Much Ado About Free Trade?
Examining the Role of Discourse and Civil Society in the Framing of the Anti-Free Trade Debate, 1985-1988

By Kyle Roerick

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ABSTRACT

The well-known outcome of the 1988 federal election – a Conservative Party majority in Parliament and an effective "yes" to the question of whether or not the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States was desired – tends to obscure the importance of the process by which a large non-party based opposition movement sought to cultivate and organize the public's understanding of the election's central premise. While the opposition movement failed to have Prime Minister Brian Mulroney removed from power, the discursive process that the movement both created and was the driving force behind, is key to understanding the historical context of the debate over free trade itself.

This thesis will illustrate that there existed a discursive process amongst the efforts of the anti-free trade movement from 1985-1988 to cultivate, organize, and mobilize public opposition to Mulroney's neo-liberal economic policies, through re-framing those objections into a larger and more deeply-rooted Canadian historical narrative.

A discourse analysis was conducted using the various public education materials produced by major anti-free trade civil society organizations in Canada. The examination of that discourse revealed three major stages in the overall process: First, organizations relied heavily on classic paradigms of an anti-continentalist narrative to reinforce what was *different* between the two countries creating an *us* and *them* paradigm and building a case for Canadian exceptionalism. Second, there was an intensification of the *us* and *them* language into a more defined *us* **versus** *them*, or them *against* us, dichotomy. Third, the anti-free trade movement sought to effectively translate the previously established civic opposition into pragmatic political action in preparation for a national election campaign.

The results show that there was an evolution in the ways members of the civil society opposition framed and evolved their arguments in order to turn their "issues" into more of a "crisis." By employing (and expanding on) discursive tools used within that public narrative to generate fear of the *other* to validate illusions of *self*, and to construct believable threats to the collective, the more "micro" discussion over the growing pervasiveness of neo-liberalism took on a hyper-nationalistic and symbolic routine, one that mirrored the iconic political and electoral debates in 1891 and 1911, both of which had also been based upon the potential for free trade with the United States. Most of all, the evidence points to a popular opposition movement against free trade, which not only significantly pre-dated the official political opposition, but in some respects created its message and focus.

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CHAPTER I

CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, AND FREE TRADE

Introduction

In 1988, Canada's future existence hung in the balance, or so argued the members of the anti-free trade movement which, since 1985, had developed into a well-organized social opposition to the proposed free trade agreement with the United States. Across the country, Canadians debated whether a free trade agreement was in Canada's best interest. Opponents maintained that a deal with the Americans would significantly and negatively impact every single aspect of Canadian life, resulting in massive job losses, detrimental impacts on national sovereignty, and irreparable damage to Canadian culture and social institutions. As such, long before the question became the cornerstone of the 1988 national election, these opponents ultimately agreed that this debate would only be settled in the form of a national vote prior to the signing of any final agreement. In this way, Canadian voters, whom anti-free traders also believed they could win over and mobilize, could be given the opportunity to decide their own fate and popularly resolve if free trade with the United States was the right direction for the country to take.

Between 1985 and 1988, a range of labour, social, and religious groups embarked on a national public education campaign to convince Canadians that free trade with the United States would equate absolute losses of independence, sovereignty, a unique culture, and an ability to establish a distinct Canadian identity. The Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, eventually called an election for November 1988. While this election provided the official and political opposition the opportunity to stop the deal, it also provided the

rhetorical battlefield between those in all sectors of Canadian civil society who believed free trade with the United States was a threat to Canada, and those who sought to renew historic bilateral free trade.

A Brief History of the Politics of Bilateral Free Trade

For over a century and a half, Canadians have questioned the merits and fantasized about the dangers associated with close economic partnership with the preponderant United States in both public and political debate. In all cases, free trade generally meant the reduction, if not gradual or immediate elimination, of tariff barriers between the countries in order to make bilateral trade easier, more efficient, and more integrated. The supporters of free trade with the United States believed that economically, Canada would benefit greatly from a closer and deeper partnership with the U.S. On the other hand, those opposed believed that for Canada to grow and exist as a strong, independent, and free country, relations with the United States – here, on an economic level – should not be "free" but remain heavily regulated and controlled by Canadian authorities. If not, and within a bilateral relationship with a more liberalized system, the more powerful United States was bound to take advantage and the sources of power within that relationship would all but locate in Washington. For those opposed, a free trade system meant Ottawa would relinquish national power and sovereignty willingly to the United States without concern for any future effects on the country. For them, supporters of free trade were selling-out Canada to the Americans.

Historically, free trade with the United States has typically yielded a significant amount of political, economic, and cultural backlash in Canada with roots that reach back to the mid-19th century. While the trade relationship between Canada and the United

States has largely been seen as an economically beneficial one for both countries since 1988 – in clearly varying degrees – in political and cultural terms, trade relations between the two countries have been complex and at times ambiguous, prior to 1985. It has been seen by some as a gateway to American annexation, unbridled dependence, and the destruction of a unique Canadian identity or "way of life". Early examples of the debate were rooted in the fear that the Canadian territory would be physically and politically annexed by the United States. Constructed by various media sources and political elites on both sides of the border, this fear inspired a need in Canada to install economic and political borders or barriers to stay the argued or desired expansion of the United States.[1] The theme of annexation played a key role in how some political elites in Canada were to characterize and talk about relations with the United States for much of the 19th and early 20th century.

Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, made it a "national policy" to protect the fledging Canadian economy and industry from the more economically powerful United States by implementing a high tariff system in the late 1870s. At this time, arguments against free trade were often characterized by the exploitation of the national credo that closer continental economic integration would ultimately render Canada unable to build its own unique and distinct nation-state. Early examples of the debate concerning deeper economic relations with the U.S., primarily played out in the political dynamic between Macdonald's Conservative Party and the federal Liberal Party, who supported renewing a reciprocity treaty that had existed between British North

1 See Donald F Warner, The Idea of Continental Union: Agitation for the Annexation of Canada to the United States, 1849-1893. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1960); Randall White, "Free Trade 1854," Beaver 68, No. 6 (1989): 14-22; L. B Shippee. Canadian-American Relations 1849-1874. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939); J. L. Granatstein, "Under Which Flag?," in *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism*. (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1996).

America and the United States from 1865 to 1866.[2] From 1874 to 1878, under Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie, the Liberals would attempt to renew this agreement. However, and since the end of the 1854 agreement, Canadian attempts to renew reciprocity "evoked little enthusiasm south of the border," primarily due to a lingering strength of post-Civil War protectionist forces.[3] In the end, the Americans rejected Mackenzie's proposal. Riding on the failure of the Liberal attempt to form a new bilateral trade policy with the United States, Macdonald staged his political "comeback" in the 1878 federal election, with his National Policy at the centre of his platform. Macdonald's economic policy was diametrically opposed to the pro-reciprocity Liberals, a feature the Conservatives relied upon in the effort to be re-elected. While the Liberals touted the merit in continuing to build a closer economic relationship with the United States, Macdonald's vision for Canada was completely different. His 1878 economic plan was distinctively protectionist, with a focus on connecting Canada along its east-west axis, developing a strong national economy, and maintaining a strong connection with the British Empire.

Macdonald's National Policy, put into place in 1879, arguably dominated his ideological convictions until his death in 1891. Chief among these convictions was a strong sense of imperialist priority and a distrust of Americans. Professor Patricia K. Wood summarizes that:

> The political motivations of the Conservatives' protectionism were linked to tariff revenue, the building of the Canadian-Pacific Railway and defensive strategy against the McKinley Tariff of the United States.

2 The treaty was cancelled by the U.S. Congress in 1866 after the Civil War had ended and a year before Canada would officially became a country. For the most part, this was due to an American protectionism measure to promote faster rebuilding of domestic industry following the Civil War.

3 Robert E. Hannigan, "Reciprocity 1911: Continentalism and American Weltpolitik," Diplomatic History 4, No. 1 (January, 1980): 1-18.

> In addition to his personal political stake in the National Policy, Macdonald held a deep distrust of American politicians and their institutions. This distrust further blackened his perspective in already difficult situations. [4]

Wilfrid Laurier replaced Mackenzie as Liberal Party leader in 1887 and eventually led his party to victory in the 1896 federal election. However, before Laurier's 1896 victory, he endured a very difficult political battle between himself and Macdonald over the issue of renewed reciprocity with the United States in the 1891 federal election. While Laurier saw merit in an economic policy where reciprocity could be renewed, Macdonald would ensure that Laurier's vision would remain significantly unpopular with Canadian businesses and voters. Historian O. D. Skelton noted that Laurier was principally against the notion that the National Policy had brought about any significant economic or political benefits originally promised by the Conservatives in the late 1870s.[5] Laurier was "unhesitatingly in favour of closer and friendlier trade relations with the United States," and at the very heart of the issue, he himself noted that, "the time has come to abandon the policy of retaliation [read: tariffs] followed thus far by the Canadian government [read: Conservatives], to show the American people that we are brothers, and to hold out our hands to them, with a due regard for the duties we owe our mother country."[6] Britain had since abandoned its preferential trade relationships with colonies in favour of free trade, and despite the Imperialists in the Canadian government who preached to safeguard the Imperial connection, commercially, culturally, and politically, Laurier firmly believed that the acceptance of Canada as an independent state was far preferable for the Country's future prosperity. "The day is coming when this country will

4 Patricia K. Wood, "Defining 'Canadian': Anti-Americanism and Identity in Sir John A. Macdonald's Nationalism," Journal of Canadian Studies, 36, No. 2 (Summer 2001): 51;

5 Ibid., 454-456

6 O. D. Skelton, Life and Letters of Sir Wilfred Laurier, Volume 1. (Oxford University Press: Toronto, 1921), 376

have to take its place among the nations of the earth," he remarked in 1890 in Montreal. Two years later, after his party's bitter defeat in the 1891 election, he stated, "[m]y opinion is that in the course of time the relations of Canada with Great Britain must cease, as the relations of colonies with the mother country do cease, by independence, just as a child becomes a man."[7] For Laurier, the overreliance on the Empire was fruitless and counterproductive to Canada. The Liberals believed that independence was critical for Canada to make its own commercial treaties.

Laurier sought to challenge the Conservative's thirteen-year incumbency by addressing the depressed state of the Canadian economy and proposing that the National Policy was outdated and a new economic option should be explored.[8] Political historian J. L. Granatstein noted that in the 1880s the Liberals came up with two ideas – Commercial Union and Unrestricted Reciprocity.[9] While the first implied an ambitious customs union and a common Canada-U.S. external tariff, the latter suggested free trade between Canada and the United States but provided that each government could set their own external tariffs for other countries.[10] Macdonald, however, firmly believed that his National Policy was still relevant and important for Canadian economic development. Not only did he see it as important to continue the unhindered economic and political growth of Canada, he was also convinced that Canada's annexation remained actual American policy.[11] According to Granatstein, Macdonald wrote in 1890 that "every American statesman…covets Canada. The greed for its acquisition is still on the increase,

7 Ibid. 364

8 Wood, 2001, 49

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 44

11 Ibid., 46

and God knows when it will end."[12] Macdonald sought to defeat Laurier at the polls the following year by focusing on the fear of annexation, and characterizing the Liberals, and their proposed economic policy, as inherently traitorous to Canada.

During his 1891 federal election campaign, Macdonald evoked, rhetorically, national mythologies of loyalty to the British Empire and American annexation in order to convince Canadians that free trade with the United States was a disloyal gesture and dangerous feat for Canada to pursue. Granatstein argued that "Canadian conservatives used the Loyalist myth as a weapon in the domestic political and social wars," including those associated with free trade.[13] Granatstein described the myth as a "conservative phenomenon" stemming from the American Revolution. The Loyalists, those who rejected American republicanism and favoured the conservation of imperial institutions and traditions, had moved north to British North America and maintained a "hatred of the Yankees to justify their detestation of democratic forms and republicanism."[14] This notion characterized much of the early "anti-American" discourse that, according to Granatstein's analysis, later became a powerful and coercive rhetorical tool used by political elite to maintain political power. He noted that the Loyalist myth "became the key tool in the maintenance of the established political and economic order," including Macdonald's National Policy.[15]

Professor Patricia K. Wood analyzed the visual discourse (political and campaign cartooning) during the 1891 federal election. Wood concluded that the rhetoric and

12 Ibid.

13 J. L. Granatstein, Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism. (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1996), 38

14 Ibid., 5. Interestingly, this "conservative phenomenon" was re-used by the political and social left throughout the 1970s and 1980s to oppose free trade.

15 Ibid.

imagery used by the Conservatives to position themselves against Laurier's pro-reciprocity Liberal platform, was connected to a larger anti-American contemporary social narrative that evoked questions of ethnicity, gender, and class while often blurring the lines between whether the arguments were based on economics or if they were about national identity.[16] She also shed light on the utility of how the anti-American and pro-imperialist discourse operated within the context of the 1891 election:

> In a common political move, the Tories [Conservatives] sought sole ownership of the power to define "Canadian," and paradoxically externalized their Canadian opponents by presenting them as a foreign enemy. The choice put before the voters was not merely between two parties, but between two visions, two destinies: either remain nestled in the Union Jack behind the British lion, or sell your birth right and your soul to Washington, soon to be the capital of North America. The Tory strategy was successful and won the party another term in the House of Commons.[17]

Macdonald returned to power after Laurier was defeated in the election. Macdonald's loyalist and anti-American rhetoric appeared to have worked enough to discredit Laurier and to convince a majority of the Canadian voters that renewed reciprocity with the United States was not in Canada's national interests. Granatstein noted that Macdonald's success revealed a "country that desperately wanted to remain British and that continued to fear…the United States."[18] Skelton argued that Macdonald and the Conservatives:

> [f]ought with their backs to the wall, knowing their leader was dying, his lieutenants at odds, and their old party discredited. Desperation and in some cases an honest belief that the nation's or the Empire's safety was at stake, drove them to a campaign of personal abuse and flag-waving

16 Ibid., 49. Professor Patricia K. Wood, argues that "economic recession in the 1880s led many to find fault in the tariff walls of the National Policy and seek potential growth through increased exchange with their largest trading partner, the United States. Laurier was convinced to make "unrestricted reciprocity" the party's central plank months before the election was called."

17 Ibid., 50

18 Granatstein, 1996, 50.

> beyond Canadian precedent…They tried to prove the Liberal leaders were hoping and working directly for annexation.[19]

For Skelton, these charges "had no basis other than the heated imagination of self-righteous partisans, but repeated and reckless assertion had some effect," as in the end, "thousands of simple Canadians had imagined that the country's national existence and national honour were at stake, and had voted to avert the dangers of too intimate trade connection with the United States."[20]

By 1910, many in Canada had come to detest the National Policy, particularly the agricultural community in Western Canada who complained of the high costs of protectionism.[21] Although the Liberal Party dropped its advocacy of free trade from its platform for the 1896 election – which it won – Laurier acted on the demands of the farmers and began to negotiate a deal proposal with American President, William Howard Taft. Prior to Taft's presidency, President Theodore Roosevelt too had to address growing resistance to protectionism, particularly in New England, where shoe and textile manufacturers were dissatisfied with the Dingly Act of 1897 – a measure that extended high tariffs to virtually all domestic production.[22] Roosevelt, however, "declined to tamper with the tariff," a political move that sought to satisfy the protectionism and stability of his own party.[23] When opposition to protectionism grew even louder in the United States, considerably in the north-east, Roosevelt considered a reciprocity

19 Skelton, 1921, 411.

20 Ibid., 418.

21 Ibid., 54.

22 Hannigan, 1980, 6.

23 Ibid

agreement with Newfoundland, arguing that reciprocity with Canada would be far too difficult to obtain.[24]

After Roosevelt, Taft was left with the legacy of a discontented New England and Midwestern manufacturing industry which detested the Dingly Act. While cautious at first, by 1910 Taft presented himself as a supporter of reciprocity and fought "vigorously for Congressional support" of the proposed 1911 agreement with Canada.[25] In 1909, the Taft administration attempted to slightly loosen restrictions on key materials used by producers such as hides, coal, iron ore, wood pulp, and petroleum, by introducing the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act. However, while Payne-Aldrich found early support from industrial revisionists, eventually dissatisfaction to the extent the Act went to reduce tariff barriers prevailed and helped persuade the Taft administration to pursue a reciprocity agreement with Canada in 1910.[26] Taft was also convinced that, attuned to current world trends and the commercial relationship with Canada, a greater primacy on foreign trade rather than protectionism would provide "the United States with the long term structural needs of American capitalism."[27] Responding to his country's own dissatisfaction with the protectionist legacy of Macdonald's National Policy, Laurier met with Taft to negotiate a reciprocity agreement in 1910. By late January, 1911 a reciprocity agreement was reached by both parties that provided for a tariff-free and unrestricted flow of each nation's natural products; now Laurier had to brave the storm of criticism that followed and sell the agreement to Canadian voters, like he attempted in 1891.

24 Ibid

25 Sir Robert L. Borden, His Memoirs. (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1938), 319.

26 Hannigan, 1980, 8.

27 Ibid

Historian Douglas A. Brown argued that the "ideological consequences of establishing a relationship with the United States [at that time] emphasized a conflict between nationalist and imperialist values in Canada."[28] The imperialist connection and popular preference to the British Empire over the American Republic remained a strong force in Canadian society and politics. Similarly, historian Simon J. Potter argued that the 1911 debate created an opportunity for political groups in both countries to utilize the media to "forge alliances with each other and work together on a specific issue."[29] This was particularly the case with Canadian manufacturers who began courting British imperialists in order to build support to oppose Laurier's reciprocity deal.[30] In the early 20th century, Canadian businesses were opposed to greater trade liberalization with the United States as it meant a massive influx of American companies that would swamp fledging Canadian companies and local competition. The 1911 federal election was a watershed in the country's political history, particularly in terms of the iconic debate between those favouring renewed reciprocity with the United States and those who, holding on to Macdonald's legacy, opposed it. The election represented a reaffirmation of the ties between Canada and the British Empire while asserting a lingering distaste and fear in the Canadian electorate to accept a redirection of Canadian economic policy from Britain to the United States. Some still arguably saw reciprocity as an absolute retooling of Macdonald's National Policy, which some argued would have disastrous and fatal effects on the future of Canada. Potter observed that, "on the one hand, Canada's eastern

28 Douglas A. Brown, "Thoroughbred Horse-Racing Receives an Imperialist Nod: The Parliamentary Debate on Legalizing Gambling in Canada, 1910," International Journal of the History of Sport, 11, No. 2 (1994): 256

29 Simon J. Potter, "The Imperial Significance of the Canadian-American Reciprocity Proposals of 1911." Historical Journal [Great Britain] 47, No. 1 (2004): 81

30 Ibid.

manufacturers enjoyed the benefits of a 'National Policy' of tariff protection…On the other hand, Canada's western farmers were more interested in demolishing tariff barriers altogether than in further entrenching the principle of protectionism in order to unify the British empire through preference."

> Moreover, many western farmers looked primarily to the United States rather than Britain or even eastern Canada as a trading partner. By the early twentieth century, many western farmers were actively opposing the National Policy that they believed was forcing them to buy expensive eastern Canadian manufactured goods.[31]

However, as Macdonald had done in 1891, the Conservatives under Robert L. Borden exploited public fears of American annexation while reinforcing the national primacy of the connection to the British. In order to discredit Laurier and defeat his proposed agreement with the United States. Unlike their successors in the 1980s, the eastern Canadian business community fervently opposed reciprocity in 1911. A group of powerful Toronto businessmen, later known as the "Toronto Eighteen," publicly stated their opposition to the proposal arguing that Canada's economic prosperity was a product of the National Policy and reciprocity would destroy it. "Moreover," they argued:

> The agreement would weaken ties with the empire. It would expose Canada to enormous difficulties if the United States withdrew at some future point. Moreover…to avoid such a disruption Canada would be forced to extend the scope of the agreement so as to include manufactures and other things…Reciprocity threatened Canadian nationality with a more serious blow than any it has heretofore met.[32]

Borden's Conservatives designed their campaign against the pro-reciprocity Liberals to reflect the above by characterizing Laurier as a traitor who was ultimately disloyal to Macdonald's vision of Canada as a strong and independent nation, separate from the

31 Ibid., 89

32 J. L. Granatstein. "The 1911 Reciprocity Agreement and Election" in *Partners Nevertheless: Canadian-American Relations in the 20th Century*, ed. Norman Hillmer (Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman, 1989), 68.

United States. Like Macdonald, Borden relied heavily on presupposed public sentiment and common sense understandings about Canada-U.S. relations, as well as the socially rooted connection to Britain, to convince voters that reciprocity ultimately meant the destruction of Canada. Breaking those ties with Britain, for much of the Imperialist community in Canada, meant surrendering and submitting to the United States, rather than what Laurier argued, as national independence for Canada. For some reason, there was no middle ground for those such as Borden, who argued that, "Canada, having once become the commercial and industrial vassal of the United States would inevitably become the political vassal of the Country and ultimately would be absorbed."[33] In his memoirs, Borden noted that in the 1911 campaign, the Conservatives made much use of public utterances made by Taft and other senior officials to convince the Canadian voters that the United States was in favour of such annexation notions.

> In this campaign much use was made of the public utterances of President Taft who fought vigorously to obtain Congressional support of the Reciprocity Agreement. At a meeting held in Boston on April 25th, he made public correspondence between himself and ex-President Roosevelt. [Taft exclaimed,] it (Reciprocity) might have the tendency to reduce the cost of food products somewhat; it would certainly make the reservoir much greater and prevent fluctuations. Meantime the amount of Canadian products we would take would produce a current of business between Western Canada and the United States that would make Canada only an adjunct of the United States.'[34]

The Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Mr. Champ Clark, said at the time:

> I hope to see the day when the American flag will float over every square foot of British North American possession, clear to the North Pole…I have no doubt whatever that the day is not far distant when Great Britain wild joyfully see all her North American possession becoming part of this Republic. That is the way things are trending now.[35]

33 Borden, 1938, 320.

34 Ibid., 319.

35 Ibid

For Borden, remarks like these served to greatly offend "the pride of Canadians who looked forward to the development of their country as a great nation within the orbit of the British Commonwealth."[36]

Political scientist, Brian Bow argued that the 1911 election exemplified the "widespread anxiety that economic integration would inevitably lead to political annexation…the dark shadow of 'manifest destiny'…still had not been lifted."[37] In the final months before the election, Borden toured the country arguing that the "Reciprocity compact…meant the commercial and fiscal union of Canada and the United States," and that Canadians "must decide whether the spirit of Canadianism or of Continentalism shall prevail on the northern half of this continent."[38] Borden continued in a speech given in Halifax, Nova Scotia on September 19th, 1911, just two days before the election:

> To all who are proud of her past, to all who hope for her future, I make an earnest and sincere appeal to rise above all party ties, to take heed of the higher considerations and to determine their course with a sense of the enduring results of their decision…I beg them to cast a soberly considered and seriously considered vote for the preservation of our heritage, for the maintenance of our commercial and political freedom, for the permanence of Canada as an autonomous nation within the British Empire.[39]

A "propaganda machine" funded by Canadian business and organized through the newly created Canadian National League (CNL) also significantly advanced Borden's campaign against Laurier and the pro-reciprocity position.[40] Appeals to British loyalty, while simultaneously drawing out differences between Canada and the United States, were the most common themes presented in the arguments by the "anti-reciprocity

36 Ibid

37 Brian Bow, "Nationalism, Regional Identity and the 'Deep Integration' Debate in Canada". Paper presented to the Canadian Political Science Association annual conference, Vancouver, BC, June 4-6, (2008): 5.

38 Borden, 1938, 328.

39 Ibid

40 Granatstein, 1996, 69.

propagandists."[41] For them, Granatstein argued, the issue was not necessarily the trade deal itself, but more its possible implications for Canada. For example, in 1911, the *Montreal Star* wrote:

> Shall we let the men, who deserted us in the dark days, now come in as full-fledged "American citizens" and take over the country they did not think worth living in…? Shall we give up, too, the glorious future which beckons us – the chance that we will become the chief state in the British Empire and the most powerful nation in the world?[42]

The success of using this type of anti-continentalist discourse in context of proposed closer bilateral economic relations lay in its appeal to innate socio-political constructions of the electorate. The results of the 1911 election brutally crushed Laurier and the Liberals who were "ultimately swept away by a tidal wave of pro-imperial and anti-American arguments, spurred by railway and banking interests that had prospered under the national policy."[43] Bow noted that in the aftermath of the 1911 election, "Canadian political elites came to see free trade as an untouchable issue;" indeed, from the 1911 election through to the 1980s, the advocacy of free trade with the United States was seen as the death knell of any federal political ambition. However, quietly proposing and negotiating deals with Washington to ensure Canada's economic security and prosperity was not unheard of: Often a political and diplomatic game, negotiations began in the 1930s for a commercial agreement that would ease tensions put in place by high tariff walls, retaliatory tariff counter measures, and the Great Depression.

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41 Ibid., 70.

42 Ibid.

43 Bow, 2005, 3. While most academics agree that Laurier's loss in 1911 represented the Canadian public's sheer rejection of the idea of free trade with the United States, some disagree. See: Eugene Beaulieu and J. C. Herbert Emery. "Pork Packers, Reciprocity, and Laurier's Defeat in the 1911 Canadian General Election." Journal of Economic History 61, no. 4 (2001): 1083-1101. They argued against the idea that Laurier's defeat in the 1911 election is synonymous with Canada's rejection of reciprocity with the United States and its commitment to imperial ties. Instead, they argued that reciprocity actually bolstered support for Laurier in 1911 and that if it had not been for the opposition mainly from the Quebec pork industry, Laurier would have retained a majority.

The 1930 Smoot-Hawley Tariff significantly discouraged trade relations between Canada and the United States. The tariff was a protectionist Republican response to the onset effects of the Depression which sought to "diminish imports from all nations and thereby help American farmers [for example] who were struggling despite previous tariff concessions, such as the Fordney-McCumber Tariff of 1922."[44] As a result of Smoot-Hawley, the Canadian government under Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King introduced the Dunning Tariff, named for Finance Minister Charles Dunning. The tariff was retaliatory in spirit as it prescribed high tariffs on American goods, and attempted to redirect trade to the United Kingdom. According to Stephen Hoogenraad, the Dunning response did not convince Canadians that enough had been done to rectify the pressure brought on by Smoot-Hawley. As such, opposition leader Richard B. Bennett had been handed an issue to which he could use against the King government in the federal election scheduled for that year.[45]

Bennett and the Conservatives defeated King and the Liberals in the 1930 election exploiting the Liberals response to Smoot-Hawley and, "immediately upon his election, Prime Minister Bennett raised the tariff to unprecedented heights." Canadian envoy to the United States and a high ranking political advisor William Duncan Herridge, urged the Prime Minister to seek closer cooperation and economic relations with the United States, particularly with the recent election of the Democrat President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933 whom "had a policy of seeing reciprocity around the world, along with a Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, obsessed in that direction." Bennett resisted Herridge's

44 Stephen Hoogenraad, Guiding the Ship Through the Storm: W. D. Herridge and Canadian Relations with the United States, Chapter II: Reciprocity, M.A. Thesis, (Department of History, Carleton University, Ottawa, 2000), 35

45 Ibid

advice as he preferred to coddle trade relations with the British Empire over the United States. King's reaction to Bennett's high tariff was that it would in fact discriminate against the British. Bennett countered by noting that "he was 'for the British Empire next to Canada, [while] some gentlemen are for the United States before Canada." Hosting the Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa in 1931 (postposed till the summer of 1932), Bennett's attempted to restore a profitable trading system between Canada and the British, who had abandoned their policy of free trade due to the "severity of the Depression." The Ottawa Agreement came out of the conference which helped to bolster Canada's trade with Britain; however, they were not enough to ensure economic recovery and Herridge, once again, pushed Bennett to reconsider initiating talks with the Americans.[46]

Bennett soon heeded the advice of his policy advisor and began attempts at a commercial agreement with the United States. However, in February, 1933 the Liberals attempted to obtain an agreement themselves in the event of a federal election and "to embarrass" the Bennett government which was still firmly committed to Imperial trade. In response, Bennett quickly arranged a meeting with Pierre de L. Boal, the U.S. chargé in Ottawa to "assure him of his desire to enter negotiations."[47] Negotiations stymied throughout 1933 and 1934. After President Franklin D. Roosevelt was granted authority through the *Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act* to negotiate and sign up to 50% tariff reductions, the State Department advised Roosevelt against negotiation an agreement with Canada first, citing that Bennett could argue to the Canadian people that "he had brought the United States to its knees by tariff retaliation and forced us to sign an

46 Ibid., 37-38.

47 Ibid., 38-39.

agreement." As such, preparations for an agreement with Canada in 1934 halted, and Sweden and Belgium were granted trade agreements instead.[48] With the upcoming 1935 Canadian federal election, Herridge and Bennett were concerned that the failure of the Conservative government to obtain an agreement with the Americans that the Liberals would brutally criticized them in their campaign. As negotiations continued to go nowhere, largely attributed to Herridge's "aggressive" negotiation tactics and Bennett's ineptitude with the Americans demanding a list of concessions clearly unacceptable to the United States, the State Department notified Ottawa of the suspension of talks until after the Canadian federal election. Seeing this as the Conservative's last chance at producing something tangible and positive to run on in the election, Herridge continued to aggressively pressure Washington to conclude; however, in the end, Herridge conceded that nothing close to a deal would evolve before election day on October 14th, 1935. The Liberals won the election and picked up where Herridge had left off. This time, perhaps based on a better negotiating atmosphere, a commercial deal was completed between the two countries and a closer Canada-U.S. relationship that had been so resisted in previous decades, began to solidify. By 1939, American foreign investment in Canada was 60% up from 39% in 1919.[49]

During WWII, the close relationship between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Mackenzie King facilitated a working relationship arguably unseen in Canadian-American relations history. The two worked close together to ensure the prosperity and security of the North American continent was ensured during the War. Issues of

48 Ibid., 44.

49 Galen R. Perras, Franklin Roosevelt and the Origins of the Canadian American Security Alliance 1933-1945: Necessary, but Not Necessary Enough, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 98.

continental defence and economic stability, arguably set the tone for future decades of Canadian-American relations. In the early years of the War, the Permanent Joint Board of Defence (PJBD) was created to facilitate the means of cooperative continental defence. Moreover, agreements such as those made at Hyde Park and Ogdensburg, saw the "mobilizing of resources of [the] continent" which amounted to the United States supplying Canada "with components for munitions bound for Britain as a part of British lend-lease aid" while increasing American purchases in Canada brining "bilateral trade to a closer balance."[50]

With Britain's declining ability to invest in the Canadian economy due to the vast damage caused by WWII as well as its diminishing status as a global superpower in the post-war era, Canada began to identify less and less with the former Empire and more towards a new role as a global-middle power actor and a continental partner with the United States. Historian Galen Perras noted in his book, *Franklin Roosevelt and the Origins of the Canadian American Security Alliance 1933-1945: Necessary, but Not Necessary Enough*, by 1945, American investment had risen to 70%, a "lifesaver for Canada" and particularly for the Canadian dollar, which could have witnessed shortages that would have "all but shut down the country."[51] However, when the United States quietly proposed, in 1947, a free trade agreement (resembling a modified customs union) to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Mackenzie King "rebuffed them on political grounds,

50 John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies, 3rd Edition, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. pp. 155; For a more in-depth look at how the Hyde Park Agreement of 1941, as it was called, aided both the possibly ruined Canadian economy by supplying it with trade surplus which ran over $1 billion (CND) per annum for the rest of the War, see Galen R. Perras, Franklin Roosevelt and the Origins of the Canadian American Security Alliance 1933-1945: Necessary, but Not Necessary Enough, Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998.

51 Perras, 1998, 98.

not economic ones."[52] Granatstein argued that King's decision to decline the American offer was much more complex than both the Prime Minister's diary and other historians have allowed.[53] In the spring of 1948, King iterated to U.S. Ambassador Hume Wrong that the timing, political risks involved, risks dangerous enough to involve the defeat of the government, and anxieties over "the long objective of the Americans…to control this continent," all contributed his final decision. Though disappointed, Wrong informed the State Department of King's decision, explaining that the Prime Minister was not in a "favourable position" to make such a decision on the economic proposals. King discussed his decision with Cabinet arguing that regardless of the economic benefits, the critical issue surrounding weakening ties with the Empire and commercial union with the United States was still a salient one in Canada, and must be taken into account, particularly in context of the electorate. The exiting King warned that his successor Liberal leader and Prime Minister, Louis St. Laurent, could not afford (especially as a French Canadian) "to leave himself open to the charge that he sold Canada to the Americans by scuttling imperial preferences and ties." [54]

Under the successive Liberal governments after King's departure from politics, the continental relationship between Canada and the United States grew significantly during; however, it was not without its critics. Historian Donald Creighton argued that the

52 Bow, 2005, 4.

53 For a more in-depth look at the idea of a renewed reciprocity agreement between Canada and the United States post-1911, see: Robert Cuff and J.L. Granatstein. "The Rise and Fall of Canadian-American Free Trade, 1947-1948." Canadian Historical Review [Canada], 58, no. 4, (1977): 459-482; Richard Kottman, N. "The Canadian-American Free Trade Agreement of 1935." The Journal of American History, 52, no. 2, (Sept., 1965): 275-296; J. A. McDonald, A. P. O'Brein, C. M. Callahan. "Trade Wars: Canada's Reaction to the Smoot-Hawley Tariff." The Journal of Economic History, 57, No. 4, (December, 1997): 802-826; Michael Hart, "Almost But Not Quite: The 1947-48 Bilateral Canada-U.S. Negotiations," The American Review of Canadian Studies 19 (spring, 1989): 25-58.

54 Robert Cuff and J.L. Granatstein. "The Rise and Fall of Canadian-American Free Trade, 1947-1948." Canadian Historical Review [Canada], 58, no. 4, (1977): 479-480

Liberals after WWII "made no conscious move to question or resist" growing American domination of the Canadian economy.[55] Here, Creighton indicated what would become the foundation of post-War criticism and resistance associated with the preponderant United States: 1) To what extent are Canadian politicians "selling" Canada to the United States; and 2) How will closer and rapidly growing American foreign investment dominate over the Canadian economy, its foreign and domestic policies, and its identity and culture?

Apart from Conservative John Diefenbaker's government, which was in power from 1957-1963 and who promised to divert 15% of Canadian trade away from the United States to the UK, the economic consensus of the consecutive Liberal governments in the post-war era appeared to have slowly and increasingly gravitated towards the United States. By 1957, direct American foreign investment in Canada had reached $8.33 billion, doubling to $16.72 billion by 1960, 75% of Canada's total foreign investment, while Britain's investment barely reached 15% by 1960. The British economy, well into the late 1960s, was relatively unstable: But by that by the end of the 1960s, the United States was by far the largest player in the Canadian economy, accounting for over 70% of the Canadian export market and just under 80% of the foreign direct investment.[56] According to Bow, the anxieties over free trade, or at least "more limited and less formal kinds of integrative policy coordination," did not stop successive Canadian governments from

55 Donald Creighton, The Forked Road: Canada, 1939-57 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), preface, 125-7, 226, Also see: George Grant, Lament for a Nation, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965); and Walter L. Gordon, A Political Memoir, (Halifax, N.S.: Good Read Biographies, 1983),

56 Rooth and Walsh (2003/2004): 8.

signing on for other bilateral and multilateral agreements.[57] In the early 1960s, the United States began a series of trade liberalization measures, largely due to negotiations at the Kennedy Round at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1963. This helped spawn various regional trade agreements such as the 1965 Auto Pact between Canada and the United States which removed tariffs on auto-related materials and vehicles. Tom Keating argued that this liberalization drew Canada closer to the American orbit; increased access to American markets created a larger incentive for Canadian producers to rely on the United States.[58]

Despite the post-war economic boom in Canada, itself largely due to the economic relationship with the United States, some Canadians were wary of the massive influx of American companies. Among them was Walter L. Gordon, Finance Minister under Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, who argued that the rise in American investment would ultimately, if it had not already, lead to economic and overall dependence on the monolithic United States. Reminiscent of arguments made by Conservatives and the protectionist business community in 1891 and 1911, Gordon saw Canada overrun, which in his opinion, significantly impaired Canada's "national" economic development. In other words, for Gordon, a heavy reliance on the United States would only worsen if Canadian business continued to be smothered by more powerful foreign competitors.[59] In 1966, he published his book *A Choice for Canada: Independence or Colonial Status*, which argued for a greater acceptance of the dangers posed by American over-investment

57 Hyde Park (1941), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1949), Defence Production Sharing Agreement (1956), the North American Aerospace Defence Command (1958).

58 Tom Keating. Canada and World Order: The Multilateralist Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2002), 67.

59 See Walter L. Gordon, A Political Memoir, (Halifax, N.S.: Good Read Biographies, 1983), 59-67.

and reliance on their economy.[60] As Gordon explained, the "snowballing of foreign investment would be a disaster for [the country]:

> That in such circumstances, most of the industrial expansion needed would take place south of the border, and that hundreds of thousands of young Canadians would be forced to seek employment in the United States. Inevitably, this would mean a reduction in the standard of living of many Canadians who stayed behind. This is what we must prevent…the future of our country depends upon it.[61]

Through advocacy, monographs, and civil society organizations, Gordon sought to challenge the post-war "continentalist" economic consensus towards a heavy reliance on the United States. Despite the lukewarm reception of Gordon's economic policy ideas within the Liberal Party, Gordon still pursued the issue of the implications of foreign investment, asking Pearson to establish yet another royal commission to study American investment in Canada (the first was initiated by Gordon in 1955 under the government of Louis St, Laurent). As a response to Gordon's insistence, Pearson agreed and appointed Gordon as committee chair in January 1968 of the *Task Force on Foreign Ownership and Structure of Canadian Industry* or what would become the "Watkins Commission" – named after Mel Watkins, a member of the radical left faction of the NDP and co-founder of the Movement for an Independent Socialist Canada (the Waffle Movement) in the 1970s, who along with others such as Robert Laxer and Abraham Rotstein, would supply much of the early base for the movement against free trade with the United States in the 1980s.[62]

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60 Walter L. Gordon, A Choice for Canada: Independence or Colonial Status. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966).

61 Gordon, 1983, pp. 242.

62 See Granatstein, "Class Traitor: Walter Gordon and American Investment," in *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism*. (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1996), 146-169; Stephen Azzi, Walter Gordon and the Rise of Canadian Nationalism. Montreal: McGill-(Queen's University Press, 1999).

Under Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Canada witnessed a reintroduction of economically protectionist and trade diversification measures that sought to curtail reliance on the U.S. economy. This reached fruition in the mid-1970s partly in response to a growing concern over Canadian dependency on the United States and a public distaste for the American led war in Vietnam. In 1971, along with fellow nationalists Robert Laxer, Peter C. Newman, and Mel Hurtig, Gordon co-founded the Committee for an Independent Canada (CIC), a civil society organization of economic, cultural, and political elites who sought to curb federal government policy direction away from the United States. The CIC helped create the political and economic atmosphere in which Trudeau's government sought to nationalize the Canadian economy.[63] Additional to the creation of these regulatory bodies, which aimed at "buying back" the Canadian economy and/or protecting it from unbeneficial foreign investment, the Trudeau government sought new economic and foreign policy direction in its "Third Option."[64] Economically speaking, Trudeau's "Third Option" sought out trade agreements with Asian and European partners in order to lessen dependence on their bilateral economic relationship with the United States. A politically motivated, rather than economically accurate venture, the "Third Option" failed to achieve its ends, in part due to apathy from the Canadian business community who found it much easier to deal with the Americans and internal party and government opposition.[65]

63 Granatstein, 1996, 166; Trudeau's government introduced regulatory institutions, such as the Canadian Development Corporation [1971], the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA) [1973], Petro-Canada [1975], and the National Energy Program (NEP) [1980].

64 Granatstein, 1996, 166.

65 Ibid. For example, key architect of the Third Option, Mitchel Sharp, noted in his memoirs that he "intended the Third Option, in part, as a preferred alternative to the more extreme kinds of nationalistic measures that were being advocated in some quarters at the time. The Third Option came to be invoked enthusiastically by the government and by others to support policies that were far more

Canada in the 1980s: Recession, a Royal Commission, and Reciprocity

While Trudeau sought to promote domestic industrial and economic growth though nationalizing and heavily regulating Canadian industry in the 1970s, instead, Canada plunged into the worst economic depression and unemployment levels since the 1930s. The depression was in part produced by the National Energy Program, one of the nationalizing measures of the Trudeau era, which many in the United States and Canada saw as anti-US when it came to the natural gas industry. Moreover, disappointing trade diversification efforts (Third Option) to expanding markets in Asia and Europe arguably led Canada to re-evaluate its economic policy and ultimately, trade policy with the United States.[66] During the 1970s, both Canada and the United States had witnessed strong protectionist and nationalist forces in their respective governments. In the late 1970s and early 1980s more continentalist or globalist politicians and economists blamed much of for the stagnation and depression on the prevailing protectionism. With the United States at the helm, the 1980s witnessed states and international financial organizations turn away from policies of government intervention and market regulation, and turned toward neoliberal policies bent on the downsizing of the state and the removal of national and international capital and commercial controls.[67] Protectionism was the enemy of a seemingly new world order of domestic and international deregulation, liberalization, and

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nationalistic than my paper had proposed, a consequence that I deplored." Mitchell Sharp, Which Reminds Me…A Memoir (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 186.

66 Ibid.

67 Gavin Fridell, "The Fair Trade Network in Historical Perspective," Canadian Journal of Development Studies 25, 3 (2004): 411-428

privatization; this was the beginning of a new global liberalization arguably not seen since the immediate post-war era.[68]

In March of 1981, President Regan visited Canada, and in a joint session of both the Commons and the Senate, spoke to his vision for the world in the new decade:

> There are very important reasons for us [the United States] to restore our economic viability. Such new sustained prosperity in an era of reduced inflation will also serve world-wide to help all of us resist protectionist impulses. We want to open markets. We want to promote lower costs globally.[69]

Within this context, and not necessarily because of Reagan's remarks in Parliament, the *Royal Commission of Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada* was set up to examine Canada's current economic situation and make suggestions on the future of Canada's economic policy directions. The Commission, also named *The Macdonald Report* after its primary author, Donald Macdonald, was a government-led public inquiry that heard testimony from both those who supported and those who feared more economic reliance on the United States. From 1982 and 1984, many of those organizations that headed the would-be "anti-free trade movement" identified themselves and their opposition to more neo-liberal and pro-business solutions through submissions made at the hearings. In 1985, the Commission's formal findings which examined various avenues for future economic options were published and presented to recently

68 Reagan, and his administration, actively and publically denounced protectionism from the early 1980s. Reagan often cited the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930 as effectively plunging not only the United States, but also the world, into deeper economic despair in the 1930s. The post-war international economic vision, as outlined in Breton Woods in 1944 by the Allies, sought to steer away from the protectionism that some believed to have been responsible for the economic chaos of the 1930s and the rise of fascism, and into a new international order based on a stable monetary system and liberal trade regulations. Hence, the creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that was designed to provide short-term loans to developing countries to help balance payment difficulties, the World Bank, designed to provide longer term financial assistance to development projects, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), established to advocate for the reduction of trade barriers through a series of negotiated rounds. Fridell, 2004, 413

69 Canada. Department of External Affairs. The Visit to Canada of the President of the United States of America, Ronald Wilson Reagan, and Mrs. Reagan, Ottawa, March 10-11, 1981, (Ottawa : External Affairs Canada, 1981), 8159.

elected Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.[70] Most notable among the Commission's recommendations was that Canada pursue a free trade deal with the United States.

Those who feared that more neo-liberal or market-oriented economic policies might come from the Commission's findings had watched the process closely for they believed that the interests of industry and business had an unfair edge in the hearing process. They also revered Canada's more regulated economic policies, labour standards, and social assistance measures as far more superior than the various American models. Professor of political science and co-editor of *The Other Macdonald Report: The Consensus on Canada's Future that the Macdonald Commission Left Out*, Duncan Cameron, described this "wary group" as the "popular sector," and outlined their positions in the edited collection.[71] For Cameron, himself a major voice in the opposition movement, the popular sector was non-governmental organizations across the country that represented specific interests of the Canadian public. Labour unions, churches, women's groups, social agencies, Native organizations, and farmer's organizations had sought to have their voices and concerns heard at the Commission in efforts to inform a more inclusive perspective. Cameron saw these groups as those in society who "shared broad characteristics of economic and political marginalization from the major decision making institutions in Canada."[72] Their submissions to the Commission were made in order to

70 Jeff Moon & John Offenbeck, Index to the 72 Studies of the MacDonald Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada. (Kingston: Queen's University, 1988).

71 Duncan Cameron and Daniel Drache, eds. The Other MacDonald Report: The Consensus on Canada's Future that the Macdonald Commission Left Out. (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1985), p. ix.

72 Jeffrey M. Ayres, Defying Conventional Wisdom: Political Movements and Popular Contention against North American Free Trade, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 4.

voice their opposition to the business community's advocacy for less government regulation in the economy.

Cameron argued that the Commission had invariably sought to "propose a new social consensus on economic policy," without full recognition of the concerns of the popular sector.[73] In other words, the Commission would serve the neo-liberal business agenda and would further marginalize the popular sector in terms of their influence in Ottawa to push for a greater focus on social justice and union strength, rather than pro-market economic policies. When the Commission revealed its report, stating that Canada should pursue a free trade agreement with the United States, those opposed saw this as a top-down imposition of a new direction in Canadian economic policy, a "consensus" not arrived in part of the popular sector, or the Canadian public, but rather, among only the business community and political elite.

Negotiations between the government of Canada and the United States for an agreement began in late September 1985. Reagan had confirmed Washington's view on the matters of protectionist forces in their own domestic and international economy in early 1981. His address to the House of Commons and the Senate in Canada did not explicitly mention anything to do with free trade with Canada, however, expressed the administration's preference to resist protectionist forces world-wide.[74] In 1984, the United States *Tariff and Trade Act* passed into law and providing authority for the Executive Branch to negotiate free trade areas without prior approval of Congress.[75] This

73 Ibid.

74 Canada. Department of External Affairs. The Visit to Canada of the President of the United States of America, Ronald Wilson Reagan, and Mrs. Reagan, Ottawa, March 10-11, 1981, (Ottawa : External Affairs Canada, 1981), 8159.

75 Stephen L. Lande, The Trade and Tariff Act of 1984: Trade Policy in the Reagan Administration. (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1986)

made Reagan's preference of expanding economic liberalization globally, providing more flexibility for the President to pursue desired trading partners. In late September 1984, Reagan invited the newly elected Canadian Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, to the White House to discuss matters concerning regional and global economic opportunities. In a press release after the meeting, Reagan announced that "a healthy North American economic relationship is essential to the prosperity of our two countries. We discussed some potential ways of increasing trade and investment between us."[76]

Less than three years later (January 1988), an agreement was signed by both countries. It, however, still required passage through the legislative branch in Canada – a process that would largely be defined by the results of the 1988 federal election. In 1985, a popular sector social movement began to coalesce in opposition to the proposals of the *Macdonald Report* and the political/business elite who supported it. This movement mounted an effort to disprove that a neo-liberal (as they saw it) economic direction for Canada was not only unpopular with the majority of Canadians, but was historically opposed to traditional Canadian economic, social, political and cultural values. From 1985 to 1988, these groups campaigned to ensure that the Canadian public was convinced of their own affirmations that the "new consensus" for Canada's economic future was not popularly endorsed and that it presented a critical threat to Canada's future.

Towards a More Inclusive History of the FTA

The specific role discourse played in these anti-free trade civil society campaigns has yet to be explored in any great detail. For this study, discourse can be defined as the

76 President Ronald Reagan. The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan 1984, Part 1 (Lanham, Md.: Bernan Press, 1995)

contextual historical political or cultural dialogue surrounding a specific issue in history.[77] More specifically, discourse can be seen as a set of conversations that occur – or have occurred – between interested and (perhaps on a less apparent level) non-interested members of that specific issue. These conversations are not limited in any sense to speech between individuals; they include the reading of texts, images, or any passage of interested information directly related position on the specific issue. The opposition movement's public education materials are examples of these "conversations" – they acted in such a way as to relay pertinent (yet tailored) information to the Canadian public. These materials ranged in accordance with the movement's level of organization, financial resources, and the specific period in which they were produced. Those opposed to the proposed free trade negotiations wrote articles in organizational newsletters and newsmagazines, monographs, pamphlets, fact sheets, and spoke at public events and rallies.

Historically, the use of specific rhetorical and discursive methods by certain political and economic elites or groups (e.g., political parties) to oppose free trade with the United States has been the predominant focus of accounts of the 1988 free trade debates. While, in Canadian history, this is a foundational and critical piece – and one built upon in this study – it is only a partial explanation of the larger historic opposition towards continentalism. This research has made efforts to show that the discursive messaging used by non-Conservative political elites in the 1988 federal election to criticize Mulroney had actually developed from the bottom up through a vast network of civil society organizations. In this context, the political parties only eventually harnessed the

77 Douglas A. Brown, "Thoroughbred Horse-Racing Receives an Imperialist Nod: the Parliamentary Debate on Legalizing Gambling in Canada, 1910", International Journal of the History of Sport, 11: 2, (1994): 253

discursive ground work laid out by this social movement in Canada, and used it to their advantage in the latter part of 1988.

Indeed, the story of the FTA is typically presented within the prism of the federal election and clearly places primacy on the words and actions of the political elite. The 1988 leaders debate between New Democratic Party leader Ed Broadbent, Liberal leader John Turner, and Mulroney has been cited as a pivotal moment in the anti-free trade opposition, particularly Turner's famous shot at Mulroney, "I happen to believe that you have sold us out…"[78] Political scientist Richard Johnston argued this was a "critical moment" in the English debate that concretized a connection between the public's fears over loss of sovereignty (for example), and the agency of Mulroney.[79] For Johnston, Turner reiterated "weeks" of prepared discourse by both opposition parties and non-party advocates.[80] What scholars like Johnston neglect is the formative years of civil society action and collaboration that produced the social momentum, discourse, and consciousness they would eventually politically harness. In other words, more politically focused examinations of the FTA debate in Canada ignore the fact that the Liberals and NDP were provided a massive "running start" into the summer and the fall of 1988 where the fate of the agreement was settled. This often overlooked element of the history of the debate of the FTA is primarily due to a focus on the weeks leading up to the election and the political parties involved in the opposition to the FTA, rather than the intricacies of the debate itself.

78 Richard Johnston, et al. "Free Trade in Canadian Elections: Issue Evolution in the Long and Short Run," in W. H. Riker (ed), *Agenda Formation*, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

79 Ibid., 243

80 Ibid.

That being said, at least one comprehensive work, by Dr. Jeffery Ayres, has provided an examination of the "formative" years of the civil society opposition to the FTA by looking at the inter-institutional process of collaboration and cooperation between non-governmental and opposition political parties. By examining debate from a social movement and a political process perspective, Ayres avoided focusing solely on the outcomes; rather, he illuminated on the process by which organizational opposition was achieved.[81] As will be discussed below, however, this study departs from Ayres' work by specifically examining the ways these organizations sought to build *popular*, rather than strictly institutional, opposition to the FTA. This project examines the public campaign materials in detail, observing their discursive content, while ultimately shedding light on what is observed to represent a "discursive process." This "process" was the sum of various discursive tools and strategies that built upon one another in the attempt to bring the Canadian public together in opposing to free trade.

This project will present the reader with new sources of information that often go unnoticed in more political or economic readings of the public's anti-free trade stance in the 1980s. It will engage primary sources that have yet to be fully studied but which were critical to the participating organizations and the broad social movement's public education campaign between 1985 and 1988. These materials include the various organizations' newsletters, news magazines, bulletins, press releases, pamphlets, fact

81 Jeffrey M. Ayres, Defying Conventional Wisdom: Political Movements and Popular Contention against North American Free Trade, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

sheets, or basically any and all of their material intended for public distribution between 1985 and 1988 that condemned Mulroney and the FTA.[82]

An analysis of the ways these groups reacted to the proposal of the FTA may tell us much more about the historical context in which it took place, but moreover, may illuminate the various ways Canadians organized themselves socially, culturally, and politically in cohesive units to oppose bilateral trade liberalization between Canada and the United States. Through a reading of the public education material produced by this civil opposition, we may be able to make connections to past instances of the free trade debate, and uses of similar models of anti-free trade discourse. Moreover, by looking at how Canadians wrote and spoke about themselves, particularly in a campaign which sought to convince them of a specifically crafted and constructed sense of self, we ultimately see how they saw themselves in that historical context. Without a fuller examination of the multitude of discourse employed by the anti-free trade movement to cultivate and organize public opinion in opposition to the agreement, the story of the FTA and the election itself is at best incomplete, and at worst misunderstood.

82 While a concerted attempt was made to obtain multiple examples of each of the materials, especially from each of the organizations mentioned, the reality was that much of the public education materials were disposed of by these organizations. As such, some examples of the material may be more plentiful than others, and some more readily available from specific organizations.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY & HISTORIOGRAPHY

This project looks at the ways Canadian civil society used discursive tools in order to cultivate, organize, and eventually, mobilize the Canadian public to oppose Mulroney's proposed FTA. The discursive tools constructed specific models of national identity and presupposed a multitude of threats to Canada, all of which were argued to be *de facto* consequences related to a free trade agreement with the United States.

The processes by which civil society sought to cultivate and organize dissent amongst the Canadian public was pursued within a re-imagined, or, at least, re-contextualised, continentalist, and nationalist historical narrative, one which sustained a multitude of assumptions about both Canada and the United States. Most notable amongst these assumptions were those which argued that closer relations or integration with the United States would render Canadian sovereignty and independence, and even Canadian values, redundant.

The following chapter describes the methods used in this study and provides some background for each of the civil society organizations involved in the early, and later, stages of the anti-free trade debate in Canada in the 1980s. This section also serves to outline the three key steps in the "discursive process" carried out by the anti-free trade organizations. To accomplish this, anti-free trade organizations crafted discourse in various ways that sought to cultivate public opposition, organize that opposition around a specific "issue" and, finally, translate that opposition to collective action. It is important to note that while these stages have been identified here on their own, they by no means

functioned in a manner that was mutually exclusive; rather, these stages overlapped and worked off each other in order to bring about the anti-free trade movement's ultimate goal, which was, proximately, to stop the FTA from becoming a reality. However, in the long term, their goal was to build a public consensus that would stand then (and in the future) adamantly opposed to neo-liberal direction in Canadian public policy.

Time Frame

The period of this study begins in the context of the tail end of the Macdonald Commission, particularly, after Brian Mulroney became Prime Minister of Canada in September 1984. The landslide election victory of a recent former president of a major Canadian mining company had labour unions concerned over the direction Mulroney might take Canada, particularly in context of a previously protectionist Liberal government. The spring of 1985 marked a watershed for those civil society organizations who were wary of Mulroney's public policy intentions – particularly those related to pro-business and market-oriented economics and a re-commitment to strengthening the Canadian-American relationship. At the Prime Minister's meeting with President Reagan in Quebec City in March – better known as the "Shamrock Summit" – the two leaders signed a declaration on trade and began the process towards the negotiation of a free trade agreement.

In early September 1985, the final report from the *Royal Commission on Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada* (better known as the Macdonald Report) was released. Among its major recommendations was that Canada should secure a free trade deal with the United States. Both the summit and the release of the report ignited

criticisms of the economic direction the Conservatives. In these critical moments the social opposition movement against free trade was born.

The study follows the dynamics and growth of the movement from these early points up to the federal election in November 1988, which more or less ended the ambitions of the movement to stop the proposed free trade agreement due to the return of Mulroney and his Conservative Party, who prevailed in the election, and with a landslide victory.

Key Players

Building a case against the proposed bilateral free trade agreement took a multifaceted organisation of groups as well as a strategic organisation of both discourse and public opinion. The key players in the movement against free trade in the 1980s included the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the Council of Canadians (COC), the National Action Committee for the Status of Women (NAC), the United Church of Canada (UCC), and ultimately, the Pro-Canada Network (PCN). In their attempts to cultivate and influence opposition, these organizations developed materials in order to persuade the Canadian public to oppose the proposed FTA. Such materials included magazines, newsletters, fact sheets, briefing papers, pamphlets, small books and even comic books. These sources provide the most accurate account of the positions and arguments of the organizations in context of their opposition to the FTA. Moreover, these sources represented the collaborative voice of national opposition to neo-liberal policy directions and closer continental integration with

the United States.[1] The language also indicated that these materials were clearly intended for the Canadian public, specifically, to educate or inform them to the perceived dangers of free trade and the possible future consequences of trade liberalization.

The Canadian Labour Congress represented many affiliated Canadian and international unions, as well as provincial federations of labour and regional labour councils. Between 1985 and 1988, the CLC organized its own discursive opposition primarily through its *Canadian Labour* newsmagazine, but also participated in the creation of other public education material, particularly in their anti-free trade campaign, *Our Canada or Theirs?* (explored below). The CLC spoke on behalf of Canadian unions' concerns over the apparent gravitation of Canadian economic policy consensus (post-Macdonald commission) to more neo-liberal or market-oriented directions, which they believed would significantly weaken trade unionism in Canada. The CLC, just as CUPE would, believed that Canada had a much more positive public policy history concerning the strength and role of labour unions in relation to that of the United States. Concerns over whether Mulroney's proposed directions for the country would result in the streamlining or harmonizing of labour policies or standards with the U.S. was of critical concern to the CLC and affiliate labour organizations. Their discourse and public education material reflected this as their efforts were aimed at proving to Canadians that

1 My experience in archival search for these materials was varied: neither the COC nor the PCN kept records of their public education materials used in the movement between 1985 and 1988, despite having produced a significant amount. The NAC, UCC, CLC, and CUPE on the other hand, kept or deposited their materials in various archives (if not their own). While I was most successful in finding relevant materials from the above four members of the anti-free trade movement (albeit, in 2010, CUPE's national office had moved to a new building and threw out much of its older materials), visits to the COC proved unfruitful. Additionally, since the PCN was an umbrella organization, and was more an example of a temporal organizing committee, such as a campaign office in an election, the materials produced by them were often mixed in with other organizations collections. It is unfortunate that I was not able to have greater access to the COC, as my research specifically showed them to be the most sensational of Mulroney's civic adversaries.

Mulroney was out to dismantle the work of Canadian labour unions. This, they argued, was a critical danger not just to labour unions, but to the entire country's economic and social structure.

At the beginning of the 1980s, CUPE was Canada's largest union and represented a variety of workers in such areas as health care, education, municipalities, libraries, universities, and social services. Much like the CLC, CUPE's focus was on the possible negative effects a free trade deal with the United States would have on Canadian workers, primarily, but not limited to, massive job loss and the protection of union workers' rights. Deeply concerned over what it argued to be the probable harmonization of labour standards and the weakening of union power in a more deregulated economic system, CUPE provided its opinions through their newsmagazine *The Facts*, as well through public executive speeches pamphlets, fact sheets, buttons, and eventually, even lawn signs.

The Council of Canadians represented more broad "nationalist" opinions held primarily by the political, cultural, and social left, and framed its discourse well within the existing anti-continentalist narrative. It typically spoke on matters concerning the relationship between the United States and Canadian independence, sovereignty, and national control over a vast array of sectors, including the economy. It represented a constituency that had historically been wary and critical of closer relations with the United States, and who often argued such relations would destroy Canadian political and cultural independence. The COC was founded in 1985 by anti-continentalist elites, such as Mel Hurtig who co-founded the Council for an Independent Canada in the 1970s with Walter Gordon. As professor Jeffery Ayres noted, "the COC filled an important vacuum

in nationalist discourse by raising concerns about the diminution in Canadian sovereignty they feared as a result of a free trade deal between Canada and the United States."[2]

For its part, the National Action Committee (NAC) for the Status of Women was a volunteer organization that worked to improve the status of women in Canadian society. The NAC acted as an umbrella organization that nationally represented an array of non-governmental organizations across the country, all of whom advocated for reforming laws and public policies that unequally favoured men over women such as those which regulated rates of pay. It also played a role in informing the Canadian public about issues concerning the inequality of all women in Canadian society. In context of the free trade debate in the 1980s, the NAC played a key role in relating the various dangers the opposition argued would come of the agreement to women in Canada. More specifically, and as will be explained below, the NAC argued women would likely be the *most* adversely affected group in a free trade agreement with the United States, citing massive job losses in predominantly female occupied labour sectors, such as the service sector.[3]

Representing a very different front, the United Church of Canada's main concern was how the increasingly pro-market, privatized, and deregulated economic structure in the U.S. would directly affect poorer Canadians. Like other prominent social activists and organizations at the time, the UCC was unsure that the economic direction proposed by the Macdonald Report and seemingly adopted by the Mulroney government was the right path for Canada's poor. It argued that a move towards an economy that relied on the whims of the capitalist market system would further reinforce a society where the poor

2 Ayres, 1998, 48.

3 See Marjorie G. Cohen, Free Trade and the Future of Women's Work: Manufacturing and Service Industries, (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1987.); Also see Sylvia Bashevkin, "Free Trade and Canadian Feminism: The Case of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women," Canadian Public Policy 15, No. 4 (December 1989): 363-75.

were left behind and the rich were left to profit. As a result, the UCC represented, as much as anything else, opposition slated on moral grounds.

The majority of the anti-free trade work that came from the UCC was coordinated by the National Working Group on the Economy and Poverty (NWGEP) headed by John Foster. Based in Toronto, the UCC also participated heavily in the anti-free trade newsletter called the *Free Trade Action Dossier* (FTAD) produced in association with the Working Unit on Social Issues and Justice (a joint project of Canadian Churches for Global Economic Justice.) The FTAD sought to "provide activists on the free trade issue with analysis, news, timeline, updates, action suggestions and information on new publications and resources."[4] The FTAD also featured articles from other anti-free trade groups, such as the Coalition Against Free Trade (CAFT), which had units in each province. In 1988, the FTAD renamed itself to the *Pro-Canada Dossier*, keeping in line with the national-level language of the PCN.[5]

The Pro-Canada Network, created in the spring of 1987, became the umbrella organization that coordinated meetings, education materials, and strategic objectives for the movement. This is not to say that the organizations that preceded the creation of the PCN ceded their anti-free trade efforts to the coordinating body; they all continued to produce their respective anti-free trade materials and campaigns. However, the PCN

4 GATT-Fly, Free Trade Action Dossier, No. 1, (May 11, 1987).

5 GATT-Fly, Pro-Canada Dossier, No. 9, (March 4, 1987). "From the Editor: The Free Trade Action Dossier has been renamed the Pro-Canada Dossier. We have changed the name for two reasons. The deal will not just affect our trade, it will have a profound and disastrous impact on just about everything we do as a nation. We have called the Dossier "Pro-Canada" because we hope that it can serve as the link between all the national and regional organization fighting the Mulroney deal that are a part of the PCN. We also hope to make the Dossier a news service that can provide information and analysis to both the regular mass media as well as the publications and other communication vehicles of the PCN member organizations. To assist us in fulfilling this goal we would appreciate receiving any articles, cartoons, news of events, etc. which could be shared with the network through the dossier."

represented a pragmatic collaborative effort to coordinate strategy and function as a focal point for the anti-free trade movement itself, and a "united opposition" of sorts.[6]

Perspectives on the FTA

Post-hoc analyses of the 1989 FTA have attempted to explain the outcomes of the debate between proponents and opponents in a myriad of ways. In addition to the studies reviewed in Chapter 1, the FTA has been dealt with from a small range of vantage points. Included in this would be a focus on the economic elements of the FTA, as well as the economic climate in which the negotiations and the debate took place. Michael Hart is often the most cited when discussing the economics, rather than the "politics," of the FTA. His book, *Decision at Midnight: Inside the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Negotiations* provided an historic overview of Canadian trade policy while illuminating the comprehensive economic negotiation process between U.S. and Canadian government officials from 1985-1987.[7] Alan Ernst, in *From Liberal Continentalism to Neo-Conservatism: North American Free Trade and the Politics of the C.D. Howe Institute*, reviewed the growing body of literature associated with the "new business agenda" in Canada.[8] Like Hart, Ernst focused on the history of Canadian economic policies in order to contextualize what a growing body of literature was calling in the early 1990s, the

6 Ayres, 1998, 63.

7 Michael Hart, Decision at Midnight: Inside the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Negotiations, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994); Also see, Hart, A Trading Nation: Canadian Trade Policy from Colonialism to Globalization, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004); Gilbert R. Winham, and Elizabeth DeBoer-Ashworth. "Asymmetry in Negotiating the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, 1985-87," in William I. Zartman and Paul Z. Rubin, eds., Power and Negotiation (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

8 Alan Ernst, "From Liberal Continentalism to Neo-Conservatism: North American Free Trade and the Politics of the C.D. Howe Institute," Studies in Political Economy, 39 (Autumn, 1992): 109-140.

"new business agenda," or the break from "the combination of Keynesianism and continentalism, which marked Canada's post-war economic strategy.[9]

Political perspectives tend to focus on the election of 1988 itself as a historical marker that represents the entire debate as it played out between the NDP, Liberals, and Conservatives. What this electoral perspective neglects is the critical role civil society played in basically creating the messaging and structure of a debate later procured by political elite.[10] However, others have tended to look at the FTA with an important examination of the ways in which Canadian nationalism played a hand in the political debates. For example, Professor Sylvia Bashevkin, in *True Patriot Love: The Politics of Canadian Nationalism*, looked at the role English nationalist ideas played from the 1970s and the 1980s in the context of largely pro-regulatory stances. Specifically, she analyzed the extent of the reception of the nationalist ideas by the contemporary political elite, and in part, how those ideas translated in to political support for their various cases. Bashevkin broadly examined the FTA debate, arguing that in the 1980s, nationalism was not strong enough to stop Mulroney's aspirations for the bilateral trade deal.[11] While

9 Ibid.

10 See, for example: John Pammet, "The 1988 Vote," in Alan Frizell et al., (eds), *The Canadian General Election of 1988*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989); Richard Johnston et al., Letting the People Decide: Dynamics of a Canadian Election, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1992); Lawrence LeDuc, "Voting for Free Trade? The Canadian Voter and the 1988 Federal Election," in *Politics*: Canada, Paul Fox (ed), 7th Edition. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1991); André Blais and M. Martin Boyer, "Assessing the Impact of Televised Debates: The Case of the 1988 Canadian Election," British Journal of Political Science 26 (1996): 143-164; Matthew Mendelsohn, "The Media's Persuasive Effects: The Priming of Leadership in the 1988 Canadian Election." Canadian Journal of Political Science, 27 No. 1, (1994): 81-97.

11 Sylvia Bashevkin, True Patriot Love: The Politics of Canadian Nationalism, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991); Also see: Sylvia Bashevkin, "In the Shadow of Free Trade: Nationalism, Feminism and Identity Politics in Contemporary English Canada." Journal of Canadian Studies 35, No. 2 (2000): 109-127. Her analysis focuses mainly on the history and evolution of English-Canadian nationalism and examines its problematic future as a viable option in Canadian socio-political and economic debate and discourse. However, her study focuses more on the anatomy of English-Canadian nationalism, more that addressing it in context of the free-trade debate.

Bashevkin examined English-Canadian nationalism in context of the FTA, her analysis was focused on the role of the "politician" in the equation of the opposition.

Perspective: The Role of Civil Society

The work of political scientist, Dr. Jeffery M. Ayers has been most influential on the tenor of this study; his analysis of how various organizations opposed to the FTA organised themselves in efforts to effectively quash the proposed agreement, has been critical. Moreover, his analysis, thus far, represents the most comprehensive look at the inter-organizational collaboration between the various groups involved in the anti-FTA movement. Ayers' work studied the strategy of coalition building between the players involved in the anti-FTA movement through a political process model, which analyzed mobilization through access and use of resources, political opportunity structures, and changes in the inter-subjectivity of the participants of the movement.[12]

Ayres addressed a crucial factor to the study of popular contention against free trade with the United States in Canada: specifically, the connection between the *movement* and the *polity*. Ayres explained that it was not just a matter of opinion, but that the organizations were actively seeking to "influence the policy process, or attempt to fundamentally change existing institutions," and present ideas on how Canadian economic policy, in their opinion, should be managed.[13] Using a political-process model to examine the movement, Ayres observed that the raising of specific levels of consciousness built solidarity amongst like-minded members and developed an accessible

12 Ibid., 6.

13 Ibid. 18.

or intelligible inter-organizational identity.[14] For Ayres, solidarity was built between these organizations – which held their own diverse and representative views – by convincing groups that a free trade agreement with the United States would be harmful to Canada on a level that would at least affect each of the individual stakeholders in kind. This became a critical "common denominator" to incite close cooperation along ideological and cultural divides across sectors.[15]

Moreover, Ayres' work showed that a coalition of diverse groups had to effectively organize if they were ever going to influence the policy process or change existing institutions. Indeed, changing the institutional or policy process was not limited to the institutional level itself; Civil society, as Ayres noted, was critical in the entire process. By cultivating and organizing opposition beyond their own collaborative efforts, the anti-free trade movement needed to secure the Canadian public's endorsement of their messages and arguments. Thus, the materials produced effectively evolved from efforts to internally mobilize, to active measures meant to externally motivate.

However, Ayres spent most of his efforts discussing the inter-organizational mobilization of these groups, the political opportunities which they had access to during their campaign, and finally, their work with the federal NDP and Liberals. As a result, he devoted a limited amount of time on how these organizations sought to cultivate and organize *popular* opinion, thoughts, and attitudes. Ayres only appeared to have elaborated on the use of public education material at later stages in the movement. For instance, Ayres argued that October 1987 represented "a new stage in the anti-free trade

14 Ibid. 19.

15 Ibid., 53.

movement's strategic direction and development."[16] After the finalization of the agreement in late 1987, Ayres observed a new period began whereby the "nature of the stakes had changed" and where the opposition now looked to oppose a formal agreement, rather than a long and taciturn negotiation process. The "shift" in strategy would come from these events and result in a re-focussing of their efforts to a "national direct political-action campaign."[17] Ayres held that the period between the first national assembly of the PCN in 1987 through to the election of 1988 was the crucial period when the anti-free trade movement would really begin their public awareness and mobilization campaign.

What will be explored in this project is the degree to which the discourse and the public opposition was already "well-developed" by the various players by the time the federal election got underway. Ayres stated that "the PCN became a clearing house for the distribution and exchange of an outpouring of pamphlets, newsletters, fact sheets, books, news clippings, and analyses about free trade."[18] For Ayres, these were critical in affecting and impacting the Canadian public's way of thinking, particularly their combining of anti-free trade messages with symbolic Canadian iconography.[19] While we can agree that the PCN's public education coordination would have a significant impact, the "leg-work" done from 1985-1987 was instrumental in establishing the tenor, reach, and sophistication of their public discourse.

An examination of the discourse found in the organizational materials used to "educate" the Canadian public, follows below. From as early as March 1985, the

16 Ayres, 1998, 74.

17 Ibid., 75.

18 Ibid., 78.

19 Ibid.

discursive "primers" that were developed for the public's ultimate "acceptance" of the arguments and positions in the later 1987-1988 campaigns, were initiated. While the historical context would differ slightly, particularly regarding the nature of the agreement and of course the political opportunity structures, the discursive messages produced by the anti-free trade groups had shape and purpose far before the end of 1987.

Perspective: Speaking for French Canada

The anti-free trade movement in the 1980s was largely an English-Canadian project which relied heavily on classic examples of English-Canadian myths; Granatstein, among others, notably Seymour Martin Lipset, has shown how British conservatives departed from the United States after the American Revolution in order to preserve the connection and institutions associated with the British Empire.[20] These British "Loyalists" and their heirs then used the appeals to the crown and anti-American dialogue to justify and retain their anti-revolutionary and anti-democratic power in British North America and then Canada. Given this parentage of anti-American and pro-imperialist attitudes, particularly in context of Macdonald's National Policy and the debates on free trade in 1891 and 1911, the English-Canadian historical practice of being defined as "not" American arguably does not translate to French-speaking Canadians.

20 Granatstein, 1996, 38; Also see Seymour M. Lipset Continental Divide: the Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada, (New York: Routledge, 1990) argues that the American Revolution fundamentally split English speaking North America into two binary wholes, Canada in the north and the United States to the south. With a rejection of the thirteen colonies' fight to break ties with their colonial masters (Britain), Canada fundamentally "became a counter-revolutionary bastion of non-liberal Tory values and institutions and hence forth remained distinct from the United States in a number of fundamental ways." Thus, according to Lipset, Canada and the U.S. are irrevocably distinct and separate entities. Lipset argued that the U.S. was thus founded upon, and still encapsulates, a "revolutionary" system of values and ideals, whereas Canada's rejection of the Revolution spoke to its traditional "counter revolutionary". Edward G. Grabb and James E. Curtis, Regions Apart: the Four Societies of Canada and the United States. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005), 21.

Within the free trade debate, Ayres mentioned that the French-Canadian business community, predominantly located in Quebec, actually favoured free trade with the United States.[21] Moreover, Ayres noted that the social movement against free trade failed in Quebec particularly because it could not successfully "overcome historical Canadian regional and national cleavages;" their message of a predominantly English-speaking "pan-Canadian cause" did not work to convince French-speaking Quebeckers to "identify with and support a strongly Canadian nationalist anti-free trade cause."[22] Duncan Cameron argued almost a year after the 1988 federal election that a greater presence and attention was necessary in Quebec. "We had to do more work with Quebec – and that never really happened … within the anti-free trade movement, it was basically an Anglophone movement."[23] Professor Peter Bakvis also mused on Quebec's role in the debate surrounding the FTA and argued that the debates that occurred in English Canada were much different from those in Quebec.[24] Many in English Canada opposed free trade based on the fear that it would effectively weaken Canadian national identity. However, as the national "identity" this community sought to protect was largely English, many in Quebec did not relate to the cause as well as the rest of English Canada.[25]As a result, input from and an examination of materials produced for and by Quebec and French Canada does not significantly inform this project.

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21 Ayres, 1998, 26.

22 Ibid., 111.

23 Ibid., 112.

24 Peter Bakvis. "Free Trade in North America: Divergent Perspectives Between Quebec and English Canada." Quebec Studies, 16, (1993): 39-48; Also see Tim Thomas, "George Grant, the Free Trade Agreement, and Contemporary Quebec." Journal of Canadian Studies 27, no. 4 (1992): 180-196; Lawrence Martin, "Continental Union" The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 538, no. 1 (1995): 143-150.

25 Ibid.

Discourse and Collective Identity: A Cultural Studies Perspective

Discourses are dialogues between individuals and groups, and assist, through specific methods, in the construction of particular models of identity and social consciousness for the purposes of collective cooperation and action. Discourse should be observed as political and motivational in various social processes in modern societies. Political and social theorist Michel Foucault argued that the written or spoken word should not simply be studied as a document but rather as "discourse" which lends itself to a larger historical network or relations based on power and identity.[26] Post-modern political scientists and cultural historians depart from the assumption that historical or contemporary language is inextricable to their historical context. Rather, language is a critical factor in the ways human societies share, create, and organize their daily lives. For the purposes of this study, close attention was paid to the work of professors Cynthia Hardy, Thomas B. Lawrence, and David Grant who have studied the relationship between discourse and the construction collective identity and action.[27] For these scholars, studying this relationship involves focusing on the "processes through which a collective identity is produced via the creation of texts, and on the relationship of collective identity as a discursive object to patterns of action."[28] "Moreover," they argued:

> Unlike research on social identity, a discursive approach does not examine what members are thinking, nor does it attempt to relate collective identity to individual social identities. Rather, its focus is primarily on the constructive effects of conversations in which participants describe themselves as a collective. A discursive

26 Steffi Retzlaff and Stefan Ganzle, "Constructing the European Union in Canadian News" Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines 2 No. 2 (2008): 68.

27 Cynthia Hardy, Thomas B. Lawrence And David Grant. "Discourse And Collaboration: The Role Of Conversations And Collective Identity." Academy Of Management Review 30, No. 1, (2005): 58-77.

28 Ibid., 62.

> conceptualization of collective identity provides a powerful basis for understanding the dynamics of collaboration, because it situates collective identity in the language in use among members and avoids the need to assess the degree of convergence across the minds of individuals.[29]

This project focuses on analyzing how the opposition utilized discourse throughout the movement to describe themselves as a collective, and how a subsequent collective identity was used as a powerful resource to incite collective action and effective collaboration.

Historian Douglas A. Brown provides an example of how a discursive approach can function in historical analysis and in a Canadian context. Brown examined the Canadian parliamentary debate in 1909 surrounding the Miller Bill, a private member's bill in the House of Commons that motioned to criminalize "book-making" (gambling) at horseracing tracks. He argued that by studying those parliamentary dialogues, we could better understand the historical context being studied. For Brown, historical discourse served as a "historical marker that points to an intersection of several dynamic public social and cultural dialogues," and which often reveal less obvious social, political or cultural conditions.[30] Brown used the political discourse surrounding the debate found in the parliamentary transcripts as well as newspapers to better illustrate how ideology, the importance of cultural affirmations and opinions, and national identity played out in the historical context and conversations. Brown argued that:

> A cultural reading of these transcripts dissects the ideological statements made on both sides of the debate and reveals discursive formations...that were uniquely Canadian. Analysis of this event demonstrates that social reform legislation was defined by conflicts between the preservation of values and behaviours of a lingering British imperialism and the

29 Ibid.

30 Douglas A. Brown, "Thoroughbred Horse-Racing Receives an Imperialist Nod: the Parliamentary Debate on Legalizing Gambling in Canada, 1910", International Journal of the History of Sport, 11: 2, (1994): 252.

> consciousness of an emerging Canadian nationalism. Beyond this level of ideological differentiation, there were divergent opinions regarding the management of the related cultural and social influences of their American neighbours. The cultural analysis of this singular event reveals the plurality of meaning attributed to this sporting pastime. Consideration of the literary/textural characteristic of written documents, including official government transcripts, emphasizes the cultural context in which the sources/evidence were generated...The use of particular rhetoric can be very important to the interpretation of the debate.[31]

Brown's example presses the importance of further cultural readings into historical events, particularly in terms of national debates where internal conflicts of identity, policy options, identity, and cultural values are involved.

For other cultural historians, valuable information is not solely found in empirical and "objective" observations of historical data and sources. Cultural historians Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt discussed this shift in detail in their edited *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Cultures*.[32] They argued that new modes of analysis had begun to displace paradigms of social history, such as Marxism, by the 1980s, "inaugurating what came to be known as the linguistic or cultural turn."[33] These scholars stressed new approaches to studying social relations looking at language and deinstitutionalized forms of power while problematizing structuralists' theories of "fixed and highly elaborated structures of meaning."[34] Cultural perspectives sought to move beyond earlier explanations of historical instances while moving into deeper understandings and interpretations of historical phenomena. Discourse became a major source of information for future historical studies. For example, in her study of the relationship between discourse and revolutionary France, Hunt explained that during the

31 Ibid., 252.

32 Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (eds). Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture. (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 1999.

33 Ibid., 2

34 Ibid., 8

Revolution, "political language [was] used rhetorically to build a sense of community and at the same time to establish new fields of social, political, and cultural struggle."[35] Her work built on the contention that sources of discourse can act as critical tools in expanding on previously studied historical subjects, mainly because it offers a different perspective on the social interactions between individuals and groups during key moments in history.

Similarly, Anne Rubenstein examined the relationship between discourse and social movement, particularly how it was used to discuss and negotiate the terms in which national identities were structured in post-revolutionary (1917) Mexico. She observed that within a presumed "nation," there existed many different and diverging "national" discourses. These existed and emerged at different times, but always played off one another.[36] In her, *Bad Language, Naked Ladies, and Other Threats to the Nation*, Rubenstein provided an excellent analysis of how text, images, and discourse unite to illustrate relevant connections between culture and power.[37] Illustrated through the *historietas* (comic books), national discourses competed with one another through a myriad of visual and textual examples, interacting and reproducing through the relationships with the Mexican people. These examples of contestation between modern and traditional discourses segue into issues pertaining to larger questions of identity and what was considered "Mexican" and what was not.[38] By building a rhetorical source where community or social collaboration can occur, discourse created a base of power where groups can come together and form like-minded social units.

35 Lynn Hunt, Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution, (Berkely: University of California Press, 1984), 17.

36 See Anne Rubenstein, Bad Language, Naked Ladies, and Other Threats to the Nation. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 8

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

Looking specifically at how political language can build social constructions, incite national debate and conflict, as well as re-imagine cultural forms of self and other, is a critical part of this thesis. In part, its goal is to look at the language used by the opposition and try to illustrate their attempts to build a specific "Canada" as well as establish new forms and reopen existing national conflicts and historical narratives. The national debate surrounding free trade in the mid-1980s is an excellent example whereby a cultural reading into the discourse used by the opposition in the movement against free trade provides a more complete understanding of the many levels of social change, movement, and cultural politics that were involved at that time. A reading into the language and arguments used by those opposed to the FTA reveals more than simple opposition. Rather, and connected to Brown's analysis, the free trade debate illustrates a relationship between more complex historical cultural and political narratives and the various methods of public organization and social movement.

As Laurier encountered in 1891 and 1911, those espousing an economic nationalism in line with Macdonald's vision firmly believed that a Canadian state was not compatible with the values of those who supported more "continentalist" avenues. The anti-integrationist or economic nationalist discourse – often associated with anti-American rhetoric or pan-Canadian nationalism– challenged those in favour of free trade.[39] In other

39 Pan-Canadian nationalism is a form of English-Canadian nationalism which often glosses over or even denies cultural, linguistic, or sub-nationalities in order to make a case for a larger idealized form of Canada. Pan-Canadian nationalism has been typically used in English-Canadian discourse to discredit pro-integrationist aspirations of closer economic ties with the United States. A typical feature of pan-Canadian nationalism is to generalize and homogenize Canada into a whole unit in order to most successfully juxtapose its values, ideals, history, attitudes to those of the United States, as well as to make it an easier and more relevant target for mythological notions of American expansionism. The objective is to synthesize and organize the unit under the banner of "Canada". Political scientist Will Kymlicka has discussed pan-Canadian nationalism as an attempt by English-speaking Canada to increase their mobility and political power at the expense of Aboriginal and French-speaking Canada. It sets out specific standards and concepts of what "Canadian" is, particularly in times where that concept is deemed threatened, often incompatible with minority visions of self and

words, both discourses challenged each other to prove to the Canadian people that their option for Canada was the better option, that their policy was the most beneficial for the future of the country, and that the opposing option was either dangerous or ineffective.

Discourse Analysis and Discursive Tools

The goal of this study is to elaborate on the connection between historical discourse and social movement, particularly the overall process of cultivating and organizing public thought, attitudes, and opinion. Most importantly, however, this project seeks to illustrate how the opposition movement, formally developed from within civil society, attempted to mobilize the Canadian public at a national level to oppose free trade with the United States. It looks specifically at the discursive messaging used throughout the period of 1985 and 1988 by those non-governmental organizations to both connect with each other and convince the Canadian public that free trade with the United States equated the destruction of Canada. Through a discourse analysis, a larger discursive process was revealed that linked the various elements of anti-free trade sentiments, opinions, and attitudes to the role of discourse in the mobilization of opposition to the FTA.

Initially, the anti-free trade organizations sought to re-frame opposition to Mulroney and the FTA within an existing and powerful historical anti-continentalist narrative. This narrative has roots in political discourse employed since Confederation and was

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other, and allows English-Canadians to express their own cultural identity using Canada as a vehicle. See: Will Kymlicka, "Multinational Federalism in Canada: Rethinking the Partnership" in Roger Gibbins and Guy Laforest, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward Reconciliation,* (Montreal: Montreal Institute for Policy Research, 1998).

popularized with the Loyalist migration as well as the hotly disputed elections of 1891 and 1911.[40]

Before negotiations had even begun, this rhetoric was used to cultivate early opposition not only to the free trade agreement, but to any idea closer economic integration with the United States. This was primarily due to an overwhelming division in economic perspectives, particularly the social left's suspicion about the rise of neo-liberal or market-oriented economic policies both globally and in the United States. For them, a refashioning to a more neo-liberal American model of economic standards – including, and most notably, labour standards – was *inevitable* after a free trade agreement was signed. They began lobbying like-minded organizations as well as the Canadian public, insisting that free trade was not in the best interest of Canadians. Indeed, if the opposition were going to succeed in building a vast network of public and private opposition to the then current government and their policy directions, a reservoir of social and political defiance was necessary to create in advance. This is how the anti-free trade movement, which culminated with the famed 1988 federal election, began.

The discourse analysis asks how the opposition movement sought to secure public endorsement or consent of their anti-free trade agenda through discursive means. Ultimately, anti-American and pan-Canadian nationalist discursive tools were the movement's greatest allies in terms of cultivating early public opinion against Mulroney's proposed economic policy directions. This is not to suggest that anti-American rhetoric was the social movement's only or even dominant strategy in the

40 Granatstein, 1996.

attempt to create public opposition to free trade. Rather, the larger body of anti-free trade discourse suggests that the discursive process had three major parts.

First, to cultivate an early aversion to the idea of closer economic integration with the United States, the opposition's public message relied on exploiting any level of difference between Canada and the United States, constructing a temporal identity based on the constituted difference. Early discourse illustrated the beginning of this process to have revolved heavily around basic anti-American rhetoric, done to create a vision of "self" between Canadians and elaborate on "difference" between Canada and the U.S. This assisted in the solidification of "sides" (*us* and *them*) or binary opposition structures that would ultimately frame in the intersubjective decision making processes of the Canadian people. This anti-American argument was, however, only a start. The constructed collective identity also had to be transformed from a dichotomy of *us* and *them* to a more combative version of *us* versus *them*. This was achieved through a process of threat naming, a discursive process whereby the idea of closer economic integration was suggested to equate absolute loss or destruction of Canadian sovereignty, identity, culture, social institutions, labour and environmental standards, and "way of life." This "absolute" loss was the *ultimate* threat to Canada. Finally, and based on the discursively created temporal "Canadian" identity and the threats that were named against it, the opposition incited collective action by arguing that the only way Canada could survive was to vote against the Conservatives in the 1988 federal election.

By creating and constituting elements of difference between the two countries, regardless of relying heavily on generalizations and common assumptions, an environment was created whereby Canadians could feel and believe they were anything

and everything but "northern" Americans. Whether true or not, authors of the discourse reinforced this by using vague language or relying on commonly shared knowledge or "national" mythology. As scholar Genevieve Piché argued, presuppositions within statements presented, served to clarify that which the authors took for granted or perceives as common ground.[41] Presuppositions were generalizations, assumptions, and even stereotypes, used by the opposition to support their arguments against free trade. Identification of differences between Canadians and Americans, generalized fears and anxieties of commonly shared anti-American sentiments, and idealized visions of Canada and Canadians were such examples. The constitution of difference in the process of othering – defining oneself and like-group through highlighting difference – was done in generalized and vehement means in order to drive home to point and importance of viewing oneself as remarkably different than the "other."

The second major discursive tool used by the opposition was that of "threat-naming", a process of identifying a national "concern" as representing an *urgent* danger to a particular object or population. By calling attention and/or sensationalizing an object as a threat, the authors of the anti-free trade discourse could argue that action *must* be taken to address it. Through the discourse, the opposition crafted the United States as a deep threat to Canadian culture, society, way of life, independence, and sovereignty in order to make the case that a free trade agreement, which by bringing two country's economies closer together would ultimately destroy Canada. This threatened "Canada" was made up of presupposed, idealized, and generalized notions in order to construct the most commonly accepted notion of a "national" identity. Both a common membership and a defined

41 Gen Piche, Nouvelle Vague: The Securitization of the U.S.-Canada Border in American Political Discourse. MA Thesis. Department of Political Science, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 2009), 22.

enemy were intentionally created in order for Canadians to feel like a part of a discursively constructed group that was threatened, attacked, or was in danger.

Thirdly and finally, through the group, collective public action – based on the common understandings of self, other, threat and threatened – was demanded by the free trade opposition organizations. General or seemingly common ties were exploited in order to solidify the *in-group* against the *outside* threat, and mobilize them for defensive action. The discourse before the election made it seem dire that Canadians had to do everything possible to stop the Conservatives and the FTA or face a complete or *absolute* loss of an independent Canada to the United States.

1. Us and Them

In the words of cultural theorist Northrop Frye, "Canadian identity is an eminently exhaustible subject."[42] Specific elements of the various ways in which identity is created, however, are important to discuss in context of Canada and the cultivation of opposition to free trade. The opposition movement relied heavily on the discursive creation of a "Canadian" identity (or "us" in context of "them") in order to secure and organize specific public opinions. With the creation of a relevant identity, one that the Canadian public could relate to, cultivating opposition around an "issue" such as free trade would be easier. This was based on the anti-FTA groups' assumption that a national identity would translate into more or less cohesive and common set of grouped attitudes and opinions, at least in general terms of self-identification and socially accepted understandings of self. Moreover, and in this case, national identity was typically a binary

42 Northrop Frye, "Canadian Identity", Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada Vol. 14, (1976): 57-69

negative juxtaposition; temporal in nature, it was created to serve the purpose as a social organizer and a political motivator within Canadian civil society.

In *A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness*, Ian H. Angus, addressed questions concerning the creation of a Canadian identity. He argued that an examination of national identity required an investigation into the way national contents were "patterned" as they were arranged into "mythic forms."[43] National contents could mean symbols, parcels of history, or language that seemed to exemplify the proverbial "nation." Specifically, the way these were patterned or organized, distributed, or utilized into mythic forms or mythologies, assisted in the creation of a national identity, or, at least, the general national association of the citizenry. Angus argued that the first forms of beliefs in a nation-apart was from the American Revolution and the migration of the British 'loyalists' northward into territory that would eventually become Canada. A border draws a line and distinguishes human order from what is inside and what is outside; "Canadian identity has been a matter of self-preservation and its definition a problem for self-reflection since Confederation."[44] For Frye, Canada was a garrison that existed in the northern wilderness and had a constructed a border to which it can retreat behind, attain order, identity, and self-protection.[45] Moreover, this garrison was a "community surrounded by a physical and a psychological frontier," one which

43 Ian H. Angus, A Border Within: National Identity, Cultural Plurality, and Wilderness, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 108.

44 Ibid., 105.

45 Northrop Frye, "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada," in The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination. (Toronto: Anansi, 1975), xxxiii

relied on order to hold them together through a unification of attitudes by externalizing an enemy.[46]

The border provided a political stay to believed American encroachment and influence, while also providing a non-physical line of demarcation for Canadians to contemplate existence and identity. Angus traced the roots of Canada's first "nationalism" and emphasized the character of Canada as a "northern nation" in opposition to the United States.[47] Macdonald's National Policy then reinforced the idea that Canada's direction was to move away from the United States while the provinces remained closer together and closer to Britain. The border between the two countries existed both legally and in the hearts and minds of some of the top Canadian politicians and loyalist citizenry. Angus explained the concept of identity as a self-defining practice where a group (inside) is defined (to the best it can) as indistinguishable from another (outside), thus, creating a "border."[48] This often occurred through negation – where the group delineates forms of exclusion and membership, where threats to that identity are "created", where the language and imagery used appeals to tribal loyalties, and where proposed levels of internal superiority and external inferiority come into play.[49] Angus averred that the direction of this negation originated from sustaining a border between the "self" and the "other" in order to preserve and protect the self while maintaining the other.[50]

46 Ibid.

47 Angus, 1997, 114.

48 Ibid., 4.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., 47.

These are all elements most seen in ethnic nationalism, however, they were a main feature of the ways in which the opposition forces against free trade sought to cultivate public opinions: attitudes were forced into a polarization when such identity building practices required an internal homogenization of thought, opinion, history, culture and identity. The dominant use of pan-Canadian nationalism was a testament to this as a type of ordering of things also created an intentional story of us and them.[51] Moreover, these identities were temporal because they could be constructed at different times and used in different contexts. While a socially shared basis of national identity existed, it became more relevant when individuals and organizations discussed an issue within the context of a historical anti-continentalist narrative of the identities and mythologies associated with closer continental integration with the United States.[52]

1.1 Creating Us and Them: The Anti-American Element

Political historian, J. L. Granatstein provided a most thorough account of the broad use of anti-Americanism in Canadian history in his book, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism*. Like Angus, Lipset, and others, Granatstein traced the roots of anti-American thought and opinion back to the American Revolution and detailed its use as a tool by political and cultural elites to preserve or enhance power in the remainder of the 19th and throughout the 20th century. For Granatstein, this continued right up to the

51 Ibid., 9.

52 For insightful and diverse accounts of the elements of Canadian nationalism, particularly how it relates to defining self through construction of an "other" see: George Grant, Lament for a Nation, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965); William M. Baker, "The Anti-American Ingredient in Canadian History." Dalhousie Review 53, No. 1 (1973): 57-77; Mel Hurtig, At Twilight in the Country: Memoirs of a Canadian Nationalist, (Toronto: Stoddart, 1996); Richard Gwyn, Nationalism Without Walls: The Unbearable Lightness of Being Canadian (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995); John C. Kendall, "A Canadian Construction of Reality: Northern Images of the United States." American Review of Canadian Studies 4, No. 1 (1974): 20-36; Allan Smith, Canada: an American Nation? Essays on Continentalism, Identity and the Canadian Frame of Mind, (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); Stephen Azzi, Walter Gordon and the Rise of Canadian Nationalism. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999).

1988 federal election, where, at the time, he argued it to be the "last gasp of anti-Americanism."[53] His analysis provides historical evidence to suggest that the use of negative juxtaposition of Canada and Canadians vis-à-vis the United States was a successful tool in creating grounds ripe for opposing free-trade policy options.[54] In his book, Granatstein argued that anti-Americanism has been a common defence mechanism used by Canadians to resist what they saw as "the take over of Canada by American money, ideas, and culture."[55] Granatstein noted that anti-Americanism derived from the "understandable hostility" felt by those who had been loyal to the British Crown and opposed to the revolutionary Americans. Peppered by various events such as the War of 1812 and the Rebellions of 1837 – while employing anti-Yankee sentiments – the Loyalists reaffirmed their aversion to more democratic or republican systems as well as their social control and power over the more conservative institutions developed in British North America. Anti-Americanism thus evovled into a tool in the maintenance of political power in the newly established Canada, as well as what Granatstein described as the "political and economic order" of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald.[56]

Granatstein has also examined the ways in which politicians have used anti-American rhetoric to convince Canadians that the United States sought to devour Canada. They argued that the only way to circumvent American annexation was to oppose all

53 J. L. Granatstein, Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism. (Toronto: HarperCollins), 1996. For his discussion on the "last gasp", see pages 246-277.

54 See also: Patricia K. Wood, "'Defining Canadian': Anti-Americanism and Identity in Sir John A. Macdonald's Nationalism," Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer 2001): 49-69; Kim Richard Nossal, *Anti-Americanism in Canada*, in Brendan O'Connor, ed., Anti-Americanism: History, Causes and Themes, Vol. 3 (Westport: Greenwood), 2007; Brian Bow, "Anti-Americanism in Canada and Mexico," paper presented to the International Studies Association Convention, Chicago, March 1-3, 2007; Brian Bow, "Nationalism, Regional Identity And The 'Deep Integration' Debate in Canada". Paper presented to the Canadian Political Science Association Annual Conference, Vancouver, BC, June 4-6, 2008.

55 Granatstein, 1996, Preface.

56 Ibid.

policy options or opinions made by Canadian continentalists who favoured closer ties with the United States. For those like Macdonald, Canada was only as strong as its rejection of the American Republic and its loyalty to the British Empire.[57] Those who were "pro-American" or those who believed closer ties with the United States would in fact benefit and not harm Canada's political, cultural, or economic sovereignty, were often viciously characterised as disloyal or unpatriotic.[58]

Patricia K. Wood, in *'Defining Canadian': Anti-Americanism and Identity in Sir John A. Macdonald's Nationalism*, provided an excellent account of the various uses of discursive messaging behind Macdonald's political rhetoric during the federal election of 1891. Wood examined how Macdonald tapped into socially shared perceptions of what America and Americans were, as well as what and who Canadians believed themselves to be in order to inform public opinion at a time where free trade (reciprocity) with America came up as an alternative economic policy to his National Policy.[59] She illustrated the contextual use of anti-Americanism in reinforcing the notion that Canada needed to protect and defend itself against an encroaching United States. Moreover, Wood's study identified a relationship between "anti-American" discourse and the development of a specific "model" of Canadian identity which sought to bind "Canadians" together in opposition to the continentalists. Wood analyzed the ways in which opponents to Macdonald were depicted in these images in order to gain further perspective on the elements of opposition to free trade. Particularly, she suggested that the *ways* opponents

57 See Granatstein, 1996; Chapter 1 and 2, explaining the inheritance of the Loyalist anti-Americanism and the first major uses of anti-Americanism as a discursive tool to solidify power and favour in the 1891 and 1911 federal elections.

58 Ibid.

59 Patricia K. Wood, "'Defining Canadian': Anti-Americanism and Identity in Sir John A. Macdonald's Nationalism," Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer 2001): 49-69.

of Macdonald were made to look – feminine, weak, patsies, and betrayers of Canada – had much to do with their strategy to win over the Canadian electorate.

Given that the anti-free trade movement in the 1980s relied upon a general parcelling of "national" contents a "common" identity was created through the campaigns against the FTA by means of communicating from the "inside" from the "outside" via a propagation of symbols specific markers that define what was perceived, and assumed, to be "Canadian" and what was "American."[60] Angus, for example, argued that national identity derived its being from a historic bloc who identified with a "general popular will and acts as a representative of that will."[61] Anti-Americanism became the most accessible English-Canadian mythic form or discursive resource available in terms in cultivating or reinforcing what it really meant to be "Canadian" throughout the 20th century. The movement would continue to speak on behalf of all Canadians, and use English-Canadian indicators of "self" to justify their positions.

2. Threat Naming

Once the anti-free trade organizations had re-introduced classic anti-continentalist arguments and tools into their discourse, a focus had to be created in order to "rally" or organize the Canadian public *against* a specific public policy proposals or directions; the FTA provided that needed focus to organize and streamline opposition. In other words, the previously popularized sense of *self* and *other* could serve as incentive to rally action around the FTA, particularly if that issue is deemed a "threat" to the "in-group" [read: Canadians/Canada]. Threat naming by the anti-free trade groups created an environment

60 Angus, 1997, 20.

61 Ibid.

where the issue or crisis of free trade evolved. The anti-free trade movement sought to organize public opinion against the proposed agreement by creating an enemy from within Canada [read: pro-free traders] and outside of Canada [read: the United States]. By doing so, and relying heavily on presupposed anti-American attitudes, the anti-free traders attempted to connect these sentiments to a larger vision, purpose, and issue.

In a recent study on the "securitization" of the Canada-U.S. border post-9/11, Piché's research indicated that discursive actions and attempts were made by political elite on both sides of the border to construct the border as a security "issue."[62] She argued that the way in which the border became a matter of national security, or "securitized," relied heavily on a threat-naming process that focused on specific threatening elements such as terrorism.[63] The ways in which the threats were discussed and contextualized mattered as well; the goal was to fit the specific threats into a larger framework of existing national concerns or narratives on defence or security. In context of the debate in the 1980s, the anti-free trade movement used threat-naming in order to make the FTA, as a whole, a threat to every aspect of Canadian life. Moreover, the opposition did not just want to make the FTA an issue. As their discourse revealed, it was more advantageous to make it out to be a national crisis. An examination of the ways in which the opposition talked about the FTA in relation to its possible effects on Canadian society is a critical piece in the larger anti-free trade story, as well as the social movement itself.

62 Piché, 2009, 42.

63 Ibid.

2.1 The FTA: A Threat to Canadian Exceptionalism

A discursive by-product of the threat-naming process was definitely the construction of an exceptionalist self-image of Canada and Canadians. This Canadian exceptionalism, rooted in mythic Loyalist history and the language of late 19th century elites, advanced the idea that Canada was and always has been *more* fair, *more* just, *more* peaceful, and a *more* compassionate society than, most specifically, the United States.[64] This exceptionalism proved a discursive resource by those opposed to the FTA, as they focused their efforts on embellishing national mythologies and presupposing idealized possibilities in order to make Canadians not just believe they were exceptional, but that the FTA threatened to take that exceptionalism away from them. The need to elevate Canadian identity to such a high level throughout their campaigns was because it provided a critical way of explaining to Canadians that they, indeed, had something to protect and preserve.

According to John Ralston Saul, Canada has suffered from a contradiction between its reality and its mythology.[65] What Canadian history has shown us, particularly at times when national identity becomes an issue, is that mythology turns complexity into generality and helps citizens to summon idealized versions of self and contrived perceptions of others. For Saul, the way Canadians have tended to deal, or at least try to negotiate, with what they believe is really true or "real" about themselves and what is myth, has rendered them "victims of mythology." Mythology also helps to reaffirm general exceptionalist characteristics Canadians believe to be *certainly* true, particularly,

64 See for example: Seymour Martin Lipset, "Trade Union Exceptionalism: The Case of Canada and the United States," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 538, No. 1 (March, 1995): 115-135; Brian J. Gains, "Duverger's Law and the Meaning of Canadian Exceptionalism," Comparative Political Studies, 32 No. 7 (October, 1999): 835-861.

65 John Ralston Saul, Reflection of a Siamese Twin, (Toronto: Penguin Group Canada, 1998), 4.

but not limited to, the notions of superiority to Americans and to the United States. Possibly agreeing with Granatstein's arguments about elites and their role in the creation and perpetuation of specific forms of discourse and identity, Saul argued that those in positions of power and responsibility have embraced the practice of "ahistorical public mythology."[66] Specifically, during points at which the "Canadian" public identity feels or is meant to feel most vulnerable, these mythologies are used to shepherd public thought in order to re-establish or maintain some form of social order in accordance with specific policy objections or directions.

They are the key drivers that not only make certain public policy, such as free trade, a "national" issue, but also to generate fear and anxiety around the idea. Free trade was rejected in 1891 and 1911 by cultivating this fear through discourse and later political action. Continental integration in other forms have been adamantly opposed and fought against using the guise of the American usurper as their main artillery and based on generations of anti-Americanism and Loyalist myth. This was the main mythology used in the context of the various movements or national debates against free trade and represented the "anti-continentalist narrative" discussed in this project. Saul would most likely argue that the myth was used to deny complexity in order to sell generality and make a "national issue" resonate with the public, like the anti-free trade movement would in the 1980s.

The use of discourse to generate fear is based on mythology of the victim. According to Saul, Canada's most basic myth is that it is victimized by the United States and has always been in a perpetual state of anxiety over American domination or assumption of

66 Ibid., 9.

control. These fears had helped unite Canadians in opposition to various policy proposals of closer alignment with U.S. policies.[67] According to Granatstein, the Durham Report of 1839 was instrumental in inaugurating that victimization in the hearts and minds of Canadians, particularly regarding fears of American seizure of Canada. The only way for the Loyalists who left the American Republic to prevent annexation and defend themselves was to create a nation and a nationality of their own and to elevate the Canadas (Upper and Lower) into an object of "national importance" and to birth a country able to resist absorption into the United States.[68]

The naming of threats to Canada and Canadians from America or Americans was therefore a critical feature of the discourse created in the period surrounding opposition to free trade. The idea that Canada's first nationalism and identity has heritage in the "garrison" and in the "border," the United States has become (regardless of accuracy) the perpetual threat of Canada and Canadian "way of life." A particular "Canada" is not only different from the United States, it is something to be stood "on guard" for. Threats are named when there exists a contradiction in public policy to the deemed "way of life" of Canadians. The opposition to free trade constructed, through language, the Canada that they believed was the real Canada, and argued that the many effects of free trade, all dangerous on their own but even more destructive together, *would* come to harm that Canada. Threats were explicitly named, namely privatization, deregulation, liberalization, dominant American culture, labour and health care standards, weakening of trade unionism, and massive job losses. Threats were also implicitly mentioned throughout the language and imagery used to convince Canadians to oppose closer integration.

67 Ibid., 28.

68 Granatstein, 1996, 31.

Harmonization of policy was what the opposition feared would come from a free trade agreement, and thus, presented the largest threat of them all. Harmonizing with the more powerful United States would mean a loss of Canadian standards, practices, culture, independence and sovereignty. Therefore, the organizational discourse took their strategy a step further, and explained to Canadians that if they did not "act now," if they did not come to the defence of Canada, Canada, as they knew it, would cease to exist.

3. Collective Action

In order to mobilize the Canadian public to finally reject the FTA, the opposition would have to promote and solidify specific, common, and meaningful ties between those different individuals and groups who opposed the deal. General and particular membership ties needed to be created between members (individuals and organizations) in order for them to feel connected to the issue and, ultimately, with the action that was to be associated with it. In turn, these ties contribute to a collective identity and, in this case, a national identity that was used by those opposed to free trade to create a national support base. This "identity," according to Cynthia Hardy, Thomas B. Lawrence and David Grant, was critical in the production of the collective action sought by the movement itself:

> Temporally and rhetorically related texts constitute conversations in which participants draw on and simultaneously produce discursive objects and ideas. A discursive approach to interorganizational collaboration is inherently processual and contextual. The relationship between discourse and interorganizational collaboration…can be understood as the product of sets of [these] conversations that draw on existing discourses. Specifically, effective collaboration, which we define as cooperative, interorganizational action that produces innovative, synergistic solutions and balances divergent stakeholder concerns, emerges out of a two-stage process… (1) Generalized membership ties—discursively constructed relationships that connect participants to a common issue around which the collaboration is organized— and (2) those conversations that produce particularized membership ties, which connect the participants directly to each

> other, rather than indirectly through an issue. In this process, conversations produce discursive resources that create a collective identity and translate it into effective collaboration.[69]

As has been discussed above, these "discursive resources" were produced by historical conversations that existed long before the anti-free trade movement in the 1980s. This study suggests that while the work of Hardy et al. focuses on inter-institutional collaboration, their thesis on the relationship between collective identity and collective action helps to inform a better understanding of the anti-free trade social movement in Canada. Their work applies quite well to the preliminary inter-organizational collaboration studied by Ayres, but also serves to reveal what these organizations sought to reproduce within the Canadian public. In practical terms, the CLC, CUPE, the UCC, and other members of the movement all participated in building links between the different organizations in order to form an effective collaborative entity with the capability of performing collective action on behalf of the movement in its entirety. However, it was the PCN, which provided that function to the best of its ability.

The organization of opinions and attitudes, inter-institutional or otherwise, relied on the ability to create generalized and particularized membership ties between the individuals and groups involved. These ties assisted in the construction of a collective identity for the purposes of collective action. As Hardy et al. noted, there is a relationship between collective identity and effective collaboration which is best illustrated through an analysis of the role discourse plays in that relationship. These ties were created discursively just as the threats, threatened, and idealized "Canada" were. These types of discourse defined the problem and attempted to build and mobilize action against it.

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69 Cynthia Hardy, Thomas B. Lawrence And David Grant. "Discourse And Collaboration: The Role Of Conversations And Collective Identity." Academy Of Management Review 30, No. 1, (2005): 58.

Threat naming was motivational "in the form of a general call to arms to potential participants and stakeholders,"[70] but they were all a part of the process in organization of the attitudes and opinions deemed necessary to oppose the FTA, primarily to help promote collective action.

Generalized membership ties are those discursively created relationships that connect participants to a common "issue" around which collaboration is organized. The presupposed threats associated with free trade were the common issue, and, in turn, connected participants indirectly. Particularized membership ties connected participants to one another, Canadian to Canadian, rather that indirectly through the issue of free trade. These varied, but were commonly found within the collected discourse as shared values, attitudes, opinions, national mythologies, or generally presupposed understandings of Canadians by Canadians.

For Hardy et al, the relationship between features of collective identity and collective action were best illustrated through analysis of the role discourse plays within that relationship. They argued that "discursive processes produce collective identities, which lead to various forms of collective action." Action comes when a group believes in themselves and holds their ideas, attitudes and opinions to be validated or at least sanctioned by a larger movement (read: anti-free trade). The "stressing of similarities or shared attributes around which group members coalesce" is a critical part of this process. It occurs when the collaborating partners in the movement or group successfully produce (or reproduce) a "discursive object that refers to themselves as some form of collective, rather than simply a set of disconnected individuals or as a group of organizational

70 Hardy, et al., 2005, 64.

representatives."[71] Ayres argued the PCN represented this on an institutional level in the movement against free trade. On a sub-institutional level, participants in the movement started to describe themselves as a "collective," and, comparably, described others as "threats, enemies or incompatible with the collective, nation, or group." Collective identity was critical to collective action because it allowed the participants to create the problem, issue, threat, as well as the solution or the alternative or 'right' way to move forward. The solution is proposed as "part of a collaborative framework in which the potential for joint action is both significant and beneficial."[72] For the anti-free trade movement, the solution to the threats associated with the proposed FTA was to stop it from ever becoming a legislative reality.[73] The federal election in 1988 provided them the political opportunity to achieve this goal and therefore presented an interesting use of discourse in order to ensure that the presupposed collective identity translated into effective action.

3.1 Civic Opposition to the Political Realm

The reality that it would ultimately be the NDP or the Liberals who would remove Mulroney from power, and, in effect, kill the free trade legislation, was not elusive to the PCN or the other organizations. While the opposition movement had various degrees of contact with the Liberals and NDP throughout their campaigns, by the spring of 1988, the PCN sought to set up "formal" ties with the Liberals and the NDP to prepare for a fall election. Two letters were written to Turner and Broadbent in the spring of 1988 that

71 Ibid., 61

72 Ibid., 62-63

73 That being said, the anti-free trade movement was not completely against international trade, per say; they argued for "fair" trade, which they believed would never result in a Canada-U.S. economic pact where the United States would clearly benefit more in the agreement.

outlined the PCN's desire to establish liaisons within the party and to schedule formal strategy meetings. Co-Chairperson Tony Clarke wrote the following to leaders Ed Broadbent and John Turner in April 1988:

> As you know, the federal government will soon be tabling legislation for the implementation of the U.S. –Canada Free Trade Accord in the House of Commons. We believe that the introduction of this implementing legislation [Bill C-130] marks a critical moment in the struggle against the *Mulroney-Reagan trade deal*. It is imperative that every effort be made to mobilize resources, both inside and outside Parliament, to stop the passage of this…legislation [emphasis added].[74]

Calling the FTA the "Mulroney-Reagan trade deal" was actually an explicit discursive strategy by the anti-free trade movement. Like many of their other arguments about the implications of the deal and the deal itself, anti-free traders were encouraged to publically disassociate the FTA with free trade or economics, for example, and replaced descriptors with more affective or associative vocabulary. For example, the *Free Trade Action Dossier* suggested to the public that they start to employ this strategy themselves in their daily lives in order to spread the message that the FTA was dangerous. The Dossier asked:

> What you can do? - Give it [the FTA] a bad name – Call it the Mulroney Trade Initiative. <u>For those who are uninformed</u> free trade has a positive ring to it. By using Mulroney (or Mulroney-Reagan)…we can encourage people to associate all the distrust and other negative emotions those names…invoke with the bilateral trade initiative [emphasis added].[75]

These letters also expressed the desire to hold a meeting with the leaders and a delegation of 30 top leaders from the representative organizations in Ottawa. The "primary purpose of this meeting," according to the letters, was to:

> Share strategy proposals and strengthen common commitments in preventing the passage of the implementing legislation. In particular, we would like to hear about the steps your party plans to take in the House

74 Pro-Canada Network (Ottawa), Letter to John Turner and Ed Broadbent, April 1, 1988.

75 (GATT-Fly, <u>Free Trade Action Dossier</u>, No. 1, May 11, 1987).

> of Commons to stop the passage of this legislation. We will also invite the leaders of several participating organizations to share their strategies for mobilizing public opinion against the...legislation.[76]

A consultation occurred on June 28-29th, 1988, between the PCN and organizational representatives and the NDP and Liberal House leaders – Nelson Riis and Herb Gray – to discuss a proposed summer action plan.[77] While an election call was their ultimate goal, with no clear date in sight the PCN sought to disrupt or delay the legislative process of Bill C-130, the act introduced into Parliament by the Conservatives that would implement the FTA. While Mulroney's party had a majority and would have no problem voting through the legislation, there were still elements of the legislative process itself that the opposition could influence to delay or put pressure on the government's bill. This was the basis of their summer action plan – to delay the passage of the implementing legislation in order to force Mulroney to call an election on the issue of the FTA. The PCN also had devised a draft proposal for national action against the FTA scheduled for the fall in the event that an election was still not called. It proposed organizing mock "by-elections" whereby 8 to 13 riding across the country would hold (non-official) by-elections in ridings held by Conservatives, or preferably Conservative cabinet ministers. The strategy paper argued that these elections would have the "flavour" of real by-elections, with campaigns, election days, and ballot boxes for actual voting. The ballot would specifically be on the FTA. These elections would be supplemented with a national leaflet and sign campaign, and organized by a national coordinator and national campaign team, complete with canvassers, sign crews, office staff, and election day workers. "With no federal election," the paper argued, "we will need to have a national focus to organize

76 Ibid.

77 Pro-Canada Network (Montreal), Report to the Pro-Canada Network Assembly, August 28-29, 1988.

around and a platform from which to present our arguments. This should be interesting to the media…[and should] also allow us to reach down into many communities with our message." The campaign period suggested was from late August to the "election" date of October 24th. The PCN saw this proposed action as opportunity to further their messages, while providing focus, media attention, and visible protest to the lack of a proper federal election.[78]

Another part of their delaying strategy focused on the Senate, the upper house of the Canadian legislature, as legislation passed from the House of Commons had to be passed in turn by the Senate before it could receive Royal Assent.[79] The PCN, partnering with the opposition parties, sought to delay ratification of Bill C-130 in the Senate by proposing the upper house hold the nation-wide hearings denied by the House committee. On July 20th, Liberal leader John Turner explicitly asked the Liberal-dominated Senate to delay the passage of the implementing legislation until a federal election was called so the Canadian people could decide.[80] Turner's tactic helped him gain in the polls by making himself out to be a public "defender" of democratic process and rights of Canadian citizens. By in large, Ayres argued that Turner's strategy had worked and noted

78 Pro-Canada Network (Ottawa), Proposal for a National Action against the Trade Deal in the fall, 1988, Strategy Document, July 1988.

79 In Canada, before the third and final reading of a piece of legislation in the House of Commons, a legislative committee is established to examine the proposed legislation in finer detail. The second legislative committee for Bill C-130 was set up in early July, 1988. (The first Bill C-130 committee was set up in 1986, in the aftermath of Mulroney's announcement of the intention to procure a free trade agreement with the United States.) As legislative committees were made up of all parties in the House, regular contacts were set up between the PCN and the Liberal (L. Axworthy, W. Allmand) and the NDP (R. Langdon, J. Manly) representatives on the committee. During July, the PCN coordinated a nation-wide "telegram blitz" calling for public consultations at the committee, which would in effect stall the legislative process. The committee, however, decided against nation-wide hearings but held Ottawa-based hearings instead, where just over a dozen PCN affiliated organizations made presentations against the FTA. (Pro-Canada Network (Montreal), Report to the Pro-Canada Network Assembly, August 28-29, 1988.)

80 Jeffery M. Ayres, "Political Process and Popular Protest: The Mobilization Against Free Trade in Canada," American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 55, No. 4 (October, 1996): 483.

that after July 20th, a Gallup poll had reported that 52% of Canadians supported Turner's move, as compared to 30% who disapproved. While this was something the movement had been arguing for long before Turner, the Liberal leader's actions also bolstered the movement's demands for an election. Turner's move in July represented a "strategic articulation of the anti-free trade movement's concerns," most notably their primary contention that a federal election be held to decide the fate of the FTA.[81]

Thanks to his move, Turner's popularity would increase and rise above Mulroney's own in late July and August; by the end of the summer, Turner personally had written the Conservatives off as an "inevitably doomed" government, with no chance in a fall election.[82] The Conservatives fought back with a campaign strategy that belittled Turner's capacity as a national leader. The strategy seemed to have worked: by October 1988, the Conservatives had risen to 43% in the polls, precisely the number they would achieve on election day seven weeks later.[83]

The leaders' debate between Broadbent, Turner, and Mulroney was a crucial moment in the election campaign. It illustrated Turner's appropriation of the messages produced by the anti-free trade movement, particularly his famed "I happen to believe that you have sold us out…" comment to Mulroney. Political scientist, Richard Johnston argued this was a "critical moment" in the English debate as it concretized a connection between the public's fears over loss of sovereignty and the agency of Mulroney and the FTA.[84] Mulroney noted in his memoirs that Turner's showing in the debates brought the

81 Ibid.

82 Brian Mulroney, Memoirs: 1939-1993, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2007), 625.

83 Ibid., 626.

84 Richard Johnston, et al. "Free Trade in Canadian Elections: Issue Evolution in the Long and Short Run," in W. H. Riker (ed), *Agenda Formation*, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 243.

popularity polls between the two parties to a closer margin by October 31 and through to November 11th.[85] For Mulroney, "Turner had become a [political] bridge for people to cross over and join the anti-free trade side."[86] Seeing the Liberals advancing 12 to 14 points ahead in November, Mulroney and the Conservatives strategized to pour their efforts into Quebec, a move that – combined with their support from eastern Canadian business – arguably won them the election.[87]

Presentation of Results

This thesis attempts to illustrate that there existed a discursive process amongst the efforts of the anti-free trade movement from 1985-1988. Thus, the presentation of results from this analysis follows how the process unfolded, and as such, how the social movement developed itself into what it became in 1988. First, the initial reactions by various civil society organizations to the proposed policy directions and subsequent negotiations for a free trade agreement with the United States were paramount to the construction of the discursive resources necessary to build a collective identity and a common enemy for the grand purposes of eventual collective action. The discourse involved with this initial part of the overall process relied heavily on classic paradigms of anti-American rhetoric within the anti-continentalist narrative, while reinforcing what was different between the two countries and creating an "us" and a "them," and building a case for Canadian exceptionalism at the same time. Second, was the intensification of the *us* and *them* language into a more defined *us* **versus** *them*, or them *against* us. This

85 Mulroney, 2007, 634-635.

86 Ibid., 637.

87 Ibid

was prepared and executed through re-tooling the language to involve the naming of threats and the creation of a discernable enemy or enemies. The purpose of the second part of the overall process was to organize public attitudes and opinions around a specific idea, issue, or crisis in which something would eventually need to be done about it. Thirdly, through the reinstitution of certain public opinions and attitudes, the anti-free trade movement sought to effectively translate previously established civic opposition into pragmatic political action; this would mean public endorsement of the two opposition parties against Mulroney and the Conservatives in the federal election of 1988. The following chapter presents the results of the entire discourse analysis by providing selections of the discourse that sought to (1) cultivate, (2) organize, and (3) mobilize Canadians against the FTA. Based on the discursive tools outline in chapter two, it provides an analysis of the language used in context of the social movement and both its proximate and long-term goals.

CHAPTER III

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS & RESULTS

The well-known outcome of the 1988 federal election – a Conservative majority and an effective "yes" to the question of whether or not the FTA was desired – tends to obscure the importance of the process by which the large opposition movement sought to cultivate and organize the public's understanding of the election's central premise. While the opposition movement failed to remove Mulroney from power, the discursive process that the movement both created and participated in is key to understanding the historical context of the debate over free trade itself. As is explored below, the opposition's strategy revealed itself in three distinct phases. First, initial opponents relied on classic forms of anti-American rhetoric, as well as idealized, "common sense" understandings of Canada, in order to generate a clear sense of *self* and *other*. "Classic" anti-Americanism was bolstered by constructed notions of commonality, uniqueness, and superiority, to help form a backdrop of popularized and generalized perceptions of others in order to solidify binary thinking. In this way, a distinct and unique idea of Canada was constructed in order to make the differences relevant, and, hopefully, highly salient to the broader Canadian public. Classic anti-Americanism is a reference to Granatstein's definition, "a common defence mechanism used by Canadians to resist what they saw as the take-over of Canada by American money, ideas, and culture," and its classic usage, or what Granatstein has argued, is "as a tool by political and cultural elites to preserve or enhance power."[1] While his theory has greatly informed my understanding of anti-

1 Granatstein, 1996, Preface.

American discourse, this study looks beyond his theory and situates anti-Americanism it in a much larger discursive process not identified in Granatstein's original work.

Second, with the creation of this defined self and other, the element of choice was introduced to generate the impression of being forced to choose a side. The language of *us* and *them* began to take on the character of *us* versus *them*, a binary, and ultimately, exclusive framework in which competing interests and visions were presented as alternative paths available for the Canadian future, and which, specifically, named a threat to the success of that future. In addition, the element of choice also primed the opposition and, it was hoped, the public, for an increasing demand that a federal election be held so as to allow Canadians to actively and openly decide whether or not free trade with the United States was the right direction for the country.

Finally, having called attention to the proximate threat, opposing organizations were able to proceed to the third phase, the argument that action *must* be taken to address this threat. The election campaign was, therefore, able to build upon the difference and danger of the United States, and frame the choice as one necessary ensure the survival of the threatened.

Part One: Models of Difference in Constructing the Self and Other

The genesis of early opposition to the FTA should be understood in a context where two factors loomed large: a new Conservative government which appeared to have drastically different economic policy from the previous Trudeau government; and a social context which was greatly informed by a lingering extension of the strong labour union movement of the 1970s. Early arguments, primarily made by labour unions, suggested to

all observers that Mulroney's decision to endorse more neo-liberal economic directions would drastically and negatively affect their stakeholders and on Canada as a whole – a nation, they argued, with a historic aversion to liberalization and deregulatory policies, such as free trade. The opposition signalled that Mulroney's new – and very pubic – relationship with the United States was a cause for concern. Canadians widely understood that Reagan's administration endorsed a neo-liberalist economic policy of a nuanced commitment to the globalization of world economies through a reduction or elimination of barriers associated with international trade. Opposition forces – most notably labour groups – therefore challenged the expected package of deregulation, liberalization, and privatization, of which, was presumed to follow the introduction of neo-liberal economic policies.

Neo-liberalism, pro-business, or "back-to-the-market" economic philosophy, was seen as a formidable enemy by the labour unions, but also by other civil society organizations, such as the United Church of Canada, and the National Action Committee (for the Status of Women). They argued that neo-liberalism would take jobs away from Canadians, further increase the gap between the rich and poor, and roll-back the Canadian women's movement. This opposition was reinforced by a traditional aversion to continentalist aspirations in Canada: continentalists were those that saw deeper integration with the United States, particularly post-World War II, as beneficial to the Canadian economy. The debate was formed and vividly played out from the 1950s and 1970s when labour unions, economic nationalists, and left-of-centre politicians, opposed high levels of American foreign investment and, moreover, saw continental integration as

greater American control of the Canadian economy.[2] Robert Laxer, a staunch anti-free trader and a former member of the socialist wing of the NDP in the 1970s (the so-called "Waffle Movement") argued that continentalists believed "the United States and Canada [were] basically *so similar* that the border [was] an unfortunate accident of history" [emphasis added].[3] While this was a heavily biased and crude definition of what proponents for closer integration with the United States probably thought at the time, it provides the context for the "knee-jerk" reaction of organizations such as CUPE and the CLC that focused their early opposition on "publicly educating" the Canadian people about the various and important differences between the two countries.

With the publication of the Macdonald Report in 1985 – which recommended a liberalization of Canadian trade policies particularly with the United States – the apprehensions previously felt about Mulroney's future policy directions seemingly was confirmed. Most notably, Mulroney's acceptance of the report's recommendations was presented in his public announcement in September 1985 that the Canadian government would begin official negotiations of a free trade agreement with the United States. This statement prompted the CLC and CUPE to issue a firestorm of criticism against the Mulroney government and the Prime Minister himself, and began the anti-free trade movement, which started, and continued, as a rejection of Mulroney's argued neo-liberal economic path for Canada. Created in 1985, the COC added a key element to this opposition: the organization effectively described Mulroney's proposed negotiations for a

2 Robert Laxer, Canadian Unions, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co. Publishers, 1976), 85.

3 Ibid., 117.

free trade agreement with the United States as an effort to harmonize the economic policies of Canada and the United States and further dilute Canadian sovereignty.[4]

The construction of national models of difference, therefore, came from a context in which parts of Canadian civil society saw its new government taking the country in a drastically different and – in the opinion of the budding opposition – and significantly dangerous economic direction. Effectively characterizing the neo-liberal shift as distinctly "un-Canadian," the civil society opposition publicly advanced various differences between the two countries in order to establish what Canadians had to lose in the drastic "shift" in national policy. However, what exactly were CUPE and the CLC saying in response to the government's declaration? How did they begin to set the stage of a would-be intense national dialogue between those opposed to free trade amongst themselves, as well as with the pro-free traders?

The initial strategy of those opposed to Mulroney was to establish that Canada and the United States were very different, and that a free trade agreement – or, at least the liberalization of current economic policies and regulatory institutions – would place that difference in danger (e.g., Canadian culture being subsumed into the larger, more preponderant U.S. culture). Their main presupposition was that free trade with the United States ultimately equated to the outright harmonization of economic policy and subsequently, the inevitable loss of Canadian culture, sovereignty, and independence.

4 From the point of view of this project, most unfortunate is the complete lack of COC public education material available to researchers. Perhaps there exists somewhere a cadre of primary documents produced by the COC between 1985 and 1988, that illustrate their positions and discursive strategies during the anti-free trade movement; however, despite contact the COC and past members involved in their campaigns, I was only able to recover two pamphlets from 1985 which state the organization's main concerns, demands, and what they thought Canadians should have been doing in response to the Conservative's proposal of a free trade agreement with the United States.

In keeping with historical discursive traditions of nationalists and anti-continentalists, America and Americans needed to be featured in a specific way in order to create and cultivate a conflictive and binary intersubjective environment. In other words, a context needed to be established in which Canadians felt a significant level of difference from, and even superiority to, the United States to eventually argue that harmonizing public policy with America would be detrimental to the preservation of a "uniquely" Canadian difference. The authors and their arguments, featured below, all represent the attempt to establish models of difference in order to show Canadians who they were, what they had, and what they stood to lose.

Part One: Constructing an Identity through a Constitution Difference

Origins of "Difference" and the Canadian Labour Movement: 1970s-1980s

James Laxer has noted that, in terms of the labour movement in Canada, the first half of the 1970s was characterized by the diverging options held by an "increasingly nationalist membership and a largely continentalist leadership in Canada's international unions."[5] This period illustrates the tensions involved in the debate over the preponderant influence of the United States within the realm of the labour organizations and leadership politics. Like nationalist and continentalist politicians, Canadian labour too had this divisive predicament in their organizational structure and their labour movement aspirations. This typically played out between what were known as "international" unions and "national" unions: an international union was a union whose head office was

5 Laxer, 1976, 113.

typically in the U.S., but which, chartered local unions in both Canada and the United States; while a national union was one in which membership was confined to Canada.[6]

In 1975, some 100 American-based unions represented 1.5 million Canadian unionists, while 1.3 million unionists belonged to 95 Canadian unions. This created tensions between these two groups (international and national) over the structure of the Canadian labour movement itself.[7] For the most part, Canadian unions were largely more nationalist, and this to some American-based unions, were regarded as threats to the preservation of more internationalist or continentalist unionism. For example, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the fastest growing national Canadian union, was perceived as a threat because of the future role it might play in swinging the balance of power in the Canadian Labour Congress (which had a more continentalist leadership at the time), towards national Canadian unionism.[8] At the 1974 CLC convention, CUPE, among other Canadian unions, pledged to seek reform measures from within the CLC to gear leadership towards greater autonomy for Canadian unions. This proved to be a major source of conflict between the continental leadership of the international unions and the growing nationalist popularity among Canadian union members at the time.

In the early 1970s, some predicted that the nationalists within the Canadian labour movement would continue to grow in strength until Canada had "an entirely self-governing and self-sufficient labour movement."[9] At the CUPE leadership convention in 1973, Stan Little, president of the union, noted that the CLC leadership (which at the time

6 Ibid., 323.

7 Ibid., 113.

8 Ibid., 114.

9 Ibid., 117.

was headed by Donald Macdonald) was "blind to the social and the political changes" that had been occurring in Canada. Macdonald – the same man who later chaired the Royal Commission in the early 1980s that provided Mulroney with the recommendations to pursue a more liberalized trade policy and a free trade agreement with the United States – argued as president of the Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa), that labour should be pushing for internationalism, to extend the movement beyond the borders of North America. Macdonald, just before his retirement from the CLC in 1974, decried that "those who want to beat the drums of chauvinistic and jingoistic nationalism" were undoubtedly, "playing with fire."[10] But the nationalist sentiment in CUPE's high ranks was adamant; Russ Doyle, president of CUPE Local 43, lamented that "for too long, we have been taking too many orders from the U.S. We are not going to take any more crap from people in the U.S."[11] Little and Doyle's comments represented a frustration within CUPE with both the Canadian labour movement and the reality of the structure of Canadian unionism, particularly with the continentalist leanings of those like Macdonald.

The Canadian labour movement's nationalism, and the growing opposition to American domination of Canadian unions (especially in the form of the international unions), flourished in the late 1970s along-side a growing political and economic nationalism found primarily in the NDP's Waffle Movement. Spilling over from that decade, the early 1980s saw a reaffirmation of strong nationalist convictions by the leadership of Canadian labour, most notably with Jeff Rose becoming president of CUPE in 1983 (to 1992), Dennis McDermott continuing to act as president of the CLC from 1978 (to 1986), and Shirley Carr, becoming CLC president after McDermott's

10 Ibid., 127

11 Ibid.

retirement.[12] CUPE's reaction to Mulroney as the new Prime Minister, particularly after the Shamrock Summit in 1985, was not surprising. He was not only seen as the antithesis of labour unionism, hosting a seemingly pro-neoliberal economic agenda. Moreover, his outlook was considered a threat to a decade of nationalist unionism in Canada, and those who had worked so hard to establish a thoroughly Canadian national labour movement. For labour, the return to a time when Canada and the United States were far closer and more integrated brought back anxieties and outrage over American domination in Canada.

Canadian Unionism and an Alternate Vision for Canada

In the spring of 1984, CUPE president, Jeff Rose, alluded to the then-current organizational vision for the labour and union movement in Canada and the uncertainty he felt as a leader over the impending tide of pro-business forces in Canada and abroad:

> Political and business pressures…are trying to change society back to one that is *less* free, *less* fair, *less* secure, and *less* decent…We are engaged in a struggle not just to preserve our *own* economic well-being, but to preserve a humane and caring society for everyone…When we try and defend our union [CUPE], we are not just trying to keep the *law of the jungle* out of our hospitals, schools, municipalities, libraries and all the other places where we work. Because, without a union to stop them, employers could do whatever they want to us. *That's not the kind of society we think is right*.[13]

Moreover, Rose mused about the fate of the union itself in Canada; his words spoke volumes to CUPE's social vision of for Canada:

> Deep down this is a struggle about the kind of society we want to live in. We have a vision of society, as a caring and unselfish society…We must

12 These leaders grew out of the nationalist labour movement in the 1970s and challenged the old CLC continentalist leadership under Macdonald. They represented what could be seen as a new face of nationalist labour movement leadership, and would carry on their challenge to continentalism with their organizational opposition and campaigns to Mulroney and the FTA.

13 Canadian Union of Public Employees (Ottawa), "Jeff Rose - Worth Fighting For: Selected Speeches and Articles, 1983-1991," 1991, 5-7.

> take that message to our members, to rebuild the confidence…Confidence, loyalty, solidarity, and support are a precondition, in my view, for our very survival as a union.[14]

In this context, Rose focused on the survival of the national Canadian union in the seemingly changing Canadian political and economic landscape. However, almost exactly a year later, Rose, while remaining committed to his earlier convictions about the importance of unionism in Canada, began to reframe his arguments differently. Instead of speaking about the survival of the union or labour's gains in Canada, the fate of Canada as a whole was in jeopardy. How or what could explain this shift in discursive framing?

In 1983, Mulroney retired as President from one of Canada's largest mining companies, the Iron Ore Company of Canada, to run for leadership of the Conservative Party. In the 1984 election, Mulroney and the Conservatives won a landslide victory, clearing a 211 seat majority to the opposition parties' (Liberal and NDP) combined 70.[15] For Rose, and perhaps other union leaders, as a pro-business government had taken seat as a majority in the House of Commons, the fate of the labour union had seemingly been put in critical danger. However, Rose's "micro" discussion of the survival of Canadian unions rapidly developed into one that spoke in more universal terms of the potential effects a neo-liberal economic model would have on Canada as a whole, not just labour unions. This reframing of CUPE's initial objection to Mulroney would rapidly evolve into a neo-nationalist economic fervour, examples of which are seen as the mid 1980s progressed towards the 1988 election.

In a March-April 1985 edition of CUPE's *The Facts*, "The Regressive Conservatives," Rose firmly posited what he saw as the dangerous "new order" in

14 Ibid

15 Simon Fraser University. Election Results, 1867-Present. Accessed online: http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/1867-present.html January 21, 2012.

Canadian politics.[16] Despite the fact that Mulroney had not yet been able to do much in terms of "shifting" Canadian economic policies, the article suggested the shift had *already* taken place and cemented itself as the "cornerstone" of Canada's economic policy:

> The Tories have opted for even more reliance on the private sector. Appeasing business…has become the cornerstone of Canada's economic policy. Like all policies of appeasement, the more we give, the more business wants. Here are the facts: They wish to sweep away all impediments to higher profits and freer movement of capital. A new language of economics has been developed to legitimize the regressive social and economic policies. Monetarism, supply-side economics, international competitiveness, favourable investment climate, free trade, privatization, fiscal responsibility [emphasis added].[17]

In October, 1985, after Mulroney began negotiations with Washington for a free trade deal, Rose reframed his original anxiety over the fate of Canada's unions in 1984 into a distress over the more general effects, which the movement towards more pro-market, business oriented economics would have on Canada as a whole:

> Free Trade is a major threat to Canada's public sector. If implemented, this policy will have a devastating effect on public programs and public sector employment. A free trade agreement with the U.S. would have a devastating effect on the amount of federal money reaching the regional less-developed areas in Canada. In the process, it would result in major job losses.[18]

No longer was it just about the survival of the union. For Rose, the context seemed to have change so much, that a new way of discussing the goals of the labour movement had emerged, one that ultimately involved the entire country. "What kind of society have working people been trying to create here in Canada?"[19] Rose asked a crowd at a CUPE division convention in the spring of 1985:

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16 Canadian Union of Public Employees, "The Regressive Conservatives" The Facts, 7 No. 2, (March-April, 1985).

17 Ibid.

18 Canadian Union of Public Employees, "The Special Convention Issue" The Facts,7 No. 5, (September-October, 1985).

19 CUPE, *Worth Fighting For*, 1991, 18.

> We exercise the right *as a people*, [to] make life in our country better, fairer, more equal, more caring and more protective…Now, what's at stake in all this? What's at stake are two totally different visions of the kind of society Canadians – and future generation of Canadians – can live in. Is Canadian society to erase the gains that ordinary people have brought about…? Are we to head back to the kind of society where ordinary people have second-class health care? That is what starting to happen. Where the roads and the parks are allowed to deteriorate, but the weapons industry flourishes? That's what's starting to happen.[20]

By equating the protection of Canadian unionism with the preservation of a particular vision of Canadian society, Rose adapted a more specific goal into a far more universal one and one that could potentially seek support from all Canadians, not just union members. Moreover, Rose framed this as a "fight" and a battle over two visions, between two forces; he called on those within his organization and, invariably, the Canadian people, to join this fight.

> We're fighting for more than just our jobs. We're fighting for the kind of society we want to live in, the kind of society we want to bequeath to our children and our grandchildren – the kind of society we think is right…The working people of Canada share some basic values about taking care of each other and sharing adversity, and we aren't going to give in to the survival-of-the-fittest type of society that the Conservatives and the businessmen are yearning to impose on us.[21]

Many of the early examples of the anti-free trade discourse focused on creating difference and generating feelings of hostility in order to convince Canadians that moving closer to a more neo-liberal economic reality, particularly in partnership with the United States, was a dangerous and undesirable venture. This practice, mainly stemming from the political left, was not an overly nuanced strategy as had been witnessed in the growing economic nationalism of the post-war era. However, its strength was thought to be found in its potential to convince the Canadian public that the United States was a hostile model of politics, culture, and society and, one incompatible with the Canadian

20 Ibid., 21.

21 Ibid.

"way of life." What happened here was a shift in the societal preferences of "the working people of Canada," to a universal penchant for all Canadians; Rose's "kind of society" was now argued to be Canada's *way of life*. With that said, how much of Rose's or CUPE's arguments, in the end, were really about free trade? Perhaps it is more appropriate to argue that free trade was more a symbolic mechanism within which those in civil society, such as Rose, saw the final straw that would break camel's back, one that would plunge Canada into a neo-liberal Conservative wasteland.

Rose was able to manipulate the current *us* and *them* dichotomy, while accentuating the exceptional uniqueness of what made Canada, "Canada," by constructing what he – and CUPE – saw as Canada's "way of life". The assertion of a distinct and unique Canada was critical in convincing the readers that not only was there a clear difference between Canada and the United States, but that free trade with the southern neighbour was a great concern. By means of accomplishing this, the Canadian way of life was constructed on presupposed and generalized notions of Canada in order to create the most accessible form of public knowledge and meaning. Moreover, by discussing a distinct way of life, the authors gave Canadians something through which to contemplate a proposed loss. Specifically, they argued that the shift towards neo-liberalism and free trade would invariably damage that presumably desirable, even sacred way of life. A 1986 edition of *The Facts* entitled "Macdonald Report: Thumbs Down!" noted that:

> The report of the Mac Commission, poorly researched, mean-spirited, and imbued with a narrow business oriented bias, presents an agenda for Canada's future that must be rejected. The report would turn Canada into a northern extension of the United States with inferior social programs, a profits-before-people system, a wider gap between rich and poor, and the loss of our distinctive Canadian *way of life* [emphasis added].[22]

22 Canadian Union of Public Employees, "Macdonald Report: Thumbs Down!" The Facts, 8 No 2. (March-April, 1986).

A January/February 1987 issue of *The Facts* attempted to define and sanctify Canada's "distinctive way of life" while arguing that it was in danger because of the FTA:

> Free trade threatens our Canadian Way of Life: At What Price? What is at stake in these negotiations is nothing less that our distinctive Canadian *values*. We have built on this side of the border a more decent, caring and civilized society. The price we may have to pay for a free trade agreement is everything that makes us different (and better) than the Americans. While the fundamental underpinning of Canadian society is based on the British concept of peace, order, and good government, our southern neighbours have enshrined life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. From this dichotomy, two fundamentally different philosophies of life and government have evolved [emphasis added].[23]

The final part of this example is key as it highlights the fundamental belief in the notion of critical difference. Driving home the idea of difference was naturally critical to the messaging, as similarities would work against their case of supported incompatibility. Regardless of potential similarities between Canada and the United States, the authors dug deep into historical, even primordial notions of difference to ensure that the dichotomy held true.

As a November/December 1987 issue of *The Facts* observed:

> Canada's distinctive way of life is endangered: The Free Trade Threat. Canada's way of life is, and always has been, distinctive from that of the United States. While there is much to admire in U.S. society, we have *chosen* to create in Canada a society that is different in fundamental ways [emphasis added].[24]

Here, the author recalled the Loyalist myth (a classic primordial notion of difference) and the closer connection to Britain. The author reminded Canadians that their difference was an extension of free will, a sacred decision or *choice* made their Canadian forbearers to

23 Canadian Union of Public Employees, "Free Trade Threatens our Canadian Way of Life: At What Price?" The Facts 1 No. 6, (January-February, 1987).

24 Canadian Union of Public Employees, "Canada's Distinctive Way of Life is Endangered: The Free Trade Threat." The Facts 9 No. 6, (November-December, 1987).

preserve a distinctly un-republican way of life. Introducing the historical choice to define Canada in a different and distinct way supported the strategy to strengthen perceptions of difference while imposing a level of unique importance on that decision itself. The statement was a general appeal to history and time; characterizing the "way of life" as having "always," allowed the author to imply that this was an unquestionable fact. The author then proceeded to discuss elements of the fundamental differences he or she initially introduced:

> Despite many shortcomings, most of us in Canada agree that our towns and cities are *generally* cleaner, safer, less violent, better planned, and more liveable. The countryside is *generally* less exploited and the environment *generally* more respected. Our social programs are more extensive, accessible and generous; in the U.S., there is no universal public health insurance, no public pension plan, and the social assistance and unemployment insurance programs are well below our standards. Our education and health care systems are more financial accessible, more uniform in quality, and more subject to public control. And not withstanding aberrations, our labour laws and standards are generally better, and our unions stronger [emphasis added].[25]

As a notable strategy, the word *generally* is used quite frequently before a proposed fact of fundamental difference. At the beginning of the statement, the author also explained to the reader that "most of us in Canada agree," illustrated that what followed were, in fact, presuppositions, and, at least, what observers should take for granted as "common" ground. Coupled with the way in which one side was clearly and intentionally legitimized as superior, while the other was characterized as ultimately inferior and a less desirable option, the language used in the argument attempted to convince the reader that a specific and superior and exceptional "way of life" existed.

The CLC and Early Opposition to the FTA

25 Ibid.

In his book, *Canadian Unions*, James Laxer described the relationship between Canadian labour leaders in the 1970s and the economic nationalism that had characterized that period.[26] He identified CLC president, Dennis McDermott, as a key member of the nationalist camp in the labour movement, noting that in 1973, the then-Canadian director of the United Auto Workers, asserted that there "existed a conflict of interest between Canadians and Americans" in the realm of union strength and solidarity.[27]

In an October 1985 issue of the CLC newsmagazine, *Canadian Labour*, McDermott wrote an editorial piece *Canada and the U.S.: Vive la Difference!*[28] Although the article was in English, "long live the difference" was written in French to bring attention to both the linguistic difference between Canada and the United States as well as to Canada's unique bilingual status. McDermott began his article by stating his positions and his affirmations: "I am nevertheless a true Canadian patriot. I love this country and everything about it with a deep and abiding passion."[29] He then proposed a question (to which he had carefully crafted the answers): "obviously, Canadians do not like being mistaken for Americans. Just how alike are we?"[30] McDermott then exhausted a list of the most commonly held or assumed truths of Canadian and American political, social, and cultural history in order to paint a general image for the readers to contemplate. "Consider the following differences," he urged readers, beginning with the difference of language, as he did in his title:

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26 Ibid.

27 Ibid., 117.

28 Dennis McDermott, "Canada and the U.S.: Vive la Difference," Canadian Labour, 30, No. 8 (October, 1985).

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

> First in the development of our respective nations. Following the Plains of Abraham, Canada was born of a confederation based on two nations, two languages and two cultures – a bilingual, bicultural nation by decree. The United States on the other hand, is very unilingual and teaches no second language in its school systems.[31]

For the purposes of providing a succinct message, McDermott parsed much more complex events and historical contexts into the most "common" and assumed differences between Canada and the United States and used it against the *other* to generate intersubjective difference. Canada thus was presented to the reader as a more inclusive of diversity and culture, obviously presented as laudable and desirable, whereas the U.S. was presented in the most subtle yet obvious forms as parochial and linguistically non-progressive. McDermott continued in the same vein in the following paragraph:

> Consider also the diametric difference between assimilation as practiced by the American versus Canadian multiculturalism. The Americans tend to assimilate in accordance with the melting pot theory. Canada on the other hand has a policy of multiculturalism, the concept of Canadian mosaic.[32]

Here, McDermott reminded readers of the general Canadian notion of the United States as a country that works to assimilate rather than celebrate and respect the multitude of cultures that arrive with immigrants. Whether or not his arguments had quantifiable merit, the ways in which he presented his point were done with the intent to project a clear Canadian exceptionalism and superiority.

McDermott then afforded the reader into a few brief examples of further difference; he continued to rely on the discursive strategy to balance exceptionalism, superiority, and inferiority in the favour of Canada, particularly with his next seemingly random, yet intentional comment: "consider also the matter of black slavery. We have no similar

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

history as was the case in the U.S."[33] The purpose of bringing up the history of slavery was a venture to convey a level of superiority over the United States by reminding the readers of their historic deplorable treatment of blacks. In other words, it was an attempt at *look at what you did, and what we did not do*. "Finger pointing" was a typical feature used to illustrate difference and levels of superiority and inferiority based on presupposed and predetermined models of morality, respect, and infallibility. Furthermore, the slavery comment was short and had no further information preceding or following it, nor did the history of slavery have anything to do with free trade. But the claim impresses that it was an effort to illustrate Canadian exceptionalism, or at least, a simple discursive jab at the vulnerability of American history, rather than a rational argument on the "dangers" associated with neo-liberal economics.

McDermott brought up a few more typically used historical markers of difference; like 1891 and 1911, he impressed the idea of Canada being a trans-Atlantic nation, rather than a North American one, in order to distance his subject [Canada] from the United States. He then finished with a short lament, which summarized his attempt to generate binary intersubjective opposition for public decision making:

> No, I do not want to live in or be competitive with Ronald Reagan's deregulated society with its street violence, its graffiti, its squalor, and its dependence on the virility the hand gun. I would much more prefer the social fabric of Canada, where one can still walk the streets and sleep safely at night. Economic integration with the U.S. demands too high a price [emphasis added].[34]

The intention of this article was to explicitly reinforce binary opposition while implicitly generating opposition to continental integration; McDermott ended with this and pressed the glorification of minor differences, in order to promote feelings of

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

strangeness and hostility to the United States. McDermott powerfully described the United States as a dangerous, violent, and dilapidated society while he proposed Canada as a "safe haven." Not only was McDermott relying on presupposed and generalized notions of the U.S. and Canada, he warned readers that any type of harmonization between the two countries would absolutely threaten Canada.

Interestingly, McDermott did not feel it necessary to address the economics of a free trade agreement with the United States, perhaps it was because he took for granted the need to discuss free trade in a non-economic context. Rather, McDermott relied on an arguably more powerful discursive resource, one that has proved successful in past instances of the cultivation of opposing views on free trade: that of complex cultural and social discursive messages. Here, he presupposed the public's feelings on Canada-U.S. relations, and continued to muse about Canadian superiority and American inferiority in order to show Canadians what they stood to compromise by favouring closer relations with the United States. While the opposition would eventually speak directly to what they saw as probably economic consequences of a free trade agreement, much of their discursive strategy revolved around presupposing Canadian political and cultural thought.

The CLC and Campaign 1986: Our Canada or Theirs?

The opposition movement sought to reinforce their message of difference by adding the element of choice into the debate; they would later ask Canadians to whom they thought their country, their way of life, and their future *belonged* – the Canadian public or the political elite and multinational corporations? The language of choice provided the FTA opposition an environment with specific terms and parameters in which they could engage the Canadian public. In other words, by asking Canadians a question, to which

they already knew the answer, the opposition, rather than presenting a true binary, used the element of choice to reinforce their point that Canada was in danger of losing control of its future.

In 1986, the CLC announced its campaign against Mulroney's proposal for a free trade agreement; *Our Canada or Theirs?* discussed self and other in a way that not only illustrated the differences between Canada and the United States, but questioned to whom Canada really belonged. Was it *ours* or *theirs?* Was Canada for Canadians or for the Americans and corporate elite? Adding the element of possession gave the arguments a different level of meaning; not only were Canadians different, not only was their way of life unique, but control, destiny, democracy, and civic sovereignty over the country were being called into question.

In a press release dated June 10, 1986, the CLC publically that it would be developing its campaign against Mulroney's negotiations and more neo-liberal economic practices. The press release mentioned that the first step in the campaign was a full page advertisement in the *Ottawa Citizen* on June 14, 1986. The ad asked the reader in three inch block letters: "We are concerned for jobs for Canadians; our children's future; our families' health and safety; Canada's sovereignty. Aren't you?"[35] The full-page ad warned that most Canadians would be big losers in a free trade deal with the U.S: "In a deal involving 250 million people on one side and 25 million on the other, the scales are bound to tip in favour of the bigger side. We predict that hundreds of thousands of Canadians will lose their jobs."[36]

35 Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa), "Labour to 'Pull All Stops' in Campaign Against Free Trade, Deregulation, Privatization." Press Release, June 10, 1986.

36 Ibid.

By the spring of 1986, the CLC had a membership of roughly 2.1 million. In a letter to the membership, CLC president Shirley Carr said:

> To the CLC's 120 district labour councils, 12 provincial and territorial federations, and the leaders of the CLC's 90 affiliated unions: to make the joint issue of free trade, deregulation and privatization a central theme for Sept. 1 Labour Day activities across the country. Carr's letter points to the serious effect a wrong decision at this time can have on Canadian society. It requests that all commemorative activities (on Labour Day), displays, speeches, demonstrations, etc, the Congress position (on these issues) be made the centrepiece.[37]

Carr had been president of CUPE's Ontario division in the early 1970s, and became executive vice-president of the CLC in 1974. Carr was also heavily active in the CUPE's challenge to both the CLC and to the leadership of Macdonald, whom they saw as too "continentalist" in his outlook towards the Canadian labour movement. Carr commented a year before she became an executive at the CLC that "the CLC has raped the Canadian Union of Public Employees…They're out to destroy CUPE because you are too powerful…[CLC officers] are afraid they may have to get out and labour instead of having cushy seats to put their fat bottoms on."[38]

The positioning of Carr and McDermott at the top of the executive of the CLC arguably brought with it the challenge of reform which CUPE had pressed for in the early 1970s. Both Carr and McDermott held anti-continentalist views, particularly in terms of Canadian labour and the influence presented by the United States, views that had been developed throughout their work in the labour movement in the 1970s. Reacting to Mulroney in 1986, Carr announced the new public education campaign with its goal of rallying Canadians against Mulroney and the proposed free trade deal. Carr announced that the CLC's "objective is very clear:

37 Ibid.

38 Laxer, 1976, 133.

> We will inform Canadians of what these government policies mean to them: […] mass disruption in our way of life, our social institutions, our country's sovereignty, as well as mass unemployment. The campaign, which will run under the overall theme of "Our Canada of Theirs" will be nation-wide in scope with specific regional programs conducted in co-operation with federations, labour councils and affiliated unions. While its main objective will be to repeal government initiatives on free trade, deregulation and privatization, it will also aim at *changing public opinion* away from the Regeanite "back-to-the-market" philosophy. The campaign will expand to reaching the politicians and general public by means of media advertising, lobbying, demonstrations, coalitions building with *like-minded* groups, public forums, phone banks, news conferences and other means [emphasis added].[39]

The discursive tools used in the campaign *Our Canada or Theirs?* reveal key aspects of the opposition's process of creating identity through the constitution of difference. One of the most significant differences between Canada and the United States, according to the CLC and CUPE, was that more established neo-liberal "back-to-the-market" economic philosophies in President Reagan's United States. Their central argument was that Canada was built as a "caring and compassionate" country, one that did not overly rely on markets to dictate how the economy was run, but rather placed faith in government regulation instead; "Canada belongs to the people and not the corporations," the article stated, and relies on "our democratic political institutions to shape our futures":[40]

> Canadian workers and their families are currently being subjected to the Canadian version of a worldwide phenomenon – a 'back-to-the-market' philosophy pushed by right-wing governments and their friends in the business community. The aim is to return to a system where the market reigns supreme, where the weak are at the mercy of the strong. The push by neo-conservative elements in our country toward a market dominated economy threatens the very fabric of our society, reducing it to a jungle where the strong survive and the weak are left by the wayside.[41]

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39 Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa), "Our Canada or Theirs: Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa) Unveils $1.5-Million Campaign." News Release. September 23, 1986.

40 Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa), "Free Trade: Our Canada or Theirs?" Canadian Labour, 31, No. 7 (September), 1986.

41 Ibid.

The purpose of illuminating these specific elements of a more "American-style" neo-liberal economic system was to illustrate to Canadians what they would risk by entering into a free trade deal with the United States. In the text, the author suggested that a free trade agreement with the United States would complete Canada's transition to a neo-liberal, deregulated economic system, thereby destroying its "traditions" of government regulation and compassionate oversight. Conjuring images of the "wilderness" and "jungle" to describe the American system was done to allegorically emphasize the primal and Darwinian nature of the liberalized market economy, although the author did not find it necessary to detail what a neo-liberal economic system would look like in the Canadian context. The CLC also argued that the American system was a critical threat to "the very fabric of our society." But it failed to explain how or why the organization thought this, nor did it explain what a "social fabric" might look like. Vague language, such as "social fabric," permitted the author to make an argument without providing firm evidence, making the argumentative discourse more influential rather than rationally or empirically sound.

The CLC summarized its position on difference between the United States and Canada in a statement made near the end of the article:

> The CLC will use every means at their disposal to make sure that all Canadians understand that free trade, deregulation, and privatization involve the abandonment of a Canadian tradition of using government to bring about a caring and sharing society in favour of a corporate vision that views the U.S. with its extremes of wealth and poverty, with its minimal social services, with its decaying public institutions, with its over-bloated military, with its market dominated philosophy – as the ideal that Canada should adopt [emphasis added].[42]

42 Ibid

The CLC used the word *tradition* to reinforce the object of common sense history. Like using the word *always*, tradition permitted the author to argue a vague understanding of economic history. In other words, if Canada had a tradition of using government regulation to bring about a caring and sharing society, for the most part, it had been there for a "long time." In that case, an abandonment for something "extreme," "decaying," and "minimal" would seem nonsensical and even perilous. The arguments did well to reinforce commonly held assumptions about the United States and *its* problems, and equally did well to differentiate America from what Canada "was."

A Moral Imperative: The UCC and Free Trade

While the United Church of Canada was not labour union, the Church's ideological underpinnings dovetail with those of the CLC and of CUPE. This was primarily due, but not limited to, the Church's abhorrent aversion to economic neo-liberalism which it saw as ultimately "un-Canadian," and completely immoral. It saw the tenants and effects of neo-liberalism as forcing an even larger wedge in the gap between the rich and the poor, an issue that was central to the Church's future opposition to the FTA. In an issue of *The Facts* in March-April 1985, John Foster of the UCC, outlined the Church's early position to Mulroney's economic outlook:

> Current neo-conservative policies are as unethical as they are reactionary. Moral disorder in our society, as the gap between rich and poor continues to widen. The agenda of the Mulroney governments…is further deepening the moral crisis. The law of 'survival of the fittest' threatens to reverse the progress that has been made toward a more caring and more equitable society in Canada.[43]

Foster outlined an important and central concept to the Church's position against not just free trade, but also towards a larger shift in government policy; neo-liberalism –

43 Canadian Union of Public Employees, "The Regressive Conservatives" The Facts, 7 No. 2, (March-April, 1985)

particularly the effects of market-oriented, profit-making, deregulation, liberalization, and privatization – could wreak havoc on marginalized individuals in Canadian society, most notably the poor. For the UCC, as free trade was the embodiment of this shift and represented a critical threat to Canadian social justice, hence it was a full-blown moral crisis.

The UCC played a key role in discussing the free trade debate through this social justice lens. During the years prior to the original FTA announcement, the UCC provided briefs to the Macdonald Commission to reinforce its position that the future of Canada's economic options should take into account elements of social justice, disarmament, and morality. Primarily concerned with the rise of neo-liberal economics as well as the ballooning of American military and defence expenditures, the UCC's social justice unit paid significant attention to the Commission. In a brief in 1983, the UCC argued that any future economic policies or development prospects that Canada would pursue "cannot be divorced from constraints necessitated by social development and by environmental protection, and [that a] sustainable future will involve divestment from military production for export strengthening of agriculture, and choosing a soft-path energy option."[44] The UCC argued, with foresight, that neo-liberalism, possibly exacerbated due to closer economic policy coordination with the United States, could begin to change aspects of Canadian society which they believed not only to be distinct, but vitally important:

> The [UCC] supports the form of mild nationalism foreseen in the creation of the NEP and the FIRA, since without such an exercise of the will to own and control the economy from within, our social and political

44 The United Church of Canada, Working Unit on Social Issues and Justice, *Brief to the Royal Commission of the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada*. (Saskatoon, November, 1983).

> independence, along with our economic independence, is put in jeopardy.[45]

The Church was foreshadowing thought, opinion, and policy perspectives on economic integration with the United States. It clearly placed itself within the spectrum of those organizations that became leaders in the fight against encroaching neo-liberal ideals, particularly those involving back-to-the-market philosophy:

> Economic development is not something that can be pursued in a moral vacuum. The journey of human history towards salvation, or destruction, has always been and will remain dependent on the way social justice is exercised, as well as on the development of production and trade. Therefore, our prospects for a healthy economy in the long term will be built carefully on a respect for human rights and the needs of the poor.[46]

The UCC was thus opposed to economic policy based on the will and whims of the capitalist market-system alone, and not by regulation and control from the state with (presumably) the needs of human society in the forefront.[47] The UCC was also responding to the then-current economic climate of Canada, largely addressing the unemployment levels which left 12% of Canadians without a job, the highest levels since the 1930s. While the levels dropped slightly to 11.3% in 1984, the UCC believed Canada was in a crisis:[48]

> Canada is in crisis. Canadians are in crisis. The organization of our national economic household is in question. The question is moral and spiritual as well as material. The Church's policy on the economic crisis is not unique. It is the latest in a historic series of initiatives in which the people of the United Church have addressed themselves to issues of justice in Canadian society.
>
> The state of the present Canadian and world economy represents a moral crisis, in which capital, rather than labour, property, rather than people,

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Statistics Canada. "Labour force survey estimates (LFS), supplementary unemployment rates by sex and age group, annual", (CANSIM Table 282-0086). (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2011).

> are asserted as the dominant principle of economic and social life, and inequality and injustice increase rather that being reduced. [49]

Another area that concerned the UCC, especially within the context of the economic crisis, was the American role in the disruption of a Canadian "way of life." This was particularly due to Canada's seeming dependence on its economic relationship with the United States, a trend that favoured neo-liberal forms of economic power:

> What has lead Canada to the present crisis? Most…begin with the early 1970s, locating the breakdown of the post-war boom in the economy and the breaking apart of the ideological consensus of welfare capitalism at the same time…Canada in particular…analyses begin with our dependency on the United States. The great economy has been described as badly managed, as devoting far too great a proportion of its resources to inflation-building war industries. Evaluating our history of dependence…we see a pattern of further weakness. Our dependent manufacturing sector has been characterized by domination by foreign-owned corporations and management…
>
> …As the United Church has repeatedly pointed out in study documents, our economic predicament in Canada is significantly due to our dependency on global markets dominated by large, often foreign controlled, corporations.[50]

The UCC had gone to great lengths to clearly define its position on the economic future of Canada in the years before the Macdonald Report was made public. In that future there was little room for economic liberalization, such as proposed in the report, nor was there space for closer integration with the American economy. In context of their position, policy, and opinions, the Church's reaction to these proposals was to say the least, fiery. At an anti-free trade rally at Massey Hall in Toronto in March of 1986, the Very Rev. Clarke MacDonald, director of the Office of Church in Society at the UCC,

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49 The United Church of Canada. Working Unit on Social Issues and Justice (Toronto), *The Church and the Economic Crisis: The Policy of the United Church of Canada*, 1984.

50 Ibid.

lamented on the proposed economic directions facing Canada at the time.[51] His savagely expressed words called into question notions of dependence, sovereignty, and elements of difference, as well as recited an ever-present narrative of fearing the United States:

> Friends: We have called for the freeing of our economy from the tentacles of the military octopus south of us that saps the blood from their own economy and threatens human kind with extinction. We are concerned in the United Church about our theological, cultural and social values that are uniquely Canadian. So, Mr. Mulroney, when you go to Washington please don't sing: - "Sure it would steal your heart"…but rather: "Ronnie, please don't steal our country and our culture and our social values which we treasure, - don't steal them away." Further, we want it [involvement of all sectors in a public debate] to happen before we find ourselves plunged into a river which may carry us inexorably into a sea of continentalism to become pray to the sharks of militarism or engulfed in the waves of economic materialism with its "every man for himself" philosophy…We want to be in the words of Monsignor Moses Coady "masters of our own destiny."[52]

Portraying the U.S. as an octopus, the Very Rev. invoked the image of multiple arms of influence and danger; the danger lay in the proximity of this influence, particularly because of what the octopus was doing to his own country. The octopus was portrayed as a villain to America, but also a villain and destroyer of all of humanity. This echoed the position of many of the UCC's leaders that the United States was a bastion of hyper-militarism and that closer integration with America in any sense presented a critical danger to Canada, a country which was portrayed as the exceptionally more "peaceful" of the two countries. This idea of a nation that embodied peaceful values, as opposed to militaristic priorities, was a critical way the UCC constituted difference between Canada and the United States. It was used by activists not only to illustrate difference, but also to

51 The rally hosted authors such as economic nationalists Walter Gordon, Abraham Rotstein, and Canadian Auto Worker's union president, Bob White.

52 Very Rev. Clarke MacDonald. Dir., Office of Church in Society, The UCC. Statements made at an anti-Free Trade Rally at Massy Hall, Toronto, March 17, 1986.

imply superiority based on a presupposed Canadian tradition of social justice. In an anti-free trade publication, leading UCC activist John Foster noted that:

> The addiction to militarism in the richest economy in the world, our neighbours, is nothing less than a sickness…The systems of un-well-ness or sickness, are much more extensive. Did any of you see David Brinkley…on the coverage of the mid-term elections in the U.S. last week? For a moment, I thought we were in the teens and the twenties with Ida Tarbell and Upton Sinclair. He spoke of the smell of money in the U.S. Senate, the corruption…of American democracy. In some states, it seems to cost as much to become a senator as it does to build a prison in Port Cartier. Put this with the aggressive devaluation of human beings, with…homelessness in the United States, the increasing class character of medical care, the decline of urban infrastructure. We are not immune, we are affected.[53]

The UCC's discourse insisted that Canada had always had a history of being a caring and compassionate country, a tradition of social reform and assistance for society's weak and poor which had always been superior to that of the United States. The UCC reinforced these national myths in order to build a sense of exceptionalist identity among Canadians against a backdrop of the United States. Social justice and morality played heavily into their attempts to illustrate that Canada was indeed fundamentally distinct from the United States. Highlighting these two concepts also assisted in their attempts to convince the Canadian public that there was something significant to lose if the FTA were adopted.

Give Peace a Chance

Canada as a peacekeeping nation may be one of the most common and overused myths to define how Canadians see themselves. Canadian political elites have often used the imaginations and national mythologies of peace and peacekeeping in order to promote

53 John Foster. National Working Group on the Economy and Poverty. Address to the Annual National Conference of the Canadian Mental Health Association, "Building a Policy Consensus", Ottawa November 13, 1986.

a sense of national identity and purpose. In this context, by embellishing American militarism while accentuating a Canadian penchant for peace, the authors drove a further wedge between *us* and *them* in public discourse on free trade. Stemming from a very public and popularized distaste for American involvement in Southeast Asia in the 1960s and Latin America in the 1980s, as well as the legacy of the arms race between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the authors honed in on an established hostility to further underline difference.

In an issue of *Pro-Canada Dossier*, the authors explicitly draw the line between trade and American military ambitions. The issue further illustrated the implied distaste for the policies of the United States, as well as highlighting difference to promote hostility towards the country itself:

> The present free trade initiative has its roots in militarism. One of the main factors in the economic decline of the United States is its military over-extension. The U.S. economy suffered greatly from the huge sums of money spent on the American war effort in Vietnam. Relative to other industrialized economies, the militarized economy of the U.S. is also unusually corrupt and wasteful and provides far fewer jobs than money invested in other types of endeavours…Most serious of all is the prospect that the Canadian economy would become so dependent on military spending that peace and disarmament would pose a real economic threat. This is already true of the U.S. economy. The result has been the U.S. avoidance of disarmament at all costs by encouraging wars and the threat of wars: the Korean War, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, the covert war against Nicaragua, and most recently, Star Wars. Is this the kind of future we want for Canada?[54]

The author attempted to make the argument that free trade would likely increase Canada's involvement in the American military machine. To the extent that these affirmations could be true were unknown the author. However, the way they spoke made the truth irrelevant. Instead, they relied on popularized historical events to characterize the United States, and its war-laden economy, as a hostile partner for Canada and a war-

54 GATT-Fly, "Free-Trade Has It's Roots in Militarism," Pro-Canada Dossier, No. 17 (October 27, 1988).

monger, which permitted them to make broad, general, and affective claims without needing firm evidence.

CUPE published a "peace issue" of *The Facts*, in which the union highlighted American military superpowerdom and its global (often cited as imperialistic) reach, as well as the organization's concerns of the consequences for Canada:

> Our drift closer to the U.S. has not gone unnoticed by other governments and the UN. This trend threatens the respect from all sides which Canada has earned. We've been seen as conscientious and significant, honest brokers on the world stage. This is due to Canada's emergence as a middle power, our generous foreign aid, our participation in UN peacekeeping efforts, our refusal to adopt or endorse more extreme U.S. positions on various issues, and the perception that we have a moderating influence on the United States.[55]

Here, the authors provided "common sense" examples of Canadian foreign policy practice and history in order to delineate a contentious dichotomy between Canada and the United States. This quote also provided Canadians subtle forms of agency in a bipolar international scene, despite living so close to the United States; the idea of having agency in a bilateral relationship with a superpower has long been important to the Canadian psyche as it denotes forms of sovereignty and independence. The complexities of the relationship did not matter to the authors and were unimportant to the objective of convincing the reader of difference because the statements were based on presupposed ideas of the Canada/U.S. reality. The author tactfully assumed that the reader accepted the notion that Canada *was more* peaceful before they even started their line of argument.

Elements at the UCC proceeded in a similar vein. During a presentation made by the Church in Society Committee – a section of the UCC that concerned itself primarily with social justice and economic issues – a representative reminded members that,

55 Canadian Union of Public Employees. "The Arms Race and Free Trade," The Facts 9 No. 2, (March-April, 1987).

"Canada has always had a more humane and just social service system than the United States."[56] The presentation was made based on the official policy of opposition to free trade established through its General Council. The premise of their organizational policy (and, in effect, their discourse) came from both the Bible and Canadian social, cultural, and historical roots:

> Our roots are…grounded in a gospel that reminds us that love of God can only be expressed through our care of and concern for each other, especially the weakest members of our community. As Christians then, we attempt to bring a Biblical critique to bear on all political decisions, for Christ reminds us in the 25th Chapter of Matthew that God will judge the nations by how they treat the poor, the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick and the prisoner… It is with that sense of history, our long tradition of involvement in and concern over the political decisions that have shaped this nation, and a belief in our responsibility to raise ethical questions about major public policy concerns that we engage in a discussion of the impact of "free trade" on Canadians, particularly they weakest Canadians.[57]

The UCC saw free trade as a threat to Canadians because it believed free trade would turn Canada into a version of the United States, that Canada would lose its carefully crafted social institutions to privatization and deregulation, and that the economy and society would come to resemble a "world of jungles where the powerful ones control the weaker ones."[58] Like many other organizations within the opposition movement, the UCC's economic presuppositions detailed the ways in which the Church crafted its public information. Still there was no concrete way to predict the various effects of a forthcoming bilateral trade agreement. The best way to cultivate and organize opposition was to convince the public that they had due reason to believe that they were different, superior, and threatened by the United States and free trade.

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56 Speaker Unknown. United Church of Canada, "Presentation on Free Trade made by The Church in Society Committee of London Conference the United Church of Canada." Date Unknown

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

The message put forth in the UCC's anti-free trade publications – documents usually stewarded by John Foster – was typically consistent with that of the rest of the movement: that Canada must end the cycle of dependence on the United States, a country whose social priorities were focused on the wealthiest few at the cost of the many poor.[59] The UCC firmly believed that the FTA was a "carefully orchestrated master plan to increase the freedom of the transnational corporations and large investors in Canada, while reducing the ability of democratic institutions and the Canadian people to direct investment to Canadian priorities and the needs of Canadians."[60] Foster quoted Isaiah 65: 21-23 in a January 20, 1987 public memorandum:

> They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them.[61]

Foster applied religious allegory to accentuate the historical debate on Canadian economic dependence on the U.S. and profit-making of corporate elites via the concept of working for oneself or one's group and not for the benefit of the privileged others. In the January memorandum which appeared in many anti-free trade publications, Foster stated that Canadians "strive for a society based on social solidarity where the needs of the poor take priority over the wants of the rich, the rights of workers take precedents over the maximization of profits."[62] What Foster believed (as did many others in the anti-free trade camp), was that the above-mentioned society would be impossible to preserve if the

59 John Foster for the National Working Group on the Economy and Poverty, UCC. "Building Self-Reliance in Canada", January, 1987.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

FTA were to become a reality as self-reliance – seen as the only way to stay the emerging forces of neo-liberal economic policy – would be diminished, if not all together destroyed, by the FTA.

"We believe that the root cause of poverty and unemployment is the undemocratic and dependent nature of our economies. The Mulroney government's initiative to negotiate bilateral free trade with the U.S.A threatens to deepen our dependence." As well, Foster stated that dependence was a direct cause of poverty and unemployment. Moreover, Foster and the UCC, as well as the other anti-free trade groups, the primary political task for the future of the struggle for self-reliance was "popular education among all Canadians." The main point of the publications and discourse was to present a challenge to the pro-free traders, and, most importantly, to produce a network of opposition through the production of a "common understanding and support for economic alternatives to the present system," which they believed to be saturated with foreign ownership.[63]

A sense or a feeling of difference was necessary but not sufficient to organize public thoughts and attitudes against the FTA. The next step in the discursive process was to exploit the differences in such a way that could frame them in more tangible concepts. Canadians needed to feel that if they entered into a free trade agreement with the United States, those glorified and specific differences – the differences that made them distinctively Canadian – would assuredly disappear through assimilation into the more powerful United States. The authors began discursive "threat-naming," a process whereby the outside group is characterized as an enemy that threatens the cohesiveness,

63 Ibid.

the uniqueness, and the sovereignty (for example) of the inside group. This practice of threat naming assisted in transforming dichotomy of *us* and *them* to a far more hostile version of *us* versus *them*, whereby the United States, Mulroney, and the FTA became enemies of the Canadian people and the Canadian state.

Part Two: Free Trade, the United States, and Other Threats to the Nation

Early 1987 featured a much more organized and stronger anti-free trade movement and anti-Mulroney message. Since the 1985 Shamrock Summit, the work of the various civil society organizations produced a cadre of discursive public opposition to the proposed free trade agreement. CUPE, the CLC, and the UCC had played a critical role in the initial conception of an anti-free trade message, particularly through their affirmation that Canada was starkly different from, and superior to the United States, and that a more neo-liberal economic national policy would completely alter Canadians' current way of life.

Of note was the growing demand from the opposition to call a federal election in order to let the people of Canada decide if the Mulroney government truly had their support. Since Mulroney had previously denied his affirmations to initiate free trade with the United States in 1983 and 1984, the various organizations of the movement argued he had no public mandate to continue the negotiations with Washington. Parallel to their efforts to force the government to call an election on the issue of free trade, the anti-free trade civil society organizations maintained their public education campaigns in order to prepare the public for a future opportunity to destroy the deal by voting the Conservatives out of Parliament.

The anti-free trade movement needed a new organizational structure to assist it in better coordination of ideas and strategies involved with public education campaigns and with targeting the individuals and groups needed to help push for an election; this would also eventually include better coordination with the political opposition leadership of the Liberals and the NDP. To this end, the Pro-Canada Network (PCN), a coalition of the various anti-Mulroney and anti-free trade organizations, was created in 1987. While the various organizations that made up the PCN, notably the CLC, CUPE, and the UCC, had already established their various and separate campaigns against Mulroney, the new umbrella group built upon its members' work and eventually developed its own strategies and its own public education campaign against the proposed FTA. The PCN represented not only a pooling of resources but also an integration of the various strategic ideas of the stakeholders, all of whom held staunch anti-free trade, anti neo-liberal, and anti-Mulroney affirmations. The PCN was a symbolization of the movement itself on a national level; the name explicitly stated, and yet, implicitly indicated, that the organization was a defender of Canada and Canadians, as it was a coalition of organizations, which were indeed "pro-Canada."

Public Opinion and Free Trade

One of the first major PCN efforts was to commission a public opinion poll to discern the level of support in Canada for a free trade agreement. In the summer of 1987, the PCN hired Angus Reid to conduct a public survey, which proposed to Canadians possible consequences of the FTA and recorded their reactions. A fascinating element of the survey itself is the way the questions were constructed. The survey asked Canadians if they would support the free trade agreement if:

> (1) The ability of Canada to have independent economic policies *would gradually be* weakened over-time. (2) *There would be* an increased American control of Canadian T.V. and radio stations, newspapers and magazines. (3) Unemployment *would force* many families to relocate to other parts of Canada or even to the U.S. in search of jobs. (4) Canadian foreign defence policy *would gradually become* less independent over time. (5) *Americans would gain the right* to buy up and ship to the United States more Canadian natural resources, including fresh water [emphasis added].[64]

The wording of the questions was considerably leading, and like other discursive strategies employed by anti-free trade organizations, left the public with few options. For example, what Canadian would support a bilateral agreement that would weaken Canadian independence over time, increase American control, force relocation of families for employment, render foreign policy redundant, or allow the U.S. to "buy up and ship" Canadian resources at will? The opposition presupposed throughout their public education campaign that these consequences *would* occur. As a result, the PCN took for granted that the Canadian public would find these consequences undesirable and perhaps frightening, thereby solidifying support for their opposition movement. Moreover, all of these "consequences" were constructed by the PCN; the organization could not predict the definite or even likely consequences stemming from an FTA with the U.S. Nonetheless, the results of the survey indicated that for the first time since January 1986, more Canadians opposed free trade than supported it. According to the report, there had been a 15 per cent drop in support and a 12 per cent rise in opposition over the previous six months.[65] Given the nature and the structure of the questions, the outcomes of the survey are hardly surprising; as a result, it both confirmed and probably generated momentum for the campaign:

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64 PCN commissioned Angus Reid Survey, Conducted (August 24-28, 1987) found in GATT-Fly, Free Trade Action Dossier, No. 4 (September 10, 1987).

65 Ayres, 1998, 91.

The survey report listed five things the Canadian public generally felt *would not* happen under free trade. While the majority of respondents felt that these would not happen under the FTA, the survey report stated that "if they could be proven true," a majority of Canadians would be less likely to support free trade.

> (1) The rights of the French speaking people *would be hurt*. (2) The Canadian health care system *would become* like the private health care system in the United States. (3) The quality of our education system *would deteriorate*. (4) Women's rights and their access to social services and employment equity *would be reduced*. (5) *There would be more violent crime* in Canada because it would be more difficult for Canada to enforce strict gun control laws [emphasis added].[66]

The opposition movement would have had a difficult time proving the above to be true. However, by focusing their discourse on commonly held fears, anxieties, historical knowledge, and ideas about Canada and the United States, the authors could at least strongly imply that these things could happen. The leading questions in the survey, and the subsequent results, illustrated the reliance on the public's subjective and overall intersubjective on the issue of free trade with the United States. The questions were tailored to evoke a specific reaction. In addition, the language presented in this survey, particularly in the questions posed, served as an outline to illustrate the nature and scope of the opposition's framing and construction of a threat to Canada and Canadians.

Harmonization

One of the most central features of the entire anti-free trade movement was the presupposition that free trade equated absolute and comprehensive harmonization of policy, standards, and socio-political values between Canada and the United States. Moreover, with harmonization, at least according to the opposition, losses of Canadian

66 PCN Angus Reid Survey, 1987.

standards, traditions and practices were inevitable; for harmonization would affect almost every aspect of Canadian life and would translate into far more than an economic agreement. The opposition materials asked: what did Canada stand to lose if the Canadian economy became more "like" the United States? Loss became central to the opposition's argument as it assumed that there was nothing to be gained or won on the side of Canadians.

Moreover, in all these cases, harmonization was the threat because it would mean adapting or acquiescing to the American policies, and the loss of a "Canadian" "way of life." In this case, the opposition could make use of their opponents arguments; proponents had their own "subtle and effective rhetorical strategies…about the broader political implications of free trade…[and] developed highly-technical arguments about how the deal would strengthen the Canadian economy, by enhancing competitiveness, locking in market reforms, and securing a dispute-resolution mechanism that would deflect U.S. trade remedy attacks."[67] For the opposition, however, deeper integration with the United States was both a fear and the presupposed threat behind the FTA. The use of the threat was central to the discursive strategy of organizing and mobilizing public thought and opinion against the deal. Given this, harmonization used in the context of the anti-free trade discourse implied far greater integration than was perhaps even possible, or desired by the two countries for that matter.

The testimony of Archbishop Michael Peers, Primate, Anglican Church of Canada, at a parliamentary hearing on the FTA in 1987 illustrated the general fear of harmonization. The threat of harmonization, built upon earlier arguments, but was

67 Brian Bow, "Nationalism, Regional Identity And The 'Deep Integration' Debate in Canada". Paper presented to the Canadian Political Science Association annual conference, (Vancouver) June 4-6, 2008, 5.

augmented by reminding the reader of existing Canadian superiority, and suggested harmonization would bring the country to the lower American level:

> We do not want to level or average out our health services with those in the United States, or see them privatized in the American pattern. We do not want our taxation system so harmonized with that of the United States that we can do nothing more to redistribute income in Canada and end up with the same growing polarization of the super-rich and the marginalized which is widening every day in the United States…We have done better than this in Canada, and we must protect the ability to apply our imagination and our best motives in developing better social programs in Canada's future.[68]

The threat was justified by using historic and quintessential English-Canadian anxieties and fears over loss of control, sovereignty, independence, and absorption into the U.S. The threat was also justified by relying heavily on the earlier cultivated anti-Americanism and Canadian exceptionalism. If the Canadian "way of life" was superior to, more desirable, or safer than that of the U.S., harmonization would threaten this superiority.

This study is not arguing that their fears or anxieties about the possible effects free trade, regulatory coordination, or harmonization were entirely unfounded; no one could fully predict the effect comprehensive trade liberalization would have on Canada in either direction. However, these anxieties and fears were constructed and dispatched to the Canadian public as universal and undeniable "truths." The opposition predicted how, what, and who the free trade agreement would have negative repercussions for, and warned Canadians that these predictions would definitely happen. What made this discourse so effective is that it was based on presupposition – a direct link between the agreement and the threats that they named were assumed to be true. Modal verbs such as

68 Government of Canada. House of Commons, Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, "Testimony of, Dr. Anne Squire, Moderator of the United Church of Canada and Archbishop Michael Peers, Primate, Anglican Church of Canada", (Ottawa), December 7, 1987.

"will," "would," "could," "might," and "may" all played in different capacities to promote a message of threat and crisis. Statements such as "free trade will affect every aspect of our lives" were then used to relay the message that harmonization was a complete and finite project and that there was no in between.[69]

Free Trade Is a Threat to Our Sovereignty

Historically, sovereignty has been used by those in opposition to free trade as a critical factor in their discursive messaging in order convince the Canadian public that reciprocity with the U.S. would ultimately mean the dissolution of Canada as a free and independent country. Threat to sovereignty may have been the opposition's most commonly used discursive tool in the entire free trade debate. The use of the threat applied to Canadian organizations, institutions, and even the government has historical precedents (as we have seen) in the rejection of the argued over-investment in post-war Canada by American firms, and the largely nationalist anti-continentalist labour and political movements of the 1970s.

In *The Case against Free Trade,* Duncan Cameron argued that sovereignty was, in theory, absolute and indivisible; a body was sovereign or it was not and that body had the final authority to make decisions within its jurisdictions or it did not.[70] For Cameron, the question of sovereignty was one of *relativity*; in Canada, "the question is whether relative sovereignty would increase or decrease under free trade."[71] Cameron's assessment of Canadian sovereignty during the debate was shared by others in Canadian history. For

69 Pacific Group for Policy Alternatives (Vancouver). "What Women Should Know about Free Trade," Vancouver Status of Women. Date Unknown.

70 Duncan Cameron, "The Case Against Free Trade," Candian Labour 32 No. 1 (January,1987).

71 Ibid.

example, since the late 1950s, Walter Gordon saw an increase in foreign investment by the U.S. in Canada as signalling a decrease in relative economic sovereignty. However, for the grand purpose of convincing Canadians that the situation was dire, that Canada needed protection and that collective action was critical to save their country, the opposition movement relied on a much less tempered version of Cameron's and Gordon's argument. The majority of the discursive messages, more in-tune with that of the 1891 and 1911 federal elections, argued that the loss of sovereignty would be less *relative* and more *absolute*. Whether or not they actually believed that sovereignty would be lost in absolute terms was irrelevant; it was the public messages of absolute cost, loss, or dissolution that was critical to the discursive process.

In May of 1985, a couple months after Mulroney and Reagan's summit, Executive Vice-President of the CLC, Dick Martin, argued in a CLC news brief that Mulroney's new trade policy threatened Canadian jobs. As such, the CLC was:

> Concerned about the threats to Canadian sovereignty, which might accompany free trade with the United States. The endangered list of Canadian practices include: Medicare; occupational safety laws, bilingualism, to the extent that it affects corporate costs; any social programs which are significantly different from those in the U.S.; different levels of corporate taxation; laws on collective bargaining and union membership; provincial systems of collective fees and royalties on natural resources which differ from those in the U.S.; and minimum wage laws. Canadians are not ready to give up all those practices and customs, which flow from our heritage simply in order to satisfy government's reverence for the market.[72]

As CLC president, Dennis McDermott reiterated:

> The labour movement has expressed concern about Canada's economic domination by the United States and, in the sphere of trade, that clearly implies the desirability of diversifying our trading partners…free trade with the U.S. *would* result in a sharp loss in Canadian economic sovereignty. Free trade would force Canada to abandon such tools of

72 Canadian Labour Congress, (Ottawa), "Trade Policy Threatens Jobs – Canadian Labour Congress." News Brief, May 28, 1985.

> national economic management as tariffs, quotas, discriminatory procurement and subsidies [emphasis added].[73]

In a press release the day following Mulroney's announcement in the House of Commons that his government and the Reagan Administration would soon begin negotiations for a bilateral free trade agreement, McDermott echoed:

> Free trade with the U.S. is awash with uncertainties and has the potential to fundamentally change for the worse everything about Canada and the way Canadians live…And in the final analysis it could very well cost us our political, economic, and cultural sovereignty.[74]

In October, 1985, when Minister of International Trade James Kelleher invited members of CUPE and the CLC to participate in advisory committees regarding a possible free trade agreement with the United States, the CLC declined, arguing that "[o]n behalf of our 2 million members we wish to re-state emphatically that the CLC is opposed to the concept of free trade because of its threats to existing jobs and to Canada's economic, political, and cultural sovereignty."[75]

Sovereignty was used as a general term to mean many things. Economic, cultural, and political sovereignty, while relatively different in scope, were bundled in a package. Moreover, sovereignty was typically synonymous with Canadian identity; for Canadians, the opposition presumed there had been a mythological understanding that absolute sovereignty was essential for the preservation of a distinct Canadian identity. Without the protection of absolute sovereignty, Canadian identity would become redundant and Canadians would simply become Americans. In the spring of 1986, Carr argued:

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73 Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa), "Free Trade A Danger to Canada, Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa) Warns." Press Release, June 27, 1985.

74 Canadian Labour Congress, (Ottawa), "Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa) opposes Mulroney's Free-Trade Proposal," Press Release, September 27, 1985.

75 Canadian Labour Congress, (Ottawa), "Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa) Says No To Free Trade Committees." Press Release, October 10, 1985.

> [T]he free trade deal…endangers Canada's economic, cultural and political sovereignty…We mustn't let our government barter away our entire future and that of our children…Our government must be told that Canadians value their national identity and are not prepared to become Americans for the sake of the free trade agreement.[76]

To take an example, Crown corporations in Canada such as the CBC were argued to as essential for the preservation of a distinct Canadian identity. The fear the opposition held was that these crown corporations might become endangered by being bought-out by private corporations, perhaps some not even Canadian-owned:

> Historically, many of Canada's crown corporations – the CNR, Air Canada, and the CBC, to cite a few examples – have been key instruments of national economic development. Indeed, many would argue that these public institutions played a critical role in maintaining our sovereignty and our Canadian identity.[77]

Here, the author equated these institutions with the protection of sovereignty and national identity. In other words, they relied on each other for survival. In addition, the author created a threatened national entity, an entity which was vital to the entire nation:

> How does the CBC promote our identity? The CBC promotes our identity by keeping us in touch with each other, by focusing on Canadian issues and developments, and by helping us see world issues from a Canadian perspective. Do farmers in Saskatchewan want to know what is happening to coal miners in Cape Breton? We think so. The CBC also reflects the uniqueness of Canada and Canadians. The CBC helps us all to see ourselves as a distinct culture, with a rich heritage, and not as a pale imitation of the American people. The CBC, while far from perfect, is essential to the retention and growth of Canadian identity, cultural values, and political independence, as well as to the existence of a viable arts community in this country.[78]

Typically, the opposition movement associated independence and sovereignty with the maintenance of a distinct Canadian culture, safeguarded by publicly owned institutions. They suggested that culture had often been, for Canadians, inextricably

76 Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa) (Ottawa), "Free Trade Endangers Canada's Identity, Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa) Warns," Press Release, April 24, 1986.

77 Canadian Union of Public Employees "The Regressive Conservatives" The Facts, 7 No. 2, (March-April, 1985).

78 Ibid

linked to a unique Canadian identity and, therefore, was vital for the survival of a distinct country. With the belief that free trade would kill Canadian sovereignty in absolute terms, Canadian culture (among other things) would also be threatened in such terms:

> Free trade means opening our borders wide to American economic, social and cultural and even political influences, in effect doing away with Canadian identity. We can only assume that, if these cultural policies are a victim of a free trade treaty, then the battle to preserve Canadian culture will be all that more difficult [emphasis added].[79]

The purpose of the language used above was to identify and illuminate specific elements that make a certain group – in this case Canadians – unique. By arguing, through carefully constructed language (often based on gross generalization or presupposition), that those elements were in danger or threatened, the opposition created an enemy.

Free Trade Is a Threat to Canadian Jobs

Unsurprisingly, the threat to jobs was most notably advanced by labour unions. The alarm was sounded by CUPE and the CLC, as well as the NAC whose primary focus was the threat to jobs typically held by women. As early as 1985, when nothing had even been attempted in regards to negotiating a deal, CUPE, in its magazine *The Facts*, headlined that "jobs will be destroyed, jobs will disappear."[80] The argument that an FTA with the United States would result in mass unemployment of Canadian workers set much of the stage for the way these organizations discussed the assumed dangers associated with neo-liberalism.

While classic examples of losses of independence and sovereignty circulated through the opposition's discourse, more trade- or economic-specific items were featured in order to link tangible threats to the FTA itself. Employment, for example, was a critical issue

79 Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa), "Our Canada or Theirs?" Canadian Labour 31 No. 7 (September, 1985).

80 Canadian Union of Public Employees, "The Regressive Conservatives" The Facts, 7 No. 2, (March-April, 1985).

for the opposition to take advantage of, particularly given existing high unemployment rates in Canada. The rise of globalization and neo-liberal economic policies in the 1980s brought about larger anxieties over the movement of labour and capital to places where standards, wages, and union power were lower. The idea behind this was that industry would move to places like this to lower their employment costs and to maximize their profits. The opposition identified the United States as a potent example of where labour standards, minimum wage, and union solidarity were relatively much lower than Canada. The argument presented was that if the FTA were to happen, labour standards would have to be harmonized to meet these lower American standards:

> Southern United States working conditions marred by low health and safety standards and miserable wages will become the benchmark for carpetbagger Canadian companies. The end result will be depressed wages and working conditions for Canadian workers and their families.[81]

> These policies will force Canadians to weaken their social programs to match the lower standards prevailing in the United States, practically destroying many of our vital programs including health care and unemployment insurance.[82]

> With increased U.S. competition, Canadian firms would be forced to cut costs by lowering wages, ignoring health and safety standards, and fighting legislative protection which ensures equal rights and equal pay for women. They will do this because their major competitors will be [U.S. companies] with low or no minimum wage, poor labour legislation and very low levels of unionization.[83]

Such claims were generally not backed by evidence and relied instead on the presumption that the proposed deal meant definite job loss and standards harmonization. Interestingly enough, the opposition movement never discussed the possibility of

81 Canadian Labour Council (Ottawa), "Canadian Labour Congress opposes Mulroney's Free-Trade Proposal." Press Release. September 27, 1985.

82 Canadian Labour Council (Ottawa), "Canadian Labour Congress Announces Atlantic Free Trade Initiatives." Press Release, January 8, 1987.

83 National Action Committee for the Status of Women (Ottawa). "What Every Woman Needs to Know about Free Trade." Elections Pamphlet, October, 1988.

American labour standards "improving" due to a "harmonization" with "superior" Canadian labour standards; instead, they only argued within a framework that suggested the United States would always serve to drag Canada down to its "level."

The opposition could not indefinitely predict future economic and sectoral outcomes of effects from the deal. However, by stating that thousands upon thousands of jobs *will*, *would*, or even *might* be lost, they did not need to rely on much supporting evidence; rather, the CLC relied on the presupposition that job loss was seen as a universal social and economic negative, and that the readers feared losing their jobs regardless of the cause.

In a CLC advertisement that was featured in their *Canadian Labour* magazine but printed in national and regional newspapers during their campaign *Our Canada or Theirs*, two reasons were given to the reader to ponder. In large print and in the style of a poster campaign, the ad read:

> Canadians don't need free trade…free trade would kill jobs. By the hundreds of thousands. Jobs across Canada could be in danger if we had free trade with the United States. Canadian culture would be swamped…Family farmers would be forced out of business…Free trade would ruin our transportation system…Sound frightening? We've only scratched the surface.[84]

This ad presented not a single piece of evidence to prove that "hundreds of thousands" of jobs would be lost. Nor did it provide any evidence to the rest of the arguments it put forth. Rather, the ad threw together a collection of seemingly unrelated, yet clearly important examples of Canadian life and charged free trade with the motive to destroy those things. A confusing and contradictory use of the modal verbs also existed throughout their arguments – *free trade <u>would</u> kill jobs. By the hundreds of thousands.*

84 Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa), "Featured: Our Canada or Theirs Advertisement," <u>Canadian Labour</u>, 31 No. 9 (November, 1986).

Jobs across Canada could be in danger if we had free trade. This usage, perhaps, pointed to the fact that while the opposition really did not know what would happen, it kept forcefully implying that catastrophe loomed. This also furthers the point that this type of discourse was used to scare or frighten the Canadian public, rather than provide them with reasoned information about employment levels. The author continued in the same vein: "[s]ound frightening? We've only scratched the surface."[85]

The discourse presented in these arguments, continued to present issues that were presupposed to be linked with free trade by claiming that their truths were undeniable:

> There is *no question* the Mulroney trade deal will cripple job opportunities in the regions…The CLC doesn't want to see a Canada where young people are doomed to leave their homes in towns and villages to seek jobs elsewhere in the big cities…Under Mulroney's grand design, our children and grandchildren might have to start looking for work in Alabama [emphasis added].[86]

Here, the author provided the reader with no other option, that a free trade agreement (in whatever form it would come to take) *would* cripple jobs, doom opportunities for Canadian youth, and force a migration the American south. There was no evidence presented that suggested that for generations to come Canadians would have to find jobs in the United States. However, evidence was mainly inconsequential within the terms presented here. The language used was not only vague, but it was viscerally suggestive of a sensationalized and gloomy future:

> This message has to do with our future. It deals with one of the gravest dangers Canada and its people have ever faced in their history…If free trade ever became a reality, hundreds of thousands of Canadians are bound to lose their jobs. American workers look with envy at their Canadian counterparts who do not have to live in the same dehumanized society which relies on the law of the jungle.[87]

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85 Ibid

86 Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa), Public Message by Shirley Carr, "Shattered Dreams." December 2, 1987.

87 Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa), Public Message by Shirley Carr, June 1986.

Free Trade Is a Threat to Women

Among the many aspects, institutions, and programs in Canada, that the various opposition organizations asserted would be drastically altered with the introduction of an FTA, Canadian women ranked high on the list of what was threatened. The NAC (primarily via chairwoman Marjorie Cohen), the CLC, and CUPE, all publicly denounced Mulroney as effectively, "anti-woman," and the free trade agreement as a formidable danger to Canadian women, especially their jobs. The history of the NAC dates back to the 1970 *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women* which highlighted some of the major gaps in gender equality in Canada at the time.[88] According to Cohen, at the conference, "Strategy for Change" in 1972, the NAC was created out of the disparaging findings from the Commission and in order to fight for women's equality under a law and federal governments who had not taken these issues with any degree of severity or sincerity. As an independent organization, though receiving funding from the government in some capacity, the NAC began focussing on the looming issue surrounding the wage gaps between men and women in the mid-1970s, and for the most of the 1970s, "there was not a clear distinction between economic issues and other equality issues."[89] By the 1980s, particularly after a partial recognition of the principle of "equal pay for work of equal value" was included in the 1977 federal *Human Rights Act*, government and employers generally accepted broader women's issues such as equal pay, maternity leave, and leaving "traditional" female occupations. It was clear, however, that into the early 1980s the women's movement and the NAC were concerned with the level

88 Marjorie Cohen, "The Canadian Women's Movement and Its Efforts to Influence the Canadian Economy", in Constance Backhouse and D.H. Flaherty, Eds. *Challenging Times: The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1992, pp. 215-224.

89 Ibid., 216.

of economic decision-making carried out by government and the business community. In 1992, Cohen, reflecting on the Mulroney government argued that the women's movement recognized that:

> Although we can fight for years and years for…equal pay for work of equal value…it is a small victory if a government economic policy (such as the current obsession with international competitiveness) means that fewer people will be employed. Equal pay laws do not help much if you do not have a job.[90]

In 1985, and in response to the *Macdonald Report*, the NAC produced its response paper *Macdonald Report and its Implications for Women*.[91] The paper, like most of their anti-free trade materials that would follow into the late 1980s, strongly criticized the Commission's report arguing that "women would be the most adversely affected by these changes…Free trade was seen as a major policy shift…towards a much stronger reliance on international market forces to shape the economic and political direction of the country."[92] After this, the NAC and other groups sympathetic to their cause and concerns over the Mulroney government's economic initiatives joined the anti-free trade movement of public education campaigns in efforts to communicate the dangers to women all over the country.

In a 1986 issue of *The Facts*, Cohen wrote an article for CUPE headlined "Free Trade and Women – They stand to be the big losers in any trade deal with the U.S."[93] Jobs were the focus of the argument, specifically tailoring the issue of presumed massive job loss around women:

> The manufacturing industries are most vulnerable to free trade, such as clothing, textiles, leather products and toys are the ones employing most

90 Ibid., 218

91 Marjorie Cohen, *Macdonald Report and its Implications for Women* (Toronto: NAC, 1985).

92 Cohen, 1992, 222.

93 Canadian Union of Public Employees, "Bumper summer Issue" The Facts, 8 No. 4, (July-August, 1986).

> female manufacturing workers. The same situation prevails in the service sector where most women workers are concentrated. Free Trade in services would wipe out hundreds of thousands of women's jobs. And free trade would almost certainly halt – and even reverse – the move toward pay and employment equity in Canada [emphasis added].[94]

Cohen's analysis of the possible effects of free trade on Canadian women was typically a bit less sensationalized than other authors in the anti-free trade camp, notably Shirley Carr. For example, Carr later stated in a press release in spring 1988 that:

> The Mulroney government is trying to turn the clock back on the gains made by Canadian women. Thousands, in fact hundreds of thousands of women will lose their jobs in the fall out of the Mulroney trade deal. As many as 250,000 out of the 600,000 women employed in the manufacturing sector could lose their jobs if this deal is implemented.[95]

Again, with no evidence to back her claims, Carr framed her argument on speculation, or if there was any valid research preformed, it was not indicated in the text. This is because she took for granted the fact that the readers of the discourse would most likely find her claim that "hundreds of thousands of women will lose their jobs," frightening and perhaps believe it to be true.

On the other hand, an economist by trade, Cohen spoke to specific sectoral issues and often avoided the pan-Canadian or exceptionalist discourse practiced by so many others in the movement. Despite Cohen's more tempered analysis and discourse, she still prescribed to some presuppositions and played a major role in formulating a "female-centric" discourse in the process of mobilizing action against the free trade agreement. For Cohen, since the Mulroney government was pro-market and neo-liberal, it was also in essence, anti-feminist. Cohen saw neo-liberalism and its opposition to pay and

94 Ibid

95 Canadian Labour Congress, "Free Trade and Child Care Policies Hurt Women." Press Release March 4, 1988

employment equity for women in Canada as an inevitable and logical casualty of reliance on the market to dictate the most profitable economic policies and practices.

In 1987, Cohen released her book, *Free Trade and the Future of Women's Work: Manufacturing and Service Industries*. A major effort to add to the free trade debate, this book examined the possible impacts of free trade on women, and analyzed the effects in context of the service sector where the majority of employees were women.[96] In her introduction, Cohen argued that "with free trade Canada will be forced to harmonize social and economic policies so that they conform to those of the United States."[97] For Cohen, "free trade, more than any public issue…dramatized the very different interests dividing ordinary people and the rich and powerful."[98] Many opponents saw themselves in a class conflict between the haves and the have-nots, and in a neo-liberal economic scheme, the former typically suffered at the hands and actions of the latter.

Given Mulroney's friendship with Reagan, Cohen saw the movement towards free trade, privatization, and deregulation as part of an "ideological package."[99] For Cohen, and many of the anti-free trade movement and supporters, these three concepts were seen not as separate but as part of a larger global "restructuring" of the world economy that would allow for "greater capital mobility to giant firms."[100] Neo-liberalism was anti-feminist because it did not take into account the specifics of equality, gender, or class: Instead it promoted a classic liberal ideal of individual prosperity in which such specifics were secondary to one's ability to achieve success within that system.

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96 Marjorie Cohen, Free Trade and the Future of Women's Work: Manufacturing and Service Industries, (Ottawa: The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 1987), 12.

97 Ibid

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid., 14

100 Ibid.

Other opponents framed free trade as a women's issue in terms that are more crisis-like. For example, the Vancouver Women's Directorate of the Pacific Group for Policy Alternatives warned in an anti-FTA pamphlet:

> Free Trade will affect every aspect of our lives. The reason why the cost is so high for women is because it will ultimately affect those industries where the majority of the workers are women, not to mention the threat to a huge range of social and economic programs and government policies that Canadians have created over the years to protect ourselves against the worst abuses of a market economy. In other words, Free Trade means a giant leap backwards for women. There is no doubt that a trade agreement with the U.S. will also cause huge job losses in service sector industries. A free trade deal with the U.S. is not in our interest. No matter how you cut it, free trade is a disaster for women. It's a disaster for all Canadians [emphasis added].[101]

Not exclusive to the NAC leadership, or to affiliated women's groups, by any means, it was a common discursive feature to state that "every aspect" of women's lives would be affected by the proposed free trade agreement. This vague language was often used at the beginning of a statement and provided authors with "discursive wiggle-room." Moreover, by establishing the looming threat as overwhelmingly vast, the authors could state what they wished about the effects as long as it fit within the parameters of their presupposition. For example, simply stating that "free trade means a giant leap backwards for women" did not really serve any purpose other than to evoke fears and anxieties over the future of the 20th century women's movement. There were no clear arguments to suggest that this would happen, nor were there any to concretely illustrate how this could happen.

The purpose of the selected discourse was to identify and construct a threat that was clearly influential with the subject-group; here, it was women:

101 Pacific Group for Policy Alternatives (Vancouver), "What Women Should Know about Free Trade," Vancouver Status of Women Pamphlet. Date Unknown.

> A free trade agreement would have a devastating impact on the lives of Canadian women. We believe that social programs, from unemployment insurance and maternity leave, to pay equity and minimum wage laws, would be undermined if not destroyed by a need to be more competitive with a nation like the U.S. After all, our neighbour to the south is a country, unlike Canada and the vast majority of industrialized nations is without a national maternity leave system; it is a nation where child care services run mostly on a profit-making basis; it is as nation – the only industrialized nation, excepting South Africa – that does not have Medicare. We are convinced that, if a free trade deal becomes a reality, women will be among the biggest losers [emphasis added].[102]

Without knowing the actual outcomes, words like "devastating" and "destroyed" were used to exacerbate the "unknown" and validate the implied threat. Using comparative language, and illustrating the difference between Canada and the United States specific to women's social programs and benefits, arguably influenced the reader's perception of the United States. This strategy was simple yet also viscerally complex. If authors were basing their entire arguments and creation of threat on the difference between the U.S. and Canada, there must have been something to be said about how useful or effective that discursive strategy was, otherwise, why would most of the anti-free trade discourse have relied so heavily upon it?

> Across the country, polls show that more women than men are against the trade deal. This is because it will effect every issue women in this country have been fighting for. Women will be amongst those hardest hit, and can least afford to bear the cost of free trade adjustments. Women will lose from this trade deal because working women are concentrated in industries which will be most harmed under free trade. The women who will be particularly affected by job losses are immigrants, women of colour, older women, disabled women and women with little formal education [emphasis added].[103]

The NAC attempted to expand their message's scope by including minority women in the group they saw as the most vulnerable in a post-FTA Canada. Many of the NAC

102 Saskatchewan Actions Committee Status of Women (Regina), SAC Opposes Bi-Lateral Free Trade Deal, Press Release, July 3, 1987.

103 National Action Committee (Ottawa), "Free Trade is a Women's Issue," Pamphlet, October, 1988.

pamphlets were translated into the most widely used immigrant languages Toronto and Vancouver. Including these women in the debate was important for the social movement's goals to expand their support base. It was also reflective of the larger conversations happening within feminism that for the theory to be relevant, an approach/lens that moved beyond that of white middle class women was necessary. The last line of the above discourse is rather troubling. Simply listing minority women, low-educated women, and disabled women as those who "will be particularly affected by job losses" does not seem to have had much further purpose than to recruit supporters. No other information was provided to suggest *why* these groups would be particularly affected; rather, this statement sought to elevate the presupposed threat and associate it with a marginalized group who may already feel oppressed. By associating the constructed threat to the *most* vulnerable, the threat was amplified and the effect expanded. The hoped for result was a larger support base for the opposition movement in preparation for an opportunity to politically oppose the deal, in an election, for example. Arguably, the NAC's strategy could be applicable to all of the anti-free trade organizations; the goal was about expanding membership to their cause, influence power, while establishing and national agenda that opposed neo-liberalism and Mulroney.

Part Three: Collective Action, Survival, and the 1988 Election

Since early 1986, anti-free traders had demanded that a federal election be called to provide the opportunity for the Canadian public to vote on the bilateral free trade agreement with the United States. As the year progressed and well into 1987, the call for an election became the anti-free trade movement's central demand:

> The key to all [our] strategies is mobilizing public opinion both against free trade and in favour [of] the democratic right to decide Canada's

> future through a federal election before a free trade deal is ratified. This will require a major education effort, and an effective media strategy.[104]

While neither the PCN nor the public knew when Mulroney was going to call an election, they at least speculated throughout 1988 that it might be a reality that year. For example, in the minutes of a PCN meeting in December 1987, Duncan Cameron suggested that the Network only had "the first nine months of 1988 in order to make their case," predicting that an election would come in the fall.[105] Moreover, by mid-December 1987, the Prime Minister announced to his caucus that 1988 would be an "election year."[106]

An election provided the political opportunity the opposition movement demanded. It was a critical "game-on" from early 1988 to not only master the message of the dangers of free trade to Canada through their major education effort, but most importantly, to get Canadians to mobilize and to head to the polls to vote against the Conservatives.

The previous two years illustrated how the opposition carefully cultivated anti-American, anti-Mulroney, and anti-free trade sentiments while establishing links to dangers and threats to Canada. This provided the opposition with a unique position whereby they constructed the external enemy, and thus, the threat to the nation. With that, they were able describe the ways in which Canadians could effectively protect themselves and their country from the constructed enemy. However, while the discursive public education campaign was critical to cultivating and organizing civic opposition, the most politically pragmatic way of defeating the FTA was defeating the Conservatives in an election. This would be the best way for the opposition movement to convince

104 GATT-Fly, Free Trade Action Dossier, No. 5 October 23, 1987.

105 Pro-Canada Network (Ottawa), Minutes of the Pro-Canada Network Meeting on December 1, 1987.

106 Brian Mulroney, Memoirs: 1939-1993, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2007), 584.

Canadians to mobilize and collectively act; the other option or so they suggested, was to watch Canada disappear, or succumb to Yankee and/or corporate take-over.

On top of this, the opposition relied on their profound belief in a constructed collective identity as the backbone of future collective action. Repeating Hardy et al., collective action is best understood through the analysis of the discursive construction of a collective identity.[107] In other words, they argued that "discursive processes produce collective identities, which lead to various forms of collective action."[108] Critically examining the discursive tools used as well as the movement's 1988 strategies illustrates how the opposition sought to produce a collective identity for those opposed to free trade and incite collective action against it. It also points to a connection between discourses of collective identity and collaborative engagement, and the political process involved in the later stages of the debate.

Preparing for the "Most Important Election of the Century"

The creation of the PCN in 1987 gave the movement an organizational hub critical to its overall cohesiveness and public education strategy. The way in which the PCN would organize the collaborative messages against the FTA would be essential to the success it would hope to achieve at the polls in the fall of 1988. In an internal strategy paper developed at a PCN network meeting, the organization listed its primary objectives:

> To organize a nation-wide public campaign for the two fold purpose of: A) defeating the proposed U.S. – Canada free trade accord; and B) launching a public process for determining alternative economic policy directions for Canada. The objectives of this national campaign are to be pursued: By mobilizing public opinion and critical awareness of the major issues; By provoking a federal election on free trade and economic

107 Hardy, et al. 2005, 61.

108 Ibid.

> alternatives; By stimulating provincial refusals to implement the free trade accord.[109]

By January 1988, FTA had been fully negotiated and signed by both Mulroney and Reagan. The signing was, however, more a formality as it was not a legal treaty in Canada until it was passed through the legislature. Mulroney hoped for a majority in the next parliament, affording him the luxury of passing the FTA with little hindrance from the opposition. The PCN met in January and produced a six month campaign strategy with the theme of "It's a bad deal for Canada."[110] Two specific national actions were identified: a national petition drive; and a national day of action to take place in June of 1988. According to Ontario Federation of Labour representative, Riel Miller, the meeting would mark "the launch of a collective agenda for action across the country."[111]

For the PCN, the primary goal was to unite Canadians from many different perspectives in their opposition to the Mulroney deal. It sought to accomplish this by "aiding" Canadians' understanding of their "common interest in defeating the trade deal."[112] For the PCN, the campaign represented a "voyage where thousands of people take a step upon a common road…a journey from one stage to the next until we reach a *common* goal [emphasis added]."[113] This helped to outline what the discursive process and movement represented; the purpose was always to convince a broad and diverse constituency that they did hold a common interest and a common identity, and feared a common threat in FTA.

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109 Pro-Canada Network, (Ottawa), Internal Strategy Paper, October 17-18, 1987.

110 Pro-Canada Network, (Ottawa), Memo from Riel Miller to Officers and Staff re: the PCN Assembly, January 19, 1988.

111 Ibid.

112 Pro-Canada Network, "Winning the Fight for Canada: Defeating the Mulroney Trade Deal," Pro-Canada Network Strategy Paper, January 16, 1988, 5.

113 Ibid., 7.

In its January strategy paper, the PCN continued to emphasize the building and strengthening of local coalitions, development of campaign material, participation in and producing of public education events, and reinforcement of the network on a national scale. From January to March, its strategy was to continue to spread the word about the dangers of the FTA.[114] In March and April, as petitions were circulating nationally to attempt to force the hands of the Conservative to call an election, the PCN sought to hold a national petition day. Armed with the slogan "Sign up for Canada Day, Sign on for Canada," the petition was set to be circulated nationally through as many public outlets as possible; in order to build "a sense of national solidarity."[115] In the summer and onwards into the fall, their focus was the possibility of an election, particularly in terms of generating appropriate discursive materials for a pre-election period, such as lawn signs, pamphlets, buttons, shirts, and banners, for example. "Ultimately," the PCN strategy paper remarked, "Mulroney's trade deal will only be put to rest in an election. An election where the people of Canada will decide."[116]

By June, the PCN had begun to seriously consider an official election strategy in the event that a fall election was called. Their primary objective "would be to ensure that the trade deal continues to be the central issue in the campaign and that the links are constantly made between the trade deal and the major economic and social policy issues in the campaign." General organization preparation included meetings with the opposition parties, the creation of steady PCN liaisons with the opposition parties, and creating a cadre of volunteers to work with the PCN during an actual election

114 Ibid., 8.

115 Ibid., 9.

116 Ibid., 2.

campaign.[117] The PCN and individual anti-free trade organizations' message to the public during the months leading up to the election was that this election:

> *...will be the most important election in this century*. Canadians will have to choose whether to move towards continental integration and the loss of sovereignty and economic options that go with free trade or to continue to work for an independent country, leaving the economic and social options open to being shaped by Canadians. Those working to defeat the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement have only 50 to 60 days in which to convince Canadians of the dangers of the agreement [emphasis added]."[118]

The purpose of this message was to dramatize the impending election by describing it as the most important choice in Canadian history. This type of discourse played the role of rallying the public around a specific issue, while constructing it as *the* issue of the century:

> Do Canadians really want to become as dependent upon, and controlled by the United States, as we would be under the proposed free trade agreement? Or do we want to remain in control of our national destiny? That is the choice. That is the real issue. If we endorse the agreement, it will be but a matter of time before Canada is reduced to being one of the symbols on a continental flag.[119]

Aiming to give the public little to no choice – while simultaneously empowering them to choose – was a classic discursive tactic of the anti-free trade materials. By equating the FTA with *absolute* dependence and or loss of sovereignty to the United States, the opposition could argue that the FTA also was equal to Canada becoming a part of the United States.

Civic Opposition to the Political Circus Ring

With the election announced for October, 1988 the PCN and affiliate organizations now had the clear political opportunity to harness the civic power of their years of work,

117 Pro-Canada Network, (Ottawa), Pro-Canada Network Election Strategy, Discussion Proposals, June 19-20, 1988.

118 GATT-Fly, Pro-Canada Dossier, No. 15, (September 13, 1988)

119 Ibid.

education, and outreach by translating these feelings and opinions into actual support for the opposing political parties. This is not to say that the years of public education on the dangers of the FTA were largely irrelevant until the political seed could be planted in the NDP or the Liberal Party. Rather, it was more the case that the previous years of work, materials, and outreach done by the PCN and affiliate organizations of the anti-free trade movement, were paramount to the political momentum of the opposition parties in the 1988 election. For example, as Ayres noted, "by articulating opposition to the FTA in terms of cultural and social issues…Turner had packaged [the Liberal message] in the PCN's [discourse]. He thus tapped the cultural and social reservoir of anti-free trade opposition, and became a lightning rod for it electorally."[120]

On November 8, 1988, in a memorandum to all member organizations of the PCN, Chairperson Tony Clarke wrote:

> The results of recent polls reveal that the cartoon booklet, coupled with the intensive education dives in each of our constituencies, has finally paid off...[polls] reported October 29 that 54% were now opposed to the Mulroney trade deal while only 32% supported it…The challenge now, as we all know, is to effectively *translate* this increased [civic] opposition to the trade deal into support for New Democrat and Liberal candidates across the country on November 21st [emphasis added].[121]

The final stage in the discursive process – the translation from opinion to action – was now the opposition movement's priority. Here, the anti-free traders would rely on the previous years of implemented discourse – albeit, with a heightened sense of urgency due to the revised timelines involved with the announcement of an election – while making

120 Jeffery M. Ayres, "Political Process and Popular Protest: The Mobilization Against Free Trade in Canada," American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 55, No. 4 (October, 1996): 483.

121 Pro-Canada Network (Ottawa), Memorandum to All Member Organizations from Tony Clarke, November 8, 1988. The "cartoon booklet" that Clarke was referring to was the central public education material for the PCN's anti-free trade campaign. *What's the Big Deal? Facts and Feelings on Free Trade* was produced in conjunction with the CAFT in Toronto and was distributed in English in October 1988. A deeper discussion of the role the cartoon booklet in the anti-free trade discourse is found in this thesis starting on page 140.

the case that the only way to defeat the FTA was through a vote against the Conservatives. According to a September 1988, issue of the UCC's *Pro-Canada Dossier*, in these final weeks, the civic movement:

> Must rely on the leaders and candidates of the opposition parties to educate Canadians on the free trade issue. How the opposition parties decide to cut the issue will be critical to how people vote on the issue. The Pro-Canada Network has been offering assistance to the parties by sharing research and documentation, by providing experts to brief candidates on the free trade issue, and by preparing an election kit…a series of fact sheets….a collection of brochures and other resources…[122]

Election Materials: The Last Front

As the historical context changed, so too did the medium of discourse. With particular emphasis on visual, easy to grasp language, plus visual cues, smaller and more distributable forms of information became more of a priority. With the political alliances more or less in place and the election fast approaching, the anti-free trade movement would begin to focus all its efforts to spreading its message of the perils of free trade with the United States. The PCN headquarters, located in Ottawa, was the central nervous system of the anti-free trade movement. The PCN had developed a campaign strategy committee in early 1988, chaired by Julie Davis (CUPE, OFL) to oversee all strategy options. While the PCN undertook a large coordinating role in the upcoming election, affiliate organizations continued to produce "election" materials themselves. The materials illustrated a more heightened sense of urgency in the arguments presented by the opposition, suggesting to the reader that time was running out, but that the movement still had the chance to succeed in its goals of stopping the FTA. The language of the arguments also tended to remain largely rudimentary and general – even more so than in

122 GATT-Fly, Pro-Canada Dossier, No. 15, (September 13, 1988)

previous years – in order to remain convincing while providing a message, that was clear, concise, and accessible to almost every Canadian possible.[123]

The PCN and affiliate organizations moved to build upon their most accessible public strategies. Already, for example, lawn signs had been produced and distributed in Ontario by the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL); these campaign signs read on one side, "Let Canadians Decide," on the other, "Canada: Don't Trade It Away." Promoted throughout the anti-free trade literature and public education materials since the spring of 1988, the public were urged to display these signs on their lawns, promoting visibility of their message. The signs came at a cost of $1.25 each. The Coalition Against Free Trade (CAFT) – a Toronto based anti-free trade group – came up with the slogan, "No-Eh?" for their contribution. Lawn signs were also distributed at the same time in British Columbia by the Victoria and Vancouver chapters of the CAFT. Their sign featured an image of a maple leaf with a checked ballot box beside it asking to "Let Canadians decide."[124] Buttons, stickers, and t-shirts were available for purchase at the CAFT in Toronto in the fall of 1988. The COC produced bumper stickers which read "Canada – Let's not trade it away."[125]

In retrospect, some would argue, however, that of all the affiliated organizations, the NAC was most active in re-focusing its educational efforts around the election.[126] Its message had been clear throughout the anti-free trade movement: the FTA would most

123 Translations of election materials were even conducted in languages other than French or English in metropolitan centres such as Toronto or Vancouver. Organizations like the NAC saw potential support in immigrant communities, especially among immigrant women.

124 GATT-Fly, "Lawn Signs Campaign," Free Trade Action Dossier, No. 10 (March 30, 1988).

125 Ibid.

126 Pro-Canada Network (Ottawa), "Discussion Paper on Membership Education and Organizing for PCN Media/Communications Committee," by Dennis Howlett, 1989)

adversely affect women in Canada but not in ways limited solely to employment. As one election pamphlet read, "this federal election is the most important one for women since the campaign for women's suffrage, which women finally won in 1919."[127] The NAC described the FTA as the most "damaging" government initiative towards women in the history of Canada.[128] However, the pamphlet successfully tied the more general concerns associated with the PCN and other affiliate organizations of the anti-free trade movement to those in their constituency:

> The most jobs lost under free trade will be in industries which employ large numbers of women, particularly immigrant and visible minority women. Lower wages and poorer working conditions will result from the downward pull of competition with American business. The quality of our [social programs] are threatened. The free trade deal threatens our current standards on consumer and environmental protection, which are higher than the U.S. It threatens our ability to maintain independent policies and positions on international affairs, and it does not protect our natural resources including water.[129]

The construction of the FTA, free trade, and economic policy coordination with the United States as a "women's issue" was a discursive tactic to garner support for the cause among a specific constituency, in this case Canada's female population. Moreover, this example illustrated how the NAC tailored certain broader messages of the anti-free trade movement to speak to a sub-constituency; this was something most individual organizations did in order to appeal to specifics while still petitioning the general population. Concluding their argument in this pamphlet, and in attempts to reinforce a female dominant theme in their position, the NAC argued that the FTA would remodel Canada into a country "that is no different than the U.S.," while "severely threatening *everything* the Women's Movement had been fighting for, and the gains Canadian

127 National Action Committee (Ottawa), "Women Vote!" Election Pamphlet, October, 1988.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid.

women had made [emphasis added].” Additional NAC election pamphlets included: “Free Trade: A Bad Deal for Women, Here’s Why and What to Do,” and “What Every Woman Needs to Know About Free Trade.” Like the “Women Vote!” pamphlet, the messages in these remained rather similar: the focus remained that free trade was a women’s issue and that more women should recognize the dangers and threats associated with it even if they were predictions made by the opposition. Without mentioning statistics, the pamphlet, *What Every Woman Needs to Know About Free Trade*, reminded Canadian women that, “more women than men are the against the free trade deal. This is because it will affect every issue women of this country are concerned about.” Again, as in much of the discourse, details are spared and taken for granted as the threat is applied to “every issue” possible in the minds of the Canadian woman.[130]

As in other examples, the authors did not feel it necessary to elaborate on the ways Canada would become “no different” than the United States, nor to show how or why this presumed event would threaten the progress that Canadian women had specifically made. Rather, the arguments relied on the presupposed knowledge and opinions of Canadian women and the United States to imply that the FTA would threaten and destroy that progress if it was not stopped. The authors took for granted the larger yet more defined picture of the FTA (and its context) and replaced it with a message that was effective to the reader – i.e. that this election was not about economics, or culture, or sovereignty, or free trade, it was really about *women*.

130 National Action Committee (Ottawa), “Act Against Free Trade Now!” Action Bulletin, September, 1987. NAC, “Free Trade is a Women’s Issue,” Pamphlet, October, 1988. NAC, “Women Vote!” Election Pamphlet, October, 1988. NAC, “What Every Woman Needs to Know about Free Trade.” Elections Pamphlet, October, 1988.

In addition to the preparation of pamphlets, the NAC and the CAFT developed "election kits" that would serve as a resource for popular education during the pre-election period, as well as aid the Liberal and NDP campaign offices in their own efforts to garner support behind their candidates and against the FTA. According to the *Pro-Canada Dossier*:

> The election kit provides action suggestions, a question and answer briefing paper on the free trade issue, a series of one page fact sheets related to free trade, a list of resource people and resource materials and a collection of some of the best pamphlets that have been produced by different organizations on the issue. [Additionally], in order to make the popular opposition to the Mulroney trade deal more visible during an election campaign the PCN is urging stepped-up efforts to distribute buttons, stickers and lawn-signs.[131]

For its part, CUPE produced a rather large (125 pages) special issue of its magazine for the election entitled, *The Facts on Free Trade: Canada, Don't Trade It Away*, which was also the title of their 1988 campaign against the FTA. This document included submissions from almost every major and notable player in the anti-free trade movement, including leaders from all the major anti-free trade civil society organizations, as well as cultural and political opponents of Mulroney and the FTA.[132]

Interestingly, while the special issue provided one of the most comprehensive collections of anti-FTA positions available in the month before the election, nothing was notably related to the election itself. Most of the arguments presented were those that had been previously made throughout the past several years. *Canada, Don't Trade It Away*, was a restatement of the anti-free trade movement's position as well as a defence of the key players and authors. However, this defence had become a necessary tactic: pro-free traders, even Mulroney, had often criticized the opposition movement for relying heavily

131 GATT-Fly, Pro-Canada Dossier, No. 15 (September 13, 1988)

132 Canadian Union of Public Employees (Ottawa), "The Facts on Free Trade: Canada, Don't Trade It Away", October, 1988.

on national, cultural, and emotional iconography in order to make their case against the agreement, rather than a reasoned or economically sound rebuttal.[133] Hence, the special issue noted:

> All the contributors of this issue are highly respected and knowledgeable specialists in the various areas of the trade deal they examine. They include economists, political scientists, researchers and social activists, as well as union officials. Unlike most people, they have actually read the voluminous text of the accord…In explaining exactly what the adverse effects will be, the authors do not engage in rhetoric or speculation. Their approach is factual and well-reasoned. That is why this special issue is "must" reading for everyone who is concerned about the future of Canada. Our hope is that it will prove a valuable source of information for all those Canadians who share our belief that the Mulroney-Reagan pact is a betrayal of the country we love.[134]

The booklet sought to address any allegations the anti-free trade movement received from its critics, but clearly grounded itself in the tried and true discourse of the movement. The educated, reasoned, and informed experts who studied the issues were simply confirming their own constructed truths to be valid and were letting the Canadian public know "exactly what the adverse effects *would* be" while not engaging in the use of rhetoric and speculation.

The most notable contribution to the public education material produced in the months before the election was the PCN/CAFT comic book, *What's the Big Deal? Some Straightforward Questions and Answers on Free Trade*.[135] The comic book was illustrated by long-time supporter and primary contributor of the movement's anti-free trade visual discourse, Terry Mosher (or his alias, Aislin). On each page of the book a political cartoon (originally published 1985-1988) was included, one that generally matched the content of the written word on the current page. Each political cartoon

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid.

135 Ayres, 1998, 94; Ayers suggested that the comic book became the movement's most successful educative piece against the FTA.

employed the same discursive strategies that the spoken and written word did. Most common were depictions of high ranking Conservative Party officials pledging allegiance to the American flag, singing the American national anthem, or canoodling with President Reagan. Written by Canadian playwright Rick Salutin, *What's the Big Deal?* was presented in a conversational style in which two "ordinary" Canadians discussed specific questions and concerns about the FTA. The conversations in the comic book were a collection of the movement's discursive messages and tactics and represented one of the most organized and final attempts at convincing the Canadian public just over a month before the election.

Ten days after Mulroney announced the election, the PCN distributed over 2.2 million English-language copies of the book to metropolitan areas.[136] As Ayres noted, the comic book approach marked a significant popular educational success, and it was widely cited for its accessibility and common-sense style in "explaining" the issues. "Canadians reported that its question-and-answer dialogue was much easier to digest than many of the technical pamphlets published for and against the deal."[137] Indeed, building upon the now familiar emphasis on both accessibility and "common sense," the comic book was written for a grade seven or eight reading and comprehension level to further reduce any communications barrier particularly so close to the election.[138] Overall, it attempted to elevate the free trade agreement to an issue unparalleled in history: "[W]e feel, the more discussion the better, because this is probably the most important decision our country

136 The French translation was not complete until the week of November 8, 1988 (+/- 12 days before the election), another example of perhaps how the movement failed to make Canada's French-speaking populace more of a priority.

137 Ayres, 1998, 95.

138 Ibid.

will face in our lifetimes."[139] As had been done so many times before, the author attempted to focus all importance on the specific issue while asking the reader to ignore everything else in history.

The comic book was essentially the movement's last attempt to tie up any lose ends of the discursive process in preparation for the vote in November. It kept its message simple yet sharp, relating back to the discursive tactics used throughout the campaign. At this point, the most critical outcome for the movement was to persuade any Canadians who were still "on the fence" in regards to their support, or more importantly their indifference about the FTA, a rhetorical stance that the opposition hoped to banish:

> What did we give up? We gave the American corporations the right to come into Canada and behave exactly as if they're at home in the U.S. They get the right to buy almost any Canadian company… They get the rights to our resources, and we have to sell to them… For American businesses, this deal is like a Declaration of Independence in Canada. For us, it means we become a part of the American economy. Canada gets to be one department in a big U.S. supermarket [emphasis added].[140]

Powerful images of loss or surrender were presented; Mulroney had *already* given the Americans everything that the opposition said they would lose under the FTA. Just weeks before the election, the PCN characterized Mulroney as a traitor to Canada and an unfit leader who was in Washington's pockets. The language and arguments used were clearly speculative, considerably leading, and powerfully nostalgic. They presented the presupposition of *absolute* integration as a fact, rather than a possibility, reminding the reader that American businesses would soon buy up all Canadian business and incorporate the Canadian economy into their own.

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139 Pro-Canada Network (Ottawa), What's the Big Deal: Some Straightforward Questions and Answers on Free Trade, October, 1988.

140 Ibid.

In order to convey the immensity if the task, the opposition movement relied on the idea that a trade agreement with the United States would never be fair and free because of the extent of the power difference between the two countries. The opposition wanted the readers to see the Canada-U.S. relationship as completely "one sided" by obsessively reminding the public that Canada has always played the weaker role, characterizing it as holding a more "feminine" posture in the bilateral relationship. The image of this had been best crystallized by novelist Margaret Atwood elsewhere when she wrote that:

> Canada as a separate but dominated country has done about as well under the United States as women world-wide have done under men. About the only position they have ever opted towards us, country to country, has been the missionary position, and we were not on top. I guess that is why the national wisdom vis-à-vis them has so often taken the form of lying still, keeping your mouth shut, and pretending you like it.[141]

In like manner, in the PCN comic book, Aislin illustrated a masculine "Uncle Sam" figure walking through the door, unbuckling his belt, and throwing his hat to the side as he entered his home. A burning cigar from his mouth accentuated his stereotypical masculinity and perhaps alluded to a celebratory event or success (perhaps the signing of the FTA). The figure, representing the United States, exclaimed, "Yo, John [Crosbie], Daddy's Home!!"[142] In the corner of the cartoon, a newspaper clipping revealed the headline, "Crosbie labels Canada-U.S. 'love slaves.'" Yet again, in this social commentary, Uncle Sam prepared to "take advantage of Canada" here represented as Crosbie, a Cabinet minister. The sexual and effeminizing connotations associated with this cartoon, and reflected Atwood's analogy, spoke to the visual discursive tactics used in political cartoons in the 1891 and 1911 federal elections. Then pro-free traders were often characterized as more effeminate or weaker, representing a similar "Canada" in

141 Canadian Union of Public Employees (Ottawa), "The Facts on Free Trade: Canada, Don't Trade It Away", October 1988.

142 What's the Big Deal? (1988)

kind. On the other hand, those against reciprocity were characterized as strong and protecting, a nationalist representation of a Canada "strong and free."[143]

Nonetheless, and having painted the picture of a seemingly insurmountable power imbalance, in the end, they provided the answer to the fundamental question: collective action against the FTA must occur at the polls in November or Canada would fall victim to all the threats prescribed by the opposition's discourse:

> This deal means we give up being an independent country. *Isn't that a little extreme?* Is it? Think about this. Ever since Canada became a country, federal and provincial governments have fought each other for certain powers. Now they'll both give up their powers-to American businessmen! *That's ridiculous. It's like the free trade deal becomes our new constitution.* That's exactly what it is.[144]
>
> This deal sounds like a nightmare! It's a monster! *I can't think of a single good thing about it!* I can. *What?* It hasn't happened yet. *I thought it was a sure thing, it's practically over.* That's what the government wants you to think. *Can we still do something about it?* Yes we can…[145]

Post-Script: Results of the Election

Despite the efforts of the anti-free trade movement, Mulroney and the Conservatives returned to the House of Commons with a clear majority. Taking 169 seats, the Liberals won 83, the NDP 43, the Conservatives received more than enough seats to easily pass Bill C-130. While Mulroney perhaps saw this as the "political mandate" demanded of him, opponents drew attention to the popular vote as an indication that Mulroney had not received the majority of the public's support. The combined popular vote of the opposition parties – at 52% – was greater than the popular vote of the pro-free trade

143 See Wood, 2001.

144 Ibid.

145 Ibid.

Conservatives, which received 43% (5% went to "other" parties).[146] At a glance, this suggests that more Canadians voted against the FTA than voted for it. However, this observation rests on the assumption that a vote for an opposition party clearly meant a vote against free trade in the 1988 election. Conversely, we cannot assume that a vote for the Conservatives was a vote for free trade either.[147]

In the years since, several theories have sought to explain the outcomes of this historic election. Scholars have argued that the Conservative strength came from their phenomenal support in Quebec and the inefficient split of the anti-free trade vote between the Liberals and the NDP. For example, Reginald Whitaker argued in *A Sovereign Idea: Essays on Canada as a Democratic Community*, that it was:

> Unmistakeably their [Quebec] votes, which made the difference in electing a Tory majority. Outside Quebec, only Alberta gave a majority of votes to the Tories. Everywhere else the anti-free trade Liberals and NDP received clear combined majorities of the popular vote.[148]

As a result, there was an anti-Quebec backlash by English-Canadian nationalists, who blamed Quebeckers for "imposing" the free trade deal on the rest of Canada, since the majority of Quebec supported Mulroney.[149] Whitaker noted that he could speak directly to the anger of the election night in 1988 for in the aftermath he was driven to take a public anti-Quebec position.[150] In a response article, *No Laments for the Nation: Free*

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146 Ayres, 1998, 114.

147 See Ayres, 1998, 115; Also, for the dynamics of the vote itself, see: John Pammet, "The 1988 Vote," in Alan Frizell et al., (eds), *The Canadian General Election of 1988*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989); Richard Johnston et al., Letting the People Decide: Dynamics of a Canadian Election, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1992); Lawrence LeDuc, "Voting for Free Trade? The Canadian Voter and the 1988 Federal Election," in *Politics*: Canada, Paul Fox (ed), 7th Edition. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1991).

148 Reginald Whitaker, A Sovereign Idea: Essays on Canada as a Democratic Community. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 315.

149 McNally, (1990), 185

150 Ibid., 327(n.26)

Trade and the Election of 1988, Whitaker argued that "Quebec domination of Canadian politics [had] never been more obvious, no more abrasive." [151]

Brian Bow suggested that the Conservatives and the FTA would have met the same fate as in 1911 had it not been for the split vote between the Liberals and the NDP; since both parties were more or less seen as equal representations of the anti-free trade ideal or movement, the anti-free trade vote went two ways.[152] In late August, the PCN gave serious consideration to endorsing a plan of "strategic voting;" specific ridings would be targeted based on polling data, and an equal number of NDP and Liberal candidates for each of these key ridings would be endorsed.[153] However, in early November, the PCN abandoned this plan to endorse a strategic voting schema, motivated in part by the drop in support for the Conservatives that came after the televised leaders debate. Members agreed that because of the rise in the polls of the NDP and the Liberals, strategic voting would not be necessary.[154] In addition, the PCN ultimately agreed that "even if such a strategy were necessary, it could prove to be counterproductive for a number of reasons."[155] This decision became part of their own post-election analysis of the 1988 election.

151 Reginald Whitaker, "No Laments for the Nation: Free Trade and the Election of 1988," Canadian Forum (March, 1989): 11

152 Bow, 2005, 4.

153 Unfortunately, the minutes do not explain the criteria of what made it a "key riding".

154 Pro-Canada Network (Ottawa), Memorandum to All Member Organizations from Tony Clarke, November 8, 1988

155 Ibid. Unfortunately, in the document, the PCN did not explain the reasons why it believed "strategic voting" could be "counter-productive". Tony Clarke provided his PCN telephone number, and urged others to contact him to discuss these reasons further, if needed. Perhaps this signalled an implied moment of doubt in the reality that the civil society movement's votes would have to be split between too parties, thereby weakening the future political opposition, or at worst, handing the Conservatives a majority (which happened).

Anti-Free Trade: A "Timeless" Canadian Tradition?

In the aftermath of the election, Dennis Howlett of the PCN mused about the efforts of the organizations involved during the election period. He noted that while the popular education materials offered prospective success, these "vehicles of alternative communication" were not mobilized to their full potential. For example, he observed that "only three of the four unions used their regular membership education programs in any concerted way to educate their membership on the free trade issue."[156] According to Howlett, the NAC put the free trade issue at the centre of their educational efforts, while groups like "three of the four major labour unions" and the churches, "did very little in terms of re-focusing of their educational efforts."[157] By then, however, this all mattered very little; the election's result signified the end of the mobilization efforts and protest campaign against the FTA.

This electoral defeat did not stop the individual members, supporters, or organizations of the PCN and the anti-free trade movement from continuing to criticize the FTA, and its soon-to-be second incarnation, the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. At the 1992 CLC national convention, the first of four major campaigns announced was the continued abrogation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, opposition to NAFTA, and support for an alternative economic recovery plan.[158] The politically-left journal *Canadian Dimensions* wrote in an editorial in a 1992 spring issue entitled, *Stop NAFTA*, echoed the disturbing and dark discourse used in the late 1980s by the PCN:

156 Pro-Canada Network (Ottawa), "Discussion Paper on Membership Education and Organizing for PCN Media/Communications Committee," 1989.

157 Ibid.

158 Geoff Bickerton, "Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa) convention '92." Canadian Dimension, 26, No. 4 (June 1992): 16

> The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement [FTA] is destroying the Canadian economy. Close to half-a-million Canadian jobs have disappeared since 1989. Health and social services are eroded. For working people, the prospect of a dignified life has become uncertain. Millions occupy the ranks of the working poor or eke out an existence on welfare or unemployment insurance. Three years into the FTA, the corporate dream has become a nightmare and we face a long, dark, cold night… Mulroney and the corporate elite declared war on the Canadian people years ago. NAFTA is a battle we cannot afford to lose. [159]

The PCN eventually evolved into the Action Canada Network (ACN) in 1991 and carried on with the use of the distinctive discursive tools associated with the previous years of anti-integrationist social and political movement, this time in the context of the fight against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), from 1990-1993.[160] So while the PCN, in name, ended, the anti-free trade movement continued, particularity defining itself through the discursive caché it had developed and maintained over the course of its history.[161] This helps explain why much of the language and discursive tools used at irregular intervals in Canadian history to convince the Canadian people to oppose free trade have remained remarkably similar, despite the varying historical contexts in which they played out.

The "timeless" quality of the discourse used by the anti-free trade movement, suggests that it may provide one of the least complicated ways to cultivate, organize, and

159 Editorial (Author Unknown), "Stop NAFTA." Canadian Dimension 26, No. 4 June 1992: 3; For some excellent examples more of the same discursive messaging, or of the reactionary discourse to the FTA 1989 and talks of NAFTA, see: Maude Barlow and Bruce Campbell, Take Back the Nation, (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1991); Maude Barlow and Bruce Campbell, Take Back the Nation 2: Meeting the Threat of NAFTA (Toronto : Key Porter Books, 1993); Mel Hurtig, The Betrayal of Canada (Toronto: Stoddart, 1991); - Hurtig, At Twilight in the Country: Memoirs of a Canadian Nationalist, (Toronto: Stoddart, 1996).

160 See Ayres, 1998, 117-143.

161 The evolution of the anti-free trade debate and the inter-organizational collaboration that tends to go along with it, continues to date. A present day example of the PCN/ACN would be the Trade Justice Network (TJN). Their membership includes representatives from the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), the Council of Canadians (COC), the Réseau québécois sur l'intégration continentale (RQIC), the Canadian Labour Congress (Canadian Labour Congress (Ottawa)), the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), and the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN). Along with the COC, the TJN is currently campaigning against the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), being negotiated by the current Conservative federal government under Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

mobilize civic opposition contested public policy directions. History has shown that these discursive methods – specifically those that rely on anti-American rhetoric, Canadian exceptionalism, and threat-naming – are habitually used in constructing opposition to bilateral agreements between Canada and the United States that suggest some element of closer integration (even on the smallest of levels). The discursive methods used by those opposed to free trade – and other multinational agreements in which Canada was (or will be) involved – should be examined with a scope which addresses how discursive tools may represent a small part in a larger social exercise. For example, what could account for the drastic change in which labour unions – such as CUPE – discussed their concerns about the Conservative government's more neo-liberal economic inclinations? How did it to come to be that, in 1985, Jeff Rose spoke in specific terms of supporting the strength of the labour union and of workers' rights, while by 1988, he spoke in vague and universal truths? (E.g. "In the name of increased trade with the U.S., Mulroney has put in danger the *very nature* of Canada? [emphasis added]")[162]

The re-framing of an initial concerns over the pervasiveness and domination of pro-market and neo-liberal policy directions for Canada's future into more visceral connective terms (even if it had nothing to do with free trade), was initiated in order to cultivate, organize, and mobilize opposition to the proposed deal. Through discursive means, the opposition movement constructed its case against Mulroney's policy direction in terms that Canadians could more easily grasp, which included: sovereignty, independence, loss of culture, loss of identity, and survival of the nation. Moreover, general oppositions to free trade – such as a gradual compromising of union power and

162 CUPE, *Worth Fighting For?* 1991, 58.

employment – were framed in such a way that made them applicable to every Canadian (as well as specific Canadians, i.e., women). As the years progressed, the discourse began framing these "micro-concerns" of neo-liberal economics to more "macro-level" anxieties about Canada's existence. The authors made free trade into such a universal issue that the specificity of the opposition's concerns became the backdrop to more "popular" or "general" concerns, such as, Canadian identity, or "way of life." By universalizing the debate over free trade, the opposition movement afforded themselves the luxury of speaking in vague and general terms, while not compromising the specificity of their convictions.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The anti-free trade debate of the 1980s was much more than a political story, more than a fight between a divided Liberal and NDP on one side and a more organized and better-funded Conservative and big business campaign on the other. On a macro level, the iconic election of 1988 played back the visceral and historic battle between nationalists and continentalists over the subject of free trade with the United States. However, on a more micro level, it also pitted a budding civil society movement against the new Mulroney government's seeming affinity with more neo-liberal economic policies, a battle that took shape long before the electoral contest would unfold. What many Canadians experienced as a "political" debate against free trade began as a discussion among civil society organizations about the future of Canadian society, and the implications of the election of a pro-business and pro-free trade Prime Minister in 1984. This study sought to explore the role discourse played in the various efforts made by the civil society organizations to cultivate and organize public opinion in opposition to both Mulroney and the FTA.

This resistance began as a reaction by the "popular sector" – labour unions, women's groups, churches, environmental groups, Aboriginal organizations, and farmers unions – to what they saw as misrepresentation in the Macdonald Commission's hearing process and the recommendations for Canada to pursue a more flexible global trade strategy, and to negotiate the FTA. Perhaps it was a reaction amongst those in civil society who saw the Macdonald Report as a step towards a future of a more deregulated, liberalized, and privatized Canada. Finally, a free trade agreement with the United States would not only

confirm a greater shift to a model of neo-liberalism in Canada, but would further serve to bring Canada and the United States to a level of enthusiasm over economic integration not seen since the post-war period, an era which rekindled Canadian anxieties over American domination of the country.

As the years progressed, particularly into the 1988 federal election, the micro-opposition over neo-liberal economic directions had been completely re-modelled to resemble pre-existing iconic anti-continentalist debates. While the specificity of the enmity to neo-liberalism remained within the arguments of the anti-FTA organizations, both explicitly and implicitly, the initial reaction over what kind of society Canadians wanted for themselves and for their future became one embroiled in classic frameworks of anti-Americanism, threats of Americanization, and the destruction of Canadian sovereignty. The resulting dynamic reveals how the iconic and historical anti-continentalist narrative has the power and the potential to be re-contextualized in order to cultivate, organize, and, depending on the political opportunity, mobilize the public against specific public policy directions.

The analysis revealed three major stages in the overall construction of the historically contextual anti-free trade thought and opinion, as well as the opposition movement's attempt to cultivate, organize, and mobilize public opposition to the FTA and Mulroney. While these stages have been identified on their own, they by no means functioned as such. Rather, these stages overlapped and worked off each other in order to bring about the anti-free trade movement's ultimate goal: in the short term, to stop the FTA from becoming a reality; and, in the long term, to build a public consensus which would stand then adamantly opposed to neo-liberal direction in Canadian public policy.

First, for the purposes of cultivating opposition to Mulroney's public policy directions, the opposition re-contextualized the classic anti-continentalist narrative whereby Canadians largely defined themselves in opposition to the United States in order to reinforce their "national" solidarity, and publicly encourage resistance of integrationist policy options, such as free trade. Those who opposed continentalism worked within a narrative that drew metaphysical lines of demarcation in order to clarify who Canadians were and who they were not. The creation of a collective identity, based on a negative juxtaposition of *us* and *them*, was one of the most effective ways to argue that there indeed was a unique "Canadian" way of life. Re-contextualizing this narrative through then-contemporary discourse was critical in cultivating early opposition to the FTA.

Second, and within the re-established, anti-continentalist narrative, the civil society organizations began to name threats to Canada as whole as well as specific groups of Canadians themselves, all of which *would* originate from the FTA. The threats named by the anti-free trade organizations – for example, loss of independence, loss of sovereignty, becoming Americans, catastrophic job loss, women's social status, further degradation of the environment, marginalizing of minority groups, privatization of healthcare, and the removal of unemployment insurance – were assumed *would definitely* occur if a free trade deal with the United States were to happen. These threats were presuppositions, and the predominant way anti-free trade organizations presented their arguments to the Canadian public. By assuming something *would* occur before it had the chance to do so, the authors of the arguments took for granted what they saw as "common" ground among Canadians. Moreover, the authors were so convinced Canadians would likely accept their constructed consequences of a free trade agreement they rarely felt that they had to

provide any substantive evidence to accompany their claims. Rather, the authors relied on vague language, particularly the type that had meaning within the larger anti-continentalist public narrative, to make their various cases against the FTA. This second stage sought to organize public opposition by redefining that initial binary dichotomy of *us* and *them* into one that suggested enmity and threat, effectively changing it to an *us* versus *them* dynamic.

Lastly, using the previous two steps as leverage in the final stage of the overall discursive process, the anti-free trade movement had to convince Canadians, somehow, to effectively mobilize and "actively" oppose Mulroney and the FTA in the 1988 election. They did this by creating general and particular links between participants, while reinforcing the previous models of *us* and *them* and *us* versus *them* to further establish a "collective identity" for the purposes of "collaborative engagement." By discursively producing and reproducing a formative collective identity regardless if it would temporary or lasting, action could come at the time when those who believed in the collective identity also believed that their ideas, attitudes, and opinions were validated or at least sanctioned by a larger movement. At the time, the belief that one belonged to a particular and exceptional version of Canada was therefore critical to the anti-free trade movement's ability to suggest that was (both) under attack, or at the risk of surviving if something was not done about it.

As the election neared, the various *ways* in which the "micro" discussion over the implications involved in neo-liberal economic directions for Canada soon exploded into a very public and political national "war of words." The analysis of the historical context and the anti-free trade discourse has suggested that the reason for this was due to a

discursive process whereby initial concerns – advanced early by the CLC, CUPE, and the UCC – over the degree in which neo-liberalism would pervade the newly elected Conservative's public policy were re-contextualized within a pre-existing historical anti-continentalist public narrative. Additionally, by employing and expanding on discursive tools used within that public narrative to generate fear of the *other*, read: America, to validate illusions of *self*, read: Canadian, and to construct believable threats to the *collective* by the *other*, the "micro" discussions over the pervasiveness of neo-liberalism took on a hyper-nationalistic and symbolic routine that mirrored the iconic political and electoral debates in 1891 and 1911.

This begs the question: *How much was the "anti-free trade debate" really about free trade?* Does a re-framing of an "issue" within an existing public historic narrative for the purposes of producing more affect among the populous to oppose, or perhaps support, certain policy directions, obfuscate the "issue" itself? Alternatively, does this process serve to push forward various policy agendas without having to provide much detail about the stated "issue" at hand? Is the anti-continentalist narrative exclusive to "issues" related, directly or indirectly, to closer integration with the United States? On the other hand, can its fundamental characteristics – predominantly the anxiety over foreign domination, loss of sovereignty to a more "powerful" partner, and diminished control over national resources, for example – be applied to public policy options that have nothing to do with the United States? Moreover, does the "issue" have to necessarily be an "economic" one, or, can the powerful historical narrative be used to re-frame debates over North American security, or defence policy?

Potential Areas for Future Study

Based on the analytical framework outlined in the project, there were other potentially relevant areas that could have been analyzed, in particular, an increased corpus of material could include the vantage point of the audience, the pro-free trade stance, and the uses of visual discourse. It is difficult to define audience, particularly in the context of discourse, and in terms of who was the intended, potential, or actual audience. The intended audience of the oppositions' discourse seemed to be the members of the various organizations involved and the Canadian public in general. While the audience is clearly a relevant element in a study on the opposition's discursive strategies, it was not considered critical to understanding the discursive process by which anti-free traders sought to cultivate and organize attitudes and opinions. As was suggested, this is mainly due to the assertion that the discourse presupposed its own audience in the first place by speaking – presumably – on behalf and about a broad constituency. Nonetheless, a critical engagement of how this material was *received* rather than how it was *broadcasted* would add an additional layer of understanding.

Indeed, this study does not attempt to prove that a definite relationship existed between what was being said and what Canadians thought or did. This, in itself, is another project altogether, and would include a far more quantitative historical approach. Rather, it suggests that the shaping of thoughts and opinions through specifically constructed and targeted discourse may at least indirectly influence individual actions.

Another potentially relevant element of the data collected, as well as, the discursive process itself, would be the analysis of visual discourse. The use of political cartoons was central to the opposition's attempt at cultivating and organizing Canadians' socially

shared perceptions of self and other, particularly in the exaggerated caricatures of mythological Canadian and American national figures depicted in often humorous and compromising positions. The issue with adding a visual discourse analysis section to this project is the understanding that it could comprise a study in its own merit. While it is appropriate to reference the importance cartoons played – and this study does highlight some major uses of the medium – it remains available as the centre of a different study.

The role of the pro-free trade discourse is also central. Discourse does not exist in a vacuum; rather it functions in a perpetual existence of multiple discourses, competing with each other. This period, as well as previous examples of national debates surrounding free trade, illustrates the different positions and how the proponents of the positions challenged each other in efforts to gain the public's endorsement. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's government only appeared to engage the anti-free trade discourse, and the personal attacks on himself on a political or parliamentary level. In his memoirs, recounting the years of negotiation of the FTA, rarely did he make any diret reference to the civil society opposition. And while the government, the business community, and think tanks that supported the liberalization of Canada's economic policies, notably the Fraser and C. D. Howe Institutes, would publish pro-free trade materials to garner support for the FTA, they were not – like the anti-free trade materials – geared for general public consumption.[1] It was in the few months – especially weeks – before the 1988 election where the Conservatives really began to pour their efforts in

1 See: A. Ernst, "From Liberal Continentalism to Neo-conservatism: North American Free Trade and the Politics of the CD Howe Institute," Studies in Political Economy, 39 (Autumn, 1992): 109-140

proving to Canadians *en masse* that the FTA would be beneficial to the country and that the images painted by the opposition were outlandish and false.[2]

Like the opposition, the pro-free trade government and private sector institutions had to strategically convince the public that their position was the "correct" and "most beneficial" choice for Canada and Canadians. A study of the pro-free trade camp's October 1 – November, 21, 1988 campaign would be an interesting study. In part, it could take note of the fact that the Conservatives, as well as the private sector business, were much better funded and had far better access to resources to promote the FTA. It could also compare the strategies employed by the private sector versus those utilized by civil society in the "intense" pre-election period. However, a look into how early the Conservatives and the Canadian (and perhaps, American) business community began to "sell" the FTA to Canadians.

A deeper examination and analysis of French Canadian opposition to free trade would also be a significant contribution to the discussion of the debate surrounding the FTA. While French-speaking Canadian labour unions were supportive of their English-speaking counterparts' objection to a shift towards more deregulation and higher levels of liberalization in the Canadian economy, the remainder of civil society in Quebec, particularly the business community, were less inclined to outrightly condemn the FTA and Mulroney's Conservatives. While the PCN made efforts to translate their public education materials into French, its efforts were arguably negligible. The major feature in its 1988 campaign against the FTA, *What's the Big Deal?* was only translated into French (Le libre-échanges? Parlons-en!) just under a week and a half before the election in

2 See *Part V: Campaign '88* in Brian Mulroney, Memoirs: 1939-1993, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2007)

November.[3] This tardiness illustrated, perhaps, both the social movement's limited access to resources, and/or their failed attempt at giving more primacy to the organizational and mobilization of supporters in Quebec.

Two other important areas in the free trade remain largely unexplored. Due to a limited amount of resources available, the decision was made to not include an examination of the role environmentalist groups and agricultural sector campaigning. An examination of the role the National Farmers Union (NFU) played in construction of the debate as an agricultural issue is a very important piece to the overall discussion of the FTA and should be analyzed further. In addition, the Canadian Environmental Law Agency (CELA) played a role in the discussion of the FTA as an environmental issue, particularity in context of 1988.[4] While most of the anti-free trade organizations would mention the threat to Canada's environment, particularly arguing that a closer harmonization of poorer American environmental standards would significantly disrupt Canada environmentalist progress, the subject was typically framed in an existing structure of policy sovereignty. The debate surrounding NAFTA, particularity with the rise of a global as well as Canadian environmental activism, also provided examples of the role of these organizations in framing the debate in environmental terms. Perhaps an examination of the environmental debate surrounding both the FTA and NAFTA would

3 Pro-Canada Network (Ottawa), "Memorandum to All Members of the PCN," November, 8, 1988.

4 See Canadian Environmental Law Association, "Environmental Impacts of Bill C-130: The Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement as Environmental Law." Prepared for the Legislative Committee on Bill C-130 by Stephen Shrybman, Counsel, July 19, 1988; "Selling Canada's Environment Short: The Environmental Case Against the Trade Deal." CELA, 1988; "Environmental Impacts of Bill C-130: The Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement as Environmental Law." Prepared for the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs: Free Trade Review by Michelle Swenarchuk, Counsel, February 29, 1988.

be a beneficial study to explain their role within the larger picture of the anti-integrationist debate.[5]

Opposition to closer continental economic integration with the United States will most likely remain predominant in modern Canadian politics. Our task now is to observe how historical and new members of those opposed to free trade (or larger neo-liberal economics) seek to cultivate, organize and motivate the Canadian public in opposition to these agreements and their proposed extensions or expansions.

Opposition to Canada-U.S. Integration Post-9/11: An Example

In the first decade of the 21st century, the Canada-U.S. relationship has largely been defined by the post-9/11 security agenda. In the realm of defence and of security, efforts and agreements to establish closer coordination on these matters has produced varying degrees of opposition from familiar players in the anti-free trade debate, such as the Council of Canadians. For example, in 2005, the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) Agreement between Canada and the United States sought closer coordination of Canada, the United States, and Mexico on issues related to trade as well as border security.[6] The COC would play a major role in providing a vehicle for civil society opposition to the agreement, while employing starkly similar models of discourse used in

5 For example, see Michael Dreiling, "Remapping North American environmentalism: Contending Visions and Divergent Practices in the Fight over NAFTA." Capitalism Nature Socialism 8, No. 4, (1997): 65-98.

6 The SPP no longer exists, and since August 2009 it is no longer an active initiative of any of the original partners. No one is clear what exactly happened to the SPP. Some officials at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade have suggested it was a Bush Administration policy direction and initiation that was eclipsed by the Obama Administration. Needless to say, the announcement in February, 2011, by President Barak Obama and Prime Minister Stephen Harper that the two countries would be pursuing talks on a North American Perimeter Security Strategy, is for some – like the COC – a re-branding of the SPP. This, therefore, places the new strategy into the category of agreements that seek to greater integrate Canada into the United States' model of economic and security politics. (See: The Council of Canadians, "The Canada-U.S. Beyond the Border Action Plan," Websource: http://www.canadians.org/trade/issues/security/index.html Accessed: January 14, 2012).

the 1980s.[7] Their campaign, "Integrate This!" a civic challenge to the SPP, provided sectoral-related information to illustrate the possible impacts the agreement would have on both Canada and Mexico, including particularly familiar positions on Canadian independence in context of closer integration with the U.S.:

> In a post-9/11 world where, for the Bush administration, "security trumps trade," the Canadian and Mexican governments have agreed to fully integrate their security apparatuses with the U.S. and fully participate in its "war on terror" in return for vague assurances of continued market access for their largest corporations. But the SPP goes much further than this. Plans for regulatory convergence, energy sector integration and a potential common external tariff will make independent Canadian policies on agriculture, the environment and energy impossible.[8]

A reading of their primary public education piece, *Behind Closed Doors: What They're Not Telling us about the Security And Prosperity Partnership*, reveals a similar message to the organization's overall distrust of more neo-liberal government policies, especially in connection with continental integration, as well as an overarching fear of losses of sovereignty and control over resources:

> It's time to put an end to the SPP! The Council of Canadians demands that Canada cease all talks leading toward deeper integration between Canada and the United States. At the very least, we must bring the SPP to the House of Commons for a full debate. We must also disband the North American Competitiveness Council and consult with Canadians in a meaningful and participatory way on Canada-U.S. relations. The majority of Canadians would prefer a "Sovereignty and Justice Partnership" with the United States, which protects Canada's energy and water, preserves an independent foreign policy, and addresses real security concerns instead of the fantasies of the Bush administration.[9]

A discourse analysis of the various campaign materials in these newer cases would prove interesting on this topic, particularly in context of the 2011 North American Perimeter

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7 Council of Canadians (Ottawa), Integrate This! Challenge to the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America. 2007. Websource: http://www.canadians.org/integratethis/index.html Accessed: January 13, 2012

8 Council of Canadians (Ottawa), *Behind Closed Doors: What They're Not Telling us about the Security And Prosperity Partnership*, August, 2007.

9 Ibid

Security strategy, which some argue, "trade[s] away your privacy and civil liberties for 'access' to the U.S. market."[10]

A Modern Anti-Free Trade Movement?

The Council of Canadians, CUPE, and the CLC (among others), continue to assert an anti-free trade stance – a position they see as anti-corporate and pro-democratic – and are still producing materials that oppose various attempts by current governments to negotiate free trade agreements with other countries. Similar arguments are presented, each of which reinforce the idea that discourse can be an accessible resource even if it has already been re-framed to apply to "similar" contexts.

One very prominent example of a more current campaign against a proposed free trade deal is the Trade Justice Network's (TJN) campaign against the Canada – European Union Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA).[11] The most remarkable thing about this opposition is not necessarily the obvious similarities in both the materials and the discursive content used to cultivate and organize public opposition to the FTA. Rather, it is the fact that these similar arguments are now being applied to a "non-American" subject. How do the arguments used against closer economic integration with

10 See Council of Canadians (Ottawa), *North American Perimeter Security: This time Harper will trade away your privacy and civil liberties for "access" to the U.S. market*. Accessed online: http://canadians.org/publications/CP/2011/summer/perimeter-security.pdf January 13, 2012.

11 The TJN is invariably an extension of the PCN and the ACN. It's members include: Alternatives, ATTAC-Québec, Canadian Auto Workers Union, Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, Canadian Conference of the Arts, Canadian Labour Congress, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario, Canadian Youth Climate Coalition, Common Frontiers, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, Council of Canadians, Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, Indigenous Environmental Network, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, Manitoba Federation of Labour, National Farmers Union, National Union of Public and General Employees, Northern Territories Federation of Labour, Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, Polaris Institute, Public Service Alliance of Canada, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, Rideau Institute, Science for Peace, Sierra Club Canada, and United Steelworkers.

the United States, translate into effective opposition building against that with the European Union?

Like the PCN in 1988, the TJN created a comic book to explain the threats and dangers associated with CETA. Entitled, *Top Ten Reasons Why CETA is Bad for Canada*, this feature of public education material explains through caricature and speech bubble, what the Harper government seeks to "do to Canada," and moreover, how CETA threatens to "completely change the country."[12] This comic book is a version of the 1988 model, whereby two "ordinary" Canadians engage in a discussion about the economic policies of the Stephen Harper government, with a focus on the proposed CETA:

> Once again, our federal and provincial government and business leaders are negotiating a "free trade" deal behind the backs of Canadians. This time, it's called the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, or CETA for short. It will change the face of Canada as we know it, and Harper wants to sign it in a hurry — before anyone has a chance to debate it! [emphasis added].[13]

This introductory paragraph sets the tone for the rest of the four page online comic book. It reminds us of similar discursive tactics used in previous campaigns against free trade with the U.S., primarily that CETA is a "threat" to: public services, local job creation, water, public health care, the environment, agriculture, cultural and communications sovereignty, rights of Indigenous people, labour standards and rights of workers, and finally, democratic rights.[14] In other words, according to the TJN, the CETA basically threatens almost every aspect of Canadian life. Thus, Canadians "must act now to stop [CETA] — before it's too late!"[15] A full exploration and examination of this

12 Trade Justice Network, *Top Ten Reasons CETA is Bad for Canada*, 2010. Accessed online: http://fileserver.cfsadmin.org/file/tradejustice/107062cf31075064c01a3e6cd712eb3d3f56f5a5.pdf January 13, 2012.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Trade Justice Network, *Top Ten Reasons CETA is Bad for Canada*, (Ottawa, 2010).

nuanced version of inter-organizational collaboration is certainly warranted, not only because of the remarkably similar discursive strategies and tools to convince Canadians to oppose this deal, but because those arguments are now not in regards to the United States.

Is there something "Canadian" to this story? Do we apply the historic anti-continentalist model that suggested American annexation, domination, and influence to new "enemies" in current contexts, be they American or not? Can, or will, sections of the Canadian population continue to frame their opposition to specific public policy directions within that pre-existing historical anti-continentalist narrative?

As previously mentioned, this paper did not attempt to make a finite connection between the discourse used in the anti-free trade campaign and the ways the Canadian public acted or made decisions in the late 1980s. The value in revealing the continued and contemporary use of the anti-continentalist narrative to oppose certain public policy directions is primarily to illustrate how smaller or sectoral concerns can be discursively conflated, universalized, and sensationalized in order to reach a broader constituency. In other words, opposition does not have to compromise the specificity of its disagreements with current government policy, per say, if it can successfully re-frame the "issue" into a larger and more affective framework or narrative. For example, in the CETA comic book, the authors argue that "foreign control of our broadcasting will mean less Canadian content…and that threatens our cultural identity…[O]ur governments could lose the ability to protect and promote Canadian arts and culture! It could also affect our sovereignty."[16] Instead of talking *directly* about the specifics of what more foreign

16 Ibid.

control – if it was actually going to happen, or if it was assumed to happen – would look like for Canadian broadcasting, the discourse re-frames the "concern" into a more "macro" narrative that focuses on the "threat of loss" of familiar Canadian components such as identity, culture, and sovereignty. Arguably, those employing this discourse still observe the anti-continentals narrative as an effective way in informing the Canadian public and the attempt to institute opposition forces amongst them, despite its "shortcomings" in the 1980s.

Looking specifically at current anti-free trade or various other campaigns from organizations like the COC, the TJN, the CLC, the UCC, and CUPE, scholars should look carefully at the discourse used to cultivate, organize, and mobilize public opinion and assess how much their claims of "threats of loss" actually had anything to do with their arguments. Personal interviews, surveys, and/or focus groups, may prove helpful in gauging reactions to the discourse and for suggesting the ways in which this type of historic discourse may influence the intersubjective decision making process of Canadians. Fortunate for the future research, all of the organizations keep their public education material from their current campaigns on their websites. Future scholars should examine these contemporary "examples" of how Canadian civil society organizations continue to reframe opposition to more neo-liberal policy directions of the current Harper government, for example, in Canada, within the historic anti-continentalist narrative for the purposes of making more local "issues" into ones that effect the future, sovereignty, culture, and identity of every single Canadian.

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