The Politics of Collaborative Prevention: A Sociological Account of Commemoratives and a Young Worker Safety Campaign

by

Elizabeth Alexandra Mansfield

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Dalla Lana School Public Health
University of Toronto

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Abstract

In public health, prevention is a fundamentally political process as both the selection of problems to be addressed and solutions recommended reflect decisions that are informed by economic, social and cultural forces. Yet prevention is often presented as a monolithic enterprise, an objective and scientific discourse that does not take sides. Behind this facade of political neutrality, diversely positioned individuals and groups often fail to find and/or sustain a common ground for shared prevention initiatives. Increasingly, many prevention awareness campaigns focus upon true accounts or injury narratives that serve both as a catalyst to build multipartite consensus through developing shared collaborative prevention discourses and practices and to mobilize public support for health and safety issues. While the use of the true account form is a recommended strategy in the public health literature directed toward practitioners, the
engagement of true accounts in prevention campaigns has not been adequately problematised and examined from a critical social theoretical perspective. A qualitative, sociologically oriented case study of the use of the true account form, the commemorative, in young worker safety campaigns is proposed to deepen our understanding of this particular type of prevention intervention in particular and prevention as an enterprise more generally. The study investigates the socio-historical context in which the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt, a Canadian young worker educational initiative, emerged and unraveled as a multipartite prevention campaign centered upon the true account form of consensus commemoratives. A key finding is that true accounts of young workers killed on the job are socially mediated to diffuse blame and build consensus between diversely positioned occupational health and safety practitioners and the family survivors of workplace tragedies. What is included and excluded from these true accounts of workplace injuries, as socially constructed narratives in multipartite prevention awareness campaigns, may be, in part, a product of the terms and conditions negotiated between lead players. The true accounts included in collaborative, cross-institutional prevention campaigns, while referencing real events, may be told in ways that accommodate and harmonize the political perspectives of diversely positioned stakeholders. Conversely, the true account form is a potentially problematic strategy for collaborative prevention discourses and practices, as consensus commemoratives can be retold as critical remembrances of workplace death, with the result that the unifying narrative of a shared, collective memory project is undermined. This dissertation finds that the activity of collaboration shapes prevention as a socio-political activity/practice.
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Chapter 1
Introduction to the study

This dissertation is a sociological exploration of the social, economic and political forces that shape our understanding of prevention, which is often focused on outcomes and techniques and overlooks the operation of prevention as a socio-political activity/practice. These prevention outcomes and techniques often devolve into educational interventions directed toward making individuals aware of their roles and responsibilities and toward changing individual behaviour. The selection of prevention education initiatives over other possible interventions is seldom understood as a choice that has social and political implications. In addition, the system of beliefs and prevention creeds implicit in many safety education and awareness campaigns are rarely articulated, let alone analyzed. It is not surprising that an increasingly popular intervention, the use of personal stories about injuries in prevention education, has not been adequately problematised and examined from a critical social theoretical perspective.

A case study of a prevention education campaign was developed to address this gap. A study of a young worker injury prevention campaign explored an increasingly popular approach in prevention education: the use of “true accounts.” The true account form is defined here as the centering of prevention messages around individualized, “true” stories of incidents. A qualitative, sociologically oriented study was developed to deepen our understanding of this particular type of prevention intervention, in particular, and prevention as a collaborative, multipartite enterprise more generally.

The engagement of true accounts in a multiple stakeholder safety campaign is analyzed to understand both the underlying logic and unintended effects of this discursive form. In this case study, the shared prevention project of multipartite or multiple stakeholders who often take adversarial positions around workplace health and safety issues, is described as an example of a “collaborative prevention discourse.” The research may be of value to OHS practitioners and other stakeholders and public health practitioners and researchers engaged in prevention, as the case study suggests that the selection and implementation of prevention discourses may have profound implications for the policies and practices that flow from them.
The selection of the LifeQuilt website as a case study of true accounts

In 2003 when I decided to pursue a PhD, I knew that the use of personal or true stories in the field on injury prevention would be the focus of my graduate studies. While working as a research coordinator in the implementation and evaluation of injury prevention initiatives at St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto, I was intrigued by the true account young worker safety awareness posters that were first introduced by the prevention division of Ontario’s Workers Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) in 1999. (See Appendix A for a list of acronyms and glossary of terms.) As I travelled by subway to my job, I noticed these posters, which used true accounts to communicate prevention principles in a personal, attention-grabbing and compelling format.

Personal accounts of young worker injuries were the centrepiece of annual WSIB safety awareness campaigns (1999 to 2005) that focused on seriously injured young workers and/or the families of youth killed on the job. These stories, as “told” by injured workers themselves and/or surviving parents and family members, were the focal points of several television, radio, poster and online campaigns (Schuyler 2002). Typically, these true accounts were communicated from a first- or third-person perspective and addressed the preventability of industrial accidents and the terrible family loss unfolding in the aftermath of a workplace tragedy. The poster campaigns were often a direct appeal to young people and parents to become more active and involved in asserting their safety rights and responsibilities on the job.

As I viewed these posters, the following questions came to mind: Why were these particular stories selected for these campaigns? What were the guidelines for the production of these true accounts? Why were specific prevention principles rather than others selected for these campaigns? What were the take-away messages that these posters were designed to communicate?

I asked these questions because while working in the field of prevention education research, I had come to see prevention as a highly politicized landscape. Every meeting and conference I attended as a prevention research coordinator included stakeholder debates concerning the relative merit of different intervention strategies to prevent unintentional injuries. In attendance,
there were always practitioners who wanted to immediately roll out educational programs, even if the curricula had never been evaluated or pilot tested. The underlying logic of this prevention education approach was that education and safety awareness could do no harm. It was frequently argued by the pro-education group that until other structural measures were in place, safety education programs and public awareness campaigns, through increasing knowledge and changing individual behavioural intentions, could reduce the incidence of injuries. Other health and safety practitioners at injury prevention meetings asserted that it was only by taking an ergonomic and/or environmental approach that injury rates could be reduced, for example through engineered changes within the work environment and through the design of improved workplace practices. An additional perspective was articulated by safety activists who viewed legislative change and enforcement practices, such as increased fines and penalties for employers who allowed unsafe working conditions and practices, as the gold standard intervention.

From my perspective, the injury prevention community appeared to me as a field of competing discourses, political viewpoints and practices. However, despite the tensions that characterized multipartite relations, whenever injury survivors and/or their significant others spoke about their tragic experiences at these safety events, a sense of unity or common ground was momentarily created. Time and time again, I was struck by the power of the personal testimony of injury survivors to produce agreement, a temporary truce, between feuding partisan stakeholders. These emotional and moving personal stories seemed to ignite a moment of consensus and a shared commitment to “the common cause” of prevention. Often those survivors who recalled their injury events portrayed prevention as a personal responsibility. In retelling an injury story, especially when the individual was affiliated with a safety education program, the cause was commonly portrayed as a result of inadequate knowledge and/or training. Nevertheless, this engagement of the personal in multipartite or cross-institutional prevention venues appeared to speak across political differences. The personal story was compelling, and even if one disagreed with the assumptions the account was based upon, these testimonials reinforced a sense of commitment to the shared values of prevention. There was a unifying mission that the personal or true account incited: work together to prevent all injuries, since all injuries, like the horrendous injury described by the speaker, are patterned, preventable and predictable.

During the fall of 2003, I attended a Safe Communities conference in Sarnia. The 2003 Safe Communities conference was a typically diverse participant group including health and safety
practitioners representing workers and employers, public health professionals, community-based prevention organizers, government workers and academics. The discussions following each conference presentation reflected divergent perspectives on what should be done to prevent injuries. It was during this conference that I first became aware of the Canadian Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt, a nine-by-eighteen-foot memorial quilt commemorating the lives of one hundred young workers killed on the job. You could hear a pin drop as the LifeQuilt was unveiled and introduced by Paul Kells, a young worker safety advocate and the father of Sean Kells, one of the young workers commemorated on the textile artwork. There was a moment of unity or consensus, a sense of shared mission as we gathered before the LifeQuilt.

When I returned to Toronto, I visited the LifeQuilt website. The website (www.youngworkerquilt.ca) is an online memorial and prevention education resource that includes a photo reproduction of the LifeQuilt fabric artwork, commemoratives and photographs of ninety-eight young workers killed on the job between 1937 and 2002. The stories or true accounts of young workers can be accessed through the personal tribute pages of the LifeQuilt website. The website content also includes a page of injured worker accounts, Canadian injury statistics, stakeholders’ links to government agencies, corporations, union and workplace health organizations and educational programs. The web versions of the young worker stories on the LifeQuilt have been incorporated within several provincial and national safety awareness campaigns, in school-based young worker safety programs, other web-based communications and interactive learning tools (Ontario Ministry of Labour 2007). As well as true accounts of young workers killed on the job, the website content includes organizational pages communicating the prevention messages of the cross-institutional committee, Friends of the LifeQuilt, that raised funds and managed the initiative.

![Figure 1: The LifeQuilt Website](image)
I felt the LifeQuilt website might provide an excellent case study to answer some of my early questions about the engagement of true accounts in prevention initiatives and the nature of multipartite collaboration in Occupational Health and Safety (OHS). The LifeQuilt campaign, as described on the website, involved the collaboration of diverse stakeholder groups within Ontario’s occupational health and safety community: labour and employer safety organizations affiliated with compensation boards, government and families. The Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt was the first media communications campaign in Ontario’s OHS system to involve both worker and employer health and safety association representatives. Since the website included individual commemoratives of workplace fatalities, features and patterns of the true account form engaged in a young worker injury prevention campaign could be explored.

The dissertation’s case study investigates the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt, a web-based version of Laurie Swim’s fabric quilt artwork memorializing the lives of one hundred young workers killed on the job. The LifeQuilt website was the focus of the case study, as I perceived it as a potentially rich source of data exemplifying the use of the true account within a multiple stakeholder prevention campaign in occupational health and safety.

**Statement of research purpose and objectives**

**Research purpose:** To understand how a true account form, the commemorative, operates in the field of collaborative prevention.

**Research objectives:**

1. To describe how prevention discourses are shaped by social, political, historical and economic forces
2. To account for the emergence of collaborative or multipartite prevention campaigns in OHS
3. To identify the discursive features of true account forms, such as the commemorative, in the context of occupational health and safety
4. To understand how a commemorative campaign in occupational health and safety can facilitate and challenge the shared goals of the prevention discourses and practices of diversely positioned OHS stakeholders
Potential contributions of the study

This study provides a critical sociological exploration of the widely held perspective in OHS (and indeed in public health more generally) that prevention is a neutral, scientific, evidence-based discourse. The findings of this study identify features of prevention discourses that may be taken up, modified and sometimes abandoned by diversely located stakeholders for social, political and economic reasons. The research may have implications for a critical sociology of prevention and contribute to the sociology of commemoration in the context of serious and fatal workplace injuries.

An overview of the methodology

Discourse analysis, situational analysis and thematic analytic tools were engaged in the study of the website, other internet resources and key stakeholder interview data. Employing a theoretical sampling approach, seven interviews were conducted with study participants associated with government, and OHS labour, OHS employer and family organizations. Online resources and supplementary documents provided by participants were also collected and analyzed to provide a social, political, economic and historical context for the LifeQuilt website.

Multiple readings of the data were conducted that engaged a variety of qualitative methodological techniques and conceptual frameworks. Concepts from collective memory theory provide the framework in which the findings are presented in this report. Collective memory research is a subfield of sociology that examines the processes and production of shared memory as well as the forms, functions, contextualizing factors and dynamism of commemorative processes.

For the purposes of my study, the LifeQuilt website as a data set provided a series of personal tribute pages (commemoratives), multipartite pages communicating prevention messages from a multiple stakeholder perspective, and online links to internet safety campaigns that have used the LifeQuilt’s commemoratives. Further, the LifeQuilt website also identified organizations affiliated with employer, labour and community-based safety organizations that have archived past and present media campaigns on their separate websites. As I was interested in the ways in which true accounts are organizationally mediated and might change over time, the LifeQuilt
provided a rich data set for the exploration of a dynamic true account form, the commemorative, in prevention communications.

At the same time, it is important to point out some of the limitations of the research design as a case study, in particular, the generalizability of findings from a single situation. Taking a discourse analytic approach, the interpretation of findings provided here, from a specific theoretical vantage point, must be emphasized as one of many potential readings of the data. Second, the generalizability of findings from this case concerning the use of the true account form in collaborative prevention discourses would require additional in-depth studies engaging multiple multipartite organizational settings. Hopefully, there will be opportunities for the design and implementation of such studies in the future.

Outline of dissertation chapters

Chapter 1: The first chapter provides an introduction to the dissertation topic, overview and rationale for the research need, a statement of the research purpose and objectives.

Chapter 2: In this chapter, the literature review considers how the literature on prevention discourse informs the research problem. The sociology of risk literature review focuses upon the risk society thesis as it provided an early conceptual orientation to the data. This review of literature considers prevention discourses in public health and occupational health and safety and the true account form in safety campaigns. The literature review establishes a need for further research on the intended and unintended consequences of engaging the true account form in prevention public awareness campaigns. The research questions are stated at the conclusion of this chapter.

Chapter 3: The chapter on methodology is an account of the relations between theory and methods that informed the research design and analysis of the LifeQuilt case study. This chapter considers the process of reading data from different theoretical perspectives and the dynamic and emergent relationship between texts and analysis. It also provides a discussion of the theoretical shift from the sociology of risk to collective memory studies.

Chapter 4: The rationale for exploring the LifeQuilt through a collective memory lens is described in the theory chapter. An overview is provided of the theoretical traditions of collective memory studies as well as examples of sensitizing concepts salient to the analysis of the
LifeQuilt memorial. Reasons are explored for linking collective memory approaches with collaborative prevention discourses in the analysis of a multiple stakeholder commemorative campaign in Occupational Health and Safety.

Chapter 5: Historical, legislative, organizational and policy changes that set the stage for the emergence of a multipartite campaign memorializing young workers killed on the job in Ontario’s occupational health and safety environment are documented. The LifeQuilt multipartite initiative is placed in a historical context.

Chapter 6: Drawing primarily from interview data, this chapter describes factors that contributed to the formation of a multiple stakeholder prevention coalition for the LifeQuilt memorial project and how a collaborative prevention discourse was developed to facilitate this process. The chapter compares and contrasts the perspectives of different stakeholders agreeing to participate in a collaborative prevention initiative. The impact of memorial gatekeeping mechanisms on multipartite relations and the subsequent erosion of this initiative are considered.

Chapter 7: A collective memory analysis of the LifeQuilt website explores how themes of remembrance and prevention are dynamically related and how they inform a prevention education approach. This chapter investigates both official collaborative prevention discourses of the multipartite web pages and alternative perspectives reflected in the consensus and critical commemoratives of the personal tribute pages. Consensus commemoratives and critical commemoratives are contrasted and potential problems with the true account approach are discussed. The LifeQuilt website is compared with other worker memorial websites to demonstrate different discursive engagements of the true account form engaged in alternative socio-political settings.

Chapter 8: The conclusion discusses aspects of the study in relation to the research questions, literature reviewed, collective memory theory and frame analysis. Implications are discussed as they relate to the engagement of true accounts in collaboration prevention discourses and practices. Some areas for further research are suggested. Possible contributions of the research to the policy and practice of occupational health and safety are identified.
Chapter 2
Location in the literature: Prevention discourses in occupational health and safety

Introduction

This review looks at the literature that informed the positioning of the research problem and questions addressing the engagement of true accounts in prevention awareness campaigns. The purpose of the literature review is to consider what sociological perspectives on risk and prevention might tell us about the role and functioning of true accounts in safety campaigns. The review also considers what is missing or underdeveloped in the literature related to true accounts and prevention. True accounts are defined here as the centering of prevention messages around individualized, true stories of incidents, and are often communicated through the media of television, radio, newspaper, posters, and school and workplace safety curricula.

Initially, risk society theory seemed particularly salient to a consideration of the true account form because of its focus on the self-management of risk – a theme often communicated in true accounts engaged in OHS prevention campaigns. However, the risk society literature could not account for changing prevention discourses and their location in different socio-political settings. The subsequent prevention literature review revealed social, political and historical shifts and continuities in these discourses and activities in OHS. Later in my analysis, a collective memory perspective was used to explore the use of true accounts, such as commemoratives, to build consensus between stakeholder groups in occupational health and safety. The shift from a risk society perspective to the engagement of a collective memory lens is described in Chapter Three, which deals with methodology. A more detailed overview of collective memory theory is provided in Chapter Four.

The first section of this chapter briefly reviews a sociological theory of risk: risk society/reflexive modernity, a perspective that provided a departure point for this project. The remainder of the chapter explores the discursive shift in prevention approaches with an emphasis on changing approaches in OHS. Within occupational health and safety management systems, the popularization of behaviour-based and safety culture approaches has been critiqued as
contributing to an increasingly decontextualized and individualized understanding of prevention. This psychosocial modeling of OHS prevention discourses resonates with the popularization of the personal, true account form engaged in many multipartite OHS safety campaigns. Finally, existing literature on the use of true accounts as a health communications strategy is considered. This literature suggests the need for further inquiry into the social, political and economic forces that shape and are shaped by the use of true accounts in occupational health and safety campaigns.

**Cognitive science and socio-cultural understandings of risk**

The cognitive science model of risk is reflected in the epidemiological study of populations in which risks are treated as empirically observable and related to the objective measurement of harms. According to Lupton (1999), cognitive scientific or socio-technical understandings of risk bring together notions of dangers and hazards with the calculation of probability and risk. However, epidemiological approaches often fail to consider how the selection and perceptions of risk objects are socially mediated (Mythen 2010). Cognitive scientific or socio-technical approaches are found in many disciplines such as the natural sciences, medicine, engineering and occupational health and safety (Mythen 2007; Reith 2004).

The rise of socio-technical discourses on risk has been related to both the rationality of modernity and the demands of urbanization and industrialization in the early stages of capitalism (Lupton 1999; Zinn 2004). In pre-Renaissance times there was a view that misfortune and disaster were a result of fate, chance and God’s will (Green 1997). During the eighteenth century, enlightenment thinking assumed that all natural and material phenomena could be explained through laws of causality based upon scientific empiricism (Lupton 1999). The industrial revolution brought new pressures to control populations and deal with public health issues brought about by the rapid processes of industrialization and urbanization (Fairchild et al. 2010).

Throughout the nineteenth century, the increasingly sophisticated sciences of statistics and epidemiology made it possible to predict the probability of an event with greater accuracy (Hacking 1991). As probability theory developed in the field of mathematics, risks were increasingly treated as identifiable, predictable and potentially controllable phenomena. Mathematical concepts of probability supported organizational systems of capital by making risk
calculable for insurance instruments and the population risk assessment techniques of epidemiology (Prior 1995). Prior (1995) notes that it is through the “social uses of mathematics that the once perceived random patterns of life and death are increasingly viewed as patterned and predictable events” (p. 134).

Risk as a calculable, patterned, and predictable phenomenon is a modern concept that has implications for the management of adverse events. As Mythen (2007) observes, modern social institutions are charged with managing predictable and preventable risk events:

As well as threatening material harm, risk is in many senses a technology for planning and limiting coming adversities. Of course, once social institutions distinguish risks that are forming on the horizon they are duty bound to manage such dangers. Thus risk invites both macro-forms of structural regulation and micro-forms of self-management. (P. 301)

Unlike the cognitive science approach to risk, socio-cultural theories of risk view the selection of harms and hazards as socially and culturally mediated processes. Beck’s theory of the “risk society” and Giddens’s agentic understanding of “reflexive modernity” address the social, institutional and cultural mediation of hazards and harms that are also portrayed from a realist perspective.

**The risk society thesis and its limitations in considering prevention**

The thesis of a risk society is articulated in the writings of sociologists Ulrich Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1991). Beck (1992) argues that while premodern societies were also characterized by risk, the risks of late modernity are more radicalized partly because they are driven by technological forces and exist on a global scale. While the defining feature of early capitalist industrial society was the problem of scarcity, late modernity is organized around safety. As Beck (1992) observes:

The dream of class society is that everyone wants and ought to have a share of the pie. The utopia of the risk society is that everyone should be spared from poisoning. (P. 41)

The drive for capital accumulation, industrial development and scientific progress has produced catastrophic hazards that threaten the health of all citizens, producing heightened risk awareness and, at the same time, a cynicism toward scientists, governments and institutions. Late modernity
engages a public cynicism toward government and scientific experts as they propose solutions to the dangers they have helped to create.

In a reflexive and highly individualized social order, actors see themselves as decision-making agents attempting to exercise some control over their exposure to danger through the life-long management of risks. According to Beck (1992), the individual is placed at the centre of an ever-increasing sphere of decision making in an age of “do-it-yourself biography” (p.135). However, Beck (1992) stresses that the processes of individualization in a risk society are institutionally dependent and highly standardized by the requirements of a labour market economy. At the same time, risk definitions potentially open up the possibility of political action and mobilization: Beck asserts that risk knowledge may also create new social movements that emerge in response to widely dispersed risks.

Giddens (1991) sees late modernity as producing an ontological insecurity that is expressed in an increased awareness, anxiety and institutional calculability related to risk. As Giddens (1991) observes, “Risk concerns future happening – as related to present practices – and the colonising of the future therefore opens up new settings of risk, some of which are institutionally organized” (p.117). For Giddens, subjectivity under late modernity is endlessly exposed to multiple and counterfactual discourses on risk and its management in the course of everyday life.

Within an epistemological framework, Beck and Giddens can both be interpreted as post-positivist realists and as weak (low relativism) constructionists (Lupton 1999). While both Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) acknowledge that the existence of global and environmental risks is real, these risks are intersubjectively mediated through open-ended decision-making processes involved in constructing individual identity. However, individual identity is structured and standardized by the institutional requirements of a labour market economy (Beck 1992) and by a concern with calculating and managing risks in relation to a temporally planned future (Giddens 1991). Further, risk awareness is situated within a grand narrative of late modernity, in which globalized dangers are an essential object of the reflexive ordering of individual and collective biographies.

In his writing, Beck uses the term risk in different ways. While he sometimes uses risk and danger synonymously, his predominant definition of risk is a realistic estimation of the probability of dangers or harms that inhere in persons, things or situations. However, Beck is
also interested in the perception of risk and how it impacts upon processes of individual and group identity. Beck observes that risk perception is socially constructed and reinforced by media and awareness campaigns.

When I was reviewing the sociological literature on risk, the discourses on young worker safety and prevention frameworks seemed to resonate with the writings of Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) on risk and reflexive risk decision making in the highly individualized social order of late modernity. Several sociologists have approached the analysis of youth decision making from a risk society perspective (Austen 2009; Furlong and Cartmel 1997; Kelly 2001; Lewis 2006). A risk society perspective may consider how institutionally mediated prevention discourses inform the construction of individual biographies and decision-making processes of youth. Beck’s work describes the biographical, individualized management of risk; the public/lay distrust of risk expertise; and the formation of social movements based upon shared risk experiences.

The coalition of families that came together through the LifeQuilt project subsequently went on to form a support organization, Threads of Life, for families who have experienced serious occupational injury, disease or workplace fatalities. This grassroots mobilization around workplace risk issues resonated with the social movement themes articulated in Beck’s writing. Beck observes that due to the increasing fragmentation of social groups within reflexive modernity, the identification of risks and their incompetent management can be a source of solidarity and provides a new ground for grassroots activism. The possibility of political action and mobilization around safety issues leads to new social movements that emerge in response to widely dispersed risks.

The actor-centered positions of Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) explore relationships between processes of individualization and institutional structures within a risk society and their impact upon the constitution of individual and collective biographies. Both Giddens’s and Beck’s models of the individual as reflexively managing risk within a biographical project have been criticized for failing to adequately address issues of social class and exaggerating the role of agency in social life (Mythen 2005; Walkgate and Mythen 2010). An analysis of the dynamic relationship between risk politics and the state is missing from the work of Beck. As Elliot (2002) observes, Beck’s risk society thesis needs “to develop methods of analysis for explicating how patterns of power and domination feed into and are reconstituted by the socio-symbolic
structuring of risk” (p. 311). Further, the writings of Beck and Giddens engage a grand narrative form for examining social phenomena; the empirical evidence at times feels forced to fit the theoretical picture (Elliot 2002; Mythen 2005). Beck’s position on “real” versus socially constructed risks is viewed as inconsistent while the theoretical rationale for Beck’s different positionings on risks remains unclear (Mythen 2004). The potentially positive effects of risk are also absent from the risk society thesis (Lupton 1999, 2006).

Beck’s risk society is a dystopia in which the state or its scientific institutions cannot provide long-term solutions for the risks produced by industrial society. There is only the possibility of locally organized risk coalitions devising strategies of individualized risk avoidance, since the state, science and other agencies are implicit in the production and management of risks that, in turn, generate further risks. This perspective views prevention as the management of risk. However, this seemed to be a somewhat arbitrary and one-dimensional portrayal of prevention.

**Prevention discourses: From “the accident” to “the injury event”**

The prevention literature reviewed for this dissertation often falls within the cognitive science or socio-technical framing of social problems. This review suggests that prevention discourses are neither static nor apolitical activities: discursive shifts from systems theoretical approaches to behaviour and safety cultural models of prevention that focus on individualized educational interventions have implications for policy and practice (Silbey 2009).

Historically, the emergence and growth of the injury prevention paradigm in public health as a platform for intervention has involved a “semantic shift” from the shared belief that accidents are random and unpredictable events to the conviction, disseminated by practitioners to the public, professionals and policy makers, that injuries are predictable and preventable, and therefore as subject to potential control as other medical conditions (Green 2000; Grossman 2000). Prevention in public health has undergone a paradigmatic shift from an understanding of the accident as a product of individual misfortune (Green 1997; Lupton 1999) to an epidemiologically driven model in which injuries are represented as preventable and predictable events. The prevention and control of unintentional and intentional injury has been recognized as a key public health issue in developed and developing countries (Peden, McGee and Sharma 2002). In Canada, injury is identified as the leading cause of death of individuals between the ages of one to forty-four years (Public Health Agency of Canada 2006). Injury is described as the
“invisible epidemic” and viewed as responsible for more deaths of young adults and youths in North America than all other causes of premature mortality combined (Smartrisk 2005).

The socio-technical approach to the science of injury prevention has been summarized as a process that involves (1) defining the injury problem, (2) identifying risk and protective factors, (3) developing, implementing and evaluating prevention interventions and (4) advocating for the widespread adoption of effective strategies and interventions (Christoffel and Gallagher 2005; Sleet et al. 2004). Socio-technical discourses communicating injury prevention as a science portrayed injuries as preventable and predictable events; accidents were no longer to be conceived of as incidents of bad luck and misfortune (Green 1997).

**Injuries as preventable: Epidemiology and the identification of populations at risk**

Public health statements on injury prevention typically observe that, while everyone is potentially at risk for injury, injury rates and the risk of being injured are not distributed equally throughout the population (D’Cunha 2002). Prevention interventions, based on epidemiological research, are intended to target populations identified as at high risk for intentional and unintentional injuries (Pless and Hagel 2005). The characteristics of vulnerable populations are continuously reconfigured by researchers as they map new relationships between a multitude of risk factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic and geographic background (Krieger 1994). Political, social and economic factors shape the modeling of risk correlates (Krieger 2001; Prior 1995).

The literature on young workers, the substantive topic of the true accounts explored in this dissertation, is often located within a cognitive science risk perspective. Within young worker safety, an extensive epidemiological literature has emerged that seeks to identify the constellation of risk factors specific to the life course stage of adolescence and young adulthood and to recommend age-targeted prevention strategies (Breslin and Smith 2005; Castillo, Davis and Wegman 1999; Runyan and Zakocs 2000). A number of risk factors, job-, workplace- and person-related, for instance, have been identified as contributing to the vulnerability of working youth (Runyan and Zakocs 2000). Working alone or under poor supervision are also factors that may increase the risk for workplace injuries (Westaby and Lowe 2005). Job-related risks among young workers also include taking on tasks for which they have not received adequate training (Miller and Bush 2004; Parker, Merchant and Munshi 2002). While being new on the job is a
risk factor for all ages, it is a particularly salient for young workers, because they frequently move from job to job (Breslin et al. 2006).

A prevailing theme underlying the young worker literature is that young people, due to a host of biopsychosocial factors, including their work inexperience, sense of invincibility, eagerness to please, inability to discern workplace risk and unawareness of their rights as workers, are an especially vulnerable labour market group (Frone 2003). The physiological and psychological development of teens may not match the tasks they are being asked to perform (Wegman and Davis 1999). Developmental factors such as the physical mismatch between the growing adolescent and equipment designed for adults has been suggested as a factor (Runyan and Zakocs 2000). Young workers are portrayed as being employed before they are adequately prepared to exercise their occupational health and safety legal responsibilities and rights (Greenberger and Steinberg 1986; Kelloway and Day 2005; Loughlin and Barling 2001; Schuyler 2002; Tselikis 2001).

Research findings from Canadian studies suggest that individual-level explanations for young worker injury rates need to be embedded in broader social, political and economic contexts. A large scale study of the WSIB claims data conducted by Breslin and Smith (2006) found that being new to the workplace is a risk factor for workers of all ages. The findings of this study suggest that youth are not at risk because of individual-level factors such as psychological and developmental characteristics. Rather, they are at risk because they occupy a particular niche in the labour market that is typified by a combination of low-skill jobs and working arrangements located within workplaces that are not conducive to occupational health and safety and to injury prevention.

Although it is important to understand why youth injury rates are disproportionate to other age-based categories, it is also necessary to explore the popularization, positionings and possible functions of the young worker construct itself within the context of occupational health and safety. The interests of injury prevention professionals in the development of marketable prevention interventions have been identified as forces contributing to the commodification of risk (Green 2000; Porter 1999; Robertson 1998). Many other vulnerable groups have been identified through epidemiological approaches. For example, temporary workers, older workers, immigrants and workers with mental and physical disabilities are also highly vulnerable to
workplace injury. Yet these groups have not been taken up by safety organizations as frequently as young workers, who are the centrepiece of many provincial OHS campaigns (McCloskey 2008). McCloskey observes that the topic of young worker safety resonates with the public due to the intense feeling of tragedy that is communicated when a young person is killed on the job and the commonly held belief that the early OHS training of youth is a catalyst for long-term change in the safety culture of the workplace. The vulnerable population of young workers provides an example of how prevention initiatives are a response to the selection and framing of a particular risk problematic from a variety of alternatives (Allen, Anderson and Peterson 2010). The selection of this topic as the focus of a true account campaign may be embedded in the socio-cultural, political and economic context of a multiple stakeholder initiative in occupational health and safety.

**Emergence of systems theory approaches to the science of injury prevention**

A major trend in both the public health and occupational health and safety literature is the emergence of systems theory approaches to the science of injury prevention (Gielen 1992; Mazumdar 2007; Park 2002; Runyan 2003). An integrated multiple systems theoretical understanding of injury was first popularized by William Haddon, an engineer and public health physician working in the area of traffic safety in the 1960s. Haddon’s injury prevention framework encouraged a turn from the tendency of safety research to focus exclusively on psychological-and-human-factors explanatory models of injury (Waller 1994). Haddon’s writings demonstrate how the systemic analysis of the structural causes of injury events frequently devolves into educational intervention solutions.

Prior to systems theory approaches, public health and occupational health and safety prevention models had been criticized for treating injury occurrences as causally linked to errors in individual knowledge and deviant behaviour (Dekker 2002; Holden 2009). Haddon’s framework contextualized injury incidents within a broader set of environmental structures and sequential processes (Runyan 2003). Injury was defined by Haddon agentically in terms of five types of energy (thermal, radiant, chemical, electrical, mechanical) acting as vectors/vehicles involved in the transference of energy that could lead to harm. In essence, Haddon defined prevention science as the control of harmful energy and asserted that almost all injury events were predictable and preventable (Andersson and Menckel 1995; Liller 1994).
Haddon’s (1963) matrix is a social epidemiological conceptual tool used for the etiological analysis of individual injury events and for the design of prevention interventions (Lett, Kobusingye and Sethi 2002). One axis of the matrix represents the components of the injury event: the agent, the host and the physical and social/cultural environment; the other axis represents time delineated as pre-event, event and post-event. Haddon’s framework addresses what the agent, host and environment had contributed during each phase of the injury event. Initially developed for the analysis of car crashes, the matrix was modified (Haddon 1980,1982) with the goal of providing a heuristic for the analysis of causes and the designs of interventions applicable to any prevention issue (Bunn, Slavova and Hall 2008; Lett et al.2002; Runyan 2003). Haddon outlined ten countermeasures directed toward the prevention and/or management of hazards and classified intervention measures on a passive to active continuum indicating the extent to which an individual must participate in an intervention for it to be effective.

Haddon’s systems theory legacy has been the popularization of multiple-level intervention solutions. This systems theoretical approach is captured in the four E’s of injury prevention intervention categorizing interventions as (1) education, (2) engineering, (3) environmental and (4) enforcement/legislative change measures (Mace et al. 2001; Towner, Dowswell and Jarvis 2001). While injury control practitioners acknowledge the importance of environmental, economic, enforcement and legislative injury prevention solutions, the key public health platform for the implementation of prevention initiatives is education (Towner et al. 2001).

Systems theory can lead to the individualization of injury prevention solutions. Educational initiatives in prevention are typically directed toward increasing the individual’s knowledge of risk and protective factors and changing behavioural intentions. The prevention literature provides a number of explanations for this educational bias. First, educational interventions are relatively inexpensive and quick to implement (Mohun 2005). Second, education in the form of prevention training is deemed necessary when new technologies and/or practices are adopted, to achieve acceptance and compliance (Geller 2005). Third, while these programs are rarely evaluated, they are seen as raising awareness, building momentum for structural solutions such as policy, ergonomic and regulatory change and not causing harm (Gielen 1992). In a review of the literature on youth OHS interventions, McCloskey (2008) observes that while the prevention of workplace injuries requires a multi-faceted approach involving the four Es, education is the most frequently implemented prevention intervention solution. While systems theory opens up
the possibility of exploring structural determinants of injury, the OHS literature tends to focus on education emphasizing the psychological and individualistic aspects of injury control.

**Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems**

Beginning in the 1970s, there was an increasing focus upon occupational health and safety management systems and organizational factors that were thought to influence safety performance and that could be administered at the firm level (Hale and Hovden 1998; Nichols and Tucker 2000). The emergence of a systems approach in the 1980s was, in part, a response to the inadequacies of organizations and management in the area of OHS performance in an era of OHS deregulation (Saksvik and Quinlan 2003). Following a series of international disasters, it was increasingly evident that with occupational accidents, human error and technical failure alone were insufficient explanations (Hale and Hovden 1998).

A key assumption of occupational health and safety management (OHSM) frameworks observed by Holden (2009) is that improvements to safety can be realized only through “changes that address not only people, but also the many systems components with which people interact” (p. 34). Similar to Haddon’s matrix in public health, the sequence of multiple organizational, technical, cultural and behavioural factors was seen as producing occupational incidents. Contrasted with OHS programs, OHSM is considered a more proactive and coordinated approach to prevention solutions including management commitment tools; employee participation tools; hazard control systems; OHSM manuals and procedures; performance measures; evaluation systems; and integration, communication and continual improvement through preventive and corrective action systems (Robson et al 2007).

Central to the development of OHSM was the introduction of regulatory reforms in Canada, Europe, Australia and other industrialized nations that encompassed a neoliberal shift from prescriptive models to self-regulatory approaches that were reliant upon employer responsibility for workplace safety standards, monitoring and documentation (Bluff 2003). Gunningham (2009) has described these systems as management-based regulation where “standards, whether they are imposed by the firm on its various operations (internal regulation), or by governments on firms, or industry associations on their members (external regulation) have the considerable attractions of providing flexibility to devise their own least-cost solutions to social challenges” (p.4). Frick, Jensen and Quinlan (2000), noting the vagueness of this safety strategy, defines OHSM as “a
limited number of mandated principles for a systematic management of OHS, applicable to all types of employers including the small ones” (p.3).

**From accident-prone workers to OHSM systems and managing blame**

One outcome of the OHSM systems orientation is that it moves the focus of prevention discourses away from individual blame. Blame is seen as a barrier to learning from industrial accidents and disasters (Pidgeon and O’Leary 2000). Further, the demands for increasing accountability when an industrial incident occurs are in conflict with the prevention principles advocating a more open reporting organizational culture so that future injuries can be averted (Dekker 2007). The systems perspective on occupational safety views assigning blame as counterproductive and interfering with “real prevention” and the multiple variables of which the accident was the end result (Krause and Weekley 2005). OHSM systems call for a change in the accident causality paradigm. As Krause and Weekley (2005) observe, “The question is not ‘Whose fault was the accident?’ but rather ‘How should the whole system of design, technology and worker be influenced to create safety and prevent accidents?’” (p.39)

A commonly cited reason for moving away from blame discourses in occupational injury prevention is that focusing upon blame interferes with locating facts that can lead to corrective actions (Birch 2009). Eighty-eight percent of accidents during the first half of the twentieth century were portrayed as the result of unsafe behaviour (Heinrich, Peterson and Roos 1980). Early occupational health and safety research focused upon individual models of injury incidents, such as accident-proneness, whereby the injured worker was seen as at fault. Heinrich’s (1931) domino theory, depicting occupational injuries as a sequential product of unsafe acts performed by individual workers, was an influential perspective in early workplace safety research. During the 1940s and 1950s, Heinrich’s influence was reflected in the continued popularity of accident-proneness explanations for industrial accidents (Sass and Crook 1981). The prevalence of individualized explanations of workplace injury during this time period has been, in part, attributed to the ease with which theories of accident-proneness could be aligned with psychoanalytical theory (Guarnieri 1992). Implicit to this approach was the belief that the worker’s injury was unconsciously motivated by deviant and self-destructive tendencies. As Mohun (2005) and Aldrich (1997) observe, occupational health and safety research identifying the individualized psychological and behavioural correlates of risk in the 1920s and 1930s
emphasized the role of the careless worker in causing industrial accidents. This research was frequently funded by the insurance industry, which had a vested interest in blaming the worker in order to contain costs associated with injury claims (Guarnieri 1992; Mohun 2005).

From an OHSM systems perspective, the attribution of error and blame is seen as a product of hindsight error; reflecting back on a workplace accident, judgement is based on knowledge now available that wasn’t available to the actors then (Woods and Cook 1999). Reason (1990) rejects the human error or “human blunder” theory of occupational accidents and observes:

Rather than being the main instigators of an accident, operators tend to be the inheritors of system defects…Their part is that of adding the final garnish to a lethal brew whose ingredients have already been long in the cooking. (P.173)

Catino (2008) develops a typology of two types of blame discourses: individual blame logic versus organizational function logic. He observes the following features of individual blame logic: The individual blame logic is based on the view that actors, whether employees, supervisors, employers, inspectors or parents of working youth, are decision-makers who choose between safe and unsafe actions. This person-centred model is based on a belief in individual responsibility and accountability for the accident, and this can bring some solace to the victims’ families and the general public. However, when organizations are able to blame individuals, rather than seeing accidents as the end product of systemic failure, they can maintain their structure, practices, technologies, economies and social relations unaltered.

Alternatively, Catino (2008) observes that the organizational function logic seeks to identify “latent factors” and critical conditions that are at the origin of the accident and places the causal factor of an event in the context of the whole organization and its surrounding institutions and policy settings. Even when accidents appear as the result of errors made by individuals, mistakes are products that are socially mediated and systematically produced (Vaughan 1996). While this approach is appealing on a conceptual level, it is difficult to implement within the politicized environments of workplace organizations.

According to Catino (2008), both individual blame and organizational function logic approaches to prevention are problematic. While the individual blame logic may lead to the punishment of an employee, supervisor, manager, employer at a workplace, it may not lead to a contextualized understanding of the event and systemic changes required to prevent further incidents.
Alternatively, the organizational functional logic may impede accountability and allow for the organization to continue operating post accident as before, inhibiting systemic change and the adoption of best practices. As Wells, Morgan and Quick (2000) observe:

At the very least, the collective approach risks blurring lines of accountability and avoiding necessary questions of where responsibility should lie. It is possible that, by skewing the emphasis in favour of wider organizational factors, errors will never be regarded as an individual’s fault, even when might properly be so regarded. Further, this could erode the sense of personal and professional responsibility. Arguably, there are positive aspects to blaming. It is difficult to deny the deterrence aspects of blame particularly with legal processes. (P. 503)

Sagan (1993) states that there are a number of problems with the organizational functional logic approach. He notes that lessons from accidents taking place in organizations and institutions, where protecting the interests of powerful people is often a greater priority than transparent investigative and reporting processes, are unlikely to promote a learning process that could lead to systemic change and the prevention of future incidents. Additionally, Sagan (1993) also observes that accident investigations are often incomplete and inaccurate, and their results are never fully disclosed.

**How behaviour-based safety discourses encourage individualized prevention interventions**

Prevention discourses in occupational health and safety since the 1980s often align with the goals and objectives of an OHSM framework outlining the management of safety as a firm-level responsibility (Hopkins 2006; Waller 1994). Within firm-level models, prevention education and training interventions tended to predominate, as solutions centred on behaviour-based and organizational safety culture theories (DeJoy 2005; Guldenmund 2007, 2000; Hopkins 2006). Safety culture approaches, Shein (1992) states, are quintessentially top-down tactics that primarily focus upon management’s influence on inter- and cross-organizational values and norms, and stakeholder involvement that influences “the way we do things around here”(p. 8).” Behaviour-based strategies are often referred to as bottom-up or frontline approaches focusing upon the knowledge and actions of workers and supervisors (Haukelid 2008). Both approaches inform the true account form of young workers in occupational health and safety.

Behaviour-based approaches to prevention are grounded in the stimuli-response, operant conditioning and reinforcement models drawing from early behavioural theories of Pavlov’s
classical conditioning model and Skinner’s behaviour modification research (DeJoy 2005; Geller 2005). Rooted in experimental psychology, these behaviour-modification approaches, based upon controlled laboratory animal research, have influenced the applied behaviour analysis of work safety behaviours (Krause 1997).

In occupational health and safety, behaviour-based safety research informs the design and implementation of many prevention interventions directed toward changing the awareness and practices of employees and supervisors (Geller 2005; Hale 2009). Risky workplace behaviours are first identified through performance tracking and then changed through motivational activities such as rewards and incentives for adopting safe practices (Krause 1995). The goal is to find the most effective techniques, often through implementing, documenting and evaluating educational interventions, to change unsafe behaviour to safe behaviour (Tharaldsen and Haukelid 2009). The approach is centered on observing and enhancing the safety of task-related actions (Hidley and Krause 1994).

Applied behaviour analysis methods include identifying and providing operational definitions of key safety behaviours; observing and documenting the incidence rate of behaviours; and utilizing feedback mechanisms and data to sustain ongoing improvement (Krause 1997). According to Wilder, Austin and Casella (2009) behaviour-based safety focuses “specifically on the analysis and modification of work environments to reduce injuries and promote the safe behavior of individuals” (p. 206). Essentially, this approach sees safety behaviour as an observable product of the individual’s interaction with the workplace environment (DeJoy 2005). For example, Bandura (1986) has argued that through repeated exposure to model behaviours, positive safety learning will occur.

Behaviour-based safety approaches put the onus on the worker to manage her/his own safety, even when these ideas are articulated within worker participatory and empowerment health and safety models (Geller 2005; Loafman 1998). Behaviour-based safety is described by Geller (2005) as offering a system of tools and procedures such as instructions, reinforcement and incentives to encourage workers to take control and modify their safety practices, thereby reducing occupational injuries through a “bottom-up empowerment approach” (p. 558). If educated about the risks and hazards of their workplace, protective behaviours and safety advocacy, workers are potentially more involved in advocating for their health and safety rights
and responsibilities (DeJoy 2005; Tucker 2007). Behaviour-based prevention initiatives are designed to enhance individual safety self-management and are predominantly directed toward reducing risk behaviours, promoting protective behaviours and recognizing situational cues (Smith 1999).

An intrinsic feature of behaviour-based approaches is that accidents are still cast as the result of the unsafe actions of workers, while the upstream factors that create unsafe actions are largely ignored (Smith 1999). By making workers responsible for their own safety, the behaviour-based approach may shift attention away from management’s responsibility to identify, reduce and eliminate work hazards (Frederick and Lessin 2000). Behaviour-based safety is a person-centred approach that tends to portray accidents as products of worker error. As a result, this prevention model downplays the role of systemic determinants and promotes educational interventions; when the incident is ultimately seen as an outcome of individual behaviour, then training, social marketing and public education campaigns are logical prevention strategies (Holden 2009; Reason 2000).

Additional criticisms have been levelled at behaviour-based approaches. First, workers may find themselves in a contradictory position when required to advocate safety in organizations that prioritize productivity over injury prevention (Hopkins 2006). There may be a fundamental conflict between implementing improved safety and ergonomic practices in the workplace if such practices interfere with the management objectives of profit and productivity (Holden 2009). Further, employees have reported concern that being observed by management through behaviour modification, tracking and feedback might have negative repercussions if they are perceived as poor performers; the compliance-based approach places workers under the scrutiny of management (Smith 1999). The sustainability of behaviour-based safety was also questioned is a case study by Cox and Jones (2006) in which the Learnsafe program was evaluated five years after its implementation in manufacturing plants in the U.K.. Respondents in this study noted that the solutions they suggested were not always considered and implemented by management, and this dampened the employees’ enthusiasm for the program (Cox and Jones 2006).
Safety culture discourses and practices as individualizing prevention

A prevention discourse that became popular in the OHS literature starting in the 1980s focuses upon the safety culture of the workplace (Silbey 2009). Turner et al. (1989) defined safety culture as “the set of beliefs, norms, attitudes, roles and social and technical practices concerned with minimizing the exposure of employees, managers, customers and members of the public to conditions considered dangerous or injurious” (p. 686). Safety culture or culture of safety models have been described as a top-down approach. In contrast with behaviour-based safety, safety culture models focus upon the role of organizations in managing the complex interaction between active and latent factors involved in industrial accidents (Haukelid 1998; Mearns and Flin 1998; Reason 1998). A major impetus behind the safety culture approach was the International Energy Agency’s 1986 report on the nuclear accident of Chernobyl and a series of subsequent enquiries into other major industrial and environmental disasters (Cox and Flin 1998; Reason 1997; Silbey 2009). The status of the operating company’s safety culture was seen as a significant determinant in accidents such as the North Sea Piper Alpha oil explosion and the rail disaster at Clapham Junction in London (Silbey 2009).

Safety culture has been deterministically defined by Channing (2003) as “the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies, and patterns of behaviour that determine commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organization’s health and safety management” (p. 220). The creation of a management-driven safety culture within organizations was portrayed as key to the elimination of injuries. Corporate culture, leadership style and management commitment are factors that have been described as prerequisites for the achievement of an effective safety culture (Cooper 2000). Management commitment refers to the leadership required to provide guidance and the necessary resources to achieve a safe workplace culture. According to Flin and Yule (2004) “the decisions made at senior levels will affect the priorities, attitudes and behaviours of managers and employees lower down the organizational hierarchy, and be a critical driver on the emphasis that the front line manager places on the competing values of safety and productivity” (p.59).

Safety culture communicates the belief that industrial dangers could be controlled by vigilant management systems based upon strong safety leadership and positive, cohesive safety awareness and attitudes at all organizational levels (Holden 2009). The safety culture concept,
with its focus upon practising safety vigilance in all life activities, makes a link between safety attitudes and practices in work and nonwork areas of life (Park 2002). This person-centered approach to safety may have resonated with multiple stakeholder audiences in an era of OHS deregulation emphasizing firm-level, bipartite solutions to workplace safety (Holden 2009). Guldemund’s (2000) broad definition of safety culture seems to capture the social essence of this approach: “those aspects of the organizational culture which will impact on attitudes and behaviour related to risk” (p. 251). The person-centered emphasis is upon changing attitudes, norms and values rather than structural determinants of workplace safety (Hopkins 2006).

Just as the behaviour-based literature is widely critiqued, the utility of the safety culture construct is also questioned. Debate rages over definitions of safety culture (Cox and Flin 1998; Hale 2009; Haukelid 2008; Hopkins 2006; Rao 2007); whether organizations have single, multiple and/or changing safety cultures and systems of meaning (Clarke 2003); problems with operationalizing and measuring this concept, particularly given the vagaries of its meaning (Cox and Cox 1996; Pidgeon 1998); and the construct’s capacity to differentiate between the relatively stable, diverse and emergent cultures that may exist within organizations, work sites and sectors (Silbey 2009). Further, while safety culture acknowledges systemic processes, it is ultimately a reductionist and individualistic discourse that ignores the potential roles played by cultural conflict and power inequalities in the occurrence of industrial accidents (Clarke 2003; Silbey 2009). As Silbey (2009) observes, safety culture is “often conceptualized to be measurable and malleable in terms of the attitudes and behaviours of individual actors, often the lowest-level actors, with least authority in the organizational hierarchy” (p.34). Safety culture, through its emphasis on attitudes, norms and values at the societal, organizational and individual level, tends to downplay the significance of engineering and, enforcement changes that may be required to create safer workplaces (Dekker 2002).

The similarities between behaviour-based and safety cultural models have been noted in literature reviews by DeJoy (2005), Guldemund (2000), and Holden (2009). Both behaviour-based and safety culture models promote person-centred solutions (Holden 2009). Systems-centred theories articulate that a combination of work system factors, both human and non-human, are involved in occupational injuries, whereas person-centered educational approaches tend to dominate in the design of interventions (Dekker 2002). These perspectives are critiqued in several reviews of the literature in occupational health and safety (DeJoy 2005; Guldemund
2000; Holden 2009; Hopkins 2006; Silbey 2009; Tharaldsen and Haukelid 2009). A criticism directed toward both behaviour-based and safety culture models is that neither model addresses the conflict that can exist between safety and productivity goals (Hopkins 2006; Silbey 2009). Whether focusing on behaviour or organizational culture, neither prevention discourse typically attends to power dynamics and the broader political, social and economic contexts within which occupational injuries take place (Pidgeon 1998; Silbey 2009).

While behaviour-based and safety culture constructs have been widely critiqued, they continue to be popular approaches among practitioners in occupational health and safety. Safety culture and behaviour-based safety focusing upon person-centered tendencies are well-suited to individualized educational initiatives that target a variety of stakeholder audiences (DeJoy 1995; Holden 2009; Reason 1998). The synthesis of both perspectives is reflected in prevention educational interventions that typically include targeted behaviour-based learning programs and broad-based safety culture awareness campaigns (Trifiletti et al. 2005).

“Culture of safety” or “safety culture” approaches are intended to create collective value consensus around shared safety norms within organizations and across organizational and jurisdictional domains (Breslin and Shannon 2005; Park 2002). It is assumed that an improved safety culture that includes the institutional domains of home, school, workplace and community will percolate down to the work site and change the awareness and behavioural intentions of employees.

DeJoy (2005) observes that these two perspectives can operate simultaneously as an individual safety behaviour learning approach can be supported by the invocation of a culture of safety perspective. A safety belief system transmits generalized safety values and norms that reinforce safety-appropriate worker behaviour. Others argue that the two perspectives aren’t really that different as, ultimately, they are both “person-centered” approaches to changing individual worker behaviour (Dejoy 2005; Holden 2009). From this perspective, public awareness campaigns directed toward multiple audiences are viewed as potentially influencing a safety culture shift and positively affecting workplace safety knowledge and practices.
Safety culture and stakeholder coalitions in OHS prevention initiatives

Eakin, Lamm and Limborg (2000) outline a case of a multiple stakeholder prevention initiative based, in part, upon safety culture principles. A case considered in this article is the safe workplaces initiatives promoted by the Safe Communities Foundation, a not-for-profit organization with branches across Canada and affiliated with the international Safe Communities Organization. This program, in partnership with the WSIB, offers a seventy-five per cent rebate, which businesses can share in proportionately, for improved workplace safety performance. Eakin et al. (2000) describe this as a soft approach: monitoring and regulatory enforcement are replaced by education and mentoring within an incentives program that stresses “safety pays.” As Eakin et al. (2000) observe, a cornerstone of this program is a culture of safety approach, in which work and daily life are inseparable. Eakin et al. (2000) state, “In the workplace, a “cultural” model of safety proposes that OHS should be embedded in work practices and management systems, and become part of the ethos of doing business” (p. 242). The authors suggest that there may be problems with locating OHS via safety culture principles in a broader community-based model in that it may deflect attention from the politically contentious issues of health in the workplace. Safety culture models assume that individual attitudes and behaviour in other aspects of life such as recreational activities may be carried into the workplace and vice versa. Further, the safety culture model may encourage the privatization of responsibility in OHS and encourage the regulatory withdrawal of government (Eakin et al. 2000).

An additional critique is directed toward the assumption of many community-based models that partners from diverse sectors such as labour and business can be brought together to work on shared prevention initiatives. Such a stakeholder consensus perspective ignores the vested interests of different groups and individuals, such as safety association representatives providing training and corporate sponsors funding programs in exchange for an enhanced public profile, and the reluctance of labour to become involved in a business model of safety (Eakin et al. 2000).

True accounts in prevention campaigns

Employing personal accounts is a safety culture strategy apparent in many public awareness campaigns that address a variety of public health concerns such as cancer screening, second-hand smoke and AIDS (Seale 2003). As Smith (2005) observes, true stories convey the message
that this terrible tragedy is a predictable and preventable event that could happen to you or someone you know. Through audience identification with true stories, personal narratives in public health campaigns are intended to connect consumers to generic prevention messages on how to reduce risk behaviours and recognize dangerous conditions (Mohun 2005). Mohun (2005) provides a history of the use of statistics for social purposes by reformers and practitioners affiliated with safety movements in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century America. The author considers the use of the personal in safety campaigns to convey the message that the occurrence of an injury is more than a statistical probability and to imagine such an accident happening to family or friends. The rhetorical device of linking the personal anecdote to statistical statements about risk suggests that future accidents will happen to other members of the group described in the story. Mohun (2005) observes that the anecdote is both descriptive and prescriptive. While statistics could be used to identify and describe a general problem, the personal story became a more effective means of connecting the personal with the statistical and persuading people to change their attitudes and behaviour (Mohun 2005).

Clarke and Van Amerom’s (2007) analysis of the media portrayal of accidents in the news examines injury stories from a critical perspective. While this study does not address accidents in relation to prevention campaigns, it does consider discursive elements of accident narratives. Taking a discourse analytic and content analysis approach, the researchers analyzed seventy-four articles from the top twenty English-language magazines circulating in Canada and the United States. The authors provide a comparison of accounts of group accidents versus individual accidents. Engaging a risk society perspective, Clarke and Van Amerom (2007) find that the reporting of individual accidents valorizes individuals and rescuers, and focuses upon the miracle outcomes of these stories. These media portrayals often decontextualize the event and obfuscate the systemic causes of accidents.

These observations seem to be consistent with the analysis of health issue news reporting described by Wallack and Dorfman (1992). The researchers report on the findings from their content analysis of health issues in the news. They note that while health was frequently reported in the news, health stories were not communicated from a public health perspective. Wallack and Dorfman (1992) conclude, “In sum journalistic practices likely contribute to the hegemony of individual-level explanations of health issues and so may systematically inhibit a broader public health understanding of health problems” (p. 126). The researchers observe that news reporting
individualized health problems by focusing on individual behaviour and technical solutions rather than on the social and economic determinants of health issues (Wallack and Dorfman 2001). According to Wallack and Dorfman (2001), news reports on health issues tend to have a narrow behavioural focus and to look at the tragedy of the victims rather than the social conditions that create these tragedies.

While prevention campaigns in the media have been considered from a critical sociological perspective, the functions and unintended outcomes of engaging true stories of occupational injuries in safety campaigns has not been adequately accounted for. The existing public health literature on engaging the personal in prevention education is primarily directed toward practitioners and focuses on true stories as a safety education tool (Christoffel 2000; Cullen 2005; Girasek 2005; Smith 2005). Practitioner-directed evaluation research considers the impact of personal stories as an educational intervention directed toward increasing prevention awareness and as a technique for changing individual workplace behaviours (Cole 1997; Cullen 2005; Ricketts et al. 2010). Soliciting the participation of survivors and/or families of those who have experienced traumatic injuries is often recommended when designing safety campaigns targeting a wide audience base and advocating for injury prevention reforms (Doll and Binder 2004; Girasek 1999, 2003; Smith 2005; Spielholz, Clark and Sjostrom 2005).

Previous research on the roles played by family advocates and identifiable victims in the field of prevention has explored why families choose to engage or not to engage in advocacy work. Girasek (2003, 2005) interviewed parents of fatally injured children about their feelings about taking part in prevention campaigns and created guidelines around when and how injury prevention professionals should approach family members in relation to the passage of a bereavement period. Strategies for mobilizing identifiable victims and family members who have been affected by an injury trauma within prevention campaigns have been recommended in prevention practitioner journals (Christoffel 2000; Dermer 2004; Fivizzani 2004). However, the discursive form, the socio-political context and structural and cultural consequences of the use of true accounts of occupational injuries and deaths in prevention education have not been fully addressed in the literature.
Study rationale and statement of research questions

I have outlined some key themes in prevention discourses as a departure point for an analysis of the role played by the true account form in occupational health and safety campaigns. The risk society perspective suggests that the pervasiveness of risk in everyday life and the focus upon safety self-management necessitates a biographical orientation toward contextualizing and managing risks. While this perspective provides interesting observations regarding the sociology of risk, it does not provide a critical understanding of prevention discourses in occupational health and safety.

The literature on OHS prevention suggested that prevention discourses are multifaceted and changing, and could serve purposes beyond the management of risk such as deregulating OHS and managing/distancing/diffusing blame. Prevention in public health is characterized by a shift from an understanding of the accident as a product of individual misfortune (Green 1997; Lupton 1999) to an epidemiologically driven model in which injuries are represented as predictable and preventable events. The belief that all injuries are preventable and predictable and controllable through environmental, enforcement and most especially educational solutions is a public health prevention legacy that continues to inform occupational health and safety discourses and practices (Waller 1994). Early psychological theoretical constructs of prevention, through emphasizing the irrational components of behaviour, such as impulsivity and unconscious motivation, that contributed to injury, reinforced the idea that injury was unpredictable and unpreventable (Guarnieri 1992). The subsequent movement toward systems theory understandings of injury prevention, using Haddon’s matrix in the 1960s, conceptualized injuries as a result of foreseeable stage-based breakdowns in the environmental, engineering, educational and enforcement/legislative systems.

The emergence of an OHSM systems approach marked a shift from state-regulated to firm- and employer-managed safety in neoliberal times (Bluff 2003). Within an OHSM framework, the assignment of blame for injury events has been described as counterproductive and interfering with an open injury-reporting organizational culture and the development of solutions that consider the multiple variables involved in industrial incidents. Although OHSM approaches to health and safety emphasize a number of systemic variables, human and nonhuman, that contribute to injuries, recommended interventions are dominated by person-centered educational
programs (Dekker 2002). Behaviour-based safety models in OHSM make the worker responsible for safety self-management through the provision of techniques and incentives to change unsafe activities to safe practices (Krause 1997). The safety culture perspective depicts management-driven organizational safety culture as key to the elimination of injuries. This person-centered approach emphasizes the role of enhanced management systems, with strong safety leadership and positive attitudes, norms and values, in reducing injuries rather than addressing the structural determinants of occupational harms (Silbey 2009). Since a goal of safety culture approaches is to achieve broad-based value consensus, interventions influenced by this model often mobilize diverse stakeholder groups to work together to bring about positive safety change (Eakin et al. 2000).

While epidemiological models of prevention emphasize the statistical profiles of risk populations, true accounts are a way of grounding abstract injury data in the concrete, personal stories of injury victims (Mohun 2005). However, the engagement of true accounts of occupational injuries in safety campaigns has rarely been problematised and examined from a critical social theoretical perspective. In occupational health and safety, further research is required to understand how this strategy both shapes and is informed by the politics of prevention. How does making prevention personal and individualized through communicating true accounts in public awareness campaigns affect our understanding of the role of broader social forces in workplace safety processes and outcomes? A qualitative, sociologically oriented case study is proposed to deepen our understanding of this particular type of prevention intervention in particular and prevention as an enterprise more generally. In developing the true account as a topic of inquiry and formulating a set of research questions, I have drawn primarily from literature on OHS discourses of prevention. The study was guided by the following research questions.

**Statement of research questions:**

1. Why did true accounts emerge as a prevention strategy in a cross-institutional, multiple stakeholder campaign in the historical, social and political context of occupational health and safety in the late 1990s?

2. What do the texts of the LifeQuilt say and do?

3. How does the LifeQuilt discursively reflect consensus and/or critical accounts of prevention and remembrance?
Answers to the first research question may fulfil the research objectives of accounting for the emergence of multipartite campaigns in OSH and relating campaigns to social, political and economic forces. The second question focuses on the form and content of the texts of the LifeQuilt website as an example of how the true account form corresponds to the third research objective of considering the discursive elements of the true account form. Answers to the third question may help meet the fourth objective of understanding multiple stakeholder relations in a shared prevention campaign.
Chapter 3
A methodological pathway

Introduction

This chapter is an account of the methodological (and theoretical) journey of this dissertation. The goal of the following discussion is to make my research process transparent to the reader and to provide a rationale for the methodological and theoretical choices made. During the phases of project design, data collection and analysis, I used different methodological techniques and tried out various conceptual lenses before finding a theoretical framework for this dissertation’s interpretation of findings. Throughout the chapter, I will highlight some of the features of that process. I will first describe how I came to choose the LifeQuilt as a case study of the true account form engaged in a multipartite campaign promoting a collaborative prevention discourse in occupational health and safety (OHS). As discussed in the introductory chapter, the research problem that informed this study was rooted, in part, in my work as an injury prevention research coordinator. It was this experience that first led me to see the study of personal or true accounts in safety education communication as a possible area of sociological inquiry. The research design section provides an account of my data sources, sampling strategy and data collection procedures as they unfolded in the study. In the analysis section, I describe my changing relationship with theory as it occurred during the early and later stages of data analysis. This is where interview data and document analysis were especially valuable in providing a context for a discourse analysis of the LifeQuilt internet texts. These resources facilitated a more nuanced understanding of the social dynamics of the collaborative dimensions of the project.

My initial idea, prior to developing the research proposal and submitting the protocol for ethics review, was to study the personal tribute page and multipartite pages from a critical discourse analytic perspective without conducting interviews. However, it soon became apparent that additional documents and key informant perspectives were necessary to understand the socio-historical and policy context of the LifeQuilt website. In the early days of proposal preparation, several experiences of looking at online texts suggested the importance of going beyond the internet data to understand the politics of using true accounts, particularly when engaging the commemorative form for prevention. For example, I noticed that none of the commemoratives identified employers, even though some employers had been identified in newspaper and magazine coverage of workplace fatalities that were described on the LifeQuilt website. It
seemed to me that there might have been tacit understandings about the selection of families for
the quilt, who could speak, what could and could not be said when telling a story on the
LifeQuilt and the LifeQuilt website.

I. Research design

The research design was a qualitative case study of a young worker safety campaign as an
example of the use of the true account form in a collaborative prevention initiative in OHS. The
study was initially developed using situational analytic techniques as described by Clarke (2005).
Clarke (2005) rejects the positivist assumptions of traditional grounded theory. The situational
analysis approach outlined a series of conceptual exercises and discourse analytic techniques for
the emergent mapping of social worlds.

Entering this project, my objective was to understand how true accounts of workplace
injuries/fatalities emerged as the focal point of prevention education initiatives in occupational
health and safety in Ontario in the late 1990s. Additionally, I wanted to learn how the use of true
accounts, particularly in young worker campaigns, was socially mediated. A case study seemed
particularly well suited to answering my research questions, as the objectives of this approach are
to glean from a particular case as full an understanding as possible of principles that may operate
in other related situations (Wynsberge and Khan 2007). According to Silverman (2005), the
purpose of an exploratory case study is to “provide insight into an issue or to revise a
generalization” (p.127).

Through a case study of the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt campaign, I initially planned to
explore issues of class, parent activism and institutional responses to young worker safety. My
primary focus was to be the LifeQuilt (http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca) website, as it provided a
rich data set for exploring true accounts, stakeholder relations and prevention. A qualitative
approach was suited to the investigation of an area in which the categories of analysis were not
known (Sandelowski 1993) and the emerging and changing properties of a topic must be
understood in relation to situational contexts and meanings (Clarke 2005).
II. Data sources

The case study of the LifeQuilt, as an internet prevention resource, involved the texts of the LifeQuilt website, additional sources of web-based documents and key informant data. The documentary data focused on a time period of 1995 to 2009. It was during this time period that young worker serious injuries and fatalities were receiving extensive media coverage. Data collection ended in 2009 with the conclusion of interviews and retrieval of grey literature such as newspaper articles, government reports and website data. Interviews were conducted with representatives from sectorally diverse organizations participating in the production, maintenance and communication of the LifeQuilt campaign. These data sources were selected because of their salience to my research objectives and questions.

The LifeQuilt internet texts: The LifeQuilt website data (see Appendix B: Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt Website – Summary Table) included internet texts of deceased and injured young workers, other webpages describing background information to the LifeQuilt’s development, appended statistics of young worker safety, mission statements of the multipartite Friends of the LifeQuilt Committee and linked resources and contact information. Since the focus of this case study was the true account form of the commemorative, and the collaborative dimensions of prevention, the data analysis concentrated on the personal tribute pages and multipartite pages of the website. The texts of the LifeQuilt website consisted of ninety-eight (accessible via hyperlinks) personal tribute pages, referred to in this dissertation as “commemoratives,” memorializing fatally injured young workers. Twelve website pages described throughout the dissertation as “multipartite pages” were also included in this data set. The multipartite web pages explicitly voiced the shared perspective of the stakeholder group Friends of the LifeQuilt that organized the LifeQuilt campaign.

The LifeQuilt data were relevant to the dissertation’s objectives of exploring features of the true account form in the context of an OHS prevention campaign. Both the multipartite pages and the individual commemorative website pages were also relevant to answering research questions related to the discursive construction of consensus and critical accounts of workplace injury events.

In contrast to other worker memorial websites, the LifeQuilt is now a closed, non-interactive website. It is an online resource (1) displaying the LifeQuilt image and exhibition schedule and
(2) communicating individual commemorative narratives and collaborative prevention messages that were edited and designed by a multipartite stakeholder group for safety education purposes.

**Internet documentary materials:** Documentary materials included a series of online materials such as newsletters, annual reports, media accounts (see Appendix C) and other worker memorial websites put on the internet during the time period 1995 to 2009. Documentary or text-based documents were also retrieved from LifeQuilt links to other young worker injury prevention websites and through reviewing the web-based materials of organizations participating in the LifeQuilt initiative. For example, the LifeQuilt website is linked with multiple organizations, several of which report to the Workers’ Safety Insurance Board and Workers’ Compensation Boards across Canada. This use of documentary texts affiliated with organizations aligned with different sectoral interests allowed for a comparative analysis of a variety of stakeholder perspectives. The documentary data source was particularly helpful with the research objectives related to learning about different political perspectives characterizing OHS organizations affiliated with labour, business, workers compensation and parent communities.

The WSIB provided a rich database of young worker commemorative narratives in its online archives that are organized by year since 1999. All of this material was accessed though the WSIB’s website (http://www.wsib.on.ca/.nsf/public/PreventionCampaigns). This documentary resource was useful to a consideration of features of the commemorative, particularly since several of the true accounts included on the WSIB were also included on the LifeQuilt website. The WSIB campaign and the LifeQuilt allowed for the comparison of true accounts engaged in different organizational settings.

While using the Google search engine to retrieve links to the LifeQuilt, I found links to other worker memorial websites, such as the Simon Jones memorial website, Families Against Corporate Killers and United Support & Memorial for Workplace Fatalities, that also included true accounts. The features of the true accounts engaged in other worker memorial websites were compared and contrasted with those of the LifeQuilt website. This was useful in terms of my research question considering consensus and critical commemorative narratives, and to an understanding of discursive differences between true accounts engaged in multipartite versus single stakeholder settings.
**Key informant interviews:** Interviews were conducted with key informants associated with participating organizations to describe and account for their experiences of engaging with different organizational stakeholders while working on the LifeQuilt as a cross-institutional prevention initiative. Interviews engaged representatives of the four core groups of sectoral interests identified during preliminary background research. After the study received ethics approval (see further on in the chapter), an information sheet and consent form (see Appendix D) was sent to the respondents prior to the interview, and all participants agreed to be audiotaped. The interviews used semi-structured interview techniques, which involved conversations around general domains of interest (see Appendix E for general topics and questions covered in these interviews). The purpose of this methodological approach to interviewing was to give participants the opportunity to describe and frame issues in their own way and to allow for the emergence of ideas that were outside of the researcher’s own theoretical framework (Kvale 1996). Participants involved in prevention were asked about the roles their organizations played in young worker safety in general and the LifeQuilt specifically, the organizations they interacted with, the challenges they encountered in collaborative processes and how they managed them, and their understandings of and perspectives on prevention. It was made clear to all participants that the research was about their involvement in OHS and the LifeQuilt campaign and that individuals would not be identifiable in any report of the findings of the study.

Five of the interviews were conducted face to face (at places of the respondents’ choosing) while, due to geographical distance, two took place over the telephone. The interviews were taped and lasted between a half-hour to two hours in length, depending upon the willingness and/or time available of individual participants. After the completion of each interview, field notes describing my impressions of the interview and suggesting additional lines of inquiry were recorded. Since analysis occurred throughout the data collection process, additional questions for subsequent interviews were suggested by reviewing internet documentary literature, completed interview transcripts and through the ongoing analysis of the LifeQuilt website. For example, why were graphic headlines used in the personal tribute page or commemorative texts? Why were some personal tribute pages more detailed than others? Why were company names not mentioned? How were the families recruited? Why did families agree or not agree to participate?

It is important to note that the research questions in this study did not focus upon the individual as the unit of analysis but on social interactions, organizational dynamics, contexts, policy and
discursive frameworks, in relation to the practices of prevention. My interest in conducting interviews was to provide a context for the discursive interpretation of the LifeQuilt internet texts and to compare and contrast organizational and positional narratives as to why the LifeQuilt website was created and its intended use. My objective was to investigate the organizational narratives of key informants from government, family, employer and labour safety groups that played a role in the creation of this initiative.

The interview data were very important to the research objectives directed at gaining an understanding of the social, political and economic environment informing the LifeQuilt’s creation. These data also provided insights into my first research question: why the true account form of the commemorative emerged as the prevention strategy in a multiple stakeholder campaign. Most of the individuals interviewed had extensive experience in Ontario’s OHS community and were able to provide detailed contextual information that contributed significantly to my understanding of the initiative.

Interview respondents also provided information that was not available on the website or the background literature, including information on the compensation status of young workers killed on the job who did not have dependants. Participant perspectives in the LifeQuilt initiative enhanced my understanding of legal and policy issues, political divisions between interest groups, policy approaches and the roles played by less visible processes of decision making in cross-institutional projects.

III. Sampling strategy

Several sampling decisions were made from the outset of the study. After completing a situational mapping exercise to identify key organizations, a theoretical sampling strategy was engaged. This approach allowed for the selection of key informants who might provide insights into the interview questions and issues arising from the background literature, website and transcripts from completed interviews (Sandelowski 1993). A standpoint perspective approach was used to identify individuals for the study. Eakin (2010) defines “standpoint” as “perspectival location,” denoting that an individual’s point of view, that is, what is seen and framed as a problem, depends on the person’s social status and organizational location (p.114). Sample size was determined less by number of participants as by unit of analysis, such as instances, standpoints, interactions, relationships, circumstances and situations.
I focused on four groups within occupational health and safety that participated in the LifeQuilt and are postulated to have distinct perspectives on prevention: employer and labour associations affiliated with the WSIB, the Ministry of Labour (MOL), a government branch, and family workplace safety activists (usually parents/siblings of deceased young workers). I assumed that the participants would communicate perspectives that reflected their role and organization/sectoral affiliation. Within these four categories, the selection of participants was influenced by practical constraints such as monetary issues, travel time within Ontario and the availability and willingness of the participants to be interviewed.

During the recruitment process, I found myself dealing with a very small group of key informants who were knowledgeable about the LifeQuilt initiative. This turned out to be a lesser number of key informants than I had originally anticipated, and in two cases when I tried to get additional interviews with individuals from the same sectors, I was directed toward individuals already included in the sampling plan. It may have been that some individuals were not that informed or that they felt their more involved colleagues should receive credit for their participation in the project and act as official spokespersons. Since the LifeQuilt initiative involved a small network of key informants, the sample size reflects this reality.

The key informant data provided an institutional narrative describing the organization’s reasons for participating in the LifeQuilt initiative and experiences and protocols related to working on a multipartite collaborative initiative. These institutional stories provided an organizational context for interpreting the dissertation’s core data source: the LifeQuilt website data. After I had conducted seven in-depth interviews, new and contradictory data were not forthcoming. (See Appendix E describing interview participants).

IV. Data Management

The interviews were transcribed, the transcriptions checked against audiotapes, identifiers removed and the data kept in secure storage. The interviews, along with the texts from the LifeQuilt website were entered into Atlas Ti for data management purposes. Notes related to analyzed documents were also entered into the software program for coding and analysis.

Due to the transient nature of web-based resources, I was aware that the resource I was studying could potentially be taken offline during the course of my research. Web-based documents, while
a rich source of data, can also change or disappear and reflect shifts in the contextualizing discursive networks through which they are communicated (Lemke 1999). The web-based documents to be analyzed were downloaded, referenced by dated URLs and saved in hard copy. This approach turned out to be important to my analysis, as the website was altered from an interactive website to a closed, read-only website during the course of my analysis. When I first examined the LifeQuilt website, there was an active chatroom page where visitors could post comments about their impressions of seeing the LifeQuilt. Fortunately, I downloaded and printed hardcopies of the website after receiving ethics approval and created a binder of each online page in May 2004. Six months later, the interactive chatroom was closed. (When I asked interview participants as to why this had changed, explanations were not forthcoming.)

**V. Analysis**

The analysis of data was ongoing throughout the phases of data collection, the review of relevant literature and writing up. The case study began with an exploration of the website and related documentary data before interview data collection. Multiple readings of the website, documents and interview data were ongoing from the early to final stages of the project. The analytic process became more intensive and nuanced toward the end of the collection phase and initial writing up. Several different qualitative analytic tools and strategies were used in the analysis of textual and visual materials.

**Situational mapping analytic techniques:** The data were analyzed using the situational, social worlds and positional mapping techniques outlined by Clarke (2005) to stimulate ideas about the relations among elements in the research situation. A series of maps were produced, using these techniques, that identify players, nonhuman elements, material elements, discursive frameworks, and elements that are both present and absent from the research situation. Situational maps were used to map the human, nonhuman, discursive and other elements in a research situation of inquiry and to begin probing the possible interrelationships. Social world/arenas mapping is a second level of mapping, whereby the relationships between collective actors, nonhuman (material) and discursive relations are diagrammed (see Appendix G for an example of a situational map).

Mapping approaches focused on the research situation allowed for the interrogation of data that was setting specific and reflexively driven through acknowledging the possibility of multiple
interpretations and the researcher’s presence and theoretical gaze in each phase of the study (Pumphilon 1999). As well as stakeholder group identification, legislative changes, policy shifts and the changed configuration of institutional relations in OHS also became evident during this mapping process. Clarke’s mapping techniques of situational and social worlds/arenas maps were useful in the early stages of the dissertation as strategies for the diagramming and analysis of narrative, visual and historical documents.

**Critical discourse analysis:** In order to see the LifeQuilt internet texts in a broader context, the analysis began with a preliminary analysis of the website and linked online materials using critical discourse analytic techniques (Fairclough 1993) in which texts were explored as a source of evidence for examining claims related to social structures, processes, power relations and resistance. Discourse analysis attends to the role played by language in the communication and constitution of textual representations of reality (Taylor 2001). As a methodology, Cheek (2000) observes, discourse analysis focuses on textual analysis where language, never neutral, is interrogated and seen as “being both constituted by, and constitutive of, the social reality that it seeks to represent” (p. 40). The commemoratives and multipartite pages on the LifeQuilt were approached as institutionally negotiated, even though they often appeared as a “naturalized” direct and unmediated communication between families and audiences of the quilt (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). Multiple readings of the LifeQuilt texts were conducted, asking the following questions:

- What is mentioned?
- What is not mentioned?
- What positions are established within the discourse? How are they interrelated?
- What discursive frameworks are articulated through the website?
- What are the features of the young worker subject that is produced by this discourse?
- What are the relationships between the lay and expertise discourses included on the website?
- What is the official account communicated that justifies the site’s creation?
- Is there a counterfactual discourse that challenges the official account of a multipartite prevention campaign?

As an analytic strategy, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was useful in suggesting the contextualizing influence of organizational/power dynamics on the content of the data. Further, this approach sensitized me to the complexity of true account authorship in a prevention coalition setting in which a multipartite committee, including representatives from government, families, and labour and employer safety groups, was involved in recruiting stories, providing content
guidelines and editing the final product. In this sense, the commemoratives of the LifeQuilt were socially mediated according to committee rules as to what kinds of information were to be included/excluded on the website. Readings of the website revealed multiple discourses and positions that are referred to within the texts (Fairclough 2001). For example, on the LifeQuilt website pages, there are stock phrases found in professional OHS prevention discourses, and expressions from lay safety discourses (such as the professionally frowned-upon term “accident”). The meanings of the texts were examined in relation to that which is mentioned, that which is not mentioned, and that which might function as constraints on speakers. The texts were also investigated in relation to the representation of authorship and its presence or absence. This was of particular interest with the true account form, as the stories included on the LifeQuilt website are presented as naturalized “real stories” told by family members. (Interview data revealed that the personal tribute pages of the LifeQuilt website were authored by family members – but in response to a template of questions sent to families and then edited by members of LifeQuilt committee.)

A purely CDA approach, however, did have some limitations, as I found myself jumping to conclusions about how and why the stories of the LifeQuilt were constructed. For example, because the LifeQuilt included stories from every province/territory in Canada, I began to look at the stories as deliberately representative of location. From the interviews, I subsequently learned that recruitment was fraught with difficulties, and that it was likely a fortuitous coincidence that the commemoratives were, at the conclusion of the project, inclusive of all provinces and territories of Canada. This example of a conclusion drawn from my reading the LifeQuilt texts, which was then contradicted by the interview data, was a reminder of the methodological wisdom of engaging multiple data sources and not rely exclusively upon a website analysis.

**Discursive content analysis:** Discourse analysis provided insights that informed my second research question concerning what the true account commemorative texts of the LifeQuilt say and do. As I read these texts, I explored them for overall meaning and began to make memos about the features of individual accounts through comparing and contrasting individual cases. Stories were grouped according to narration style; length; fatality incident details; inclusion of prevention messages; the language of blame; the use of visceral and graphic language depicting injury; discourses on family, work and individual character; statements evoking blame/blamelessness.
The texts were explored for overall meaning, narrative structures, common and variable features (Potter and Wetherell 1994). Particular attention was paid to stylistic devices such as the use of persuasive language, metaphor, subtext, irony, rhetorical stance and repetition (Watson 1995). The texts were also read for narrative style (i.e., factual accounts versus emotional tributes), tone and use of a first-, second- or third-person viewpoint. Attention was paid to tone, the use of newspaper-style headlines, the order and structure of statements within individual webpages, the different forms of persuasive communication and the juxtaposition of active versus passive statements.

An attention to intertextuality delineating how documents, texts and visual discourses refer to other texts and referents informed the analysis (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). Potter (1996) notes that “discourse analysis is concerned both with the organization of texts and talk in practices, and with the discursive resources that those practices draw on” (p. 130). For example, a number of the multipartite pages and individual commemorative pages employed prevention slogans that are a part of the professional discourse on injury prevention.

It is important to note that discourse analysis is not limited to language and can include discourses representing visual images and material cultural objects such as monuments, buildings and websites (Brooker 1999). Visual discourse included such things as the images selected, viewpoint, perspective, light color, depth of field, relation to other works in the same substantive area, composition, scale and texture, symbolic reference, injunctions to viewers, work of the image. Memos were made about visual elements of the website, including layout, design, fonts, imagery, lighting and site navigation, and some of these observations were also included in the analysis.

**Frame analysis:** Goffman’s (1974) concept of frame analysis draws from the symbolic interactionist understanding that what is taken as reality is socially produced. Goffman (1974) viewed “frames” as definitions of the situation that allow us to make sense out of events. Meaning is produced through the application of frameworks or schemata of interpretation that allow individuals to make sense of events. How an event is understood depends on how it is characterized at the time or retrospectively portrayed from the individual’s point of view. There is a great deal of variability in the degree of organization of frameworks, and while some frameworks are carefully set out in terms of a system of rules and logic, the majority of
frameworks are loosely based on a taken-for-granted, common-sense approach or perspective (Goffman 1974). In the analysis of the LifeQuilt texts, I have followed Vinitzky-Seroussi’s (2002) use of collective memory theory and frame analysis in interpreting commemorative events and memory projects. Using this method, commemorative texts are analyzed with a consideration of the relative presence or absence of three narrative components (protagonist commemorated, the event and the event’s context). Other worker memorial websites were considered as a comparator with the LifeQuilt, to understand how the presence/absence of narrative components operated in different commemorative settings. This approach, described in detail in the findings chapter (Chapter Seven), facilitated answers to my third research question considering the different discursive features of consensus and critical commemoratives on the LifeQuilt.

**Early content and thematic coding for collective trends of the internet data**

To facilitate seeing overall trends and variations between the texts, the stories were organized into a table that initially categorized the narratives by age of worker, gender, education, occupational sector, seasonal/temporary work. Using constant comparison techniques, I conducted multiple readings of the texts and made detailed notes of commonalities and differences between the texts. Kvale’s (1996) techniques of considering multiple perspective explanations of data and contexts of interpretation were engaged in the reading and interrogating of texts across the dataset. Such an approach highlights that data and findings are never a reproduction of reality but a representation of reality that reflects both the personal and theoretical assumptions of the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). A dialogue between theory and data, as described by Sandelowski (1993), occurred throughout each stage of data analysis. During this process, relevant literatures were considered in the process of reformulating data theoretically and developing analytic frameworks.

The interview data and website texts were analyzed using the thematic analysis approach described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach involves generating initial codes that capture interesting features of the dataset, organizing codes into code groups and then developing potential themes. Using thematic analysis techniques (Clarke and Braun 2006), categories, as they were observed, were coded systematically across the data. Codes were developed for information that was routinely included in the personal tribute pages, such as whether the victim
was wearing personal protective equipment or working alone; whether he or she lacked training or was new to the job; as well as the person’s personality, hobbies, academic achievements and future plans. In addition to coding the personal tribute pages, I also coded the multipartite pages and created memos describing themes that emerged during this phase of the analysis. The table below captures the early coding strategy for the internet texts of the LifeQuilt website. As can be seen, there was a strong focus on both individualizing and humanizing the young worker (family, individual worker, the injury event) and attributing injury cause to risk factors (cause of injury) associated with safety failures involving youth. This organization of the data contributed to an understanding of my second research question: what the commemorative texts of the LifeQuilt say and do, and how the texts might be related to prevention discourses.

Table 1: Coding of the internet texts of the LifeQuilt website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code group</th>
<th>Individual codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family presence</td>
<td>• Family systems and relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dependants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mourning and loss</td>
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<td>• Suffering</td>
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<td>Individual worker</td>
<td>• Moral character and personality</td>
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<td>• Education</td>
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<td>• Hobbies</td>
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<td>• Future plans</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Work ethic</td>
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<tr>
<td>The injury event</td>
<td>• Workplace fatality details</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Graphic description of death</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention principles</td>
<td>• Faulty technology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Working alone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Faulty engineering</td>
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<td>• Inadequate supervision</td>
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<td>• Insufficient training</td>
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<td>• Dangerous conditions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Temporary work</td>
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<td>• New to the job</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Co-worker negligence</td>
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<td>• Employer/supervisor negligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention messages</td>
<td>• Prevention statements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Recommended prevention strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety legacies</td>
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Dynamic and emergent relationships between theory and data

As I continued the coding process, my analysis was informed by certain theoretical frameworks that were later abandoned. For example, the discourses on young worker safety communicated
the need for youth to be wary of the risks of working alone, of being new to the job, poorly supervised or insufficiently trained, and they called for youth to exercise their safety rights and responsibilities. These suggestions for young workers to manage their own safety resonated with the sociological writings of Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) on risk and reflexive risk decision-making in the highly individualized social order of late modernity (Furlong and Cartmel 1997). The individual is placed at the centre of an ever-increasing sphere of reflexive decision making that influence many dimensions of life, including education and career trajectory in an age of “do-it-yourself biography” (Beck1992). In short, working youth are unpractised in reflexive risk decision making.

This theoretical orientation was initially attractive because individualization processes were reflected on the LifeQuilt website through my initial readings of the data. There was an emphasis in the texts upon the unique individual and the family characteristics that often overshadowed the workplace and other structural determinants of industrial accidents. However, some of the organizational and personal tribute pages of the LifeQuilt raise potentially contentious issues such as negligent employers and supervisors, companies tampering with the accident site before the investigation, and cases of inadequate OHS regulation. These elements of the LifeQuilt communicating the anger of some families at companies and the OHS system could be interpreted as reflecting Beck’s risk society assertion that in a post-fordist world of work, people organize protests and social movements around shared risk experiences.

At the same time, this theoretical approach did not shed light on the multipartite collaboration dimensions of the LifeQuilt campaign, which included the participation of employer and labour affiliated organization government and those most affected by workplace tragedies: the families and friends of the deceased. The risk society approach could not address the research objective of accounting for the emergence of a collaborative or multipartite prevention campaign nor provide insights related to the third research question examining the presence of consensus and critical accounts of prevention and remembrance. Further, notions of the risk society were not useful in considering a prevention campaign in a specific historical, social and political setting. It was when I turned to the interview data and continued my readings of web-based and supplementary documents that alternative theoretical constructs emerged that helped my conceptualization and interpretation of the LifeQuilt.
Thematic coding of the interview transcripts and seeing the case differently

As I coded the interview transcripts, new categories emerged. A number of the categories, particularly those related to safety culture and behaviour-based perspectives on prevention, were also captured in the coding of the multipartite pages of the LifeQuilt website. The interviews focused explicitly on the LifeQuilt as an opportunity for common ground; the project itself was located by all participants at a particular juncture in the socio-historical setting of OHS in Ontario. The late 1990s were seen by interview participants as a divisive time, when the Workers’ Compensation Board was renamed the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and there was a shift from an emphasis on compensation issues to injury prevention. The interview data also introduced new themes, such as compensation issues for the families of young workers without dependants killed on the job, the nature of collaboration and managing blame that were not captured through initial readings of the website. These themes were aligned with my first research question asking why true accounts, such as commemoratives, were at the centre of multiple stakeholder campaigns and examining details of the social and political context of these campaigns in the late 1990s. The table below captures the early coding of transcript data.

Table 2: Coding of the interview transcript data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code group</th>
<th>Individual codes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>• Family crisis of occupational death</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Compensation issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family life/closure/healing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Institutional (non)acknowledgment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention discourses/frameworks</td>
<td>• Blame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Closure/healing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaboration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Culture of safety</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Power of personal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Spiritual/religious</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Young worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative OHS campaigns</td>
<td>• Lay/professional</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Employer stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family stakeholders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Government stakeholders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Labour stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Compensation issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fundraising</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
As I became more familiar with the dataset through the process of multiple readings, coding and memoing of the internet texts, documents and interview transcripts, I began to focus on the commemorative form. What might a public memorial using the true account form lend to a collaborative prevention campaign? At this point, I revisited some earlier analytic exercises I had performed, and was sensitized to the way in which personal and family anecdotes dominated on many of the personal tribute pages and foregrounded the role of the workplace. In other words, through multiple readings of the internet data and interview transcripts, I began to see the focus on prevention and collaboration in the memorial or commemorative form as related to the management/distancing/diffusion of blame.

**Dialogue between collective memory theory and the data**

It was through multiple readings of the interview data, grey literature and socio-historical writings through a collective memory lens that I realized that the commemorative was a unique form of the true account genre that was perhaps well-suited for a collaborative campaign involving diversely positioned OHS stakeholders. As my work went through a stage focused on the commemorative, I began reading the literature on collective memory theory, a sociological perspective that addresses the social, economic, cultural, and political dimensions of public remembrances. The collective memory literature highlights that public memorial acts and practices are produced at particular social, political, cultural and economic conjunctures, frequently sponsored by dominant institutions and often intended to promote social consensus. As well, this perspective does consider the complexities of stakeholder collaboration in public memorial processes that are often trying to promote dominant interests and build multipartite consensus, while acknowledging those who have suffered as a result of the commemorated event.

This literature sensitized me to the complex social dynamics of public commemorative processes, their often “intended” consensus-building functions, and the significance of the timing and design of public memorial acts and artifacts. Why are some tragedies commemorated and other tragedies not? Why does a memorial site/practice emerge at a particular time in history? During this stage of the analysis, my visit to Washington DC public memorials and commemorative sites, combined with the collective/social memory literature, attuned me to the complex dynamics of acts of public remembrance. Collective memory studies provided
conceptual and methodological tools that were relevant to a discussion of the context of the LifeQuilt as a commemorative campaign engaging true accounts. The theory was also useful for considering discursive elements, form and content of individual commemoratives as examples of the true account form. Importantly, it also enabled me to draw upon the frame analysis research techniques engaged in studies of commemoratives and museums by Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002) and Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi (2007). Theory here is considered as a part of the method and was used to guide and make sense of the interpretation of findings and analysis. In the next chapter, collective memory approaches are discussed. It was through this theoretical lens that the LifeQuilt website was revealed as a product and process mediated through the politics of a collaborative prevention discourse.
Chapter 4
Collective memory theory and commemoration

Introduction

Collective memory is a sociological concept that refers to multiple, changing and dynamic social representations of the past. These shared understandings of the past, while often initiated by dominant groups and/or institutions, are also frequently objects of political contest (Sturken 1997) and reinterpretation (Saito 2006). The collective memory literature emphasizes how public memorial acts and practices are produced at particular social, political, cultural and economic conjunctures; commonly sponsored by dominant institutions; often intended, in their design, to promote social consensus; and often challenged and reinterpreted by social groups.

From a collective memory perspective, public commemoratives practices, such as memorials, may be interpreted as deliberate constructions of the past that take place within specific social, historical and political contexts. Public commemoratives are purposive and often an attempt by dominant institutions to manage difficult pasts while acknowledging the pain and suffering of victims and their families. Because public memorials commonly involve government approval and sponsorship, the state and/or dominant organizations may act as gatekeepers, influencing the selection and framing of commemorated events. At the same time, official narratives that align with dominant ideologies may be challenged by social groups with different narratives that question official and orthodox framings of the past.

The previous chapter on research methods described different conceptual approaches that were considered before selecting a collective memory perspective. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of collective memory studies and theoretical traditions that characterize the field, and to highlight how this perspective is taken up in my study. The first section provides a working definition of collective memory and the scope and diversity of this research area. The second section looks at the work of the sociological theorist who coined the term, Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist who was influenced by the theoretical perspectives of structural functionalism and symbolic interactionism. Collective memory themes that are associated with the theoretical orientations of functionalism and symbolic interactionism are discussed. The chapter concludes with a rationale for using collective memory concepts in the analysis of interview and textual data.
Defining collective memory

Collective memory has been described by Zelizer (1995) as a construct that “refers to recollections that are instantiated beyond the individual and for the collective” (p. 214). Sociologist Barry Schwartz articulates a general definition of collective memory. He defines collective memory as “the distribution throughout society of beliefs, feelings, moral judgments and knowledge about the past” [http://www.sociologyencyclopedia.com/info/sample1.pdf (accessed 15 January 2011)]. According to Jedlowski (2001), collective memory may “be understood as a set of social representations concerning the past which each group produces, institutionalizes, guards and transmits through the interaction of its members” (p. 33). Each of these definitions emphasizes collective memory as a selective understanding of the past that is produced by social groups.

The activity of commemoration is a central focus of collective memory studies (Zelizer 1995). Collective memories subject to sociological inquiry typically share an embodiment in material form, such as a monuments, commemorative events, internet sites or memorial artwork (Wagner-Pacifici 1996; Zelizer 1995). Schwartz (1982) observes that commemorated events are invested “with an extraordinary significance and assigned a qualitatively distinct place in our conception of the past” (p. 377). However, the remembrances of dominant groups are more likely to be institutionalized in commemoratives and other official versions of the past (Schudson 1997). This is partly a function of the symbolic and material resources needed to both create and promote public commemorative acts and practices (Bodnar 1994; Scott 1997). As Conway (2010) observes, “commemoratives relate to what people actually do in a communal way and in public contexts – commemoration basically involves public work – in response to the social distribution of opinions about the past and is the outcome of contestation, interests, and negotiation” (p. 444).

What are collective memory studies?

Collective memory studies typically explore the processes that both govern and challenge the content and formation, institutionalization and transmission of remembered events of a social group and their translation into customs, practices and institutions that, at least temporarily, function to sustain a sense of shared identity (Connerton 1989). This subfield explores the social context and practices through which recollections of past events are selected, mediated,
institutionalized and sometimes contested as group narratives (Beim 2007; Blair and Michel 2007; Olick 2007). As Zelizer (1995) observes:

By definition, collective memory thereby presumes activities of sharing discussion, negotiation, and often contestation. Remembering becomes implicated in a range of other activities having as much to do with identity formation, power and authority, cultural norms and social interactions as with the simple act of recall. Its full understanding thus requires an appropriation of memory as social, cultural and political action at its broadest level. (P. 214)

The study of collective memory has emerged as an active area of scholarship in a variety of disciplines over the past three decades (Conway 2010; Fine and Beim 2007; Fowler 2005, 2007; Misztal 2003). These disciplines, in addition to sociology, include history (Assmann 1998, Confino 1997; Hutton 2008; Klein 2003), cultural studies (Fowler 2007; Sturken 1997; Zandberg 2010), psychology (Irwin-Zarecka 1993; Reese and Fivush 2008), ethnography (Cherot 2009; Milligan 2007), and anthropology (Olick and Robbins 1998; Wertsch 2008).

This area of study gained momentum in the 1980s when disciplinary trends coincided with a renewed interest in the studies of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who first introduced collective memory as a sociological construct in 1925. The growth in collective memory studies has been attributed to the following factors: multiculturalism, pluralism and social movement theory (Irwin-Zarecka 1994); local knowledge challenges to the official accounts of historiography reflecting culturally dominance (Osiel 1997; Schwartz 1997); identity politics and the politics of victimization and regret (Kammen 1995; Olick 2007; Saito 2006); postmodernism and challenges to modernity’s assumptions of linear historicity, truth and identity (Fowler 2007; Halas 2008; Hess 2007). Wertsch and Roediger (2008) summarize common themes that characterize many collective memory studies from a variety of academic disciplines:

The body of knowledge is a feature of the culture of individuals who share some similarity, and individuals may participate in various different groups (with different collective memories), defined by generation, countries of origin, locale (e.g., Texans), and so on. The attribute is the “distinctive holistic image of the past in the group” (e.g., World War II veterans in the U.S. who are referred to as “the greatest generation” by some). The process is the continual evolution of understanding between the individual and the group, as individuals may influence and change the collective memory of the group, and the group can change the individual’s understanding of being a member of the group…These three entities capture some (but not all) off the various senses of collective memory used by scholars in different academic disciplines. (P. 318)
I. Maurice Halbwachs and collective memory

The early writings on collective memory of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs\(^1\), a student of Durkheim, made a major contribution to sociological understandings of commemorative materials (Connerton 1989; Fowler 2007; Misztal 2003; Olick 2007; Schwartz 1996; Sturken 1997; Werstch 2002). Olick and Robbins (1998) note that Halbwachs studied social groups and the construction of collective memory while rejecting an “individual-psychological approach to memory” (p. 109). As Halbwachs (1992) observes, “no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine their recollections” (p.139).

Each individual’s memories are inscribed within social frameworks through which recollections are supported and take on meaning. “It is in this sense there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the extent that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection” (Halbwachs 1992:38). Halbwachs acknowledged individual consciousness and the multiple social contexts in which the person remembers (Fowler 2007). As Halbwachs (1992) observes, “The individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory” (p. 182). All individuals remember by placing themselves in the context of the group, but the memory of the group is apprehended within the recollections of the individual (Reese and Fivush 2008). Individual memory is accessible only through its socially negotiated meaning and represents the intersection of the individual’s membership in various social groups.

Memory is not a natural, innate property of the individual but socially constructed. Individual memory presupposes social frameworks that give the past meaning. Through socialization processes such as social interaction, education and acculturation, we learn to place our understandings in the social frameworks of collective memory and, in doing so, remember our past (Poole 2008). As Jedlowski (2001) observes “These cognitive and emotional frameworks consist of the categories through which the past is selected, ordered and understood; they are stabilized by interiorizing the effects of social interactions and stored as a result of these interactions, such as commemorative acts and ritual activities, being repeated” (p. 31).
From Halbwachs’s perspective, place memory is the most important factor in sustaining collective memory, as it is through social construction and reconstruction of sacred group landmarks, such as commemoratives, that the group’s interpretation of the past is maintained and changed. Since the Middle Ages, Palestine has been a commemorative terrain that shifts and transforms over time. In *The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land*, Halbwachs observes the changing monument localizations that occur as different historical periods construct alternative narratives about the life and death of Jesus. As Halbwachs (1992) states, this diversity of collective memory “attests to the fact that in each period the collective Christian memory adapts its recollections of the details of Christ’s life and of the places where they occurred to the contemporary exigencies of Christianity, to its needs and aspirations” (p. 234).

The writings of Halbwachs have informed both structural functionalist and symbolic interactionist collective memory studies. Halbwachs views the collective memory of groups as creating memory products, rituals and networks that support shared value systems and normative consensus. At the same time, Halbwachs’s analysis of intermediate social processes and his sensitivity to the temporal, spatial, contingent and identity dimensions of collective memory activities have informed symbolic interactionist studies. Halbwachs’s analysis of the production of collective memory through the representations created through small group relations has also been influential in the development of symbolic interactionist collective memory perspectives. He views social groups as providing a dynamic field for the production, revision and purposeful engagement of representations of the past. For Halbwachs, collective memory is a socially constructed process, and membership in various social groups is instrumental in how we construct and reconstruct the past. Individuals in the context of the group, whether it be a family, union, religious or political organization, for example, draw upon the perspective of the group to recreate the past (Halbwachs 1992).

However, Halbwachs also views social groups as continuously revising collective memories to serve the needs of the present. For example, Halbwachs sees collective memory and its potential

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1 Although the construct collective memory is also referred to using other descriptors such as social memory, cultural memory and collected memory, I have chosen to retain Halbwachs’s term. Halbwachs (1877-1945), a socialist, was detained during the Nazi occupation of Paris and deported to Buchenwald, where he died of dysentery.
for reinterpreting the past from the vantage point of the present as potentially strengthening the class consciousness of the working class (Fowler 2007). A key insight of Halbwachs’s (1992) writing is that collective memory is a group’s selective construction of the past in order to meet its present-day needs, beliefs and objectives:

In the same way, society admits all ideas (even the most ancient), provided that they are ideas, that is, that they have a place in its thought and that they still interest present-day people who understand them. From this it follows that social thought is essentially a memory and that its entire content consists only of collective recollections or remembrances. But it also follows that, among them, only those recollections subsist that in every period society, working within its present-day frameworks, can reconstruct. (P. 188)

From Halbwachs’s perspective, the individual, through interacting in multiple group contexts, engages in a variety of mnemonic communities. The individual participates in multiple social frameworks and positions within these frameworks from which remembrances are derived, making memory both plural and changeable (Olick 1999). As Olick (1998) observes, “There is no individual memory without social experience nor is there any collective memory without the individual participating in communal life” (p. 342). It is the perpetuation of social memories that keep their group context active, and it is the group memory that manifests itself within individual memories. Halbwachs preferred to use the group rather than society as the central unit of analysis and saw shared recollections as provided by multiple collectivities with distinct identities (Olick 2007). Halbwachs did not see collective memory as a solely individual property; over time, memories are institutionalized in images, artifacts, and commemorative rites and are both sustained and challenged by collective socialization practices, ritual acts and even processes of reinterpretation.

II. Functionalist collective memory studies

The collective memory approach to the sociological study of commemoratives is associated with the writings of Emile Durkheim (1964) and his focus upon the role of collective representations in maintaining social order. In particular, the collective memory tradition often draws upon the Durkheimian concepts of social solidarity, the collective conscience, the sacred, the integrative function of rituals and the objectification of shared-meaning frameworks in complex society through commemorative practices (Miller 2000; Misztal 2003).
Durkheim first discussed the function of commemoratives as shared memory products and practices that promote social solidarity. In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, ritual activities create and strengthen social bonds (collective effervescence) directed toward that which is imbued with a special significance, the sacred, defined as a reified belief system that is distinct from routine everyday life. It is through the practice of traditions, rituals and commemorative rites that moral values are reaffirmed and the social cohesion of community life is sustained. These ritual activities, discussed in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, include commemoratives and other ritual activities honouring ancestors and ancient traditions. For Durkheim, memory is an inherently social activity, institutionalized in laws, rules, records and practices (Misztal 2003). In particular, it is through commemorative practices that societies celebrate their shared traditions and sacred beliefs; rituals allow collective memory to be passed on and, through acknowledging the past, help maintain collective identity and the continuity of social life. According to Durkheim (1964), commemoratives bring group narratives into focus and let the community “renew the sentiment which it has of itself and its unity” (p. 420). By renewing links with the past through practices, such as commemoration, a sense of social identity and historical continuity is preserved (Miller 2000).

In *The Division of Labour in Society*, Durkheim (1964) addresses the complexity of maintaining social solidarity in an increasingly fragmented and secular society. He views professional and occupational groups, legal institutions and the state as playing a pivotal role in sustaining social cohesion, moral integration and social order. The authority of religion is replaced by that of the nation state in the complex organization of modern, secular society (Miller 2000). In *The Division of Labour in Society*, the nation state is portrayed as resistant to the alternative constructions of diverse social groups that were at variance with state-controlled official collective memory accounts; the state functions to remember the past in a way that would preserve a unifying national consciousness and maintain social solidarity. As Misztal (2003a) observes, “Since social solidarity is possible only to the extent that individuals share values and norms, the role of the state is to persuade people about the validity of such a common identity and value system by inducing both social remembering of certain events in specific ways and social forgetting of other events” (p. 134). Durkheim’s focus upon the integrative functions of mnemonic practices, such as public memorials and commemorative practices, downplays the politics of constructing official accounts of the past.
Structural functionalist approaches to collective memory focus upon the normative frameworks guiding collective representations. These normative frameworks or cultural value systems often reflect dominant or ruling structural interests (Jedlowski 2001). The creation of collective memory products and practices, such as memorials and commemoratives, are seen, from a Durkheimian structural functionalist perspective, as unifying vehicles that help to build social consensus (Connerton 1989). Structural functionalist collective memory studies often focus upon the production of institutionalized collective memory objects, such as memorials, commemoratives, museums or films, as the unit of analysis and their role in promoting social solidarity (Olick and Robbins 1998; Schwartz and Schuman 2005). Collective memory frameworks operate within the context of differentiated societies as a means of building social solidarity and normative consensus that align the mnemonic activities of social groups with the official memories of ruling elites (Mistzal 2003).

**Functionalism, commemoratives and consensus narratives**

This focus upon the function of public memorials in producing a unifying narrative is evident in Simpson’s analysis of a collection of obituaries published in the New York Times. Simpson (2006), the author of *9/11: The Culture of Commemoration*, analyzes the content and form of personal commemoratives. Simpson views the 9/11 commemoratives as promoting a nationalist agenda. In his discussion of a collection of 9/11 obituaries, *Portraits of Grief*, published by the New York Times, Simpson observes that controversial information, such as the religious backgrounds of persons with Muslim names or immigrants from Islamic countries was not mentioned. The idealized American way of life was celebrated in these individual commemorative accounts:

So the rhetoric of the “*Portraits of Grief,*” with its stress of family values, communitarian virtue, and seemingly adequate leisure amid busy lives (time for cooking, loving one’s children, helping others) is detached from the fuller lives and “characters” of the dead themselves (the lives in which might have been bad tempered or hated their jobs) … But the majority of remembrances are defiantly positive, reports of the good times in these vanished lives. *Portraits* has entered popular culture as a patriotic icon. (Simpson 2006:43)

As Simpson observes, *Portraits of Grief* was an expression of, and rallying call for, American patriotism, a collection of carefully constructed epitaphic descriptions of those who were adhering to national ideals and values and who heroically died for a way of life.
An example of a state-dominated theory of collective memory is exemplified in the writings of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983). In *The Invention of Tradition*, social memory is described as a method of social control for the realization of dominant interests. This approach sees the function of collective memory as that of creating traditions that serve the state. Traditions are invented and established relatively quickly to resolve conflict and create a sense of continuity with the past. For example, an English industrialist introduced the kilt, emblematic of Scottish identity and ancestry, in the late nineteenth century during a period of political unrest. Hobsbawm and Ranger contend that with the decline of traditional politics, there is a need to invent traditions as methods for creating bonds of loyalty, legitimizing institutions, representing social cohesion, protecting statuses and supporting processes of socialization and indoctrination. From this perspective, collective memory is deterministic, constituted from above and used as a consensus building strategy and a tool for social control. As Connerton (2003) notes in his observation of the political functions of collective memory, “images of the past commonly serve to legitimize a present social order” (p. 3).

**Agents and gatekeepers in the management of public remembrances**

Structural functional approaches are reflected in collective memory studies that consider the role of commemorative gatekeepers and agents of memory (Misztal 2003). Bodnar (1992), Sturken (1997, Wagner-Pacifici (1996) and have paid particular attention to the agents and gatekeepers of public commemoratives. Memorials are often sponsored by dominant organizations, and those charged with the project management of a commemorative practice are typically employees of funding agencies (Bodnar 1992). They may act as gatekeepers and try to maintain control over the production and distribution of the commemorative products. The concept of gatekeeper, engaged in social memory studies, is not new to the social sciences. The social scientific concept of gatekeeping was first described in Lewin’s (1947) writings on social planning. Lewin asserted that the most effective way to bring about social change was to focus on gatekeepers, whom he defined as those in positions of authority who control the flow of goods and ideas

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2 The concept of gatekeeping emerged through Lewin’s study of family food habits and activities and his finding that housewives were gatekeepers in food-related decision making, controlling what food entered the household. Lewin asserted that gatekeeping could be applied to the field of media studies, as the dissemination of news is also informed by the decision-making activities of key individuals in organizational settings.
throughout society. Gatekeeping is a practice that is associated with the hierarchical structure of organizations and the means whereby some individuals and groups are in positions with access to goods, information and services that are disproportionate to their formal authority. As gatekeepers to public memory artifacts, individuals in positions of organizational authority may make efforts to exercise control over the production and distribution of the commemorative object.

Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi (2007) studied the effect of gatekeeping on the public memorial activities of the South African Apartheid Museum, which opened to the public in 2002. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was formed following the end of white minority rule and in accordance with the amnesty conditions of the former apartheid government. The TRC, as agents of public memory, endorsed by Nelson Mandela and Bishop Tutu, pushed for a unifying commemorative of apartheid. Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi (2007) observe that the South African Apartheid Museum exhibits reveal a past sanitized of issues such as race, religion, belief and law. Apartheid, in the context of these museum exhibits, is largely explained through an economic framework in which Afrikaners and Africans are victims of British oppression. Similarly, the ANC is presented in a positive light, with issues of violence and internal struggles deleted from the narrative. As agents of memory, the TRC carefully controlled the museum’s narrative, designed to elicit an overarching message of consensus and thereby avoid conflict (Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi 2007).

The AIDS Memorial Quilt also reflects the complexities of commemorative gatekeeping and ownership in the commemorative process (Blair and Michel 2007; Sturken 1997). Most U.S. memorials, including the AIDS Memorial Quilt, have had not only had grassroots support but leadership by individuals with considerable social capital (Sturken 1997). The AIDS Memorial Quilt is a project that was conceived by San Francisco LGBT and AIDS activist Cleves Jones, a friend and supporter of gay rights activist Harvey Milk. Jones initiated the NAMES project as a way to use personal commemoratives to mobilize political and economic support for AIDS research and to raise funds for AIDS victims. Under his leadership, the project grew from 1,920 panels in 1986 to a public display of more than 40,000 panels in Washington Square in 1996. However, because of the quilt’s expansion, the NAMES project required a larger management organization; a grassroots volunteer group no longer administered the NAMES project. Jones’s role as the AIDS Memorial gatekeeper was appropriated when the NAMES project was
restructured as a professional nonprofit organization with more than thirty employees, a budget of $2.5 million a year and an aggressive marketing strategy (Sturken 1997). The NAMES organization officials acting as the AIDS Memorial Quilt gatekeepers set out a new agenda. There was a shift in emphasis from Jones’s agenda – to use the quilt as a tool for raising funds to find a cure, to raise awareness of the disease and to provide primary care to those living with AIDS – to a new strategy of using the quilt as a social marketing campaign for HIV prevention education (Sturken 1997). In effect, Sturken (1997) observes, the quilt had become a commodity under the control of the executives of a bureaucratic organization who were primarily engaged in social marketing and digital quilt-panel archiving activities.

As books, movies, T-shirts, posters, buttons and other objects were produced from the images of individual panels, dissension concerning the purposes and functions of the quilt within the gay community escalated. The commodification of the AIDS Memorial Quilt raised issues of ownership, as those who had contributed panels on behalf of friends and family were excluded from the decision-making processes. In 2003, Jones was fired from the project after criticizing the NAMES organization for failing to exhibit the quilt and for abandoning the original political, economic and research agenda for the plight of AIDS victims (Blair and Michel 2007). In 2005, the dispute with Jones was settled, and thirty-five of the panel stories that he initially recruited for the AIDS Memorial Quilt were returned to San Francisco to be managed by the alternative organization he founded, San Francisco Friends of the AIDS Memorial Quilt (Bajko 2005). In effect, Jones provided a new grassroots organization in which he could exercise his agent-of-memory role and promote the AIDS quilt squares for the original political purposes envisioned.

III. Symbolic interactionism and collective memory

While collective memory draws upon the tradition of functionalism, it is also strongly influenced by symbolic interactionist theory. Symbolic interactionism is a uniquely American school of sociological theory inspired by pragmatism and phenomenology. As the name suggests, the focus of this perspective is on how humans use language to create symbols, to develop common meaning and to communicate with each other. The founder of symbolic interactionism is George Herbert Mead, and the term for this theoretical approach was coined by his student, Herbert Blumer. The key principles of Blumer’s symbolic interactionism (SI) are that individuals act upon the basis of what things mean to them, that meanings are created in interaction and that
meanings are transmitted, negotiated and changed through processes of negotiation between people. The approach assumes that objects and events have no intrinsic meaning, but only assigned meaning that emerges through interaction in everyday life (Prasad 2005). The symbolic and situational aspect of all social phenomena, actions, events and objects hold unique meanings for different individuals.

Blumer’s principles draw upon Mead’s concepts of mind, self and roletaking. It is through mind, self and roletaking that we are able to view ourselves in social situations, produce self-images that accompany us, and shape interpretive activities. Mind refers to the unique capacity of humans to attach symbols to designated objects of the environment, to rehearse different lines of action toward objects in the environment and to select a course of action that facilitates cooperation and survival (Turner 1982).

The concept of self is dependent on mind and evolves through three developmental stages of roletaking: play, game and the generalized other or community of attitudes (Turner 1982). It is through increasing skills in roletaking activities that individuals can anticipate and make decisions regarding the suitability of their responses to others in relation to imagined responses (Prasad 2005). “Play” refers to early phase of socialization, when an infant can take on only a few roles of others. The concept of “game” refers to the individual’s growing capacity to take the role of multiple others in organized activity. The “generalized other” is a description used by Mead to describe the community of attitudes, beliefs and norms that characterize an individual’s multiple spheres of interaction. It is through these roletaking processes that individuals can anticipate and make decisions regarding the appropriateness of their responses to others’ actions.

From a symbolic interactionist perspective, social reality is an ongoing negotiated order and has a constructed nature. Agreement about social reality is reached through the ongoing negotiation activities between actors/groups in local situations. Organizational cultures are not incontrovertible structures and are continuously negotiated and changed through social interaction (Prasad 2005). In contradistinction to the focus on static states and structures of structural functionalism, interactionists emphasize the ongoing, changing, becoming aspects of social processes.

Symbolic interactionism, in collective memory studies, focuses upon how meaning emerges and is institutionalized and changed through actor-centred processes of social interaction in everyday
life. Drawing upon symbolic interactionist theory, Olick (1999; 1999a) sees collective memory as negotiated, historically contingent and as portraying groups’ identities as dynamic and changing. Collective memory studies taking a symbolic interactionist approach explore the processes through which mnemonic products, such as commemoratives, are agentically negotiated, challenged, and continuously reinterpreted by social groups (Beim 2007; Olick 2007; Olick and Robbins 1998; Zerubavel 1996).

According to Fine and Beim (2007), symbolic interactionism focuses on both the process and the production of collective memory products and practices. Social interaction is the process though which a product, in this case collective memory, is produced. The symbolic interactionist approach to collective memory recognizes the reification of the group mind that is endemic to the functionalist analysis of collective memory products and practices. Both the constructed notion of collective memory and the study of public commemoratives and memorials reference the objectification and institutionalization of social processes. However, the analysis of reified patterns of group activity from a symbolic interactionist perspective sharpens the focus upon the individuals and groups that influence and are influenced by memory work. As Fine and Beim (2007) observe:

Yet much of the analytic value in the concept of collective memory is found in its reification. A reified notion of the group mind allows us to analyze patterns of social thought that transcends the individual, just as long as such a strategy does not neglect the individuals and groups that are consequential in establishing memory through reputation work. Although a substantive focus that reifies memory flattens out individual or even group-level behavior, it reveals behavior patterns that affect individuals and groups even in the absence of their intentions. (P.2)

Symbolic interactionism emphasizes the role of agency and the temporal dimensions of memory; collective memory practices cannot simply be reduced to instruments of social control that oppress subordinate classes and minority groups (Misztal 2003). Too frequently, collective memory research fuses the production of a collective memory product, such as a commemorative, with its reception and, in doing so, focuses upon its intended purpose rather than its dynamic and ever-changing qualities (Beim 2007). While memorials are material representations of the past, symbolic interactionist studies also consider how and why individuals and groups respond to institutionalized narratives of the past and change these stories from the vantage point of the present and anticipated future. As Fine and Beim (2007) observe,
“Collective memory is a living concept, linked to the behaviors and responses of social actors who generate meanings” (p. 5). Collective memory products and practices, such as commemoratives, are not static entities but sites of interaction. Collective memory products are shared representations of the past created, institutionalized, protected, contested and communicated through group interaction (Jedlowski 2001).

**Commemoration as a struggle between official and vernacular accounts**

Bodnar (1992) describes the struggle between dominant and community-based perspectives. Public memory is circumscribed by struggles between institutional and vernacular versions of official narratives of the past (Bodnar 1992). Bodnar (1992) contends that ordinary individuals are “less interested than cultural leaders in exerting influence or control over others, and are preoccupied, instead, with defending the interests and rights of their respective social segments” (p.16). In his analysis of American monuments, including the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC, he notes that there is often a tension between “official” and “vernacular” memories and that commemorative symbols must be able to accommodate multiple perspectives for memorials to connect with a broad public audience.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial reflects both official and vernacular narratives. The commemorative studies by Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz (1991) and Sturken (1997) have explored the multiple narratives of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. The monument, situated below ground level, consists of two simple, conjoined black granite walls that list the names of the 57,939 dead American soldiers chronologically ordered by date of death.

Unlike the other War Memorials located on the Washington Mall, Lin’s monument does not celebrate the military status of the dead soldiers. They are represented as a list of citizen names with no mention of rank, service, unit affiliations or roles in the Vietnam War (Sturken 1997). As Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz (1991) note, this commemorative strategy to communicate the deaths of soldiers as personal, private moments rather than a sacrifice for a patriotic cause did not resonate well with the conservative political and military elite.

Although conservative politicians, right-wing veterans and military officials were offended by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the public response to the memorial, once it was unveiled, was
overwhelming (Sturken 1997). It is the most visited memorial site on the Washington Mall, with an estimated 20 to 30 million visitors since its unveiling in 1982. As Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz (1991) note, “Ironically, the memorial designed to be least visible has become the most visible because its users have opened up its spaces and extended them outward” (p.417).

The wall has been described as a shrine and living memorial: families and friends of veterans have left mementos at the base of the wall, expressing a wide range of vernacular viewpoints and personal and political sentiments. The individualized and personalized context of this memorial lacking references to the war and the military status of the deceased is reflected in the vernacular response of visitors who visit the soldiers commemorated as family members. As King (2010) observes:

As Connerton and Halbwachs would have predicted, remembrance is a manifestation of existing social conventions. In the act of commemoration, the public invest the personality and their families with charisma … Precisely because soldiers are now professional specialists, civilians are able to re-connect to them most effectively through the shared experience of domesticity. (P. 19)

**Commemoratives as dynamic discourses**

Commemoratives, as products and processes of commemoration, are dynamic discourses and practices that are open to reinterpretation and new cultural readings as shifts in social and historical contexts take place (Saito 2006). The writings of Bodnar (1992), Sturken (1997), Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002) and Zerubavel (1996) assert that collective memory, as exemplified in its public, commemorative form, can be simultaneously pluralistic and hegemonic. Commemoratives are potentially sites of contestation where official accounts may be challenged by vernacular or local knowledges and where local groups resist the dominance of powerful elites and institutions to control, via gatekeeping activities, the public memory of the past (Bodnar 1992). Bodnar (1992) describes this commemorative space as public memory:

Public memory is produced from political discussion that involves not so much specific economic or moral problems but rather fundamental issues about the entire existence of a society: its organization, structure of power, and the very meaning of its past and present … Its function is to mediate the competing restatements of reality these antinomies express. Because it takes the form of an ideological system with special language, beliefs, symbols, and stories, people can use it as a cognitive device to mediate competing interpretations and privilege some explanations over others. (P. 14)
Mistzal (2003) describes the dynamics of memory as “a contingent product of social or political actions and as a ground or basis of further action” (p. 7). These practices are subject to later revision and are sites of potential contestation. This symbolic interactionist perspective is evident in the writings of Scott (1996), Sturken (1997), Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi (2007), Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002), and Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz (1991) among others. Scott’s (1996) study of a miners’ memorial looks at how a second memorial, funded by the local business community, was implemented by overturning an earlier controversial public monument, with detailed information about the dangers of mining, developed by relatives of dead miners. These collective memory studies explore the “commemoration of difficult pasts” (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991).

“Difficult pasts” refer to past events constituted by moral trauma, controversy, disputes and tensions. According to Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi (2007), “it is an event that many (mostly the victims) wish to remember, many (mostly the perpetrators) wish to forget and many wish that it had never taken place” (p.58). Commemoratives are often sites of struggle between social groups with disparate narratives of the past. “The past threatens to penetrate the contemporary social and political scene, to change the hegemonic narrative, to encourage new voices, to demand justice and recognition” (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002:31). As Sturken (2002) in her study of the AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Vietnam Memorial observes, “commemoration is ultimately a process of legitimation and the memorial lies at the center of a struggle between narratives” (p. 8).

While memorials are influenced by dominant institutions and sponsors in their planning and implementation, there is a tendency to conflate the production of these artifacts with their reception and to ignore their continuous reinterpretation by human actors (Beim 2007; Fine 2007; Saito 2006; Schwartz 1996). For example, Schwartz has written extensively about the changing social, historical and political context in which the Lincoln Memorial has been interpreted and how it has provided a discourse that has served both conservative and liberal ideologies. Commemoratives, as products and processes of commemoration, are dynamic discourses and practices that are open to reinterpretation and new cultural readings as shifts in social and historical contexts take place (Schwartz 1996).
Saito provides an example of the changed positioning of a memorialized event in his study of the transformative narrative of Hiroshima’s victims. Saito (2006), in his analysis of the “reiterated commemoration” of Hiroshima, describes three collective memory shifts. Hiroshima victims were first rendered “invisible” during the postwar occupation (1945-1951); second, rendered visible at the national level as objects of pity as Japan regained sovereignty (1951-1954); and third, finally embraced Hiroshima as constitutive of the post-war national identity and antinuclear movement, following nuclear fallout incidents that received worldwide media attention (1954-1957). Saito (2006) notes the social, political and economic conditions that contributed to distinct interpretations of the cultural trauma of Hiroshima and the central role that commemoration can play in identity politics:

Collective memory is part and parcel of collective identity because memory is a precondition for narrative construction of autobiographies by which we identify who we are. As historical circumstances change, we reconstruct our collective memory and redefine our collective identity. (P. 353)

**Framing features of the commemorative form and content**

Integral to my analysis is an understanding of how commemorative texts can provide unifying/consensus or subversive/critical scripts. I have engaged the social framing commemorative perspective of Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002), which the author applied to an analysis of different memorial sites and practices commemorating the death of Yitzhak Rabin. Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002) provides a dramaturgical analysis of two commemorative sites in Israel: the site of Yitzhak Rabin’s assassination and his graveside memorial. While the graveside memorial omits any reference to the assassination and its context, the commemorated site of the assassination involves a more elaborate, detailed and politicized discourse.

Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002), drawing upon Goffman’s (1974) concept of frame analysis, views commemorative narratives as consisting of three components: commemorated protagonists, the commemorated event, and the event’s context. As Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002) observes, “Framing narratives through inclusion and exclusion of material is part and parcel of the formation and reformation of any commemoration.” (p. 35). Central to Vinitzky-Seroussi’s approach is the strategy of downplaying context in public memorial acts and practices to diminish controversial and political dimensions of the commemorated event. By focusing on the heroics of those memorialized and the technical details of the event, commemoratives are more likely to serve
dominant political interests and generate, perhaps temporarily, social consensus. The form and substance of commemorative sites and practices are shaped by the control of the “agents of memory” (Wagner-Pacifici 1994); the dominant social, political and economic climate at the time; and the relevance of the past in the present. Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002) views the multiple memorial sites for Rabin as a fragmented commemorative strategy facilitating the communication of diverse discourses aimed at separate audiences in different places.

Application of collective memory theory to the study of a young worker memorial website

Collective memory theory is a useful theoretical perspective for the analysis of data associated with a memorial project for the following reasons: First, this body of literature addresses both contextualizing factors and the social processes involved in the historically specific production of memorial artworks. From a collective memory perspective, commemoratives as public practices emerge in a particular place and time and in response to specific social, political and economic circumstances.

Second, while there are a variety of perspectives communicated through collective memory studies, most theoretical and empirical studies address commemorative acts and processes as socially constructed (Olick and Robbins 1998). Collective memory projects, which often make reference to historical atrocities, oppressive practices, wars, technological disasters, diseases, political assassinations and protests, and workplace deaths, are purposively designed; appointed agents or entrepreneurs of memory are often influential in managing the content and form of public commemoratives (Wagner-Pacifici 1996). Further, the gatekeepers of collective memory are frequently employed by the state or state-affiliated organizations, and decision making concerning the form and content of public memorials typically reflects dominant social, economic and cultural forces (Bodnar 1992). A recurrent theme in collective memory studies is that commemorative projects are designed to build consensus and bring disparate groups together by producing a unifying narrative or story that initially reflects the agenda of dominant organizations and/or institutional interests (Bodnar 1992; Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi 2007; Wagner-Pacifici 1996).

Third, the original impetus behind creating a memorial, the unifying script that the commemorative is intended to communicate, may be contested and reinterpreted over time (Saito 2006; Scott 1996; Sturken 1997; Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002). In other words, those writing from a
collective memory sensibility are keenly aware of the differences between the initial process of producing a public monument, memorial or commemorative artwork and its subsequent reception, interpretation and revisions over time by diverse audiences in different political, social and economic circumstances (Olick 2007; Saito 2006; Schwartz and Schuman 2005; Wertsch 2002).

From a functionalist social memory perspective, I have interpreted the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt website as a public memorial initially developed to generate consensus between diverse stakeholders and to build common ground during a particular contentious time in Ontario’s occupational health and safety system. At the same time, this analysis has also drawn upon symbolic interactionist theory through its focus on the dynamic relations between individuals and organizations in shaping consensus commemoratives and critical commemoratives on the LifeQuilt and other worker memorial websites. The LifeQuilt data are also read as a collective memory process and as a site of redefinition and political struggle. The collective memory approach here is described as a theoretical lens through which a young worker memorial website is revealed as a product and process mediated through the politics of collaborative prevention.

Collective memory theory provides sensitizing concepts for locating the true account form of the commemorative in the historical, social and political contexts of OHS prevention campaigns. This research subfield provides analytic tools for investigating the form and content of true accounts forms such as the commemorative. The theory also encourages reflection upon how the deaths of injured workers may be constructed for the present purposes of a collaborative prevention discourse as exemplified in the memory project of the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt.
Chapter 5
The socio-historical context of the LifeQuilt

Introduction

The decision to create a public memorial is always predicated by social, political and economic factors (Schwartz and Schuman 2005). As a result, commemorative projects must be understood in relation to their location in time and place and the socio-cultural, political and economic factors that produce public remembrances. In this chapter, I outline major shifts that occurred in Ontario’s occupational health and safety system leading up to the formation of a multiple stakeholder committee that launched the young worker memorial imitative in 2001. These shifts are important, as they provide a historical context for understanding changes in OHS prevention discourses, and the timing of the LifeQuilt campaign as a project communicating a collaborative prevention discourse. In particular, I argue that changes in government and the restructuring of Ontario’s OHS system are factors that contributed to increasingly adversarial stakeholder relations, and are key to understanding why true accounts emerged as a prevention strategy in a multiple stakeholder campaign in the late 1990s.

History of OHS in Ontario

The historical development of occupational health and safety in Ontario has been described as a move from an era of market regulation during the nineteenth century, to state intervention in the nineteenth, to the current regime of employer self-regulation (Storey and Tucker 2006). For the majority of the nineteenth century, the administration of occupational health and safety was based upon a private contract between employer and employee in which the condition of paid labour was accompanied by the assumption of occupational risk by the worker (Gunderson and Hyatt 2005). In the event of an industrial accident, the onus was on the injured worker to establish the negligence of the employer in a court of common law (Dee, McCombie and Newhouse 1987). This was a costly and time-consuming process that was rarely resolved in the injured worker’s favour (Storey and Tucker 2006).

The passing of the Ontario Factories Act in 1884, through setting safety standards for children and female labour, marked the first step toward the emergence of a system of protective rights for workers, in which safety was partly mediated by the state and separated from exclusively
market principles (Storey and Tucker 2006). Following the publication of the Meredith Report in 1914, the Workmen’s Compensation Board was introduced in 1915 as an independent administrative body (Dee, McCombie and Newhouse 1987). The foundation of the compensation model was an agreement whereby, in exchange for giving up the right to sue employers, irrespective of fault, workers would receive full and fair compensation for injuries incurred at work. This meant that injured workers, in the event of a workplace injury that impacted their ability to work and draw an income, would no longer have to rely upon family or charities. Employers, in exchange, through paying premiums, were protected from lawsuits. Individual costs for the no-fault insurance plan were spread among contributing employers, while collective liability provided compensation for injured workers and their dependants. These events were significant in the development of an “external responsibility system” in which government played a role in setting and enforcing protective standards. However, the external responsibility system did not give workers a voice in identifying health and safety issues and exercising participatory rights, nor did it protect employees who reported safety infractions from employer reprisals (Tucker 2004).

**Participatory rights and the emergence of an internal responsibility system**

In Ontario, a commission chaired by Dr. James Ham in 1976 recommended the creation of the “internal responsibility system” as a bipartite mechanism for an occupational health and safety decision-making model and a legislative strategy to support worker participatory rights. This inquiry into worker safety followed a series of highly publicized workplace accidents in the mining industry, in particular, a series of wildcat strikes led by Elliot Lake miners concerned about their health and safety. The Ham Commission recommended a legislative strategy to support worker participatory rights (Lewchuk, Robb and Walters 1996). The commission asserted that both workers and employers must work together to ensure a shared commitment to workplace safety (Storey and Tucker 2006). In his report, Ham gave priority to the internal responsibility system to which he ascribed four principles (O’Grady 2000). First, joint health and safety committees were a requirement of the internal responsibility system. Second, the powers of the joint committees included inspection, investigation and, according to some interpretations, decision-making powers in relation to health and safety (Tucker 2004). Third, workers were granted the right to individually refuse unsafe work. Finally, workers had the right to be informed of hazards within the workplace.
The Ham Commission recommendations were influential to the participative health and safety model that was the basis of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Bill 70) passed in 1978 (Walters 1983). As a result of this legislation, participating in joint health and safety committees was made mandatory in workplaces employing twenty or more employees. At the time, this was seen by many labour activists as a first step in establishing a policy and institutional framework for worker input and control over occupational health and safety (Tucker 2004).

O’Grady (2000) observes that “since the 1970s, the internal responsibility system has been the defining feature of workplace health and safety policy in Canada” (p. 36). The internal responsibility system emphasized, in theory, the capacity of employees and employers to cooperatively resolve workplace safety issues with the state intervening and acting as a mediator of last resort (Lewchuk, Robb and Walters 1996). Such an approach was intended to minimize the government’s presence in potentially contentious labour relations, as differences were to be negotiated and resolved by workplace parties (Tucker 2007). The negotiation of health and safety issues between employees and managers at the firm level signalled a policy shift towards increased workplace self-regulation (Saksvik and Quinlan 2003). This OHS orientation toward self-government and conservative fiscal constraint is a defining feature of many OHS management systems internationally (Frick and Wren 2000).

**Political regime change and its impact on Ontario’s occupational health and safety system**

In 1985, a Liberal minority government was elected and, working with the New Democratic Party (NDP), a series of reforms were introduced to occupational health and safety that set the stage for partisan politics and collaboration (Haddow and Klassen 2004). The Premier’s Council authored a series of reports recommending a number of changes to labour policy, including increased collaboration between business and labour. The Liberal government extended coverage to white-collar workers, gave workers the unilateral right to stop unsafe work and set up the organizational infrastructure for the Workers Health and Safety Agency (WHSA) to be jointly administered by representatives of business and labour (Storey and Tucker 2006).

The Worker Health and Safety Agency (WHSA), created in 1989, was to be a bipartite organization, with equal representation and leadership from business and labour, mandated to develop, administer and coordinate the delivery of certification training programs for all joint health and safety committee members. The WHSA’s primary function was to manage health and
safety training and to oversee certification of Joint Health and Safety Committees (O’Grady 2000). Additionally, workers were being encouraged through such programs to understand and exercise their right to refuse dangerous work (Haddow and Klassen 2004).

While the agency was structured as bipartite to represent the interests of both employer and employees, it was perceived by the business community as being dominated by labour (Tucker 2004). The establishment of the Workers’ Health and Safety Agency in Ontario marginalized Work and Safety Associations, who had worked closely with business and now had a reduced role in the development and delivery of workplace health and safety education (Haddow and Klassen 2004).

The WHSA’s mandate to train and certify Joint Health and Safety Committees required increased funding. As the number of employees required to complete training to receive accreditation rose, the costs of WHSA programs escalated from 42 million dollars in 1990 to 62 million dollars in 1994 (Fowlie 1994). However, from a prevention perspective, the rising costs of safety education were justified by the Workers’ Health and Safety Agency. WHSA representatives saw their programs as protecting workers participatory rights and, in the long term, saving compensation costs through reducing the frequency of workplace injuries and deaths (Haddow and Klassen 2004). Nevertheless, many Ontario businesses saw these safety education costs as simply adding to their growing concern with the unfunded liability costs of the Workers’ Compensation Board (Bradford 1998).

The NDP came into power in 1990 and faced the challenges of a deep economic recession and the impact of globalization on the private sector (Haddow and Klassen 2004). As taxation and social spending levels continued to increase, business blamed government practices, particularly the sponsoring of occupational health and safety initiatives, as adding to the deficit and undermining the profitability of the private sector. The NDP responded with a policy agenda that was designed to work associatively with business and encourage collaborative relations between business and labour (Bradford 1998). Nevertheless, organized labour and left-leaning occupational health and safety people were disappointed with the government’s business-friendly approach – particularly considering organized labour’s longstanding political support and representation within the NDP’s rank and file. The business community did not support legislation that increased the health and safety participatory rights of employees. In 1990, Bill
208 was passed as an amendment to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Bill 70), extending the requirements for certification for Joint Health and Safety Committees and the right to stop work. In 1993, the passage of Bill 40 strengthened the position of labour by introducing legislation that protected the collective bargaining of employees and increased labour’s power in regards to collective bargaining and work stoppages (Martinello 2000).

The election of the Harris conservative government in 1995, with an agenda to reduce the size and scope of government, had a significant impact on the bipartisan dynamic between labour and business (Tucker 2004). In contrast to previous Progressive Conservative governments in Ontario, the Harris administration actively promoted an anti-union and pro-business ideology (Martinello 2000). The Conservatives were committed to reducing worker protection legislation and making labour policy more compatible with the interests of business (Camfield 2000). Harris’s “Common Sense Revolution” promised reversals of labour legislation reforms that had occurred under the Liberal and NDP governments, a complete overhaul of the workers’ compensation system and the reduction of business taxes (Haddow and Klassen 2004). Virtually all of the provisions of Bill 40, which had protected the collective bargaining rights of organized labour, were repealed by Conservative labour legislation: Bill 7 (Martinello 2000). These changes created deep fissures within the occupational health and safety field in Ontario.

According to Haddow and Klassen (2004), the elimination of and massive cutbacks to programs and initiatives once dominated by labour exposed the partisan politics of occupational health and safety:

The Conservatives also made clear their preference for a much more market-oriented approach to the economy. They would abolish the main co-ordinative decision-making forums that the NDP had created, reverse its changes in labour relations and workers’ compensation legislation, reduce business taxes and seek to restore prosperity by enhancing, rather than adulterating, the liberal and competitive tenor of Ontario’s business culture. To an entirely unprecedented degree, then, partisan conflict in Ontario during the 1990s allowed for a clear differentiation between the agendas of left- and right-wing parties in power. (P. 145)

Under the Harris government, the Ontario Workers’ Compensation Bureau was renamed the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) of Ontario, when the Workers’ Compensation Reform Act (Bill 99) was enacted on January 1st, 1998. Ontario was the first compensation board in Canada to drop the terms “worker” and “compensation” from its title (Tucker 2004). Bill 99
introduced fundamental changes to the Workers Compensation Act that aligned with the neoconservative ideals of the Harris government.

The WSIB was completely restructured, and its role as a provider of direct services to injured workers was radically reduced. As a cost-cutting measure, the Occupational Disease Standards Panel was disbanded, discouraging research and the development of a comprehensive occupational disease compensation policy (Tucker 2007). Chronic mental stress was also excluded as a basis for receiving workers’ compensation. The dissolution of the Worker Health and Safety Agency in 1997 was considered a victory for business.

The Harris government implemented a revenue strategy to control costs by reducing benefits, cutting programs, and downsizing administration. These tactics were often justified by concerns with the WSIB’s unfunded liability (Gunderson and Hyatt 2000). Commencing in January 1998, compensation benefits were reduced from 90 to 85 percent of pre-injury earnings (Haddow and Klassen 2004). There was a widespread belief in the business community that WSIB’s rising costs were driven in part by injured workers who were cheating the system. To give a sense of the tenor of the times, a twenty-four-hour fraud line was set up by the WSIB after the conservative Harris government took office in 1995 (Storey 2009).

**New emphasis on injury prevention at the WSIB**

With the enactment of Bill 99, the WSIB was given a new mandate to prevent workplace health and injuries. Section 4(1) of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act outlines the following WSIB health and safety responsibilities:

- Promoting public awareness of occupational health and safety
- Educating employers, workers and other persons about occupational health and safety
- Fostering a commitment to occupational health and safety among employers, workers and others

An important component of the WSIB’s new prevention role was to motivate and assist workplaces to become self-reliant in managing health and safety. The key motivational strategy provided by the WSIB for employers to improve health and safety was the provision of financial incentives to reduce workplace injuries and illnesses. The most significant policy instrument for providing businesses with an incentive for creating safe workplaces was the use of an experience rating system; insurance premiums paid by employers were calculated and based on the costs of
past claims and in relation to firm size and industrial sector (Ison 1986). Three programs were promoted to encourage businesses to reduce injury rates: the Council Amended Draft-7 (CAD-7) for the construction industry and the New Experimental Experience Rating (NEER) program for large employers in other industries. In 1998, a program designed for small employers, the Merit Adjusted Program (MAP), was introduced.

Following Bill 99, the WSIB continued to administer a no-fault work insurance plan for both workers and employers and managed Ontario’s OHS prevention system (Sobeco 2008). The WSIB’s services included providing benefits to injured workers, monitoring health services provided to injured workers and playing a more active role in return-to-work programs. Two new programs implemented by the Harris government to motivate employers to reemploy those injured on the job had a profound influence on Ontario’s OHS regime.

Although during the ten-year period prior to this legislation, there had been a growing trend for workplaces, rather than the Workers’ Compensation Board, to manage return to work, the Early and Safe Return to Work program (ESRTW) and Labour Market Re-entry formalized the re-employment obligations of employer and employee following a workplace injury (Eakin, Clarke and MacEachen 2003). The Early and Safe Return to Work Program placed an obligation on employers and employees to return workers to their pre-injury jobs or for employers to create alternative positions. Those injured workers unable to return to work would be assessed for a labour market re-entry plan to support the worker’s labour market re-entry and ultimately reduce compensation payments that occurred because of the injury.

A series of return-to-work obligations were outlined in the new legislation that described responsibilities regarding employer-worker communication, and adherence to return-to-work plans mediated by the Board, worker and workplace parties. Tighter time limitations were placed on appealing board decisions, including return-to-work decisions. The focus on return to work was reflected in changes in the application process. There was a six-month limit for the application for benefits after an injury had occurred, and the employer was obliged to share information regarding functional abilities and limitations post injury to expedite the development of return-to-work plans requiring the cooperation of worker and employer.

Accompanying the new focus on ESRTW, a specialized prevention division within the WSIB was established. In a report directed toward employers (WSIB 2002), an economic rationale for
preventing injuries was made, and improvements in the safety culture of an organization were equated with increased productivity and profitability. Making the “business case” for health and safety, the WSIB (2002) report states, “Safety is a positive cultural element that leads to other business improvements” (p. 5). Safety was to be aligned with the principles of the marketplace, and this was to occur through an increased focus upon the cost-effectiveness of injury prevention for the business community (Haddow and Klassen 2004). As Dingwall and Chippendale (2001) state, “The WSIB and the Ministry of Labour are also promoting the concept that safety is good business, e.g., by pointing out that firms which invest in health and safety realize a rate of return as high as through reduced claims and higher morale and productivity” (p. 14).

**Safety culture focus of young worker injury prevention programs**

A multi-faceted, cross-domain approach to messaging the importance of workplace health and safety highlighted the relevance of family- and school-based education for occupational injury prevention and gained credence in Ontario’s OHS regime in the late 1990s. In a 1998 policy document, the Ministry of Labour announced an important new focus on the prevention of workplace injury and disease and the promotion of health and safety. The relevance of a generalized multiple-domain injury prevention approach for workplace safety was communicated by the assistant minister of labour who, in announcing the priority issue of young worker safety, noted, “The health and safety system outside the workplace has a role in helping motivate and support workplaces” (Kvisto 1998:9). In a 1998 Ontario Ministry of Labour document, “Preventing illness and injury – A better health and safety system for Ontario’s workplace,” safety culture was defined as a shared responsibility that included not only those in the workplace but also future workers, their families and communities.

In Ontario, as elsewhere in North America during the 1990s, young workers were identified as a particularly vulnerable labour segment. A provincial analysis conducted in 1999 found that workers under the age of twenty-five were 25 percent more likely to be injured than those over twenty-five years of age (Ontario Ministry of Labour 2003). Several stories of young workers, seriously or fatally injured on the job, received considerable media attention between 1994 and 1999. It was at this time that workplace health and safety was introduced into the secondary school curriculum expectations. According to the Ministry of Labour (2003a), high school
education programs were to “arm youth with knowledge of their rights and responsibilities and give them the tools and support they need to prevent workplace injuries and illness” (p. 3).

The prevention divisions of the WSIB and the Ministry of Labour adopted a management health and safety systems approach that promoted educational activities, such as young worker social marketing campaigns and school-based occupational health and safety curricula in the late 1990s (Tucker 2007). The Ministry of Labour and the WSIB worked together to produce workplace health and safety education materials directed toward students. The first young worker high school program introduced by the WSIB was the Young Worker Awareness Program in 1997, originally developed by the WHSA in 1995 and endorsed by the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) and the Ontario Safety Service Alliance (OSSA). In keeping with the WHSC focus upon a generalized safety curriculum and consciousness-raising activities, the Young Worker Awareness Program was directed toward making youth aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The major project of the Ontario Ministry of Labour young worker partnership strategy was the creation of Live Safe! Work Smart! – an occupational health and safety program initially introduced to students in grades 11 and 12 in 2001. The program, an 800-page binder with detailed lesson plans, overheads, activity sheets and student evaluation tests, was coauthored by the Ministries of Labour and Education in partnership with the Work Safety Insurance Board, Ford Motors, the Canadian Auto Workers, and parent activists of youth killed or injured in the workplace. To increase the likelihood of classroom implementation, Live Safe! Work Smart! was curriculum-mapped to meet provincial expectations in multiple topic streams.

An annual report (WSIB, 1998) announced that, “young workers – the business and social leaders of tomorrow – were recognized as a key audience for our prevention programs” (p. 2). Ontario, along with British Columbia, took a lead role in organizing the first national young worker conference in Ottawa, which also evoked the future labour force investment team in its title, “The Seed You Plant Today.” Young worker safety exemplified a focus on prevention directed toward the behaviour of individual workers. The idea of extending health and safety education to non-workplace domains, such as the home and the school, supported the government’s commitment to minimal intervention in a neoliberal approach to safety. Training
young people before they enter the workplace about their rights and responsibilities and workplace health and safety was seen as important preparation for IRS participation:

As noted, the internal responsibility system is the foundation for occupational health and safety. In furthering developing the internal responsibility system, the WSIB is focussing on young workers before or as they enter the labour force. In addition to developing a Young Worker Awareness Programme, the WSIB is working with the Ministry of Education to ensure that workplace safety has a place in the new Grade 9 curriculum. A key concern is to develop and strengthen that culture of safety in the workplace and to drive home the concept that safety is everyone’s responsibility. (Dingwall and Chippindale 2001: 41)

In Ontario, beginning in the late 1990s, an increasing number of government- and WSIB-funded prevention media campaigns promoted broad-based educational strategies emphasizing the individual’s responsibility in the management of workplace safety. In 1999, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board launched a public awareness campaign, targeting young workers with a series of posters, radio and television messages again driving home the message that safety was an individual worker’s responsibility. The main message, as conveyed in the text accompanying the 1999 poster of an injured young worker, Matt Sagan, states that “knowledge gives you the power to protect yourself.” In fact, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board young worker website (www.youngworker.ca) identifies lack of information as a crucial determinant of young worker injuries and deaths. The need for young worker education directed toward enhancing safety awareness and behaviour is justified on their introductory web page:

Because an average of 42 young Ontario workers are injured, made ill, or killed on the job every day. Think of it. That’s almost 2 young workers injured every hour of every day and every night, seven days a week, and it’s often because of what they didn’t know (http://ywap.ca/english/ywa_eng.htm).

Ontario’s young worker safety education and public awareness campaigns promoted safety in the workplace as a matter of individual responsibility. The government’s youth-targeted prevention messages communicated a hard-line position on workplace health and safety self-reliance. The Ontario Ministry of Labour young worker website advises that, while the cost of refusing safe work may be loss of a job, getting fired is relatively inconsequential when compared to the possibility of serious injury or death:

Even if you only feel that after a refusal you were treated differently, remember that the loss of a job is nothing compared to losing a finger, getting burned or perhaps losing your life. Give yourself a pat on the back for exercising your rights
and protecting yourself and your co-workers. It probably isn’t a great place to work if your employer reacts by punishing you.

(http://www.worksmartontario.gov.on.ca/scripts/default.asp?contentID=2-4-3)

Beginning in 2003, the WSIB, the Industrial Accident Prevention Association and the Ministry of Labour increasingly targeted parents as important role players in the prevention of young worker injuries. The websites of the Young Worker Awareness Program, Ontario Ministry of Labour and the Industrial Accident Prevention Association all include messages invoking enhanced parental responsibility in youth workplace injury prevention. These messages, such as the excerpt below from a flyer, Employing Young Workers: Tips for Parents, often convey an urgent and reproachful tone:

Who’s looking after your children now? Remember how carefully you looked after your children when they were small – making sure they were buckled into a car seat properly, that they wore their helmets when biking or roller-blading, that they got enough rest and ate properly, that they didn’t talk to strangers. Those children currently have jobs or will have shortly. Who’s making sure they’re safe now? … Remind them that no job or rate of pay is worth being injured for. Fingers, eyes and your life cannot be replaced. New jobs can always be found. Talk to them about their jobs – not just the pay and benefits, but about the actual tasks they take on. Use your parent radar to detect potential risks and ask about how safety is handled on the job. (Ontario Ministry of Labour 2007: 34).

**Encouraging stakeholder collaboration through prevention projects**

A central part of the Ministry of Labour’s and WSIB’s collaborative injury prevention strategy was to invite key stakeholders to work together in creating safer, fair and harmonious workplaces. Collaboration had been identified as one of the four underlying principles guiding the government’s involvement in workplace injury prevention and health promotion initiatives (Ontario Ministry of Labour 1998). Given the political strife that had characterized the occupational health and safety system under the Harris government, there was a need to improve relations between labour and employer safety groups. The young worker campaigns were introduced in the late 1990s, during a time when the Harris government cutbacks had alienated organized labour and left-leaning safety activist groups. In a politically charged environment, young worker injury prevention was perhaps perceived as an olive branch issue that could foster cooperation and heal relationships between multipartite groups in occupational health and safety. Perhaps the somewhat neutral focus of improving the safety of working youth and educating youth before they entered the workforce facilitated young worker safety as a suitable issue for a
multipartite partnership initiative. Public awareness and school-based educational programs did not interfere with the government’s commitment to deregulation and a bipartite model of firm-level health and safety management.

The Ministry of Labour and the WSIB took the lead in the formation of the Young Workers Health and Safety Advisory Panel in 2000, the first multipartite stakeholder group since the restructuring of the Workers’ Compensation Board. The Young Workers Health and Safety Advisory Panel, formed in 2000, was established as a prevention campaign planning committee that brought together diverse institutional players, including organized labour, business, government and community-based organizations (Ontario Ministry of Labour 2003). The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities was also involved in program development, as occupational health and safety was now being integrated into school curricula. The Ministry of Labour demonstrated commitment to a leadership role in the young worker campaign when a full-time manager of young worker health and safety initiatives was hired in 2000 (Ontario Ministry of Labour 2007).

**The emergence of the Canadian Young Worker Memorial Quilt (LifeQuilt)**

In 2001, the first collaborative prevention project that emerged from this multipartite stakeholder coalition was the creation of a public memorial in the form of a commissioned textile artwork, the Canadian Young Worker Memorial Quilt (later renamed the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt), commemorating the lives of one hundred workers killed at work. The artist, Laurie Swim, was passionate about worker safety and had created other fabric artworks depicting labour tragedies. Swim had recently completed a fabric artwork, *Breaking Ground – the Hogg’s Hollow Disaster*, a quilt memorial tribute to the five Italian immigrant workers killed during a tunnelling accident in 1960 at York Mills. An acquaintance and worker health and safety activist suggested to Swim that she create a quilt commemorating young workers. Swim developed a prototype for the quilt’s design and approached the WSIB for funding for the project. The WSIB would not provide start-up funds but wanted to make sure that its affiliates, the WHSC, a safety organization representing labour would work on the LifeQuilt initiative with the Industrial Accident Prevention Association, whose primary client group is small business owners and managers.
The Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt initiative emerged at a time when the restructuring of the workers’ compensation system had alienated many stakeholders within occupational health and safety (Bradford 1998; Camfield 2000). The LifeQuilt, a memorial artwork celebrating the lives of one hundred young workers killed on the job, was the first multipartite public awareness campaign, involving health and safety associations representing both labour and business interests. The young worker commemorative campaign encouraged a broad spectrum of stakeholder collaboration through the formation of a multipartite fundraising and administrative committee, the Friends of the LifeQuilt. This committee included representatives from government, employer and labour safety groups, families of workers seriously injured or killed on the job and the community. The Friends of the LifeQuilt engaged in fundraising, promotion and exhibiting activities, as well as assisting with plans for recruiting families of deceased young workers to participate in the project.

Since the mid-1990s, parents of seriously injured youth and youth killed on the job had established a media presence. Family members had been vocal in the media, discussing the tragic deaths of their children and expressing outrage at the failure of the prevention system in protecting the lives of inexperienced, working youth (McCommons 2003). In 2003, under the leadership of Shirley Hickman, several families involved in the LifeQuilt project formed their own organization, Threads of Life, to support families in the aftermath of a chronic occupational illness, serious or fatal industrial incident, and to advocate for OHS bureaucratic and legislative reform and public awareness of workplace risk. The mission of Threads of Life, a national registered charity, is to help families by providing peer assistance with navigating the health and safety system and to give families the opportunity to promote injury prevention through participating in their Speakers Bureau and other fundraising and lobbying activities.

**The LifeQuilt and WSIB sponsored memorials**

While the LifeQuilt was the first collaborative memorial project using the true account form initiated by the prevention stakeholder panel, it is important to note that the WSIB had previously unveiled two memorials commissioned by their Board of Directors as millennium projects. These monuments, commemorating workers killed on the job and promoting prevention, had been completed in 2000 – a year before the WSIB was approached by Laurie Swim with her prototype for a quilt memorializing young workers. The commissioned
installments represented the first time since the WSIB’s inception in 1914 that workers killed on the job had been publicly memorialized (WSIB 2001). The two monuments located in Simcoe Park, close to the WSIB office, include a memorial wall, 100 Workers commemorating one hundred workers killed on the job and a figurative sculpture entitled The Anonymity of Prevention, unveiled in 2000. The sculpture by Derek Lo and Lana Winkler is a life-size figure of a construction worker, wearing proper safety equipment, who is using a chisel to carve the message “Remembering our past … building a safe future” on the granite wall of 100 Workers.

Figure 2: The Anonymity of Prevention

100 Workers by John Scott and Stewart H. Pollock is a granite wall topped with one hundred bronze plaques commemorating a worker killed on the job each year from 1901 to 1999. Each plaque lists the name of the worker, cause and date of death on the job. One inscription reads, “Joseph Cote: Pinned between tractor, scoop and ram – Died February 9, 1998.” The last plaque, 2000, was deliberately left blank, symbolizing future workers killed on the job who had yet to be memorialized at the time of the unveiling.

Figure 3: The 100 Workers Monument
The building of these memorials and monuments was taking place at a time when both the Ministry of Labour and the WSIB were moving from a focus on compensation/blame to prevention/shared responsibility. As stated in the WSIB 2000 Annual Report:

The monument is a daily reminder of the tragic consequences that injuries and illness in the workplace can have. It is also an affirmation of the commitment of all our staff in occupational health and safety to reduce those tragedies. (WSIB 2001:4)

The WSIB, in funding these monuments, hoped to salvage from workplace tragedies a safety message and to create a monument promoting their new prevention ideology. As stated on the WSIB’s website:

Our new monument honours the memory of Ontario workers who have lost their lives as a result of workplace injury or disease. We commemorate their legacy as a catalyst for the promotion of occupational health and safety in Ontario.

(http://www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsitem.nsf/Public/PreventionEvents6)

When the memorials were officially unveiled in November, 2000, relatives of many of the workers commemorated on the plaque were invited to a public ceremony. “For the families it was a time to reflect, to grieve, but also to look for an opportunity to find some solace in the knowledge that they do not grieve alone”(WSIB 2001:6).

However, not all families of those killed on the job and commemorated on the WSIB memorial found solace in the impersonal depiction of the deceased. Robin Kells (2000/2001), sister of Sean Kells (the worker represented on the 1994 plaque), wrote that the memorial was a depersonalizing monument that failed to describe the workers’ lives and omitted details concerning cause of death. It did not depict Sean’s life or the cause of his death on the third day of his job at an automotive company. Kells (2000/2001) describes his death as preventable and the result of the negligent practices of his employer. At this workplace, Kells notes, eleven regulations of the OHS code were violated before Sean showed up for his first day of work. Kells (2000:2) observes the impersonal tenor of the 100 Workers monument:

If you pass by the memorial at 200 Front Street in Toronto, please try to imagine the 100 lives lived and the thousands of people affected by the loss of their loved ones. Understand that these 100 people are only a small number of the thousands who are dead because they went to work. Recognize that the plaque you read describes a death, not a life … (P. 2)
From a social memory framing perspective, Kells saw the WSIB monument as silent on the workplace fatality context and on information about the person (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002). Here Kells might be understood as an “agent of memory” critiquing the impersonal nature of Sean’s commemorative and calling for a more personal remembrance of her brother’s life and tragic death. Perhaps the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt offered the possibility of a more meaningful commemorative act for the families and friends of youth killed at work.

**Conclusion**

The emergence of the LifeQuilt as a young worker public awareness campaign took place in the aftermath of funding cutbacks and deregulation within Ontario’s occupational health and safety system (Tucker 2004). The emergence of a collaborative prevention project, the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt, took place during turbulent times in Ontario’s occupational health and safety regulatory regime. The enactment of Bill 71 in 1995 and Bill 99 in 1998, changes in OHS and labour legislation, policy shifts, and organizational restructuring, guided by a neoconservative government with a pro-business agenda, encouraged the deregulation of workplace safety. With the reorganization of the Workers’ Compensation Board, renamed the Work Safety Insurance Board, and the Ontario Ministry of Labour, there was a shift from a focus on workers’ rights and compensation to a focus on prevention, economic incentives and individualized safety self-reliance.

Under the Harris government, the Workers Safety Insurance Board, formerly the Workers’ Compensation Board, reduced labour’s presence in OHS policy and education by eliminating labour-dominated programs and services. A renewed focus on financial incentives (reduced premiums for good performers and penalties for poor performers) was seen as the best strategy for encouraging firms to self-manage workplace health and safety. However, this approach created a great deal of dissension within the Occupational Health and Safety community, polarizing labour and business health and safety practitioners. Concerns about the emergence of a growing youth workforce, media attention to young worker deaths, and the need to build collaborative relations may have contributed to the emergence of a commemorative artwork and website for young worker safety.
Chapter 6
Common ground and fissures in the LifeQuilt

Introduction

The previous chapter provided an overview of the socio-historical and political context in which the LifeQuilt was created. The changing policy and legislative environment of Ontario’s occupational health and safety (OHS) system set the stage for this unique project. The LifeQuilt was the first multipartite initiative in Ontario’s occupational health and safety system that involved the collaboration of bereaved families, representatives from government, WCBs and employer and worker health and safety affiliated organizations. Partnerships were negotiated between multiple and diverse stakeholders who temporarily set aside their political differences to establish a common ground for the creation of a shared safety awareness campaign. The chapter thematically organizes findings that describe both the initial creation of a common ground for a collaborative prevention initiative and the fissures to the common ground that followed.

In this chapter, drawing upon the interview data and documents, the analysis is guided by the following questions: (I) How did a worker memorial campaign commemorating youth create common ground? (II) How did the status of the death of young workers without dependants in the compensation system create common ground? (III) What agendas did different OHS stakeholder groups bring to bear on their LifeQuilt campaign involvement? (IV) How did the gatekeeping activities of dominant organizations unsettle the common ground?

The analysis draws data from interviews with individuals (see Appendix F) from government, workplace safety organizations associated with workers, employers, and families. The project participants are referred to by pseudonyms and their associated sectors throughout the dissertation’s reported findings. The line numbers included in interview quotes/extracts indicate the transcript section. The study participants were associated with different sectors and were involved in occupational health and safety. Barbara (families) is a family activist for workplace safety and the parent of a young worker killed on the job. Carol (employer OHS) and Jeff (employer OHS) are OHS professionals who work with employer groups. Diane (labour OHS) and James (labour OHS) are OHS professionals who work with labour groups and organizations. Susan (labour OHS) was involved in the production of the LifeQuilt. Richard (government OHS)
I had anticipated that these health and safety professionals would present perspectives that aligned with the client/organizational groups they represented. For the most part, individuals did speak from their respective organizational or sectoral standpoints. However, on occasion, an individual would communicate a different perspectival standpoint. For example, in one instance an individual associated with employer health and safety groups and with a background in union politics was quite critical of the corporate community. However, the individual subsequently returned to the employer safety group representative role. Richard, who spoke as a government worker in OHS, had an extensive background working with workers and in labour advocacy, and he seemed to, at times, articulate both a government and labour standpoint.

I. How did a worker memorial campaign commemorating youth create common ground?

“Common ground” is used here to refer to the creation of a provisional space for participating in a shared initiative among diverse stakeholders with different standpoints, who view OHS from conflicting perspectives. In OHS, common ground is often difficult to establish, since different stakeholders hold differing perspectives about the causes of workplace injuries and proposed solutions. Workplace injuries take place in a social and legal context in which charges of criminal negligence could be laid, fines levied, insurance premiums raised and the moral reputations of workers and employers put at risk. Occupational health and safety professionals who represent the interests of employers and workers frequently have conflicting understandings about the cause of an injury, the specifics of an injury account and the assignment of responsibility for its occurrence. This often results in a political polarization of pro-employer and pro-worker prevention positions in OHS, with one side generally attributing injury blame to careless workers and the other blaming the policies and practices of employers/management. This conflict usually makes it difficult to establish a common ground as a foundation for multipartite initiatives. As Carol (employer OHS) observed, the LifeQuilt was unique in establishing a common ground for a multiple stakeholder project:

So when you start peeling away that onion you’re gonna find that inside this there were people who came together that never worked together before, there were people who came together who may have historically seemed to be adversaries: as, you know, it’s labour and it’s management. (Carol employer OHS: 41)
As one respondent, Jeff (employer OHS) noted, different causal narratives related to both injuries and hazardous conditions often undermine the possibility of establishing common ground for a shared initiative. He contrasted failed attempts at finding common ground in OHS negotiation around noise pollution and repetitive strain syndrome with the successful grounding of the LifeQuilt project:

I mean, on lots of projects I’ve worked on in the past, we had a very difficult time working together. But this was not like that because it’s very simple to see you’re either committed to this thing or you’re not committed. It’s a common goal. So when you have that in your back pocket, it makes things work a lot better. The other thing that I think was important about this is that people were there because they wanted to be there … Ahm, you know, even when it can be frustrating, and it has been in some of the other areas like, you know, trying to put together strategies for repetitive strain injuries and things, well, you know, we all agree that’s a problem, but we don’t all agree what the nature of the problem is or how it comes up to be a problem, etc. Well that wasn’t a problem with this particular project. So I felt it was self-managed, low bureaucracy and lots of commitment, so that’s a good project from my perspective. (Jeff employer OHS: 53)

The interview data suggested three factors that contributed to the creation of common ground for the LifeQuilt initiative: (1) consensus around the creation of a public memorial, (2) young worker death as a “motherhood” issue, (3) the unifying narrative of a collaborative prevention discourse.

1) Consensus around the creation of a public memorial: While different ideological perspectives on occupational health and safety had often led to disagreements concerning OHS policy and practice in the past, the LifeQuilt was seen by project participants as positively affecting relationships between organizations, or at least between their representatives. The LifeQuilt was a collaborative prevention initiative, cutting across organizational lines, that brought together individuals who didn’t interact on a regular basis. Here Richard, a government worker, comments on the ways in which the LifeQuilt brought people together and the impact this collaborative process had on the OHS environment at the time:

I get to know all these people better. And ahm, at deeper levels in the system, for example and many others, people get attracted to it and they get to know other people. And it’s sort of grounding for a lot of other things … it’s woven the relationships tighter, it’s given people more of a concept that, in spite of ideological barriers, there is a community here, and these are things we all care about, and we should give the best of ourselves to, ahm, doing something about
them. I think it’s really contributed to the renewal of the system. (Richard government OHS: 331)

The LifeQuilt, a planned artwork memorializing young workers killed on the job, facilitated common ground. As Richard observed, the power of this subject matter drew people from different political locations to a willingness to share in the creation of a public memorial:

The LifeQuilt campaign draws people into a different framing and a different, ahm, emotional and collaborative state where they can set aside those things that might divide them, and a desire to create a beautiful thing together. So I think that’s the central ... central feature, that stories, collectively especially, the subject matter is so powerful, it dwarfs everything else.(Richard government OHS: 213)

The LifeQuilt was described by three interviewees as providing an opportunity to renew a commitment to the core values of prevention. According to Diane (labour OHS) the imagery and stories of the quilt are far more effective prevention messages than statistics or anonymous reports:

Those faces are there looking at you and at the same time there’s these hands, you know. Um, so I think seeing the quilt itself creates an impression or feeling and then reading the stories, that’s where … emotional. The response when you see the quilt, then read the stories, it’s more sort of analytical. This didn’t have to happen. This could have been prevented. And it’s a little bit overwhelming. I guess too there’d be a contrast, like the Anonymity of Prevention monument, which is just a collection of names, versus something like this. (Diane labour OHS: 293)

2) Young worker death as a “motherhood” issue: The death of young workers is also a powerful “motherhood issue” because it violates strong cultural beliefs about the order of life and age-appropriate death. Burying one’s child, perhaps especially in the context of a “preventable and predictable” industrial accident, is an unpainable tragedy. “Age-inappropriate death,” as manifested by the death of young people killed on the job, is culturally unacceptable in North American society (Zelizer 1985). One family advocate interviewed noted that the death of a young person in contemporary, Western society violates a fundamental social norm about the “order of life.” She discusses how, as a parent, there is an irrevocable sense of guilt and responsibility when a child dies:

It’s like the parent role – as a parent we have to protect our children … Something went wrong and as a parent I wasn’t able to protect my child. And then it’s all about the order of life, and the order of life is that, you know, we are to bury our parents … You know, as a spouse if you are married, one of you are going to bury
one or the other before, but you don’t bury your children. It’s not in the order of life. (Barbara families: 293)

Barbara (families) felt the stories of lives lost commemorated on the LifeQuilt reminded occupational health and safety professionals of the importance of their work and the mission of prevention – to avert future injuries that are patterned, predictable and preventable. Being in the presence of the LifeQuilt was viewed by Barbara as serving a therapeutic function through giving individuals a chance to reflect upon the tragedies that have touched their lives and their work in health and safety. She discussed the emotional response of OHS professionals seeing the LifeQuilt artifact for the first time:

And I’ve seen Health and Safety inspectors, Ministry of Labour inspectors who have investigated numerous deaths and severe injuries, and they come before the LifeQuilt and they sit and they almost – it’s almost like it gives them, ah ... gives them, ah, permission to reflect on the work that they’ve done in their life. And they’ll sit and they’ll cry and they’ll reflect on so many tragedies, that they’ve been carrying them for so long. And it’s like the power of the quilt. I think it gives those inspectors and people who are involved in health and safety that visual opportunity to reflect on all of their own work in health and safety. (Barbara families: 175)

Participating in the LifeQuilt campaign was viewed by respondents (James labour OHS; Diane labour OHS; Richard government OHS; Carol employer OHS; Barbara families) as an almost spiritual experience. Being involved with the LifeQuilt campaign was described by Richard as analogous to a “revival meeting” (Richard government OHS); and as energizing those involved in occupational health and safety (Barbara families, Carol employer OHS). Richard (government OHS) saw the death of young workers as an occupational health and safety topic that even the most politically conservative could relate to, noting that a number of individuals in the upper echelons of the Harris conservative government had made an emotional connection with the project. The LifeQuilt, as a young worker injury memorial, acknowledging youth, workplace deaths and family loss, touched upon a “motherhood issue” that everyone could identify with on a professional, personal and moral level:

There were people weeping, people overwhelmed with grief comforting each other. This is all – it’s a frame of emotion that around, ah, sort of like a revival meeting, almost, so it meant that we found common ground with people we wouldn’t have otherwise ... Those from an employer organization, get to know a (senior government official) so much better. I get to know all these people better. So when they think of me, it’s different than if you just say workers, all he (the
worker) thinks about is just getting benefits and that’s bankrupting the province… And ahm, at deeper levels in the system many others, people get attracted to it (the LifeQuilt) and they get to know other people. (Richard government OHS: 331)

The capacity of deceased young workers to elicit an empathetic response from the majority of OHS stakeholders was also discussed in the interviews (Barbara families; Jeff employer OHS; Diane labour OHS). The tragedy of young people killed on the job and the suffering of family survivors resonated with many involved in health and safety (their distinct structural and political locations in OHS notwithstanding). Bringing together organized labour, employer and employee representative safety agencies, government and families through a commemorative campaign for the families of deceased young workers was an ideal vehicle for creating common ground. As Diane, a health and safety activist affiliated with labour observes:

Well, it was something that everyone could agree about, that, you know, young workers dying on the job was needless and, you know, more efforts could be made in the area of prevention and, um, you know they’re most at risk, statistically. So I think it was relatively easy for people to be together around the issue of young workers and everyone could identify, you know, someone young going into a job. A lot of these cases, you’ve read the cases. (Diane labour OHS: 74)

The young worker death issue perhaps reverberates across partisan lines because individuals reflect upon their own place in family systems as parents, sons, daughters or siblings. Comments made by Jeff, a health and safety professional working with employer groups, suggest that the young worker issue plays to the family-role identities of targeted audiences. In the following excerpt, he demonstrates the capacity to connect with audiences and personalize workplace hazards through communicating young worker tragic scenarios:

You know, I mean, you probably remember what it was like being a kid yourself just like I did when I was a kid, you know. I’m not thinking about, you know, driving safely or, you know. Boss says, get in there and clean out the mixer, I get in there and clean out the mixer. I mean, how am I supposed to know there’s more than one energy source to the thing? … You know, that’s why we need to do this stuff, you know, and I tell people, I get pushed back all the time, you know, in my company about following rules and things. Would you let your kid get in there? Well then you shouldn’t be letting anybody else get in there, and it’s simple as that. Because if you do, you’re going to be the one that’s going with me to talk to the family. (Jeff employer OHS: 169)
3) The unifying narrative of a collaborative prevention discourse: The third element contributing to common ground was the unifying quality of the discourse. In the collective memory literature, acts and rituals of commemoration are seen as vehicles for creating comforting collective scripts, creating a sense of community and building consensus (Olick 2007; Connerton 1989). From this perspective, public memorials and commemorative events are viewed as a strategy for building institutional consensus and thereby creating common ground (Schwartz 1982). The LifeQuilt, as a multipartite prevention campaign, was characterized by a dominant institutional narrative. This unifying narrative is described here as “collaborative prevention,” a discourse that emphasizes prevention as a shared responsibility. Collaborative prevention discourses emphasize shared responsibility and the necessity of working together to prevent future injuries, rather than dwelling upon individualized blame associated with past events.

The LifeQuilt campaign, as reflected in the interviews, website data and grey literature, was a collective memory project that aimed to develop a shared narrative, linking the tragedy of workplace death to the future prevention of similar events. Commemorative acts can serve as vehicles for building consensus and containing conflict (Osiel 1997). In the collective memory literature, the act of public commemoration can be used to interpret past tragedies as a warning and a model (Olick 1999). As we have seen, the LifeQuilt emerged at a time when stakeholder groups representing labour had a diminished role in OHS and bereaved parents whose children had been killed on the job were expressing their outrage with a system that had not only failed them but also did not acknowledge their loss. Within the official account of the LifeQuilt campaign, several features of a dominant script of collaborative prevention might include promoting a culture of caring versus blaming and advocating a shift in the safety culture value system. In the following excerpt, James (labour OHS) describes the paradigm shift in prevention:

Ahm, I think ... I think it’s going to – I think there’s a potential here to move to ... a different … a different paradigm, I guess, a different way of looking at things, because the, ahm, the old school where I guess that I grew up was very much about blame. And well you know, the employers don’t care and they’re killing the workers, and that’s the message, and they need to be held accountable. And then ahm ... I’ve kind of come personally to the view that no, we need to focus on something that’s more positive. Like how can we cultivate a culture of caring for one another, whether it’s caring for young workers coming into the workplace, that they’re aware of their rights and that there’s proper precautions taken, or whether it’s caring for injured workers that when they...
return to work they’re not viewed as, you know, people that are working over the system and are faking their injuries or what-have-you. They’ve gone through a lot and they need to be accommodated and their coworkers need to be supportive. So getting to – trying to – I think people have a natural desire to be caring for one another, and it’s bringing the best qualities of people rather than trying to point accusatory fingers at each other. And I think that this project is, well for me it’s certainly made me rethink things. Well it’s ... I’m actually more – it’s more on the issue of the culture of care. (James labour OHS: 551)

James’s perspective very much aligns with viewpoints communicated in the safety culture literature, where “blametalk” interferes with a broader systemic approach to the prevention of injuries. His statements, quoted above, seem to exemplify the contrast between the old discourse of compensation (blame/accountability) and the new discourse of collaborative prevention (caring, mindfulness, and shared responsibility). The discourse of collaborative prevention communicated through interviews, media reports and the LifeQuilt texts is that safety is a collective responsibility shared by workers, employers, parents, government, teachers and the community at large (WSIB 2005).

James seems to advocate for a culture of caring, achieving prevention through cooperation rather than adversarial relations. The “natural desire to be caring” is also described by James (labour OHS) as “mindfulness.” James, an advocate for labour, sees blame as interfering with the goals of prevention. In the following excerpt, he sees indifference as the root of workplace harm.

Collaborative prevention portrays workplace injury as a result of attitudes of indifference, a generalized apathy that contaminates the workplace. James (labour OHS) states that the focus should be on how to make everyone care:

I see in the workplace that there’s sort of indifference. That you know, there’s – we all want to point fingers, who’s to blame, you know, and sue this person, charge them with manslaughter whatever, right. There’s all of that that goes on. But at the end of the day, in a lot of workplaces, workers are injured because of indifference on the part of all the players in the workplace. And if there’s a way to encourage the workforce and the management structures, etc., to be more vigilant and caring for workers, ahm, and how do we cultivate that, how do we create that sort of change in thinking. (James labour OHS: 215)

Collaborative prevention discourses place an emphasis on the normative dimensions of occupational health and safety. Through raising awareness and changing consciousness about workplace injuries, and injuries in general, as predictable and preventable, these tragic events can be eliminated. This discourse requires that all workplace (and non-workplace) parties engage in a “culture of caring.” A DVD promoting the LifeQuilt project, funded by the WSIB, also
emphasizes the collaboration prevention campaign as a cultural change project. In the documentary, the purpose of the initiative is described as follows:

Basically it is to change the culture of how we look at the issue of health and safety; for one thing these happen as isolated incidents – bringing together one hundred stories will impress those who look upon the piece – every time I talk to people about it – they’re surprised, I’m surprised at their own response – they didn’t know so many young people are harmed and also die. (WSIB 2002a)

The collaborative prevention model in OHS is a multipartite, multiple-domain approach to safety, whereby an enhanced culture of safety leads to reduced injury in all stages and activities of life, and all unintentional injuries – whether a bike injury, a playground fall, or a workplace electrocution incident – are interrelated. Prevention requires attentiveness, a quality that must be cultivated and practiced in all spheres of life. Industrial injuries are part of a seamless discourse: inattention to safety awareness and behaviour at home, school and recreational activities may translate into workplace injuries. Safety is a way of being in this world, a prevention gestalt that enhances our ability to predict, process, and respond to workplace hazards affecting ourselves or others. It is not the employee, employer, government, health and safety organizations that are to blame for workplace injuries and fatalities – it is a failure in the cultural system that leads to weak norms and risky practices:

Well, I mean, can this really take place if it’s only just the government and the employers and, you know, the WCBs of the country? No, because safety doesn’t just start at the plant or at the, you know, the workplace. Those boxes have to be completely eliminated, obliterated, because it’s about a societal cultural change that needs to take place. (Carol employer OHS: 113)

II. How did the status of the death of young workers without dependants in the compensation system create common ground?

The treatment of families in the aftermath of a child’s workplace death also contributed to the common ground. The topic of young worker deaths also connected with multiple audiences for political and institutional reasons. The issue spoke to what all players perceived as a weakness of existing Canadian legal and workers’ compensation systems to address young worker deaths in a symbolically or materially meaningful way. The death of a young worker without dependants is a situation that highlights the structural limitations of legal and compensation systems to provide services for grieving families. The families of deceased young people without dependants are not eligible for financial support under the Workers’ Compensation Act. Historically, the Workers’
Compensation Act of 1915, the Meredith Act, did not provide remuneration to the families unless the family members could demonstrate financial reliance upon the young worker’s salary as part of the household economy. Lawyers might be able to demonstrate relations of dependence as a basis for filing a compensation claim if a young person was contributing to the household income and the family relied upon this income. However, this form of compensation is a rare occurrence (Richard government OHS). Richard (government OHS) noted that families were often dismayed by the paltry value, both financial and symbolic, of a deceased young person’s life and the insensitivity of the legal and workers’ compensation system to their suffering:

And a very common trajectory was they’d (family members) lose a loved one, and often be shocked at how little impact it had, how little it seemed to mean, shocked as well by how little resource was available to them financially or otherwise, essentially discovering that the value of a human life, especially a young one, can be completely nil. If you lose a child and you’re not financially dependent upon them, you get a cheap funeral. (Richard government OHS: 29)

As Richard (government OHS) noted, parents were angered that young worker fatalities, particularly in relation to the psychological and often economic devastation of the surviving families, were not symbolically acknowledged or financially compensated. As has been noted in media articles (Stunt 2008; Kells 2000) and communicated in interviews (Barbara families; Richard government OHS; Carol employer OHS), the families of young people killed on the job were not only ignored by the compensation system, they were “brushed aside” by the legal system. The bereaved family’s sense of the official insignificance of a young worker’s death was also reinforced by the low status of such deaths, often reflected in the subsequent inquest process and court proceedings. Here, Carol (employer OHS) talks about the LifeQuilt and how it drew attention to the insensitive treatment of families of seriously and fatally injured young workers. Carol (employer OHS) commented on the insensitivity of the legal system:

It’s been a catalyst for, you know, for looking at sort of safety overall, but over sort of the vulnerability of people as well. And also caused people to think about what is the role of government in all of this, and community organizations. I mean when you think of a Paul Kells, a Shirley Hickman and a Rob Ellis and these others out there, they symbolize that whole pot of people that are out there. When you think of the fact that they had to go and sit in a courtroom where the company that their child worked for was being heard, the charges were being heard, and before them there was a traffic incident being heard, so it spoke to the level of concern, if you like. (Carol, employer OHS: 155)
Given the lack of institutional support for bereaved families, the emotional and devastating impact of a child’s occupational death upon family members was also an issue that people could respond to across party lines. James (labour OHS) talked about parents who were unable to work for several years because of the traumatic impact of the workplace death of a family member. The family tragedy of a young person killed and its impact upon family member’s personal and work life was a theme also touched upon by Barbara (families), Diane (labour OHS), Carol (employer OHS) and Richard (government OHS). As Diane (labour OHS) observed:

I think some of the families were just torn apart by this. There were some cases like that where the families were torn apart, either divorced, or parents were never the same, never had the same relationship. (Diane, labour OHS: 227)

In Ontario, as in many other jurisdictions, families of victims of workplace injury did not have access to fines imposed on employers and deposited in the Victim’s Justice Fund. This fund for victims of crime was set up by the NDP government in 1994 and created by pooling a 25 percent surcharge on fines collected for committing provincial offences. The monies were intended to assist the victims of crime and their families. However, the families of workplace fatalities were not considered eligible for financial support – even when the workplaces where their children were killed had been charged with criminal negligence. At the same time, the interpretation of workplace crime victims was seen by some as inconsistent. For example, the Harris government withdrew money from the $60 million Victim’s Justice Fund to provide $2.5 million in support for the families of workers killed during the 9/11 tragedy. As James (labour OHS) noted:

And we were also, in an effort to try to get a much more significant funding commitment from the WSIB, we were – I in particular, was using the example of the World Trade Centre at the time. But as opposed to portraying it as an act of terrorism and leaving it at that, I was saying, no, no, World Trade Centre was a workplace, and there were, you know, so many thousands of people working in that workplace, and a terrible tragedy happened in that workplace. And in the Province of Ontario there were twenty or more families that lost a loved one in that workplace. And the observation I was making was, okay, so there’s twenty-some families in Ontario who lost a loved one to a tragedy in a workplace in New York, but that’s twenty out of 300 every year. So what about the other 280 families that lost somebody to a workplace tragedy? Shouldn’t they get some kind of assistance to deal with this tragedy, to deal with the grief they’re going through and funeral arrangements and what-have-you? (James labour OHS: 391)

Interviewees from all sectors saw the institutional resources for families of young worker fatalities as inadequate, upsetting and as a source of public embarrassment. There was agreement
among the employer-, labour-, family- and government-affiliated safety representatives interviewed that the families in the aftermath of a workplace tragedy were not formally acknowledged, received no monetary support and were demoralized by the legal and investigative process surrounding the workplace death of a young relative.

And then, you know, like, more often than not the employer is not that empathetic to the family. And so they just wash their hands of it, say, “Well, you know, go get your compensation if you’re eligible. But if you don’t get compensation, well we’re not gonna do anything for you.” (James labour OHS; 485)

Families were provided with little or no government and institutional support in the bereavement and recovery process. The legal-jurisdictional system was often difficult to understand and access for families investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of a child. Bill Stunt discusses his experience of navigating the legal and compensation system in Alberta following his son’s workplace death. From a newsletter of Threads of Life, an organization that was started by a group of families participating in the LifeQuilt initiative, Bill Stunt (2008) comments on the investigation of his son’s death working at an Alberta ski resort:

My family and I got a rapid education into the issue of workplace safety in Alberta. We made contact with the inspector investigating Karl’s tragedy. The inspector warned us not to expect to hear anything for at least four months. The four-month delay stretched out to an incredible 23 months. It became almost a full-time occupation for us to continue to press the province to make a decision. We made numerous representations to the labour minister, the health minister and to the premier of the province himself, desperate because we knew that the statute of limitations for these cases in Alberta is two years. We were determined not to let time run out. It took a great toll on our physical and mental health but we persevered, intent on getting the answers we so desperately needed. (Stunt 2008: 2)

III. What agendas did different OHS stakeholder groups bring to bear on their LifeQuilt campaign involvement?

While the LifeQuilt was a unifying vehicle for the shared expression of empathy for families in the aftermath of an occupational tragedy, there were perhaps also benefits for organizations participating in this initiative. As the collective memory literature suggests, stakeholder groups engaged in remembrance campaigns may have a variety of reasons for participating and may also receive anticipated and/or unanticipated benefits for becoming involved in commemorative
activities. Commemoratives may serve dominant institutional interests, such as building consensus, enhancing public institutional images, and attempting to achieve closure for victim groups (Sturken 1997). At the same time, commemorative sites may involve social groups with different narratives and agendas for remembering past tragedies. In the following section, the participatory benefits for (1) government stakeholders, (2) employer safety groups, (3) labour safety activists and (4) bereaved family members are described.

1) Benefits of participating for government stakeholders: The LifeQuilt memorial initiative provided an opportunity for recognizing the suffering of the families traumatized by young worker workplace fatalities. Within a collaborative forum, commemorating young workers and their families allowed for institutional and public acknowledgement of the suffering of families and friends of those seriously or fatally injured in workplace tragedies. According to James (labour OHS) this was especially important for organizations, such as the WSIB and the Ministry of Labour, who had been criticized for their limited support for young worker fatalities and the families of victims of workplace tragedies:

These agencies could affirm their commitment to workplace injury prevention and symbolically acknowledge the suffering of families of fatally injured young workers through the creation of a public memorial where families could play an active role. Well I think they could see, you know, like this, ahm, this has a lot of potential. The hundred families had come together, the LifeQuilt was created, and they were taking some pride in that they played a role in it. And some of the other families had agreed to be what they called ambassadors, safety ambassadors for WSIB, and be in their social marketing campaigns. So relationships had begun to take form there and so WSIB was more supportive of these families. And they were seeing that, ah, they were subject to some criticism because they really weren’t doing anything to support the families previously. (James labour OHS: 379)

While initially the WSIB was limited in its official involvement in the LifeQuilt project, as public awareness and organization momentum for the memorial built, their enthusiasm for the initiative also increased. After a prototype of the LifeQuilt was unveiled in Toronto in 2001, WCBs played a more active role in supporting the initiative. The WSIB ran fundraising events for the LifeQuilt, and several WCBs took a more proactive role in recruiting families to the LifeQuilt (Richard government; Carol employer). Perhaps the WSIB realized that involvement in this remembrance and prevention initiative put a more human and caring face on an agency that was sometimes perceived as “uncaring” and driven by cost and revenue considerations.
Following the 2003 unveiling of the LifeQuilt, the WSIB ran public awareness campaigns that featured parents and siblings of young workers commemorated on the LifeQuilt talking about the personal impact of a workplace fatality and communicating prevention messages:

In addition to its general Social Awareness campaign aimed at Ontarians aged 25 to 54, the WSIB launched its first awareness initiative geared specifically towards parents of young workers. For five weeks, the WSIB got its message out about workplace safety, rights and responsibilities to parents by asking: “How safe are your kids at work?” The campaign included hard-hitting radio and print advertisements featuring parents talking about the effect of the work-related death of their child. Parents told their stories in a direct and personal way, emphasizing the emotional and human dimension of workplace safety, while raising awareness of the importance of promoting safe work practices. (WSIB 2005:10)

After the launch of the LifeQuilt, James (labour OHS) noted that key family members participating in the LifeQuilt were named as “safety ambassadors” for the WSIB. Helping families along their “journey of healing” was a theme highlighted in the WSIB’s 2004 annual report (WSIB 2005). The 2004 WSIB Annual Report also announced the provision of some financial and infrastructure support for the Threads of Life organization, a support organization for families of seriously injured workers and workplace fatalities that grew out of the network of families that came together for the LifeQuilt campaign.

2) Benefits of participating for employer safety groups: According to the collective memory literature, an intended outcome of many public memorial processes is to acknowledge the pain of victims and to begin a process of forgiveness and closure (Sturken 1997; Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002). As Osiel (1997) has noted, one of the ironies of public remembrance is the hope of dominant institutions that remembrance through commemorative acknowledgement will bring silence and lead to the forgetting/distancing of unacceptable events. For example, a video on the LifeQuilt states that “closure for the families’ is a goal for the memorial (WSIB 2002). Some of the OHS professionals interviewed hoped that the LifeQuilt might help bring some closure to the family’s ordeal (Carol employer OHS Jeff employer OHS). Carol (employer OHS), for example, saw the LifeQuilt as the first step for parents of youth killed at work to move on with their lives:

And they come and they see their children’s face up on this and it is, ahm, it’s a real – often a real turning point for them. It’s often a time when they begin to be able to put some closure and start to move on. (Carol employer OHS: 89)
Employer OHS representatives saw the potential of connecting employers to the importance of prevention through using the LifeQuilt and its moving, personal stories to communicate a message advocating for the shared responsibility for workplace safety. Both Carol and Jeff (employer OHS) expressed disappointment at the impact of this initiative upon their targeted audience. While OHS professionals associated with employer-directed safety interventions envisioned the LifeQuilt’s potential impact on employer behaviour, very few employers actively supported the initiative. As Carol (employer OHS: 51) observed, “Nobody wanted to give the big bucks, but everybody wanted to be part of it.” James (labour OHS) who worked with Jeff (employer OHS) in corporate fundraising interpreted business’s reluctance to become fiscally involved in the project as a result of indifference. Getting businesses to support the LifeQuilt, according to Jeff, was a tough sell and those few employers who publicly endorsed the project often had a unionized workplace:

There are certain kinds of employers out there who, you know, you can always go to and who will always step up to the plate. There are others that it doesn’t matter what you do, you’re never going to collect a dime from them. And so we had some of that, I’m going to call it soft intelligence, within the group. (Jeff employer OHS: 73)

3) Benefits of participating for labour safety groups: Worker safety activists sympathetic to labour had their own agenda in the benefits of being involved in the LifeQuilt project. Some participants who advocated for workers saw the potential leadership roles families of young worker fatalities might play in drawing public attention to occupational health and safety issues. Both James (labour OHS) and Richard (government OHS) were occupational health and safety professionals who sympathized with workers. They saw the LifeQuilt as an opportunity to make families experiencing workplace tragedy a more visible and vocal presence in occupational health and safety. As discussed in the previous chapter, organized labour had a diminished role in the post–Bill 99 environment of the Ontario occupational health and safety system. The families, could, in telling their stories, potentially provide concrete examples of workplace tragedies in which OHS deregulation may have been a contributing factor. These stories could be used by labour to critique Harris reforms to OHS:

We used to have three times as many engineers. That’s a societal statement that we should have the best engineers we can get to monitor whether this is all safe
and so on. So ... so in year 2000 we’re sitting in a very bad place. We’re sitting in a place where someone got elected saying, “That’s all red tape,” and their agenda of the common sense revolution was, “We don’t need that, we can do it some other way.” And the families, in a sense, are the witness and they’re saying, “This is important stuff. These lives are worth something. There should be somebody there to do something about this.” Yet in essence they were fighting for the restoration of something that had previously existed. So, right from the beginning, I knew that if it worked we’d find the hundred families, I knew the kind of people we’d find, I knew the energy it would bring, I literally could envisage, as I said at the beginning, we’ll get all these folks together, we’ll launch this thing, they’ll form an organization, the sum would be more than the individual parts, and something really strong and powerful will come out of it. So I just knew that right from the beginning. (Richard government OHS: 151)

The capacity of families of deceased young workers to organize and voice concerns about occupational health and safety was contemplated from the outset of the LifeQuilt initiative, according to Richard (government OHS) and James (labour OHS). The families, by sharing their personal accounts of workplace tragedies, could provide personal, concrete accounts of the failure of the prevention system. Richard (government OHS) also saw the LifeQuilt project as creating a community of families that would be a potential resource and source of support for labour. Richard (government OHS) stated, “Why don’t we do a quilt? And we’ll find all these families and graphically tell their story, and in the process, not only will we have that public impact, but we’ll bring all these families together who are mostly working on their own.” (Richard government OHS: 27)

Those associated with labour did not see the LifeQuilt as a vehicle for emotional closure in the aftermath of a tragic occupational fatality. Rather than closure, Diane (labour OHS) saw the quilt as a source of validation for some families surviving an occupational tragedy. She felt that the LifeQuilt was a catalyst for social support for grieving families in the aftermath of a workplace death. Diane also spoke of how some families must contend with suspicions that youthful carelessness contributed to their child’s death or that the young person was somehow complicit in his or her death. Such sentiments may be communicated by employers, coworkers or members of the community:

Somehow it was a validation or something of their experience … I think it’s old attitudes to do with health and safety. Just, I think, attitudes, you know, “well he’s young, must have been reckless, a young guy, you know.” You know some stereotypical attitudes about health and safety. (Diane labour OHS: 239)
Diane (labour OHS) and Richard (government OHS) also spoke of the impact of stories on audiences of the quilt and the website. Both noted that telling stories of injured workers was a longstanding tradition of the labour movement. When a worker was killed on the job, his/her tragic story would often be recounted at union hall meetings. (Diane labour OHS)

4) Benefits of participating for bereaved families: Through the quilt project – and later, Threads of Life, an organization that was initiated by families participating in the LifeQuilt initiative – the families saw themselves as finally having a voice in occupational health and safety. At the same time, families did not respond to the LifeQuilt as a vehicle for closure. In the online personal tribute pages of the LifeQuilt website, at Threads of Life conferences, in newsletters and in interviews, some families communicated that there is no closure when a young person is killed at work. An expression often repeated by family survivors at Threads of Life conferences and in the grey literature is that the “hole in their hearts” will never heal.

Some families, active in the safety movement and family support organization, Threads of Life, saw the LifeQuilt as representing an opportunity to share a more personal account of a workplace fatality and to put a face on the anonymity of prevention (Richard government OHS). Through participation in the LifeQuilt project, the young person was not a statistic but a life – represented on an artwork and website that included a photograph, mementos, personal messages from the families as well as an account of the death and the life lived. This was a more in-depth, personalized commemorative than could be inscribed on the bronze plaque of a granite statue.

And these tragedies aren’t going to happen to somebody else. And that’s the purpose of the stories on the LifeQuilt too, to bring to students, to bring to young workers that these tragedies don’t happen to a person in a book; these tragedies happen to real people in real life. And ahm, that’s where, you know, the LifeQuilt has journeyed on, because now some of the families that were involved with the LifeQuilt have become, ahm, advocates and have become speakers and we go to – some of the families go to schools and other workplaces. But the message is – to the students in school is – you know, this happened to my family. If this happened to my family it can happen to you. (Barbara families: 157)

Yet the families who shared their stories through the LifeQuilt defined a somewhat separate structural position, locating themselves as advocates for health and safety but not a part of the OHS system. As a group, bereaved families can participate in a number of initiatives that are not necessarily complementary. They can criticize OHS, express the concerns of organized labour and also participate in the collaborative prevention social marketing campaigns of the WSIB.
The families who are involved with Threads of Life have carefully maintained their lay status, which differs from those occupational health and safety professionals who are aligned with labour, business, or government agencies. Very much in keeping with Bodnar’s (1992) distinction between the official and vernacular voices of commemorative events, some families maintain that they tell stories from a lay perspective, distinct from OHS professional discourses advocating OHS high school education (Barbara families). Families did not feel that this professional discourse provided adequate protection for young people new to the job (Barbara families). Without rigorous requirements for on-the-job training, supervision, inspection and significant penalties, parents, in effect, were being asked to rely upon employers to protect young workers. An example of the vernacular is in the following quote from Susan (labour OHS), the mother of a teenager, encouraging parents to not to trust employers:

And that kind of interaction and those parents of the kids who had died, you know, telling other parents, “Don’t be scared to ask what’s going on in the workplace … Don’t think that they (employers) are taking care of your kids because they didn’t take care of mine,” you know what I mean? (Susan labour OHS: 364)

During a time when there were diminishing opportunities for safety professionals, particularly those who advocated on behalf of labour, to play an instrumental role in health and safety policy and practices, the families brought a critical voice to the table. Parents questioned the realism of relying upon youth to assert their “rights and responsibilities.” In the following quote, family activist Barbara comments on the disconnect she sees between the socialization of youth at home and the unrealistic expectations of youth regarding management of their own safety in the workplace:

You know, I know that he didn’t have the knowledge, right, to identify the hazards when he walked into that room, right, so they don’t – they want to please, young workers want to please, they want a job, they need the money, ahm, and we train children, right, we train children to be respectful of adults and not to, ah, and not to ask a whole lot of questions. And then when they get into the workplace, we ask them – then we tell them, “You have to right to ask questions and you have the right to make sure that you feel that you’re working in a safe environment.” (Barbara families: 133)

While some OHS professionals saw the families as ambassadors for prevention, it is evident that the families, in interviews and the grey literature, defined themselves as outside of the occupational health and safety system. After all, it was the prevention system that led to the
tragedy that spurred their involvement in occupational safety activism in the first place. The families did not see themselves as OHS professionals but as storytellers providing narratives that personalized the anonymity of injury events:

So as family speakers we don’t talk health and safety. I don’t know health and safety; I’m not a health and safety professional. I leave the health and safety training to the professionals. What I do and I do well is my family story. I give the personal perspective. (Barbara families: 369)

As well, the possibility of families taking an adversarial stance when sharing the stories of a relative killed on the job was discussed in the interview with Richard, a government worker in OHS. Richard was keenly aware that the families, through their personal tragedies, were potentially powerful players in the OHS system because of their detailed, experience-based knowledge. He communicated the tremendously difficult position of the families who had agreed to participate in the LifeQuilt project, still wanting accountability and yet also willing to share their stories as cautionary tales to possibly prevent other workplace fatalities:

And it interested me so much, these were all families, virtually all of them could point to some tremendous failing in the workplace and/or in the health and safety system [that] killed their kid. And, had it been me, I don’t know if I could ever have let go of my feeling that I wanted accountability. I’d say [the] majority starts very strongly driven by a desire for resolution and accountability. Many are angry, they’re upset for every good reason. But there’s something about that moment of ... ah, putting your child’s image out there, wanting their life to be valued and seen with others and their story told, very simple things, a lot just slips away. (Richard government OHS: 225)

For some families, the LifeQuilt was a chance to clear their child’s name of blame for the injury event. Families, during the recruitment process, were routinely assured that their loved ones would not be blamed for the injury within the accounts upon the website (Diane labour OHS). According to Diane, blame attribution was a concern on the part of several parents who had been told by employers that their child’s workplace death was a result of “worker carelessness.” Diane (labour OHS) recounts the story of one father who considered submitting his son’s story to the LifeQuilt but later declined:

He was considering putting his son’s name forward, but the reason he didn’t was there was some idea that his son was to blame for the accident, and he had this sense or idea that, um, he was trying to defend his son from the blame that he felt could have been ascribed to him so I was telling him, look this project is about commemorating … You know there’s no question of … these young workers
really were victims. There’s no question of blame. This is for prevention, you know. (Diane labour OHS: 70)

The LifeQuilt provided a symbolic acknowledgement of the family’s loss. For the first time, the families of deceased young workers were visible within the OHS community. Their stories, their true accounts were a resource, a form of symbolic capital that they could choose to give or take away from different OHS sectors engaged in prevention education. Barbara (families: 215) notes that while families have a voice and funds for bereavement support that are provided, in part, by Workers’ Compensation Boards, they still do not have a legitimate position in the legal system:

And ah, you know, so that was huge. For the first time in Canada, you know, it was out in the open ... It wasn’t hushed and no longer did families need to feel like they were alone. No longer – and families talked about, you know, being brushed aside. There was no place in the legal system for families, but here all of a sudden was a place for families to have a voice. So you talk about the ripple effect. And we are saying, you know, families are up front and they’re saying to the community, this isn’t acceptable. But I think that’s the difference. I think that’s the difference, that families are no longer the silent partner. (Barbara families: 249)

It is important to note that, while families could lend support to a variety of differently situated prevention campaigns, they continue to see their contribution to health and safety as sharing their stories and providing a critique of OHS policies and practices. Their contribution involved sharing personal perspectives and their lived experiences of the failures of the OHS system, as distinct from OHS professional and safety organizations’ ideas about occupational injuries.

IV. How did the gatekeeping activities of dominant organizations unsettle the common ground?

Since public commemoratives such as memorials involve government approval and sponsorship, dominant organizations may act as gatekeepers, exercising control over recruitment, commemorative content and exhibition plans. Although the LifeQuilt commemorative was a partnership project, not all players had equal power in relation to administrative, recruitment and narrative content functions. The WCBs, employer-associated health and safety groups and government agencies who shared prevention education functions in Ontario’s occupational health and safety system were the gatekeepers or “agents of memory” (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991). The employer-based health and safety organization had a strong resource base and was best positioned, as an organization, to house the LifeQuilt and to manage website
production, administration and circulation. These forms of gatekeeping are described as (1) recruitment gatekeeping and screening for “suitable” families for the LifeQuilt, (2) commemorative content gatekeeping – managing the sayable and unsayable, (3) fundraising gatekeeping and (4) exhibition/distribution gatekeeping.

1) Recruitment gatekeeping and screening for “suitable” families for the LifeQuilt:
Although Workers’ Compensation Boards did not fund or provide facilities for the production of the LifeQuilt, they played a strong gatekeeping role in recruiting families to participate in this initiative – particularly in the early stages (Diane OHS labour; James OHS labour). The original protocol was that only provincial workers’ compensation boards would contact families and provide an invitation to participate in the LifeQuilt. Families were initially to be recruited through the WCBs due to concerns about privacy and release of personal information policy and rules. Once the WCB had received permission from the families to consider participating in the LifeQuilt project, then volunteers associated with the project would contact a member of the bereaved family (Diane labour; Carol employer). After the WCB-invited families accepted, signed a release form and returned the information form, a LifeQuilt Committee member could then contact the families to arrange for a personal photo and mementos to be included in the individual quilt block (Diane labour).

WCBs wanted to be in control of identifying non-confrontational candidates for the quilt and contacting family members, due to what they perceived as potential privacy and liability issues. In an interview with Jeff (employer: 125), noting that the WCBs control over recruitment was a constant concern throughout the project, he stated, “WCBs didn’t really change their position in terms of providing information and names and things.” In the interviews (Jeff employer; Diane labour) and in the following quote from the chatroom (no longer active but downloaded from the LifeQuilt website on March 20, 2004), it is clear that there was some concern regarding the attitudes of families who might be invited to participate:

We used a computer selection of likely families and then reviewed the list to identify the families that we would approach. If there was a case involving issues that were confrontational or negative the case was eliminated from the list of prospects (LifeQuilt website Family and Support 2002)

When it came to recruitment, that is finding families to share their stories of a family member’s death and thereby participate in the LifeQuilt initiative, the WSIB was concerned as to which
families would be selected for the individual quilt blocks and the personal tribute pages of the website. Diane (labour OHS) and Richard (government OHS) suggested that WCBs were concerned that the “unsupervised” recruitment of relatives affected by a workplace fatality might result in the inclusion of controversial, angry families on the memorial quilt and website. For example, Susan (labour OHS) suggested that families who had spoken to the media about the death of a young worker could be approached, as these stories were already published in the public domain.

Well, first, like you know, the delay in finding a place where, you know, people could come and work on the quilt, then the delays in being able to access, ahm, the case histories. And I kept going to these meetings where, ahm, you know, everybody is patting each other on the back, and I keep asking – one of the ways of getting these victims’ histories was to go to magazines, ahm, I mean, you know, like Canadian Living or, what’s the other one, Chatelaine or something like that. (Susan labour OHS: 190)

Speed of recruitment also created tension in the multipartite initiative. Recruitment proceeded at a slow place and delayed the material production of the LifeQuilt as the April 28th, 2003, International Workers’ Day of Mourning deadline approached. Two years into the initiative and with a year remaining, only one-third of the families had been recruited. It was at this point, according to Diane (labour OHS), that recruitment began taking place through informal networks that included notices posted in local union newsletters. Once the recruitment momentum picked up, labour organizations were placed under tremendous pressure to find local volunteer quilters for the creation of commemorative blocks. Labour was increasingly frustrated with the WCBs and employer health and safety organizations. Diane (labour OHS) was upset with delays and the fact that “case histories weren’t forthcoming”:

And as I said, towards the end we were, ahm, you know, like we had something like thirty cases or whatever to work on at the very last minute. So it became sort of, I hate to say it, but it became sort of a production. And then it just became like pulling teeth. It just kind of slowed way down, and then of course the very end we have a lot, a lot, you know, it was hurry, hurry up at the end. And it wasn’t so personal, it wasn’t that personal interaction with the parents themselves … Ahm, well as I said, the process of doing these works is as important as the end result. So we weren’t, ahm, we weren’t interacting a lot of the time with the parents, which we could have been. And then in the end it wasn’t, ahm, it hasn’t been – the piece itself hasn’t been circulated to wider public audience. (Susan labour OHS: 194)
2) **Commemorative content gatekeeping – managing the sayable and unsayable:** The families recruited to the LifeQuilt were asked for specific types of information. A form was used to gather information about the workplace fatality, date, location and age of worker. The form did not ask for the name of the company, details of the investigative process and penalties/fines imposed. Four of ninety-eight LifeQuilt families provided information about the inquest and charges, but this information was not explicitly requested.

Control was achieved in recruitment strategies, in the form used to collect information and in editorial decisions concerning website content. As Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi (2007) observe, overarching commemorative consensus or the dominance of the official narrative over alternative accounts is achieved through control over the form and content of the mnemonic artifact. Each family was also asked to submit a photo of the commemorated individual that reflected “their personality” (Diane labour OHS). The titles that describe the injuries on the personal tribute pages of the LifeQuilt website were not provided by the families, and the stories that appear on the website are often abbreviated versions of the texts that were included on quilt blocks of the LifeQuilt artifact (Diane labour OHS). Laurie Swim, who had worked with families on previous projects, counted on personal contact with families to get more intimate and detailed accounts of the young people and the workplace injuries. However, because the stories came in all at once, toward the end of the project Swim was unable to coproduce stories with families as she had in past projects. There was very little interaction with the parents (Diane, Susan labour OHS).

Interview data confirmed that the absence of employers identified by personal or company names was a decision made by the Friends of the LifeQuilt in developing the initiative as a partnership prevention project (Richard government OHS; James labour OHS; Carol employer OHS). Both Richard (government OHS) and James (labour OHS) noted that companies were not named on either the LifeQuilt artifact or the website, in an effort to build momentum for a multiple stakeholder collaborative prevention campaign. Diane (labour OHS) provides this explanation:

> Right. Um, we had company names in some cases, but not in every case. It was whatever they had sent to us. And really I think it was more focused on the person, um, and I think families started seeing it that way. As the project evolved it seemed to be more as a commemoration … That idea, rather than blaming. There were certainly some parents that were very angry about what had happened to their child … And, um, you know I mean some of them sent us the newspaper
clippings. Sometimes there was coverage that was extensive about these cases so we would have had that information. But it’s not something that we were trying to do, to sort of, you know, expose companies. (Diane labour OHS: 45)

Here Diane emphasizes the deliberate management of blame as shaping the content of the commemorative texts. While critical accounts of these workplace deaths were available to the multipartite committee, they chose to exclude contextualizing details that might evoke blame, because this would contradict the goals of collaborative prevention. The WCBs’ gatekeeping concerns (naming companies, providing extensive coverage and context) were dominant in this initiative.

3) Fundraising gatekeeping: From its inception, the LifeQuilt was forced to deal with complex financial issues; funds were needed to cover the material costs and commission payments. Although the WSIB supported the project in spirit and participated in the recruitment process, they did not provide funding. It was the employer health and safety organization that reported to the WSIB and provided initial start-up funds. This start-up money was to be reimbursed by the labour health and safety organization as fundraising proceeded. However, this situation created conflict within the multipartite initiative, as labour saw the employer health and safety organization’s initial funding dominance as enhancing their power in overseeing the development of the LifeQuilt project (James labour OHS; Susan labour OHS). Susan (labour OHS: 35) noted that the “the employer organization, ah, seemed to rule the growth.” Three of those interviewed (James, Diane labour OHS; Jeff employer OHS) felt that once the project was unveiled in 2003, the government agencies and WCBs were getting all the glory, while labour affiliated organizations and families were doing all the work:

Ahm, I think that, you know, this may sound sceptical but, you know, by the time it was finished and we were doing all the road shows, oh yeah, they were right there, you know. Yeah, everybody is there to get the glory. And I don’t mean that to be overly sceptical or paranoid, but you know(if) a couple of WCBs ponied money up right at the beginning, not huge amounts, maybe they could have paid more, they certainly have the wherewithal to do that. Some never did, you know, for whatever reason. (Jeff employer OHS: 149)

While the employer health and safety organization actively promoted the LifeQuilt, helped coordinate quilt production logistics and built provincial and national momentum for the project through networking with WCBs and the media, it was labour-affiliated organizations that, in the end, appeared to have raised most of the money. According to James (labour OHS), Diane
(labour OHS) and Susan (labour OHS), it was the unions, through fundraising efforts by a labour-affiliated organization, who raised the majority of funds to sponsor the individual quilt blocks:

They would say the employer community embraced this and did all kinds of things, right? If they did, it’s totally unbeknownst to me. Because my experience in the work of creating [the] LifeQuilt was that the major funders, in terms of sponsoring families, [were] the trade unions. (James, labour OHS: 337)

In fact, fundraising directed toward collecting employer contributions for the LifeQuilt had an abysmally low success rate (Jeff employer; James labour). Few businesses were willing to contribute to the project, and fundraisers targeting employers noted they had more success with public- than private-sector companies. Jeff observed that the LifeQuilt was “too political” to engage employer support. Even when companies were approached who had a direct connection with the family of a young worker killed on the job, there was reluctance to become involved. James (labour OHS) shared an anecdote about approaching a major department store; the young son of one of its employees had been killed on the job:

Well, that goes back to the indifference. I just think it’s an attitude of indifference towards the health and safety of the workers and, ahm, you know, their focus is on production and whatever their enterprise is involved in … I went to the (department store) and I said, “Well, you know, you guys are really doing all these TV commercials promoting, you know, your commitment to safety, but there are (families) losing loved ones in the workplace, and you have an employee whose son was killed, and we’re doing this LifeQuilt, would you be willing to sponsor her son’s segment of the quilt?” And ah, “Well, what are you looking for?” And I said, “Well, we’re asking each of the sponsors to sponsor for $1500 and the proceeds would go to pay the artist.” And the answer I got back from them was they were prepared to pay $25.00 for sponsorship. (James labour OHS: 461)

4) Exhibition/distribution gatekeeping: The employer health and safety organization also exerted gatekeeping control over the promotion and selection of exhibition venues for the LifeQuilt. The employer health and safety organization, in a financial position to house the LifeQuilt and host the website, influenced the promotion and exhibition schedule of the LifeQuilt (Jeff employer OHS; James labour OHS). Promotion and exhibition activities created dissension in the LifeQuilt partnership, further eroding the stability of the project’s common ground. Jeff (employer OHS), Diane (labour OHS), James (labour OHS) and Susan (labour OHS) had envisioned that the LifeQuilt would be exhibited with greater frequency in community-based
venues. For example, Jeff imagined that the LifeQuilt would be displayed at shopping malls, high schools and in front of provincial legislative assemblies, and was upset that the employer health and safety organization was predominantly exhibiting the artifact in OHS venues. For Jeff (employer OHS) keeping the LifeQuilt within the occupational health and safety community meant that the LifeQuilt was speaking to the converted rather than increasing public awareness and building community momentum for young worker safety:

The intent was that it would be a much broader base. It would be used in many, many more ways. You know, you’ve got days of mourning, you’ve got national events, you’ve got all these kinds of things where this thing could really make a difference, you know. The employer-based health and safety organization is a wonderful organization, but it’s much narrower in its focus and mandate and vision than all of these groups that were represented at the beginning. (Jeff, employer OHS: 149)

Participants (Barbara families; Susan labour OHS; Diane labour OHS; Jeff employer OHS) interviewed observed that the LifeQuilt, in commemorating workplace fatalities, was also exposing the failure of the occupational health and safety system, the workplace and/or human error. For example, Jeff (employer OHS) perceived the strategy of revealing personal stories of dying on the job, especially young people, as a politically complex situation. As Jeff (employer OHS) observed:

But having that strategy means you recognize and accept the fact that we’re failing right now. And politically that’s always a very difficult thing to do, and the higher you go, the more political it gets. So that’s where you start running into some of the problems, you know. (Jeff employer OHS: 261)

Susan (labour OHS) observed that any time an injury is acknowledged, it is implicitly a recognition of a failed safety measure and/or human error. Susan (labour OHS) saw marketing the LifeQuilt as a prevention tool as potentially problematic, because it engaged the true account form: The strategy of a commemorative prevention project rooted in documented events was perceived as a double-edged sword. The stories were compelling; personalizing injury prevention through communicating commemoratives could help a broad audience connect with the issue of occupation health and safety.
Conclusion

This chapter, drawing upon interview data, has considered factors contributing to the initial creation of a common ground for a collaborative prevention initiative and the fissures that followed. Both government agencies and those interviewees associated with safety education for workers and employers characterized young worker safety as a motherhood issue. Further, all parties saw the lack of official acknowledgement, both monetary and symbolic, of young workers without dependants as an institutional weakness that rendered less visible the industrial death of youth.

A commemorative, carefully controlled and negotiated by interest groups within OHS, created a consensus memorial, but the activities of dominant agents of memory later eroded the common ground. Initially, labour, government and families benefited from participating in this initiative. Health and safety professionals associated with labour and with greatly reduced power in the Occupational Health and Safety System under the Harris government saw bereaved family members as powerful advocates for workplace safety reform. Government agencies and compensation boards representing both employers and workers, by participating in this initiative, could improve their image as caring institutions. Bereaved families, angered and frustrated by the systemic trivialization of young persons’ industrial deaths, came together as a powerful interest group in OHS. Health and safety professionals associated with employers contributed to the crafting of a shared narrative that was acceptable to the business community and WCBs by suppressing information related to a workplace death that would contextualize or identify the event. In a similar way, labour health and safety professionals aimed to ensure that commemorated workers were not blamed for workplace tragedies and that employers were included in the call for shared responsibility articulated on the LifeQuilt website.

Challenges in sustaining the common ground of the LifeQuilt initiative were a consequence of internal tensions within the multipartite partnership committee overseeing this initiative. The internal tensions were largely a result of unequal powers in a multipartite initiative, with dominant organizations screening families and stories to be included on the LifeQuilt and keeping the exhibition and promotion of the LifeQuilt artifact and website within the OHS community. Interview data suggested that the true account form, by pointing to the failure of the prevention system, is ambivalently located within a public awareness campaign. The true
account ignites a personal, emotional connection to the importance of prevention and, at the same time, recalls the failure of an OHS system that frames every injury as predictable and preventable.

In the next chapter, the discursive features of the online commemorative, personal tribute pages and the multipartite web pages are considered as supporting, and sometimes challenging, the unifying narrative of a collaborative prevention discourse. The true account form, as a consensus or critical commemorative, has the potential to both facilitate and challenge the common ground of collaborative prevention discourses and practices.
Chapter 7
A discourse analysis of the LifeQuilt website

Introduction

The previous chapter, drawing upon interview data from diversely positioned stakeholders, often political adversaries in multipartite forums, outlined factors that contributed to the creation of common ground and a collaborative prevention discourse for a commemorative young worker safety initiative. As described in the introductory chapter, collaborative prevention discourses emphasize the values of shared responsibility, safety vigilance and multiple stakeholder cooperation to prevent future injuries rather than dwelling upon “blametalk.” These particular aspects of the dominant narrative of the LifeQuilt demonstrate how consensus commemoratives embracing these principles can facilitate the common ground of collaborative prevention projects. Consensus commemoratives are defined here as a true account form that, in telling the stories of occupational fatalities that could have been averted, communicate both the remembrance of individuals who died on the job and the preventability of all occupational injuries. In contrast, I view critical commemoratives as challenging the principles of collaborative prevention discourses by finding blame, demanding accountability and social justice and questioning the efficacy of prevention education interventions.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the discursive features of the LifeQuilt’s collaborative prevention discourse and how this discourse is reflected in the consensus and critical texts of the website. An analysis of the LifeQuilt’s collaborative prevention discourse suggests that commemoratives can both support and challenge the common ground of stakeholder coalition projects. The true accounts included in collaborative, cross-institutional prevention campaigns, while referencing real events, may be told in ways that accommodate and harmonize the political perspectives of diversely positioned stakeholders. What is included and excluded from these true accounts of workplace injuries, as socially constructed narratives in multipartite prevention awareness campaigns, may be, in part, a product of the terms and conditions negotiated between lead players.

This chapter is a discourse analysis of the texts and images of the LifeQuilt website. The multipartite pages of the website will be considered in the first section of this chapter, and key themes of a dominant narrative that aligns with the discourse and practices of collaborative
prevention are described. The following features characterize this account of an official narrative of collaborative prevention: all injuries are preventable, predictable and related; young worker deaths are a motherhood issue; workplace tragedies are parables for prevention; and the memorial acts as a call to action and “shared responsibility” for the prevention of workplace injuries.

In the second part of the chapter, discursive features of the personal tribute pages of the website are considered. From a collective memory perspective, the personal tribute pages of the LifeQuilt website, as is typical of public commemoratives, were purposively recruited and narratively constructed to meet the political needs of dominant institutions (Bodnar 1992; Schwartz 1982). Rules of recruitment and framing of accounts that inform the content and form of the online commemoratives are discussed. Most importantly, following Vinitzky-Seroussi’s (2002) model of commemorative form, the roles of “protagonist,” “event” and “context” in the narration of true accounts for a collaborative prevention campaign in occupational health and safety are discussed.

**The LifeQuilt website**

![Figure 4: An example of a “multipartite page” of the LifeQuilt website](image)

The LifeQuilt website was launched in 2002, a year prior to the LifeQuilt artwork’s official launch.
unveiling in 2003. The website includes twelve “multipartite pages” describing the initiative, sponsors and partners, injured workers, the artist, volunteers, quilters, community outreach, media and booking information. The twelve pages of the website that communicate messages attributed to the multipartite committee (the Friends of the LifeQuilt) are referred to in this chapter as “multipartite pages.” These pages communicate a multipartite perspective for promoting the LifeQuilt project as an awareness campaign for “remembrance and prevention”.

Figure 5: An example of a “personal tribute page” or commemorative

“Personal tribute pages,” as described on the LifeQuilt website, refer to the individual commemoratives of the 100 young workers killed on the job that are represented on the LifeQuilt website. The full texts of the “personal tribute pages” are accessed by double-clicking on the names of the deceased workers, which are listed alphabetically in the left-hand margin of each organizational and individual commemorative page of the website. It is only through clicking on the names of the deceased workers, appearing in a column in the left-hand margins of the Friends of the LifeQuilt multipartite pages, that the detailed consensus commemoratives, and occasionally critical commemoratives, appear. In this way, the
dominance of the collaborative prevention discourse is also facilitated by the website design. The personal tribute pages, some of which challenge this collaborative prevention discourse, are hidden from view unless accessed via the hyperlinked name.

I. Collaborative prevention discourse and the multipartite pages of the LifeQuilt website

Four discursive features of the multipartite pages that communicate a collaborative prevention discourse are (1) injuries are linked, patterned, preventable and predictable, (2) selecting a unifying “motherhood” issue, (3) transforming occupational tragedies into “prevention parables” and (4) occupational health and safety as a “shared responsibility.” These particular aspects of the dominant narrative of the LifeQuilt demonstrate how collaborative prevention discourses and practices potentially facilitate the common ground of a multipartite project.

1) Injuries are linked, patterned, preventable and predictable: One way in which a common ground for collaborative prevention projects is established is through communicating the prevention language shared by injury prevention professionals associated with government, labour and business: workplace injuries are “preventable,” “predictable” and “related.” The common mission of many OHS professionals is to convince “lay” audiences (such as employers, parents, workers) that “there really are no accidents” and that workplace injuries are not isolated events. In OHS, this prevention rhetoric provides a unifying creed that may facilitate creating a common ground for collaborative prevention initiatives. The LifeQuilt is described as an artwork that visually depicts and links young worker commemorative quilt blocks, so that individual deaths at work are no longer seen as isolated and unrelated events. The LifeQuilt can be viewed as highlighting this prevention creed through both examples from the texts and visual imagery of the website. As stated on the homepage:

One thing links these names and stories: the fact that these tragedies did not have to happen. Injuries in the workplace are predictable and completely preventable, and that is the extraordinary message behind the LifeQuilt. (http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/index.htm)

A reproduction of the LifeQuilt artifact is the focal point of the website’s homepage. The central image of the LifeQuilt, a figure of a young person, is flanked by one hundred commemorative quilt blocks each representing the death of a young worker. Through the use of the same template for each square, the images are visually connected: the squares are individual remembrances that are part of a collective story of prevention in which the fatal
injuries of young workers are patterned, preventable and predictable:

One hundred commemorative quilt blocks flank the focal image, each conveying the life story of the victim of a fatal workplace injury – those who lost their lives trying to earn a day’s wage. (http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/)

Figure 6: LifeQuilt’s homepage and a reproduction of LifeQuilt artwork

An example of the patterned linkage between individual injury death events is the visual representation of the names of the deceased young workers. With the exception of the homepage, the names of the commemorated young workers appear in a single formal, alphabeticized list on the left-hand side of each page of the LifeQuilt website. The honoured are brought together, for the dual purposes of remembrance and prevention, in a list naming one hundred fatally injured workers on the LifeQuilt website. Columniation in commemorative artwork has been interpreted in the collective memory literature as a way of depicting solidarity and linking individual stories in a style that is reminiscent of war memorials (Scott 1996). As stated on the LifeQuilt page of the website:

LifeQuilt is a tapestry quilt paying tribute to those who are woven together in life by a common thread – a workplace injury. The humanity behind the
statistics is represented in each name, seam, and stitch. 
(http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/)

2) Selecting a unifying “motherhood” issue: Collective memory theory asserts that the selection of a unifying issue for public commemoration projects may be influenced by the topic’s capacity to build consensus (Sturken 1997). Interview data suggested that the choice of young workers as the issue for collaborative prevention was, in part, influenced by its potentially broad appeal. From a collective memory perspective, developing a collaborative campaign around youth, characterized as all workers between the ages of 15 and 24, might be interpreted as an occupational health issue that is less politically contentious than other issues that are more explicitly linked with structural determinants such as class, ethnicity or workplace/sector characteristics. The official narrative of the LifeQuilt communicates workplace injury as preventable and predictable and patterned by worker age:

The Canadian LifeQuilt is a unique and permanent memorial dedicated to the thousands of young women and men between the ages of 15 and 24, who have been killed and injured on the job. (http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/index.htm)

Associating workplace injuries and fatalities with youth can be interpreted as a political act or a choice that has communicative consequences. Most importantly, rather than linking workplace injuries and fatalities to the legislative and regulatory framework of OHS, or workplace settings for example, the young worker construct associates youth inexperience and vulnerability with unknown, unrecognized risks and unfamiliarity with risk-protective behaviours. The engagement of the young worker model downplays the impact of a variety of structural and cultural determinants, such as legislation, regulation, and the social relations of work, which locate the injury outside of the individual’s status as a member of a particular group.

Unlike the “experienced worker,” with a work history and supposedly previous contact with safety education, the young worker has not necessarily been exposed to prevention education. In this sense, the injured or killed young worker perhaps points less to the failure of the prevention system than other categories of workers who have been injured or killed after supposedly receiving safety training and despite understanding their legal rights and responsibilities for a safe workplace.
From a prevention perspective, the young worker construct provides a relatively blank slate – an ideal template for making the case for educational interventions and the management/distancing of blame. There is less “history” and more “innocence” and “blamelessness” attached to the young worker in comparison with other worker categories. The construct of the young worker is typically circumscribed by age and not demarcated by class. The young worker is ingenuous, “prepolitical” and in the process of becoming – not yet officially affiliated with the side of labour or business or structurally defined as an employee or employer/manager.

This exemplary character and innocence of the young worker construct is communicated through both the visual images and texts on the multipartite pages of the website. I see this “special status” of the young worker on the LifeQuilt website reflected in the visual imagery of the LifeQuilt website that imbues the young worker with a “sacred” like presence. Adjacent to the prevention slogan, Protect the Future of Young Workers, and appearing on the header of every webpage are black-and-white photos of the faces of two young people killed at work. The photos of both youth appear to be backlit and in a circular shape, producing a graphic that might be described as a halo effect, which may be read as emphasizing the innocence of youth.

Another visual depiction of the innocence and vulnerability of young workers is captured in the focal image of the LifeQuilt, the silhouetted figure of an unclothed adolescent youth reproduced on each page of the website and predominant on the homepage. This central, monochromatic, front-lit image is of a generic youth with hands outstretched and extended above her/his head. There is an absence of contextualizing information in this visual image concerning gender, ethnicity, class, geographic location, and setting. On the website (http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/index.htm) the central figure of the LifeQuilt is described as a youth with “hands stretched to heaven,” a metaphor that suggests a spiritual discourse. The figure of the LifeQuilt and its description reinforces the construct of the fatally injured young worker as exemplary, innocent, vulnerable and not to be blamed for the injury or fatality.

The young worker issue seems to provide an ideal platform for downplaying blame and building multipartite consensus around a memorial project. An example of the use of young worker safety to build collaborative prevention solidarity through safety education advocacy is conveyed in the following statement from an organizational page of the LifeQuilt website:
We tell our children we love them, they are the most precious people in our lives. Meantime, we tell each other that youth are our future. For our part, we would rather show young people they are valued … To learn more about the many educational programs available to young workers be sure to contact the following partners or sponsors of the LifeQuilt. (http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/protectworkers.htm)

3) Transforming occupational tragedies into prevention parables: The description of the LifeQuilt as a memorial for “remembrance and prevention” suggests that the narrative of a young worker tragedy can also serve an educational purpose. This creation of meaning out of loss is another way in which blame is managed through constructing a commemorative for the purpose of prevention. Collective memory theorist Sturken (1997) has described this process of salvaging meaning out of death in her analysis of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. As she observes (1997), the AIDS quilt is not just a “process of remembering the dead and the meaning and value of their lives but also … an attempt to create something out of that loss” (p. 199). The LifeQuilt project is similarly described as building communities and giving members of the “affected community,” a term used on the LifeQuilt website to describe the families of fatally injured young workers, “an opportunity to share their stories in a unique way and (in) a way that contributes to the goal of prevention.”

The primary focus of the LifeQuilt is on remembering the lives of those killed at work rather than those who are living with serious injuries. The public commemoration of deceased individuals provides “closed stories” as cautionary tales for prevention. “Closed stories” may be more suited to a multipartite context in which there is an effort to create a common ground between labour and business. The LifeQuilt website does acknowledge the seriously injured through a single webpage of injury anecdotes and the inclusion on the artwork of pink organza ribbons representing injured workers. However, the visual and textual emphasis of the website is upon the personal stories and photos of one hundred deceased young workers that are hyperlinked to individual webpages. Those with serious injuries may still raise issues relating to how a claim was resolved/unresolved, who was to blame for the workplace injury and question how their case is managed. The use of closed stories for prevention education and awareness may be particularly important in a collaborative prevention initiative where the message of shared responsibility is contingent upon the containment of blame. The “closed
status” of the LifeQuilt stories is further emphasized by the fact that the website itself is noninteractive, with chatrooms and bulletin boards removed from the website in 2005.3

4) Occupational health and safety as a “shared responsibility”: The presence of a unifying safety message that emphasizes shared responsibility is evident in the following texts from the LifeQuilt. The LifeQuilt project is described as a “process and the artwork as a means to educate us all about the need to end young worker injuries and deaths.” The involvement of the public is communicated in this sentence, “Only by working together will we help eliminate injuries and deaths in the workplace.” These solutions often reference the need for workers, employers, government, families and the public at large to form “partnerships.” Linking prevention with a broadly distributed or shared responsibility for workplace safety, as reflected in these statements, is a key component for building the common ground for collaborative prevention discourses. The creation of a social movement, the call to mobilize communities around concern for young worker safety, is also communicated on the “Protect the Future” organizational page of the website:

As a health and safety movement we walk the talk. In addition to aid for the LifeQuilt project many of us have established youth committees. We are also offering post-secondary student scholarships; supporting apprenticeship training; and perhaps most importantly we are bringing health, safety and environmental awareness into the schools. ([http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/protectworkers.htm](http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/protectworkers.htm))

Throughout the multipartite pages of the website the LifeQuilt is described as a “call to action.” As noted on the multipartite pages of the website this collaborative prevention partnership must include workers, parents and employers committed to safety education and awareness and then moving to “action,” which is not defined. The website states:

Health and safety awareness and education to help to create a safer and healthier work environment. But once aware we all must commit to action. ([http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/protectworkers.htm](http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/protectworkers.htm))

Shared responsibility is a key idea in the management of blame, an idea that is highlighted in

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3 I asked participants about why the website changed from interactive to closed but was unable to get analytical purchase on this. Perhaps there was concern over controversial postings, such as the chatroom posting included on page 108 of the previous chapter. Also, Diane (labour OHS) mentioned that expanding beyond the one hundred stories included online was not a part of the LifeQuilt project protocol.
the discourse of collaborative prevention as reflected in the texts of the LifeQuilt website. Note how the shared responsibility theme is conveyed in the following statement from the website in which the LifeQuilt is described as “meant to inspire people thinking about what they can do to prevent a family’s loss of a son or daughter to a workplace injury.” The message that shared responsibility is required for young worker safety is emphasized in the following quote through the use of “we” and “everyone”:

The LifeQuilt is a constant reminder to everyone that we need to protect future generations of Canadian workers while remembering and honouring those who have been killed or injured on the job. (http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/LifeQuilt.htm.)

The theme of shared responsibility for the future of young workers is also communicated visually in the imagery of the homepage, whose centerpiece is a reproduction of the LifeQuilt artifact. Each of the one hundred commemorative quilt blocks flanking the central figure of the young worker replicates the image of hands cast downward and holding the photo of the deceased young worker. The depiction of the deceased held in clasped hands pointing downwards might be interpreted as invoking the idea of adult responsibility in the protection of youth. Indeed, this is communicated in promotional materials, publicizing the LifeQuilt, in which the hands are described as representing “the hands of those who remain behind, but they also represent the hands of those determined to prevent other such tragic losses.”

Figure 7: A reproduction of a quilt block detailing the image of extended hands

The hands provide a broad visual reference that can be projected upon a variety of individuals in positions of custodial responsibility, such as parents, employers, coworkers, teachers and OHS professionals working with government and labour. Employers are appealed to directly
on two of the multipartite pages where the chair of the LifeQuilt committee and a parent of a youth killed on the job is quoted as saying: “We entrust our children to you, the employer – it is your responsibility to protect them.” The following message is communicated on the “Community Outreach” page of the LifeQuilt:

The LifeQuilt has become an important symbol for the importance of young worker health and safety. Together with the Friends of the LifeQuilt Committee, it is creating a national consensus on the issue and perhaps more important a real sense of community. (http://youngworkerquilt.ca.calendar/htm)

A collective call to action for prevention is a way of shifting focus to the future orientation of prevention rather than the past occurrence of an injury fatality. Collaborative prevention, in the case of the multipartite LifeQuilt project, manages blame by engaging commemoration for the purposes of “remembrance and prevention.”

Collective memory theory describes public commemoration as a process that seeks to produce an official and unifying narrative of the past by acknowledging yet “containing” alternative and potentially subversive narratives within a consensus-building framework (Schwartz 1982). Commemorative projects are often responses to “difficult pasts,” and while producing an official or dominant account or consensus-building narrative, public memorials must also acknowledge the counter-narratives and alternative perspectives of victims and other interest groups (Saito 2006). Without the dominant institution’s acknowledgment of alternative perspectives, the memorial may fail to provide a “unifying” narrative through alienating key audiences, particularly those who are critical of the prevention system and directly linked to the remembered event (Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi 2007).

II. Personal tribute pages of the LifeQuilt website

The analysis of the personal tribute pages considers the following themes: (1) discursive features of consensus commemoratives (2) discursive features of prevention parables and (3) discursive features of critical commemoratives.

Discursive features of consensus commemoratives

According to Vinitzy-Seroussi (2002), the commemorative narrative has three components: the protagonist, the commemorated event, and the context of the event. Vinitzky-Seroussi
(2002) asserts that the commemorative communicates a consensual message by removing contextual information from the account and thereby depoliticizing the event. Influenced by Goffman’s (1974) concept of framing, she asserts that commemoratives can be interpreted in relation to the emphasis on the presence or absence of one or more of the story components. As Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002) observes:

The stricter the adherence to only the first or second component of the narrative (often associated with the “hard core” facts), the larger the audience that can gather around it. In other words, the “thinner” the message (often a consensual message), the larger the audience that can identify with it. The risk is that the makeup of the narrative can be reduced so much that it will repel those collectives for whom the paucity of content is tantamount to erasing the past. Conversely, opting for a focus on the context ensures that collectives adhering to it will be smaller, as many may find the mnemonic narrative too politicized. (P. 39)

In my analysis, I first consider the protagonist, the exemplary young worker, the injury event and finally, the use of context in the personal tribute pages. I argue that the official narrative of collaborative prevention is reflected in the personal tribute pages that provide a limited workplace context for the person killed at work. In these accounts, blame is not attributed to individuals or organizations. The structure of remembrance for the purposes of prevention focuses upon the exemplary character and personality of the young worker, family context, class location and the passive positioning of the victim. These dimensions of remembrance in the consensus commemorative form typically absolve the workers, families and employers of blame, perhaps as a prerequisite for collaborative prevention discourses. Narrative features that distance the occupational death event of the LifeQuilt commemoratives from the workplace context and blame include 1) focus upon the exemplary character and personality of the young worker, 2) passive positioning of the workplace fatality victim and 3) emphasis on family life rather than on the work setting.

1) The exemplary character and personality of the young worker: The commemorative form as a public remembrance celebrates the memory of the individual by highlighting the positive personality traits and disposition of the individual. As Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz (1991) observe, the individuals that are commemorated “are necessarily heroic or, at the very least, untainted” (p. 379). Throughout the texts of the LifeQuilt, the temperament and character of young workers are portrayed as laudatory. Many of the descriptors emphasize the positive
demeanor of those commemorated. Several young workers are described as “fun loving” and as having “a sense of humour.” One worker is described as having a “1000-watt smile.” “Kind,” “gentle,” and “good-natured” are other adjectives employed.

A responsible character and good work ethic is also described in several accounts. Young workers are portrayed as “team players,” as “givers not takers,” as “leaders” in the workplace, family and community setting. They are also depicted as popular among their peers and coworkers. This aspect of getting along with others is conveyed in the description of a young worker who “enjoyed his work and became good friends with his coworkers.” Similarly, in other accounts young workers are described with terms such as “well liked” and “always a team guy.” The presence of a positive work ethic is evident in the use of descriptors such as “motivated,” “hard-working young man,” “a responsible worker,” and “working hard.” The exemplary character of a young worker is captured in the text of this personal tribute page commemorating Jared Diduck, killed at the age of 19, while working on an oil rig:

News of Jared’s death stunned the many, many people who knew him as a son, brother, cousin and friend. Over 900 people gathered to celebrate his life. A former teacher described Jared as a very special friend – loving, spontaneous, rascal, sensitive, very, very social, laughing, quick-witted, sweet. Jared was killed helping to make this province what it is…

(www.youngworkerquilt.ca/jareddiduck.htm)

The protagonists of the LifeQuilt commemoratives, as exemplary young workers, are exonerated from blame. Two-thirds of the personal memorials on the LifeQuilt describe the personality and character of the young person commemorated. Here, following the commemorative model described by Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002), the focus is upon the protagonist with a lesser focus upon the context of the event. Commemoratives, as Sturken (1997) observes, often sanitize those memorialized and background the context of the death by celebrating the life of the deceased individual, so that the dominant narrative driving the memorial project can be preserved. Both Sturken (1997) in her discussions of the Vietnam War Memorial and the AIDS quilt and Simpson (2006) in his analysis of 9/11 commemoratives observe that memorials, through focusing upon the individual and limiting contextualizing information may contribute to the depoliticization of these events. I believe that a similar process of depoliticization also occurs on the LifeQuilt. By presenting young workers as exemplary in the majority of commemoratives and not identifying companies, the primary
focus is upon the individual, innocent young person. Further, establishing an exemplary
personality is also important for the engagement of individual commemoratives as prevention
lessons.

Collaborative prevention discourses manage blame by focusing on the generalizable and
technical principles of prevention that are not linked to specific individuals, organizations or
institutions. It is therefore important that the individual be portrayed as not having negative
personality traits or behaviours that might be potentially interpreted as contributing to the
injury event. It is essential for collaborative prevention consensus commemoratives that the
memorialized young workers be depicted as exemplary and as innocent victims in workplace
fatalities.

2) Passive positioning of the workplace fatality victim: Another way in which the blamelessness
of the young worker is achieved is through the passive positioning of the victim of a workplace
injury in reference to the event of the workplace fatality. When we look at the headlines and the
verb tenses used to describe the terrible things that happened, the language emphasizes the
passive position of the victim. A young worker is “pulled into an industrial dough mixer.” This
language is conveyed in other instances when a worker becomes “entangled in the rotating drive
shaft” of a wood grinder, another “caught against a pump suction intake inlet.” A young worker
is under a cottage “when the jacks failed and the building fell.” While logging, a young worker’s
“coat was caught in the chains, pulling him into the gear and causing multiple injuries by the
mechanism of a conveyor belt.

The language of the headlines describing death is evocative and emphasizes the vulnerability
of the young worker “crushed,” “drowned,” “entangled” and “asphyxiated.” At other times, the
senselessness of the death is described: sometimes paradoxical – “died constructing”; or futile
– “died due to lockout failure”; or implying the simple preventability of death – “working
alone strangled in a conveyor.”

The details of the death are often graphic, visceral and technical. Young workers falling into
machines, boiling brine, crushed under the wheels of a truck. These details suggest the horror
of the experience, the realness of the body, the traumatic brutality of an industrial fatality. The
human body “behind the statistic” further focuses upon the individual, the pain and suffering,
apart from the social context of work. These accounts zoom in on the individual and technical
rather than the social aspects of the workplace injury fatalities. Douglas Loyer’s tribute page is a commemorative text that emphasizes the horrific image of his workplace death:

When my son was told to go in a standard cement mixer to clean off the hardened cement, another employee turned on his machine, which activated my son’s machine. The machine’s inside paddles crushed and pinned him in. My son sustained a shattered liver, many broken ribs, collapsed lungs and torn portal vein. In other words, my son got squashed and could not be saved and his lungs filled with his own blood.

(http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/douglasloyer.htm)

The often visceral details of the death keep my attention focused upon the individual and the graphic imagery of the event. This combined focus upon the individual and the violent circumstances of death removes the injury fatality from the broader social, political and economic context of work injuries. The exemplary young worker is often a victim of technical failures in the workplace. Neither the worker nor the employer is to blame. The protagonist and the traumatic, visceral aspects of the event, rather than context, is most frequently depicted on the LifeQuilt commemorative

3) Emphasizing family life rather than work setting: A third feature of the commemorative form from Vinitzky-Seroussi’s collective memory perspective is the depth of the context of tragedy being commemorated. On the LifeQuilt personal tribute pages, the family setting, rather than the workplace context, is often emphasized. Through this focus on family background, I would assert, the presence of the workplace and employer is diminished. Family-centred accounts individualize consensus commemoratives and shift the focus from work to family.

The focus upon family life is evident in approximately two-thirds of the stories. Family roles such as brother, grandson, spouse, father, and family provider are described. The size of the immediate family is mentioned in several accounts, with single-child status mentioned in six accounts. These descriptions of family life provide a personal, familial context for workplace tragedies. The use of the young worker category, particular teens and those new to work with a limited occupational history, seamlessly draws attention to family life details and nonwork achievements. This emphasis on family roles and systems makes the workplace seem secondary in some LifeQuilt commemorative accounts:

Bradley died on August 16, 1991 as a result of a tragic accident at a hospital where he was employed as a groundskeeper and maintenance mechanic. Bradley enjoyed camping, fishing, cycling, music and quiet times with his
The backgrounding of the workplace is also highlighted through emphasizing class dislocation at the time of death. This phenomenon might be described as the blue-collar deaths of white-collar kids. For example, one young worker’s death is described as “doubly tragic” because he was about to leave his job to return to university studies. Twenty-five of the commemorative accounts mention post-secondary education. Several accounts mention future plans such as a “career in forestry,” “engineering” and “education.” By stressing the “part-time” or “seasonal” nature of the job, often by mentioning post-secondary educational status, several commemoratives highlight the disjuncture between a temporary working-class job and middle-class career aspirations.

Following Vinitzky-Seroussi’s model of narrative framing, the LifeQuilt commemoratives focus primarily upon the protagonist, family life and principles of prevention that are not bound to the workplace details of a specific event. In ways that are similar to Scott’s (1996) account of the rebuilding of the Harlan County Miners Memorial, the LifeQuilt commemorative website downplays contextualizing information that would alienate employer, safety professional and government audiences. On the LifeQuilt website, the official narrative predominates and emphasizes that all parties (parents, workers, management, employers and government) are responsible in the prevention of workplace injuries and need to work in unison toward achieving the goals of collaborative prevention. The occupational safety solutions recommended through the collaborative prevention campaigns, such as the LifeQuilt, are primarily educational and contain blame by advocating “shared responsibility” for the future of young worker safety.

**Discursive features of prevention parables**

The consensus commemorative in collaborative prevention discourses, as exemplified by many of the personal tribute pages of the LifeQuilt may take a particular form: the prevention parable. In this case, the remembrances of youth killed at work are cautionary tales or safety parables that construct the past to align with principles of collaborative prevention. The personal tribute pages often support the discourse of collaborative prevention by generalizing from a specific workplace case lessons that could prevent a similar event, in a variety of
occupational settings, from occurring in the future. These technical and generalizable prevention principles explicitly captured in the personal tribute pages and articulated in young workers campaigns such as the LifeQuilt include (1) mining safety lessons from young worker fatalities, (2) faulty technology/engineering, (3) inexperience, inadequate training, being new to job and working alone.

1) Mining safety lessons from young worker fatalities: Commemoratives may provide a way of finding something meaningful from a senseless tragedy by transforming a personal story into an injury prevention narrative or collaborative prevention parable. As a respondent noted “we are telling the stories for prevention” (Barbara, family). By linking remembrance with prevention, the consensus commemorative allows for a terrible workplace fatality to be translated into a broader cause. Describing their son’s death, “as a young vital life wasted,” the parents of one commemorated young worker state, “All we can hope for is that someone will learn by our loss.” The commemoratives are constructed as “prevention parables,” demonstrating lessons and principles of prevention. This notion of the parable for prevention is communicated in the following LifeQuilt commemorative text:

Brent came out of a gravel pit and was going up a hill, with the truck fully loaded. He did not see the train at the top of the grade. There were no bars in place at the time. There was brush to his right which obstructed his view. Brent would not have heard the whistle because he would have been gearing down. One second of not seeing the danger took his life. There should be BARS across railing crossings on highways. On September 28, 2000, three teenage boys were killed at this same crossing. Now there are bars. ([http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/brentwade.htm](http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/brentwade.htm))

Both in the interview data and memorial texts, consensus commemoratives were seen as providing a way of salvaging something meaningful from a senseless tragedy by transforming a personal story into a narrative for prevention. In one personal tribute page of a young miner, the following cautionary message is communicated:

Many people at Chad’s wake said they can’t believe that it has happened to someone they know, that they had only read about it happening to other families. Nothing can be taken for granted, we must ensure our children come home every night. ([http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/chadlamond.htm](http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/chadlamond.htm))

Structuring remembrance around generalizable prevention principles allows for the commemorative’s engagement as a collaborative prevention lesson. The past is reconstructed from the present to show how an injury event was predictable and preventable and to highlight
the prevention principles that were violated; these principles are independent of the specific person injured in a specific place and under specific circumstances (Pidgeon 1997). The injury event is retroactively constructed according only to the educative and technical principles of prevention, while other factors, such as the push to finish a job, labour shortages and productivity pressures are ignored.

2) Faulty technology/engineering: A number of commemoratives mention either faulty technology or faults in the workplace environment as leading to the occupational fatality. Examples include improper guarding, jamming machines, faulty vehicles, broken equipment, or the unavailability of personal protective equipment. These accounts also include workplace design issues, such as flaws in structural engineering, poorly marked workplaces, insufficient lighting and inadequate oxygen access.

In the faulty technology/engineering accounts, I find that blame is narrowed to the technical dimensions of work rather than to the social relations of work in which injuries occur. For example, the technical cause of death is a “tractor not roadworthy,” “a faulty bearing in a plant conveyer” or “faulty equipment that had not been properly maintained.”

Dwayne died on May 20, 1993, after the rear wheel drive forklift tractor he was driving went off a wooden bridge and landed in a creek, trapping him under water. It was later determined the tractor was not roadworthy. Dwayne was a well liked, fun loving, caring man. He liked animals and playing darts. He was an inspiration to his brother Joe.

(http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/dwaynedanielson.htm)

The broader questions of why faulty equipment, dangerous vehicles and defective technology were in use in the first place are not addressed in many of these accounts. The official prevention discourse of the commemoratives does not ask, for instance, why shortcuts were taken, why equipment wasn’t checked. Through focusing upon this intermediate level of intervention and technicalizing injury, the social, political and economic contexts of workplace injuries are ignored.

3) Inexperience, inadequate training, new to job, working alone: The issue of inexperience, reflected in such themes as inadequate training, being new to the job and temporary work, is stressed in several accounts. These themes highlight what is perceived as the particularly vulnerable status of young workers: untrained labour neophytes. For example, a young worker
is described as “working at his first summer job.” In another case, a young worker was killed when logs moved on a skidder, and it is noted “that proper training would have prevented this needless accident.” Other accounts establish inexperience by noting their newness to the workplace in phrases such as it was the “third day on the job.” Similarly, young workers are depicted as working long shifts, suggesting that fatigue increases vulnerability to workplace injuries.

Six of the commemoratives report coworker involvement in the events that led to the young worker’s death. In these cases, the inexperience of the coworker is often seen as a contributing factor. In all these cases, the worker’s unfamiliarity with the workplace and lack of training are seen as pivotal to the workplace fatality. The fatality is constructed as an event in which there was an absence of educational interventions. Here, the focus on prevention interventions deflects attention from workplace context, as the injury is portrayed as the result of inadequate preparatory safety education.

Kelly had been working part time for less than three weeks when he died. On October 31, 1995, he was crushed when some logs moved on a skidder. He had not been trained and was working without supervision. “Proper training would have prevented this needless accident. Kelly enjoyed life to the fullest. His ready smile and sense of humour will always be missed by his friends and family. A young, vital life wasted. All we can hope for is that someone will learn by our loss… Kelly, keep howling at the moon.”

Similarly, the situation of “working alone” is described in nineteen of the accounts. This is identified as a dangerous practice that can be addressed by prevention interventions such as awareness of the risk of working unaccompanied by a trained and safety savvy coworker. In summary, prevention principles that are most frequently recommended include receiving safety training, following machinery protocols and inspection, working with coworkers and wearing personal protective equipment. Many commemorative accounts reconstruct the injury as the result of technical error or insufficient prevention awareness and training. In these situations blame is not specifically directed toward individual employers, workers, parents or the OHS regulatory system.
Discursive features of critical commemoratives

When the context of the workplace injury is emphasized in commemoratives or personal accounts, the dominant narrative of collaborative prevention (a discourse that highlights shared responsibility and the importance of education) may be questioned and blame articulated. These alternative narratives are described here as “critical commemoratives.” Alternative narratives or critical commemoratives sometimes appear in the personal tribute pages, challenging the principles of collaborative prevention by finding blame, demanding social justice and accountability and/or questioning the efficacy of prevention interventions such as education, existing legislation and enforcement practices. The following critical commemorative themes are explored by considering their presence on the LifeQuilt and contrasting these accounts with critical commemoratives on other worker websites (1) raising issues of blame by including context and (2) contrasting the LifeQuilt critical commemoratives with other worker memorial websites.

1) Raising issues of blame by including context: The LifeQuilt memorial project as a multipartite initiative, also includes a small number of “critical commemoratives,” that is, stories and messages that do not conform to the ideal type of the dominant collaborative prevention narrative. The project is a multiple stakeholder commemorative art object and website that communicates an official consensus narrative, that of collaborative prevention, but that also includes the critical perspectives and experiences of those memorializing their family members.

For memorial projects to build multipartite consensus around a politically divisive issue such as young worker fatalities, there must be acknowledgement of family perspectives expressed through critical commemoratives (Sturken 1997). Sites of commemoration, through acknowledging the critical voices of those closest to the victims of tragic events, demonstrate a spirit of inclusiveness and enhance the authenticity of the commemorative as a truly multipartite project (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002; Bodnar 1992). According to Strurken (2007) Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi (2007) and Bodnar (1992), the commemorative sites, dominated by an official consensual narrative, must carefully manage dissenting voices. An official memorial that is sanitized of all critical voices may be received by the public as an instrument of pure
propaganda. In my view, the inclusion of a relatively small number of critical commemoratives is necessary to give the LifeQuilt project cross-institutional and multiple-group credibility.

However, because critical commemoratives can potentially contradict the very premises of collaborative prevention, where workplace safety is a normative enterprise achieved through instilling a society wide culture of caring, their presence on the LifeQuilt was carefully managed by dominant organizations. The presence of a small number of critical commemoratives on the LifeQuilt website took place within a multipartite campaign in which the gatekeepers or dominant “agents of memory” were organizations that worked closely with employer groups, compensation boards and government.

Collaborative prevention discourses communicate that workplace accidents can be predicted and prevented by changing safety culture norms and behaviour through implementing educational interventions targeting individuals and organizations. As noted earlier, the official narrative is articulated in such a way that no specific individual or group is held accountable for the workplace fatality. This is often achieved by limiting the workplace context, by addressing the family setting, the individual personality, the graphic portrayal of death and the technicalization of injury. In contrast, critical commemoratives often locate blame, placing responsibility on employers, supervisors, government or safety professionals. These stories contextualize the life lost within the workplace as a social setting. Here, the commemorative of Dwight Peel blames employers who disregard their employees’ safety:

On June 27th 1998, 2 days after his 17th birthday, my precious son made headlines throughout Alberta. Not because he won some select sports tournament, not because he heroically saved someone else’s life; Dwight made headlines because, contrary to saving someone’s life, Dwight’s life was horribly taken. Dwight died an ugly and violent death when a tire he was checking the pressure on at work, exploded into his beautiful face. The force of the explosion was such that it was heard throughout the town of Onoway. The force of the explosion was such that it projected Dwight against a wall ten feet away. The force of the explosion was such that it ripped my heart from my chest and blew a gaping hole into our family that will never be fixed. Dwight’s life, all that he worked so hard to become, his hopes and dreams, gone forever because of an employer’s blatant disregard for Dwight’s safety. We lost our son and all the hopes and dreams we had for Dwight. Craig and Kevin lost their big brother and the world and our community lost an incredible spirit. All because a company chose not to care. The loss of our precious son is devastating enough but knowing how easily preventable his death was is too much to bear. We are not some third world country; this is Canada and our young people deserve
guaranteed safety and security in every workplace. I pray this LifeQuilt will make some companies re-evaluate how they do things, before they add any more precious faces and pain-filled stories to another LifeQuilt.  
(\url{http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/dwightpeel.htm})

Critical commemoratives, in which the workplace context is emphasized, politicize the workplace injuries. These critical commemoratives suggest that the corporate consequences of an employee death are socially and politically unjust. Employer blame is raised in a commemorative account that involves a young worker who was killed when a crane toppled over. Subsequently, the crane operator was fined, but the family was appalled that the company was not penalized and did not take any responsibility for the incident that killed their son. As the parents note:

Sadly, to our dismay, the charges against the company he worked for were later dismissed. We were very disappointed by that as they seemed to show no sign of remorse for what they had done. They were simply content to let the operator assume full responsibility for the accident.  
(\url{http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/erichelgeson.htm})

Six cases in total on the LifeQuilt website mention that companies were charged by ministries of labour for safety infractions. Three of these commemoratives also note that the site of the fatality was tampered with by the company prior to the official investigation. One commemorative notes the negligence of supervisors in describing a young worker’s death:

Troy lost his life on October 30, 1996, when the roof collapsed at the mine where he worked. He drowned in hot brine because of the carelessness of supervisors who did not drain the tank before workers were allowed to work on it.  
(\url{http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/troystadnyk.htm})

The efficacy of educational/training interventions is also critiqued in two commemoratives. It is reported in one commemorative that the young worker had asserted his responsibility as an employee to report a dangerous situation, in this case working alone and without a panic button, but the employer did not respond with protective measures. In another commemorative, it is noted that a young worker killed during a logging injury was wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment.

These critical commemoratives challenge the discourses of collaborative prevention by making statements that question educational interventions and shared responsibility as sufficient conditions for the prevention of occupational deaths. Critical commemoratives that invoke “blametalk” may ultimately threaten the common ground. The personal injury story or true
account of a workplace death or trauma can be retold and publicized in other venues, such as newspaper articles, with additional context, including new and identifying information. Some of the stories on the LifeQuilt have been narrated with identifying information and additional context in other forums such as newspapers and other print media.

The problem of containing blame when engaging the “real story” format of commemoratives is evident in the case of young workers without dependants whose deaths are not compensable. The families are not necessarily obliged to remain silent about the details of a workplace tragedy. Since family members of a young person without dependants do not receive benefits from compensation boards, other than minimal funds to cover funeral costs, they are not a part of a no-fault insurance system and are free to discuss the fatality details, such as the place of employment, investigative process and perceived miscarriage of justice.

While the majority of commemoratives on the LifeQuilt website do not invoke blame narratives directed toward specific individuals, organizations or institutions, there are some commemoratives that raise the spectre of blame and challenge the official account of collaborative prevention communicated on the website. By comparing the LifeQuilt website to alternative worker memorial websites, it is apparent the consensus commemorative differs from the critical commemorative and can be engaged in other political, social and economic setting to assign blame and seek compensation for past injustices.

2) Contrasting the LifeQuilt critical commemoratives with other worker memorial websites- A comparison of the LifeQuilt with other worker fatality websites reveals that the content and framing of their critical commemoratives differ markedly from the personal tribute pages of the LifeQuilt. The critical commemoratives posted on the LifeQuilt website are quite tame and controlled in comparison to more militant workplace fatality websites that do not take a multiple stakeholder collaborative prevention approach. The LifeQuilt website texts predominately follow the script of collaborative prevention, and alternative or critical commemoratives that challenge the elimination of blame and accountability from discussions of occupational injuries and deaths are contained within a consensus framework. This consensus approach is in stark contrast with the following worker memorial websites, from the U.K. and the U.S., where calls for accountability and social justice place the commemorative in a social activism framework. To show how the commemorative form can be used as a politically subversive discourse, alternative worker memorial websites will be described. These include a website from the U.K., where
families are demanding corporate and government accountability, and from the U.S., where families are advocating for full and timely access to workplace fatality investigations. Below is a table that contrasts some of the differences between consensus and critical commemoratives based on this case study:

Table 3: Comparison of Consensus and Critical Commemoratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Consensus commemoratives</th>
<th>Critical commemoratives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Key message               | • Consensus commemoratives communicate collaborative prevention discourses and promote stakeholder coalitions  
                              • Consensus commemoratives are oriented toward the prevention of future events and the forgiveness of past tragedies | • Critical commemoratives do not communicate collaborative prevention discourses nor promote stakeholder coalitions  
                              • Critical commemoratives seek compensation and/or social justice to redress past tragedies as opposed to forgiveness |
| Prevention principles     | • Described in neutral, technical and generalizable terms with minimal reference to workplace accident and directed toward individual change | • Prevention principles are articulated in a social, political and economic context  
                              • Incident is defined as likely to take place again unless OHS and social system undergo structural change |
| Educational possibilities | • Consensus commemorative can be engaged as a prevention lesson targeting the individual and drawing upon safety culture and safety self-management in a multipartite forum  
                              • Prevention parable may be invoked | • Critical commemoratives depict workplace deaths in politicized, collective terms |
| Deceased worker           | • Focus upon the exemplary individual                                                   | • Focus upon the exemplary individual                                                   |
| Loss and mourning         | • Expression of loss by immediate family                                                 | • Expression of family loss often includes friends and community                         |
| Graphic description of death | • Frequently included either within the commemorative and/or the headline                | • Frequently included either within the commemorative or the headline                   |
| Workplace incident        | • Lack of detail about workplace incident and context                                    | • Details about workplace incident and context including pre- injury, injury and post-injury circumstances |
| Employers                 | • Not named                                                                             | • Employer names and sometimes company profiles/background/histories included           |
| Blame attribution         | • Technical description of failed prevention principles  
                              • Minimal workplace/OHS regulatory context                                              | • Blame attribution directed toward multiple factors such as employers, policies and practices, profit motives and failure of the regulatory system |
In the U.K., the websites www.SimonJones.org, and Families Against Corporate Killers (www.fack.org.uk) are examples of worker memorials that are not framed as multipartite OHS initiatives. In the United States, a website, United Support & Memorial for Workplace Fatalities (http://www.usmwf.org) includes memorials that name companies and assign blame in an approach that differs from the Canadian LifeQuilt website. These open and interactive worker memorial websites, managed by family activists and, in the U.K., family and union activists, depart from the collaborative prevention discourse that is dominant on the LifeQuilt website. From Vinitzky-Seroussi’s collective memory perspective, these commemorative websites are context -laden: details concerning the incident, the company and the investigative processes politicize the occupational incident. These more “radical” memorial websites demonstrate that the true account commemorative form can be used to challenge dominant institutions in OHS. The following examples of online worker fatality memorials suggest the potential militancy of families affected by a workplace fatality.

**Simon Jones memorial website**

![Simon Jones memorial website](image)

**Figure 8: The homepage of the Simon Jones U.K. webpage**

The Simon Jones memorial website, from a collective memory perspective, is rich in political context. Throughout the Simon Jones memorial website (www.simonjones.org), the injury fatality of a young worker is placed in a broad social, economic and political context; creating a culture of safety, raising awareness of health and safety is not posited as a central solution for corporate homicide. The remembrance for Simon Jones is clearly a critical commemorative and names two companies viewed as complicit in his death. The history of this campaign (1998–
24 year old Simon Jones is killed on his first day as a casual worker at Euromin’s Shoreham dock, his head crushed by the grab of a crane. Simon was taking a year out from Sussex University when he became another victim of the casual labour economy. The harassment Simon got from the dole made him take any job on offer for fear of having his benefit stopped. Simon got the job unloading a ship at Euromin’s dock despite having no training or experience in this dangerous and skilled work through the employment agency Personnel Selection, who should by law have checked that the job was safe for him. They didn’t. Soon after Simon’s death his friends and family set up the Simon Jones Memorial Campaign to fight for the truth about Simon’s death to be revealed and to challenge the profits-before-people set up that killed him. From the beginning, the campaign was committed to direct action to ensure that politicians don’t get away with brushing his death, like so many others, under the carpet. (http://www.simonjones.org.uk/campaign/index.htm).

After three years of family-led activism, the Simon Jones campaign was successful in getting the Crown to prosecute Euromin and its manager, Steve Martell. The outcome, a fine of 50,000 pounds was disappointing to the campaign members. Subsequently, in 2001, five campaign members were arrested during a protest at Euromin. A friend of Simon’s, Carly North, is quoted on the website:

One of the accused, Carly North, a local single mum and friend of Simon’s, says at the time, “My friend died and the company that killed him gets off with a fine. I sit in their office for a couple of hours and get charged as if I’m the criminal. It was when I was getting fingerprinted and DNAed I thought, “No, this isn’t right.” (http://www.simonjones.org.uk/campaign/index.htmkillers)

The commemorative can be used to express dissent and, in the case of the Simon Jones memorial, to mobilize, engage in protest activities and expose the failure of the government and the OHS system to hold negligent employers accountable for workplace fatalities. Public memorials do not preclude the circulation of alternative accounts that include information potentially damaging to the reputations of employers, government agencies and occupational health and safety professionals. Vinitzky-Seroussi’s (2002) observation of different framings of commemoratives is evident on alternative worker memorial websites where contextualizing information is included.
Families Against Corporate Killers

Inspired by the Simon Jones campaign and the advocacy of other families in the U.K. who underwent the tragedy of a loved one’s death on the job, a family-based organization was created, called Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK). FACK (www.fack.org.uk) is also an example of a worker memorial website that takes a far more militant occupational health and safety stance than the LifeQuilt memorial website.

Figure 9: The homepage of the U.K. FACK website

Founded in 2006 in the U.K. at the 17th annual Hazards convention, this national organization’s mission is to unite bereaved families affected by a workplace fatality into a single voice, to end workplace deaths and to provide legal and emotional support for relatives of those killed on the job. Many of the commemoratives included on the FACK website name workplaces where the deaths occurred and express outrage at the lack of corporate accountability when these “totally preventable” deaths occur. The organization, on its home page, states that families are robbed twice: first, by the loss of their loved ones to an incident that could have been prevented by the employer and second, of their right to justice:

Families against corporate killers – FACK – is a national campaigning network which will campaign to stop workers and others being killed in preventable incidents and will direct bereaved families to sources of legal help and emotional support. Relatives of people killed at work formed this national campaigning group. FACK believes families bereaved as a result of unsafe and unhealthy workplaces are angry and frustrated. They feel they have been robbed twice: Once of their loved ones in incidents that should have been prevented by employers simply obeying the law on workplace health and safety; and secondly of their right to justice. The campaign is seeking urgent government action to halt the complacency about deaths at work and decent laws which will bring dangerously negligent bosses to justice. FACK wants a review of the way work-related deaths are investigated and the way families are treated. And it believes workers and safety reps must be given more rights to protect themselves against exposure to unacceptable risks to their lives and health. To support FACK’s
work please send donations made out to ‘GMHC’ with a note that the money is for FACK only. (http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/fack/about/)

**United Support & Memorial for Workplace Fatalities**

An American worker memorial website (http://www.usmwf.org) provides tools and strategies for families suffering through a workplace fatality. In the United States, Tammy Miser, following the workplace death of her brother, founded a workplace death family activism organization in 2003, United Support & Memorial for Workplace Fatalities (Green, 2008). A key objective of this organization is to gain access for families to the investigative process and findings following the occurrence of a workplace fatality. There is an interactive online memorial site (http://www.usmwf.org/memorial/Tribute.htm), and several of the tribute pages name the employer and express anger both that companies are not held accountable for actions leading to workplace fatalities and that families do not have access to the investigation following a loved one’s death. Here is an example of a critical commemorative that provides detailed, contextualizing information, assigns blame and alleges an investigative cover-up:

On October 29, 2003, Shawn and his coworkers performed a routine procedure to relight a furnace at Hayes Lemmerz, an international producer of automotive and commercial highway steel and aluminum wheels. (It was common practice for workers to be asked to put(out) fires to avoid calling the fire department.) After the furnace was lit, Shawn remained in the vicinity to ensure the flames remained extinguished. After few minutes, Shawn and his coworkers began to collect their tools. He was standing directly behind the furnace with his back toward it, when suddenly an explosion occurred. Coworkers who witnessed the explosion stated that despite being knocked down Shawn got up and started walking toward the doors. It was then that a second and more intense blast occurred. The heat from the blast was hot enough to melt copper piping. Unfortunately, Shawn did not die instantly; instead, he remained on the building floor smouldering while the aluminum dust continued to burn through his flesh and muscle tissue. The breaths he took burned his internal organs, while the blasts took his eyesight. By the time the ambulance arrived, Shawn had no nerve endings and was burnt from head to toe. Yet, he was conscious and asking for help. Later that morning, Shawn’s family let him go. It was the hardest thing they’ve ever done, and to this day they live with a feeling of guilt.

In the middle of the family’s tragedy there was another taking place. Hayes Lemmerz was allowed to start the clean-up process simply because Shawn was not dead yet. The immediate clean-up not only contaminated the investigation site, but also deprived Shawn’s family and coworkers the opportunity to begin their healing by visiting the site of the incident. Today, Shawn’s sister, Tammy Miser, is the founder of the United Support and Memorial for Workplace
Fatalities. She works tirelessly to ensure that family members of workplace tragedies have the support needed to cope with their loss. In addition, she advocates for the rights of these family members, including the right to visit incident sites. Shawn’s loss has forever impacted the life of his family. His family’s efforts to provide resources and support to those affected by workplace tragedies has forever impacted the lives of countless others.

(http://www.usmwf.org/family/Family%20Bill%20of%20Rights%20-%202010%20-%202011%20-%202007.pdf)

This is an open and interactive website, and a story from the LifeQuilt was submitted to the USMWF memorial page by the family of Burton Reimer, a 17-year-old youth killed during his first day of employment in commercial fishing. This contribution of a LifeQuilt commemorative to a more radical worker memorial website reveals the potentially volatile character of the true account genre: the families, in sharing their personal workplace tragedies, are not tied to a single organizational and political perspective. The accounts of workplace death memorialized on the LifeQuilt can potentially be circulated to other initiatives or told by families in different ways.

All of these examples from other worker memorial websites demonstrate that the true account can be a kind of “wild card” in collaborative prevention initiatives. While bereaved families in OHS may participate in a multipartite initiative, there is always the possibility that they may choose to tell their stories in different forums and from non-collaborative perspectives. Further, the presence of a workplace fatalities victim’s name means that details, such as company name and detailed circumstances of the worker’s death, may be easily detected through internet searches. The true account genre, while powerfully linking an occupational fatality statistic to a human face, always threatens to identify companies, to comment upon government inaction or expose the inadequacies of OHS policies and practices in place. While WCBs emphasized workplace fatalities as a catalyst for the promotion of prevention, family members of those killed are not necessarily willing to abandon their search for the cause of the accident and demands for individual accountability. As Robin Kells (2000/2001), sister of Sean Kells, killed on the job at the age of 19, observes, “Negligent employers must be as accountable as drunks behind the wheels of a car” (p.2).

The LifeQuilt prevention initiatives, especially those that use a true account strategy, reference an identifiable injury event that involved a specific person, employer and set of circumstances. As a result, additional information that may blame companies can be potentially linked to each true account incident included on the LifeQuilt. Internet search engines, in many cases, can
locate online media accounts of workplace fatalities documented on the LifeQuilt. Media accounts often name the companies that employed the worker and may provide additional information about the circumstances surrounding the young person’s death on the job.

Engaging families in OHS initiatives is not without risks, as families can tell their stories in ways that challenge the dominant narrative. While families of workplace tragedies can tell their stories in ways that serve dominant institutions and the discourse of collaborative prevention, the stories can be rewritten or communicated through other public platforms that are potentially critical of dominant OHS approaches to young worker safety. As well, the families of young workers killed on the job, participating in the LifeQuilt project, may be empowered through the process of telling their stories for prevention. These families, with no claims to financial dependence upon the deceased, are typically not receiving benefits from WCB and are unrestricted by confidentiality agreements.

**Conclusion**

The Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt website communicates a dominant and unifying narrative of collaborative prevention in which remembrance is used to invoke a message of shared responsibility to eliminate future workplace injuries and distance blame. At the same time, the website also contains alternative narratives, critical commemoratives in the context of the LifeQuilt, in which families, reflecting upon their child’s death, question the wisdom of relying upon raised safety consciousness and safety education as the panacea for the prevention of workplace injury. These narratives may also find fault with employers, existing safety regulations, the accident investigation process and the legal system. Yet as Bodnar (1992) and Sturken (1997) note, the minimal inclusion of carefully controlled critical commemoratives in public memorial and practices may appeal to a greater number of social groups, including the victims and families remembered. However, commemoratives that acknowledge the victims and their families may also constitute the public memorial as a site of ongoing social struggle where official versions of the past are challenged and revised through group activity (Sturken 1997; Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002; Bodnar 1992).

The LifeQuilt website data suggest that the distancing of blame may be central to the logic of collaborative prevention discourses. Collaborative prevention discourses demonstrate how the management of specific blame and accountability, albeit temporarily, might be a prerequisite for
successfully launching multipartite initiatives in OHS. In particular, the presence of a shared safety discourse creating common ground is communicated through the dominant content of the LifeQuilt commemorative website. The discourse of collaborative prevention attempts to “distance,” “manage,” “contain” or “tame” blame narratives through advocating “shared responsibility,” “awareness” and “education” for the prevention of future workplace injuries and deaths. This reading of the LifeQuilt website, through a collective memory lens, has revealed the memorial as a site of struggle, where the dominant narrative of collaborative prevention is sometimes questioned, within commemorative texts, by families asking for accountability and justice and unwilling to support an OHS system that failed to prevent a family member’s death. The official account promoting the discourse of collaborative prevention is most prominently displayed on the committee authored “multipartite” website pages and reflected in the dominance of online consensus commemoratives.

When the LifeQuilt website is compared with other worker memorial websites, the true account form, the commemorative, is problematic, since it is not confined to communicating the ideals of collaborative prevention discourses and practices. Commemoratives are not immutable records, and a consensus narrative can be retold as a critical commemorative of workplace health and safety. As has been discussed, the targeting of employer and government blame is evident in other worker fatality websites that are designed and funded independently of government and insurer/compensation agencies. These open and polemic websites stand in contrast to the closed and controlled environment of the LifeQuilt website. The potential for true accounts of workplace fatalities to invoke blame may raise red flags for multipartite prevention coalitions considering this communications approach. The commemorative as a true account strategy may create fissures in the common ground of a multipartite OHS campaign as a result of internal stakeholder dissension within and also because the stories of workers killed on the job can be told outside of the consensual discursive framework of collaborative prevention.
Chapter 8
Discussion and conclusions

The introductory chapter of this dissertation began with an account of how my interest in prevention campaigns using the true account form was, in part, a result of exposure to a series of posters, television and radio ads produced by the WSIB. Since the completion of this dissertation research, the WSIB has redesigned its website. The WSIB website that I accessed until 2009 archived all of the true account posters used in social marketing campaigns from 1999 to 2006. In 2010, the WSIB website was redesigned and all online true account posters were removed. The WSIB social marketing posters that are currently available online depict dangerous worksites (2006), cartoons of injured workers (2007) and photo simulations of dead workers (2008). While there are a variety of possible explanations as to why the true account campaigns may have been taken offline, viewing the WSIB website changes through a social memory lens, I can’t help but wonder why the posters of true accounts communicated by serious injury survivors and family members of workers killed on the job are no longer present. Is there a concern that the individuals featured in true accounts speak from a standpoint that may not reflect the administrative perspective of the WSIB? Does the true account of a workplace fatality, no matter how it is framed, always exist as the “elephant in the room” (Zerubavel 2006) and reflect the failures of the prevention system?

In this chapter, I consider the interrelations between a collaborative prevention discourse, the true account form of the commemorative, and a provisional stakeholder coalition group. Drawing upon my three research questions – the dataset, literature reviewed and collective memory theory - I discuss both the intended and unintended outcomes of this collaborative prevention approach, asking: What does this case study of the discourses and practices of a commemorative campaign have to say about how prevention operates in a collaborative forum? How are these workplace fatalities that communicate the failure of the occupational health and safety system reconciled with a multipartite campaign’s current promise of the future prevention of all workplace accidents?
I. Why did a multipartite prevention campaign using the true account form emerge in the social and political context of OHS in the late 1990s?

The case study explored the emergence of a collaborative prevention discourse engaging true accounts that took place at a critical moment in the history of occupational health and safety in Ontario. My first research question considered why true accounts emerged as a collaborative, multipartite prevention communications strategy in OHS during the late 1990s. Why did these diversely located stakeholders, often considered as OHS adversaries, agree to work together on a joint initiative? What was the impetus for their involvement in a young worker public awareness campaign? Interview data, official documents and peer-reviewed literature were used to consider the impact of changes in the labour and compensation system that occurred with the passage of Bill 99; media reports of middle-class youth killed at work; and the escalation of tensions between stakeholders within OHS. With the reorganization of the Workers’ Compensation Board and the Ontario Ministry of Labour, the focus shifted from workers’ rights and entitlement to prevention and insurance claims management. The newly named Workplace Safety and Insurance Board became increasingly involved with Early and Safe Return to Work Programs and the administration of incentive programs that rewarded employers reporting reduced injury rates and penalized poor performers. Employer-driven concerns over unfunded liability and the reduction of costs associated with claim payouts were major foci of the restructured WSIB.

This legislation resulted in a complete overhaul of the OHS system. OHS safety advocates affiliated with government and organized labour were sidelined as legislative changes minimized their role in prevention policy and training programs. Reduced government regulation of the workplace encouraged a policy of worker safety self-reliance. Under this new OHS regime, employers and workers were primarily responsible for managing safety in a bipartite prevention system in which government played a dramatically reduced role. Those interviewed for this study communicating a labour standpoint (James, Richard OHS) saw firm-level safety regulation as undermining the safety rights that workers had fought so hard to achieve.

The popularization of safety deregulation and OHSM system approaches during the 1980s and 1990s was not unique to Ontario or other provincial jurisdictions. Internationally, there had been a shift in focus from compensation discourses focused on state regulatory mechanisms to
prevention discourses advocating bipartite management of workplace health and safety at the firm level (Bluff 2003). The new neoliberal prevention discourses promoting enhanced organizational safety culture and employee behaviour change have been described as largely driven by the economic objectives of profitability, insurance incentives and firm-level regulatory autonomy (Frick and Wren 2000).

**Blue-collar deaths of white-collar kids:** One important factor that helps account for why a true account youth-focused collaborative campaign emerged during the late 1990s was that the safety of young people became an issue visible to middle- and upper-class parents. While work injury is a class issue that affects, for the most part, people from the working class, when the issue impacted middle- and upper-class parents, these parents had the connections and resources to increase the profile and visibility of young worker safety. A group of educated, media-savvy parents became actively involved in publicizing the vulnerability of young workers, recounting stories of serious injuries and workplace fatalities involving youth. Newspaper and magazine articles were often critical of the OHS prevention system’s approach to the protection of young workers (Kells 2000; McCommons 2003; Schuyler 2002; Tselikis 2001). The media reported the deaths of young workers, focusing on not only the incident but also the character of the individual and his or her educational achievements and future plans ended by a senseless workplace tragedy. Within an increasingly deregulated OHS environment in Ontario in the late 1990s, workers were expected to be skilled in the recognition and management of work-related hazards.

The rhetoric of safety self-management communicated in young worker educational resources was viewed by some parents as providing inadequate protection for young workers. Identified as a vulnerable group in the prevention literature, young workers were characterized as inexperienced, eager to please and reluctant to assert their legal rights and responsibilities, let alone question the authority of their employers (Frone 1998). Barbara, an interview participant and the parent of a young worker represented on the LifeQuilt website, questioned the policy/practice implications of firm-managed safety for young workers.

This case study’s interview and document data also indicated that families were angered by the fact that the deaths of young workers without dependants were not symbolically or fiscally acknowledged within Ontario’s provincial compensation and legal systems. Initially organized
by families involved in the LifeQuilt project, Threads of Life was a family support and safety advocacy organization that became a new stakeholder group in Ontario’s OHS system. As interviewee Barbara noted, families were no longer treated as “silent partners” in OHS. The blue-collar deaths of white-collar kids was socially unacceptable to a core group of families who came together as an interest group through their involvement in the LifeQuilt initiative. The conservative Harris government, perhaps as an opportunity to smooth relations between stakeholder groups within the OHS system and to appease the increasingly vocal families of deceased young workers, formed a council for cross-institutional prevention initiatives. Subsequently, the LifeQuilt initiative was launched to bring employer and labour safety organizations, government ministries, WCBs and families of seriously and fatally injured young workers to work on a collaborative prevention campaign. Interview data suggested that the campaign improved the morale of OHS by creating an opportunity for health and safety people to participate in a multipartite collaborative initiative.

Consensus through commemoratives: A second way to account for the emergence of such a prevention project at this time was that it played a role in generating consensus. The first collaborative prevention project that emerged from this government-led stakeholder coalition was a public memorial, the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt artifact and website commemorating the lives of one hundred workers killed at work. According to collective memory theory, memorial projects are often designed to build consensus by producing a unifying narrative aligned with the interests of dominant institutions (Connerton 2003). The Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt, through its focus upon the institutional acknowledgement of family loss and sharing individual remembrances of workplace tragedies for prevention, provided a sacred common ground; memorializing the deaths of young workers was a motherhood issue, an issue that one was unlikely to disagree with and that (at least temporarily) generated consensus.

Safety culture and collaboration: As one study participant Richard (OHS government) noted, even hard-nosed politicians responded with empathy when meeting parents and hearing the stories of their children who had died on the job. The interview, document and website data highlighted the importance of safety culture as a dominant OHS prevention perspective. Since it was a prevention model that could bring stakeholders together and communicate safety messages that were not workplace intrusive, safety culture was well suited to multipartite initiatives in OHS. Safety culture assumes that occupational dangers can be controlled by safety-vigilant
management systems, committed safety leadership, and positive safety awareness and mindfulness at all safety levels (Haukelid 1998). This perspective focuses on the top-down dissemination of group values, attitudes and norms that will impact the priorities, attitudes and behaviours of managers and employees on the front line (DeJoy 2005). Safety culture conceptualizes injury prevention as a normative enterprise, and through focusing on the practice of safety vigilance in all activities, this prevention model links mindful behaviour in work and non-work areas of life (Park 2002). Prevention communications, based on a safety-culture model and initiated in the late 1990s, targeted a variety of audiences and often focused on the topic of young worker safety (McCloskey 2008). Young workers and young workers-to-be, their families, educators, future and current employers offered an ideal broad-based audience for public awareness initiatives.

II. What do the texts of the LifeQuilt say and do?

The case study was designed to identify and understand the features, underlying logic and functions of the socially mediated LifeQuilt texts in the context of a multipartite prevention campaign. These texts included pages written by the multiple stakeholder group, described as multipartite pages, and the personal tribute pages commemorating young workers. The multipartite pages of the LifeQuilt revealed a collaborative prevention discourse that is detected in the majority of the commemorative texts. My second research question inquired as to what the texts say and do, using the perspectives of collective memory theory and frame analysis methods.

The LifeQuilt and collaborative prevention consciousness-raising: The multipartite pages of the LifeQuilt communicate a collaborative prevention discourse that promotes OHS stakeholder coalitions and safety as everyone’s responsibility. The discourse of collaborative prevention, as communicated through the texts of the LifeQuilt, is based on several principles. First, all injuries are seen as patterned, predictable and preventable. Second, normative change is considered crucial to prevention’s success, as it is only through raised awareness and changed individual consciousness that injuries can be prevented. Third, the prevention of all workplace injuries is proposed as a shared responsibility, in the belief that it is only through cooperation that all future injuries can be eliminated. A final principle of the discourse is that true accounts can serve as safety parables. On the LifeQuilt website, families are given “an opportunity to share their stories
in a unique way and in a way that contributes to the goal of prevention.”
(http://www.youngworkerquilt.ca/LifeQuiltlovedones.htm)

The underlying logic of the collaborative prevention discourse communicated through the LifeQuilt dataset includes the following points: multipartite prevention approaches should emphasize shared responsibility for OHS; stakeholder cooperation should communicate a unified safety culture message; and the prevention perspective should be future oriented, with no “blametalk” associated with past injury events. This discourse recommends an intense concentration on educational interventions directed toward consciousness-raising, advancing safety knowledge and changing the behavioural intentions of individuals. Safety is essentially a cultural problem whose solution is education in the form of broad-based public awareness campaigns that can socialize individuals to improve safety values and knowledge levels, and to change behavioural norms.

**Collaborative prevention discourses and true accounts:** True accounts in collaborative prevention discourses are told in ways that accommodate and harmonize the political perspectives of diversely positioned stakeholders. Typically, collaborative prevention discourses construct injuries as individualized, neutral, technical problems amenable to educational interventions. The discourse’s search for consensus tends to discourage an in-depth, structural analysis of workplace injuries. Discussions of an occupational incident’s cause and issues of accountability may potentially disrupt multipartite stakeholder coalitions. In the case study of the LifeQuilt, collaborative prevention discourses – with their focus on shared responsibility, working together for a common cause and remembering workplace fatalities for prevention – recommended increasing the scope and intensity of educational interventions. These interventions targeting individuals and organizations are presented as the most effective way to change safety culture norms, knowledge and behavioural intentions. The workplace fatality is framed as an account that can contribute to prevention, an account that is often sanitized of blame and lacks a comprehensive analysis of cause. As interview participant James (labour OHS) noted, dwelling upon blame associated with past injury events interferes with bringing about a collaborative culture where stakeholders can work together to prevent future tragedies. This perspective was also reflected in the OHSM prevention literature and in the rationale for avoiding discussions of both organizational and individual blame logics (Cantino 2008).
The true accounts of the LifeQuilt potentially bring about a personal identification with victims/survivors of workplace tragedy. In communicating a prevention message through a true account, the injury is individualized, personalized, has an identity and ceases to be an anonymous event. As Mohun’s (2005) analysis of the American safety movement observes, the true account puts a concrete human face on abstract statistical data. In his history of the American safety movement, Mohun (2005) observes that true accounts were a way of connecting the public by using anecdotes “to convey the message that this is more than an exercise in probability, that accidents really do happen to friends and neighbours” (p.338).

The true account form involves the centering of prevention messages around individualized, “true” stories of incidents. However, these stories, engaged in prevention awareness campaigns, are not naturalized accounts and always speak from a political location. A true account from a LifeQuilt personal tribute page describes a workplace death in which a worker fell from a broken scaffold. This account does not flag the company as violating its safety responsibilities to make sure that workers are wearing functioning harnesses and that equipment is in working condition. Nor does the true account mention the role of OHS regulatory agencies in inspecting sites and ensuring that workers receive fall-protection training and are complying with OHS regulations. Instead, the commemorative states that the young worker was not wearing a harness and fell from an unsecured scaffold. The focus of the commemorative is educational and individualized: workers should wear proper equipment and routinely check the security of platforms. It is a story that can be used to demonstrate the importance of personal protection equipment and fall-prevention principles. The commemorative communicates the collaborative prevention discourse’s mission on the LifeQuilt of remembrance for prevention. The story has been shared to contribute to the goals of prevention, which are ultimately directed toward creating a safety-savvy worker through communicating technical prevention principles. This true account is a snapshot that fails to consider the broader socio-political context of this event. From a collective memory perspective, the true account form is the telling of an incident that occurred in the past through a socio-political lens of the present. This implies that a particular perspective informs the articulation of the true account on the LifeQuilt. The interview data and the texts of the LifeQuilt website reflect the dominance of a WCB management standpoint (Eakin 2010).

Vinitzky-Seroussi (2002; 2010) notes that commemoratives that are intended to create consensus engage the discursive strategies of framing the deceased as an exemplary individual and
providing a description of the individual that is sanitized of social and political context. The consensus commemoratives of the LifeQuilt describe the exemplary character of the deceased, his or her scholastic achievements, and family life. This commemorative framing conceals a full accounting of the details of the event and obscures the operation of prevention as a socio-political activity and practice. The workplace fatality is retold by invoking generic prevention principles, such as asserting worker rights and responsibilities, not working alone and receiving adequate safety training.

Collaborative prevention discourses manage blame by focusing on the generalizable and technical principles of prevention that are not linked to specific individuals, organizations or institutions. Converting the tragedy into a prevention parable is a way of constructing the true account as a warning, a cautionary tale. The narrative of a young worker killed on the job can serve a redemptive function as a parable for prevention. The prevention parables of the LifeQuilt communicate generic prevention principles and do not include contextualizing structural factors, such as productivity pressures, labour shortages and unsafe conditions, that may have contributed to a death on the job.

The commemoratives that dominate on the LifeQuilt distance blame, avoid a discussion of structural solutions and focus instead on what can be learned within a collaborative prevention discursive framework. The true account devolves into a cautionary tale imparting OHS prevention lessons targeting workers, workers-to-be, parents, employers and the public at large. These true accounts depoliticize workplace injuries by concealing the social, economic and political relations of workplace injuries.

III. How do the LifeQuilt texts reflect consensus and critical commemoratives?

The LifeQuilt is a memorial space that is predominantly occupied by consensus commemoratives but includes critical commemoratives. Consensus commemoratives on the LifeQuilt are true account forms that, in telling the story of an occupational fatality that “could have been averted,” communicates both the remembrance of the individual fatally injured on the job and the preventability of a workplace injury. Critical commemoratives challenge the principles of collaborative prevention by finding blame, demanding social justice and accountability, and/or questioning the efficacy of prevention interventions such as education and existing legislation and enforcement practices. The LifeQuilt commemorative campaign served dominant
institutional interests of Occupational Health and Safety by engaging workplace tragedies as redemptive and cautionary tales in a consensus-building narrative carefully constructed to neutralize blame. At the same time, the commemoratory campaign allowed for the minimal presence of critical accounts of workplace injuries that might challenge or unsettle the dominant narrative. As collective memory researchers argue, the presence of critical commemoratives is tightly controlled and adheres to rules concerning content details, identifying information and content (Sturken 1997; Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002). Effectively controlled, critical commemoratives can enhance the impact of public memorials by giving a commemorative act or practice an aura of authenticity (Bodnar 1992; Sturken 1997; Teeger and Vinitzky-Seroussi 2007). While consensus commemoratives dominate on the LifeQuilt, the presence of a small number of critical commemoratives enhances the memorial as a truly “inclusive” and multipartite monument.

Commemorative acts and practices may serve dominant institutional interests by containing critical narratives within a consensus-building framework. Public commemoratives sponsored by dominant interests, according to Bodnar (1992), are “maintaining the social order and existing institutions, the need to avoid disorder or dramatic changes, and the dominance of citizen duties over citizen rights” (p. 19). The function of many public memorials that serve dominant institutions is to engage commemorative acts to build consensus. This is achieved through the active involvement of dominant institutions in developing a unifying narrative or official account that acknowledges the suffering of the affected community while keeping blame at bay. The LifeQuilt can acknowledge the suffering of victims while calling for a renewed collective commitment to safety culture.

The true accounts on the LifeQuilt that are examples of critical commemoratives identify factors, such as negligent employers, supervisors, investigative cover-ups and inadequacies of the OHS system, for these workplace deaths. Yet, these critical commemoratives are contained within the rule-governed framework of the LifeQuilt website. For example, companies are not named, and the accident investigation is not described in detail. Critical commemoratives are not dominant on the LifeQuilt website, and they are still contained within a memorial product that focuses on collaboration, distancing blame and remembering for prevention. Commemorative acts and practices serve dominant institutional interests by containing and taming potentially subversive narratives within a consensus-building framework (Wagner-Pacifici 1996). Interview data portrayed employer safety organizations and compensation boards as powerful gatekeepers
exercising control over the recruitment and content of injury commemoratives and over exhibition plans.

**How commemoratives raise blame**

The true account genre, the commemorative being an example, is a potentially subversive strategy: family workplace tragedy true accounts may expose the weaknesses of OHS policies and practices. Individuals may reveal companies who knowingly engage in unsafe practices or governments who, by failing to regulate, enable the tragic outcomes of negligent employers. True account forms, such as commemoratives, can be used by families to make demands for social justice, corporate accountability, financial compensation, increased access to the workplace fatality investigative process or simply to expose the failing of the OHS prevention system.

An example of the changeable nature of true accounts is provided by comparing two accounts of the death of Timothy Hamilton. On the LifeQuilt website, Timothy’s personal tribute page describes how he was at a summer job, setting up event tents, and had been on the job for over twelve hours. There was no light, and when the last pole was put into place, it hit a hydro line; Timothy was electrocuted and a coworker badly burned. In keeping with the features of the consensus commemorative, Timothy’s exemplary character is described. However, the socio-political context of the occupational death is not communicated through this commemorative account.

The LifeQuilt commemorative can be compared to the account of Timothy Hamilton’s death included in the *Real Life, Real People* section of the Government of Alberta’s Employment and Immigration website (http://employment.alberta.ca/4339.html). The site provides a detailed and critical account, identifying the companies First Energy Corporation and Fiesta, whose practices led to Tim’s death and the serious injuries suffered by his coworker. The company employees instructed Tim and a coworker to install a tent pole at night when the power line was not visible. The First Energy Corporation and Fiesta were issued a $100,000 fine. Here the death of Tim Hamilton is placed in a social, political and economic context:

> Both companies knew the power line was there. They had been discussing it for 6 months. Neither firm called the local power company, nor measured the height of the line, nor measured the length of the tent pole. In the middle of the night, after Tim was
killed and taken away, First Energy Corporation made special arrangements for the tent to be moved a few feet away from the power line. They still held the party the next day. (http://employment.alberta.ca/SFW/5378.html)

Worker commemoratives are a dynamic narrative form and are always located in a social, political and economic context. While the case study examined the LifeQuilt as a multipartite initiative in which texts were mediated to align with collaborative prevention discourses and practices, in other settings, such as the U.K. and U.S. websites, and the Alberta government employment website, more critical, contextualized commemoratives were communicated. The true account form is not restricted to any political agenda and, in fact, can be constructed and retold from a variety of standpoints. Collaborative prevention ideals, as this case study has shown through comparing the LifeQuilt with other worker memorial websites, are not reflected in all commemorative acts and practices. As Olick (1999) observes, “Commemoration is a way of claiming that the past has something to offer, be it a warning or a model” (p. 381).

The case study of the LifeQuilt is an accounting of a multipartite initiative in which the management, dilution and distancing of blame through remembrance and commemoration is a key feature of the discursive framework of collaborative prevention. The commemorative, through its focus upon the institutional acknowledgement of family loss and individual remembrance, provides common ground for multipartite players. The group narrative of collaborative prevention invokes a workplace tragedy as a redemptive and cautionary tale for prevention. At the same time, the case study has suggested that the commemorative as a true account form allows for multiple interpretations of workplace injuries that are potentially unsettling to the dominant narrative. Hence, the commemorative form both allows for common ground but is also vulnerable to alternative narratives and stories that may invoke blame. Further, the true account form of the injury commemorative can be engaged in campaigns that demand social justice and accountability, and are critical of dominant institutions. The consensus and critical account of Timothy Hamilton’s death illustrates the different framings of a workplace tragedy. Timothy’s story on the LifeQuilt, focused on character and prevention lessons (worker inexperience, inadequate training, and hazardous conditions) rather than workplace context, is a prevention parable that supports collaborative prevention. However, the campaign “Tim’s Story” included on the Alberta government employment website presents a critical commemorative that exposes the corporate practices and players responsible for his death. This suggests that the Alberta government’s perspective may differ from that of WCBs and health and safety
organizations that do not highlight critical, contextualized stories of workplace deaths in a similar way.

**Prevention is political**

This study provides a critical sociological commentary of the widely held perspective in OHS (and indeed in public health more generally) that prevention is a neutral, scientific, evidence-based discourse. The findings of this case study have identified features of collaborative prevention discourses that may be taken up by diversely located stakeholders for social, political and economic reasons. Prevention discourses need to be analyzed for both their manifest and unintended consequences to be understood. Collaborative prevention discourses, with their focus upon shared responsibility and stakeholder consensus, engage in the politics and negotiation of blame. The true account form is well suited to the consensus-building objectives of collaborative prevention discourses. A tragic story is communicated as a prevention parable, unifying the OHS community while individualizing the injury event and sanitizing the account of specific blame. This containment/diffusion of blame skews accounts of workplace tragedies and produces safety educational messages that are stripped of fault and accountability. The accident is everyone’s problem, a consequence of shared indifference and a wake-up call for mindfulness. If collaborative prevention discourses and practices conceal an understanding of the underlying causes of injury incidents and discourage accountability, how can prevention operate as socio-political activity and practice?

While the dominant commemorative narrative of the LifeQuilt holds blame and accountability at bay, it also ironically reintroduces the notion of chance and the accident. Collaborative prevention is a contradictory discursive position that espouses the preventability of all injuries and yet simultaneously veers away from a discussion of the cause of past injury incidents: attributing fault may compromise the distancing/diffusion of blame. Further, the discussion of blame and accountability may jeopardize the harmonious multipartite social relations of collaborative prevention. However, removing discussions of fault and attribution of cause from the analysis of injury events begs the question as to why the injury occurred. If the social, economic and political context of workplace incidents is not made explicit in true accounts, then injuries, as a result, may appear to be more like accidents than predictable and preventable events. What are the implications of conceptualizing occupational injuries and deaths as the
individualized outcome of safety culture and behaviour deficits? Is the construct of the accident-prone worker revitalized by collaborative prevention discourses and practices?

As interview participant Jeff (employer OHS) observed, making workers, work and workplaces safe requires a willingness to acknowledge and understand the failures of the current prevention system. These failures cannot be reduced to technical issues, as occupational injuries are the product of social, political and economic forces. The focus of collaborative prevention interventions is individualized educational initiatives that are designed to improve the culture of safety and workplace behaviour and practices. The stories of past workplace injuries and deaths are retold as safety parables shared to prevent the occurrence of occupational injuries and deaths in the future. Collaborative prevention seems to require a creed of preventionism – that is, a faith in broad-based normative and educational discourses that can prevent workplace injuries and eradicate the language of blame, compensation and accountability. Shared responsibility and the democratization/diffusion of blame shifts the public focus from the OHS system’s past failures to the prevention of future incidents through adopting attitudes of increased mindfulness and caring in the workplace.

**Implications for policy and practice**

This study has provided a sociological exploration of the nature of prevention in OHS (and indeed in public health more generally) and has challenged the widely shared perception that prevention is a neutral, scientific and evidence-based practice. The case study is hopefully of value to OHS practitioners, other stakeholders and public health practitioners, and researchers engaged in prevention, as it shows how the selection and implementation of prevention discourses may have unexamined political sources, and profound manifest and unintended implications for the policies and practices that flow from them. The research recommends the continued development of a critical sociology of the politics of collaboration in OHS.

Future research activity could further explore the social and political relations that shape collaborative prevention discourses and investigate how these discursive practices impact workplace health and safety. Collaboration in OHS is inherently political, because stakeholders do not have equal power, and forming coalitions between employers, labour and government may be a deliberate strategy to containing dissent and manage multipartite conflict. In this way,
multipartite collaboration may also facilitate the alignment of prevention discourses and practices with a dominant institutional perspective.

This case study of a true account form in multipartite campaign contributes to a perspective that prevention is political. The true accounts included in collaborative, cross-institutional prevention campaigns, while referencing real events, may be told in ways that accommodate and harmonize the political perspectives of diversely positioned stakeholders. The literature on blame logic in OHSM prevention discourses suggests that decisions regarding the naming of employers, the portrayal of individual workers and the inclusion/exclusion of contextualizing information are negotiated in the true account engaged in multipartite safety campaigns. What is included and excluded from these true accounts of workplace injuries, as socially constructed narratives in multipartite prevention awareness campaigns, is negotiated between stakeholders acting as “agents of memory” (Wagner-Pacifici 1996). The true account in a collaborative prevention forum is a product of the terms and conditions negotiated between diverse stakeholders – some of whom are more powerful as gatekeepers than others – who view injury cause and prevention from different perspectives. Important policy and practice implications flow from engaging true account as a prevention education strategy. An analysis of the LifeQuilt initiative suggests that prevention is not just about the management of risks, harms and hazards but is also concerned with promoting stakeholder collaboration, communicating safety culture to multiple audiences, and diffusing and distancing injury-related discussions of blame. If the communication of sanitized true accounts of workplace tragedies is an educational technique that interferes with an in-depth understanding of the underlying causes and broader socio-political context of occupational injuries, this approach, no matter how well intended, may increase workplace risk and undermine the potential of prevention as a useful enterprise.
References


McCommons, James. 2003. “How safe is their summer job? Teaching kids to spot unsafe work situations — and to say “no” when necessary — is the first job of parents.” *Better Homes and Gardens* June: 208–12.


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Kingston, Ontario: IRC Press.


(http://www.wsib.on.ca/files/Content/Downloadable%20FileBusiness%20Results%20Through%20Health%20%20Safety/Biz.pdf)


### Appendix A: Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Prevention Discourse</td>
<td>A multipartite prevention discourse that emphasizes shared responsibility and the necessity of working together to prevent future injuries rather than dwelling upon individualized blame associated with past events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Memory Studies</td>
<td>An area of sociological literature that considers the forms, functions, contextualizing factors and dynamism of commemorative acts and processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Commemorative</td>
<td>Alternative narratives or critical commemoratives sometimes, challenge the principles of collaborative prevention by finding blame, demanding social justice, accountability and/or questioning the efficacy of prevention interventions such as education and existing legislation and enforcement practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus Commemorative</td>
<td>A true account form that in telling the story of an occupational fatality that “could have been averted” both communicates the remembrance of the individual fatally injured on the job and the preventability of workplace injury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multipartite Web Pages</td>
<td>Web pages on the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt website whose authorship is attributed to the multiple stakeholder group, the Friends of the LifeQuilt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Tribute Pages</td>
<td>Web pages on the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt website commemorating 98 workers between the ages of 14 and 24 killed on the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention Parables</td>
<td>True accounts of workplace tragedies are retold as cautionary tales.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and prevention lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True Account Form</td>
<td>The centering of prevention messages around an individualized, “true” stories of incidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESRTW</td>
<td>Early and Safe Return to Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAPA</td>
<td>Industrial Accident Prevention Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRS</td>
<td>Internal Responsibility System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOL</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>New Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHS</td>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHSM</td>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSSA</td>
<td>Ontario Service Safety Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCBs</td>
<td>Workers’ Compensation Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHSA</td>
<td>Worker Health and Safety Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSIB</td>
<td>Workplace Safety and Insurance Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Allen</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brett Anderson</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Apostoliuk</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Bakstad</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Barnabas</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna Barr</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Barrett</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Bass</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley James Bastien</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan Bebeau</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Bednas</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton Brandt</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giuseppe Bussoli</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucien Chouinard</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugues Cote</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Dauost</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Danisoks</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felice D’Ascanio</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillaume Delisle</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jared Dietrich</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B: Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt Website -- Summary Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Death Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Vehicle</th>
<th>Season/PT</th>
<th>New to job</th>
<th>Blame</th>
<th>Safety moral</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Hobby</th>
<th>Author ID</th>
<th>Graphic Details</th>
<th>Headline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lee Ed Dotshkat</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No-date included</td>
<td>Eagle Plains, Yukon</td>
<td>Service and Transport.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;24 years old – improperly maintained brakes on his vehicle caused his truck to roll&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rene Nathan Dupont</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Hitchcock, Sask</td>
<td>Manu/trades</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;24 years old: Fell into the jaws of a crusher&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Eddy</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;18 years old: Fell from a scaffold&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Ellis</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No-date available</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>Manu/trades</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;18 years old: Killed by being pulled into an industrial dough mixer&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Enright</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;22 years old: Killed in a mining mechanism&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Fairbairn</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Warn Bay, British Columbia</td>
<td>Logging</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;24 years old: died in a logging accident&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Fletcher</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Maple Creek, Sask</td>
<td>Transport.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;24 years old – died in a collision with a train&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Fulbrook</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Welland, Ontario</td>
<td>Take Your Kid to Work day</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;14 years old: Killed in a utility vehicle&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Gaudreault</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Charlevoix, Quebec</td>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quebec -- no headline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Gillies</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Estevan, Sask</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;22 years old: Collision with a semi-trailer&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory Grams</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Edmonton, Alberta</td>
<td>Manu/trades</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;22 years old: working alone, strangled in a conveyor&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew Halpin</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Langara Island, BC</td>
<td>Service Tourism</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;22 years old: Drowned as a fishing guide&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Hamilton</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Bragg Creek, Alberta</td>
<td>Service Hospitality</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;19 years old: Electrocuted&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luc Hatzotte</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>St-Eugene, Quebec</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quebec -- no headline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Hickman</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>Skating Arena</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;20 years old: machine explosion and fire&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy Hicks</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Newcastle, New Brunswick</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;23 years old: Electrocuted&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Hill</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Falcon Lake, Manitoba</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;19 years old: crushed repairing a building&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne Hirtle</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Harmony, Nova Scotia</td>
<td>Logging</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;24 years old: Machinery death at a sawmill&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gilles Huard</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Kirkland LakeOntario</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;18 years old: Buried in a mine&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B: Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt Website -- Summary Table

<p>| Name          | Age | Gender | Death Date | Location         | Sector               | Vehicle | Season/ | New to | Blame | Safety | Higher Education | Character | Family | Hobby | Author ID | Graphic Details | Headline                                                                 |
|---------------|-----|--------|------------|------------------|----------------------|----------|---------| Job    |       | Moral |       |       |         |          |       |       |          |                |                                                                         |
| Murray Jeffrey| 22  | M      | 1999       | Sask             | Oil and gas          | Y        | N       | N      | N     | N     | Y     | Y     | Y       | N         | Y     | Y     | N         |                | “22 years old: Died in a head-on collision”                           |
| Kelly Kaler   | 19  | F      | 1997       | Vancouver, BC     | Service Retail       | N        | N       | Y      | Y     | Y     | N     | N     | N     | N       | N     | N     | N         |                | “19 years old: murdered during a store robbery”                      |
| Dean Karjalainen | 21 | M      | 1998       | Thunder Bay, Ontario | Service Courier     | Y        | N       | N      | N     | N     | N     | N     | N       | Y     | N     | Y         |                | “21 years old: Died in a motor vehicle crash while on delivery”     |
| Sean Kells    | 19  | M      | 1994       | Ontario           | Manu/trades         | N        | Y       | Y      | Y     | Y     | N     | N     | N       | N         | N     | N     | N         |                | No headline                                                           |
| Sebastien Lalonde | 16 | M    | 2001       | Quebec            | Agriculture         | Y        | Y       | N      | N     | N     | N     | N     | Y       | N         | N     | N     | Y         |                | Quebec – no headline                                                   |
| Chad Lamonde  | 20  | 2002   | Sudbury, Ontario | Mining           | N        | N       | N      | N     | Y     | N     | Y     | Y       | N         | Y     | Y     | N         |                | “20 years old: Fell over 800 feet down a mine shaft”                 |
| Todd Lanktree | 21  | M      | 1990       | Guelph, Ontario   | Construction        | N        | Y       | N      | N     | N     | Y     | Y       | N         | N     | N     | N         |                | “21 years old: Killed doing construction work”                        |
| Jamie Lapierre| 21  | M      | 2000       | Point Tupper, Nova Scotia | Transport         | Y        | N       | N      | Y     | N     | N     | Y       | Y         | Y     | Y     | N         |                | “21 years old: Overcome by fumes”                                    |
| Anthony Lavigne | 23 | M      | 1996       | Beaver Creek, n   | Road construction   | Y        | N       | N      | Y     | N     | N     | Y       | Y         | N     | N     | Y         |                | “23 years old: Fatally injured while working road construction”     |
| Erich Lehmann | 19  | M      | 1992       | British Columbia | Manu/trades         | N        | N       | N      | Y     | Y     | N     | N         | N         | N     | N     | Y         |                | 19 years old: Crushed by heavy equipment”                               |
| Gilbert Lima  | 25  | M      | 1999       | Ontario           | Quarry              | N        | N       | N      | Y     | Y     | N     | N         | N         | N     | N     | N         |                | “25 years old: Killed by heavy equipment”                               |
| Douglas Loyer | 20  | M      | 2000       | Cambridge, Ontario | Manu/trades         | N        | N       | N      | Y     | Y     | N     | N         | Y         | N     | Y     | Y         |                | “20 years old: Died due to lockout failure”                            |
| Luke Machver  | 15  | M      | 1995       | Coquitlam, British Columbia | Garbage plant   | N        | Y       | Y      | N     | N     | Y     | Y       | Y         | Y     | N     | Y         |                | “15 years old: Crushed and asphyxiated”                                |
| James MacMillan | 25 | M    | 2000       | Agriculture       | Y        | Y       | Y      | N     | N     | Y     | Y       | Y         | N         | N     | Y     | Y         |                | “24 years old: Crushed when unloading heavy machinery”                |
| Neville Martin | 23 | M      | 1967       | New Brunswick     | Construction        | N        | N       | N      | Y     | Y     | Y     | N         | N         | N     | Y     | N         |                | “23 years old: Fell from scaffolding”                                 |
| Kenny McCoy   | 15  | M      | 1999       | Lashburn, Sask.   | Manu/trades         | Y        | Y       | Y      | Y     | Y     | Y     | Y       | Y         | Y     | Y     | Y         |                | “15 years old: Killed on his first summer job at a tire recycling plant” |
| Matthew McCougli | 18 | M      | 1998       | Lanark, Ontario   | Logging co-op       | N        | Y       | N      | N     | Y     | Y     | Y       | Y         | N         | N     | N     | N         |                | “18 years old: fatal head injuries while logging”                     |
| Gerry McFadyen | 20 | M      | 1991       | La Ronge, Sask.   | Oil and gas         | N        | Y       | N      | Y     | Y     | Y     | Y       | Y         | Y     | Y     | Y         |                | “20 years old: Apprentice power lineman”                               |
| Yancy Dore Meyer | 19 | M     | 1937       | Larder Lake, Ontario | Mining            | N        | N       | Y      | Y     | Y     | Y     | N         | N         | N     | Y     | Y         |                | “19 years old: Stabbed while working in a convenience store”           |
| Edward Miller  | 19  | M      | 1937       | Larder Lake, Ontario | Mining            | N        | N       | Y      | Y     | N     | N     | Y         | N         | N     | Y     | Y         |                | “19 years old: Died as an untrained substitute driller”                |</p>
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## Appendix B: Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt Website -- Summary Table

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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Sector</th>
<th>Vehicle</th>
<th>Season/ Year</th>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;22 years old: Lack of railroad bars led to death...now there are barrier bars.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Wanner</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Midale, Sask</td>
<td>Oil and gas</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;19 years old: Summer student&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Melby Ward</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Shell Camp lake, Nova Scotia</td>
<td>Logging</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;23 years old: logging accident&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd A. Wharington</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Regina, Sask</td>
<td>Sindow washer</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;24 years old: Fell to his death&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler Wirachowsky</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>East End, Sask</td>
<td>Manu/trades</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;191/2: Fell to his death&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>8 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33(Y)</td>
<td>33(Y)</td>
<td>18(Y)</td>
<td>68(Y)</td>
<td>44(Y)</td>
<td>31(Y)</td>
<td>64(Y)</td>
<td>56(Y)</td>
<td>29(Y)</td>
<td>31(Y)</td>
<td>59(Y)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Categories
- **Vehicle**: vehicle involved in fatality
- **Sector**: work sector
- **Seasonal part-time**: job described as not permanent
- **New to Job**: inexperienced, unpractised in workplace
- **Blame**: any suggestion of blame
- **Safety moral**: safety lesson learned from fatality
- **Character**: Young worker’s personality
- **Higher education**: education status
- **Family**: references to young worker’s family
- **Author ID**: attribution of authorship
- **Graphic Details**: of death: visceral description
- **Headline**: caption from personal tribute page

### Observations
- There are 98 personal tribute pages on the website; two hyperlinks did not work as of Dec. 2009.
- These are the first 100 stories recruited/accepted by the multiparty committee (Friends of the LifeQuilt) and they range from 1937 to 2002
- 36 young workers are between the ages of 14 and 19 years old. 62 young workers are between the ages of 20 and 25 years old.
- 90 males and 8 females have commemorative pages on the LifeQuilt website.
- 33 of the workplace fatalities involved vehicles.
Appendix C: Sample document resources

Workers Safety Insurance Board (WSIB)
—Prevention campaigns 1999–2008
—Annual Reports 1997–2006
—WSIB e-newsletters
—Young Worker resources

Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA)
—Accident Prevention
—Accident Prevention E-news
—Annual Reviews 2000–2006
—Young worker prevention resources

Workers Health and Safety Centre
—Annual Reports 1997–2007
—At the Source e-bulletin 2001–2006
—Young Worker Awareness Program

Ministry of Labour
—Work Smart Ontario resources
—Ontario Young Worker Health and Safety Initiatives/Programs Inventory

Ontario of the Worker Advisor

Ontario Federation of Labour
—Focus newsletter 1998–2006

Ontario Service Safety Alliance
—Safety Mosaic Magazine

Threads of Life
—Newsletters 2003–2006

Our Youth at Work
—2005, 2006 simulcasts
—Prevention campaigns

Safe Communities – Passport to Safety
—Prevention campaigns 2003–2006

Institute for Work & Health
—Annual Reports 2000–2006
Appendix D: Information Sheet and Consent Form

Introduction to Study of the LifeQuilt and Injury Prevention Campaigns: Information Sheet

Dear _____

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to participate in a research study that I am conducting for my PhD dissertation topic in workplace injury prevention. My name is Elizabeth Mansfield and I am a graduate student in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto, under the supervision of Dr. Joan Eakin. My dissertation, which focuses upon the LifeQuilt, a young worker awareness campaign, aims to increase our understanding of prevention education in occupational health and safety. This letter describes the study, why you have been invited to participate and what your participation involves.

About the study: In the area of occupational health and safety, very little is known about the practices of collaborative projects in prevention that involve different organizations and institutions working together in the planning and launching of public awareness campaigns. Particularly, preventive education has not been understood from the viewpoint of prevention professionals and others involved in the planning of safety media campaigns. The research will contribute to an understanding of how prevention operates across organizations involving multiple players and will inform policy and program planning in future educational initiatives.

Your involvement in the study: The research is a case study of the LifeQuilt young worker awareness campaign that will involve both the analysis of public documents related to the LifeQuilt and young worker awareness campaigns and interviews. Interviews are a very important part of this research as a goal of the study is to present an understanding of prevention from the viewpoint of those who are actively involved in the field. You are being invited to participate because of your expert knowledge and experience in young worker prevention education. A series of conversation-like interviews with approximately twenty individuals involved in the field of prevention and young worker safety will be conducted in Ontario.

The research seeks to understand your ideas on young worker safety in general and knowledge about your participation in the planning, development and launching of the LifeQuilt initiative. If you give permission, the interview will be taped so I can remember what you tell me, and in your own terms. The interview will last approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours, and you will be asked about
your involvement in the LifeQuilt campaign and young worker safety education. You may also be asked to share your observations about prevention campaigns and your views about how prevention is thought about and practiced.

**Risk and benefits to you:** I do not know of any risks from participating in the study. Although the findings may not benefit you directly, your participation may contribute to knowledge about prevention strategies and collaborative campaigns and may contribute to occupational health and safety policy and program planning in the future.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:** The interviews will be completely confidential and what you say will not be discussed with anybody at your organization or with any other participants in the study. Results of this research will be reported in general terms, with no reference to individual practitioners or circumstances that could identify you. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the interview data. No name or personal identifying details will be attached to any of the data. All documents, audiotapes and other research materials will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet and all data will be processed on a secure, password-protected computer. The consent forms will be kept locked separately from other study data/forms. The taped interviews will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the study. Neither your name nor the name of your workplace will be used in any publication of the study results. In the publications of results, the data will be presented in aggregate form and individuals will not be recognizable. The project will take about two years to complete, but when it is complete the results will be made available to all those involved. Resulted will be published after completion of the study and presented to various academic and community audiences. The data from the interviews will be used to inform the present study, but may also be used in future projects on this topic.

I very much hope that you will be willing to participate, and look forward enormously to learning about what you do, your experience, and your ideas about working in the area of young worker injury prevention. If you would like any further information or explanation about this project please contact Elizabeth Mansfield or her academic supervisor, Professor Joan Eakin at the University of Toronto at the number/addresses below:

Elizabeth Mansfield 416-978-1316 or elizabeth.mansfield@utoronto.ca
Dr. Joan Eakin 416-978-8502 or joan.eakin@utoronto.ca
Consent Form: Interviews with Study Participants

I have read the Introduction to the Study given to me and understand the following:

- During the interview (which last about 1 or 1 ½ hours), I will be asked to describe my involvement in young worker safety and the LifeQuilt initiative. I will also be asked about my experiences working in a project involving multiple organizations and the use of real life stories in young worker safety education.

- What I say will be kept entirely confidential. Individual participants will not be named in any reports or publications coming from this study, nor identified in any way in other interviews or communications.

- The interview will be taped and later transcribed into written form with all details removed that could link the contents to me in particular. I can ask not to be taped, or I can stop the taping at any time during the interview.

- I don’t have to answer any questions I don’t want to, can end the interview if I want to, and even ask at a later time that my interview be removed from the study.

- The data from the interviews will be used to inform the present study but may also be used in future projects on this topic. If I do not agree to this, I can say so, and my interview will not be so used.

- If I want I will be given a summary report of the research when it is finished.

- I may be contacted by the researchers again in the future to clarify/follow-up on small points, but can choose not to give permission for further contact.

- If I have any questions I can speak with the student researcher, Elizabeth Mansfield at the University of Toronto, at 416-978-1316 or elizabeth.mansfield@utoronto.ca or her academic supervisor, Dr. Joan Eakin, at the University of Toronto, at 416-978-8502 or joan.eakin@utoronto.ca. If I have any questions about participating in this study I may also contact the Ethics Review Office at the University of Toronto at 416-946-3273 or ethics.review@utoronto.ca.

#

______________________                                  _______________
Participant                                                             Date

______________________                                   _______________
Researcher                                                              Date
Appendix E: Sample Interview Questions

**General background**
- How did you become involved in young worker safety?
- What kinds of activities are you engaged in related to young worker safety?

**The LifeQuilt**
- How did you become involved in this initiative?
- How was it decided what accounts should be written, and how they should be written?
- How were the stories recruited to the LifeQuilt?
- How has the LifeQuilt been received by different groups, organizations and audiences?
- Who originally owned the LifeQuilt and who owns the LifeQuilt now? How did this change come about?

**Organizational collaboration**
- Which organizations were you associated with in relation to the LifeQuilt?
- How did these organizations work together?
- What was it like to work in an initiative involving different organizations?
- Were some organizations and groups easier to work with than others? Why? In what way?
- What are the rewards in working with other organizations?
- What are the challenges in working with other organizations?

**The website**
- At what point, was a decision made to have a website and why?
- How are the stories on the website told differently or the same as on the actual quilt?
- What changes have been made to the LifeQuilt website since it was first made available online?
- Who uses the website?
- How are the LifeQuilt and the LifeQuilt website administered?
- Is there a (prevention/education) strategy underlying the LifeQuilt? What would it be?

**Injury narratives in prevention awareness campaigns**
- Have you been involved in any other campaigns that have used personal injury narratives like this? Tell me about. Were they successful? Why? Why not?

**Perspectives on young worker injury prevention**
- How would you describe the approaches used by young worker safety campaigns at the present time?
- Has your organization’s approaches to young worker safety changed over time? How?
- Do you think there are any problems or limitations of the young workers safety program?
Appendix F: Interview Participants

*Barbara (family safety activist)* is the parent of a young worker killed on the job. She was interviewed on May 11, 2007.

*Carol (employer OHS)* is an occupational health and safety professional who works with employer groups. She was interviewed on July 11, 2007.

*Diane (labour OHS)* is an occupational health and safety professional who works with labour. She was interviewed on June 6, 2007.

*James (labour OHS)* is an occupational health and safety professional who works with labour. He was interviewed on June 6, 2007.

*Jeff (employer OHS)* is an occupational health and safety professional who works with employer groups. He was interviewed on July 3, 2007.

*Richard (government OHS)* is a government employee involved with health and safety who sympathizes with labour. He was interviewed on May 3, 2007.

*Susan (labour OHS)* was involved in the production of the Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt and is a supporter of labour interests. She was interviewed on June 22, 2007.
Appendix G: Example of social world mapping

LifeQuilt
Gatekeepers and Agents of Memory

Legend
- Multipartite Players
- Unanticipated features and silences
- Discourses informing the LifeQuilt

- Culture of Safety & behaviour-based safety discourses
- All injuries are predictable and preventable
- Discourse on young workers injury and death as morally, socially, economically unacceptable
- True Accounts: Human stories behind the statistics
- Collaborative Prevention: Discourse of shared responsibility
- White collar kids in blue collar jobs
- Pedagogical family: responsible for education and safety of working youth
- Neoliberal Discourses: toward deregulation and self reliance in occupational health and safety

Appendix G: The Young Worker Memorial LifeQuilt (messy situational map)

- Bereaved Family Safety Activists
- Government OHS professionals
- Thes of Life
- Friends of the LifeQuilt
- Business Community
- Local Union Chapters
- Employee Safety Associations
- WSI and WCds
- LifeQuilt recruitment
- LifeQuilt account authorship, writing guidelines, editing
- Employers not identified
- Lay versus expert discourses on young worker injury prevention
- WSIB 100 Workers/Anonymity of Prevention Memorial Nov 1, 2001
- WSIB 100 Workers/Anonymity of Prevention Memorial Nov 1, 2001
- Media accounts of individual stories included on the LifeQuilt
- Issues of social relations and power in the workplace
- Young Workers not on the Life Quilt i.e., “at risk” youth
- Injured worker associations not included
- Families of young workers without dependents receive funeral coverage and no monetary or therapeutic support
- Highly publicized workplace deaths of young workers Sean Kells, David Ellis, Tim Hickman, Sharon Peat, Robert Fulbrook from 1994 to 2000 in Ontario
- Victims surcharge fund