"British Columbia is Open for Business":

Environmental Justice and Working Forest News in the *Vancouver Sun*

Mark C. J. Stoddart

Dept. of Anthropology & Sociology, University of British Columbia

Site 8, Comp. 50, RR #1

Winlaw, BC, V0G 2J0

(604) 707-0667

mcjs@interchange.ubc.ca

Abstract

This paper analyses the *Vancouver Sun*'s construction of the Working Forest Initiative, which was introduced by the BC Liberal government in 2002. The Working Forest originally defined forestry as the primary use of all forested Crown land that was not within a protected area. By 2003, the Working Forest was transformed into a largely symbolic recognition of the importance of the forest industry. Through the *Sun*, the debate over the Working Forest is simplified into a conflict between a discourse of "certainty and stability" for the forest industry and an oppositional discourse that challenges the conflation of the interests of forestry capital with a reified "general interest." In the *Sun*, debate over the Working Forest is dominated by sources from government, environmental organizations, and the forest industry. Other important news sources are rendered silent, including First Nations and forestry labour voices.

Introduction[1]

The term "environmental justice" is usually used to refer to the disproportionate distribution of environmental harms, such as toxic waste, landfill sites, or heavily-polluting industries according to ethnicity or social class (Bullard, 1993; Bullard, 1994; Hamilton, 1995; Floyd & Johnson, 2002). The "environmental justice frame" has emphasized that environmental issues are fundamentally also issues of class, ethnic, and gender oriented systems of social power (Capek, 1993). While the environmental justice literature has tended to focus on the misdistribution of environmental "bads," I would like to focus on the social construction of an environmental good: the public forest lands of British Columbia. In this paper, I will examine the *Vancouver Sun's* coverage of the Working Forest policy initiative,

which was a government attempt to re-construct the meaning of the province's forests. Through this analysis, I will explore the ways in which media constructions of the environment intersect with issues of social justice.

The Working Forest initiative was introduced by the BC Liberal government in 2001. Originally, the Working Forest appeared to be the inverse of the Protected Areas Strategy, the NDP policy that protected twelve percent of the provincial land base. In its nascent form, the Working Forest would have defined forestry as the primary use of all forested Crown land not currently in parks or other protected areas. Thus, the Working Forest Initiative, in its original form, represented a move by the Liberal government towards increasing the control of forestry capital over public forest lands. However, by July 2004 the legislation had been transformed to a "symbolic" gesture of recognition for the importance of the forest industry to the B.C. economy (Western Canada Wilderness Committee, 2004). This led to a proclaimed "victory" for the B.C. environmental movement.

Through an analysis of the *Vancouver Sun*'s coverage of the Working Forest, I will argue that environmental policy debate is simplified into a conflict between a state-capital discourse of "certainty and stability" for the forest industry and an environmental discourse that challenges the Liberals' attempts to conflate the interests of forestry capital with a reified "general interest." Furthermore, I will show that the debate over the Working Forest is dominated by news sources from three organizational standpoints: government, the forest industry, and environmental organizations. Other important voices, such as First Nations and forestry labour speakers, are generally invisible. Finally, I will argue that the environmental discourse that enters the *Sun*'s construction of environmental policy debate is ultimately compatible with the hegemony of capitalism and the liberal democratic state. The environmental discourses that enter the *Sun*'s construction of environmental policy debate are ultimately containable as a form of "passive revolution." This is the failure "to alter hegemonic constraints" by engaging in a politics geared towards "limited reforms" (Carroll &

Ratner, 1999, p. 31). In the textual reality of the *Sun*, the counter-hegemonic potential of environmentalism becomes a move towards "green" capitalism, without challenging either the anti-ecological logic, or the social inequities that underlie the relationship between nature and society in British Columbia.

The news media are an integral part of our communication system. By repeatedly telling us who and what are important to think about, the media help construct our perceptions of the social world beyond the borders of our daily lives (Tuchman, 1978). Through the news, speakers from government, industry, and other "important" news sources work to structure the social world beyond our daily experience. This textual reality privileges a selective group of media sources, while marginalizing other voices from public debate. As such, news "offers a perpetual articulation of how society is socially stratified in terms of possession and use of knowledge" (Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1989, p. 3). The media have also been central to the social construction of environmental conflict and environmental policy debate. Through the media activism of environmentalists, deforestation, global warming, and recycling have become social problems that cannot be ignored by the state or capital (Hannigan, 1995). If we wish to understand how environmentalism, environmental conflict, or environmental policy are constructed and disputed, then the news media should be treated as a key site for sociological research.

Overview of the Method

  A Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis was used for this project. Discourse analysis is the set of qualitative research methods that chronicle and interpret the social use of language, or discourse. From a Foucauldian perspective, discourse is a medium of social power. He writes, "there can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p. 93). As Apperly writes, Foucauldian discourse analysis:

> locates power at the level of discursive formations which make possible
> specific truths and knowledges and which also make possible specific kinds of
> agents and structures (Apperly, 1997, p. 15).

Foucault uses the term "archeology" to describe the method of examining how discursive formations come into being, as well as how discursive formations construct social objects (Foucault, 1972). Through archeology, we attempt to describe how discourse "restricts, limits and arranges what can and cannot be said" about a given subject (Prior, 1997, p. 70-71). Archeological analysis looks at the ways in which "discourse empowers certain agents to create representations," thereby privileging certain social actors and marginalizing others from the practices that shape our social realities (71). In documenting how social knowledge is constructed through discourse, archeology describes how "sanctioned forms of rational discourse" are linked to "governing systems of order, appropriation and exclusion" (Gordon, 1980, p. 233). Thus, archeology is concerned with the ways in which the production of discourses of "truth" perpetuates relationships of social power.

  For this project, I collected texts from the *Vancouver Sun* in two stages. First, I gathered texts that covered the period from May 2001 to June 2003. A second wave of sampling occurred in March 2005, when I gathered texts from June 2003 to January 2005. To collect newspaper texts, I did searched for the keyword "working forest" using two different online databases: Canadian NewsDisc and Canadian Newsstand. I imported all of the

Working Forest texts into N6, a software package for qualitative data analysis, where they could be coded and analyzed (QSR, 2002). This gave me an "archive" of 38 texts to work with. Given the relatively small size of the archive, I used a strategy of "comprehensive sampling," which Miles and Huberman describe as "examining every case, instance, or element in a given population" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 28). Thus, I coded and analyzed all of the texts that made up the Working Forest archive.

Table #1 provides a visual summary of the archive, by year of publication and article type. Most of the articles were published in 2003 (29 out of 38), with only a few articles published in each of the other years. The sample is evenly split between "news" articles (19 of 38 texts) and "non-news articles" (19 of 38 texts), including editorials, columns and letters to the editor.   I chose to include all types of articles, rather than focusing only on news texts, because editorials, columns and letters may have as important a role as news stories in shaping the textual social reality of the *Sun*.

Table #1: Summary of Sample

Year of Publication	News Articles	Non-News Articles	Total
2001	1	1	2
2002	1	1	2
2003	14	15	29
2004	3	0	3
2005	0	2	2
Total	**19**	**19**	**38**

In both my analysis and in the presentation of my results, I have paid limited attention to the location of articles within the *Vancouver Sun*. While I have noted how many articles within each textual archive appeared as opinion pieces (editorials, columns and letters to the editor), I have not structured my discourse analysis to account for how these different "genres" of newspaper texts work in terms of the overall network of power/knowledge constructed by the *Sun*. As both Hackett and Ericson et al. note, letters to the editor are particularly important for providing a sense of democratic "legitimacy" to newspapers. The letters section is the site where readers can participate in the news debate (Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1989; Hackett, 1991). Letters and opinion pieces may also be used to circumvent the greater ideological "closure" of news texts. Hackett writes, "Letters to the editor . . . can be used to shift the terms of debate, challenge the language in dominant use, and extend the range of perspectives that otherwise would have been available" (Hackett, 1991, p. 279). However, at the same time, these opinion pieces may be treated less seriously by readers, since they fall on the "opinion" side of the fact/opinion dichotomy that underlies news discourse (Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1989).[2]

I did not create a comprehensive coding scheme prior to engaging with my data. As Silverman notes, while coding schemes are useful for helping us to move quickly through data, they also "furnish 'a powerful conceptual grid' from which it is difficult to escape" (Silverman, 2000, p. 825). By adhering to a preconceived coding scheme, the "uncategorized activities" within the data are likely to go unnoticed (825). In an attempt to address this problem, I created codes as I read through the data. While this resulted in a makeshift "coding scheme" that was often redundant and required work to pare down, I believe it was

---

[2] By paying insufficient attention to the location of discourse within these different news genres, I have left a lacuna in my analysis that should be addressed any future work on environmental discourse and the mass media.

worth coding from the data to avoid putting on the conceptual blinders of a pre-defined scheme. Thus, my conclusions were built up in a manner suggested by the "grounded theory" tradition of qualitative sociology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

I coded each text I read for the "bibbits" that felt relevant. As Kirby and McKenna note, a bibbit is a "snippet or bite of information" that feels important (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 135). The bibbits were originally coded to "free nodes" in N6, which are stand-alone categories used to collect similar pieces of data (QSR, 2002). Once I had created a substantial number of free nodes, I sorted these into a "node tree," which orders the nodes in relation to each other. For example, nodes were organized into trees based on who was speaking within the text; whether the bibbits demonstrated some facet of a particular type of discourse; or whether the bibbits were drawn from news texts or editorials. As I worked through several readings of the texts, I also made document memos and annotations, which allowed me to build up observations until I reached a degree of saturation that allowed me to form conclusions about the data.

Finally, the conclusions that were drawn through working with N6 were primarily "descriptive," rather than analytical or interpretive (Wolcott, 1994). That is, I initially attempted to summarize the data without going engaging in extensive theoretical interpretation. Only after I finished working through the coding and analysis phase of all four groups of texts did I attempt to draw more "interpretive" conclusions, where I theorized the results.

Results

The Working Forest was officially introduced by the Liberal government in early 2002 (McInnes 2003, p. A1). However, the idea of Working Forest legislation has its roots in the discourse of forestry news sources during the 1990s. For example, the idea that forestry lands require legislative protection emerges in the *Vancouver Sun* as early as 1992 (Bohn,

1992, p. B2). In a sense, the Working Forest policy represents the continuation of an ongoing debate over "protected areas." In contrast with the NDP, the Liberals plan to set aside "protected areas" for the forest industry, rather than for "nature."

It was not until October 2003 that the government passed Bill 46, which enabled cabinet to bring the Working Forest into law. In its nascent form, the legislation had severe implications for the status of Crown land in British Columbia (Western Canada Wilderness Committee, 2003a). According to the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, the Working Forest legislation would have made resource extraction the priority use of crown land. As a result, it would have precluded the possibility of creating new protected areas, or protecting watersheds for domestic water use. Following a government-initiated "public input" process, which concluded that there was little public support for the legislation, the final version of the legislation was translated into a largely "symbolic" gesture of recognition for the importance of the forest industry to the B.C. economy (Western Canada Wilderness Committee, 2004). This led to a proclaimed "victory" for the B.C. environmental movement.

Table #2 summarizes the patterns of representation of news sources in the Working Forest archive. This group of texts is dominated by news sources from three broad organizational perspectives: government, the forest industry, and the environmental movement. Government sources and environmentalist sources each appear in 15 of 38 articles. Forest industry sources receive substantially less coverage, appearing in 7 of 38 articles. First Nations and forestry labour sources appear in only one article each. All other news sources appear in six articles. This includes three "expert" news sources, two NDP party news sources and one municipal government news source. If we isolate news articles from the archive a slightly different picture emerges. Here, Liberal sources appear most often, with representation in 10 of 19 articles. Environmentalist sources appear in 8 of 19 articles, while forest industry news sources appear in 6 articles. First Nations sources appear in one article, while forestry labour news sources do not appear at all.

Table #2: Representation of News Sources

News Source	# of Articles (*n*=38)	# of Articles: News Texts Only (*n*=19)
Liberal Government	15	10
Environmentalist	15	8
Forest Industry	7	6
First Nations	1	1
Forestry Labour	1	0
All Other News Sources (Expert, NDP, Municipal Government	6	3

Liberal government discourse is generally consistent with the themes of "neo-liberalism," such as concern with the deficit, the benefit of tax cuts and a pro-business worldview. In promoting the Working Forest, government speakers emphasize the need to create "certainty and stability" for the forest industry as a means to "revitalize" the industry. This is illustrated in the following excerpts:

> "If we want companies to invest we . . . [must] make sure we remove hurdles that get in the way of certainty and confidence," Campbell said. Campbell said a draft paper on the working forest is to be released next week for discussion. He said the province wants to establish a working forest to ensure forest companies have certainty on the land base (Hamilton, 2003, p. C5).

> "I'm sending a message to the investment community that British Columbia is open for business and that we're bringing certainty to the land base," Minister of Sustainable Resources Management Stan Hagen said. He said the working forest will also create greater stability for the families and communities that depend on the forest industry (McInnes, 2003, p. A1).

The Liberals' discourse gives a fairly explicit impression of a state-industry bloc, where the government acts on behalf of the general interest of capital. Within Liberal discourse, such a state-industry bloc is beneficial to BC as a whole. The following excerpt is taken from a speech by Gordon Campbell that was reprinted in the op-ed section of the *Sun*.

> We all know that our forest industry is a critical component of our heartlands economies. Over the last five years, our forest industry has been in serious trouble. Since 1998 we have lost $600 million in provincial revenue from forestry. Twenty-six mills have closed for good since 1997. Literally thousands of people have lost their jobs. That simply can't continue. We have to make changes (Campbell, 2003, p. A21).

Within the textual world of the *Sun*, Liberal government discourse links the interests of forestry capital with the "general interest" of British Columbia as a whole. Even after the environmental movement proclaimed the "defeat" of the Working Forest, Liberal news sources hold to this discourse. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

> "There's no backing off the principle of the thing," Abbott said. "The principle of the thing remains that we need to identify and protect the working Crown land base in the province of British Columbia. So there's no retreat there."
> Abbott said the government has decided to retain the Provincial Forest designation and pursue its goal of a working forest using existing tools, such as regional land-use plans (Kines, 2004, p. B4).

In its both its initial form and in its "symbolic" re-construction, the Working Forest recognizes the value of the logging industry to the province. Through this discourse, the interests of capital are linked with the general interest and the needs of rural communities.

While government discourse focuses on the creation of a pro-business public self, environmental values are also invoked. This is seen in the following examples:

> The working forest land base creates a new opportunity for certainty for those who depend on forestry. The new forest practices and range management act provides sound science and common sense as we manage our forest in a way that's exemplary to the rest of the world. It is time for a new generation of forestry in British Columbia, a new generation that combines the importance of environmental stewardship with economic viability (Campbell, 2003, p. A21).

> Joyce Murray, minister of water, land and air protection, described the report as good science and the findings understandable given the way the protected areas have been created in the province. The findings emphasize the need for proper stewardship on Crown lands outside the park system, she said, adding those who describe the working forest as being set aside exclusively for

industry are dead wrong. "There is that perception," she said, adding companies must realize that to sell their products on today's markets, they must adopt strong environmental practices. "Environmental standards apply in the working forest" (Pynn, 2003b, p. B1).

By connecting a pro-business discourse with a discourse of environmental values, Liberal news sources attempt to construct an eco-capitalist public self. Within this eco-capitalist discourse, the state-industry bloc is constructed as the legitimate manager of the BC environment.

The *Sun*'s construction of the Liberal government is generally sympathetic. Here, the Liberals are portrayed as a vehicle of necessary change. They embody economic revitalization, growth, and prosperity, as seen in the following excerpts:

> The Liberals have the clearest mandate possible to restore integrity, to deliver affordable and effective public services, to stimulate the economy, and to reduce personal taxes. These are their easier challenges. Their greatest challenge will be to thoughtfully and sensitively balance policy tensions and political stresses. For example, balancing workers' rights with citizens' access to public services; balancing judicially defined aboriginal rights with common law rights of non-aboriginals; and balancing economic and conservation values in designating working forest lands and park lands (Mullins, 2001, p. A23).

In the textual reality of the *Sun*, the Liberals are out to right the wrongs of the NDP decade. They are also out to restore the "balance" that has been implicitly disturbed during the NDP era. In opinion pieces and editorials, critique of the government often takes on the feel of friendly advice.

> The provincial Liberals have the rhetoric of economic growth and prosperity mastered. What they do this year will tell British Columbians whether they've learned the art of matching their words with action. . . . The Liberals ought not to change course for the sake of scoring a few political points. They ought not to pursue change for change's sake. They must have their eyes on the right prize: economic growth. It's only as their general pledges in the throne speech are translated into specific programs this year that we'll find out whether they can provide British Columbians a chance to achieve a standard of living that's second to none in Canada, if not North America ("B.C. Awaits Matching of Words with Action," 2003, A18).

While *Sun* editorialists and columnists generally present the Liberal government in a sympathetic light, there is a an important oppositional discourse that portrays the Liberals' business-orientation as oppositional to the public interest. This critical discourse attempts to disconnect the general interest from the interests of capital. It appears most explicitly in a letters to the editor written by environmental movement participants. The following excerpt is by Jim Cooperman, of the Shuswap Environmental Action Society:

> The "drunk with power" Gordon Campbell Liberal government is now planning to increase the corporate control of our forests through its proposed working forest legislation . . . Their rationale is flawed because these companies already have a secure hold on the public forests through the tenure system and mandated allowable annual cuts. . . . Forestry companies already have a stranglehold on our forests and this legislation would only further limit opportunities for uses other than industrial forestry. Those concerned about the negative impact that industrial forestry has had and continues to have on wildlife, recreation and watersheds need to let the government know that the working forest proposal must be scrapped (Cooperman, 2003, p. A11).

However, while an oppositional construction of the Liberals appears infrequently in earlier texts, the balance between positive and negative constructions of the government seems to shift around May or June 2003. This is a couple of months before environmentalists proclaim "victory" over the working forest, where the legislation is transformed into a "symbolic" proclamation of the value of the forest industry to the province. For example:

> B.C. plans to push ahead with its Working Forest Initiative, intended to provide economic certainty to 45 million hectares of Crown timberland, despite a government-commissioned consultation report showing almost no public support for the policy among respondents (Pynn, 2003a, p. B1).

Within this news article we see the depiction of the Liberal government as uninterested in their own public input process. This invokes a sense of the government as unconcerned about the "public interest" as they push ahead with their own agenda for the Working Forest.

While the forest industry is the third most prominent news source in this set of texts, industry speakers appear much less than government news sources. Given the sense of a state-industry bloc that emerges in the Liberal era, we might ask whether Liberals news sources act as a proxy for capital in the textual reality constructed by the *Sun*. Where industry discourse does appear, it tends to echo Liberal discourse, with a focus on the need for new investment, the need to make the industry more competitive, and the theme of "certainty and stability." This is demonstrated in the following excerpts:

> Craig Neeser, vice-president of coastal operations for Weyerhaeuser, said the industry needs clearer definition of the land base available for logging. "I don't know if it is going to be bigger or smaller," Neeser said, "but we need certainty on what it is and we need to get on with building the industry that's the right size to whatever that working forest will be" (Hamilton, 2003, p. C5).

> Steve Crombie, the director of public relations for International Forest Products Ltd., said in principle the creation of a working forest could lead to more investment. "Because there's been this lack of certainty or lack of clarity around land use, it makes it very difficult to make decisions in investing in the land base or reinvesting in our manufacturing operations," he said. We'll have greater confidence in being able to go logging to have the logs to create the products that we sell" (McInnes, 2003, p. A1).

Environmentalist news sources are also among the primary news sources in this textual archive. The main environmentalist discourse related to the working forest centres on issues of corporate control of forestry resources. The Working Forest is constructed as a form of enclosure which will make it more difficult to allocate forest land for non-industrial uses. The following example is illustrative:

> Environmentalists were calling the proposal a giveaway to corporations and an assault on the environment. Ken Wu of the Western Canada Wilderness Society called it "perhaps the most sweeping anti-environmental forestry legislation in B.C.'s history." Wu argued that the legislation that comes out of the discussion paper will include provisions that will make it very difficult to protect any new forest areas because they will require that the total amount of working forest be maintained (McInnes, 2003, p. A1).

The second example comes from a letter to the editor by Tom Lester, of the Sierra Club of Canada:

> Not surprisingly, the Liberals are trying to portray their working forest concept as a panacea for forest communities and jobs . . . However, handing corporations private-like rights to 45 million hectares of a publicly held resource is nothing of the sort. . . . So, is the working forest in the best interest of forestry- dependent families? Absolutely not. Is it a flagrant attempt to line the pockets of the industry players who contributed to the Liberals' election campaign? You bet (Lester 2003, p. A15).

Here, the connection between the public interest and the interests of capital is challenged. Instead, the "public interest" is connected to an environmental politics that opposes the working forest. This is demonstrated in the following excerpt, which features Ken Wu, of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, who is one of the most visible critics of the Working Forest.

> Wu said the Liberal administration is "blatantly thumbing its nose at the people of the province" by proceeding with a policy that only benefits a few political corporate backers. "Why did they hold a public input process if all they're going to do is ignore the public input when it's not in their favour? Their arrogance is completely out of control" (Pynn, 2003a, p. B1).

Thus, we see that both the state-industry bloc and environmentalist news sources attempt to link the "public interest" to their own political standpoint in the Working Forest debate. Finally, when the *Sun* announces the transformation of the Working Forest into a largely symbolic pronouncement of support for the forest industry, environmentalist news sources define their own victory as a victory for the public interest. This is seen in the following excerpt:

> "This is just a great day," said Ken Wu, executive director of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee. "It's the first big environmental victory under the B.C. Liberal government and it shows that people should not be cynical under the B.C. Liberals. They need to get involved. It works" (Kines, 2004, p. B4).

Thus, the environmental "victory" over the Working Forest initiative is simultaneously a triumph for the public interest over an attempt to increase the power of forestry capital over a "public" forest landscape.

Table #3 summarizes the frequency of positive and negative framing of the Working Forest over time. If we simply look at the frequency of positive and negative framing, negative framing of the Working Forest is somewhat more prevalent throughout the data set. However, if we look at the frequency of positive and negative framing by article type, we see that there is a greater discrepancy among news articles (see Table #4). Here, negative framing appears 11 times, while positive framing appears 8 times. By contrast, non-news articles show more of a balance between negative and positive framing, with negative framing appearing in 8 articles, while positive framing appears in 7 articles.

Table #3: Summary of Positive and Negative Framing

Publication Date	# of Articles	Positive Framing	Negative Framing
Jan-June 2001	1	0	0
July-Dec 2001	1	0	0
Jan-June 2002	2	2	0
July-Dec 2002	0	0	0
Jan-June 2003	21	9	11
July-Dec 2003	8	2	4
Jan-June 2004	1	0	1
July-Dec 2004	2	1	2
Jan-June 2005	2	1	1
Total=	**38**	**15**	**19**

Table #4: Framing by Article Type

Article Type	Positive Framing	Negative Framing
News	8	11
Non-News	7	8
Total=	**15**	**19**

The discourse of "certainty and stability" is the primary discourse used to promote the Working Forest. Through this discourse, the state-capital bloc links the interests of industry with those of rural forestry communities. This is demonstrated in the following excerpts, the second of which is from an opinion piece written by Liberal MLA Stan Hagen:

> "I'm sending a message to the investment community that British Columbia is open for business and that we're bringing certainty to the land base," Minister of Sustainable Resources Management Stan Hagen said. He said the working

> forest will also create greater stability for the families and communities that depend on the forest industry (McInnes, 2003, p. A1).

> Our government committed to establishing a working-forest land- base to provide greater stability for working families. The legislation and policy that will do just that will be completed in the fall (Hagen, 2003, p. D2).

An interesting point, however, is that we are never explicitly told *what* industry needs certainty and stability *from*. While we might infer that the industry is receiving protection from the uncertainty of First Nations and environmental social activism, this is not made explicit in the *Sun*'s news discourse.

A jobs discourse is also invoked by the Liberals and by op-ed writers who promote the Working Forest. John Winter, of the B.C. Chamber of Commerce writes:

> The B.C. government's new "working forest" proposal could offer some tangible hope for many of these communities. This new approach to the environment and the economy would give greater certainty to the forest land-base in the province. Most notably, if done right, it offers B.C. communities the potential to increase jobs and investment without sacrificing the environmental values British Columbians expect from our forests (Winter, 2003, p. C3).

Through the jobs discourse, the interests of industry are connected with the needs of rural communities. Here, certainty and stability for industry goes hand-in-hand with the promise of security for forestry workers.

An oppositional discourse sees industry interests as separate from local communities. Here, industry is depicted as primarily self-interested. The Liberal reforms that will "revitalize" industry and make it "competitive" will simultaneously empower industry to dislocate itself from local forestry communities. The following examples are illustrative:

> NDP leader Joy MacPhail said the proposal is a smokescreen to cover up the fact that Forest Minister Mike de Jong is working on forestry reform proposals that will give commercial interests more freedom to operate in ways that ignore the interest of local communities. "Stan Hagen hopes to convey a sense that there is going to be prosperity in the future for rural communities. He talks about jobs and the communities but then you have Mike de Jong and his advisers, behind closed doors, planning for a forest restructuring that will mean

an end for many forest jobs in B.C. and I think an end to many of the communities, too," MacPhail said (McInnes, 2003, p. A1).

"It is widely perceived that the WFI will mean a 'sell off' or 'give-away' of vast areas of B.C. to corporations as part of a privatization agenda," said [a government commissioned] report. "Short-term financial benefits may ensue, but at a very high cost to future generations. The public strongly supports maintaining government control and oversight of Crown forest land" (Pynn, 2003a, B1).

Here, the working forest is constructed as a mechanism for increasing corporate power at the expense of rural communities and the public interest. The linkage of the jobs discourse and a pro-industry discourse is challenged by critical news sources, such as the NDP and environmentalists. Thus, we see how rural communities are discursively constructed by opposing sides in the debate over land use policy. The dominant discourse connects the needs of rural communities with the interests of the forest industry, while a critical discourse challenges this linkage between the interests of communities and capital. Here, oppositional news sources argue that Liberal forest policy empowers capital, without meeting the interests of working communities. What is particularly noteworthy is that rural communities are always constructed by others. The voices of actual members of rural communities are rendered invisible in the textual world of the *Sun.*

At one level, the emergence of a more "democratic" critical discourse may be celebrated as a positive move towards a discursive opening for a politics that links environmental and social justice concerns. The inclusion of such a critical discourse in the *Sun*'s network of power/knowledge demonstrates the possibility for critical discourse to become visible in the mass media. It illustrates that social movement groups can successfully mobilize a counter-hegemonic discourse that exploits the "cracks in the monolith" of the mass media (Hackett, 1991). At the same time, the oppositional discourses that are represented by the *Sun* fail to connect the jobs discourse with a political alternative that is linked with either

environmentalism or social justice. While such an alternative discourse may exist beyond the realm of the news text, it is not permitted entrée to the *Sun*'s construction of reality.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this paper, I used discourse analysis to examine the *Vancouver Sun's* coverage of the Working Forest policy initiative. The Working Forest was an attempt by the British Columbia government to re-construct the meaning of the province's forests in a way that would have consolidated the power of forestry corporations over forest lands. While the bulk of the literature on environmental justice has focused on the differential allocation of environmental harm, I have focused on the social construction of the public forest lands of British Columbia. In the final section of the paper, I will foreground the connections between the media construction of the Working Forest and issues of environmental justice.

Throughout this textual archive, the *Vancouver Sun* creates a system of power/knowledge that is characterized by a hegemony of "two sides" to environmental policy debate. Here, environmentalists are positioned in opposition to forestry capital, while the state assumes the role of an explicit ally of industry. In this construction of environmental policy debate, the interests of forestry labour are most often connected with the interests of capital. Where environmental news sources are shown challenging this point of connection, there is an absence of an environmental discourse that re-connects the interests of labour with those of environmentalists. Whether this is a failure of environmentalists to mobilize such a discourse, or a failure of the *Sun* to include such a discourse in its construction of reality is difficult to determine from an analysis of news texts alone.

However, if we look at the Western Canada Wilderness Committee's online publications regarding the Working Forest, we see an environmental discourse in which environmental concerns are firmly linked with the interests of labour and First Nations. The

Western Canada Wilderness Committee challenges the Liberal discourse that connects the interests of forestry capital and labour. The group argues that the health of forestry communities is harmed by the increased control over forestry resources granted to industry by the Working Forest. The Wilderness Committee writes:

> The Working Forest does nothing to address the main causes of instability and job loss in the forestry industry, such as the increasing export of raw logs, the high-grade overcutting of valley bottoms, mechanization in the mills and in the woods, the undiverse, low value-added pulp and lumber orientation of the BC logging industry . . ., the tenure stranglehold of a few large companies that creates this undiversified wood products industry, and the Softwood Lumber duties imposed by the US. All of these causes of job loss and insecurity for forestry workers will only continue and increase with the Working Forest in place (Western Canada Wilderness Committee, 2003b).

In a similar vein, the Wilderness Committee argues that the "certainty" provided to logging companies through the Working Forest initiative will shut down possibilities for the just settlement of First Nations land claims. In the following excerpt, the Wilderness Committee connects its environmental concerns over the Working Forest with a discourse of social justice for First Nations:

> Even if Working Forest legislation states that it will not limit First Nations from obtaining such lands for treaty settlement, the amount of money or land the people of BC will have to pay the logging companies for giving back tenured forest lands to First Nations will increase. This will consequently act as a major financial disincentive for the government to give back valuable forestlands to the First Nations, and will slow down negotiations and make them more difficult and costly. By increasing the companies' claims to compensation on prime forestlands at the centre of First Nations treaty settlement interests, the First Nations have MUCH to lose from the Working Forest (Western Canada Wilderness Committee, 2003b).

Of course, this single example does not offer conclusive proof that the *Sun* actively excludes more "radical" environmental discourses that link social justice and ecological concerns. However, these excerpts do provide clues that even more "mainstream" environmental groups are bridging ecological and social justice concerns. Unfortunately, this type of counter-

hegemonic discourse is receives minimal attention in the *Sun*'s construction of environmental policy debate.

I would also conclude that there are only a few official positions that allow entrée into the media construction of environmental policy debate. The media debate over the Working Forest is dominated by government, environmentalists and industry. These are the collective identities that give media sources the power to participate in the formation of social reality. While forestry labour and First Nations people may be talked about, they appear only rarely in news texts to speak for themselves. Working only from news texts, we might ask whether the invisibility of these news sources reflects a process of active exclusion, or whether these organizational actors have not engaged in attempts at news-making activity. There is evidence that First Nations and labour have tried to gain access to environmental policy debate in the *Sun*. For example, the IWA website contains two press releases that challenge the state-capital bloc's dominant discourse that links Liberal forest policy with the general interest of forestry labour (IWA, 2003). For the IWA, increasing the control of forestry corporations over natural resources works against rural communities. In the IWA construction of Liberal forest policy, the Working Forest and the Results-based Code should be opposed on the basis that increased corporate power is not matched by requirements for companies to invest in local communities. Thus, Liberal forest policy works to sever the "social contract" forged between labour, capital and the state. For example, one of the releases states:

> Of particular concern to workers and their families is the misguided effort by the provincial government to remove any of the socio-economic obligations on forest tenure holders. "We need to warn citizens of resource-based communities that their futures are on the line," said CEP Western Region Vice-President Dave Coles. "The writing is on the wall: We're being asked to give up legislative protection for our jobs and homes, with nothing in return." "These changes will rip up another contract with the people of British Columbia by stripping away community rights to timber and jobs," added [BC Federation of Labour President Jim] Sinclair. "First Nations, workers and forest dependent communities must have the opportunity to participate in a

complete public review on these changes before the Liberals make a bad situation worse" (IWA, 2003).

The IWA website also contains a joint policy statement issued by the IWA, CEP, First Nations Summit, and the BC Federation of Labour. This release opposes Liberal forest policy on the basis the government has neglected to account for the interests and voices of labour and First Nations. Here, First Nations interests, the health of forestry communities, and environmental sustainability are joined together in opposition to the dominant discourse on Liberal forest policy. The following excerpt is a key example of a counter-hegemonic discourse that is rendered invisible in the *Sun*'s construction of policy debate:

> On a critical issue of significant importance to our economy, particularly in rural BC, the province has failed in its constitutional obligation to consult and accommodate First Nations and has failed to adequately consult with forest workers. Further, the province has failed to meet its moral obligation to consult with communities that depend on sustainable forestry and has failed in its ethical obligation to consult with stakeholders whose livelihoods depend on sustainable forestry or who depend on sustainable forest practices. . . .
> BC's forests are vital to our province's economic and environmental well being. Future forest legislation and policy must include proper stewardship and monitoring to ensure sustainable forests, the recognition of Aboriginal Title and rights, the full participation of First Nations, and effective mechanisms that develop long–term investments in jobs, and the workers and communities that depend on them . . . (Coles et al., 2003).

While the evidence I have presented here is limited, it does support the notion that labour and First Nations seem interested in participating in public debate over environmental policy in B.C. Thus, their exclusion from the *Sun* does not seem due to lack of interest. Rather, their voices are likely not deemed relevant enough to gain entrée to the *Sun*'s construction of Working Forest policy debate. Through the construction of this system of power/knowledge, the *Sun* reproduces relations of power among the state, industry, environmentalists, First Nations and labour.

In conclusion, I would argue that the media are hegemonic, not in the sense of favouring one political party over another. While editorials in the *Sun* tend to a tone of "friendly advice" when critiquing the Liberals, we should not conclude that the *Sun* is simply

a propaganda machine for the Liberals. Rather, the *Sun* may be considered hegemonic in the sense of encouraging uncritical thought about environmental policy debate, by simplifying a complex debate into a conflict between two opposing dominant discourses. In general, the Liberal-industry discourse of providing "certainty and stability" for the forest industry is opposed by an environmental discourse of corporate accountability and the public interest. This reading of the *Sun* is consistent with the position that the mass media tend to simplify environmental debate in BC into a dichotomy between "environmental" and "forestry" perspectives (Doyle, Elliott & Tindall, 1997; Hackett et al., 2000).

Finally, the environmental discourse that is admitted into public debate by the *Vancouver Sun* is one that is ultimately compatible with the hegemony of capitalism and the liberal democratic state. It is an environmentalism that is bound by the twin poles of eco-managerialism and eco-capitalism. According to Timothy Luke, eco-managerialism takes as its guiding mission the "redefining and then administering the earth as 'natural resources'" (Luke, 1999, p. 104). Whereas eco-managerialism implies a more active role for the state, eco-capitalism emphasizes the importance of "the market" as a tool for solving "even the most serious manifestations of ecological crisis" (Adkin, 1998, p. 318). News sources that have more explicitly "environmentalist" politics tend to invoke a more eco-managerialist discourse, which views "nature" as an entity that is best governed by the state. By contrast, the environmental discourse that is invoked by Liberal news sources in their attempts to construct a "green" public self can be understood as a form of eco-capitalism. The environmental discourses that enter the *Sun*'s construction of environmental policy debate are ultimately containable as a form of "passive revolution." In Gramscian theory, the trap of "passive revolution" is described as the failure "to alter hegemonic constraints" by engaging in a politics geared towards "limited reforms" (Carroll & Ratner, 1999, p. 31). In the textual reality of the *Sun*, the counter-hegemonic potential of environmentalism becomes a move

towards "green" capitalism, without challenging either the anti-ecological logic, or the

social inequities that underlie the relationship between nature and society in British Columbia.

Bibliography

Adkin, L. E. (1998) *The Politics of Sustainable Development,* Black Rose Books, Montreal.

Apperly, A. (1997) In *The Impact of Michel Foucault on the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Eds, Lloyd, M. and Thacker, A.) MacMillan Press, New York, pp. 10-28.

B.C. Awaits Matching of Words with Action, (2003) *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. A18.

Bohn, G. (1992) One-Year Old-Growth Logging Halt Imposed on 350,000 Hectares, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. B2.

Bullard, R. (1993) In *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots*(Ed, Bullard., R. D.) South End Press, Boston, Mass, pp. 15-40.

Bullard, R. (1994) *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality,* Westview Press, Boulder, CO.

Campbell, G. (2003) We're on the Right Track, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. A21.

Capek, S. M. (1993) *Social Problems,* **40,** 5-24.

Carroll, W. K. and Ratner, R. S. (1999) *Canadian Journal of Sociology,* **24,** 1-34.

Coles, D., Haggard, D., John, E., et al. (2003) *Joint Statement on the Provincial Government's Proposed Forest Policy*, http://www.iwa.ca/news/media/0500-03forest%20legislation-joint%20statement.pdf.

Cooperman, J. (2003) Industry Already Has a Stranglehold on Forests, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. A11.

Doyle, A., Elliott, B. and Tindall, D. (1997) In *Organizing Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice*(Ed, Carroll, W. K.) Garamond Press, Toronto, pp. 240-268.

Ericson, R. V., Baranek, P. M. and Chan, J. B. L. (1989) *Negotiating Control: A Study of News Sources,* University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Floyd, M. F. and Johnson, C. Y. (2002) *Leisure Sciences,* **24,** 59.

Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge.,* Pantheon Books, New York.

Foucault, M. (1980) In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (Ed, Gordon, C.) Pantheon Books, New York, pp. 78-108.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research,* Aldine Press, Chicago.

Gordon, C. (1980) In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (Ed, Gordon, C.) Pantheon Books, New York, pp. 229-260.

Hackett, R. A. (1991) *News and Dissent: The Press and the Politics of Peace in Canada,* Ablex, Norwood, NJ.

Hackett, R. A., Gruneau, R., Gutstein, D., et al. (2000) *The Missing News: Filters and Blind Spots in Canada's Press,* Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives & Garamond Press, Ottawa & Aurora, ONT.

Hagen, S. (2003) Providing Access to Mineral Resources, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. D2.

Hamilton, C. (1995) In *Cultural Politics and Social Movements*(Eds, Darnovsky, M., Epstein, B. L. and Flacks, R.) Temple University, Philadelphia, pp. 189-198.

Hamilton, G. (2003) Time to Proceed with Forest Agenda, Loggers Tell Campbell, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. C5.

Hannigan, J. A. (1995) *Environmental Sociology: A Social Constructionist Perspective,* Routledge, London & New York.

IWA. (2003) *First Nations and Labour Leaders Demand Immediate Withdrawal of BC Liberal Forest Legislation. Press Release: May 5, 2003*, http://www.iwa.ca/news/web-bulletins/05-May-03.htm.

Kines, L. (2004) Victoria Drops Unpopular Plan to Designate Working Forests, *The Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, B.C., pp. B4.

Kirby, S. L. and McKenna, K. (1989) *Experience, Research, Social Change: Methods from the Margins,* Garamond Press, Toronto.

Lester, T. (2003) Working Forest Plan Doesn't Address Real Threats, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. A15.

Luke, T. W. (1999) In *Living with Nature: Environmental Politics as Cultural Discourse*(Eds, Fischer, F. and Hajer, M. A.) Oxford University Press, New York, pp. 103-120.

McInnes, C. (2003) B.C.'S Forests Open for Business, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. A1.

Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook,* SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Mullins, G. (2001) Liberals' Greatest Challenge, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. A23.

Prior, L. (1997) In *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*(Ed, Silverman, D.) SAGE Publications, London, pp. 63-79.

Pynn, L. (2003a) B.C. Sticks to Forest Plan, *The Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, pp. B1.

Pynn, L. (2003b) Rare, Endangered Species Need More Land: Study, *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. B1.

QSR (2002) N6 Student QSR International, Victoria, Australia.

Silverman, D. (2000) In *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Eds, Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S.) Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 821-834.

Tuchman, G. (1978) *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality,* The Free Press, New York.

Western Canada Wilderness Committee. (2003a) BC Liberals Pass the Working Forest's Enabling Legislation Today. E-Mail Newsletter Received October 28, 2003.

Western Canada Wilderness Committee. (2003b) *Privatizing Our Public Lands: Stop the BC Government's 'Working Forest' Initiative.*, http://www.wildernesscommitteevictoria.org/campaigns_forest.php.

Western Canada Wilderness Committee. (2004) *Working Forest 2003-2004 Archive*, February 4, http://www.workingforest.org/.

Winter, J. (2003) Province Depends on a 'Working Forest', *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, BC, pp. C3.

Wolcott, H. F. (1994) *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation,* SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.