Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education

JCIE

What's Really at Stake? Insights from Nova Scotia Teachers' Use of Social Media during Collective Bargaining

Rachel K. Brickner

Cite this article

Article abstract

This study uses the case of the 2015-17 contract negotiations between the Government of Nova Scotia (Canada) and the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union to understand (1) how the Government, the union, and individual educators framed the issues at stake in negotiations, and (2) how those perspectives were represented in traditional and social media. To answer these questions, I conducted two unique content analyses of news releases, social media posts, and traditional digital media over the course of negotiations. Results show that educators used social media to frame their work explicitly in terms of caring labour and to communicate with specificity and urgency the toll of their working conditions on their ability to meet the needs of their students and maintain their own well-being. However, active educators' voices were rarely included in traditional media. These findings show that using social media does not guarantee that teachers' perspectives will influence the broader public discourse. Moreover, they suggest that to the extent that care frames are employed in teachers' strikes, it may be important for unions to develop an official campaign—in collaboration with rank-and-file educators—that is centred around care.

érudit

What's Really at Stake? Insights From Nova Scotia Teachers' Use of Social Media During Collective Bargaining

Rachel K. Brickner
Acadia University
rachel.brickner@acadiau.ca

ABSTRACT

This study uses the case of the 2015-17 contract negotiations between the Government of Nova Scotia (Canada) and the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union to understand (1) how the Government, the union, and individual educators framed the issues at stake in negotiations, and (2) how those perspectives were represented in traditional and social media. To answer these questions, I conducted two unique content analyses of news releases, social media posts, and traditional digital media over the course of negotiations. Results show that educators used social media to frame their work explicitly in terms of caring labour and to communicate with specificity and urgency the toll of their working conditions on their ability to meet the needs of their students and maintain their own well-being. However, active educators' voices were rarely included in traditional media. These findings show that using social media does not guarantee that teachers' perspectives will influence the broader public discourse. Moreover, they suggest that to the extent that care frames are employed in teachers' strikes, it may be important for unions to develop an official campaign—in collaboration with rank-and-file educators—that is centred around care.

Introduction

On April 21, 2017, Nova Scotia's Liberal government passed legislation imposing a contract on the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union (NSTU). This legislation followed 17 months of negotiations, NSTU members' rejection of three tentative agreements, a work-to-rule campaign, and a one-day strike. In response to the law, NSTU President Liette Doucet stated, "There is no amount of legislation that can break the resolve of teachers. They are going to keep telling their stories and pushing for better classroom conditions until a government is willing to make needed reforms to improve the learning environment for students" (Nova Scotia Teachers Union [NSTU], 2017a).

The importance of workers telling their stories has been emphasized by activists and academics as one response to media coverage of labour disputes, which tends to be critical of, even hostile to, unions. Because unions are party to negotiations, they and the employer may be the focus of traditional media coverage,[1] to the exclusion of workers themselves. In a media context in which labour conflict is often framed in terms of how labour disrupts service and how such disruptions impact consumers or the public, centring the voices of workers can illuminate the actual conditions of work that may motivate a labour dispute. While work on media is critical to our understanding of how messages get framed in public, there are other related and important questions: what are the workers' stories, and how do they differ from those of the employer and the union?

Over the course of their 2015-17 contract negotiation, agencies of the Government of Nova Scotia (Canada) and the NSTU used news releases to advance their perspective on negotiations to the media and public. Individual educators relied on social media to tell their stories. Each actor in this negotiation had a different perspective, and how they framed this perspective revealed a different view of what

---

[1] Traditional media coverage here refers to print (including digital), radio, and television coverage from networks, newspapers, or newsmagazines.

was at stake for Nova Scotia public education in the contract negotiation. As such, the first question this article asks is how the three actors framed their perspectives in public statements. Because framing signals to a broader audience how to make sense of a situation, the second question examined in this paper is whether the perspectives of teachers, such as those they expressed in social media, were among those represented in traditional media.

To answer these questions, I conducted two unique content analyses of news releases, social media posts, and traditional digital media over the course of the 2015-17 contract negotiation between the Nova Scotia government and the NSTU. In the first, an examination of approximately 150 texts from provincial agencies, the NSTU, and individual educators shows that in public statements both the province and the NSTU framed their position in broad generalities about care for educators' working conditions and acting in the best interest of Nova Scotia's students. On the other hand, educators framed their work more explicitly in terms of caring labour and spoke with specificity and urgency about the toll of their working conditions on their ability to meet the needs of their students and maintain their own well-being. In the second, an examination of approximately 200 news articles, opinion columns, and letters to the editor shows that, although the narratives of individual educators were substantially different from those of the NSTU and Government, educators' voices were rarely included in traditional media outlets.

These findings reinforce what we know from literature on media coverage of labour, social media, and framing. First, they show that traditional media centred the NSTU and Government, to the exclusion of educators' voices. Second, they show that while social media allowed educators to bypass media gatekeepers, this did not guarantee that their perspectives influenced the broader public discourse. Finally, the findings show that using care frames can be powerful in articulating concerns for educators and students but can also be used to criticize the labour disruption. Therefore, to the extent that care frames are employed in teachers' strikes, it may be important for unions to develop an official campaign—in collaboration with rank-and-file educators—that is centred around care. Despite its limitations, social media can be critical to such campaigns, since they allow

educators to tell the stories about their experiences that can help the public better understand what is at stake in contract negotiations.

Framing Labour Disputes

This study uses the concept of framing to analyze how teachers, the NSTU, and provincial actors communicated their perspectives during the 2015–17 contract negotiations. Charlotte Yates (2010, p. 42) defines framing as "select[ing] what is important about an issue, event or set of relations, and what is made invisible and offer interpretations of causality, moral judgment, and appropriate courses of action to 'solve' a problem." As discussed further on, framing is widely used in social movements literature to analyze how organizations communicate strategic messages in order to "mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). Framing is also important to politicians and the media, who have an interest in communicating to audiences what they perceive as salient about an issue. Robert Entman (1993, p. 55) argues that because framing can lead audiences to have different reactions, contestation over how political texts are framed represents an exertion of political power. Further, he notes that journalists working to "objectively" convey information may unwittingly adopt dominant frames (Entman, 1993, pp. 56–57).

Framing is important in understanding media coverage of labour unions and disputes, which, as academic analysis has long observed, tends to be negative. Unions are presented as self-interested, greedy, or obstacles to reform (Parenti, 1993; Puette, 1992; Stephens, 2021). Labour disruptions, including strikes, may be more likely to be covered than other labour issues, but the experiences of workers that may make them more willing to strike are not covered extensively (Leedham, 2023; Soron, 2018; Gunster, 2008; Park & Wright, 2007; Puette, 1992). When labour issues are covered, journalists tend to use a "consumer" or "disruptive" frame (Puette, 1992; Soron, 2018). When journalists frame stories about collective bargaining or job actions through consumer frames, they signal that organized labour is "an impediment for the consumer, either by adding costs to goods, making poor quality products, or (via strikes or inefficiencies attributed to labour) delaying the instant gratification of consumer goods and services" (Martin, 2004,

p. 53). Disruptive framing focuses attention of the public on strikes and job actions, emphasizing how "a select group of (privileged) workers holds the public hostage in order to serve their own needs and interests" (Gunster, 2008, p. 662). Employers and unions will adopt similar frames in public statements. For example, Gunster (2008, pp. 662–663) notes that both sides will claim that their perspective is most reflective of the public interest, with the government speaking to the importance of financial sustainability and avoiding disruption to service for citizens and the union defending job action as necessary to ensure quality public services.

From the perspective of informing the public about what is at stake in a contract negotiation, there are consequences to reporting that employs consumer and disruption frames. News stories may not dig deeper into the issues that are motivating tension in bargaining or a job action (Gunster, 2008). Additionally, if the union has not been engaged in deep organizing, its statements and decisions may not reflect the perspectives of rank-and-file workers (Bascia, 2008; McAlevey & Ostertag, 2014; Cake 2024). Soron (2018, pp. 30–34) cautions that unions cannot compensate for this disconnect through a clever public relations campaign, but he and others emphasize that highlighting the voices of workers themselves can be important in shifting public support, especially in a negotiation or job action (Glass, 2003; Gunster, 2008; Stephens, 2021). For example, in his analysis of media coverage of the British Columbia teachers' illegal strike of 2004, Gunster showed that on talk radio, where the content was driven by what the public (rather than journalists) wanted to discuss, more time was devoted to the actual conditions facing teachers, which elevated public understanding of teachers' "views and experiences as an essential prerequisite for developing a rational, coherent, and informed opinion on the strike" (2008, p. 675).

While Gunster's analysis does not discuss this explicitly, a unique characteristic of labour disputes in the education sector is that education is part of the care economy. Nancy Folbre (2021) defines the care economy as "the site of production, development, and maintenance of human capabilities." In addition to unpaid work that takes place in family settings, the care economy includes paid work in private and public enterprises that provide health, education, and other social services. The work of education is what Folbre and Erik Wright (2012) refer to as "interactive"

care because it goes beyond meeting basic needs and includes things like building mental abilities, skills, emotional intelligence, trust, and human capabilities. Importantly, care work is collaborative and relational, involving personal connections between, in the terms of Nel Noddings (2005), caregiver(s) and individuals who are cared for (Folbre, 2021; Tronto, 2013). Finally, as Folbre and Wright (2012) emphasize, education work is a team effort—involving teachers, parents, and other caregivers—that ultimately supports the development of human capital that has broader social benefits. Although education is caring labour, it is important to note that educators are also professionals engaged in the work of formal academic instruction (Hanrahan & Amsler, 2022).[2] In principle, the costs for public education, including investments to maintain sustainable working conditions and compensation for educators, are borne by the taxpayer. However, policy-makers often download additional caring activities onto educators and schools without recognition or resources (Hanrahan & Amsler, 2022). This contributes to a phenomenon that Christa Wichterich (2019) calls "care extractivism."[3]

In Canada, care policy is largely decentralized, with responsibility for care provision falling to the provinces and individual families (Bezanson, 2015). Until recently,[4] early childhood education and care tended to be seen as private concern, met through a patchwork of providers and inadequately resourced. On the other hand, elementary and secondary education are publicly funded (Langford et al.,

---

[2] For a more detailed discussion of how views on the professional status of teachers influenced their unionization, see Shelton (2017).

[3] Locating education in the care economy is not meant to diminish the fact that schools have been the sites of structural inequities and abuses, often rooted in racism and legacies of colonialism, that belie an ethic of care. Despite the Nova Scotia Government's 2015 Action Plan focused on developing innovative and culturally relevant curricula and Treaty Education, research shows that Black and Mi'kmaq students have negative experiences in schools linked to low expectations; discrimination and stereotyping; and lack of a sufficiently culturally relevant curriculum (Hamilton-Hinch *et al.*, 2021; Malinen and Roberts-Jeffers, 2021; Diallo, 2021; Orr *et al*., 2017).

[4] In its 2021 budget, the Liberal Government of Canada invested in a multi-year Multilateral Early Learning and Childcare Framework to support early childhood education and care. See https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/early-learning-child-care/reports/2017-multilateral-framework.html.

2017). Despite public funding for elementary and secondary schools, trends in education and other social policies make schools sites of contestation over policy priorities. For example, teacher autonomy and professionalism are in tension with schools' focus on student testing and data-focused classroom management (Moore et al., 2024). Additionally, budget cuts facing public schools are in tension with under-resourced and inequitable social welfare systems that leave schools and teachers picking up more of the burden of care for students in need (Shaker et al., 2022). Such tensions inform contract negotiations, sometimes leading to contentious labour disputes.

Unions are important to improving working conditions for educators and other workers in the care economy (Folbre et al., 2012, pp. 197–198). Like other social movement actors, unions representing workers in the care industry use framing to mobilize their members, articulate demands, and build public support. Stephanie Ross (2011, p. 90) observes that to have an impact, "frames must have some relationship with already existing understandings of self and the world." Research shows that care frames, which emphasize work by professionals to provide quality care, improve patient or student outcomes, and uphold the public good, can resonate with care workers and the broader public. As their studies of early childhood educators (Yates, 2010) and nurses (Cake, 2024) show, care workers' unions have used care frames to mobilize their membership and garner support from the public.

Teachers and their unions have also used care frames during negotiations and strikes. In some cases, care frames have been used by individual educators. During the British Columbia Teachers' Union strike of 2014, educators engaged in a Twitter campaign using hashtag #ThisIsMyStrikePay to highlight how care for their students motivated their strike (Brickner, 2016). Hanrahan and Amsler (2022) observe that by framing demands as "not about the money," West Virginia teachers striking in 2018 emphasized the need for increased support services in schools. Unions have also used care frames during negotiations. In advance of their successful strikes in 2012 and 2019, respectively, the Chicago Teachers' Union and United Teachers Los Angeles adopted an approach called "bargaining for the common good" (Will, 2019). Accordingly, both unions framed their bargaining

demands in terms of "the schools that students deserve," emphasizing the need to invest in academic areas (e.g., small class sizes and culturally relevant courses) and social services (e.g., access to counselors) that would best allow schools to meet the needs of their students (Caputo Pearl, 2017; Chicago Teachers' Union (CTU), 2012).

Though it is important for frames to be "culturally resonant" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 619), Ross cautions that culturally resonant frames may be "pervaded with the unspoken but hegemonic assumptions about the prevailing social order" (2011, p. 92). Care work is gendered and other-regarding labour. Strikes by care workers can be characterized as a (predominantly female) workforce abandoning its caring role (Hardman & de Rezende Rocha, 2003; Cake, 2024). Hailey Huget (2020, p. 2) argues that care workers contemplating a strike are thus "caught between impossible options." They can prioritize the immediate needs of those dependent on them or, by striking, improve "the long-term ability to provide the best possible care" (Huget, 2020, p. 2).

Regardless of the narrative frames employed, the landscape of traditional media does not easily allow teachers to voice their experiences. Social media have emerged as important platforms that allow individuals and organizations to bypass traditional media gatekeepers (Maratea, 2008; Pole, 2010; Shirky, 2008). The generally negative—or missing—coverage of labour in the traditional media has led unions to use social media to disseminate their message (Dingerson, 2021). Educators and their unions are among those who have used social media to share personal experiences and assessments of the education sector (Brickner, 2016; Bruder, 2013; Lynch-Biniek, 2010) and organize collective actions (Berkovich, 2011; Blanc, 2021; Catte et al., 2018).

Blogging has been an important form of social media for educators, although newer apps have become more popular (Greenhow et al., 2020). Blogs emerged in the late-1990s and gained popularity in the early 2000s (Maratea, 2008, fn 6). As Pole (2010, p. 16) observes, blogs allow people to "write meaningfully," with low technological barriers to entry, and without the space limitations of traditional media. Gil de Zúñiga et al. argue that "the blogosphere constitutes a public space of discussion and social networking that can reshape or expand information

availability" (2009, p. 555). Given these advantages, blogging has been encouraged as an important medium for teachers to use for pedagogical purposes and in communicating with students, parents, and community members (Bruder, 2013; Stewart, 2015). Blogging has also been used to disseminate information about education politics and policy[5] and as a sphere of claims-making by educators grappling with austerity policies in post-secondary education (Lynch-Biniek, 2010) and those opposed to education reform efforts in elementary and secondary education (Berkovich, 2011).

Like all social media, blogging has limitations. While it offers the individual blogger space to disseminate opinions, there is little guarantee that the issues represented in blogs will break through to broader audiences or have broader impact (Farrell & Drezner, 2007; Maratea, 2008). In their early study of political blogging, Farrell & Drezner (2007, pp. 28–29) noted that journalists were far more likely to read blogs than members of the general population. The upshot is that blogs consumed by members of the traditional media could have more influence in political debate. There is, correspondingly, no guarantee that blogs will generate any kind of collective action when a political response is sought. As Lynch-Biniek (2010) reflected of her own blog, "My failure to elicit further online response demonstrates the difference between providing information and motivating collective action in online communities."

This does not mean that educators should not blog. Lynch-Biniek further reflected that "Writing is not commonly equated with action, but writing has undeniable power and can often be the precursor to other types of actions. ... [And] blogging can invite a larger audience to reflect on the inner-workings of academic labour" (Lynch-Biniek, 2010). In a labour dispute, blogging, like other social media (Brickner, 2016), allows individual educators to bypass the media, and their own

---

[5] Influential education blogs include "Answer Sheet" by Valerie Strauss at the *Washington Post*, "Diane Ravitch's Blog," and the compilation of blogs at *Education Week*.

unions, and to present to the public a detailed picture of the realities of their working conditions.

Methods

To better understand how the stakes of negotiations were framed by the Government of Nova Scotia, the NSTU, and individual Nova Scotia educators—and whose perspectives were represented in the traditional media—I carried out two unique content analyses with the help of two student research assistants. [6] Content analysis is a "systemic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter" (Krippendorff, 2019) Through the process of coding, content analysis allows the researcher to "reveal the content (i.e., messages, meanings) in a course of communication" (Neuman and Robson, 2009). The first content analysis involved coding 147 texts from the beginning of contract negotiations in December 2015 until a new contract was imposed by the Government in February 2017. To understand how the Government and NSTU framed negotiations, we coded 49 news releases from provincial government agencies and 47 news releases from the NSTU. News releases are an effective source of data in an analysis of framing because they are carefully written by organizations to inform and influence the public via the media (Steidley & Colen, 2017; Choi, 2012). Moreover, Emily Leedham (2023) argues that strike coverage is increasingly shaped by "dueling press releases," making these important sources of information on union and employer perspectives. To understand how individual teachers framed the issues, we turned to social media, coding 51 anonymous posts on the blog "Teachers of Nova Scotia" (TNS). [7] Relying on anonymous blog entries has drawbacks. For example, it is impossible to tell if there are multiple posts by the same person, and contributors are self-selecting. On the other hand, posting anonymously helps protect identities

---

[6] Patrick Hergott created the two data sets. Aliza Prosser coded for reliability. I am profoundly grateful to them both. Reliability coding was above 80% for each of the four variables coded for this project.
[7] TNS is a project of Educators for Social Justice – Nova Scotia (ESJ-NS), which is comprised of unionized educators and allies who support a well-rounded and democratically unionized public education system that supports social justice: https://esjns.com/about/. The author has been a member of (ESJ-NS) but was neither involved in the TNS project nor an active member while this project was ongoing.

of students and allows educators to comment on their experiences without fear of reprimand.[8]

This analysis draws on coding for two variables—the issue covered in the text (i.e., negotiations, an event) and whether/how the text included a care frame. The final codes were refined through two cycles of coding (Saldaña, 2021). Each text was viewed as a unit of analysis and given a single code (Tolley, 2015). Texts were coded as explicitly including a care frame when they mentioned the caring relationship between the educator and student or when they acknowledged that there is also a relationship between educators and their employer, the latter of which is responsible for establishing working conditions that support educators' well-being and students' learning conditions. Other texts did not explicitly mention the relational aspect that is foundational to care ethics but emphasized "care-adjacent" themes. For example, some texts mentioned investing resources in schools, while others mentioned working in the "best interest" of students. Because it was used vaguely, we did not attempt to define or interpret "best interest"; instead, we used that phrase as an "in vivo" code. When texts did not include a care frame, such as when they discussed aspects of the negotiating process (e.g., meeting dates, results of votes), we coded it as "none."

In addition to assigning a numerical code for each variable, I took note of representative statements. These statements allow us to see the qualitative difference in how educators, the NSTU, and the government agencies presented their perspectives and how they changed over the course of negotiations. These representative statements also illuminated something not captured in the coding,

---

[8] As discussed in this volume by the contributions of Porter and Yoon, there is employer recognition and expectation that educators will engage in social media, but guidelines can hold individuals responsible for understanding relevant policy while also establishing vague principles for appropriate engagement. In a similar vein, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's *Nova Scotia Teaching Standards* (2018, p. 16) assert that a teacher should be "knowledgeable about the ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities of teachers" and "[understand] the importance of professional conduct in the personal use of social media." There is nothing preventing NSTU members from contributing to social or traditional media, but they are held to standard of professionalism that is not explicitly defined.

which is how, at different points in negotiations, the Government and NSTU fused care narratives with other frames typically used in labour negotiations. I note in the analysis when frames about care are fused with consumer frames, which are used to convey that actors engaged in a labour dispute are ensuring or impeding access to goods and services, and disruptive frames, which are used to convey that unions are using their power to advance their interest in a way that harms the public.

The second, quantitative content analysis gives us a better picture of whose perspectives were represented in traditional media. This content analysis included a total of 208 news articles, opinion columns, and letters to the editor that were published in *CBC News* (online), *CTV Atlantic* (online), *Global News* (online), and the *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, which are the major traditional media outlets in Nova Scotia and provide coverage of major issues in education, such as negotiations. News articles were coded for whether sources for information or quotations were from the Government, NSTU, or an active educator. For opinion columns or letters to the editor, we coded for whether the text was authored by an active educator. As Neuman and Robson (2009, 208) note, content analysis allows the researcher to "compare content across many texts" and "reveal aspects of the text's content that are difficult to see." These qualities make content analysis an appropriate method for understanding how contract negotiations were framed and whose perspectives were included in traditional and social media.

Contract Negotiations between the NSTU and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2015–17

The NSTU, established in 1895, is the single bargaining agent for teachers, speech-language pathologists, and school psychologists in Nova Scotia's public schools. The period of collective bargaining under consideration in this paper between the NSTU and Nova Scotia's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development began on September 29, 2015. A tentative agreement was reached on November 23, 2015. Although it was recommended by the NSTU executive, members rejected it in a vote on December 1, 2015. A second tentative agreement, reached on September 16, 2016, was also recommended by the union's executive

but rejected in a membership vote. NSTU President Liette Doucet[9] called for a strike authorization vote on October 12, 2016, and 96% of voting members supported a strike mandate.

With the strike authorization vote in hand, the NSTU engaged in its first job actions in union history. First, the NSTU began a work-to-rule campaign on December 5, 2016. Citing safety concerns, the Government closed schools for a short time at the beginning of the work-to-rule campaign. Schools reopened after a public outcry and clarification from the NSTU about duties their members would undertake. The parties resumed negotiations and reached a third tentative agreement on January 18, 2017. As before, the NSTU executive recommended the agreement, but members rejected it in a vote on February 9, 2017. At this point, Liberal Premier Stephen McNeil initiated back-to-work legislation, prompting a one-day, province-wide strike on February 15, 2017. Ultimately, the Government passed Bill 75, *An Act Respecting a Teachers' Professional Agreement and Classroom Improvements*, imposing a contract on the NSTU.

Both Premier McNeil and NSTU President Doucet framed Bill 75 in terms of the relationship between parties working for a better system of public education. McNeil framed the passage of Bill 75 as a chance to move forward *with teachers* in the best interest of students, stating "We can now focus on working with teachers to strengthen our classrooms – that's what is in the best interest of our students" (Nova Scotia Premier's Office, 2017b). Doucet, on the other hand, emphasized the harm done by the government: "Teachers have been taking a stand for better classroom conditions. They are tired of having their concerns ignored.... A legislated contract will do nothing to improve the state of our schools and will only further erode the trust between teachers and this government" (NSTU, 2017a). These statements are representative of how the Government and the NSTU framed negotiations throughout the time of collective bargaining. Both parties emphasized

---

[9] Doucet was elected to replace Shelley Morse, under whose leadership the NSTU began negotiations but whose term expired in 2016.

the importance of teachers in meeting the needs of students, but neither the Government nor the NSTU communicated to the public in a detailed way that would allow the broader public to understand why teachers broke with their union's recommendations and rejected three tentative agreements. An editorial from the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* following the rejection of the second tentative agreement summarizes this frustration: "People have been told that money is not a prime issue for teachers and that, as Ms. Doucet repeated this week, 'concerns of poor working conditions and not being valued as professionals' have fuelled the two no votes. What does that actually mean?" (No need for strike; Teachers contract, 2016). Unintentionally, the editorial highlights the importance of listening to teachers themselves.

Framing Demands in the 2015–17 Contract Negotiation

The following analysis of media releases from various offices of the Government of Nova Scotia and the NSTU demonstrates that the parties are each staking out a position that their demands are in the best interests of the public, students, and teachers. Care frames are employed very generally and are frequently fused with consumer and disruptive frames. The analysis of the Teachers of Nova Scotia blog also shows educators using care to frame their concerns. However, the blog posts go into detail about how the working conditions in Nova Scotia's public schools negatively impacted their own well-being and were an obstacle in meeting the academic and other needs of students.

Framing in the Government's News Releases

Over the period of contract negotiations with the NSTU, various offices of the provincial government issued 49 news releases. Of these, 22 news releases were specific to negotiations. In these releases, the Government fused disruptive/consumer and care frames, positioning itself as being fiscally responsible while working with the NSTU to improve teachers' working conditions and support students' needs.

The consumer frame, stressing fiscal responsibility, was established early on in Government news releases. For example, a statement issued by then-Finance and Treasury Board Minister Randy Delorey, begins by praising the work of public sector workers who "deliver vital public services to Nova Scotians" but cautions that "Government also has the important responsibility to set fiscal policy that ensures the long-term sustainability of programs and services and to protect Nova Scotia's fiscal plan" (Nova Scotia Department of Finance and Treasury Board, 2015).

While Delorey's statement sets the tone of the Government's fiscal priorities, other news releases frame the Government through a care lens. Table 1 shows the results of coding for care frames in these news releases. It was most common for news releases to discuss negotiations in terms of working with the NSTU and its members to improve working conditions (six releases of 22), followed by "investing" in schools (five of 22).

TABLE 1: CARE FRAMES IN GOVERNMENT NEWS RELEASES ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS

Care Frames	# of News Releases
Care for students	3
Care for educators' working conditions	6
Investment in schools	5
"Best Interest" of students/schools	2
None	6
Total Government New Releases	**22**

In her statement after the rejection of the first tentative agreement in 2015, Karen Casey, then-Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), notes her disappointment through a care frame. She uses relational language

("listening") to signal that Government is willing to invest in improving the working conditions that enable teachers to better support students: "Government is listening. We capped classes, hired more teachers, and invested to increase supports for students struggling with math and reading. We have shown we are willing to make the necessary investments" (Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2015).

As negotiations dragged on and became more contentious, the Government's news releases fused consumer and care frames to shift the onus of responsibility onto the NSTU. For example, in a statement made after an impasse in negotiations in November 2016, Premier McNeil stated,

> The Nova Scotia Teachers Union presented a proposal that the province simply cannot afford to pay.... We believe in the importance of education for our students and the overall health of the province. That is why in every budget we have made investments in the classroom. It is why we committed an additional $10 million for teachers and the union to address conditions in the classroom (Nova Scotia Premier's Office, 2016).

Fewer Government news releases framed their message explicitly in terms of student well-being (rather than "investment"). However, Premier McNeil focused explicitly on student well-being when discussing back-to-work legislation after the one-day strike. In a statement, McNeil fused care and disruptive frames, stating that:

> the strike action by the union has impacted students and their families for too long. The union's actions and directives have caused harm to students -- to their learning outcomes, university and college ambitions, and athletic aspirations. This is not acceptable and can no longer continue (Nova Scotia Premier's Office, 2017a).

An analysis of the Government's news releases reveals that Premier McNeil and his ministers fuse consumer/disruptive and care frames. While consistently reminding the public of their responsibility to taxpayers, they explicitly acknowledge working

in relation with the NSTU to improve teachers working conditions while investing in schools and caring for the needs of students. They use this fused framing to cast the NSTU as an unrealistic partner whose actions actively harmed students. This perspective will be contested by the NSTU and TNS blogs, but it is worth noting how care frames can be used to different ends by multiple parties.

Framing in the NSTU's News Releases

Throughout the period of contract negotiations, the NSTU published 47 news releases, of which 38 focused on negotiations. As noted, theorists locate education in the care economy in part because of the relationship between the educator and student. A second relationship is between the educator and employer, who has the responsibility for ensuring that caring labour is materially sustainable. This second relationship is captured in the category of "working conditions"—the material factors that enable educators to support their students' academic development and personal well-being and which may be the subject of collective bargaining. As Table 2 shows, most NSTU news releases focused on care through working conditions (22 of 38). An example of how working conditions reflect this dual relationship of care can be seen in a statement from NSTU President Shelly Morse after members rejected the first tentative agreement in 2015: "Significant demands on teachers' time continues to be an issue for our members. Government needs to take a serious look at teachers' working conditions, and make improvements to help teachers best meet the needs of their students" (NSTU, 2015).

TABLE 2: CARING FRAMES IN NSTU RELEASES ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS

Care Frames	# of News Releases
Care for students	5
Care for educators' working conditions	22
"Best Interest" of students/schools	1
None	10
Total NSTU news releases	**38**

As negotiations wore on, the NSTU's releases also fused consumer and care frames to criticize the Government and stake out a position as the party acting in the best interest of students. For example, responding to back-to-work legislation, Liette Doucet laid the blame for the contentious negotiations at the feet of the Premier McNeil:

> If the Premier really wants to help teachers teach, he'll put in place hard caps from Grades P-12, he'll provide the necessary funding to support students with special needs, he'll bring in positive reforms such as implementing an attendance and discipline policy. But the Premier isn't interested in doing any of those things, all he's interested in doing is picking needless fights with unions. … If you don't respect the teachers who dedicate their lives to educating our province's children, then you are not doing anything for the kids (NSTU, 2017b).

Statements in the NSTU news releases frequently focus on the relationship between teachers and the Government. For example, Doucet cited their poor relationship as the reason for the NSTU's withdrawal from a "Working Conditions Committee" while negotiations were ongoing, stating that "teachers have lost faith that the government is truly willing to form a partnership based on mutual respect" (NSTU, 2016). While the focus on the union-government relationship is not surprising, it shifts focus away from the actual work experiences of teachers. Morse and Doucet's statements speak generally about working conditions—administrative tasks that take time from teaching, class sizes that are too large, insufficient support for special needs students. However, without hearing more detail, the news releases could reasonably be seen as a mere tit-for-tat between adversarial parties.

Framing in the Teachers of Nova Scotia Blog

During the 2015-17 contract negotiations, individual educators turned to social media, including blogs, to discuss their experiences working in public education.

Some educators had personal blogs,[10] but the Teachers of Nova Scotia blog offered an opportunity for individual teachers to write anonymously. Educators posting on TNS were specific about the caring nature of their work and how working conditions impacted their ability to engage in this work effectively. As Table 3 shows, 46 of the 51 posts explicitly acknowledged a caring relationship, either with students (28 of 51 posts) or the way working conditions impact this care (18 of 51). One teacher's post about their relationship with students is representative of this aspect of caring labour:

> I love to teach and I love my students. I love seeing the moment when it clicks for a kid in a course that they used to feel lost in. I love the relationships that I have built in my classroom and continue to enjoy now. I am hooked on the teachable moments that go beyond mathematics, when I share with my students portions of the big picture that I can see and help them to grow as people (Call Off the Sharks, 2016).

TABLE 3: CARE FRAMES IN TNS POSTS ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS

Care Frames	# of Posts
Care for students	28
Care for educators' working conditions	18
None	5
Total Blog Posts	**51**

Moreover, TNS posts offered clear detail about the impact of policies on teachers' ability to carry out their work effectively. Some posts discussed the impact of

---

[10] See, for example, Grant Frost's "Frosted Education" (frostededucation.com) and Ben Sichel's "No Need to Raise Your Hand" (noneedtoraiseyourhand.wordpress.com).

policies on their ability to work with students. For example, one teacher wrote about how class size is central to educational attainment because of how it can foster relationships:

> I love all of my classes, but I've accomplished so much more with my small class and we've been able to develop a sense of community. They're getting the education they deserve. They're getting the attention they need. They're getting to know and understand one another. Seeing this kind of learning and growth is why I became a teacher, and it is why I will fight for these kids until the bitter end (My Small Class, 2016).

Other posts linked policies to the well-being of educators themselves, such as one teacher who discussed the ways that they are overburdened:

> the bureaucracy involved in my job has become absurdly unwieldy. … Educational outcomes, standardized tests, formulaic report cards, and data obsession cannot be reconciled with the concurrent expectations that teachers be inclusive, culturally sensitive and responsive, that they differentiate and adapt instruction and assessment, address diverse mental health concerns, manage increasingly difficult behaviour issues, and develop meaningful personal relationships with each individual student. …I care about my work. I want to do a good job and it bothers me deeply that I can't (Everything to Everyone = Nothing at All, 2016).

Finally, some posts put the caring labour of teachers in the context of NSTU's job action, such as one teacher whose post discussed how working-to-rule revealed the extent of teachers' involvement with students:

> Work-to-rule has helped to highlight what has become the norm in schools. Many teachers rarely sit down during the day. Any extra time they have is spent providing extra help, running leadership or other extracurricular groups, doing paperwork, or just helping out in one way or another. In addition, they spend their evenings coaching and planning to meet the needs of students working at a range of grade levels. Many teachers take

time away from their own children to ensure a positive learning experience for the children of others. Work-to-rule is a good reminder of how deep teachers' investment in children's education, health, and well-being actually runs. Even teachers benefit from seeing what an integral part of the system they are (The Frog Awakens, 2016).

TNS bloggers were a self-selecting group and may have been more motivated to express disapproval of education policy or express frustrations with their working conditions. That said, their posts provide clear detail about how teachers experience their work, and the general takeaway from the posts is that they do not have the resources (including time), support, and autonomy to work with the diverse students who make up their classes. As a result, the ability to build relationships and to care for the intellectual development and well-being of each student is compromised. The TNS posts provide evidence that helps explain why NSTU members rejected three tentative agreements and voted overwhelmingly to support job action.

Teachers' Voices in the Media

As noted, research cautions that while blogging can be important for self-expression and organizing, it can be difficult for blogs to break into the traditional media. Considering that polling data show that Canadians rely on traditional media, including television and newspaper websites, as primary sources of news (Maru Public Opinion, 2022), this may limit the audience for blogs.[11] To assess whether the perspectives such as those articulated in the TNS blog were represented in traditional media, a second content analysis examined who was a source for news articles or an author of op-ed columns and letters to the editor. As Chart 1 shows, of the 129 news articles about negotiations, 80 included a source from the provincial government (e.g., a statement from a press release or answer from an interview),

---

[11] According to Maru (2022), 26% of Canadians rely on social media websites for news. This trails other top sources of news, including television broadcasts (45%), newspaper websites (29%), TV news websites (29%), and business television broadcasts (29%).

and 88 included an NSTU source. These stories largely covered events in the timeline of negotiations and job action, such as a vote on a tentative agreement or return to bargaining. While the media reported that working conditions were a key point of contention for the NSTU, there were no stories providing detailed reporting of teachers' experiences in the classroom. At most, stories reported an extensive list of issues that created challenging working conditions. For example, a *Chronicle Herald* story about a Government initiative to create a Partnership on Systemic Working Conditions stated that "[Minister Karen Casey] told media that specific concerns including the curriculum, data collection, working conditions, student behaviour and other issues could be discussed by teachers through the new forum. The forum would include members of the government, the union and school boards" (Previl, 2016).

On the other hand, only 10 news articles included an active educator as a source. While some of these articles did reference teachers' social media accounts, they did not generally go into detail about teachers' concerns. For example, when the Government cancelled school on the first day of the NSTU's work-to-rule action *CTV* ran a story that included photos of teachers' social media posts with pictures of empty classrooms and the hashtags #ReadyToTeach and #NSTUnited (Ready to Teach, 2016). Overall, these findings support Gunster's (2008) perspective that media frame labour disputes as two sides, union and employer, both jockeying to portray themselves as acting public interest. Missing from the coverage was reporting on teachers and their experiences that was captured in the TNS blog posts.

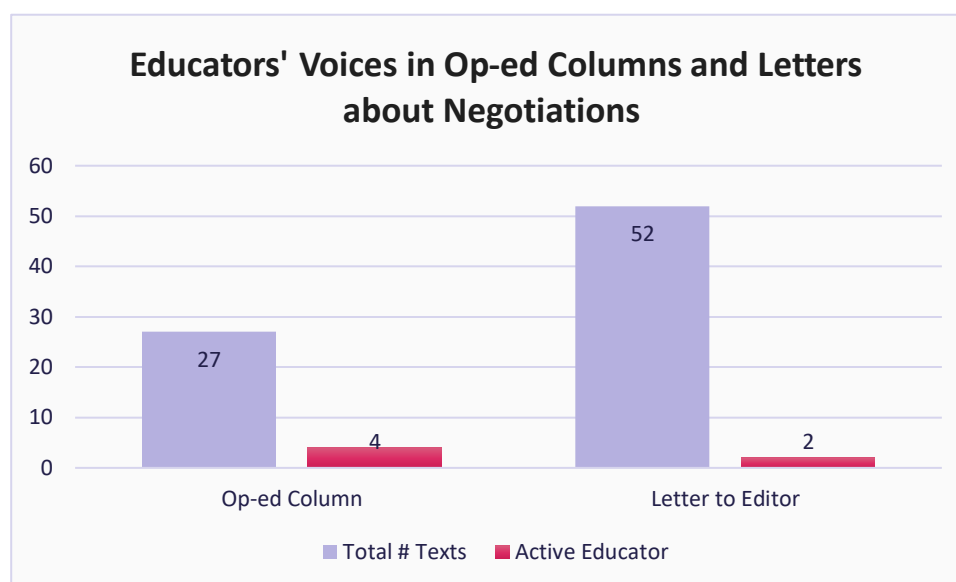**CHART 1: SOURCES IN NEWS ARTICLES ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS, 2015–17**

Chart 2 shows whether active educators were authors of op-ed columns and letters to the editor that were published by traditional media during negotiations. As above, active educators' perspectives were rare in these subjective forms. Only three of 27 op-ed columns were authored by an active educator. A fourth op-ed included extensive comments from an educator, as told to the author, and so is included here. Only two of 52 letters to the editor were written by people who

Sources in News Articles about Negotiations
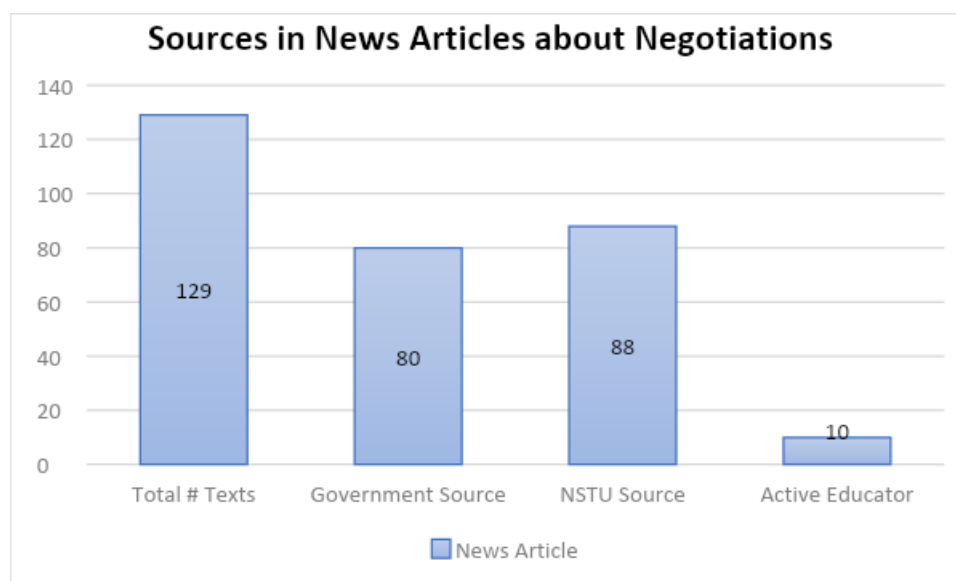
explicitly identified as active educators.

It was beyond the scope of this project to examine the criteria opinion editors used in determining whose opinion columns and letters to publish; however, the data show that authorship was not particularly diverse: all nine of the CBC columns were written by the same individual. In the *Chronicle Herald*, eight of 18 columns (44%) with a byline were written by two people. Given the qualitative difference in the stories told by educators versus the Government and NSTU that were identified above, the absence of educators' voices and perspectives means meaningful information about what was at stake in negotiations, about what working conditions meant for teachers, and about their inherent distrust of the Governments' initiatives was not available to the public through traditional media.

Conclusion

In a 2016 post on the TNS blog, one teacher wrote, "Should a government seemingly go to war with the people who educate their citizens? Probably not. Does the public value and understand our jobs and what we do for our students enough to support us? I hope so, but I'm not so sure" (It Comes Down to Value, 2016). Without a personal connection to a teacher who is willing to talk in detail about

working conditions, members of the public will learn through various media about the realities of teachers work with students and what might lead them towards job action. Analyzing what messages get conveyed about education work and where they are disseminated is therefore important to understanding what the public knows about the teaching profession.

To understand the key messages conveyed by the Nova Scotia Government, NSTU, and individual educators during the 2015-17 contract negotiations, I analyzed texts from each party through "care frames." As discussed above, framing messaging through the lens of care can be an effective strategy for unions in contract negotiations, allowing them to emphasize the skilled nature of the work and link the demands for improved material conditions to the improved quality of care. This analysis showed that all three parties employed care frames, although there are qualitative differences among them. The Government's press releases framed care primarily as investing in students and in teachers' working conditions while maintaining its fiduciary responsibility to taxpayers. The NSTU's press releases emphasized care primarily in terms of care for teachers' working conditions, from which student well-being flowed. Notably, both the Government and NSTU fused care frames with the consumer and/or disruptive frames commonly seen in labour reporting. In doing so, each accused the other party of working against students' well-being (and, in the case of NSTU releases, of harming teachers). Such framing by the Nova Scotia Government is illustrative how care workers can be criticized for abandoning their duty to care. Individual teachers used social media to express their views on working conditions during the period of negotiations. They also used care frames in their posts but provided important detail that was missing from messaging by the two main bargaining agents about the actual conditions of work that make it difficult for teachers to care for their students (and themselves).

To get a better understanding of whose perspectives were received by the public, a second content analysis focused on news articles, op-ed columns, and letters to the editor about negotiations to see which actors served as a source (for the news articles) or an author (for op-eds and letters). Consistent with the broader literature on labour reporting, the findings show that news reporting overwhelmingly focused on the actions and statements of the NSTU and the

Government, rarely including the perspectives of active educators. Given the vague, often accusatory tone of both the Government and NSTU, if theirs were the main messages conveyed about the contact dispute, it would be reasonable for the public to be unclear about why NSTU members were so dissatisfied with their working conditions that they rejected three tentative agreements.

Using social media, teachers offered fuller explanations about their experiences working in Nova Scotia's public schools. However, as the second content analysis shows, the perspectives of active educators were not well represented in news articles, op-eds, or letters to the editor. This, too, is consistent with literature about blogging, which emphasizes that it has value as an accessible vehicle for expression and bypasses traditional media gatekeepers but cannot be guaranteed to influence broader media discourse.

These analyses leave an important question: if care is an important way for educators to frame their work, how can educators share their stories in ways that may be more influential? Activists and scholars point to at least two approaches, each of which involves a more coordinated effort with the union and rank-and-file educators. One approach, mentioned previously, is to move towards a model of bargaining for the common good, which explicitly links negotiating demands to what students need to succeed (Will, 2019). Another approach, that could be used separately or in tandem with bargaining for the common good, is to develop a media strategy that builds the voices and experiences of teachers into broader union organizing and communications efforts (Dingerson, 2021; Stephens, 2021). Regardless of the approach, union communications strategies must adapt to the ever-changing traditional and social media landscape to effectively inform the public about what's really at stake in negotiations.

References

Bascia, N. (2008). What teachers want from their unions: What we know from research. In M. Compton & L. Weiner (Eds.), *The global assault on teaching, teachers, and their unions: Stories for resistance* (pp. 95–108). Palgrave MacMillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230611702

Berkovich, I. (2011). No we won't! Teachers' resistance to educational reform. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(5), 563–578. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231111159548

Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26(2000), 611–639.

Bezanson, K. (2015). Return of the nightwatchman state? Federalism, social reproduction, and social policy in Conservative Canada. In K. Meehan & K. Strauss (Eds.), *Precarious Worlds: Contested Geographies of Social Reproduction* (pp. 25–44). The University of Georgia Press.

Blanc, E. (2021). How digitized strategy impacts movement outcomes: Social media, mobilizing, and organizing in the 2018 teachers' strikes. *Politics & Society*, 50(3), 485–518. https://doi.org/10.1177/00323292211039953

Brickner, R. K. (2016). Tweeting care: Educators' dissent through social media in the US and Canada. *Labour/Le Travail*, 77(Spring), 11–36.

Bruder, P. (2013). Why teachers should be blogging...and how to do it: Examples of teacher created blogs. *The Education Digest*, 79(3), 30–37.

Cake, S. (2024). At your side, on your side: United Nurses of Alberta communications framing. *Journal of Industrial Relations*. https://doi.org/10.1177/00221856241280451

Call off the sharks. (2016, November 12). *Teachers of Nova Scotia*. https://teachersofnovascotia.wordpress.com/2016/11/12/call-off-the-sharks/

Caputo Pearl, A. (2017, May 9). *Schools LA students deserve campaign: Unapologetic about what students, educators need*. UTLA President's Perspective. https://www.utla.net/news/schools-la-students-deserve-campaign-unapologetic-about-what-students-educators-need

Catte, E., Hilliard, E., & Salfia, J. (Eds.). (2018). *55 Strong: Inside the West Virginia Teachers' Strike*. Belt Publishing.

Chicago Teachers' Union. (2012). *The Schools Chicago's Students Deserve*. https://www.ctulocal1.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SCSD_Report-2012-02-16.pdf

Choi, J. (2012). A content analysis of BP's press releases dealing with crisis. *Public Relations Review*, 38(3), 422–429. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.03.003

Diallo, H. C. (2021). *#BlackInSchool*. University of Regina Press.

Dingerson, L. (2021). Using social media as an organizing tool. In M. Charney, J. Hagopian, & B. Peterson (Eds.), *Teacher unions and social justice: Organizing for the schools and communities our students deserve* (pp. 289–295). Rethinking Schools.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, *43*(4), 51–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Everything to everyone = nothing at all. (2016, November 1). *Teachers of Nova Scotia*. https://teachersofnovascotia.wordpress.com/2016/11/01/everything-to-everyone-nothing-at-all/

Farrell, H., & Drezner, D. W. (2007). The power and politics of blogs. *Public Choice*, *134*(1–2), 15–30. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-007-9198-1

Folbre, N. (2021, August 11). *An economist's view on the care economy*. U.S. Department of Labor blog. https://blog.dol.gov/2021/08/11/an-economists-view-on-the-care-economy

Folbre, N., Howes, C., & Leana, C. (2012). A care policy and research agenda. In N. Folbre (Ed.), *For love and money: Care provision in the United States* (pp. 183–204). Russell Sage Foundation.

Folbre, N., & Wright, E. O. (2012). Defining care. In N. Folbre (Ed.), *For love and money: Care provision in the United States* (pp. 1–20). Russell Sage Foundation.

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Puig-I-Abril, E. & Rojas, H. (2009). Weblogs, traditional sources online and political participation: An assessment of how the internet is changing the political environment. *New Media & Society 11*(4), 553–574. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1177/1461444809102960

Glass, F. (2003). Amplifying the voices of workers: An organizing model for labour communications. *Labor Studies Journal*, *24*(4), 1–16.

Greenhow, C., Galvin, S. M., Brandon, D. L., & Askari, E. (2020). A decade of research on K–12 teaching and teacher learning with social media: Insights on the state of the field. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, *122*(6), 1–72. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146812012200602

Gunster, S. (2008). Listening to labour: Mainstream media, talk radio, and the 2005 B.C. teachers strike. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, *33*(4), 661–684. https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2008v33n4a2071

Hamilton-Hinch, B.-A., McIsaac, J.-L. D., Harkins, M.-J., Jarvis, S., & LeBlanc, J. C. (2021). A call for change in the public education system in Nova Scotia. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 44(1), CI64–CI92. https://doi.org/10.53967/cje-rce.v44i1.5025

Hanrahan, N. W., & Amsler, S. (2022). "Who else is gonna do it if we don't?" Gender, education, and the crisis of care in the 2018 West Virginia teachers' strike. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 29(1), 151–166. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12739

Hardman, S., & de Rezende Rocha, T. (2023). "Cheerleaders" and "Mama Bears": Combatting sexist teacher strike discourse. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 42(4), 367–387. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-023-09883-7

Huget, H. (2020). Care workers on strike. *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, 6(1). https://doi.org/10.5206/fpq/2020.1.8063

It comes down to value. (2016, November 29). *Teachers of Nova Scotia*. https://teachersofnovascotia.wordpress.com/2016/11/29/it-comes-down-to-value/

Krippendorff, K. (2019). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodolody* (4th Ed). Sage.

Langford, R., Richardson, B., Albanese, P., Bezanson, K., Prentice, S., & White, J. (2017). Caring about care: Reasserting care as integral to early childhood education and care practice, politics and policies in Canada. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 7(4), 311–322. https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610617747978

Leedham, E. (2023, September 2). I've tracked Canadian strikes for the last two years. Here's what I've learned about strike coverage. *PressProgress*. https://pressprogress.ca/ive-tracked-canadian-strikes-for-the-last-two-years-heres-what-ive-learned-about-strike-news-coverage/

Lynch-Biniek, A. (2010). An English teacher's manifesto, or writing my way into labour activism. *Reflections*, 10(1), 206-229. https://reflectionsjournal.net/wp-content/uploads/CopyrightUpdates/Vol10N1/V10.N1.Biniek_Lynch_Amy.pdf

Malinen, K., & Roberts-Jeffers, T. (2021). Who cares? Racial identity and the family-school relationship. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 24(6), 827–841. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2019.1679756

Maratea, R. (2008). The e-Rise and fall of social problems: The blogosphere as a public arena. *Social Problems*, 55(1), 139–160. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2008.55.1.139

Martin, C. R. (2004). *Framed! Labor and the corporate media*. ILR Press.

Maru Public Opinion. (2022). *Canadian News Consumption*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6405fa1b78abf0232468c763/t/64dd84cbf68dc87100331789/1692239051473/Release%2BCanadian%2BNewsies%2B28%2B9%2B22.pdf

McAlevey, J., & Ostertag, B. (2014). *Raising expectations (and raising hell): My decade fighting for the labour movement*. Verso. https://doi.org/10.18740/S4988F

Moore, S. D. M., Yoon, E.-S., & Janzen, M. D. (2024). Defending and strengthening public education as a common good: Toward cross-border advocacy. *Critical Education*, *15*(2), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.14288/ce.v15i2.186989

My small class. (2016, October 20). *Teachers of Nova Scotia*. https://teachersofnovascotia.wordpress.com/2016/10/20/my-small-class/

Neuman, W. L. & Robson, K. (2009). *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (2nd Canadian Ed). Pearson Canada.

No need for strike; Teachers contract. (2016, October 6). *Chronicle Herald*, A15.

Noddings, N. (2005). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. Teachers College Press.

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2015, November 25). *Statement by minister*. News releases. https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20151125005

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2018). *Nova Scotia teaching standards: Excellence in teaching and learning comprehensive guide*. https://www.ednet.ns.ca/psp/files-psp/docs/nsteachingstandardsen.pdf

Nova Scotia Department of Finance and Treasury Board. (2015, November 5). *Labour relations, Ministerial statement*. News Releases. https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20151105006

Nova Scotia Premier's Office. (2016, November 25). *Statement from Premier Stephen McNeil*. https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20161125005

Nova Scotia Premier's Office. (2017a, February 11). *Statement from Premier*. News Releases. https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20170211002

Nova Scotia Premier's Office. (2017b, February 21). *Government ready to take action to improve classrooms.* News Releases. https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20170221003

Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU). (2015, December 1). *Teachers reject tentative agreement.* News Releases. https://nstu.blob.core.windows.net/nstuwebsite/data/documents/pdf/NR_RejectTADec1_15.pdf

Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU). (2016, November 9). *NSTU postpones participation in working conditions committee.* https://nstu.blob.core.windows.net/nstuwebsite/data/newsreleases/NR_PartnershipNov9_16.pdf

Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU). (2017a, February 11). *Statement from Liette Doucet about back-to-work legislation.* News Releases. https://nstu.blob.core.windows.net/nstuwebsite/data/newsreleases/statementlegislation%20.pdf

Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU). (2017b, February 13). *Note to Stephen McNeil, Teachers are teaching.* News Releases. https://nstu.blob.core.windows.net/nstuwebsite/data/newsreleases/NR-TeachersAreTeachingFeb13-17.pdf

Orr, J., Robinson, D. B., Lunney Borden, L., & Tinkham, J. (2017). "There is a difference": Mi'kmaw students' perceptions and experiences in a public school and in a Band-operated school. *Journal of American Indian Education*, *56*(1), 55–80. https://doi.org/10.5749/jamerindieduc.56.1.0055

Parenti, M. (1993). *Inventing reality: The politics of news media* (2nd ed). St. Martin's Press.

Park, D. J., & Wright, L. M. (2007). Giving labour the Business? Changes in business and labour reporting from 1980 to 2000. *Labor Studies Journal*, *32*(1), 60–81. https://doi.org/10.1177/0160449X06298889

Pole, A. (2010). *Blogging the political: Politics and participation in a networked society.* Routledge.

Previl, S. (2016, October 25). Education; Teachers to take strike vote Tuesday. *Chronicle-Herald*, 1.

Puette, W. (1992). *Through jaundiced eyes: How the media view organized labour.* ILR Press.

Ready to teach: N.S. teachers document empty classrooms on social media. (2016, December 15). CTV News. https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/ready-to-teach-n-s-teachers-document-empty-classrooms-on-social-media-1.3190198

Ross, S. (2011). Social unionism in hard times: Union-community coalition politics in the CAW Windsor's "Manufacturing Matters" campaign. *Labour/Le Travail*, *68*(Fall), 79–115.

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th edition). SAGE Publishing Inc.

Shaker, E., Farhadi, B., & Winton, S. (Eds.). (2022). *The crisis continuum and the role of public education in a just recovery. Winter/Spring.* Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2022/01/CCPA%20Monitor%20Jan%20Feb%202022%20OSOS%20WEB.pdf

Shelton, J. (2017). *Teacher strike: Public education and the making of a new American political order.* University of Illinois Press.

Shirky, C. (2008). *Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without organizations.* Penguin Press.

Soron, D. (2018). A crisis of representation: Anti-unionism, media and popular culture. In S. Ross & L. Savage (Eds.), *Labour under attack: Anti-unionism in Canada* (pp. 19–34). Fernwood Publishing.

Steidley, T., & Colen, C. G. (2017). Framing the gun control debate: Press releases and framing strategies of the National Rifle Association and the Brady Campaign. *Social Science Quarterly*, *98*(2), 608–627. https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12323

Stephens, S. (2021). Media advice for social justice union leaders. In M. Charney, J. Hagopian, & B. Peterson (Eds.), *Teacher unions and social justice: Organizing for the schools and communities our students deserve* (pp. 283–288). Rethinking Schools.

Stewart, O. G. (2015). A critical review of the literature of social media's affordances in the classroom. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, *12*(5–6), 481–501. https://doi.org/10.1177/2042753016672895

The frog awakens. (2016, December 21). *Teachers of Nova Scotia*. https://teachersofnovascotia.wordpress.com/2016/12/21/the-frog-awakens/

Tolley, E. (2015). Racial mediation in the coverage of candidates' political viability: A comparison of approaches. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *41*(6), 963-84. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2014.1002201

Tronto, J. C. (2013). *Caring democracy: Markets, equality, and justice*. New York University Press.

Wichterich, C. (2019). Care extractivism and the reconfiguration of social reproduction in post-Fordist economies. *ICDD Working Papers*, *25*. https://kobra.uni-kassel.de/handle/123456789/11680Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *26*(2000), 611–639.

Will, M. (2019, January 25). The New Flavor of Teacher Strike: More Than Just Pay Raises. *Education Week*. https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-new-flavor-of-teacher-strike-more-than-just-pay-raises/2019/01

Yates, C. A. (2010). Understanding caring, organizing women: How framing a problem shapes union strategy. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, *16*(3), 399–410. https://doi.org/10.1177/1024258910373870