

A Crude Depiction of Oil: A Comparative Discourse Analysis of CBC Calgary and British Columbia's Coverage of the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project.

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### **Abstract**

As fossil fuels become increasingly associated with images of ecological destruction and humanitarian concerns, many have come to question the future viability of Alberta's oil sands. In the face of uncertainty, the fossil fuel industry and Alberta government attempt to secure public consent for resource extraction by legitimizing the assumption that fossil fuel development is imperative to economic and social welfare. Accordingly, this research paper will examine the news media's role in facilitating this process by sponsoring hegemonic neoliberal discourses touting the promise of oil sands, while silencing dissenting voices highlighting its environmental and social repercussions. While the majority of literature focuses on the mainstream media, scant research has examined the role of public service broadcasting (PSB) in this matter, despite the crucial role they play in sustaining democracy. Consequently, this research fills this gap in the literature by analyzing the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) framing of the controversial Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion project (TMX) in a bid to examine whether it's fulfilling its mandate to remain unfettered by corporate and government influences. Specifically, it involves a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of CBC Calgary (N=12) and CBC British Columbia (N=15) to gauge whether local attitudes, values, and beliefs towards the fossil fuel industry are reflected in their respective framing of TMX. Overall, the findings reveal that while CBC B.C. and Calgary's coverage does reflect local attitudes surrounding TMX, the CBC Calgary's narratives reflect the neoliberal discourses sponsored by the Alberta government and fossil fuel industry, thus raising questions about the relationship between public broadcasting, democratic institutions, and the corporate interests of the fossil fuel industry.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Heralded as an “energy superpower,” (Way, 2011) Canada’s fossil fuel industry is facing an increasingly uncertain future fuelled by plummeting oil prices, a lack of investment, and just recently, the emergence of a global pandemic. At the same time, the environmental and social ramifications of the Alberta oil sands are being pushed into mainstream discourses by environmental and Indigenous activists, thus casting an unappealing image over the industry. Most recently, the Trans Mountain Pipeline (TMX) became a national battleground for contested politics surrounding the oil sands. In addition to garnering significant criticism from environmentalists and Indigenous communities, the controversy also paved the way for an inter-provincial feud between the B.C. and Alberta governments.

In times of despair, research suggests the fossil fuel industry has gone to significant lengths to secure hegemonic consent for the continued development of the oil sands. Given their proximity to the Alberta government, industry actors and pro-pipeline politicians are in a privileged position to sponsor neoliberal discourses in the news media legitimizing the assumption that economic and social welfare is contingent on the continued development of the fossil fuel industry. Accordingly, a growing body of research suggests mainstream newspapers, in particular, serve the dominant interests of oil executives and governments by framing the development of resource extraction as necessary economic and job growth while silencing alternative discourses highlighting their environmental and social consequences (Gunster & Saurette, 2014; Dusyk et al., 2018; Way, 2011).

While the mainstream news media’s involvement in the dissemination of neoliberal ideology is well recognized in critical scholarship, scant research has examined the role of public service broadcasters (PSB) in the matter, despite being a cornerstone of democracy (UNESCO,

2005). In addition to providing citizens with valuable information about public affairs, it also operates outside the scope of government and corporate interests. As a public service, PSB distinguishes itself from the corporate media landscape by providing unbiased information, catering to the general interests, representing a plurality of viewpoints, and perhaps most importantly, holding government bodies accountable (Conseil mondial de la radiotélévision, 2001). Accordingly, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), which is Canada's sole public broadcaster, is mandated to "maintain freedom from control by vested interests, whether political or financial" (Caplan and Sauvageau, 1986, p. 263).

With the emergence of the digital media landscape, however, scholars argue it has become increasingly difficult for public broadcasters, including the CBC, to maintain political independence from governments and corporations that champion neoliberal policies such as deregulation, privatization, and defunding of public services (Hackett, 2017; De Cillia & McCurdy, 2016; Taras & Weddell, 2020). Bearing this in mind, this research paper will examine this shift through the lens of the Deep State thesis, which in the Canadian context, suggests the fossil fuel industry has fostered a cozy relationship with the Alberta and federal governments, allowing it to influence energy policies to benefit its own capitalist interests (Taft, 2016; Blue et al., 2016; Carter, 2011). This consequently erodes the essence of a democracy requiring government institutions to operate externally of corporate and vested interests (Brown, 2020).

Accordingly, this research paper attempts to examine whether this tight-knit relationship between the Alberta government has permeated the CBC's role as a democratic institution to remain unfettered by corporate interests, as suggested by the Deep State thesis and as shown to be the case with corporate news media, or whether the public broadcaster is fulfilling its democratic duty to provide Canadians with critical information about public affairs (Hackett,

2017). A critical examination of the CBC's framing practices is warranted as it would provide valuable insight into whether the broadcaster is fulfilling its duty as a public servant to keep citizens informed about governmental and political matters such as climate change policy (Newton, 2016) and to provide a plurality of discourses. Furthermore, it can contribute to policy discussions surrounding the future of PSB in an increasingly commercialized world guided by neoliberal principles (Newton, 2016).

To address this issue, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the CBC's portrayal of the TMX is performed in an effort to assess whether coverage of the pipeline reflects local attitudes and beliefs, and whether it contributes to the neoliberal assumption that the oil sands are indispensable to Canada's economic and social welfare. Thus, it is guided by the following questions: (1) to what extent, if at all, does coverage about TMX vary locally between CBC Calgary and British Columbia, and if so, how can this variation be understood? (2) In what ways, if any, is the Alberta government's pro-oil discourse reflected in CBC Calgary's news coverage of the Trans Mountain Pipeline? (3) Drawing on the Deep State theory, what do the findings represent in the broader context of public service broadcasting as a democratic institution? The final question will allow us to reflect on previous research suggesting PSB, and by extension the CBC, is facing uncertainty amid a media landscape saturated by corporate influences.

With this said, the following research paper is structured as follows: Chapter 2 will provide a contextual and historical synopsis that will help situate the research topic, including the Trans Mountain Pipeline controversy; the current state of the Alberta oil sands; the Deep State theory and; public service broadcasting and the CBC. Following suit, Chapter 3 will set up the theoretical framework for the research question, including an overview of the available research. Meanwhile, Chapter 4 will present a detailed overview of the research question and

methodology, while Chapter 5 will unveil the findings and provides a comprehensive discussion about their significance. Finally, the research paper will conclude with Chapter 6, which provides an overview of the results, while addressing the paper's limitations and future direction for research.

## **Chapter 2: Contextual Framework**

The following chapter outlines the contextual elements that will help guide the research framework. First, it provides an overview of the controversy surrounding the Trans Mountain Pipeline, including its history and the challenges it faced. Then, it summarizes the current state of uncertainty surrounding Alberta's fossil fuel industry. It follows suit by presenting the Deep State thesis and how it applies to the Canadian energy landscape and concludes by profiling the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), its mandate, and the state of public service broadcasting.

### **2.1) Trans Mountain Pipeline**

Established in 1953 by American energy conglomerate Kinder Morgan, the Trans Mountain pipeline (TMX) transports refined bitumen—a voluminous mixture of oil, sand, and water—to Canada's West Coast through 1,150 kilometres of pipeline running through Alberta, British Columbia, and Washington State (Trans Mountain, n.d.). After expressing a desire to increase pipeline capacity, Kinder Morgan applied to the National Energy Board (NEB)—the federal body that oversees the approval of energy projects—in December 2013 to triple the pipeline's capacity threefold from 300,000 barrels of crude oil a day to 890,000 barrels a day, with construction slated to begin in December 2017. As part of the expansion project, the pipeline would run through Edmonton, Alberta, to Burrard Inlet in Burnaby, British Columbia (Linnit, 2013) through an additional 980 kilometres of new pipelines and would open Canada's energy supply chain to Asian markets.

#### **2.1.1) Environmental and Indigenous pushback**

Following Kinder Morgan's submission to the NEB, the pipeline project was met with bitter resistance from local politicians, environmental activists and First Nations communities,

who argued the federal government had not adequately assessed the pipeline's implications on ecological conditions and Indigenous land rights (Radio-Canada, 2017). Namely, environmental opponents argued the pipeline would spill and threaten B.C.'s inland waterways and coastline, while indigenous communities asserted the pipeline would violate their sovereignty and impact their culture. TMX's construction, for instance, would have had grave impacts on the health and food sovereignty of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation by raising chemical toxins and hazardous biotoxins (Jonasson et al., 2019). Furthermore, opponents argue the environmental impact assessment of the expansion project failed to consider the pipeline's impact on such local health concerns and impacts of climate change (Jonasson et al., 2019). Meanwhile, mass demonstrations continued throughout much of 2018, with many organized protests taking part around B.C. In a notable example, federal Green Party leader Elizabeth May and New Democratic Party MP Kennedy Stewart were arrested alongside 100 other demonstrators for staging a protest on a court-protected zone near the pipeline's construction site (CBC News, 2018a). Persistent resistance from indigenous communities and environmentalists eventually led to the NEB's decision to temporarily postpone public hearings for the project 2016 and prompted the federal government to commit to an environmental assessment of the pipeline, which involved appointing a three-member panel to conduct an environmental review of TMX (Canadian Press, 2019a).

### **2.1.2) Political Tensions: British Columbia versus Alberta**

Uncertainty around the pipeline was further intensified by an ongoing political dispute between British Columbia and Alberta, characterized by their respective governments' divergent standings towards the pipeline. While British Columbia Premier John Horgan had consistently opposed the pipeline on the grounds of environmental and social impact on the province, then-

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley had remained steadfast in her support for the pipeline, arguing it would bolster provincial employment and economic growth. This geographical divergence is also reflected in terms of population; while Albertans tend to perceive resource extraction projects such as pipelines as an economic benefit, British Columbians perceive them as an environmental risk (Axsen, 2014). By early 2018, mounting tension between both provinces was eventually manifested as trade war over the expansion project. In January 2018, the province of British Columbia approved a motion restricting all oil shipments from Alberta until re-examination of the pipeline's environmental and social ramifications, which was consequently labelled as an unconstitutional and politically motivated stalling tactic by Alberta (Ip & Johnston, 2018).

In response to B.C.'s motion, the Alberta government moved to implement Bill 12, also known as *Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act* or the "turn-off-the-taps" legislation, giving the province the authority to restrict oil and gas exports to B.C. from Alberta without an appropriate licence (Bellefontaine, 2018). B.C. consequently blasted the measure as being unconstitutional and threatening to B.C. fuel prices, and subsequently filed for court action in May 2019. By September 2019, B.C. had been granted a temporary injunction against the legislation, though Bill 12 was ultimately never used by Alberta (Schmunk, 2019). Amid the ongoing dispute, many analysts argued TMX's fate ultimately rested in the hands of the federal government, adding it was incumbent on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government to halt the political commotion surrounding the pipeline and get it built (De Cillia, 2018).

Citing the fate of the cancelled Energy East and Line 3 pipelines, several pro-resource advocates also warned the federal government that by failing to build TMX, Canada would face a severe investment chill from foreign energy investors (De Cillia, 2018). Amid years of

significant delays to the project, Kinder Morgan eventually announced it would suspend all non-essential spending surrounding the pipeline, prompting the federal government to purchase the beleaguered pipeline by May 2018 (Radio-Canada, 2018). When pressed about the matter, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau unapologetically defended his government's decision to buy the pipeline, arguing it was an economic necessity and in the public's best interest (Fife & McCarthy, 2017; CTV, 2019). Following two subsequent rejections from the National Energy Board (NEB), citing a lack of environmental and Indigenous consultation, the expansion project eventually received approval, and construction began in December 2019 (Boles, 2019).

## **2.2) Canada, Oil Sands, and Growing Uncertainty**

As famously touted by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper during a 2006 speech in England, Canada has long been proclaimed an "Energy Superpower" in the oil and gas industry (Kirby, 2015). Nearing six million barrels of oil a day, Canada has emerged as the world's fifth-largest producer, with its biggest client being the United States (Krauss, 2020). While the country has had a long involvement in the gas, hydroelectricity, coal, and uranium industries, Alberta's oil sands have emerged as its main economic driver within the last century (Way, 2011). With its deposit accounting for 64% of the country's total production and infusing more than 60% into Western Canada's economy (Natural Resources Canada, 2019; Krauss, 2020), the province remains highly dependent on oil royalties to sustain its political, social and economic activities. If Alberta were a country, it would be considered the world's fifth-largest oil-producing country (Leahy, 2019). As such, it has been actively seeking and encouraging the expansion of its oil sands since the mid-twentieth century (Davidson & Gismondi, 2011). When it comes to expanding Canada's pipeline infrastructure, proponents have often argued new

pipeline routes are necessary to diversify Canada's energy market away from the U.S., to bolster job growth in the energy sector, and to reduce reliance on crude-by-rail transportation.

### **2.2.1) An Oily, Slippery Slope**

Merely a decade after Prime Minister Harper marketed the nation as an “energy superpower,” Canada's fossil fuel industry has been cast into doubt as plummeting international markets, divestment by major oil companies, unemployment, tanking production and increased talks of Western separatism unfold (Panetta, 2019; Hussey, 2020). Moreover, recent forecasts suggest a quarter of all Albertans will lose their job in the oil sector, which will ultimately “reshape” the entire province's economic landscape. Since 2014, over the majority of the 53,000 jobs terminated from Canada's oil and gas industry are not expected to return (Hussey, 2020). Albertans themselves are having a change of heart when it comes to the oil industry's ominous future, with the majority supporting a transition towards renewable energy (De Cillia, 2020). Along with bolstering political tensions among international oil producers like Russia and Saudi Arabia, coupled with a global push towards renewable energy and an unexpected global health crisis, the future of Canada's fossil fuel sector errs on the side of despair.

The debate surrounding the future of Canada's energy sector has landed at the junction of economic interests and environmental concerns. Since 2015, Alberta's energy sector has suffered from low prices, while oil industry proponents argue resistance from environmentalists and Indigenous groups is only adding to the precarious state of the industry. At the same time, delays in pipeline approvals by the National Energy Board (NEB) has prompted Alberta to scale back on oil production in the last two years to clear out a glut in oil storage (Krauss, 2020). Adding fuel to the fire, the federal government in 2019 passed its controversial Bill C-69, or the *Impact Assessment Act*, which gave the NEB a more robust mandate in the assessment of major energy

projects. The bill was purported by industry supporters as being a “pipeline killer” by discouraging investment in the oil sands by making the approval process too strenuous (Elliott, 2019). Amid these cancellations, analysts argue dozens of impending energy projects won’t be built until more export pipeline capacity becomes established in the country (Healing, 2020). Pro-resource politicians also argue doubts over the industry’s future is discouraging further investment in the Alberta oil sands, which consequently threatens Canada’s economic ecosystem.

Just days before the federal government was slated to make a final decision on the project, mining developer Teck Resources announced in February 2020 it would withdraw its application to build its Frontier mine—a nine-year-long mission to expand Canada’s oil sands industry—near Fort McMurray, Alberta, due to a heightened degree of uncertainty around the future of energy projects in Canada. The company’s decision also came amid weeks of demonstrations and blockades in support of B.C.’s Wet’suwet’en First Nation. (Connolly, 2020; Krauss, 2020). In the wake of the project’s cancellation, incumbent Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, long known for his stance on defending the province’s oil industry, urged the federal government to “decide whether the rule of law and national unity means anything in Canada, and whether jobs and growth matter to our future” (Connolly, 2020). Furthermore, some of the world’s largest players in the energy sector, including Royal Dutch Shell, ConocoPhillips, Total, and Marathon Oil, have slowly divested from Alberta oil sands (Healing, 2019). Citing a growing level of uncertainty around Canada’s energy sector, for example, Shell announced in 2017 it would reduce its share in the oil sands from 60% to a mere 10%. (Shell, 2017).

### **2.2.2) Environmental Resistance**

With the rapid expansion of the oil sands in the latter half of the twentieth century came undesirable consequences on a national scale, such as rapid inflation, housing and labour shortages, increases in drug use and prostitution (Adkin and Stares, 2016, p. 195; McCurdy, 2018, p. 34). One of the most perceived consequences of the fossil fuel development, however, is its environmental one. The extraction of bitumen from the Athabasca deposits is now the fastest-growing source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Canada, making them a significant contributor to climate change (Swart & Weaver, 2012, p. 134). Meanwhile, experts predict the country is unlikely to meet its climate goals under the 2030 Paris climate agreement (Leahy, 2019).

While the governments of Canada and Alberta do, to some extent, engage in climate change policy, including the implementation of a carbon pricing scheme, such environmental consequences have nevertheless made the Alberta oil sands a national symbol for those who oppose the development of fossil fuels in Canada, often labelling them as “tar sands” or “dirty” (Carson, 2011). Though Canada has been touted as a champion of climate change policy on the international stage, especially with at the helm of Justin Trudeau’s Liberal government, it’s engagement to developing the oil sands industry suggests otherwise. As former Alberta Liberal Leader Kevin Taft best puts it: “Canada wants to be a climate champion. At the same time, it wants to increase its oil exports” (Leahy, 2019).

The Alberta and federal government’s desire to push for fossil fuel development, meanwhile, has prompted a slate of protests by environmentalists, arguing it will not only bolster the impacts of climate change, but would also pose a threat to human and ecological health. On several occasions, citizen demonstrations both in Canada and south of the border have hampered plans to develop Alberta’s fossil fuel industry. For instance, a 2015 report titled *Lockdown: The End of Growth in the Tar Sands* suggests major delays and challenges in the construction of new

pipelines in Alberta are driven by citizen demonstrations and legal battles over the pipelines' environmental ramifications (McKinnon et al., 2015). Likewise, environmental resistance from the U.S., namely towards the defunct Keystone XL pipeline project, is argued to have been a turning point in the Alberta oil sands by inspiring more Canadians to stage mass demonstrations against energy projects such as TMX (Panetta, 2019).

### **2.2.3) Indigenous Resistance**

Meanwhile, Canada's Indigenous communities have long voiced their opposition towards the development of Canada's energy industry, especially in Western Canada, on the grounds of social, environmental, and constitutional impacts. Specifically, many have highlighted the industry's impact on Indigenous communities' health, quality of life, water quality, wildlife populations, air quality, and most recently, their constitutional rights (Droitsch & Simieritsch, 2010). With respect to constitutional rights, First Nations have increasingly noted that the federal government, in tandem with the Alberta government, had largely dismissed such communities' rights to water, land, fishing, hunting, and trapping, and that such protected rights are often compromised by the interests of the fossil fuel industry (Droitsch & Simieritsch, 2010). Of note, however, is that several Indigenous communities have benefitted considerably from resource expansions projects over the years, and as such, the majority of Indigenous communities are not opposed to the industry in and of itself, but rather, oppose any expansion of the industry as it commits to transitioning towards renewable energy (Leahy, 2019).

Meanwhile, infringements of constitutionally protected rights have been the source of several protests and demonstrations regarding the development of resource extraction projects, including those tied to the Trans Mountain Pipeline. As with several resource development projects, Indigenous communities have often asserted that all levels of government, along with

the industry itself, have on several occasions failed strike a balance between the competing interests of the fossil fuels industry and those of First Nations, which has often resulted in judicial action alleging a lack of consultation and discussions (Weber, 2016). Such concerns were highlighted in a 2016 report by the Alberta government, which revealed authorities had failed to consider Aboriginal and Treaty rights in its development of the oil sands. Specifically, some of the violations highlighted in the report include the province's failure to consult with communities; a disregard for traditional land uses and culture; and failing to protect the environment of Treaty holders, among other things (Morin, 2016). Though Indigenous communities approve of certain projects, resistance towards the further development of fossil fuel projects by Indigenous communities in Alberta, as previously noted, has added a layer of uncertainty in the future of its oil sands industry (Purdon & Palleja, 2019). Despite these allegations, however, the fossil fuel industry maintains it has worked with Indigenous communities over the years to properly assess risks (Leahy, 2019).

#### **2.2.4) The Emergence of a Global Pandemic**

Amid ongoing concerns surrounding the future of the Alberta oil sands, producers were further impacted by the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) in early 2020. The global economic shutdown prompted by the pandemic, including plummeting profits, significant staffing layoffs, and cutbacks on spending, was felt widely both at home and abroad. On a global scale, the crisis is expected to reduce global oil demand in the first quarter of 2020 by a hefty 3.8 million barrels of oil a day against 2019 levels, which will inevitably result in plunging oil prices and a glut in oversupply that could last several years (Mabee, 2020). Domestically, the price of Western Canadian Select—one of North American's largest streams of heavy crude oil—plummet nearly 45 per cent in value to U.S.\$16 are expected to remain low for the

remainder of the year (Mabee, 2020). The pandemic has also had an impact on the federal government's climate change agenda, with reports indicating Ottawa and the Alberta government had signed an agreement to scale back on environmental monitoring of the oil sands due to the economic repercussions of the health crisis, prompting backlash from environmental activists (Weber, 2020). Concerns surrounding the economic repercussions of the pandemic, coupled with a long-standing uncertainty around the viability of Canada's fossil fuel sector, have nevertheless prompted a wave of anxiety surrounding the oil sands since the start of 2020 (Ljunggren & Smith, 2020; Bakx, 2020; De Cillia, 2020).

### **2.2.5) 2020 Russia-Saudi Arabia Price War**

Ongoing political disputes, both at home and abroad, are also casting a shadow of doubt over Alberta's oil sands. On the heels of a global pandemic, Saudi Arabia and Russia, both of the world's largest oil producers, became entangled in an economic war for global oil market share in early 2020 following the collapse of a three-year agreement to restrain oil output and keep oil prices at a moderate level. Provoked by Moscow's refusal to renegotiate the deal, OPEC countries announced they would ramp up production and flood the market with surplus oil supplies, causing the oil prices to plummet by over 60% in 2020 (Ng, 2020). Though the two countries eventually reached a truce in April, the repercussions were felt across the world. Amid the dispute, the price of a barrel of Canada crude oil fell to the lowest level in its history (Evans, 2020), while a number of large oil sands players in Alberta announced they would cut down on capital spending for the year, thus prompting significant cuts on spending and salaries in the sector (Canadian Press, 2020). According to experts, the substantial drop in oil prices, coupled with the impacts of a global health crisis, will have a long-lasting impact on Alberta's fossil fuel

industry (Seskus, 2020). Such circumstances pushed the federal government to offer a relief package for the oil sector.

### **2.3) Canada, Fossil Fuels, and the Deep State**

#### **2.3.1) The Deep State: Where Industry & Democracy Entwine**

Modern neoliberalism, which embraces the privatization of public services, agencies, and corporations (Adkin, 2016), has enabled large corporations to tailor law and policy to their own ends (Brown, 2016). The intertwining of political and corporate interests is often likened the emergence of a “Deep State”—a collection of private and government interests that collaborate, behind the scenes, to establish a political framework that corresponds to a particular agenda (Cooper et al., 2018). Harbisher (2019) describes the Deep State as a “shadow government that operates behind the façade of everyday politics; or as a clandestine group of political and commercial interests that seek to manipulate public opinion, trade and commerce.” (p. 57).

Alluding to the neoliberal tendencies of the deep state, Giroux (2015) notes:

The “deep state” empties politics of all vestiges of all democratic rule while attempting, on the other hand, to make its machinery of power invisible and, on the other, to legitimate neoliberal ideology as a matter of common sense. The decisions that shape all aspects of the commanding institutions of society are made largely in private, behind closed doors by the anonymous financial elite, corporate CEOs, rich bankers, the unassailing leaders of the military-industrial complex, and other kingpins of the neoliberal state (p. 89).

Under the conditions set forth by the Deep State, the political system, along with democratic institutions, are influenced by vested corporate interests in such a way that moulds policymaking in their favour (Giroux, 2015). As explored in the forthcoming section, Canada’s fossil fuel industry has had a large role to play in influencing policies surrounding climate change and fossil fuel development in Canada, and specifically, in Alberta.

#### **2.3.2) Canada and Alberta’s Deep State**

Canada's reliance on fossil fuel revenues has encouraged a cozy relationship between the federal government, the Alberta government, and oil industry stakeholders (Haluza-Delay, 2018; Daub & Carroll, 2015; Taft, 2017; Carter, 2011; Graham et al., 2015; Lequesne, 2019). In Alberta, this relationship can be traced back to the late twentieth century under the Klein government (Harrison, 2015). While this relationship may be economically beneficial, scholars argue it has done more harm than good to the nation's democratic functioning. Here, democracy is defined as "citizens' rights to vote, to express opinions freely and to have free access to information and ideas" (Dawes, 2017a, p. 39). Timothy Mitchell's (2011) develops on this notion in what he calls a *carbon democracy*, where democratic countries whose economies rely chiefly on oil production, including Canada, have come to depend on the fossil fuel industry to sustain their democratic institutions, which in turn allows the industry to pervert policymaking in favour of its economic interests, that is, to sustain the development of fossil fuels.

Expanding on this concept in what she deems *petro-politics*, Carter (2011) argues Alberta's scarce environmental considerations when it comes to the development of its energy industry—including regulatory gaps and poor consultation—is a result of a "symbiotic relationship between government and oil companies, with governments highly dependent on revenues from private oil developments and oil companies earning impressive profits from oil extraction on public lands" (p. 52). This concept is echoed by Kevin Taft (2017), who argues Canada's key democratic institutions have been "captured" by the oil industry, thus obstructing any meaningful advancement or action on climate change policy. Through public relations campaigns, significant lobbying efforts, media sponsorships, and political financing, industry representatives and policymakers collaborate to ensure industry growth is maintained. In exchange for capital returns, the federal and Alberta governments satisfy industry interests

through subsidies, lax environmental regulation, and by actively defending the industry domestically and abroad. Furthermore, Alberta's lack of autonomy from the fossil fuel industry extends beyond government legislation, with many Albertans have come to be dependent on the fossil fuel industry for their mental and economic well-being and sense of identity.

Consequently, regular Albertans, whether directly affiliated with the oil industry or not, "tend to go to the barricades to defend the oil companies when there is any sign of criticism from outside the province or, indeed, from internal naysayers" (Harrison, 2015, p. 84). Thus, facets of the deep state are reflected not just in government dealings, but also in everyday society.

### **2.3.2) Industry, Canadian Government, and Lobbying Practices**

Occurrences of this tight-knit relationship between Canadian governments and the fossil fuel industry are extensively documented in academia and elsewhere (Taft, 2017; Graham et al., 2019; Thompson, 2015; De Souza, 2018; Blue et al., 2018). In their analysis of the fossil fuel industry's federal lobbying activity under Prime Ministers Justin Trudeau and Stephen Harper, for instance, Graham et al. (2019) identified intense patterns of interaction among few industry representatives and key public office holders, including ministers and senior public servants. Moreover, the authors found "consistent and steady" lobbying activities often coincided with sweeping regulatory changes to federal environmental policy, while industry pundits tended to communicate with officials from Natural Resources Canada, the House of Commons and Environment Canada. This shift in lobbying tactics, they argue, "points toward a 'deep state' whereby key government institutions and actors become integrated with private firms and interest groups that together co-produce regulation and policy" (p. 6).

In another instance, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's national campaign manager, Dan Gagnier, was forced to step down from his position in 2018 amid reports he had advised five

TransCanada officials on how best to shape federal decisions on a national energy strategy to secure its controversial pipeline proposal, despite not being a registered lobbyist himself (Thompson, 2015). Elsewhere, documents obtained in 2018 revealed that in the wake of Kinder Morgan's decision to halt all non-essential spending on TMX, senior government officials held several phone calls with the company's CEO, Ian Anderson, to discuss speeding up the pipeline's approval process despite ongoing public consultations with Indigenous communities (De Souza, 2018). Taken together, the close relationship embraced by the Canadian federal government, the Alberta government, and the fossil fuel industry sets out the conditions required for the development of a Deep State. As explored in the next section, and as unravelled in the theoretical framework of this research paper, the Deep State is positioned to weaken Canada's democratic institutions, including the federally mandated Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

## **2.4) CBC, The Public Sphere, and the State of Public Service Broadcasting**

### **2.4.1) Democracy, the Public Sphere and PSB**

The essence of journalism has long been associated with Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere and democracy (Lewis, 2016). Habermas's original account of the public sphere referred to the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century bourgeoisie class, including wealthy academics and shopkeepers, who would congregate in public spaces like coffee shops and social clubs to engage in open dialogue about current political affairs (Habermas, 1991). According to Habermas, this open dialogue among the elite class would serve to hold governments and politicians to account, much like modern media does so today. Habermas stipulates, however, that the rise of mass media, such as the newspaper and broadcast television, and its democratic potential paved way for the middle-class public sphere, which allowed regular citizens who are not members of the bourgeoisie engage in meaningful discussions about

political affairs. Much like with the rise of mass media, today's modern media encourages public scrutiny and transparency of government bodies, which in turn opens up a public dialogue and helps to uphold democracy (Habermas, 1991).

The public sphere has been instrumental in establishing the framework of PSB over the last century, namely as a result of its separation from corporate media, state power, and embrace of independent regulation. As Dawes (2017a) puts it, PSB is "a sphere between public and private realms that could be protected from both the state and the market" (p. 40). Furthermore, PSB is defined as "broadcasting made, financed and controlled by the public, for the public. It is neither commercial nor state-owned, free from political interference and pressure from commercial forces" (UNESCO, 2005). Nestled between state-controlled broadcasting and profit-oriented corporate media, PSB is situated around the key democratic principles of:

Informing citizens, highlighting and amplifying public issues, facilitating discussion and communicative exchanges between different segments of society, providing "universally" available broadcasting service throughout the country, and reducing the impact of social inequalities on public participation in the public discourse. These are classic functions of the democratic public sphere, but they are not well fulfilled by entertainment and profit oriented commercial broadcasters (Hackett, 2017, p. 100).

Given these factors, PSB constitutes a quintessential element of democracy for citizens from Canada to Australia, New Zealand, and Britain. At its very core, PSB is to remain unfettered by government influence while providing a plurality of discourses that encourage informed discussions about important public issues. As Taras and Weddell (2020) put it: "Public broadcasting is all about 'bridging,' 'witnessing,' and 'connecting'" (p. 9).

#### **2.4.2) CBC: Canada's National Broadcaster**

Established as a crown corporation in November 1936 (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2012), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) is a publicly funded national broadcaster whose mandate is to "contribute to the development of shared national consciousness and identity; to

reflect the regional and cultural diversity of Canada and; to contribute to the development of Canadian talent and nature.” (Government of Canada, 2019). Neither commercial nor state controlled, the CBC lends itself to the principles of accuracy, fairness, balance, and impartiality. Moreover, it claims that its journalism draws from facts that do not “promote any particular point of view on matters of public debate” (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, n.d., n.p.). The Canadian federal government’s 1986 Task Force on Broadcasting Policy proclaimed that the CBC must “maintain freedom from control by vested interests, whether political or financial” (Caplan and Sauvageau, 1986, p. 263). This is in line with the democratic role PSB, which is above all “an information and education tool, accessible to all and meant for all, whatever their social or economic status” (Conseil mondial de la radiotélévision, 2001, p.7).

The public broadcaster operates primarily on television, radio and a digital newspaper platform and covers a wide range of topics from national and local politics, to sports and entertainment. It also operates in a myriad of languages, including English, French, and eight Indigenous languages (Taras & Weddell, 2020). Furthermore, the CBC’s political bureau is based primarily in Ottawa, though it corresponds with dozens of other local offices around Canada, including both in Alberta and British Columbia. According to Taras & Waddell (2020), the CBC sets out to “be a connecting link and a unifying voice in a country challenged by vast distances, sharp and often painful linguistic and regional divides and the pervasive influence of American culture” (p. 7). In other words, the CBC’s mandate, at its very core, is to culturally tie Canadians together amid a large diaspora of narratives disseminated from governments, corporations, and foreign influences.

### **2.4.3) PSB in Downfall?**

According to Habermas, the public sphere has weakened in tandem with the rise of public relations, mass advertising, and the oversaturation of entertainment, which he argued has led way to a “fake version” of the public sphere (Habermas, 1991, p. 195). Much like the public sphere, scholars argue the state of PSB, both in Canada and elsewhere, is facing a predicament concerning its viability. Public broadcasters, they claim, have shifted from a model encouraging national unity and harmony towards one that promotes neoliberal values such as individualism, commercialism, and privatization (DeCillia & McCurdy, 2016; McChesney, 2001; Renner, 2013; Rowland, 2013; McCauley, 2003; Curran, 2002; Lewis, 2016; Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Raboy, 1998; Uzelman et al., 2005; Hackett, 2017; Dawes, 2017b; Brown, 2016). With the emergence of online news and stronger demand for defunding, moreover, it has become challenging for a public broadcaster to maintain political independence from neoliberal governments that champion such values (Hackett, 2017, p. 100).

As Herman and Chomsky (2002) contend, the rapid globalization of commerce and technology, along with growing financial pressures on non-commercial media, has significantly undermined the importance of PSB around the world. This concern is echoed by Raboy (1998), who calls for a need to legitimize PSB at a time when “its basis is under attack both on ideological and economic grounds,” that is to say, that it is losing its grounds as a social and cultural symbol of national unity, rather than economic or political one (pp. 168-69). A 2005 UNESCO report on the state of PSB argues the model “is more relevant than ever before, and [...] it is urgent to nurture and strengthen PSB institutions and practices to safeguard the integrity and interests of ‘citizens’” (p. 12). In the Canadian context, Taras & Weddell (2020) note the CBC is currently at a crossroads due to decades of funding cuts, political interference, poor management, and an overall desire to bolster the saturation of private broadcasters.

The neoliberalization of PSB is seldom documented in academia, though existing research points to an increase in neoliberal values embodied by public broadcasters. In their analysis of public discussions surrounding the CBC, DeCillia and McCurdy (2016) found that public broadcasting was no longer interpreted as a public good in the public discourse, but rather as an extension of the market embodied by a prioritization of ratings, advertising revenue, and productivity rates. At the same time, Lewis's (2016) analysis of the BBC's discourse reveals the public broadcaster's coverage of international events "in no way achieves any ideal of a discursive space free from market motives. Instead, it repeats and mirrors existing institutional power dynamics" (p. 21), to which he adds the BBC, "has allowed itself to forget the ideology that both brought it into being and which ratified its continued existence" (p. 35).

The trend towards the neoliberalization of PSB is paralleled by the growing interest of public officials to privatize or defund CBC and some of its functions (Rowland, 2013). Those who push for the privatization of PSB argue it's not as impartial as it once was and condemn its coverage for catering exclusively to elite audiences (Dawes, 2017b). In the Canadian context, moreover, the CBC is lambasted for getting in the way of private broadcasters, being a waste of taxpayers' money, and being of no importance (Taras & Waddell, 2020). Despite this interest, however, opinion polls indicate that most Canadians would prefer leaving control of the CBC in the hands of the public (Ladurantaye, 2013). Given the importance of public broadcasting to democratic integrity, this research will help understand the current state of PSB in Canada, along with its supposed independence from government influence, by analyzing the CBC's coverage of the controversial Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion project.

## **2.5) Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the ongoing controversy surrounding the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion project; the mounting uncertainty surrounding Canada's fossil fuel industry; how the close and unwavering relationship between government and industry is enabling the development of resource extraction in Canada despite mounting evidence of climate change; and how this tight-knit relationship, also known as the Deep State, is reshaping Canada's democratic institutions. Expanding on this contextual framework, this research paper will examine whether the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, an essential component of the democratic public sphere, has been impacted by this relationship between corporate and government interests amid a push for defunding and privatization. With this said, the forthcoming section will explore how hegemonic neoliberal discourses purveyed by the fossil fuel industry and government within the Deep State are communicated into public spaces, including through the media, to secure widespread consent for the development of fossil fuels in the face of mounting uncertainty.

### **Chapter 3: Theoretical Overview and Literature Review**

The following chapter provides an overview of relevant theory and literature that will help situate the research subject within a broader academic context. The pertinence of this section is twofold; first, it discusses how elite industry stakeholders attempt to maintain their hegemony by securing popular consent for the development of resource extraction.

Subsequently, it illustrates how the news media serve the capitalist interests of the elite by disseminating neoliberal ideology in their news coverage. By framing resource extraction as a public good, while silencing alternative narratives emphasizing their social and ecological ramifications, newspapers ultimately reproduce discourses that legitimize the oil industry.

#### **3.1) Hegemony, Ideology and Discourse**

##### **3.1.1) Hegemony: A Tool of Ruling Elites**

According to traditional Marxist theory, the network of capitalist elites that control the production of an industry seeking to exert their ideas onto subordinate classes to maintain their legitimacy (Laughey, 2010, n.p.). Expanding on this idea, political theorist Antonio Gramsci referred to hegemony as the process by which the dominant class obtains voluntary consent from the submissive as a means of advancing its self-serving political, social and economic interests (Gramsci, 1992). In other words, ruling groups maintain their hegemony by winning the approval of subordinate groups for the imposed social order (Lears, 1985). Furthermore, hegemony is secured when the consequences of capitalist activity, including labour, economic, and ecological exploitation, are systematically excluded from the public narrative and taken for granted by the masses (Artz, 2018, p. 10).

##### **3.1.2) Securing Hegemony through Ideology and Discourse**

Establishing hegemony does not require an active commitment by subordinate classes to the established social order, nor is it sustained through brute coercion (Lears, 1985). Rather, it is maintained through the incessant production and perpetuation of ideology (Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Purvis & Hunt, 1993)—a common set of values, beliefs and ideas through which the collective interests of the dominant class are established, legitimized, and maintained through the use of discourse (Carey & Foster, 2011, p. 250). Discourses, defined as an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations through which meanings are constructed and reproduced (Hajer, 1997, p. 44), provide a shared ground on which ideas are discussed, exchanged, and challenged (Davidsen, 2016, p. 243). Ideological discourses are conveyed through what Gramsci called *hegemonic apparatus* such as schools, churches, and the media (Mouffe, 2013; Çoban, 2018). Individuals' beliefs are thus shaped through their everyday interactions with these institutions, thus making them vulnerable to the absorption of dominant hegemonic ideology (Mouffe, 2013). With this regard, the elite class maintains its legitimacy by suppressing challenging discourses that could disband the established hegemonic order (Tulloch & Neilson, 2014, p. 27). However, a loss of equilibrium in their economic and political influence caused by the emergence of an alternative discourse risks provoking a counter-hegemony by the opposition, which, if successful, would prompt the emergence of a new social order (Çoban, 2018; Artz, 2018).

Lequesne (2019) expands upon Gramsci's work in what he calls "petro-hegemony," whereby powerful fossil fuels industries and pro-oil politicians operating within the Deep State produce conditions of popular consent by disseminating discourses that promote the economic and social welfare of resource extraction while silencing those who point to its social and environmental consequences. According to Lequesne, democratic governments whose economies rely heavily on fossil fuel revenues, including Canada and the United States, operate

through a system of consent, coercion, and compliance to maintain petro-hegemony. This sentiment is echoed by Haluza-Delay (2018), who alludes to the manifestation of petro-hegemony in Alberta:

In Alberta, while capitalism is generally embedded in the common-sense consciousness, petro-capitalism is fully embedded in the lifestyle practises and provincial politics making for a constantly contested terrain. [...] Mobilizing identities, projecting that there is no alternative, and erasure of the moral questions for technocratic mediation are among the means by which this hegemony is materially and discursively maintained (p. 4).

Here, Haluza-Delay points to petro-hegemonic discourses that are historically rooted in Alberta's reputation as an oil-producing province, wherein the desire to develop the fossil fuel industry is deeply embedded into the very fabric of its culture, rendering it commonsense knowledge for the average Albertan (Adkin, 2016). Such efforts by the Alberta government and the domestic oil industry to mobilize consent for fossil fuel development based on its economic and social benefits consequently embody the principles of modern neoliberal ideology, as explored in forthcoming sections.

### **3.2) Neoliberalism, Democracy, and Oil: The Economization of Everything**

#### **3.2.1) Neoliberalism: The Economization of Everything**

According to McChesney (1998), neoliberal ideology is “the defining political economic paradigm of our time,” and refers to the “policies and processes whereby a relative handful of private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize their personal profit” (p. 7). Characterized by a push for privatization, free markets and minimal government interference (Good, 2008), neoliberal ideology is hegemonic from the point of view that its principal mantra—economic growth above all else—is woven into the fabrics of contemporary lifestyles and remains largely unquestioned by the public due to its “common sense” nature (Birchfield, 1999; Hall et al., 2013). In *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's*

*Stealth Revolution*, Wendy Brown (2016) defines the neoliberalism as the “economization of everything,” wherein most, if not all human activity is performed as a means to maximize economic gains, including education, health, fitness, family life, and politics. Brown further asserts that humankind, what she calls *homo economicus*, performs as a commodified market actor in a world saturated by neoliberal rationale:

To speak to the relentless and ubiquitous economization of all features of life by neoliberalism is thus not to claim that neoliberalism literally marketizes all spheres, even as such marketization is certainly one important effect of neoliberalism. Rather, the point is that neoliberal rationality disseminates the model of the market to all domains and activities—even where money is not at issue—and configures human beings exhaustively as market actors, always, only, and everywhere as *homo economicus* (p. 31).

Brown’s thesis firmly argues that contemporary neoliberalism is eroding the core principles of democracy, to which she adds has “enormous consequences for democratic institutions, cultures, and imaginaries” (p. 35) and thus “curtails the promise of the modern liberal democratic state to secure inclusion, equality, and freedom as dimensions of popular sovereignty” (p. 42). In regard to how neoliberal ideology has been disseminated throughout modern history, Brown points to hegemonic thought as the main culprit. Specifically, she notes centuries of “soft power” have rendered modern neoliberal thought an apparatus of “sophisticated common sense” that draws on consensus and buy-ins rather than brute force (p. 35). Drawing from the works of Foucault, Brown argues that as a consequence of this soft power, neoliberal principals are now embedded into language which is consequently promulgated by the state.

One of the primary vehicles for disseminating neoliberal thought, according to Brown, is through government, and by extension, through democratic institutions. The state, she argues, is chiefly responsible for supporting the economy and facilitating its continuous growth — “the neoliberal state may act openly as a capitalist state and on behalf of capital because economic

growth is its *raison d'état*" (p. 68). Given that PSB operates as a democratic institution under a government-imposed mandate, it can thus be deduced, under Brown's argument, that public broadcasting has become intertwined with neoliberal policies characterized by a push for privatization and deregulation. Neoliberal policies in Alberta, for example, were introduced in the late twentieth century under Ralph Klein's government through policies that championed deregulation, privatization, lower taxes, and cuts to government programs (Harrison, 2015). Within this framework, a public broadcaster's core mandate becomes the dissemination of neoliberal discourses that serve the economic interests of the market, consequently obscuring its duty as a public service to serve the public good.

### **3.2.2) Fossil Fuels and Hegemonic Neoliberal Discourses**

The dissemination of neoliberal ideology is routinely exercised in petro-states—jurisdictions whose revenue and economy draw substantially upon sales from its oil and gas industry (Carter, 2016; Lequesne, 2019). This is the case with Canada and Alberta, both of whom embrace maximal and short-term outcomes on economic growth at the expense of labour and environmental exploitation (Adkin, 2016). For instance, the Canadian and Albertan governments, in tandem with the oil industry, actively employ hegemonic neoliberal narratives that encourage the development of the oil sands under the guise of economic development, growing demand, sustainable development, and the national interest, despite scientific evidence pointing to their ecological and social ramifications (Firtova, 2017, p. 188; Davidsen, 2016; Nasiritousi, 2017; Wood, 2018; Gunster et al., 2018).

However, mounting opposition towards resource extraction, along with growing pressures on governments to transition towards green technology, has forced government and industry to reframe their public relations strategies to ensure public consent is maintained (Smith,

2015). This rebranding involves shifting focus to Canada's image as a clean energy producer, open for investment, committed to Indigenous/environmental consultation, and as having a balanced approach to environmental impacts and fossil fuel development (Smith, 2015; Adkin & Stares, 2016). As Blue et al. (2018) highlight, discourses emerging from Alberta "allow industry and government to promote an image of leadership on climate change while structuring a policy environment that facilitates market expansion and increased oil and gas production" (p. 106).

Since 2008, the Alberta government's PR strategy has drawn heavily upon ecological modernization (EM) theory, which assumes environmental protection and economic growth can be mutually satisfied through the promise of sustainable development and innovative technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) (Davidson & MacKendrick, 2004). By shifting towards a sustainable development discourse, government and industry can cast a more environmentally conscious image upon themselves as a means to deflect criticism on key issues like climate change and Indigenous concerns (Adkin & Stares, 2016; Davidsen, 2016). This is exemplified in the Alberta government's tendency to emphasize its environmental commitment, despite lax environmental regulation and a continued push for industry development (Davidsen, 2016). According to Adkin & Stares (2016), sustainable development discourses adopted by the Alberta government entail: (1) an emphasis on the emergence of innovative technology instead of an economic shift; (2) minimization of environmental risks and harms; and (3) reassurance that responsible management and "balancing" of social and environmental harms will help keep the economy afloat (Blue et al., 2018). Taken altogether, these discursive strategies serve to deflect any criticism towards the industry by casting it as environmentally and socially sound, which in turn helps secure consent for its continued development. This narrative shift is also paralleled by the oil industry in its public relations strategy, as evidenced in McCurdy's (2018)

analysis of advertising campaigns by the fossil fuel industry which found that within the last decade, the industry's approach to advertisements involves linking resource extraction to preserving the natural environment.

In addition to sustainable development, the Alberta government has also leaned on the “Nativist Neoliberalism” discourse (Adkin & Stares, 2016, p. 219) to secure consent for the continued development of fossil fuels. Here, the government positions itself as having a duty to protect the industry from external threats from the federal government, environmentalists, and indigenous opponents in order to preserve the “Albertan identity.” This protectionist narrative, which has historically been used by the Alberta government, “is one of a besieged people that must repeatedly defend its greatest source of wealth (oil and gas revenues) from the grasping hands of governments representing the larger, urban populations of eastern Canada” (Adkin & Stares, 2016, p. 220). This discourse, in turn, supports the “us versus them” assumption that the rest of Canada is systematically out to punish Alberta (Dusyk et al., 2018). In turn, Alberta is presented as the hero of its own story by fulfilling its duty to protect its economic and social interests in the face of external threats. In a similar vein, Haluza-Delay (2018) found that an advertising campaign launched by the provincial government and the oil industry position energy extraction and production as inextricable with Alberta self-identity (p. 3).

In the face of growing challenges to Alberta's fossil fuel industry, the province, in partnership with key industry actors, has campaigned for the continuous growth of the industry on the grounds of economic prosperity, job growth, and national identity, and protectionism. However, as resistance mounts, so too has the province and industry's efforts to secure public consent. To do so, they have shifted gears towards a narrative acknowledging the impacts of fossil fuel development on climate change but has largely done so to reinforce public consent of

the industry through the means of sustainable development and technological growth, rather than a genuine desire to develop towards renewable forms of energy. In this sense, the industry and province have adapted a narrative that casts fossil fuel development as an exercise of environmental efficiency, despite a lack of genuine action on climate change. Furthermore, the province's discourse has also prompted a nationalist, "we versus them" narrative, which positions the Alberta government as the protector of the oil industry and Albertans' interests.

### **3.3) Media, Framing, and Fossil Fuels**

#### **3.3.1) Framing, Hegemony, and Neoliberal Ideology**

The hegemonic role of the media has long been recognized in communication scholarship. As Herman and Chomsky (2002) contend, "the media serve, and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them" (n.p.). Accordingly, research at the juncture of media, hegemony, and ideology demonstrate how the news media constructs meanings through schematic frames that are "largely consistent with the capitalist interests of powerful elites" (Carragee & Roefs, 2004, p. 222). Media frames are discursive packages that help shape public understanding of certain issues; what happens, what is important, and why certain things matter over others (Gitlin, 2003, p. 6). Frames are consequently neutralized and absorbed by the public as commonsense knowledge, hence their ability to reproduce neoliberal hegemony (Hardin & Whiteside, 2010, p. 314).

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to how frames are sponsored by external sources such as politicians, industry stakeholders, and experts; how journalists engage with frames when writing news stories; and how the audience interprets those frames (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009; Carvalho, 2005; Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Tromble & Meffert, 2016). As Gamson & Modigliani (1989) note, discursive packages are often sponsored by

powerful groups that have an interest in promoting their neoliberal self-fulfilling agendas. Sponsorship often involves the employment of media-savvy specialists, such as public officials or industry spokespeople, by large corporations in order to advocate on behalf of their interests. Sponsorship, for instance, involves activities such as interviews with journalists and writing commentary pieces in newspapers (p. 6). Because the mass media tends to echo the interests of influential sponsors, the former's preferred frames will often dominate the mediated discourse (Tromble & Meffert, 2016). As explored in the next section, a significant body of literature has observed the mainstream media's framing of Canada's fossil fuel industry.

### **3.3.2) Thematic Framing of Resource Extraction**

Research on the framing of fossil fuels suggests mainstream newspapers regularly promote frames sponsored by the oil industry, thus legitimizing the commonsense neoliberal assumption that resource extraction is imperative to a nation's economic growth, energy security, social prosperity, and national security while disregarding critiques associated with their environmental repercussions (Kojola, 2017; Way, 2011; Gunster & Saurette, 2014; Hoberg, 2013; Schram et al., 2016; Wright & Reid, 2011; Davidsen, 2016; Hackett & Adams, 2018; Carvalho, 2005; Deacon et al., 2015; Stephens et al., 2009; Adkin, 2016). Although debates surrounding the consequences of resource extraction are gaining traction in the public sphere, as explored in the previous section, mainstream news media continue to limit the scope of discussion to those aligned with the neoliberal values embodied by government and industry operating within the Deep State (Davidsen, 2016; Way, 2013; Kojola, 2017; Gunster & Saurette, 2014; Dusyk et al. 2018). Such themes coincide with research on the mediated framing of climate change, whereby mitigation is presented as a question of economic and energy concerns,

rather than environmental and social ones (Young & Douglas, 2011; Stoddart et al., 2016; Antilla, 2005; McCright & Dunlap, 2000; Good, 2008).

As paralleled by the neoliberal discourses emerging from government and industry themselves, research suggests the mainstream media often positions economic growth against environmental protection in their coverage of fossil fuels (Matthews, 2011; Kojola, 2017; Davidsen, 2016). In the framework of this “environment versus economy” dichotomy, the media promotes resource extraction as a binary trade-off between environmental protection and economic growth. Thus, it advances the idea that employment and GDP growth is contingent upon the exploitation of natural resources. As alluded to in the previous section, oil proponents and governments operating within this nationalist frame are positioned as the caretakers and friends of a nation lacking job security, while opponents are presented as out of touch elitists who are willing to sabotage job creation in order to protect the environment (Matthews, 2011; Gunster & Saurette, 2014; Davidson & Gismondi, 2011; Hackett & Adams, 2018). Here, Canada and Alberta are presented as victims of a heinous campaign organized by elite environmentalists who don’t know what it’s like to work in the oil sands (Gunster & Saurette, 2014).

Such themes are consistent with Kojola’s (2017) analysis, which found that mainstream U.S. newspapers’ framing of the controversial Keystone XL pipeline portrayed the project as necessary for economic well-being, national security, job creation, and the national interest, while calls by activists to reject the pipeline were equated with harming job growth. Similarly, Gunster and Saurette’s (2014) analysis of the Calgary Herald reveals the Alberta Newspaper participates in the “narrative justification of the promotional petro-state” by selecting information that reinforces pro-resource discourses while simultaneously obscuring dissenting voices. One of the most recurring themes identified in the coverage was the economic benefits of

the oil sands, including an emphasis on the fossil fuel industry's role in producing wealth for the province. In line with the native neoliberalism discourse practised by government, the Herald's coverage also positioned Alberta as being responsible for defending itself against all criticism against the industry and restore its favourable representation in the court of public opinion.

Concerning resistance, the authors found the Herald did not ignore the presence of opposition towards the industry but framed opponents as ideologically motivated elites that sabotage economic growth to protect the environment, which in turn, depicts the oil sands industry as being a victim of constant aggression from environmental opponents. Such findings are reflected in the Alberta government's rhetoric. In his victory speech upon being elected Premier of Alberta, for example, Jason Kenney promised he would fight "foreign-funded special interests" like the David Suzuki Foundation and the Tides Foundation, which he accused of leading "a campaign of economic sabotage" against Alberta (Thurton, 2019). This is paralleled by Chen's (2019) analysis of the Herald, which found the newspaper provided little to no attention to environmental and First Nations resistance and consequently promoted the industry as being too economically important for Canadians and Albertans to lose.

While a significant body of research has focused on mainstream media's framing of the fossil fuel industry, little work has been pursued in the domain of non-corporate newspapers. Exploring the relationship between environmental protection and economic growth in corporate and alternative media—which are independent of external control and not primarily driven by commercial advertising revenue—Hackett and Adams (2018) discovered significant differences in their respective framing of the TMX expansion project. Specifically, they observe that while corporate media presented TMX as being necessary to economic growth, public interest, and community well-being, alternative media frequently juxtaposed "corporate greed" with notions

like green jobs, climate change, and risk to Indigenous communities. Echoing the corporate discourses highlighted in the previous section, the authors also found mainstream media highlighted the industry and government's "balanced" approach to fossil fuel development, including mentioning environmental protections put in place by the province. Interestingly, the authors note that alternative media doesn't reject the economy as a whole, but rather, rejects "austere" carbon capitalism in favour of sustainable, green capitalism. Despite these findings, the authors concluded that both commercial and alternative news media legitimized the assumption of a binary trade-off between environmental protection and economic growth.

Conversely, some studies found that newspapers employ discursive frames such as environmental justice, social justice, local ecological degradation and climate justice when reporting on resource extraction (Dusyk et al., 2018; Pitrowski, 2013; Firtova, 2017; Ahchong & Dodds, 2012; Davidsen, 2016). Dusyk et al.'s (2018) analysis of the Toronto-based *Globe and Mail*'s framing of the Northern Gateway Pipeline, for instance, revealed the pipeline's environmental risk dominated discussions surrounding the project. However, the newspaper did not go beyond the term "environment" when elaborating such risks, and as such, made very little to no mention of the greater societal impacts of the pipeline, including climate change. Instead, the *Globe*'s detail to environmental risk focused primarily on the local and immediate environmental concerns such as bitumen spills and threatening tanker activity.

### **3.3.3) Primary Definers & Salience of Voices**

In addition to framing the oil sands industry as a binary trade-off between environmental consequences and economic growth, research suggests the news media also promotes hegemonic order by providing salience to pro-oil voices in news coverage, while silencing the voices of Indigenous communities, labour workers, scientists, and environmental activists (Anderson,

2009; Schram et al., 2016; Kojola, 2016; Freudenberg, 2005; Deacon et al., 2015; Hackett and Adams, 2018; Chen, 2019). By extension, the framing of a particular issue is contingent on the selection of primary definers. Primary definers—those who first “define” the nature of a problem (Anderson, 1997, p. 161)—are credible individuals and institutions, ranging from academics to experts to industry representatives, that are given predominant salience in the media and are thus in a privileged position of framing news stories to align with their interests (Lashmar, 2018; Anderson, 1997). In other words, primary definers are provided with a discursive space in the media, which allows them to frame a particular issue in accord with their worldview, to push a particular agenda into the public sphere.

Hackett and Adams’ (2018) analysis of mainstream and alternative coverage surrounding TMX, for example, reveals that while the voices of government and industry spokespeople who repeatedly touted the importance of extractive industries for Canada’s economy were given most salience in mainstream media, while indigenous groups, environmental activists, and industry workers were more frequently cited in alternative newspapers. However, the authors found that oil sands workers and union representatives, who are often heralded as the main beneficiaries of the fossil fuel industry, were seldom mentioned in both alternative and mainstream coverage.

At the same time, Deacon et al. (2015) found that the importance attributed to local voices was significantly downplayed in mainstream news coverage of the oil sands. They concluded that while government and industry spokespeople were introduced by their official titles, local spokespeople were identified through general, ambiguous labels such as “the First Nation band.” Such findings suggest that marginalized voices are perceived as inferior to those of state and industry officials, therefore amplifying the legitimacy of the so-called “expert opinions” of the elite class (p. 429). In this light, it can be deduced that mainstream media are

more likely to rely on experts, industry, and government sources, while omitting, or suppressing, the voices of dissenting voices such as Indigenous communities and environmentalists.

### **3.3.4) Socio-Demographic Considerations**

One of the ways hegemonic framing is rendered more effective is through socio-demographic considerations. Geographic proximity, regional values, and relevance for the reader are all factors that influence the selection and framing of environmental-related news by journalists, as well as how it is received by readers (Carvalho, 2007; Gravelle & Lachapelle, 2015). As Gravelle and Lachapelle (2015) note, the geographic distribution of pipeline opponents and supporters is contingent upon the spatial distributions of the project's risks and benefits. In other words, the media's use of pro-economic frames is more likely to resonate with readers who directly benefit from such projects (such as Albertans), thus making them vulnerable to the consent of neoliberal ideology. Conversely, individuals who face the environmental and social repercussions of such projects (including British Columbians) are far more likely to reject the media's interpretation of pipelines as an economic driver. Given the broad approaches to the environment in different areas in Canada (Young & Dugas, 2012), media coverage is likely to differ between both Alberta and British Columbia given their divergent stances surrounding pipeline projects (Axsen, 2014; Lequesne, 2019). However, these findings were contested in Dusyk et al.'s (2018) analysis of the Northern Gateway Pipeline, who despite the regional distribution of risks and benefits in both provinces, found no disparities in framing between Alberta and British Columbia by mainstream newspapers. The authors hypothesize that the homogenization of news coverage was likely due to their sample being made up exclusively of newspapers owned by Canadian media conglomerate Postmedia (p. 18).

### **3.4) Chapter Conclusion**

As evidenced by this literature review, mainstream newspapers are positioned to reproduce neoliberal discourses that seek to legitimize resource extraction as necessary on the grounds of economic development, job growth, nativism, and the national interest. Moreover, they suppress the voices of marginalized groups such as environmental activists, scientific experts, and Indigenous communities. As Davidsen (2016) notes, while environmental and social movements do succeed in sponsoring frames in the news media, mainstream discourses are predominantly defined by the industry, government, and corporate newspapers that strongly influence a given region (p. 242). Moreover, the themes discussed above parallel the neoliberal discourses used by public officials and industry spokespeople to promote the continued development of resource extraction in the face of mounting dissent, thus suggesting that mainstream newspapers indeed serve the vested interests of the capitalist class (Way, 2013). However, the literature review has unveiled several gaps that will be addressed in the framework of the current research paper. Firstly, little to no research has examined the framing of the fossil fuel industry in British Columbia newspapers. Furthermore, critical scholarship has yet to look at the role of PSB in framing fossil fuel extraction, despite their critical role in providing a responsible forum for public debate.

#### **Chapter 4: Research Question & Methodology**

Thus far, this paper has established that mainstream news media tend to reproduce hegemonic narratives in their news coverage on resource extraction that aligns with the neoliberal interests of government and industry operating within the Deep State. While literature supports this argument in relation to mainstream newspapers, scant research has yet to look at the matter through the lens of public service broadcasting (PSB). The contentious debate surrounding resource extraction and its contribution to anthropocentric climate change warrants further examination into PSB, particularly when considering its role in providing unbiased information enabling audiences “to form the fairest possible idea of events” and “allow the different viewpoints to be expressed” (Conseil mondial de la radiotélévision, 2001, p. 17).

Accordingly, the proposed research answers Deacon et al.’s (2015) call for further investigation into how Canadian alternative news outlets—those that aren’t privately owned by corporate media conglomerates—construct environmental justice discourses surrounding resource extraction. It also answers DeCillia and McCurdy’s (2016) call for more critical research on the neoliberal implications of PSB and its role as the nation’s public servant. It also contributes to a growing need for discourse analyses to further capture the regional differences in newspaper coverage about resource extraction in Canada (Dusyk et al., 2018). Doing so would highlight both how alternative media’s reporting of the oil industry is influenced by socio-political factors, and whether they have become increasingly affected by political and industry interests as explored in the Deep State theory (Anderson, 2009). Finally, it addresses Anderson’s (2009) push for further investigation into regionally based media outlets, which are rarely the subject of examination in communication scholarship despite their significant role in influencing public perceptions on a local scale.

#### 4.1) Research Question

Bearing in mind the findings from the literature review, this paper extends the scope of research on mainstream newspapers to the study of PSB, and specifically, CBC's Calgary and British Columbia English-language news divisions. Of particular interest here is whether the CBC is fulfilling its democratic duty as a public servant to provide Canadians with factual and unbiased information about the fossil-fuel industry, or conversely, whether its coverage reproduces the neoliberal hegemonic discourses maintained by the Alberta government and fossil fuel industry. In other words, it strives to uncover whether the CBC is engaging in the "narrative justification of the petro-state" (Gunster & Saurette, 2016). Given that PSB's democratic essence is to "allow different viewpoints to be expressed" (Conseil mondial de la radiotélévision, 2001, p. 17), this research will also examine whether the CBC's regional coverage reflects the divergent political standing of British Columbia and Alberta on pipeline projects, or whether coverage is uniform across both regional platforms. Finally, the study will explore what the findings represent in the broader context of PSB and whether, as purported by the Deep State theory, the CBC as a democratic institution has been "captured" by the fossil fuel industry's neoliberal interests. As such, the proposed research is thus guided by the following questions:

**RQ:** To what extent, if at all, does coverage about TMX vary locally between CBC Calgary and British Columbia, and if so, how can this variation be understood?

**SQ1:** In what ways, if any, is the Alberta government's pro-oil discourse reflected in CBC Calgary's news coverage of the Trans Mountain Pipeline?

**SQ2:** Drawing on the Deep State theory, what do the findings represent in the broader context of public service broadcasting as a democratic institution?

The analysis will thus consider whether public acceptance towards the project in both provinces skewed coverage in terms of frequency of coverage, selection of sources, and the level of salience accorded to marginalized and dissenting voices (Carvalho, 2008). As Axsen (2014) notes, Albertans and British Columbians typically diverge when it comes to resource extraction projects; while the former tends to support them for their contribution to jobs, the latter generally oppose them for their environmental and humanitarian ramifications. This was evidenced by the diplomatic tensions between the governments of Alberta and B.C. in the lead-up to TMX's approval. To this end, TMX was selected for analysis as it symbolically represents the polarizing debate surrounding resource extraction in Canada. As Lequesne (2019) notes, the pipeline has become one of the most prominent examples of environmental activism in Canada that "showcase developments in the relationships between corporate power, local democracy, and grassroots climate justice activism" (p. 16), thus making it an important case for analysis.

#### **4.2) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

To answer the above questions, the research is guided by a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the linguistic constructions used by the CBC in its news coverage of TMX in 2018. Drawing from the works of social constructivists like Foucault, CDA identifies the ideological character of news articles by closely examining their choice of words and rhetoric (Hackett & Adam, 2018). Building on traditional content analyses, CDA looks beyond the scope of textual features by taking into account the social and political contexts of mediated discourses (Carvalho, 2008). Discursive practices—including a journalist's choice of words, metaphors, idioms, and expressions—are central to how the media frame issues. Further, they allow for an examination into how particular messages and meanings are conveyed and limited in order to manipulate public interpretation of resource extraction (Hansen, 2011, p. 10).

CDA is used by communication scholars to understand why certain understandings of an issue gain dominance in mainstream news coverage, while others are silenced or discredited (Hajer, 1997, p. 44). Echoing this, Carvalho (2008) calls for further analysis into the degree to which stakeholder interests are represented in media discourses. According to the author, a good method of CDA involves a systemic examination of conflicting parties to “make explicit the alignment of news media with a given side and increase awareness of the plurality of views, as well as of the biases both in the media and in social actors’ discourses” (p. 164).

To this end, this research will undertake a mixed-method approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis. While a traditional content analysis limits the analysis to manifest or surface-level content, a discourse analysis that combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques allows for an examination of latent content that reflects underlying themes and biases within the coverage (Anderson, 1997). In tandem, attention will be paid to the designated primary definer of each article analyzed in the sample, since they play an important role in shaping the discursive narrative of a news story. The analysis of primary definers will contribute to the examination of local variances in coverage, while also allowing for a better understanding of the degree to which, if found to be the case, the scope of discussions is restricted to those in line with local ideologies and attitudes (Anderson, 1997). By using CDA, then, we will be in a position to gauge whether the CBC subscribes to a particular camp concerning resource extraction, or whether it engages in eclecticism of viewpoints.

### **4.3) Data Sample & Aggregation**

For this study, the online news database *Eureka* was used to build a corpus of English-language digital news articles ( $N=27$ ) about the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project published by CBC Calgary and CBC British Columbia (See Appendix for sample articles).

Articles were collected using the keywords: “Trans Mountain pipeline” and “expansion project.” Furthermore, selected articles were published between April 1, 2018, and June 1, 2018, to coincide with key dates surrounding the TMX’s approval, including Kinder Morgan’s decision to suspend all non-essential spending related to the pipeline on April 8, and the Canadian government’s announcement on May 29 that it would purchase the pipeline. Furthermore, the timeline allowed for coverage to capture the ongoing dispute between British Columbia and Alberta surrounding the latter’s controversial turn-off-the-taps legislation, as explored in Chapter 2. While CBC has separate operations in both Edmonton and Calgary, Calgary was ultimately selected due to the city’s close affiliation with the fossil fuel industry and being home to the offices of Canada’s largest fossil fuel players (Rieger, 2019).

A keyword search returned an initial sample of news articles and analyses ( $N=86$ ) mentioning TMX in either the title, byline, the lede, or the body of the article. The initial search returned a higher number of B.C. articles ( $N=57$ ) when compared to Calgary articles ( $N=29$ ). Analytical pieces were retained in the sample because the CBC claims that unlike its opinion pieces, this genre involves “observation based on the facts of the issue” (McGuire, 2013, n.p.) and is “objective and does not include the journalist’s opinion” (Enkin, 2014). To reduce the sample size, any duplicates, opinion articles, editorials, and articles published by wire services such as the Canadian Press were omitted from the sample in order to remain within the scope of the research topic. Specifically, articles written by either CBC journalists or “CBC News” were selected for analysis. To further minimize the number of B.C. articles, the according sample was reduced by half by using random sampling generator *Randomizer.org*. The number of articles per region was subsequently tallied into the following two categories:

<b>Table 1: Data Sample</b>
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Source	News Article	Analysis	Total
CBC Calgary	10	2	12
CBC B.C.	14	1	15
Totals	24	3	27

#### 4.4) Coding Framework and Analysis

The final sample ( $N=27$ ) was analyzed and coded using ATLAS.TI qualitative software and subsequently coded on a Google spreadsheet. Given that this is a mixed-methods study, the analysis involved both quantitative coding and qualitative thematic analysis to allow for a more comprehensive reading of the articles. Specifically, the quantitative nature of the research involved coding primary definers and capturing frequency of thematic themes, while the qualitative portion of the study involved a deeper reading of the articles to detect any recurring patterns and themes with respect to the article's framing of TMX.

Bearing in mind the findings from the literature review, an initial coding framework was developed. During the initial reading, overarching themes, including "economy," "balance," and "environment" (See Table 2) were coded. A second reading, meanwhile, included capturing sub-themes associated with each article, thus for a better understanding of how geographical disparities between both samples differed. During the thematic analysis, meanwhile, attention was paid to how the TMX pipeline was framed, including (1) how the author situated TMX; (2) how environmental consequences of the pipeline were presented; (3) how Indigenous communities were presented; (4) how the oil industry was positioned; (5) how opposition towards the pipeline was presented as a whole by the author; and (6) what lexical choices were made by the author in their reporting. When identified, these queries were coded as wither (1) positive; (2) negative; (3) neutral; or (4) no mention. Neutral articles were identified in instances where coverage was balanced, or in other words when the author presented both sides of the

argument surrounding the pipeline or made no evident suggestion with respect to their own beliefs. Furthermore, the overall tone of the article was coded as either positive (article positions TMX as necessary), negative (article positions TMX as not necessary); and neutral (article provides a balanced presentation of TMX).

Theme	Sub-theme	Frequency of codes		
		CBC B.C.	CBC Calgary	Total
Economy	Pipeline will grow economy	0	10	10
	Pipeline will cause job growth	2	3	5
	There's an investment chill	1	5	6
	Industry is facing a crisis	0	3	3
	Green jobs will grow economy	1	0	1
	Bill 12 will impact B.C. gas price	1	0	1
Balance	Economy over environment	1	5	6
	Balanced approach is needed	1	3	4
Environment	Oil industry is pro-climate	0	1	1
	Climate policy will impact TMX	0	1	1
	TMX will cause oil spill	6	1	7
	TMX will impact environment	8	2	10
	Lack of env. Consultation	1	0	1
Indigenous Issues	Indigenous support for pipeline	0	1	1
	TMX will impact communities	7	0	7
	Lack of consultation on TMX	4	0	4
	TMX impede land rights	4	0	4
	TMX threatens culture/lifestyle	2	0	2
	Communities will defend rights	4	0	4
Political Delays	TMX delay was B.C.'s fault	2	10	12
	Delay is politically motivated	6	4	10
	More pressure needed on B.C.	0	3	3
National Interest	TMX is in national interest	0	2	2
	TMX is not in national interest	3	1	4
	Feds prioritizing private interests	2	0	2
	Alberta interests must be defended	0	1	1
National Unity	Pipeline will unify Canadians	0	3	3
Leadership	Federal government must intervene	1	5	6
	Feds are siding with Alberta	3	0	3

Meanwhile, primary definers were identified as the first person quoted in the article. Based on the literature review, primary definers were openly coded into seven categories: (1) politicians; (2) public servants; (3) industry representatives; (4) experts; (5) citizens; (6) Indigenous communities; and (7) advocacy groups. Once identified, the primary definer's characteristics, including their location, affiliation, and official titles were also recorded. Finally, their stance on the pipeline was also coded as either (1) pro-pipeline; (2) anti-pipeline; (3) neutral; or (4) other. Taken altogether, this research framework allowed me to thematically and quantitatively capture how CBC Calgary and CBC B.C. framed the TMX pipeline debacle, and whether such framing styles aligned with local public opinion on the project.

#### **4.5) Chapter Conclusion**

As explored in this chapter, this research project seeks to explore whether the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) is fulfilling its mandate as an independent public broadcaster to offer informative and unbiased, and pluralistic information about TMX, or whether, as forwarded by the Deep State theory, it's coverage reflects the neoliberal hegemonic discourses communicated by Alberta's government and fossil fuel industry. To explore this query, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is performed on a sample of digital news articles ( $N=27$ ) by the CBC's divisions in Calgary ( $N=12$ ) and British Columbia ( $N=15$ )—both of whom have divergent standings on TMX—as a means to examine how, and to what extent, framing of TMX reflects local ideological attitudes on the pipeline. The forthcoming chapter will explore the results from this analysis while offering a discussion on what the findings symbolize in the broader context of journalism, the public sphere, and democracy.

## **Chapter 5: Results and Analysis**

This chapter will present the findings emerging from the research framework elaborated in the previous section, including general findings, primary definers, and recurring themes. The findings will be followed by a discussion that situates the research topic in the broader context of democracy, the deep state, and what it represents for public service broadcasting. The chapter will then close off with a conclusion that will resume the overall findings and answer the research question outlined in the previous section.

### **5.1) General Findings**

Overall, the 27 articles analyzed in the framework of this research paper suggests there are several disparities between the CBC's British Columbia and Calgary divisions in their framing of the TMX pipeline. Among them includes the evident divergence in tonality (See Table 3). For instance, the majority of Calgary articles were coded as positive in tone (83%), meaning they framed the pipeline as being necessary, while the majority of B.C. articles (60%) were coded as negative. Conversely, none of the Calgary articles framed the pipeline negatively, while only a single B.C. article was coded as positive (6%). This disparity, then, suggests coverage in Calgary aligns with the overall push by the Alberta government and fossil fuel industry to build TMX, while also echoing local public opinion about the pipeline (Axsen, 2014; Dusyk et al., 2018; Gunster & Saurette, 2016). At the same time, it also parallels negative sentiment towards the pipeline in B.C., who as explored in previous sections, tend to lambast TMX for its environmental and social repercussions. Of note, B.C. articles represented the majority of all neutral articles (33%), wherein the author presented a balanced account of the debate surrounding the TMX pipeline debacle and thus suggested neither a pro nor anti-pipeline stance. Conversely, Calgary coverage accounted for a mere 16% of neutral articles.

<b>Table 3: Overall tone</b>			
Coded Tone	Frequency of codes		Total
	CBC B.C.	CBC Calgary	
Positive (Pipeline is good)	1	10	11
Negative (Pipeline is bad)	9	0	9
Neutral	5	2	7
Other	0	0	0

This provincial disparity is also apparent when examining the pro/anti-pipeline sentiment communicated in the articles. Out of all 12 Calgary articles, 10 (83%) were coded as pro-pipeline, while the remaining 2 articles were coded as neutral (17%). In contrast, 46% of B.C. articles were categorized as anti-pipeline, as opposed to a single article (6%) that was in favour of the pipeline. The remaining articles (46%), were coded as neutral. Again, these results parallel the polarizing stance on the pipeline in B.C. and Alberta (Axsen, 2014). Furthermore, such findings are largely consistent with the literature review presented in Chapter 3, which suggests mainstream coverage of Alberta-based newspapers, including the *Calgary Herald*, is more likely to promote TMX in a positive light (Gunster & Saurette, 2014).

Concerning the environment, only half (50%) of CBC Calgary articles made any mention of the environment or climate change, while the other 45% of articles were coded as neutral by only mentioning the existence of environmental concern and offering no further analysis. Meanwhile, only one article, or 8%, presented the environment in a positive light. Out of the 14 B.C. articles mentioning the environment, 5 (29%) framed the environment as being an important factor in the debate surrounding TMX, as opposed to a single article (5%) suggesting otherwise. These findings, aligned with the respective government discourses in B.C. and Alberta, suggests coverage is representative of local public opinion surrounding TMX, where B.C. articles are more likely to defend the environmental stakes at play.

Despite the notable role played by Indigenous stakeholders in discussions surrounding TMX, 9 out of 15 (60%) Calgary articles made no mention of them at any point in the analysis, while 7 out of 17 B.C. articles (41%) did to varying degrees. Of the articles that did acknowledge Indigenous stakeholders, three of them in the Calgary sample were coded as neutral, while five of in B.C. were supportive of Indigenous opposition and thus coded as positive. Again, in line with research of socio-demographic factors explored in Chapter 3, these findings suggest the CBC's coverage does, in fact, reflect the local attitudes, concerns, and beliefs regarding the TMX pipeline. Here, B.C. coverage was more likely to mention Indigenous communities, which, as explored in Chapter 2, reflects the fact that the majority of Indigenous opposition towards the pipeline derives from B.C. Despite being reflective of local attitudes.

In the same vein, the analysis suggests 10 out of the 12 Calgary articles, or 83%, framed opposition towards the pipeline (i.e. how protesters and vocal opponents of the pipeline were presented) in a negative light. For example, one of the articles presented environmental protesters as having “briefly interrupted” a pro-pipeline gathering before being “led from the building” (A4). At the same time, B.C. Premier John Horgan, a vocal opponent of the pipeline, was quoted as being “the worst politician in Canada in decades” (A9) and as lacking maturity for his stance on the pipeline (A6). In stark contrast, 40% of B.C. articles that mentioned opposition towards TMX framed it as being positive, while the remaining mentions (33%) were coded as neutral. These findings are consequently reversed when observing both divisions' framing of the oil industry, wherein every single one of the Calgary articles that made mention of the industry (75%) framed it as being necessary and worth fighting for, while not a single CBC B.C. article framed it positively.

<b>Table 4: Thematic Sentiment</b>
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Theme	Coded Sentiment	Frequency of codes		Total
		CBC B.C.	CBC Calgary	
Trans Mountain Pipeline	Positive	1	11	12
	Negative	6	0	6
	Neutral	8	1	9
	No mention	0	0	0
Environmental Issues	Positive	5	0	5
	Negative	1	1	2
	Neutral	6	5	11
	No mention	3	6	9
Indigenous Issues	Positive	5	0	5
	Negative	0	0	0
	Neutral	2	3	5
	No mention	8	9	17
Opposition (general)	Positive	6	0	6
	Negative	1	10	11
	Neutral	5	1	6
	No mention	2	1	3
Oil industry	Positive	0	9	9
	Negative	4	0	4
	Neutral	1	0	1
	No mention	10	3	13

As paralleled by previous research outlined in the literature review, the findings unveiled in this analysis suggests the CBC's Calgary division tends to frame the TMX pipeline, and by extension the fossil fuel industry, in a more positive light, while its B.C. bureau is more likely to frame TMX negatively. This was also the case in regard to their framing of the environment, Indigenous communities, and opposition against the project; while B.C. presented these three elements positively, Calgary's coverage did not. To this end, the following section will discuss whether these findings were paralleled in the authors' selection of primary definers.

### **5.2) Primary Definers: Who Had a Say?**

The results presented in the first section of this chapter were also evidenced in an analysis of primary definers. As discussed in Chapter 3, primary definers are sources selected by the

media to provide information or opinions that supplement news stories. While primary definers are meant to provide information that enables the media to maintain public service impartiality norms and to remain “insulated from accusations of partisan capture and bias,” (Anstead & Chadwick, 2018, p. 250), the uprising of digital media has pushed new outlets to narrow the spectrum of pluralistic views, and as such, have come to foster closer relationships with primary definers that seek to promote their agendas (Anstead & Chadwick, 2018; Anderson, 1997), which in turn, promotes existing hegemonic structures of power (Proctor, 2004).

This analysis (See Table 7) has unveiled that CBC B.C. was overall more likely to accord salience to dissenting, anti-pipeline voices, while CBC Calgary relied primarily on pro-pipeline stakeholders. When it comes to their selection of primary definers (See Table 6), both divisions opted for politicians and experts, which parallels previous research on source selection. However, the divergence lies in *whom* these politicians and experts are. In CBC B.C.’s case, expert sources tended to be environmental and science experts, while CBC Calgary articles relied on Alberta-based professors in the realm of natural resource law, economy, and policy.

In terms of politicians, CBC Calgary articles cited federal, provincial and municipal figures including federal Finance Minister Bill Morneau, Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi, and United Conservative Party Leader Jason Kenney (who was elected Premier of Alberta in 2019)—all of whom are vocal supporters of TMX. Surprisingly, a CBC Calgary article cited federal New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh, a vocal opponent of the pipeline, though his comments were immediately followed by pro-pipeline voices rebuking such comments. Meanwhile, B.C.’s roster of politicians included federal Green Party leader Elizabeth May, Burnaby, B.C., Mayor Derek Corrigan, and Alberta Deputy Premier Sarah Hoffman. In line with the results deduced in the previous section, the above findings suggest that as far as political and

expert voices go, CBC B.C. is likely to grant salience to anti-pipeline politicians and environmental experts, while CBC Calgary, as expected, opts for pro-pipeline politicians and Alberta-based politicians specializing in economics and energy law. Meanwhile, public servants—those who work for a government body but don't hold a seat in office—were cited on four occasions in B.C. coverage, and included B.C. Attorney General David Eby, B.C. Supreme Court Justice Christopher Grauer, and Supreme Court of Canada Justice Beverly MacLachlan.

Concerning dissenting voices, primary definers selected by B.C. articles included a First Nations community in B.C., a B.C.-based Indigenous advocacy group, and a Washington, D.C.-based environmental advocacy group. In the same vein, a B.C. article also quoted a citizen organizer of an anti-pipeline demonstration near TMX's construction site. Conversely, CBC Calgary articles provided no salience to dissenting voices in its coverage, neither from Indigenous communities nor pro-environment groups. Instead, two articles quoted pro-oil advocacy groups, one of which included greater Vancouver Board of Trade CEO Iain Black, who despite being based in B.C., voiced support for the construction of TMX.

Primary Definer	Frequency of codes		Total
	CBC B.C.	CBC Calgary	
Politician	3	4	7
Public Servant	4	0	4
Industry Representative	0	1	1
Expert	2	4	6
Citizen	1	0	1
Advocacy Group	2	2	4
<i>Pro-oil advocacy group</i>	0	2	2
<i>Environment advocacy group</i>	1	0	1
<i>Indigenous advocacy group</i>	1	0	1
Indigenous Communities	1	0	1
No primary definer	1	1	2

**Table 6: Pipeline Stance of Primary Definers**

Stance on Pipeline	Frequency of codes		Total
	CBC B.C.	CBC Calgary	
Pro-pipeline	2	9	11
Anti-pipeline	10	0	10
Neutral	2	2	4
Other	0	0	0

Taken altogether, these findings suggest the CBC reflects local ideological values and beliefs about the pipeline, as we saw in Chapter 2. Conversely, the results also suggest CBC Calgary is in a position to limit the scope of discussion surrounding TMX to those in line with the neoliberal discourses of Alberta's government and fossil fuel industry, while at the same time obscuring the dissenting voices of Indigenous and environmental advocates. While its coverage is reflective of local beliefs and attitudes, the tendency to obscure dissenting voices, as explored in Chapter 2, is emblematic of hegemonic theory and the reproduction of neoliberal hegemonic discourses. In addition to providing salience to a broader diaspora of voices, CBC B.C.'s coverage was also more likely to offer a plurality of perspectives, as evidenced by the number of articles coded as neutral. Here, the author offers a full, balanced, and complete picture of the debate surrounding TMX, as opposed to Calgary's coverage, which made seldom mention of arguments made by environmental, indigenous, or opposition against the pipeline. With these elements taken into consideration, the following section will present a deeper examination of the latent themes uncovered in the coverage.

### 5.3) Thematic Analysis

To supplement the quantitative examination of the CBC's news coverage in Calgary and B.C., a qualitative analysis of the sample (See Appendix for sample articles) reveals a series of patterns and trends that align with previous research on the matter. As will be explored in the coming section, the themes, identified through a more thorough reading of the articles, suggest

the framing of TMX, namely in Alberta, aligns with the neoliberal hegemonic discourses emerging from the Alberta government.

### **5.3.1) The Victim, the Villain, and Petty Pipeline Politics**

A consistent storyline identified throughout the analysis is one of political delays and victimization. Specifically, the conversation surrounding TMX in both publications consistently alluded to the ongoing dispute between the B.C. and Alberta governments—often framed as being petty and politically motivated—as the main factor behind the pipeline’s delay. This, in turn, positioned the inter-provincial squabble as being a potential threat to Albertans and the fossil fuel industry. By engaging in a political and ideological altercation, the two provinces are hindering any potential progress on the pipeline’s construction, and as such, could put citizens and the economy at risk, as illustrated in this passage in CBC B.C.:

Calls for a quick resolve to the Trans Mountain pipeline dispute are reverberating on this side of the B.C.-Alberta border as well. Peter Milobar, the opposition critic for the environment and MLA for Kamloops North Thompson, introduced a motion on Monday imploring B.C. to meaningfully engage with Alberta and the federal government. “It’s really calling for the posturing to end,” Milobar told Shelley Joyce, the host of Daybreak Kamloops. “People in their day-to-day lives are going to be impacted by this and it’s getting beyond the point of silly.” (A19)

This excerpt suggests the B.C. government must put “vexatious,” (A3) and “frivolous” (A3) politics aside, along with its “foot dragging” (A8), and collaborate with Alberta and the federal government to reach a mutual agreement on TMX. Doing otherwise, as suggested in the article, would hurt its own population. Conversely, numerous CBC Calgary articles blamed the B.C. government and its “illegal stall tactics” for the political contention surrounding the pipeline, thus deflecting any criticism or acknowledgment of Alberta’s role in the political dispute, including its implementation of Bill 12. This is reflected in the following quote:

The UCP leader said that because the pipeline was approved by the National Energy Board, he feels it’s unacceptable that the federal government hasn’t intervened by asking

B.C. to obviate any other illegal stall tactics. He also accused Alberta's NDP government of not taking strong enough actions against B.C.'s NDP government. (A12)

Another prevalent theme among CBC Calgary's coverage is the suggestion that Alberta is the victim of a heinous, calculated political campaign mounted by British Columbia. This alleged campaign is consistently framed as being unfair, immature, and an attack on Alberta's economic and social interests. In particular, several articles framed B.C. Premier John Horgan as being unfit to lead the province and "immature" for spearheading the campaign against Alberta. Furthermore, coverage often dismissed or delegitimize Premier Horgan's disapproval of the pipeline on the grounds of its environmental and economic ramifications, instead suggesting it's purely motivated by ideology and hatred towards Alberta. This tendency to suggest B.C. is "playing a dangerous game" is reflected in this quote by Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi in the wake of the federal government's purchase of the beleaguered pipeline from Kinder Morgan:

[Naheed] Nenshi told CBC Toronto's local morning show that Ottawa was left with no better options than to nationalize the Kinder Morgan pipeline because of political game-playing by British Columbia Premier John Horgan. "I've called Premier Horgan the worst politician in Canada in decades. Harsh, but also true," Nenshi said. "Premier Horgan has been playing a very dangerous game. He knows he can't win in court, so his whole plan was to drag this thing out so long that the investors, who have plenty of other places to put their money, will say it's not worth investing in Canada." (A9)

As discussed in Chapter 2, this trend for news coverage to frame Alberta as the victim of external pressures consequently aligns with hegemonic discourses promoted by the provincial government. As Adkin and Stares (2016) note, the province often engages with the "Nativist Neoliberalism" discourse by positioning itself as having the duty to protect its sovereignty, its interests, and those of the fossil fuel industry. This, in turn, presents the province as having to defend itself from "the grasping hands of governments representing the larger, urban populations of eastern Canada" (p. 220). In the context of CBC Calgary's coverage, the B.C. government is presented as this "grasping hand" that Alberta must protect itself from, as captured here:

Notley had strong words for both the federal and B.C. governments on Sunday, threatening serious economic consequences against B.C. “Maybe the government of B.C. feels they can mess with Texas—and who knows, maybe they can. But let me be absolutely clear. They cannot mess with Alberta,” the premier said. (A11)

Conversely, CBC B.C. articles positioned Alberta as the villain for implementing its contentious turn-off-the-taps legislation (see Chapter 2), which was condemned by the B.C. government for threatening provincial fuel prices. In this vein, news articles presented the legislation as “unconstitutional” (A26), as a “punishment” (A29) and as an “unfair” (A41) and “discriminatory” (A26) attack on the province for opposing TMX on the grounds of environmental and social consequences. The coverage also suggests the province is willing to take retaliatory measures to protect the interests of British Columbians, as demonstrated in the following sample:

[B.C. Attorney General] David Eby says it’s unconstitutional for one province to use energy policy to punish another province, and B.C. is prepared to take legal action against Alberta. “If there is anything in this legislation that even suggests the possibility of discrimination against British Columbians, we will take every step necessary to protect the interests of British Columbians,” Eby said. (A17)

As exhibited by this analysis, a dominant theme that emerged in the coverage is that of political delays and victimization. Here, both publications acknowledged that the ongoing provincial dispute surrounding TMX is hampering existing efforts to build the pipeline. The presentation of this political dispute, however, varied between both publications. For instance, the language used by CBC Calgary to describe the dispute consistently positioned Alberta as the victim of a heinous and calculated attack by the B.C. government. By opposing the pipeline, B.C. was presented as conspiring to filibuster the pipeline’s approval for political reasons, thus jeopardizing Alberta’s economic and social interests. Bearing witness to previous research on the matter, such findings parallel the Alberta government’s nativist discourse by positioning itself as having the duty to protect its interests from external threats (i.e. the rest of Canada). By

consequence, this promotes an “us versus them,” narrative (Dusyk et al., 2018) that presents Alberta as being a lone wolf in its journey to economic prosperity, and as such, must fend for itself at all costs. This finding is in line with Gunster and Saurette’s (2014) examination of the Calgary Herald’s framing of the fossil fuel industry, which they found “framed oil sands politics as a fight between external critics and the province (and people) of Alberta” and also “sharpened and dramatized that conflict by portraying those critics and extremists seeking nothing less than to cripple the province’s most important industry” (p. 352). In stark contrast, CBC B.C.’s coverage presented the Alberta government, and especially its turn-off-the-taps legislation, as being an unfair and discriminatory punishment against the province. Thus, while both divisions acknowledged the political rivalry at play, their respective interpretations of this rivalry differed to varying degrees.

### **5.3.2) Economy over Environment: An Exercise of Balance and Sustainability**

Another major theme identified is that of a binary trade-off between the economic benefits of the pipeline and its environmental impact. As exemplified in the literature review presented in Chapter 3, previous research suggests Canadian mainstream media consistently positions fossil fuel extraction, including pipeline projects, as being imperative to Canada’s economic and social welfare, while obscuring or downplaying their impact on the environment, climate change, and Indigenous communities. Such findings were also found to be the case in the framework of this research paper, as demonstrated in the following excerpt from a CBC Calgary article:

Notley also reminded [Jagmeet] Singh it’s a mistake to continually pit the environment against the economy. “To do that and forget the needs of working people, or to throw working people under the bus, means that both economic growth and environmental protection are bound to fail,” said Notley. (A6)

Here, a quote by incumbent Alberta Premier Rachel Notley suggests putting environmental concerns above economic ones will consequently “throw working people under the bus.” Furthermore, it suggests putting environmental concerns above the pipeline’s economic value would impede both environmental and economic growth. This standpoint suggests that environmental protection is contingent on economic growth, thus reflecting the “sustainable development” and “balance” discourses examined in the literature review. As noted by Adkin & Stares (2016), one of the main facets of the Alberta government’s neoliberal sustainable discourse involves both the minimization of risks and harms and reassurance that responsible management and “balancing” of social and environmental harms will ensure economic welfare. In the same vein, when CBC Calgary *did* acknowledge the value of environmental policies, it was done so to economic ends, as shown in the following analysis:

Kent Fellows, an economist with the University of Calgary’s School of Public Policy believes federal support for the expansion could “evaporate” if Alberta’s carbon tax was removed from the equation. [...] Fellows says the pipeline has a better chance of being built with strong federal support, something he believes will be greatly diminished if Alberta puts the brakes on carbon pricing. [...] Even if [Jason] Kenney fails to get rid of carbon pricing in Alberta, there is a chance that by trying to, he could alienate the federal government, which is one of the province’s biggest allies on the pipeline file. [...] In the curious world of pipeline politics, Alberta’s carbon tax on fuel could be the key to getting more of the province’s oil to market. (A1)

In this passage, the source advises against plans to dismantle Alberta’s carbon pricing scheme. At surface level, this could be interpreted as a suggestion that carbon taxation should remain in place to hold the fossil fuel industry accountable to its carbon footprint. Upon deeper examination, however, it becomes apparent that the argument being made for keeping the provincial carbon tax is politically motivated—in fact, the words “environment” or “climate change” are never mentioned in the excerpt. Instead, the analysis argues that by keeping the

provincial carbon tax in place, Alberta can secure Ottawa's support for the construction of TMX.

In the same article, however, the analysis does acknowledge climate change:

Ironically, much of the hostility towards the carbon tax actually comes from outside the energy industry, with the biggest players in Alberta's oil patch supporting a price on carbon as a way of tackling climate change. (A1)

Whether or not this statement reflects reality is outside the scope of this research paper, but it does parallel the Alberta government's tendency, along with the fossil fuel industry, to highlight its commitment to climate change and environmental policy despite being of the highest polluting jurisdictions in North America (Semeniuk, 2016; Adkin & Stares, 2016). The same tendency is depicted here:

Liberal Leader David Khan also said they would support investment that would allow the pipeline to go ahead, albeit with some conditions. "However, our support is contingent on the Government of Alberta committing to report annually on Alberta's oil sands region through a transparent, full cost accounting framework, including both reclamation liabilities and greenhouse gas emissions, to ease public concerns, improve accountability, and increase confidence in this pipeline project both at home and abroad. (A11)

Again, the suggestion here is that the Alberta government must commit to robust environmental reporting of its oil sands, though ironically not for environmental purposes. Instead, more transparent accounting of fossil fuel emissions would increase public confidence in the pipeline, thus ensuring a better chance of getting it built. This tendency to undermine environmental protection was echoed in a single CBC B.C. article suggesting the environmental concerns surrounding the pipeline are less alarming than concerns over the danger of crude-by-rail exports, thus warranting the construction of TMX:

[Valemount, B.C. Mayor Jeanette Townsend] said it's hypocritical of the provincial government to focus on the environmental impacts the project could have on the coast while ignoring the risks of not increasing pipeline capacity through the province. (A13)

As exemplified in this section, the CBC's coverage in Calgary, except for a single B.C. article, promotes the hegemonic commonsense assumption of a binary trade-off between

environmental protection and economic growth. Specifically, the narrative adopted in CBC Calgary's articles emulates the neoliberal discourse of sustainable development purveyed by the province, wherein environmental protection is encouraged insofar as it doesn't impede economic growth. This finding reflects Gunster and Saurette's (2016) analysis of the Calgary Herald, which found the Alberta-based newspaper acknowledged the importance of environmental policy, but only insofar as it doesn't impede economic growth and the development of the fossil fuel industry. In a similar vein, a CBC B.C. article blasted environmental concerns over TMX in B.C. for drawing attention away from the need to expand pipeline capacity and reduce the province's reliance on dangerous crude-by-rail exports.

### **5.3.3) Building a Pipeline in the Face of Uncertainty**

In line with the body of literature presented earlier, CBC Calgary's consistent, if not repetitive, defence of the pipeline's economic benefits was predominantly observed in the analysis. As exemplified in the first section of this chapter, the construction of TMX is often purveyed as being the answer to all of Alberta's economic woes, including bolstering employment and GDP and consequently positioned the fossil fuel industry as paramount to Canada's national economic welfare. *Not* building the pipeline, conversely, would cause significant damage to an industry already facing downfall:

Overall, the [TMX] dispute is credit negative for the Province of Alberta [...] as the project's cancellation would represent a potentially significant loss in revenue, increase its energy transportation costs and diminish future energy infrastructure investment and oil development at a time when the province is already forecasting a prolonged period of deficits and rapidly rising debt," the report says. (A7)

Building on this, several articles acknowledged Canada's fossil fuel industry is facing an "economic emergency" embodied by rising unemployment and mounting opposition. A CBC B.C. article, for example, quotes Alberta-based CAPP CEO Tim McMillan arguing "Canada's

reputation today is a country that dawdles, can't get their act together and is losing investment" (A19). On the heels of two pipeline cancellations, several CBC Calgary articles warned that failure to build the pipeline would exacerbate an ongoing investment chill faced by the industry. This investment chill derives from the assumption that Canada's stringent environmental requirements as set forth in the Trudeau government's Bill C-69 (see Chapter 2), coupled with recurring cancellations of energy projects, would discourage foreign investment in the oil sands. This is exemplified in a quote by then-UCP leader Jason Kenney, linked the pipeline's construction to sustaining quality of life:

[Jason] Kenney called the regulatory and court hold-ups on the project "an economic emergency for Alberta." "If we can't get this project built it means we will strand hundreds of billions of dollars of value for future generations. The ability to pay for our pensions, our health care, our quality of life as Canadians," said Kenney. (A11)

And again, in this CBC Calgary analysis:

And so, Alberta is hungry for some wins—particularly for the Oilpatch, and very particularly with pipelines. When polled, most Albertans strongly believe pipelines are the most significant issue facing the provincial economy. The demise of two major pipeline projects, Northern Gateway and Energy East, caused anger. Bill C-69, the plan to overhaul the national environmental assessment process, is creating fears it will be increasingly difficult to build another major pipeline in Canada. (A12)

In one instance, a CBC B.C. also alluded to the economic importance of the pipeline for local energy sector jobs, as purveyed here:

Sean Surerus of Fort St. John's Surerus Pipeline said it is important for people in favour of [TMX] to speak out. Surerus Pipeline was selected to build a portion of the pipeline expansion as part of a joint venture. Surerus said he already has about 160 people working on the project, roughly half in Fort St. John. If the expansion is cancelled, it will lead to tough decisions, he said. "We have to have a hard look at our people," he said. "These are real, paying jobs that are compromised." (A13)

Of note, this is the only article in the CBC B.C. sample that focused on the province's energy sector. Accordingly, B.C. coverage has largely dismissed the economic repercussions of the pipeline's cancellation on local communities like Fort St. John whose jobs depend on the

energy sector. As such, coverage was not found to be representative of local stakeholders in the industry, instead focusing predominantly on the provincial government's opposition towards the pipeline, as well as large-scale demonstrations against TMX. However, and in line with the political delay theme outlined above, several B.C. articles highlighted the repercussions of Alberta's turn-off-the-taps legislation on the provincial economy and specifically on fuel prices:

David Hughes, an energy consultant and president of Global Sustainability Research Inc., is concerned the move could wreak havoc with B.C. gas prices if the bill is implemented. "It would potentially restrict supplies and that's certainly going to crank up prices." [...] "This is a case of politics more than practical realities," Hughes said. "If [Alberta premier Rachel Notley] did turn off the supply to B.C., it would hurt Alberta and B.C.'s economies." (A19)

As exemplified in this section, this theme tells the story of a province and fossil fuel industry plagued by economic uncertainty. Amid several pipeline cancellations and a more robust approval process for energy projects, CBC Calgary presented TMX as a beacon of hope—a light at the end of the tunnel—for the province's economy and oil industry. This is reflective of a reality wherein, as discussed in Chapter 2, the fossil fuel industry is under mounting pressure to perform amid plummeting gas prices, diplomatic tensions, shifting demand, and the emergence of a global pandemic. The analysis also revealed that CBC B.C., with the exception of one article, tends to omit representations of the local energy industry. Specifically, only the article presented above shed light on the potential impacts of the pipeline's cancellation on local B.C. communities, jobs, and opportunities tied to the fossil fuel industry. Instead, the majority of discussions surrounding the pipeline focused on the B.C. government's attitude towards the pipeline, and consequently omits the voices of smaller communities that rely on the energy industry. Conversely, several CBC B.C. articles noted Alberta's retaliatory turn-of-the-taps legislation would hurt B.C.'s economy by increasing fuel prices.

#### **5.3.4) Federal Government: A Saviour to one, a Betrayer to Another**

How best to tackle these threats facing Alberta? Coverage suggests the onus rests on the federal government to do something about it. In line with this, a consistent frame that emerged in the analysis concerns the federal government's leadership on the pipeline file. The analysis uncovered that, overall, CBC Calgary's articles promoted the expectation that Ottawa must side with Alberta on the dispute and offer its full support to building the pipeline:

It would be an oversimplification to attribute the re-emergence of alienation to the current dustup between Alberta and B.C. over the Trans Mountain pipeline. While this one issue may be the primary focal point, anger has been building for some time. It follows a very real economic downturn, the ongoing divisive debate over the future of the oil sands, other environmental concerns, the demise of "politics as usual" in Alberta, the perception that B.C. is playing politics and the belief by some that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hasn't got Alberta's back. (A12)

In the same vein, coverage also presented the Trudeau government as having the duty to intervene and put an end to B.C.'s petty politics, which, as explored in previous sections, is often framed as being the source of delay for TMX:

UCP leader [Jason Kenney] said that because the pipeline was approved by the National Energy Board, he feels it's unacceptable that the federal government hasn't intervened by asking B.C. to "obviate any other illegal stall tactics." (A11)

As with the victimization theme outlined earlier in this chapter, this presentation of the dispute consequently dismisses Alberta's role, including its turn-off-the-taps legislation, in delaying the pipeline. Instead, it presents the argument that the B.C. government is solely responsible for the delay for spiteful and politically motivated reasons that threaten its economic interests. Furthermore, it assumes the federal government is by default obliged to side with Alberta and defend the fossil fuel industry by supporting the pipeline (which was ultimately the case). In contrast to CBC Calgary's coverage, CBC B.C. presented the federal government as

having betrayed the province by taking Alberta's side on the dispute, and erring in its decision to purchase TMX despite its environmental and social ramifications:

NDP MP Kennedy Stewart, who is facing charges for defying a court order to protest at least five metres away from Kinder Morgan property, called Trudeau reckless for forcing the pipeline through British Columbia. "The prime minister has failed on this project. He is blowing this into a national crisis because of the mishandling of this file," said Stewart. (A22)

Research has shown that in times of despair in the oil patch, the federal government is often expected to intervene by providing corporations with bailout packages and competitive royalties (Shrivastava & Stefanick, 2015). In the face of crisis, then, it is expected that Alberta can always count on the federal government to support its industry. Though it contrasts the province's "Nativist Neoliberalism" discourse observed by Adkin & Stares (2016), it does also suggest the Alberta government, as observed in Kevin Taft's (2016) Deep State thesis, expects Ottawa to put its interests above those of other provinces and support the fossil fuel industry. This has shown to be the case in the CBC's Alberta coverage, which presents the federal government as having the duty to intervene in the dispute by supporting Alberta and shunning B.C. Conversely, CBC B.C.'s coverage frames Ottawa, who ended up purchasing the beleaguered pipeline project, as betraying B.C.'s interests and siding with Alberta and Big Oil.

### **5.3.5) Petro-Culturalism, National Identity, and Western Alienation**

One of the storylines identified in the analysis heavily reflects the Alberta government's long-standing conviction that it must do everything in its power to stand up for its national interests and protect the resource industry. This is illustrated here:

[Jason Kenney] also accused Alberta's NDP government of not taking strong enough actions against B.C.'s NDP government. "We have an NDP government here in Edmonton that has fumbled the ball from Day One," Kenney said. "They are aligned fundamentally and philosophically with the New Democrats in B.C., the New Democrats in Vancouver, the Government of Burnaby, the Government of Coquitlam ... they don't really understand what they're fighting for here." (A11)

Here, UCP Leader Jason Kenney blasts the incumbent provincial government, headed by NDP Leader Rachel Notley, for not being austere enough towards the B.C. government for delaying the pipeline. Upon a deeper reading of the passage, Kenney here is suggesting that ideologically and symbolically, the Alberta government must be a strong leader and fight for the people and the fossil fuel industry no matter what the repercussions may be—even if that means eroding diplomatic relationships with B.C. and the federal government. The NDP government, in this sense, is portrayed as being out of touch with the fundamental ideology that underpins Alberta leadership, which champions the “[neo] liberal, authoritarian, corporatist state” (Harrison, 2015). Meanwhile, a CBC Calgary analysis alludes to the long-standing sentiment of Western alienation in Alberta:

And that’s part of what makes this resurgence of resentment different. Many Albertans feel unsupported—if not outright attacked—from the East and also from the West. “Western alienation” has become “Alberta alienation.” Still, there are some who lived through the recession of the 1980s and remember the rise of the word “alienation” who look at what’s happening now, and an aggrieved Alberta must avoid returning to the past. (A12)

Drawing from the victimization theme identified earlier, the “western alienation” frame underscores the sentiment that Alberta is being sidelined by the rest of the country (Smith, 2015). This excerpt paints a sharp portrayal of Alberta as a province undermined by its allies and left to fend for itself in times of uncertainty. While this has been a long-standing discourse in the history of Alberta, it has recently re-emerged in the government’s discourse under the leadership of Premier Jason Kenney (Keller, 2019). Thus, CBC Calgary tends to replicate sentiments accustomed to Alberta’s petro-cultural identity; on one hand, it derides Rachel Notley’s government of being out of touch with the very essence of Alberta leadership: to defend its interests no matter what the repercussions may be. On the other, its narratives underscore a

deeply embedded feeling among Albertans of being alienated by the rest of Canada. Both of these findings suggest CBC Calgary's framing of TMX reflects Alberta's identity and culture as a petro-nation.

### 5.3.6) Environmental Concerns and Dissent

When it comes to their respective framing of the pipeline's environmental repercussions, both publications diverged. As noted in previous sections, CBC Calgary's coverage seldom made mention of the environment or climate change, while also failing to provide salience to environmental activists. When coverage did mention the environment, it was presented as a brief acknowledgment that the pipeline is drawing environmental criticism from opponents, though it never develops or elaborates on said criticism. Instead, these claims are buried amid pro-pipeline voices. However, in times when environmental opposition was given salience in its coverage, CBC Calgary either presented them as "interrupters" or as being a nuisance:

Not everyone in the crowd was supportive of the pipeline project. The gathering was briefly interrupted by three protesters brandishing signs decrying the federal government's "bailout" for the oil and gas sector in the face of climate change. As the protesters were led from the building, Anna Gerrard, from Climate Justice Edmonton, told CBC News they're opposed to the plan. She said they don't believe public funds should be invested in a project when there are Indigenous cases before the courts by people who believe they were not properly consulted. (A4)

As evidenced is this passage, at times when environmentalists *are* given salience in coverage, they're presented as disruptive, interrupters, and a minority. Thus, contesting narratives are belittled and suppressed to cast them in a negative light. Again, these comments were quickly proceeded by the voices of the project's supporters. In another instance where an anti-pipeline voice was presented, the quote was placed at the very end of the article (where it

will likely be missed by readers). In a 770-word article, anti-pipeline voices were given a mere 96 words of salience, and were thrown at the very end of the article:

“Critics of the project point to Canada’s climate change targets, increased oil tanker traffic, and risk of spills as concerns. Mike Hudema, Greenpeace’s climate and energy campaigner said Kinder Morgan’s action is a signal of what’s to come. ‘The writing is on the wall, and even Kinder Morgan can read it. Investors should note that the opposition to this project is strong, deep and gets bigger by the day,’ Hudema told CBC News. (A11)

Conversely, a larger proportion of CBC B.C. articles presented the pipeline as being a risk to B.C.’s environmental landscape. However, of note, very few articles pointed to the large-scale environmental consequences such as climate change. Instead, coverage tended to focus on local environmental impacts such as a ‘catastrophic’ oil spill and the threat to local biodiversity. This finding parallel Dusyk et al.’s (2016) analysis of the Northern Gateway pipeline, which found that B.C. coverage focused more on local environmental impacts rather than large-scale ones. In any case, environmental concerns regarding the pipeline outweighed those observed in CBC Calgary’s coverage of TMX. Furthermore, some of the coverage also suggested there was a lack of environmental consultation by the NEB on the pipeline before choosing to approve it.

The federal and Alberta governments support the Trans Mountain project, while B.C. says it’s defending its coast from a potentially catastrophic oil product spill. ‘This process is about B.C.’s right under the Constitution to regulate against the deleterious impacts on the environment, on the economy, on the provincial interests—whether it’s an inter-provincial project or a provincial project,’ B.C. Environment Minister George Heyman told reporters at the B.C. Legislature on Wednesday. (A18)

In stark contrast to CBC Calgary’s framing of dissenting voices, CBC B.C. portrayed environmental opposition as ‘calm’ and committed” in showing their disapproval with the pipeline. Furthermore, B.C.’s coverage mentioned environmental protests and demonstrations more frequently than its counterpart:

A prominent U.S. environmentalist who, 30 years ago, wrote the first book on global warming for a general audience visited Vancouver on the weekend to bolster opponents of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and help raise money for their legal defence

fund. (A15) McKibben, 57, says he's impressed with the commitment and calmness of protesters vowing to keep the pipeline from being built. (A15)

As examined in this section, and as expected based on prior literature on the matter, CBC B.C. was more likely to mention the environmental risks associated with the TMX pipeline than its Western counterpart. In terms of subject matter, its coverage often linked threats to the pipeline with local environmental consequences such as oil spills and damage to coastal biodiversity and resources. However, and as demonstrated in prior research, the pipeline was rarely linked to larger-scale environmental concerns such as climate change. Meanwhile, CBC Calgary's coverage provided little to no salience to dissenting voices, and when it did, it was either a very brief acknowledgment with no further elaboration, or it was tucked at the very end of an article. When it comes to framing environmental opposition to the pipeline, a large difference was examined between the two divisions. For its part, CBC Calgary framed protesters as being a minority and a nuisance, while CBC B.C. framed them in a more positive light as being calm, reasonable, and dedicated to defending their cause. As explored in the ensuing theme, this tendency was also paralleled in their respective presentation of Indigenous resistance.

### **5.3.7) Indigenous Opposition**

Another theme observed in the coverage was Indigenous concerns towards the pipeline. As was shown to be the case, and as expected given previous research, Indigenous representation in CBC Calgary's coverage was very seldom—even to a lesser extent than its coverage of environmental concerns. With three total mentions identified in the entire sample, indigenous issues were overall neglected from its coverage. Unsurprisingly, one of the few mentions of Indigenous communities frames them as being supporters of the pipeline:

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade is flying about 100 business, community and Indigenous leaders to Alberta this week in an effort to show that some British Columbians support the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion moving ahead. (A2)

The two other mentions, for their parts, were mere acknowledgments that Indigenous resistance exists. Meanwhile, CBC B.C. coverage provided a wider array of salience to First Nations communities and voices opposed to the pipeline, with many arguing its construction would impact Indigenous sovereignty, land rights, culture, health, and lifestyles. Furthermore, coverage included the voices of various Indigenous leaders and advocacy groups.

[Secretary-treasurer of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs] Judy Wilson said the fact shareholders voted for the sustainability report proposal shows they want the company to be more socially and environmentally responsible, but that won't stop opposition to the Trans Mountain expansion because it threatens Indigenous culture, spirituality, identity and way of life. (A20)

On several occasions, CBC B.C. coverage also highlighted arguments that First Nations communities weren't adequately consulted by the federal government nor by Kinder Morgan prior to the pipeline's approval. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, Indigenous consultations are a major component of the National Energy Board's evaluation when considering the approval of energy projects such as pipelines. This sentiment is echoed here:

The Tsleil-Waututh is the lead plaintiff in a challenge to the pipeline involving a number of First Nations who claim they weren't adequately consulted on the Trans Mountain project. Likewise, the Tsleil-Waututh say the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion plans threaten their very way of life. They claim the threat of a spill in Burrard Inlet is inevitable and the additional tankers the project would bring, could eliminate the southern resident killer whales which are a cornerstone of their culture. "Canada's efforts at consultation and accommodation scarcely amounted to more than giving notice and receiving (the Tsleil-Waututh Nation's) views," they argue. Such an approach cannot be reconciled with the duty of deep consultation that Canada acknowledged was required of it in the circumstances. (A23)

In sum, it can be deduced that there's a stark difference in the representation of Indigenous communities between both publications. Chiefly among them is the fact that CBC Calgary's coverage accorded very little salience to Indigenous communities and made little acknowledgment of the pipeline's impacts on their sovereignty. This finding becomes interesting when one observes the narrative emerging from the Alberta government itself. When the Federal

Court of Appeals concluded in 2019 that First Nations were not consulted in good faith prior to the pipeline's approval, the Alberta government urged the court not to put Indigenous opposition above public interests in TMX (Canadian Press, 2019b). CBC Calgary consequently reproduced this sentiment by obscuring the voices of Indigenous communities and thus reinforcing the assumption that the pipeline is necessary and in the national interest. In contrast, CBC B.C.'s coverage adequately reflects the local concerns of Indigenous communities surrounding the pipeline's impact on their land, health, and culture. Furthermore, it recognizes concerns that Indigenous communities were not adequately consulted by the federal government, unlike CBC Calgary. Finally, its coverage provided salience to Indigenous voices including leaders and advocacy groups.

### **5.3.8) Big Oil versus Provinces**

An unexpected theme that emerged in the analysis is one that aligns with the Deep State thesis—which is alluded to on two separate occasions in the CBC B.C.'s coverage by questioning the industry's relationship with the federal government:

Burnaby Mayor Derek Corrigan said he expects resistance to the twinning of the Trans Mountain pipeline to grow after Trudeau stated he would use federal financial and legislative power “to remove the uncertainty around the project.” “I’m embarrassed to see our prime minister kowtowing to an American oil giant. We’ll continue in the city of Burnaby to fight this project to our last breath,” said Corrigan. “This has become ground zero for who is controlling our democratic institutions—is it the people of our country or is it the multinational corporations?” (A22)

Here, the Mayor of Burnaby raises doubt over the federal government's relationship with the fossil fuel industry. Specifically, he argues the federal government is “kowtowing,” or acting in a subservient matter, towards Kinder Morgan in order to get the pipeline built. Hence, he questions to what extent the fossil fuel industry controls the country's democratic institutions. This concern is in line with the Deep State thesis that underpins this research paper, which

assumes that democratic institutions have indeed been “captured” (Taft, 2017) by the oil industry to the extent that it fashions laws, government proceedings, and other elements to serve its own self-fulfilling agenda. This notion is again raised in a CBC B.C. article:

[Federal Green Party Leader Elizabeth May] accused [Kinder Morgan] of holding the Canadian government to ransom to get protections from losses on a pipeline project she says the company planned to cancel long ago. “They are kidnappers who took a hostage, not to get the ransom, but to kill the hostage,” she said. (A26)

This quote stunningly suggests Kinder Morgan “took hostage” of the federal government and “held it to ransom” in order to get it to make decisions that serve its own private interests, namely, to approve the pipeline. Furthermore, the last line suggests Kinder Morgan wanted to “kill the hostage,” or in other words, eradicate the federal government’s democratic duty—which in and of itself highlights the hands-off style of governance championed by modern neoliberalism (Brown, 2016). As suggested by these two passages, then, it can be deduced that the CBC B.C.’s coverage, in line with the Deep State theory, brings to light questions surrounding the extent to which the fossil fuel industry has a grip on Canada’s federal government, which as discussed in previous chapters, poses a threat to democratic institutions that are supposed to operate independently from corporate bodies. More specifically, the coverage reflects on Kinder Morgan’s role in the federal government’s approval of TMX.

#### **5.4) Discussion**

Our first research question sought to address whether CBC Calgary and CBC B.C.’s framing of TMX reflected the local attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments of their respective provinces. Indeed, the findings presented in this chapter suggest the CBC Calgary’s coverage reproduces the Alberta population’s pro-pipeline stance by framing the construction of TMX as necessary to economic growth, bolstering employment, and alleviating an investment chill (Harrison, 2015). Beyond its presentation of the pipeline, its coverage also paints the story of an

Alberta, who in addition to facing an economic crisis plagued by plummeting oil prices and unemployment, has fallen victim to Western alienation. Here, the B.C. government is presented as purposely waging a heinous attack against the province by delaying the pipeline's construction and thus jeopardizing its interests. In the face of uncertainty, coverage frames the federal government as having the duty and obligation to intervene and put an end to the B.C. government's politically motivated campaign and build the pipeline. This consequently parallels Gunster and Saurette's (2014) identification of "government-as-saviour" and "victimization" frames in the Calgary Herald's framing of the oil sands. In stark contrast to CBC B.C.'s coverage—whose government and population are generally opposed the pipeline (Axsen, 2014)—CBC Calgary seldom acknowledges the pipeline's potential impacts on the local environment and Indigenous issues. CBC B.C., for its part, consistently alluded to the pipeline's impacts on local biodiversity, though it rarely linked such impacts to broader concerns such as climate change. In the same vein, an analysis of primary definers also demonstrated this spatial bias; while CBC Calgary's coverage often presented the voices of pro-pipeline academics, experts, and politicians, CBC B.C., in contrast, provided salience to dissenting voices such as environmental groups, Indigenous groups, and local politicians opposed to TMX. While providing salience to those whose voices align with provincial interests, others were systematically omitted in the process. For instance, CBC Calgary's coverage largely suppressed the dissenting voices of Indigenous groups, environmentalists, and local Alberta communities opposed or unsure about the pipeline (Hussey, 2018). In sharp contrast, CBC B.C.'s coverage relied predominantly on anti-pipeline sources in urban, populated areas like Vancouver or Burnaby, while paying little attention to smaller, local communities whose economies and job sector rely chiefly on energy projects like TMX.

What can we make of these findings? At surface level, local attitudes towards TMX *were* reflected in CBC B.C. and Calgary's coverage. As observed at the onset of this research paper, British Columbians tend to oppose the pipeline's environmental and social ramifications, while Albertans embrace it for its economic and social benefits (Axsen, 2014; Lequesne, 2019). Given this spatial bias, CBC Calgary's pro-pipeline narrative is more likely to resonate with the local population as they're in a position to benefit directly from TMX, while CBC B.C.'s audience would reject it (Gravelle & Lachapelle, 2015; Gunster and Saurette, 2014). At the same time, it reflects literature suggesting mainstream newspapers, especially when based in Alberta, frame the fossil fuel industry in a positive light (Chen, 2019; Way, 2011; Dusyk et al., 2018; Gunster & Saurette, 2014). On that account, we can validate the research question by concluding the CBC Calgary and CBC British Columbia's framing of the pipeline does, in fact, reflect the local beliefs and attitudes held by the respective populations they serve. Thus, when reflecting on the CBC's mandate as a public broadcaster to "reflect the regional and cultural diversity of Canada" (Government of Canada, 2019), one could say the CBC is fulfilling its democratic duty and serving the public with the very best of intentions.

This conclusion, however, paints a rosy picture of a much more complex issue. When taking into account framing theory, it becomes apparent that coverage extends beyond the representation of local attitudes and beliefs and into the reproduction of neoliberal hegemonic discourses embodied by the provincial government. By suppressing representations of Indigenous communities and environmental activists in CBC Calgary's case, it is consequently narrowing the scope of discussion to those aligned dominant interests. By omitting all oppositional discourses from its coverage, it tailors the narrative in such a way that reflects only the neoliberal discourses purveyed by the Alberta government, and as such, engages in what

Gunster and Saurette (2014) call the “narrative justification of the promotional petro-state.” Here, CBC Calgary becomes as a proxy—or an extension—of the Alberta government and fossil fuel industry by actively defending resource extraction and thus legitimizing its continued development, despite mounting scientific evidence pointing to its environmental consequences.

When revisiting the CBC’s mandate to “reflect the regional and cultural diversity of Canada” (Government of Canada, 2019), then, it becomes apparent that’s not entirely echoed in reality. However, it is important to note that CBC Calgary’s reproduction of hegemonic neoliberal discourses is limited to provincial boundaries and are not reflected in CBC B.C.’s framing of the pipeline. Accordingly, it would be inaccurate to conclude the CBC does not reflect local values, attitudes and beliefs of their respective jurisdictions. The divergence, however, rests in the fact that CBC Calgary’s coverage does not present “the fairest possible idea of events” and “allow the different viewpoints to be expressed” (Conseil mondial de la radiotélévision, 2001, p. 17) as a public broadcaster should. Instead, it takes this plurality of viewpoints and packages it into a narrative that reflects the petro-state values championed by the Alberta government since the late twentieth century (Harrison, 2015). Whether this tendency is exhibited in the CBC’s other divisions—notably its Ottawa Bureau—warrants further examination. In answering our second question, then, the analysis confirms the Alberta government’s neoliberal discourses are indeed reflected in CBC Calgary’s news coverage of TMX under the guise of sustainable development, economic growth, balance, and victimization.

What does that mean for the CBC, public service broadcasting, and democratic institutions then? Though often overlooked, PSB occupies an important role in the framework of democracy and informed civil decision-making, especially when it comes to communicating information about the environment. As Hackett (2017) puts it:

Historically, the rationale or mandate for public broadcasters such as [the CBC] has included the democratic roles of informing citizens, highlighting and amplifying public issues, facilitating discussion and communicate exchange between different segments of society, providing “universally” available broadcasting service throughout the country, and reducing the impact of social inequalities on participating in public discourse. These are classic functions of the democratic public sphere (p. 100).

As explored in Chapter 2, the democratic essence of PSB is falling through the cracks as neoliberal policies, which champion privatization and deregulation (Brown, 2016), undermine the importance of public broadcasting as a public good. Furthermore, it has become increasingly challenging for PSB to maintain autonomy from external influences. The CBC, for its part, is no exception amid threats to its “funding and political independence from unsympathetic neoliberal governments” (Hackett, 2017, p. 100), and to this, we add corporate independence as well. When reflecting on the Deep State thesis explored throughout this research paper, along with modern neoliberalism’s impact on democratic institutions (Brown, 2016), it can be deduced that in CBC Calgary’s case, the fossil fuel industry’s corporate interests, which are consequently reflected in the Alberta government’s hegemonic discourses, permeated the boundaries of democratic institutions, including the nation’s public broadcaster. Instead of serving the public good, CBC Calgary becomes a mere conduit in which the fossil fuel industry’s desire to legitimize the continued development of the fossil fuel sector can be disseminated, thus reinforcing the commonsense assumption that TMX is the only viable option for maintaining economic welfare and Canadians’ way of life (Brown, 2016). It bears reiterating, however, that the findings unveiled in this paper suggest this act of reproducing neoliberal hegemonic discourses does not extend beyond the scope of CBC Calgary’s coverage, and as such, it cannot be generalized to CBC as a corporation.

What are the ramifications of a PSB operating under the guise of oil’s deep state (Taft, 2016)? For one thing, it means a public service that operates to serve the corporate interests of

the fossil fuel industry by limiting the scope of discussion to those in line with its self-fulfilling beliefs, ideas, and ideologies. Otherwise put, it legitimizes the belief that economic and social welfare is contingent on fossil fuel development while suppressing dissenting narratives that suggest otherwise. By omitting alternative discourses that pose a threat to this mantra, including the voices of Indigenous communities and environmentalists, this ideology is absorbed as reality by CBC Calgary's audience, who are already predisposed to supporting the industry (Harrison, 2015). Consequently, CBC Calgary errs in fulfilling its duty as a public broadcaster to act "as a check and watchdog on government power and [provide] citizens with the information that they need to know about their world and make decisions about their future" (Taras & Weddell, 2020, p. 173). By discouraging broader discussions surrounding the fossil fuel industry, its implications on social and environmental health, and the prospect of transitioning towards renewable forms of energy, the oil sands are depicted as an indispensable service that provides Canadians with immaculate wealth and comfortable lifestyles.

Drawing from Hackett's (2017) definition of PSB depicted above, CBC Calgary is failing to "facilitate discussions and communicate exchange between segments of society" that are the spinal cord of democracy (p. 100). Thus, in line with previous research highlighted in Chapter 2, these findings reinforce the assumption that PSB, including in Canada, has shifted from a model encouraging national unity and independence towards one that promotes neoliberal values in line with the fossil fuel industry, thus posing a threat to the very essence of democracy and the public sphere (Brown, 2016). In the framework of Alberta's Deep State, CBC Calgary no longer operates autonomously and independently from political and corporate influence, thus eroding its very role as a democratic institution. The above discussion, then, helps to address our third and final research question.

### 5.5) Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of a critical discourse analysis of CBC Calgary and British Columbia's framing of the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion project. Specifically, it involved a quantitative examination of primary definers and overarching themes and a qualitative assessment of underlying frames and storylines in the coverage. In the framework of this analysis, a sample of CBC Calgary ( $N=12$ ) and CBC B.C. ( $N=15$ ) articles was analyzed to gauge, as outlined in our methodology, whether their respective presentation of TMX reflected local attitudes and beliefs towards TMX, and whether the Alberta government's neoliberal hegemonic discourses are reflected in CBC Calgary's coverage. Thus, in answering our first research question, and in line with PSB's mandate to present "the fairest possible idea of events" and "allow the different viewpoints to be expressed" (Conseil mondial de la radiotélévision, 2001, p. 17), the CBC does, in fact, reflect local ideologies, beliefs, and values of the provinces in which it operates. However, in answering our second research question, it becomes apparent that upon deeper examination, CBC Calgary's framing of TMX fails to provide a plurality of discourses by limiting the scope of discussions to those in line with the neoliberal interests of the Alberta government and the fossil fuel industry. By omitting all alternative discourses, including those that draw attention to the pipeline's social and environmental repercussions, the public broadcaster legitimizes the commonsense neoliberal assumption that building the pipeline is the only way to fuel Alberta's dulling resource industry and bolster the national economy. Interpreted through the lens of neoliberalism and the Deep State thesis, such findings suggest CBC Calgary no longer operates independently from political and corporate interests to serve the public good, as a PSB should. Instead, and as evidenced by the findings presented in this chapter, it serves the Alberta government and fossil fuel industry by promoting the notion that energy

development is the only viable path forward for economic and social welfare. This failure to represent a comprehensive scope of discourses, despite being representative of local beliefs, dampens the democratic role of public broadcasting to provide unbiased information about public issues that serve to hold government bodies to account. With this being said, the following section will close off the research paper by providing a brief overview of the findings and future paths of research.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

Hailed as the economic powerhouse of the country, Alberta's oil sands are now facing unprecedented uncertainty in the face of plummeting gas prices, global diplomatic tensions, a lack of energy projects, an ongoing investment chill, and most recently, the emergence of a global pandemic. Adding fuel to the fire, the industry is frequently associated with images of ecological devastation and humanitarian distresses, making it difficult to secure public consent for their development in Canada (Gunster & Saurette, 2014). Given Alberta's identity as a petro-nation, in which the majority of its economic welfare derives from the energy sector (Adkin, 2016), such challenges pose an imminent threat to its established hegemony.

Accordingly, the Trans Mountain pipeline has become a national symbol of contested politics surrounding Alberta's fossil fuel industry. Plagued by an ongoing diplomatic feud with British Columbia, robust consultations with Indigenous communities, and ongoing resistance from environmentalists, the promise of TMX was hanging by a loose thread. These challenges, coupled with mounting dissent from environmental and Indigenous communities, have posed a threat to the future of the TMX expansion project. In a bid to secure public consent for TMX, government and industry, working together, employed hegemonic neoliberal discourses, often through the media, promoting the pipeline under the guise of economic and social welfare. This consequently legitimizes the oil sands' continued growth, despite ample evidence pointing to their impact on the local environment, climate change, and Indigenous sovereignty.

The Alberta government has enjoyed a cozy relationship with the fossil fuel industry—a relationship that may be understood through the lens of the Deep State (Taft, 2016; Carter, 2011). Through consistent lobbying tactics, the oil industry has had a privileged hand in fashioning government policy to favour its neoliberal interests, that is, to grow the industry. This,

in turn, paved the way for Alberta's neoliberal governance style that embraces industry-friendly policies such as lower taxation, subsidies, and royalties (Steward, 2017). While such policies are applauded by the industry, they play a large role in Alberta's poor environmental track record, including budget cuts to its environmental ministry, a lack of consultations, and poor environmental monitoring (Carter, 2016; Carter, 2011).

As purported by the Deep State thesis, the oil and gas industry's influence on government affairs, which "attempt to influence the provincial government and the public to ensure its investments and profits in the tar sands developments are protected" (Cater, 2016, p. 167), poses a threat to Canada's democratic institutions. By "capturing" or "co-opting" these institutions, the fossil fuel industry erodes the core values of a democratic nation by tailoring legislation that favours its own self-fulfilling agenda. One of these democratic institutions is the media, and specifically, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. As a public service, the CBC is mandated to provide informational, unbiased information that helps Canadians make informed decisions. To this end, it must "maintain freedom from control by vested interests, whether political or financial" (Caplan and Sauvageau, 1986, p. 263). However, under the reign of oil's Deep State in Alberta (Taft, 2016), it would be assumed that the CBC has become a vehicle for disseminating the Alberta government and fossil fuel industry's hegemonic discourses. On that account, the CBC no longer fulfills its democratic duty to serve the public good, and conversely, ends up serving the neoliberal interests of the fossil fuel industry.

Against this backdrop, this research paper set out to examine whether the CBC's framing of TMX indeed reflects these hegemonic neoliberal discourses, or whether it is fulfilling its democratic duty to "reflect the regional and cultural diversity of Canada" (Government of Canada, 2019). Specifically, it asked: (1) to what extent, if at all, does coverage about TMX vary

locally between CBC Calgary and British Columbia, and if so, how this variation is understood? (2) In what ways, if any, is the Alberta government's pro-oil discourse reflected in CBC Calgary's news coverage of the Trans Mountain Pipeline? (3) Drawing on the Deep State theory, what do the findings represent in the broader context of public service broadcasting as a democratic institution? To answer these questions, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was performed on CBC Calgary (N=12) and CBC British Columbia's (N=15) respective coverage of TMX to gauge local discrepancies in coverage and the degree to which the Alberta government's hegemonic neoliberal discourses may be reflected.

Though an extensive body of literature suggests Canadian mainstream newspapers do reflect the Alberta government and energy industry's pro-oil narrative, scant research has examined the CBC's role in the matter. Thus, building on a call for further exploration into the implications of neoliberalism on PSB (De Cillia & McCurdy, 2016), along with a need for further examination into regionally based outlets (Anderson, 2009; Deacon et al., 2015), this research paper closes the gap by extending the analysis of neoliberal discourses to public service broadcasting, which in addition to being an essential component of democracy, also plays an imperative role in the communication of environmental information (Hackett, 2017).

### **6.1) Findings**

In answering our first research question, the analysis has shown that CBC Calgary and B.C.'s framing of TMX reflected local values, beliefs, and attitudes towards the pipeline. While the former's coverage framed the pipeline as being important to employment and economic welfare, the latter depicted TMX as being a concern to Indigenous sovereignty and to the local environment. Here, our expectations were met given previous research suggesting geographic proximity, regional values, and relevance for the reader are all factors that influence the selection

and framing of energy projects (Carvalho, 2007; Gravelle & Lachapelle, 2015). Conversely, it contrasts Dusyk et al.'s (2018) analysis of coverage surrounding the Northern Gateway Pipeline in B.C. and Alberta, which found no disparities in framing between the two provinces in mainstream coverage. However, the authors attribute this lack of variation to the fact that both newspapers were owned by media Conglomerate *Postmedia*, which is known to have ties with the oil industry. Thus, the evidence suggests CBC B.C. and Calgary frame TMX in such a way that reflects local attitudes and beliefs, thus fulfilling its duty as a public broadcaster to “allow the different viewpoints to be expressed” (Conseil mondial de la radiotélévision, 2001, p. 17).

Concerning our second query, our findings suggest CBC Calgary engages in the “narrative justification of the promotional petro-state” (Gunster & Saurette, 2014) by highlighting pro-pipeline discourse and omitting dissenting ones. Specifically, our findings align with previous research suggesting mainstream newspapers legitimize the commonsense assumption that resource extraction is imperative to Alberta’s economic growth and social prosperity while discrediting or obscuring critiques associated with its impact on climate change, the local environment, and Indigenous sovereignty. As was also the case in our literature review, CBC Calgary painted the story of an Alberta besieged by the rest of Canada, including B.C., whose government, is presented as conspiring to tear down Alberta’s fossil fuel industry for no good reason. In this light, the federal government is called upon as the saviour, caretaker and friend of a province that’s fallen victim to Western alienation. In answering our second question, then, CBC Calgary does, in fact, engage in the reproduction of hegemonic neoliberal discourses, although the same cannot be said for CBC B.C.

In addressing our third and final question, the findings suggest CBC Calgary does not “maintain freedom from control by vested interests, whether political or financial” (Caplan and

Sauvageau, 1986, p. 263) as a public service should. In fact, in its framing of TMX, CBC Calgary narrows the scope of discussion to those in line with the neoliberal narrative fashioned by the Alberta government and the oil industry, thus legitimizing the development of fossil fuels. This suggests, as proposed by the Deep State thesis, that CBC Calgary is not fulfilling its democratic duty to provide Albertans with a plurality of discourses allowing Albertans to make informed, rational decisions about the fossil fuel industry. Instead, it operates in the energy sector's favour by presenting Albertans with the notion that TMX is the only ends to economic prosperity, while at the same time suppressing alternative discourses suggesting otherwise. Our findings, then, support the assumption that CBC Calgary's autonomy, which is necessary to perform a democratic institution, has been threatened by a neoliberal government and a corporate industry with a self-fulfilling agenda.

## **6.2) Limitations and Future Directions**

Several limitations were faced in regard to the research methodology of this paper. Chiefly among them is the fact that the sample was limited. To remain within the boundaries of this research paper, a sample of 27 articles out of 86 total articles was selected for analysis. While it did provide a plausible conclusion, a larger sample size would have allowed for a more comprehensive examination of the subject matter. To this end, the scope of this study was limited due to the smaller sample size and should be considered in future research.

Another weakness of this study relates to geographic diversity. The findings uncovered in this study suggest CBC Calgary's tendency to reproduce neoliberal hegemonic discourses did not extend beyond provincial boundaries, and as such, was not replicated in CBC B.C.'s coverage. However, it cannot be concluded that the CBC in and of itself subscribes to this paradigm. Consequently, a further investigation into the CBC's other divisions, including its Edmonton,

Saskatchewan (given its proximity to AB), and Ottawa Bureau would be warranted in future research. This, in turn, would allow for a more fruitful exploration into whether or not the results can be attributed to the CBC as a whole.

This study has also raised important questions about the nature of public service broadcasting operating within a Deep State. While the results do, to a certain degree, paint a picture of PSB as a democratic institution co-opted by corporate and government interests, further examination into the matter would be warranted. Given the importance of PSB in providing valuable information to Canadians, it is necessary to hold it to account and ensure it is fulfilling its mandate as a public service to serve the public good. Despite its limitations, however, the study certainly adds to our understanding of the relationship between the CBC, the fossil fuel industry, and democracy.

### **6.3) Chapter Conclusion**

In its 2018 Special Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that global warming caused by anthropogenic emissions from fossil fuel extraction is expected to reach 1.5 °C within the next half-century unless production decreases (IPCC, 2018). Despite a growing body of scientific evidence pointing to the consequences of human-induced climate change (Swart & Weaver, 2012, p. 134), the Canadian and Alberta governments continue to approve energy projects such as the Trans Mountain Pipeline, while making little effort to scale back on emissions and implement green technology (Adkin, 2016).

This continued approval of energy projects, despite their known environmental and social ramifications, is largely due to the close relationship fostered by the government and fossil fuel industry over time. Accordingly, the industry's "capture" of government operations, as

suggested by the Deep State thesis, has severe consequences for democratic institutions such as the CBC, which plays a crucial role in communicating information about public affairs.

Graham et al. (2019) argue that to transition away from fossil fuels, “rapid, democratic and socially just manner is required. If we do not acknowledge and address the influence that the fossil fuel holds over government policy, we will not be able to take the steps necessary to adequately address the crisis with the urgency it requires” (p. 7). This statement begs the question: if public service broadcasting has fallen under the reigns of the fossil fuel industry, then who’s left to hold it to account?

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## Appendix

<b>Appendix A: CBC Calgary Sample (N=12)</b>			
Article ID	Date	Author	Title
A1 <sup>1</sup>	10/05/2018	Erin Collins	Why killing Alberta's carbon tax could kill Kinder Morgan pipeline
A2	15/05/2018	Rachel Ward	Vancouver trade board to fly Trans Mountain pipeline supporters to Alberta
A3	04/11/2018	CBC News	Trans Mountain pipeline rally draws well over 1,000 to McDougall Centre in Calgary
A4	30/05/2018	CBC News	Trans Mountain deal proof federal government willing to step up for oil and gas, says finance minister
A5	23/04/2018	CBC News	Kinder Morgan fumbled public relations on Trans Mountain, poll suggests
A6	24/05/2018	Dave Dormer	Premier Notley spars with federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh over Trans Mountain
A7	24/05/2018	CBC News	Moody's warns Trans Mountain failure would be major blow to Alberta economy
A8	17/04/2018	Lucie Edwardson	Notley's Bill 12 'shows bold leadership,' say Alberta oil and gas producers
A9	01/06/2018	CBC News	B.C. premier's 'very dangerous game' forced Ottawa to buy Trans Mountain pipeline, Calgary mayor says
A10	23/05/2018	CBC News	Alberta could be on shaky ground in B.C. lawsuit over Bill 12, Calgary legal expert says
A11	08/04/2018	Sarah Rieger	Kenney supports Notley's pitch to have Alberta invest in Trans Mountain pipeline
A12 <sup>1</sup>	23/04/2018	Tony Seskus	The new Alberta alienation: Resenting East and West

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis

<b>Appendix B: CBC British Columbia Sample (N=15)</b>			
Article ID	Date	Author	Title
A13	22/04/2018	Andrew Kurjata	Northern B.C. residents stage pro-pipeline rally in Fort St. John
A14	04/18/2018	CBC News	More British Columbians now support the Trans Mountain pipeline project: poll
A15	14/05/2018	Chad Pawson	Trans Mountain is 'the kind of place to draw the line,' says environmentalist Bill McKibben
A16	23/05/2018	Megan Thomas	B.C. premier has 'full and frank' conversations with western premiers but no consensus on pipeline
A17	16/04/2018	CBC News	B.C. threatens to sue Alberta as all sides in Trans Mountain dispute dig in
A18	18/04/2018	Rhianna Schmuck	B.C. going to province's highest court in attempt to fight Trans Mountain pipeline
A19	17/04/2018	Claire Henning	Alberta's Bill 12 more about politics than practicalities, says energy expert, politician
A20	09/05/2018	Gemma Karstens-Smith	B.C. First Nation leader pitches sustainability to Kinder Morgan pipeline investors
A21	24/05/2018	Jason Proctor	Court throws out Trans Mountain pipeline challenge from City of Vancouver and Squamish Nation
A22	16/04/2018	Karin Larsen	Anti-pipeline leaders restate resistance to Trans Mountain pipeline project
A23 <sup>1</sup>	05/30/2018	Jason Proctor	Trans Mountain pipeline: Did the Crown act 'honourably' toward First Nations?
A24	05/20/2018	Briar Stewart	Kayakers take Kinder Morgan protest offshore in U.S.
A25	22/05/2018	Megan Thomas	B.C. sues Alberta over turn-off-the-taps legislation
A26	28/05/2018	Yvette Brend	Elizabeth May pleads guilty to criminal contempt for pipeline protest
A27	09/05/2018	CBC News	Burnaby files pipeline appeal to Supreme Court of Canada