through employing phrases such as "some are wondering" (lines 14-15), and there is "the perception in some quarters" (line 87) when making references to the account. While the article only points to those who are wondering about race issues or those who have perceived race issues, the account seems more sensible in that it does not make sweeping statements about all women. If the account were presented in such a way as to suggest that all women are wondering, or that there is the perception in all quarters, readers may dismiss the account and the intended reading may not be accomplished. Through implying and suggesting ideas that relate to the account as opposed to making sweeping or definitive statements, the account appears to be more logical and unbiased, thereby making the intended reading more "sensible."

The Interpretive Schemata: Intending A Particular Reading

The interpretive schemata intends a particular reading of the ideological frame. Once the ideological frame has been accomplished in the text, it dovetails with the interpretive schemata to produce an intended reading of social reality, and according to the ideological frame. The frame is embedded in and shapes the account and the text, while the schemata transforms the frame into an objectified way of knowing the world.

As it was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the ideological frame is that NAC is being dominated by a narrow subset of women, namely women of color, and through this domination, mainstream women have become silenced within NAC. Having such a frame in place means that the interpretive schemata intends a reading of NAC that is shaped by this frame, thereby intending to represent NAC as being only concerned with issues facing only the most oppressed women in society. By focusing on such problems
and race issues, the question of what NAC represents or entails is made invisible and NAC becomes conceptualized not as a group that lobbies for the rights of all women, but consumed with problems of race and representation. This focus is all that is made visible to us. The very issue of the Canadian feminism, as represented by NAC is hidden from view. In Smith’s work, “Where There is Oppression, There is Resistance,” she illuminates this point in stating that the focus problems within feminist movements becomes restricted to the frame in place which devalues and distorts the centrality of such movements. She states,

Each [women’s movement initiative] is reassembled as a technical or otherwise limited problem. It is relocated into its professional or other institutional setting. It is given a new terminology tying it into the controlled institutional communication and action system. How it becomes visible, can be thought and acted upon gets restricted to that frame. The problem becomes specific, cut off from its general relation to the whole question of women’s oppression within contemporary capitalist society. (cited in Adamson, Briskin, and McPhail, 1988: 182)

Smith’s point about the problem becoming specific and cut off from its relation to the question of the oppression of women in society is abundantly apparent in “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles.” Representations of NAC are organized to intend a portrait of NAC as being too consumed with race issues to take leadership in the Canadian women’s movement. Since the frame shapes the account to point to the idea that women of color are increasingly gaining power within NAC, thereby silencing mainstream women, the interpretive schemata intends a reading that makes this idea all that is visible to us. In other words, the interpretive schemata intends a reading of NAC that makes visible only issues of race and representation, thereby rendering other work of organization invisible. By selecting certain “facts” in accordance with the frame, aspects of the organization, such as past accomplishments and gains for Canadian women are overshadowed. For example, on lines 165 to 168, Glenda Simms stated that “...she’s more disturbed by the infighting than she is with the group’s claims of being inclusive.”
Similarly, while Thobani points out that she has "...brought a whole new generation of women into NAC" (lines 81-82), which is indeed a considerable accomplishment, the article went on to state that in light of this accomplishment, there is now "...the perception in some quarters that NAC is now largely concerned with immigrant and refugee issues." (lines 88-90) Thus, while Thobani has given a stronger voice to minority women within NAC, this accomplishment is devalued when the schemata intends a reading that selects only the issue of excluding and silencing mainstream women. Through selecting such "facts," and overlooking other ideas and accomplishments, the interpretive schemata aims for a particular reading of NAC that suggests NAC is only concerned with those issues facing the most oppressive women in society and therefore unable to bring forth challenges that foster the equality of all women alike.

The Circle of "Virtual Reality" and Ideological Circles

As chapter two pointed out, sometimes a frame is not repeated, but is used to shape a specific account. However, in many cases, a frame is repeatedly used. When this occurs, the account takes on a circular character producing and reproducing an intended reading of reality that can be taken as reality. This ideological circle locks us into the reality intended by the schemata, even though this reality appears as objective and complete. While there may be different events, different encoding processes, and even different accounts, when the frame shapes the schemata in several accounts, the message is the same as in other accounts, thereby making the intended reading of reality very powerful indeed.

The ideological frame that NAC only represents a narrow subset of women which serves to marginalize NAC's leadership on the women's movement is used in a number of articles. Several articles focused on problems and weakness in the organization while overlooking or devaluing past and present accomplishments. To illustrate this point, I will briefly investigate how another article, entitled "Back to Being Radical" (Feb. 25,
uses the same message concerning NAC as “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles.” Indeed, the events, encoding processes, and account are different in both texts, but it is the same intended reading, as shaped by the same interpretive schemata that represents NAC as being too consumed with issues of race and representation to accomplish goals for all Canadian women. Since unpacking the ways in which accounts are socially organized requires an in-depth investigation (as this chapter has illustrated), the processes and practices of producing “Back to Being Radical” will be greatly simplified here.

In the text, “Back to Being Radical,” the lived actuality is presented as NAC walking out of two government investigations on women’s issues which the group had lobbied for: a royal commission into new reproductive technologies and a panel on violence against women. The reasons cited in the article for such walk outs were that NAC “...felt the former was on the wrong ideological track and the latter unrepresentative of female diversity (only one member of a minority on the panel)....” This actuality was then encoded to point to ideas of “no longer having a unified women’s movement,” that “mainstream women are unsure of their role as Canada’s largest women’s lobby embraces the margins,” and that “white women are now the ones to be silenced.” The “particulars” identified were Nancy Jackman, a feminist philanthropist who claimed that “Some women feel their voices are now lost at NAC,” and Glenda Simms was quoted again as stating that “...women are now questioning who they want to speak for them.” The work of encoding and the “particulars” was used to then generate and support an account, namely that through NAC’s efforts to deal with inclusivity, several problems have ensued such as “pitting them (women) against each other,” and “if NAC was fated to implode as it felt its way through the toughest feminist issue of the decade - inclusion.” The account is shaped by an ideological frame that reconceptualizes such walk outs as exclusionary and problematic in that they suggest debates over race and inclusivity. The
interpretive schemata intends a particular reading of NAC that makes only those aspects of the organization that are central issues of race and representation available to us.

While in the respective texts, the lived actualities are different, the terms, phases and grammatical and logical connections are different, different particulars are used to support the accounts, the intended message in both texts is highly similar in that NAC is represented as grappling with issues of race and domination by women of color. As Smith pointed out, frames of this nature represent problems as specific and restricted so that the very question of women’s oppression within contemporary society becomes cut off from view. Thus, in both cases, even though there are different processes and practices that produced the accounts, the interpretive schemata intends a particular reading of NAC that reconceptualizes the organization as being consumed with racial infighting and problems of inclusivity, making mainstream women feel silenced. All that is made available to us is those “facts,” ideas, or past events that support the ideological frame, thereby overlooking other aspects of NAC that relate to the question of women’s oppression in contemporary society. While NAC has lobbied long and hard for government initiatives in state-funded day care, violence against women, employment equity, and other issues that can affect all women alike, not only the most marginalized, such efforts are not made visible to us because they do not substantiate the frame or schemata that intends such a reading.

As this chapter has pointed out, in investigating how we know about NAC in particular and partial ways in The Toronto Star, there are various processes and practices at work. While accounts, such as the ones presented here appear as objective and unbiased, once such accounts are unpacked, the ways in which they are socially organized become apparent. As it has been illustrated, once a schemata is set in place, there is a tendency for other accounts to select “facts” and present ideas that fit the same schemata, as was evident in the articles “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles,” and “Back to Being Radical.”
When the same schemata is at work in more than one account, it becomes very powerful indeed and takes on a circular character. Reality thus becomes interpreted continuously in partial ways and according to the same schemata which appears to be objective and neutral. In other words, reality is presented in various accounts in particular and partial ways, although the partial nature of such accounts is not made visible to us. Thus, accounts that take on an objectified character are, in fact, highly ideological. The only way to unpack and deconstruct these ideological and “virtual reality” circles is through stepping outside of them and investigating them from our own knowledge and standpoint in the world. The disjunctures between the ways that we know the world from our own locations and of objectified accounts can then come to light, and reality can be understood as mediated and socially organized in particular and partial ways. Without stepping outside these circles of reality and unpacking the work of selection, organization, assembly, and interpretation that goes into these versions of reality, we are reproducing a reality that references the world in partial and particular ways.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore how we know about representations of NAC in *The Toronto Star* in particular and partial ways. I have tried to explain how these representations are partial because, as has been made evident, we only receive certain aspects of these representations while other aspects are made invisible. It is precisely this invisible work that I have aimed to unpack, while highlighting that this work is done by actual individuals in actual settings.

These settings and the accounts produced within them have been discussed as part of the relations of ruling through which our society is ordered and governed. Rather than arguing that individuals order and govern our lives, a social organization of knowledge approach suggests that it is the work of individuals which constitute social relations of ruling, through creating and reproducing texts and "objective" forms of knowledge that mediates what can be known. Once these texts are understood as creating and reproducing relations of ruling, the ways in which these relations are socially organized can be made evident. As Smith (1993: 224) points out, "uncovering texts as constituents of relations anchors research in actual ways in which relations are organized and how they operate."

In this work, I have tried to illustrate how texts can reproduce relations of ruling through shaping reality in particular ways. While these texts or accounts come to us as objectified modes of knowing, there are various processes and practices involved in how these texts come about in the ways that they do. I have tried to rupture the "objective" and "commonsense" claims asserted within such accounts and point to the processes of assembly, selection, organization, and interpretation. In other words, while these accounts appear to follow a logical sequence of "facts" or "ideas," they are worked up in particular and often subtle ways in order to appear as such.
In chapter 2, the reasons for adopting a social organization of knowledge approach to investigate how we know about particular phenomena in the ways that we do were outlined. Through comparing and contrasting this approach with other sociological frameworks that attempt to explain how social reality is created or reproduced, this work has suggested that a social organization of knowledge can both rupture and challenge how our social worlds are put together in ways that rule and manage our lives. As well, this approach speaks to us as insiders of our social worlds, enabling us to use our situated knowledge as the starting point of inquiry. Through examining this situated knowledge, we become better able to discover how “objective” claims about social reality can be highly discrepant from our own realities and experiences, illuminating the idea that objectified modes are, in fact, partial and worked up in particular ways. Through activating our situated knowledge, the disjunctures between objectified modes of knowing and our own ways of knowing can be made evident.

By pinpointing these disjunctures, this work has tried to point out that a social organization of knowledge approach, unlike traditional sociological frameworks, can lead to social change. When we take up our own standpoint in the world, examining our local realities, we can begin to recognize how our everyday and everynight worlds are governed and ordered in particular ways. Rather than making others accountable in “the way that things are,” when we take up our locations in the social world, we can begin to recognize how our own processes of reading enter us. (Smith, 1993) Thus, through adopting a social organization of knowledge approach, social change can ensue because we make ourselves accountable in “the way that things are” through rupturing how we make sense of reading texts that constitute relations that order and govern our lives in certain ways. Indeed, this change can be seen on a micro level, rupturing how we as individuals, rather than institutions or groups within those institutions, can reproduce objectified ways of knowing, but if we want to change how it is that our social worlds are ruled and governed, we must question how we participate in these ways of knowing.
In chapter 3, I have tried to illustrate how these ways of knowing are put together and organized in certain ways. Through pointing to how representations of NAC within The Toronto Star are assembled, interpreted, and organized, this chapter has aimed to show that there is an ideological frame in place that shapes how such representations become known to us. These representations are shaped through highlighting certain themes, ideas, terms, phrases, and sub-frames, all of which can be understood as part of the larger ideological frame that depicts NAC as only representing a small group of women, serving to marginalize the centrality of NAC as the leader of the Canadian women's movement. This chapter was also central in providing a background in which to locate and understand how a particular article, namely, “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles,” is socially organized within the circle of “virtual reality,” as presented in Chapter 4. As I have tried to illustrate in this chapter, this article does not exist in a vacuum, but rather is connected, albeit in sometimes subtle ways, to other representations of NAC in The Toronto Star, connections which are organized through the same or a similar ideological frame and interpretive schemata.

Once the ideological frame and interpretive schemata are made evident, these connections can be clarified because, as Smith (1990: 162-63) reminds us, “The reader must know the schemata of the discourse to read in the connections that are not apparent.” These connections have been made apparent through identifying the ideological frame that is set in place to shape accounts concerning NAC in The Toronto Star, namely NAC only speaks for a minority of women, thereby creating difficulties and struggles, both within and outside the organization, and hindering its ability to accomplish goals. Having pointed to this ideological frame, it becomes possible to understand how this frame can dovetail with the interpretive schemata to shape social reality according to this frame. In other words, while there may be an ideological frame in place that organizes the account, once this frame becomes part of social reality and
consciousness, there is an interpretive schemata at work to shape this reality and according to the ideological frame.

As Chapter 4 has illustrated, this reality is a partial one, and through investigating the socially organized nature of a particular text entitled, “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles,” the invisible processes and practices that have gone into the creation of this text have been highlighted. The processes through which this partial reality becomes known begin with a lived actuality, namely a statement made by Sunera Thobani, the first woman of color to head NAC, that she wants her successor to be a woman of color to continue her pioneering work of making NAC an inclusive organization. This actuality was then encoded with certain words, phrases, and grammatical and logical connections that both describe and interpret this statement in particular ways. The work of “the particulars” is also made evident here, as the work of certain individuals, namely those who can be seen as “experts” on NAC related issues is highlighted in the text and in conjunction with the intended account. Once the work of “the particulars” is made evident (although such work is not a necessary component of the text), an account is presented that can be seen in relation to the lived actuality, as the latter seems to be interpreted and made sense of within the parameters of the former. At the stage in which the account is presented, the lived actuality becomes “what actually happened/what is,” as a lived actuality is always lived, but once it becomes referenced and reported upon, it is seen as “what actually happened/what is” and stands in direct relation to the intended account that seems to follow in an “objective” sequence. However, as I have tried to illustrate in this chapter in particular, such accounts are far from “objective” as there are processes of assembly, organization, and interpretation that select and highlight what aspects of the account are to be made visible to us.

These processes of assembly, organization, and interpretation can be understood within the parameters of the ideological frame which shapes how it is that the account will be presented. Once the account becomes crystallized and part of social reality or
social consciousness, it becomes the interpretive schemata through which reality becomes known. As Chapter 4 has pointed out, the frame and schemata can be accomplished in a single account, but in many cases, they shape several accounts. As the articles “Women’s Group Facing Major Hurdles” and “Back to Being Radical” indicate, there is a tendency for other accounts to be presented that select the “facts” to support the same schemata, becoming part of social consciousness. When this occurs, the frame takes on an “objective” form, appearing as “the way that things are” because the ways in which the frame shapes the account is not made visible, but rather stands as a claim about the social world that seems to make sense of this world.

Indeed, unpacking how objectified modes of knowing are socially organized is a sizable and considerable enterprise. As Smith states, the enterprise “...is indeed grandiose; it is that of transforming our understanding of the nature of power when power is textually mediated.” (1993: 224) But, if we want to change how our lives are ordered and governed, we must discover how objectified ways of knowing the world work in particular ways as constituents of relations of ruling as well as how these ways of knowing enter our consciousness.

Essentially, a social organization of knowledge approach entails a shift in perspective, a perspective that has become known to us in increasingly and powerfully mediated ways. The processes of mediating how our worlds become known to us are in textual form which are embedded in and reproduce relations of ruling, relations that bind how power is organized and maintained. The shift in perspective that accompanies a social organization of knowledge method of inquiry requires us to unpack these relations, relations that form the basis of power through which our society is known and managed. As we have learned to know the world through relations of ruling, we can also learn how to deconstruct and reconstruct these ways of knowing, and become experts in exposing, unpacking, and challenging such relations which only provide us with versions of reality that are assembled, organized, and interpreted in partial and particular ways.
Article References

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Women. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Appendix

First page heading: Back to Being Radical.
Second page heading: Cracks Show as NAC Grapples With Diversity.
Caption under photograph of Sunera Thobani on B1: Charting New Course: President Sunera
Thobani says NAC has to “forge ahead under the leadership of the most marginalized women in society.”
Subheading: Mainstream women are unsure of their roles as the largest women’s lobby embraces the margins.
Caption under photograph of Gail Picco on B8: FED UP: Activist Gail Picco quit after NAC turned down a fundraising deal she negotiated with Random House.
Quote before text: “Some women feel their voices are now lost at NAC. We’ve had many conversations about taking it back. We know we could, but we’ve decided not to because we still have some faith in it...but I don’t know, maybe we should pull ourselves together and do it.” - Nancy Jackman, ambivalent feminist philanthropist.

The Text

Back when the National Action committee on the Status of Women withdrew its support from two high-priced government investigations: one a royal commission into new reproductive technologies, the other a panel on violence against women.
NAC had lobbied long and hard for both. For it to walk out because it felt the former was on the wrong ideological track and the latter unrepresentative of female diversity (only one member of a minority on the panel) didn’t quite cut it with a lot of mainstream feminist women.
Crucial issues were finally, if imperfectly, being addressed, and NAC takes a walk? Oh brother, sisters, what are you doing?
The disavowing accelerated that fall when NAC marched front-row centre in the campaign against the Charlottetown accord. Not because the deal was bad for Canada or bad for Quebec - that hardly came into it - but because, according to NAC’s hyper-sensitive reading, it was somehow bad for women.
Its “Vote NO” signs were quickly matched by “NAC Does Not Speak For Me” buttons circulated, embarrassingly, by a former executive member of the organization. Shunning letters to the
editor roared in. Even longtime ally Glenda Simms, head of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, commented that "women are now questioning who they want to speak for them. We no longer have a unified women's movement."

Perhaps the better phrase was unified women's philosophy.

Most women, whether active or passive as feminists, actual members of the organization or not, had shared NAC's goals since it set up as an equal rights lobby in 1971. In a sense, they'd grown up with it. But now they wondered if it had grown up with them. By the 90's, it had the numbers - 600 groups representing 3 million women (it never claimed to speak for all women) - but did it have the maturity, the political smarts to survive Stage Two of equal rights?

The 90's were clearly a hard-ball decade and to these women, NAC's tactics often appeared self-defeating, locked in the past. How else to account for the 60's style storming of the Parliament Buildings last June when Reform Leader Preston Manning wouldn't meet with them?

As security guards hustled them out, some of the 100 protesters screamed for the TV cameras, "This is violence against women." It was cringe-making, wrote Ottawa commentator Charlotte Gray, watching "NAC's Kabuki theatre of oppression." The turn of phrase was hers alone; the sentiment was not.

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'We no longer have a unified women's movement.'

-GLENDA SIMMS
head of the Advisory Council
on the Status of Women.

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They wondered too, if NAC was fated to implode as it felt its way through the toughest feminist issue of the decade - inclusion: the acknowledgement that white women can no longer speak
for all women, that they must share the "power" or risk the charge of racism. Even June Calwood, whose feminist bona fides seemed to have been carved in stone, was to take a hit on that score.

When Sunera Thobani assumed the presidency in June, 1993, she laid down her political gauntlet: yes, gains had been made in the preceding 20 years, but they’d only benefited a “minority” of women - in fact, the white middle-class majority - and not by any stretch all women.

NAC had to “forge ahead under the leadership of the most marginalized women in society,” or it would stall at the status quo where those women were “excluded and silenced.” Rather more contentiously, she added that marginalized women “understand our society better than those who live in the four walls of relative privilege.”

The battle was duly joined. Were white women now the ones to be “silenced?” White women who had founded NAC, who had fought the big equality fights on abortion rights, pay equity and sex crimes reforms. They’d done it all for Canadian women, so how were they suddenly racist, exclusionist, privileged?

No matter how noble the intent, wasn’t NAC, in focusing on women’s different experiences, ultimately pitting them against each other? If so, that would benefit the male establishment, not to mention delights their more active enemies elsewhere.

Last summer, a NAC spokesperson greeted the otherwise widely applauded news that a woman had been appointed president of General Motors with a flippant: “She’s white, isn’t she? Skin color brings privileges.” At that point the split between where NAC was in terms of feminist ideology and where the average Canadian woman was seemed eye-rollingly clear.

As it did, once again, earlier this year, and this time it had nothing to do with skin color. NAC’s most recent spate of unwelcome publicity - it usually hits the headlines only when there’s conflict - has centred on its
rejection of a book-selling deal with Random House Canada. Depending on where you read about it, the deal either collapsed over business concerns. (the official version) or because political correctness had run amok (sundry columnists.)

Either way, the incident contained within itself the two issues that could determine whether NAC survives as a lobby.

One is the no-choice need to increase its financial self-sufficiency as government funding declines. Three years ago its $1 million budget was two-thirds supplied by Ottawa. Now it is less than a third, and good news is not expected in Monday's budget.

The other issue is far less straightforward: the implications of "identity politics." That's the jargon for when certain issues are claimed as the exclusive domain of those directly involved - only a woman on welfare can address social supports, only a woman of color can identify racism, only a mother, child care, ad infinitum.

The Random House deal, the brain child of NAC's long-time fundraising consultant, Gail Picco, would have seen NAC offering its members a catalogue of 40 books from the publisher's backlist of female authors, a who's who ranging from Germaine Greer to Carol Shields.

More significantly, it would have seen NAC putting its imprint on new books, the first of which was to be the paperback version of Star writer Judy Steed's disturbing examination of child sexual abuse, Our Little Secret.

Picco negotiated a deal whereby NAC would sell the book for the $16 list price but buy it for $5, a 68 per cent discount. Initially, it was to take 5,000 copies, which was later reduced to 2,500, and have three months (later extended to one year) to pay the publisher. Unsold books could be returned without penalty.

"Anyone looking at this would have said it was a good deal," says Random House president David Kent. "It exposed our authors to their core audience, and there was minimal, if any, risk to NAC.

Thobani agrees. "For me, it's a priority that we stabilize our financial situation, and I thought this was a good deal. The imprint part was a little risky, but I thought the catalogue offset the risk."

That's not the way some on NAC's 25-person executive saw it at its January meeting. A fundraising venture of this size was a new terrain for a group that so far has limited itself to private donations, flogging T-shirts, and mugs, and only recently holding events such as a Dream Auction. Some thought the terrain looked rocky.

Whether 5,000 or 2,500 copies, without a distribution system, they'd never sell that many. One-time NAC president Doris Anderson still scoffs. "It was dreaming in technicolor. Do you know how hard it is to sell books in Canada? I do."

Some members argued a book bearing NAC's imprint should be written by NAC itself or at least represent official policy. This book, while in the right realm, did neither. And the, the coup de grace. To two of the women on the executive, Shelagh Day and Laura Sky, Our Little Secret was homophobic.

Homophobic at least in the sense that they felt it perpetuated the stereotype
that gay sexuality is "soft" on child sexual abuse.

The debate was long and intense, but in the end the group voted overwhelmingly against the deal. Kent calls that decision "a no-brainer."

"There's no doubt in my mind they were pressured into it by the tyranny of the minority," he says.

It has been Day, a lesbian activist (since resigned from NAC for uncon- nected work reasons), who's taken most of the flak for the outcome. Unfair, she says. She had financial concerns about the deal even before she read Steed's book, and never knew until after the fact that Random House would take back unsold copies. As for her concerns about what she saw as stereotyping, getting attacked for it "is not just wrong in itself, but it's indicative of the entire problem."

Day says that if NAC "hadn't talked about how the book relates to bigotry against gays and asked, when considering putting its name on the cover, whether it counteracts the bigotry or feeds into it, it would have been re- miss."

Thobani agrees. That is what inclusion is all about. "I didn't find the book homophobic," she says, "but then, I'm not a lesbian woman. Their concerns are valid and have to be taken seriously because we live in a society where there is homophobia.

Maybe there is, counters Picco - who was so disgusted by NAC's action that she immediately resigned - but there's no homophobia in the book. (Steed investigated several stories of sexual abuse, only two of which, albeit high-profile, involve men and boys. She states clearly that most pedophiles are heterosexual men, most victims female.)

"What happened here," says Picco, "was the lesbian caucus saying "We're lesbians, and if we say it's homophobic, it is. My oppression is worse than yours. Everyone's got a different piece of identity at NAC, and it's preventing them from coming together for collective action."

No, counters Thobani's predecessor Judy Rebick. At least not yet - though maybe the danger is there. "It was up to the lesbian caucus to do what it did, to raise the alarm. I didn't think the book was homophobic, but I suppose you could read stereotyping into it. They did - so if publishing it disturbs them, don't do it. I've no problem with it."

What Rebick does have a problem with is what can happen when the "shadow side" of identity politics comes into play - "when the issues of different groups become the overbear- ing, defining issues, and were unable to discuss what unites us, which is what inclusion is supposed to be all about."

She cites the uproar at last year's annual meeting when NAC presented a paper on violence to the 400 in attendance. Two years work had gone into it she says, but there were still objec- tions about a lack of consultation. "The objections were angry and rigid. A lot of anger gets misdirected. But you have to stand up to it. People silence themselves out of guilt and then accuse others of shutting off the de- bate. I sympathize with those feelings, but I don't buy the argument. It's all very tough stuff. But I do wonder if the stick has bent too far."
Anderson wonders, too, pointing out that the British feminist movement broke apart at the end of the 70's over race and class, and never got itself together again.

“I got a lot of flak from women of color when I was president (1982-84) who said, “You don’t represent me,” I said, “this isn’t an elite organization. All you have to do is run (for office).” Which they did, greatly to their credit. Lesbians have always been in the organization, and they were patient when we didn’t push their concerns. Now they’re pushing them.

“I get so fed up with the critics. This wasn’t any bigger a ‘crisis’ than any of the others over the years.

The sniping has always been there. In the past, from men; more recently from other women, particularly in the media. It’s frustrating, says Thobani, to see all the potshots over the Random House affair, and zero coverage on the ongoing work: a recent social policy conference out west; the largest-ever general meeting, the sheer hard work that’s going on to make “inclusion” more than the most tired buzz phrase of the 90’s.

“All the divisions of race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation that exist in society exist within NAC,” she says “and we’re dealing with them head on. The question is, how do we work on these issues in such a way that the organization holds together?

“No. But we are the only place where these debates are even taking place.”
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