LEARNING ON THE PICKET LINE:
INVESTIGATING A POLITICO-ADMINISTRATIVE REGIME

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ABSTRACT

In September 2011, approximately 1700 unionized non-academic staff at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec went on strike. Using institutional/political activist ethnography, this study examines the informal learning of non-academic staff during the strike and assesses how their experiences are coordinated through social relations. The data used in this study consists of non-structured interviews with union workers and organizers, along with the critical analysis of institutional texts. The study looks at the informal and non-formal learning of workers on strike and considers how participation in the strike promoted workers' understanding and knowledge of how the university is socially organized, and helped many of them gain a critical consciousness. In an era of increased corporatization of the higher education sector, this study documents the relationship between learning and action in the context of a significant, contemporary labour dispute at a major Canadian university. Further, grounded in an analysis of workers' experiences of the strike, it provides a potential resource for further inquiry into future labour and union struggles in universities in North America.

RÉSUMÉ

En Septembre 2011, environ 1,700 travailleurs/travailleuse non-academique syndicaliser à l'Université McGill à Montréal, Québec ont déclencher une grève. En utilisant une ethnographie institutionnelle/une ethnographie d'activiste politique, cet étude examine les element d'apprentisage informel des travaileurs/travailleuse non-academique pendant la gràve, et évalue comment leurs expériences sont coordonnées par les relations sociales. Dans cette étude, les données utilisées sont composées des entrevues non-structurés avec des travailleurs/travailleuse syndiqués et des organisateurs, ainsi que l'analyse critique des textes institutionnels. Cet étude porte sur l'apprentissage informel et non-formel des travailleurs/travailleuses en grève, et examine comment la participation dans la grève a favorisé la compréhension et savoir des travailleurs par rapport a l'organisation sociale de l'université, et assistés de nombreux travailleurs a acquérir une conscience critique. Dans une période qui voit l'augmentation de privatisation dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur, cette étude documente la relation entre l'apprentissage et l'action dans le context d'une conflit de travail contemporain dans une grande université Canadienne. De plus, fondée sur une analyse des expériences des travailleurs/travailleuses qui sont en grève, cet étude fournit des ressources pour les études dans l'avenir qui examinent les luttes des travailleurs/travailleuses et des syndicats dans les universités dans l'Amérique du Nord.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this research is to understand and examine knowledge production and learning among union members actively engaged in labour organizing and struggles at a major academic institution. This study attends to the dynamics of such learning and knowledge production, the relevance of organizing and learning to the lives of those involved, and the implications of these activities and learning processes on the union and the institution. It focuses specifically on the case of the MUNACA (McGill University Non-Academic Certified Association) union strike at McGill University in the Fall of 2011, and the experiences of MUNACA workers and union organizers at McGill throughout the strike. The central research questions ask: (1) what are the ways in which people learn and produce knowledge through strike actions, labour struggles and direct action?; (2) how do connections to labour struggles influence workers' relationships to social movements?; (3) how do workers involved in strikes respond to tactics used by senior administrations, such as those employed by McGill; and (4), what do they learn by doing so?

1.2 PURPOSE & APPROACH OF STUDY

This thesis examines and highlights the importance of processes of learning and knowledge production within labour movements. When reviewing literature on union strikes in academic institutions, it became clear that little research has been conducted on strikes of non-academic workers in universities.

In the Canadian context, there is minimal literature on such strikes; in fact, the only documentation found on strike activities of non-academic unions at universities comes from the United States (e.g. University of California, Harvard, and Yale University).[1]

While theories of informal and social movement learning are extensive, there is limited research that builds upon the lived experiences and grounded learning of those individuals participating in social movements and struggles, or puts such theory into practice. There is a great deal of literature and documentation within unions on the topic of union education, yet very little has been written about the types of informal learning that occur through participation in union organizing and strike actions.

This study uses institutional/political activist ethnography (D. Smith, 1987; G. Smith, 1990), and thus begins from the standpoint of those who are directly affected. In this case, interviews with MUNACA workers are the entry point for this research. The study draws on interviews conducted with six workers who had participated in the strike, and two union organizers who participated in strike coordination. The interviews helped to connect theory and literature with the experiences and learning of participants. In turn, an examination of institutional texts, along with the interviews, help to provide an analysis and uncover how learning can occur informally within labour struggles.

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[1] An important study of non-academic workers on strike at a university is Hoerr's (1977) *We Can't Eat Prestige: The Women Who Organized Harvard.* This book gives a detailed narrative account of 3,500 office and laboratory workers at Harvard University. A small group of women fought in the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) on behalf of women working within the institution.

1.3 CHAPTER SUMMARIES

This thesis consists of five chapters. The introduction and provides a summary of the study, the research questions, the purpose and approach to the work, and short summaries of each chapter. It concludes with a short narrative, which locates the researcher in relation to the topic of the study.

Chapter two offers a review of the literature, theory, and analysis by relevant scholars on the topics of unions, universities and informal learning. Firstly, this chapter explores some of the ways in which academic institutions have become increasingly corporatized, and provides a framework through which to analyze how universities have produced cultures of privatization and an increase in corporate administrative structures resulting in the rise of unions and labour movements within university settings. Secondly, this chapter briefly reviews literature on organized labour and unions in Canada. This section provides a groundwork for understanding how Canadian unions and working-class movements function, and the ways in which unions can act as forms of resistance within the confines of capitalism. Thirdly, this chapter explores some of the theories and scholarly works behind informal and non-formal learning within social movements and struggle. The section also explores some limitations of the literature, and indicates how this project may contribute to addressing these shortcomings.

Chapter three explores the fundamentals of conducting research through the methodology of institutional/political activist ethnography. The first half of the chapter examines the ways in which this methodology can be applied, by

starting from a place of examining the lived experiences of the people participating in the research. It reveals the importance of locating the ruling relations that shape people's everyday actions and experiences when conducting an institutional/political activist ethnography. The chapter considers Kinsman's (2006) work on mapping the social relations of struggle, and discusses how such mapping can assist in exposing relations of ruling. It also connects Kinsman's analysis with Foley's (1999) work on informal learning in social action. The second half of the chapter describes ethical considerations involved in conducting this research. The positionality of the researcher is also addressed, through a description of the location and reflection on insider and outsider privileges.

Chapter four draws on and analyzes institutional texts and knowledge produced through interviews with MUNACA members and union organizers. The analysis in this chapter draws on Dorothy Smith's (1987) notion of "textually mediated forms of social organization," and George Smith's (1990) work on the politico-administrative regime. Both of these scholars explain some of the ways in which the use of text can be integral to understanding the local organization of the everyday, and can shape people's everyday experiences and learning. In this study, texts and interviews are analyzed in order to expose the social organization of the university. This chapter also builds on the earlier discussion of the importance of informal and non-formal learning through social movements and struggle (Foley, 1999; Holst, 2002), and examines the pedagogical importance of direct action (G. Smith, 1990; Thompson, 2006). The data and analysis located in this chapter pull*s* together the knowledge and experiences of workers and union

organizers in order to examine modes of regulation that exist at McGill and in a wider politico-administrative regime.

The fifth chapter outlines the findings of the study, explaining some of the limitations to the research and suggesting possible avenues for future research. It provides suggestions for how this research can serve as a resource for (a) documenting union workers' experiences during strikes; (b), adding to an institutional memory at McGill; and (c) informing current and future labour struggles within McGill and at other universities.

1.4 Reflecting on experience: an entry point

As a student and organizer who has attended McGill for the past seven years, I have seen many union struggles at the university. In 2010, I witnessed the fight for unionization for over 1,500 course lecturers. I also observed the senior administration's overt resistance to the union drive for casual and support workers. Over the past academic year (2011-2012), I have observed the MUNACA workers' fight to secure a new contract. Throughout the strike, I spent time on the picket lines, showing my support for the union, and speaking with workers about their experiences and frustrations throughout the strike. I was impressed by the ways in which this strike was fostering critical conversations about the history of unionization at McGill, the experiences of the workers throughout their time at McGill, and the different tactics and knowledge they had developed though union organizing. It was also remarkable to see the types of resistance and struggle that developed on the picket lines, through worker participation in strike actions.

The experience of being on the picket line as a student and organizer taught me a great deal about the fight and struggle for unionization, the experiences of female workers at the university, the reactions of the McGill administration, and potential ways in which to directly challenge the power of the institution. By speaking with workers, faculty members, and fellow activists, and reflecting on my own experiences, I began to question how labour struggles could foster politicization, and different forms of learning and knowledge production. I also wondered how these acts might be able to foster and influence resistance. In order to document such institutional struggles at McGill, it became increasingly important to hear how workers who had spent decades of their lives working for the university felt undermined and devalued by their employer.

It was through my own reflective experiences that I began this thesis. After speaking informally with MUNACA members on the picket line, I decided to approach some of these workers and union organizers to discuss their experiences through interviews. I chose to focus this research on some of the ways in which individuals learn through labour struggles and social action, and to investigate the institutional coordinates that continue to impact and shape the local experiences and knowledge of MUNACA workers.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: THEORY & CONTEXT

This chapter provides an overview of literature, theory, and analyses by key scholars on unions, the corporatization of universities, and theories of informal and non-formal learning through social action. The first section explores some of the ways in which academic institutions have become increasingly corporatized and privatized within the Canadian system of higher education. The growing corporatization of universities cannot simply be confined to the university. Rather, the recognition that post-secondary education has become a place for profit can be seen as being driven by larger global and social processes and shifts in capitalist relations. The shift towards neoliberal economic reform has led to increased privatization of public spaces and played an increasing role in the corporatization of and corporate influence upon, post-secondary education. Neoliberalism has been defined as:

> A form of global capitalism based on the deregulation of free markets and the privatization of wealth. It subordinates government control to the interests of private profit. The government - rather than regulating the market to assure a level playing field – becomes an extension of market activity, the servant of the industries to which it is captive. Neoliberalism provides tax breaks for the rich, reduces spending on social programs and welfare, expands corporate control and eradicates labor rights, environmental protection, drug and food regulations and even national law. (Gandio, 2010, para 7)

This chapter provides a framework to understand how universities have veered towards models of corporatization and privatization. It contends that, on the one hand, this has resulted in greater job insecurity and the casualization of employment contracts, and on the other, has fostered growing union organization within universities. The next section briefly analyzes organized labour and unions in Canada. This discussion offers an understanding of how unions and working-class movements function. It also discusses ways in which unions can act as forms of struggle and resistance within the confines of capitalism and also, as related to this study, in the face of increased corporate administrative governance of universities.

The final section of this chapter describes the theory and scholarly work behind informal and non-formal learning, and learning within social movements. It explains how the literature reviewed assists in examining ways in which learning within social movements, struggle, and action occur. It describes how social movement learning and critical adult education scholarship are necessary tools to understand the ways that learning can occur through social struggle. This section also engages with some of the limitations of the existing literature, and explores how the thesis can contribute to further research. In sum, this chapter provides a framework through which to analyze the MUNACA strike and the learning processes evident within this labour struggle.

2.1 CORPORATIZATION OF THE CANADIAN UNIVERSITY

The past three decades have seen increasing corporate influence on, and privatization within Canadian academic institutions. The increasing influence of the corporate sphere began early in the 1980s, through shifts in government policy, influenced by private sector lobby groups such as the Corporate-Higher Education Forum, the Business Council on National Issues, and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association (Newson, 1998). Newson (2000) contends that groups like these, through the provision of funding, have gained authority over academic researchers who partner up with such corporate clients. These clients subsequently gain influence over university administrations in order to push a corporate agenda (Newson, 2000). While academic institutions and education more broadly have long been contested terrains, alongside cuts to state expenditure on public education, public universities and the notion of education as a public good have been reshaped by corporate influence, embracing cultures of commercialization and privatization. As Chomsky (1999) asserts, neoliberalism and corporate culture have become regulators through which "private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize their personal profit" (p. 7).

In *Steal this University: The Rise of the Corporate University and the Academic Labor Movement*, Johnson, Kavanagh, and Mattson (2003) argue that one of the defining factors of contemporary universities is not merely that they are influenced by corporate interests, something that is not in and of itself a recent phenomenon, but the fact that these corporate influences now dominate.

Corporate influence in and control over academic institutions has encroached onto independent governance in a number of ways. One of the subtlest of these methods involves the commercialization of educational institutions. Educational institutions are increasingly spaces populated by advertisements and brand-name products. Privately supplied goods and services, such as technologically mediated instruction, are incorporated into the everyday learning processes of the majority of the university population (Turk, 2000). However, these subtle forms of commercialization are only small examples of the takeover of public education that require investigation. In fact, it could be argued that the more prominent forms of corporate influence over post-secondary education systems lie in the management of labour and bodies within those spaces themselves.

2.1.1 WHERE DID AUTONOMOUS THOUGHT GO? THE RISE OF PRIVATE FUNDING

According to Newson (2000), there are two sides to corporatization that directly impact structural changes of universities. The first is the fact that universities and colleges increasingly accept funding from corporate donors and the private sector, particularly in an era when public revenues are in steep decline. As Clark (2003) states, "in the 1970s, the direct government formula funding often represented as much as 90 percent of the institutional budget. Today, with increased tuition fees and more aggressive institutional fund-raising, this has fallen to the 60-70 percent range even for large institutions" (p. 179). Conlon (2000) states that "most provinces have eliminated grants, and federal funding for post-secondary education has been cut by over 50% since 1979" (p. 145). Due to

these cutbacks, universities have started to rely on financial support from the private sector. An example of this can be found in the increasing influence of corporate funders on the direction of research, as well as the academic orientation of universities more broadly (Turk, 2000). In many circumstances, funders favour projects that are in line with their own interests, or ones with commercial links, and as a result, academic research can be susceptible to control in the form of censorship (Renke, 2000). An example of this can be found in the case of the University of Toronto signing a $15 million deal with the Joseph Rotman foundation and a $6.4 million deal with Peter Munk of Barrick Gold and Horsham Corporation, which resulted in these corporations having unprecedented influence over academic programs at the university (Turk, 2000). In addition, the school signed another donor agreement of $8 million with the Nortel Institute of Telecommunications, which included the addition of three junior tenure-track positions to be appointed in consultation with Nortel (Graham, 2000). In 2012, York University considered a deal with Research in Motion co-founder Jim Balsillie, whose goal was to create an international law program connected to the International Governance Innovation, his private Waterloo-based centre (Bradshaw, 2012). In exchange for this funding, Balsillie wanted extensive input on hiring and research within the university. In April 2012, more than 200 faculty members opposed this deal, and the faculty council of Osgoode School of Law rejected the offer, arguing that it would greatly interfere with academic freedom and autonomy (Hopper, 2012). As we can see, the privatization of academic institutions has changed the social functioning of universities, creating a shift

away from autonomous thought and public knowledge towards the privatization of education and academic thought.

As Henry and Tator (2009) argue, the "production of knowledge contributions, curricular decision making, and allocations of funds within the academy are always related to power and who holds it" (p. 30). As governmental interest in public funding continues to decrease, Canadian universities are forced to compete with one another, causing them to restructure programs, research, and teaching strategies in order to attract funders. Conlon (2000) argues that "the widespread attack on public institutions has produced a kind of corporate nationalism, changing the very vocabulary of public discourse: "'efficiency' is now defined by profit" (p. 147).

2.1.2 THE RISE OF THE CORPORATE MODEL & THE COMMODIFICATION OF EDUCATION

The second side to corporatization, according to Newson (2000), involves processes through which universities and colleges have started to implement the *modus operandi* of the private sector. In response to increasing corporate control, universities are now engaging in for-profit activities of their own. Instances of these activities have already been mentioned earlier in this chapter, including the acquisition of brand name technology, the proliferation of advertising on campuses, and for-profit research. Other ways in which universities have adopted private sector business structures include the hiring of private companies to manage university affairs, such as campus housing, computer and food services, and bookstores. Another example is the growth of distance education and online

instruction. Through its online course offerings, the University of Phoenix is now one of the largest private universities and most extensive providers of higher education in the United States. Similarly, in Canada, Athabasca University, a public institution, is one of the largest providers of online and distance education programs, offering undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs. The majority of Athabasca's instructors are contract sessionals. According to Cox (2003) the growth in such online university education has shifted "the meaning of college from that of a process one goes through to a product one buys" (p. 16).

The increase in online education has also produced a transformation in terms of how technology is being used and engaged within a university context. In *Digital Diploma Mills: The Automation of Higher Education*, Noble (2001) argues that, as universities have received more corporate attention, education has become increasingly commodified. Noble (2003) explains that education has been co-opted in this way through the increase in online education and technology-based instruction leading to a decrease in labour-based instruction. In Canada, there has been a national effort with the Telelearning Research Network, which is centred at Simon Fraser University, to implement the bulk of Canada's public education system into a "Virtual U" network (Noble, 2003). The increased use of technologically mediated forms of instruction plays a role in the way labour is organized in universities, hence changing their very structure.

In addition, corporate management models have increasingly become the norm at Canadian universities. As Woodhouse (2010) states:

> The mechanistic discourse of corporate culture has expunged the language of education: subject based disciplines and the professors who teach them have become "resource units"; students are no more than "educational consumers" or "revenue units"; curricula have become "program packages' graduates are now "products. (p. 4)

Furthermore, as more universities increasingly provide online education technology and computer-based instruction, the commoditization of teaching has resulted in educators losing their autonomy and independence, and university administration gaining direct control over the management of pedagogy and curricula.

2.1.3 MANAGERIALISM & ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNANCE OF UNIVERSITIES

In the early 1990s, the bulk of administrative and managerial positions within the university was drawn from faculty members, who played a major role in institutional decision-making. This overlap helped to create an implicit shared commitment to education between academic and administrative staff (Tudiver, 1999). There has, however, been a decline in faculty influence and a shift from "collegial self-governance to managerialism as the dominant mode of institutional decision-making" (Newson, 1998, para 15). Numerous administrators are hired each year to govern the direction of academic life, even as universities claim to be battling budget crises that force them to reduce the number of full-time faculty (Ginsberg, 2011). Senior administrative positions have emerged such as: assistant vice president, secretary-general, associate provost, associate dean, and vice-

principal adding to the already existent administrative positions of president, provost, and vice-principal. According to Newson (1998),

> The argument for 'a more managerial approach' has been premised on a need to transcend the local interests of departments and faculties, something that can be accomplished best through a purportedly neutral body – the central administration – which will give primacy to meeting budgetary constraints rather than to preserving academic territory
>
> (From Collegialism to Managerialism section, para. 15*)*

Along with this increase in administrative and managerial positions, there has also been a trend towards more corporately controlled boards of governors. According to Shaw (2000), boards of governors make up the top decision-making bodies within universities. Tudiver (1999) states that they "set budgets and policies, and administrators controlled implementation. Board and administration [are] authorized to run universities without participation by faculty, students, or anyone else in the system" (Tudiver, 1999, p. 29-30). At Queen's University, in Kingston, Ontario, one member of the board of trustees generated $22 million in university revenue through private funds, giving both the donors and members of the board implicit approval to manage much of the university's academic direction (Conlon, 2000). As with administrative positions, members of governing boards are often isolated from academic work. As top-down administrative governance increases within universities, faculty members and other academic staff become restricted as to the types of courses they can teach and the research they are able to engage

in. As Shaw (2000) asserts, “faculty members are seen and treated not as autonomous professionals, but as subservient workers” (p. 153).

This trend of faculty subordination, in the face of administrative governance, can also be seen at McGill. Firstly, the McGill board of governors consists of 25 voting members who are responsible for the maintenance and administration of the university (“Board of Governors”, n.d.). According to the McGill University Board of Governors Handbook, several members of the board, as well as senior administrators, act as representatives on several external corporate bodies, such as the Max Bell Foundation, McCord Museum Corporation, and the iNovia Capital (Board of Governors Handbook 2011-2012, n.d.) More than half of the Board members are affiliated with other large corporations such as Bell Canada, CitiBank Canada, and RBC Global Asset Management Inc. In addition, the chairman of the Board acts as the board director of CitiBank Canada, which provides services in corporate and investment banking, and the current principal of McGill sits on the board of the Royal Bank of Canada (*Stikeman Elliott LLP*, n.d.). The McGill board of governors “dictates the direction of the University along an increasingly corporate, for-profit, business model, making decisions on behalf of staff and students they have never met, and all behind firmly closed doors” (The McGill Daily, November 28, 2011). In addition, the board is following a trend apparent in both American and other Canadian universities, in which the majority of board members now tend to be affiliated with corporate private institutions, more than with the academy itself. Conlon (2000) asserts that “the transition to corporately-controlled board of

governors has not only changed the culture of institutions, it has compelled Canadian universities to forge dubious links between industry and university researchers" (p. 146)

Another concern is the ongoing investment by McGill in companies and corporations whose operations have caused environmental degradation and which have been implicated in human rights abuses. In 2011, McGill had an endowment fund of $962.3 million invested in multiple Canadian and international companies such as Suncor and GoldCorp (Phipps, 2012). Additionally, until 2010, Chartwells, a sub-corporation of Compass Groups, controlled the majority of food services at the university. In 2010, McGill switched to Aramark Canada, another large food service company as a private partner (Newsroom, 2010). Food services throughout campus are now controlled by Aramark Canada, and all but one of the student-run food services have not survived. An example of this can be seen in the case of the demise of the student-run Architecture Café in the summer of 2010. Deputy Provost of Student Life and Learning at McGill claimed that the café was not financially sustainable, though it was an affordable option for and was also highly popular with students. (McGill Reporter Staff, 2010). All of this might lead us to question what 'sustainability,' a concept often touted by universities in an age of for-profit environmental initiatives, really means in the context of a partially corporate-controlled university environment.

2.2 RESISTANCE TO CORPORATIZATION: UNIVERSITY LABOUR RELATIONS

The increasing corporatization of academic institutions is impacting how labour is organized within the academy. The decline of full time employees and the increase in part time and contract workers often means that employees are paid less, receive minimal benefits, have fewer legal rights, and are less likely to unionize (Turk, 2000). Furthermore, as previously discussed, the shift from shared governance between faculty and administration, to a model of management by senior administrators and a corporate board of governors has threatened academic freedom and put tenure-track positions in jeopardy. This has motivated many faculty members and educators to advocate for unionization (Tudiver, 1999).

As Johnson et al (2003) assert, "this love affair between the market and higher education has helped prompt some within academia to rethink their status as laborers and their relations to labor unions" (p. 3). As corporate management and the pressure to privatize increase, so does labour movement activity within academic contexts. According to Johnson et al (2003),

> Today academic unions might still be concerned with academic freedom, but the terms have changed. The threat is no longer occasional war or political crisis, but the ever present pressure of corporatization. Now unions are fighting for academic freedom, plus some much more basic needs—pay that can put food on the table [and] health-care benefits. (p. 4)

With this has come a change in the predominant function of unions within university contexts – from sites of struggle for academic rights, to sites of struggle for labour politics. One of the important roles of unions within universities is that they have the ability to be recognized as a form of resistance against institutional

corporatization. Unions can be sites of resistance in that they not only fight for job security and benefits, but are also involved in broader struggles for accessible public education, and against the corporatization and privatization of higher education.

Labour unions have a specific function and history within universities. Not everyone working within academic institutions is unionized, and for those who are, unionization has often been the outcome of a long battle. Typically, at universities, one finds several different unions for different categories of employees, such as teaching assistants, research assistants, faculty, contract teaching staff, academic support staff, and non-academic support staff. Quebec has one of the highest levels of unionization in North America, with 40.3% of university employees being unionized (MacLennan, Singh, and Zinni, 2005). PSAC (Public Service Alliance of Canada), a union that in the past, generally represented federal public workers in Canada, decided in 1996 begin trying to unionize employees in the Quebec University sector[2] (Leduc, 2010). By 2001, PSAC had approximately 20,000 members from that sector within various universities in Quebec (Leduc, 2010).

Within academic institutions, each union has different bargaining functions and strategies. However, universities using corporate models have the power to create bargaining arrangements that deal with different types of employment and unions separately. It is fairly uncommon for contracts to cover workers throughout an entire industry – for instance, within a university context –

[2] To read an interesting account of labour activities within Quebec universities, see the document produced by PSAC (2009): *Changing course: University unions and PSAC* by Alexandre Leduc.

due to the success of employers creating bargaining arrangements that deal with workers in different types of employment individually, as opposed to collectively (Camfield, 2011). The reasoning behind this is that, from the point of view of the employer, employees in this situation possess less bargaining power, since they do not have the power-in-numbers that would come from being united under one union. If all of the employees at a university were members of the same union, the university would likely be unable to function should workers go on a strike.

The literature reviewed in this section of the chapter is important in order to deconstruct the ways in which corporatization and privatization of academic institutions has affected labour struggles within them. The loss of jobs through various types of commercialization such as technology-based instruction has reduced the number of jobs within universities, and has led to lower pay for workers. As Camfield (2011) argues, "unions are extremely important for the working class as they are one of the only ways that workers can defend themselves against capitalists and governments whose determination is to expand corporate profits and power" (p. 67). As this study contends, this point is potently illustrated through the rise of the MUNACA workers, and other labour struggles at McGill: the strike operated as a direct confrontation against a corporately governed administration.

2.3 Organized labour and unions in contemporary Canada

As discussed in the previous section, unions are integral in the fight for labour rights. With the impact of neoliberal economic policy on the Canadian economy, full-time, permanent work has decreased, causing an increase in

temporary, part-time, and precarious employment. Generally speaking, unions help working people gain better access to fair pay, health benefits, overtime work hours, vacation time, and to build healthier and safer workplaces. Camfield (2011) claims that, while unions are far from ideal, they are currently the best form of organization through which workers can defend their rights, improve working conditions, and try to change society in larger ways. Camfield further asserts that "unions today give workers a legally-recognized way to organize collectively and negotiate with their employers. This makes unionization an alternative to having to deal with employers as isolated individuals" (p. 59).

According to Statistics Canada (2007), in the past two decades, Canadian unions have seen a steady decrease in membership, union density, and bargaining power. Union density, meaning the number of people who are enrolled in a union, has declined steeply since 1985, when it was measured at 41.8%, and by 2009, the percentage of union membership had further decreased to 29.5% (Camfield, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2007). However, as Spencer (2002) articulates, "unions remain stubbornly present within most liberal democracies" (p.8). Unionism today is based largely on contracts, and their central activities include bargaining collective agreements in order to retain reasonable benefits within a financially unstable capitalist economy (Camfield, 2011; Bleakney and Morrill, 2010).

According to Camfield (2011), strikes are becoming less and less common, and often occur in order to defend, rather than improve, the rights of workers. Workman (2009) states that this decline can be attributed to a "climate of neoliberal austerity deliberately forged by governments and materially

cemented by decades of intensified corporate restructuring. Such restructuring has made most workers fearful and weakened the overall resistance of the labour movement" (p. 66-67). Camfield (2011) claims that strikes can be phenomena through which workers experience the impact of what they are doing. He further suggests that, "strikes can demonstrate that a collective rather than individual response to problems is not only possible, but more effective for working people" (p. 28).

Unions and the labour movements more broadly are engaged in class conflict and struggle, whether or not their members or society at large recognize their activities as such (Bleakney and Morrill, 2010). Features of capitalism are embedded in union formation, organization, and activism. According to Bleakney and Morrill (2010) and Newman (2002), amongst hyper capitalism, unions spend a great deal of time and energy defending benefits, wages, and conditions of their members. Spencer (2002) argues that labour unions have been regarded as "old" aspects of social movements, but contests that they can in fact be seen as relatively recent social organizations. Another powerful dimension to unions is that they provide a space through which working people can build their capacities to think and act for social change (Camfield, 2011). Labour movements provide a space in which skills are learned and developed, collective actions are organized, and critical analysis and consciousness become rooted in experiences and struggles, in order to bring about progressive social change.

2.3.1 UNION EDUCATION: LEARNING WITHIN UNIONS

Union members may engage in a number of tasks within the context of union activities: handling grievances, mobilization, research, and engaging in labour education. Labour education plays an important function within unions, and can be thought of as a specific type of adult education (Taylor, 2001). According to Taylor (2001), by the early 21st century, more than 100,000 workers in Canada were involved in educational programs facilitated by unions or other labour organizations. Union education, as described by Spencer (2002) and Taylor, has as one of its central goals supporting union organization through education and learning. While union education and labour education differ in certain ways, both are integral parts of workers' movements, and are used interchangeably throughout this chapter.

Unions use education as a form of challenging the power of employers, to build worker alliances, and to develop union presence collectively (Spencer, 2002; Taylor 2011). Spencer (2002) argues that labour education is important in the "develop[ment] of union consciousness [in order] to build common goals and to share organizing and campaigning experiences" (p. 17). Union education often consists of educational courses and workshops related to filing grievances, labour code bargaining, and health and safety issues. According to Camfield (2011):

> Unions are active in educational courses and workshops which aim to educate members on how to be active in the sometimes-complex world of union organization [and] familiarize them with the legal, policy, and other dimensions of the environment in which unions operate and foster union consciousness. (p. 38-39)

Labour education varies within different unions as well between countries, and is often focused largely on "tools" that can be concretely used to fight for better labour conditions. Some programs, however, deal with issues of racism, homophobia, and sexual harassment, both within the context of the workplace, and in society more broadly. Many union education programs also include literacy and second language classes for illiterate and migrant workers, and can also include courses catered only to women and/or people of colour (Spencer, 2002).

While some attempts have been made in developing union education courses that deal with larger societal issues, many labour education scholars argue that it is integral for this education to go beyond labour organizing and educate also around broader political, economic, and social struggles (Bleakney and Morrill 2010; Camfield 2011; Livingstone and Sawchuk 2004). For instance, Camfield (2011) argues that most of what is learnt today within worker education contexts relates to bureaucratic contract unionism. This type of learning, he argues, does not "help workers to organize themselves to resist the actions of employers and governments or to change their unions," nor does it "develop collective capacities to understand or resist the attacks to which people are being subjected in capitalist society today" (p. 62-64).

The structure and methods of teaching that occur within labour education have been contested issues within unions, for instance, there have been questions of whether using more popular methods might be more effective and relevant (Spencer, 2002). Bleakney and Morrill (2010) assert that there must be a stronger

emphasis on direct action, strategy building, and bolstering working-class, grassroots movements. They further state:

> In the context of union education practice, we must go beyond information transfer from a perceived higher authority, to a place of creative planning, application, evaluation, recognition, and celebration of our victories. (Bleakney and Morrill, 2010, p. 147)

Labour education in Canada starts with exploring the experiences of workers, and continues by linking such experiences to the course material (Taylor, 2001). Bleakney and Morrill (2010) argue that the ways in which effective worker education can occur includes creating a space for workers to use their own experiences, rather than simply being taught. Taylor (2001) claims that the simple experience of filing a grievance, or participating in a strike can constitute worker education. Union education and learning occur in formal, informal, and non-formal ways. Spencer (2002) states that while structured labour education is important, most union members learn and become most active within their unions by participating in negotiations, strikes, and grievances. As Camfield (2011) has asserted, strikes can be seen as "schools of struggle," where learning and education can occur through experience. Livingstone and Sawchuk (2004) write that, "social movements can be important places of exchange, learning, and the building of social knowledge production and constructing alliances across societies and borders" (p. 150). The next section of this chapter discusses theory and literature on non-formal and informal learning within social movements.

2.4 NON-FORMAL & INFORMAL LEARNING: LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL ACTION

> *When we're in the process of mobilizing or organizing it begins to be seen also as an educational problem...Education is before, is during and is after...it's impossible to organize without educating and being educated by the very process or organizing. (Paulo Freire, 1990, p. 120)*

Discussions of learning in general often focus on such sites of formal education as universities and classroom, but some adult educators recognize the importance of non-formal and informal learning. Allman (1999) argues that education should be seen as a "cultural pedagogical practice," in which learning can take place in multiple sites. This includes many non-traditional forms, such as mass media, popular culture, and other public spheres. Informal learning is rarely planned, and often stems from lived experience. Livingstone (2005) states that "learning is increasingly understood as an interactive process through which learners socially construct their own understanding of the world they live in, for example, by reflecting on their experiences in relation to a variety of mentors, peers and other sources for learning" (p. 986).

Non-formal learning, of which union education is one example, is a type of education that is not formal, but still involves specific objectives (OECD, n.d.). However, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, non-formal learning lies somewhere in between formal and informal learning, and these categories can often become blurred. Informal learning can and does also occur within union education. As Bleakney and Morrill (2010) state, union education must start from a point of exploring workers' experiences, and linking those experiences to course material. The diversity of

sites through which knowledge is produced and in which learning can occur illustrates some of the ways in which non-formal learning can and does occur.

Foley (1999), one of the main contributors to the field of informal and non-formal learning, argues that the collective experience of struggle is often an integral learning point for individuals. Foley's analysis has steered much recent scholarly work on informal learning, social movement learning, and knowledge production in social movements (Chovanec, Lange, and Ellis, 2008; Hall and Turray, 2006; Endresen and Von Kotze, 2005; Novelli and Ferus-Comelo, 2010; Choudry and Kapoor, 2010). Foley (1999) posits that

> While systematic education does occur in some social movement sites and actions, learning in such situations is largely informal and often incidental – it is tactic, embedded in action and is often not recognised as learning. The learning is therefore often potential, or only half realized. (p. 3)

Finger (1989) argues that one of the important ideas of adult education is that of learning from and reflecting on experience. Foley (1999) further states that the "most powerful learning occurs as people struggle against oppression, as they struggle to make sense of what is happening to them and to work out ways of doing something about it" (p.2). This analysis is one that is not often recognized or acknowledged within activism or the academy. Many adult education scholars have stated that the nature of learning within social struggle and social movements receives little direct attention, and is often very poorly understood (Chavonec et al, 2008; Foley, 1999; Hall and Turray, 2006; Holst, 2002; Novelli and Ferus-Comelo, 2010). Through this study, I wish to further the research

within this field of scholarship and observe some of the multiple ways through which informal learning has the potential to challenge power.

2.4.1 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AS LEARNING SITES

Leading scholarship on adult education processes confirms that social movements can be significant sites of learning (Allman, 1999; Finger, 1989; Foley, 1999; Holst, 2002; Novelli and Ferus-Comelo, 2010; Welton, 1993). As Livingstone (2005) asserts, informal learning is not limited to social movements, but instead can occur in a multiplicity of spaces. Learning within social movements is often done in informal ways, through discussions, meetings, mobilizations, strategizing sessions, and participation in demonstrations, something which often leads to people downplaying its validity. Dykstra and Law (1994) theorize that there are three major reasons why people are often slow to see the importance of learning within social movements:

> This reluctance stems from (a) viewing social movement practice as political and not educative; (b): the tendency in adult education to dismiss informal education in everyday life; and (c): the increasing professionalization of the field, which has moved the field away from its historical roots within social movements themselves. (Dykstra and Law, 1994, p. 80-81)

Spencer (1995) concurs with these ideas, and claims that in many ways, adult education has always been connected to social change, social action, and social movements.

Many adult educators agree that learning within social movements is a powerful educational tool (Chovanec et al, 2008; Finger, 1989). Hall and Turray (2006) state that social movements are "powerful instruments of change" (p. 5), and further, that "it is precisely the learning and knowledge-generating capacities of social movements that account for much of the power claimed by these movements" (p. 230). Zacharakis-Jutz (1991) argues that education is an instrument of power, and can shape knowledge and the production of knowledge within social movements. According to the scholarly work described in this chapter, it seems that there is a mutually beneficial relationship between education, learning, and social movements.

Many critical adult educators have also described the relationship between education and social movements as being transformative, in a number of ways (Allman, 2001; Finger, 1989; Holst, 2002; Welton; 1993). Finger (1989) asserts that in order to create social change, personal transformation must also be realized. He argues that social movements provide environments for learning through which some of these processes can occur (Finger, 1989).

2.4.2 KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION WITHIN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING, CRITICAL LEARNING & THE UNLEARNING OF DOMINANT DISCOURSES

Multiple adult education scholars claim that learning through social struggle can act as a form of resistance against dominant discourses (Alvarez, 1989; Jesson and Newman, 2004; Foley, 1999). Alvarez (1989), a feminist adult educator, describes learning through struggle as a means of engaging with hegemonic ideologies and participating in oppositional discourses. Foley (1999)

furthers Alvarez's analysis by stating that incidental learning is embedded within processes of social action, and that the "unlearning of dominant discourses and the learning of resistance discourses is [therefore] central to emancipatory learning" (p. 17). Jesson and Newman (2004) argue that:

> People engaged in social action are learning in order to resist unwanted forms of control, understanding their own situation and experiences in order to exercise more control themselves. People in groups are learning for a purpose: to change the way they and others in our society think, feel and act. (p. 253)

Foley (1999) claims that learning which occurs in struggle can come into existence in various ways: "gaining self-confidence, useful skills and knowledge, developing critical understanding of how power works in society. Above all, people learning that they [can] act, and learning that the action that they [take makes] a difference" (p. 26). By recognizing the ways in which people learn to challenge dominant discourses, they are better equipped to resist them.

Choudry and Kapoor (2010) state that knowledge produced within social movements is routinely neglected within academic literature, and often even within these movements themselves. Novelli and Ferus-Comelo (2010) highlight the importance of knowledge produced through social action, and assert that the construction of alternative knowledges is imperative to maintaining working-class power:

> Central to this process of building 'counter-knowledge' then is to recognize knowledge production within oppositional social movements, and valorize

> the process by treating it as a legitimate and important field of study that mirrors capital's concern with the study of the role of knowledge, but with very different motivations. (Novelli and Ferus-Comelo, 2010, p 50)

They further argue that examining these different forms of knowledge helps to develop radical ways of thinking beyond our neoliberal present (Novelli and Ferus-Comelo, 2010). They go on to explain how learning (formal, informal and non-formal) and knowledge produced within social movements enhances strategy building and mobilization within these movements (Novelli and Ferus-Comelo, 2010). Chovanec et al (2008) agree that much learning occurs incidentally and in informal settings, but further note that "learning can also be deliberate and catalytic and that such learning is also vital to the growth and sustenance of social movements" (p. 201). Foley (1999) acknowledges that systematic education can and does occur within social movements, but maintains that such learning is largely informal, and occurs through social action. Chovanec et al (2008) assert that mobilizing and action can be strengthened through such learning once education has been integrated into these social movements**.** Holst (2002) applies the term "pedagogy of mobilization" to describe the multiplicity of learning that occurs within social movements.

> The pedagogy of mobilization is the learning inherent in the building and maintaining of a social movement and its organizations. Through participation in a social movement, people learn numerous skills and ways of thinking analytically and strategically as they struggle to understand their movement in motion. (p. 87-88)

Much of the knowledge produced through social struggle and action occurs in relation to the critical learning and development of a social consciousness. Foley (1999) describes the process of critical learning as one that involves people "theorizing their experiences: they stand back from it and reorder it, using concepts like power, conflict, structure, values, and choice. It is also clear that this critical learning is gained informally, through experience, by acting and reflecting on action, rather than in formal courses" (p. 64). Similarly, Chovanec et al (2008) state that "critical learning attempts to engage with an individual's consciousness as situated within larger political and economic forces and act upon those forces for social change" (p. 188). Knowledge production is crucial to the development of workers' political consciousness, especially in the fight for economic and social justice (Novelli and Ferus-Comelo, 2010). Allman (1999) and Foley (1999) both argue that developing a critical consciousness is essential to creating social change, and helping people to situate themselves as social actors in struggles for justice and liberation. Holst (2002) concludes that it is through critical thinking, and learning through experience, that one can develop a critical consciousness within social movements.

2.4.3 PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE: CHALLENGES TO STUDYING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Bevington and Dixon (2005) provide an important analysis of the contradictions inherent to social movement theory. They argue that experiences within social movements are routinely excluded from the literature, while academics often dominate the political space of researching social movements.

Robin Kelley (2002) complements Bevington and Dixon's analysis by asserting that, as social movements generate new knowledge, learning, questions, and theories, we must remember that the critical engagement of the people involved in these struggles is crucial when it comes to engaging in social movement research. Kelley argues that, "too often, our standards for evaluating social movements pivot around whether or not they 'succeeded' in realizing their visions rather than on their merits or power of the visions themselves" (p. ix). It is important to recognize what both Bevington and Dixon and Kelley assert: a focus on the knowledge produced in the course of people's lived experiences of struggle is integral, both to an understanding of social movements, and the learning which takes place within them. Too often, there is a lack of research generating "holistic and materialist analyses of learning in particular sites and struggles" (Foley, 1999, p.6).

In attempting to find practical examples of scholars using informal learning theory and social movement learning theory, resources were limited. Foley (1999) provides several case studies, including: observing political education in the Zimbabwe liberation struggle; a campaign to preserve the Terania Creek rainforest in Australia; and learning in neighbourhood community centres in Australia. In all of these cases, Foley conducted interviews with participants about their experiences, provided practical and theoretical analyses, and observed and analyzed the informal learning that took place. Chovanec et al (2008) examined the struggles of female workers in Chile by investigating their political learning and social consciousness, and some of the ways in which social

movements in existence throughout the time of the Chilean dictatorship changed their lives. Both of these scholars placed the experiences and learning of people engaged in social struggle at the forefront of their analyses. These cases present some of the contradictions and critiques found within research around learning and social movements. This study aims to foreground the lived experiences of workers within labour movement struggle, rather than speaking for them. As Foley (1999) claims, in order to value informal learning and learning within social struggle, we must expose it.

2.5 Creating a conceptual framework: from theory to methodology: A passage into institutional ethnography

Understanding the experiences of union members and organizers at McGill in relation to the ways in which the university structures itself is one contribution to this research. The literature discussed above makes up part of an important foundation to the creation of a conceptual framework for such research.

As described in this chapter, there is relatively little literature on the subject of informal learning, and learning through social movements that engages in practical analyses of people's lived experiences. This study aims to link the theoretical to the practical. By using Foley's theory of incidental learning in social action as its framework, this research explores the experiences of union members and organizers who were involved in the Fall 2011 MUNACA strike at McGill.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The first half of this chapter examines the ways in which institutional ethnography (Campbell and Gregor, 2002; D. Smith, 2005) can be practiced by starting from the everyday lived experiences of union members and organizers. I investigate the importance of locating the ruling relations that shape people's everyday actions and experiences when conducting an institutional/political activist ethnography (Frampton, Kinsman, Thompson, and Tilleczek, 2006; G. Smith, 1990). This chapter describes Kinsman's (2006) ideas about mapping the social relations of struggle, and how such mapping can aid in opposing regimes of ruling. The discussion then connects Kinsman's analysis with Foley's (1999) work on learning through social action. Foley proposes a number of ways in which learning through struggle and participation in social movements can be critical to confronting and resisting ruling relations. The second half of this chapter discusses the ethical considerations of conducting this research through an institutional/political activist ethnography. I discuss how power, when using institutional/political activist ethnography, can be conceptualized through locating and reflecting on the insider privileges of the researcher. I outline recruitment processes, consent and confidentiality of the participants, and methods of data collection and analysis. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the challenges and limitations that have been faced in producing this study.

3.1 INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY: EXTENDING BEYOND EXPERIENCE

This thesis draws on the scholarly works of Dorothy Smith's (2005) institutional ethnography, and George Smith's (1990) political activist ethnography in order to uncover the different forms of learning that occur in social action. Institutional ethnography seeks to analyze individual and local perspectives within the larger social organization of society (D. Smith 2005, Campbell and Gregor 2002). Drawing on this literature and the writings of other institutional and political activist ethnographers, I attempt to map out the realities of MUNACA workers' lived experiences throughout the strike, in order to understand how the ruling relations under which they live affect them institutionally.

Dorothy Smith (2005) introduces the approach of institutional ethnography as a starting point for discovering the:

> Social relations organizing institutions as people participate in them and from their perspective. People are the experts of their own lives, and the ethnographer's work is to learn from them, to assemble what is learned from their different perspectives, and to investigate how their activities are coordinated. (p. 225)

Institutional ethnography introduces the research process by placing people's experiences and knowledge at the forefront of the inquiry. In doing so, the institutional ethnographer's goal is to discover and map out how such experiences and knowledge go beyond the everyday, and to understand how people are situated within these institutional frameworks. It is also important to recognize that, in starting an inquiry through the framework of institutional/political activist

ethnography, the experiences documented cannot be seen as the "objective truth" but instead help to understand ruling relations and social organization, and assist in developing a critical analysis (Frampton et al, 2006).

As Dorothy Smith (2005) notes, "it is the aspects of the institutions relevant to the people's experience, not the people themselves that constitute the object of inquiry" (D. Smith, 2005, p. 38). Thus, in this research, by listening to and understanding the everyday experiences of the MUNACA workers, I aim to unravel the ways in which learning occurs through such labour struggles, and how these realities are embedded in social relations. This methodology focuses on a "research as discovery" approach, thus this study has been consistently revised, corrected, rethought, and re-analyzed. One question we must ask ourselves as institutional ethnographers, as Campbell (2006) notes is, "what organization of the world organizes and maintains the position that these people live and suffer from, and that this research is helping in the struggle against?" (p. 90). By starting from the standpoint of workers, and mapping out the responses of the university administration during the strike, this study examines some of the ruling relations that exist within and from the institution, documents the confrontation and pedagogical moments that exist when resisting these ruling relations, and uncovers the social organization of the institution.

3.2 THEORY AND LANGUAGE: RULING RELATIONS & THE POLITICO-ADMINISTRATIVE REGIME

As discussed above, an entry point when approaching research through an institutional ethnography involves exploring the language and experience of those

directly involved, in order to locate the institutional processes that shape such experiences. Kinsman (2006) claims that until examined and critically analyzed, the social organization of an institution generally goes ignored. D. Smith (1999) and Campbell and Manicom (1995) coined the term "'ruling relations' in order to develop language that moves beyond traditional concepts of power and the state. Ruling relations demonstrate the connections between the different institutional relations organizing and regulating society. Ruling relations combine state, corporate, professional, and bureaucratic agencies in a web of relations through which ruling comes to be organized" (Frampton et al, 2006, p. 37). Ruling relations are what connect our local contexts to each other within a global framework; they dominate cross-contextually, and shape our local experiences. Texts, for example, can act as a form of coordination within ruling relations. Textually mediated ruling relations enable researchers to unpack ways in which people relate to one another in predetermined ways, regardless of whether or not they know each other (Campbell and Gregor, 2002). I discuss text-based ruling relations and how they apply to this institutional ethnography in the later sections of this chapter. By identifying the ruling relations at play in the MUNACA context, we can explore the experiences and knowledge of the everyday world and study how it is organized.

The process of investigation in order to define 'ruling relations' in research is one that is different for every institutional ethnographer. Campbell (2006) explores the experiences of people with disabilities in home support programs and services. She describes 'ruling relations' as the relations that

become and remain dominant. Her findings explain that in practice, the labour agreements of the home support programs take priority over the direct concerns and experiences of the comfort and care of clients. The labour agreements here act as an example of how texts can be implicated within ruling relations, and can act as invisible coordinators of people's activities. As Campbell writes, "the institutional processes through which ruling practices subordinate and write over experiential knowing" (p. 94). In another study, Roxana Ng (2006) uses institutional ethnography to expand the political understanding of the exploitation of garment workers in Canada, in the current period of economic globalization. Ng describes regimes of ruling as linked to larger social and global processes, and examines the Canadian garment industry through the everyday experiences of migrant garment workers. Ng (2006) states that "the power of institutional ethnography goes beyond its academic and analytical utility. Its stance, located outside the ruling regime, enables the researcher to identify how ruling gets done and how to develop alternative modes of action to challenge regimes of ruling. It is thus through and through a political tool" (p. 187).

George Smith (1990) begins his research by constructing a political activist ethnography as an approach by which to centre the experiences of gay men, and explore the relations of ruling surrounding AIDS treatment within public health practices and policy. Smith identifies the ruling relations here as the creation and implementation of AIDS treatment policies that police and control the experiences of gay men. He focuses on the experiences of activists in order to politically confront and investigate the organizing logic of ruling regimes, and a

particular politico-administrative regime, in order to find ways to oppose them (Frampton et al, 2006). The work of the political activist ethnographer is to explore the everyday organization of the social relations of management and administration (G. Smith, 1990). By building upon, extending and strengthening insider knowledge within activist milieus, political activist ethnography becomes a methodology to better understand ruling regimes and, ultimately, to develop more effective forms of resistance.

Both G. Smith (1990) and Ng (2006) offer political activist ethnography as a political tool that can assist in developing alternative strategies of resistance and action that confront ruling regimes. This research in this study uses institutional and political activist ethnography as a tool to investigate the insider knowledge that has developed throughout the MUNACA strike in order to provide an understanding of learning through social action.

3.3 MAPPING SOCIAL RELATIONS OF STRUGGLE & LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL ACTION

Kinsman (2006) states that in order to construct knowledge and understandings of social movements, one must map out the social relations of struggle. Through this mapping, we can identify how people directly involved in social struggles navigate these ruling relations. Kinsman (2006) argues that by doing political activist ethnography research, we can observe social movements and struggles that exist, in order to reshape and investigate the ground upon which ruling relations are located. In mapping out the institutional relations and obstructions that workers face, this study questions and analyzes how they are

situated within a politico-administrative regime. By drawing upon an analysis of learning and knowledge production that emerged during the 2011 MUNACA strike, it documents strategies that can actively challenge the relations of ruling.

In the previous chapter I discussed Holst's (2002) idea of "pedagogy of mobilization" as it illustrates the multiple forms of learning that can occur within social movements. Through participating in such movements, informal learning can occur whereby people gain multiple skills and ways of thinking strategically (Holst, 2002). As discussed earlier, Foley (1999) argues that informal learning is implicit in the everyday, and grounded in the experiences and 'doings' of people's lives. Furthermore, Dorothy Smith (1990) claims that the knowledge that comes from people's everyday experiences of living within regimes of ruling can be described as reflexive or insider knowledge. As such, it is imperative to examine this type of knowledge amongst research participants, in order to expose institutional power. Investigating the pedagogy and learning that transpires through social movements such as the strike can inform social action, and act as an important tool in understanding and confronting actors within a politico-administrative regime. As Kinsman (2006) notes, "there is much to be learned from the movement organizers and activists and from their confrontations with ruling regimes" (p. 139).

3.4 TAKING A STANDPOINT: POSITIONING THE RESEARCHER & CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY

When focusing on methods of research such as institutional and political activist ethnography, there is immense potential to reflect on the social locations

in which we are situated, and observe the power relations that exist there. I draw on and learn from the studies and research of other academics that have used institutional and political activist ethnography methodologies within community activism and social movements, such as Campbell (2006), Kinsman (2006), G. Smith (1990), Ng (2006) and Thompson (2006). Institutional ethnographers must constantly question relations of power, the biases implicit in the knowledges foundational to their academic work, and the implications of how their research might be used. Dorothy Smith (1990) asserts that "[i]n beginning from the local historical setting of people's experiences, the ethnographer must start in a reflexive fashion from inside the social organization of not only his/her own world, but by extension the social world he/she intends to investigate" (p. 26). While I am conscious of my own privilege as a researcher, I believe that consistently reflecting on and questioning dynamics of power can provide a better analysis of this research. Within this study, my position as a researcher follows the notion of insider/outsider status (Mykhalovskiy and Church, 2006). As a community organizer and activist who has participated in local struggles throughout my studies at McGill, I was part of mobilizing on the student end during the MUNACA strike. This mobilization and building relationships with workers on the picket lines, informs my analysis throughout this study and gives me an insider position within this research. My position as a researcher is one that understands and acknowledges the complexities of the strike and workers' experiences. However, I am not a union worker, nor was I an employee at McGill

on strike with financial constraints or a family to support, therefore, I also recognize my outsider position within this research.

Institutional and political activist ethnography require the researcher to start the critical investigation from the standpoint of the people directly affected in order to expose aspects of social organization that may not be visible from other social locations. Within research, there is often a perpetuation of hierarchies of power; the imbalance between "us" – the researchers and academics doing the theorizing and analyzing – and "them" – the people in the spotlight, being researched and written about (Campbell and Gregor, 2002). Within the process of conducting research and especially activist research, it is integral to begin directly from the experience of those being researched. The focus within institutional ethnography on shifting away from a preoccupation with objective knowledge, and towards reflexive knowledge acquisition, and moving away from speculative accounts of people's social practices, is imperative in conducting research. I come into this research from a perspective of using the experiences of workers as a starting point and foundation, and by mapping out the social world in which they are situated.

3.5 THE ETHICS OF RESEARCH: RECRUITMENT

Participants in this research range in age, gender and occupational status. The participants are predominantly members of the McGill community who have had some relationship to labour organizing, unions, and social movements. They include employees, union organizers, and students at the university. The subject population is predominantly women and was recruited through recommendations

from colleagues, fellow students, faculty members, and organizers at McGill, as well as through various activisms that I have been involved in. Due to limited academic research on women in unions, and women's experiences in labour struggles, I chose to recruit mostly women for the interviews.

While participating on the picket line during the strike, I met several workers who were interested in this project and asked to be included in the research. Some of my initial interviewees told me about coworkers who they thought might be interested in, and benefit from this research. The central group of interviewees for this research consists of workers at McGill University who were members of MUNACA during the time of the strike. Out of the six participants who were MUNACA members, five of them were women. They held positions as: clerical workers, administrative coordinators, and library assistants. I conducted two interviews with union organizers who were not MUNACA workers, but participated in the strike in some way. These two union organizers who participated in strike coordination were both women, and had been involved at McGill in labour organizing for approximately five years. The intention behind interviewing these participants was to provide an institutional history of labour and union organizing at McGill and provided an outsider perspective of the strike. Several of the people interviewed in this section have been involved with McGill and/or union organizing for several years, and had many memories and experiences to share.

3.5.1 Ethical issues: consent, confidentiality, & anonymity

Following their recruitment, an email was sent to potential participants asking them to contribute to the study. The copy of this recruitment email can be seen as Appendix B. I notified all participants that they were welcome to discuss any questions, concerns, or clarifications they may have had regarding this project, and that they would have the option to withdraw their participation at any time. After providing them with this information, I asked that they inform me of their availability in order to conduct an interview.

After the participants agreed to be interviewed, I provided a consent form (Appendix B), to be read and signed. The consent form outlined an overview of the proposed research, and what participation in this research would entail. The consent form also explained that participation in this study was completely voluntary, and that participants could refuse or decline to answer any questions at any time throughout the interview. A section of the form stated should they choose to participate, they would remain anonymous and their names would not be disclosed to anyone. Pseudonyms were used for each participant throughout the study.

Interviews were conducted in a private office at McGill, or in another space that was more convenient for the participants. The interviews would begin with a short discussion about the research, and any questions or concerns that the participants might have. Following this discussion, they were provided with a hard copy of the consent form, and we had a discussion clarifying any questions they might have had on the topic of consent. No compensation was provided to participants.

3.6 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION: NON-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

> *Describing interviews as a set of questions doesn't get at the actual work involved. For me, analytical thinking begins in the interview. It's like an analytic rehearsal. I'm checking my understanding as it develops; I offer it up to the informant for confirmation or correction.*
>
> (Eric Mykhalovskiy, 1999, p. 23)

Interviews conducted through institutional and political activist ethnography are methods of investigating the experiences of the informants to reveal the ruling relations that structure these experiences (Devault and McCoy, 2002). When interviewing participants, I hoped to understand the ways in which the strike affected them, and hear their stories as workers who were facing various administrative and institutional barriers. This study consisted of extensive non-structured one-on-one interviews. Eight participants were recruited for this study: Kyla, Lauren, Max, Melissa, Nicki, Nina, Samantha, and Tamara. Of these eight participants, six—Kyla, Lauren, Max, Melissa, Nicki, and Tamara are MUNACA members.

The interviews were approximately 60 minutes in length. Rather than providing specific questions for the participants, potential themes were discussed in advance so that they had an idea of what the interview would consist of. Kinsman and Gentile (1998) have observed the variances that often occur in interview contexts: "people [are] affected differently, the narratives t[ake] different shapes, and the researchers f[ind] that their providing some historical context often help[s] informants remember and reconstruct their experiences" (p. 58). All of the interviews for this study were conducted two to three months after the strike ended, therefore it was important for me as the researcher to remind

participants of certain incidents, in order to gauge their experiences. The institutional texts used by the senior university administration were useful as well, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

In keeping with institutional ethnography interview traditions, the interviews consisted of speaking with people and having informal discussions around themes of union organizing and learning, giving all participants a chance to discuss how they experienced the strike. DeVault and McCoy (2002) claim that "given that the purpose of the interviewing is to build up an understanding of the coordination of activity in multiple sites, the interviews need not be standardized" (p. 757). By using a format of non-structured interviews and informal discussions, I intended to let participants guide their own thought processes, in order to not alter their viewpoints and memories. The themes discussed led to more specific and direct discussions around the topics of this research.

For the participants who were recruited to provide a more extensive history of labour struggles at McGill, there were more specific themes to ponder. Points of discussion included: institutional memory, the formation of different unions, and previous strikes at McGill. The relationships of participants to union organizing, and why they found this participation important, as well as reactions by the university administration to unions and union formation at McGill were also explored. For the MUNACA participants, more of an emphasis was placed on discussions about how they experienced the strike, and their understandings about unions and labour struggles, discussing how things had changed since before they were active in their union. Going chronologically starting from the

most recent events helped participants in looking back at their learning and thought processes from before the strike, in order to recognize how their learning might have changed during and after it. Throughout the interviews, if there were any topics that were not discussed that I thought would be relevant to this study I would refer back to some of the questions. Some of the questions provided to participants included:

1. What were your initial understandings and thoughts about unions when you first started working at McGill?
2. What do you think you have learned by being involved in unions/social movements/labour organizing?
3. Do you feel as if your politics have changed since being involved in a union or engaging in labour organizing?

As the project researcher, each interview provided me an opportunity to learn and discover what I did and did not know. Each taught me something, and gave me something new to bring to the next interview. For instance, one participant discussed how having this space to debrief and discuss the strike was very meaningful to her. This is something I thought about and discussed with other participants in later interviews, and also something that I took note of as something to mention in my concluding remarks. As Mykhalovskiy and Church (2006) suggest: "in institutional ethnography, the researcher is permitted to learn, perhaps must learn from each interview what may inform and change the subsequent interview, even when the same topics or questions are introduced each time" (p. 74)

The importance of the interviews was to hear about each participant's experience and learning through labour struggles and social action. The questions provided to the participants prior to the interviews contributed to the participants' abilities to reflect on their experiences, and the different forms of knowledge production and learning that occurred within the context of the strike.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS & INSTITUTIONAL MAPPING

> *Texts are of central importance to institutional ethnography because they create this essential connection between the local of our (and others') bodily being and the translocal organization of the ruling relations.*
> (Dorothy Smith, 2005, p. 119)

In institutional ethnography, texts are integral to locating ruling relations as they shape informants' local experiences and learning. Texts can refer to anything in the form of images, words, and sounds, which exist as a material form that is replicable (D. Smith, 2006). Texts can act as institutional coordinators and, in ethnographic investigation, are crucial in examining the local organization of the everyday. Dorothy Smith (2005) states, "negotiating/struggling over the concepts vested in texts, make visible the centrality of texts and the concepts they establish and standardize across local settings in the formation of institutional regimes and the ongoing coordinating of people's work within them" (p. 118).

Throughout this study, I examined various documents, emails, and legal scripts that helped to reveal texts as actively coordinated social relations in the labour conflict at McGill. George Smith (1990) states that part of the importance of reading documents and texts is to provide meaning but also to understand how institutional discourses impact the organization of people's lives. G. Smith (1990)

argues that by investigating texts through ethnography, one can examine how they function as "conceptual coordinators of social action" (p. 642). By surveying documents such as court injunctions and email updates about the strike issued by the university's senior administration, I reveal how such texts worked to coordinate and impact MUNACA workers' everyday experiences of working within the university and of being on strike.

Textual analysis is used in this study in several ways. The first approach involves the use of texts to provide a context and body of literature for this study, in order to better examine the research questions. Text as well as interviews provide context, and are used to create a brief institutional history of the MUNACA strike at McGill. The second use of textual analysis involves creating an institutional mapping of texts with local experiences. Institutional mapping through texts "extends ethnography from people's experiences and accounts of their experience into the work processes of institutions and institutional action" (Turner, 2006, p. 139). By speaking with people in interviews about certain texts such as solidarity letters, email updates, and documents provided by the McGill administration, I intend to make a connection between these texts and participants' experiences. By examining the relationship participants have with these texts, I wish to uncover the ruling relations and the learning that occur within these relations.

The third use of texts in this thesis will involve analyzing text through a method described as "intertextual hierarchy" (Dorothy Smith, 2006). Intertextual hierarchy is the process through which "texts regulate other texts; it is an

important dimension of the textual organization of institutional processes and the ruling relations in general as regulatory" (D. Smith, 2006, p. 79). Through inter-textual hierarchy, I will observe texts such as emails and official statements made by the McGill senior administration and relate them to those provided by the union. By looking at the relationship between these texts, one can observe the relationships between MUNACA workers as the informants, and the university as an actor within the politico-administrative regime.

3.8 DATA ENTRY & ANALYSIS

Once interviews were completed, the data-entry involved full transcription. When completing interviews with participants, and signing consent forms, they were asked if they would like a copy of the transcription to see if there was anything they would want to change or exclude. Participants also had the option to receive the chapter in which their interviews were prior to publication, in order to see if what was written was representative of their experiences and opinions. Most participants decided that they were fine with just receiving the final draft of the chapter to read through. I provided each participant with their pseudonym used within the study and encouraged them to make any edits or changes.

As I started to transcribe, I realized how integral the process of transcription is in terms of connecting the dots and organizing the research. The process of going back and transcribing the interviews helped to link together the theory and literature, and to map out the relationship between the institutional

texts and the interviews. This was an important process in trying to piece together and organize the data/analysis chapter.

Prior to conducting interviews, I knew roughly which texts would be used throughout the study. When conducting them, as described previously, texts such as updates and court sanctioned injunctions by McGill's senior administration were shared with participants in order to observe their relationship to and experiences of these events. By comparing the texts to what participants said, the initial data helped in locating the disjuncture between what people experienced and what these texts claimed (this is discussed in greater depth in chapter four). Further, these discussions with participants helped in recognizing which other texts and documents would be important in coming to understand the ruling relations and organizational structure that impacted the workers.

When analyzing the data here, it is critical to recognize that the interviews conducted cannot be generalized to encompass the experiences and opinions of every single worker or union organizer. Interviews conducted in an institutional ethnography do not focus on making generalized observations of participants' experiences, but rather, are used to make such observations of the location of the social as it shapes informants' experiences (Devault and McCoy, 2002). The interviews are not meant to make speculative accounts of workers' experiences, but are instead meant to help socially locate the lives of workers at McGill.

Discussing institutional texts with participants, and the processes of transcribing the interviews, helped to piece together disjunctures between workers' experiences, and the McGill administration's responses to the strike. The

research process also consisted of interrogating and analyzing the texts and language used by the administration in order to place the university within a larger institutional and political context. All of this has contributed to understanding how the institution is socially organized, and ways in which participants' experiences are situated within it.

3.9 LIMITATIONS

Within this research, there were several limitations. Constraints of time and practicality placed limits on the numbers interviewed. Had this been a doctoral research project, for example, I might have hoped to include a broader range of participants and interviewees. Initially the goal was to include interviews with MUNACA workers, as well as students, faculty, university administrators, and members of other unions at McGill in relation to the MUNACA strike.

The study attempted to document various people's experiences during the strike, but also to provide an institutional history of all labour struggles at McGill, including those of other unions existent on campus. In trying to include students and faculty, the goal was to document those who were active and supportive of the strike, the activist activities they participated in, and their experiences of how the administration was responding to strike actions. Trying to interview various union representatives ended up being a larger initiative than expected, and something that was not feasible within the scope of this masters thesis.

Another major limitation of the study was that I had originally set out to focus on the experiences and informal learning of women during the strike. The strike was an interesting one in terms of gender, as 80% of those on the picket

lines were women, some of whom were amongst the lowest paid employees at McGill. In thinking about gender within this study, the relationship between women and the MUNACA strike fostered critical conversations about how support work, such as clerical work, is socially constructed and gendered as female/feminine, and how important it is to analyze how this comes about.

I had started to interview participants who were women with the goal of examining these issues concurrently. It became increasingly relevant when one of the participants mentioned how working within a union as a woman has been a struggle for her, and how she doesn't know how to increase female leadership and make unions more female-dominated. When I heard this, I decided that the focus of this study should be on women's experiences, because they are so often neglected within union spaces. Therefore, in my recruitment process, I interviewed predominately women to document their experiences participating in organized labour. Many of the female participants did not discuss their experiences as women on the picket line, and I started to worry about the analysis on gender that I had hoped to include. A colleague mentioned how using institutional ethnography can be about challenging what participants say and engaging in critical analysis with the data. Therefore, if women did not say that they experienced anything differently as a woman during the strike, I would try to engage with this by deconstructing why that was. Furthermore, I wanted to use a critical feminist analysis to look at the ways in which society views women as submissive and docile, and investigate how women are regulated within the university and in the context of the strike. However, as I started to conduct

interviews and once I completed the majority of my data/analysis chapter, I realized that an analysis that attended more closely to gender would have been important to investigate throughout the entire study and interviewing more women to document their experiences would be necessary. This did not seem feasible with time and within the context of an MA thesis, therefore I chose not to include this potential gender section, and instead to discuss it within my limitations. I regret doing this and hope this is a topic that future research will examine. Moreover, the data included in this study provides a foundation upon which other projects can build in order to delve deeper into the gendered aspects of union participation. The next chapter goes on to discuss the data, and provide an analysis to this study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA/ANALYSIS

This chapter draws upon institutional texts and knowledge produced through interviews with MUNACA workers and union organizers. Through the interviews, I attempt to map the social relations of struggle by recounting the experiences of workers. The analysis in this chapter draws on Dorothy Smith's (1987) notion of "textually mediated forms of social organization" and George Smith's (1990) ideas about politico-administrative regimes. The use of texts combined with interviews helps to explore how the university is socially organized. This chapter also builds on the importance of informal and non-formal learning through social movements and struggle (Foley, 1999; Holst, 2002) and examines the pedagogical importance of direct action (G. Smith, 1990; Thompson, 2006). The data and analysis within the chapter pulls together the knowledge and experiences of workers and union organizers in order to shed light on the modes of regulation that exist at McGill and within a wider politico-administrative regime.

4.1 CONTEXTUALIZING THE RESEARCH: LABOUR AT MCGILL

At McGill University, unionization has been slow to develop. The unions at McGill represent various employees such as: non-academic staff, course lecturers, service employees, teaching assistants, casual and temporary workers and research associates and assistants. Faculty at the university are not unionized, although some belong to a staff association known as The McGill Association of University Teachers (MAUT).

The McGill Teaching Assistant Association (MTTA) was founded in 1974 in order to defend the working conditions of teaching assistants at McGill (Leduc, 2010). Although MTTA was not a union under the Quebec Labour Code, it proceeded to attempt negotiations with McGill. However, the senior administration's lack of compliance with these negotiations demonstrated how, without unionization, there tends to also be an absence of bargaining power (Leduc, 2010). By the 1980s, McGill activists and MTTA members partnered with the *Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec* (FNEEQ-CSN) to create an organizational campaign for the unionization of teaching assistants. "After cards representing between 35 and 50% of employees had been submitted, the *Commission des relations de travail du Québec* organized a three-day vote in December 1992. A favourable result was achieved and the union certified on January 11, 1993" (Leduc, 2010, p.6). At that time, the Association for Graduate Students Employed at McGill (AGSEM) was formed representing teaching assistants. AGSEM was one of the first unions to represent graduate employees in Quebec, and is now the the largest labour union at McGill, representing over 3,000 teaching assistants, examination invigilators, and since August 30th, 2011, course lecturers and instructors (AGSEM, n.d.). When it reached its first collective agreement in 1998, AGSEM teaching assistants fought for similar collective agreements to those of other teaching assistant unions across Canada (AGSEM, n.d.). In 2008, AGSEM members went on strike, requesting a 3% salary increase, an increase in hours, and size limitations for conferences and laboratory sessions (Fogel, 2011). In 2011, AGSEM started a union drive to

represent course lecturers, who are the lowest paid in Quebec. AGSEM finally unionized course lecturers in August 2011, after attempting to do so four times in twenty years.

The Association of McGill University Support Employees (AMUSE), and the Association of McGill University Research Employees (AMURE) are the two most recent unions to form at McGill. AMUSE began its drive to unionize in 2008, when a group of research assistants in the history department expressed frustration with their working conditions (Leduc, 2010). The union drive began with the intention to unionize non-academic, casual and temporary workers, many of whom were and are McGill students (AMUSE, n.d.). AMUSE became accredited as a union in January 2010. It has never been on strike and in 2011, went into negotiations with the university, eventually coming to a collective agreement on March 12, 2012. AMURE formed in 2010, and has also never gone on strike. It represents approximately 1100 research associates and assistants at McGill. AMURE consists of two separate units with separate collective agreements with the university; one for research assistants, and another for research associates (Spence, 2011).

MUNACA (McGill University Non-Academic Certified Association) formed in 1992 and, in 1993, became a certified union under the Quebec Labour Relations Commission (MUNACA, n.d.). According to Leduc (2010), MUNACA "decided to join a labour body, because McGill has been converting permanent jobs into temporary jobs, i.e., casuals" (p. 28). Prior to this unionization, non-academic employees at the university were represented by the McGill University

Non-Academic Staff Association (MUNASA), which represents the collective interests of non-unionized, non-academic staff. MUNASA is not a union, but exists to represent the interests of those non-academic staff who are not part of MUNACA (examples of positions that fall under this organization include some managerial staff). Throughout its existence, MUNACA has undergone four collective agreements: in 1994, 2002, 2007 and, of greatest relevance to this study, 2011. The first three agreements underwent many negotiations, but the agreement that was under negotiation during the fall of 2011 led MUNACA's first strike – this began on September 1st.

MUNACA currently consists of approximately 1700 non-academic workers at McGill, in positions ranging from clerical work to library and technician support. Before it issued a strike notice, the union had been in negotiations with the McGill administration for approximately eight months. Their demands were related to issues of salary, pensions, and benefits. In January 2010, McGill's senior administration implemented drastic cuts to MUNACA workers' benefits, to the tune of approximately $1 million. In August 2011, the administration announced that they were making cuts to benefit plans, including reduction of benefits for retirees (MUNACA, August 11, 2011). At that time, MUNACA's president asserted, "the rationale for cutting [benefits] was to save the university money. It had nothing to do with the actual benefits plan" (Gass, 2011). According to MUNACA, as of that time, it would have taken McGill non-academic employees thirty seven years to reach the top of their pay scale This can be compared to other universities in Montreal, where the same process would take

between three and fourteen years. (MUNACA, September 14, 2011). One of the demands of the union involved negotiating for an annual three percent wage increase. They also called for this announcement of pensions and medical benefits to be rendered void (MUNACA, February 8, 2011).

Since their previous contract ended in November 2010, the union has undergone more than twenty-three collective bargaining negotiations with the university administration. An agreement was ratified on December 5th, 2011, and the final agreement was signed on June 20th, 2012. This final agreement included a 2.2% across-the-board retroactive wage increase, and decision-making rights on the university's pension and benefits committee (Ratification Document, 2011). Most importantly, the final agreement implements a wage scale for the first time, and one that is comparable to other universities in Quebec. The strike took place over one semester, approximately three months, until MUNACA members voted in favour of ratifying a new five-year contract, which passed with 71.5% (MUNACA, 2011).

4.2 WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL? WORKERS' PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS OF UNIONS

When asked about their initial feelings on unions, the majority of the MUNACA members interviewed expressed feelings of cynicism, and stated that they didn't understand why unions existed in their fields of work. Nicki stated: "the union was a vague entity that I knew very little about. I paid mandatory dues and attended general assemblies once or twice a year but other than that, I had no involvement." She felt very cynical about unions and said that she had believed

them to be of very little use, especially for clerical workers such as herself. Max stated that prior to the strike, he was anti-union: “I felt that unions were more for people who didn’t have a very strong work ethic. That was the impression I had.”

Some of the workers felt that unions were a distant entity. Melissa said, “I only attended the general annual meetings, like the big ones. The small meetings, I always thought they were something that didn’t involve me.” Camfield (2011) argues that there is a lack of union-worker relationship in today’s working class labour movements. Nina, a union organizer and member of AGSEM, discussed how she was not actually aware of the fact that she was part of the union until they went on strike. After becoming an active union organizer, Nina talked about how one of her main goals within union organizing was to make unions more visible and accessible to their members.

Lauren talked about how she understood why unions should exist, but had mixed feelings about union activity. Her opinions on the subject changed drastically when she had to file a grievance after twenty years in her workplace. She said:

> It did hit me, something happened with my change of jobs that directly affected me, which made me stand up and fight. That was the real beginning of when I started to realize, you know, I have got to fight for myself because nobody else will. They will fight with me but I have got to take a stand. That was kind of the beginning of my whole feelings of unions and it started from there because of my personal circumstances.

These initial sentiments are but a few examples of workers' personal understandings of unions. As is evident, several of those interviewed expressed cynicism or apathy when discussing their initial relationship with their unions, or opinions on the existence of unions. Many of these same workers discussed how their experiences and feelings changed after being involved with the strike. This is discussed in greater detail towards the end of this chapter.

4.3 STRIKE CULTURE: THIS IS WHAT WE CALL COMMUNITY

Samantha, one of the strike coordinators, discussed the development of a strike culture, which she experienced as involving many of the aspects needed to be thought out and discussed in order to conduct strike actions:

> People were very nervous at the beginning because this is a really strange new situation. Being on strike is a really weird thing, you walk in a circle for four hours and you don't get your regular pay and you don't know when it is going to end. It is very bizarre. I think in the beginning…we didn't really know what we were doing because you never really do with a strike because every situation is completely different. There was a huge learning curve in the beginning for everyone in terms of figuring out just basics like how should a picket line look and who are the picket captains.

Another issue brought up was that of keeping up morale on the picket line. Nicki recalled how the beginning of the strike felt like a party: "well we are here and it is a beautiful sunny day and we are not stuck in our offices and we are just going to make a statement and McGill is going to let the long weekend go by and call us all back on Tuesday and say we're sorry and it will be over." But, as the weeks

and months went on, and negotiations continued, morale began to drop. Max stated that being a picket captain was at times quite chaotic, and to him, one of his biggest responsibilities included keeping up morale: "I didn't want to see people with their heads down, so I tried to encourage them to hold their heads up high…because I believe that we are more competent when we're feeling good than when we're feeling defeated."

Samantha discussed how organizing 1700 people on a daily basis was challenging and hard at first, but once things were put in place, she could see people become increasingly unified and connected "because they shared this really unusual experience that nobody else in their lives would understand with one another." Indeed most of those interviewed spoke about a sense of community that developed on the picket line. Kyla talked about her experience as a picket captain, and how, as union members bonded and got to know one another, it began to feel like a second family. She said,

> Our group, we still keep in touch and it was the greatest thing for getting a real sense of community among other workers. Before, I just knew a couple people in the library, and then the one or two people at the union office who answered my calls…but now I know all the picket captains, all the people on my line, so easily 150 people.

Max compared the strike culture to the ice storm that hit Montreal in 1998: "it got people talking to one another and we were all on strike living the same thing, and so it did bring us together." Nicki described it similarly, saying that it was like being stranded on a desert island, "having that common cause, it is an incredible

thing. The strength that you derive from that is what made the whole thing so amazing." The strike allowed the union to spatially function in a space and moment somewhat unto itself, outside the arena and time of official university administrative functions and processes.

Another theme that developed throughout the interviews was an appreciation of conversations that transpired along the picket line, and the development of a human connection between members. As Nina discusses:

> I think the human connection made a difference. When you are able to empathize and feel what people are feeling it makes a big difference. For me I think that is really important in learning about anything, that human connection, and actually understanding what people are going through, and walking those picket lines over and over again because it is really tiring…So most of all I think the human connection was very important in building that spirit of collegiality and how can we help and how can we share.

Melissa talks from her personal experience:

> By being on the picket line you talk to people and listen to their stories and what they have to say, and hear other people's stories. It is other people, too, who are dealing with shit and you hear people's stories and realize, it is not just me…you get to know people like the person who cleans the beakers ends up having two kids and one of them has special needs. Then you are like wow, I want to walk for you because it is not just for me, but for you as well. It becomes more personal.

The connection that Melissa speaks of illustrates how participating in the strike was part of the learned experience of sharing a common struggle. This affirms Foley's (1999) idea that critical learning often occurs through reflecting on and recognizing one's experiences.

The notion of human connectedness is an example of how solidarity can function within social movements and labour struggles. Samantha spoke about solidarity during the strike, and asserted: "I think in terms of educating about what union solidarity is, just the fact of living through a strike is just the best possible education around that." The term solidarity was a new one to Nicki, and during the strike she talked about how she understood what it felt like*:* "it is that feeling of collectivity. The people that I met I never probably would have met and we came together under one common cause." Engaging in collective struggle, and supporting one another as members of a community formed a type of solidarity.

4.4 THE DISRUPTION OF COMMUNITY BUILDING: MCGILL RESPONDS WITH AN INJUNCTION

At the beginning of the strike, the union, and many of its members and supporters, formed a large presence on the picket line. Workers picketed in front of entrances to the university, carrying picket signs, and singing.[3] MUNACA members constructed picket lines outside of McGill, at both the Downtown and Macdonald campuses. MUNACA were joined by members of other organizations, including AGSEM, SSMU (The Student Society of McGill University), and

[3] See Appendix A for a detailed chronology of the MUNACA strike.

AMUSE. Many other students and faculty were also often present, and walked the picket line to show their support. Early in September, the McGill Faculty Labour Action Group (MFLAG) formed, which was made up of a group of McGill faculty members, librarians, and other academic staff. This group was formed out of a concern about the MUNACA strike and labour conditions at McGill more generally.[4] On September 23rd, after three weeks of strike action, McGill administration requested and was subsequently granted an injunction, which involved restricting picket line action, noise levels, and the access that union members had to university buildings. The injunction required MUNACA:

> TO ABSTAIN from demonstrating or protesting by shouting, chanting, marching, picketing, displaying signs or posters, gesturing or assembling on Petitioner's property in the Restricted Locations;
>
> TO CEASE AND ABSTAIN from using a microphone, speaker, loudspeaker, stereo, or any other tool or machine used for purpose of amplifying voice or sound within twenty-five (25) metres of Petitioner's property in the Restricted Areas and Location;
>
> "TO CEASE AND ABSTAIN from assembling in a group of more than fifteen (15) persons within four (4) metres of the entries and exits of Petitioner's property in the Restricted Areas and Locations;
>
> (Superior Court, September 23, 2011)

[4] For more information about MFLAG: http://mflag666.wordpress.com/

While in a number of its official statements during the beginning of the strike, the senior administration claimed that campus operations were largely unaffected by the strike, the MUNACA executive stated that the injunction "means that it has NOT been 'business as usual' at McGill. In fact, we've been so successful at expressing our dissatisfaction that McGill went to court to try to shut us up." (MUNACA, September 25, 2011).

Once the first injunction was granted, many of the dynamics of the strike, and the relation between the university's senior administration and the union changed. Lauren discussed how the injunctions felt like a reminder to everyone on the picket line of who had really had the power and control. She claimed that the only thing the senior administration "cared about was 'we want to make sure that they understand that we are the power, we are the authority. To heck with what they want, whether they want it or not, or whether they should have it or not, we don't care. Maybe we will give it at the end because we have no choice but we are going to make them suffer until the very end because they got to know that we have the power.'" The injunction that the university administration obtained against the union can be seen as an example of what Dorothy Smith (1987) has described as textually mediated forms of social organization. It is important to recognize and observe such texts not only for their meaning, but also in terms of how they organize people's lives (G. Smith, 1990). In this case, injunctions were a means of regulating the responses and actions performed by the union throughout the strike.

It is also relevant to examine ways in which communications were carried out through the university's Media Relations Office (MRO), which often sent out messages on behalf of the senior McGill administration; these emails themselves came to be known amongst the McGill population as "MROs". These communications illuminate a number of things about the ways in which the McGill administration interacted with the university as a whole. McGill's senior administration was able to send mass emails and updates (MROs) about the strike to the entire McGill student, faculty, and managerial population, as well as to news media both on- and off-campus. Furthermore, responses made by McGill's senior administration through modes such as the MROs, were often attempts to speak on behalf of the entire university population (students, faculty, and employees). MUNACA's ability to reach out to the general public, on the other hand, was much more limited; the responses to the injunctions and updates on strike actions by the union could only be viewed if people looked at the union's website, Facebook or Twitter pages, received a flyer, and occasionally, via news media. This illustrates the discrepancies between how information was disseminated by these two parties, affecting what content was presented and who received the information. The email accounts of MUNACA employees were suspended during the strike, meaning that they were not able to read the MROs. This identifies some of the ways in which the senior administration can and did exercise power over much of the discourse on campus.

After the injunction was granted, the culture and energy along strike lines transformed. Many of the picket captains indicated that morale dropped. As Kyla

discussed, “once the injunction hit the first day or two the general mood just sank and it was hard to get their spirits up…it was pretty demoralizing.” Lauren affirmed, “when the injunctions came through, that made people angry. There was a lot of anger towards the fact that every single thing we tried to do, McGill seemed to win.” In response, the union distributed statements regarding the injunction, and how they intended to move forward. MUNACA responded strongly to the injunction by stating that it limited freedom of speech. A statement written by MUNACA’s president asserted,

> Our labour dispute with McGill University is now nearing the two-month mark. During that time, McGill administration has put more focus on getting injunctions from the courts to limit our freedom of expression than they have on finding a fair resolution to the strike. (MUNACA, October 24, 2011)

At this time, there was a back and forth between MUNACA and the administration, which was also accessible to supporters and the wider McGill community. However, as stated above, the disparity between MUNACA’s access to communications, and that of McGill’s senior administration is something that must be acknowledged. The McGill administration responded to MUNACA’s statement regarding the limiting of freedom of speech by stating:

> Please note that in granting our request for some clear rules about picketing that would respect our right to remain open and continue our operations, the judge has not prohibited MUNACA members from picketing nor from making their opinions known. Nor did the University

> seek that. Rather, the injunction places limits on how those actions are expressed. (MRO, September 29, 2011).

The union responded to the injunctions by developing new strategies and goals to continue striking. MUNACA stated, "the union will abide by the injunction, while continuing to inform students and faculty about our core issues with respect to protections for our pensions, benefits and the implementation of a proper wage scale." (MUNACA, September 27, 2011).

4.5 LEARNING THROUGH STRUGGLE: MCGILL AS A "NO FREE SPEECH ZONE"

On October 21st, 2011, the Quebec courts granted McGill two more injunctions against MUNACA. After the first injunction was granted, one other tactic that MUNACA implemented included picketing outside the homes and workplaces of senior administrators and members of the University's Board of Governors. The second injunction stated that MUNACA members must refrain from demonstrating and protesting outside these people's homes and workplaces, and provided certain restrictions around assembling and picketing at off-campus McGill events. The injunction stated:

> TO CEASE AND ABSTAIN from using a microphone, whistle, drum, speaker, loudspeaker, stereo, or any other tool or machine used for the purpose of amplifying voice or sound around the residences of McGill University's Board of Governors and Senior Administration, from the residences of all McGill University's academic administrators and

managers, as well as from any location where McGill University is holding any event or activity

TO CEASE AND ABSTAIN from, (i) assembling closer than 10 meters from entries and exits of the places of employment of McGill University's Board of Governors and Senior Administration, as well as any location where McGill University is holding any event or activity and, (ii) beyond the 10 meter limit, assembling in a group of more than thirty (30) persons

NOT TO OR INVITE OR ENTICE OTHERS TO PARTICIPATE in any acts of behavior in contravention of the Provisional Order.

(Superior Court, October 21, 2011)

The university administration, backed up by the court system, had the ability to implement extreme penalties against the union if they did not comply with these regulations. On October 20th, MUNACA members picketed at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) Hospital at the Glen Yards Construction Site. This strike action shut down construction for the day when unionized construction workers at this site refused to cross the picket line. The Vice-Principal of Administration and Finance at McGill claimed that this action was "unnecessary" and "provocative." (MRO, October 20, 2001). The third injunction asserted that the union should refrain from picketing within three metres of the exits and entrances of the Glen Yards construction site[5]. In response, MUNACA's president stated,

[5] See Appendix A for detailed chronology of strike.

> In light of the adversarial and draconian tactics used by the McGill administration, we had to find creative ways to make our voices heard in and around Montreal. We have been open and transparent about our strategy to reach-out to key members of the Board of Governors to ask them to work towards a quick resolution to the strike. But McGill is set on keeping us away from all key decision makers who can hear our demands and play a role in the resolution of the conflict. (MUNACA, October 24, 2011)

The union responded to the injunctions by stating that the university's senior administration and the principal of McGill had established the equivalent of a "no free-speech zone" (MUNACA, September 27, 2011). MUNACA's president contended that "it is disturbing when the head of McGill University, who professes to promote inquiry and discussion, uses her substantial resources to silence views that question her commitment to fairness" (MUNACA, September 27, 2011). Further, during this time, the MROs being sent out to the general McGill population consisted of statements indicating the administration's disappointment with the union's tactics. As McGill's principal stated in one MRO:

> I understand that a strike is never an easy time, but I ask all to remember that this is a university where discourse is sometimes sharp but civil, where viewpoints may clash but people do not, where we work out our differences talking around a table, where we do not deface buildings and

> engage in physical threats. We don't do that here. (MRO, October 18, 2011)

This statement was made in response to the actions that MUNACA members performed during homecoming, such as asking donors and alumni to hold off on donations until after negotiations have been settled, protesting in front of the Omni Hotel, where a homecoming dinner was taking place, and disrupting other homecoming events. McGill's principal further stated: "such actions are unacceptable in a civilized society" (MRO, October 18th 2011). These types of statements were attempts to paint union tactics – and MUNACA members themselves - as uncivilized and threatening. As Melissa asserted, "they were sending out these very hateful emails that the union is like this…they are trying to make sure people think the university is a good employer or whatever and in fact, you are just demonizing the union."

4.6 Insider & reflexive knowledge: the strike as a "pedagogical moment"

As discussed above, the injunctions created anger and mistrust on the picket line. However, they also increased mobilization amongst members. As Melissa articulated:

> People were really mad because they were thinking McGill is preaching, telling their students the freedom of speech, of power, it is a democratic society, that we have a right to express ourselves and then you go and give an injunction. You actually, because you feel angered you feel like okay now let's do something more. Before you are just happy walking around

> but no let's do something else, let's do something more to fight McGill because they are just pushing us and pushing us so now we are going to push back. It mobilized people more. McGill thought they would silence us but actually it had an opposite effect.

Dorothy Smith (1990) has described the notion of "reflexive knowledge" as an insider knowledge that cannot come from the researcher or the regime, but stems from people's local experiences. By increasing mobilization, MUNACA members also developed new strategies and tactics to maintain a presence and increase momentum post-injunction. The response to the injunctions that fostered mobilization also engaged workers in strategic and critical learning. Workers learned quite quickly during the strike how to use other strategies to picket, despite the injunctions. Samantha described the experience of workers after the injunction was granted:

> That was really shocking for people and people became more radical because of it and you would see that in the action we did after that point…[workers] were ready to picket homes, they were ready to sit in the entrance to the Omni Hotel and do things in the beginning they wouldn't have been comfortable doing. Yeah, lots of new strategies came out of that because we didn't have a choice.[6]

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[6] From October 11-14th, 2011 McGill planned homecoming celebrations. On October 14th, 2011, MUNACA published a statement asking people to withhold donations to McGill until the strike was fairly resolved (for more information: http://www.munaca.com/node/359). On October 14th, 2011, McGill University hosted the Red & White Dinner in order to celebrate homecoming at the Omni Hotel. One of the strategies that MUNACA deployed was to picket outside of the Omni Hotel during that dinner, do a sit-in, and blocking the hotel's Sherbrooke entrance.

The injunction increased mobilization and fostered creativity through the formation of new strategies and ways of educating about the strike, and what the union was fighting for. The union started to use tactics which included flash mobs, picketing workplaces and residences, reaching out to alumni, picketing in other areas of Montreal, and disrupting university luncheons and events. This affirms what Novelli and Ferus-Comelo (2010) argue that learning and knowledge production within social movements and direct action can enhance strategy building and mobilization within these movements. They also suggest that the process of building counter-knowledges is part and parcel of building new strategies of resistance. As Nicki expressed, "we had to start getting creative and we did. We crossed the lines we shouldn't have crossed and I have no regrets, none. I did what I had to do." The various strategies and creative ways in which those on the picket lines resisted administrative pressures affirms what Foley (1999) and Holst (2002) assert about critical learning: that participation in social movements can produce learning and encourage strategic thinking within struggle.

A wealth of understanding and learning on the part of union members also emerged during the strike, on topics concerning laws about protesting, labour, and strike actions. Nicki discussed how, prior to the strike, she knew little about labour laws in Quebec. Kyla similarly described "learning exactly what my rights [were] in terms of being able to protest, and learning pretty darn clearly the letter of the law with regards to strike actions, unions and labour relations in general." This can be seen as another instance of the ideas about insider and reflexive

knowledge that G. Smith (1990) discusses. Throughout the strike, workers quickly acquired knowledge about labour and protest laws that they did not previously possess. George Smith describes the importance of such reflexive knowledge when it comes to "providing keys to unlocking puzzles" and "putting together an account of the social organization of a regime" (p. 644). The knowledge that workers acquired helped them to understand many of the ways in which McGill as an institution functions and is socially organized.

In observing various aspects of direct action, such as the MUNACA strike, it is also important to recognize the pedagogical aspects that exist when participating in such social movements. Thompson (2006) asserts that direct action can be an effective means of struggle and that it "can also be[come] the basis of a new kind of thinking." (p. 101). He argues that the pedagogies which can develop within direct action and confrontation, and the reflexive knowledge that stems from it, can be important tools in exploring social relations (Thompson, 2006). In relation to the MUNACA strike, tactics of direct confrontation and resistance aided workers in uncovering the foundations of a politico-administrative regime that connected university administrative governance and decision-making with the policies and laws around protesting and strike actions within the university, as well as new strategies in response to the injunctions.

Thompson (2006) further asserts that direct action and confrontation allow people to "learn something very concrete about the belly of the beast" and can aid in the "demystification of the world." (p. 101-102). The injunctions here can be seen as means of fostering learning and aiding in the realizations of workers about

the McGill senior administration as an employer, as well as McGill as an institution. Samantha said that:

> People became a lot more militant after the first injunction because that was the first time they kind of realized how nasty an employer can be if they want to. I think people were shocked that their employer would do this to them. If you have been going every day for forty years or thirty years or twenty years to the same workplace and then one day you can't go there anymore.

Many employees discussed how the strike made them realize that McGill administration, as an employer, did not appreciate them. Lauren claimed that, "it became a real power struggle in the end. I felt to a certain extent McGill was not looking out for us. McGill didn't give a damn about us." The ways in which Lauren and most of the other workers have described this experience can be understood in terms of what Thompson (2006) describes as this "demystification of the world" (p. 102). For many MUNACA workers, the strike fostered a political understanding of how the university is organized.

Kyla stated that her first experience with McGill was a positive one, but as time progressed, her opinion changed. As she said, "they were not overly concerned with both the students and the staff. They were all about their reputation, trying to get more money out of donors and things." Samantha recalled,

> The tactics they ended up using, they really stripped away the veneer for a lot of people. To see oh the administration doesn't care…they don't really

> care about the support staff in the scheme of things. There is a hierarchy and support staff is near the bottom. So I think that the way the employer behaved during the strike with the injunctions, with the lies that come out. People realized that their employer didn't have a lot of respect for them. I think it brings out a lot of anger, and even now a lot of people are angry and mistrustful.

The learning that many union members engaged in throughout the course of the strike, in relation to university structures and the roles of senior administrators, affirms what many scholars assert about ways in which confronting dominant and oppositional discourses can be part of a learning process (Alvarez 1989; Ferus-Comelo 2010; Foley 1999). The next section of this study explores ways in which workers felt that engaging in the strike fostered a rise in critical consciousness.

4.7 CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS & POLITICIZATION: FROM APATHY TO MOVEMENT

Throughout the strike, many workers noticed shifts in their political views and a changed understanding of knowledge and power. Alvarez (1989) suggests that confronting oppositional discourses can be central in raising people's consciousness. As mentioned above, the injunctions and the strike played a large role in worker's understandings around the politics of how the university operates, and some workers started to develop a critical consciousness through participating in the strike and direct action.

Max revealed how the strike solidified his beliefs and politics. Kyla also shared how she felt the strike made her realize where she stood politically. She stated: "I am not a fan of the conservative philosophy that is going on here with the administration. So [the strike] solidified where I was in terms of my political beliefs." Melissa reflected that the strike made her more militant: "you become angry, you are not a spectator, now you are an actual actor. You want to do something." The strike helped Melissa decide where she wanted to put her energy. Once it was over, she realized that she wanted to support other groups in struggle, because she appreciated all the support she received and saw on the picket line. In talking about how her politics changed, Lauren noted:

> I am not a very political person believe it or not, but I got to admit, I listen to the issues more now. No matter what they are, I pay more attention to what is going in terms of the government thing, not just McGill and not just the strike. I started to wake up to more political issues in general.

Lauren claimed that the strike taught her that her experiences were unique, but that others also go through similar experiences in different struggles. This also made her realize how important it is to get involved with these other struggles. Kyla talked about how she has now become much more aware:

> I was a little more apathetic before the strike. Especially [about] people who volunteer just around downtown, handing out flyers for their various causes. Having to do that for three months and seeing how difficult it was, how very few people would stop to listen to you or even take your flyer, I try a lot more now to listen to what they have to say.

When asked why she felt like her politics had changed, Lauren asserted, "because I have experienced it. I have seen what a large group can do. I have seen how powerful it can be." As Foley (1999) argues, both sites of struggle, and the struggle itself can provide opportunities for learning in action, as we can see with the cases of Kyla and Lauren.

Nicki was another worker who talked about some ways in which her critical consciousness developed through participating in the strike. When talking about her politics, she claimed:

> The union and the strike gave me a venue to think outside of my little world where I was and to begin to realize the whole question of social injustice… I am far more aware of global injustices, mostly because of the different people I have met and the sharing of information. I now see the world as a much bigger place and that I can make a difference. I don't accept mainstream thought as readily as I used to. I find myself questioning, probing, and I'm not afraid to challenge authority. I realize that I matter, that I count, and that I have a voice. This had been hugely enlightening for me.

Nicki discussed how the critical learning that occurred for her translated into observing and listening more to other struggles. She talked about her experiences participating in and marching with Occupy Montreal, saying that, "had it not been for the strike I would most probably have not been aware." She also talked about how she is now a strong supporter of the Quebec student movement against tuition hikes, something that she probably would not have actively supported prior

to her own experiences with union action. She further stated how her views on trusting authority have changed. She said:

> I have come to learn that you can't trust authority just because of who they are. It is not even trust, it is a matter of just accepting at face value what we are taught…because of where I come from the news was viable and certainly media controlled how we felt and thought and they sort of determined what we need to know and what we didn't.

Max talked about how he is much less apathetic than before: "before I had the tendency to walk away and just say okay, don't make a fuss – just keep walking. I don't want to do that anymore. I don't want to just walk away. If there's a problem, it needs to be dealt with." Both Nicki and Max's accounts illustrate the point that Allman (2001) and Foley (1999) make, that the development of a critical consciousness is imperative in creating social change and helping people situate themselves as social actors within struggles.

Another aspect of political consciousness and critical learning that many workers demonstrated was an understanding of the importance of strength in numbers when it comes to a movement when it comes to fighting for social change. As Max articulated, if "one person stands up and shouts, nothing is going to change, everybody has to come out make a stand. I might not be the best speaker, but I will go stand with them to help make a larger presence." Similarly, Nicki talked about how she came to understand the importance of strength in numbers, and how collectivity makes it possible to work toward stronger social

change. She spoke about how the strike taught her that a group of people coming together was a visible sign of resistance. As Lauren asserts:

> More than anything I really believe that there is more power in numbers and if you really want something to change then you need to stick together, that not everything is good when there is a movement, there is pros and cons within a movement. Some people are going to suffer more than others, some people are not going to suffer as much. That is the good and bad about democracy. More than anything, I believe that if you believe in something or you feel strongly about something or even if you want to support someone who does, get involved. To some extent even it is just a small way, small things matter. Small is better than none so if you believe in something get involved. Even if it is wearing a little button or letting people be aware that you are supporting something. Getting out there and doing it, I am going to help some other unions or some other causes now but before, I probably wouldn't have, I probably would have said, 'oh well good luck to them.' But now, I would say that is a good enough cause to give them some of my time.

Lauren's learning through social movements made her appreciate how there are always ups and downs within these movements, and how important it is that social justice struggles be collective and connected to one other.

Many MUNACA members had never participated in a protest before, and, as such, the MUNACA protests shaped the way they understood public forms of

protest, and how different their own experiences were from how media outlets often portray protest and dissent. As Samantha described:

> Even the demographic of the union, these people who had never really, who had often not been in a situation of putting themselves out there in that way in terms of demonstrating, being in a march, protesting on the street and there was stuff that happens, someone got arrested, and security. It was also people realizing to a certain degree that a group of people protesting is not necessarily dangerous… People were in this situation that they would never be in normally. Being the protester, being the person that the cops or the security people are harassing. I think that was really big for raising people's consciousness.

Max concludes by saying: "I've become a pro-protester! Before I was more likely to walk on by, not wanting to make waves. But if you make no waves, nothing changes." This last statement is an important one, and integral to the processes of learning and participating in social struggle. As Foley (1999) asserts, "for people to become actively involved in social movements, something must happen to their consciousness – they must see that action is necessary and possible" (p. 103). Above all, the experiences of workers on strike can be seen as an example of an integral learning experience, providing the insight that one needs to fight for social change.

4.8 UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICO-ADMINISTRATIVE REGIME: TEXTS AS SOCIALLY MEDIATED FORMS OF ORGANIZATION

George Smith (1990) describes a regime as "a mechanism for facilitating an investigation and description of how ruling is organized and managed by political and administrative forms of organization. An everyday feature of our society is how these various institutional sites of regulation and control are merged together to create what [he calls]…a politico-administrative regime" (p. 637). Texts can be used as such to teach us how the university functions, and how different actors, such as faculty, employees, and students, are regulated within the institution. In the case of the injunctions and MROs, the social organization of both forms of text sought to produce an image of the union as violent and unreasonable, making the senior administration look rational and "civilized." For instance, the principal of McGill, in response to the union's deployment of various tactics – such as the disruption of homecoming events after the first injunction was granted – stated: "violence and vandalism are not hallmarks of McGill; they are not part of McGill culture and they have no place in it" (MRO, October 18, 2011). Another important use of institutional texts, both throughout the strike and after it ended, included the use of the word "community" by various senior administrators. In one MRO, McGill's principal and vice-chancellor stated:

> Let us not lose sight that we all part of the same community. We are all McGill. We will be working together again, side by side, in what I hope will be the very near future. (MRO, October 18, 2011)

Another MRO stated:

> Disputes create tension within our community. Nonetheless, we all depend on the mutual respect that all employees of the University are valued

> colleagues, that we aim for a timely resolution of the strike, and we act in a manner that will have us all come back together as a community once the strike is over. (MRO, September 29, 2011)

Finally, on December 19th, 2011, once negotiations were concluded, and the union voted to accept a new collective agreement, another MRO was put out, stating: "together we support a great university and we make up a great community." (MRO, December 19, 2011). There is clearly a disjuncture between these statements from the university administration, and the ways that MUNACA workers have described their experiences. Dorothy Smith (2005) talks about "the disjuncture between the experienced actualities of those caught up in such a process and what is recognized in the form of words that represent them institutionally [as] an important dimension of institutional power" (p.194). This exposes the many discrepancies between McGill's description of itself as democratic and promoting of values of freedom of expression, and the lived experiences of MUNACA workers during the strike. The use of injunctions and MROs demonstrate how texts wield enormous power in contemporary society when activated by members of a ruling apparatus.

It is important to reflect on the atmosphere that the MROs helped to create. The McGill senior administration's ability to manage much of the discourse on campus is integral to understanding how control and regulation function within administrative forms of organization. When the union initially decided to go on strike, the MROs were designed to give updates to various members of McGill's population, on the negotiations between McGill and

MUNACA. However, the responses to the MROs reflect the opinion and outlook of the university's senior administration. Along with the injunctions, these communications more indirectly illustrate an interference with democratic participation and freedom of speech.

The injunctions can also be seen as a starting point in this critical investigation, in terms of helping to understand and map out the politico-administrative regime, and therefore, such communications must be observed more closely. In examining how the university's senior administration came to a place of invoking the injunctions, it is clear that the McGill administration went to the court system to enforce the practice of 'civilized protesting.' George Smith (1990) describes how one of the standard features of a regime is its ability to enact legal authority. The court system's compliance with the university administration, through the granting of the two injunctions, is an example of this.

A regime can be described as a form of organization that carries distinctive modes of regulation through particular institutional forms (G. Smith, 1990). In the case of MUNACA, the injunctions and MROs sent out by senior administration can also be viewed as modes of regulation. When the union first went on strike, a few faculty members chose to hold classes off campus so as not to cross the picket line. In an MRO, the administration stated: "a professor's right to not cross the picket line does not confer the right to move classes off campus. Like other employees who choose not to cross the picket line, the professors would forfeit his or her salary for the time he or she is not on the job" (MRO, September 22, 2011). In one specific case, a professor tried to hold her class off-

campus, which resulted in the administration threatening to stop paying her salary should she continue to do so (CBC News, 2011). Student mobilization groups circulated a petition stating opposition to the undemocratic use of university listservs and MROs to provide "one-sided and political positions about the strike" (Change, n.d.). Additionally, the president of MUNACA asserted in a media statement that "on campus, students collecting signatures supporting MUNACA say they received a threatening phone call from the McGill administration warning them that 'they will have troubles' if they continue to circulate the petition on campus." (MUNACA, October 26, 2011).

From the examples given throughout this chapter of the administration's actions during the strike, it is clear that the ways in which they demonstrated power indicates the corporate, top-down structure that exists within the university. A statement made by MUNACA claimed: "this executive believes that the consistently 'top down' approach to the administration has contributed to a mood of distrust and divisiveness on campus" (MUNACA, May 7, 2011). Furthermore, in 2008, at a meeting of McGill's senate, the principal suggested that it was ultimately senior administrations' responsibility to make decisions within the institution, and senate was only responsible for "provid[ing] advice in relation to strategy" (Ebbels, 2008). She further stated that "both the strategic direction and day-to-day management [fall] to our governing bodies and result[s] in the fusion of governance and administration" (Ebbels, 2008). As Shaw (2000) asserts, "in post secondary education, the corporate management style has become

increasingly evident, as the corporate agenda itself has become more pervasive." (p. 153).

Ng (2006) argues that regimes of ruling can be linked to larger social and global processes. McGill's senior administration, in the context of the strike and its reactions to the union, can be seen as regulators within a larger corporate university structure. An example of this is the fact that senior administration and the board of governors determine the use of contract and non-tenured faculty, the use of corporate food service providers throughout the campus, and McGill's financial investments in companies, who also have a stake in the way the university is run. All of these can be seen as part of the encroaching corporatization of governance structures in the university system. More detailed instances of McGill's corporate governance structures can be seen in chapter two, section 2.1.3.

In order to challenge and transform ruling relations, it is important to investigate the modes of regulation described above, in order to expose a politico-administrative regime. Foley (1999) puts forward an argument outlining "the analytical strength and political utility of holistic and materialist analyses of learning in particular sites and struggles, maintaining that a critique of capitalism must lie at the heart of emancipatory adult education theory and practice" (p. 6). As mentioned earlier, direct action can be pedagogically important to union members. However, when it comes to examining the specific case of the MUNACA strike, the increased awareness of many workers with regards to the increasingly corporate and bureaucratically run nature of the university and its

senior administration highlights some of the things that workers were able to learn about how McGill operates. As Melissa stated, "they don't care about the workers here. It is sad but I mean, I think they are looking at the bottom line just like most people in big companies… it is all about money and dollars." Many workers stated that the strike revealed the corporate-minded nature of the university and its senior administration. After this experience, many of these workers felt that the senior administration's overarching goal was to maintain a good reputation, as opposed to generally acting in good faith. The learning evident in this disillusionment with the institution is itself a good example of many of Foley's points.

4.9 THANKS MCGILL! THINGS WE DON'T LEARN IN THE CLASSROOM

Incidental learning happens everywhere, and throughout this strike, it developed in multiple forms and varied spaces. One aspect of this that workers who had been on strike spoke about included various life lessons and ways to live while on strike. Kyla discussed how one had to learn to be more cautious about finances and money management due to the fact that strike pay is significantly less than usual salary. She described how workers brainstormed how to deal with this while on the picket line. Melissa shared how, as her picket line developed as a community, people would discuss how to get cheaper groceries, and cut down in order to live within their budgets. Samantha, one of the strike coordinators, discussed one of the most important life lessons she learned about the strike:

> The importance of being hopeful and confidence and that was a really big thing for me during the strike because you know, we didn't know how

> long it was going to last and we didn't know how much we were going to gain… Even if I didn't know what was going on or how it was going to turn out, to be positive and to tell people what we are doing is important and is making a difference and is helping with a negotiation.

Nicki talked about how it increased her self-confidence to see support coming from various organizations, such as other unions, student groups, and faculty. Foley (1999) claims that learning through social struggle reveals itself in multiple ways, which include "gaining self-confidence, [acquiring] useful skills and knowledge, [and] developing [a] critical understanding of how power works in society." (p. 26). As Nicki recalled, "my level of self confidence has sky rocketed. That is an interesting phenomenon because a lot of picketers will tell you the same thing. I don't know if it is just because we were thrown out there in the public eye and all of a sudden marching in the street, I don't know why it is." Kyla felt very empowered by the strike and her participation in it: "I learned a lot about myself, I had no idea I would be completely comfortable speaking in French to 1600 people. Most of the time it was union chants and introducing other speakers, but it was still very empowering." Nicki talked about a disruption that a group of striking workers made at a speech given by McGill's principal, and said, "yeah that sort of thing … I had no idea that I would be capable of doing that before."

Max said he saw a lot of changes in people's attitudes and personalities: "I noticed a change in a lot of people from the beginning of the strike and then towards the end of the strike. At the beginning of the strike, a lot of people were

very timid and they didn't say much. Now they are much more vocal and daring." Kyla's experience affirmed many of these same things that Max pointed out:

> There were a lot of real personal transformations of people. There were a lot of really shy people at the beginning who came out of their shells. There was this one woman who was really introverted and very shy. The last two weeks of the strike one of the truck drivers was being aggressive and almost hit her and she just let him have it for a good 10 minutes and she was like wow, I can't believe I did that but I was just so shaking mad. It was really neat to see so many people grow like that.

The changes in people's confidence shifted throughout the strike, and several of those interviewed said that the strike taught them that they could be active in speaking out and making social change. Recognizing that unions were there to support them during a strike was an important learning experience.

4.10 POST-STRIKE VIEWS ON UNIONS: UNDERSTANDING THE UNIVERSITY

This chapter began with several of those interviewed discussing their initial cynicism and apathy towards unions. After going on strike, many discussed how their opinions of unions had changed drastically. The strike made Melissa understand union struggles: "when we went on strike, that's when you get the unions' side of the story and you see the people…it is when you get a better understanding of the struggle, the union is basically struggling, they are fighting for you." Lauren had an experience filing a grievance during her time at McGill, and felt that unions were important even before the strike. She talked about how

she saw the opinions of her colleagues, as well as her own, change monumentally during the strike:

> You find that opinions were changing more against the university. Started to realize that this is not the union, this is the university. They are the ones who have the power…Yeah, I would say a lot of opinions changed later on. I think people started to learn more, they started to understand more, and started to see the issues from different points of view, and started to see the bigger picture.

Nicki, who initially felt unions to be tedious and unnecessary, discussed how she now realizes how crucial unions are "to combat the corporatization of universities… it's blatantly obvious under the current administration that McGill is very corporate-minded, and thus employees need the protection of a strong, vibrant, proactive collectivity." The strike not only changed people's opinions of unions, but also made workers realize how important unions are in terms of worker protection and movement building. Lauren asserted, "I think [unions] are very important; more and more important because it is a voice, it is a vehicle. Without a union you are fighting this hierarchy that don't give a damn about you in a sense. It is like you got this ivory tower and there is everybody else and they don't give a damn about you."

Samantha, a union organizer during the strike, discussed how the strike fostered a great deal of momentum within the union. She said, "definitely now participation is much more than it used to be and more people come out to information sessions. The office is much busier but the people are much more in

touch with their union as a whole." Lauren talked about how the organization of the union has become strong since the strike: "it is great now, if there is ever anything that is needed we can organize so easily … in terms of anything that needs to be done now regarding MUNACA, it can be done like that and there are so many more people involved now. Before, when they used to have meetings, hardly anyone would go ... Now, people go, and they read those emails."

As mentioned, the strike and participating in MUNACA's struggles also fostered much personal growth for many union members. Max recounted: "I came out of the strike feeling richer. I feel much stronger today than I did before the strike and it helped to put a lot of things in perspective for me." The strike not only mobilized the union's members, it also changed the attitudes of many of its members towards MUNACA and union activity in general.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 DISCUSSION

This study attempts to map out the experiences of the everyday lives of workers over the span of the MUNACA strike, and investigates the informal learning that exists within social action and struggle. By examining informal learning that occurred during the strike, this thesis also investigates how participants' experiences were coordinated through social relations. It examines such things as how workers resisted the responses and tactics used by the university's senior administration, and what they learned through doing so. The experiences of workers are documented throughout this thesis, from their initial, pre-strike feelings about unions, to what the injunctions and strike responses from McGill's senior administration taught them, to things that they learned from being on strike. By drawing on the lived experiences of workers as an entry point to this thesis, my role as a researcher using institutional/political activist ethnography was twofold. Firstly, I sought to document workers' informal learning, which came about from the experience of being on strike. Secondly, I worked to investigate the relations of ruling that impact, shape, and coordinate the everyday experiences of these workers.

When I first began writing this thesis, the goal was to document the informal learning that happened on the picket lines and, more broadly, how participating in social movements can foster politicization. As the interviews proceeded, it became obvious that understanding how an institution such as McGill is organized, and which modes of regulation directly affect people, locally

as well as within larger global and social processes, is integral in using the methodology of institutional/political activist ethnography. The combination of documenting workers' experiences and analyzing institutional texts has helped to illuminate a disjuncture that exists between McGill's senior administration and the experiences of workers.

The use of institutional/political activist ethnography in this research is unique in that I as the researcher am not the only one examining the ways in which ruling relations exist within McGill and on the broader political scale: the participants in this study were also active in recognizing and confronting ruling relations. Documentation of how participants learned throughout the strike was imperative in coming to understand some of the ways in which the university and its administration operates. Many participants expressed that the strike helped them understand how the university's senior administration as an employer, did not support them while they were on strike, and about how the senior administration operates when dealing with conflicts such as labour struggles. Workers shared how McGill administration's recourses to legal action, such as the injunctions, furthered their knowledge about how the university functions. Lastly, participating in the strike helped workers recognize how integral being part of a union can be when it comes to confronting political and administrative regimes.

The use of institutional texts and analysis of institutional language, and the investigation of participants' experiences, fostered concrete learning about the "belly of the beast" (Thompson, 2006). Some workers understood very clearly that the university employs a top-down, corporate approach to administrative

governance. As described in the previous chapter, the union used actions such as going to the board of governors' and senior administrators' workplaces and homes as strategies of confrontation and resistance. By partaking in these actions, participants actively learned how McGill and its senior administration is currently administratively governed, and becoming increasingly corporate as a whole. It can be argued that the MUNACA strike was not just an isolated incident, but rather serve as an indication of how Canadian universities are increasingly governed by administrative and corporate influences, and further how larger capitalist relations such as neoliberalism have transformed the ways in which universities operate (Ginsberg, 2011).

This has been seen in the past, as well as through more recent confrontations with the university's senior administration. An example of this is the events of November 10th, 2011, when a group of students occupied the offices of senior administrators in the James Administration Building in order to protest against tuition hikes in Quebec, the increase in corporate dominance at McGill, and a lack of student representation. The administration's response was to crack down on political protests on campus, and call in the police, a move that led to violent police action against several students. In February 2012, several students occupied another floor of the James Administration building, in order to dispute a referendum vote for two very significant social justice groups on campus, and further protest the ongoing corporatization and privatization of education. The response by the administration during this occupation was to shut the lights in the building, and refuse access to washrooms, food and water. These are but a few of

the examples that occurred in the same year as the MUNACA strike; and demonstrates how the MUNACA workers are situated within a politico-administrative regime. The senior administration's response to the above-mentioned examples as well as the MUNACA strike (with such actions as injunctions, and police and high security presence) illustrates the types of regulation that exists within relations of ruling. Gaining insider-knowledge, participating in the strike, and documenting this knowledge production during and since the MUNACA strike helped both the participants, and myself as the researcher, understand these existing modes of regulation used by the senior administration, and identify more clearly, the union's ongoing confrontation and resistance to such ruling relations.

5.2 TENSIONS

While writing this thesis, one of the reasons I chose to use this particular methodology was to ensure that workers' experiences would be at the forefront of the research. However, it is important to reiterate that the experiences of the participants discussed are in no way meant to speak for every MUNACA worker's experiences of the strike. It is therefore important to describe some of the tensions that arose from this research. As mentioned in chapter three, in my recruitment process, I sought to interview participants who were interested in talking about how they learned through the strike, and how their politics might have changed as a result. This process intended to interview participants who felt that they had thoughts and experiences to share in relation to the research topic.

Within the study, participants had a common experience of the strike in terms of how they were treated by the McGill senior administration as an employer. Some claimed they learned a lot, whereas others did not feel that their politics had changed much, though they felt that they were less apathetic than before. Others also discussed how their experiences during the strike brought out a great deal of anger and frustration with the way the strike ended, and how they still feel like they have many unresolved feelings regarding the strike. One participant claimed that, after being back at work for a few weeks, everything went back to normal and he did not have any anger or frustrations with the university after the strike was over. Some participants, when being interviewed, discussed how they saw some workers on strike who did not feel connected to the union at all and despised being on strike. When asked how participants felt about their fellow colleagues who were against the strike and union, many participants spoke about how they felt it brought negativity to the picket line. Another participant stated that she felt very negatively about the strike at the beginning, and described how her politics and viewpoints changed as it continued, especially as the senior administration continued to refuse the union's demands. These tensions demonstrate that all the MUNACA workers experiences can not be generalized, and therefore operate as a reminder of how this study cannot claim to represent every experience. As Devault and McCoy (2006) argue, the goal is "not to generalize about the group of people interviewed, but to find and describe social processes that have generalizing effects" (p. 18). Thus, the goal of my research has been to use the experiences of the participants in this study,

combined with an examination of institutional texts, to analyze how MUNACA workers living under different circumstances exist and are coordinated within the same organizational structure.

5.3 FUTURE RESEARCH & FINAL REMARKS

When writing this thesis, there were several moments where I wanted more topics to be included in this study. While writing it, the huge student movement against increasing tuition hikes in Quebec was going on, and I was constantly battling the desire to try and include some of the student strike into this study as well. However, as time went on, due to time constraints, I began to recognize that there was only so much I could document and analyze and that the MUNACA workers' voices deserved a project of their own. This study does not claim to describe and document everything from the MUNACA strike, but hopes to contribute towards much-needed documentation of the history of labour struggles at McGill. Detailing the experiences of workers on strike can help in understanding ways that the McGill administration has dealt with labour disputes, and can provide a foundation for future labour struggles at McGill.

When embarking on this research, looking at informal learning in social movements seemed important to what I was focusing on. As I started to write, the interviews and the actual writing of this thesis taught me some ways in which so much of learning is embedded in the social organizations of our lives. The way in which we learn on a daily basis is rooted in the institutional power that connects us with one another and influences our lives. If anything, the strike has brought a new understanding, for me, of the politics embedded in informal learning.

Using a methodology of institutional/political activist ethnography has helped me to disrupt the dichotomy of research and activism, and connects both to find ways to oppose and resist ruling relations. Furthermore, as described in my methodology chapter, putting informal learning and social movement learning theory into practice, and documenting workers' experiences of learning through the picket line, can help in future social movements and labour struggles, as well as making a contribution to understanding social movement learning. Furthermore, I hope this project can provide a foundation upon which other projects (such as research at the doctoral level), can delve deeper, perhaps in studying informal learning within unions with more of a gender and race analysis. I hope this thesis helps the participants who were interviewed to debrief about the strike, through documenting and recounting their experiences, as well as helping the union to record its history. Furthermore, in moving forward with this topic, I believe that future research can also be done to more extensively observe the relationship between the development of corporate administrative university structures and the growth of unions at universities such as McGill.

Lastly, using institutional/political activist ethnography provides a method to look at the ways in which institutions coordinate people's experiences in order to provide frameworks and guides for future grassroots action. I hope that this thesis will contribute to an institutional memory[7] of labour struggles of McGill

[7] I also hope that people reading this will look at Mahtab Nazemi's MA thesis, *Beyond Racism: Mapping Ruling Relations in a Canadian University from the Standpoint of Racialized Women Student Activists,* which uses institutional ethnography to look at the experiences of racialized women at McGill. I hope that both of these theses combined can be used to look at the ruling relations at McGill and provide an institutional history of social struggles at McGill.

and can act as a helpful resource for future labour struggles and student movements, including an understanding of the ways in which university administrative regimes function, and informing strategies to confront these power relations.

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Appendix A

CHRONOLOGY

September 2011

September 1st	MUNACA goes on strike. Picket lines were constructed outside of McGill University, both on Downtown and Macdonald Campus. The union consists of 1,700 non-academic staff at McGill in positions such as clerical workers, library assistants, and technicians.
September 7th	McGill Faculty Labour Action Group (MFLAG) formed. MFAG is a group of McGill Faculty members, librarians, and other academic staff who formed our of concern about the MUNACA strike, and
September 23rd	First Injunction granted from the court system restricting MUNACA from picketing 4 metres of any entry or exit to McGill property, a maximum of 15 people can be 4 metres from all entries and exits, and no wearing of MUNACA and PSAC pins, badges, signs, within 4 metres. For more info: http://www.munaca.com/legaldocs
September 29th	MUNACA reaches out to members of the Board of Governors by sending letters asking them to take action and a stance the strike, and to help MUNACA reach a fair deal.

October 2011

October 6th	Second Injunction granted against MUNACA for picketing outside senior administrators and board of governors homes and workplaces. The injunction restricted MUNACA workers from blocking or impeding access, making amplified noise, and being within 10metres of workplaces of Board of Governors and private homes of Senior administrators.
October 11-14th	Homecoming weekend at McGill was October 11-14th. MUNACA used strategies to picket outside the Omni Hotel during the Red & White Dinner celebrating homecoming and sit and block the hotel's Sherbrooke entrance. MUNACA published a statement asking people to donors and alumni's to withhold donations to McGill until the strike is resolved and negotiations are fair. For more information: http://www.munaca.com/node/359

October 20th	MUNACA members picketed at the MUHC (McGill University Health Centre) Hospital at the Glen Yards Construction Site. This strike action shut down the construction on the site for the day when construction workers refused to cross the picket line. The Vice-Principal of Administration and Finance at McGill claimed that this action was an "unnecessary, provocative action".
October 21st	Third Injunction restricts MUNACA members from picketing outside of MUHC. The injunction stated that MUNACA workers cannot block of impede access to the site and cannot be within 3 metres of the entrance of exit. For more information: http://www.munaca.com/legaldocs
October 23	McGill administration is granted an Injunction through the court system stating.
December 2011	
December 1st	Tentative agreement reached between MUNACA and McGill University.
December 5th	McGill ratifies new collective agreement with a ratification vote that passed with 71.5% in favour of a new-five year contract. The final agreement included a 2.2% across-the-board retroactive wage increase, a decision-making rights on the university's pension and benefits committee.
February 17th	The review of McGill's collective agreement stalls. Some discrepancies and new or modified articles of the new Collective Agreement by McGill and workers wait for their retroactive pay.
March 9th	250 MUNACA members demonstrate on campus regarding stalled review of collective agreement.
May 3rd	MUNACA and PSAC join. PSAC is certified as the bargaining agent for MUNACA. MUNACA is now named MUNACA-PSAC Local 17602.
June 19th	MUNACA signs new collective agreement

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant,

I am contacting you in regards to my research for my Masters thesis for the Department of Integrated Studies in Education under the supervision of Dr. Aziz Choudry. I would like to invite you to participate in my research by partaking in a one-on-one interview.

The project I am focusing on will be looking at how learning occurs within unions and union organizing in academic institutions. I have chosen to ask you to participate in this study because I believe you are someone who has experienced working within a union and/or doing labor organizing at McGill University. I would like to know and ask you about what you have learned and how your understanding has changed through working with unions, in various capacities.

Should you choose to participate in this research I would meet with you to provide you with any information, questions, clarifications, or concerns about this research. You may withdraw from this study at any time (before, during, and/or after the interview) and any information you have provided with me will be kept completely confidential. If you accept my invitation to participate in this study, it will mean that you will be participating in a 60 minute one-on-one interview with me, the principal investigator.

The interview will consist of a set of questions which I will provide you with prior to the interview date. I will also provide you with a consent form which will include detailed information regarding the purpose of this study, information and reassurance regarding confidentiality, and the ownership of your contributions. The interview you will be participating in will be audio recorded and transcribed by me, and will be kept in safe locked file cabinet where only I will have access to it. After transcription, I would be happy to meet with you to provide you with the full transcription, and to discuss with you if there is anything you would like to remove or change.

All names in my research will be changed and not disclosed. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns, or if you would like more information regarding this study and my proposed research. If you accept, I will provide you with a consent form that you will have to carefully read and sign.

Sincerely,

Nakita Sunar
514.xxx.xxxx
nakita.sunar@mail.mcgill.ca

Appendix C: Consent Form

Dear Participant,

You have been invited to participate in a research study. Below is a brief summary of the research, please read through this form carefully and sign your consent to use your participation in this study.

Title of Research: Learning on picket lines: unions and social movement learning

Principal Investigator:
Nakita Sunar, M.A. Student
Department of Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University
nakita.sunar@mail.mcgill.ca, 514.xxx.xxxx

Research Supervisor:
Dr. Aziz Choudry, Professor
Department of Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University
aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca, 514.xxx.xxxx

Summary of proposed research:
The purpose of this research is to understand and examine the ways in which learning occurs through social movements. More specifically, this research will explore how different forms of learning occurs within unions and union organizing in academic institutions such as McGill university. This project will contribute to already-existing bodies of literature documenting union histories at McGill, as well as cataloguing the responses of students, staff and faculty, and the general public towards union activities.

Participation in this research:
Participation in this study consists of taking part in a 60 minute one-on-one interview. The interview will consist of a set of questions, which I will provide you with prior to the interview date. The interview you will be participating in will be audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher, and will be kept in safely locked file cabinet or password protected file where only the researcher/principal investigator will have access to it. After transcription, the researcher will meet with you to provide you with the full transcription, and to discuss with you if there is anything you would like to remove or change.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from this study at any time before, during, and/or after the study takes place. You are also allowed to refuse or decline to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. All names of the participants will be changed, and not disclosed to anyone. All information you provide during the research will be kept in confidence, this means solely the principal investigator will have access

to this research. If you choose to withdraw from this study, you must not disclose any content of the research that was provided throughout this study.

Consent:
If you consent to everything mentioned above, please sign and date below. Your signature below indicates that you agree to participate in this study, be audio-recorded, and transcribed. If you have any concerns or questions you may contact the principal investigator and/or the research supervisor. Please keep a copy of this consent form for your own records.

If you have any concerns or questions related to the ethics of this study, please contact McGill Research Ethics Board, at 514.398.6831.

I have read the above information and have asked any questions I have of the principal investigator. I agree to participate in this study. My signature indicates that I am informed about this study and the potential risks.

Name of participant: Signature of participant:

_____ _____

Date:

_____

Name of principal investigator: Signature of principal investigator:

_____ _____