

Investigating Media Coverage of the Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick Electoral  
Reform Initiatives

by

Janice Dowson  
B.A., Dalhousie University, 2007

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the department of Political Science

© Janice Dowson, 2011  
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy  
or other means, without the permission of the author.

## **Supervisory Committee**

Investigating Media Coverage of the Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick Electoral  
Reform Initiatives

by

Janice Dowson  
B.A., Dalhousie University, 2007

### **Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Dennis Pilon, (Department of Political Science)  
**Supervisor**

Dr. James Lawson, (Department of Political Science)  
**Departmental Member**

## **Abstract**

### **Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Dennis Pilon, (Department of Political Science)  
Supervisor

Dr. James Lawson, (Department of Political Science)  
Departmental Member

In 2005 Prince Edward Island's plebiscite on replacing the single member plurality (SMP) voting system with a mixed member proportional (MMP) voting system was defeated. In New Brunswick a similar referendum, recommended by the Commission on Legislative Democracy in 2004, was never held. This thesis investigates media coverage of these recent electoral reform initiatives in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. Specifically, it examines local newspaper coverage of each province's electoral reform initiatives and analyses the findings to determine if the newspapers demonstrated any bias for or against the implementation of a new voting system. It concludes that in each province the local newspaper media demonstrated a pro-electoral reform position, though there was considerable variation between the newspapers with respect to the breadth of coverage, the amount of bias and how that bias was articulated to readers.

## Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
List of Tables .....	vi
List of Figures .....	vii
Acknowledgments.....	viii
Chapter One - Media Portrayal of Electoral Reform Initiatives.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Why Electoral Reform – Definitions and Arguments.....	6
Institutional Failures of Plurality .....	7
Representative Failures of Plurality.....	8
Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick Case Study Comparisons .....	10
Electoral reform: Past and Present.....	11
Historical Work on Electoral Reform.....	14
Re-invigorating Democracy – Citizen’s Voice in the Electoral Reform Process.....	16
Three Ideal Functions of the News Media.....	20
Conclusion .....	31
Chapter Two - Electoral Reform and Public Education in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick .....	33
Most Recent Wave of Electoral Reform Initiatives.....	34
Prince Edward Island .....	36
New Brunswick.....	44
Electoral Reform and the Provinces .....	48
Conclusion .....	53
Chapter Three - Media Content: Comparative Local Newspaper Coverage in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.....	54
Methodology.....	55
Classification of Articles.....	59
The Findings .....	62
Conclusion .....	75
Chapter Four – Media Analysis .....	76
Three Ideal Functions of Media.....	77
Provide a Forum for Discussion of Diverse, Often Conflicting Ideas.....	78
Give Voice to Public Opinion.....	88
Surveillance and Watchdog Functions.....	94
Comparative Analysis of the Five Newspapers .....	98
Comparison to Ontario Newspapers and the 2007 Ontario Referendum .....	104
Conclusion .....	105

Conclusion .....	107
Summary .....	108
Further Insight and Further Questions .....	111
Final Thoughts .....	116
Bibliography .....	118
Appendix – List of Articles.....	127

## List of Tables

Table 1 – Prince Edward Island Electoral Results 1966 – 2007.....	38
Table 2 – New Brunswick Election Results 1970-2010 .....	46

## List of Figures

Figure 1 - <i>Times &amp; Transcript</i> : Article by Type.....	62
Figure 2 - <i>Telegraph-Journal</i> : Article by Type .....	62
Figure 3 - <i>The Daily Gleaner</i> : Article By Type.....	62
Figure 4 - <i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i> : Article by Type.....	63
Figure 5 - <i>The Guardian</i> : Article by Type.....	63
Figure 6 - Reporting position by newspaper.....	64
Figure 7 – Columnist position by newspaper .....	65
Figure 8 – Editorial position by newspaper .....	66
Figure 9 – Letters to the editor position by newspaper.....	68
Figure 10 – <i>The Guardian</i> Op/Ed Position.....	69
Figure 11 – <i>The Guardian</i> coverage before and after May 27, 2005 .....	70
Figure 12 – Overall position of newspapers .....	71
Figure 13 – Overall position of New Brunswick newspapers .....	71
Figure 14 – Position of <i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i> .....	72
Figure 15 – Position of <i>The Daily Gleaner</i> .....	72
Figure 16 – Position of <i>Telegraph-Journal</i> .....	72
Figure 17 – Position of <i>Times &amp; Transcript</i> .....	73
Figure 18 – Position of <i>The Guardian</i> .....	73

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Dennis Pilon, for his wisdom, insight, encouragement and patience throughout the development and execution phase of this project. His guidance and enthusiasm for the topic helped turn a vague idea in my head into what is presented in these pages. I would also like to thank, Dr. Jamie Lawson, for his insightful comments, as well as, Kimberly Anderson and Diane Price for helping me with a variety of needs over the past two years.

Thank you to my peers in the M.A. program for inspiring me in many ways and honouring me with your friendship. A special thanks to Thomas Cheney for saving me from countless hours in the library basement scrolling through microfiche. Finally, I must thank my parents for their limitless support and encouragement throughout my entire education.

# Chapter One - Media Portrayal of Electoral Reform Initiatives

## Introduction

In Canada the single member plurality (SMP) system is currently used to elect members at the federal level and in all the provincial and territorial legislative bodies, and has been routinely scrutinised and manipulatively reformed by political elites attempting to maintain control. More recently, concerns about decreasing voter turnout and increased voter apathy triggered a re-examination of the role SMP plays in voter discontent. Reform initiatives are increasingly involving a role for citizen participation, though the extent of participation varies between the provinces. Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick each respectively initiated electoral reform debates and undertook a process of self-reflection with respect to the democratic ideals they desire. In order to assess their respective electoral systems, each province established an expert commission designed to evaluate the viability of introducing some measure of proportional representation (PR) to the province. Both expert commissions produced reports recommending electoral reform measures commence forthwith, beginning with vast public education and consultation campaigns and culminating in binding referendums. Political elites initially seemed willing to embrace changes aimed at establishing more meaningful democracy, but once reform recommendations were made their attitudes shifted towards hostility and reservation.

By 2006 both provinces had opted to retain the status quo SMP electoral system by ignoring electoral reform recommendations. Prince Edward Island held a non-binding plebiscite in 2005, which was soundly defeated with 64% rejecting the proposed

reforms.<sup>1</sup> In New Brunswick, the 2006 provincial election removed Bernard Lord from the government before he firmly set a date for a referendum, leaving the electoral reform proposals unrealised. Though there is much speculation as to why each province's electoral reform initiatives failed there has, thus far, been little scrutiny of each of these processes. How are we to understand these results and dysfunctional processes? Was public disinterest, confusion and fear exploited and simultaneously used to claim defeat as the will of the people? Given that public involvement, by means of referendums, was promoted in both Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, was the public provided with sufficient information, and what, if any, biases for or against reform were evident in information supplied? In this thesis, I will explore these questions by investigating the characterisation of electoral reform initiatives in the news media, which is increasingly understood as the key political forum for public discussion and debate. Specifically, this thesis will examine to what degree local newspaper media provided readers electoral reform information in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick in an attempt to gain insight into the media's ability and willingness to educate and engage citizens in electoral reform procedures. Furthermore, I will examine if the character of debate can provide any insight into why these two electoral reform initiatives, undertaken for similar reason and forwarding similar solutions led to different results.

This thesis will take up this examination by seeking to answer three fundamental questions:

---

<sup>1</sup> Elections Prince Edward Island. "Plebiscite on Mixed Member Proportional Representation System – Official Results." Elections Prince Edward Island. <http://www.electionspei.ca/plebiscites/pr/results/detailed/index.php> (accessed March 2, 2011).

1. What was the content of local newspaper media with respect to the Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick electoral reform initiatives?
2. To what degree did the local newspapers serve the three functions of democracy as outlined in this thesis?
3. Can this content provide insight into why Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick political elites reacted differently with respect to electoral reform recommendations, given that electoral reform studies were undertaken for similar reasons, in similar style and produced similar recommendations?

These questions situate my research in the debates surrounding the institutional and political purposes of electoral reform, the role of the citizen more broadly in the adoption of electoral reform procedures, and how the privately owned and operated media is often tasked with providing information to the public while maintaining an open forum for public deliberation on political issues. In order to answer these three questions it is imperative to place my analysis in the context of contemporary academic debates, both with respect to electoral reform and the media's role in the democratic process.

At the theoretical level this thesis will challenge the conventional literature surrounding the nature of electoral system reform as based on citizen engagement, citizen preference, and effective performance. Instead, this thesis will demonstrate using historical evidence that when electoral reform historically occurred, it was imposed by political elites focused on maintaining power and control. I will juxtapose the historical elite driven reform initiatives against the current language of re-invigorating democracy and increased role for citizens that pervade the most recent electoral reform initiatives. Furthermore, I will examine debates in academic literature surrounding the news media's

role in political discourse focusing on three ideal functions and expectations. Specifically, I will examine critical media studies' challenges of the conventional understanding of the news media's intentions in political discourse. These two theoretical foci will together form the basis for the empirical analysis I will provide of local newspaper coverage in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

At the empirical level, this thesis will offer a comparative analysis of local newspaper coverage of electoral reform initiatives in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. Studies of these electoral reform initiatives, thus far, do little more than provide a process narrative of the when and how, with little emphasis on the why. Though in both provinces electoral reform procedures were primarily elite driven processes, they did require citizen support of the recommendations through province-wide referendums, though in New Brunswick this remains unrealised. It is, therefore, important to assess how the information was delivered to the citizenry in order to promote informed political participation. My analysis will offer a comparative study of the character of coverage within the local newspapers. Because news media is increasingly the main space for public deliberation on political issues, my analysis is designed to discover whether the news media provided a biased interpretation of the electoral reform initiatives or if it did serve as an educating and engaging source of information for citizens.

Furthermore, I will be assessing local newspaper media specifically because, though television is the main source of information for citizens, newspapers still provide a great deal of political information for citizens. Newspapers are able to examine the issues in more depth whereas television news reports are shorter and are more focused on

what is deemed ‘infotainment.’<sup>2</sup> Newspapers arguably maintain sections where opinion is acceptable, namely the editorial pages, and sections where opinion should not be relevant, namely the news pages. By studying newspaper content, this thesis will be able to juxtapose the different sections to determine the role bias played in allowing for the ‘ideal’ deliberative space.

In order to proceed, the remainder of this chapter will examine the theoretical debates surrounding both electoral reform and the media’s role in democracy. This will bring together the various facets of this thesis. First, it will outline the pertinent language of electoral reform and, more importantly, it will highlight how historically electoral reform was political motivated rather than democratically or value oriented. It will address differences between politically motivated and elite imposed electoral reforms in the past and the seeming adherence to a democratic prerogative of the current, but failing, electoral reform initiatives. It will then outline academic debates pertaining to media’s role in the democratic process, especially with respect to media’s public responsibility and the media’s ability to serve as a public deliberative space and promote participatory democratic citizenship. From these insights, I will outline concretely how the media analysis of the local newspapers will occur in order to assess what role, if any, it might have played in each province.

Following from this chapter, chapter two will outline the most recent electoral reform initiatives in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick and situate their respective reform procedures within the greater contemporary Canadian context. Furthermore, it will analyse public involvement and education in the varied processes.

---

<sup>2</sup> David Taras, *Newsmakers: The Media’s Influence on Canadian Politics* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1990), 100-102.

Chapter three provides a comparative outline of local newspaper electoral reform coverage in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick and uses eight criteria to establish the character of public debate and the deliberative capacity of these media outlets.

Chapter four will use the results presented in chapter three to analyse how well each of the newspapers studied served the three ideal functions of the news media as established in chapter one.

### **Why Electoral Reform – Definitions and Arguments**

Electoral reform is increasingly being considered an answer for Canadian provinces seeking democratic reform, however, these efforts have not yet led to any definitive reforms. At the federal level, the Law Commission of Canada published a study in 2004, but little came of the results.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, at the provincial level, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island each investigated various electoral systems that would add proportionately to seat allocation in the respective provincial legislatures. In British Columbia, Ontario and Prince Edward Island electoral reform proposals were put to referendums seeking citizen approval for changes to the current SMP systems, but none of the referendums were able to secure the support needed for passage. In Quebec and New Brunswick, the government made vague commitments to holding a referendum in the future, but in each case the province's electoral reform proposals and initiatives were abandoned resulting in adherence to the status quo.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Canada, Law Commission of Canada, *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada* (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services, 2004), 7, <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/J31-61-2004E.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Louis Massicotte, "Electoral Reform in Canada," in *To Keep or To Change First Past the Post? The Politics of Electoral Reform*, ed. André Blais (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 133.

There is much debate between academics, politicians, interested parties and the public at large about the current SMP electoral system and the merits of reform options. For the sake of this thesis, arguments for and against reform will be broken into two categories: institutional and representative concerns. Institutional concerns relate to the proper working of the Westminster parliamentary model, while representative concerns are about representing voter desires and providing representation of social diversity. These two concerns are clearly present in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick and I will outline the similarities and difference in the two cases throughout. I will then examine current academic debates about the motivations behind electoral reform initiatives. Furthermore, outlining these arguments will highlight how and why the news media is now a central player in electoral reform initiatives.

### **Institutional Failures of Plurality**

The electoral system is an important institution in Canadian democracy. The electoral system transforms votes into seats and in doing so it plays a key role in determining the potential, and potential limits, of democracy as understood by Canadians. Institutionally, the Canadian governing model, inherited from Britain and known as Westminster parliamentary democracy, is dependent on responsible government. Responsible government is two-fold and is dependent on separation between the government and the House whereby, as Jennifer Smith describes, “the House depends on the confidence convention to exact accountability of the government to itself but it does not thereby participate in the government. A second feature is the constitutionality of the opposition, that is, the opponents of the government in the House.”<sup>5</sup> Extracting

---

<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Smith, “Parliamentary Democracy versus Faux Populist Democracy,” in *Parliamentary Democracy in Crisis*, eds. Peter H. Russell and Lorne Soissin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 176.

accountability occurs by the questioning of government policy and proposals in question period, and the government must maintain the confidence of the House on key confidence motions. If this confidence is lost, government must dissolve and the current members form either another government or an election is called. The second feature, as outlined by Smith, is the constitutional role of the opposition.<sup>6</sup> The opposition's role is to question and interrogate government policy and ensure that the leader is not able to rule in autocratic fashion. A strong and able opposition is the essence of parliamentary democracy and SMP is increasingly enfeebling the opposition in several Canadian provinces.

### **Representative Failures of Plurality**

Representative democracy allows the citizens to vote for representatives that will serve the interests of the electors in the legislative body. However, there is contention surrounding how well the plurality voting system is able to serve its representative function. Dennis Pilon outlines how plurality does not represent all individual voters and also fails in providing representation for Canada's socially diverse population.<sup>7</sup> The current SMP system provides the electorate with representatives that do not accurately reflect the voters' desires and it produces legislatures that are not truly reflective of society. With respect to representing individual voters, because with SMP only votes for the winning candidate count toward electing a representative, any vote for a losing candidate can be considered "wasted" as it did not count toward electing a

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Dennis Pilon, *The Politics of Voting* (Toronto: Emond Montgomery Publications, 2007), 33.

representative.<sup>8</sup> Proportional systems help alleviate the wasted vote by ensuring that many more votes go toward electing a representative by some means.<sup>9</sup> This allows electors to gain access to the representation they desire, and creates a legislative assembly more representative of all citizens.

In addition to not representing individual voters, SMP provides little incentive for parties to respond to societal demands for increased representation of Canada's social diversity.<sup>10</sup> With respect to the underrepresentation of women, Pilon states:

Despite public visibility and a strong presence in civil society, women's groups found it difficult to influence the parties from within and without. Typically, parties would claim either that the all-or-nothing logic of plurality prevented them from running more women (as it might make them uncompetitive) or that they were powerless to control the nomination processes for candidates (as the processes were a matter of local constituency association).<sup>11</sup>

In this way SMP acts as a barrier to women winning seats in the legislatures.

Proportional systems are better able to accommodate diversity, when societal pressure for the accommodation exists.<sup>12</sup> Pippa Norris outlines:

First, under proportional systems, each party presents the public with their collective list of candidates for each multimember district. As such, parties have an electoral incentive to maximise their collective appeal in such lists by including candidates representing all the major social cleavages in the electorate, for example, by including both middle-class professionals and blue-collar workers, farmers and urban shopkeepers, Catholics and Protestants, as well as women and men.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>13</sup> Pippa Norris, *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 188.

PR provides increased incentive for parties to run a more diverse slate of candidates, and makes the parties more accountable for the candidates they run.

### **Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick Case Study Comparisons**

As provinces both Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick are constitutionally recognised levels of government and as such are free to act autonomously in provincial areas of jurisdiction including making changes to the electoral system and process. Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick were relatively late to adopt SMP as the voting system; instead using dual-member districts in Prince Edward Island until 1996 and in New Brunswick until 1974.<sup>14</sup> In each province the shift to single member constituencies was met with considerable contention surrounding the electoral reform and constituency redistribution procedures.<sup>15</sup>

Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick electoral reform initiatives were similarly designed and undertaken due to similar systemic failures of SMP. Institutionally, both legislative assemblies are subject to drastically inflated majorities, whereby the inability of SMP to ensure a strong opposition party able to hold the government to account is clearly demonstrated. In each province erosion of the official opposition was judged to be threatening the legitimacy of government. Because of the two-party dominant systems, the party securing a majority of the seats does generally receive a majority of votes. This majority of votes are then translated through SMP into a

---

<sup>14</sup> John Andrew Cousins, "Prince Edward Island's Cautious Path toward Electoral Reform," in *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, ed. Henry Milner (Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004), 282-283; Gail Campbell, "Defining and Redefining Democracy: The History of Electoral Reform in New Brunswick," in *Democratic Reform in New Brunswick*, ed. William Cross (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2007), 291.

<sup>15</sup> Prince Edward Island, Commission on Electoral Reform, *2003 Prince Edward Island Electoral Reform Commission Report* (Charlottetown, P.E.I: Elections Prince Edward Island, 2003), 25, Commissioner: The Honourable Norman H. Carruthers, [http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/er\\_premier2003.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/er_premier2003.pdf); Campbell, "Defining and Redefining Democracy," 289-296.

super-majority of seats limiting seats available for opposition members and threatening the legitimacy of the institution. At the extreme, each province has had a sweep of the legislature, representing the two examples of this happening in Canada. The first occurred in Prince Edward Island in 1935, with the Liberal party winning all the seats, despite the Progressive Conservatives gaining 42% of the popular vote.<sup>16</sup> The second occurred more recently in New Brunswick in 1987, with the Liberals again securing all of the seats with 60% of the popular vote.<sup>17</sup> Overall, the institutional similarities make the cases suitable for meaningful comparison.

Along with the institutional similarities, SMP also presents similar representative failures in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. The respective provincial party systems are similar. Each is a two-party dominant model, with the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives the only parties ever to hold government, and a relatively limited role for third or ‘minor’ parties. This adherence to a two-party model is exacerbated by SMP. Also, each of the Commissions raised concerns over the underrepresentation of women and visible minorities in the legislative assemblies, and pointed to how adopting an MMP model would promote more diversity.<sup>18</sup>

### **Electoral reform: Past and Present**

Current arguments about electoral reform are primarily focused on whether or not to adopt reforms, what kind of reforms to adopt, and what factors drive, or should drive, the electoral reform process. Primarily the debate is between those who argue that

---

<sup>16</sup> Cousins, “Prince Edward Island’s Cautious Path,” 283.

<sup>17</sup> New Brunswick, Commission on Legislative Democracy, *Final Report and Recommendations* (Fredericton, NB: Government of New Brunswick, 2004), 33. <http://www.gnb.ca/elections/pdf/cld/CLDFinalReport-e.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 11; Prince Edward Island, *Commission on Electoral Reform Final Report*, 31.

electoral reform is primarily an argument about democratic values and others who argue that electoral reform initiatives are about self-interested political elites maintaining political power. The debate surrounding the adoption of electoral reform is specifically tied to the contemporary role for the citizen in the electoral reform process, and relates directly to the education process by which citizens become enabled to fully participate.

Arguments for and against reforms are situated in debates about the viability of SMP and proportional systems to serve parliamentary democracy models. Beginning with Alan Cairns' influential arguments that the SMP electoral system exacerbates sectional cleavages and limits the ability of political parties to act as a nationally integrative force, debates surrounding electoral reform were characterised by issues of representative functionality. Cairns states, "Whatever its other merits, the single-member constituency system lacks the singular capacity of proportional representation to encourage all parties to search for votes in all sections of the country."<sup>19</sup> This representation argument is furthered by those citing hyper-regionalisation of the party system during the latter half of the twentieth century<sup>20</sup> and the inappropriate application of SMP to a federal system.<sup>21</sup>

André Blais argues that all arguments surrounding selecting an electoral system are based on both empirical evidence and a value judgement.<sup>22</sup> This argument is

---

<sup>19</sup> Alan Cairns, "The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada: 1921-1965," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 1 (1968): 80.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Milner, "Political Drop-Outs and Electoral System Reform," in *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, ed. Henry Milner (Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004), 21.

<sup>21</sup> Lawrence Leduc, "The Failure of Electoral Reform in Canada," *Political Science* 61, no.2 (2009): 21.

<sup>22</sup> André Blais, "The Debate over Electoral Systems," *International Political Science Review* 12, no. 3 (1991): 239.

reiterated by John Courtney's arguments that all electoral systems value certain factors over others.<sup>23</sup> Champions of and critics against electoral reform assess the current electoral system using different criteria to evaluate success. Those supporting a change from SMP to a proportional model highlight how PR could re-invigorate democracy, provide a greater role for the citizen in the democratic process, and allow for more meaningful representation.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, supporters of SMP argue that PR will hinder the ability of government to function. For example, PR will lead to endless elections because minority governments will be the norm. It will further fragment the party system leading to extremist parties gaining access to legislatures. Lastly, there will be no way for citizens to hold politicians to account because the representative-constituency link will be gone.<sup>25</sup> These two sides present very different views of PR and highlight different values and functions they each feel need to be upheld in the electoral system.

In addition to arguments for and against reform more generally, there are debates questioning if electoral reform is even possible. Courtney argues that there are too many obstacles in Canada to enacting electoral reform, specifically stating, "Leading politicians on the government benches do not, so far at least, favour change, and the electorate has,

---

<sup>23</sup> John Courtney, "Reminders and Expectations about Electoral Reform," in *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, ed. Henry Milner (Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004), 114.

<sup>24</sup> Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais, "Introduction: The New Landscape of Canadian Democracy," in *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, ed. Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005), 10-11; Louis Massicotte, "Changing the Canadian Electoral System," in *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, ed. Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005), 66-71; R. Kenneth Carty, "Canadians and Electoral Reform: An Impulse to Doing Democracy Differently," *Representation* 40 no.3 (2004); Pilon, *Politics of Voting*; Milner, "Political Drop-Outs," 24-33.

<sup>25</sup> Richard S. Katz, "Problems with Electoral Reform: Why the Decision to Change Electoral Systems is Not Simple," in *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, ed. Henry Milner (Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004); Tom Flanagan, "The Alternative Vote," in *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, ed. Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005), 102-106; Courtney, "Reminders and Expectations," 104-113.

for the most part, shown little interest in the issue.”<sup>26</sup> Because the political elites benefit from the current SMP system there is little incentive for them to adopt reforms.<sup>27</sup> Current electoral reform processes differ from historical processes which demonstrate that electoral reform has been used to manipulate power relationships and allow political elites to maintain power and limit the power of opponents.

### **Historical Work on Electoral Reform**

Canadian provinces and municipalities have used proportional or majoritarian systems in the past. The issue of electoral reform has been an ongoing debate throughout Canada’s history, and though currently the language is concerned with democracy and re-invigorating the citizens’ role, historical evidence demonstrates, past electoral reforms were all about maintaining the power of the elites, while limiting the power of their opponents.

In the wake of the Winnipeg General Strike Manitoba switched to a form of PR within Winnipeg, using what would today be characterised as single-transferable vote (STV), while the rural constituency continued using SMP. By 1927 all constituencies were selected using a proportional system with 10 candidates selected in a multimember district within Winnipeg and the remaining constituencies electing representatives using single member districts but with a transferable vote in an instant run-off format known as alternative vote (AV).<sup>28</sup> These reforms were to give a voice to the now mobilised working class, while ensuring that the plurality system would not allow every seat to won

---

<sup>26</sup> John Courtney, “Is Talk of Electoral Reform Just Whistling in the Wind?” in *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, ed. Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005), 156.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>28</sup> Massicotte, “Electoral Reform in Canada,” 113.

by a “socialist” reformer. Moreover the separation between the city and rural districts led to the drastic underrepresentation of Winnipeg in the legislature. PR in Manitoba was adopted in order to limit the voice of those opposing the traditional power elites. By formatting the electoral system in the manner they did, the traditional power elites were able to maintain their stranglehold on power, while appearing to placate the opposition.<sup>29</sup>

In Alberta, STV was used in Calgary and Edmonton, while an alternative vote majoritarian system was used in the rural districts. This electoral system makeup was used to overrepresentation of farmers while limiting the representation of urban areas. Pilon states, “It also conveniently had the effect of maintaining the maximum divisions between those opposed to farmer politics, a fact not lost on their adversaries.”<sup>30</sup> Alberta elites used electoral reform to ensure power was maintained in the hands of the farmers showing little concern for equal representation.

In British Columbia an AV system was used in the 1952 and 1953 elections. Changes were made to the election act under the assumption that people whose first preference was for the Liberals or Conservatives would give their second preference to the other party, in order to avoid the socialist CCF. Thus, AV was put in place primarily to reduce the likelihood of the CCF gaining a majority of seats.<sup>31</sup>

Historically, in Canada, electoral reform was not about reflecting the desires of the people, but has been about self-interested politicians attempting to maintain political control. However, more recently there is a greater acceptance that electoral reform is

---

<sup>29</sup> Dennis Pilon, “Explaining Voting System Reform in Canada 1874 to 1960,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2006): 145.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>31</sup> H.F. Angus, “Note on the British Columbia Election in June 1952,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 5, no.4 (1952): 586.

needed to re-energize Canadian democracy and that this necessitates a greater role for the citizen, as will be demonstrated by highlighting further contemporary arguments on the nature of electoral reform in Canada.

## **Re-energizing Democracy – Citizen’s Voice in the Electoral Reform**

### **Process**

Evidence of the historical manipulation of electoral systems by traditional elites for the sake of maintaining power demonstrates a need for the electorate have a voice in the proposed changes. The current debate on electoral reforms is occurring within a language of renewed democracy.<sup>32</sup> Matthew Mendelsohn and Andrew Parkin argue that any initiation of electoral reform at the federal level must involve a citizens’ forum to promote greater participatory democracy.<sup>33</sup> This forum would help to educate citizens on reform proposals and enhance the credibility of reform options.<sup>34</sup> There is increased attention to the role of citizen’s in the process. In British Columbia and Ontario, Citizens’ Assemblies were used to put the decision in the hands of citizens. Giving the decision to citizens represents an attempt to promote increased political participation and greater legitimacy for any electoral reform recommendations.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Howe, Johnston and Blais, “The New Landscape of Canadian Democracy,” 7.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew Mendelsohn and Andrew Parkin, “Getting From Here to There: A Process for Electoral Reform in Canada,” in *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, ed. Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005), 143.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>35</sup> R. Kenneth Carty, André Blais, and Patrick Fournier, “When Citizens Choose Reform: The British Columbia Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform,” in *To Keep or To Change First Past The Post? The Politics of Electoral Reform*, ed. André Blais (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008), 143-144.

Historically, debates about electoral reform took place in legislatures and the media without engaging with an uninformed public.<sup>36</sup> Currently, however, debates about electoral reform are being removed from the legislative bodies and are taking place either through independent commissions or in a deliberative democratic process. The use of deliberative and direct democratic practices is being heralded as a major breakthrough and the first step in fixing Canadian democracy.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, there has been an increased interest in making sure that the electorate is given the ultimate authority in making the final decision through a referendum process. Though the referendum processes thus far have not been without political interference and questionable rule setting by the political elites, this increased role for the electorate complicates this idea of purely value judgement versus purely self-interested politicians.<sup>38</sup>

Critics of this form of direct democracy call attention to the limitations of referendum processes, political manipulation of the referendum process and difficulties associated with engaging the public. For critics, this almost overzealous adherence to new forms of deliberative and populist democracy has led to the acceptance that only when passed by referendum will electoral reform occur.<sup>39</sup> They argue that though it seems political elites are undertaking reforms in order to re-invigorate democracy, the reality is that the infusion of deliberative and direct democratic practice into the current

---

<sup>36</sup> Massicotte, "Electoral Reform in Canada," 124.

<sup>37</sup> Norman Ruff, "Electoral Reform and Deliberative Democracy," in *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral System Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, ed. Henry Milner (Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004), 235; Howe, Johnston and Blais, "The New Landscape of Canadian Democracy," 7; Carty, "Canadians and Electoral Reform."

<sup>38</sup> For example: Requiring that the referendums meet a super-majority 60% threshold for passage in British Columbia, Ontario and Prince Edward Island.

<sup>39</sup> Leduc, "Failure of Electoral Reform," 40; Carty, "Canadians and Electoral Reform," 179.

representative democratic system does not work. It is being used by political elites to manipulate the electorate into thinking action is occurring while inaction remains supreme. Louis Massicotte argues when politicians decide to fully take up an issue they act, and the setting up of committees and deep public consultation processes are usually ways for political elites to avoid action. Time elapses and anomalous results are forgotten while the political elites are able to put forth an image of a government contemplating the values of average citizens.<sup>40</sup> The use of a referendum to give all citizens a voice in electoral reform is also contentious. R. Kenneth Carty states, “Referendums are quickly becoming the gold standard for major legitimate institutional reform in Canada.”<sup>41</sup> For Carty this relates to the current electoral reform initiatives representing a change in Canadian democracy. There is increased reliance on the engagement of citizens in the process.<sup>42</sup> For Massicotte the use of referendums plays into the hands of the political elite because it allows reform initiatives to be defeated without the government having to defend decisions to not reform a demonstrably flawed system.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, political elites retain control of the referendum process and are able to manipulate the process to all but guarantee the result they desire.<sup>44</sup>

Greater public participation in the electoral reform process requires greater attention to public education campaigns. The public is not provided with the resources needed to fully understand what is at stake in electoral reform initiatives. Supporters of

---

<sup>40</sup> Massicotte, “Electoral Reform in Canada,” 123.

<sup>41</sup> Carty, “Canadians and Electoral Reform,” 182.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Massicotte, “Electoral Reform in Canada,” 123.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 132-134; Peter McKenna, “Opting Out of Electoral Reform – Why PEI Chose the Status Quo,” *Policy Options* (June 2006): 60.

participatory models of electoral reform initiatives argue that substantial public education surrounding the electoral systems and reform options are required to fully engage citizens in the process.<sup>45</sup> There are arguments, however, that electoral reform referendums are destined to fail because public education campaigns cannot engage a largely apathetic public.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, Pilon demonstrates that in the case of the 2007 Ontario Referendum on electoral reform, the Ontario newspaper media failed to provide a deliberative space, but instead presented biased arguments heavily against reform, thus further solidifying elite opinion.<sup>47</sup> These arguments present an inherent problem in including the electorate in deciding on matters of electoral reform. Because the public is being asked to play a greater role in electoral reform, greater attention needs to be given to the information the public is receiving.

The electorate's increasing role in the decision making process necessitates a study of the public education discourse throughout the electoral reform initiatives. This is especially prudent in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, given that the reform research and proposal stages remained an elite driven process. In Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, electoral reform initiatives were undertaken in similar manner. Each province undertook the electoral reform process as an elite driven exercise, instead of involving a deliberative Citizens' Assembly model as was done in British Columbia and Ontario. In each case the government appointed Legislative Commissions that were mandated to study the feasibility and acceptability of reforming the electoral system.

---

<sup>45</sup> Mendelsohn and Parkin, "Process for Electoral Reform," 143; Carty, Blais and Fournier, "When Citizens Choose Reform," 158-159; McKenna, "Opting Out," 61.

<sup>46</sup> Courtney, "Whistling in the Wind," 156.

<sup>47</sup> Dennis Pilon, "Investigating Media as a Deliberative Space: Newspaper Opinions about Voting Systems in the 2007 Ontario Provincial Referendum," *Canadian Political Science Review* 3, no. 3 (2009): 12.

Both Commissions reported similar recommendations to the legislatures including that the SMP system should be reformed to a mixed member proportional (MMP) system and highlighting the need for greater public consultation and education on the subject of voting systems. Furthermore, each province did include a role for the electorate in adopting the reform recommendations by means of a binding referendum. The inclusion of the electorate in the decision making process necessitates public education about electoral reform. It is, therefore, important to assess how the Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick electorates were educated and engaged in electoral reform debates, specifically looking at the news media's electoral reform dialogue.

### **Three Ideal Functions of the News Media**

The media is increasingly the main source of political information for citizens. Because the media act as intermediary between political elites and citizens it is important to assess if the media is able to fulfil its role as purveyor of information with respect to political reforms as substantial as voting system change. Electoral reform initiatives represent a significant change to the current system and represent a profound change with respect to Canadian democracy. It is, therefore, important to assess the news media's ability to provide a public forum for political dialogue in which citizens are able to consider opposing views and use this information to formulate educated opinions. In Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick electoral reform initiatives were elite driven processes with little public consultation.<sup>48</sup> The public largely gained information about the electoral reform proposals and referenda through the news media. This necessitates

---

<sup>48</sup> Unlike in the British Columbian and Ontario cases, where Citizens' Assemblies were commissioned and tasked with developing a model of electoral reform, citizens in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island were largely left out of the process.

studying how the news media conveyed the information to citizens and how much information citizens were actually provided with on the issue.

The news media's ability to influence political dialogue on issues relies on the credibility the public grants the profession. The news media is able to make the political world real to citizens and gives political matters shape and substance. It is universally accepted by politicians, citizens and the media alike that the media is an important political institution and as such is able to have independent influence over society.<sup>49</sup> This acceptance of the media's role is increasingly tied to a "mediation" of politics, a term described by Jesper Strömbäck, whereby the formal linkages between the governors and the governed are through media outlets.<sup>50</sup>

The news media is expected to serve a multitude of functions in a free and democratic society. Doris Graber argues the media is expected to serve four distinct, yet overlapping, functions in the United States and these functions can be applied within the Canadian context. Though this list is not exhaustive, these functions are based in the promotion of an "ideal" participatory democratic model where engaged citizens are able to play a substantive role in government.<sup>51</sup> Graber outlines:

As First Amendment scholars and other prominent Americans see it, the press should do four things: (a) provide a forum for discussion of diverse, often conflicting ideas; (b) give voice to public opinion; (c) serve as citizens' eyes and ears to survey the political scene and the performance of politicians; and (d) act as a public watchdog that barks

---

<sup>49</sup> Doris Graber, "The Media and Democracy: Beyond Myths and Stereotypes," *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003): 139-140; Michael Schudson, "The News Media as Political Institutions," *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002): 251.

<sup>50</sup> Jesper Strömbäck, "Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of Mediatization of Politics," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13, no.3 (2008): 230.

<sup>51</sup> Graber, "Media and Democracy," 143.

loudly when it encounters misbehaviour, corruption, and abuses of power in the halls of government.<sup>52</sup>

Though four functions are outlined here, I will, investigate the third and fourth function as one as the two are inextricably linked. It is through the lens of these three functions that I will investigate the role of news media with respect to democracy and current arguments surrounding whether the news media is able to genuinely serve as an educating and engaging source of information. It is important to note that, though I am drawing on the functions outlined by Graber, my analysis does not necessarily reflect her understanding of how these ideal functions are served. Instead I will outline my own understanding of the three ideal functions, which come from examining different arguments about the role and motivation of the news media more generally. These three ideal functions will be the basis for my analysis of the Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick local newspaper media in the following chapters.

### **Provide a Forum for Discussion of Diverse, Often Conflicting Ideas**

The ability of the news media to serve in the public interest is dependent on its ability to create an open forum for political communication and discussion of a diverse range of ideas and arguments. David Taras argues that the media needs to remain as open as possible to allow all citizens an open forum within which ideas can be formed and debated. In a perfect model, the public sphere would allow all views, including those against the mainstream, in order to keep society vibrant and evolving.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore for Taras, the role of journalists is to ensure that citizens are provided with a lively and

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> David Taras, *Power & Betrayal In the Canadian Media* (Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd., 2001): 5.

critical debate about important issues.<sup>54</sup> As with Taras, Frederick Fletcher and Robert Everett argue that the media “should promote a constructive engagement of citizens, foster their interest and confidence in and understanding of the electoral process, and provide a stimulus to participation.”<sup>55</sup> Fletcher and Everett argue that the media serves to provide information to citizens in order to give them a better understanding of the issues at stake and allow the citizens to make informed decisions based on a variety of information and conflicting view points.<sup>56</sup> In an ideal democratic setting the news media would present all sides on an issue in a fair manner, strictly seeking to provide information to citizens without attempting to skew the opinions of the audience.<sup>57</sup>

However, there are at least two possible problems with this idealised view: (1) the media may not present all views, or do so in a balanced way, and (2) the public may not be paying attention. The potential problems with bias are fairly obvious. The challenges of an indifferent public may be less so. For instance, some argue there is a serious gap between the idealised view of a public made up of engaged and concerned citizens, and a reality of widespread public ignorance and cynicism about politics.<sup>58</sup> In this view, journalists should seek to provide citizens with only highly relevant information in order to make a political opinion easier to formulate. This is especially salient when it comes

---

<sup>54</sup> David Taras, “Introduction: The New World of Communications in Canada,” in *How Canadians Communicate*, eds. David Taras, Frits Pannekoek and Maria Bakardjieva (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003), 16.

<sup>55</sup> Frederick J. Fletcher and Robert Everett, “Mass Media and Elections in Canada,” in *Media, Elections and Democracy*, ed. Frederick J. Fletcher (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991), 180.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>57</sup> Christopher Dornan, “Printed Matter: Canadian Newspapers,” in *How Canadians Communicate*, eds. David Taras, Frits Pannekoek and Maria Bakardjieva (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003), 116; Jimmy Chan and Wing Suen, “Media as Watchdogs: The Role of News Media in Electoral Competition,” *European Economic Review* 53 (2009): 799; Stömbäck, “Four Phases of Mediatization,” 231.

<sup>58</sup> Taras, *Power & Betrayal*, 31.

to electoral reform initiatives. Though not beyond the grasp of understanding of the general population, electoral reform initiatives represents a more complicated policy initiative than regular legislative processes. As such, they require a greater emphasis on providing relevant and accurate information to the public to clearly highlight what is at stake in these debates. Journalists must be aware of the level of understanding the public has of the process and should help the public to not get bogged down by the details but view the process as a whole.

In the case of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, the news media's role in providing an open forum of debate is crucial for allowing citizens to formulate educated opinions. Being that the public education campaign was left mainly to the news media, journalists and editors were given tremendous leeway to formulate public opinion on the issue if they so desired. This thesis will investigate what, if any, bias local newspaper journalists displayed with respect to electoral reform initiatives in these two provinces. Likewise, it will investigate whether the newspaper media further entrenched or challenged elite political opinion. In order to investigate this function, I will look at reporter, columnist, and Op/Ed positions to determine if the newspapers studied provide both neutral informative pieces and the conflicting ideas needed for citizens to fully engage with electoral reform.

### **Give Voice to Public Opinion**

The ability of the news media to give voice to public opinion is difficult. Stylistically journalists work in a unidirectional space, whereby they gather information on a given topic then disseminate the piece to the public at large. Though consultations and interviews with public figures can help to achieve some semblance of the public's view, it is insufficient in providing a complete understanding of the public's opinion on

an issue. The assumption that the media can provide political elites with insight into the majority and minority opinions on any given subject is not only incorrect but dangerous, as the news media seldom assesses public opinion by talking to citizens. Instead, the news media choose to focus on the opinions of public and private institutions, think tanks and agencies, and, if they do delve into reporting on public opinion, it is mainly done through the use of opinion poll data.<sup>59</sup> By gathering ‘public opinion’ in this way the news media actually attribute the voice of specialists in the field to the public further diminishing the voice of the masses and alienating the public from the debate.

However, newspapers have a unique ability to include public opinion as part of the editorial pages. By providing space for opinion pages newspapers allow members of the public to write in with responses to the printed material as well as give voice to other matters the newspaper may not be covering. Letters to the editor are one of the most read sections of the newspaper, thus demonstrating that the ability of the public to have a voice in the public sphere is available in some capacity.<sup>60</sup> The letters section provides a unique public forum for deliberation.<sup>61</sup> Letters to the editor are often seen as a means of offsetting the singular focus of reporters. Though the editorial pages can provide an open forum for deliberation and insight into public opinion, the editorial board ultimately retains control over the process, thus diminishing the public deliberative function of the

---

<sup>59</sup> Linda Trimble and Shannon Sempert, “Who’s in the Game? The Framing of the Canadian Election 2000 by the Globe and Mail and the National Post,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 1 (2004): 53; Graber, “Media and Democracy,” 145.

<sup>60</sup> Ernest C. Hynds, “Editors at most U.S. Dailies See Vital Role for Editorial Page,” *Journalism Quarterly* 71 (1994): 573.

<sup>61</sup> Christopher Cooper, H. Gibbs Knotts and Moshe Haspel, “The Content of Political Participation: Letters to the Editor and the People Who Write Them,” *PS* (2009): 131.

space. To gain more access to the range of public opinion on these recent voting system initiatives, this study will examine letters to the editor.

Having said all this, it is important to assess the inability of the letters section to accurately reflect public opinion. David Grey and Trevor Brown argue that letters to the editor provide only, “hazy reflections of public opinion.”<sup>62</sup> Letters to the editor provide insight into voluntary political participation but cannot accurately reflect the totality of societal views because only certain members of the public participate. This is reflected in the work of Christopher Cooper, H. Gibbs Knotts and Moshe Haspel, who determine that letters to the editor are only reflective of a particular portion of society and many marginalised groups are not represented in the letters pages. Specifically, the majority of letters to the editor are written by middle-aged, middle-class, white men.<sup>63</sup> Using letters to the editor as a window into the opinions of society is not completely valid as they do not accurately reflect society. That being said, the letters section does provide some insight into the willingness of the population to engage in political dialogue to a certain extent.

Furthermore, the letters to the editor section also gives the editorial board a direct means of manipulating the tenor of political dialogue by allowing editors to act as ‘gatekeepers’ in the selection of which letters to print.<sup>64</sup> This gives the editorial board

---

<sup>62</sup> David L. Grey and Trevor R. Brown, “Letters to the Editor: Hazy Reflections of Public Opinion,” *Journalism Quarterly* 47 (1970): 450.

<sup>63</sup> Cooper, Knotts and Haspel, “Content of Political Participation,” 136.

<sup>64</sup> Daniel M. Butler and Emily Schofield, “Were Newspapers More Interested in Pro-Obama Letters to the Editor in 2008? Evidence From a Field Experiment,” *American Politics Research* 38 (2010): 357; Karin Wahl-Jorgenson, “Letters to the Editor as Forum for Public Deliberation: Modes of Publicity and Democracy Debate,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18, no. 3 (2001): 304; Dave D’Alessio and Mike Allen, “Media Bias in Presidential Elections: A Meta-Analysis,” *Journal of Communication* (2000): 135.

power in crafting the letters section not to necessarily reflect the public opinion but instead to reflect ideological position of the paper. Gate-keeping or selectivity bias is difficult to determine because it cannot be known what the newspapers decided not to print.<sup>65</sup> These limitations have not stopped scholars from reflecting on the role gate-keeping plays in presenting public opinion within the letters section. Karin Wahl-Jorgenson describes, “editorial practices advance, suppress, and warp ways of interacting in public.”<sup>66</sup> This assertion outlines how even the section of the newspaper designed to give citizens a voice can be manipulated and skewed by the media elites. Likewise, the choice to include certain letters and solicit letters from experts in certain fields demonstrates that the editorial boards’ view of the letters section, not as a means to engage with the mass public, but instead as a forum for stakeholders to further a political opinion.<sup>67</sup> Though these studies are convincing, evidence also reflects the view that gate-keeping bias may not be used to promote any particular ideological viewpoint, but instead is sometimes used to balance out any imbalances in coverage in the reporting section of the newspaper.<sup>68</sup> In this sense, the bias of the editorial board may not be ideological. However, the letters section still fails to demonstrate public opinion as a whole because certain letters are published more as a means of demonstrating opposing view point to the rest of the paper.

---

<sup>65</sup> D’Alessio and Allen, “Media Bias in Presidential Elections,” 136.

<sup>66</sup> Wahl-Jorgenson, “Letters to the Editor,” 309.

<sup>67</sup> Lindsay H. Hoffman and Michael D. Slater, “Evaluating Public Discourse in Newspaper Opinion Articles: Values-Framing and Integrative Complexity in Substance and Health Policy Issues,” *Journalism & Mass Communications Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (2007): 59; Wahl-Jorgenson, “Letters to the Editor,” 314.

<sup>68</sup> Butler and Schofield, “Pro-Obama Letters,” 14.

With respect to electoral reform initiatives, the ability of the news media to give voice to public opinion is crucial. Because public consultation was limited in the initiatives in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, the newspapers provided the main avenue for citizen dialogue. I will analyse the ability and willingness of the newspapers under study to give voice to public opinion by looking at the editorial position and the letters to the editor. Looking at the editorials will allow for a comparison between the editorial board's opinion and the position put forth in letters, in order to analyse the willingness of the media elites to engage conflicting public opinion. This thesis will use the editorial pages, not to assess public opinion, but instead to determine the extent of public engagement with electoral reform and the level of understanding of the debate surrounding electoral reform.

### **Serves as Public's Eyes and Ears and Act as Public Watchdog**

The third function of the media is premised on the ability of the masses to gain access to information in order to clearly hold political elites to account for misbehaviour. Graber describes the surveillance function: "the media are expected to serve as eyes and ears for citizens, who need to monitor the soundness of policies and the performance of politicians."<sup>69</sup> Likewise, the watchdog function tasks journalists with, "monitoring misbehaviour, corruption and abuses of power by government."<sup>70</sup> In this respect the role the media plays with respect to democracy is crucial. It provides the means for the citizens to hold political elites to account. However, some complain that the news media is often unable to fulfil this function because reporters do not have the resources to

---

<sup>69</sup> Graber, "Media and Democracy," 146.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 147.

pursue investigative journalism to the fullest extent. Due to time and financial limitations reporters must rely on information that is made readily available. Often times this information comes directly from the political elites by way of press releases and public statements. In this respect, journalists are not acting in a surveillance capacity but are instead legitimating the politicians' viewpoint.<sup>71</sup>

The ability of news organisations to act in a surveillance capacity is directly related to the viability of news outlets as profit making enterprises. Journalists are forced to meet deadlines and financial resources needed to undertake a large investigative process are severely limited. Newspapers are forced to serve private, business interests and, in order to maximise profits, expenditures must be kept to a minimum. The convergence of the newspaper industry has limited the breadth of stories covered and this is why news organisations exhibit conformity in the range of stories covered. It is argued that in the realm of print media, conglomerates are increasingly relying on fewer reporters and re-printing pieces in several newspapers.<sup>72</sup> This conformity limits the ability of the reporters to investigate other issues or provide different insights to the public. This media concentration creates an atmosphere where the stories presented to the public represent a small segment of debate.<sup>73</sup> As Taras argues, "The media window, the portal through which we view our country and the world, is becoming increasingly distorted by the stained glass of conglomerate power."<sup>74</sup> The window into actions of

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 146-147; Schudson, "Media as Political Institutions," 265.

<sup>72</sup> Schudson, "Media as Political Institutions," 252-253; Taras, *Power & Betrayal*, 23.

<sup>73</sup> Schudson, "Media as Political Institutions," 252-253; Taras, *Power & Betrayal*, 23.

<sup>74</sup> Taras, *Power & Betrayal*, 23.

political elites is lessened because overarching conglomerates remain more focussed on profit and less focussed on providing the public good.

The majority of revenue generated by newspapers comes from advertising; newspapers represent the largest advertising medium in Canada.<sup>75</sup> The need to provide enough space in the newspaper for advertising presses journalists to research and report on key mainstream issues instead of allowing them to report on a wide scope. Critics argue that the reliance on advertising revenue and the need to maintain a wide circulation forces newspapers to focus on and promote mainstream or centrist ideals.<sup>76</sup> Fear of alienating readership limits the willingness of journalists and publishers to push the envelope on reporting. This creates an environment whereby all mainstream news outlets in competition for readership end up reporting the same stories in the same fashion. Likewise it is argued that in smaller communities where access to multiple news sources is limited, there is the potential that single news conglomerates will skew the message in a particular way. Without adequate access to competing information the public may automatically accept such slanted views.<sup>77</sup> Overall, the media ownership concentration limits the ability of journalists to function in a surveillance or watchdog functions; instead journalists are simply becoming puppets of the political elites.

With respect to Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick newspaper outlets, the concentration of media ownership is pervasive. Prince Edward Island has one major daily newspaper, *The Guardian*, which is owned and operated by Transcontinental

---

<sup>75</sup> Dornan, "Printed Matter," 103.

<sup>76</sup> Matthew Mendelsohn, "Construction of Electoral Mandates: Media Coverage of Election Results in Canada," *Political Communication* 15 (1998): 243.

<sup>77</sup> Dornan, "Printed Matter," 98.

Media, a media conglomerate active in all ten Canadian provinces.<sup>78</sup> In New Brunswick, there are four major papers published daily, three English language dailies, *Times & Transcript*, *Telegraph-Journal*, and *The Daily Gleaner*, all owned and operated by Brunswick News, a media conglomerate owned by J.K. Irving. The French daily assessed, *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, is independently owned and operated.

In order to analyse the surveillance and watchdog function of the news media I will examine how the media debate related to the dialogue of political elites in the two provinces. This will provide insight into the newspapers' willingness to challenge the political elite opinion and act in a surveillance and watchdog capacity. Furthermore I will analyse what, if any, effect the concentration of media ownership in New Brunswick had on the news media's characterisation of electoral reform debates.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has looked at the theoretical arguments surrounding the institutional and representational failures of SMP, and demonstrated how current debates heralding electoral reform as needed to re-invigorate democracy are promoting greater citizen engagement and action in the process. The use of referendums or the proposed use of referendums in the process also highlights public education as necessary component of any electoral reforms. Additionally, this chapter has outlined three ideal functions of democracy and examined debates in media literature pertaining to the ability of the media to serve these functions. Building on this chapter, the following chapter will examine the most recent reform initiatives in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick to assess the level of public education and further establish the role the newspaper media played in

---

<sup>78</sup> Transcontinental Inc., "Media Sector: Print Media - Newspapers," Transcontinental Inc.. <http://www.transcontinentalmedia.com/print-media/newspapers/?lang=en> (accessed March 8, 2011).

educating and engaging the public. Reform initiatives in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec will also be examined to further situate Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick in the broader context of electoral reform debates in Canada.

## Chapter Two - Electoral Reform and Public Education in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick

### Introduction

From the previous chapter it is evident that while electoral reform is not a new fascination within Canada, the current language surrounding electoral reform is novel. Specifically, concerns about re-invigorating democracy reflect current frustrations surrounding Canadian representative democracy. Highlighting a ‘democratic deficit,’ whereby the political institutions within Canadian life are increasingly understood to be both unrepresentative of and unresponsive to citizens, calls for electoral reform are gaining more attention as voter turnout continues to decline. Increasing public dissatisfaction and declining confidence with democratic institutions and politics in general inspire current electoral reform debates. In this capacity, electoral system reformers uphold reforms as a means of addressing current democratic deficits facing Canadian society.<sup>79</sup>

Provinces undertaking reform initiatives have included a greater role for citizen participation in the process than has historically occurred. The previous chapter outlined the language of electoral reform and assessed the media’s three ideal functions in promoting the citizenry’s ability to engage in participatory democracy. Building on the literature, this chapter will examine the most recent reform initiatives in Canadian provinces, specifically assessing how citizens were involved in the different processes. The five provinces that have researched electoral reform initiatives recommended that the question be put to a referendum, thereby giving citizens the final say in the adoption of a

---

<sup>79</sup> Massicotte, “Electoral Reform in Canada,” 118.

new system. Using the electorate in the reform process necessitates citizen engagement and it is important to address how public education occurred.

This chapter will, first, outline how the current focus on re-invigorating democracy became the basis for current electoral reform initiatives. It will then address reform procedures in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, focusing on the Commission processes, recommendations and public education mandates. It will then assess electoral reform initiatives in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec to provide a comparative analysis of the electoral reform campaigns and referendum procedures.

### **Most Recent Wave of Electoral Reform Initiatives**

The most recent wave of electoral reform debates at the federal level was sparked by the 1997 federal election. The results of the 1993 and 1997 federal elections highlighted three prominent shortfalls of a SMP: one-party dominance, destruction of a party, and hyper-regionalisation of parties.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, concerns about enfeebled opposition, perverse electoral outcomes and hyper-polarisation of parties within several of the Canadian provinces led to electoral reform being placed on the agenda at the federal level as well as in five provinces.<sup>81</sup>

The 1993 federal election victory of Jean Chrétien's Liberal Party highlighted some of the shortfalls of SMP, which were further demonstrated by their 1997 and 2000 electoral victories. As Lawrence Leduc notes:

The debate on electoral reform in Canada intensified following a third Liberal majority victory in the 2000 election. In that election, the Liberals won 172 of the 301 seats with 41 percent of the total vote. The

---

<sup>80</sup> Henry Milner, "First Past the Post? Progress Report on Electoral Reform Initiatives in Canadian Provinces," *Policy Matters* 5, no. 9 (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2004), 13.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.

Canadian Alliance, successor to the Reform party, formed the Official Opposition with 66 seats, all but two of these in the West. The Bloc retained its grip on Quebec, winning 38 of the provinces 75 seats, and Liberal hegemony in Ontario continued as the party captured 100 or 103 seats. Turnout declined even more dramatically to a new record low of 61 percent.<sup>82</sup>

The 1993, 1997 and 2000 elections all resulted in strong Liberal victories. The Progressive Conservatives and New Democratic Party were left with few seats and two new parties had strong showings, namely the Bloc Québécois and the Reform party. These elections demonstrate one-party dominance, decimation of parties and regionalisation of parties. Because of the party system fragmentation, the Liberals seemed to have almost unlimited power within the House of Commons as no other party appeared able to form an effective opposition or ‘government in waiting.’<sup>83</sup>

In 2004, the Law Commission of Canada recommended implementing a MMP electoral system to replace the current plurality system. The Law Commission argued that although electoral reform alone could not fix Canadian democracy it would serve as an important first reform.<sup>84</sup> The 2004 federal election reduced the Liberal majority to a Liberal minority and the focus on ‘democratic renewal’ shifted to a focus on political survival. The political elites calling for ‘democratic renewal’ ignored recommendations on how to re-invigorate Canadian democracy more fully and these recommendations have stayed dormant in the current era of minority governments.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Leduc, “Failure of Electoral Reform,” 22-23.

<sup>83</sup> Milner, “Political Drop-outs,” 21.

<sup>84</sup> Canada, *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*, 7; Leduc, “Failure of Electoral Reform,” 24.

<sup>85</sup> Leduc, “Failure of Electoral Reform,” 23.

Though electoral reform initiatives at the federal level stalled with little accomplished, the language surrounding the need to re-invigorate democracy did enter the provincial scene. This ‘democratic renewal’ that is underscoring the electoral reforms in the provinces has led elites to promote greater citizen engagement in the process.

### **Prince Edward Island**

Prince Edward Island was the last province to adopt SMP, as it maintained dual-member districts until the 1996 provincial election. The *Legislature Act* of 1893 created a single Legislative Assembly composed of 30 elected representatives from 15 dual-member districts, with one Councillor and one Assemblyman elected in each district.<sup>86</sup> Candidates ran separately as Councillors and Assemblyman. The ability to vote for Councillor was tied to property ownership with the elector being granted one vote for each Councillor in every district where the elector owned \$325 worth of property. Elections for Assemblyman were open to any British male over 21 years of age living in or owning an estate worth \$6.00 yearly. Each eligible voter could only vote for one Assemblyman.<sup>87</sup> Other than the expansion of the franchise to women in 1922 and Aboriginals in 1963, Prince Edward Island’s electoral system remained relatively unchanged until a new *Election Act* was passed in 1964.

The *Election Act* 1964 removed the property restrictions and opened elections of Councillors to the entire electorate, while removing the ability of property owners to vote in multiple districts. It also established that party affiliations should be placed on the

---

<sup>86</sup> John Andrew Cousins, “Electoral Reform for Prince Edward Island,” *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 25, no. 4 (2003): 22.

<sup>87</sup> Prince Edward Island, *Commission on Electoral Reform Final Report*, 20.

ballot next to the candidates' name.<sup>88</sup> The dual-member electoral system remained in place until a court challenge under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was put forward that asserted that the current electoral boundaries did not provide equal representation of all electors. Citizens in Kings County were overrepresented while those in Queens County were underrepresented due to a difference of approximately 10,000 electors between certain districts in Kings and Queens County.<sup>89</sup> An Election Act and Electoral Boundaries Commission was created and reported in 1993. Their findings led to the *Election Act* of 1994, which eliminated the dual-member districts and opted for 27 single-member districts with Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) elected by first-past-the-post plurality voting. Though not considered a real option at the time, the Commission did look into adopting a MMP system, but deemed it was too far a departure from traditional British and Canadian electoral system standards.<sup>90</sup>

The plurality system in Prince Edward Island has consistently created inflated majorities that leave the opposition unable to fulfil its role of holding the government to account. For example, in the 1993 election the Liberal party secured 31 seats with 55% of the popular vote, while the Progressive Conservatives won only one seat with 40% of the popular vote. In the 2007 election, the governing Liberals won 23 seats having won 53% of the popular vote while the Progressive Conservatives' official opposition is four members, though the party secured 41.4% of the popular vote in the 2007 election.

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 25.

Year	Progressive Conservative			Liberal			New Democratic Party			Total Seats
	Seats	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seats	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seats	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	
2007	4	14.8%	41.4	23	85.2%	52.9			2	27
2003	23	85.2%	54	4	14.8%	42.9			3.1	27
2000	26	96.3%	57.9	1	3.7%	33.7			8.4	27
1996	18	56.3%	47.4	8	25.0%	44.8	1	3.1%	7.8	32
1993	1	3.1%	39.5	31	96.9%	55.1			5.4	32
1989	2	6.3%	35.8	30	93.8%	60.7			3.5	32
1986	11	34.4%	45.6	21	65.6%	50.4			4	32
1982	21	65.6%	53.6	11	34.4%	45.7			0.7	32
1979	21	65.6%	53.2	11	34.4%	45.3			1.3	32
1978	15	46.9%	48.2	17	53.1%	50.7			1.1	32

**Table 1 – Prince Edward Island Electoral Results 1966 – 2007.<sup>91</sup>**

Though traditionally two-party dominant, Prince Edward Island is increasingly becoming more open to other parties and in the 1996 election NDP leader Herb Dickieson won the party its first ever seat, securing 7.8% of the popular vote. In the following election, the NDP secured 8.4% of the popular vote but failed to elect any members to the legislature. Though popular support for the NDP increased between elections the party was shut out of the legislature. The two dominant parties have little incentive to enact electoral reform because, even though each suffers regularly as an enfeebled opposition, both will ultimately regain control of the Legislative Assembly and enjoy complete control.

Sparked by other provinces' initiatives, the Speech from the Throne in 2000 initiated studies to determine the promise of electoral reform and potential ramifications of introducing it to the Island. The Legislative Assembly established the Special Committee on the *Election Act* in order to gather public opinion and offer

<sup>91</sup> Elections Prince Edward Island, "Provincial Election Results: Detailed Results for Recent Provincial General Elections," Elections Prince Edward Island.  
<http://www.electionspei.ca/provincial/historical/results/main.php> (accessed March 8, 2011).

recommendations. The Special Committee chaired by MLA Jim Bagnall reported in April 2001 that further investigation into PR should commence due to its recent addition to the electoral system in New Zealand.<sup>92</sup> This Special Committee was composed of five MLAs and found that the two biggest concerns for PR were the large number of wasted votes and the inflated majorities for election winners that provided few opposition members.

The Legislative Committee's recommendations led to the establishment of Commission of Electoral Reform in January 2003. Instead of opting for a deliberative democratic model as was done in British Columbia and Ontario, Prince Edward Island opted for an elite driven process. Retired Chief Justice of the Province, the Honourable Norman H. Carruthers, was appointed sole commissioner with a mandate to conduct:

A review of all statutes and associated regulations respecting the manner in which the Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected in the Province; to consider the impact which District boundary changes, based on population shifts, may have for rural communities; and to determine the relevance of an alternative electoral system, such as proportional representation, for Prince Edward Island.<sup>93</sup>

Reporting in December 2003, the Commission recommended that Prince Edward Island adopt MMP as it would combine the current single member district plurality system and a proportional list system.<sup>94</sup> Though Carruthers supported either MMP or STV, he felt MMP would be more acceptable to Islanders as it would allow Islanders to retain the

---

<sup>92</sup> Prince Edward Island, *Commission on Electoral Reform Final Report*, 26.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

current relationship between the electorate and the local representative while establishing greater proportionality due to the addition of list MLAs.<sup>95</sup>

There was concern by critics that the elite driven Commission process did not allow any role for Islanders. Though there was an attempt by the Commission to engage citizens through seven open public meetings, relatively few Islanders attended or became involved in the process. Carruthers defended the legitimacy of the Commission to make decisions despite the lack of public engagement by arguing that those who did turn out represented thousands of Islanders.<sup>96</sup>

Although it was within his purview as sole commissioner to recommend that the legislature adopt the changes without a referendum, Carruthers decided that a referendum was necessary.<sup>97</sup> Carruthers reported, “The general public must now decide whether they do, in fact, want change and, if they do, then they must decide the nature of the change. This decision making process will have to take place by way of a referendum.”<sup>98</sup> Carruthers recommended a Citizens’ Assembly be created to outline the exact form the MMP reform would take, and to craft the plebiscite question. Carruthers felt it was important to include citizens in the process in order to provide increased democratic legitimacy and initiate greater awareness and understanding of the proposed changes. Instead of establishing a Citizens’ Assembly, Premier Binns decided to retain the elite

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 98-99.

<sup>97</sup> Carty, “Canadians and Electoral Reform,” 180.

<sup>98</sup> Prince Edward Island, *Commission on Electoral Reform Final Report*, 99.

nature of the reform procedures and the Legislative Assembly created the Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future.<sup>99</sup>

The new commission was mandated to refine the MMP model and develop a communication and public education strategy.<sup>100</sup> This public education strategy involved newspaper, radio and television advertisements as well as a panel discussion and multiple public meetings. The Commission decided to hold a public meeting at each of the Island's senior high schools ensuring that all citizens could attend a meeting in close proximity to their residence. The Commission used the concerns raised at the meetings to make changes to the recommended model, namely eliminating dual candidacy as part of the proposed MMP model. This showed a willingness to include citizens in the process but did not represent the full deliberative process as in British Columbia and Ontario.

A major part of this Commission's mandate was to provide citizen education. Public meetings were the main forum for deliberative education and in total 992 citizens were directly consulted and educated through these meetings.<sup>101</sup> The Commission developed a website and used press releases to further educate the electorate. It also produced a pamphlet entitled, "Answers about our Electoral Future in Prince Edward Island," which was mailed to all Island households in September 2005.<sup>102</sup> This pamphlet was four pages and answered thirteen general questions relating to the Commission and

---

<sup>99</sup> Prince Edward Island, Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future, *2005 Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future* (Charlottetown, P.E.I: Elections Prince Edward Island, 2005), 1. <http://www.electionspei.ca/electoralfuture/finalreport.pdf>.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 8.

its mandate. Though it provided colourful pictures, it provided little information on the proposed changes, simply weighing three general pros and cons of first-past-the-post and the proposed MMP model. It did include a list of the public meetings, the website and the phone number citizens could call for more information, but overall it provided citizens with little information.

Though the Commission did provide opportunities for the electorate to access information on electoral reform, the public meetings and access to other pamphlets was on a voluntary basis. The public meetings reached fewer than 1000 people and the pamphlet sent to households provided little information. *The Guardian*, the Island's daily newspaper, on the other hand, has a daily circulation of 10,000, and although it is not possible to know how many individuals read the articles surrounding electoral reform debate, the wider dissemination of information makes understanding the character of debate in *The Guardian* an important aspect of understanding citizen engagement in Prince Edward Island. Additionally, the CBC strike in the late summer of 2005 limited the amount of coverage provided to citizens, and furthered the importance of *The Guardian* as the main forum for public education and engagement.<sup>103</sup>

The plebiscite process in Prince Edward Island demonstrates the danger of allowing such referendums to be controlled by partisan politicians. Though the Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future recommended that approval for passage of the plebiscite need only be 50% plus one, Premier Binns stated during the campaign that a positive vote would only be recognised if the measure gained 60% percent approval (exemplifying the precedence set by British Columbia super-majority

---

<sup>103</sup> Jeannie Lea, "The Prince Edward Island Plebiscite on Electoral Reform," *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 29, no. 1 (2006): 5.

threshold).<sup>104</sup> Likewise, Premier Binns also required at least a 60% voter turnout in order to legitimate a positive vote. Though, Prince Edward Island has the highest voter turnout rates for both federal and provincial elections, the circumstances of the plebiscite were not conducive to high voter turnouts. The plebiscite was held shortly before winter and was a stand-alone vote not attached to any general election. These two circumstances each have historically negative correlations to voter turnout.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, days before the vote was to be held the number of polling stations was reduced by 90%, ensuring longer lines, greater travelling distances and confusion about where people were to vote.<sup>106</sup> All these factors could potentially have driven voter turnout down. Last, instead of using standard voter enumeration, electors were forced to answer five questions before being able to cast a ballot, which lengthened the voting process and made lines at polling places longer.

On November 28, 2005 the plebiscite was resoundingly defeated with 64% rejecting the change, though only 30% of eligible voters cast a ballot.<sup>107</sup> Although there is no evidence that the results would have been different if voter turnout had been higher, the manipulation of the process by political elites is of concern. Though undertaking the electoral reform initiatives in order to re-invigorate democracy, this manipulation demonstrates a desire of political elites to maintain the status quo as opposed to having meaningful democratic renewal.

---

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 6; Massicotte, “Electoral Reform in Canada,” 132.

<sup>105</sup> Massicotte, “Electoral Reform in Canada,” 132.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>107</sup> Elections Prince Edward Island. “Plebiscite on Mixed Member Proportional Representation System – Official Results.” Elections Prince Edward Island. <http://www.electionspei.ca/plebiscites/pr/results/detailed/index.php> (accessed March 2, 2011).

## New Brunswick

Whereas in Prince Edward Island politicians must bridge the divide between rural and urban interests, in New Brunswick politicians not only do this but are also forced to bridge the divide between the Francophone and Anglophone populations. Historically, the Francophone population supports the Liberal party while the Anglophone population supports the Progressive Conservatives.<sup>108</sup> Though at times there have been other parties elected to the Legislative Assembly, historically and presently the New Brunswick political arena has remained a two-party dominant model with the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives as the dominant parties. R. Kenneth Carty and Munroe Eagles note, “New Brunswick’s party politics has long been an oscillating game between Liberals and Conservatives with these two old parties, each deeply rooted in traditional social and geographical bases in the province, each taking turns in office.”<sup>109</sup> This back-and-forth relationship between government and opposition has long related to which of the two major parties has been able to gain support from both the Anglophone and Francophone populations.

The Liberals victory, under leadership of Louis Robichaud’s, in 1960 shifted the course of New Brunswick politics away from traditional patronage appointments and localised services. By centralising service provision at the provincial level, Robichaud’s government was able to revolutionise New Brunswick politics and he was largely

---

<sup>108</sup> R. Kenneth Carty and Munroe Eagles, “Party Activity across Electoral Cycles,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 36, no. 2 (2003): 382.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 382.

celebrated for his achievements.<sup>110</sup> If the 1960s were about improving service provision, the 1970s in New Brunswick were focused on language relations. Through the latter half of the twentieth century political elites sought to bring together enough support from both the Francophone and Anglophone populations to further strengthen their mandate and control over the Legislative Assembly. Politicians who have been able to overcome this historic divide have been able to maintain control over the government for many terms with relatively few opposition members opposing them in the Legislative Assembly.

Bringing together the Francophone and Anglophone populations, Richard Hatfield's Progressive Conservatives were able to defeat Robichaud's Liberals in 1970, winning 32 of 58 seats while winning slightly less of the popular vote. Though Hatfield was able to retain the Premiership for 17 years, winning four elections, eventually the tenuous coalition of Anglophones and Francophones irrevocably fractured ushering in a new tenure of Liberal dominance over the province. Frank McKenna's Liberals were elected in 1987 securing 60% of the popular vote and all 58 seats. Though this is an anomalous result, the electoral results from 1970 to present show the adverse effect of SMP on the composition of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly. Highlighting the 1995 and 1999 provincial elections, the Liberals secured 87% of the seats in 1995 while securing just under 52% of the popular vote. In 1999 Bernard Lord's Progressive Conservatives re-gained power with 53% of the popular vote, translating into 80% of the seats.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Hugh Mellon, "New Brunswick: The Politics of Reform," in *The Provincial State in Canada: Politics in the Provinces and Territories*, eds. Keith Brownsey & Michael Howlett (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1992), 94.

<sup>111</sup> Elections New Brunswick, "Provincial Elections: Provincial General Election Results," Elections New Brunswick. <http://www.gnb.ca/elections/publications-e.asp#1> (accessed March 8, 2011).

Year	Progressive Conservative			Liberal			New Democratic Party			Other			Total Seats
	Seats	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seats	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seats	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seats	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	
2010	42	76.4	48.8	13	23.6	34.4			10.4			6.4	55
2006	26	47.3	47.5	29	52.7	47.1			5.1			0.3	55
2003	28	50.9	45.5	26	47.3	44.3	1	1.8	9.7			0.5	55
1999	44	80.0	53.0	10	18.2	37.3	1	1.8	8.8			0.9	55
1995	6	10.9	30.9	48	87.3	51.6	1	1.8	9.7			7.8	55
1991	3	5.2	20.7	46	79.3	47.1	1	1.7	10.8	8	13.8	21.4	58
1987			28.6	58	100.0	60.4						11.0	58
1982	39	67.2	47.5	18	31.0	41.3	1	1.7	10.2			1.1	58
1978	30	51.7	44.4	28	48.3	44.4			6.5			4.8	58
1974	33	56.9	46.9	25	43.1	47.5			2.9			2.7	58
1970	32	55.2	48.4	26	44.8	48.6			2.8			0.2	58

**Table 2 – New Brunswick Election Results 1970-2010<sup>112</sup>**

The increasing salience of electoral reform as a viable reform option and an increase in the populist desires of the electorate drove Premier Bernard Lord to establish the New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy. As in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick electoral reform initiatives were an elite driven process. Established in December 2003, the eight member Commission was given a year to fulfil its mandate. At the time the mandate was the most expansive mandate given to any commission as it required fulsome recommendations for re-invigorating New Brunswick democracy and was not limited to electoral system reform. The Commission was to make recommendations in areas of electoral reform, legislative reform, and democratic reform.<sup>113</sup> With respect to electoral reform, the report argued that the current SMP

<sup>112</sup> Elections New Brunswick, "Provincial Elections: Provincial General Election Results," Elections New Brunswick. <http://www.gnb.ca/elections/publications-e.asp#1> (accessed March 8, 2011).

<sup>113</sup> New Brunswick, *Final Report and Recommendations*, 4.

electoral system was not in line with the democratic values of New Brunswick citizens and recommended a MMP system with list MLAs selected on a regional basis.<sup>114</sup>

Commissioners argued that the Commission report should be the basis of any reform proposals put forth and that their recommendations for a regional form of MMP is best suited to meet the democratic needs of New Brunswick. The report called for a four step process to be undertaken in order to undergo the proposed electoral reforms. First, there should be wide dissemination of information pertaining to both the current SMP system and the proposed regional MMP system in an attempt to encourage broader discussion and understanding in the public. Second, the Commission called for ratification by New Brunswick citizens in form of a binding referendum as the only legitimate and democratic way to undertake electoral reform. Third, the implementation of the new MMP electoral system, if ratified by the voters, could be implemented in either the 2007 or 2011 general provincial elections. The Commission recommended two years be allotted for public consultation, education, debate and completing a referendum. Last, the report argued that after MMP has been successfully implemented a review of the MMP system should be undertaken in order to ascertain if it appropriately addresses the democratic concerns identified by New Brunswick citizens and what changes if any could potentially be made to better the system.<sup>115</sup> Though the Commission did fulfil its mandate and comprehensively suggested a new electoral model complete with suggested electoral boundaries, a referendum was not held. Premier Lord had tentatively proposed holding a referendum alongside 2008 municipal elections, but after his loss in 2006 the

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 48-49.

new Liberal government failed to initiate any referendum process.<sup>116</sup> Ironically, Lord's Progressive Conservatives secured a higher percentage of the popular vote, but Shawn Graham's Liberals won the majority of seats and therefore formed a majority government.<sup>117</sup>

Public education campaigns did not occur in New Brunswick. After the Commission tabled its, "Final Report and Recommendations,"<sup>118</sup> the Lord government focused on the fixed election date legislation and largely ignored the electoral system reform proposals. Little was done to educate the public about electoral reform, and Lord's refusal to set a firm referendum date further alienated the public from the process. In this regard, the public education campaign and the electoral reform debate mainly occurred in the newspapers. It is important to assess the New Brunswick news media content surrounding electoral reform because this was the main forum for public dialogue about electoral reform.

### **Electoral Reform and the Provinces**

British Columbia and Ontario have also undertaken some discussion of electoral reform with similar results in province-wide referendums: both were defeated. Though each province was using electoral reform as a means of re-invigorating democracy and re-establishing an engaged public, each undertook reform initiatives due to different problems with SMP. Both provinces used deliberative Citizens' Assemblies and this process demonstrates the strain between deliberative and direct democracy. In both cases, political elites initiated electoral reform processes allowing for the appearance of

---

<sup>116</sup> Massicotte, "Electoral Reform in Canada," 132-133.

<sup>117</sup> Elections New Brunswick, "Provincial Elections: Provincial General Election Results," Elections New Brunswick. <http://www.gnb.ca/elections/publications-e.asp#1> (accessed March 8, 2011).

<sup>118</sup> New Brunswick, *Final Report and Recommendations*, 1.

democratic change while maintaining the status quo. Electoral reform proposals were initially raised by the opposition in British Columbia and Ontario and were initiated once the 'reformers' formed the government. Though there were steps taken in each province to stay true to the campaign platform, once in power each of the governments failed to act on recommendations and enacted no meaningful electoral reforms.

### **British Columbia**

Back to back elections in British Columbia demonstrate different systemic failures of SMP. In 1996 the NDP won a majority of seats in the legislature while the Liberals secured a higher percentage of the popular vote. In the subsequent election in 2000 the NDP were nearly removed entirely from the legislature with the Liberals winning 77 of 79 seats and removing any effective opposition.<sup>119</sup> The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly (BCCA) was designed in order to give citizens the ultimate say in the electoral future of the province with the BCCA making a recommendation through a deliberative democratic process and the recommendation being put to direct democracy through referendum.<sup>120</sup> It was created as means of ensuring that the process was removed from the politicians' hands, though the referendum process was controlled very much by political actors.

After a year of education and deliberation the 160 member BCCA proposed changing the SMP system to a STV system.<sup>121</sup> The electoral reform recommendation was put to a referendum alongside the 2005 British Columbia General Election and,

---

<sup>119</sup> Election BC, "Provincial General Elections – Results," Elections BC Resource Centre. <http://www.elections.bc.ca/index.php/resource-centre/reports/> (accessed March 8, 2011).

<sup>120</sup> Ruff, "Electoral Reform and Deliberative Democracy," 239-240.

<sup>121</sup> Carty, Blais and Fournier, "When Citizens Choose Reform," 156.

though close to 58% of voters supported the reform, it failed to meet the required 60%, super-majority threshold required by the government for passage.<sup>122</sup> The referendum was again put to vote alongside the 2009 British Columbia General Election and secured only 39% support.<sup>123</sup> The decline in support for STV between the 2005 and 2009 referendum has effectively ended the calls for electoral reform in British Columbia at the present time.

### **Ontario**

In Ontario the case of electoral reform was not born out of systemic failure of SMP but instead related to successive majority governments of three different parties in the late 1980s to the 2003 election. Election results, examining seat totals, made it seem as though Ontario voters were continually rejecting the policies of the governing parties and giving a strong mandate to a different party. All three majority governments were won with a plurality of votes while the majority of voters favoured the parties left in opposition. The 1987 Liberal majority was won with 47%, the 1990 NDP majority was won with 37.6%, and the 1995 Progressive Conservative majority was won with 44.8%. The ideological differences between the parties were strong but the mandate for each majority government was weak.

While leader of the opposition, Dalton McGuinty called for electoral reform as part of his election platform. But after securing a majority in the 2003 election, McGuinty's Liberals were slow to act with regards to electoral reform.<sup>124</sup> In 2004 Pilon noted, "Bringing to the attention of the voters such anomalies in their current voting

---

<sup>122</sup> Leduc, "Failure of Electoral Reform," 25.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 26.

system could rebound on the Liberals in unpredictable ways, not only possibly denying them a future turn as a single-party majority government, but even casting doubt on the legitimacy of their present “majority.”<sup>125</sup> Following the BCCA model, Ontario did eventually move on electoral reform, establishing the Ontario Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform (OCA) in September 2006. The OCA, which consisted of 103 members and one non-voting chair, submitted its recommendation to the government May 15, 2007. The OCA recommended adopting of a MMP system, which included increasing the number of legislative seats to 129. There would be 90 single member districts and 39 seats filled with list members.<sup>126</sup> Along with adopting British Columbia’s deliberative process for the electoral reform initiative, the Ontario government followed the precedent set by British Columbia’s and established a 60% threshold for acceptance, further stipulating that the proposal had to achieve 60% of the popular vote as well as 50% support in 60% of the ridings. The proposal was put to referendum alongside the 2007 Ontario General Election and was rejected by the electorate gaining only 37% support.<sup>127</sup>

In British Columbia and Ontario electoral reform initiatives were first put forth by opposition parties and reform processes only initiated after that party had gained power using SMP. Once in power, adherence to the status quo became paramount and the two governments were unwilling to enact electoral reform legislation that could potentially erode their own power interests. In the case of British Columbia and Ontario, the

---

<sup>125</sup> Dennis Pilon, “The Uncertain Path of Democratic Renewal in Ontario,” in *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, ed. Henry Milner (Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004), 250.

<sup>126</sup> Leduc, “Failure of Electoral Reform,” 29.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

government used referendums to demonstrate the unwillingness of the electorate to support electoral reform through direct democracy while ‘patting themselves on the back’ for using a new deliberative democratic technique.

### **Quebec**

In Quebec the most recent electoral reform initiatives were sparked by the 1998 ‘wrong winner’ victory of the Parti Québécois (PQ). The PQ won a majority of the seats, while the Parti Libéral du Québec (PLQ) was relegated to opposition status even though having received a higher percentage of the popular vote.<sup>128</sup> The push for adopting some form of PR involved a citizen’s campaign. The mouvement pour une de démocratie nouvelle (MDN) forced the issue with signed petitions and by holding public meetings on the issue. Likewise the PLQ and the burgeoning Action démocratique du Québec (ADQ) stated a preference for some form of PR to be added to the electoral system. The Landry government set up a National Assembly Committee on Institutions and this Committee announced public meetings would be held to discuss electoral reform options with the public.<sup>129</sup> Along with the public meetings, a larger public forum was steered by Claude Béland held and included 1,000 delegates.<sup>130</sup> Over 90% of the delegates backed some form of electoral reform, and the Béland Committee presented its recommendations two days before Premier Landry called an election.<sup>131</sup> The election brought the PLQ back

---

<sup>128</sup> Brain Doody and Henry Milner, “Twenty Years after René Lévesque Failed to Change the Electoral System, Québec May Be Ready to Act,” in *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, ed. Henry Milner (Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004), 270.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

into power and the new government largely dismissed the Béland report, though public pressure for PR remains strong.<sup>132</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Recent electoral reform initiatives have been met with hostility by political elites. Both elite driven commissions and citizen centred assemblies have recommended that in order to re-invigorate democracy some form of proportionality is needed. Political elites have, thus far, been unwilling to implement changes. Though the initiatives were undertaken in different ways, alongside electoral reform recommendations, the need to hold a referendum to consult citizens before changes are implemented is now the standard model. This need to hold a referendum requires that citizens be fully educated with respect to the proposed changes. Alongside calls for referendums, there were recommendations pertaining to the education of citizens prior to the referendums. Though the governments did attempt to educate citizens, the majority of information provided about both the electoral reform procedures and the recommendations were provided by the news media. In Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick the need to educate the electorate was specifically outlined in each Commission's respective reports. The governments did provide some non-partisan information to the citizens, but alongside this information were partisan positions with regards to the recommendations. The local newspaper media therefore becomes an important political actor as it is another forum for citizens to gain information. The following chapter will outline the local newspaper content in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick in order to evaluate the character of the media surrounding electoral reform and if the media represented an open public forum for discussion and debate.

---

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

## **Chapter Three - Media Content: Comparative Local Newspaper Coverage in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick**

### **Introduction**

The previous chapter outlined the most recent reform initiatives in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, and detailed the role of public education. Furthering this focus, this chapter will outline the local newspaper coverage of the electoral reform initiatives in both Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. To begin, I will outline the methodology used to locate and classify articles. Next I will present my findings with respect to eight criteria. The empirical information will be outlined in order to answer several questions. First and foremost: Did the local newspaper media serve the three ideal functions of democracy as outlined in chapter one. More specifically, did the local newspaper media provide an open forum for information and conflicting ideas? Did the local newspaper media give voice to public opinion? And did the local newspaper media act in a surveillance and watchdog capacity? In order to evaluate if the local newspaper media served these three functions, I have established eight criteria that will be used to evaluate the local newspaper media's characterisation of the electoral reform debate.

These criteria are:

1. What types of articles were printed in each newspaper?
2. What position, if any, did reporters present on electoral reform in each newspaper?
3. What position did columnists take with respect to the electoral reform recommendations in each newspaper?

4. What position did the editorial board take on electoral reform debate in each newspaper?
5. What position on electoral reform was displayed in the letters to the editor section of each newspaper?
6. What was the position of Op/Ed columnists in each newspaper?
7. With respect to Prince Edward Island, when did the bulk of the coverage take place?
8. What was the overall position, pro or con reform, of each newspaper?

Outlining my findings through these criteria provides a complete picture of the characterisation of the local newspapers' position on electoral reform and will allow for analysis as to what extent the media fulfilled the three ideal functions of media in creating a participatory citizenship model.

## **Methodology**

Though there are multiple media types that could be assessed with regards to electoral reform commentary, this thesis focuses solely on local newspaper content. This is because newspapers are able to provide more in depth coverage than, say, television newscasts.<sup>133</sup> Television newscasts are kept short and provide relatively superficial coverage of the story. Stories tend to focus on the humanistic aspect of the news and provide little information regarding the substance of the argument. Likewise, the use of the internet as an information gathering media poses problems in identifying the number of citizens accessing what sources and how each of the citizens view the credibility of the sources used. Furthermore, only local newspapers were analysed in order to focus the

---

<sup>133</sup> Taras, *Newsmakers*, 100-102.

media content analysis on papers mainly focussed on Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick news.<sup>134</sup> The newspaper content analysis, thereby, is a quantitative and qualitative analysis of electoral reform coverage in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick based newspapers with an average daily circulation greater than 10,000. This provides a strong basis of readership in each province.

In the case of Prince Edward Island there is one local newspaper that fits the criteria for selection. *The Guardian*, published in Charlottetown, had an average daily circulation of 18,409 copies in 2009.<sup>135</sup> *The Guardian*, “covers the Island like the Dew,”<sup>136</sup> primarily focusing on Island news and holds itself as an important institution in island life. *The Guardian* has a history of extreme partisanship, acknowledging the Conservative political leaning of the newspaper until the 1950s.<sup>137</sup> Today, however, managing editor Gary MacDougall writes, “Today’s *Guardian*, like ones of old, still carries plenty of news about politics but coverage is non-partisan, unlike the old days.”<sup>138</sup> *The Guardian* is owned and operated by Transcontinental Inc., a large media conglomerate.<sup>139</sup> Media content was analysed from the establishment of the Commission

---

<sup>134</sup> Defined as newspapers primarily focused on and produced in the area with which readers interact on a daily basis. Juxtaposed to national newspapers, which cover national and international news, local newspapers focus more on the events of the given area and are able to provide in depth coverage of local matters.

<sup>135</sup> Canadian Newspaper Association, “Circulation Data Report 2009,” Canadian Newspaper Association. [http://www.newspaperscanada.ca/system/files/2009CirculationDataReport\\_3.pdf](http://www.newspaperscanada.ca/system/files/2009CirculationDataReport_3.pdf). (accessed March 8, 2011).

<sup>136</sup> Guardian, “*The Guardian* - Charlottetown,” *Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/> (accessed March 8, 2011).

<sup>137</sup> Guardian, “Our Team - History,” *Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/Our-Team> (accessed March 8, 2011).

<sup>138</sup> Gary MacDougall, “Our Team - History,” *Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/Our-Team> (accessed March 8, 2011).

<sup>139</sup> Transcontinental Inc., “Media Sector: Print Media - Newspapers,” Transcontinental Inc.. <http://www.transcontinentalmedia.com/print-media/newspapers/?lang=en> (accessed March 8, 2011).

on Electoral Reform, through the Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future's deliberations and recommendations to the time leading up the plebiscite. In order to fully assess the response of the media to these government measures, the search parameters extend from January 1, 2003 to November 28, 2005. This encompasses the entire period from Premier Binns' initial appointment of Norman H. Carruthers as sole commissioner to the day of plebiscite. Though this includes a period prior to the recommendations being made, this period started the discussion within the public.

In the case of New Brunswick there is one French language and three English-language papers that have a circulation greater than 10,000. Figures from 2009 place *L'Acadie Nouvelle's* (published in Caraquet) average daily circulation at 20,300. Three English language daily newspapers also had the requisite daily circulation: the *Times & Transcript*, published in Moncton, with an average daily circulation of 36,952, *The Daily Gleaner*, published in Fredericton, with an average daily circulation of 21,297, and the *Telegraph-Journal*, published in Saint John, with an average daily circulation of 32,944.<sup>140</sup> With respect to ownership, *L'Acadie Nouvelle* is an independently owned and operated paper whereas the three English-language newspapers are all owned and operated by J.K Irving's Brunswick News.<sup>141</sup>

Because New Brunswick did not hold a referendum the time frame for analysis will conclude with the defeat of the Progressive Conservatives in 2006. This will encompass the creation of the Commission, the Commission recommendations, Premier

---

<sup>140</sup> Canadian Newspaper Association, "Circulation Data Report 2009," Canadian Newspaper Association. [http://www.newspaperscanada.ca/system/files/2009CirculationDataReport\\_3.pdf](http://www.newspaperscanada.ca/system/files/2009CirculationDataReport_3.pdf). (accessed March 8, 2011).

<sup>141</sup> Brunswick News, "Brunswick News – Publications," Brunswick News. <http://www.brunswicknews.com/publications.php>. (accessed March 8, 2011).

Lord's response to the report, and Lord's defeat in the 2006 provincial election. In order to fully assess the response of the media to the electoral reform initiatives the search parameters extend from the initial establishment of the Commission on Legislative Democracy on September 13, 2003 to the election day, September 18, 2006. Including a French language newspaper is important due to the significance of language politics in New Brunswick.

### **Prince Edward Island**

A comprehensive search of *The Guardian's* archives was completed using the Eureka (formerly NewsScan) academic database. The archives were searched between the dates January 1, 2003 to November 28, 2005 inclusive, using the terms: 'electoral reform', 'proportional representation', 'PR', 'mixed member proportional', 'MMP', 'Commission on Electoral Reform' and 'Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future'. These search parameters produced 432 articles. After reviewing the 432 articles, 162 articles were excluded from the data set, leaving 270 relevant articles for the sake of this study. Reasons for exclusion are outlined below.

### **New Brunswick**

Comprehensive searches of *The Daily Gleaner*, the *Times & Transcript*, and the *Telegraph-Journal* were completed using the FP Infomart academic database. The archives were searched between the dates September 13, 2003 and September 18, 2006 inclusive, using the terms: 'electoral reform', 'proportional representation', 'PR', 'mixed member proportional', 'MMP' and 'Commission on Legislative Democracy'. These search parameters produced 173 articles and after reviewing the articles, 119 articles were deemed relevant for the sake of this study. Specifically, *The Daily Gleaner* provided 30 articles, *Times & Transcript* provided 38 articles, and *Telegraph-Journal*

provided 54 articles. In addition to the articles from the English language newspapers, a comprehensive search of *L'Acadie Nouvelle* was completed using the Eureka (formerly NewsScan) academic database. The archives were searched between the dates September 13, 2003 and September 18, 2006 inclusive, using the terms: 'réforme électorale', 'représentation proportionnelle', 'Commission sur la démocratie législative', 'représentation proportionnelle mixte'. These search parameters produced 91 articles, 29 of which were deemed relevant to this study.

Articles were culled for three specific reasons. First, articles were excluded if the search terms were merely present and stated by the author in passing and the focus was not on the electoral reform recommendations or processes. For example, in the New Brunswick paper archives, searching 'Commission on Legislative Democracy' produced many articles containing the term that were focussed on recommendations made by the Commission that did not pertain to electoral reform, such as fixed election dates. Second, articles were excluded if they were short informational pieces pertaining only to the whereabouts of public meetings and information sessions. Last, articles were excluded if they dealt with the discussion of electoral reform following the 2004 election of Paul Martin's minority government.

### **Classification of Articles**

The classification of articles was two-fold. First, I classified the articles as reporting, editorials, columns, Op/Ed columns or letters to the editor (labelled opinion in figures and called letters throughout). Articles written by staff journalists, unnamed staff journalists or articles that were printed in the paper but written by a wire service such as the Canadian Press were coded as reporting. Editorials were specifically attributed to the

editorial board and were written in order to provide readers with the opinion of the editorial board members. The classification of columns proved more difficult. Columns are characterised as opinion pieces written by staff columnists and are expected to be largely personality driven and provide the reader with the opinion of the writer. For the sake of this study, the classification of columns was limited to the articles written by a staff columnist. Articles were classified as Op/Ed columns (opposite the editorial pages) if the writers were stakeholders in the electoral reform debates invited to weigh in and provide commentary and opinion on the proposed reforms. Writers of such articles include: members of the legislative commissions, political elites, political scientists, noted members of the community and leaders of various interest groups. Letters are specifically classified as letters to the editor published in the opinion pages.

After the initial determination of the type of article, coding of the article as pro, con or neutral toward the electoral reform process and recommendations was determined. The coding of the article as pro, con or neutral was determined by assessing the overall tenor of the piece. Determining if an article was for pro electoral reform was relatively straight forward. First, an article was judged as for electoral reform if the writer of the article specifically stated the preference for the recommended proportional system over the current plurality system. Second, an article was judged pro electoral reform if the positive aspects of electoral reform were specifically highlighted while current plurality electoral system was berated without specific statement by the author. Last, an article was judged pro electoral reform if the article more wholly focussed on positive opinions of political elites and political community commentators in favour of electoral reforms.

Determining if an article was against or con electoral reform was also relatively straightforward. First, an article was judged as con electoral reform if the author specifically stated a preference for the current plurality system over the adoption of the proposed proportional systems. Second, an article was judged as con electoral reform if possible negative ramifications of electoral reform were highlighted rather than the positive aspects of electoral reform. Third, an article was judged as con electoral reform if the article more wholly focussed on the negative opinions of political elites and political community commentators against electoral reform. Finally, an article was judged as con electoral reform if the author of the article was for PR, but instead of supporting the recommended model the author proposed a different model that was not to be voted on through referendum. These articles were judged as con electoral reform because the authors of the articles were not supporting the recommendations put forth and by presenting a differing model demonstrated unfavourable opinion of the electoral reform initiative. In order for an article to be categorised as neutral it either provided no statement of opinion for or against electoral reform, or it provided roughly equivalent coverage of pro and con opinions.

## The Findings

### Criteria One: What types of articles were published?

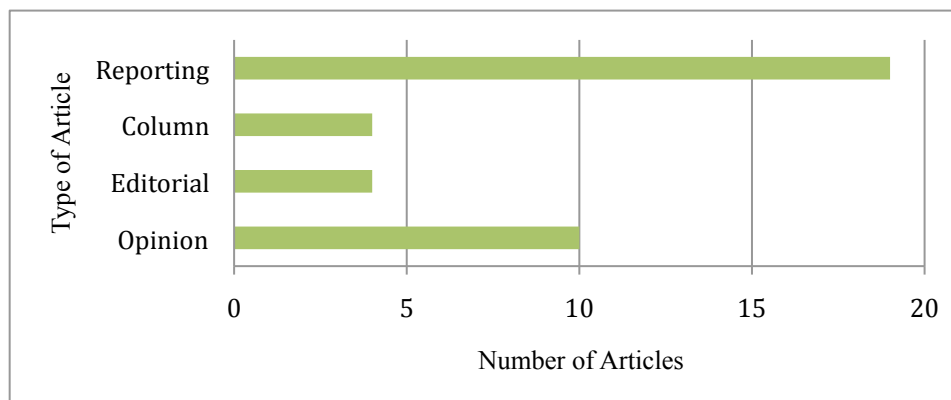


Figure 1 - *Times & Transcript*: Article by Type

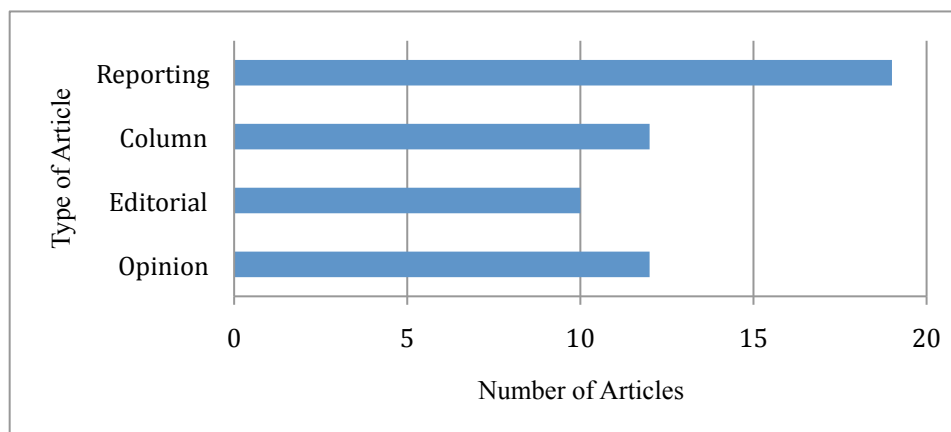


Figure 2 - *Telegraph-Journal*: Article by Type

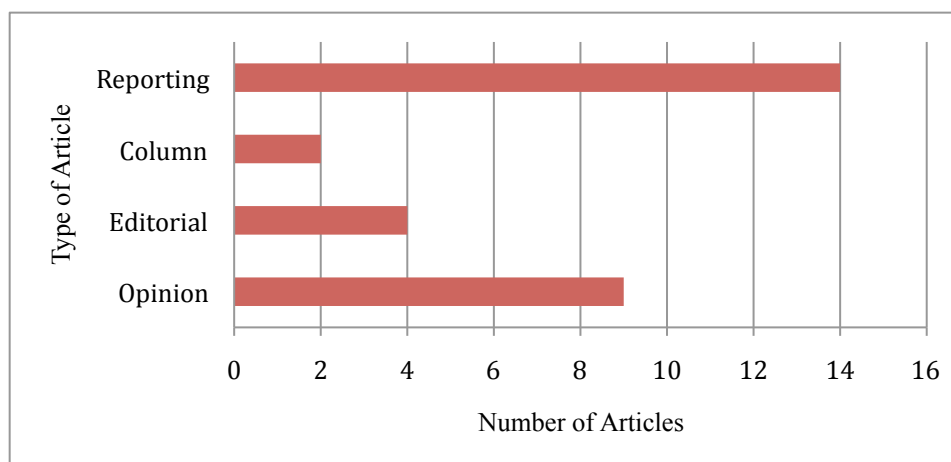
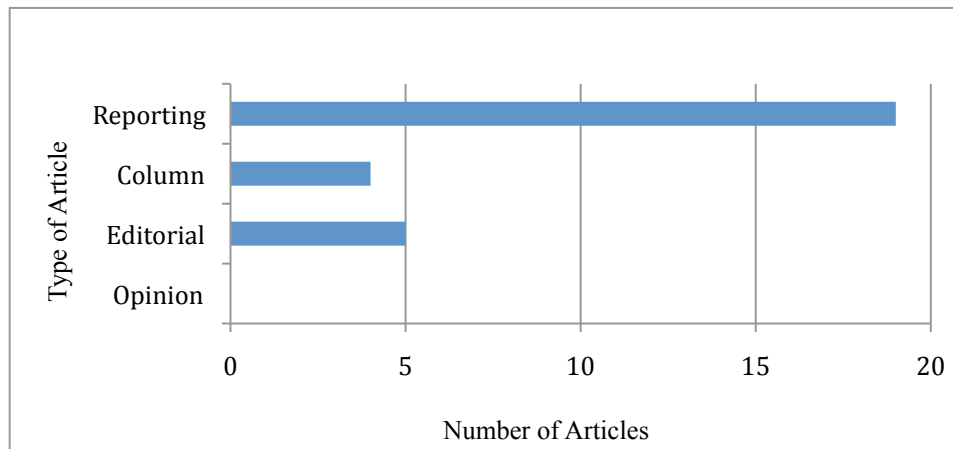
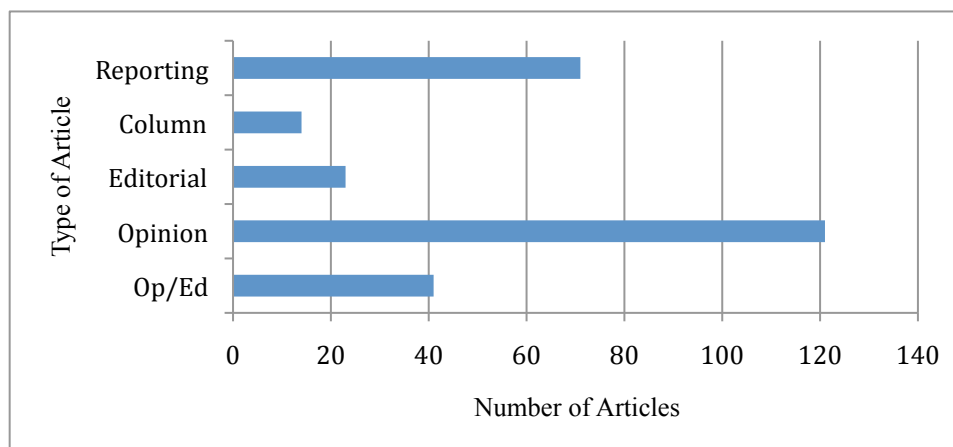


Figure 3 - *The Daily Gleaner*: Article By Type



**Figure 4 - *L'Acadie Nouvelle*: Article by Type**

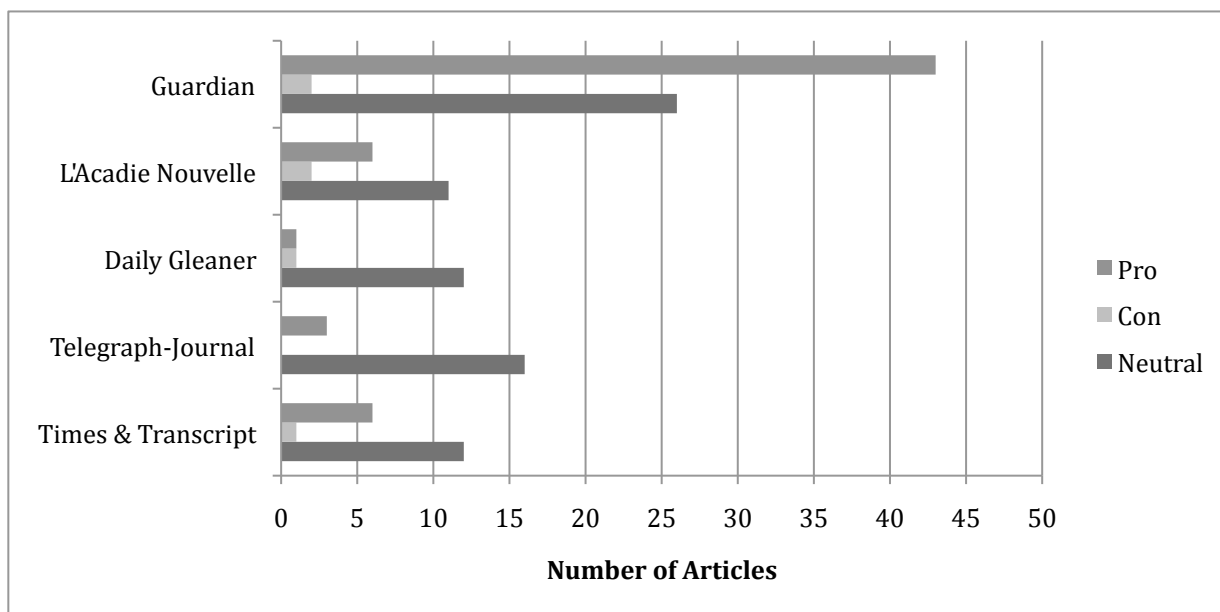


**Figure 5 - *The Guardian*: Article by Type**

Referring to Figures 1-5, it is evident that the New Brunswick newspapers published far fewer articles on electoral reform than did *The Guardian*. Likewise, the New Brunswick newspapers published more reporting pieces than any other type of piece, while *The Guardian* published more letters to the editor on electoral reform than any other type of piece. From Figure 5, *The Guardian* was the only newspaper studied to include Op/Ed pieces from noted commentators as well. Columns dealing with electoral reform were

few, except for, from Figure 2, the *Telegraph-Journal*, which published as many columns on electoral reform as it did letters to the editor.

**Criteria Two: What position did the reporters take on the issue of electoral reform?**

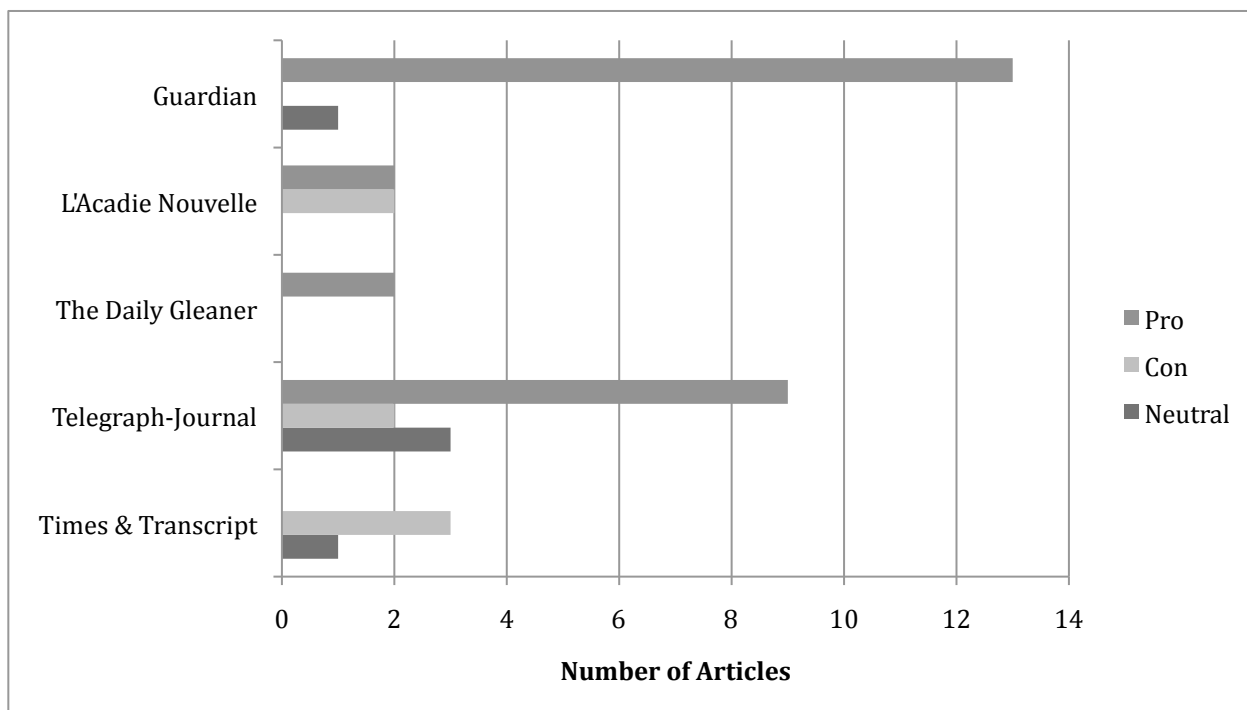


**Figure 6 - Reporting position by newspaper**

Figure 6 shows that the reporting pieces published in the newspapers varied in their position with respect to the electoral reform debates. *The Guardian* was most overtly positive with its positive reporting pieces outnumbering the neutral and negative pieces (43:26:2). In contrast, in each of the New Brunswick newspapers neutral reporting pieces outnumbered the pieces that demonstrated a position. *The Daily Gleaner* remained the most neutral in the reporting pages, presenting 12 neutral articles and one for and one against electoral reform. News reports in the New Brunswick newspapers that demonstrated a position on electoral reform were generally pro reform in character. *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, the *Telegraph-Journal* and the *Times & Transcript* news stories

contained five times as many pieces focused on pro electoral reform arguments than they did stories highlighting con electoral reform arguments.

### Criteria Three: What role did columnists play in the debate?



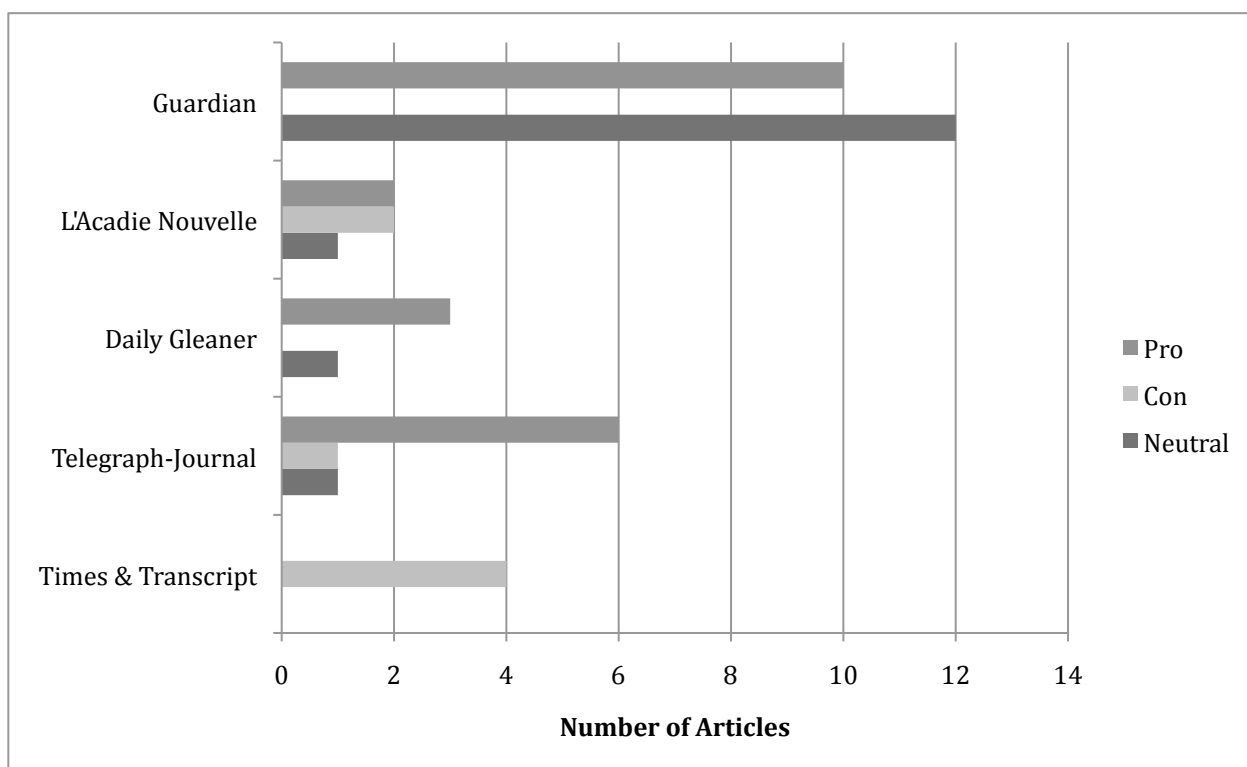
**Figure 7 – Columnist position by newspaper**

Figure 7 demonstrates the columnists' role in the electoral reform debate in the two provinces. The position of the columnists did differ between the newspapers. *The Guardian* columnists were most overtly pro electoral reform, with no column expressing a negative opinion about electoral reform. *The Daily Gleaner* columns covering electoral reform were only positive, however, there were only two such columns. Both of the columns were written by Brent Taylor, who, along with being a columnist, was a member of the Commission on Legislative Democracy and a retired politician at the time of publication.<sup>142</sup> *L'Acadie Nouvelle* published four columns pertaining to electoral reform,

<sup>142</sup> Veterans Review and Appeal Board, "Biographies – Brent Taylor," Veterans Review and Appeal Board. <http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca/Members-membres/Taylor-eng.cfm>. (accessed March 8, 2011); Brent Taylor,

two supporting and two rejecting the recommendations. The *Times & Transcript* published three negative columns and one neutral column. The three negative columns were written by Norbert Cunningham, who in addition to writing a column is the head of the editorial board.<sup>143</sup>

**Criteria Four: What position did the various editorial boards take in the debate?**



**Figure 8 – Editorial position by newspaper**

Figure 8 illustrates the various newspapers' editorial boards position on the electoral reform recommendations. Attune to the position of the columnists, support for and rejection of electoral reform varied. *The Daily Gleaner's* editorial board was most

---

Electoral Change on Horizon," *Daily Gleaner* (May 24, 2005); Brent Taylor, "Minority Governments are not Necessarily Bad," *Daily Gleaner* (June 6, 2004).

<sup>143</sup> Norbert Cunningham, "Do NBers Want to Weaken Democracy?," *Times & Transcript* (January 24, 2005); Norbert Cunningham, "Our Politicians Must Rescue Armed Forces," *Times & Transcript* (October 14, 2004); Norbert Cunningham, "Ideas to Make our Politics more Democratic," *Times & Transcript* (March 16, 2004).

overtly pro electoral reform, publishing only editorials supporting electoral reform or neutral towards its adoption. Likewise, *The Guardian*'s editorial board also provided zero con electoral reform editorials. However, they did publish many neutral editorials that focussed on empowering the citizens to make an informed decision with regards to the plebiscite and that urged the government to make the plebiscite process fair and widely accessible.<sup>144</sup> The *Telegraph-Journal*'s editorial board position was almost entirely pro electoral reform, as well. *L'Acadie Nouvelle*'s editorial board was even handed in its position toward electoral reform, basing its opinions directly on how electoral reform would affect the rural and Francophone populations of the province. The *Times & Transcript*'s editorial board was decisively against the idea of electoral reform, and published only con electoral reform editorials.

**Criteria Five: What was the character of debate in the “letters to the editor” section?**

As seen below, *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, did not include its “letters to the editor” section as part of the archives, and therefore will not be included in any provision of information or analysis relating to these criteria. Focus will be based solely on the English language New Brunswick newspapers and *The Guardian*.

The “Letters” section attempts to give the public the chance to comment on items that they think the newspaper is not covering fairly, or not covering at all. In order for a letter to be printed in each of these papers, the author of the article must be verifiable. *The Guardian* requires that letters be under 350 words in length and further state, “the editor will edit for length and The Guardian reserves the right of editorial discretion in

---

<sup>144</sup> For example see: Editorial Board, “Electoral Future website enhanced,” *Guardian* (August 4, 2005); Editorial Board, “Electoral Reform: Getting Informed,” *Guardian* (September 20, 2005).

the publication of letters.”<sup>145</sup> Likewise, *The Daily Gleaner*, the *Times & Transcript*, and the *Telegraph-Journal* all have the same letter to the editor policy. Letters must be under 250 words in length and the editors, “reserve the right to edit letters for: length, libel, taste and non-verifiable information.”<sup>146</sup> In addition to these guidelines, the editor has the final decision as to what letters get published in the letters section. This makes analysis of the letters section difficult, given that we do not know which and how many letters were not published.



**Figure 9 – Letters to the editor position by newspaper**

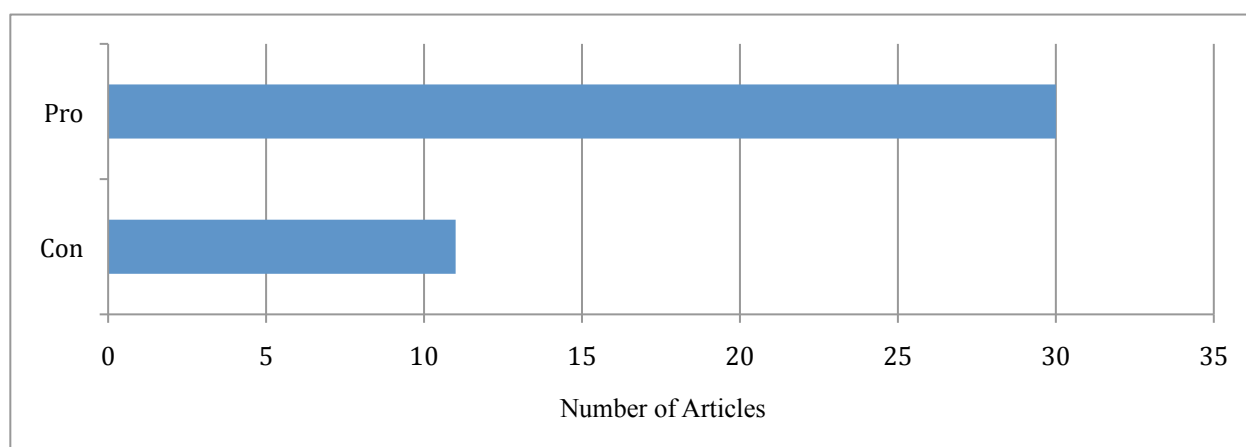
Figure 9 outlines how the debate was characterised in the letters to the editor section of the various newspapers. *The Guardian* published far more letters to the editor regarding electoral reform than were published in the New Brunswick newspapers. *The Guardian*

<sup>145</sup> Guardian Opinion, “Submit your letter to the editor,” Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/Letters-to-editor/Submit-your-letter-to-the-editor/2010-09-15/article-1750612/Submit-your-letter-to-the-editor/1> (accessed March 8, 2011).

<sup>146</sup> Daily Gleaner Contact, “Letter to the Editor Guidelines,” *Daily Gleaner*. <http://dailygleaner.canadaeast.com/onsite.php?page=contact#B> (accessed March 8, 2011); Times & Transcript Contact, “Letter to the Editor Guidelines,” *Times & Transcript*. <http://timestranscript.canadaeast.com/onsite.php?page=contact#B> (accessed March 8, 2011); Telegraph-Journal Contact, “Letter to the Editor Guidelines,” *Telegraph-Journal*. <http://telegraphjournal.canadaeast.com/onsite.php?page=contact#B> (accessed March 8, 2011).

published 122 letters dealing with electoral reform debates, while the New Brunswick newspapers published a combined 31 letters. *The Guardian* also published letters for and against electoral reform in a relatively equivalent number, though there were more letters for electoral reform published. The New Brunswick newspapers, however, published twice as many letters supporting electoral reform than they did letters opposing reform. *The Times & Transcript*, which demonstrated a heavily con reform position in its columns and editorials, published eight letters supporting reform and just two opposing the proposals.

**Criteria Six: What was the position of Op/Ed columns?**

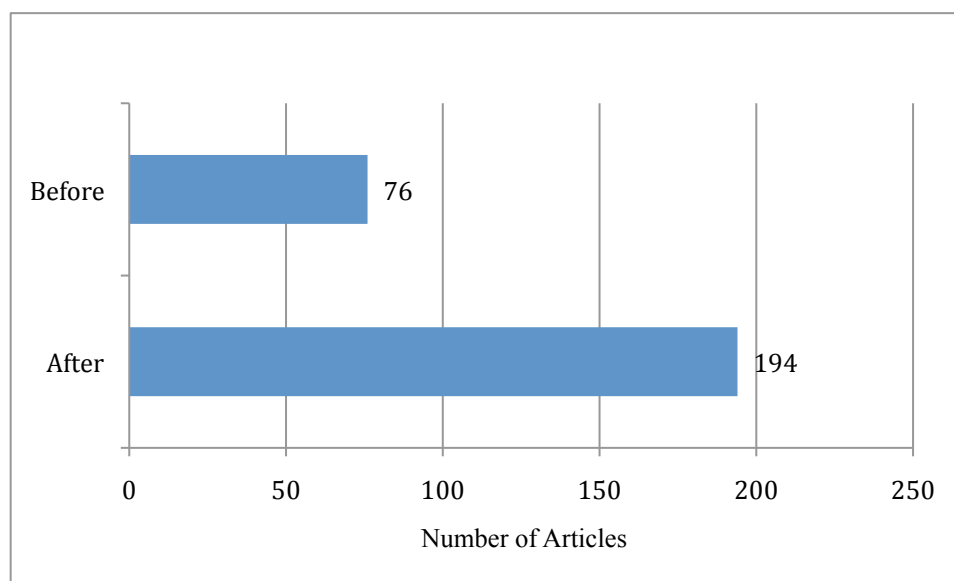


**Figure 10 – *The Guardian* Op/Ed Position**

Figure 10 demonstrates that *The Guardian* is the only newspaper of the five studied to include Op/Ed pieces. As stated before, Op/Ed pieces, for the sake of this study, are pieces written by credible stakeholders in the debate invited to voice their educated opinion about the reform proposals. *The Guardian* published 41 Op/Ed commentaries or guest opinions on electoral reform. Of these, nearly three-quarters expressed a pro electoral reform position.

**Criteria Seven: When did the bulk of coverage in *The Guardian* occur?**

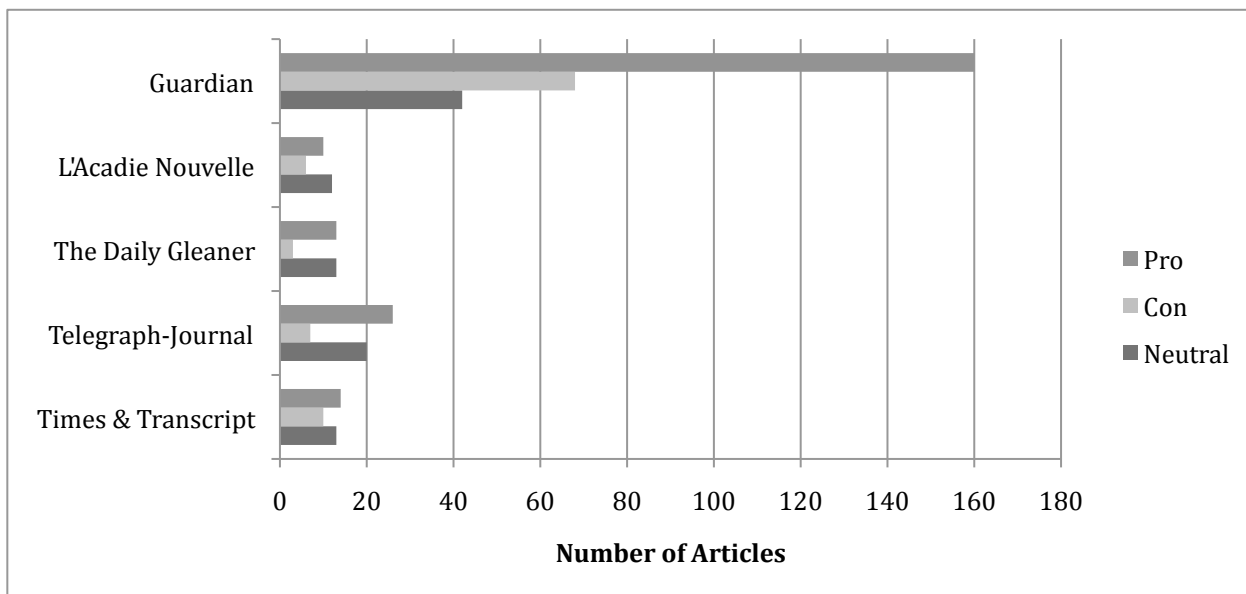
For this criteria I will be assessing the number of articles published before and after the Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future published its recommendations on May 27, 2005. This report detailed the MMP recommendations and concretely outlined the specific MMP system that would be adopted if the plebiscite passed. Furthermore, the report discussed the plebiscite question and created a time-line for public meetings, education campaigns and the plebiscite procedure. This report marks the shift in Prince Edward Island between theoretical and concrete debate and dialogue of electoral reform. This will be used to assess the difference in amount of coverage between *The Guardian* and the New Brunswick newspapers.



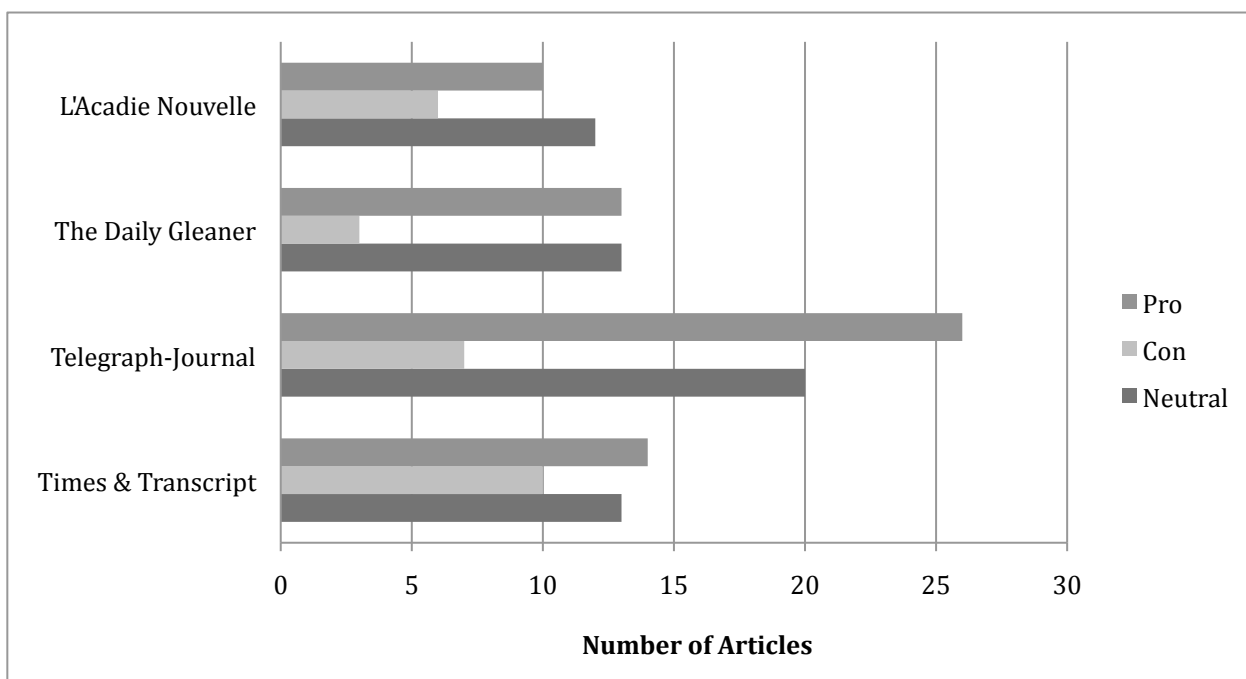
**Figure 11 – *The Guardian* coverage before and after May 27, 2005**

Figure 11 represents the timeline of *The Guardian*'s electoral reform coverage. The bulk of the coverage was published after the Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future published its report on May 27, 2005. In the six months directly prior to the plebiscite, more than double the number of articles were published than had been in the first two and half years of the electoral reform initiative in the province.

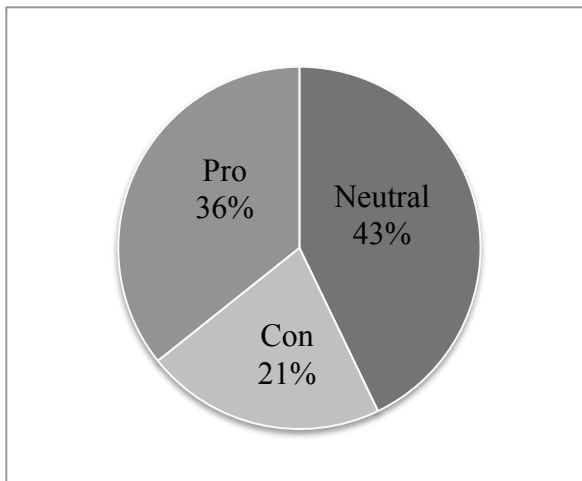
**Criteria Eight: What was the overall character of each of the newspapers?**



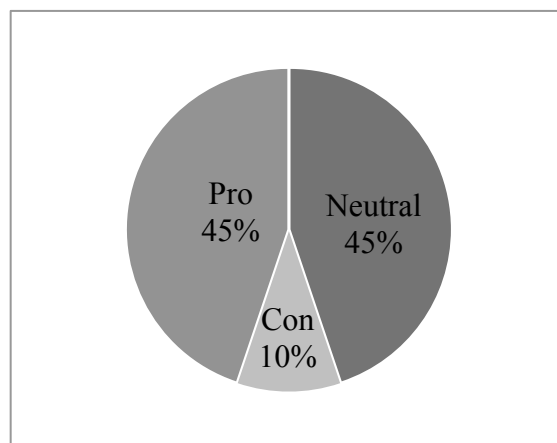
**Figure 12 – Overall position of newspapers**



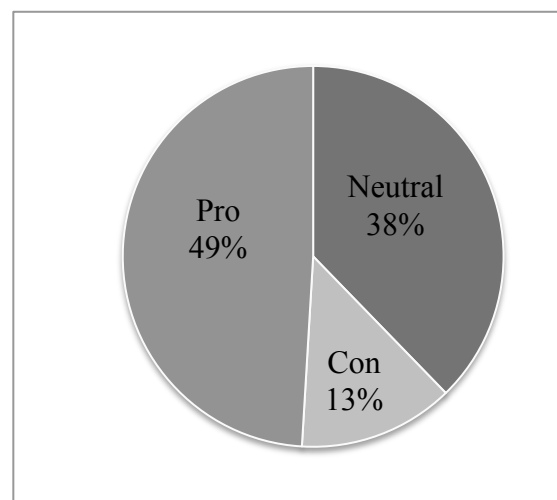
**Figure 13 – Overall position of New Brunswick newspapers**



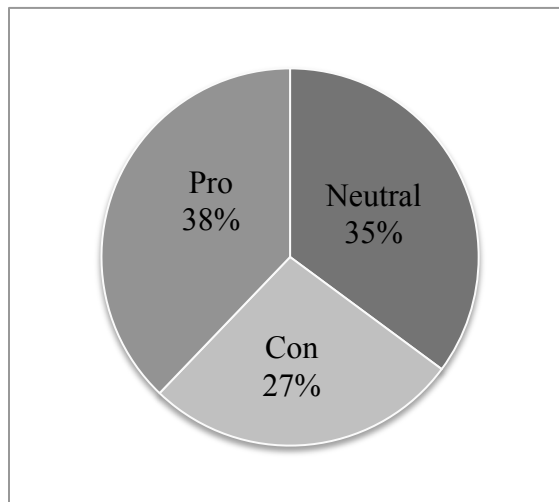
**Figure 14 – Position of *L'Acadie Nouvelle***



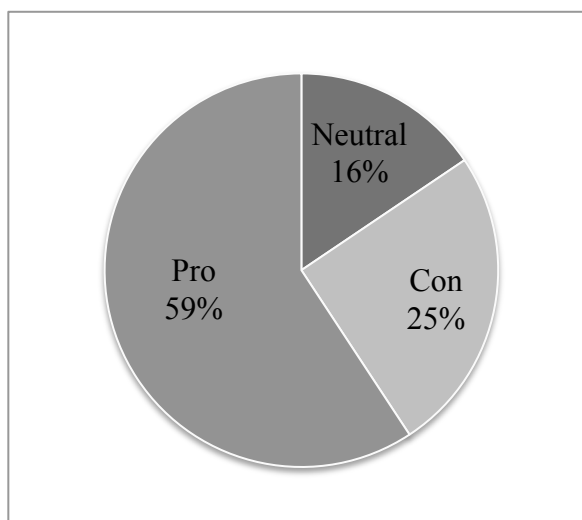
**Figure 15 – Position of *The Daily Gleaner***



**Figure 16 – Position of *Telegraph-Journal***



**Figure 17 – Position of *Times & Transcript***



**Figure 18 – Position of *The Guardian***

Figures 12-18 illustrate the overall position taken by each newspaper. Looking at the position of all the pieces together shows the positional trend taken by each of the newspapers. Figures 12 and 13 demonstrate that each newspaper published more articles expressing a pro electoral reform position than articles taking a con electoral reform position. *The Guardian*, the *Telegraph-Journal*, and the *Times and Transcript* all published more pro electoral reform articles than they did neutral pieces, while *The Daily*

*Gleaner* published an equal number of pro and neutral pieces. *L'Acadie Nouvelle* published a greater number of neutral pieces than it did pro electoral reform pieces, though it did publish more pro electoral reform articles than it did con electoral reform articles.

Figures 14-18 represent the percentage breakdowns of each of the newspapers studied. These figures demonstrate that the *Times & Transcript* and *L'Acadie Nouvelle* came closest to remaining neutral with respect to the entire character of the newspaper. Figure 14 shows *L'Acadie Nouvelle* did publish slightly more articles expressing an opinion than it did neutral, and of the pieces demonstrating an opinion more were pro electoral reform. Figure 17 shows the *Times & Transcript* demonstrated a solid mix of neutral pieces along with substantial number of pieces for and against electoral reform. Neutrality was met by the *Times & Transcript*, not by reliance on neutral pieces but by presenting both opinions on the subject relatively equally throughout the time period studied. Figures 15 and 16 demonstrate that a significant position taken on electoral reform was taken by both *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Telegraph-Journal*. As percentage of articles published, each of these papers published far more articles supporting electoral reform than were published opposing the proposals. Each also published more neutral pieces aimed at providing citizens with information about the proposals without highlighting a position. 90% of articles published by *The Daily Gleaner* were either pro electoral reform or did not take a position, while just 10% of articles opposed reform proposals. 49% of articles published by the *Telegraph-Journal* supported the electoral reform proposals, while 13% opposed the proposals. Like *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Telegraph-Journal*, Figure 18 shows the total character of *The Guardian* was supportive

of electoral reform. The majority of articles published on electoral reform took a pro electoral reform position. 59% of articles on electoral reform were positive in nature, while 25% were opposed. Whereas the New Brunswick newspapers published neutral pieces in relative equivalency to opinionated articles, 84% *The Guardian* published had a position on electoral reform, while 16% did not take a clear position.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrates the complexity of the debate surrounding electoral reform and the complexity of conveying the information to the public. This chapter served to illuminate how the debates surrounding electoral reform took place in the local newspaper media in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. Furthermore, it highlighted how these debates relate to the role of media more generally with respect to conveying political information. In the following chapter I will use the information provided in this chapter to analyse how well the local newspaper media served the three ideal functions of media as outlined in chapter one, regarding electoral reform debates in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

## Chapter Four – Media Analysis

### Introduction

The previous chapter outlined each newspaper's position on electoral reform based on eight criteria. By separating the articles into these eight criteria, it became apparent that, though there were similarities, each newspaper provided unique coverage of the electoral reform initiatives. Overarching trends are present, but each newspaper characterised the debate differently and, in their own way, presented a biased position on electoral reform. Stemming from these differences, this chapter will use the eight criteria from chapter three to analyse how well each of the newspapers served the three ideal functions of promoting a participatory democratic model outlined in chapter one. Specifically it will outline if and how the local newspaper media provided citizens with relevant information and conflicting opinions in order to provide them the opportunity to participate fully in the political decision to accept or reject electoral reform.

Chapter one outlined the three ideal functions of the news media in promoting an arena for a participatory democratic model, whereby citizens are highly informed, engaged and enabled to fully participate in democratic life.<sup>147</sup> This involves providing citizens with necessary information to make informed decisions, and also providing conflicting ideas and arguments to further citizens' ability to understand what is at stake in their decisions. This is especially pertinent in circumstances when referendums are used to accept or reject electoral reform. As demonstrated in chapter one there is considerable debate within these three ideal functions as to the capability and reliability of the media in providing an open forum for debate. It is widely accepted by both

---

<sup>147</sup> Graber, "Media and Democracy," 143.

politicians and the public that the media should serve public interest despite being a private, profit driven enterprise. This chapter will use the eight criteria established in the previous chapter to evaluate how well the newspapers studied did in serving the three ideal functions and enabling a participatory citizenship model.

This chapter will begin with a concise review of the three ideal functions of news media as developed in chapter one. I will then use the eight criteria presented in chapter three to comparatively analyse how the five newspapers fared at serving the three ideal functions outlined in chapter one. Drawing from this analysis, I will assess the overall character of each newspaper in order to highlight the role each played in the greater debates surrounding the electoral reform initiatives. Lastly, I will juxtapose my analysis with Pilon's arguments from, "Investigating Media as a Deliberative Space: Newspaper Opinions about Voting Systems in the 2007 Ontario Provincial Referendum,"<sup>148</sup> in which he found the Ontario newspaper media unable or unwilling to provide a deliberative space. Overall, this chapter seeks to determine if the Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick local newspapers served the public interest and how the bias present affected the character of citizen engagement.

### **Three Ideal Functions of Media**

From chapter one, Graber's four functions of media are to: provide a forum for discussion of diverse, often conflicting, ideas; give voice to public opinion; serve as the public's eyes and ears; and act as public watchdog.<sup>149</sup> All of these functions are part of an overarching goal whereby the media will promote a forum for citizens to become

---

<sup>148</sup> Pilon, "Investigating Media," 1.

<sup>149</sup> Graber, "Media and Democracy," 143.

engaged and develop a full understanding of the debate in order to make an informed political decision.<sup>150</sup> These ideal functions have been analysed with respect to election campaigns when political information from a multitude of sources is pervading the citizenry.<sup>151</sup> My analysis, however, is looking at the local newspaper's ability to serve the three ideal functions (as outlined in chapter one) when characterising the debate surrounding a referendum question to be directly voted on by citizens.

The news media is just one resource citizens might have used to gain information surrounding electoral reform. If adhering to the three ideal functions of media, the newspapers studied would provide a forum where unbiased information and critical engagement for and against electoral reform are presented in a single entity, thereby consolidating information for the electorate. I will look at each function separately, using the results from the previous chapter to assess each newspaper's contribution in providing an open forum in which citizens can grapple with difficult political questions.

### **Provide a Forum for Discussion of Diverse, Often Conflicting Ideas**

The first function of media is to provide a forum for providing information to the public that, in an ideal model, will present both sides of the argument in a fair manner. The forum is not best served as strictly a place for facts, with no opinions or judgements on the policy proposals. It is, instead, best served as forum for debate, where unbiased information is provided alongside conflicting opinions to allow citizens to both understand the issue and gain access to educated opinions about what is at stake in the decision process. To analyse if the newspapers provided an open forum, "for discussion

---

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>151</sup> For example see: Frederick J. Fletcher, "Mass Media and Parliamentary Elections in Canada," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1987): 354; D'Alessio and Allen, "Media Bias in Presidential Elections," 148.

of diverse, often conflicting ideas,”<sup>152</sup> I will analyse electoral reform coverage from reporters published as news reports and columns written by staff and Op/Ed columnists.

Reporters understand their profession as a means to provide readers with the information needed to formulate an educated opinion from a neutral provision of facts.<sup>153</sup> This relates directly to whether or not there was evident bias in the reporters’ articles. The ideal journalistic model holds that all sides are presented in a ‘relatively fair’ manner. Critics of this ideal argue that journalists withhold certain information in order to shape public dialogue in a certain ideological manner.<sup>154</sup> Others argue that the media further solidifies elite opinion rather than providing information to the citizens to allow them to make an informed decision on the proposals’ merits rather than ideological bent.<sup>155</sup> Addressing these critiques will occur by analysing to what extent the news sections of the newspapers provided balanced coverage of the debates, including both neutral informative pieces and conflicting opinions. Journalists are ideally supposed to help citizens engage critically with the information, and open their minds to the conflicting opinions.

Columnists, on the other hand, are expected to write opinion based articles. In this respect, columnists add to the forum by providing a particular position that draws on factual evidence, which works alongside journalists reports to present both information and educated opinions. Columnists are employed by the newspaper and are regular commentators on issues facing the public. As such, they are not necessarily experts on

---

<sup>152</sup> Graber, “Media and Democracy,” 143.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>154</sup> Taras, *Power & Betrayal*, 31.

<sup>155</sup> Schudson, “Media as Political Institutions,” 253.

the particular issue being presented, but they are expected to provide opinions to the public. On the other hand, Op/Ed contributors are invited to write as experts and stakeholders, and are expected to present opinion and further open the arena of debate. By analysing these three sections in concert, I will be able to evaluate how well each did in satisfying the first function of news media, namely providing information and conflicting opinion allowing for critical engagement by the electorate.

To begin, each of the newspapers did provide a number of news stories about the reform initiatives and procedures, and in Prince Edward Island, reporters addressed the plebiscite specifically. In each of the New Brunswick papers, the number of news stories printed was higher than any other type of article studied. *The Guardian*, however, published more letters to the editor than it did news stories about electoral reform, though it did still publish more news stories than the New Brunswick papers combined.<sup>156</sup> The number of articles presented to the public indicates that there was an attempt by the reporters to cover the issue of electoral reform.

### **Analysis of the News Reports**

*The Guardian* reporters presented electoral reform to the citizens with a positive bias. 43 articles presented the information to citizens in a positive manner, while just two pieces reflected a position against electoral reform. 26 articles did not take a position on electoral reform, but instead reported the facts in an unbiased and neutral way.<sup>157</sup> This evidence demonstrates that *The Guardian* did shape political dialogue on electoral reform in a positive manner. The reporters writing about electoral reform at *The Guardian* did

---

<sup>156</sup> See Appendix: Number of News Stories Guardian 72, NB papers 71.

<sup>157</sup> See Figure 6.

not feel a duty to provide unbiased information, or to provide equitable coverage of the electoral reform debates. Citizens relying on *The Guardian* for information and insight to formulate an opinion were provided with articles highlighting the positive aspects of reform without considering the arguments of those opposed to reform. Articles were not presented in a neutral manner, nor were positive and negative positions represented in equitable numbers. *The Guardian* reporters did attempt to shape political dialogue in a particular way and thus did not fulfil the first ideal function of the news media.

This positive position was not, however, a reflection of political elite opinion, but instead reflected and solidified the position of the Commissioners mandated to study and propose the best electoral model for Prince Edward Island. Political elites resoundingly spoke out against electoral reform and did little to provide citizens with all aspects of the debate.<sup>158</sup> *The Guardian* did not resoundingly report on the opinions of the political elite, but instead focused on opinions of advocates and called attention to the inherent bias of political elites against reform. Overall, the positive characterisation of electoral debate by the journalists narrows the scope of public forum that *The Guardian* provided in helping citizens to critically engage with different opinions on electoral reform.

In comparison to *The Guardian*, the New Brunswick reporters did adhere more fully to the journalistic understanding of the ideal of presenting an unbiased position by publishing neutral articles written to educate the electorate. Not all articles published were neutral in position, but pieces that did take a position were fewer than those that presented an opinion.

---

<sup>158</sup> David McLaughlin, "The New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy," in *Democratic Reform in New Brunswick*, ed. William Cross (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2007), 29; Cousins, "Prince Edward Island's Cautious Path," 288.

To begin, *The Daily Gleaner* presented a completely balanced position on electoral reform in its news stories. All but two articles were neutral informative stories, demonstrating the balance that ideal journalists think they should follow in presenting information. As for the two articles that did take a position on electoral reform, one presented a positive opinion while the other presented a negative opinion. In the case of *The Daily Gleaner*, reporters did manage to provide citizens with highly relevant information without presenting an overt bias.

The *Telegraph-Journal*, the *Times & Transcript*, and *L'Acadie Nouvelle* also generally remained as neutral purveyors of information, though each did publish articles with inherent positions on the reform initiative. Though each newspaper presented more neutral articles than it did articles that presented an opinion, the articles that presented an opinion were pervasively positive. The *Telegraph-Journal* did publish three articles with a positive opinion on electoral reform, while it published zero articles with a negative position. Though it did not present positive and negative positions equally, it did present sixteen neutral articles that focused on all sides of the debate as well as completely neutral articles. The *Times & Transcript* and *L'Acadie Nouvelle* both published articles on both sides of the debate, and though they each published more positive articles than negative, overall their characterisation of the debate remained unbiased.

The adherence to publishing more unbiased articles allowed the electorate in New Brunswick the ability to access information on electoral reform in more open forum than citizens in Prince Edward Island, though this coverage was fairly limited in comparison to the coverage in *The Guardian*. In New Brunswick, articles that took a position on electoral reform were more so confined to the sections of the newspaper that are designed

to open the debate to educated positions and opinions. In the two provinces, the New Brunswick papers better exemplify an adherence to the balanced presentation of information and position by journalists.

The balanced presentation of news reports is not the only concern for newspapers providing a forum for conflicting ideas. For my analysis regarding the first function of news media, I also will look at the position of columnists and Op/Ed contributors. Reporters are supposed to open the forum by providing citizens an understanding of the topic and better enabling the electorate to engage in critical debate. Once citizens are educated and exposed to conflicting debates, opinion based sections of the newspaper work to further illuminate different arguments and help citizens to understand what is at stake in the debate. Analysing what positions were presented by columnists and Op/Ed contributors will further illuminate each newspaper's willingness to present and engage with different opinions and further highlight each newspapers discernable position on electoral reform.

### **Analysis of the Columns and Op/Ed Columns**

To begin, it is worth noting that, like news stories, *The Guardian* published more columns than each of the New Brunswick newspapers. It was also the only newspaper that included Op/Ed pieces, while the New Brunswick papers limited contributions from non-staff to the letters to the editor section.

*The Guardian* columnists presented positive opinions on electoral reform and also published one neutral piece.<sup>159</sup> This further separates the position of *The Guardian* from the position of the political elites. Columnists are expected to provide personal

---

<sup>159</sup> See Figure 7.

opinion and as such cannot be expected to provide both sides of the debate, but six columnists wrote fourteen columns on electoral reform for *The Guardian* and all (except one neutral piece) took a positive position on electoral reform. This unified position on electoral reform further solidifies the positive characterisation of electoral reform debate in *The Guardian*.

The Op/Ed contributors furthered this pro electoral reform position, though there was an effort to include conflicting opinions. These pieces were written by invited contributors, such as Doris Anderson as President of Fair Vote Canada, Mark Greenan leader of the Prince Edward Island Yes Campaign, former MLA Jeannie Lea writing on behalf of women's groups and Ivan MacArthur spokesman for the No to the MMP proposal coalition.<sup>160</sup> The newspaper solicited these Op/Ed contributions and the writers were given greater column space than generally attributed to members of the public through the letters section. By publishing the Op/Ed columns, the editorial board is further able to shape the debate in a particular manner, which *The Guardian* did by presenting a greater number of positive pieces. Of Op/Ed columns published, almost three times as many were positive on electoral reform than negative. The Op/Ed columns gave *The Guardian* the opportunity to balance its coverage on electoral reform, but instead it continued to present a more positive position on electoral reform.

Combining the results of the news stories and the columns, it is evident that though *The Guardian* was providing a forum for dialogue, it was not fulfilling the first ideal function of media; rather it used its columns to further entrench the positive aspect

---

<sup>160</sup> For example see: Doris Anderson, "Bring in a new era by voting 'Yes' to PR," *Guardian* (November 6, 2005); Jeannie Lea, "From where I sat in the house, it was clear something was wrong with our system," *Guardian* (November 25, 2005); Ivan MacArthur, "Another look at single transferable vote," *Guardian* (August 6, 2005).

of reforms. Between the columns and the reporting there was little voice given to those against the reforms. These results further highlight *The Guardian*'s positive position on the electoral reform debate in Prince Edward Island, and its willingness to use its influence to shape the opinion of the public. *The Guardian* did not adhere to the idealistic media role as a balanced purveyor of information, and it did not push the opinion of political elites. Instead, *The Guardian* was willing to push an agenda against popular and elite opinion and attempted to establish a dialogue for reform.

The New Brunswick papers published far fewer columns on electoral reform and did not include any specific Op/Ed pieces. Likewise, though all New Brunswick newspapers published more news stories than any other singular type of article, the use of columns by each paper differed. This demonstrates the willingness of the different newspapers to engage with media elite opinion in addition to public opinion in differing amounts. This is significant because it relates to how the newspapers' shape the opinion presented and further solidifies how the character of debate is going to take place in the paper. Whereas analysing the news reports the New Brunswick newspapers produced relatively similar results, the position of the columnists was highly varied.

In the case of *The Daily Gleaner* only two columns were published, and both promoted the adoption of electoral reform. Interestingly, the two columns were written by Brent Taylor, an appointed member of the Commission on Legislative Democracy which had recommended the reform.<sup>161</sup> Taylor was a regular columnist employed by *The Daily Gleaner* and had served as MLA for Southwest Miramichi as a member of the

---

<sup>161</sup> Veterans Review and Appeal Board, "Biographies – Brent Taylor," Veterans Review and Appeal Board. <http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca/Members-membres/Taylor-eng.cfm>. (accessed March 8, 2011); Brent Taylor, "Electoral Change on Horizon," *Daily Gleaner* (May 24, 2005); Brent Taylor, "Minority Governments are not Necessarily Bad," *Daily Gleaner* (June 6, 2004).

Confederation of Regions party from 1991-1995. When combining these two columns with the news reports, *The Daily Gleaner* remains relatively neutral in its position on electoral reform, though the limited coverage and single position in the columns does little to contribute to the ideal of presenting conflicting ideas, and thus *The Daily Gleaner* only half serves the first function of media.

The *Times & Transcript* published four columns, three against electoral reform while one remained neutral. Each negative column was written by Norbert Cunningham, who also served as the head of the editorial board.<sup>162</sup> When analysing the negative position of the columns alongside the news stories, the *Times & Transcripts* presented six positive, four negative and 12 neutral articles and columns.<sup>163</sup> The totality of these pieces presents citizens with both information and critical engagement with opposing views, further opening the dialogue and enhancing the deliberative space. In this respect, the *Times & Transcript* is serving the first function media and providing a forum of conflicting ideas and open dialogue and debate.

The *Telegraph-Journal* published the greatest number of columns of the New Brunswick newspapers, and of these columns, the majority were pro electoral reform. With nine positive, two negative, and three neutral, the columns were written by many different columnists and include a three part series devoted to fully investigating and promoting reform initiatives.<sup>164</sup> Unlike, *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Times & Transcript*,

---

<sup>162</sup>Norbert Cunningham, "Do NBers Want to Weaken Democracy?," *Times & Transcript* (January 24, 2005); Norbert Cunningham, "Our Politicians Must Rescue Armed Forces," *Times & Transcript* (October 14, 2004); Norbert Cunningham, "Ideas to Make our Politics more Democratic," *Times & Transcript* (March 16, 2004).

<sup>163</sup> See Figures 6 and 7.

<sup>164</sup> Sarah McGinnis, "The New Face of Democracy," *Telegraph-Journal* (July 31, 2004); Lorne McGuigan, "What is Your Opinion on Democracy?," *Telegraph-Journal* (August 20, 2004); Lorne McGuigan, "Why

the columns in the *Telegraph-Journal* were written by many contributors and all but one supported the proposals.<sup>165</sup> This primarily unified positive position combined with the no negative coverage in the news articles positions the *Telegraph-Journal* as highly pro reform. In analysing the news coverage and columnist position, the *Telegraph-Journal* did not strive to create an open forum for conflicting ideas, but like *The Guardian*, promoted a pro reform dialogue juxtaposed to the political elites' anti-reform rhetoric.

*L'Acadie Nouvelle* published four columns, two promoting the reforms and two rejecting the reform proposals. These columns directly spoke to how the electoral reform initiatives would change the Francophone representation in the province. Interestingly, three columns were written by Luc Desjardins, who changed his position on reform depending on what aspect of reform he was discussing.<sup>166</sup> By presenting conflicting ideas *L'Acadie Nouvelle* represented the dialogue of debate that was happening in the province.

Because *L'Acadie Nouvelle* did not include letters to the editor I will analyse the editorials in concert with the news and columns. Much like the columns, the editorial board presented a neutral position on electoral reform, publishing two editorials supporting and two editorials rejecting reform initiatives. The editorials published were not written on behalf of the editorial board as a whole but were signed by the respective authors. Each of the opinions was based on different aspects of reform, and all presented

---

Electoral Reform Should Catch Your Interest,” *Telegraph-Journal* (August 27, 2004); Though Lorne McGuigan was a member of the Commission on Legislative Democracy and not a staff journalist for the paper, I categorised this three-part series as a Column, and not an Op/Ed Column because it was undertaken as a Feature Column series arranged by a regular columnist for the paper.

<sup>165</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>166</sup> Luc Desjardins, “Réforme démocratique,” *L'Acadie Nouvelle* (June 26, 2006); Luc Desjardins, “Alea jacta,” *L'Acadia Nouvelle* (September 18, 2006); Luc Desjardins, “Démocratie législative bicommunautaire,” *L'Acadie Nouvelle* (February 28, 2005).

evidence to support the claims made in the articles. Combining editorials, columns and news articles, *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, promoted a viable forum outlining different arguments and thus served the first function of the news media relatively well.

Overall, each newspaper adhered to providing an open forum for diverse, often conflicting ideas to varying degrees. By analysing the positions promoted in the news stories, columns and Op/Ed articles, it is evident that each newspaper presented argument in different capacities, with some more willing than others to take a clear position on the issue. In the cases of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick electoral reform debates, the local newspaper media was willing to engage in discussion of reform and did not serve the political elites' opinion.

### **Give Voice to Public Opinion**

The second goal of the media is to give voice to public opinion. Because it is difficult to represent public opinion in news stories due to time and financial restraints, public opinion is represented in the opinion pages, primarily in the letters to the editor section of the newspaper. Letters to the editor provide citizens with the means to engage in the debate and offer opinion and insight, rather than remaining strict consumers of information. Letters to the editor allow engaged citizens to enter the debate and confront or support articles and positions in the publication more generally. By providing citizens a voice in the debate readers can gain insight into opinion of the greater public and not just opinion of media elites.

It is important to note that letters to the editor represent voluntary participation and do not necessarily reflect positions of the public more generally but instead letters represent highly engaged or highly enraged individuals' positions. Likewise, because not

all letters are printed, there are speculative arguments that selectivity and gate-keeping biases are involved in determining what letters get published.<sup>167</sup> For critics, the letters to the editor section represents another opportunity for the editorial board to manipulate the discourse and promote a unilateral position, highlighting that position as the view of the wider public. It is not possible to know what letters were rejected by the different editorial boards, and thus it is impossible to use the letters as evidence for public opinion generally. But knowing what letters were published can provide general insight into the position of the newspapers. In order to analyse the role of the letters to the editor section in providing a voice to the public, I will also be analysing the position of the editorial board. This will offer insight into how the character of debate in the letters section is reflective of or counter to the position of the editorial board and the paper more generally.

Of the newspapers studied, *The Guardian* was the only one to publish more letters to the editor than news stories. This shows a strong willingness to allow citizens a voice in the debate and represents a willingness of the editorial board to open the discussion to, both, a broader audience and to wider opinion.

*The Guardian*'s editorial board arguably took a positive position on electoral reform, publishing no editorials against the proposed changes. They did, however, publish more neutral pieces, than they did those that supported the reforms.<sup>168</sup> The neutral editorials were focused on trying to get Islanders to take reform proposals seriously and educate themselves about the proposals and prepare themselves for the plebiscite. These editorials did not push the electorate to vote for or against reforms, but

---

<sup>167</sup> D'Alessio and Allen, "Media Bias in Presidential Elections," 136.

<sup>168</sup> See Figure 8.

instead tried to promote citizens engagement.<sup>169</sup> Editorials are designed to allow the editorial board to take a position on a subject and present this position to the public. *The Guardian* editorial board did push a decidedly pro reform agenda, but also pushed for more citizen engagement and for citizens to engage fully with the issue of electoral reform.

Though the editorial board did take a positive position on electoral reform, the letters to the editor section was the least biased portion of the newspaper. The editors did publish slightly more letters in favour of reform, but they did not withhold letters against reform. Arguments that the editorial board is able to manipulate the tenor of dialogue by using gate-keeping and selectivity bias do not seem relevant in the case of *The Guardian*. Though it is impossible to know what letters were not published, by publishing a relatively equal number of letters for and against the reforms, the editorial board demonstrated a willingness to publish opinions that differed from those of people working at the newspaper. From the editorial board's position and the letters published, *The Guardian* did serve the second function of democracy by providing ample space for the public to voice differing opinions in a relatively open forum.

*The Daily Gleaner* and *Telegraph-Journal*'s editorial boards took positive positions on electoral reform, and in each case this positive position carried over to the letters section.<sup>170</sup> Each newspaper published far more letters supporting reform than it did letters against reform. Each newspaper did allow citizens to voice opinion on electoral reform, but the opinions expressed resoundingly supported the editorial position

---

<sup>169</sup> For Example see: Editorial Board, "Electoral Future website enhanced," *Guardian* (August 4, 2005); Editorial Board, "Electoral Reform: Getting Informed," *Guardian* (September 20, 2005); Editorial Board, "O.K. Islanders, Get out and Cast Your Vote," *Guardian* (November 28, 2005).

<sup>170</sup> See Figure 8.

of the newspaper. There is only speculative evidence of manipulation by the editorial board in this manner, but the corresponding position of the letters section and the editorial board further positions *The Daily Gleaner* and *Telegraph-Journal* as decidedly pro reform.

Deeper analysis of the letters published in these two newspapers further demonstrates a limited public dialogue. The same individual wrote seven of the fifteen letters published in the two papers.<sup>171</sup> These seven letters all championed reform. Reliance on one person's letters demonstrates a willingness of these two papers to present positive citizen opinion on reform, further entrenching in society the opinion of the newspaper. Not knowing what letters were rejected makes analysis of why this occurred impossible as it cannot be known if these were the only letters the newspapers were receiving. However, presenting this one individual's pro electoral reform letters gives the impression of a highly supportive public, while the public might actually have been largely disengaged in the debate.

Looking at the number of articles published can give us further insight into the desire to give voice to public opinion. *The Daily Gleaner* published more letters to the editor than it did columns and editorials. This demonstrates a willingness to allow citizens to voice opinions on debate in a greater capacity than it was being discussed by the newspaper staff. The *Telegraph-Journal*, on the other hand, published more editorials and columns on electoral reform than it did letters to the editor. This shows a difference in the amount of debate taking place in these two newspapers. The *Telegraph-Journal* relied heavily on media elite opinion being presented to the readers, while readers' letters on the subject were either not printed or not received. Regardless of

---

<sup>171</sup> See Appendix.

intent, which cannot entirely be known, *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Telegraph-Journal* did entrench the positive editorial position on electoral reform in the letters to the editor section, further removing voices of dissent from the debate. Without more information it is difficult to analyse if *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Telegraph-Journal* provided a forum for public opinion or used the letters to further their own position. Each did, however, provide only limited space to give voice to public opinion, though the reason for this cannot be known from my study.

The *Times & Transcript's* editorial board took a decidedly negative position on electoral reform. Columnist Norbert Cunningham serves as head of the editorial board, and his negative position on electoral reform, which is evident from his columns was also evident in the editorials. This demonstrates the ability of an individual to shape the political commentary of the entire newspaper. Cunningham was able to voice his opinion both in his columns and in editorials, and this allowed him to further promote his position on electoral reform.

Unlike *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Telegraph-Journal*, however, the anti-reform rhetoric in the editorials is not reflected in the published letters to the editor. In response to the position of the newspaper, the *Times & Transcript* published eight letters in support of electoral reform and just two opposed, with one of the letters opposing the reforms published as a letter to the editor by Cunningham.<sup>172</sup> Like *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Telegraph-Journal*, primarily one individual championed the pro reform position. Specifically, one individual wrote half of the letters supporting electoral reform.<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>172</sup> Norbert Cunningham, "Playing Chicken and Listening to Voters," *Times & Transcript*, October 5, 2005; See Figure 9.

<sup>173</sup> See Appendix.

The *Times & Transcript* demonstrates the use of the letters to the editor section as a means to both, provide citizens a chance to respond to the opinions expressed in the commentary sections of the newspaper, and to balance the overall characterisation of the debate in the newspaper more generally. Like *The Daily Gleaner*, the *Times & Transcript* published more letters to the editor than it did columns and editorials combined. This demonstrates a willingness to open the forum to public debate that was not representative of the editorial position of the newspaper. By publishing more letters supporting reform, the *Times & Transcript* positioned itself as a generally balanced purveyor of information, if not slightly pro reform, while the editorial board was clearly against electoral reform.<sup>174</sup> This acceptance and provision of conflicting ideas and increased richness of debate, demonstrates the ideal nature of media in political debate. The *Times & Transcript* demonstrates a forum for the discussion of ideas that includes a voice for public opinion contrary to the position of the paper. This reflects a news media source that is serving the public interest by providing for educated and reflective debate on the political matters facing the public.

Without accessing any letters it is impossible to know to what extent *L'Acadie Nouvelle* allowed public voice in the debate, which limits my ability to analyse the French language newspaper in the same manner as the English language New Brunswick newspapers. Overall, the newspapers that included letters to editor did so in different ways, and in doing so achieved different ends.

Comparing the two provinces, it is evident that the debate in the public and in the media was fairly limited in New Brunswick when compared to the widespread debate and

---

<sup>174</sup> See Figure 17.

space provided for such debate in *The Guardian*. There is evidence that this is a reflection of the seriousness of the debate in the two provinces. The majority of coverage in *The Guardian* occurred in the final six months before the plebiscite.<sup>175</sup> After the Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future published its final recommendations, including the plebiscite question and concrete model to be voted on, attention to and coverage of electoral reform increased. This corresponds to public meetings and public education from non-media sources also providing information to citizens.

### **Surveillance and Watchdog Functions**

The third ideal function of the media is to oversee political elites and alert the public to any misdeeds or manipulation. This is known as the surveillance or watchdog function. Graber describes, "above all other criticisms, the media have been accused of major shortcomings in political surveillance, compounded by shallow presentations and a failure to feature diverse points of view."<sup>176</sup> The surveillance and watchdog function serves to highlight misbehaviour of politicians and calls attention to political mismanagement.<sup>177</sup> There are two main institutional failings that, for critics, complicate the ability of the media to act in a surveillance and watchdog capacity. First, journalists lack resources, such as time and money, to fully investigate issues and as such are unable to hold powerful politicians accountable for misbehaviour.<sup>178</sup> Second, concentration of media ownership allows conglomerates to shape the message, especially in communities

---

<sup>175</sup> See Figure 11.

<sup>176</sup> Graber, "Media and Democracy," 148.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

where they are the only news source.<sup>179</sup> This section will explore both failings with respect to the coverage in the newspapers studied.

First, with respect to being able to complete the surveillance and watchdog function, the main source of political manipulation taking place in these two provinces relates to words versus actions of the politicians. In both provinces, the government established a Commission to highlight how to better democratic practice in the province, maintaining that more and better democracy was needed. When it came time to allow citizens to vote on the changes, however, in both provinces different political manipulation showcased a willingness of the political elites to forego re-invigorating democracy in order to retain power by adhering to the status quo. In Prince Edward Island, this was demonstrated by manipulation of the plebiscite procedures and the imposition of drastic super-majority rules. In New Brunswick, this was demonstrated by Lord's refusal to call for a referendum on the issue.

In Prince Edward Island, *The Guardian* did attempt to hold Premier Binns to account for the plebiscite manipulation. The editorial board, especially, focused on the plebiscite procedure in multiple editorials, which called for a fair, free and open plebiscite procedure. Without taking a position for or against electoral reform, the editorial board argued that Binns' manipulation of the process was damaging to Island democracy more generally. The editorial board attempted to draw attention to the political manipulation and force a fairer and more open electoral process.<sup>180</sup> *The Guardian* did serve a surveillance and watchdog function by calling public attention to

---

<sup>179</sup> Schudson, "Media as Political Institutions," 252-253; Taras, *Power & Betrayal*, 23.

<sup>180</sup> For Example See: Editorial Board, "Island Voters Have a Right to Know," *Guardian* (October 25, 2005); Editorial Board, "By Establishing a 60 Percent Threshold for the Nov. 28 Plebiscite, the Premier is Tilting the Exercise in Favour of Status Quo," *Guardian* (October 28, 2005).

the political manipulation of the reform procedures and calling for greater public education and participation in the reform process.

In New Brunswick, there was less focus on challenging Lord's position on electoral reform and stories focused more so on reform procedures. There was little attention paid to challenging the political responses to the Commission's recommendations and there was no reaction to Lord's refusal to set a referendum date.<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, the comparatively limited coverage in New Brunswick versus in *The Guardian*, allowed New Brunswick political elites to readily ignore the Commission's electoral reform proposals and focus on other recommendations. In this respect the New Brunswick papers did not act in a surveillance and watchdog capacity, but instead allowed political manipulation to go unchallenged.

The concentration of media ownership is another major concern for critical media analysts. The two arguments that will be addressed here will be: that concentration of media ownership promotes re-printing of articles in multiple news sources in order to cut costs, and that in smaller markets, concentration of media ownership will allow media elites to manipulate the political message in one direction. The three English language New Brunswick newspapers are all owned and operated by Brunswick News, a media conglomerate owned by J.K. Irving.<sup>182</sup> As demonstrated in the previous chapter, *The Daily Gleaner*, the *Telegraph-Journal*, and the *Times & Transcript* all presented varied

---

<sup>181</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>182</sup> Brunswick News, "Brunswick News – Publications," Brunswick News. <http://www.brunswicknews.com/publications.php>. (accessed March 8, 2011).

positions on electoral reform.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, analysis from this chapter highlights difference in where the positions of the papers were manifested.

Within the three newspapers there was no overlap in the stories published. Journalists and editorial board members were unique to each publication, and stories picked up from wire services differed as well. Where there was overlap was in the letters to the editor section. As stated above, *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Telegraph-Journal* each published letters written by the same individual, though each of the letters differed slightly from each other. Likewise, all three newspapers published letters written by Mark Greenan, an electoral reform activist advocating for the adoption of Prince Edward Island initiatives, but each letter was presenting different arguments in response to something that had been published in the paper. This creates varied press in the province and furthers the ability of citizens to access relevant information and enables them to better understand and contemplate reform measures.

*The Daily Gleaner*, the *Telegraph-Journal*, and the *Times & Transcript* represented the three English-language New Brunswick newspapers with a daily circulation greater than 10,000, and as such, represent the locally run newspaper market. Despite the concentration in ownership, the newspapers presented varied positions and, in doing so, challenge the idea of shrinking deliberative space and eroding marketplace of ideas as put forth by critical media scholars.<sup>184</sup> In the case of New Brunswick, the powerful Brunswick News media conglomerate did not manipulate the message and use its multiple newspapers to promote either side of the debate. The biases demonstrated in

---

<sup>183</sup> See Figures 15-17.

<sup>184</sup> Schudson, "Media as Political Institutions," 252-253; Taras, *Power & Betrayal*, 23.

these newspapers are all attributable to the respective newspapers and not the parent company.

### **Comparative Analysis of the Five Newspapers**

Overall, each of the newspapers studied did present information with some form of bias, though the amount of bias and how the bias was presented differed between the papers. Overall, *The Guardian* was the most pro reform paper with 59% (160 of 270) of electoral reform coverage offering a pro reform position, while 25% (68 of 270) were negative and 16% (42 of 279) providing no discernable position. However, when looking strictly at the articles that presented a position on electoral reform *The Daily Gleaner* is the most positive with 81% (13/16) of articles presenting a pro reform position.<sup>185</sup>

In Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick citizens were asked participate in the electoral reform process by way of referendums. Though in New Brunswick the referendum never took place, the Commission's insistence of a referendum, created a participatory space for the electorate. This reliance on the electorate to make the final decision on electoral reform makes it critical for the news media to serve the three ideal functions. Chapter two, outlined the differences between the citizen driven deliberative process in British Columbia and Ontario, and the elite driven processes in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. Each Commission recommended a large education campaign before the issue was put to a referendum but as demonstrated in chapter two, the education of citizens largely took place in the media.

---

<sup>185</sup> The other newspapers position strictly using pieces with position are as follows: *The Telegraph-Journal* – 78% pro reform; *the Guardian* – 70% pro reform; *L'Acadie Nouvelle* – 62.5% pro reform; and *Times & Transcript* – 58% pro reform.

To this point, I have offered an analysis as to the biases of the newspaper without stipulating how each newspaper was promoting its particular positions. Though, it is difficult to discern the motivations of the media elites without further investigation through interviews, I am able to point to some common themes highlighted by the different newspapers.

### ***The Guardian***

*The Guardian's* pro reform bias was demonstrated through three types of arguments: (1) PR would promote fairer representation; (2) Prince Edward Island should lead the way for electoral reform in Canada and; (3) arguments that challenged political manipulation in the reform procedures. First, arguments about fairer representation focused on promoting a greater role for women and allowing votes for other parties to count toward representation. *The Guardian* highlighted the position of various women's groups supporting the proposed MMP model, and invited prominent women to write Op/Ed columns promoting PR's ability to bring women into the political process.<sup>186</sup> *The Guardian* also focused different types of articles on NDP and Green party support of electoral reform recommendations.<sup>187</sup> By focusing on how MMP could promote a greater role for women and additional parties in the legislature, *The Guardian* was promoting the need for a more diverse legislature is more representative of social diversity and individual voter intentions. Arguments supporting the MMP proposal were also based on

---

<sup>186</sup> See for example: Andrea Simpson, "Improving Opportunities for Women in Politics," *Guardian*, August 8, 2003; Natalie King, "Political System Needs Change to Entice Women," *Guardian*, July 31, 2003.

<sup>187</sup> See for example: Wayne Thibodeau, "NDP Leader says Current Electoral System is Failing Islanders," *Guardian*, September 29, 2003; Staff Journalist, "Green Party Nearing Formation," *Guardian*, July 6, 2005.

the promoting Prince Edward Island as a model for the rest of Canada.<sup>188</sup> These arguments presented the position that, by adopting the MMP proposals, Prince Edward Island would become a leader in Canada. These arguments are the basis of the promoting a different image of Prince Edward Island to the rest of the country. The last thematic argument for adopting the MMP proposals in *The Guardian* focused on challenging the reservations to change of the traditional political elites, namely the Progressive Conservatives and Liberals.<sup>189</sup> *The Guardian* published articles challenging the role of Premier Binns in the plebiscite process, thus drawing attention to the conflict of interest of allowing political elites to control the referendum process. Furthermore, arguments were specifically made about the 60% super-majority threshold needed for passage.<sup>190</sup>

### ***The Daily Gleaner***

*The Daily Gleaner* promoted a pro reform position in New Brunswick. This pro reform bias manifested in two main themes: (1) general arguments about ‘fairness’ and; (2) Premier Lord’s role in the adopting reform recommendations. First, unlike *The Guardian*, which focused on specific arguments supporting reform, *The Daily Gleaner*’s did not promote specific arguments. Instead, *The Daily Gleaner*, promoted general arguments about how PR would promote ‘fairer’ election results, without qualifying what

---

<sup>188</sup> See for example: Hendrik de Pagter, “Islanders have an Historic Opportunity to say Yes to PR,” *The Guardian*, November 22, 2005; Harry Baglole, “A Chance to Lead the Way,” February 10, 2004.

<sup>189</sup> See for example: Alan C. Holman, “Do Grits, Tories Fear Electoral Change,” *Guardian*, September 17, 2005; Wayne Thibodeau, “Premier is tinkering with vote: Carruthers says,” *Guardian*, November 9, 2005; Ron Ryder, “Yes Supporters Voice Concerns to Binns about Plebiscite Rules,” *Guardian*, November 17, 2005.

<sup>190</sup> See for example: Editorial Board, “By Establishing a 60 Percent Threshold for the Nov. 28 Plebiscite, the Premier is Tilting the Exercise in Favour of Status Quo,” *Guardian*, October 28, 2005.

values they were trying to promote.<sup>191</sup> When the articles did give specific examples they outlined how SMP tends to create large majorities in the legislature, thereby leaving little voice for opposition members.<sup>192</sup> These specifics, however, were often based in articles highlighting the work of the Commission and usually remained unbiased in their presentation of information.

Second, *The Daily Gleaner* also focused many articles on the role of Premier Lord in the reform process and urging for a referendum.<sup>193</sup> These articles challenged Premier Lord to take a position on electoral reform and to not allow the Commission's recommendations to go unheard. *The Daily Gleaner* promoted a greater role for Lord in the reform process, and highlighted his comments that a referendum would be called. Though establishing a meaningful role for Lord in the process, *The Daily Gleaner* did not directly challenge the Premier to set a date for the referendum.

### ***Telegraph-Journal***

The *Telegraph-Journal* presented a pro reform position by focusing on the language of 're-invigorating democracy.' Like *The Daily Gleaner*, the *Telegraph-Journal* did not promote specific arguments about the MMP procedures, but lauded the Commission's work on promoting strong democratic practice in New Brunswick. These arguments took two main forms. First, articles were aimed at involving citizens in the process and trying to get readers to engage with the pro electoral reform arguments by situating New Brunswick recommendations in the greater debate occurring throughout

---

<sup>191</sup> See for example: Phil Duchastel, "Fair Voting System Needed," *Daily Gleaner*, June 10, 2005; S. Bruce Benton, "Every Vote Counts in Electoral Process," *Daily Gleaner*, August 29, 2006.

<sup>192</sup> See for example: Shannon Hagerman, "Hearings to Focus on Democracy," *Daily Gleaner*, May 17, 2004.

<sup>193</sup> See for example: Editorial Board, "Premier Lord Has Work To Do," *Daily Gleaner*, October 18, 2003; S. Bruce Benton, "Which System is Lord Backing?," *Daily Gleaner*, June 13, 2005.

Canada.<sup>194</sup> Second, arguments promoted the MMP model as a new brand of democracy that would spark a new interest in politics in New Brunswick.<sup>195</sup>

### ***Times & Transcript***

The bias presented in the *Times & Transcript* needs to be broken down into the anti-reform bias in the columns and editorials and the pro reform bias in the news articles and the in the letters section. The columns and editorials provided the majority of the anti-reform articles. These pieces focused on arguments about decreased accountability and questioned the legitimacy of ‘appointed’ MLAs.<sup>196</sup> The anti-reform articles presented specific problems with the MMP model as suggested by the Commission and They argued that electoral reform would weaken democracy in New Brunswick and offered alternative reforms, such as removing party discipline and moving towards a majoritarian voting system.<sup>197</sup>

The news articles and letters to the editor presented a pro reform bias. This pro reform bias highlighted how PR would better serve the qualities that citizens want in an electoral system.<sup>198</sup> They also argued that a change to PR was imminent throughout

---

<sup>194</sup> See for example: Richard Roik, “Appetite is Growing in Canada for Proportional Representation,” *Telegraph-Journal*, May 10, 2004; Everton McLean, “B.C. Results Seen Spurring Possible Change in N.B.,” *Telegraph-Journal*, May 20, 2005.

<sup>195</sup> See for example: Sarah McGinnis, “The New Face of Democracy,” *Telegraph-Journal*, July 31, 2004; Clay Merrithew, “Proportional Representation is the Best Solution,” *Telegraph-Journal*, April 27, 2004.

<sup>196</sup> See for example: Editorial Board, “Keep Politics Representative,” *Times & Transcript*, May 2, 2004; Editorial Board, “Appointed MLAs are Unacceptable,” *Times & Transcript*, June 21, 2006.

<sup>197</sup> See for example: Editorial Board, “Politicians Must Reform Approach,” *Times & Transcript*, September 9, 2009; Norbert Cunningham, “Ideas to Make Our Politics More Democratic,” *Times & Transcript*, March 16, 2004.

<sup>198</sup> See for example: Keith J. Tindale, “Proportional Systems Better,” *Times & Transcript*, September 30, 2004; Campbell Morrison, “NBers to Decide Fate of Electoral Reform,” *Times & Transcript*, February 28, 2004.

Canada, and it was time for New Brunswick to recognise the failing of SMP.<sup>199</sup> Like *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Telegraph-Journal*, the arguments supporting electoral reform remained relatively general arguments about the need promote fairer results and more democratic practice without offering specific arguments.

### ***L'Acadie Nouvelle***

*L'Acadie Nouvelle* presented a varied bias surrounding electoral reform proposals. Unlike the English language newspaper support for electoral reform, *L'Acadie Nouvelle* did not rely on general arguments about fairness and democracy, but instead focused the pro reform sentiment on specific representative concerns that PR might help overcome. Articles that presented a pro reform position focused specifically on bringing different voices into New Brunswick politics. These included arguments about how proportional representation might encourage more women to seek public office, and how PR might encourage youth to re-engage with politics.<sup>200</sup> Arguments against reform were focused specifically on how the proposed MMP system would affect Francophone representation in the Legislature.<sup>201</sup> These articles were not specifically anti-reform, but wanted more information about changes to the electoral boundaries and assurances that the Francophone population in the province would still be fairly represented. Overall, each newspaper presented different arguments about electoral reform, with emphasis on

---

<sup>199</sup> See for example: Keith J. Tindale, "Time for Drastic Overhaul," *Times & Transcript*, August 16, 2005; Allen Rod, "Electoral Reform's Time Has Come," *Times & Transcript*, September 24, 2004.

<sup>200</sup> See for example: Charles-Antoine Gagnon, "Le taux de participation des 18 à 20 ans est très faible," *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, January 20, 2004; Mary Lou Stirling, "La réforme électorale: de bonnes nouvelles pour les femmes," *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, June 12, 2004.

<sup>201</sup> See for example: Luc Desjardins, "Démocratie législative bicommunautaire," *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, February 28, 2005.

different arguments pertaining to what the writers deemed as important aspects of democracy.

### **Comparison to Ontario Newspapers and the 2007 Ontario Referendum**

This relates directly to Pilon's study, which determined that the Ontario broadsheet dailies did not provide a deliberative space for citizens to become educated on the issue of electoral reform. In "Investigating Media as a Deliberative Space: Newspaper Opinions about Voting Systems in the 2007 Ontario Provincial Referendum,"<sup>202</sup> Pilon uses evidence from broadsheet dailies with circulation over 100,000 in Ontario to highlight limitations in deliberative democratic practice. Looking at the editorials, columns, and Op/Ed columns, Pilon argues that the newspapers studied presented a highly unbalanced, mainly negative, position on electoral reform and did not engage with opposing views. In this sense, newspaper coverage was not balanced or representative and limited the ability of citizens to engage with both sides of the debate, further limiting their ability to assess what was at stake with respect to electoral reform.<sup>203</sup>

These results do not reflect the results of my study of the local newspaper media in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. Though there are several differences in the scope and nature of the studies, this thesis has demonstrated that the local newspaper media in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick did a superior job creating a deliberative space than did the Ontario papers. The differences in scope of the studies is consequential in many regards, however, if I limit analysis to the position of editorials,

---

<sup>202</sup> Pilon, "Investigating Media," 1.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 12.

columns and Op/Ed columns, my analysis of the position of the newspapers only slightly differs from my overall findings.

If I remove analysis of the reporting and letters to the editor sections, and focus solely on editorials, columns and Op/Ed columns, the positions of the newspapers become more positive, except for the *Times & Transcript*, which presented only negative columns and editorials. However, by including the reporting bias and the letters to the editor section, my analysis provides a fuller account of the positions of the local newspapers. The difference in results is not limited to the pro reform position of the newspaper I studied, and the anti-reform positions of the Ontario newspapers, but includes the willingness of the five newspapers studied in this thesis to present balanced informative pieces, alongside positive and negative opinions of both media elites and the public more generally.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, my analysis of the electoral reform coverage in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick local newspapers demonstrates that each of the newspapers provided different coverage of the debate. Overall, each newspaper did present biased coverage of the debate in question, with all five newspapers presenting an overall pro reform bias. This pro electoral reform bias, however, was not necessarily the position of each newspaper. In the case of the *Times & Transcript*, the editorial board and the lead columnist were vehemently anti-reform and did not offer conflicting opinions in Op/Ed pieces. This anti-reform rhetoric was countered with a decisively pro reform characterisation in the letters to the editor section and through the news reports. *The Guardian* presents a highly positive position with little attention given to the anti-reform

arguments. The local newspaper media in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick provided different adherences to the three ideal functions of media in promoting a participatory democratic model.

## Conclusion

This thesis sought to emphasise the importance of understanding the news media's involvement in providing political education and engaging citizens. The primary task was to present and analyse local newspaper coverage of electoral reform initiatives in the local newspaper media in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. The secondary purpose of this comparison was to discover what, if any, insight the local newspaper coverage could provide into why the two provinces, whose electoral reform initiatives were similarly undertaken and provided similar recommendations, led political elites to act differently in each case. It became clear while undertaking my analysis that it is difficult to determine how the character of local newspaper coverage of electoral reform debates in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick affected the outcomes of electoral reform initiatives without conducting further study.

Therefore, this conclusion is not intended to present a finite understanding of public education campaigns in the cases presented, or for that matter, even the totality of news media coverage in either province. Instead, it presents findings on one specific segment of news media coverage to assess to what extent the local newspaper media served the three ideal functions required to create a participatory citizenship model. Graber describes participatory democracy as a place, "where politically well-informed citizens play an active role in government."<sup>204</sup> There is debate as to whether this participatory model should be the ideal, but regardless of critics of such a model, the most recent wave of electoral reform initiatives in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick included a participatory model by establishing the need for a referendum

---

<sup>204</sup> Graber, "Media and Democracy," 143.

before changes could be enacted. This conclusion is undertaken to serve three functions. First, I will summarise my findings. Second, I will provide brief insight into what can be taken from my study with respect to the role of the media in each province and the outcomes of the initiatives, while highlighting limitations of such insight and establishing questions that remain unanswered. Last, I will provide final comments to conclude the overall study.

## **Summary**

As established, in chapters one and two, the most recent wave of electoral reform initiatives in Canada was lauded as representing a new phase in Canadian democracy. This focus on democratic values introduced a reliance on citizen involvement in the process. Whereas a deliberative democratic model for recommending a new system was used in Ontario and British Columbia, initiatives in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick were largely elite driven processes. In each province, recommendations provided that, after a comprehensive public education campaign, the electorate needed show acceptance of reforms through province-wide referendums. In Prince Edward Island, the Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future was to provide the final details of proportional model, undertake a public education campaign and establish the date and question for the plebiscite.<sup>205</sup> The plebiscite was defeated six months after the final report was tabled, with just 36% of those voting supporting changes. Voter turnout in the plebiscite was just 30% of eligible voters.<sup>206</sup> In New Brunswick, the Commission on Legislative Democracy recommended a substantial two-year education

---

<sup>205</sup> Prince Edward Island, *Commission on Electoral Reform Final Report*, 99-100.

<sup>206</sup> Elections Prince Edward Island. "Plebiscite on Mixed Member Proportional Representation System – Official Results." Elections Prince Edward Island. <http://www.electionspei.ca/plebiscites/pr/results/detailed/index.php> (accessed March 2, 2011).

campaign with a binding referendum on a proposed MMP model to be put to citizens. These recommendations were largely ignored.

Furthermore, from chapter one, it is evident that the news media is increasingly the main source of political information and the main forum for public education and engagement on a myriad of issues. Journalists, politicians and the public at large accept the news media's role as influential. Because of this understanding, the news media have become important political actors in their own right. Journalists and news outlets more generally have a tremendous capacity to shape political dialogue. As citizens increasingly rely on news media for political information, it necessitates a study of how that information is presented to citizens. This requires a defined understanding of the roles and responsibilities in educating and enabling citizens to fully participate in political decisions. In order to do so, I outlined three ideal functions to maximise the participatory capacity of citizens. First, the news media should strive to provide an *open forum for discussion of diverse, often conflicting ideas*. Second, *give voice to public opinion* and third, *serve as the public's eyes and ears and act as a public watchdog*. In serving these three ideal functions, the news media would foster an educated and engaged public more enabled to make political decisions.

From chapter two, it is evident that the public education was largely left to the news media. In Prince Edward Island, the public received a single pamphlet on electoral reform, which offered little information and dialogue about the debate. Furthermore, the Commission did host 12, sparsely attended public meetings, and provided more information and audio versions of the public meetings on its website.<sup>207</sup> In New

---

<sup>207</sup> Elections Prince Edward Island, "The Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future," Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future. <http://www.electionspei.ca/electoralfuture/>.

Brunswick, there was no government sponsored education campaign, and the Lord government largely ignored the electoral reform initiative, with an open disregard for recommendations by the subsequent Liberal government. In a response to the Commission on Legislative Democracy final report the newly elected Liberal government published “An Accountable and Responsible Government.”<sup>208</sup> This report states, “The case for changing our electoral system to include elements of PR has not yet been made. Therefore, there will not be a referendum on any new form of electoral representation during the 2008 Municipal Elections.”<sup>209</sup> In one bullet point, the Graham government disregarded the Commission on Legislative Democracy’s recommendations and removed citizens from the process entirely.

In chapters three and four, I provide the media content and media analysis as to how well each of the local newspapers in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick served these three ideal functions. Analysis through each of the ideal functions highlighted that each newspaper served each function in some capacity, and each did so differently. Overall, each newspaper did provide more positive coverage than it did negative, though this varied by degree and style.

In Prince Edward Island, the limited time between the final model presentation and the plebiscite coupled with the CBC strike created an arena whereby, as Jeannie Lea describes, “The letters to the editor in our daily provincial paper became the main forum

---

<sup>208</sup> New Brunswick, *An Accountable and Responsible Government: A New Generation of Leadership, The Government’s Response to the Final Report on the Commission on Legislative Democracy* (Fredericton, NB: Government of New Brunswick, 2007), <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Corporate/pdf/ResponseFinalReport-CLD-June2007-e.pdf>.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

for discussion.”<sup>210</sup> This reliance on *The Guardian* to provide dialogue necessitates an understanding of the nature of coverage electoral reform procedures received. *The Guardian* took a decisively pro electoral reform position, and though it did allow for some airing of conflicting ideas, the scope of this forum was narrow.

In New Brunswick, the limited attention given to the reform options by the government ensured that the majority of information on electoral reform recommendations would come from the news media. Each of the newspapers studied presented an overall pro reform position, though the position of the editorial boards did differ. At *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Telegraph-Journal* the editorial boards supported reform and presented highly pro reform coverage in all sections of the newspaper. Along with the pro reform coverage, both newspapers did also provide a multitude of neutral pieces but there was limited publication of con electoral reform positions. *L’Acadie Nouvelle*’s editorial board took a more balanced position on electoral reform and this is reflected in the coverage in other aspects of the newspaper. This balance is reflected in the overall character of coverage, although there was still more pro reform pieces published than con reform pieces. Of all newspapers studied, the *Times & Transcript*’s editorial board was the only one to take an entirely con electoral reform position. This was reflected in the columns, but pro reform coverage in the news and letters section, ended up giving the totality of coverage a pro reform character.

### **Further Insight and Further Questions**

This thesis is not intended to stipulate that increased public education about electoral systems and electoral reform would necessarily ensure passage of referendums. Nor am I asserting that heavily biased coverage in the news media would necessarily

---

<sup>210</sup> Lea, “Plebiscite on Electoral Reform,” 5.

promote the electorate adoption of the opinion presented, be it pro or con electoral reform. Instead, it is intended to add insight into how electoral reform coverage added to the discussion and debate.

Without further research it is difficult to conclusively state why Prince Edward Island proceeded with a referendum, while in New Brunswick the electoral reform process stalled after the Commission on Legislative Democracy made its recommendations. However, the media content and analysis I have presented can provide some insights into the extent proposals were treated seriously in each province.

Overall, in both Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, political elites were able to control the electoral reform procedures, but were unable to control the character of coverage in the local newspaper media. There is little more than speculative evidence that can be made with respect to what insight the character of electoral reform coverage had on determining how electoral reform initiatives unfolded. In both provinces, local newspaper coverage was similar, with all newspapers presenting a pro reform bias. The electoral reform initiatives, however, differed significantly. In New Brunswick, the Lord government, focused more so on other legislative reforms and provided little movement on the electoral reform recommendations made by the Commission, even though the Commission's mandate focused on researching a new electoral system for the province.<sup>211</sup> In Prince Edward Island, the initial Commission's recommendations were somewhat followed, with another Commission rather than a Citizens' Assembly being put in place to present the model and plebiscite rules. However, Premier Binns did not

---

<sup>211</sup> McLaughlin, "Legislative Democracy," 37.

take up the recommendation that 50% plus one be held as the threshold for passage, and instead established a strict 60% threshold, drawing on British Columbia precedent.<sup>212</sup>

The positive coverage in Prince Edward Island did not force public acceptance of the reform initiative or even promote high voter turnout. From the letters published in *The Guardian* the pro and con positions looked to be relatively even. The news, columns, editorials and news reports, were all presenting a pro electoral reform position. The editorial board also attempted to hold the Binns' government to account for the plebiscite 'tampering,' namely the closure of 90% of polling stations and inflated threshold for passage.<sup>213</sup> The plebiscite received 36% support, far less than the 60% needed for passage. Furthermore, voter turnout for the plebiscite was approximately 33%.<sup>214</sup> Evidence seems to suggest that *The Guardian* had little affect on the electorate in Prince Edward Island.

The positive coverage in New Brunswick did little to spark action from political elites, or prompt citizens to force the issue with their leaders. Electoral system reform received little traction as an issue for consideration regardless of the position of the local newspaper media. In comparison to Prince Edward Island, the New Brunswick newspapers provided relatively limited coverage of electoral reform recommendations. In Prince Edward Island the majority of coverage occurred in the six months between the final recommendations of the Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future

---

<sup>212</sup> Lea, "Plebiscite on Electoral Reform," 6; Massicotte, "Electoral Reform in Canada," 32.

<sup>213</sup> Editorial Board, "By Establishing a 60 Percent Threshold for the Nov. 28 Plebiscite, the Premier is Tilting the Exercise in Favour of Status Quo," *Guardian* (October 28, 2005).

<sup>214</sup> Elections Prince Edward Island, "Note about Voter Turnout," Elections Prince Edward Island. <http://www.electionspei.ca/plebiscites/pr/results/index.php> (accessed March 8, 2011); Because no enumeration list was used, this number is an approximation based on the number of votes cast and the 2003 PEI general election voter list.

and the plebiscite.<sup>215</sup> This difference suggests that for electoral reform to get on the agenda of news media there needs to be substantial movement on the part of political elites to (or at least appear to) be making commitments to change.

In Prince Edward Island the initial Commission on Electoral Reform was specifically tasked with researching and recommending if some form of PR would better serve Island democracy.<sup>216</sup> The Commission's recommendations solely focused on adopting PR and allowing Islanders to vote on the model. The subsequent Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future was set up to develop the final MMP proposal and write the plebiscite question. This sole focus on PR allowed groups for and against electoral reform to mobilise from the start and keep the issue of electoral reform on the agenda. Though the majority of articles were presented after the plebiscite question and MMP model were finalised, there was significant coverage in *The Guardian* prior to these announcements. The character of coverage in *The Guardian* reflects seriousness of debate in Prince Edward Island. By comparison, in New Brunswick, the Commission on Legislative Democracy had a much wider mandate and made many recommendations on different aspects of legislative function. This allowed the political elites and the media to focus on the different recommendations while paying limited attention to calls for MMP.<sup>217</sup> Because the MMP proposals were not seriously considered by the Lord government, there was little mobilisation of forces for or against the recommendations.

*The Guardian's* pro reform bias focused on specific arguments, whereas in New Brunswick the pro reform articles presented only general arguments. This relates to the

---

<sup>215</sup> See Figure 11.

<sup>216</sup> Prince Edward Island, *Commission on Electoral Reform Final Report*, 2.

<sup>217</sup> McLaughlin, "Legislative Democracy," 34.

seriousness of debate in the two provinces. By establishing the Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future, the Binns' government signalled intent to go forward with the referendum. This opened the debate to the wider public and included public meetings, though these were sparsely attended. The mobilisation of groups for and against reforms and the established negative position taken by political elites in Prince Edward Island solidified debates in what was at stake with the issue of adopting the MMP model. This led to specific arguments being made in *The Guardian* about the benefits of adopting PR in the province.

In New Brunswick, on the other hand, political elites made little movement on the MMP recommendations. This led to limited public engagement with the issue, and little mobilisation of advocacy groups for or against reforms occurred. This limited public engagement with the reform options is demonstrated in the media content. The New Brunswick newspapers published far fewer articles on the electoral reform proposals than were made in *The Guardian*. Furthermore, in the New Brunswick newspapers, arguments for reform were made in very general ways, with few specific examples cited. *L'Acadie Nouvelle* decided to reserve full judgement about the reform recommendations were being withheld until further information was presented. Public education remained limited in New Brunswick, and the newspapers were seemingly trying spark interest in the MMP proposal rather than specifically engage with what was at stake in the electoral reform model.<sup>218</sup>

The comparison of these two cases demonstrates that political elites in each province retained control of the electoral reform initiatives, even though independent

---

<sup>218</sup> See for example: Lorne McGuigan, "Why Electoral Reform Should Catch Your Interest," *Telegraph-Journal*, June 21, 2006.

Commissions were established and each required citizen approval through a referendum. In Prince Edward Island the government moved the electoral reform debate along quickly and the referendum was defeated. There was media support for reform procedures, but this support did little to sway the public to supporting the reforms. In New Brunswick, the Lord government did not seriously engage with the MMP recommendations and the referendum process was never initiated. There was media support and appeared to be public support, but this was not enough to push for the required referendum.

In both provinces, there are still several questions left to answer about why political elites reacted to reform recommendations in the different manners. The positive coverage in the local newspaper media represents a foray into the electoral reform debates that differs from the position of the political elites, and the mandated balanced coverage the Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future was providing. Further studies into the character of coverage on the radio, television, and online news sources need to be analysed to address how other forms of media were addressing the electoral reform debates. Likewise, a greater study of all information provided to the public, from advocacy groups, political parties, and other sources could all provide further insight into each province's electoral reform initiatives and citizen engagement.

### **Final Thoughts**

This thesis has studied local newspaper coverage of electoral reform debates in an attempt to highlight how well the local newspaper media served the three ideal functions of media in a democracy. More specifically, it looked at whether the local newspaper media fairly educated and engaged citizens with conflicting ideas to allow the electorate to make sound political decisions with respect to electoral reform. My discussion of local

newspaper content in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick hopes to add to a larger discussion about the roles and responsibilities of the media with respect to allowing for participatory citizenship. With increasing attention on deliberative processes and direct democracy, and increasingly reliance on the media to provide political information, there must be more critical academic engagement with the information citizens receive.

## Bibliography

- Anderson, Doris. "Bring in a new era of voting by voting 'Yes' to PR." *Guardian*. November 6, 2005.
- Angus, H.F. "Note on the British Columbia Election in June 1952." *The Western Political Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1952): 585-591.
- Baglole, Harry. "A Change to Lead the Way." *Guardian*. February 10, 2004.
- Benton, S. Bruce. "Every Vote Counts in Electoral Process." *Daily Gleaner*. August 29, 2006.
- . "Which System is Lord Backing." *Daily Gleaner*. June 13, 2005.
- Blais, André. "The Debate over Electoral Systems." *International Political Science Review* 12, no. 3 (1991): 239-260.
- Brunswick News. "Brunswick News – Publications." Brunswick News. <http://brunswicknews.com/publications.php>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Butler, Daniel M. and Emily Schofield. "Were Newspapers More Interested in Pro-Obama Letters to the Editor in 2008? Evidence From a Field Experiment." *American Politics Research* 38 (2010): 356-371.
- Cairns, Alan. "The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada: 1921-1965." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 1 (1968): 55-80.
- Campbell, Gail. "Defining and Redefining Democracy: The History of Electoral Reform in New Brunswick." In *Democratic Reform in New Brunswick*, edited by William Cross, 273-299. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2007.
- Canada, Law Commission of Canada. *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*. Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services, 2004. <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/J31-61-2004E.pdf>.
- Canadian Newspaper Association. "Circulation Data Report 2009." Canadian Newspaper Association. [http://www.newspaperscanada.ca/system/files/2009CirculationDataReport\\_3.pdf](http://www.newspaperscanada.ca/system/files/2009CirculationDataReport_3.pdf). (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Carty, R. Kenneth. "Canadians and Electoral Reform: An Impulse to Doing Democracy Differently." *Representation* 40, no.3 (2004): 173-184.

- Carty, R. Kenneth and Munroe Eagles, "Party Activity across Electoral Cycles," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 36, no. 2 (2003): 381-399.
- Carty, R. Kenneth, André Blais and Patrick Fournier. "When Citizens Choose to Reform SMP: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform." In *To Keep or To Change First Past The Post? The Politics of Electoral Reform*, edited by André Blais, 140-162. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Chan, Jimmy and Wing Suen. "Media as Watchdogs: The Role of News Media in Electoral Competition." *European Economic Review* 53 (2009): 799-814.
- Cooper, Christopher, H. Gibbs Knotts and Moshe Haspel. "The Content of Political Participation: Letters to the Editor and the People Who Write Them." *PS* (2009): 131-137.
- Courtney, John. "Reminders and Expectations about Electoral Reform." In *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral System Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, edited by Henry Milner, 103-115. Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004.
- . "Is Talk of Electoral Reform Just Whistling in the Wind?" in *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, edited by Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais, 149-158. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005.
- Cousins, John Andrew. "Electoral Reform for Prince Edward Island." *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 25, no. 4 (2003): 22-31.
- . "Prince Edward Island's Cautious Path toward Electoral Reform." In *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral System Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, edited by Henry Milner, 281-290. Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004.
- Cunningham, Norbert. "Ideas to Make our Politics more Democratic." *Times & Transcript*. March 16, 2004.
- . "Our Politicians Must Rescue Armed Forces." *Times & Transcript*. October 14, 2004.
- . "Do NBers Want to Weaken Democracy?" *Times & Transcript*. January 24, 2005.
- . "Playing Chicken and Listening to Voters." *Times & Transcript*. October 5, 2005.
- Daily Gleaner Contact. "Letter to the Editor Guidelines." *Daily Gleaner*.  
<http://dailygleaner.canadaeast.com/onsite.php?page=contact#B>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- de Pagter, Hendrik. "Islanders Have an Historic Opportunity to Say Yes to PR." *Guardian*. November 22, 2005.

- Desjardins, Luc. "Démocratie législative bicommunautaire." *L'Acadie Nouvelle*. February 28, 2005.
- . "Réforme démocratique." *L'Acadie Nouvelle*. June 26, 2006.
- . "Alea jacta." *L'Acadie Nouvelle*. September 18, 2006.
- Doody, Brian and Henry Milner. "Twenty Years after René Lévesque Failed to Change the Electoral System, Québec May Be Ready to Act." In *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral System Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, edited by Henry Milner, 267-280. Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004.
- Dornan, Christopher. "Printed Matter: Canadian Newspapers." In *How Canadians Communications in Canada*, edited by David Taras, Frits Pannekoek and Maria Bakardjieva, 97-120. Calgary: Calgary University Press, 2003.
- Duchastel, Paul. "Fair Voting System Needed." *Daily Gleaner*. June 10, 2005.
- Editorial Board. "Premier Lord Has Work to Do." *Daily Gleaner*, October 18, 2003.
- Editorial Board. "Electoral Future Website Enhanced." *Guardian*. August 4, 2005.
- . "Electoral Reform: Getting Informed." *Guardian*. September 29, 2005.
- . "Island Voters Have a Right to Know." *Guardian*. October 25, 2005.
- . "By Establishing a 60 Percent Threshold for the Nov. 28 Plebiscite, the Premier is Tilting the Exercise in Favour of Status Quo." *Guardian*. October 28, 2005.
- . "O.K. Islanders, Get Out and Cast Your Vote." *Guardian*. November 28, 2005.
- Editorial Board. "Keep Politics Representative." *Times & Transcript*. May 2, 2004.
- . "Appointed MLAs are Unacceptable." *Times & Transcript*. June 21, 2006.
- . "Politicians Must Reform Approach." *Times & Transcript*. September 9, 2006.
- Elections BC. "Provincial General Elections – Results." Elections BC Resource Centre. <http://www.elections.bc.ca/index.php/resource-centre/reports/>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Elections Prince Edward Island. "The Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future." Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future. <http://www.electionspei.ca/electoralfuture/>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).

- Elections Prince Edward Island. "Note about Voter Turnout." Elections Prince Edward Island. <http://www.electionspei.ca/plebiscites/pr/results/index.php>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Elections Prince Edward Island. "Provincial Election Results: Detailed Results for Recent Provincial General Elections." Elections Prince Edward Island. <http://www.electionspei.ca/provincial/historical/results/main.php>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Flanagan, Tom. "The Alternative Vote." In *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, edited by Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais, 199-106. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005.
- Fletcher, Frederick J. "Mass Media and Parliamentary Elections in Canada." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1987): 341-372.
- Fletcher, Frederick J. and Robert Everett. "Mass Media and Elections in Canada." In *Media, Elections and Democracy*, edited by Frederick J. Fletcher, 179-217. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991.
- Gagnon, Charles-Antoine. "Le taux de participation des 18 à 20 ans est très faible." *L'Acadie Nouvelle*. January 20, 2004.
- Guardian. "The Guardian – Charlottetown." *Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Guardian. "Our Team." *Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/Our-Team>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Guardian Opinion. "Submit your letter to the editor." *Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/Letters-to-editor/Submit-your-letter-to-the-editor/2010-09-15/article-1750612/Submit-your-letter-to-the-editor/1>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Graber, Doris. "The Media and Democracy: Beyond Myths and Stereotypes." *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003): 139-160.
- Grey, David L. and Trevor R. Brown. "Letters to the Editor: Hazy Reflections of Public Opinion." *Journalism Quarterly* 47 (1970): 450-456.
- Hagerman, Sarah. "Hearings to Focus on Democracy," *Daily Gleaner*. May 17, 2004.
- Hoffman, Lindsay H. and Michael D. Slater. "Evaluating Public Discourse in Newspaper Opinion Articles: Values-Framing and Integrative Complexity in Substance and Health Policy Issues." *Journalism & Mass Communications Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (2007): 58-74.

- Holman, Alan C. "Do Grits, Tories Fear Electoral Change." *Guardian*. September 17, 2005.
- Howe, Paul, Richard Johnston and André Blais. "Introduction: The New Landscape of Canadian Democracy." In *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, edited by Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais, 3-18. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005.
- Hynds, Ernest C. "Editors at Most U.S. Dailies See Vital Role for Editorial Page." *Journalism Quarterly* 71 (1994): 124-36.
- Katz, Richard S. "Problems with Electoral Reform: Why the Decision to Change Electoral Systems is Not Simple." In *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral System Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, edited by Henry Milner, 85-102. Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004.
- King, Natalie. "Political System Needs Change to Entice Women." *Guardian*. July 31, 2003.
- Lea, Jeannie. "From where I sat in the house, it was clear something was wrong with our system." *Guardian*. November 25, 2005.
- . "The Prince Edward Island Plebiscite on Electoral Reform." *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 29, no.1 (2006): 4-8.
- Leduc, Lawrence. "The Failure of Electoral Reform Proposals in Canada," *Political Science* 61, no. 2 (2009): 21-40.
- MacArthur, Ivan. "Another look at single transferable vote." *Guardian*. August 6, 2005.
- MacDougall, Gary. "Our Team – History." *Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.pe.ca/Our-Team>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Massicotte, Louis. "Changing the Canadian Electoral System." In *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, edited by Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais, 65-98. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005.
- . "Electoral Reform in Canada." In *To Keep or To Change First Past The Post: The Politics of Electoral Reform*, edited by André Blais, 112-139. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- McGinnis, Sarah. "The New Face of Democracy." *Telegraph-Journal*. July 31, 2004.
- McGuigan, Lorne. "What is Your Opinion on Democracy?" *Telegraph-Journal*. August 20, 2004.

- . "Why Electoral Reform Should Catch Your Interest." *Telegraph-Journal*. August 27, 2004.
- McKenna, Peter. "Opting Out of Electoral Reform – Why PEI Chose the Status Quo." *Policy Options* (June 2006): 58- 61.
- McLaughlin, David. "The New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy." In *Democratic Reform in New Brunswick*, edited by William Cross, 23-38. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2007.
- McLean, Everton. "B.C. Results Seen Spurring Possible Change in N.B." *Telegraph-Journal*. May 20, 2005.
- Mellon, Hugh. "New Brunswick: The Politics of Reform." In *The Provincial State in Canada: Politics in the Provinces and Territories*, edited by Keith Brownsey & Michael Howlett, 81-112. Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1992.
- Mendelsohn, Matthew. "The Construction of Electoral Mandates: Media Coverage of Election Results in Canada." *Political Communication* 15 (1998): 239-253.
- Mendelsohn, Matthew and Andrew Parkin. "Getting From Here to There: A Process for Electoral Reform in Canada." In *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, edited by Paul Howe, Richard Johnston and André Blais, 137-148. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2005.
- Merrithew, Clay. "Proportional Representation is Best Solution." *Telegraph-Journal*. April 27, 2004.
- Milner, Henry. "First Past the Post? Progress Report on Electoral Reform Initiatives in Canadian Provinces." *Policy Matters* 5, no. 9 Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2004.
- . "Political Drop-Outs and Electoral System Reform." In *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral System Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, edited by Henry Milner, 17-39. Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004.
- Morrison, Campbell. "NBers to Decide Fate of Electoral Reform." *Times & Transcript*. February 28, 2004.
- New Brunswick. *An Accountable and Responsible Government: A New Generation of Leadership, The Government's Response to the Final Report on the Commission on Legislative Democracy*. Fredericton, NB: Government of New Brunswick, 2007. <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Corporate/pdf/ResponseFinalReport-CLD-June2007-e.pdf>.

- Norris, Pippa. *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Behavior*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Pilon, Dennis. "The Uncertain Path of Democratic Renewal in Ontario." In *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral System Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, edited by Henry Milner, 249-266. Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004.
- . "Explaining Voting System Reform in Canada, 1874-1960." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2006): 135-161.
- . *The Politics of Voting: Reforming Canada's Electoral System*. Toronto: Emond Montgomery Publications, 2007.
- . "Investigating Media as a Deliberative Space: Newspaper Opinions about Voting Systems in the 2007 Ontario Provincial Referendum." *Canadian Political Science Review* 3 no. 3 (2009): 1-23.
- Prince Edward Island, Commission on Electoral Reform. *2003 Prince Edward Island Electoral Reform Commission Report*. Charlottetown, P.E.I: Elections Prince Edward Island, 2003. Commissioner: The Honourable Norman H. Carruthers, [http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/er\\_premier2003.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/er_premier2003.pdf).
- Prince Edward Island, Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future, *2005 Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future*, Charlottetown, P.E.I: Elections Prince Edward Island, 2005. <http://www.electionspei.ca/electoralfuture/finalreport.pdf>.
- Ruff, Norman. "Electoral Reform and Deliberative Democracy." In *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral System Reform in Canada and its Provinces*, edited by Henry Milner, 235-248. Toronto: Broadview Press Ltd., 2004.
- Roik, Richard. "Appetite is Growing in Canada for Proportional Representation." *Telegraph-Journal*. May 10, 2004.
- Ryder, Ron. "Yes Supporters Voice Concerns to Binns about Plebiscite Rules." *Guardian*. November 17, 2005.
- Schudson, Michael. "News Media as Political Institutions." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002): 249-269.
- Simpson, Andrea. "Improving Opportunities for Women in Politics." *Guardian*. August 8, 2003.
- Smith, Jennifer. "Parliamentary Democracy versus Faux Populist Democracy." In *Parliamentary Democracy in Crisis*, edited by Peter H. Hall and Lorne Sossin, 175-188. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

- Staff Journalist. "Green Party Nearing Formation." *Guardian*. July 6, 2005.
- Stirling, Mary Lou. "La réforme électorale: de bonnes nouvelles pour les femmes." *L'Acadie Nouvelle*. June 12, 2004.
- Strömbäck, Jesper. "Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13, no. 3 (2008): 228-246.
- Taras, David. *Newsmakers: The Media's Influence on Canadian Politics*. Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1990.
- . *Power & Betrayal in the Canadian Media*. Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd., 2001.
- . "Introduction: The New World of Communications in Canada." In *How Canadians Communications in Canada*, edited by David Taras, Frits Pannekoek and Maria Bakardjieva, 9-23. Calgary: Calgary University Press, 2003.
- Taylor, Brent. "Electoral Change on the Horizon." *Daily Gleaner*. May 24, 2005.
- . "Minority Governments are not Necessarily Bad." *Daily Gleaner*. June 6, 2004.
- Telegraph-Journal Contact. "Letter to the Editor Guidelines." *Telegraph-Journal*. <http://telegraphjournal.canadaeast.com/onsite.php?page=contact#B>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Thibodeau, Wayne. "NDP Leader says Current Electoral System is Failing Islanders." *Guardian*. September 29, 2003.
- . "Premier is Tinkering With Vote: Carruthers Says." *Guardian*. November 9, 2005.
- Times & Transcript Contact Section. "Letter to the Editor Guidelines." *Times & Transcript*. <http://timestranscript.canadaeast.com/onsite.php?page=contact#B>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Tindale, Keith J. "Proportional Systems Better." *Times & Transcript*. September 20, 2004.
- . "Time for Drastic Overhaul." *Times & Transcript*. August 16, 2005.
- Transcontinental Inc.. "Media Sector: Print Media – Newspapers." Transcontinental Inc.. <http://www.transcontinentalmedia.com/print-media/newspapers/?lang=en>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).

- Trimble, Linda and Shannon Sempert. "Who's in the Game? The Framing of the Canadian Election 2000 by the Globe and Mail and the National Post." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 1 (2004): 51-71.
- Veterans Review and Appeal Board. "Biographies – Brent Taylor." Veterans Review and Appeal Board. <http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca/Members-membres/Taylor-eng.cfm>. (Accessed March 8, 2011).
- Wahl-Jorgenson, Karin. "Letters to the Editor as a Forum for Public Deliberation: Modes of Publicity and Democracy Debate." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18, no. 3 (2001): 303-320.

## Appendix – List of Articles

<b>Author</b>	<b>Media</b>	<b>Date (DD/MM/YYYY)</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Position</b>
Taylor, Brent	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	24/05/2005	Column	Pro
Taylor, Brent	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	06/06/2004	Column	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	22/06/2006	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	18/10/2003	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	12/11/2004	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	23/06/2004	Editorial	Pro
Amos, Lorne D	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	03/02/2004	Letter	Con
Lowry, Brian J.	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	27/09/2005	Letter	Con
Benton, S. Bruce	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	13/06/2005	Letter	Pro
Benton, S. Bruce	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	01/02/2005	Letter	Pro
Benton, S. Bruce	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	29/08/2006	Letter	Pro
Benton, S. Bruce	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	06/02/2006	Letter	Pro
Duchastel, Phil	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	10/06/2005	Letter	Pro
Finnamore, Alice	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	06/10/2005	Letter	Pro
Greenan, Mark	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	25/07/2006	Letter	Pro
Llewellyn, Stephen	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	28/06/2006	News	Con
Barrera, Jorge	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	25/01/2006	News	Neutral
Canadaeast News Service	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	30/11/2005	News	Neutral
Duplain, Richard	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	15/06/2004	News	Neutral
Hagerman, Shannon	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	20/01/2005	News	Neutral
Hagerman, Shannon	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	17/05/2004	News	Neutral
Hagerman, Shannon	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	10/01/2004	News	Neutral
Hagerman, Shannon	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	01/12/2005	News	Neutral
Llewellyn, Stephen	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	21/06/2006	News	Neutral
Llewellyn, Stephen	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	21/06/2006	News	Neutral
Morris, Chris	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	25/11/2005	News	Neutral
Morrison, Campbell	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	28/02/2004	News	Neutral
Canadian Press	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	29/11/2005	News	Neutral
Llewellyn, Stephen	<i>Daily Gleaner</i>	08/06/2005	News	Pro
MacDougall, Gary	<i>Guardian</i>	08/10/2005	Column	Neutral
de Pagter, Hendrik	<i>Guardian</i>	22/11/2005	Column	Pro
Holman, Alan C	<i>Guardian</i>	19/11/2005	Column	Pro
Holman, Alan C	<i>Guardian</i>	05/11/2005	Column	Pro
Holman, Alan C	<i>Guardian</i>	17/09/2005	Column	Pro
Holman, Alan C	<i>Guardian</i>	26/11/2005	Column	Pro
Holman, Alan C	<i>Guardian</i>	15/10/2005	Column	Pro
MacDonald, Marion	<i>Guardian</i>	22/10/2005	Column	Pro
MacDougall, Gary	<i>Guardian</i>	26/11/2005	Column	Pro

MacDougall, Gary	<i>Guardian</i>	09/07/2005	Column	Pro
O'Brien, Kevin	<i>Guardian</i>	22/10/2005	Column	Pro
Webster, Campbell	<i>Guardian</i>	04/11/2005	Column	Pro
Webster, Campbell	<i>Guardian</i>	18/11/2005	Column	Pro
MacDougall, Gary	<i>Guardian</i>	28/05/2005	Column	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	04/08/2005	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	15/09/2005	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	01/06/2005	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	26/05/2005	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	20/09/2005	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	28/11/2005	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	29/12/2003	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	18/12/2004	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	29/05/2004	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	25/10/2005	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	25/10/2005	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	24/02/2003	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	29/11/2004	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	02/08/2003	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	06/10/2005	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	02/07/2004	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	26/02/2005	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	22/10/2005	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	20/12/2004	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	23/09/2005	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	25/05/2005	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Guardian</i>	28/10/2005	Editorial	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	31/10/2005	News	Con
Willis, Nancy	<i>Guardian</i>	28/09/2005	News	Con
Armstron, Nigel	<i>Guardian</i>	06/10/2005	News	Neutral
Brown, Jim	<i>Guardian</i>	21/10/2005	News	Neutral
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	03/05/2005	News	Neutral
Gallant, Doug	<i>Guardian</i>	22/01/2003	News	Neutral
Horne, Debbie	<i>Guardian</i>	16/09/2005	News	Neutral
King, Natalie	<i>Guardian</i>	26/05/2003	News	Neutral
Nesbitt, Mike	<i>Guardian</i>	12/06/2003	News	Neutral
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	07/11/2005	News	Neutral
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	15/06/2005	News	Neutral
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	17/11/2005	News	Neutral
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	11/11/2005	News	Neutral
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	17/06/2005	News	Neutral
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	24/10/2005	News	Neutral
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	04/11/2005	News	Neutral

Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	13/09/2005	News	Neutral
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	17/12/2004	News	Neutral
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	16/12/2004	News	Neutral
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	09/11/2005	News	Neutral
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	19/12/2003	News	Neutral
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	27/05/2003	News	Neutral
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	20/10/2005	News	Neutral
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	31/08/2005	News	Neutral
Willis, Nancy	<i>Guardian</i>	20/09/2005	News	Neutral
Willis, Nancy	<i>Guardian</i>	22/11/2005	News	Neutral
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	28/11/2005	News	Neutral
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	22/11/2005	News	Neutral
Day, Jim	<i>Guardian</i>	04/10/2003	News	Pro
Day, Jim	<i>Guardian</i>	24/11/2005	News	Pro
Day, Jim	<i>Guardian</i>	20/03/2004	News	Pro
Day, Jim	<i>Guardian</i>	28/05/2005	News	Pro
Gallant, Doug	<i>Guardian</i>	10/04/2003	News	Pro
Gallant, Doug	<i>Guardian</i>	21/11/2003	News	Pro
Gallant, Doug	<i>Guardian</i>	20/11/2003	News	Pro
Gallant, Doug	<i>Guardian</i>	20/10/2005	News	Pro
Gallant, Doug	<i>Guardian</i>	19/10/2005	News	Pro
Island Digest	<i>Guardian</i>	17/11/2005	News	Pro
King, Natalie	<i>Guardian</i>	03/06/2003	News	Pro
King, Natalie	<i>Guardian</i>	31/07/2003	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	30/09/2005	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	29/09/2005	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	26/11/2005	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	25/07/2003	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	08/11/1956	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	20/11/2005	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	05/11/2005	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	23/11/2005	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	12/11/2005	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	09/11/2005	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	21/05/2004	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	26/10/2005	News	Pro
Ryder, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	15/10/2005	News	Pro
Sharratt, Steve	<i>Guardian</i>	06/10/2005	News	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	26/03/2005	News	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	23/11/2005	News	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	22/10/2005	News	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	21/10/2005	News	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	25/10/2005	News	Pro

Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	06/07/2005	News	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	25/11/2005	News	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	07/10/2003	News	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	26/09/2005	News	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>Guardian</i>	05/10/2005	News	Pro
Stewart, Dale	<i>Guardian</i>	16/06/2005	News	Pro
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	26/11/2005	News	Pro
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	25/11/2005	News	Pro
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	20/09/2003	News	Pro
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	28/05/2005	News	Pro
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	04/11/2005	News	Pro
Thibodeau, Wayne	<i>Guardian</i>	26/10/2005	News	Pro
Bulger, David M.	<i>Guardian</i>	25/11/2005	Op/Ed	Con
Carroll, Tony	<i>Guardian</i>	05/02/2003	Op/Ed	Con
Carroll, Tony	<i>Guardian</i>	10/06/2005	Op/Ed	Con
Cobb, Gordon	<i>Guardian</i>	30/08/2005	Op/Ed	Con
Connor, Tom	<i>Guardian</i>	29/05/2003	Op/Ed	Con
Hennessey, Sean	<i>Guardian</i>	27/09/2005	Op/Ed	Con
Lewis, Kingsley	<i>Guardian</i>	23/11/2005	Op/Ed	Con
MacArthur, Ivan	<i>Guardian</i>	06/08/2005	Op/Ed	Con
Moran, James	<i>Guardian</i>	21/11/2005	Op/Ed	Con
Price, Richard	<i>Guardian</i>	22/09/2005	Op/Ed	Con
Connor, Tom	<i>Guardian</i>	28/05/2003	Op/Ed	Con
Price, Richard	<i>Guardian</i>	24/10/2005	Op/Ed	Con
Anderson, Doris	<i>Guardian</i>	04/11/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Brown, J'Nan	<i>Guardian</i>	26/11/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Burge, Marie	<i>Guardian</i>	15/11/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Carroll, Tony	<i>Guardian</i>	03/01/2003	Op/Ed	Pro
Carroll, Tony	<i>Guardian</i>	09/08/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Cobb, Gordon	<i>Guardian</i>	26/07/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Connor, Hans	<i>Guardian</i>	27/08/2004	Op/Ed	Pro
Dickieson, Herb	<i>Guardian</i>	20/09/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Gallant, Doug	<i>Guardian</i>	22/08/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Green, John Eldon	<i>Guardian</i>	24/10/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Greenan, Mark	<i>Guardian</i>	28/11/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Gwyn, Richard	<i>Guardian</i>	23/11/2004	Op/Ed	Pro
Hay, Pete	<i>Guardian</i>	03/07/2003	Op/Ed	Pro
Holman, Alan C	<i>Guardian</i>	07/06/2003	Op/Ed	Pro
Kelly, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	09/07/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Layton, Jack	<i>Guardian</i>	11/06/2003	Op/Ed	Pro
Lea, Jeannie	<i>Guardian</i>	17/11/2003	Op/Ed	Pro
Lea, Jeannie	<i>Guardian</i>	25/11/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Lea, Jeannie and Baglolle,	<i>Guardian</i>	01/06/2005	Op/Ed	Pro

Harry				
Lund, Kirstin	<i>Guardian</i>	22/11/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Macdonald, Donalda	<i>Guardian</i>	26/08/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
MacLean, Rob	<i>Guardian</i>	31/10/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Novoselic, Krist	<i>Guardian</i>	24/11/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Robichaud, Gary	<i>Guardian</i>	06/05/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Simpson, Andrea	<i>Guardian</i>	08/08/2003	Op/Ed	Pro
Simpson, Andrea	<i>Guardian</i>	18/11/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Simpson, Andrea	<i>Guardian</i>	06/10/2005	Op/Ed	Pro
Stewart, Nicholas	<i>Guardian</i>	13/05/2004	Op/Ed	Pro
Yaffe, Barbara	<i>Guardian</i>	09/08/2004	Op/Ed	Pro
Yaffe, Barbara	<i>Guardian</i>	09/06/2004	Op/Ed	Pro
Bain, Gordon	<i>Guardian</i>	08/11/2005	Letter	Con
Brennan, Robert	<i>Guardian</i>	08/06/2005	Letter	Con
Bruce, Earle	<i>Guardian</i>	04/11/2005	Letter	Con
Bulger, Ivan	<i>Guardian</i>	22/11/2005	Letter	Con
Bulman, Chris	<i>Guardian</i>	19/11/2005	Letter	Con
Bulman, Chris	<i>Guardian</i>	25/10/2005	Letter	Con
Cann, William	<i>Guardian</i>	30/06/2005	Letter	Con
Chapman, Mike	<i>Guardian</i>	19/11/2005	Letter	Con
Clarey, Andy	<i>Guardian</i>	22/06/2005	Letter	Con
Cobb, Gordon	<i>Guardian</i>	12/10/2005	Letter	Con
Connor, Kirsten F.	<i>Guardian</i>	28/11/2005	Letter	Con
Croken, Rudy	<i>Guardian</i>	28/11/2005	Letter	Con
DeGrace, Stephen	<i>Guardian</i>	08/10/2003	Letter	Con
Duffy, Anna	<i>Guardian</i>	03/11/2005	Letter	Con
Ferguson, George Jr.	<i>Guardian</i>	28/09/2005	Letter	Con
Flood, Brendan	<i>Guardian</i>	16/11/2005	Letter	Con
Hemphill, Wanson	<i>Guardian</i>	31/10/2005	Letter	Con
Henderson, Robert	<i>Guardian</i>	16/09/2005	Letter	Con
Hennessey, Sean	<i>Guardian</i>	25/11/2005	Letter	Con
Hennessey, Sean	<i>Guardian</i>	11/11/2005	Letter	Con
Herbert, Rodney M.	<i>Guardian</i>	20/10/2003	Letter	Con
Keane, Greg	<i>Guardian</i>	13/06/2005	Letter	Con
Keaveny, John	<i>Guardian</i>	08/07/2003	Letter	Con
MacArthur, Ivan	<i>Guardian</i>	02/06/2005	Letter	Con
MacArthur, Ivan	<i>Guardian</i>	16/11/2005	Letter	Con
MacArthur, Ivan	<i>Guardian</i>	30/09/2005	Letter	Con
MacArthur, Ivan	<i>Guardian</i>	24/11/2005	Letter	Con
MacArthur, Ivan	<i>Guardian</i>	28/11/2005	Letter	Con
MacCallum, Marion E.	<i>Guardian</i>	11/11/2005	Letter	Con
MacDonald, J. Allan	<i>Guardian</i>	25/11/2005	Letter	Con
MacDonald, Neil	<i>Guardian</i>	07/11/2005	Letter	Con

MacLeod, David E.	<i>Guardian</i>	05/12/2003	Letter	Con
MacLeod, Preston	<i>Guardian</i>	17/11/2005	Letter	Con
MacNevin, Myrt	<i>Guardian</i>	20/10/2005	Letter	Con
MacQuarrie, Ian	<i>Guardian</i>	09/09/2005	Letter	Con
MacWilliams, Dugald	<i>Guardian</i>	29/10/2005	Letter	Con
McCarthy, Mike	<i>Guardian</i>	27/08/2005	Letter	Con
McKenna, Lloyd C.	<i>Guardian</i>	09/10/2003	Letter	Con
McKenna, Lloyd C.	<i>Guardian</i>	21/06/2003	Letter	Con
O'Shea, Art	<i>Guardian</i>	26/12/2003	Letter	Con
Rahman, Mujeeb	<i>Guardian</i>	28/11/2005	Letter	Con
Robertson, Ian	<i>Guardian</i>	04/11/2005	Letter	Con
Ross, Patrick	<i>Guardian</i>	19/11/2005	Letter	Con
Smitz, Paul	<i>Guardian</i>	26/11/2005	Letter	Con
Staples, Garth E.	<i>Guardian</i>	01/06/2005	Letter	Con
Staples, Garth E.	<i>Guardian</i>	22/11/2005	Letter	Con
Staples, Garth E.	<i>Guardian</i>	10/10/2003	Letter	Con
Staples, Garth E.	<i>Guardian</i>	08/10/2005	Letter	Con
Tingley, Jean E.	<i>Guardian</i>	02/11/2005	Letter	Con
Trainor, Shirley	<i>Guardian</i>	08/10/2005	Letter	Con
Tweel, David	<i>Guardian</i>	29/10/2005	Letter	Con
Vimy, Gregory	<i>Guardian</i>	19/09/2005	Letter	Con
Williams, Alton	<i>Guardian</i>	18/11/2005	Letter	Con
Carroll, Tony	<i>Guardian</i>	02/09/2005	Letter	Con
Cobb, Gordon	<i>Guardian</i>	02/07/2005	Letter	Con
Baglole, Harry	<i>Guardian</i>	13/07/2005	Letter	Neutral
Doiron, Ray	<i>Guardian</i>	03/10/2005	Letter	Neutral
Staples, Garth E.	<i>Guardian</i>	01/11/2005	Letter	Neutral
Arsenault, Blair	<i>Guardian</i>	04/10/2005	Letter	Pro
Baglole, Harry	<i>Guardian</i>	30/08/2005	Letter	Pro
Baglole, Harry	<i>Guardian</i>	04/10/2005	Letter	Pro
Baglole, Harry	<i>Guardian</i>	10/02/2004	Letter	Pro
Baglole, Harry	<i>Guardian</i>	14/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Bolger, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	23/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Boyd, Mary	<i>Guardian</i>	24/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Bradley, John	<i>Guardian</i>	09/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Broderick, Leo	<i>Guardian</i>	27/12/2004	Letter	Pro
Bulman, Chris	<i>Guardian</i>	06/08/2005	Letter	Pro
Bulman, Chris	<i>Guardian</i>	16/06/2005	Letter	Pro
Campbell, J.W. (Bill)	<i>Guardian</i>	22/05/2003	Letter	Pro
Carroll, Tony	<i>Guardian</i>	05/10/2005	Letter	Pro
Carroll, Tony	<i>Guardian</i>	05/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Cheverie, Leo	<i>Guardian</i>	28/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Cobb, Gordon	<i>Guardian</i>	04/06/2005	Letter	Pro

DeGrace, Stephen	<i>Guardian</i>	05/10/2005	Letter	Pro
DesRoches, Michael	<i>Guardian</i>	05/11/2005	Letter	Pro
DesRoches, Michael	<i>Guardian</i>	19/09/2003	Letter	Pro
Dunphy, Jane	<i>Guardian</i>	14/06/2005	Letter	Pro
Dunphy, Jane	<i>Guardian</i>	29/10/2005	Letter	Pro
Dunsworth, John	<i>Guardian</i>	28/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Greenan, Elizabeth	<i>Guardian</i>	07/10/2005	Letter	Pro
Greenan, Gerard	<i>Guardian</i>	12/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Greenan, Mark	<i>Guardian</i>	28/06/2005	Letter	Pro
Griffin, Diane	<i>Guardian</i>	11/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Griffin, Diane	<i>Guardian</i>	19/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Hill, Marlene	<i>Guardian</i>	23/08/2005	Letter	Pro
Horne, Fred	<i>Guardian</i>	19/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Johnston, Michelle	<i>Guardian</i>	19/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Kelly, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	22/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Kelly, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	10/09/2005	Letter	Pro
Kelly, Ron	<i>Guardian</i>	29/10/2005	Letter	Pro
Lea, Jeannie	<i>Guardian</i>	08/03/2003	Letter	Pro
Lund, Kirstin	<i>Guardian</i>	17/06/2005	Letter	Pro
Lund, Kirstin	<i>Guardian</i>	11/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Lund, Kirstin	<i>Guardian</i>	08/10/2005	Letter	Pro
MacKinnon, Angela	<i>Guardian</i>	04/10/2003	Letter	Pro
MacLean, Rob	<i>Guardian</i>	09/10/2003	Letter	Pro
McGuire, Matt	<i>Guardian</i>	11/07/2005	Letter	Pro
Meggs, Peter	<i>Guardian</i>	01/08/2005	Letter	Pro
Meggs, Peter	<i>Guardian</i>	17/10/2005	Letter	Pro
Ogg, Christopher	<i>Guardian</i>	13/07/2005	Letter	Pro
Page, Michael	<i>Guardian</i>	23/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Page, Michael	<i>Guardian</i>	12/10/2005	Letter	Pro
Perry, Edith	<i>Guardian</i>	31/03/2005	Letter	Pro
Peters, Gerard	<i>Guardian</i>	26/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Ralling, M. Jane	<i>Guardian</i>	07/05/2005	Letter	Pro
Robichaud, Gary	<i>Guardian</i>	28/02/2004	Letter	Pro
Savidant, Mike	<i>Guardian</i>	23/12/2003	Letter	Pro
Shakespeare, John and Mary	<i>Guardian</i>	07/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Shakespeare, John R.	<i>Guardian</i>	25/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Shakespeare, John R.	<i>Guardian</i>	19/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Stiles, Jeremy	<i>Guardian</i>	08/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Taylor-Murray, Anne	<i>Guardian</i>	13/10/2005	Letter	Pro
Taylor-Murray, Anne	<i>Guardian</i>	28/05/2004	Letter	Pro
Taylor-Murray, Anne	<i>Guardian</i>	24/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Wither, Steve	<i>Guardian</i>	25/10/2005	Letter	Pro

Worth, W. Gordon	<i>Guardian</i>	04/12/2003	Letter	Pro
Worth, W. Gordon	<i>Guardian</i>	30/05/2005	Letter	Pro
Worth, W. Gordon	<i>Guardian</i>	15/08/2005	Letter	Pro
Zelin, Jenni	<i>Guardian</i>	10/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Bevan-Baker, Peter	<i>Guardian</i>	03/09/2005	Letter	Pro
Desjardins, Luc	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	18/09/2006	Column	Con
Desjardins, Luc	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	28/02/2005	Column	Con
Desjardins, Luc	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	26/06/2006	Column	Pro
Nadeau, Jean-Marie	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	27/01/2006	Column	Pro
Haché, Bernard	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	15/03/2004	Editorial	Con
Rainville, Maurice	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	20/10/2004	Editorial	Con
Saint-Cyr, Jean	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	20/01/2005	Editorial	Neutral
Rainville, Maurice	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	28/09/2004	Editorial	Pro
Chiasson, Gaéтан	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	15/03/2006	Editorial	Pro
Ricard, Phillippe	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	10/12/2004	News	Con
Roussel, Kevin	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	18/04/2005	News	Con
Roussel, Kevin	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	21/03/2005	News	Neutral
Staff	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	17/02/2006	News	Neutral
Staff	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	12/02/2005	News	Neutral
Gagnon, Charles-Antoine	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	20/06/2006	News	Neutral
CAG	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	01/10/2004	News	Neutral
Gagnon, Charles-Antoine	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	23/09/2004	News	Neutral
PC	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	07/09/2004	News	Neutral
Gagnon, Charles-Antoine	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	21/06/2006	News	Neutral
Roussel, Kevin	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	28/03/2005	News	Neutral
Gagnon, Charles-Antoine	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	22/12/2003	News	Neutral
Gagnon, Charles-Antoine	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	20/01/2005	News	Neutral
Gagnon, Charles-Antoine	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	30/01/2004	News	Pro
Stirling, Mary Lou	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	06/12/2004	News	Pro
Larocque, Sylvain	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	04/01/2004	News	Pro
Hachey, Steve	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	23/01/2006	News	Pro
Staff Journalist	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	24/09/2004	News	Pro
Roussel, Kevin	<i>L'Acadie Nouvelle</i>	22/04/2005	News	Pro
Fulton, Wendell	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	29/06/2006	Column	Con
Fulton, Wendell	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	18/02/2006	Column	Con
Kaufield, Kathy	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	22/02/2005	Column	Neutral
McGuigan, Lorne	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	27/08/2004	Column	Neutral
McGuigan, Lorne	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	20/08/2004	Column	Neutral
Kaufield, Kathy	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	18/01/2005	Column	Pro
Harvey, Janice	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	29/09/2004	Column	Pro
Harvey, Janice	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	05/01/2005	Column	Pro
Hrabluk, Lisa	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	29/11/2003	Column	Pro
Kaufield, Kathy	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	19/01/2005	Column	Pro

McGinnis, Sarah	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	31/07/2004	Column	Pro
Roik, Richard	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	30/06/2004	Column	Pro
Roik, Richard	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	10/05/2004	Column	Pro
Walker, Julian	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	09/10/2003	Column	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	27/09/2004	Editorial	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	21/06/2006	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	31/07/2004	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	15/07/2006	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	28/06/2006	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	30/07/2006	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	24/04/2004	Editorial	Pro
Editorial Board	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	08/07/2006	Editorial	Pro
Canadian Press	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	31/08/2005	News	Neutral
Canadian Press	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	01/12/2005	News	Neutral
Canadian Press	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	24/10/2005	News	Neutral
Canadian Press	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	20/09/2005	News	Neutral
Davies, Carl	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	10/06/2005	News	Neutral
Davies, Carl	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	23/09/2004	News	Neutral
Davies, Carl	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	21/06/2006	News	Neutral
Davies, Carl	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	20/06/2006	News	Neutral
Kaufield, Kathy	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	02/12/2005	News	Neutral
McLean, Everton	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	20/05/2005	News	Neutral
Morris, Chris	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	29/11/2005	News	Neutral
Morris, Chris	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	25/11/2005	News	Neutral
Rawlines, Karen	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	28/12/2004	News	Neutral
Roik, Richard	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	01/04/2004	News	Neutral
Shipley, David	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	20/09/2004	News	Neutral
Davies, Carl	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	12/10/2004	News	Neutral
Berry, Shawn	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	30/11/2005	News	Pro
Davies, Carl	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	17/05/2004	News	Pro
Davis, Sandra	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	01/12/2003	News	Pro
Caverhill, Mike	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	05/07/2004	Letter	Con
Donnelly, Fred	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	26/11/2004	Letter	Con
Toole, Barry	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	06/12/2005	Letter	Con
Trueman, Don	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	23/06/2006	Letter	Con
Benton, S. Bruce	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	05/04/2004	Letter	Pro
Benton, S. Bruce	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	20/10/2003	Letter	Pro
Benton, S. Bruce	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	17/08/2006	Letter	Pro
Little, George	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	28/01/2006	Letter	Pro
Merrithew, Clay	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	27/04/2004	Letter	Pro
Noble, Edward	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	15/08/2006	Letter	Pro
Raymond, Richard	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	05/02/2005	Letter	Pro
Werner, Sarahrose	<i>Telegraph-Journal</i>	04/08/2004	Letter	Pro

Cunningham, Norbert	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	24/01/2005	Column	Con
Cunningham, Norbert	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	14/10/2004	Column	Con
Cunningham, Norbert	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	16/03/2004	Column	Con
Belliveau, W.E	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	12/11/2005	Column	Neutral
Editorial Board	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	29/09/2004	Editorial	Con
Editorial Board	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	20/01/2005	Editorial	Con
Editorial Board	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	05/02/2004	Editorial	Con
Editorial Board	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	21/06/2006	Editorial	Con
Canadaeast News Service	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	10/12/2004	News	Con
Times & Transcript Staffer	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	02/01/2006	News	Neutral
Barrera, Jorge	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	23/09/2004	News	Neutral
Barrera, Jorge	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	25/01/2006	News	Neutral
McHardie, Daniel	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	14/10/2003	News	Neutral
McHardie, Daniel	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	11/05/2006	News	Neutral
Moszynski, Mary	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	20/01/2005	News	Neutral
Moszynski, Mary	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	21/06/2006	News	Neutral
Moszynski, Mary	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	20/06/2006	News	Neutral
Times & Transcript Staffer	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	21/05/2004	News	Neutral
Times & Transcript Staffer	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	01/12/2005	News	Neutral
Times & Transcript Staffer	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	01/12/2005	News	Neutral
Times & Transcript Staffer	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	29/11/2005	News	Neutral
Allen, Rod	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	24/09/2004	News	Pro
Barrera, Jorge	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	23/02/2004	News	Pro
McHardie, Daniel	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	23/05/2005	News	Pro
McHardie, Daniel	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	02/03/2004	News	Pro
McHardie, Daniel	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	13/10/2003	News	Pro
Morrison, Campbell	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	28/02/2004	News	Pro
Cunningham, Norbert	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	05/10/2004	Letter	Con
Whitmore, John	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	18/03/2004	Letter	Con
Daly, Al	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	26/02/2004	Letter	Pro
Farrell, C.J.	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	26/07/2004	Letter	Pro
Greenan, Mark	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	01/08/2006	Letter	Pro
Tindale, Keith J.	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	16/08/2005	Letter	Pro
Tindale, Keith J.	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	30/09/2004	Letter	Pro
Tindale, Keith J.	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	22/06/2006	Letter	Pro
Tindale, Keith J.	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	18/11/2005	Letter	Pro
Tobin, Sebin L	<i>Times &amp; Transcript</i>	12/07/2004	Letter	Pro