

Making Care Count: Troubling Neoliberal Policy Frameworks in the Childcare and Waste
Management Policy Areas of Newfoundland and Labrador

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Abstract

Since the advent of the political influence of neoliberalism in Canada in the 1970s, the dominant norms of neoliberal policymaking have determined the parameters of political possibility in both provincial and federal policy circles. This framework has compromised policy areas that involve the direct provision of care work due to the incompatibility—both theoretical and practical—of theories analyzing care and neoliberalism. This thesis analyses the universality, the reliance on care work and caring labour, and the longstanding challenges in two policy areas in Newfoundland and Labrador: childcare, and waste management, seeking to identify the utility of a care framework in proposing policy alternatives for both areas. In employing a care framework as an intervention into the policy areas and their neoliberal domination, this study assesses the practicality of care as a policy formulation and implementation framework, determining that meaningful policy change as it pertains to childcare or waste management cannot occur through an adherence to the norms of neoliberalism that currently characterize policy development in both areas. Doing so, this work illuminates the paramount importance of caring labour to society, arguing that an ignorance of this labour in written, regulated policy will continue to prevent significant societal advancement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction of Study

I. Introduction

Care is a species activity that involves everything we do to maintain, repair, and continue our world so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.

Joan Tronto and Bernice Fischer¹

Government policies have not yet successfully addressed the complexities of a communal social existence. Conceptualizations of policy change are, by nature, limited, due to the perceived constraints of governmental capacity, the adherence to path dependency, and the relative absence of critical and radical perspectives on policy change. This reluctance toward radical policy change manifests in policy areas entrenched in the provision of care or caring activities. Care is “a species activity that involves everything we do to maintain, repair, and continue our world so that we can live in it as well as possible” (Tronto 1998: 16). But care and caring activities have yet to be adequately addressed in policy areas in Canada—particularly in the face of an encompassing neoliberal political order.

Neoliberalism describes the primary political order that shapes policies in Newfoundland and Labrador. This thesis 1) identifies the dominance of neoliberalism as a policymaking ideology, and 2) examines the character of labour within a neoliberal framework. Defining this political order necessitates a recognition of several key characteristics, which begin with the emergence of neoliberal policies in Canada toward the end of the 1970s (De Angelis 2005). The specific characteristics of neoliberal governance include: the implementation of pro-market policies; erasing so-called unnecessary expenditures from public budgets, including reducing government and bureaucracy size, and limiting social welfare programs; linking social

¹ Tronto, Joan C.: 1998. “An Ethic of Care” *Generations*, 22 (3): 15-19. p. 16

citizenship to market citizenship; and focusing on individualism and detachment from social networks (De Angelis 2005; Bakker 2007). The various elements of a neoliberal political order present complications for the conceptualization of care work within policy, particularly as it pertains to the labour involved in care work. This labour is undervalued due to its incompatibility with neoliberalism. Policies regulating the activities of care are formulated within a neoliberal framework, and often cannot account for the labour involved, perpetuating systemic injustices and undervaluing care work itself. This thesis provides an intervention into this undervaluing of care work in two seemingly disparate policy areas: childcare and waste management policy in Newfoundland and Labrador. Both policy areas are influenced by the dominance of neoliberalism in the province—and, Canada as a whole—and are characterized by their dependence on caring labour.

This thesis offers a study of political possibility in Newfoundland and Labrador during a time of nearly unprecedented, intense fiscal restraint (Moulton 2016), by situating the study explicitly on the childcare and waste management policy areas in the province. Policy areas are defined as the societal and political interest in certain issues and subsequent interactions between decision-makers, interest groups, advocates, grassroots organizations, and citizens generally (Howlett 1997). Policy areas that specifically involve care work, represented in this thesis by childcare and waste, hold a distinctive communal quality; this communal quality surfaces through acts of care work that contribute to physical, emotional, or other wellbeing, or work that: “maintains human infrastructure that cannot be adequately produced through unpaid work or unsubsidized markets, necessitating public investment” (Duffy et al. 2013: 147). Provincially organized childcare in Newfoundland and Labrador provides the resources for the care of children that cannot take place solely in the household, while waste management policy regulates

the necessary processes of environmental care that cannot fall to individual responsibility. These communal, universal qualities situate the two case studies as policy areas that are organized around care work, inviting an examination of the policy areas through a care framework.

What are the parameters of a care framework, and how is it useful? Theories of care represent a feminist framework that largely emerges from a need to recognize and prioritize the ubiquitous care work involved in daily human function. Care is naturally procedural, and includes valuing the lived experiences of care givers and receivers (Tronto 1998). Due to the influence of gender and the characterization of care work as women's work—that is, work that is primarily domestic and takes place in the private sphere of the household—an explicit focus within care theories is placed on the effect that undervaluing care work has on women specifically, and conversely, the influence that the feminization of care work has on the undervaluing of this labour in the first place (Tronto 1995). As a theory and as a framework, care is a normative standpoint:

where our moral selves emerge through our relations of responsibility and care for particular others [...] [which causes one to learn] how to act morally - how to listen, exercise patience, understand and be attentive to needs, and consider and reconsider one's moral decisions in the light of the needs and demands of others (Robinson 2011: 847).

The care framework can be applied to childcare and waste management policy areas to highlight their reliance on caring labour and their societal function. Additionally, previous policy efforts have not effectively accounted for this labour.

The application of care theories to policy development is an existing tradition in the literature, with particular attention paid to social policy development (Sevenhuijsen 2003).

Hankivsky (2014) notes that placing care “places at the forefront human flourishing and the prevention of harm and suffering” (Hankivsky 2014: 253). Applied to the realm of policy, this definition of care inspires an ethical principle that renders political decisions more cognizant of the human needs of care, presenting a framework that is malleable and that has universal applicability (Hankivsky 2014). Selma Sevenhuijsen proposes that this inclusion of care in policy frameworks can render care to be valued similarly to other highly prominent political values, “such as solidarity, justice, and expediency” (Sevenjuisen 2003: 182). These theorizations of the practicality of care as a policy tool compliment definitions of care offered by Tronto and Robinson; the ubiquity and prominence of care as the activities that sustain human existence and inspire a responsibility to effectively care for others can lead to enormous political strides when written into policy.

It is this character of caring labour and the communal impact of both policy areas that render them so pertinent in Newfoundland and Labrador. The costs of childcare in Newfoundland and Labrador are consistently the highest east of Ontario, with limited availability in licensed centres due to geographical constraints (Macdonald and Friendly 2017). Further, the lack of a strategy to deal with waste generates severe ecological externalities, impacting all people in the province to a significant degree. The high presence of small communities located in isolated or remote regions of the province complicates the coordination of a provincial waste management strategy (Kazemi et al. 2014), preventing the adoption of meaningful policy solutions. Both of these case studies are characterized by their ineffective policy solutions, and both are deeply compatible with the application of a care framework.

Both policy areas are characterized by a neoliberal model of policy-making. The neoliberal order of individualism is in contradiction with the communal responsibility of care, indicating

that the conceptualization of effective solutions based in care lies outside of the mainstream framework of policy interpretation. When applied as a political theory, care could inspire the necessary ideological shift from neoliberalism that is integral to the move toward policy changes that lead to a more equitable social and environmental landscape. This includes the fundamental recognition of the complex role that care plays in daily function, the valuing of care work and activities, and the creation of institutions of care (Tronto 2010). Through the application of care theories to the labour involved in both childcare and waste management, this thesis conceptualizes the nature of the issue itself—the political absence of care—and proposes an emancipatory policy framework which could yield more equitable policies that properly account for the labour involved in care work. This work directly responds to the following research question: *What does a theoretical intervention of care reveal about the caring labour involved in childcare and waste policy in Newfoundland and Labrador? How can these revelations be practically applied to the development of emancipatory policy solutions in these areas?*

II. Key concepts and definitions

Formal and informal organizations of labour:

The distinction between formal and informal organizations of labour helps to determine what is valued within neoliberal parameters and what is not. Formal labour is the regulated, wage-earning sector of employment found in the provision of both childcare and waste management in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the childcare policy area, the formal organization of labour is represented in this thesis by Early Childhood Educators (ECE) and other individuals working in for-profit, not-for-profit, and government run childcare centres throughout the province. This workforce is characterized by a highly feminized workforce, high turnover rates, low wages, and little opportunities for advancement (Matthew 2013). The formal

labour force in the waste management policy area is comprised of sanitation workers, a labour force that is organized both as a government service and through privately contracted companies (Burcea 2015). Key characteristics of this formal labour include established wages, the security of a unionized environment, and a dominantly male labour force (Burcea 2015). The organizations of childcare workers and sanitation workers provide their labour to the completion of care work in their respective sectors, and are compensated through formal channels in exchange for this labour. The formal organization of labour is compatible with the norms of the neoliberal political order, as outlined above, as all work is characterized as productive, and takes place in organized sites.

Contrastingly, informal and unpaid organizations of labour are removed from the wage-earning, formal sector of employment; informal labour refers to activities that support or replace the services of the formal labour process, but that takes place in private or domestic spheres and is not compensated in any formal capacity (Bolton and Wibberley 2014). The informal labour taking place in the provision of childcare refers directly to the work of parents, primarily mothers, who see to the social reproductive work that facilitates child development, and is characterized by labour that is not exchanged for monetary compensation (Prentice 2009). In the waste management sector, the specific organization of informal labour that this thesis takes interest in is the work of professional recyclers. This group of labourers collect items, primarily bottles, for the purposes of recycling and receive their entire compensation from the return of the materials (Porter 2012). This labour force is not compensated by any formal authority, and completes vital care work of environmental protection, and is characterized by its dominantly male presence (Porter 2012). The informal labour of childcare, however, typically sees a highly female representation of labourers (Bolton and Wibberley 2014). In both instances, the informal

organizations of labour complete care work in domestic spheres, seeing to vital work of social reproduction.

Care work, caring labour, and theories of care:

Care work is defined as activities, both paid (formal) and unpaid (informal) that does not produce physical or material output, but that complete the social reproduction aims of “mental, manual, and emotional [work] aimed at providing the historically and socially, as well as biologically, defined care necessary to maintain existing life and to reproduce the next generation (Duffy et al. 2013: 148). Caring labour, then, is the labour employed to achieve the process and aims of care work.

The aim of this piece of care research draws from the existing field of political theories of care, which strive toward the creation of caring institutions—both within and outside of formal government, which occurs through the incorporation of care into policy frameworks (Sevenjuisen 2003). Joan Tronto articulates the necessity of providing the institutional context for good care, which includes the removal of the explicit focus on familial caring requirements, an abandonment of the market rhetoric surrounding caring activities that render people consumers rather than receivers of care, and a formalization of tactics for dealing with particularities and power dynamics within institutions providing care (Tronto, 2010). This element reflects the idea of a needs interpretation analysis, rather than a rights interpretation. Initially articulated in full by Nancy Fraser (1987), the discursive shift toward a more equitable provision of social services begins with a recognition that caring needs vary among individuals. This includes the process of magnifying typically marginalized voices, and avoiding the inclination to name one’s needs in their place (Fraser 1987). By writing care frameworks into policy, progressive action that corrects the injustices present under neoliberal policies is

institutionalized. This thesis explores caring labour and the conceptualizing caring institutions to help to formulate more equitable policies.

The caring labour of childcare

The question of labour is an under-studied area of childcare policy, particularly within the specific provincial context of Newfoundland and Labrador. Thus, this research aims to contribute to the field of feminist political economy in its evaluation of labour—both of workers in the childcare sector and of women participating in the labour force more broadly—as well as the value of this labour surrounding fundamental care work. A central rationale behind the undervaluing of childcare labour considers the feminized nature of the work itself, which is characteristically an act of care that is expected to occur within the family under neoliberal rationale (Friendly and Rothman 1995). Neoliberal policy models have historically ignored the concept of gender in the development and analysis of policy due to the assumption that political action should be removed from individual's lives and treat all people equally (Paterson 2010). Any form of gender-based approach is relatively new in the field of Canadian policy analysis, but typically results in a simplified view of how gendered constructs relate to policy, reflecting neoliberalism's "limited political will and resource allocation towards alleviating gender inequality" (Paterson 2010: 399).

The related question of value that accompanies any study of labour is an additional element to this care analysis. Centrally, observing the differences between the organization and recognition of informal and formal sources of caring labour, which necessitates considering how care work is valued, for whom it is valued, and how it is valued financially. The formal source of childcare labour includes Early Childhood Educators, daycare administrators, and service workers that are hired, organized, and paid for their labour; the makeup of this labour force is

overwhelmingly feminine—typically comprised of racialized women and people of minority status—and is characterized by low-wages, the absence of unions, and the precarity of employment security (Cleveland et al. 2003). Conversely, the informal sector of childcare labour involves familial care structures and the reliance on women to perform the duties of social reproduction, both of which are formally unrecognized due to its removal from the organized economy (Friendly and Rothman 1995).

Waste management

Labour within the area of waste management is of particular interest due to the discrepancies that exist between the valuing of formal and informal sectors of work. Formal waste management tactics, typically organized through a synthesis of provincial and municipal policy action, have been demonstrably incapable of keeping pace with expanding patterns of consumption and consumerism, with a focus on the reduction of waste at the landfill site a clearly defined goal. The formal labour force involved in the management of waste is majority male laborers, who in most cases are unionized and employed directly by a level of government. There is a technical focus to this work, which renders it valued solely as physical labour and not as politically influential (Wagner 2007). The informal sector of labour in waste management is comprised of mainly of waste collectors/pickers and recyclers, who collect recyclable items for monetary refund and repurpose items from landfills for resell; these workers are typically persons living in poverty, globally, and provide unrecognized contributions to environmental protection and economic development (Burcea 2015). All providers of informal labour contribute to environmental care in some capacity.

Critical studies of waste policy across Canada take issue with the “management” effort due to the linkages the word “management” itself has with neoliberalism. The word denotes a

certain apolitical character of waste itself, leaving the conceptualization of resolutions to waste problems as that which can be resolved “at the individual level [...] with downstream techno-scientific responsibility for responses” (Hird 2017: 190). Policy efforts to constructively address the issues that generate waste problems, then, are weak, because they are formulated within this neoliberal framework. This hinders the implementation of any actual longstanding measures:

“[...] waste rather silently moves us towards a state whereby our only solution for dealing with the toxicity our relentless consumption and planetary depletion generates is by producing permanently temporary waste deposits for imagined futures to resolve” (Hird, 2017:

189). Scholars have also voiced criticisms regarding the emphasis placed on individual or household effort among political waste management efforts; consultation efforts and dialogues of environmental responsibility typically encourage an individual impetus to reduce waste, reflecting neoliberal notions of self-determination and ultimately removing the responsibility from the state to proactively address what constitutes a societal problem (McDavid 1985; Burcea 2015; Wagner 2007). This thesis, therefore, approaches the policy area of waste with cautious use of the term management, employing care theories to move beyond the scientific implications of management and into a solutions-based approach, which considers societal change along with technical advancement.

III. Methodology

The methodological approach to this thesis works from the tradition of critical discourse, and feminist critical discourse analyses. In essence, a critical discourse analysis is employed in order to “explicate abuses of power promoted by [texts], by analyzing linguistic/semiotic details in light of the larger social and political contexts in which those texts circulate” (Huckin et al. 2012: 107). The theoretical backing to critical discourse analyses advances several intrinsic

principles to discourse, initially developed by Fairclough and Kodak in the 1990s. These principles include, but are not limited to, the following propositions: that power relations are discursive, that discourse does ideological work, that the link between text and society is mediated, and that discourse is a form of social action (Huckin et al. 2012). This thesis will methodologically employ the approach—through engaging in linguistic details quantitatively and qualitatively, accounting for ambiguities in a close, critical reading—in order to ultimately demonstrate the empty or veiled discourse utilized by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in childcare and waste management policy areas.

In a similar vein, the methods of feminist critical discourse analysis will equally be considered. Michelle Lazar (2007) defines the purpose of a feminist critical discourse analysis as “to show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities” (Lazar 2007: 142). Herein lies the emancipatory power of this thesis, which follows the feminist scholarly tradition of providing a normative standard by which research can be actualized; in examining the feminized nature of care work—which includes the deeply rooted considerations of value in the act of providing childcare, as well as the gendered rhetoric that surrounds environmental protection and the caring labour involved in this protection—the hegemonic order can be deconstructed, critically examined, and space can be made for the implementation of viable solutions and structural changes. Further, the approach of a discourse analysis creates the space to conceptualize the relationship between the two case studies, looking toward the care of children and the environment, as well as the management of waste and of children. These linkages strengthen the analysis and test the universal applicability of the care framework as it is

applied in this thesis, creating rhetorical space for theoretical and policy alternatives in both areas.

IV. Outline

The following chapters investigate the application of care theories to childcare and waste management policy areas, proposing both an alternative way in which labour can be conceptualized and accounted for, and equally, an emancipatory framework through which effective policies can be formulated and actualized. This begins with an exploration of care, theoretically, and its application as a political framework; this approach is two-tiered, and looks toward the tradition of feminist theories of care as a theoretical backbone, followed by an exploration of work that has been done in the application of theories of care to political processes and institutions. A preliminary assertion of the dominance of caring labour as fundamental to societal functioning begins the chapter, providing a review of social reproduction feminism (Fraser 2016; Bakker 2007). This theoretical review contextualizes the vital importance of care work and caring labour, prioritizing the gendered elements of such work, and illuminating the “crisis of care” that has been sparked by the neoliberal inclination toward privatization and the erasure of care to household settings (Fraser 2016). Following this contextualizing review is an exploration of the concrete application of care theories to political institutions; this follows, heavily, Joan Tronto’s seminal 2010 work on the creation of caring institutions, and other works that have, in a similar vein, proposed the cultivation of a public ethic of care through political processes (Tronto 2010; Stensota 2010). Additionally, the methodological process of a discourse analysis is evaluated in depth.

The case studies of two policy areas follow this theoretical and methodological examination, beginning with an evaluation of labour in the childcare policy area of

Newfoundland and Labrador. This case study involves four main considerations: looking toward the utility and purpose of childcare as a necessary activity of social reproduction; evaluating the ways in which neoliberal policymaking norms have shaped childcare services; a detailed, theoretical overview of the labour involved in childcare and how it has been variously undermined and undervalued, both within private and public, informal and formal organizations of labour; and a discourse analysis of a governmental policy document from Newfoundland and Labrador that attempts to reconcile the discrepancies between the caring rhetoric put forward, and the absence of genuine feminist policies that properly account for caring labour. The document that will be analyzed include: the “Caring for Our Future” Childcare Strategy (2012-2022).

Following the basic structure of the preceding chapter, a case study of the caring labour involved in the waste management policy area of Newfoundland and Labrador is examined. This case study, similarly, involves four main tenets: a preliminary assessment of the caring labour involved in the management of waste in the province, theoretically and actual, based heavily in theories of environmental care (King 1991); an examination of the ways in which neoliberal models of policymaking have corporatized and prevented environmental protection through waste management policies; a theoretical overview of the ways that labour in the waste management sector has been undervalued, looking comparatively toward provincial norms and different international examples; and a discourse analysis of a governmental policy document that, equally, tries to reconcile the use of caring rhetoric put forth with the absence of meaningful policy solutions that could effectively remedy the various problems of waste management in the province. The thesis analyzes the Newfoundland and Labrador Waste Management Strategy (2002-2025).

Having explored the varied contexts of care within the labour involved in both childcare and waste management, the fourth and final section of this thesis will provide a discussion that explores the linkages and discrepancies between both case studies, ultimately utilizing their examples to propose a framework by which policymaking can be rendered more inclusive to caring labour, and more emancipatory from the norms of neoliberalism. This involves a theoretical discussion of the links between childcare and environmental care as varied examples of social reproduction, as well as a discussion of how neoliberalism has affected progress in both policy areas. This chapter also unites the discourse analyses of policy documents in the two case studies, to critique the utility of the present use of long-term policy frameworks.

Ultimately, this thesis tests a care framework against the existing childcare and waste policies in Newfoundland and Labrador, testing the central research question: *What does a theoretical intervention of care reveal about the caring labour involved in childcare and waste policy in Newfoundland and Labrador? How can these revelations be practically applied to the development of emancipatory policy solutions in these areas?* It is expected that the incorporation of care as an analytical tenet will render hidden elements—particularly to do with labour—in both policy areas, and will create space for alternative policy realities that remedy the longstanding challenges that characterize both areas. This thesis will propose an emancipatory policy framework in the specific case of Newfoundland and Labrador, imagining a policy future for childcare and waste management that moves beyond the confines of neoliberalism.

Chapter 2: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations

I. Introduction

This chapter develops the theoretical framework of care to analyse childcare and waste management policies in Newfoundland and Labrador. It will focus on social reproduction feminism, caring labour, and the capacity for the creation of caring institutions. Each of these tenets can be categorized into two dominant themes: the political climate of neoliberalism and the character of caring labour practiced in a neoliberal society. More specifically, care is discussed at two levels: as an analytical, explanatory tool; and as a practice. This dual outlook seeks to answer the question: what does caring labour look like, politically, and how is such labour practiced and valued? This question is directly linked to the overarching premise of the research, which involves identifying the revelations that a care framework can bring to the policy areas of childcare and waste management, and identifying the policy innovations that can accompany this framework shift. With this question as a starting point, the following pages formulate a theoretical framework that makes visible the caring labour within childcare and waste management sectors that has been systemically erased through neoliberal policy norms, and proposes that caring policies and, ultimately, institutions, can be derived from this framework, and from the necessary departure from the norms of political possibility under neoliberalism. Additionally, the methodological approach of critical discourse analysis is explored in depth. This framework is developed with the intention of addressing the driving research question of the thesis, which concerns the analytical effect of care's theoretical intervention, and the practicality of its application.

II. Theories of care: Feminism in the context of neoliberalism

The first step toward a theory of care involves situating the question of what care and care work are, and what activities count as care in the context of this thesis. The origins of care, theoretically, trace back to Marxist understandings of social reproduction (Bakker 2007), and its ultimate applications to gender, and to feminist theory. In early Marxist thinking, social reproduction referred primary to the reproduction and perpetuation of the working class; this process ultimately includes a reproduction and perpetuation of systemic class inequality as well (Laslett and Brenner 1989). While this concept is integral to the feminist understandings of social reproduction as it stands presently, its exclusive focus on productive work limits its applicability beyond mass, industrial production. Feminist thinkers, particularly within the tradition of feminist political economy, extend the Marxian definition of social reproduction to include three primary tenets: biological reproduction, which accounts for motherhood; the reproduction of the labour force, involving subsistence and education; and the reproduction of caring needs, primarily within family structures, that ensure the daily continuation of society (Bakker 2007).

Recognizing the origins of social reproduction as a concept, in both Marxist understandings and its extension into feminist uses, is imperative; this hybrid theory posits that the labour involved in reproductive activities must not only be recognized, but valued. Social reproduction feminism achieves this recognition of labour while maintaining that central criticism of the reproduction of the structures that perpetuate systemic inequalities. In other words, the centrality of activities of providing care under any imaginable economic system is recognized, but the character of this labour under neoliberalism is understood to also involve the reproduction of the damaging political, cultural, and social formations that perpetuate inequalities (Ferguson 2008). Nancy Fraser (2016) highlights this inherent contradiction of

capital, where “capitalism’s economic subsystem depends on social reproductive activities external to it.” (Fraser 2016). This duality of social reproduction is an essential understanding. Departing from the theoretical conceptualizations of care and social reproduction, the practice of care must be understood. Duffy et al. (2013) define care work utilizing four criteria:

(1) [activities contributing] to physical, mental, social, and/or emotional well-being; (2) the primary labour process of the activity involves face-to-face relationship with those cared for; (3) those receiving care are members of groups that by normal social standards cannot provide for all of their own care because of age, illness, or disability; and (4) care work builds and maintains human infrastructure that cannot be adequately produced through unpaid work or unsubsidized markets, necessitating public investment (Duffy et al. 2013: 147).

The encompassing definition of care work provided by Duffy et al. highlights the informal and unpaid elements of care work, as well as the regulation of this work that takes place in a formal, politically organized manner. In a similar vein, Joan Tronto and Bernice Fischer (1998) identify the four phases that comprise a process of care: caring about; caring for; caregiving; and care receiving (Tronto and Fischer 1998: 16-7). Uniting these definitions of care work with empirical outlook of social reproduction feminism is the cornerstone to this theoretical framework.

Namely, the combination of the two—of care theoretically, and care as a practice—permits full understanding of the role that the neoliberal state plays in regulating social reproduction and activities of care, and the pervasive impact that this regulation has over the constructions of gender orders and other societal structures that impede the actualization of societal equity (Findlay 2012). The analytical utility that care brings to understanding the hindrances that neoliberalism poses to social advancement is of paramount importance to this thesis.

Canadian policy structures have turned toward neoliberalism as the norm over the past 30 years. Beginning as part of the global movement toward more conservative policies, various changes were made to the fabric of the Canadian policy landscape, including: “programme cutbacks, downsizing of public sector employees, deregulation of certain sectors of the economy and load shedding from federal to provincial governments” (Clark 2002: 782). Most severely impacted by these policies were social welfare, education, and health programs (Clark 2002). Recognition of caring labour is entirely absent from this paradigm of neoliberalism that became the norm of Canadian policymaking, under both Conservative and Liberal administrations that have held government since the 1970s. In some capacity, the concept of care is seen as a non-negotiable, ethical responsibility of the public sector; Duffy et al. (2013) classify the “spillovers” of care, including “a well-educated labour force, healthy and productive adults, security in illness and old age, and the general well-being of the population” (Duffy et al. 2013: 150) as an objectively recognized public good. It is the interaction of care, in its context as a public good, with neoliberal market structures and notions of productivity that generally skew the provision of caring activities and create a ranking of these activities based on societal norms. This indicates that while education and health care (to some extent) are seen as a direct caring responsibility of the state, other services—such as childcare and elder care—are seen as familial responsibilities, limiting the public provision of such services (Duffy et al. 2013). This is a problematic distinction that has pervaded all political systems, but which occupies a more intense character under the individualistic mindset of neoliberalism.

Two final considerations of the interactions of care and neoliberal policy making are necessary: the character of path dependency, and the concept of gender. Path dependency is a norm of policy formulation and implementation that takes a particularly dangerous character

within neoliberal structures. Essentially, for a policy to remain path-dependent upon structural reviews and calls for renewal is for a policy to maintain its pre-existing course with minor adjustments as necessary. This pattern arises due to the tendency to avoid destabilizing policy, and due to the assured returns that come from staying the course (Cairney 2014). This path dependence influences the analytical character of gender in policy analyses. Policies are typically assumed to be gender-blind, removing the capacity to understand how persons of different genders are impacted by the interaction of policy and systemic oppression. Responses to this in recent years have resulted in the implementation of a “gender-mainstreaming” process, which adopts the path-dependent tendency of considering review to be sufficient without adjusting strategies and tactics on a case-by-case basis (Paterson 2010). This is pertinent to caring labour because the labour that is involved in providing the care expected to be performed privately goes unrecognized and unvalued economically and, further, is typically performed by women, which places an immense social responsibility on women and perpetuates their continued subordination by the state (Findlay 2015).

A proper understanding of the dimensions of care necessitates this recognition of the many, inextricable elements that contribute to conceptions of care in neoliberal function—distinctions between public and private provision, economic value, hidden labour, and gender work together to provide an analysis of care and social reproduction as they appear in state function. The following table (Table 1) summarizes care’s incompatibility with neoliberalism:

Table 1: Comparing Neoliberalism and Care

	Neoliberalism	Care
1. Understanding of labour	Linked directly to market value; must be demonstrably productive economically; takes place in the public, visibly productive sphere	Ubiquitous concept; must be recognized as both that which yields economic returns and that which does not; takes place in public sphere as well as private sphere (mostly defined as households)
2. Understanding of the role of the state and public and public expenditures	Limited state interference in individual's lives; belief in little market regulation; public expenditures should be reduced so as to increase autonomy	Provision of social services and welfare is a state responsibility; belief in separation of market from state function; public expenditures should be directed toward social programs for the betterment of society
3. Understanding of citizenship	Market citizenship and social citizenship are necessarily linked	Market citizenship and social citizenship are necessarily separate
4. Understanding of gender	All genders regarded as equal in the face of policy; policy is "genderblind" to the interaction of gender and labour	All genders are not treated equally by policy; care labour is severely gendered and is politically unrecognized

(Bakker 2007; Tronto 2010; Tronto and Fischer 1998)

This table points toward the four fundamental societal elements that differentiate care from neoliberalism and demonstrates the incompatibility of the two. Labour, public expenditures, citizenship, and gender are all integral elements to understanding the two case studies of childcare and waste management policy areas, and by extension, all societal function under neoliberalism. This table understands the differences between the idea of the communal, or the universal, in both neoliberalism and care; this thesis makes the claim that care better understands a communal social existence, and seeks to make space for the consideration of this theoretical position in contemporary policy formulation.

III. Neoliberalism and the potential for caring institutions

An essential element in the consideration of the potential for caring policies rests in a central qualm—can neoliberal political structures adequately account for care and be turned into caring institutions? Resolving this problematic rests in reviewing the political character of neoliberalism and in exploring the likelihood of policy change governed under this ideology. Isabella Bakker (2007) articulates the character of neoliberal governance:

Neoliberalism carries a social analysis which ‘when deployed as a form of governmentality, reaches from the soul of the citizen—subject to education policy and to practices of empire.’ Indeed, market values are extended to all institutions and social relations, reshaping them according to private sector rules and regulations reconfiguring and privatizing (social) risk. Hence the political sphere is submitted to microeconomic rationality with the intention of submitting all aspects of human life to concepts of market efficiency and rationality (Bakker 2007: 550).

Bakker’s understanding of all aspects of human life being submitted to market efficiency is key; care work cannot be properly recognized by neoliberal policies due to the intense tendencies toward privatization and individual responsibility, which work to erase informal caring practices and stand as deeply incompatible with the universal elements of policy areas involving care work. Nancy Fraser (2016) names the incompatibility of care and the neoliberal state as the “crisis of care,” and calls for a total reconceptualization of policy: “this crisis will not be resolved by tinkering with social policy. The path to its resolution can only go through deep structural transformation of the social order” (Fraser 2016). Thus, the framework proposed in this thesis is meant to inform a potential future in which analyses of care are made an essential part of policy development, with an emancipatory policy future made possible.

Joan Tronto's seminal 2010 work on "creating caring institutions" forms a basis to this reconceptualization of policy landscapes explored through this thesis. In this piece, Tronto criticizes the familial dominated standards for "good care," determining that the institutional context of care cannot be regulated by market rationality, but must account for the complex and multi-dimensional nature of care (Tronto 2010: 162). Tronto determines that caring institutions—a largely imagined concept in the context of both her piece and this thesis—must be explicit about the pursuit of its purposes, must cope with particularity, and must be constantly cognizant of how power is used in the organization (Tronto 2010: 160). Another imperative consideration is a procedural review of how the organization is coping, and how necessary structural changes are seen to when the care provided is suboptimal. While caring institutions represent an imagined future at this point, the purpose of this work is to unpack the discourse that surrounds childcare and waste management policies as key areas of care in order to create space for an alternate, emancipatory reality to take place.

III. Contextualizing caring labour in childcare and waste policies

The basis of care—theoretically, and as a practice—and its interactions with neoliberal policies and institutions, and the limited capacity for the creation of caring institutions under neoliberal frameworks established, there remains an exploration of caring labour in childcare and waste policies in general terms. This is the central consideration of this thesis: how do the formal and informal manifestations of caring labour in both policy areas interact with the norms of neoliberalism, and how can the introduction of care as a policy framework generate meaningful policy change that results in this labour being valued and accounted for? The distinction between paid and unpaid care work and its subsequent social value is of particular interest. The paid care sector accounts for people employed in a variety of occupations, which include but are not

limited to administrative supports, housekeeping, childcare, educational assistants, personal care attendants, etc. This sector, while valued in the productive economy and, thus, recognized for its market contributions, still comprises one of the lowest-paid sectors of the workforce, with a high concentration of female workers due to the systemically feminized character of many positions that constitute care work (Duffy et al. 2013: 156). Unpaid care work, on the other hand, represents the activities performed in the provision of care—both affective and material—that occur uncompensated, and outside of the paid labour force.

The unpaid labour force of care represents a deep, prominent contradiction in capitalist or neoliberal functioning; the care performed in an uncompensated, invisible setting is necessary to the continuation of society—within a neoliberal understanding, the continuation of all market productivity—but the privatization of social services under neoliberalism confines most of these activities to the domestic sphere (Fraser 2016). Revisiting Table 1, the central tenets to neoliberalism include:

1. An understanding of **labour** as linked intrinsically to market value, and taking place in the public sphere,
2. An understanding of the role of **public expenditures** as necessarily minimal, so as to increase individual autonomy,
3. An understanding of **social citizenship** as directly linked to market citizenship,
4. An understanding of **gender** as a non-issue in the face of genderblind public policy.

Both childcare and waste policy areas show interactions between the supply of labour and the neoliberal context in which it exists and ultimately demonstrate the incompatibility between the two. This section outlines the character of caring labour in both policy areas in order to provide more context.

Labour in childcare

The childcare sector is one of the most expansive and complex portions of the paid care labour market, and one that is of particular policy interest generally. Low-wage, non-union, unstable employment, high turnover rates, and few opportunities for advancement constitute some of the defining characteristics of this sector (Cleveland et al. 2003: 296). The workforce is overwhelmingly dominated by women and minorities, with the character of the labour itself socialized as an inherent activity of the feminine sphere. The act of caring for children is twofold and accounts for the physical or material actions associated with motherhood, socialized to be an inherent part of womanhood, and an immense amount of emotional labour involved (Monrad 2017: 282). The productive capacity of the childcare labour force is an interesting element, as the work itself is not valued as economically productive, but its outcome of a new, educated class receiving childcare is valued for its economic utility (Prentice 2009). Thus, the low wages paid to childcare workers are deeply contrasted with the high, inaccessible costs of childcare itself (Friendly and Rothman 1995).

The unpaid sector of childcare labour constitutes the realm of the household or domestic sphere, where the care of children is expected to occur, without burden, as an integral part of motherhood and familial obligation. The labour expended by those who provide childcare within the unpaid domestic sector is largely invisible—it is not valued economically, and is taken for granted (Newman 2008). Further, the combination of paid and unpaid childcare that takes place in society—and, is integral to the continuation of society—must be recognized; for every child receiving care in a school or childcare setting, there are countless hours put into their development by family members, guardians, and workers in other service sectors.

The value placed upon making visible the various dimensions of caring labour within a care framework highlights the actual practice of childcare in its formal, or paid, and informal, unpaid, manifestations. This framework demonstrably disputes the four tenets of neoliberalism as highlighted above: care labour takes place outside of the productive economy in the many examples of familial care that keep society functioning; limiting the public expenditures directed toward childcare increases the need for informal networks of childcare and limits the opportunities for poverty reduction and gender equality; the social citizenship action of providing care for children in informal networks refutes the idea that market and social citizenship are intrinsically linked; and the disproportionate impact that sub-par childcare policies has on women is not evaluated or accounted for.

Labour in Waste Management

Unlike the very typical caring labour that comprises the childcare sector, the area of waste management provides a very atypical conceptualization of care work, the dimensions of which constitute formal labour practices as well as non-human elements of undervalued care work. Formal labour associated with waste management is comprised of service workers who collect waste and maintain the life of landfills. Also included in this sector of care work is the policymakers who develop tactics to manage waste that are consistent (for the most part) with expanding patterns of consumerism (Hird 2017). Labour involved in the “management” of waste is an unseen act of environmental care, with its economic value resting in conceptualizations of employment and the provision of public services.

The informal sector of care work involved in waste policy areas is vast and unclear; waste pickers, collectors of recyclables for their monetary value, and various animals and environmental processes that regulate and control landfill operations all fit under the umbrella of

unpaid care work in waste management, and are all integral to the processing of waste (Choudhary 2003; Burcea 2015). More generally, waste management policies and tactics can be understood in their broad context as imperative processes of environmental care; with climate change accelerating and ecological damage evident, developing new parameters of waste management can be seen as a necessary act of environmental care that has yet to take hold.

Again, the tenets of neoliberalism are intrinsically disputed by the actual caring practices involved in the handling and management of waste, in a context that manifests differently than that of the childcare case. These include: the act of environmental care that is accounted for by the management of waste is not an economically productive act, limiting its recognition under neoliberalism; public expenditures in waste management go toward staying the course of harmful policies already in place, not recognizing a renewal of these policies are environmentally and socially necessary; conceptualizations of waste regard individuals only as market citizens, who consume and must discard their waste, and not as social citizens who all participate in the destruction of the planet; and the overwhelmingly male-dominated labour force in the formal waste management sector reduces the analytical component of gender.

V. Methodological approach: Discourse analysis

With the theoretical framework of care providing the approach to this research, a methodology of critical discourse analysis is employed in an effort to deconstruct the formulation of policies in both areas that are considered, and to create space discursively for alternate perspectives. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach that aims to expose abuses of power promoted by texts, and to examine structural relationships that enforce inequality that are “expressed, constituted, and legitimized by language use” (Huckin et al. 2012: 108). Several principles form the basis of a critical discourse analysis, most of which

were initially articulated by Fairclough and Wodak (1996). These elements include the intention to address social problems, study of the ideological work done by discourse, the historical context of discourse, the mediated link between text and society, and the capacity for discourse to be a form of social action (Huckin et al. 2012: 108). The ultimate aim of a CDA is the development of new practices that can be emancipatory: “In terms of critical approaches, for a person to become conscious of a discourse and its practices would entail not so much immediate consciousness of a discourse itself but rather a reconstruction of the discourse at the metadiscursive level” (Price 1999: 585). Thus, the methodological CDA approach taken by this thesis attempts not only to unpack the discourse employed in documents on childcare and waste management written by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, but to change the discourse itself through the reconstruction of a discourse that accounts properly for care.

Importantly, this thesis employs a feminist critical discourse analysis in order to deconstruct the subtlety in how gendered social arrangements are sustained by pre-existing childcare and waste policy areas. Michelle Lazar (2007) initially articulates the feminist critical discourse analysis method, identifying the following aim as central:

The aim of feminist critical discourse analysis, therefore, is to show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities (Lazar 2007: 141-2).

The focus on the transformative, social justice method of the feminist CDA, and its drive toward emancipatory goals, situates its importance to this study. This seeks to deconstruct the overarching theoretical perspective that holds policy is neutral, and therefore genderblind; the

deeply gendered manifestations of labour in childcare and waste management necessitate this perspective for proper analysis, which works to demystify the proposition that policy interacts with people of all genders equally (Lazar 2007).

The policy documents from the province of Newfoundland and Labrador that will be subjected to this feminist critical discourse analysis are the 2012 *Caring for Our Future* childcare strategy, and the 2002 *Newfoundland and Labrador Waste Management Strategy*. Both were selected based on the following criteria: each constitutes the publicly accessible format of policy meant for ready public consumption; each outlines a long-term policy strategy, meant to drive policy development for 10 years or more; and each constitutes policy developments that are meant to depart from the existing path and resolve longstanding problem areas. The discourse of each respective document will be analyzed in four thematic areas: the use of caring rhetoric; emphasis on public consultation; rhetoric of economic development; and the evaluation of labour in the documents. It is intended that these feminist critical discourse analyses will clarify the dynamics of power, hierarchy, and gender in both childcare and waste policy areas, identifying the problematics that have been missed by other approaches and proposing alternative discursive ways to conceptualize these policy areas. It is also intended that the CDA will highlight the interlinkages between the two policy areas, conceptualizing how childcare strategies can inform waste “care” strategies, and how the waste management efforts can help to illuminate child “management” as it may stand.

VI. Thesis

The culmination of the theoretical framework and methodological approach, as outlined above, proposes a normative way in which childcare and waste in Newfoundland and Labrador can be better understood and ameliorated. This work operates in response to the driving research

question: *What does a theoretical intervention of care reveal about the caring labour involved in childcare and waste policy in Newfoundland and Labrador? How can these revelations be practically applied to the development of emancipatory policy solutions in these areas?* At the outset of this research, it is expected that the intervention of care will make visible the dimensions of formal and informal labour in both policy areas, identifying the absence of this consideration in the existing policies and proposing methods of their inclusion in future policy formulation. Further, it is expected that care will prove an emancipatory policy framework due to its departures from neoliberal frameworks currently in place, which will render future policies developed under a care framework more equitable, progressive, and emancipatory.

Chapter 3: Childcare Policy Area in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Case Study

I. Introduction

Neoliberal policymaking clearly impacts caring labour in the issue area of childcare. The term “childcare” itself carries with it associations that are encompassed by its use in this thesis, including “day care”, “preschool”, “nursery school”, and “early childhood education”, which is commonly coined by government agencies (Friendly 1991: 3). Martha Friendly (1991) defines childcare, a culmination of the above terms, as:

a range of care arrangements for children under the age of 12 outside their immediate and extended family and regular schooling. These supplementary child care arrangements are regulated by provincial or territorial governments or are unregulated, informal or private arrangements which fall entirely outside of government authority. (Friendly 1991: 3)

This case study adopts this definition of childcare and examines the ways in which informal and formal care arrangements interact with the dominant neoliberal policymaking system, paying particular attention to the character of caring labour that these arrangements require. The framework of care is tested against the current organization of policy in Newfoundland and Labrador, creating space for the consideration of progressive alternatives.

The dual theoretical framework of care, which constitutes 1) the concept of care as a theory, and 2) the concept of care as an empirical practice, is further developed and tested in this case study of the childcare policy area in Newfoundland and Labrador. Namely, the following pages apply care in an effort to develop a demonstrably clearer theoretical outline of the utility and purpose of the formal organization of childcare, which is regulated by policy within federal and provincial/territorial government agencies. This test of the utility and purpose of formal

childcare arrangements considers Tammy Findlay's (2015) articulation of the purpose of publicly provided childcare: "[Organized childcare] determines if: women will be supported in balancing paid work and family; the predominantly female child care workforce will be well compensated; and all women and children will have equal access to services" (Findlay 2015: 6). Through this, the following chapter unpacks the existing Newfoundland and Labrador childcare policies by looking toward the permeations of neoliberal practice in federal and provincial childcare policy, and through critical policy discourse analysis.

To achieve this, the first section of this chapter will delve into understanding childcare through a feminist lens, illuminating the manifold intrinsic elements of care—both societal and individual—in organized childcare. The following sections analyse the current state of policies that render childcare both inaccessible and unaffordable for families in Newfoundland and Labrador. First identifying the foundations of neoliberal ideology through a review of federal initiatives and their impact, and then through a specific analysis of the state of childcare policy in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is followed by a theoretical overview of the caring labour in the provision of childcare, and the chapter concludes in a critical discourse analysis of the central, accessibly formatted document, the "Caring for Our Future" Childcare Strategy (2012-2022), which is the policy strategy's document meant for public consumption. The overriding care framework identifies the inequitable condition of childcare policy as it currently stands, proposing the introduction of care as a policy theory as a potentially emancipatory path forward.

II. The utility and purpose of childcare

Social reproduction is the "daily and generational reproduction of the labouring population" (Findlay 2015: 4), and childcare is central to social reproduction. Feminist action rooted in social reproduction has been preoccupied with childcare since the recommendation of a

National Day Care Act by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1970 (Friendly 2006). This activism represents one side of the actors involved in the childcare “debate”, so to speak; feminist groups, labour movements, trade union organizations, and provincial and territorial childcare advocacy groups have organized, since the 1980s, with a set of demands that frame the purpose of childcare in terms of social reproduction (Findlay 2015). These groups have included the Childcare Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), various social movement organizations and grassroots advocacy organizations, women’s groups, anti-poverty groups, associations of professional Early Childhood Educator workforces, and child development research organizations (Langford et al. 2016). Their primary demand is for a universal childcare strategy in Canada. This involves framing childcare as a women’s issue, and a call to conceptualize the absence of a national strategy as an impediment to gender equality, workforce participation (mostly of women), and the proper healthy development of children. Much of these advocacy groups operate from a grassroots, ideological structure and focus on lobbying policymakers through petitions, protests, and rallies in support of a more equitable childcare policy landscape (Langford et al. 2016).

Childcare activism is concerned with the tensions between the neoliberal valuing of paid, formal work, and the informal “work that must be done to maintain the working population” (Findlay 2012: 11). Activists have long recognized the universal quality of childcare as a central tenet to social reproduction, calling for a national childcare strategy as that which will benefit all people by institutionalizing the necessary social reproduction arrangements of care that cause considerable societal strain, particularly on women, when left to informal arrangements (Findlay 2012).

The opposing side of the childcare debate counters both the demands and the conceptualization of social reproduction posited by the activists who are in favour of a universal childcare strategy. This side is primarily comprised of ideologically conservative groups and policymakers who see childcare as a familial issue of “parental choice,” and operates on an assumption that it is better for both child development and that the responsibility of childcare be taken care of privately by family members (Strumm 2015). This viewpoint is represented in the actual development of policy due to its likeness to neoliberal positions, which prioritize individual choice and autonomy and see the governmental role in providing social services as necessarily limited (Arat-Koc 2012). In addition to governmental support for this position, there have been several socially conservative lobby groups that have defended this position through advocacy efforts. Primarily, this includes the groups REAL Women of Canada and the National Family Network, who argue for a traditional understanding of the family, including the notion that mothers should be the primary caregivers of children, and that non-familial childcare is harmful to children’s development (White 2001). Both sides of this debate represent differing understandings of social reproduction, and by consequence, differing understandings of where the responsibility for the provision of childcare should rest. More simplistically, should childcare be the responsibility of the state, or of individual families as they choose fit? Further, how should policy development reflect these standpoints?

Martha Friendly (1991) lists the rationale behind childcare—as conceptualized within the activist bent that sees childcare as a responsibility of the state—as four tiered: it is for children, in terms of facilitating positive developmental outcomes and improving their quality of life; it is for families, to effectively coordinate family and work responsibilities and deliver vital community services to families in need; it is for women, to remove the barriers mothers face in

participating in the workforce if they so choose. Finally, it is for society at large, in supporting the next generation of a workforce and helping to alleviate the effects of poverty and its associated social problems (Friendly 1991: 6-7). This differs from the conservative counter lobby, which advocates that public expenditures should not be spent on childcare, when the care and raising of children should take place within the home (White 1991).

Given this counter position, the central takeaway from childcare activism in Canada over the past several decades is the attempt to re-conceptualize childcare as a public service—a political issue demanding policy action—rather than a partially provided, optional welfare service. The contemporary drawback against this initial purpose and call for a universal strategy in Canada can be traced to the 1990s, an era of necessarily pragmatic policy advocacy in terms of childcare. Linda White (1991) articulates this shift in advocacy:

Given limited resources, advocates devoted their time and money to lobbying for the ideal form of care. In the 1990s, however, advocates became increasingly aware and accepting of the importance of [linking childcare to established policies and programs]. Childcare must be “pitched” as a policy that (1) helps society, (2) fits well with other policy goals and (3) does not undermine—or clash with—dominant norms about gender roles (White, 1991: 107).

Empirical evidence argues in favour of the activist understanding of childcare as an activity of social reproduction that must be provided by the state; families assume such a diversity of structures that lone-parent, female-led families, families living in poverty or precarious income, and families that are marginalized in some way and facing barriers as a consequence, cannot assume the entire responsibility of caring for children (Findlay 2012; Findlay 2015; Strumm 2015). This thesis takes the position of childcare activism in the debate over childcare

organization, positing that the lack of state-led childcare provision is an impediment to social progress and social reproduction, and by consequence, the provision of care itself. As such, this work seeks to discursively dismantle the social conservative position that prevails in childcare policy development in Canada generally, and in Newfoundland and Labrador.

III. Unaffordable and inaccessible: The impact of Federal level neoliberal policy on childcare

Childcare is an issue of social policy that provides a particularly dense and interesting study of neoliberal policies due to its cross-jurisdictional character. Whereas the direct provision and regulation of childcare spaces occupies a provincial and territorial jurisdiction, childcare is also an issue on the national policy agenda, with the federal government playing a parental role, providing funding to provincial and territorial governments and regulating related policy measures. As such, this study of the state and conditions of childcare in Newfoundland and Labrador must recognize the impact that federal measures, such as the Canada Child Tax Benefit and various other commitments to childcare, including budget actions and historical attempts toward a coordinated, national strategy, has on provincial policy (Findlay 2015). In the absence of a national policy or strategy concerning childcare, services—and the costs thereof—vastly differ across provinces and territories, in what Martha Friendly and Laurel Rothman (1995) refer to as the “piecemeal” operation of childcare services across the country (Friendly and Rothman 1995: 510). Thus, situating the specificities of Newfoundland and Labrador demands, initially, this comparative recognition that costs vary both among provinces, and among cities.

Childcare’s emergence as a national social policy issue in the 1970s (Friendly 2006) coincided with the emergence of neoliberal ideology in political and policy schemas in Canada and the United States; following the Reagan era in the United States that saw increased efforts

toward small governments, foreign investments and trade, and a reliance on market structures to regulate political activity, Canada followed suit on the neoliberal project, largely in an effort to keep up with global transition toward neoliberalism (Carroll and Little 2001). This generated significant change in policy directions across policy areas, given the importance assigned to attaining balanced budgets, as described by Carroll and Little (2001):

Deregulation, privatization, regressive “tax reforms,” the erosion and dismantling of social services, the obsession with eliminating state deficits, the open door to foreign investment, and the attacks on trade-union rights all make up a policy package that inclines toward the needs and interests of capital, particularly its more internationalized mobile fraction (Carroll and Little 2001: 35).

Given this political shift toward neoliberalism, the coinciding societal pressure to publicly fund social services, like childcare, were severely compromised.

At the same time that this shift was taking significant hold, the 1980s saw two administrations—those of Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Brian Mulroney—that were vocally supportive of a national childcare strategy. This was due, in part, to the activist efforts of the organized childcare movement that emerged largely in response to the report by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970). The childcare advocacy groups, as previously outlined, had identified the problems within the country’s provision of childcare and were beginning to propose solutions through a developed set of demands directed at the federal government. The roots of the childcare movement as primarily advocating for a national strategy is key, as the fragmented nature of policy formulation in Canada as it currently stands continues to advocate for a collective, universal childcare strategy (Friendly and Rothman 1995).

Following the relative optimism within advocacy groups during the 1980s, a turn toward

pragmatic policy advocacy on the national level characterized the 1990s. This shift is an imperative recognition in understanding the current complications within the plight for a national childcare strategy. While much federal debate and attention was afforded to childcare throughout the 1980s, the 1990 federal budget—which limited transfer payments in the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) for childcare services substantially—changed both the policy image and advocacy tone of the issue. Most significantly, this move represents a major set-back for the national childcare movement that inspired a shift in organization and tone of this movement. Advocacy groups were initially opposed to the funding of childcare services through the CAP due to its envisioning childcare as a welfare service rather than a public service; as a welfare service, childcare is not represented in its universal quality and is seen as optional, whereas casting childcare as a public service calls to mind the universal benefits seen by a national strategy (Friendly and Rothman 1995). The 1990 cuts did not replace funding with any other measure, thus the demand for at least some progress reverted back to funds made available through the CAP and similar services (Friendly 1991). This marks an important discursive shift in advocacy efforts toward pragmatism that began in the 1990s (White 1991). The 1990s also saw an increased presence of counter-lobby groups, who advocated for a dominant perspective of familial childcare. The roots that this decade set for the difficulty in improving childcare services that runs throughout the country is necessarily linked to the turn toward neoliberal policy frameworks. Namely, the influence of a character of individualism, of reduced public expenditures on social services, and of privatization within neoliberal ideology all contribute to the complications presented to childcare (Carroll and Little 2001).

IV. Unaffordable and inaccessible: The impact of neoliberal policy at the provincial level

The influence of neoliberal ideology at the Canadian federal level on childcare services established, there remains a greater question to be addressed in the context of this study: why does childcare remain so expensive and inaccessible, and what role does neoliberal policymaking provincially have to play in this issue? The answer to this inquiry is rooted in an assessment of conceptions surrounding childcare policies in Canada. The influence of neoliberal ideology on individuality, familial obligation, and social services is at play in Canada, and has established publicly funded social services, such as healthcare, but a national childcare program has historically proven to be a hard-sell for Canadian governments. This can be attributed to a number of explanations, most of which revolve around the societal norms that are informed by the prevalence of a neoliberal ideology. These factors include, but are not limited to, collectively held beliefs on gender roles, and beliefs regarding the familial obligation toward childcare that inspires a deference to state intervention in such matters (White 2001). Further, proposals of policy change must be consistent with pre-existing norms and advantageous environmental conditions, which include ideological and economic backings. The prevailing influence of neoliberalism in Canadian policymaking prohibits a collective priority for accessible childcare, limiting the action that can be taken on the issue under the existing framework (White 2001). Understanding the historical difficulty with childcare policy in Canada due to the predominant framework of neoliberalism sheds light on Newfoundland and Labrador.

Based on the 2017 Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives publication “Time Out,” the yearly study of childcare fees in Canadian municipalities, St. John’s features the highest monthly costs for childcare services—for infant, toddler, and preschool aged children—in the Atlantic provinces (Macdonald and Friendly 2017). Given the subsidy program in place throughout Quebec, which sets monthly childcare fees at an initial flat rate of under \$200, the cost of

childcare in St. John's is the highest east of Ontario, with families paying over \$1000 monthly per child at all preschool levels (Macdonald and Friendly 2017). While Macdonald and Friendly note that the overall cost in St. John's has dropped slightly since the preceding 2016 and 2015 studies, the maintenance of high costs reflect, on the surface, a failure of the current policy strategy to effectively render childcare more affordable, reinforcing the necessity of a proactive study of the issue that proposes alternative frameworks.

While the high costs of childcare are the leading contributor to the inaccessibility of the service, two additional tenets must be considered: the provincial subsidy system, and the geographic accessibility of childcare centres and services. As with other provinces, the purpose of the childcare subsidy program in Newfoundland and Labrador is to provide financial assistance to families that require childcare services. Theoretically, childcare subsidies can assist low-income families by alleviating the financial strain of childcare and encouraging workforce participation, educational advancement, and self-determination among families (White 2001). The existence of a subsidy program in the province, however, does not guarantee that this purpose will be met; the policy is restrictive in terms of its applicability to governmentally run centres—all of which must be licensed by the province—as well as the strict “income test assessment” process that determines parent's financial eligibility (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2005).

In addition to the strict criteria that must be met for a family to qualify for a subsidy, there are often wait-lists to contend with, and subsidies across Canada typically do not cover the full costs of childcare, leaving families to pay upwards of \$500 per month on top of the subsidy in some cases (Macdonald and Friendly 2017). The subsidy system is further complicated by factors of geographic isolation. Given the dispersed concentration of the province's population

across urban and rural areas, many of the latter which are isolated communities, the availability of childcare spaces in any given location hinders the accessibility of the service, particularly for rural families approved for childcare subsidies that must locate licensed, approved centres in order to utilize the subsidy (Macdonald and Friendly 2017; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2005).

V. Childcare labour: A theoretical overview

A further complication to neoliberal norms in childcare policy is the undervaluing and disregard for the labour force involved in the provision of childcare—that is, front-line childcare workers. This contrasts with the purported and actual importance of the field, and the deeply impactful care work that individuals in this field provide. This labour, however, is a curiously neglected area within childcare research. This thesis argues that a care framework will better account for the character of labour involved in the provision of childcare, and that properly accounting for this work will render policies more adequate. Achieving a greater understanding of childcare labour demands, first, a theoretical sketch of the character and purpose of the labour itself. Childcare arrangements, whether formally orchestrated through licensed centres and paid, or informally through familial care relationships and unpaid, are predominantly justified as a means to permit parents—namely, women—the capacity to participate in the paid labour force while raising children (Arpino et al. 2014). The incentive to participate in the paid labour force is driven by both a need to earn an income in order to sustain family life, and by the greater ideological value that is placed on productive labour rather than caring labour under neoliberal policy structures (Arpino et al. 2014). Childcare, then, fulfills the primary social reproductive purpose of outsourcing caring labour in order to ensure proper early childhood development,

often depicted for the purpose of raising a new generation of productive labourers (Prentice 2009).

Within Newfoundland and Labrador, analyzing this undervaluing of childcare labour is detailed by the conditions of the labour force of Early Childhood Educators (ECE) in the province. The 2012 “Caring for Our Future” publication outlining the ten year childcare strategy in Newfoundland and Labrador indicates that all individuals employed in the provision of childcare must have the minimum educational requirements for being an ECE in a regulated childcare setting, which is set to be achieved through making certification opportunities available to workers through programming, distance education, and work-place training programs (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012: 10). The strategy also expresses a commitment to raising the wages of ECEs in the province over the course of 10 years (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012). While the sentiment exists in the strategic direction of childcare in the province, the average yearly salary for ECEs in Newfoundland and Labrador remains under \$30 000; based on data compiled by Nuevoo, a career search database, the average ECE salary in 2017 was \$27 091/year, which roughly translates to \$14 per hour at full time work (Nuevoo 2017). While a national poverty measure does not exist currently in Canada, the low-income measure (LIM) threshold provides an indication of a poverty line in the country. Based on the most recent census data, the LIM for a one-person household is just over \$25 000 before tax income (Stats Canada 2017). A comparative look at these figures demonstrates the precarious circumstances of employment for ECEs in Newfoundland and Labrador; the average worker earns just above the poverty line before tax, so long as they are a single person with no dependents.

In addition to low wages, several characteristics of the organization of labour demonstrate, specifically, how it is undervalued, and how the socioeconomic and political disregard for this care work impacts social growth. The less visible elements are systemic issues, which limit the function of care. Paid childcare providers are overwhelmingly feminized, comprised largely of women and marginalized people, working in low-wage positions with high turnover rates, with very little opportunities for advancement—professionally or in terms of education—and scarce wage gains. The absence of unions in the Canadian childcare labour force is also of particular interest; the severe precarity faced by childcare workers, combined with the constantly changing makeup of the labour force, renders the sector quite difficult to organize, let alone succeed, in a union environment (Cleveland et al. 2003). The poor wage conditions of individuals providing childcare is in tension with the high costs of childcare generally; families pay high costs for the service, while the people providing the service are earn low wages.

The combination of limited policies at multiple scales and the undervaluing of labour are examples of the prioritization of neoliberal ideological stances, over care, in childcare policymaking is the central argument to this thesis. The emphasis afforded to the neoliberal values of reduced public expenditures, individual autonomy or “parental choice”, and the preference awarded to the needs and interests of capital (Carroll and Little 2001) result in a social policy landscape—both across Canada and in Newfoundland and Labrador specifically—that does not recognize: 1) the universal necessity of childcare services, and 2) the valuable work of ECEs and other childcare workers. Utilizing a care framework, this chapter has identified the shortcomings of current policy initiatives as they pertain to both of these areas of need, demonstrating that the incorporation of care theory into policymaking could yield more equitable policy measures—measures that are emancipatory from the dominance of neoliberalism. With

this possibility in mind, the following section provides a critical discourse analysis of the current childcare strategy in Newfoundland and Labrador, seeking to illuminate the absence of care and create space for the areas in which the incorporation of care could result in better policies.

VI. Critical discourse analysis: *Caring for Our Future, 2012-2022*

Utilizing the methods of a critical discourse analysis, the following section identifies, deconstructs, and critiques the use of rhetoric and reinforcement of power structures that are expressed in the current, accessible childcare strategy of Newfoundland and Labrador. Specifically, this critical discourse analysis focuses on the “*Caring for Our Future: Provincial Strategy for Quality, Sufficient, and Affordable Child Care in Newfoundland and Labrador*” publication, which outlines the provincial childcare strategy from 2012-2022. This document warrants primary attention as it outlines the major policy innovations and directions of the strategy in a publicly accessible format, with a particular discursive strategy that begs close attention; namely, this format is meant to both inform and assure the public of the strategy’s effectiveness, serving a dual purpose of being an information and promotional tool. This analysis identifies themes that emerge in the discourse, as identified in this study, and unpacks the textual devices that surround them. These themes include: care; processes of public consultation; economic benefit; and labour. The four themes illuminate care theories and neoliberal ideology, permitting a rounded view of how current policy functions, and how care could inform more equitable practices.

This particular critical discourse analysis employs methods associated with the macro understanding of the critical practice; this works from the tradition started by Foucault, in which the prevailing understanding holds that the social world and the relations of power within it are determined discursively, a concept that has been furthered by scholars of critical discourse

analysis to indicate that: “regardless of how complete they may appear, discourses, in fact, are always the subject of some degree of struggle. They are, therefore, never completely cohesive and never able to determine social reality totally” (Phillips et al. 2004: 637). The space of absence of total understanding through examining the discourse must, then, be filled with conceptualizations of discursive, often emancipatory, change. Given the macro focus of this study, the four identified themes are discussed in the context of their appearance throughout the text; a word search and count identifies the prominence of words associated with the themes, and certain phrases that reinforce existing power structures in the supposedly change-driven policy strategy are considered.

Care:

As a stated topic, care, ironically, does not hold a prominent presence throughout the *Caring for Our Future* document. The word care appears only in its form as “child care,” or the titular sentiment regarding “caring” for the future, and is not used to evoke a sentiment of collective care at any point (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012). What “future” does this document aims toward? The future refers to the social future of children impacted by childcare policies (Prentice 2009). That is, the development of a new and productive labour force through means of social policy and social reproduction in the present. Understanding this conceptualization of the future helps to unpack the discourse of this document and realize the impracticality of a prosperous future based on the policy strategy as outlined.

The *Caring for Our Future* strategy revolves around three central foci: quality, sufficiency, and affordability, with each tenet driven by predominantly economic and developmental rationale rather than elements of care (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012: 5). Contrastingly, the tenets of what typically constitute a care framework—

including any mention of moral or ethical responsibility, any account of human needs, or any reference to power relations defining the parameters of care—are absent from the document (Tronto 1998). This is a curious element, given that childcare constitutes perhaps the most expansive social policy area in the province, and that social policy areas are typically the most explicit, whether intentionally or rhetorically, on stating the issues of care (Stensota 2010). This driving rationale is evident in the framing of these three elements; the document speaks repeatedly to “high-quality” and “affordable” services, (Stensota 2010: 5) with no explicit mention of the issues surrounding accessibility. Given the stark absence of rhetoric devices that could develop a caring rationale to this policy, this strategy fits with Susan Prentice’s analysis of “the ‘investable’ child and the economic reframing of childcare,” a process that broadens the scope of stakeholders in the childcare policy area and makes the business case for governmental investment in childcare:

Economic reframing provides a resource for the mobilization for childcare, but it sidesteps the problem of social inequality, including gender inequality. The business case for childcare builds an ideological/conceptual bridge to contemporary wealth production, not to social transformation [...] The political dimensions of childcare are overridden in a business-case frame that positions profitability, effectiveness, and calculation as the prime goods (Prentice 2009).

This acknowledgement that the “prime goods” to be derived from effectively run childcare are profitability, effectiveness and calculation is reflected in *Caring for Our Future*, as all indication toward a prosperous future operates from the notion of a future workforce through childhood development, and not on the impacts that a childcare strategy can have on alleviating poverty and improving gender equality.

Processes of public consultation:

Encouraging a process of public consultation in policy development is an important discursive and practical strategy that carries a two-fold purpose: at some level, it permits citizens—particularly, those with high stakes in the policy matter at hand—to voice their personally informed opinions; and, public consultations foster an image on behalf of the government of interactive policymaking, with the reality of whether public voices are incorporated into the resultant policy a non-issue. Mendelsohn (2000) states that the elite dominated policy landscape of Canada, consultation processes simply provide a facade of public engagement and are constructed to yield the desired policy result on behalf of the government (Mendelsohn 2000). The *Caring for Our Future* document emphasizes the value of input from childcare stakeholders from the beginning of the document; the message from the Minister states that input has been incorporated from “parents, early childhood educators, family child care providers, program operators, and various stakeholder groups” (Government of Newfoundland 2012). The brief file entitled “What We Heard,” outlining input from these groups, has not been available on the government’s website since the beginning of this research, in January 2017, although page 4 of the document outlines the consultation results (Government of Newfoundland 2012).

The consultation outline in the *Caring for Our Future* strategy is four paragraphs long and contains an initial statement that the consultations focused on the three driving strategic issues: quality, sufficiency, and affordability (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012: 4). Of important note is the issue of staffing; the strategy states that consultations brought the attention to the recruitment and retention of ECEs, proposing higher levels of education for ECEs along with higher wages, benefits, and working conditions (Government of Newfoundland and

Labrador 2012). While the strategy explicitly proposes adjustments to educational levels of ECEs, including a commitment to delivering distance education and educational programming for working ECEs, the average wage of these workers still sits just above the Canadian LIM (Stats Canada 2017). The persistence of these low incomes, which sit below the national average salary of ECEs (Nuevoo 2017), despite a rhetorical commitment within this strategy to increasing the wages of childcare workers in order to increase the retention of workers and quality of childcare, demonstrates a lack of practical commitment to the stated purpose.

Economic benefit:

The presence of a discussion regarding the economic benefits of a more properly legislated system of childcare is present throughout *Caring for Our Future*, but is evaluated at a very general, broad level rather than examining the immediate, more palpable benefits of a more affordable system of childcare. This economic discussion follows two tenets: level of governmental investment and reviews of rate setting and subsidy measures across provincial childcare centres. The former is evaluated in its greatest length in the “Why do we need a strategy?” section (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012: 3). This generalized “we” refers directly to the population of Newfoundland and Labrador. This section states that the provincial government has “more than doubled its financial commitment to the child care sector, with \$26.5 million in 2011-12 being allocated to targeted initiatives and interventions to address child care issues in the province” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012: 3). The following paragraph in this brief section mentions that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to doubling the annual budget for childcare by 2021-22 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012). These figures, while seemingly high and demonstrative of a governmental commitment to alleviating the barriers surrounding childcare access in the

province, do not offer substance in the context of the document itself; there is no discussion of the content of the “targeted initiatives and interventions,” and no figures on which to base the level of investment that could provide a point of reference to the reader, i.e. what the total operating costs of provincial childcare are, what the fees paid by families go towards, etc.

The second tier of economic benefit rhetoric in this strategy concerns the affordability of childcare, which, given the context of this issue in particular—as perhaps the most central concern faced by parents—is discussed as a primarily benign concern. While *Caring for Our Future* does emphasize increasing the accessibility of services through a number of means, which include rate and subsidy setting and introducing the operating grant fund to expand the autonomy of childcare centres (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012: 16), there is no mention of potential poverty alleviation that affordable services could bring, or a stated intent to help families.

The concluding section of the strategy, “Moving Forward,” paints a key element to the economic development narrative that typically surrounds childcare—the benefit seen to women. The strategy states that: “improving the availability and affordability of regulated child care in the province supports economic development, especially for women. A stronger system of regulated childcare means that parents of young children will have greater options in their decision about whether to work, go to school or stay at home with their children” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012: 18). This argument is flawed for a number of reasons; it completely disregards the economic precarity of childcare workers, who are not making a living wage in many instances, and does not offer a comprehensive explanation as to why the strategies put forth in this document, particularly, will encourage the self-determination of women.

Labour:

The employment of Early Childhood Educators (ECE) is one of the first strategic direction evaluated in the *Caring for Our Future* document. This goal is stated to encompass the issue of quality in childcare, and begins in explaining the indicators of quality, which include minimum qualifications requirements for ECEs working directly with children and for administrators and program operators, and the health, safety, and developmental requirements for childcare spaces to meet through licensing (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012: 9). It is imperative to note the formulaic discourse that is used to discuss labour in this policy document; the interests of ECEs and workers completing the labour of childcare is completely absent from the document, with the assumption that instating a higher level of minimum education requirements for those completing the labour will ensure a higher quality of childcare in the province. While the policy commits to starting programs for advancement, such as educational opportunities for current ECEs (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012: 10), there is no explicit intention to increase the salaries of childcare workers and ECEs. In other words, this policy document demonstrates an understanding of childcare exclusively as a service provided, and not as a viable source of work or labour market. This underplays the work involved in the provision of childcare and the caring activities associated with this labour force, generating problematic outcomes for those working in childcare.

VII. Conclusion

Through an assessment of social reproduction as central to an understanding of care, a deconstruction of the prominence of neoliberal ideology at the federal and provincial levels, an assessment of the importance of childcare labour, and a critical discourse analysis of the present childcare strategy in Newfoundland and Labrador, this section has contextualized and unpacked the policy area of childcare in the province, pointing toward the barriers to progress that are

present and illuminating how care, as an applied policy theory, could improve childcare services through the development of emancipatory policy solutions. The discourse analysis identifies the holes in the 2012 *Caring for Our Future* policy strategy, which emphasize the futility of the strategy in repairing the largely flawed system of childcare in the province. This case study has utilized care theories as an intervention into neoliberal policy understandings.

Chapter 4: Waste Management Policy Area in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Case Study

I. Introduction

A second case study follows a contrasting, and seemingly unrelated policy area of waste management in Newfoundland and Labrador. Although the connections between childcare and waste are not immediately clear, the many linkages in the framing, purpose, and discursive rationalization surrounding these policy areas are made clear through this comparative analysis. In particular, the element of universality that characterizes both issues warrants analysis within the care framework. Childcare is classified as universal in being a public good that affects families across Canada to some degree, and is a determinant in the healthy development of a new generation. Waste and its “management” is a consistent environmental concern on the policy agenda, and thus is universal in its impact on the earth and all of its processes. Similar to the preceding case study, the care framework that is tested against existing waste management policies in Newfoundland and Labrador is applied in two distinct ways: 1) in the development of a theoretical outline of the labour and policies involved in the treatment of waste, assessing the process of undervaluing that takes place under the influence of neoliberal ideology; and 2) providing a critical discourse analysis of the existing, long-term waste management framework in the province in an effort to exemplify the utility of a care framework in future policy development.

The following four sections develop the case study of Newfoundland and Labrador’s waste management policy area and test the applicability of a theoretical framework of care. A first section evaluates the purposes of the explicit “management” of waste, identifying the elements of environmental care that are practiced politically in the province. This is followed by an assessment of the complications that neoliberal ideology and policymaking see on the

actualization of environmental care. This analysis includes a theoretical outline of neoliberal positions on matters of environmental concern. The following section is concerned with the element of caring labour in waste management. Labour proves to be of particular interest in a care study of waste due to the discrepancies of unpaid labour internationally, which include human activities such as 1) garbage repurposing and recycling collection, and 2) the non-human elements of environmental processes that are not accounted for in the current policy model. This case study concludes with a critical discourse analysis of relevant policy documents on waste management in the province, which include: The Newfoundland and Labrador Waste Management Strategy (Department of Environment, April 2002).

II. Purposes of waste “management”: Environmental care in practice

Waste management refers to the collection of practices—regulated through governmental agencies and policies, and through various private sector actors—that control, dispose of, and attempt to control the volume of solid waste in municipalities across Canada. These practices include, but are not limited to, landfill operations, waste-to-energy technologies, recycling, and incineration (Hird et al. 2014). While these practices are expansive, and deal with a wide range of societal waste, this case study is concerned specifically with the management of solid waste derived from residential settings, and the municipal and provincial policies and practices currently in place in Newfoundland and Labrador. In this particularly residential context, the management of waste refers almost exclusively to the disposal of waste in landfill sites, where the political and social discussion typically reaches its end point (Hird 2013). Solid waste is a particular problem in the Canadian context; as of 2006, statistics show that 1000 kg of waste per person is produced annually in Canada, the bulk of which ends up in landfills across the country (Hird 2013: 105).

An understanding of residential solid waste management as a political practice in the context of this research demands an initial exploration of ecofeminist and environmental care ethics. Ecofeminist theory puts forth the idea that there exists a connection between the oppression of women and the oppression of the environment, both consequences of power dynamics present in patriarchal practices and norms. The practical application of this theory is concerned with developing emancipatory practices that eradicate social and environmental problems associated with the domination of women and the environment, and in this process, dismantling the various associated oppressive forces (Kao 2010). Theories of care ethics generate a specific environmental ethic of care that renders the moral obligation to correcting harmful human practices and their environmental externalities. As with other applications of care theories to emancipatory practice, the process of caring for and about the environment involves a constantly evolving approach that accounts for changing circumstances and needs (Fraser 1987). In their changing evaluation of practices based on increased consumption and disposal of residential waste, contemporary waste management practices can be seen as the manifestation of an environmental care ethic; while not explicitly stated as such, these practices are in place, in theory, to offset the environmental costs of improperly dispose of waste, and contain a base recognition that practices must change with societal shifts in consumption (King 1991). Thus, a discourse of care exists in studies and practices of waste management—what lacks is practices and policies that are consistent with this discourse of care.

The realities of waste management practice in Canada, specifically in Newfoundland and Labrador, is a three-tiered concern, which constitutes: the political development of short-term, temporary measures; an ignorance of waste's eternal life cycle beyond landfill disposal; and the privatization of waste management services among private, for-profit companies (Hird et al.

2014). Myra Hird, a leading scholar on critical studies of waste in Canada, unpacks this three-tiered concern, stating that waste management policies at present are that which: “[produce] permanently temporary waste deposits for imagined futures to resolve” (Hird 2017: 189). Hird also theorizes, in earlier work, the disconnect between the permanence of waste and the impermanence of existing political solutions, where landfills are “ubiquitous places of forgetting” (Hird 2013: 107). This forgetting actively runs between conceptualizations of landfills—where waste is imagined to be at the end of its life cycle, dealt with—and in public awareness and concern for waste management practices; unless policy attention and change take place on an issue by issue basis, the management waste is so routinized that it is not seen by the public as an issue requiring consistent attention (Hird et al. 2014).

An additional factor in complicating the actualization of caring practices through contemporary waste management is the intense focus on privatization of solid waste collection services that is a policy norm across Canadian municipalities. Given the high costs associated with waste collection and treatment, most Canadian municipalities offset residential collection services to private, contracted companies and ultimately save a significant amount of money (McDavid 1985). This practice is a typified action of neoliberal policy to keep government expenditure low; publicly funded collection services are more costly per household and are cited to be less efficient than private services, with the mechanism of competition relied upon to keep service costs favourable through contracts (McDavid 1985). The concern of costs and efficiency aside, the process of privatizing public services increases the capacity for corruption in the development and provision of policy; the incorporation of corporate and for-profit interests in public services alters the dynamics of reasoning behind the provision of the service, making the accumulation of capital central and offsetting the base public responsibility (Poole et al. 1987).

While more blatantly discussed as detrimental in terms of public services such as healthcare and education, the privatization of waste management services offsets the environmental rationale behind improving tactics and is, thus, very detrimental.

III. Complications of neoliberal policymaking in waste management: The provincial case

Jennifer Klein (2007) describes neoliberalism as: “a practice and ideology whose central tenet is the primacy of markets” (Klein 2007: 1). Within this schema, privatization and individualization appear often as both ideological tenets and as practical tactics—both factor predominantly into the case of waste management. Individualization refers to “the way in which identity is transformed from a ‘given’ into a ‘task’ and that individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for this task,” which “requires all to take individual responsibility towards both political and identity-based ends” (Dawson 2012: 306-7). Operating from both of these definitions, the quality of neoliberal practice as privatized and individualized becomes apparent: the responsibility for service provision is shifted from public to private means, removing the governmental onus of problems; and, subsequently, the responsibility to fix the state of things becomes an individual undertaking (Dawson 2012). Both privatization and individualization factor heavily into the persistence of issues in the policy area of waste management.

The proper treatment and disposal of waste begins with this issue of privatization, a central tenet to the particularities of policies in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in Canada more generally. Here, the focus rests on all that constitutes residential—or, everyday—waste that has an explicit end point in landfill facilities; that is, garbage produced by households through curbside collection and the similar composition of waste that comes from businesses, and associated recycling services. This classification excludes hazardous waste, organic waste, and all other compounds of waste that have specific disposal practices and programs. It is a common

practice across Canadian municipalities to privatize collection and disposal services in the waste process. In terms of waste policy, privatization typically appears most visibly in the outsourcing of waste collection and services to private, profit-based companies, which limits the public expenditures and investment—both financially and emotionally—in the collection and disposal of waste (Hird et al. 2014).

Privatization appears to be the most effective policy option for various reasons, the most dominant of which include governmental budgetary constraints that prevents the public funding of the service, in full or at all. This practical concern is coupled with standards of the dominant political culture and other ideological and practical factors that demand the use of alternative service delivery. Residential and commercial solid waste collection is one of the most commonly contracted out public services across Canada and the United States (McDavid 1985). The mechanism of market efficiency indicates that privatized service delivery is likely to be more efficient, and in most cases of waste collection across Canada, this hypothesis proves to be true; the myriad of factors that play into the actualities of waste collection, such as technological advances and changing environmental conditions, are more quickly adapted to by private corporations due to the institutional delays that occur in public service provision (McDavid 1985). The outsourcing of jurisdiction due to the institutional delays that can take place in the public provision of services is key, as it explains the reluctance, or perceived futility, to channel more public expenditures to service delivery if private entities can take over the service.

Due to the linkages between municipal and provincial jurisdiction over waste services in Newfoundland and Labrador, in which the provincial authority regulates and sets policy directions and the municipal level of governance controls the actual provision of services, responsibility among government and private sector agencies is quite convoluted and difficult to

trace. The 2002 strategy divided the province into zones governed by Regional Waste Management Authorities (RWMA), of which there are 8: Eastern Waste Management; Burin Peninsula Waste Management Corporation; Central Newfoundland Waste Management; Green Bay Waste Management; Western Regional Waste Management; Northern Peninsula Regional Service Board; Discovery Regional Service Board; and Coast of Bays Waste Management Authority (MMSB 2017). The majority of the province is regulated by one of these boards, of which the Central, Northern, and Eastern authorities are the only proclaimed RWMA's regulated under the Regional Service Boards Act, with isolated communities—particularly in Labrador—operating without a board entirely (Municipalities NL 2008). The existence of isolated communities that are left to operate without a governing board prevents the capacity for these communities to implement environmentally sound policies of their own volition.

Each of the RWMA's operate through a combination of governmental and private funding, with some collection services contracted out. While the context of privatization varies by region, the example of the Avalon Peninsula, which is regulated by the Eastern service board, provides insight to the character of privatization due to the comparatively dense population in this area, and the subsequently more robust services as a result. Across the Avalon, public collection services serve most residential areas and adhere to stringent rules regarding the volume of curbside collections, which include a maximum of 10 bags per site, with all bags weighing less than 50 lbs (Curb It St. John's 2017). Thus, most apartment buildings and high-volume regions, such as businesses and universities, hire contract waste collectors to dispose of waste at the Robin Hood Bay Waste Management Facility (Curb It St. John's 2017). This practice of privatization, and the resounding inclination toward it, arises out of the assumption that “[the private sector is] more inherently dynamic, productive, and dependable, and private

institutions are thought to be intrinsically superior to public institutions for the delivery of goods and services” (Barnekov and Raffel 1990: 135). Barnekov and Raffel also note that the intended objective of privatization is 1) the improvement of public service delivery through elevating market efficiency, and 2) “the reduction or termination of public support for particular goods and services altogether (sometimes called load shedding)” (Barnekov and Raffel 1990: 136). This tendency explains, in part, the lack of attention paid to waste collection services as a public service in Newfoundland and Labrador; the more reliance paid to privatization in this sector, the less inclination toward increasing public expenditures to ameliorate collection services in the province.

An additional consideration in analyzing the impact of neoliberal policy influence on waste management is the manner in which policies are informed by individualization, and how policies are subsequently constructed to reflect this neoliberal ideological stance. Hird calls waste management a “particular site of neoliberal governmentality,” and lists the type of governance as that which:

leads to the configuration of [waste management] as a technological issue supported by norms and practices of individual responsabilization [...] WM is largely structured as a matter of responding to individual citizens’ waste ‘needs’ through industry and technology, rather than, as a socio-ethical issue requiring forms of democratic deliberation on issues of overconsumption and economics based on relentless growth (Hird et al. 2014: 443).

In other words, the technocratic conceptualization of waste management in Newfoundland and Labrador, under this ideological stance, places the onus for dealing with and caring about waste on individuals—most of whom view waste, understandably, as an object that is forgotten when it

reaches the site of collection to its “final” stage, the landfill. Methods of consultation put forth by the government, as expressed throughout the 2002 WM strategy, only reinforce this individual approach; when the public is asked what measures will work and encouraged to live in “green” households without the proper political infrastructure to do so, band-aid policy solutions cannot suffice. This is only made worse through the intense corporate interests involved in waste management as a whole. Waste management is a business. Corporations frame the discourse surrounding waste based on their own technological capacity, construction interests: “neoliberal governance enhances industry’s monopoly by embedding techniques such as public consultations and feasibility studies within industry’s remit” (Hird et al. 2014: 448). The strong influence of the interests of corporate capital in the organization of waste management cannot be ignored.

IV. The caring labour of waste: A theoretical overview

The most publicly visible labour within the waste management sector occurs in the formalized sector—that is, paid employees working in landfills, sanitation, and waste collection services. The unseen caring labour of the informal and formally unorganized sector of this work occupies the focal point of this analysis. This investigation identifies many forms of informal labouring activities surrounding waste in order to demonstrate their socioeconomic and environmental importance, which is vastly contrasted with their recognition by formal labouring practices. Additionally, the activities of informal waste management—which include, but are not limited to, collection of recyclables for refund, garbage picking and repurposing, and the sanitizing effects these efforts have—are symptomatic of the greater issues involved with neoliberal functioning. While the context of this labour varies greatly globally, many of the actors completing informal waste activities are living in poverty, seeking the minimal economic gains that these activities garner in order to support their families (Burcea 2015). Thus, informal

waste labour is a tactic of survival rather than societal benefit, and the actors involved—including those completing the labour and those benefitting from it—do not recognize these activities as a formal societal contribution (Burcea 2015).

A myriad of these informal waste management tactics are actively practiced in Newfoundland and Labrador, and across Canada, daily, with informal recycling collection occupying the most visible and pervasive example of informal waste labour. Working from the comprehensive study completed on the informal waste management network of recycling in St. John's NL by Michelle Porter in 2012, persons completing the labour are known as professional recyclers. Porter's study presents a rounded understanding of the rationale, purpose, and benefits to greater society that professional recyclers exude, and is an important benchmark on the local context of recycling in St. John's. The primary motivations behind recycler's involvement in the informal waste management network include financial incentive, community interaction, productivity, and environmental stewardship; of these, financial incentive was established among local recyclers to be the most imperative driving factor (Porter 2012). These motivations are consistent with the literature on the topic—involvement in informal recycling networks are well-documented as a matter of financial necessity most predominantly, as many of the individuals working in this informal sector are or have experienced poverty or homelessness (Burcea 2015).

Porter's study also notes the impact that professional recyclers have on communities, which is overwhelmingly positive. Customers, referring to individuals having their bottles and recyclables collected by local recyclers, perceive this labour as enormously helpful—socially, personally, and environmentally—and benefit greatly from the efforts that recyclers make on keeping cities and residential areas clean (Porter 2012). In many circumstances, recyclers become recognizable public figures with great clout for their work. This is seen in many

communities, with the example of Wray Hart in Halifax, NS being quite apt. Hart was a professional recycler well known and respected among individuals in the south end of Halifax, and was recently killed in an impaired driving incident. The community's response to Hart's death included public vigils, praises of Hart's character and efforts on news sources and social media, and a general sense of mourning throughout the city (McMillan 2018). Hart's example is not extraordinary—recyclers are valued socially in communities across Canada, but remain unrecognized formally by political entities. What lacks, then, are policy measures that properly account for the highly valuable caring labour that is completed by professional recyclers, and a political effort to respond to the societal causes of this work occurring in the first place—that is, addressing the root causes of poverty and developing the infrastructure to properly help individuals and families.

The informal sector of waste management that is comprised of activities such as those of professional recyclers is the most visible labour in developed countries; there exists an extensive set of similar activities more common in developing nations that demand close analysis. For the purposes of this study, the activity of garbage picking is highlighted. Individuals in nations of the Global South who are experiencing poverty and related issues of socioeconomic status are often involved in the labour of garbage picking, which is a far more developed and expansive practice than is seen in North American examples. Essentially, individuals perform the labour of sorting through discarded materials in waste dumps or landfill settings; the waste is then repurposed for sale at street carts and stands run by local artisans, or is sold to companies for ulterior purposes (Wilson 1998). These materials include cardboard and paper scraps, which are resold for the purpose of creating paper pulp at a far lower cost than that which is purchased through larger

companies (Wilson 1998). This reflects a neoliberal inclination toward low-cost sourcing of material that will then be exchanged for a greater return on the investment.

The work performed in the informal garbage picking sector of waste management sees enormous environmental benefit, and is a prime example of alternative sources of income through organized but informal markets. The ecological benefits are seen in the drastic reduction of waste in landfills in these locations; because materials that are typically recovered for resale are three-dimensional, useful objects, such as clothing, spatial concerns in landfills are reduced and waste does not see the immediate environmental impact that it would have if its final destination was the landfill (Burcea 2015). Workers also participate in this labour for the financial incentive. Although minimal, the income garnered by professional garbage pickers is often enough to feed themselves and their families, and typically acts as a supplement to other incomes, whether from a formal or informal sector of work (Wilson 1998). The work is beneficial to companies involved in purchasing the materials, but is not recognized as such in any formal capacity:

Garbage pickers are essentially pieceworkers for companies they supply. Their relationship to such companies is essentially that of a ‘disguised proletariat,’ working for the paper company but with none of the social security benefits, such as medical care or pension plans, enjoyed by the formal proletariat (Wilson 1998: 110).

Thus, as professional recyclers are socially valued in the North American example, but without the formal recognition as productive members of a society driven by organized work and income, so too do garbage pickers in the Global South experience praise for their caring labour

and its environmental benefits on one hand, but none of the social security benefits that they should be receiving in the formal capacity.

V. Critical discourse analysis: *Newfoundland and Labrador Waste Management Strategy, 2002; Performance Monitoring Report, 2017*

This section employs a critical discourse analysis to the existing waste management strategy in Newfoundland and Labrador in an effort to critique and deconstruct the caring rhetoric that is employed throughout the document. The document in particular focus is the 2002 Newfoundland and Labrador Waste Management Strategy, which was released by the Department of Environment in April, 2002. The strategy, now nearly 16 years in practice, remains the central policy document on waste in the province. The format of this document's publication, as the publicly accessible format of major policy innovations and directions, will be considered as part of the particular discursive strategy employed. This analysis identifies themes that emerge in the discourse and unpacks the textual devices that surround them, similar to the previous case study's analysis of childcare policy documents. The themes, determined and identified by this study first in the case study of childcare, include: care; processes of public consultation; economic benefit; and labour.

Care:

The presence of a caring discursive strategy is evident throughout this policy document. While not explicitly stated as a theory of care, the document frequently frames the backing rationale to the developed strategies in a language of care, without actually saying the word "care" one time (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002). This infers that active words of community, responsibility, and collective action are employed throughout this document, which is meant to be publically accessible (Tronto 2010). These caring words appear

predominantly in the framing of solution development in the strategy, which is largely discussed in the introductory section: “Waste management is the responsibility of everyone—individuals, communities, businesses, industries, and government . . . Government recognizes it is now time to provide a new framework through the development of a provincial waste management strategy” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 1). This notion of collective responsibility toward more effective waste management is also discussed in the fifth and final action item, which pertains to public education (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 19). Ranked in terms of stated importance, the word responsibility appears four times throughout the strategy (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 4, 6) and is only assigned to “everyone” (4), and of “municipalities and communities” (4, 6). Only once does the document explicitly assign the responsibility of improved waste management to the government, and it is lumped in with a notion toward individual responsibility of action: “Both Government and people of Newfoundland and Labrador must take responsibility for the management of our waste and to improve waste practices” (4). Through grouping the only mention of the government’s responsibility toward improving waste management, the discourse absolves the government of taking the position as a collective lead in improving provincial policy.

The framing of collective responsibility and caring activities throughout this framework are particularly interesting when considering the depicted role of government as established in the strategy. The framing assigns the provincial government with the particular responsibility of providing the “framework for waste management by setting policies, regulations and standards” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 1). While this is a seemingly natural position for the provincial government to take on the issue of waste management, lax regulatory policies and an absence of this commitment to collective action are identified throughout the strategy’s

action items; each item commits governmental involvement in various areas of improving waste management, such as the development of a regional approach, increasing waste diversion, and improving technological capacity, but direct involvement in the development of public education towards the reduction of waste is absent (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 19). This is reflective, in many ways, of the tendency for neoliberal policies to favour individual action over governmental responsibility; the strategy encourages collective action and responsibility as an individual undertaking, and commits the most specific measures to palpable technical advancements and strategies, rather than attitude shifting mechanisms such as public education. This is reflective of the prioritization of individual liberty over collective-based solutions and the avoidance of government involvement in shaping the way citizens perceive and respond to societal problems (Harvey 2007). This strategy, thus, employs an empty rhetoric of care rather than committing explicitly to advancing the cause of environmental care through renewed waste management tactics.

Process of public consultation:

A major component to the rhetoric strategy of this policy document and its development is the processes of public consultation that informed its contents. The waste management strategy states in the beginning that all action items were informed by a public consultation process that took place in the summer of 2001; the Waste Management Advisory Committee conducted this process and prepared a report, the “Call to Action on Environmental Protection,” which was presented to Government in October 2001 to inform the ensuing strategy (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 2). Four central action items were identified: to increase recycling capacity; to make waste management affordable by combining community resources; to maintain governmental commitment to modern waste management; and to provide public

information on the importance of modern waste management (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 3). This emphasis on public consultation is stated to be imperative, which appears to be indicative of its influence in the formation of the document, although the actual description of the process is only a brief, 2 paragraph segment of the introductory section that seems to state the intentions of the Government to begin with. Further, the actual documentation of the consultation process is not available in any format on the department's website (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2017). Overall, consultation is one of the most emphasized topics, based on the comprehensive word count; it is mentioned a total of 12 times, on a total of 8 pages (3, 4, 7, 8, 14, 16, 17, 24). This assortment of sections in which public consultation is verbally valued and mentioned reflects the expanse of its emphasis.

Economic benefit:

The discourse on the economic benefits that will ensue the implementation of this policy strategy is of particular interest due to the component of business and industry that defines the disposal of waste and similar dealings. Thus, this critical discourse analysis is cognizant of the implications that a developed, comprehensive waste management strategy can have on the industry side of the policy area, and how the levying of environmental and economic distress can impact the development of policy (Burcea 2015). The dichotomous relationship between the costliness of the strategy and proposed policies, and the positive economic returns that more extensive waste management can bring to the province. Action item #2 outlines the proposed regional approach to waste management, and devotes a subsection to an outline of the costs of this regional approach; this section states that approximately the total capital cost over the years of this strategy's implementation is \$150-200 million, whereas the previous yearly cost of waste management had been approximately \$21 million (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

2002: 12). This money is proposed to be gathered through “households, businesses, and institutions in the region through taxes, tipping fees and revenues from regional and/or provincial waste diversion programs” in each individual region as established by the province (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 12). Costs established, the fourth action item outlines the economic opportunities that could arise from the implementation of this strategy, which include increasing the involvement of the private sector in waste management, training, and research and development (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 17).

Labour:

A key element to the discussion of labour in this policy document is the absence of any discussion towards elevating the current positions of employment in the waste management sector, or any discussion of the elements of hidden labour. Instead, only the possibility of the creation of employment opportunities is discussed – in vague terms – with no specific strategic promises made toward this purpose (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 16-7). The validity of the job creation in the establishment of the regional service boards is discussed; long-term, quality positions have the capacity to be established based on the discourse of the document due to the expansive operations involved in maintaining the regional service boards, however, the precarity of funding towards the continuation or security of these positions can be inferred from the insecure framework of self-sustainability within the regional service boards.

Progress: The 2017 Performance Monitoring Report

The 2017 performance monitoring report is the most recent document released by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador regarding strategic provincial waste management. The purpose of the report is to publicize updates on the action items listed in the initial 2002 waste management strategy; the document does not outline any updates to waste diversion, or

introduce new action items. This document reflects major changes that have taken place, and also underlines the problems with the organization of waste management that persist as the strategy continues to be in place. The document lists the closure of 68% of unlined landfills (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2017: 6) and the elimination of 84% of open burning and incineration sites (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2017: 6), with these numbers representing the most substantial progress since 2002.

The 2017 performance monitoring report also reiterates that the 2002 Strategy “was not prescriptive for Labrador and the isolated and more remote areas of the province,” stating that such areas are to be assessed on an individual basis (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2017: 2). This updated document does not include any new information, or updates on progress in the isolated areas, leaving no documentation of changes occurring in these areas. Additionally, the 2017 report reinforces the economic advancement as a drive for more comprehensive waste management; the word “economical” is offered as rationale 7 separate times in the first 15 written pages of the 30 page document (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2017: 1-15). This continued focus on economically rewarding policies removes the focus from the environmental and social drivers, which are scarcely listed.

VI. Conclusion

This case study determines the state of waste policy in Newfoundland and Labrador in a way that comprehends the process of erasing caring labour and the impact of neoliberalism, in its various forms, as central elements to the failure of policy reforms in the area up to this point. Through the critical discourse analysis, it is evident that the discourse utilized in the rendering of policy strategies publically accessible heavily emphasizes individual responsibility and privatization toward economic benefit as the defining path toward more proper waste

management. The framework of care disputes this emphasis in favour of expansive public investment in waste infrastructure in order to improve services. Additionally, public consultation must necessarily focus on caring waste education in order to pave a path toward more equitable, environmentally just policies.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Case Studies

I. Introduction

The policy areas of childcare and of waste management have no obvious ties or linkages. While waste management encompasses the whole of political, technical, and environmental processes that operate surrounding municipal or provincial waste tactics, childcare accounts for the systems that constitute familial and external systems of day care. The two are initially disconnected and incompatible, but are united, on the surface, by the existence of longstanding challenges that the policies regulating them have long imposed; waste management is demonstrably incapable of keeping up with trends of overconsumption and other contemporary challenges (Burcea 2015; Hird et al. 2014), while childcare remains a highly ideological political debate through which the accessibility of childcare services has scarcely improved since it became an agenda issue (Friendly 2006; Friendly 1991). Upon closer examination of the labour involved in both policy areas—specifically, the hidden, socioeconomically undervalued care work—reveals an immense amount about the policy areas themselves, and demonstrates the issues apparent in the current frameworks utilized in policy development.

This chapter unpacks the varied contexts of this all-important care work in both policy areas, testing the initial hypothesis against the findings of this thesis: can a care framework generate more appropriate policies in the development stage? First observed are the theoretical links between childcare and environmental care. This section consists of a theoretical discussion between the links of labour in both policy areas in light of the established tenets of neoliberalism and of care theories, with indication as to how an understanding of both together permits a greater understanding of each. A second section unpacks the complications of neoliberal policymaking on childcare and waste management. This discussion analyzes the discursive

commitment to care found in policy documents surrounding each area, and unveils the detrimental influence that tenets of neoliberal ideology has on policy areas involving caring labour. The final section discusses the critical discourse analyses of both case studies and situates their contents together, uniting the understanding of caring labour and Newfoundland and Labrador's exclusively rhetorical discursive commitment to care, ultimately calling for the adoption of alternative policymaking frameworks. The following chapter recalls *Table 1*, comparing neoliberalism and care theories in an effort to assess the suitability of care as a policy framework to each case study:

Table 1: Comparing Neoliberalism and Care

	Neoliberalism	Care
1. Understanding of labour	Linked directly to market value; must be demonstrably productive economically; takes place in the public, visibly productive sphere	Ubiquitous concept; must be recognized as both that which yields economic returns and that which does not; takes place in public sphere as well as private sphere (mostly defined as households)
2. Understanding of the role of the state and public and public expenditures	Limited state interference in individual's lives; belief in little market regulation; public expenditures should be reduced so as to increase autonomy	Provision of social services and welfare is a state responsibility; belief in separation of market from state function; public expenditures should be directed toward social programs for the betterment of society
3. Understanding of citizenship	Market citizenship and social citizenship are necessarily linked	Market citizenship and social citizenship are necessarily separate
4. Understanding of gender	All genders regarded as equal in the face of policy; policy is "genderblind" to the interaction of gender and labour	All genders are not treated equally by policy; care labour is severely gendered and is politically unrecognized

(Bakker 2007; Tronto 2010; Tronto and Fischer 1998)

II. Theoretical links: Applications of universality and collective responsibility

The key concept to consider in both of the case studies developed in this thesis is that of universality. It is integral to distinguish between conceptions of universality in policy literature, as two prevailing notions of universality in these policies arise. The more literal application of the word “universality” in policy indicates that all people, with all circumstances, are treated as equal in the face of policy and policy programs. Rowe and Woolley (1999) make an economic case for this definition in their “The Efficiency Case for Universality”, determining that all differences should be treated equal by policy. Adopting this notion of universality suggests that it is the most equitable and efficient policy move, denoting that: “if poor people get free eyeglasses and prescription drugs, then so should the rich” (Rowe and Woolley 1999: 614). Conversely, universality can refer to a specific collective responsibility, which concerns building community around issues that impact most, but not all people, and fostering a sense of responsibility toward the betterment of policies concerning such issues. Daro and Dodge (2009) describe this collective responsibility in terms of child protection, stating in their specific concern:

It is increasingly recognized that environmental forces can overwhelm well-intended parents, that communities can support parents in their role, and that public expenditures might be most cost-beneficial if directed toward community strategies (Daro and Dodge 2009: 68).

In more general terms, this specific type of universality puts into action the belief that collective action to achieve a common good can establish a sense of community—an effective understanding of social reciprocity—and will render society more equitable (Daro and Dodge 2009). This collective responsibility definition of universalism eschews the former definition, working from an intersectional principle that taking into account the particularities of gender,

race, class, etc. are determinants in social issues, and that political responses to these issues must take this into account.

The universality of collective responsibility can be tied directly to the tenets of care as explored throughout this thesis, working primarily from the four-point definition proposed by Fischer and Tronto (1990). These four tenets include: caring about, or a recognition of the general need for care; caring for, or the process of enacting the responsibility to meet the needs of care; care giving, or the physical work involved in providing care; and care receiving, or the evaluation of how well caring activities meet caring needs (Tronto 2010: 162). This definition extends to the reciprocity of individual or familial relationships of care, and to the institutional context of providing care through policy and organized services (Tronto 2010). Olena Hankivsky (2004) expands this definition of care and caregiving in her assessment of the centrality of care in social policy; Hankivsky stresses the importance of a language that surrounds an ethic of care that not only articulates care in an abstract sense, but establishes “human solidarity and reciprocity as central features of our social order [...] a framework that explicitly recognizes the fact of our social interdependencies and the significance of caregiving work” (Hankivsky 2004: 111). Thus, the element of a collective responsibility, or of an inclination toward reciprocal relationships, in both the childcare and waste management policy area case studies is paramount.

The consideration of universality and collective responsibility as central to both childcare and waste policy assists in identifying the key tenets that are missing in policies that are developed and implemented using the neoliberal framework. As explored in *Table 1*, neoliberalism understands: labour to account only for visibly paid work; the role of public expenditures to be limited in order to increase individual autonomy and allow markets to thrive; citizenship to revolve around one’s market citizenship; and gender to be a non-issue in the face

of policy (Bakker 2007; Tronto 2010; Tronto and Fischer 1998). Each of these tenets fosters a worldview that places individualism central, leaving no space for universality or collective responsibility (Dawson 2012). Conversely, a care framework understands: labour as that which takes place in formal and informal capacities; the role of public expenditures to be necessary in the provision of public services toward the betterment of society; citizenship to be a multifaceted concept that separates market from social existences; and gender to be a central problem in policy's capacity to be equitable (Bakker 2007; Tronto 2010; Tronto and Fischer 1998). Given that the issues central to both childcare and waste policy demand an active inclusion of collective responsibility in order to move forward, the intervention of the care framework demonstrates that equitable policies cannot be formulated under the current framework of neoliberalism.

III. Caring policies: A snapshot

Childcare is the more typical example of social policy in this thesis' tandem analysis, therefore understanding the theoretical purpose of universality inherent in the provision of childcare seems rather more tangible than that of waste management. Friendly offers a comprehensive assessment of the purpose of childcare, or who childcare is for. She lists: children, in that high quality childhood care and education can contribute to positive developmental outcomes; families, in that parents are able to combine work, family, and other responsibilities more effectively; women, in that a comprehensive childcare system allows more women to participate in the labour force; and community and society, in that childcare provides a steady workforce and helps to alleviate the effects of poverty and general social problems (Friendly 1991: 6-7). While this particular, and objective, list of the purposes of childcare is rather benign, the issue of ideology presents a challenge to the actualization of childcare policies that can be universal in application. The constant swap of Liberal to Conservative federal

administrations, and vice versa, since the 1970s generates different conceptualizations of the purposes and utility of childcare, with Liberal governments leaning more generally toward increased public provision, and Conservative governments determining that childcare should occur primarily in the home or in private arrangements (Newman 2009). Friendly's assessment of the universality of childcare's purpose renders it a social policy area that fits the characteristics of an issue concerning collective responsibility.

The policy area surrounding waste management has a rather more peculiar conception of collective responsibility, which is identified through a theoretical outlook that looks toward environmental care ethics primarily, and to the particular organization of waste management policy. This dual framework determines that while the "management" of waste as a public service is a major component to environmental protection action and policies, which invoke a notion of collective responsibility naturally (King 1991), the active components that comprise waste management policy are privatized, focus on individual responsibility and action, and feature prioritization of technological and industrial tactics over socioeconomic and environmental tactics (Hird et al. 2014). Hird et al. (2014) state that waste management "instrumentalizes a particular public relation to waste, one that conceptualizes waste at the individual level and to be resolved with downstream techno-scientific innovations, [...] waste does and does not become an issue, creating or not creating a concerned public that engages in time-limited distributed responses" (Hird et al. 2014: 443). The culmination of these perspectives indicates that waste, as a pressing environmental concern, can automatically be conceptualized as a policy area that fits within a theoretical collective responsibility framework, similar to the area of childcare. Along with childcare, however, the ideological determinations of policy action and

the focus on individual action and neoliberal influence interferes with the actualization of policies founded in collective responsibility.

IV. Discursive linkages

The theoretical element of collective responsibility and universality link the two, seemingly disparate case studies fundamentally; both concern issues of general, public concern that are typically dealt with by a notion of individual responsibility or ownership at the political level, despite containing rationalizations that align the studies theoretically with actions of collective responsibility. Analyzing the discourse of the primary, publicly accessible policy documents of both policy areas, then, works quite well in tandem. Both documents feature long-term strategies meant to manage the constantly changing circumstances of policy issues that impact all people to varying degrees of immediacy. Additionally, the same four central tenets—the use of caring rhetoric, processes of public consultation, discussions of economic benefit, and the concern of labour—appear as the main considerations of each document. This section analyzes the discourse analyses of both case studies' policy documents, identifying the areas in which a care framework could ameliorate policy formulation.

Care

An observation of the use of caring rhetoric in the discourse analyses of both the *Caring for Our Future* and the *Newfoundland and Labrador Waste Management Strategy* assesses the caring qualities of both documents based Tronto's 2010 work on the creation of caring institutions. Tronto (2010) focuses on a specific needs-interpretation struggle, a concept that concerns the dynamics within institutions that see professionals determining others' needs, questioning this authority of determination; she concludes that “any institution that presumes that needs are fixed is likely to be mistaken and to inflict harm in trying to meet such needs” (Tronto

2010: 163-4). Caring institutions, then, must effectively cope with the needs-interpretation struggle through explicit locus', which include a rhetorical space, a moral space, and a political space through which this caring determination of needs can occur (Tronto 2010: 168). Given the classifications of both issues as theoretically consistent with a care framework—both involve the provision of irreplaceable care work through the caring labour of childcare and waste, and both rely on political structures for support and provision of services—the use of a caring discourse throughout the two Newfoundland and Labrador policy documents is analyzed, seeking explicit mentions of care and acknowledgements of the power relations that govern care (Butler 2012). Both case studies demonstrate a general lack of explicit mention of care work or the importance of the labour as it relates to providing care.

Care typically appears most explicitly in the documentation of social policy (Stensota 2010), which renders the particular absence of care as a rhetorical strategy in the *Caring for Our Future* document quite curious. This strategy, rather focuses on the quality, sufficiency, and affordability of childcare services in the province, excluding discussion of the issues surrounding accessibility as they currently stand (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012). Conversely, the active words involved in care theory—such as community, responsibility and collective action, appear frequently in the 2002 Waste Management Strategy, an area that is not explicitly categorized as social policy. This strategy assigns the responsibility of waste management to “everyone—individuals, communities, businesses, industries, and government” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002: 1), but does not propose any means of collective action. This is a vital element to the analysis of these documents, as the universality of both policy areas is explicitly recognized, but the neoliberal norm of assigning individual responsibility in action remains the course taken by policy. Both the *Caring for Our Future* and

the *Newfoundland and Labrador Waste Management Strategy* fail to instate a needs-interpretation review process, which is quite evident given the longevity of both strategies.

Processes of public consultation

A second element to the discursive assessment of both policy strategies is the use, impact, and utility of public consultation processes. Both discussions of this process articulate the two central purposes of consultation action—to permit citizens to voice personally-informed opinions on matters in which they are invested, and to maintain an image of public accountability and interactive policymaking on behalf of the government. The childcare strategy mentions the publicly inaccessible “What We Heard” document, and the waste management strategy discusses the rather more extensive “Call to Action on Environmental Protection” report, prepared through consultation by the Waste Management Advisory Committee (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002). Neither document incorporates a large part of the consultation discoveries in their writing, despite the rhetoric stress placed on the importance of this process in both documents; *Caring for Our Future* outlines the findings of public consultations as consistent with the goals of the strategy as identified previously by the government, with similar discussion in the *Waste Management Strategy*.

The broader context of public consultation, which is pervasively depicted as a political technology or methodology, is also imperative to this discussion. In policy areas that extend beyond childcare and waste management, processes of consultation are rhetorically relied upon in order for the political decision-makers to determine the proper mechanisms—defined by Rowe and Frewer (2005) as the processes, techniques, and instruments by which public involvement can be enabled—so that meaningful policies can be enacted in response (Rowe and Frewer

2005). The issue with this consultation process is the nuanced definitions that surround key concepts of its application:

[Mechanisms] range from simple surveys to complex deliberative approaches involving members of the public taking part in groups or conferences, which attempt to structure the debate and provide balanced information on the issue. Not only does the lack of clear definitions hinder research activities into the effectiveness of the different mechanisms, but the sheer abundance of mechanisms creates research problems in the sense of multiplying potential objects of research (Rowe and Frewer 2005: 253).

A lack of definition in the discussions of public consultation in the *Caring for Our Future* and 2002 *Waste Management Strategy* reflects Rowe and Frewer's assessment; the uncertain terms of "public engagement" and "consultation" are utilized repetitively, without definition, which skews a reader's understanding of what processes took place. This lack of transparency reflects a minimal commitment to the inclusion of public voices in the development of these policy areas.

Economic benefit:

In both documents, the potential economic benefit of the strategies presented is stated as the most important benefit to each strategy's respective implementation. *Caring for Our Future* focuses on three tenets of economic benefit: returns through increased investment, affordability of services for parents, and the economic advancement of the status of women (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012). While the province's waste management strategy equally enforces the importance of return through investment, it conversely focuses on the economic opportunities that could arise in the waste management sector, including the incorporation of the private sector in training, research, and development is the key economic benefit to be seen by

the strategy (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002). In both cases, the focus on economic benefits, both potential and actual, supersede any moral responsibility toward better, caring policies; the interests of the policy's respective potential outcomes rest solely with those of capital and economic advancement, and do not explicitly connect how this potential economic development could work toward the betterment of social existence.

Labour:

Discourses regarding labour in the discourse on childcare and waste management in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador are equally benign in terms of worker's interests, but both take into account the creation of jobs and advancements of currently held positions through policy development. *Caring for Our Future* focuses on the advancement of the position of ECEs; a verbal commitment to funding and advancing educational opportunities for ECEs currently employed, and placing more strict regulations on a hiring process are the central tenets of the labour discourse surrounding childcare. No commitment to increasing the salaries of ECEs is mentioned (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2012). The 2002 waste management document, rather, focuses on the potential for employment creation in the area of waste management. This includes the maintenance of regional service boards primarily, with other research and development opportunities hinted to but not actualized in the text of the document (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002). In the case of both policy documents, there is no mention of the hidden, caring labour that has been shown to characterize both policy areas.

V. Conclusion

United by universality and collective responsibility, and the prevalence of caring labour at the forefront of the informal and formal dealings in both areas, childcare and waste management represent appropriate case studies through which the applicability of care to policy formulation

may be assessed. Due to the stark incompatibility of neoliberalism with the applied universality in policy, both policy areas have long been plagued with issues surrounding the valuing of labour and the jurisdiction of responsibility, which has generated a resistance to neoliberal policy formulation norms over time. The intervention of a care framework identifies elements in childcare and waste management that are missed by the dominant approach, presenting a potentially emancipatory framework by which future policies can be formulated.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Paths for Future Research

I. Introduction

This thesis has problematized the two dominant and deeply complex policy areas of childcare and waste management in Newfoundland and Labrador through a theoretical framework of care, focusing predominantly on the dimensions of formal, paid and informal, unpaid labour in both areas. Care is defined by Joan Tronto and Bernice Fischer (1990) as the collection of human activities that maintain, repair, and continue the inhabitable world, and the actions of care are known as everything that constitutes caring about, caring for, caregiving, and care receiving (Tronto and Fischer 1990; Tronto 1998). The labour involved in the provision of these caring activities marks the focal point of the case studies of childcare and waste management policy; childcare is concerned directly with the care and raising of children in familial and institutional structures, while waste management forms a central tenet of care for the environment, which extends beyond ecological reasons to the various social and political externalities of climate change and environmental degradation. Both cases are complicated by the influence of neoliberalism in the current policymaking process. The prioritization of individual liberty, corporate and private interests, and the deeply damaging patterns of overconsumption have jeopardized the possibility of growth in both childcare and waste management policies, thus future successes depend upon the introduction of a new framework of policy formulation. This thesis interrogates the current publically accessible policy strategies with a framework of care, determining that the path forward must be paved by policy models that account properly for this ubiquitous presence of care and, therefore, account for all caring labour.

II. A caring policy framework

The policy framework of care constitutes a fusion of two central frameworks: Joan Tronto's conceptualization of caring institutions; and Olena Hankivsky's conceptualization of intersectionality in public policy. Tronto (2010) identifies the shortcomings of current political institutions in terms of their capacity to properly care, and proposes a normative framework through which caring institutions may arise. Centrally, she argues that tendencies toward replicating familial relations of care politically, making market assumptions about receivers and providers of care, instating competition in the public provision of caring services, and operating without formal evaluation and review practices as processes relate to care generate institutions that are incapable of accounting for the institutional concerns of power and particularity (Tronto 2010: 159-60). Hankivsky and Cormier (2011) discuss the issue of intersectionality as it relates to policy studies; their determination holds that an intersectional policy analysis can properly "identify and address the way specific acts and policies address the inequalities experienced by various social groups" (Hankivsky and Cormier 2011: 217). More generally speaking, the intervention of an intersectional analysis in the study of policy demonstrates that a policy approach that treats all people, identifies, and groups as equal—the largely dominant approach currently in place—is necessarily inadequate and reductive (Hankivsky and Cormier 2011).

This hybrid theoretical basis proves a positive basis for an analysis of the elements of care, particularly as they pertain to labour, in childcare and waste management policy of Newfoundland and Labrador. Both areas operate on a path-dependent process, as evidenced by the lack of substantial policy innovation in the past several decades, and contain multitudes of discrepancies between formal and informal organizations of labour as it pertains to care. Within the childcare sector, the soaring fees paid by parents are juxtaposed by the low salaries of most childcare workers, herein studied by the salaries of early childhood educators, a largely

feminized workforce earning only minimally above the Canadian low-income measure for single persons (Nuevoo 2017). To further complicate rationalizations in this example of caring labour, family relations of care are entirely unaccounted for in a formal economic sense, diminishing the value attached to this imperative work. In the area of publically funded waste management, the prioritization of economic opportunities in the private sector over the work of garbage collectors—majority male workers, who are typically unionized—and the informal labour of garbage and recycling collection by bottle collectors and garbage pickers generates a socioeconomic divide in labour.

III. Conclusion and paths for future research

The nature of this work—and, perhaps, its most frustrating element—is the absence of concrete, immediately applicable solutions that may arise out of the undertaking. This challenge arises because policy systems are difficult to change; the relationship between theoretical work, particularly the introduction of more novel policy theories, and the actual work of policymaking is more mildly correlative due to the tendency toward path dependency in policy circles (Cairney 2014). Cairney notes this tendency: “Events and decisions made in the past contributed to the formation of institutions that influence current practices. When commitment to a policy has been established and resources devoted to it, over time it produces increasing returns” (Cairney 2014: 7). In other words, both the practice and theory backing major policies become stagnant over time due to the success—whether of the policy’s goals, or of the avoidance of explicit failure—that the prevailing policy method holds. Over time, this has generated a disconnect between research on policy and methods, and the political practicality of policy itself: “policy researchers have been repeatedly lectured to make themselves and their findings comfortable and ‘user-friendly’ to the decision maker” (Weiss 1990: 98). The proposed care framework of this thesis is

structurally opposed to current policy methods; while this work encourages the inclusion of alternative theoretical methods toward the revitalization of childcare and waste management policies respectively, there remains much work to be done toward the implementation of such theories in policymaking.

The utility of an alternative, normative framework of care to the two policy areas studied in this thesis lies in its capacity to account for the elements that are currently missed by mainstream approaches and to potentially fix the persistent problems themselves. Both childcare and waste management are categorized by their significant longstanding challenges. Childcare was essentially introduced as a political issue in the 1970s by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, in which the unaffordability and inaccessibility of childcare services was listed as an impediment to gender equality, poverty reduction, and early childhood development (Friendly 2006: 41). The ecological externalities of waste have been fuelled by patterns of overconsumption, the privatization of waste management services, and by the persistence of “permanently temporary waste deposits for imagines futures to resolve” (Hird 2017: 189). The absence of substantial change in both policy areas is evident, and the socioeconomic and environmental issues that arise from their improper handling remain untouched; climate change advances and the environment further deteriorates due to improper waste management tactics, and the minimal change that has occurred in the childcare area since the 1970s leaves families in poverty, prevents the advancement of gender equality, and impedes effective child development (Hird et al. 2014; Findlay 2015).

The necessity of introducing new policy frameworks, both theoretically and in implementation stages, is clear when looking toward the longevity of the complications in both policy areas—efforts toward advancement have evidently effected no significant change. The

care framework presents as a compelling, structural change that carries the capacity to revitalize the policy areas and spur meaningful change, both in the implementation of policy innovations, and in the effort to reconceptualise the way society perceives the problems of childcare and of waste management. This effort is primarily two-fold, and centralizes: establishing a public ethic of care; and creating caring institutions through institutional adjustment. The public ethic of care renders relations between people and human interdependency central, reinforcing the ubiquitous role of care and thus replacing market values of citizenship with a communal sense of care (Stensota 2010). Caring institutions centralize the relations of care in the political function of policy, accomplished through the instatement of needs-interpretation and regular review processes of policy, and in valuing caring labour both politically and economically (Tronto 2010). This research provides a vital, benchmark study of the utility of care in the central social policy area of childcare, and in the central environmental policy area of waste management; the seeming incompatibility of both strengthens the analysis and works to highlight the universal applicability of a care framework.

Given the largely theoretical bent of this initial work, there are numerous suggestions for future research that arise. These include, but are not limited to:

- A study of the care framework's applicability in relation to policy implementation literature,
- Research toward the application of care frameworks to areas of social and environmental policy interest outside of the childcare and waste management areas, and
- A discourse analysis of activist and resistance efforts in both childcare and waste management policy areas, analyzing the reactions to activist movements from policy and government officials.

The driving research question to this thesis asked: *What does a theoretical intervention of care reveal about the caring labour involved in childcare and waste policy in Newfoundland and Labrador? How can these revelations be practically applied to the development of emancipatory policy solutions in these areas?*. Reflecting on this, it is clear that an intervention of care contributes to policy analysis by 1) prioritizing and making visible the caring labour involved in both policy areas, and 2) defining the inadequacy of neoliberal policy structures to properly developing policies for these areas. This thesis posits that the incorporation of care theories into the analysis and formulation of childcare and waste management policies will ensure that labour is accounted for, and can properly handle the complex, communal qualities of both policy areas. Though difficult to envision a structural change that does away with the dominance of neoliberal policymaking norms, this thesis has created space for the consideration of care theories as viable policy alternatives that can bring an emancipatory policy future.

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