

BARRIERS TO AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION: A CASE STUDY OF THE TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE EXPANSION

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## **ABSTRACT**

Federalism can exacerbate tensions around the uneven geographical distribution of natural resources. Related conflicts recur in Canada, a federal state with an uneven distribution of petroleum products across its provinces and territories. A salient example of intergovernmental conflict over petroleum products is the dispute over the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. This research examines the conflict among the Governments of Canada, British Columbia, and Alberta around Trans Mountain, focusing on the barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution and mitigation in Canada and the requirements any policy options must fulfill to overcome these barriers. A mainly qualitative approach addresses these issues. Specifically, this research combines global energy governance and John L. Campbell's typology of ideas to create a new approach. Campbell is more central to this research. This approach is applied to a secondary statistical analysis of public opinion polling, a thematic analysis of key actors' public documents, and an analysis of interviews I conducted with key actors.

This research finds that together, competitive federalism and the joint decision trap prevent conflict resolution. Accordingly, this research produces a list of barriers to resolving this intergovernmental conflict and requirements for mitigating this conflict. By identifying these requirements, I create and apply an original approach that future studies can use to test the likelihood of success for policy options to mitigate similar intergovernmental conflicts over natural resources. This research's evaluation of potential mitigation tools suggests that 1) federal and provincial teams dedicated to large projects help bureaucrats complete these projects; 2) policies protecting the environment decrease tensions among actors; and 3) leveraging communication through partisan affiliations decreases tension.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACF	Advocacy Coalition Framework
BC	British Columbia
CER	Canada Energy Regulator
GEG	Global Energy Governance
IAA	Impact Assessment Act
NDP	New Democratic Party
NEB	National Energy Board
NEP	National Energy Program
UCP	United Conservative Party

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Context

If Canada were a unitary state, Canadian natural resource policy would offer fewer venues to express frustration, but the underlying frustrations would remain. This dissertation centers on these frustrations, asking: 1) What are the barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution in Canada? 2) What criteria must be fulfilled to overcome these barriers? In this dissertation, I find global energy governance<sup>1</sup> and Campbell's (2004) typology<sup>2</sup> clarify problems and solutions to natural resource conflicts in Canada. I apply this to the case study of the dispute over the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project among the Governments of BC, Alberta, and Canada from 2015 to 2019. I find 1) the key barrier is the joint decision trap<sup>3</sup> encouraged by competitive federalism<sup>4</sup> and 2) helpful mitigation tools are federal and provincial teams dedicated to large projects help bureaucrats complete large projects, policies protecting the environment, and leveraging communication through partisan affiliations.

Conventional wisdom dictates the importance of Canadian federalism and its varied geography in developing policies (Cairns 1977; Montpetit, Lachapelle, and Kiss 2017; Norrie 1984; Wiseman 1981). In the west, British Columbia's (BC) coasts and forests have educational, cultural, and economic value (Destination B.C. Corp 2020; Eckert et al. 2018; McGillivray 2011; Tsleil-Waututh Nation 2015). In contrast, oil is concentrated in Alberta and, to a lesser extent, Saskatchewan (Doern and Gattinger 2003). Companies extract oil from the oil sands in these provinces. While Alberta has the bulk of oil in Canada, many Albertans resent Ottawa for focusing on Quebec and Ontario politics (Gibbins 1979; Janigan 2013). This resentment may be fueled by the separation of federal and provincial jurisdictions and premiers speaking as voices of the provinces, providing points of focus for venting frustration over economic inequality concerning oil. A unitary system with Canada's landscape would keep these economic

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<sup>1</sup> Global energy governance is a branch of energy governance that addresses who governs energy and how that affects simultaneously globalizing and territorialized energy markets (Goldthau and Witte 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Campbell's (2004) typology organizes concepts based on whether they are 1) in the background or foreground of a debate, and 2) outcome-oriented or not.

<sup>3</sup> The joint decision trap is, in short, a problem in federal systems where governments' inability to agree often results in decisions representing the lowest common denominator. For a further exploration of this concept, see Chapters 2 and 7.

<sup>4</sup> Competitive federalism is a system of federalism characterized by conflict.

**Table 1.1 Timeline of Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>April 2012</b>	Kinder Morgan announces plans to expand the Trans Mountain pipeline
<b>December 16, 2013</b>	Kinder Morgan submits proposal for the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project to the National Energy Board (NEB)
<b>November 2014</b>	Over 100 people arrested around protest on Burnaby Mountain over work related to the project
<b>May 29, 2016</b>	NEB report recommends the approval of the project with 157 conditions
<b>November 29, 2016</b>	Government of Canada approves project
<b>January 11, 2017</b>	B.C. Premier Christy Clark approves project as it met her government's five conditions and issues environmental assessment certificate
<b>July 18, 2017</b>	John Horgan sworn in as Premier of British Columbia, replacing Christy Clark. Horgan forms a coalition government with the Green Party
<b>September 29, 2017</b>	Kinder Morgan begins construction expanding Westridge Marine Terminal in Burnaby
<b>December 7, 2017</b>	NEB allows Kinder Morgan to bypass the City of Burnaby's municipal laws and begin work
<b>January 30, 2018</b>	B.C. Premier Horgan temporarily restricts any increase in diluted bitumen shipped through the province
<b>February 6, 2018</b>	Alberta Premier Notley announces boycott of B.C. wine
<b>February 22, 2018</b>	Alberta Premier Notley ends boycott of B.C. wine
<b>April 18, 2018</b>	Alberta Premier Notley tables Bill 12, allowing Alberta to decrease oil shipments
<b>March 9 and 15, 2018</b>	B.C. Supreme Court grants interim and then indefinite injunction from protestors within five metres of two project sites
<b>April 8, 2018</b>	Kinder Morgan pauses non-essential spending on the project and sets end of May deadline for stakeholder agreements
<b>May 24, 2018</b>	B.C. Supreme Court dismisses appeal by Squamish Nation and the City of Vancouver
<b>May 29, 2018</b>	Government of Canada and Kinder Morgan announce that Canada will be purchasing the Trans Mountain pipeline for \$4.5 billion
<b>August 23, 2018</b>	Supreme Court of Canada dismisses City of Burnaby's appeal over Kinder Morgan bypassing municipal laws
<b>August 30, 2018</b>	Kinder Morgan Canada shareholders approve sale
	Federal Court of Appeal decision nullifies the project's approval
<b>September 20, 2018</b>	Government of Canada refers the NEB's May 2016 report back to the NEB for reconsideration
<b>February 22, 2019</b>	Reconsidered NEB report recommends approval of project with 156 conditions and 16 new recommendations
<b>April 30, 2019</b>	Jason Kenney sworn in as Premier of Alberta, replacing Rachel Notley. He declares Bill 12 in force
<b>May 1, 2019</b>	Government of B.C. files legal action against Bill 12
<b>June 18, 2019</b>	Government of Canada approves project
<b>September 17, 2019</b>	B.C. Court of Appeal has Government of B.C. reconsider environmental assessment certificate based on Squamish Nation and the City of Vancouver's court challenge over flawed NEB process
<b>September 24, 2019</b>	Federal Court of Appeal grants injunction against Alberta's Bill 12
<b>December 3, 2019</b>	Construction begins on the pipeline itself
<b>January 16, 2020</b>	Supreme Court of Canada denies B.C.'s appeal over requiring provincial permits to ship diluted bitumen through the province
<b>July 2, 2020</b>	Supreme Court of Canada denies three B.C. First Nations' appeal over consultation on Trans Mountain
<b>Late 2023</b>	Expected completion of project

inequalities around oil, yet a unitary system would be less likely to engender frustration. No one can change Canada's physical landscape, but policies can change the rules and, thus, the institutions<sup>5</sup> that govern Canada. The case study of this dissertation, the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, is an example of the aspects of Canadian federalism that encourage conflict around oil.

From early on, the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project approval process created tension. In 2012, Kinder Morgan announced the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project (see Table 1.1). The expansion includes a twinning of the pipeline that should nearly triple its capacity and an enlargement of existing terminals. As seen in Table 1.1, the pipeline extension has also been (twice) approved by the National Energy Board (NEB) and is currently under construction. Under the current prime minister, Justin Trudeau, the Government of Canada purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline to support the expansion project. During Trudeau's first term and part of his second term as prime minister, this was the primary intergovernmental conflict over pipelines in Canada. Newsworthy public measures by the relevant governments, particularly Alberta, characterized this conflict. In retaliation to BC's opposition to the pipeline and its legal challenges, Alberta threatened what some commentators called a "trade war" (Gerson 2018; Morgan 2018; Varcoe 2018). Former Alberta Premier Rachel Notley threatened a ban on BC wine. She and then Alberta Premier Jason Kenney threatened to decrease oil and gas shipments to other provinces. Both have forwarded legislation to carry out the policy. After the Supreme Court rejected BC's Premier Horgan's legal challenge to control the amount of diluted bitumen shipped through the province (*Reference re Environmental Management Act*, 2020 SCC 1), the central conflict ended.

While the conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project may appear purely economic because of the importance of natural resources, it is not. A cost-benefit analysis can be done based on compensating the financial "loser" in environmental risk and economic benefit if the project is completed based on the financial information available during the conflict (Trebilcock 2014). This analysis assumes the Governments of Alberta and BC base their decisions on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion solely on economic growth or tax revenue.

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<sup>5</sup> This dissertation defines institutions as informed by Parsons' (2007) concept of institutional causal arguments. Here, institutions are human-made constructs that are generally accepted in society. This spans norms, written laws, and policies.

Based on projections from the construction and operation of the pipeline expansion, Alberta could compensate BC for the environmental and economic risks with billions of dollars (Conference Board of Canada 2015; Goodman and Rowan 2014).<sup>6</sup> The two provinces' continued disagreement on the Trans Mountain expansion suggests other factors led to this intergovernmental conflict. These financial calculations obscure some of the potential trade-offs of this conflict.

The urgency of climate change motivates vital trade-offs. One trade-off is the critical transition to green energy, which conflicts with maintaining or growing the oil sands. The Government of Canada has committed to decreasing greenhouse gases and moving to green energy, including the COP26 goal to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C. Key objectives required to achieve this general goal are reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 (Environment and Climate Change Canada 2022a). These goals complicate oil extraction because the oil sands emit substantial greenhouse gases. In Canada, the oil and gas sector was the second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in 2020, with 24% of total emissions; in the same year, the oil sands emitted 11% of total emissions (Environment and Climate Change Canada 2022b). Achieving Canada's goals for a transition to clean energy requires scaling down or transforming oil sands emissions. Accordingly, this research project develops an approach to help relieve some of the tension between a green transition and the oil sands occurring within and among these governments. Essentially, as argued, this primarily institutional<sup>7</sup> problem requires primarily institutional solutions.

To study this topic, I draw on global energy governance, an innovative, institutional approach that addresses who governs energy and the impact of this governance on globalizing yet territorialized energy markets (Goldthau and Witte 2010). Global energy governance rejects the traditional description and analysis of energy as a zero-sum geopolitical game (Goldthau and Witte 2010). For example, Macdonald (2020) presents Canadian intergovernmental energy relations as a zero-sum game. When analyzing an earlier Canadian energy conflict in the 1980s,

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<sup>6</sup> This analysis of benefit was based on projections of revenue and cost in 2012 dollars. Since then, increased construction costs and delays occurred. Accordingly, the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (2022) found that Trans Mountain is no longer profitable as an investment for the Government of Canada.

<sup>7</sup> In this dissertation, I use Parsons' (2007) definition of institutional arguments: based on human-made structures and following rationality under constraints.

James (1990, p. 176) notes that a zero-sum game maximizes conflict while a variable-sum offers potential mutual gain. Presenting the opportunity for more winners and a growing market can decrease perceived causes of conflict (James 1990). Applying global energy governance includes federalism, interest groups, and jurisprudence on Indigenous rights. The relevant academic literature recognizes these factors as vital explanations for Canadian energy disputes (Cairns 1992; Hoberg 2016; King and Pasternak 2018), but few frameworks properly account for all three of these factors (Hoberg 2021). Global energy governance is a helpful framework that accounts for relevant factors and discourages unnecessary conflict.

Regarding the conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, global energy governance allows insights into barriers to and criteria for conflict resolution and mitigation of this dispute. It allows insights into barriers to the Trans Mountain dispute by clarifying the institutions shaping and constraining the decision-making by governments. In terms of criteria, global energy governance shifts the focus from competition to opportunities for common ground. Accordingly, my dissertation collects data on potential common ground across key decision-makers and other stakeholders, identifying where they share overlapping criteria for conflict resolution or mitigation, and accept conflict resolution or mitigation tools. In short, using this framework, this research seeks to contribute to the advancement of knowledge by clarifying the barriers to intergovernmental cooperation and requirements for mitigating intergovernmental conflicts among governments on natural resource issues.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

My work will focus on the two following objectives. 1) Theoretically, my research aims to describe and analyze barriers to intergovernmental cooperation over natural resources in Canada. 2) Practically, my objective is to improve the understanding of the current barriers to interprovincial conflict resolution in Canada and what is needed to overcome them. My research questions implicitly suggest that the independent variables are mitigation tools and barriers; the dependent variable is the level of intergovernmental conflict, albeit on a specific issue. I recognize this is not the sole direction of the relationship among these variables, as is often the case in the social sciences. Instead, the level of conflict also shapes the barriers and mitigation tools available. Achieving goals often requires conflict. This dissertation aims to find ways to ensure Canada can achieve those goals with the minimum necessary conflict.

To achieve this intellectual objective, I aim to create a framework that applies to various intergovernmental conflicts over natural resources. Policymakers and researchers can then apply this framework to similar conflicts to better understand and clearly illustrate how to mitigate these conflicts. To achieve this substantive objective, I will apply this framework to the politically symbolic case of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion conflict among BC, Alberta, and the federal government.

A helpful way to understand the conflict around Trans Mountain is to recognize that Canadian energy policy generally operates in a fragmented system. Both domestic and international energy systems are territorially and institutionally fragmented. Therefore, the conflict is a primarily institutional problem that needs primarily institutional solutions. In this research, I will study the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion conflict among the Governments of BC, Alberta, and Canada using global energy governance and Campbell's (2004) institutional framework.

Focusing on Indigenous governments and communities as key actors is outside the scope of this research.<sup>8</sup> In this research and in general, it is crucial to recognize Indigenous Nations as governments. However, it is unlikely that settler governments and courts will treat Indigenous governments as sovereign governments anytime soon (Borrows 2016; Brown 2019; Coulthard 2014). Since this power imbalance remains, this dissertation mainly studies the federal and provincial governments to focus on the key decision-makers for the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. As a result, my research focuses on conflict among settler governments. Still, it is essential to recognize that Indigenous governments can take the form of elected chiefs with or instead of traditional chiefs, such as the Wet'suwet'en in BC. Research focusing on Indigenous governments and governance has great potential for other projects, including the Trans Mountain expansion (Jonasson et al. 2019; Spiegel et al. 2020).

Overall, this research aims to identify and assess barriers, criteria, and potential conflict mitigation tools for dealing with this conflict. In this research, "mitigation" refers to decreasing the level of conflict between two or more actors. I prefer "mitigation" over "resolution" because

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<sup>8</sup> In addition to the limited scope of this research, I also followed the instructions given to me by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board (personal communication, 2021) in terms of contacting relevant Indigenous organizations. None were interested in participating. Without their input, I am reluctant to draw "Indigenous-specific conclusions" (University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board, personal communication, 2021).



the latter term implies an end to the conflict, and the recurring nature of these conflicts indicates that a resolution is unlikely. Instead, any tools that could help decrease or mitigate the level of conflict would be practical and helpful.

Consequently, researchers need to apply institutional analysis in a way that incorporates tools to mitigate intergovernmental conflict. I use “tools” to mean policy options, formal and informal, that could decrease the level of conflict. By “criteria,” I refer to the requirements for decreasing the level of conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, as expressed by at least one actor. Barriers can inform criteria. If the removal or alteration of a barrier would fulfill the requirements of one or more actors for decreasing their conflict level around the project, then that removal or alteration of a barrier would become a criterion. I use Campbell’s (2004) typology to clarify these barriers and criteria.

My research asks the following questions:

1. What are the barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution in Canada?
  - a. What types of barriers to intergovernmental cooperation exist in the conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project?
  - b. Who perceives which and what types of barriers exist?
  - c. Are these barriers new or not previously understood?
2. What criteria must any potential solution fulfill to overcome these barriers?
  - a. What, if any, criteria do all or most of the actors share?
  - b. Are these criteria feasible to fulfill?
  - c. Which, if any, conflict mitigation tools meet these criteria?

In answering these questions, one outcome of the study will be identifying and explaining the barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution. This research will add insight into how energy governance operates in Canada (Boyd 2017; Dobson and Kuzmanovic 2010; Lachapelle, Borick and Rabe 2011). Another outcome of this research is determining the criteria for decreasing or removing the barriers in this energy system. This outcome is valuable because it is essential to establish potential solutions. I create an approach to identify criteria that future studies can use to test potential solutions. This approach will help determine the likelihood that the potential solutions will be successful. My research assesses some potential conflict mitigation tools against these criteria. Future research can test additional conflict mitigation tools against

the same criteria. In short, understanding these criteria is a critical step in solving or mitigating similar conflicts.

### **1.3 Dissertation Organization**

To reiterate, the main argument of this dissertation is that the combination of competitive federalism and the joint decision trap prevented intergovernmental conflict resolution among federal and provincial governments in Canada over natural resources. Following this introduction, this dissertation begins with a literature review and theoretical approach. The literature review looks at the challenges in current energy policy, concluding that federalism is the main factor shaping these challenges, mainly because of competitive federalism. Competitive federalism refers to a period when a federal system experiences great tension. A description of the theoretical approach follows, combining an overall institutional perspective of global energy governance with Campbell's (2004) institutional typology. The theoretical approach is later used in Chapter 7 to bring together and analyze my findings.

After the theoretical approach is established, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 use different methods, primarily qualitative, to explore the case of intergovernmental conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. For one method, I conduct a regression analysis of Albertans' opinions of the Trans Mountain Pipeline project with data from Viewpoint Alberta. After that, I analyze government press releases on the project according to different themes around barriers, criteria, and mitigation tools. Finally, I summarize and discuss the findings from my interviews with key actors. Chapter 7 integrates overall findings from the three methods. This chapter also evaluates select mitigation tools against the theoretical approach earlier outlined. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the overall findings, policy implications, and suggestions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution in current energy policy in Canada, focusing on the challenges around pipeline building. I apply Craig Parsons' (2007) typology of explanations to understand why pipeline approval is complex; structural, ideational, and, to a lesser extent, psychological factors also shape barriers to pipeline building. Institutional factors can be changed by people and are subject to rationality (Parsons 2007). Structural factors cannot be changed by people and are subject to rationality (Parsons 2007). Ideational factors can be changed by people and follow no or multiple rationalities (Parsons 2007). Psychological factors cannot be changed by people and follow no or multiple rationalities (Parsons 2007). In this chapter, I find that the main barrier is how competitive federalism—a federal system characterized by conflict—encourages further conflict and poor policymaking with the joint decision trap. The joint decision trap can occur during intergovernmental decision-making; when governments are unable to agree, they blame the other for not supporting their preferred policy. As a result, the only policy that results is the least amount of policy they agree on. Chapter 7 explains how this barrier applies to the Trans Mountain expansion project based on the findings from Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

While the combination of competitive federalism and the joint decision trap is not the only barrier, it is the primary barrier preventing pipeline construction in Canada. It is also an institutional barrier. The main structural barrier is the unequal distribution of resources. Common ideational barriers are regional values and divisions between prioritizing the economy and the environment. A discussion of the limited use of psychological barriers in the literature explains climate change inaction. Operating within the constraints and incentives of competitive federalism heightens these factors' effects. Intergovernmental and federal barriers, which are institutional barriers, can combine to produce conflict, which characterizes competitive federalism. Institutional barriers create a joint decision trap, which intensifies and prolongs intergovernmental conflicts. When the federal government does not intervene to overcome the joint decision trap, provincial governments end up with the option that requires the least action. Finally, global energy governance, an institutional approach focusing on who governs energy and the implications of that governance, has great potential to resolve these barriers.

## **2.2 Background**

In the last decade, building pipelines in Canada has become increasingly difficult. When Justin Trudeau became prime minister in 2015, he effectively blocked the approval of the Northern Gateway pipeline, which would have originated in Bruderheim, Alberta and ended in Kitimat, BC. Another pipeline project, Keystone XL, was initially proposed in September 2008. Keystone XL would have transported oil from Canada across the border to the United States. In March 2010, the National Energy Board (NEB) approved Keystone XL. Prime Minister Stephen Harper campaigned for Keystone XL in the U.S. However, President Barack Obama rejected the pipeline extension application in November 2015. After Donald Trump became president, he reversed Obama's decision. This reversal increased confidence in Keystone XL's development during most of Trudeau's first term. When President Joe Biden took office in 2021, he overturned Trump's decision, cancelling Keystone XL. At this point, it is unlikely that Keystone XL will be built.

Between 2015 and 2019, the uncertainty around Northern Gateway and Keystone XL shifted focus to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. The initial Trans Mountain pipeline was proposed in 1951; construction began in 1952 and was completed in 1953. The pipeline runs from Edmonton, Alberta to the coast at Burnaby, British Columbia. As of 2022, this pipeline is transporting around 300,000 barrels daily of the full spectrum of petroleum products from the Alberta oil sands, from refined products to unrefined heavy crude. Heavy crude is transported from the pipeline to tankers at the coast; while other products go to other markets (CER 2022).

## **2.3 Barriers**

For this literature review on federalism and intergovernmental relations, the dissertation uses Parsons' (2007) four-fold typology of explanations in political science: structural, ideational, institutional, and psychological explanations (see Table 2.1). He divides arguments into two levels based on their causal factors (Parsons 2007). First, causal explanations can follow a general or particular logic (Parsons 2007). General logic refers to factors that actors cannot change, mainly exogenous material structures or psychological features; particular logic refers to human-made constructs (Parsons 2007). Second, Parsons (2007) divides causal mechanisms according to the logic of position and interpretation. The logic of position refers to rationality

under constraints (Parsons 2007). The logic of interpretation refers to having no or multiple rationalities (Parsons 2007).

**Table 2.1 Parsons' Typology of Arguments**

	General Logic	Particular Logic
Position	Structural	Institutional
Interpretation	Psychological	Ideational

Note: Reproduced from Parsons (2007, p. 15).

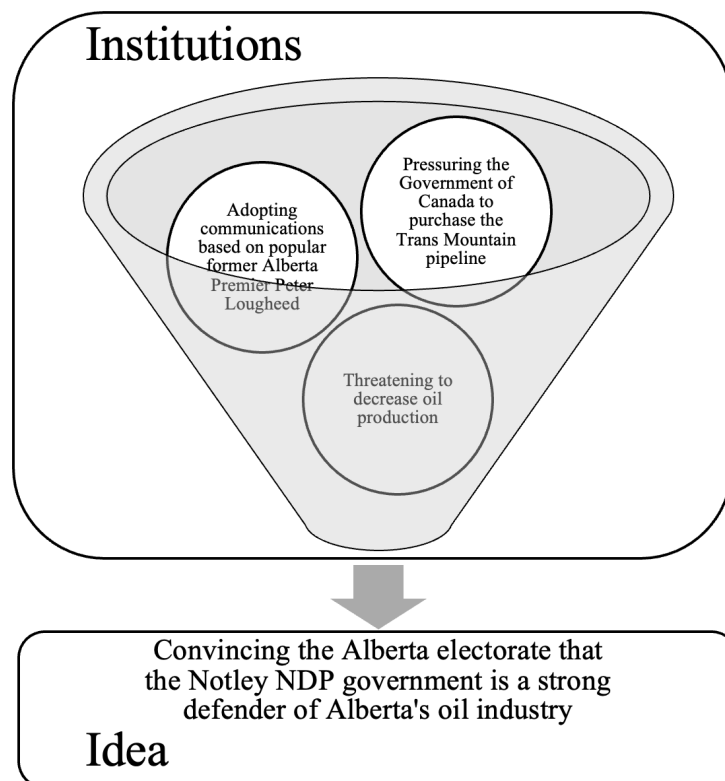
Most researchers studying federalism and intergovernmental affairs in Canadian energy include institutions as causal mechanisms. However, this does not mean that every scholar uses institutions as their sole causal mechanism or solely as a causal mechanism. Instead, scholars in this field often combine institutional causal mechanisms with ideational and structural ones in their arguments. My discussion of the literature on challenges to energy issues, focusing on pipeline building, will reflect this combination of causal mechanisms. Structural arguments are frequent and convincing since geography influences the energy sources available in any particular location. The oil sands in Alberta and the ocean in BC reflect this difference. Regardless of their explanatory power, structural factors cannot be changed. Accordingly, the frequently used institutional arguments around energy policy are the most useful in explaining how to change Canadian energy policy. Ideational arguments are less common; they help explain some aspects of regionalism and partisan politics. In comparison, institutional mechanisms are the most useful in identifying how to resolve energy issues in Canada.

Ideas are discussed as being more malleable than institutions in the literature; institutions are ideas made more permanent (Béland 2009; Béland and Cox 2016; Parsons 2007; Campbell 2004; Schmidt 2008). Certainly, ideas are easier to change than institutions when dealing with people one-on-one or in small groups. The only requirement for changing ideas is changing people's minds, which does not require onerous paperwork or overcoming bureaucratic obstacles. The rules and regulations to each policy are one indicator of an institution since they

have greater permanence .At the same time, I argue that ideas are harder to directly affect with policy change, which is institutional.

To illustrate this argument, which may seem counterintuitive, I use the example of the Alberta Notley government's efforts to convince Albertans that their government was a strong defender of the oil industry. Each policy illustrated in Figure 2.1 is an institution in and of itself. One policy was to create parallels in their communications strategy to the late, respected Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed, who is still widely viewed as a defender of Alberta and its oil industry. Part of this communications strategy included threatening to decrease oil production, which Lougheed had threatened to do during his tenure as premier. The intent of this Notley government strategy was to create a parallel in Albertans' minds with a successful, prior government. Another policy was to pressure the Government of Canada to purchase the Trans Mountain pipeline to ensure the approval of the expansion project. Through this action, the Notley government tried to show the Alberta public they were taking every step to ensure the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project would go forward.

**Figure 2.1 Malleability of Institutions and Ideas in Public Policy in the Notley Government**



Together, the Notley government used these policies—which are institutions—to try to convince Albertans of the idea that the Notley government was a staunch defender of the oil industry in Alberta. These institutions were intended to change the public’s idea. The institutions were able to be implemented. However, the Notley government was unsuccessful in changing enough minds since they were not re-elected in 2019. The intent behind providing this example is to show how ideas in small groups are more malleable than institutions, but when dealing with large groups as a matter of public policy, changing ideas can be more difficult than changing (some) institutions.

### ***2.3.1 Structural Explanations***

Examining the role of geography, specifically how natural resources are distributed across Canada, is vital to understanding energy policy in Canada. When discussing natural resources, material interests often refer to both geography and financial incentives like income. Separating structural and institutional factors shows the impact of financial incentives rather than assuming it is wholly a structural, institutional, ideational, or psychological factor. The importance of the oil industry to the Alberta economy is informed by the structural factor of having large amounts of oil in the ground and how that improves income levels. Concurrently, the institution of federalism creates and maintains the province of Alberta and a premier that is tasked with representing the best interests of that province.

A vital structural factor, natural resources, are distributed unevenly across Canada, including energy sources. For example, oil deposits are primarily found in Alberta, with a significant amount in Saskatchewan (Plourde 2012). In comparison, hydroelectricity is more commonly produced in BC, Ontario, and Quebec. These natural resources are worth different prices in the commodities market, which can result in differences in provincial and regional economies. Particularly during boom years, provinces such as Alberta, with valuable and extractable oil reserves, can inspire envy from other provinces that do not have these valuable natural resources. This imbalance can complicate interprovincial relations. In addition to the differences in price dictated by the market, oil is a “price-taker,” or has a set market price, even when the government subsidizes the industry, while provinces can effectively price

hydroelectricity. For example, Quebec's subsidies decrease hydroelectricity prices artificially (Béland and Lecours 2015; Stevenson 2004).

An extensive body of literature studies the impacts of having exploitable natural resources on countries and their constituent units, both federal and unitary. Many scholars have investigated the resource curse: the correlation between states wealthy in natural resources and poor economic development (Benner, Soares and Kalinke 2010; Berdahl, Juneau and Tuohy 2015; Boadway 2006; Ross 1999; Sachs and Warner 1995). One argument posits that wealth in natural resources leads to poor economic development (Sachs and Warner 1995). A popular variant of this argument is Dutch disease: a strong natural resource economy negatively affects the manufacturing industry (Corden and Neary 1982). The other main argument holds that the resource curse is a self-fulfilling prophecy, as it reflects the integrity of a country's institutions (Brunnschweiler and Bulte 2008; Mehlum, Moene, and Torvik 2006; Omgba 2015).

The resource curse was originally studied (Sachs and Warner 1995) and remains generally observed in the Global South (Omgba 2015; Parlee 2015; Ross 2001; Shrivastava and Stefanick 2015), while Canada is considered part of the Global North. However, some scholars argue that the resource curse applies to Canada and other countries in the Global North (Boadway 2006; Parlee 2015; Shrivastava and Stefanick 2015). Dutch disease was coined to describe the Netherlands in the 1960s (The Economist 1977). It is often applied to countries in the Global North and the Global South (e.g., Davis 1995; Kojo 2015). Countries in the Global North are more likely to be considered exceptions to the resource curse in general, such as Norway (Boadway 2006; Holden 2013; Shrivastava and Stefanick 2015). Norway is often used as an example of a country to which the resource curse does not apply (Boadway 2006; Holden 2013). One contributing factor may be that institutionally, Norway is a unitary state; it has a single sovereign fund holding all net revenue from oil and gas. Another contributing factor may be differences in political culture (Holden 2013), which is an ideational explanation.

Federalism can exacerbate the tensions around the uneven geographical distribution of natural resources (Anderson 2012; Beramendi 2007; Berdahl, Tuohy and Juneau 2015; Fossum 1997; Harrison 1996; Hoberg 2013; Plourde 2012). This research focuses on Canada, a federal state, where petroleum products are concentrated in the province of Alberta, and to a lesser extent, in Saskatchewan (Plourde 2012). From before the 1918 conference led by the western premiers to the 1980 to 1985 National Energy Program to the more recent Northern Gateway,



Keystone XL, and the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, energy politics has stressed intergovernmental tensions. In particular, the Governments of Alberta and Canada often disagree over energy policy (Fossum 1997; Gattinger 2015; Harrison 1996; James 1990, 1993; Janigan 2013; Norrie 1984; Stevenson 2002).

While Alberta and Saskatchewan have the bulk of Canada's petroleum reserves, they lack some of the physical tools they believe they need to maximize their income from the oil sands. Currently, Alberta wants to increase its access to Asian markets for oil because of how the most common petroleum product in Canada's oil sands, Western Canadian Select, is priced. It is a heavy crude oil blend that is expensive to extract and transport. For this and other reasons, it is priced at a discount compared to other types of oil. To encourage further investment in the oil sands, the Government of Alberta wants to help increase the price of Western Canadian Select on the world markets and, therefore, profitability.

Moreover, Alberta is a price-taker for oil and gas products. To change the price of Western Canadian Select, Alberta must change the product or how the product is transported. Currently, pipeline capacity is limited. Instead, oil is often shipped by rail to tidewater. In this context, tidewater refers to ocean ports with international access. Because transporting oil by pipeline is less expensive than transporting it by rail, the Government of Alberta wants pipelines built to increase the price and, therefore, the profitability of Western Canadian Select oil. However, Alberta is landlocked. The most direct route to tidewater is through BC. Involving another province includes abiding by other laws and regulations, posing a challenge for building pipelines.

The provincial boundaries and constitutional jurisdiction exacerbate the tensions around building a pipeline between the oil sands and tidewater. For one, the jurisdictions concentrate the benefits in Alberta while spreading the costs to both provinces. Accordingly, the geographical separation of costs and benefits makes it difficult to calculate costs and benefits; this separation is exacerbated by the two provinces being in separate jurisdictions with arguable veto points (Hoberg 2013). Veto points are institutional opportunities to block an action. The lack of clarity around costs and benefits allows the Government of BC to argue that the distribution of costs and benefits is unfair. Moreover, the need for the pipeline to cross from Alberta to British Columbia means it facilitates interprovincial trade, moving the pipeline project from provincial to federal

jurisdiction. While the Government of Canada has jurisdiction, federalism encourages the provinces to compete with each other to act in the perceived best interests of their constituents.

### ***2.3.2 Ideational Explanations***

Like structural factors, ideational factors explain part of the conflict. Many authors have discussed the cultures of Canadian regions and provinces (e.g., Banack 2021; Resnick 2000; Simeon and Elkins 1980; Wesley 2011; Wiseman 1981). Within this umbrella, the preponderance of scholarship studies Quebec as a representation of French Canadian culture and its efforts to protect its culture and related resistance to English Canadian dominance. Western alienation generally means Alberta's resentment towards the concentration of power in Central Canada and the federal government's consequent neglect of the West. Both share a frustration with the centrality of the federal government, suggesting a frustration with federalism; public sentiments on federalism seem to channel into relevant, local frustrations (Banack 2021; Wesley 2007). The symbol of Western alienation is an energy issue: the National Energy Program (NEP) was developed under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1980 and lasted five years before its cancellation in 1985. The NEP aimed to make Canada self-reliant on oil and gas. Since Canadian oil industry was based in Alberta, Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed saw the NEP as a federal intrusion on provincial affairs and revenues. Many Albertans and others in Canada's West shared that view. When discussing any timeline of the West's grievances toward Ottawa, scholars explain how the NEP is associated with the West feeling ignored by Ottawa (Doern and Toner 1985; Fossum 1997; Janigan 2013; Plourde 2012; Wesley 2011).

Scholars (Doern and Toner 1985; Fossum 1997; Stevenson 2004) view Ottawa's creation of the NEP as a nationalization<sup>1</sup> project, similar to Petro-Canada. The value of looking at the Alberta oil industry's opinion of how Alberta, Ontario, or Ottawa should act does not appear to be necessary to understand the nature and temporary resolution of the crisis. According to Doern and Toner's (1985) thorough explanation of the NEP crisis, none of these governments paid much attention to the oil industry's desires during intergovernmental negotiations around the NEP. Even Alberta, during the energy crisis, arguably misrepresented the oil industry's preferences while Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed framed himself as a defender of the oil

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<sup>1</sup> Here, I use nationalization to include two meanings. One is the technical sense of transferring at least part of private industry to public control. The other refers to nation-building.

industry's interests (Doern and Toner 1985). Overall, the literature suggests that while government-industry relations during the NEP were meticulously researched and reveals insight into these relations, the intergovernmental relations better explains the crisis and related negotiations.

Scholars often describe economic grievances as the root of Western alienation (Berdahl and Gibbins 2014; Janigan 2013, 2020; Macdonald 2020). The most convincing arguments (Berdahl and Gibbins 2014; Janigan 2013) describe Western alienation as a struggle over provincial autonomy, albeit in a very different way from Quebec. Essentially, the formal separation of the provinces as constituent units encourages this frustration (Wesley 2011). These findings show that ideas and institutions encourage an Albertan identity around Western alienation.

The economic differences reveal a conflict between two ideational frames concerning the oil sands. One frame prioritizes the economy over the environment, more consistent with support for the oil sands; another prioritizes the environment over the economy (Dusyk, Axsen, and Dullemond 2018; Hackett and Adams 2018; Turner 2017). The latter frame is more recent, coming from the twenty-first century; concern about the impact of climate change defines this frame. The former frame is more closely associated with Western alienation but does not require it. Both frames can appear in various ways. Actors can hold these as beliefs, whether tightly as a requirement for further change or more loosely where these beliefs can be negotiated. For example, environmental activists may genuinely hold not building any more pipelines as a requirement for environmental conservation. Further, actors can use these frames as tools to convince others. These can be the same actors or different ones.

These priorities may be similar across parties, which are institutions. Sometimes parties that share the same name have evolved differently, based on their jurisdiction and particular history, to the point where they no longer share informal connections. These informal connections include similar priorities and overlapping political staffers over time. Parties (which are institutions) engage with different priorities (which are ideas). In the case of Trans Mountain, it is vital to understand the difference between the recently left-leaning Liberal Party of Canada and the right-leaning BC Liberal Party. Often, the BC Liberal Party is described as closer to federal conservative parties than the Liberal Party of Canada (Cross and Young 2004 428-429).

Simply because two parties share the same name does not mean they share the same values or policies. Not all the Canadian federal parties are affiliated with their namesakes in each province (Esselment 2010; Pruyzers 2014). Of the major parties, only purchasing a New Democratic Party (NDP) membership affords an individual a membership at both the federal and provincial levels. If a person purchases a Conservative Party of Canada membership, this membership does not include any provincial party membership for any conservative or Conservative party. When parties are relatively close in political leanings, there will often be an overlap in politically appointed staffers and elected officials across time in both parties (Esselment 2010, 2014; Pruyzers 2014). This overlap is notable because it can encourage cooperation and collaboration across jurisdictions (Esselment 2014).

### ***2.3.3 Psychological Explanations***

The increasing physical effects and salience of climate change have affected energy federalism. Combining these two factors has made it more difficult to build pipelines in Canada. Climate change has become an increasingly important issue that human psychology is poorly equipped to handle (Hoberg 2021). The body of literature on energy sources recognizes that hyperbolic discounting complicates human perceptions of climate change as urgent. Hyperbolic discounting is the tendency for humans to underestimate future payoffs compared to immediate payoffs (Laibson 1997). Regardless of the term, scholars often discuss the global failure to prevent climate change in ways that match hyperbolic discounting (Dasgupta 2008; Marshall 2014). Also, economists and political scientists often describe climate change as a collective action problem<sup>2</sup> (Dasgupta 2021; Hoberg 2021; Keohane and Victor 2016; Ostrom 2010); uncertainty about climate change's effects exacerbates this problem. Together, these approaches show a situation in which government inaction on climate change persists because the immediate costs are more than the benefits that humans see their potential environmental protections offer. Still, government action is viable. BC initially implemented a carbon tax in 2008, and the federal government has now imposed a carbon tax on all the provinces. Despite the court challenges from provinces including Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, a carbon tax falls under federal jurisdiction. Although there is progress, it is generally considered insufficient by environmental scientists.

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<sup>2</sup> A collective action problem describes when individual interests do not align with the group interest.

Psychological causal mechanisms are the least commonly used to explain the challenges of building pipelines (Hoberg 2021). These mechanisms are unlikely to be the most important in this area. Further research into how they affect individuals in organizations and institutions involved in decision-making around Western alienation, such as party affiliation and provincial identities, may provide insights that add to other explanations. The relationship between the Alberta identity and the energy economy may be a psychological causal mechanism. Overall, psychological and structural arguments convincingly explain the problem of government inaction on climate change. Still, energy issues in Canada need institutions and ideas to explain the impact of climate change on government decision-making on building pipelines.

#### ***2.3.4 Institutional Explanations***

Institutional arguments follow both a particular logic and a logic of position. One crucial institutional factor is federalism. For most theories about natural resources, federalism is at least one key factor for understanding conflict and resolution in Canadian energy disputes (Boadway 2006; Cairns 1992; Harrison 1996; Janigan 2013; Norrie 1984; Plourde 2012; Stevenson 2004). Some scholars focus on the bargain that led to federalism (Elazar 1995; Riker 1975), while others study the effects of federalism and its different types (Anderson 2012; Burgess 2007; Volden 2004), including intergovernmental relations (Anderson 2012; Béland et al., 2017; Cairns 1979; Cairns 1992; Cameron and Simeon 2002). States often use federalism as a method of managing diverse countries. Scholars disagree on whether it largely mollifies or exacerbates tensions that come with diversity (Beramendi 2007; Cameron and Simeon 2002; Elazar 1995; Stevenson 2004). For example, Pablo Beramendi (2007) describes the overblown credit given to federalism's positive effects as the "federal illusion."

Overall, Canada is considered one of the most decentralized federations in the world—if not the most. While the extent of decentralization varies depending on the policy field, Canada has perhaps the most decentralized energy policy in the world. This decentralization is valuable to recognize because many countries are federal systems, and Canadian energy federalism provides a major case study of decentralization. Further, most countries are now federations or regionalized to some degree of federalism. These competing models make the major Canadian case relevant to this new world of increasingly hybrid states and raises this question: What are the implications of the decentralization of Canadian energy policy?

To understand the Canadian case of energy policy, Monica Gattinger and Geoffrey Hale (2010) provide a helpful framework for organizing “energy federalism” into types according to the characteristic of intergovernmental energy relations. They organize commonly used descriptors for Canadian intergovernmental relations from other works into this framework (Gattinger and Hale 2010). The framework creates categories according to the nature of intergovernmental relations. Each category of intergovernmental relations communicates the ease or difficulty of intergovernmental relations. Further, Gattinger and Hale’s (2010) framework focuses on energy policy. This framework helps identify the challenges faced in intergovernmental energy relations and identifies those that could benefit from improvement. The characteristics have been placed on a spectrum, as shown in Figure 2.2. The spectrum ranges from conflict at one end to independence at the midpoint to harmonization at the opposite end. On the left, conflict means governments have divergent interests and open disagreements. Independence means policymaking without consideration for other governments in the federation. Harmonization means governments actively develop shared policies.

**Figure 2.2 Typology of Energy Federalism**

<b>Conflict</b>	<b>Independence</b>		<b>Harmonization</b>
Competitive	Classical	Cooperative	Collaborative
Federalism	Federalism	Federalism	Federalism

Note: Adapted from Gattinger and Hale (2010).

Competitive federalism<sup>3</sup> aligns with conflict, as seen in Figure 2.2. Closer to the middle of the spectrum, classical federalism aligns with independence (Gattinger and Hale 2010).

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<sup>3</sup> Anwar Shah argues that it occurs when “all governments have overlapping responsibilities and compete vertically and horizontally to establish their clientele of services” (Shah 2013, 95). He further states that this type of federalism is theoretical and not practiced in any country (Shah 2013). Moreover, Paul Pierson (1995) uses the term competitive federalism interchangeably with laboratory democracy. For Pierson (1995), competitive federalism is when greater numbers of governments with jurisdiction over social policy lead to greater innovation. The ability to realize this innovation, he says, depends on if constituent units act autonomously (Pierson 1995). Pierson’s concept of competitive federalism has much more in common with other definitions of laboratory democracy (Gattinger 2015; Oates 1999) than it does with other authors’ definitions of competitive federalism. To clarify the usage of each concept in this dissertation, I will refer to Pierson’s “competitive federalism” as laboratory democracy.

Independence refers to policymaking without regard to other governments; independence aptly summarizes classical federalism. Cooperative federalism lies between independence and harmonization, and collaborative federalism aligns with the harmonization end of the spectrum (Gattinger and Hale 2010).

Perceived benefits of competitive federalism are shared with other forms of federalism. Some scholars argue the competition among governments in a federal system can help improve existing ideas (Pierson 1995). Laboratory federalism is the idea that having subnational governments within a federal system can lead to greater innovation. In this idea, the flexibility of different governments creates more opportunities for discovering what does and does not work. Laboratory federalism does not have to be associated with conflict and competitive federalism. According to Gattinger (2015), realizing the gains of laboratory federalism is associated with cooperative and collaborative federalism. Scholars of Canadian federalism disagree on the degree to which constant intergovernmental conflict is inherent in the federation. Some see conflict as inherent (Stevenson 2004), while others see it as characteristic of some eras of Canadian intergovernmental relations (Cameron and Simeon 2002; Harrison 1996).

Overall, the jurisdiction over energy issues is shared<sup>4</sup> between the federal and provincial governments. Sections 91 and 92 of the *Constitution Act*, 1867, formerly referred to as the *British North America Act* of 1867, delineate what falls under federal and provincial jurisdiction, respectively. Section 92A is an amendment added by the *Constitution Act* of 1982, shortly after the NEP conflict. By changing previously federal jurisdiction into shared jurisdiction, the *Constitution Act* of 1982 expands provincial jurisdiction over natural resources (Cairns 1992). Provinces own their natural resources, unlike in many federations, and they can collect resource revenues. Interprovincial trade and the movement of natural resources are under federal jurisdiction. With shared jurisdiction over energy matters, it is unclear what type of intergovernmental coordination or lack thereof should take place in Canada around energy issues. This lack of clarity is particularly salient with pipelines.

In Canada, the federal government has not been recently active in the energy sector outside of its purchase of Trans Mountain. Rather, it has been relatively inactive while the

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<sup>4</sup> I use shared jurisdiction in this context to include areas where the federal and provincial governments have distinct responsibilities within one area. Shared jurisdiction can also refer to responsibilities where the federal and provincial governments have competing claims.

provincial governments exert their influence (Gattinger 2015; Leuprecht 2015; Plourde 2012). Authors disagree on whether the Government of Canada can effectively implement a national energy strategy. Plourde (2012) and Leuprecht (2015) argue that the federal government will not likely pursue a national energy strategy because it would not be easy to enforce. Gattinger (2015) and Leuprecht (2015) claim that the federal government should not impose a national energy strategy on the provinces because the federal government does not have the province-specific knowledge to manage energy resources properly. Gattinger (2015) supports a Canadian energy strategy facilitated by the federal government but as a partner to the provincial governments.

In this context, it is important to note that Canada has a new energy regulator for the first time in sixty years. The Canada Energy Regulator (CER) replaced the NEB on August 28, 2019, as part of an environmental assessment overhaul with the new *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA), passed in Ottawa under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Both sets of changes occurred through Bill C-69 (Canada 2019). In overhauling the IAA, the government highlighted its new governance structure: more specific timelines for pipeline projects based on length of right-of-way; earlier and greater Indigenous participation; increased safety and environmental protection; and inclusive public participation. While the CER made some changes to the IAA, such as appointing new directors, the practical impact is unclear. One concern is dissonance between some of the literature and government actions. In the literature, there is no consensus on whether the federal government should implement a national energy strategy or what a national energy strategy should look like. Conversely, government background documents to the IAA state that the federal government should take a leadership role in energy issues (Gélinas et al. 2017; Government of Canada 2017).

Current information on the CER does not address the causes of intergovernmental conflict. However, changes in the CER prevent the federal cabinet from overturning the energy regulator's decisions (Canada 2019). When he was the premier of Alberta, Jason Kenney, a strong advocate for the oil industry, referred to Bill C-69 as the "No More Pipelines Bill" (Taylor 2019). Many updates to the energy regulator reverse changes made under the previous Harper government; further, the legislation considers broader economic impacts (Gibson 2019). Provinces would still have an incentive to challenge the federal government in court over a pipeline project's approval. The venues and causes for these challenges remain unchanged with the CER. Still, one criticism is that a change in regulator causes unnecessary uncertainty in the



industry. Future studies should examine whether the government's intended changes in organizational direction occur.

The court system has been the most consistent venue for resolving problems of federalism, including jurisdiction. The initial Canadian constitution, originally titled the *British North America Act* of 1867, solely dealt with jurisdiction. Since the inclusion of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the 1982 patriation of the Canadian constitution, rights and freedoms have become important constitutional matters for the courts. Canadian courts still decide specific jurisdictional issues. Many areas, including energy, are shared jurisdiction under the constitution, so the judiciary interprets the constitution and delineates what particular policies fall into and outside of particular jurisdictions (e.g., on energy, Cairns 1992; Downey et al. 2020; Gattinger 2012; on the environment, Harrison 1996; Lecours 2017). Private actors or governments at any level can legally challenge government policies. Governments can also initiate reference cases by asking the judiciary if a hypothetical policy would be constitutionally valid.

Besides the federal-provincial and interprovincial issues in the courts, the rapidly developing and changing legal interpretation of Indigenous land claims in Canada's legal system shapes conflicts around pipelines. More recent literature on conceptions of the West (Berdahl and Gibbins 2014; Turner 2017; Wesley 2011) recognizes that these concepts have not traditionally included Indigenous Peoples. Courts traditionally interpreted Indigenous land claims and constitutional protections narrowly based on harmful colonial systems and views. Recently, the judiciary has started interpreting these constitutional protections more widely. However, how these interpretations apply to current and future policies remains unclear (Borrows 2016; Brown 2019).

Consultation with potentially affected Indigenous governments and communities is required for pipeline approval. The federal government, representing the Crown, has a constitutional duty to consult Indigenous Peoples under section 35 of the *Constitution Act* of 1982. This duty applies to constructing pipelines. One reason this duty is particularly relevant to pipelines to the coast is that the most recently contentious pipeline projects pass through BC, which still has some unsettled Indigenous land claims. Another reason is that pipelines pass through areas that include Indigenous lands and waterways that affect Indigenous reserves. Pipelines pose the inherent risk of an oil spill without inherently providing economic benefits in terms of, for example, local employment. Still, in the case of *Delgamuukw v British Columbia*,

1997 SCR 1010, the Supreme Court said that consent from Indigenous communities might be required if a project infringes on other rights (Imai 2017). The point is that the trajectory of interpreting laws around Indigenous Peoples is transforming, making it difficult to predict the requirements for sufficient Indigenous participation in the pipeline approval process. Assuming a wide interpretation and practicing a nation-to-nation approach would help avoid further legal challenges.

The analysis of Indigenous views, rights, and participation is outside the scope of this research project. At the same time, the importance of Indigenous Peoples has generated research on their relationship with and general opposition to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project (Atleo et al. 2022; Jonasson et al. 2019; Kinder 2021; Pasternak and Schabus 2019; Spiegel et al. 2020). Considering the federal government plans to sell the Trans Mountain pipeline to at least partial Indigenous ownership, Indigenous research into Trans Mountain will continue to grow.

When identifying barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution, one issue that encourages tension among the federal and provincial governments is the lack of institutionalized conflict resolution mechanisms besides the courts. Many scholars of Canada's intergovernmental relations agree that the country does not have sufficient institutions enforcing these mechanisms (Banting 2005; Cameron and Simeon 2002). One exception is Robert Cairns (1992), who argues that the new constitutional framework and its associated intergovernmental negotiation mechanisms have worked well in practice. However, Cairns (1992) made this judgment a decade after the constitution was patriated and updated. This period of constitutional change corresponded with the dismantling of the NEP under Conservative Prime Minister Joe Clark. The end of this conflict over the NEP diffused much of the tension over natural resources at the time. In this period, energy issues were less salient than they are now.

Other authors focus on other causal mechanisms that prevent action on climate change (Gattinger 2015; Harrison 1996). These authors use arguments where federalism, an institution, is at least one of their causal mechanisms. Gattinger (2015) uses federalism as her primary causal mechanism. Harrison (1996) approaches Canadian environmental policy using institutional and ideational causal mechanisms. This approach asserts that federal-provincial conflict over energy issues occurs when the environment is a salient topic, particularly during election campaigns.

When energy federalism is salient, there is another reason for its conflictual nature: the unclear and shared jurisdiction over environmental matters.

Harrison's (1996) argument that an issue must be salient to cause conflict is apparent in the recent disputes over pipelines such as Trans Mountain. There is high public awareness of the general pipeline issue, particularly in BC and Alberta, the affected provinces. In this context, the conflict became prominent in social discourse because Trans Mountain was an issue that each party saw as vital for the governing party to continue to govern or win the next election. As an illustration, BC Premier John Horgan is the leader of the provincial NDP; still, his minority government from 2017 to 2020 required the continued support of the BC Green Party. Its leader, Andrew Weaver, stated that preventing the pipeline was vital for his support of the NDP government in the BC legislature. Consequently, until the 2020 BC election, Horgan's ability to lead BC as premier was contingent on preventing the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. Horgan delayed the pipeline through BC's powers from the constitution and its mechanisms for interpretation. In short, the salience of the pipeline structured government actions in a manner that encouraged conflict.

Binding conflict resolution mechanisms are common problems in federations, so I provide a hypothetical example and a real-world example. The limitations of binding conflict resolution mechanisms are common in federations (Poirier 2001; Simmons 2017). While the relevant literature generally uses binding to mean legally enforceable, I use binding in this dissertation to mean enforceable until the completion or disapproval of a project. A binding conflict resolution mechanism would be, for example, a constitutional change. Canada has different amending formulas. Hypothetically, imagine a more feasible amending formula for part of the constitution. Governments could voluntarily vote to enter and subject themselves to a set of laws with more power than statutes. It would be unpopular and is not practical because it would likely prove politically unpopular and could be seen as willingly devolving power. Nevertheless, this idea serves to illustrate what a binding intergovernmental dispute resolution mechanism could look like.

A practical example of a binding intergovernmental dispute resolution mechanism comes from recent constitutional reform in Switzerland. This constitutional reform led to binding educational harmonization across cantons, which are their subnational units (Fischer, Sciarini, and Traber 2010; Schnabel and Mueller 2017; Simmons 2017). In this context, the Swiss federal

government could only step in if the cantons could not collaborate, incentivizing harmonization (Fischer, Sciarini, and Traber 2010; Schnabel and Mueller 2017; Simmons 2017).

Other countries have institutions that dissuade intergovernmental conflict that Canada does not have. Canada does not have any required mechanism for provincial representation in the federal government. Constituents from each geographically-bound riding elect members of parliament, but there is no formal requirement for having members from each province in government. By convention, prime ministers appoint at least one minister per province. In practice, achieving this representation is often challenging. Some provinces, like British Columbia and Ontario, are home to ridings with members of parliament from as many as four parties. Other provinces, such as Alberta and Saskatchewan, do not always have members of parliament representing the Liberal Party of Canada. As a result, some governments do not have representation in the House of Commons from all the provinces. Minority governments compound this issue because Canada does not have a tradition of coalition governments. Without coalition governments, cabinet members can come solely from one party rather than the multiple parties in a coalition.

This lack of representation further incentivizes executive federalism. Executive federalism refers to the dominance of the executives of each government in intergovernmental negotiations (Smiley 1980). Most scholars of Canadian federalism assert that intergovernmental negotiations primarily operate through executive federalism (Bickerton and Gagnon 2013; Cairns 1979; Cameron and Simeon 2002; Smiley 1980), a term coined by Donald Smiley. Smiley (1980) argues that these executives are dominant because of how Canada has developed its combination of federal and parliamentary systems. The parliamentary system fuses executive and legislative power. In the Canadian context, power is concentrated in the executive, particularly in the first ministers, of each government (Marland 2016; Savoie 1999; White 2005). The degree of this centralization is particular to Canada. In comparison, Australia experiences less centralization despite also having a federal and parliamentary system. One explanation may be that Australia has a more centralized state and gives weaker powers to its constituent units (Brown 2015).

Provinces with little or no perceived representation in the federal cabinet have no leaders to represent them in the federal government. As a result, the only elected representatives of the province in a government are those in the provincial government. The lack of federal

representation concentrates the perceived legitimate provincial representatives in provincial governments. In addition, power is centralized in the executives of Canadian federal and provincial governments (Savoie 1999; White 2005). With limited federal representation and strong executives, premiers appear to be the most legitimate representatives for their provinces. Thus, when premiers are involved in conflicts with other governments, they can argue that they are the best voice for their provinces or, at least, the most legitimate ones. This tension further explains why current energy federalism around pipelines is competitive federalism. In other words, the only people who can speak for the province are encouraged to compete with each other for legitimacy.

Although there are federal-provincial-territorial meetings and trade agreements throughout Canada, they suffer from not having conflict dispute resolution mechanisms. Cameron and Simeon (2002) use the annual first ministers' conferences as an example of collaborative federalism. Since their work, these conferences have become less common and are considered ineffective. Some prime ministers did not find these conferences helpful in achieving their interests. Instead, they cultivated bilateral relations with the provinces and territories.

Just as there have been ad hoc federal-provincial efforts to work together, there have also been interprovincial collaborations. These collaborations have sometimes included all provinces and territories. At other times, participation has been confined to those belonging to particular Canadian regions. For example, the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) includes BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The NWPTA is an interprovincial economic partnership intended to provide a free trade zone across the region and weaken interprovincial restrictions. Yet these, like the first ministers' conferences, are non-binding. They provide venues for negotiation, but there are no binding resolution mechanisms because each government is the final authority for its level. Regional institutions that improve intraregional agreement on broad goals without effective conflict resolution mechanisms need different governments to cooperate (Goldthau and Witte 2010; Kohl 2010).

Shared jurisdiction, competitive governments, and lack of formal conflict resolution mechanisms exacerbate the joint decision trap. Under the umbrella of federalism, the joint decision trap is a problem in federal systems where an inability to agree often results in decisions representing the lowest common denominator. Essentially, the federal and one or more subnational governments disagree on a policy where the acceptance or approval of two or more

levels of government is needed. Without a binding conflict dispute resolution mechanism, the policy that requires the least approval is undertaken. Politicians representing each of these governments can then blame the other governments for policy inaction.

In terms of competition, three qualities of Canadian federalism mainly contribute to this competitive state: 1) strong provincial and federal governments (Béland and Lecours 2015; Cairns 1979; Doern and Toner 1985; Fossum 1997; Harrison 1996); 2) a shared jurisdiction of powers regarding energy between the federal and provincial governments (Boadway 2006; Cairns 1992; Plourde 2012); and 3) a lack of binding conflict resolution mechanisms (Banting 2005; Bickerton and Gagnon 2013; Fossum 1997; Gattinger 2015; MacDonald 2020; Stevenson 2004). These institutional barriers provide starting points that I examine to help understand how to mitigate conflict. For example, the constitutional aspects of federalism, such as the shared jurisdiction of power, cannot be easily changed, making many forms of binding conflict resolution mechanisms impractical. Still, respect for non-binding conflict resolution mechanisms could be introduced. The potential for non-binding conflict resolution mechanisms suggests that institutional conflict resolution mechanisms could weaken institutional barriers. Despite repeated intergovernmental conflicts over petroleum products (Béland and Lecours 2015; Janigan 2013; Plourde 2012; Wesley 2011), there is limited research on practices for mitigating intergovernmental conflict (Berdahl and Gibbins 2014; Simmons 2017).

The joint decision trap and the lack of formal conflict resolution mechanisms for intergovernmental conflicts provide an unfortunate feedback loop, and each builds on the other to prevent policymaking. With a lack of formal conflict resolution mechanisms, there is no clear venue indicating when a decision is final and binding (Cairns 1979; Macdonald 2020). In the case of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, the formal decision-making processes have not been binding. The NEB and the CER have approved the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, which has won various court cases and lost one. Court-issued injunctions against the pipeline expansion have stalled construction, and a Supreme Court decision against the pipeline expansion has occasionally blocked the project. I define a veto as the ability to stop a project. However, this veto does not settle the issue for any given period because of the uncertainty around future rulings. If BC had a veto on the project decided by, for example, the premier, its opposition to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion would encourage Ottawa and possibly Alberta to bargain with the province to seek its approval. If they could not make a

sufficient side payment (which may include stronger environmental protections) to satisfy BC, there would be no legal way to build the pipeline.

The approval process for large interprovincial projects introduces a feedback loop. The problem is clear in the example of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Governments (besides the federal government) that oppose the project can continuously launch legal challenges. This process can continue until at least one challenge halts the project or until the federal government either successfully appeals the decision to a higher court or makes the changes recommended by the relevant court. In cases like Trans Mountain, the federal government aims to continue the project, encouraging opposing governments to launch further legal challenges. The opposing governments continue the cycle until the project finishes before another legal challenge is successful, the project loses salience, or the federal government gives up. This loop shows another reason why this process is a problem. With the ability to indefinitely stall the project using the court system, there is no way to tell whether the project will be built, let alone completed, until it is constructed or until well after the conflict has ended because of stalled or incomplete negotiations.

This feedback loop only occurs when the issue is salient (Harrison 1996), adding an ideational element to the joint decision trap. Shared jurisdictions in federalism provide the context and constraints for the joint decision trap; the ideational element of issue salience sets off the joint decision trap. If one government is assertive in a shared jurisdiction and the other government is not assertive, then no conflict occurs. Building the pipeline may be considered overall good or bad. Regardless, the time in the court system fighting for and against the same project is not an efficient use of resources. In this context, the court becomes a venue that continuously feeds intergovernmental conflict. In Canada, the joint decision trap results from and reinforces conflict-filled, competitive federalism (Cameron and Simeon 2002; Gattinger and Hale 2010; Hoberg 2013; Pierson 1995; Scharpf 1988). While most frequently used to understand policymaking in Europe (Benz and Sinnicksen 2018; Scharpf 1988), the joint decision trap applies to Canada as well (Cameron and Simeon 2002; Gattinger and Hale 2010; Hoberg 2013; Pierson 1995; Scharpf 1988).

Recent works on Canadian energy conflicts discuss concerns that reflect the joint decision trap. In his recent book on intergovernmental energy conflict in Canada, Macdonald describes the “well-known tendency of Canadian governments in energy and climate processes to reach

agreement for agreement's sake, sacrificing effectiveness in order to give the appearance of coordinated action" (2020, p. 269). Macdonald (2020) does not mention the joint decision trap; still, his explanation of how seeking a resolution reflects the frustration of the lowest common denominator policy associated with the joint decision trap. Similarly, Hoberg's (2021) book on resistance and energy politics argue for the importance of institutional veto points in explaining whether a project goes forward. As in his previous works (Hoberg 2013, 2016, 2018 and 2021), vetoes are not necessarily binding and have been reversed as administrations changed.

From Hoberg's (2021) focus on resistance and Carter's (2020) focus on minimizing environmental damage, temporary vetoes can be a valuable tool in disincentivizing pipeline projects. I argue that while this is a good way to achieve environmental sustainability (Carter 2020; Van de Graaf and Colgan 2016), it can create stress for bureaucrats (see Chapter 6) and increase costs due to related construction delays. While these costs can be justified if they prevent emissions, as occurred in other cases like Northern Gateway (Hoberg 2021), the result in the case of currently under construction Trans Mountain was extra costs. Delays that result in the joint decision trap are not desirable when they do not lead a desired result for the actor—in this case, Indigenous governments and communities as well as environmental groups.

The joint decision trap is a problem that occurs when institutional and ideational constraints encourage conflict. Understanding the roles of ideas and institutions through Parsons' (2007) typology helps clarify where these constraints are more or less changeable. When constrained by institutions, elite frames influence how the public views their economic interests (Wesley 2011; Wiseman 1981). Within institutional limits, elite actors in government can forward their particular policy choices. It is helpful to note that Parsons's (2007) definition of institutional explanations is different from the one used by other authors because, in contrast with theirs, it excludes ideas not yet made more permanent or "crystallized" into institutions. At the same time, institutions are ideas crystallized into policies or norms.<sup>5</sup> For example, democracy would be an idea in an authoritarian country. If the authoritarian country becomes a democracy, democracy then becomes an institution. Since ideas do not have the greater inflexibility of institutions, they are more changeable. When prescribing policies, Parsons' (2007) typology is helpful to identify which existing barriers are the most flexible.

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<sup>5</sup> Other authors include ideas that are not yet crystallized into institutions, policies, or norms (Parsons 2007).



So far, this chapter has used Parsons' (2007) typology of structural, institutional, ideational, and psychological explanations to better understand the nature of intergovernmental conflicts over petroleum products and other natural resources in Canada, focusing on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Based on the literature, the main finding of the chapter at this point is that institutions are the main, changeable explanation for these conflicts. Structural explanations due to the uneven geographical distribution of oil are vital to understanding these conflicts, but geography is not changeable. Ideational explanations are relevant because they influence political parties and policymakers, especially for salient issues like the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Since the key problem is best explained through institutions, these institutional problems need institutional solutions. Accordingly, I examine how the framework of global energy governance works towards institutional solutions in the next subsection.

#### *2.3.4.1 Global Energy Governance*

Global energy governance (GEG) provides a framework that focuses on the institutional nature of energy problems. GEG is a branch of energy governance. The GEG framework establishes helpful guidelines that can improve conflict mitigation. Sovacool and Florini define GEG as “the *processes* of agenda-setting, negotiation, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of rules and agreements related to energy matters, as well as the *actors* connected to energy” (2012, 237). Relevant actors in this framework span interest groups, government, civil society organizations, think tanks, and public-private partnerships (Sovacool and Florini 2012; Van de Graaf and Colgan 2016). In particular, GEG scholars argue that states are currently the key actors (Dubash and Florini 2011; Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen, Jollands, and Staudt 2012; Van de Graaf and Colgan 2016), which accurately describes the Trans Mountain conflict and provides a valuable framework for how to mitigate this conflict. Accordingly, this dissertation focuses on the three settler governments as the key actors.

Further, the GEG framework accurately describes the system in which the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project operates. This framework provides a helpful, institutional approach, showing that some types of changes within the system are more likely to occur than others. In brief, GEG assumes that all actors are subject to various governance systems by one or more states and institutions, and coordination is often lacking (Dubash and Florini 2011; Goldthau and Witte 2010). The result is a patchwork system of energy governance that often

does not achieve global goals and can be difficult to follow (De Jong 2011; Dubash and Florini 2011; Goldthau and Witte 2010; Sovacool and Florini 2012). Without a relatively accurate description of the energy system, practical insights can be hard to identify.

The accuracy of the description of the energy system in which the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project operates does not inherently provide but is linked to GEG's usefulness. While GEG includes a variety of actors as governors, it also recognizes the current prominence of states. Balancing the heterogeneity of actors with unbalanced power relations allows researchers to consider this imbalance when studying policy change. For example, they can ask whether relevant state actors support or oppose specific policies. This usefulness extends to GEG scholars, suggesting that there are institutional solutions to institutional barriers. On top of providing a reasonably accurate description of the energy system, GEG provides a framework for potential mitigating tools and solutions. To improve the coherence of this patchwork system, GEG scholars argue that institutional barriers need institutional solutions (De Jong 2011; Dubash and Florini 2011; Goldthau and Witte 2010; Van de Graaf and Colgan 2016) that are generally consistent with GEG goals. These abstractions of institutional solutions and goals provide an approach I use in this thesis to evaluate which mitigation tools could be applied in the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion conflict.

In short, GEG advocates for regional and global institutions as helpful frameworks to address the increasingly global but still territorialized oil and gas markets. The GEG approach views states as the key players in energy policy while also recognizing the importance of markets and non-state actors and organizations as important players in energy policy. According to this framework, these institutions can help countries realize the shared benefits of a positive-sum game rather than playing a zero-sum game that encourages conflict and competition over resources (Goldthau and Witte 2010). In a system where competitive federalism and the joint decision trap lead to choosing policies that are the least common denominator, GEG's focus on viewing energy governance as a positive-sum game promises to help reveal ways to decrease tensions.

Global energy governance institutions, such as the International Energy Agency, face some of the same limitations as do federal-provincial and interprovincial relations in Canada. As a result, some of these lessons are very relevant to Canadian energy issues. One clear similarity between GEG institutions and federal-provincial institutions is the frequent lack of binding

conflict resolution mechanisms. Generally, there are fewer and less powerful binding mechanisms for international energy agreements. If a country reneges, there is generally no binding enforcement mechanism without the legal ramifications of the judiciary. The International Energy Agency, for instance, cannot force the OECD countries that make up its members to follow particular policies; it can only make recommendations and issue reports (Kohl 2010). These abstractions of institutional solutions and goals provide a framework that my research incorporates to evaluate which mitigation tools could be applied in the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion conflict.

To summarize, GEG is a promising theoretical framework for resolving energy issues in Canada. GEG shows promise for mitigating the negative effects of how competitive federalism and the joint decision trap combine. GEG is an appropriate theoretical framework for capturing the tensions of competitive federalism and the joint decision trap because it focuses on institutional, intergovernmental solutions. Consultation processes could better include Indigenous communities in settler institutions (Hurlbert and Rayner 2018). Consultation processes would also be more resistant to court challenges because consultation processes would better respect Indigenous rights and the duty to consult. These are important goals. Still, the main challenge with reducing the joint decision trap in energy issues in Canada is a variety of intergovernmental and institutional factors. The tools used in GEG by definition include intergovernmental and other institutional approaches, which can directly handle these central challenges.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that the combination of the joint decision trap and competitive federalism is the biggest challenge to Canadian energy policy, specifically the building of pipelines. Institutional challenges that lead to this combination exacerbate other relevant challenges. The chapter began by briefly describing some of the more controversial recent pipelines that have faced challenges in being approved. I then addressed the challenges faced by energy issues, specifically pipeline building, in the Canadian context. I began by addressing the structural challenge of the uneven distribution of natural resources across Canada. Next, I explained the ideational challenges: regional and provincial values and cultures, and the combative priorities of the economy and the environment. Finally, I described the limitations of

psychological challenges, focusing mainly on hyperbolic discounting in explaining inaction on climate change.

Then I addressed the causal institutional challenges. I initially outlined general findings in federalism research and Monica Gattinger and Geoffrey Hale's (2010) typology of energy federalism. Following this, I specified the challenges the Canadian federal and intergovernmental structures have created, encouraging competitive federalism. Shared jurisdiction over natural resources, including energy, incentivizes conflict over natural resource policy. Equalization exacerbates tensions over natural resources.

Further, the lack of sufficient intergovernmental conflict mechanisms in general and specifically regarding recent pipeline disputes prolongs and intensifies conflict. The judiciary is the formal, institutional mechanism available. However, its recently transformative interpretation of the Crown's duty to consult Indigenous communities is one factor in making its decisions difficult to predict, justifying continuous court challenges. Moreover, there is no provincial representation embedded in the federal legislature. The joint decision trap applies to and further encourages competitive federalism. As well, the joint decision trap generally results in policy inaction. Intergovernmental conferences and agreements provide a venue for federal-provincial and intergovernmental negotiations. The problem is that they are ad hoc and have no binding mechanisms. Having detailed the challenges to pipeline building in Canada, I examined global energy governance. The institutional focus of global energy governance better fits Canada's primarily institutional problem of energy issues.

## **CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL APPROACH**

### **3.1 Theoretical Background**

For my theoretical approach, I use a combination of Campbell's (2004) typology and Van de Graaf and Colgan's (2016) goals for global energy governance (GEG). Here, I assert this combination of methodologies is valuable to understanding barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution over natural resources in Canada and how to mitigate these conflicts. Campbell's (2004) typology of ideas categorizes which types of actors perceive and shape perceptions of barriers and opportunities for solutions. The types of ideas based on this typology, separated into whether they are in the foreground or background of debates and whether they are outcome-oriented, lead to different paths for change. GEG provides clear goals to evaluate potential conflict mitigation tools (Van de Graaf and Colgan 2016). Compared to Campbell's (2004) typology, GEG is less prominent throughout this dissertation. GEG mainly applies in the discussion (Chapter 7) and the conclusion (Chapter 8) because its primary role is to help evaluate potential mitigation tools.

Sorting actors into being “for” or “against” a project—in this case the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project—adds valuable insight into how institutions and ideas affect decision-making. As provincial premiers are the sole elected officials to represent a province, they often have the most legitimacy of any actor speaking on behalf of a province (Gattinger 2015; Stevenson 2002). Consequently, premiers can sort themselves into supporting or opposing policies when tensions run high. While each premier's position is sometimes institutional, based on the requirements of their province's population, sometimes one or more province's populations do not bind the premier to one position on a policy. In these cases, a premier chooses a position often based on partisan leanings or bureaucratic knowledge. Partisan leanings can be fluid. When these positions are chosen based on fluid partisan leanings, their positions are ideational.

This explanation is consistent with Sabatier's (1988) advocacy coalition framework (ACF), which asserts that actors group themselves into coalitions that share beliefs and goals. Versions of Sabatier's (1988) ACF have been used for analyzing support and opposition around natural resource development projects (Carvalho 2006; Freudenburg and Gramling 2002; Gottlieb, Bertone Oehninger and Arnold, 2018; Heinmiller 2016; Hoberg 2021; Liftin 2000; Tindall, Stoddart, and Howe 2020; Yordy, You, Park, Weible and Heikkila, 2019). I do not apply

the ACF in this dissertation because it is not useful overall when examining settler intergovernmental relations in this context. In short, the ACF divides organizations into coalitions, which work together towards a shared goal and have the same core beliefs (Sabatier 1988). However, Sabatier's assumption that organizations in the same coalition hold the same core beliefs does not apply here.<sup>1</sup>

Still, recognizing that actors form coalitions provides insight into the Trans Mountain conflict. This insight becomes apparent when researchers and policy analysts examine how to mitigate the conflict. With a different focus, Hoberg (2021) develops a policy regime framework influenced by Sabatier's (1988) ACF along with other theories that he applies to energy policy in Canada, including the Trans Mountain conflict. This shared influence suggests that the ACF (Sabatier 1988) is valuable for understanding energy conflicts in Canada; the ACF provides the most insight when used as inspiration rather than as the main theoretical approach.

Understanding which mitigation strategies would likely succeed requires understanding which groups would be amenable to which tools. Mitigation tools with greater popularity across actors for and against the Trans Mountain expansion are more likely to be accepted and implemented. I take inspiration from Sabatier's (1988) ACF coalitions, but do not apply the concept to each organization's core goals.

More recent than Sabatier's (1988) ACF, Campbell's (2004) institutional typology of ideas and actors' ideational realms is widely used and discussed (Anderson 2013; Bakir and Jarvis 2017; Béland 2009; Daigneault 2014; Pieterse 2009; Schmidt 2008; Wilder and Howlett 2014). As both Sabatier and Campbell are influential scholars in the field of ideas (Carstensen 2011a, 2011b; Daigneault 2014; Wilder and Howlett 2014), recent scholarship often uses both Campbell's typology of ideas and Sabatier's ACF (Clark 2002; Daigneault 2014; Schmidt 2008; Smith 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> One major problem with applying the ACF to the Trans Mountain debate is that separating organizations into coalitions by core beliefs either glosses over fundamental disagreements or creates too many coalitions to have practical analytic value for this research question. For example, the Government of British Columbia (BC) and the Coldwater Indian Band oppose the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Still, it would be inaccurate to argue that they share core beliefs. One reason why the Coldwater Indian Band opposes the project is not simply the practical threat a spill would pose to its drinking water supply but the pipeline's connection to the spiritual importance of water. In his testimony to the National Energy Board (NEB), Chief Lee Spahan explained how water is "sacred" and deeply tied to the spiritual beliefs of the community (Bellrichard 2018). However, the Government of BC does not share this core belief, illustrating that pipeline coalitions do not necessarily hold the same views. The these coalitions regarding the pipeline do not necessarily share core beliefs. As a result, the traditional ACF assumptions of shared core beliefs do not hold.

This research combines the applicable strengths of Campbell's (2004) typology with the idea of coalitions inspired by Sabatier's (1988) ACF.<sup>2</sup> For this research, ideas refer to perceptions or beliefs that are not norms across the governments under study. However, the ideas relevant to this research can be categorized as barriers to or mitigation tools for identifying potential methods for de-escalating a conflict. Campbell's (2004) typology divides ideas into four different types: programs, paradigms, frames, and public sentiments (see Table 3.1). Moreover, conflict mitigation tools and barriers can be better understood by using Campbell's (2004) ideas.

**Table 3.1 Campbell's Typology of Ideas**

<b>Concepts and Theories in the Foreground of the Debate</b>		<b>Underlying Assumptions in the Background of the Debate</b>
Programs		Paradigms
<b>Cognitive (Outcome oriented)</b>	<b>[E]lite prescriptions</b> that enable politicians, corporate leaders, and other decision-makers to chart a clear and specific course of action.	<b>[E]lite assumptions</b> that constrain the cognitive range of useful programs available to politicians, corporate leaders, and other decision-makers.
Frames		Public Sentiments
<b>Normative (Non-outcome oriented)</b>	<b>[S]ymbols and concepts</b> that enable decision-makers to legitimize programs to their constituents.	<b>[P]ublic assumptions</b> that constrain the normative range of legitimate programs available to decision-makers.

Note: Reproduced from Campbell (2004, p. 94).

Campbell's (2004) typology provides insight into conflict mitigation tools and barriers identified in my research because each type is associated with different actors and, thus, solutions. At the same time, Campbell's (2004) typology does not mirror Parsons' (2007) typology of explanations. Instead, it focuses on ideational and institutional explanations and

<sup>2</sup> Situating Campbell's (2004) typology in the literature reveals how it can help build coalitions. Ideas that help build coalitions are called "coalition magnets" (Béland and Cox 2016). For example, ideas of sustainability and growth have motivated the formation of coalitions for and against the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. This pipeline expansion project is an excellent case to examine the roles of ideas and institutions in coalitions, including elite frames and public sentiment. In this case, the purchase of Trans Mountain by the federal Trudeau Liberal government complicates the perceptions of Central Canadians who might neglect the West and not understand why the West feels disrespected and alienated. This purchase creates a case where the short-term economic incentives of earning oil sands revenue are in conflict with these perceptions of neglect and disrespect. Public sentiments and some elite frames and paradigms may not match. Instead, different advocacy coalitions use ideas to motivate each side. The uses of some ideas are more successful than others.

separates ideas into being in the foreground or the background of policy debates (see Table 3.1). This division suggests that ideas in the foreground are often ideational, while “ideas” in the background are often institutional or structural. Further, as seen in Table 3.1, ideas in the foreground are more often associated with decision-makers. In contrast, ideas in the background are more often associated with constituents (Campbell 2004). Given these two dimensions, Campbell’s (2004) typology lends itself to incorporating different types of causal explanations. By organizing causal explanations, Parsons’ (2007) typology provides a better understanding of Campbell’s (2004) typology of ideas as it pertains to my research.

Campbell’s (2004) typology of ideas enables me to identify and organize barriers to and criteria for mitigating intergovernmental conflict. My findings promise to fill a gap in the literature. First, I sort actors into being for or against the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Second, Campbell’s typology of ideas (2004) allows me to group the ideas held by actors. For example, perceptions of barriers and opportunities for solutions held by decision-makers in governments are analyzed as “programs.” Public opinion polls and interest groups are incorporated as “public sentiments.” Further, I use this typology (Campbell 2004) to sort the actors into constituents or decision-makers. Together, these frameworks provide deeper insight into the shape of the conflict through ideas and actors using those ideas.

Essentially, Campbell’s (2004) typology of ideas allows me to code different types of barriers, actors, and potential conflict mitigation tools. Moreover, conflict mitigation tools are most valuable when a larger number and variety of groups view them as helpful (Behfar et al. 2008; Merritt and Kelley 2018; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2011). Consequently, sorting actors into proponents and opponents of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project helps evaluate which conflict mitigation tools are most likely to succeed. If all three governments for and against the pipeline agree that a tool would be feasible and constructive, I will then recommend this tool.

For my research on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, the GEG framework helps determine whether these conflict mitigation tools have substantial negative or positive side effects. Since the Trans Mountain conflict is mainly an institutional problem, GEG is an appropriate framework. To identify which institutional solutions should be used, GEG has a list of goals: 1) environmental sustainability, 2) economic development, 3) domestic good governance, 4) security of energy demand and supply, and 5) international security (Van de



Graaf and Colgan 2016, 4). The goal of domestic good governance supports respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, since they are not currently respected. The five goals are a guideline to evaluating tools for conflict mitigation. In my research, after identifying these tools from the perspective of Campbell (2004), I compare potential mitigation tools against their compatibility with these goals.

By applying these frameworks, this research identifies when two or more governments share ideas for potentially removing barriers and criteria for solutions. Overall, I prioritize these ideas by determining 1) whether they have support across coalitions for and against the project and 2) whether these mitigation tools meet or address the GEG goals. The second question also asks if a tool negatively affects any GEG goals. If so, I do not recommend the tool. Next, if the tool improves one or more GEG goals, it receives a higher priority. I also evaluate government support. Generally, evaluating how well these mitigation tools meet the GEG goals is helpful because it informs policy recommendations from this research.

In this research, institutional, structural, and ideational arguments are vital to understanding the Trans Mountain conflict and its potential mitigating strategies. Specifically, institutional arguments are the most important, supplemented by structural and ideational arguments. These arguments suggest there are limits to what can be done, i.e., barriers. The importance of institutional and ideational arguments indicates that many barriers to resolving this conflict can be changed or removed. Mitigating tools should match the barriers that need to be removed. These barriers influence how to select potential mitigating tools.

### **3.2 Combining Methods in the Theoretical Approach**

To account for institutional, structural, and ideational factors, I supplement qualitative methods with quantitative methods. The three subsequent chapters show each method: quantitative regression analysis of Alberta public opinion, document analysis of government press releases, and thematic analysis of interviews with key decision-makers.

I use thematic coding to combine my findings from these methods. As seen in Table 3.2, I code in three levels: 1) the government represented, including the specific party forming the government where applicable; 2) the piece of media released, whether a document, audio or visual recording, or survey result; and 3) the phrase, sentence, paragraph, or question.

**Table 3.2 Qualitative Coding Method**

<b>Level of Analysis</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Theory</b>
<b>Actor/ Group</b>	1. What actor or group is represented by this content?	Sabatier/ Campbell
	2. Does the represented actor or group 1) support or 2) oppose the TMX?	Sabatier
<b>Article</b>	3. Is this message outcome oriented (or non-outcome oriented)?	Campbell
	4. Does this message discuss foreground assumptions or background assumptions?	Campbell
<b>Phrase/ Sentence/ Paragraph/ Question</b>	5. [If this differs from the general document] Is this message outcome oriented (or non-outcome oriented)?	Campbell
	6. [If this differs from the general document] Does this message discuss foreground assumptions or background assumptions?	Campbell
	7. Does this message address a perceived barrier to the TMX conflict? a. What is the perceived barrier? b. Is the perceived barrier treated positively or negatively? c. What is the perceived cause of the barrier?	NA
	8. Does this message address a potential conflict mitigation/solution strategy? a. What is the conflict mitigation/solution strategy? b. Is the conflict mitigation/solution strategy treated positively or negatively? c. Does the message address whether this potential conflict mitigation/solution strategy is feasible? d. Does the conflict mitigation/solution strategy address one or more of the global energy governance goals?	NA

In my dissertation, these different methods target different actors and types of ideas. Campbell's (2004) types of ideas come from different policy actors who belong to coalitions for or against the pipeline. The regression analysis of predictors for Albertans reveals public sentiment around a pipeline to tidewater. Complementing this method, the interviews and document analysis clarify ideas related to elites and decision-makers, particularly programs and frames. The press releases in the document analysis are particularly well-suited to understanding the frames communicated to the public by each government because they are, in essence, ways to distribute framing. The interviews help reveal paradigms because they offer the opportunity to probe why participants took particular actions during the conflict and what they think of mitigation tools. Further, the interviews provide opportunities for key actors to explain, in real-

world terms, how programs connect to frames, paradigms, and public sentiment. This combination of sources helps me identify programs, paradigms, frames, and public sentiments.

I relate actors and ideas to different barriers, criteria, and mitigation tools with these methods. Each type of idea engenders different policy tools where barriers and mitigation tools exist. When identifying barriers and mitigation tools, it is crucial to understand how these work for others within and across coalitions. For these reasons, the regressions, document analysis, and interviews reflect different aspects of my theoretical approach. Overall, this theoretical framework is primarily institutional. The overarching framework is global energy governance, supported by Campbell's institutional concepts (2004).

## **CHAPTER 4: PREDICTORS OF ALBERTA PUBLIC OPINION FOR PIPELINES TO TIDEWATER**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on understanding the barriers to resolving the intergovernmental conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. What do Albertans see as barriers to solving the dispute around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project? This chapter's dependent variables of whether Albertans support and deem important a pipeline to the coast—like Trans Mountain—important is not the same as the dependent variable as the dissertation's dependent variable—the level of intergovernmental conflict. The purpose of this chapter is to identify what affects Albertans' views of a pipeline like the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. In other words, which if any of the key independent variables are barriers to reducing the level of intergovernmental conflict? After conducting a regression analysis on public opinion data from Viewpoint Alberta, this chapter finds that feelings of Western alienation are a key determinant to Albertans' attitudes towards the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

When one thinks of divisive pipeline projects, the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and the various controversial policies and positions around it come to mind. Despite its salience, project proponents framed Trans Mountain as one method to achieve the goal of reaching Asian markets. The expansion plan was to nearly triple the capacity of the oil Trans Mountain can move from Edmonton, Alberta to the port at Burnaby, British Columbia. With the expansion, oil could travel by tanker to Asian markets, where Canadian petroleum products receive a higher price than they do in the American market. Keystone XL would have fulfilled the same goal of getting Canadian oil to the coast but faced the additional complication of American jurisdiction, where opponents mobilized against Keystone XL. Supporters and opponents identified Trans Mountain as the more realistic of the two options, leading both proponents and opponents of the expansion project to focus their strategies and campaigns on this project. Therefore, it is essential to understand the issues Trans Mountain faces as part of a larger project to ease the process of delivering more oil to Asian markets.

This chapter aims to clarify what the Alberta public sees as barriers to solving the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. The background outlines the relevant literature on public opinion around pipelines and natural resources in Alberta. One group of authors focuses on how

geographic and other structural factors appear in ideational values. Another group focuses on the ideational narrative of Western alienation.

Following this, this chapter presents the research questions, asking what factors drive the perceived public support and opinions on the importance of constructing a pipeline to tidewater for Albertans. Tidewater, in this context, refers to ocean ports where products can be internationally transported. The hypotheses predict positive relationships between each of the two key factors: economic prioritization and Western alienation. This chapter conducts ordinal logistic regressions to test these hypotheses on data from the Viewpoint Alberta August 2020 and March 2021 surveys. The results of these regressions indicate that Western alienation is a consistent, statistically significant predictor of positive opinions on building a pipeline to tidewater. Based on the same regressions, economic prioritization is unrelated to opinions on pipelines when controlling for Western alienation. This chapter concludes with suggestions for future research on public policy recommendations that promote Albertans and Westerners as vital contributors to Canada, regardless of the party in power at any particular time.

## **4.2 Background**

The body of literature focusing on pipeline construction and public opinion tends to discuss the roles of federalism and values, including political leanings. When focusing on federalism, the literature is divided into whether or not regionalism, often Western alienation, affects its residents' opinion formation. Albertans show higher support for pipeline construction than residents of any other province (Angus Reid 2020; Bricker 2018). The mainstream and alternative Canadian media often portray pipeline disputes as divided between those who value the economy and jobs or those who value the environment and mitigating further climate change (Dusyk, Axsen, Dullemond 2018; Hackett and Adams 2018; Turner 2017).

### ***4.2.1 Values and Priorities***

When a strong majority of the public holds particular values, their representatives (e.g., premiers) can feel bound to act according to these values. Where these values vary across jurisdictions, conflict may occur on projects where multiple governments are involved. Individuals can hold overlapping values. The values held by each individual do not have to be, and often are not, coherent (Converse 1964; Zaller 1992). Interviews and broader survey data provide insight into

how individuals form opinions. Surveys like those analyzed here can help in understanding trends where individuals may or may not consciously understand how their opinions are formed. Even where their values complement each other, individuals may not consciously see these within one worldview. For example, prioritizing the economy over the environment and Western alienation complement each other because of the recent association of the oil sands' role in the economy and Western alienation (Banack 2021; Janigan 2020; Wesley 2017). Interviews expand on these links for individuals who articulate their opinion formation and why, which can help researchers better understand groups of people who hold similar values (Banack 2021).

Alberta public opinion is often discussed based on how the geography of the province led to a strong oil sector, shaping the economy. From this perspective, any differences in values and opinions are not due to regionalism influencing how individuals develop values; instead, groups of people with particular values are more likely to be clustered in particular regions (Montpetit, Lachapelle, and Kiss 2017). Following these arguments, underlying values are stronger predictors of political positions than is regionalism. Of course, these structural factors can be difficult to study directly. Rather, these structural factors combine with other factors like worldviews, consequently appearing in values such as left-right ideology or party affiliation. Albertans are more frequently conservative than the average Canadian because their overall economic incentives and values are more likely to be right-wing than the average Canadian's (Montpetit, Lachapelle, and Kiss 2017; Wiseman 1981; Wesley 2011). For Montpetit, Lachapelle, and Kiss (2017), region moderates the effects of traditional beliefs (e.g., concern around the decline of the nuclear family) on supporting pipelines. Premiers and other representatives may feel obligated to follow public sentiment. Opposing public sentiments across provinces or regions on intergovernmental projects can create intergovernmental conflict.

#### ***4.2.2 Western Alienation***

Less often, Albertans are analyzed through an arguable cultural identity, currently tied to the oil sector (Banack 2021; Wesley 2011; Wiseman 1981). Often this analysis is presented in a bundle with Western alienation, which refers to the perception that Western Canada is being neglected by the federal government, which pays outsized attention to Quebec and Ontario (Banack 2021; Gibbins 1979). Through Western alienation, support for pipelines is also motivated by the feeling that the federal government is not paying sufficient attention or thought to this issue, which is

more important to Albertans and less to Quebecers. Believing the federal government does not give sufficient attention to the Prairie provinces is not always termed “Western alienation” (Berdahl and Raney 2021). Regional discontent or regional alienation are sometimes used to describe feelings similar to Western alienation (Berdahl and Raney 2021; Gibbins 1995; Leuprecht 2015; Mendelsohn and Matthews 2010) .

The currently dominant provincial political parties in Alberta, the United Conservative Party (UCP) and the New Democratic Party (NDP), disagree on the nomenclature that describes the region’s discontent. The UCP, including then Premier Jason Kenney, uses the term “Western alienation” to describe this phenomenon. In contrast, the Alberta NDP does not like or use that term; members of this party describe a similar, recurring concern that the federal government is more likely to overlook matters that are geographically further or in different time zones from Ontario and Quebec. The Alberta NDP has accused Jason Kenney of promoting Western alienation (Cryderman 2019). While there may be disagreement about the name, the general feelings motivating this frustration are the same.

This research uses the term Western alienation for two reasons. 1) Western alienation is the most common term in the literature used to describe this and similar phenomena. 2) Regional discontent can be applied to other provinces, such as Newfoundland and Labrador. The survey analyzed here concerns Albertans, and the term Western alienation highlights the characteristics of regional discontent specific to this group. The term Western alienation is particularly apt since it is often used to describe Albertans.

The sentiment of Western alienation is heightened by the legacy of frustration with former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s National Energy Program from 1980 to 1985. Under his son, current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the Government of Canada purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Notably, the federal government dedicated considerable financial resources to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Although the Government of Alberta offered to backstop the project for up to \$2 billion, the federal government still purchased the project. The federal government asserts it bought the project to protect jobs (PMO 2018a, 2018b; Western Economic Diversification Canada 2019).

The tension between Albertans’ frustrations with the central Canadian elite and the Liberal federal government’s support for constructing pipelines to tidewater makes both the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and Keystone XL valuable to study. These cases feature a

separation between the short-term economic incentives of oil sands income and the overall feeling of frustration with the federal government. Relevant Canadian regulatory bodies have approved both proposals, and the Trudeau Liberal government supports both projects. However, although the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project is under construction despite delays, Keystone XL is unlikely to be built after many delays.

Experts often at least partly explain the difference in the two pipelines' progress through jurisdictional differences. Keystone XL would traverse both Canadian provinces and American states, and the most recent complications preventing its construction come from the American government's opposition. In contrast, Trans Mountain's existing and potential infrastructure is limited to Canada. Further, the Canadian federal government has purchased it to decrease market uncertainty around the completion of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

This support from the federal Liberal government complicates the ideology of Western alienation as it applies to these two pipelines because they supported the project, which would economically benefit Albertans in the short term by creating jobs instead of ignoring Western interests. Still, there are indications (Banack 2021) that some Albertans blame Justin Trudeau for the delay in Trans Mountain's construction. However, the point is that the Trudeau Liberal government's support for both Trans Mountain and Keystone makes for valuable research because the Trudeau government's actions in these cases are exceptional. The combination of the Trudeau government's support and the negative association of the Trudeau name accompanying Western alienation offers researchers an interesting case where the longstanding feeling of Western alienation is more distinct from the actions of the federal government than is usually the case. Here, the Trudeau government is implementing a policy that includes short-term gains for the oil sands. Overall, the separation between short-term economic incentives and feelings of Western alienation is unusually distinct in the Trans Mountain pipeline project.

It is clear that having an economy dependent on the oil sands leads Albertan public opinion to support pipelines transporting their oil. However, it is unclear how these feelings are developed or crystallized: Are Albertans, overall, reacting to economic incentives, leading them to more right-wing beliefs, including support of pipelines? Or is there an additional ideological dimension: Are those who subscribe to Western alienation more likely to support pipelines?

#### **4.3 Research Question**



Broadly, Albertans support building a pipeline to the West Coast and view it as essential. For example, the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project is widely supported by Alberta's public. On a scale from 0 to 10, the average respondent support score for building a pipeline to tidewater was 6.8, and the importance of building any pipeline to tidewater scored an average of 6.4 (Berdahl and Wesley 2021). In August 2020, 56% of respondents supported gaining tidewater access for oil, while 26% were indifferent, and 18% were opposed (Berdahl, Hyshka, and Wesley, 2020). In addition, 55% of respondents deemed gaining tidewater access important, while 26% were indifferent, and 19% said it was unimportant (Berdahl, Hyshka, and Wesley 2020).

This research seeks to provide greater insight into the factors leading to the support and perceived importance of these projects to the Alberta public. Specifically, this chapter explores if ideological narratives and economic values influence one or both of the following: support for these pipelines and the perceived importance of these projects. A relationship between either of these factors and respondents' position on these pipelines suggests different policy goals and tools for public policymakers. For example, if a barrier is Western alienation, then decision-makers would benefit from implementing policies and policy tools that improve the perception of valuing Western, particularly Albertan, contributions (Berdahl and Gibbins 2014). If a barrier is prioritizing the economy over the environment and vice versa, policymakers could include more policies that promote the two working together.

Q1: What factors drive support for pipelines to tidewater?

Q2: What factors drive the importance of pipelines to tidewater?

While values and Western alienation may influence different individuals, I acknowledge that individuals can hold both views simultaneously. In other words, they can both support the pipelines and perceive that they are important. For one, values prioritizing the economy over other concerns like climate change and social issues are often associated with recent forms of Western alienation (Berdahl and Gibbins 2014; Banack 2021). As a result, there are four hypotheses, each predicting a positive association between a key independent variable and a dependent variable.

H1.1: The factors driving this support include differences based on values.

H1.2: The factors driving this support include ideological narratives associated with an ideology of Western alienation.

H2.1: The factors driving this importance include differences based on values.

H2.2: The factors driving this importance include ideological narratives associated with an ideology of Western alienation.

The different potential combinations are listed in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1 Hypotheses for Predicting Support and Importance of a Pipeline to Tidewater**

		<b>Predicted Responses to Pipeline to Tidewater</b>	
		Support	Importance
<b>Key Independent Variable</b>	Economic Values	H1.1 +	H2.1 +
	Western Alienation	H1.2 +	H2.2 +

## **4.4 Methods**

### **4.4.1 Data Source**

I used Stata to analyze this data. The data for this study come from Viewpoint Alberta's August 2020 (Berdahl, Hyshka, and Wesley, 2020) and March 2021 (Berdahl and Wesley, 2021) surveys. For further information about these surveys, see Appendix A. I selected Viewpoint Alberta surveys because they had a large sample size of Albertan respondents in particular. Further, Viewpoint Alberta's survey questions apply directly to this project's research question about barriers to intergovernmental resolution of the Trans Mountain pipeline, particularly underlying factors that shape government support for and opposition to Trans Mountain and similar pipelines. For methodological rigour, both months of data (August 2020 and March 2021) are included. The data were pooled to maximize sample size. It was appropriate to pool the August 2020 and March 2021 data because Viewpoint Alberta conducted both surveys during the pandemic. Further, the last Supreme Court judgments around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project had been made, and there was no change of government or political party in power.

#### **4.4.2 Key Variables**

As seen in Table 4.2, there are two key dependent variables from these surveys: the support for and the importance of pipeline projects to tidewater. In both surveys, these are sub-questions of a broader question: “For each of the following priorities for the Government of Alberta, please indicate your level of support for the idea and how important you feel the issue is.” The sub-question is “Working with other provinces and stakeholders to gain tidewater access for Alberta” (Berdahl, Hyshka, and Wesley 2020; Berdahl and Wesley 2021). The research questions of this dissertation are appropriately operationalized with this survey question because the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and Keystone XL were salient proposed pipeline projects that aimed to transport Alberta’s petroleum products to tidewater. Accordingly, participants would immediately think of these projects when reading this survey question.

First, support for pipelines to tidewater is measured by a sliding scale under “Support,” with 0 for “I completely oppose,” 5 for “I’m neutral,” and 10 for “I completely support” (Berdahl, Hyshka, and Wesley 2020; Berdahl and Wesley 2021). This item had a mean of 6.59 and a standard deviation of 2.57.

Second, the importance of projects like the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and Keystone XL is measured by a sliding scale under “Importance,” with 0 for “This is entirely unimportant to me,” 5 for “I’m indifferent,” and 10 for “This is extremely important to me” (Berdahl, Hyshka, and Wesley 2020; Berdahl and Wesley 2021). This item had a mean of 6.36 and a standard deviation of 2.63. Both results suggest the general importance of pipelines to tidewater.

Each dependent variable is an index variable transformed into a binary variable with options of agreeing with this statement or not agreeing with this statement. 0 to 5 was coded as not agreeing with this statement. 6 to 10 was coded as agreeing with this statement. In the final analysis, the binary dependent variable is “Agrees With This Statement.” For the binary dependent variable measuring support for a pipeline to tidewater, “Agrees With This Statement” is equal to 1 if the respondent supports a pipeline to tidewater and 0 otherwise. For the binary dependent variable measuring the importance of a pipeline to tidewater, “Agrees With This Statement” is equal to 1 if the respondent sees a pipeline to tidewater as important and 0 otherwise.

Tensions between the Government of Alberta and the Government of BC have often been portrayed as a clash of values and priorities: the economy versus the environment. Accordingly, this survey asks: “Which of the following statements comes closest to your view about Alberta provincial politics?” Respondents could choose “Albertans need to focus first and foremost on economic issues like growth, development, and job creation” or “Albertans need to focus first and foremost on environmental and social issues like health care, education, civil rights, water use, and combating climate change.” This analysis summarizes these options as prioritizing the economy or the environment, respectively.

I conducted ordinal logistic regressions with the key dependent variables of support for and importance of pipelines to tidewater, in addition to key independent and control variables. Moreover, research on politics shows that age, income, education, and gender/sex (Bernierth and Aguinis 2016) tend to influence political opinion. To avoid improperly attributing relationships to theoretical variables about economic beliefs and Western alienation, these regressions control for these variables. The exception is income; I controlled for employment status instead of income due to the importance of the oil industry in Alberta as an employer and the recent job losses resulting from low oil prices. In addition to these controls, the key independent variables were 1) prioritization of the economy or the environment and 2) feelings associated with Western alienation.

The two key independent variables, Western alienation and prioritization of the economy, have a potential multicollinearity problem. One of the beliefs underlying Western alienation is that the federal government has ignored the economic needs and contributions of the West, most recently in terms of the oil sands (Banack 2021; Berdahl and Gibbins 2014; Doern and Toner 1985; Gibbins 1979; Janigan 2013). An operationalized survey question reflecting this belief is included in the Western alienation variable used in these regressions (see Table 4.2). The economic grievances included under the umbrella of Western alienation are expected to have some multicollinearity with the prioritization of the economy.

**Table 4.2 Description and Summary Statistics of the Variables Used in the Regressions**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Variable description and data source</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Obs</b>
Support	A dummy variable indicating whether the respondent supports “[w]orking with other provinces and stakeholders to gain tidewater access for Alberta.”	0.58	0.49	0	1	1042
Importance	A dummy variable indicating whether the respondent views “[w]orking with other provinces and stakeholders to gain tidewater access for Alberta” as important.	0.56	0.50	0	1	1039
EconomyFirst	A variable indicating whether the respondent prioritizes the economy over the environment.	0.59	0.49	0	1	1573
WesternAlienation	A ratio-interval variable indicating how many of three statements associated with Western alienation with which the respondent agrees. Source: I averaged three dummy variables based on the Viewpoint Alberta Surveys.	0.65	0.42	0	1	1624
Unemployed	A dummy variable indicating whether the respondent is unemployed.	0.40	0.49	0	1	1488
Male	A dummy variable indicating whether the respondent is a man.	0.49	0.50	0	1	1605
Education	A dummy variable indicating whether the respondent has at least some post-secondary education.	0.81	0.40	0	1	1622
Gen X	A dummy variable indicating whether the respondent was born between 1965 and 1980.	0.32	0.46	0	1	1626
Boomer	A dummy variable indicating whether the respondent was born before 1965.	0.31	0.46	0	1	1626

**Notes**

1. All data are pooled from the August 2020 and March 2021 Viewpoint Alberta Surveys (Berdahl, Hyshka and Wesley 2020; Berdahl and Wesley 2021).

I kept the potential multicollinearity problem in mind throughout the modeling process.<sup>3</sup> After narrowing down the independent variables, I conducted a regression between these key independent variables of Western alienation and value prioritization suggests a multicollinearity problem. I conducted an ordinal logistic regression to better understand the relationship between these key variables. As seen in Table 4.3, prioritizing the economy over the environment is associated with a five-fold increase in the odds of holding the three feelings associated with Western alienation: believing that 1) the federal government treats Alberta worse than other provinces; 2) the federal governments spends less on Alberta than other provinces; and 3) Alberta receives less respect than other provinces ( $p < 0.001$ ). The strength of this relationship suggests a multicollinearity problem exists for these two key variables. When a multicollinearity problem exists, often dropping one of the variables will result in a better model.

#### **4.5 Results**

Each of the three models presented (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5) shows a different perspective. All models control for employment, education, age, and gender. In addition to these control variables, Model 1 (Value) and Model 2 (Western Alienation) each include one of the two key independent variables. By separating the key independent variables, I show their separate impacts on the key dependent variables in these regressions. Further, this separation is necessary because the multicollinearity problem between these two variables obscures their independent effects. Models 1 and 2 are presented here to show key aspects of the model specification process and to understand the robustness of the independent variables. Model 3, the Combined Model, includes the control and both key independent variables in its regression. By keeping both key independent variables, Model 3 avoids a specification error that dropping a key theoretical

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<sup>3</sup> In addition to the regression described in the main text, I conducted another test to examine if there was a multicollinearity problem. I examined the bivariate correlations between the independent variables. Western alienation and prioritization of the economy are the strongest correlated variables (0.41). This correlation is not at a level that suggests a multicollinearity problem. After running the regression models, I used VIF values to test if multicollinearity between the two variables presented a multicollinearity problem. VIF is a measure of collinearity among independent variables. None of the variables for the final regression models had a VIF over 1.34. Although there are different rules of thumb (VIFs above 2.5, 5, or 10 indicate high multicollinearity), nothing below a VIF of 2 indicates concern for a multicollinearity problem (Daoud 2017; Menard 2002; O'Brien 2007). While multicollinearity of Western alienation and prioritization of the economy had the potential to be problematic, these scores for multicollinearity between the two key independent variables do not rise to a level that becomes problematic.

variable can create. Further, comparing Models 1 and 2 to Model 3 shows how the interaction of these variables changes the strength of each of the variables and the overall regression models. The results of three models applied to two key dependent variables are shown in Tables 4.4 and 4.5.

**Table 4.3 Multicollinearity of WesternAlienation and EconomyFirst**

WesternAlienation	Values Model	
	OR	95% CI
<i>Value Priority (EnvironmentFirst)</i>	1.00	-
EconomyFirst	<b>5.159097</b>	(4.21, 6.32)
n	1572	
Log Likelihood	-1665.826	
LR chi^2	(1) 265.64	
Prob > chi^2	<0.0001	
Pseudo R^2	0.0738	
_cons		

Note: OR = Odds Ratio; CI = Confidence Interval. Bolded OR means  $p < 0.05$ .

As seen in Table 4.2, the score of the dependent variables can range from 0 to 1. Most are binary variables where 1 represents belonging to a category, and 0 represents not belonging to that category. For example, 1 represents identifying as male, and 0 represents identifying as female. The Western alienation score also ranges from 0 to 1. Unlike the other dependent variables, Western alienation can take a range of scores between those numbers because it summarizes responses from three statements. 0 represents not sharing any beliefs associated with Western alienation; 1 represents agreement with all three statements combined. Consequently, the score can include values such as one-third or one-half based on 1) how many statements the respondents answered and 2) how many statements they agreed with or did not agree with. For instance, a respondent who responds to all three statements and agrees with two of them would score two-thirds.

These models are all ordinal logistic regressions. When a regression is run, the coefficients of each independent variable are presented. In most regressions, these coefficients can be clearly explained and understood. For example, in linear regression models, a one-unit increase in an independent variable will result in an increase in the dependent variable by the number of units indicated in the coefficient. I provide a hypothetical example using the data from this research, with the hypothetical change of the dependent variable to an index. If Table C.1

described a linear regression, having some post-secondary education would be associated with a 0.39 decrease in ranked support for a pipeline to tidewater under Model 2. This interpretation is not coherent.

**Table 4.4 Regression Models: Support for Pipeline to Tidewater**

Support for Pipeline to Tidewater	Value Model		Western Alienation Model		Combined Model	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
<b><u>Key Independent Variables</u></b>						
<i>Value Priority (Environment First)</i>	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	-
Economy First	<b>1.530504</b>	(1.15, 2.03)			1.23891	(0.90, 1.70)
Western Alienation	-		<b>1.912507</b>	(1.38, 2.65)	<b>1.804138</b>	(1.26, 2.59)
<b><u>Control Variables</u></b>						
<i>Employment (Employed)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Unemployed	<b>1.623734</b>	(1.20, 2.19)	<b>1.625852</b>	(1.21, 2.19)	<b>1.606577</b>	(1.19, 2.17)
<i>Education (No Postsecondary)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Some Postsecondary	1.400853	(0.99, 1.99)	<b>1.483772</b>	(1.05, 2.10)	<b>1.462845</b>	(1.03, 2.08)
<i>Age (GenZ/Millennial)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Gen X	<b>1.910197</b>	(1.39, 2.62)	<b>1.829385</b>	(1.34, 2.50)	<b>1.849092</b>	(1.35, 2.54)
Boomer	<b>2.162462</b>	(1.50, 3.11)	<b>2.010116</b>	(1.40, 2.89)	<b>1.997534</b>	(1.38, 2.89)
<i>Gender (Female)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Male	1.244551	(0.94, 1.64)	<b>1.345827</b>	(1.02, 1.77)	1.303234	(0.98, 1.73)
n	892		913		892	
Log Likelihood	-579.6654		-589.1681		-574.5531	
LR chi^2	(6) 51.90		(6) 59.52		(7) 62.12	
Prob > chi^2	<0.0001		<0.0001		<0.0001	
Pseudo R^2	0.0428		0.0481		0.0513	
_cons						

Note: OR = Odds Ratio; CI = Confidence Interval. Bolded OR means  $p < 0.05$ .

The lack of coherence shows that the categorical dependent variable of whether respondents do or do not support a pipeline to tidewater is not appropriate for linear regression. Instead, an ordinal logistic regression is appropriate. Before transforming the coefficients, logistic regressions present their coefficients in log-odds; these coefficients cannot be interpreted in this form.



**Table 4.5 Regression Models: Importance of a Pipeline to Tidewater**

Importance of Pipeline to Tidewater	Value Model		Western Alienation Model		Combined Model	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
<u>Key Independent Variables</u>						
<i>Value Priority (Environment First)</i>	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	-
Economy First	<b>1.167054</b>	(0.88, 1.55)			0.9656257	(0.70, 1.32)
Western Alienation	-		<b>1.586083</b>	(1.15, 1.20)	<b>1.691193</b>	(1.18, 2.43)
<u>Control Variables</u>						
<i>Employment (Employed)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Unemployed	<b>1.530962</b>	(1.14, 2.06)	<b>1.578631</b>	(1.18, 2.12)	<b>1.513076</b>	(1.12, 2.04)
<i>Education (No Postsecondary)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Some Postsecondary	<b>1.496247</b>	(1.06, 2.12)	<b>1.570306</b>	(1.11, 2.22)	<b>1.555791</b>	(1.10, 2.21)
<i>Age (GenZ/Millennial)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Gen X	<b>1.915866</b>	(1.40, 2.62)	<b>1.829778</b>	(1.34, 2.49)	<b>1.854144</b>	(1.35, 2.54)
Boomer	<b>2.612066</b>	(1.81, 3.76)	<b>2.424455</b>	(1.68, 3.49)	<b>2.430194</b>	(1.68, 3.52)
<i>Gender (Female)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Male	1.174901	(0.89, 1.55)	1.236254	(0.94, 1.63)	1.221739	(0.92, 1.62)
n	892		911		891	
Log Likelihood	-579.66539		-594.63956		-581.83832	
LR chi <sup>2</sup>	(6) 51.90		(6) 58.57		(7) 58.14	
Prob > chi <sup>2</sup>	<0.0001		<0.0001		<0.0001	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0428		0.0469		0.0476	
_cons						

Note: OR = Odds Ratio; CI = Confidence Interval. Bolded OR means  $p < 0.05$ .

To better communicate the meaning of these regressions, transforming coefficients typical in regressions<sup>4</sup> into odds ratios, as shown in Tables 4.4 and 4.5, can help interpret the effects of independent variables in these ordinal regressions. The odds ratios in these tables indicate the odds of a one-unit change of the independent variable, resulting in a change in the dependent variable when controlling for all other independent variables in the model referenced. An odds ratio of 1 indicates that the independent variable does not predict change in the dependent variable. Accordingly, an odds ratio above 1 indicates that an increase in the independent variable is associated with an increased likelihood of the dependent variable occurring. Conversely, an odds ratio below 1 indicates that an increase in the dependent variable

<sup>4</sup> The tables showing the coefficients can be seen in Appendix C in Tables C.1 and C.2.

predicts that the dependent variable is less likely to occur. For example, with the odds ratio in Table 4.4 for Model 3 (Combined), the odds of respondents with some post-secondary education supporting a pipeline to tidewater were 1.46 times or 46% greater than respondents with no post-secondary education.

Holding the other independent variables constant and comparing them with the reference group of respondents who do not share any feelings of Western alienation, the odds of respondents with the three feelings associated with Western alienation supporting a pipeline to tidewater grow 1.91 times or are 91% larger than those with none of those feelings. Similarly, when respondents have all feelings associated with Western alienation, the odds of them viewing a pipeline to tidewater as important grow by 59%. Both findings are statistically significant at the 0.01 level (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5).

Employment, post-secondary education, generation, and feelings associated with Western alienation are statistically significant in the expected directions (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5). Employment and post-secondary education are negatively associated with support for building a pipeline to the coast and valuing those endeavours; older generations are positively associated with the same endeavours. Gender was not a statistically significant predictor. Except for post-secondary education, the other control variables mentioned above are consistent across the models. Some are statistically significant in the same direction; others are consistently not statistically significant. Employment is a negative predictor of support for and importance of pipelines to tidewater, which is the theoretically expected direction: Unemployed Albertans are more likely to want and value a pipeline to tidewater. This effect remains consistent when all other independent variables are controlled for, including prioritizing the economy or environment. Unemployed respondents were more likely to support a pipeline to tidewater (OR=1.62) than employed respondents. Similarly, unemployed respondents were more likely to view a pipeline to tidewater as important (OR=1.58) than employed respondents. Both relationships are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Respondents with at least some post-secondary education were more likely to support a pipeline to tidewater (OR=1.48) than those with no post-secondary education. Similarly, those with some post-secondary education were more likely to deem the building of a pipeline important (OR=1.57) than those with no post-secondary education. These relationships are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Gen X (those born between 1965 and 1980) Albertans are more likely to support (OR=1.83) and deem important (OR=1.83) a pipeline to tidewater than are Gen Z and Millennials (those born in 1981 or later, also the reference group). The Silent Generation and Baby Boomers are even more likely to support a pipeline to tidewater (OR=2.01) and view its construction as important than those in Gen X (OR=2.42). Compared to the younger groups, the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers were more than twice as likely to view building a pipeline to tidewater as important (OR=2.42).

While the Value Model is statistically significant, the independent variable indicating the respondent prioritizes the economy over the environment loses statistical significance when Western alienation is added to the model. This variable's lack of robustness in the model specification process indicates that although this variable is theoretically important and distinct from the Western alienation variable, its predictive power is less clear. Western alienation, however, retains its theoretical and statistical significance across different models. Some collinearity is expected, but the remaining statistical significance of Western alienation when controlling for individual values indicates that Western alienation is a strong predictor of support for and importance of a pipeline to tidewater while the individual value of prioritizing the economy over the environment is not.

Model 3, the Combined Model, combines the Value Model and the Western Alienation Model. It shows how Western alienation and prioritizing the economy interact with each other and in the overall regression. Models 1, 2, and 3 are statistically significant predictors at the 0.001 level. Best practices for evaluating regression models focus on selecting a model with better goodness of fit and theoretically relevant independent variables that make consistently accurate predictions across different models (Menard 2002; Osborne 2015; Seber and Lee 2003). Since multicollinearity is an issue for the two key independent variables, Model 3 is not the best model.

Models 1 and 2 are compared as they each include only one of the variables (Western alienation and prioritizing either the economy or the environment) experiencing a multicollinearity problem. Otherwise, they share the same model specification. Consequently, I evaluated the consistency of the two key independent variables as predictors. As noted above, Western alienation is a more consistent predictor of support for and importance of a pipeline to tidewater than is prioritizing the economy over the environment. The independent variable

indicating a participant prioritizes the economy over the environment—the key independent variable for Model 1—does not hold its statistical significance in Model 3. The consistency with which an independent variable holds statistical significance helps determine its statistical ability to predict the dependent variable. Since prioritizing the economy over the environment loses its significance in both Combined Models while Western alienation retains its significance, Western alienation is likely an important predictor variable that is statistically relevant. Since Model 2 includes this variable, this consistency indicates that Model 2 (Western Alienation) would be a better model than Model 1 (Value).

Regarding goodness of fit, there is no one preferred test for logistic regressions. A frequent measure is comparing the pseudo r-squared values. Larger pseudo r-squared values are less vital for logistic regressions than linear regressions. Still, the pseudo r-squared values are larger for Model 2 (Western Alienation) than for Model 1 (Value). Based on the robustness of the independent variable of Western alienation and better goodness of fit, Model 2 (Western Alienation) appears to be a better model than Model 1 (Value). Having already eliminated Model 3 (Combined), Model 2 (Western Alienation) is the final model.

#### **4.6. Discussion**

The results support Western alienation as a key explanatory variable but do not support prioritizing the economy over the environment as a key explanatory variable (see Table 4.6). In terms of the hypotheses, these regressions provide evidence supporting H1.2: The factors driving this perceived support of a pipeline to tidewater include ideological narratives associated with an ideology of Western alienation, and H2.2: The factors driving the perceived importance of constructing a pipeline to the coast include ideological narratives associated with an ideology of Western alienation. At the same time, these regressions do not provide support for H1.1: The factors driving the perceived support of building a pipeline to the coast include differences based on economic values or H2.1: The factors driving the perceived importance include differences based on economic values.

**Table 4.6 Hypotheses Results for Support and Importance of a Pipeline to Tidewater**

		<b>Responses to Pipeline to Tidewater</b>	
		Support	Importance
<b>Key Independent Variable</b>	Economic Values	None	None
	Western Alienation	+ (positive)	+ (positive)

In plain language, these regressions do not show a relationship between the association of economic values with support for or importance of building a pipeline to tidewater. These results cannot reject a null hypothesis. Instead, these results support both hypotheses that for Albertans, ideological narratives associated with Western alienation lead to higher support for building a pipeline to tidewater, as well as perceptions that a pipeline to tidewater is important. After accounting for Western alienation, these findings suggest that values and beliefs are not the most important predictors of public opinion on building pipelines to tidewater.

When Western alienation and individual prioritization of the economy or the environment are both controlled for, the latter does not predict Albertans' support for building pipelines to tidewater or the importance they attach to those endeavours. This finding has several implications. One implication is that there is a correlation between Western alienation and the prioritization of the economy over the environment. This correlation confirms a common assumption in the literature that part of Western alienation, at least in its contemporary form, involves a focus on the economic sector. Thus, individuals may have feelings of Western alienation while prioritizing the environment over the economy. Their feelings of Western alienation may even be rooted in a view of environmental conservation that is particular to Alberta. Still, it appears more frequently here the opposite way: individuals' overall prioritization of Western alienation includes the relative importance of the economy. This finding follows the idea in the recent literature on Western alienation that the role of the oil industry for jobs and the overall economy is vital (Banack 2021; Berdahl and Gibbins 2014).

At the same time, Albertans can hold views of Western alienation without prioritizing the economy over the environment. These findings suggest that while the two concepts overlap, Western alienation is not identical to prioritizing the economy over the environment. There is a multicollinearity problem, but Western alienation improves the odds more than prioritizing the

economy. The purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project by the federal Trudeau Liberal government allows those studying this topic to delineate better the intertwined concepts of prioritizing the economy over the environment and Western alienation. Further, the multicollinearity problem for the operationalized variables of these concepts suggests they remain deeply intertwined.

#### ***4.6.1 Limitations***

In any research where people's self-interest would reasonably affect their opinions that are relevant to the research topic, I would look at self-interest to see if anyone is working for or benefits from the oil industry. However, self-interest in the oil and gas industry is quite universal in Alberta. As a result, I could not control for self-interest in these regressions. Another limitation of this study is the sampling of Indigenous Peoples. There was not a sufficient number of respondents identifying as Indigenous for the survey questions analyzed in this chapter. Future surveys with a sufficient number of Indigenous Peoples could explore the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and support for pipelines to tidewater.

One limitation of this study is the difficulty of controlling for structural factors such as geography and incentives (Parsons 2007) around income.<sup>5</sup> According to Parsons (2007), structural factors are not made by people and operate under constrained rationality. Academics must recognize structural factors when studying pipelines like Trans Mountain and Keystone XL since the oil sands are inherently geographic (Anderson 2012). As with self-interest, proximity to the oil sands is problematic. While the general geographic location for respondents is available in this survey, many who work in the oil industry maintain permanent residence elsewhere. Consequently, any geographic residence provided may not accurately reflect a respondent's proximity to the oil sands. Another limitation to analyzing structural factors is that this research does not span Canada, so we cannot see if value distributions vary across provinces. Future research could extend this study to other provinces.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

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<sup>5</sup> According to Parsons (2007), self-interest can be treated as a structural factor when authors view external environmental factors like salaries or prices as unchangeable.

This chapter examined the factors that contribute to Albertans' opinions on pipelines to tidewater. I found that for Albertans, Western alienation is a stronger, more consistent predictor of support for constructing pipelines to the coast and of the importance they hold for these projects than is the prioritization of economy over the environment.

This chapter gives context for understanding the barriers in government decision-making processes over natural resources in Canada, specifically regarding the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. The context adds insight into the formation of public sentiment—a key idea in Campbell's 2004 typology<sup>6</sup>—in Alberta on pipelines to tidewater. This chapter finds evidence for the explanation that this public sentiment of Western alienation is a key factor to supporting and deeming important building a pipeline to tidewater for Albertans; the finding provides important background for understanding how government officials interact with these voters' public sentiments. In subsequent chapters, particularly 6 and 7, I examine how government officials interpret public sentiments from the electorate to legitimize their decisions. In Chapters 6 and 7, I also discuss how government officials in the Alberta Notley government reject using Western alienation and focus on frustrations due to the centrality of Ontario and Quebec.

These findings suggest that further research into the construction of pipelines to tidewater, specifically the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and Keystone XL, would provide insight into how Albertans construct their values. Interviews with Albertans that expand on existing works (Banack 2021) would add insight to understanding how they think of the federal government, the economy, and the oil sector. Western alienation may be a barrier preventing some Albertans from trusting the federal government. Through better understanding Albertans' motivations for supporting these pipelines, future researchers could further explore public perceptions of how sentiments around Western alienation and prioritizing the economy over the environment are related. They could also explore how often Albertans link them within a clear rationale or a more heuristic argument.

Western alienation as a robust, key independent variable in predicting support for building pipelines to tidewater and attaching importance to these endeavours suggests that Western alienation may fall under Campbell's (2004) ideas of "frames" and "public sentiments." Frames are rhetoric that elites use to communicate to the public, usually hoping to persuade the

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<sup>6</sup> Campbell's (2004) typology organizes ideas and institutions by whether they are 1) in the background or foreground of a debate, and 2) outcome-oriented or non-outcome-oriented.

public to support a particular position (Campbell 2004). Public sentiments are views held by the public (Campbell 2004). Albertan politicians often use Western alienation as a frame to engage supporters. The regression models in this research indicate that feelings associated with Western alienation are associated with specific actions. Politicians may use the frame of Western alienation to motivate supporters, but that frame may be successful because the public already feels alienated. In this alternative view, politicians are reflecting supporters' ideas back to them. If interviews establish Western alienation as a public sentiment, it may be valuable for federal and provincial policymakers to engage in policies that mitigate feelings linked to Western alienation.

Further research can explore potential policy tools for public policymakers to mitigate these tensions when dealing with pipelines and determine if the change in the salience of these and similar projects affects the strength of Western alienation and its relationship with economic prioritization.



## CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASES

### 5.1 Introduction

After providing insight into the barrier of Western alienation posed by Alberta public opinion in Chapter 4, I address the case of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. This chapter uses qualitative document analysis to investigate how government decision-makers communicated with the public. I use this method to elucidate barriers to resolving the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project dispute, to clarify criteria for resolving the disagreement, and to identify some mitigation tools for decreasing tensions around the conflict. In this dissertation, the term “criteria” refers to any actors’ requirements for minimizing the level of conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

The analysis finds that two main criteria—on either side of the coalition—appear unresolvable: the Kenney and Notley Alberta governments’ insistence that the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project must be built; and the Horgan BC government’s insistence that it is not to be built. While most governments agree that the economy and the environment are intertwined, these two governments’ differences on how this applies to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project present a barrier. Overall, I find government press releases suggest that federalism is a barrier to intergovernmental cooperation.

In Chapter 7, this dissertation combines this finding with the public sentiment from Chapter 4 and the interviews from Chapter 6. Together, these methods reveal that it is not simply the conflict that characterizes competitive federalism that prevented the resolution of this conflict. Rather, the dispute over the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project comes from the relationship between competitive federalism and the joint decision trap.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the use of competitive federalism as a barrier in these press releases solidifies that institutions are a key problem in solving intergovernmental conflicts around natural resources in Canada; with institutions as the main barrier, the institutional framework of global energy governance<sup>2</sup> helps clarify mitigation strategies in Chapter 7.

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<sup>1</sup> The joint decision trap can occur in federal systems during conflict. When multiple governments have a veto, at least one can exercise that veto and blame the other governments for their lack of support for their preferred policy. Minimal policymaking occurs as a result.

<sup>2</sup> Global energy governance is a branch of energy governance that focuses on the governors of energy and how this impacts globalizing, territorialized energy markets (Goldthau and Witte 2011). In this dissertation, global energy governance is mainly operationalized through through Van de Graaf and Colgan’s (2016) goals.

## **5.2 Research Questions**

The goal of this chapter concerns both main research questions: 1) What are the perceived barriers to solving the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project? and 2) What are the criteria for ending the conflict amicably? I focus on identifying barriers to resolving this dispute and publicly stated criteria for decreasing tensions by analyzing press releases. These documents will help understand what each government perceives as barriers. They will also clarify the criteria each government has for conflict resolution. However, document analysis helps less in identifying and comparing mitigation tools for decreasing the level of tension. For one, these press releases help identify the mitigation tool of communicating with publics from other constituencies, but most will be identified in the interviews in Chapter 6.

## **5.3 Methods**

The parameters for the documents included in this research include time, publisher, and content. News releases were collected electronically from relevant government publishers: the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta, and the Government of British Columbia. All departments were included. To ensure content was relevant, data were limited to government press releases that include the search term “Trans Mountain” or “Transmountain.” The search was not case-sensitive. As this research project spans Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s first term, I selected all press releases from November 4, 2015 to November 20, 2019. These parameters generated 59 press releases. I analyzed all relevant press releases found.

I used thematic analysis to identify what different governments consider barriers to and criteria for intergovernmental conflict resolution and mitigation. Each portion of text can have one or more codes. For example, when a sentence discusses both the environment and economy I coded them as the environment and the economy.

## **5.4 Results**

Most of the press releases came from the Government of British Columbia (n=25), followed by the Government of Alberta (n=20), and then the Government of Canada (n=14), as seen in Table 5.1. Except for the Alberta Kenney government, each party that formed government released between 12 and 16 press releases that fit the search parameters. The Alberta Kenney government

had the fewest press releases relevant to Trans Mountain in this time period, likely because he began his term in the spring of 2019 and the sampling period ended in fall 2019.

The thematic analysis of the press releases revealed five themes and seven subthemes (see Table 5.2). There are two barriers, two criteria, and one mitigating tool. Barriers to decreasing intergovernmental tensions around Trans Mountain fall under the relationship between the environment and the economy (complementary or competing) and federalism (collaborative or competitive). Collaborative federalism refers to governments in a federal system working together (Gattinger 2015). Competitive federalism refers to governments in a federal system in conflict with each other (Gattinger 2015). One reason that competitive federalism is generally less desirable is because governments in different jurisdictions are less likely to share information, which allows other governments to use this knowledge to benefit from best practices in policymaking. Reaching out to other governments' constituencies was the one mitigation tool used in these press releases.

**Table 5.1 Counts of Government, Party, and Premier/Prime Minister Press Releases**

Source			Number of Press Releases
Jurisdiction	Party	Premier or Prime Minister	
<b>Government of Canada</b>	Liberal Party	Justin Trudeau	<b>14</b>
<b>Government of Alberta</b>	All Parties	All Premiers	<b>20</b>
	New Democratic Party	Rachel Notley	16
	United Conservative Party	Jason Kenney	4
<b>Government of British Columbia</b>	All Parties	All Premiers	<b>25</b>
	Liberal Party	Christy Clark	12
	New Democratic Party	John Horgan	13
<b>Totals</b>	All Parties	All Premiers	<b>59</b>

**Table 5.2 Number of Press Releases Mentioning Themes Across Governments**

Theme	Sub-themes	Mentions							
		Canada	BC	Clark	Horgan	AB	Notley	Kenney	Total
Barriers									
Relationship between environment and economy	Environment and economy	13	19	8	11	13	13	0	45
	Environment vs. economy	1	1	1	0	2	2	0	4
Federalism	Competitive federalism	0	8	0	8	10	8	2	18
	Collaborative federalism	5	2	2	0	8	8	0	15
Criteria*									
Statement on Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project	Pipeline must be built	0	0	0	0	8	4	4	8
	Pipeline should not be built	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	4
Indigenous Peoples	Legal obligations (consultation)	6	11	3	8	1	1	0	18
Mitigating Tools									
Speaking to other jurisdictions		0	0	0	0	6	4	2	6
Total		14	25	12	13	20	16	4	59

\*Criteria refers to one or more actors' requirements for decreasing tensions around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

## 5.5 Discussion

### 5.5.1 *The Environment and Economy: Competing or Complementary*

Although media coverage often portrays the Government of Alberta as prioritizing the economy and the Government of British Columbia as prioritizing the environment, all governments' press releases largely unite the two themes. Although the two topics are often discussed separately, they usually appear together.

In most instances, government press releases present the environment and the economy as united in terms of Trans Mountain. Often, the Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP) Notley government and the Canada Liberal Trudeau government framed building this pipeline expansion project in terms of needing to extract and ship oil in the short term. In this context,

short term means in the coming decades. According to this argument, the benefit to the environment and economy comes from using the government revenue from the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project to invest in renewable energy and other green technologies. The Notley government's press releases on Trans Mountain emphasize how the economy and environment "go hand in hand" four times (Government of Alberta 2016c, 2017, 2018b, 2018d). One of these Government of Alberta press releases includes a quote from the then minister of natural resources in the Trudeau government, Amarjeet Sohi: "Canada is a place where the environment and the economy go hand in hand, and where projects that are in the national interest get built" (Government of Alberta 2018b). The federal press releases repeat the "go hand in hand" phrase in the context of environment and economy four times, demonstrating that these governments shared the belief that Trans Mountain offered an intertwined benefit to the environment and economy. Both governments also highlighted the combination of the environment and economy in comparable absolute and relative numbers; both governments mention the environment and economy as mutually benefiting from the pipeline in 13 press releases (92% of the Trudeau government's press releases and 81% of the Notley government's press releases.)

Among all the press releases examined, the economy is occasionally (three times in total) framed as being in opposition to the environment. Even more rarely, press releases frame the economy as more important than the environment. When this framing occurs, it is conspicuous because of its rarity. Some of the BC Liberal Clark government's conditions for supporting the Trans Mountain pipeline seen in the press releases frame the economy and the environment as competing, a frame that may not be intentional. Some conditions outlined in the Clark government's press releases indicate that the environmental risk can be mitigated or offset. For example, mitigation strategies include strengthening the marine spill response and monitoring process. Another example is the agreement that Kinder Morgan, who then owned Trans Mountain, would pay the BC government up to \$1 billion over 20 years (Office of the Premier British Columbia 2017). Although the fiscal payment from Kinder Morgan could be interpreted as sharing the project's benefits, it could also be interpreted as a payment for the environmental risk, particularly in Metro Vancouver.

Most governments tie the economy and the environment together in most of their press releases. In contrast, the Alberta Kenney government focuses on the economy without referring

to the environment. The parts of its press releases that address the economy read similarly to the other governments' press releases but do not mention the environment. Here is an example of the exclusion of the environment from one of the Kenney government's press releases: "Supporting TMX [the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project] is a vote for economic growth and national unity and is a critical milestone for Canada's energy sectors" (Government of Alberta 2019c). Compare this excerpt with one from the Alberta Notley government:

Today's recommendation by the National Energy Board [to approve Trans Mountain] fits a responsible national approach to energy infrastructure. Canada is balancing the need for much stronger action on climate change with the need to pay for that action, by sustainably developing our natural resources – including our energy resources. (Government of Alberta 2016a)

Both excerpts suggest that Notley and Kenney agree that building the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project is important for the economy, the energy sector, and Canada as a nation, but these examples illustrate the difference in framing between the Kenney and Notley governments: the Kenney government's release mentions economic priorities and no environmental priorities. The Notley NDP government's release mentions both; the Notley government clarifies how Trans Mountain is vital to the economy by emphasizing "responsible" and sustainable development (Government of Alberta 2016a). The phrasing in the Notley release signals that environmental considerations matter. Regardless of their stance on the pipeline, most governments have framed the economy and environment as mutually beneficial and inherently connected rather than prioritizing one over the other. The Kenney government stands out by not mentioning the environment and focusing on the economy.

### ***5.5.2 Federalism***

Analysis of these press releases shows both competitive and collaborative federalism at work. The relationship between the B.C. Horgan government and the Alberta Notley government fits the description of competitive federalism. Importantly, based on the press releases, the Notley government imposed measures like a wine ban, brought up legislation that threatened to "turn off the taps," and ran advertisements promoting Trans Mountain in BC:

When the BC Government threatened to take unconstitutional action to block Alberta energy products from crossing their border – action that was designed to rattle private sector investors – we answered by banning BC wine from crossing our border.

And we passed new legislation that gave Alberta the authority to regulate the transport of our products – sending a clear signal to those who would deliberately harm our economy. (Government of Alberta 2019a)

In this news release, the Notley government singles out the Government of BC, led by Horgan, as an opponent to building the Trans Mountain pipeline (Government of Alberta 2019a). Further, the release describes the BC government's actions as “[threatening]” (Government of Alberta 2019a), which implies a defence is needed. This language suggests the Government of Alberta needs to protect at least its constituents and private sector investors from this perceived threat. Another Notley government press release requests that Canadians reach out and contact Premier Horgan, showing their support for the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project (Government of Alberta 2018c). In these ways, the Notley government identified the Horgan government as a competitor. Consequently, the Notley government framed its wine ban and its threat to decrease the oil supply as defensive tactics to ensure the Government of Alberta prevailed.

In contrast to the Alberta Notley government’s aggressive approach to the Horgan government, the latter never directly addressed Alberta or the Notley government. Instead, the Horgan government targeted the federal government in these press releases (Ministry of Environment British Columbia 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2019; Office of the Premier British Columbia 2018a, 2018b).<sup>3</sup> Although the Trudeau government used collaborative language with each provincial government, not all provincial governments returned the sentiment. Both the Horgan government and the Kenney government expressed frustration with the Trudeau government. The former used legal tools to at least delay the project’s approval process within what the Horgan government argued was its jurisdictional power over the permit process. BC’s court cases focused on problems with the process used by the National Energy Board (NEB).

For example, one of the Horgan government’s press releases on their legal approach to Trans Mountain stated that BC’s “position is that the NEB erred by too broadly defining federal jurisdiction over interprovincial pipelines” (Ministry of Environment British Columbia 2018a). In another press release, the Horgan government highlighted that the Federal Court of Appeal

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<sup>3</sup> The BC government was an intervener in *Coldwater First Nation v. Attorney General of Canada*, 2020 FCA 34. As well, the BC government initiated its own reference regarding the limits of provincial environmental regulations on interprovincial projects (*Reference re Environmental Management Act*, 2020 SCC 1).

“found that the federal government failed to consult First Nations adequately” (Ministry of Environment British Columbia 2018c), adding that “meaningful consultation is critical to any future actions” (Ministry of Environment British Columbia 2018c). Since the NEB is part of the federal government with jurisdiction over interprovincial pipelines, supporting First Nations’ challenges to the NEB’s process would more effectively delay or prevent the Trans Mountain expansion than would targeting either of the Alberta governments. The tone used in these media releases suggests that the Horgan government had a competitive approach to its relationship with the federal government.

Similarly, the Kenney government aimed to fulfill its goal of the pipeline finishing construction by publicly calling for the federal government to approve the project. This campaign, called “Yes to TMX,” ran in Ottawa until the announcement of the Government of Canada’s decision on the project. In one press release, Alberta Minister of Energy Sonya Savage is quoted as saying, ““We need the Prime Minister and the federal cabinet to show leadership. On June 18, we need them to approve TMX. Full stop”” (Government of Alberta 2019b).

Two aspects of this statement suggest competitive federalism. First, in the release, Savage is publicly expressing frustration with the federal government rather than publicly stating the importance of the project while working out the details behind the scenes, as is implied in the Notley government press releases addressing the Trudeau government. Any private negotiations between the Kenney government and the Trudeau government were likely affected by the firm tone in the above statement. Second, Savage is requesting that the federal government “show leadership” after the Trudeau government had purchased the pipeline, making federal approval of the pipeline very likely: not approving the pipeline would generate further criticism of poor federal investment in purchasing Trans Mountain.

Essentially, the likelihood of the project’s approval made this part of Savage’s statement unnecessary. The wording of this press release suggests that the Kenney government used a competitive approach when interacting with the federal government. The same campaign by the Kenney government targeted the Vancouver market and disagreed explicitly with BC Premier John Horgan’s opposition to Trans Mountain.

Conversely, the Trudeau government and the Notley government had a collaborative relationship, visible in both governments’ press releases. In one, Premier Notley praises Prime Minister Trudeau:



To begin, I want to thank Prime Minister Trudeau and his government for approving these energy infrastructure projects, which are critically important to the economic future of the people of Alberta. Prime Minister Trudeau is showing some extraordinary leadership today... The Government of Alberta has agreed to provide support to the Government of Canada in its acquisition of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project and associated assets. This support was instrumental to ensuring the continued construction and timely completion of the project. (Government of Alberta 2018a)

The Trudeau government reciprocated this appreciation for the Notley government in Trudeau's statement approving the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project while not approving other pipelines:

And let me say this definitively. We could not have approved this [Trans Mountain pipeline expansion] project without the leadership of Premier Notley and Alberta's climate leadership plan, a plan that commits to pricing carbon and capping oil sands emissions at 100 megatonnes per year. We want to be clear on this point because it is important and sometimes not well understood. Alberta's climate plan is a vital contributor to our national strategy. It has been rightly celebrated as a major step forward both by industry and by the environmental community. (PMO 2016)

By singling out the Notley government's collaboration and environmental policy accomplishments, the Trudeau government showed a strong allyship with the Notley government. Here, the Trudeau government showed a supportive attitude toward the simultaneous growth of the environment and the economy as a condition of the pipeline being built. In other words, this government made its intergovernmental collaboration around shared economic and environmental issues a condition of approving the pipeline.

Relations between the Trudeau government and the Clark government appeared to lean towards mutual collaboration. While the Trudeau government does not mention the Clark government in its press releases on Trans Mountain during their overlap in office, the Clark government's statements on the Trudeau government are clear and respectful, although not as collaborative as the Trudeau and Notley governments. When the Clark government talks about the Trudeau government in its press releases, it demonstrates respect and pleasure that the latter has fulfilled the former's conditions: "Prime Minister Trudeau has confirmed the substantial progress that's been made on consultation and accommodation" (Office of the Premier British Columbia 2017) and "[the] Trudeau government has taken action on BC's second condition related to world-leading marine spill prevention, response and recovery with a \$1.5-billion

Oceans Protection Plan” (Office of the Premier British Columbia 2017). These references to the Trudeau government suggest that any issues were discussed or resolved privately. Since the conditions were already agreed to by Kinder Morgan, the former owner of the Trans Mountain pipeline, there may not have been a reason to praise the other’s leadership.

There is insufficient evidence from this analysis of press releases to characterize the relationship between the Notley government and the Clark government. Only one statement from the Notley government refers to the Clark government (Government of Alberta 2016c). None of the Clark government’s press releases mentions the Notley government. As a result, it would be speculative to determine their relationship based on these press releases.

Another theme worthy of discussion is Western alienation because it does not appear in the press releases I examined. Based on the regression analysis in Chapter 3, one would expect public feelings of Western alienation to be reflected in some Alberta press releases. However, this was generally not the case. Unlike other themes, Western alienation does not clearly appear in any press releases. The lack of Western alienation in these press releases suggests that the governments studied here were not interested in engaging—at least directly—with Western alienation.

The effect of partisanship on the overall government position on Trans Mountain is mixed. When the British Columbia party in power changed in 2017, the government flipped from supporting the pipeline (Clark and the Liberals) to opposing it (Horgan and the NDP). However, the change in party in Alberta from NDP (Notley) to Conservative (Kenney) did not change the overall position of the Government of Alberta. This consistent position supports findings in Chapter 4’s regression analysis that Alberta public opinion firmly supports a pipeline to tidewater. Compared to Alberta, a much smaller majority supports the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion in BC. As a result, an NDP government would be more likely to be supported by voters opposing the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and the Clark Liberals would be more likely to be supported by voters in favour of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. In contrast, most Alberta NDP supporters would still support the pipeline.

### ***5.5.3 Indigenous Peoples***

When governments talk about Indigenous Peoples, governments, or communities in these press releases, it is most often in the context of legal obligations. This legal frame reflects what is

expected because each settler government (Canada, Alberta, and British Columbia) owes Indigenous Peoples the duty to consult [affirmed in *Beckman v. Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation*, 2010 SCC 53; *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)*, 2004 SCC 73; *Mikisew Cree First Nation v. Canada (Minister of Canadian Heritage)*, 2005 SCC 69; *Rio Tinto Alcan Inc. v. Carrier Sekani Tribal Council*, 2010 SCC 43; *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia (Project Assessment Director)*, 2004 SCC 74]. Further, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, Coldwater First Nation, and Squamish First Nation pursued litigation to prevent the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project (The Canadian Press 2020); their grounds focused on insufficient consultation (*Coldwater First Nation v. Attorney General of Canada*, 2020 FCA 34). The BC Horgan government joined these First Nations' case as an intervener to try to delay or stop the Trans Mountain expansion. Some case studies already explore the complex relationships among Indigenous Peoples, their legal systems, and settler legal systems on Trans Mountain (Clogg et al. 2016; Hoberg 2018; Pasternak and Schabus 2019). Further case studies on this topic would add insight into trends in legal jurisprudence around Indigenous rights and natural resources.

#### **5.5.4 Criteria**

The criteria for the Alberta Notley and Kenney governments and the Horgan government are dichotomous, preventing a resolution. The Trudeau government was closer to the Alberta governments' shared position on Trans Mountain and less firm in its wording than either Government of Alberta. The Clark government also supported the pipeline conditionally based on maximizing gains for their province.

Both Alberta governments between 2015 and 2019 made it clear that they required the federal government to approve and construct the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.<sup>4</sup> Across press releases, the Notley government frequently and clearly expressed the need to build this pipeline: "Albertans have been clear – get this pipeline built. And Albertans are right – this pipeline must be built." "Alberta is prepared to do whatever it takes to get this pipeline built." "We will get this pipeline built." The Kenney government ran a "Yes to TMX" campaign summarizing their criteria. As well, this government frequently uses stages of construction as

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<sup>4</sup> As of August 2022, the federal government is funding \$21.4 billion and directing the construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project (Department of Finance Canada 2022; Trans Mountain 2022).

their criteria, stating that it requires “completion of the [Trans Mountain] pipeline” in two of their news releases. Clearly, their requirement for any resolution to this conflict would be to build the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. The Notley and Kenney governments are aligned in this criterion that the pipeline be built.

The federal Trudeau government supported the pipeline, but its press releases focused more on its approval process. Accordingly, compared to other governments, its criteria focused more on legal obligations, mainly environmental assessments and consultations. This difference may be due to the fact that the federal government circulated fewer press releases with a political tone than the governments, largely because the National Energy Board communicated its activities in a less political, more bureaucratic tone. With similarly cautiously supportive wording, the Clark government repeated that its support for the project was contingent on achieving maximum benefits for its province. The Clark government communicated this contingency through their five conditions, including a combination of fiscal compensation, economic benefit, and improved environmental protection.

Like the Clark government, the Horgan government used the press releases to speak of BC’s best interests. However, according to the releases, the Horgan government disagreed with the other governments on what is in their constituents’ “interests” or “best interests,” using this language five times to explain their mainly environmental concerns about the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and resulting legal actions to oppose it. In four news releases, the Horgan government expresses its opposition to the environmental results it expects from the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and does not mention any project benefits. When the Horgan government states its opposition to the project, the government ties its opposition to environmental concerns:

The Province recommends against the approval of the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project. The submission outlines concerns about the impact an oil spill could have on B.C.’s environment and coast, as well as the ability to effectively respond to a spill. The argument highlights the potential impacts that increased oil tanker traffic would have on southern resident killer whales. (Ministry of Environment British Columbia 2019)

This consistent focus on the project’s substantial environmental negatives suggests it is impossible to meet the Horgan government’s standards of no negative environmental impacts for the pipeline’s construction. The Horgan government’s press releases on Trans Mountain express

concern with the approval process as part of this opposition to the project based on environmental standards. In short, the Horgan government's demands that the pipeline should not be built cannot be resolved with the Kenney and Notley governments' demands that the pipeline must be built. The criteria placing governments on distinct sides of "for" or "against" the pipeline indicates that further exploring what those different sides would need for mitigation tools or, ideally, a resolution would be helpful.

#### ***5.5.5 Speaking to Other Jurisdictions***

A common theme for Alberta governments is using press releases to speak to other jurisdictions. These governments aimed to persuade other governments' constituents to speak to that (level of) government. Both the Kenney and Notley governments used press releases and campaigns to encourage British Columbians and other Canadians outside of Alberta to reach out to their governments with their support of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. In particular, the Notley government ran a campaign called "Keep Canada Working," advertised in Alberta and British Columbia. This campaign included requests to ask the Horgan government to "stop acting outside of the rule of law" (Government of Alberta 2018c). These collected requests would then be sent to Premier Horgan. The BC part of the Kenney government's "Yes to TMX" campaign aimed to convince British Columbians of the project's economic benefits through a variety of digital display, print, radio, and social media ads. According to this campaign, "The Horgan government is making a bad situation worse" (Government of Alberta 2019c) emphasizing that "[the] people of B.C. say yes to TMX, and it is time their Premier did, too" (Government of Alberta 2019c).

Both Governments of Alberta launched campaigns in BC and at least one other province to speak to other jurisdictions than their own to try to highlight support for the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. By doing so, they aimed to encourage other governments to approve the project. Despite both of the Alberta governments' campaigns in British Columbia, the Horgan government did not have a similar campaign on their end. Compared to the divided public in British Columbia, the Alberta public overwhelmingly supported Trans Mountain. The Government of Alberta reaching out to Trans Mountain supporters in BC had the potential to turn out a large percentage of BC voters supporting Trans Mountain. In contrast, any similar messaging by the BC Horgan government would have revealed a smaller percentage of the

Alberta public that opposed Trans Mountain. As a result, the Horgan government focused on legal tools concerning the regulatory process.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has aimed to identify barriers to solving the Trans Mountain pipeline dispute and criteria for mitigating this conflict that provincial governments and the federal government stated publicly in press releases. I identified 59 press releases from the Governments of Alberta, British Columbia, and Canada. Coding these documents in NVivo identified barriers to solving the intergovernmental dispute around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and criteria for mitigating this disagreement. These findings suggest an inevitable conflict between those for and against the pipeline. Two main criteria are dichotomous: 1) the governments supporting the pipeline require its complete construction and 2) the government opposing it requires that it not be built. Another finding includes that the conflict associated with competitive federalism is a critical barrier to solving the intergovernmental conflict over Trans Mountain.

The conflict of competitive federalism discourages intergovernmental conflict resolution. This is an institutional problem. Chapter 6 provides additional evidence for competitive federalism playing a role in constructing the key barrier to resolving intergovernmental conflicts: combined with the joint decision trap, competitive federalism discourages conflict resolution and encourages making lowest common denominator policies. With further mitigation tools identified in Chapter 6, Chapter 7 summarizes these findings and applies global energy governance goals to recommend specific mitigation tools.

## **CHAPTER 6: WITHIN THE POSSIBLE: INTERVIEW ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDERS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 5 identified barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution in Canada, criteria that any potential solution must fulfill to overcome these barriers, and some mitigation tools to address them. This chapter summarizes the results of my interviews with key stakeholders. The interview results described in this chapter confirm and continue to explore the barriers to the conflict and criteria that possible solutions must meet. Moreover, common themes from the interviews reveal additional barriers and criteria. Barriers identified include the constraints of federalism, the competing frames over the environment and the economy, the specific difficulties around large project approval, and a lack of national strategy in general. Based on these interviews, the main argument of this chapter is that no solution to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project dispute was possible. This finding suggests that pursuing conflict mitigation tools has greater practical value than looking for a solution. Potential mitigation tools are identifying partisan similarities across governments, improving communication, speaking with other constituents, and streamlining the environmental assessment process. These mitigation tools are evaluated in Chapter 7 under the global energy governance framework, which focuses on who governs energy and the effects of this governance on a globalizing, geographically bound energy market.

### **6.2 Research Question**

These interviews aim to build on the results of previous chapters. However, unlike the regression analysis of Chapter 3, the interviews here cover all the research questions and sub-questions of this research project:

1. What are the barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution in Canada?
  - a. What types of barriers, such as institutional/structural/ideational, exist in the conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project?
  - b. Who perceives which and what types of barriers exist?
  - c. Are these barriers new or not previously understood?
2. What criteria must any potential solution fulfill to overcome these barriers?
  - a. What, if any, criteria do all or most of the actors share?
  - b. Are these criteria feasible to fulfill?

c. Which, if any, conflict mitigation tools meet these criteria?

In particular, the interviews help answer 2.b. and 2.c. Interviews are more helpful than the survey and thematic analysis because these the interviewees are uniquely positioned to identify the feasibility of making changes that fulfill different groups' criteria and the efficacy of those changes. Moreover, the interviews provide greater insight into these sub-questions because I had the opportunity to probe which mitigation strategies would be effective and why.

## **6.3 Methods**

### ***6.3.1 Data and Methodology***

I conducted eight interviews. All interviewees were associated with at least one of the governments involved. Through purposive sampling, I found participants by email and LinkedIn. I reached out to prospective participants who 1) worked with at least one of the stakeholders and 2) were potentially connected to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.<sup>1</sup> Five interviewees were associated with the Government of Alberta and three with the Government of British Columbia. I interviewed bureaucrats and political actors from each of these governments. No one who worked for the federal government agreed to be interviewed. The small number of interviewees is a limitation since it prevented me from reaching saturation of themes. Still, these interviewees were well-placed to provide information: Seven of the eight were key players or close to key players who were close to the decisions being made in one or more governments; one was a lower rank official. The interviewees in each government generally held comparable roles.

Each semi-structured interview was generally around an hour long.<sup>2</sup> I conducted semi-structured interviews to help access their interpretations of both public and confidential events (Adams 2015; Brinkmann and Kvale 2015; Kvale 2007): how their governments saw the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, barriers to minimizing the dispute, criteria for improving the tension, and mitigation tools to improve intergovernmental relations. Since interviews occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, I conducted interviews by phone or Webex, depending on the preference of each interviewee. I recorded the audio of the interviews and

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<sup>1</sup> For the template for recruitment emails, see Appendix D.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix E for the questionnaire for semi-structured interviews.



transcribed them before analyzing transcriptions with NVivo. Interviewees were sent the transcripts for their approval. As with the previous document analysis (see Chapter 4), I could code phrases, sentences, and paragraphs with one or more themes. Often these themes overlap in the text.

## **6.4 Results/Discussion**

Analysis of the interviews with NVivo revealed that participants shared perceptions of barriers to solving the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project dispute, criteria for mitigating the conflict, and mitigation tools to alleviate the associated tension.<sup>3</sup> Table 6.1 summarizes the themes found concerning the barriers, criteria, and mitigation tools. When asked about any potential solution, all the participants asserted that no solution could completely resolve the intergovernmental dispute around Trans Mountain. Key barriers include the constraints of federalism, competing frames around the economy and the environment, concerns around large project approval processes, and a perceived absence of a national strategy for Canada in general.

When identifying federalism as a constraint, participants spoke about conflict—which characterizes competitive federalism—and forms of regional discontent. In discussing the frames through which the economy and environment are seen, many participants indicated how different governments perceive the relationship and tradeoffs between these two pivotal topics. For one, all participants discussed the potential or reality of the expansion project developing the economy without compromising the environment. Within this group of participants, some explained how the economic benefits of the pipeline project inherently pose a risk to the environment. When discussing the large project approval process as a barrier, their concerns focused on the short-term nature of electoral incentives and associated pressures as well as a lengthy approval process that introduces delays to decision-making and changes in decisions. Further exploring barriers to resolving the Trans Mountain dispute, participants expressed concern about the absence of an overarching national strategy. Others found the existing lack of national strategy appropriate.

Without a realistic solution to the disagreement over the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, mitigating the effects of the conflict becomes more important. Before the

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<sup>3</sup> All the interviewees I name and quote here gave me permission to do so. I use quotes from their interviews that they approved.

conflict over the future of the pipeline expansion, compensation for environmental risk was one tool that allowed conflicts to be avoided under BC Premier Christy Clark. By securing compensation from Kinder Morgan, the Clark government felt BC would receive a fair share of the benefits for the environmental risk posed. This compensation smoothed intergovernmental frustrations by ensuring both the federal and BC government supported the Trans Mountain expansion project. Partisan similarities helped mitigate tensions during the conflict by providing backchannels for communication. During the conflict, reaching out to other jurisdictions helped highlight common aims across jurisdictions. The respondents all mentioned that clear communication among governments was helpful when navigating the conflict. Some respondents also noted that a streamlined environmental process could have decreased the extent of the conflict.

**Table 6.1 Themes and Sub-Themes from Government Stakeholders' Interviews**

Themes	Sub-themes	Mentions*		
		All	BC	AB
Barriers				
Relationship between environment and economy	Environment vs. economy	6	2	4
	Environment and economy	8	3	5
Federalism	Competitive federalism	7	2	5
	Western alienation	3	0	3
	General regional discontent	5	0	5
Large project approval process	Electoral incentives and pressures	6	2	4
	Lengthy approval process	2	1	1
National unity/plan	Lack of national unity/plan	2	1	1
	Sufficient national unity/plan present	5	1	4
Criteria				
Solution	No possible solution in this situation	8	3	5
Mitigation Strategies				
Communication	General	6	2	4
	Speaking to other jurisdictions	3	0	3
Streamlined environmental Process		3	1	2
Partisan similarities		5	1	4
Compensation		3	2	1
Total				

\*Mentions refers to the number of press releases that mention the theme or sub-theme.

#### ***6.4.1 Possible Solutions and Mitigation Strategies***

None of the interviewees perceived any realistic way to avoid the conflict. Since the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta were aligned on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, it would have made the most sense for these governments to persuade the Government of BC to join them. Participants indicated that one of the impediments was John Horgan's campaign promise to try to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, which was important to his electorate. These participants were, at best, highly doubtful that Premier Horgan would have changed his mind after becoming the Premier of BC, even if his government had not required the support of the Green Party. Consistent with findings in the surveys (see Chapter 4) and document analysis (see Chapter 5), the interviewees argued that the Government of Alberta was always going to support the Trans Mountain Expansion project. One suggested that coordinating with affiliated parties not yet in government might have been a successful strategy, but acknowledged that coordinating policies with all amenable parties in different provinces would have been difficult and could have created tensions with governments in power.

Participants argued that the intergovernmental dispute over Trans Mountain, including the public disagreements, was inevitable, adding that key actors reacted within the structure of the existing incentives. Minor changes may have mitigated some tensions, but the central conflict would not have changed. Some participants affiliated with the Alberta Notley New Democratic Party (NDP) government noted that general policy directions and relations were generally positive with the BC Horgan NDP government but that the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project was an exception to the rule. Despite their overarching similarities and goals, the NDP governments of Alberta and BC were always going to represent the wishes of their electorate.

In short, as long as the key players stayed the same, there was no prospect of these three governments reaching a mutual agreement about the fate of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Environmental groups with various allies in Indigenous—largely First Nations—governments, communities, and individuals in Canada and the United States mobilized to target Keystone XL in particular. When that was successful, at least temporarily, proponents of a pipeline to tidewater shifted their strategy to focus their campaigns on Trans Mountain. These proponents already shared a goal of transporting oil from Alberta to the West Coast, which

would then travel by tanker to Asian markets. When the possibility of Keystone XL became less likely, proponents mobilized around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project instead. Interviewees sympathetic to or aligned with environmental groups noted some power in agenda-setting and not otherwise; interviewees who were not fond of environmental groups described environmental groups as holding greater power. The latter argument holds with Hoberg's (2021) findings in the power of resistance in large natural resource projects, which is interesting since Hoberg identifies himself as an environmental activist (2021, p. xviii). Based on a cautious interpretation of my interviews, my findings suggest a smaller role for environmental and other interest groups. In short, the dichotomous coalitions took sides on Trans Mountain with opposing goals, making any agreement to end the Trans Mountain dispute difficult to imagine.

#### **6.4.2 The Environment and the Economy: Competing or Complementary**

All participants viewed the environment and the economy as being intertwined: that both could benefit if the right plans were in place. When it came to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, six participants maintained that to some extent the requirements for environmental sustainability and protection and for economic prosperity were in conflict, at least in the short term. Those supporting the project perceived that the environment could be sustained and protected at the same time that economic prosperity could be achieved; those against it generally thought that one could not have both. In other words, the first group believed that the pipeline could be built without harming the environment, bringing economic growth to the prairie provinces. For the second group, the pipeline would benefit the economy but harm the environment; if the expansion was cancelled, the environment would benefit and the economy would suffer.

Participants believed there were different views on whether the environment and economy were in competition. Government or partisan affiliation did not determine their opinions on this relationship. Six participants saw them as priorities for particular governments, while no participants saw the environment and economy as inherent competitors (see Table 6.1). Those participants who perceived a conflict in the requirements to protect the environment and boost the economy were likely to also find that geography<sup>4</sup> was vitally important across

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<sup>4</sup> Parsons (2007) categorizes geography as a structural factor, which means that people are unable to change it and that this factor follows rationality. I interpret geography in this dissertation through institutions because public

Alberta, BC, and the federal government. Essentially, they saw the concentration of Canada's oil sands in Alberta and the importance of the beauty of the BC coast as vital factors in understanding the Trans Mountain dispute.

Reflecting public opinion, participants acknowledged the difference between the reasonably consistent Alberta support for the project and the inconsistent support in BC, where residents in Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland were opposed and those in the Interior supportive. For example, the inconsistent support in BC can help explain the difference in framing between the Horgan and Clark governments. Since the BC NDP required the support of the Green Party, which received support from Vancouver Island, they had more pressure to oppose the Trans Mountain expansion. In my interviews, participants who worked for or with the Horgan government participants broadly agreed that the government's position generally reflected the prioritization of the environment over the economy. Unlike the Clark government, the Horgan government could not put an acceptable price on this project's environmental impacts.

Interviewees explained that economic motivation based on the geographic concentration of the oil sands was vital to the impetus to support Trans Mountain. Proponents and some critics of the project viewed it as an economic boon. As these participants put forward, the economic rationale was to allow bitumen to reach Asian markets. Before the shale gas boom in 2007, the United States was a net importer of energy and had more use for Canadian oil; it is now a net exporter of energy. Consequently, producers of Alberta oil have been looking for other markets. Asian markets were appealing because of their high demand for oil. Market access to Asia would increase if existing pipelines and rail transportation to tidewater could be made more efficient and increase the amount of oil sent to the coast. The ideal method to increase efficiency and capacity was to build a pipeline to tidewater to move oil from the Alberta oil sands.

Most of the time, individual interviewees who supported the pipeline viewed this project as part of an overall plan to improve the economic and environmental sectors as a transition to renewable energy occurred over time. Occasionally, they used the language of trade-offs between the economy and the environment. Often, participants brought up measures by governments and the Trans Mountain Corporation to decrease the likelihood and impact of

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policy cannot alter geography; however, decision-makers can change the institutions that increase or decrease its impact on the public.

potential oil spills. While benefits for the economy and safeguards for the environment could be reflected in an overall plan to transition to renewable energy, there would be a shorter-term economic impact that is, at best, a less polluting option than the alternative of transporting oil by rail. This argument applied to proponents in the Alberta government and to BC public servants.

Participants from the Government of Alberta emphasized Albertans' exceptional awareness of how the oil sands, directly and indirectly, contribute to the economy. In contrast, those in the BC Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island were more likely to prioritize the environment due to its geographic salience along the coast. Participants in the Alberta and BC governments distinguished the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island from the Interior; as mentioned, BC residents in the Interior were much more likely to support the pipeline or see it as acceptable. The former Executive Director of Communications and Planning to Alberta Premier Rachel Notley, Cheryl Oates, put it clearly:

I think we deeply understand the contributions that Alberta makes to our own economy, but also to the Canadian economy. And I don't think necessarily that people outside of Alberta, and that includes British Columbians, understand that when they look at the infrastructure in their communities, or the bike lanes, the bridges, the schools: oil paid for most of that. It is the biggest contributor to Canada's economy and I don't think that outside of Alberta, people truly, truly understand the magnitude of it. So I think that's part of it. Also, British Columbians are much more concerned about environmental issues. And so you hear pipeline and the first thing that they think about is "oil spill" or the issues around the right of way.

As someone living in BC who continues to also consider herself an Albertan, Oates illustrates the difference in perspective between the greater environmental priorities for those in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island in BC and those with greater economic priorities in Alberta.

#### **6.4.3 Federalism**

In terms of federalism, participants frequently discussed its limitations and opportunities. Regardless of its benefits or drawbacks, participants frequently described negotiations that match the practice of executive federalism. Executive federalism describes federal-provincial and intergovernmental negotiations in which decisions are made by the executives, generally the

offices of the prime ministers and premiers. With one exception, they described first ministers,<sup>5</sup> one or two key relevant ministers, and members of one or more first ministers' offices as key players. In this intergovernmental conflict, the concentration of decision-making power around first ministers illustrates executive federalism (Bickerton and Gagnon 2013; Smiley 1980).

When explaining the characteristics of these discussions, participants frequently described what could be termed competitive federalism and collaborative federalism. Although neither term was used, ideas about competitive federalism and collaborative federalism appeared in seven out of eight participants' interviews. These ideas complied with the definitions of these terms that I am using in this thesis: competitive federalism is characterized by conflict among governments in a federal system. Collaborative federalism is characterized by governments in a federal system working together.

Different federal-provincial and provincial-provincial relations displayed characteristics of competitive and collaborative federalism. In discussions about the relationship between BC's Horgan government and Alberta's Notley government, participants described a situation where actors' electoral pressures and beliefs in what was best for their constituencies inherently conflicted, and needed to publicly show their efforts. This visible conflict fits the definition of competitive federalism. When they discussed the relationship between the federal Trudeau government and the Alberta Notley government, they described a relationship where both governments actively tried to harmonize their policies, following the definition of collaborative federalism. As well, participants acknowledged that although relations between the Horgan government and the Notley government were professional, the two premiers disagreed on Trans Mountain. As a result, participants described that on this topic, Notley and Horgan were seeking to "win" rather than work together, resulting in a public conflict that I describe as competitive federalism. The participants noted that in contrast, the Trudeau Liberals and Notley NDP were generally collaborative and had effective intergovernmental communication, engaging with each other positively and working together.

One government was difficult to characterize in its bilateral relations with other governments. Participants were inconsistent in their descriptions of the relationship between the BC Clark government and other governments. This inconsistency may reflect an overall trend in

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<sup>5</sup> A first minister is the leader of the political party that forms government: either a premier or prime minister.

the BC Clark government's relations with other governments, but more interviews would be needed to confirm that idea. Consequently, it is difficult to define these relationships as competitive, independent, or collaborative federalism.

As several participants pointed out, once these governments moved into advocacy coalitions that came out clearly either for or against the Trans Mountain project, the costs for the project increased because the governments demanded many changes and concessions. After costs ballooned and market uncertainty increased, Kinder Morgan, the owner, abandoned the project. Although the participants did not use the term, the result was a joint decision trap. A joint decision trap occurs in federal systems when government disagreements often lead to decisions representing the lowest common denominator (Scharpf 1988). Finally, participants explained how the Notley government persuaded the Trudeau government to buy the pipeline, overcoming the joint decision trap only by the federal government paying \$4.5 billion for the pipeline and funding the bulk of its construction.

Participants disagreed on whether a lack of a national energy strategy was a barrier to resolving the intergovernmental conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Two participants from different governments expressed the need for better national unity and planning. With a national energy strategy, governments would be more likely to construct large, interprovincial projects like the Trans Mountain expansion project with fewer delays. On the other hand, another participant explicitly did not view the lack of an energy strategy as a barrier. Instead, this individual framed the lack of energy strategy as a benefit; this individual argued that in matters of shared jurisdiction, the federal government had sometimes overreached in the past. The ability of provincial governments to make decisions and advocate in the absence of the federal government could achieve better results for all partners in the federation.

Third, none of the participants brought up Western alienation without prompting. Based on the literature review and findings from the regression analysis of Viewpoint Alberta's results, I asked participants what they thought of the term and if it was related to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. All interviewees affiliated with the NDP when the party formed the Government of Alberta did not embrace the term "Western alienation." These interviewees argued that it was part of the rival United Conservative Party's (UCP) vocabulary.

Some participants affiliated with the Alberta NDP expressed a view that shared some aspects of Western alienation. Many participants saw what others may view as Western



alienation as more of a natural focus on events “in [the federal government’s] time zone.” In this view, this focus on Central Canada was malleable. Actors in other time zones could and did engage the Government of Canada in discussions. These actors convinced the Government of Canada that Trans Mountain and other select issues associated with other provinces should be a priority. Inaction on energy policy, for some participants, was not necessarily a problem since it forestalled programs targeted at Western provinces that may not be in their best interests, such as the National Energy Program in the 1980s under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Participants affiliated with the Alberta NDP consistently highlighted the importance of the Trudeau government’s support, which culminated in the purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

#### ***6.4.4 Large Project Approval Process***

Some participants (see Table 6.1) were concerned about the future viability of long-term, intergovernmental projects due to the difficulty of getting them through. When probed, participants explained that this concern applied to all interprovincial projects, not only pipelines or natural resources. Participants affiliated with different governments also noted that the provincial governments have extensive powers while recognizing that interprovincial projects are under federal jurisdiction; having more governments involved provides more veto points,<sup>6</sup> which allows projects to be delayed or stopped. Two participants from different governments expressed frustration with a lack of a united, national vision for Canada because it did not encourage sufficient cooperation to complete large intergovernmental projects efficiently. Further, both expressed concern about the number of veto points available in large projects. In their view, a lack of national vision, as well as numerous opportunities to veto initiatives, would make large linear projects difficult or impossible to build in the future.

Another barrier participants identified as complicating large linear projects is short-term electoral incentives and pressures. Being responsible to one’s electorate and constituents is a vital part of democracy in Canada. At the same time, it can introduce additional barriers as short-term incentives change and encourage government positions to change with them. Governments in different, relevant jurisdictions can have competing demands from their electorates. Two participants noted the complications that arise when governments change their positions based on

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<sup>6</sup> Veto points are institutionally-provided opportunities to stop or prevent an action or project.

the short-term interests of the electorate. Accountability to constituents is fundamentally part of the democratic process in Canada, but it can be a barrier to long-term projects and needed change.

At the same time, electorates with different interests can create competing demands. Many interviewees asserted that although the electorate and John Horgan shared many policy priorities, the electorate's position on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project compelled Horgan to fulfill his election promise to prevent the project from proceeding. BC poll numbers show that most people in the province supported the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project (Bricker 2018). But the voters that brought the BC NDP to power largely oppose the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project (Bricker 2018). When the Horgan government came to power, it formed a coalition with the Green Party to pass a budget and form a stable government. The Green Party voters were even more likely to disapprove of the pipeline expansion than the NDP voters, further encouraging Horgan to publicly oppose the project. Interviewees familiar with Horgan noted his general opposition to the project, regardless of the coalition.

#### ***6.4.5 Partisan Similarities***

Participants in the political sector mostly found that similarities among the three governments decreased the intensity of the conflict. Three Alberta NDP sources noted that tensions were significantly less behind the scenes. All noted overall collegial respect for the BC NDP government, particularly when referring to John Horgan. Two of the three highlighted their general appreciation for the BC NDP's achievements under Horgan without prompting, citing his integrity, support for the labour movement, and economic success besides Trans Mountain. Generally, the Alberta and BC NDP governments respected each other but fundamentally and irrevocably disagreed on whether to allow the construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Former Alberta Environment Minister Shannon Phillips sums up this feeling well:

Horgan's office was decent to deal with, as well—insofar as: We disagree. We have opposite positions. So you're going to take your position and we're going to take ours. And essentially our view on all that was like, 'May the best New Democrat win.' And we did.

In short, the partisan similarities helped more than hurt. Tensions could have been worse if these governments on opposite sides of the coalition also belonged to parties with fewer partisan similarities. Behind closed doors, messaging between the provincial governments was consistent. Alberta NDP participants noted that the discussions could have been better with the BC NDP, but it would not have changed the results.

While the Alberta NDP and the Trudeau Liberals were not of the same partisan stripe, they agreed that the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project needed to be built. Further, communications were overall healthy. According to those who worked in the Notley government, the federal Liberals were receptive to the Notley government's requests and suggestions.

#### ***6.4.6 Communication***

The importance of clear and effective communication was repeated across positions and governments. Bureaucrats expressed the importance of clearly and effectively communicating within and across departments and governments; some participants recommended communicating earlier in the process, and participants affiliated with the Alberta NDP highlighted the strength of Premier Notley's communication strategy with the federal government.

Bureaucrats expressed that they felt able to do their jobs effectively regardless of partisanship. Clear communication was effective when implementing top-down decision-making and coordinating across departments. This communication style was especially helpful considering the interdepartmental and intergovernmental nature of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. According to interviewees, current communication across bureaucrats in different governments has improved due to the BC Oil Infrastructure Group and its counterparts. There are public servants in this Group who focus entirely on Trans Mountain, reducing additional demands on public servants in other departments who would otherwise have to split work on Trans Mountain and other projects. This Group also minimizes repeating tasks across jurisdictions and departments by having a consistent team to coordinate with stakeholders around the permitting process. The communication enhanced by these centralized groups allows public servants to manage the workload around Trans Mountain and similar projects more efficiently. While many researchers support collaboration (e.g., Cameron and Simeon 2002; Gattinger and

Hale 2010), there is limited research on specific, practical tools for building collaborative governance (Merritt and Kelley 2018).

Participants mentioned that, ideally, communication and engagement would have occurred earlier in the process. According to two participants, the federal government could have better followed BC's practices in consulting First Nations along the line to engage them more deeply earlier. These participants noted that the federal government implemented these practices later in the process. Similarly, one participant suggested that better communication between parties could have occurred before each formed government. By coordinating their positions, the Alberta and BC NDP may have been able to avoid this contrast in their positions on Trans Mountain.

Participants associated with the Alberta NDP generally viewed the federal government as an effective communicator. At the same time, they also noted that the Premier's Office of the Alberta NDP government prioritized clear and effective communication with the federal government to ensure the latter understood the importance of building the pipeline. All participants affiliated with the Notley government consistently highlighted Premier Notley's strength in communication. They argued that her communication was crucial for the federal government's decision to purchase Trans Mountain. Three participants spoke of an effective communication strategy that Notley used: She communicated with different business and environmental groups across Canada and traveled to Ottawa to speak in person with the Trudeau government. These tactics allowed the Alberta Notley government to convince the Trudeau government—over months of discussion—to purchase the pipeline. Overall, participants reported that communication was or could be a tool for mitigating conflict.

#### ***6.4.7 Environmental Protection and Compensation***

There were three main ways to handle the environmental risk posed by the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project: 1) to oppose the pipeline and stop its construction, 2) to compensate those likely to face environmental risk, and 3) to design and implement additional policies to decrease environmental risk. Of these three, BC Premier John Horgan chose option 1. Participants discussed option 2—compensation—as a mitigation tool to make amends for the risks that provinces and other communities face when a pipeline goes through their land. Some participants discussed compensation for the risk posed by potential oil spills, whether land or

marine. Often, they discussed compensation in terms of the five conditions negotiated between the Trudeau and Clark governments, which included financial payments to the Government of BC. Three participants agreed that this compensation could be seen as payment for the environmental and related economic risk posed by the pipeline expansion project. According to these participants, reducing the environmental risk would be preferable to awarding financial compensation to BC or other affected communities, particularly First Nations along the coast, because the latter may suggest a payoff.

Participants affiliated with the Alberta and BC governments expressed that compensation and accommodations should have been offered earlier to Indigenous Nations, and communities, and municipalities. These participants maintained that if the governments had reached to these groups out earlier, communication might have improved. Acknowledging that groups have different needs, they said that bringing these groups into the process early on could have helped build better relationships with the pipeline proponents. Even if these groups disagreed with the project, they could have negotiated better results for themselves than they received by remaining outside the process.

Some of these groups were fully opposed to the pipeline, as were many environmental groups. Some participants acknowledged the non-negotiable opposition of environmentalists. Non-negotiable opposition for environmentalists is a public sentiment and ideational argument under Campbell's (2004) typology. Campbell's (2004) typology divides ideas and institutions based on their role in the debate and whether they work towards a particular outcome. Participants in government treated environmental groups and their beliefs as subject to negotiation, even if they may have shared those beliefs.

The federal Trudeau government, Alberta Notley government, and BC Clark government designed policies to decrease the environmental risk the pipeline posed. At the federal level, the Trudeau government implemented a divisive carbon tax to decrease overall emissions and replaced the National Energy Board with the Canada Energy Regulator with the aim of increasing environmental protection. In Alberta, the Notley government implemented its Climate Action Plan to decrease greenhouse gas emissions. The Clark government required greater environmental protection, such as improving oil and land spill prevention programs. Essentially, all actors minimized the risk to the environment to strengthen their arguments that the pipeline

could go ahead. The Trudeau government and the Notley government used these policies to justify their position on the Trans Mountain pipeline in intergovernmental negotiations.

#### ***6.4.8 Streamlined Environmental Assessment Process***

Respondents who expressed concern about national plans for large projects and noted the incentive built into the electoral cycle to focus on short-term rather than long-term projects suggested streamlining environmental assessment processes at the federal and provincial levels. While participants described current coordination amongst bureaucrats within and across these governments as effective, some participants who worked in a political capacity expressed that a streamlined environmental assessment process was critical. Both respondents who suggested streamlining this process emphasized that this could and should be done without compromising environmental standards or legal obligations and considerations for Indigenous governments and communities. According to former BC Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister John Rustad, now termed Indigenous Relations Minister:

[W]e know the environmental issues. We know the engagement. We know the level of perspective and the social side of things. We know all these things. But we seem to have created processes that are designed really to just...go into such agonizing detail on engagement that it's not helpful.

This quote reflects the frustration expressed by some participants about the starts and stops of the approval process. These participants argued that the current process considers the environmental and social impacts but adds too many opportunities to unnecessarily delay this process. Instead, the same process with the same thoroughness could occur in a condensed amount of time.

#### ***6.4.9 Limitations***

In general, it was difficult to recruit participants from most stakeholder groups. Other academics researching the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project during the time frame of my interviews had this difficulty. This issue was particularly acute with the federal government. Despite many attempts to reach out to those working or who had previously worked for the federal government related to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, all who responded declined interviews for this research. As a result, the thought process of the federal government on these issues is limited to publicly available federal government documents and the reports of those who worked with the federal government.

Saturation was not reached for the BC governments, although consistent themes emerged within and across governments. As a result, the sample size for these interviews is fairly small, with eight participants. The five interviews with those affiliated with the Government of Alberta, largely affiliated with the Notley government, reached saturation. Participants discussed similar themes; most notable differences among participants from that government dealt with differences in access to particular sets of information based on their roles.

Another limitation is inherent to the case study. By focusing on one case, I lose potential insights into the overall natural resources sector. The conflict that characterized intergovernmental relations around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion is unusual. Other conflicts over petroleum products may present some different barriers and mitigation tools. At the same time, the benefit of looking at a salient, unusually tense conflict like that around the Trans Mountain pipeline publicly reveals many barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

Overall, this chapter finds that any solution would be unrealistic. Instead, mitigation tools were more likely to be effective. Potential mitigation tools include finding partisan similarities across different governments, improving communication, speaking with electorates in other jurisdictions, and streamlining the existing environmental assessment process. These interviews revealed that those close to key players viewed this situation's barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution as insurmountable. The only solution would occur if a change in one or more governments brought all key governments to the same side of the coalition, as was the case when the BC Clark Liberals, the Alberta Notley NDP, and the federal Trudeau Liberals simultaneously formed government. Clearly, this kind of simultaneous change is unlikely. Barriers to the Trans Mountain expansion process were created when the following conditions were present: 1) when governments believed that the requirements for economic prosperity and environmental sustainability and protection were in conflict; 2) when competitive federalism and the joint decision trap discouraged and prevented compromise; when regional discontent surfaced; 3) when challenges to large project approvals arose due to short-term electoral incentives; and 4) when no solutions could be found either to shortening lengthy approval processes or to resolving weak national unity and the absence of a national energy strategy. In Chapter 7, I match these

barriers and mitigation strategies with Campbell's (2004) typology ideas under a global energy governance framework.



## CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

### 7.1 An Intractable Problem

In this chapter, I answer this dissertation's two main research questions: 1) What are the barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution over natural resources in Canada? The key barrier is the combination of competitive federalism—conflict-filled federalism—and the joint decision trap. Here, I use competitive federalism to refer to a federal system with intergovernmental relations characterized by conflict. The joint decision trap refers to a situation in federal system where two or more governments disagree on an issue where they have veto power. One or more governments can exercise that veto while blaming one or more other governments for lack of policymaking while only allowing the lowest common denominator policy to move ahead. 2) What are the criteria to overcome these barriers? The criteria to overcome these barriers are irreconcilable, leaving mitigation tools as the most realistic option for decreasing the tensions in these conflicts. Overall, I argue here that using an institutional framework shaped under global energy governance<sup>1</sup> helps better understand the barriers to and tools for solving intergovernmental conflicts over natural resources in Canada.

By examining key documents and interviewing government personnel involved in the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, this research found that the intergovernmental conflict over the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion was unavoidable. As seen in Table 7.1, barriers—such as the combination of competitive federalism and the joint decision trap, irreconcilable electoral incentives, and a lengthy large project approval process—made any resolution difficult. Within the limitations of these barriers, the relevant governments established irreconcilable criteria for resolving the conflict.<sup>2</sup> Namely, the federal and Alberta governments' criterion was building the pipeline to tidewater, while John Horgan's BC government's criterion was not building the pipeline. These irreconcilable criteria were linked to two opposing coalitions: Two governments were in the “for” coalition and one in the “against.” No compromise or solution could satisfy all key actors.

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<sup>1</sup> Global energy governance is an institutional framework that focuses on who governs energy and its implications for a globalizing, but still territorialized energy market (Goldthau and Witte 2011).

<sup>2</sup> One important barrier not listed above is geographic features. The main geographic features affecting this conflict are the oil sands in Alberta and the coastline in British Columbia. This structural feature is excluded because it is inherently not changeable.

**Table 7.1 Overall Themes and Subthemes**

					Governments Affected By		
		Barrier	Criteria	Mitigation Tool	# For (n=4)	# Against (n=1)	Across Coalitions
Programs	Federalism and associated jurisdictional boundaries	Yes			4	1	Yes
	Decrease environmental risk of project		Yes	Yes	4	1	Yes
	Consulting Indigenous governments and communities		Yes	Yes	3	1	Yes
	Communicating with other constituencies			Yes	2	0	No
	Project must be built		Yes		3	0	No
	Project should not be built		Yes		0	1	No
Paradigms	Seeking re-election	Yes			4	1	Yes
	Competitive federalism	Yes			4	1	Yes
	Collaborative federalism			Yes	3	0	No
	Partisan similarities			Yes	2	1	Yes
Frames	Project is good for the economy	Yes			4	0	No
	Project is good for the economy and the environment	Yes			3	0	No
	Project is bad for the environment	Yes			2	1	Yes
Public Sentiments	Majority of each constituency supports the project			Yes	4	1	Yes
	Huge majority of Albertans support the project	Yes			1	0	No
	B.C. NDP voters oppose the project	Yes			0	1	No

Note: The typology of programs, paradigms, frames, and public sentiments comes from Campbell (2004). The coalitions are inspired by Sabatier (1988).

In addition, categorizing ideas through Campbell's (2004) typology (programs, paradigms, frames, and public sentiments) reveals the interaction between public sentiment and frames. First, programs are policies that decision-makers use to achieve a desired outcome (Campbell 2004). Second, paradigms are "elite assumptions" (Campbell 2004, 94) that limit their conceivable policy options. Third, frames are abstract ideas, such as themes and symbols, that decision-makers use to justify decisions to the public (Campbell 2004). Fourth, public sentiments are common assumptions that limit decision-makers' policy options (Campbell 2004). Public

sentiment from different electorates varied, leading public actors seeking re-election to use incommensurate frames across coalitions.

Two important barriers were the program of the jurisdictional boundaries and the complications of federalism, mainly the joint decision trap. These barriers combined in the case of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project to create a situation that came close to falling into the joint decision trap. In federal systems, the joint decision trap describes a problem that occurs when binding conflict resolution mechanisms are lacking for intergovernmental disagreements, leading to only policies that all governments agree on being implemented; governments then blame each other for not agreeing on their preferred policy (Scharpf 1988). Harmony is desirable. Another problem with the joint decision trap is that it prevents the adoption of bolder policies.

As this case illustrated, the criteria imposed by governments from opposing coalitions could not be simultaneously fulfilled. Despite disagreeing, all governments shared one criterion for establishing a resolution: economic growth. Further, all governments except the Alberta Kenney government professed to value both the economy and the environment. As a result, all governments accepted or introduced various measures to mitigate environmental risk and use revenue from the pipeline to help fund a transition to a green economy. Stronger environmental policy regimes are the minimum recommendation in Angela Carter's recent book (2020) on the oil industry's capture of the Governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

A combination of barriers (see Table 7.1) led to the governments' adoption of these irreconcilable criteria of supporting and opposing the Trans Mountain expansion project. Using Campbell's (2004) typology, I ascertained that public sentiment shaped the options available to policymakers on the Trans Mountain pipeline issue. Public sentiment was not necessarily a barrier since the majority in and across jurisdictions supported the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (Bricker 2018). However, my interviews confirmed that key actors understood what would happen if BC Premier John Horgan formed a government through an New Democratic Party (NDP)-Green Party coalition: He would have to oppose the pipeline.

Key actors on political and bureaucratic levels consistently explained the differences in BC's regions: Those on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland formed the base for the NDP and Green Party, while those in the Interior were less likely to vote for either party. Accordingly,

BC NDP voters were slightly over half as likely to support the Trans Mountain expansion project than were BC Liberal voters, while BC Green Party voters were less likely to support the project than even BC NDP voters (Bricker 2018). The BC NDP had to be accountable to those who shared the beliefs and participated in the environmental groups that were more common in their party and their coalition partner, the Green Party.

The interviewees explained that to be accountable to the voters that brought him into office and earn another term as premier, Horgan had to keep his promise on this critical pipeline issue. Thus, the importance of re-election shaped Horgan's actions. To continue garnering the support of the people who voted for him, the Horgan government determined its agenda through the frame of environmental protection: It, therefore, opposed the pipeline while supporting the economy. Based on the interviews, those familiar with Horgan did not expect him to change his position on Trans Mountain, even without the Green Party and its leader, Andrew Weaver, as his partner in the coalition government. Horgan's opposition to the project was reinforced by his party and his coalition partner.

With an opposing position on the pipeline project, the Government of Alberta, whether led by Rachel Notley or Jason Kenney, was accountable to a public that viewed pipelines as vital to their economy. Unsurprisingly, Albertans were particularly supportive of the Trans Mountain pipeline relative to the rest of Canada. Based on interviews, surveys, and press releases, it was inconceivable that any Government of Alberta would not promote the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Interviewees expressed how Albertans understood the role of oil and pipelines both in regulation and the economy. Public sentiment strongly supporting a pipeline to tidewater made any other government position unlikely, especially when the other proposed pipelines to tidewater were uncertain or denied approval during this period. This mandate to support pipelines informed and constrained any Alberta government. Premiers seeking re-election, as Premier Notley did and Premier Kenney aimed to do, were compelled to support a pipeline to tidewater. As a result, for the Government of Alberta, the only acceptable outcome to the conflict with the Government of BC was the construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

On the same side of the coalition, the federal Trudeau government also aimed to see the project to completion. Early in the conflict, the federal government could have joined either advocacy coalition, but once it had purchased Trans Mountain outright, it had no choice but to

support the construction of the project to justify the \$4.5 billion purchase. In other words, this decision made their main criterion the construction of the pipeline.

As with other government policies (Campbell 2004), the three governments used frames to justify their positions on the expansion project. They used these frames to reflect their voters' intentions back to them and persuade others of their arguments. Their disagreements are reflected in the differences in how they framed their positions. The interviews and document analyses show that the federal, Clark, and Notley governments framed Trans Mountain as benefiting the environment and the economy. This frame ties the economy and the environment together as revenues from the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project would provide economic growth to fund a green transition. The Kenney government also framed the project as an economic boon for Albertans and Canadians overall. However, his base was more likely than Notley's supporters to feel Western alienation and prioritize the economy over the environment. As a result, Kenney did not need to highlight environmental factors. These positive frames reveal the pipeline's perceived benefits to voters. In contrast, the BC Horgan government used a negative frame focused on the environmental issues around the expansion project. The different frames these actors used to explain their actions to the public came from the barriers that structure them and match the criteria that each held must be met for these barriers to be overcome.

All governments and other key actors react to barriers that others face. The barriers faced in the Trans Mountain case reflect findings in the literature. Findings from all three methods (regression analysis of public sentiment, thematic analysis of press releases, and thematic analysis of stakeholder interviews) suggest that federalism and its division of powers allowed the intergovernmental conflict over Trans Mountain to worsen. As interviewees frequently noted, actors in each government were limited by their constitutional jurisdictions and obligations. Each government used strategic tools within the constraints of federalism, leading to a period of competitive federalism.

During the height of tensions in 2018, each of the three governments employed a wide range of strategic options available to them. Interprovincial pipelines fall under federal jurisdiction. Within their jurisdiction, the federal government conducted consultations with Indigenous Peoples and other stakeholders and approved the project.

The BC Horgan government focused on using the legal system to stop the pipeline from being built. One method was backing legal actions led by First Nations and environmental

groups against the federal government over Trans Mountain (*Coldwater First Nation v. Attorney General of Canada*, 2020 FCA 34). The Horgan government also focused on the environmental assessment process since the environment is shared jurisdiction between federal and provincial governments (*Reference re Environmental Management Act*, 2020 SCC 1). By submitting a reference to the Supreme Court asking if BC could prevent shipping diluted bitumen through the province (*Reference re Environmental Management Act*, 2020 SCC 1), Horgan's government added further market uncertainty to an interprovincial issue that was under federal jurisdiction. This narrative by interviewees is different than that in Hoberg's (2021) *The Resistance Dilemma*, where Premier Horgan sought to end the conflict through the reference. The BC government's actions show that instead of working towards a compromise, it tried to compete with the federal government. Thus, this conflict indicates a state of competitive federalism.

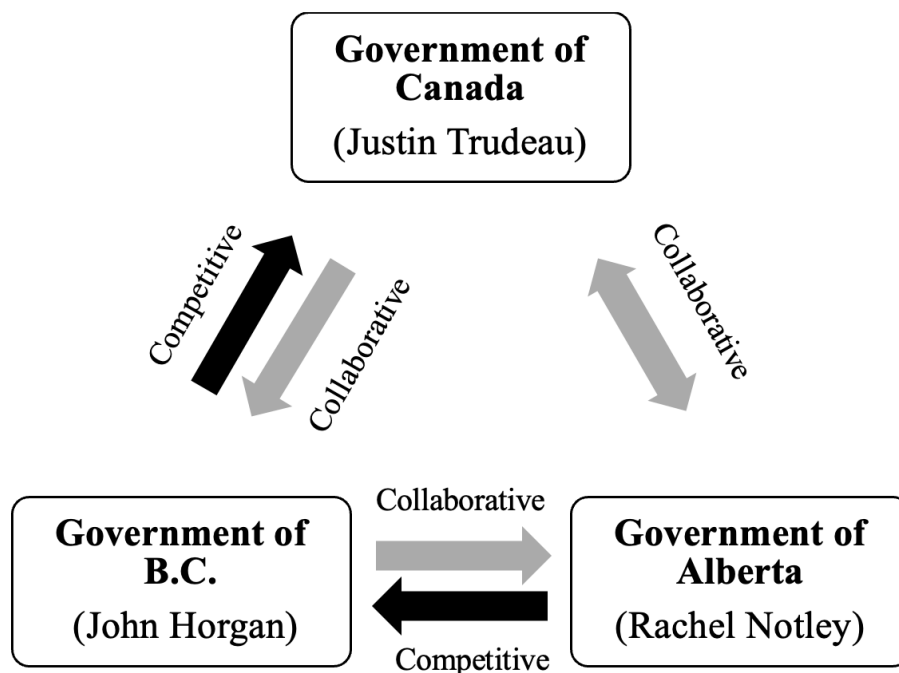
In Alberta, the NDP Notley government tried to fulfill the criteria it had established for resolving the conflict over the pipeline expansion while not having jurisdiction to approve the project. Within the confines of the institution of federalism, the Notley government used collaborative and competitive approaches. The Notley government generally favoured conflict—the characteristic of competitive federalism—when dealing with the Horgan government. For example, it responded to the Horgan government's reference to the Supreme Court of Canada (*Reference re Environmental Management Act*, 2020 SCC 1) by banning BC wine from Alberta and then announcing and passing Bill 12, which allowed Alberta to restrict oil shipments outside the province. When the Kenney government later enacted Bill 12, the Horgan government brought the matter to court, where it was found unconstitutional. The Notley and Trudeau governments had a productive relationship based on collaborative federalism. The interviews I conducted revealed that this collaborative relationship allowed the Notley government to convince the Trudeau government to purchase Trans Mountain. Through this combination of collaborative and competitive federalism, the Notley government acted strategically to get the pipeline built.

Overall, these tactics led to a period characterized by competitive federalism (see Figure 7.1) with two coalitions: one supporting and one opposing Trans Mountain. The BC Clark government negotiated for compensation and greater environmental protections; it was in power when all three relevant governments were on the same side of the coalition: In other words, they supported the pipeline. Therefore, it did not have to operate in an environment of competitive

federalism, which arose after a government came to power in BC that did not want the pipeline built. There were binding intergovernmental conflict resolution mechanisms, and executive federalism<sup>3</sup> exacerbated tensions. Consequently, the players involved began to practice the conflict that characterizes competitive federalism.

A general state of competitive federalism is not desirable because the conflict that characterizes it heightens uncertainty for businesses. However, conflict and uncertainty do not suggest that key actors were behaving poorly or neglecting the needs of their constituents. Rather, each of the governments acted in what they perceived to be the best interests of their respective electorates; each first minister anticipated or ran for re-election, suggesting that all expected to be held accountable by the people who put them in power. In other words, these actors used strategies that were in both their and their electorate's best interests within the constraints of the situation.

**Figure 7.1 Competitive Federalism**



I argue that the state of conflict that characterizes competitive federalism worked with the joint decision trap to delay the approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. However, the result of the trap itself was narrowly avoided. With no binding conflict resolution

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<sup>3</sup> Executive federalism refers to intergovernmental negotiations dominated by the executives and their offices, referring to prime ministers and premiers (Smiley 1980).

mechanism in place for intergovernmental conflicts besides the court system, the delays introduced through the court challenges and injunctions supported by the BC Horgan government seemed to prevent any option besides the easiest one to put in place: no project. The lack of binding conflict resolution mechanisms for intergovernmental conflict leading to this lowest common denominator result describes the joint decision trap.

In the joint decision trap, governments with veto power also blame other governments for not supporting their preferred policy. During the Trans Mountain conflict, governments blamed others for undesirable policy processes and results. Specifically, the BC NDP government blamed the federal Liberal government and the Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP) government blamed the BC NDP government. These actions also fit the requirements of the joint decision trap. The height of the conflict fit many characteristics of the joint decision trap.

The situation was close to falling into the joint decision trap: even with the Alberta NDP's proposed backstop, the federal regulatory approval process may have not endorsed the project. It was only because the federal government purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project with a massive injection of capital that the project avoided being the lowest common denominator of the joint decision trap.

Both sides of the coalition saw mixed results. Supporters of the pipeline were disappointed with the impact of the delay in the approval and construction on the economy. Opponents of the pipeline were disappointed because if the pipeline expansion does proceed, the expansion's construction and operation will lead to additional emissions. The pipeline's supporters won, but the period of competitive federalism and its encouragement of the joint decision trap led to some losses for all actors. It is important to recognize that this situation was largely created by a lack of federal leadership in managing energy federalism (Gattinger 2015). Because the federal government was absent in energy federalism in past decades, the provinces were able to take greater initiatives than they otherwise would have. The Governments of BC and Alberta made major policy moves on Trans Mountain to defend their interests, resulting in an intergovernmental conflict. When the federal government finally showed initiative, the provinces still sought to influence the situation. By then, the federal government had lost some of its leverage.



## 7.2 The Way Forward

The previous section examined the key barriers to intergovernmental conflict resolution over natural resources in Canada. Now, I move to summarizing and explaining the potential mitigating tools brought up in previous chapters. I argue that using a framework of GEG improves understanding of mitigation tools.

The overall framework is GEG, supplemented by Campbell's (2004) typology to better understand each mitigating tool. There are mitigating tools in Campbell's (2004) programs, paradigms, and public sentiments. The value in separating them into these categories is that only programs and paradigms contain suggestions for change. In contrast, public sentiments are not outcome-oriented. For a paradigm, an attitude of collaborative federalism from decision-makers in these governments could mitigate the tone of the conflict. Just because a majority in each relevant jurisdiction supports the expansion does not mean that change will or should occur. Instead, the fact that most of the public in these jurisdictions support the Trans Mountain expansion provides a path for governments to justify mirroring this public sentiment. While programs and paradigms can include suggestions for change, not all programs and paradigms are flexible enough to include opportunities for change. For example, the existing separation of powers in Canadian federalism is a program; it is an "elite prescription that [enables] politicians, corporate leaders, and other decision-makers to chart a clear and specific course of action" (Campbell 2004, p. 94) because it is codified and followed by elites. Altering jurisdictional powers would require changing the Canadian Constitution.

Thematic analyses of the interviews and press releases showed that some mitigation tools were applied during the conflict around Trans Mountain. While the conflict was tense, the tensions would likely have been even higher without these mitigation tools. From the interviews, it is clear that there was mutual respect between the Horgan and Notley governments despite fundamental disagreements about the pipeline; the respect between these governments allowed for transparent communications and decreased tensions. Table 7.2 presents possible ways this crisis may have been mitigated that could be applied to future intergovernmental conflicts around pipelines.

**Table 7.2 Evaluating Mitigation Tools for the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project**

Mitigation Strategy		Government Support					Does this address the GEG goal of:	
Type of Mitigation Tool	Mitigation Tool	Canada (Trudeau)	Alberta (Notley)	Alberta (Kenney)	BC (Clark)	BC (Horgan)	Environmental sustainability*	Domestic good governance*
Program	Decrease environmental risk of pipeline	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	
	Point individual or team for each large project in each government	Yes				Yes		Yes
	Communicating to other constituencies		Yes	Yes				
Paradigm	Partisan similarities	Yes	Yes			Yes		
	Collaborative federalism	Yes	Yes					Yes

**Note:** GEG refers to global energy governance.

\*These goals are summarized from the body of work on GEG from Van Colgan and de Graaf (2016). Three are not included here because none of the tools applied to them.

Mitigation tools include policies to decrease the environmental risk created by a pipeline expansion, individuals or teams focusing on large infrastructure projects, communications with constituencies from other jurisdictions, trust and communication available because of partisan similarities, and collaborative federalism. Programs reducing the environmental risk of a pipeline helped resolve disagreements between the Trudeau, Notley, and Clark governments during a period not characterized by competitive federalism. Political actors from the Notley and Clark governments consistently cited their Climate Leadership Plan and five conditions, respectively, as strategies. For the Notley government, the Climate Leadership Plan gave the Trudeau government leverage to justify buying the pipeline with environmental protections. The Clark government used the five conditions to secure benefits for British Columbians in exchange for publicly supporting the expansion project. Both governments belong to the same coalition that supports the pipeline project. In addition, the Trudeau government included environmental protections as part of its approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. While this did not satisfy the Horgan government, it may have been intended as a mitigating tool to reduce the level of conflict.

One mitigation tool is to have individuals or teams focus on large infrastructure projects, even if these projects are not entirely within their jurisdiction. This tool improves efficiency by reducing overlap across governments and decreasing the need for public servants in different departments to handle work on these projects on top of their regular workload. Based on interviews, increased efficiency is valuable when bureaucrats deal with uncertain outcomes outside of their control, which limited literature confirms (Gajduschek 2003). For example, British Columbia created the BC Oil Infrastructure Group after the conflict, which has had positive effects within government and across governments and coordinates productively with the Government of Canada. Since the federal Trudeau government and the BC Horgan government belong to different advocacy coalitions, this tool could likely benefit bureaucrats in other governments during intergovernmental conflicts.

Both Alberta governments—Notley’s and Kenney’s—leveraged the common public sentiment of supporting the project through campaigns outside their jurisdiction. Both campaigns encouraged Canadians, including British Columbians, to convey their support for the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project to the BC Horgan government. The Notley government’s “Keep Canada Working” campaign aimed to use public support—from most British Columbians and Canadians—to provide the Horgan government with the justification he needed if he changed his mind on the project. This tactic does not advance or impede any global energy governance goals. Still, it could be used in the future when anticipating a key actor may be open to changing their position.

The similar core beliefs of the Alberta and the BC New Democratic Parties—environmental conservation, social justice, and democratic socialism—coincided with heightened tensions about the pipeline. Despite sharing core beliefs, the two governments were on opposing coalitions concerning the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

The political actors I interviewed consistently viewed communication as important. At the same time, political actors agreed that no improvement in communication during the conflict would have fixed the underlying problem between these governments. Based on these findings, partisan similarities allowed for respectful communication channels across governments (Esselment 2010, 2013) when tensions were highest. While partisan similarities cannot be implemented as a change in itself, it helps us better understand that mitigating tools can be successfully applied when tensions are high. Further, parties can leverage the greater trust and

opportunities for communication associated with partisan similarities during conflicts. Although leveraging partisan similarities does not fulfill any of Van de Graaf and Colgan's (2016) global energy governance goals, it also does not counteract any of them.

This framework presents a summary tool to understand mitigation tools for the Trans Mountain conflict and similar conflicts and test the likelihood of success of mitigation tools. When interacting with governments, organizations can adapt the framework to their needs. Generally, barriers, criteria, and mitigation tools falling under "programs" are those most likely to be translated directly into policies. They can then be communicated through frames appropriate to the mitigation tool (program), relevant elite assumptions (paradigm), and the constituency with which they are communicating (public sentiment). This framework organizes mitigation tools where solutions are not possible by understanding the constraints within which governments operate and the more forward-looking goals consistent with global energy governance. The underlying argument of this dissertation is that this framework helps better understand the barriers to and tools for solving intergovernmental conflicts over natural resources in Canada.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

### 8.1 Summary of the Research

This research has explored barriers to and criteria for intergovernmental conflict resolution in Canada over natural resources. The case of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project was chosen to illustrate these conflicts. The main contribution of this research is that the primarily institutional, theoretical approach developed here can help identify and evaluate conflict mitigation tools. By applying this approach, the main finding of this research is that in the case of Trans Mountain, competitive federalism<sup>1</sup> and the joint decision trap<sup>2</sup> worked together to worsen conflict and encouraged poor policymaking.

This primarily qualitative study began by providing an introduction outlining the context and the main research questions: 1) What are the barriers to intergovernment conflict resolution over the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project? 2) What are the criteria for resolving the intergovernmental conflict over Trans Mountain? A literature review followed, leading to an institutional, theoretical approach that combines global energy governance and Campbell's institutional framework (2004). Following the literature review were three chapters on methods used in the research and results: first, a regression analysis of Alberta public opinion found that feelings associated with Western alienation have more explanatory power over the likelihood of having a positive view of pipelines to tidewater and considering them important; second, an analysis of government press releases found various barriers to resolving the Trans Mountain conflict; and third, interviews with key actors confirmed these barriers.

This research established that the decisions governments make and solutions to intergovernmental conflict are limited, not because of the actors involved but because of two main institutional barriers: federalism and, to a lesser extent, the short-term nature of the electoral system. Any potential solution must work despite these barriers, and any mitigation tool used must address at least one of these barriers. Another reason that solutions to intergovernmental conflict are elusive is that criteria presented by governments to overcome these barriers can be irreconcilable.

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<sup>1</sup> Competitive federalism refers to a federal system characterized by conflict.

<sup>2</sup> The joint decision trap (Scharpf 1988) refers to a problem in federal systems where one or more governments in an intergovernmental conflict has veto power on an issue. Using or threatening that veto power can prevent policymaking, resulting in the lowest common denominator policy.

In the case of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, the criteria held by opposing coalitions for overcoming these barriers and establishing a solution to the pipeline impasse cannot be simultaneously met. The main criterion held by supporters of the project—the federal Trudeau government, the Alberta Notley government, and the Alberta Kenney government—is the pipeline expansion’s completion, whereas the BC Horgan government’s key criterion is the collapse of the project. This discrepancy makes it very hard to find a solution to this conflict and highlights the importance of a transition to green energy. A green transition would be costly in the short term for Alberta, but it could pay off economically in the long run (Markandya et al. 2016; Scheer et al. 2022). Reducing both the need to extract bitumen from the oil sands and the environmental damage this action does would mitigate this conflict.

Governments on either side of the coalition have benefited from some mitigation tools, which governments can use to mitigate similar conflicts. Specific policy tools apply. For one, the federal government and the Government of BC (under both Premiers Clark and Horgan) decreased the environmental risk of the project. BC’s criterion recognized the staunch environmentalist opposition to the pipeline, but were more influenced by electoral concerns. All three key settler governments also created focal actors and teams for major intergovernmental projects. Alberta governments leveraged public sentiment supporting the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project to try to convince those on the other side of the coalition to change their position. Other helpful mitigation tools included leveraging shared partisan affiliation across governments and the use of collaborative federalism where possible. To better use these mitigation tools, governments could leverage goodwill and partisan similarities when a policy window opens. By establishing collaborative relationships early on, they could establish more effective communication that could continue throughout each government’s potential tenure.

## **8.2 Contribution of the Theoretical Frameworks and Typologies Applied**

The theoretical frameworks and typologies used in this dissertation help identify and explain the barriers and mitigation tools, and helped evaluate the mitigation tools. In Chapter 2’s literature review, Parson’s (2007) division of causal explanations provides a way to understand how the literature’s contributions and how Campbell’s (2004) typology<sup>3</sup> and global energy

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<sup>3</sup> Campbell’s (2004) typology separates ideas and institutions based on whether they are in the background or foreground of a debate, and whether or not they are outcome-oriented.

governance combine in this dissertation to illustrate how to mitigate intergovernmental conflicts. Their definitions of ideas and institutions are inconsistent. By using Parsons' (2007) division of causal explanations, I can better explain how global energy governance is institutional and Campbell's (2004) typology actually uses ideational and institutional concepts. By combining these frameworks, I show how institutions are the main, changeable barrier with critical ideational elements. Further, I separate actors into being for or against the pipeline project. Barriers and mitigation tools shared across governments with opposing perspectives are much more likely to be successful than governments with shared perspectives on the conflict.

Applying Campbell's (2004) typology offers insight into how to approach barriers and mitigation tools for the intergovernmental Trans Mountain pipeline dispute. A vital point of Campbell's (2004) typology of ideas is that different types are linked to different actors. Background ideas (paradigms and public sentiment) are more associated with decision-makers and foreground ideas (programs and frames) are more associated with constituents. This difference identifies which actors are most likely to be influential in changing each idea. Background ideas tend to be more difficult to change than foreground ideas, since elites and decision-makers, who tend to be smaller in number than the public, shape foreground ideas. Programs have the most opportunity for mitigation tools since they are outcome-oriented and are applied by decision-makers. Frames can also be helpful as mitigation tools, but tend to require use with a program because they are not, in themselves, outcome-oriented (Campbell 2004).

The role of background ideas may be a factor in why the concept of Western alienation was much more salient in the regressions in Chapter 4 than the press releases in Chapter 5 or the interviews in Chapter 6. Since the interviewees from the Government of Alberta mainly identified with the NDP, they were less likely to engage with that frame. Public sentiment, in contrast, is considered an assumption more held in the background of a debate (Campbell 2004).

Global energy governance is valuable in this dissertation because it shapes the evaluation of mitigation tools, which Campbell's (2004) typology of ideas does not. Through Van de Graaf and Colgan's (2016) goals, GEG evaluates mitigation tools based on practical institutional qualities that apply globally for a problem that may seem limited to one federal system. Global energy governance goals evaluate potential mitigation tools with global goals in mind; extracting and transporting petroleum products have international implications for sustainability, which global energy governance considers.

### **8.3 Policy Implications**

The findings of this research have various policy implications. For one, the theoretical framework is a helpful policy tool, which other organizations can use to evaluate mitigation tools. The main benefits of the framework are as follows: 1) it offers a summary tool for listing and comparing mitigation tools and where they have been adopted and worked; 2) it offers a practical perspective; and 3) its inclusion of global energy governance goals highlights some desirable aspects of a green transition in environmental sustainability and energy security. Although the framework is the main contribution, the mitigation tools specified in Chapter 7 could be further studied and put in place. These mitigation tools are policies to decrease environmental risk from the pipeline project, individuals or groups in each government focused on large projects, communications to other constituencies, relationships strengthened by partisan similarities, and collaborative federalism. While focusing on the framework would help in finding solutions or mitigation tools in cases, focusing on how these mitigation tools could apply in a variety of circumstances would provide insight into translating and applying policy tools in different contexts.

Testing this framework on an exceptional case of intergovernmental conflict over natural resources has elucidated barriers. While there was no solution for the case of the Trans Mountain expansion project, researchers and decision-makers can apply this framework to minor cases of intergovernmental conflict. In these minor cases, mitigation tools could lead to solutions. Compared to projects located in one province or territory, large intergovernmental projects introduce more veto points with each additional government. Each of the three key governments in this conflict would benefit from introducing or continuing offices that focus on managing public servants, stakeholders, and intergovernmental relations relevant to large projects. Further, the three key governments, especially the federal government, would also benefit from exploring ways to condense the environmental assessment process while maintaining high standards. Future research can examine whether the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) has improved these concerns associated with the National Energy Board's process.



### ***8.3.1 Government of Canada***

Based on the findings from this research, the Government of Canada could implement policies to decrease future intergovernmental conflicts about oil pipelines. The regression analysis and interviews suggest that regional discontent, including Western alienation, may have exacerbated the conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. A feature of the CER is that it reports to and follows the advice of the Government of Canada. Bureaucrats in the Government of Canada, like those in provincial and territorial governments, are supposed to provide technical advice to achieve the political goals identified by their ministers. To protect these public servants, this advice is often confidential. Since public servants' advice is necessarily private and ministers make public decisions, the perceived and actual depoliticization of these decisions is difficult within existing bureaucratic programs.

To increase the perception that the Government of Canada makes vital economic decisions and not only political ones, it could create a non-partisan, arms-length Crown agency to advise on large projects and their approval processes. This institution would also forward the global energy governance goal of domestic good governance (Van de Graaf and Colgan 2016) through increased transparency. The creation of this institution would add non-partisan expertise that is not answerable to a government. It could mitigate the perception of political decision-making and help avoid stoking public sentiment in Canadian jurisdictions where intergovernmental conflicts can arise over natural resources.

### ***8.3.2 Government of Alberta***

The Government of Alberta represents a constituency that benefits the most from the oil sands. Government decision-makers and the public recognize that the oil sands are currently vital to the Alberta economy. Nevertheless, the current process of extracting oil from the Alberta oil sands poses an environmental risk, recognized by all key governments except the Alberta Kenney government. Therefore, the Government of Alberta should invest more in economic diversification and methods to reduce emissions and to economically benefit Alberta in the long run by reducing its dependence on the booms and busts of oil pricing. In addition, the Government of Alberta could avoid using language that promotes Western alienation to discourage feelings of exclusion and encourage feelings of national belonging.

Due to strong public sentiment and economic incentives to increase government revenue and GDP, any Government of Alberta will be expected to support projects similar to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. The Government of Canada and the Government of BC are not comparably bound to holding one position on oil and pipeline conflicts. To prevent future conflicts, sitting Alberta governments could reach out to electorally viable parties with similar partisanship before these parties craft a campaign to form government. By opening communications and collaborating early in the process, they could use the channels available through shared partisanship to ensure mutually achievable policy goals and avoid future conflicts.

### ***8.3.3 Government of British Columbia***

Since it was the only one of the three governments to oppose the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, the Government of British Columbia would have the most leverage if it were to change its position. Under Premier John Horgan, this is not likely to happen. Like the Clark Liberal government, the Horgan NDP government expressed concern about the environmental risk of a pipeline carrying oil to tidewater. Any BC government has a substantial number of constituents who live along and value the beauty of the BC coastline and its economic value. At the same time, British Columbians who live in the Interior often do not share those values. Due to the split in the BC electorate due to its geography, it can have greater flexibility on Trans Mountain and potentially other natural resource projects than other governments, such as landlocked Alberta.

Since BC has an electorate with greater variation in opinions on large natural resource projects, its governments can be more open to negotiation before finalizing major campaign promises than other governments. Prior to or early in administrations that are not facing any salient, large projects, they could communicate with other governments their environmental, regulatory, and fiscal requirements for any large project. Establishing these requirements beforehand would allow negotiations to happen in a collaborative environment before tensions rise. The time needed to draft policy would also occur before a relevant conflict, allowing a more reasonable schedule for designing policy. With these measures, fewer and less extensive policies and announcements would be necessary during a conflict. The additional benefit is that even if a

conflict occurs, any environmental protection policies created would still be in place, forwarding the global energy governance goal of environmental sustainability.

#### **8.4 Limitations and Future Research**

One limitation of this research is that Indigenous perspectives are outside the scope of this work. Research has already been done on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and Indigenous Peoples (Atleo et al. 2022; Jonasson et al. 2019; Kinder 2021; Pasternak and Schabus 2019; Spiegel et al. 2020). With Indigenous groups such as Chinook Pathways and Project Reconciliation expressing interest in buying Trans Mountain (Chinook Pathways n.d.; Project Reconciliation n.d.; Stewart 2022), research into this process, the federal government's reasoning, and the impacts on Indigenous Peoples would provide valuable findings.

A second limitation is the research method. Although this case study of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project allowed a thorough exploration of the conflict around it, case study findings can typically not be generalized. Research with a greater breadth would complement the depth of this case study. Future researchers could test these findings on other projects and countries. A natural counterpart to this case would be a case study on the Keystone XL pipeline. Ideal countries for case studies are federations rich in natural resources in the Global North, such as the United States. Researchers could test whether this approach allowed them to find criteria for a resolution and potential solutions to the intergovernmental conflict around Keystone XL; they could also test if these mitigation tools worked in other intergovernmental conflicts over natural resource projects.

Another limitation is the lack of interviews with federal policymakers. All federal policymakers who responded to my interview requests declined. Without insights from federal policymakers, I had to rely on accounts from others who worked with federal policymakers on Trans Mountain. Future researchers who can access these policymakers could use the insights from their interviews to make specific recommendations for the CER. In addition, they could provide further advice regarding best practices for the Government of Canada's potential role as a mediator in similar conflicts. For example, did the Government of Canada consider staying out of the Trans Mountain conflict an option? Answers to this question and others would provide insight into the federal government's decision-making process and the effects of that process.

It is unclear whether the federal government should take a leading role in collaborative federalism or let the provinces lead. The benefit of federal leadership is that it would have prevented the joint decision trap earlier on. The drawback is that the federal decision-makers may not have had sufficient knowledge to make the best policy decision for a pipeline in two Western Canadian provinces. As for competitive federalism, further research could examine the use of the joint decision trap in Canada to try to block development. Competitive federalism and the joint decision trap appear in Canada; exploring where they take place in natural resource development and potentially how competitive federalism could be used to reach better decisions would be helpful. Research on 1) situations where the joint decision trap occurs and 2) further conditions that create these situations could lead to ways to avoid this trap.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A: Viewpoint Alberta Survey Information**

The Viewpoint Alberta Survey was conducted between August 17 and 30, 2020. The survey was deployed online by the Social Sciences Research Laboratories (SSRL). A copy of the survey questions can be found here: <https://bit.ly/35rtU9F>. SSRL co-ordinates the survey with an online panel system that targets registered panelists that meet the demographic criteria for the survey. Survey data is based on 824 responses with a 17-minute average completion time. The Viewpoint Alberta Survey was led by co-principal investigators Loleen Berdahl, Elaine Hyshka, and Jared Wesley. It was funded in part by an Alberta-Saskatchewan Research Collaboration Grant from the Kule Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Alberta and the College of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan.

The Viewpoint Alberta Survey was conducted between March 1 and 8, 2021 (Alberta data) and March 1 and 10 (Saskatchewan data). The survey was deployed online by the Leger. A copy of the survey questions can be found here: <http://bit.ly/30VcYey>. Leger co-ordinates the survey with an online panel system that targets registered panelists that meet the demographic criteria for the survey. Survey data is based on 802 responses with a 17-minute average completion time. The Viewpoint Alberta Survey was led by co-principal investigators Loleen Berdahl and Jared Wesley. It was funded in part by a Kule Research Cluster Grant and an Alberta-Saskatchewan Research Collaboration Grant from the Kule Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS) at the University of Alberta and the College of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan.

## **Appendix B: Additional Regression Variable Information**

The survey question for age originally appeared as “What year were you born?” This variable was transformed into different generations to account for generational differences in worldview and value construction. Respondents born before 1965 were recoded as Boomers/Silent Generation; respondents born between 1965-1980 were recoded as Gen X; and those born after 1980 were categorized as Gen Z/Millennial. All groups were roughly similar sizes.

This research used a binary dummy variable for unemployment. Both surveys asked about employment as: “Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?” Respondents could select one of “Working full-time,” “Working part-time,” “Unemployed or looking for a job,” “Stay at home full-time,” “Student,” or “Retired.” If respondents selected “Working full-time” or “Working part-time,” they were recoded as employed. If respondents selected “Unemployed or looking for a job,” “Stay at home full-time,” “Student,” or “Retired,” they were recoded as unemployed.

In terms of education, I separated respondents by whether they had some post-secondary education. The original question these surveys asked is “What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?” Respondents could select one of the options provided. Those respondents who selected “Some college or university,” “Trade or university certificate,” “Bachelor degree,” or “Graduate or professional degree” were recoded as “Education.”

Western alienation was measured by three items testing the sentiment of Albertans around the Government of Canada’s treatment of Alberta. These response options were collapsed into binary categorical variables of agreeing or not agreeing with the statement. Afterwards, the mean of these binary category variables were merged into a single variable: “feelings of Western alienation.”

Other questions reflected themes of Western alienation, but were excluded due to smaller sample sizes, clear overlap in question content with other independent variables, and to include a reasonable number of independent variables.

A feeling associated with Western alienation included in this model is how respondents perceive the federal government treats Alberta relative to other provinces. The question is: “In general, does the federal government treat Alberta/Saskatchewan better, worse, or about the same as other provinces?” Accordingly, respondents selected one of “Better,” “Worse,” or “About the

same.” In “When Was the West In?” Berdahl and Raney (2021) used the same question wording to represent regional discontent for the four Western provinces, substituting “your province” for the specific province name.

One of these questions asks whether the respondent feels Alberta is treated respectfully by the federal government: “In your opinion, is Alberta/Saskatchewan treated with the respect it deserves in Canada?” Participants could respond with a binary of “Yes” or “No.”

The next of the survey questions that fall under Western alienation addresses the feeling of a lack of fairness. Respondents were asked, “Thinking about all the money the federal government spends on different programs and on transfers to the provinces, Alberta/Saskatchewan receives” and could answer with one of “More than its fair share,” “Less than its fair share,” or “About its fair share.”

My excellent external reviewer, Kathryn Harrison, noted the absence of support for the United Conservative Party (UCP) as an independent variable in my regression models. I included that variable in building my regressions. As shown in the analysis below, I excluded it for theoretical reasons and because of its multicollinearity with the two key independent variables: Western alienation and prioritization of the economy over the environment. Here, I provide a multicollinearity test and explain include an ordinal logistic regression to better understand the relationship between these key variables. Overall, the statistical relationship between identifying with the UCP and the two key independent variables is similar to the relationship between the two key variables.

I initially included identification with the UCP as a variable in building my regressions due to claims that the UCP under former Premier Jason Kenney had encouraged Western alienation. This motivation was confirmed by my interviews with officials associated with the former Notley NDP government: they distanced their party from Western alienation and associated the concept with the UCP. The direction of the relationship between the UCP and Western alienation is complex. While Premier Kenney arguably encouraged Western alienation, the concept has existed long before he entered politics (Janigan 2013).

As seen in Tables B.1 and B.2 here, identifying with the UCP is associated with a ten-fold increase in the odds of holding the three feelings associated with Western alienation and an even stronger relationship with prioritizing the economy over the environment ( $p < 0.001$ ). The strength of these relationships suggests multicollinearity problems with these variables. When

there is a multicollinearity problem, dropping one of the variables generally leads to a better model.

**Table B.1 Multicollinearity of WesternAlienation and UCP**

WesternAlienation	Party Identification Model	
	OR	95% CI
<i>Party Identification (Other)</i>	1.00	-
UCP	<b>10.83438</b>	(8.09, 14.51)
n	934	
Log Likelihood	-850.85	
LR chi <sup>2</sup>	(1) 292.01	
Prob> chi <sup>2</sup>	<0.0001	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.1465	

Note: OR = Odds Ratio; CI = Confidence Interval. Bolded OR mean  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table B.2 Multicollinearity of WesternAlienation and UCP**

EconFirst	Party Identification Model	
	OR	95% CI
<i>Party Identification (Other)</i>	1.00	-
UCP	<b>16.14828</b>	(11.58, 22.51)
n	913	
Log Likelihood	-438.2	
LR chi <sup>2</sup>	(1) 334.26	
Prob> chi <sup>2</sup>	<0.0001	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.2761	

Note: OR = Odds Ratio; CI = Confidence Interval. Bolded OR mean  $p < 0.05$ .

Since there is high multicollinearity with both variables, I compare the performance of the final model in Chapter 4—the Western alienation model—with models including whether respondents identify with the UCP. The model including solely the latter variable as a key variable will be referred to as the Party Identification Model, as seen in Tables B.1, B.2, B.3, and B.4.

Overall, the Western alienation model is a theoretically and statistically more powerful explanation for Albertans' support for and importance of a pipeline to tidewater. Statistically, it is a weaker predictor variable. When added to the control variables, identification with the UCP

does not change the statistical significance of any of the control variables. Identification with the UCP is a statistically significant predictor of support for a pipeline to tidewater. When compared with the Western alienation model, the party model is weaker with a smaller pseudo r-squared and a weaker odds-ratio for its key variable (UCP OR=1.61 while WesternAlienation OR=1.91). This result suggests the party model acts similarly to the Western alienation model, but is a statistically weaker model.

**Table B.3 Support for Pipeline to Tidewater with Omitted Variable of Party Identification**

Support for Pipeline to Tidewater	Party Model		Western Alienation Model		Party and Western Alienation Model	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
<u>Control Variables</u>						
<i>Employment (Employed)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Unemployed	<b>1.79</b>	(1.19, 2.70)	<b>1.63</b>	(1.21, 2.19)	<b>1.78</b>	(1.18, 2.69)
<i>Education (No Postsecondary)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Some Postsecondary	1.06	(0.64, 1.74)	<b>1.48</b>	(1.05, 2.10)	1.09	(0.66, 1.80)
<i>Age (GenZ/Millennial)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Gen X	<b>1.71</b>	(1.23, 2.58)	<b>1.83</b>	(1.34, 2.50)	<b>1.66</b>	(1.09, 2.52)
Boomer	<b>1.95</b>	(1.20, 3.14)	<b>2.01</b>	(1.40, 2.89)	<b>1.86</b>	(1.15, 3.01)
<i>Gender (Female)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Male	1.26	(0.88, 1.81)	<b>1.35</b>	(1.02, 1.77)	1.26	(0.87, 1.81)
<u>Independent Variables</u>						
<i>Party Model (Other)</i>	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	-
UCP	<b>1.61</b>	(1.11, 2.32)	-	-	1.30	(0.84, 2.01)
Western Alienation (0-1)	-	-	<b>1.91</b>	(1.38, 2.65)	1.59	(0.94, 1.33)

Note: OR = Odds Ratio; CI = Confidence Interval. Bolded OR means  $p < 0.05$ .

n	531	913	531
Log Likelihood	-338.16813	-589.16806	-336.61988
LR $\chi^2$	(6) 27.13	(6) 59.52	(7) 25.57
Prob > $\chi^2$	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0386	0.0481	0.0430

In Table B.4, identification with the UCP is not a statistically significant predictor of perceived importance of a pipeline to tidewater when added to the control variables or when added onto the Western alienation model. This result suggests that for the perceived importance of a pipeline to tidewater, Western alienation is a more important factor than whether a respondent identifies with the UCP.

**Table B.4 Importance of Pipeline to Tidewater with Omitted Variable of Party**

Importance of Pipeline to Tidewater	Party Model		Western Alienation Model		Party and Western Alienation Model	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
<u>Control Variables</u>						
<i>Employment (Employed)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Unemployed	<b>1.77</b>	(1.18, 2.65)	<b>1.58</b>	(1.18, 2.12)	<b>1.76</b>	(1.18, 2.64)
<i>Education (No Postsecondary)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Some Postsecondary	1.32	(0.81, 2.15)	<b>1.57</b>	(1.11, 2.22)	1.34	(0.83, 2.19)
<i>Age (GenZ/Millennial)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Gen X	<b>1.64</b>	(1.09, 2.47)	<b>1.83</b>	(1.34, 2.49)	<b>1.62</b>	(1.07, 2.44)
Boomer	<b>2.30</b>	(1.42, 3.71)	<b>2.42</b>	(1.68, 3.49)	<b>2.24</b>	(1.38, 3.63)
<i>Gender (Female)</i>	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-
Male	1.26	(0.88, 1.81)	1.24	(0.94, 1.63)	1.26	(0.88, 1.81)
<u>Independent Variables</u>						
<i>Party Model (Other)</i>	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	-
UCP	1.18	(0.82, 1.70)	-	-	1.06	(0.69, 1.64)
Western Alienation (0-1)	-	-	<b>1.59</b>	(1.15, 2.20)	1.27	(0.76, 2.13)

Note: OR = Odds Ratio; CI = Confidence Interval. Bolded OR means  $p < 0.05$ .

n	528	911	528
Log Likelihood	-334.07373	-594.63956	-343.66857
LR $\chi^2$	(6) 24.76	(6) 58.57	(7) 25.57
Prob > $\chi^2$	<0.0001	<0.0001	<0.0001
Pseudo $R^2$	0.0347	0.0469	0.0359

This finding has implications for the relationship between Western alienation and UCP identification. The two are related, but Western alienation has greater explanatory power for how respondents think about building pipelines to tidewater than UCP identification. The finding speaks to the broader view in Alberta—at least in 2020 and 2021—deeming Trans Mountain important. It also suggests that while the UCP may have exacerbated Western alienation, the regional or provincial frustration with the federal government can operate without the UCP. This suggests that Western alienation has explanatory power that identification with the UCP does not. While Kenney may have exacerbated Western alienation, the UCP's explanatory power seems to come from using Western alienation rather than the other way around. By focusing on Western alienation, I reveal a relationship between ideas and Alberta public opinion that party support at times obscures.

## Appendix C: Regression Tables Before Transformation

**Table C.1 Regression Models Before Transformation: Support for Pipeline to Tidewater**

Support for Pipeline to Tidewater	Value Model		Western Alienation Model		Combined Model	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error
<u>Key Independent Variables</u>						
<i>Value Priority (EnvironmentFirst)</i>			-			
EconomyFirst	<b>0.43**</b>	(0.15)			0.21	(0.16)
WesternAlienation	-		<b>0.65***</b>	(0.17)	<b>0.59**</b>	(0.18)
<u>Control Variables</u>						
<i>Employment (Employed)</i>						
Unemployed	<b>0.48**</b>	(0.15)	<b>0.49**</b>	(0.15)	<b>0.47**</b>	(0.14)
<i>Education (No Postsecondary)</i>						
Some Postsecondary	0.34	(0.18)	<b>0.39*</b>	(0.18)	<b>0.38*</b>	(0.18)
<i>Age (GenZ/Millennial)</i>						
GenX	<b>0.65***</b>	(0.16)	<b>0.60***</b>	(0.16)	<b>0.61***</b>	(0.16)
Boomer	<b>0.77***</b>	(0.19)	<b>0.70***</b>	(0.19)	<b>0.69***</b>	(0.19)
<i>Gender (Female)</i>						
Male	0.22	(0.14)	<b>0.30*</b>	(0.14)	0.26	(0.14)
n	892		913		892	
Log Likelihood	-579.6654		-589.1681		-574.5531	
LR chi^2	(6) 51.90		(6) 59.52		(7) 62.12	
Prob > chi^2	<0.0001		<0.0001		<0.0001	
Pseudo R^2	0.0428		0.0481		0.0513	

Note: Bolded means  $p < 0.05$ . \* indicates  $p < 0.05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* indicates  $p < 0.001$ .



**Table C.2 Regression Models Before Transformation: Importance of Pipeline to Tidewater**

Importance of Pipeline to Tidewater	Value Model		Western Alienation Model		Combined Model	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error
<u>Key Independent Variables</u>						
<i>Value Priority (EnvironmentFirst)</i>						
EconomyFirst	0.15	(0.15)	-		-0.03	(0.16)
WesternAlienation	-		<b>0.46**</b>	(0.17)	<b>0.53**</b>	(0.18)
<u>Control Variables</u>						
<i>Employment (Employed)</i>						
Unemployed	<b>0.43**</b>	(0.15)	<b>0.46**</b>	(0.15)	<b>0.41**</b>	(0.15)
<i>Education (No Postsecondary)</i>						
Some Postsecondary	<b>0.40*</b>	(0.18)	<b>0.45*</b>	(0.18)	<b>0.44*</b>	(0.18)
<i>Age (GenZ/Millennial)</i>						
GenX	<b>0.65***</b>	(0.16)	<b>0.60***</b>	(0.16)	<b>0.62***</b>	(0.16)
Boomer	<b>0.96***</b>	(0.19)	<b>0.89***</b>	(0.19)	<b>0.89***</b>	(0.19)
<i>Gender (Female)</i>						
Male	0.16	(0.14)	0.21	(0.14)	0.20	(0.14)
n	891		911		891	
Log Likelihood	-585.9049		-594.63956		-581.83832	
LR chi^2	(6) 50.01		(6) 58.57		(7) 58.14	
Prob > chi^2	<0.0001		<0.0001		<0.0001	
Pseudo R^2	0.0409		0.0469		0.0476	

Note: Bolded means  $p < 0.05$ . \* indicates  $p < 0.05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* indicates  $p < 0.001$ .

## **Appendix D: Recruitment Message**

Dear [Insert Participant's Name],

I am Bianca Jamal, a PhD candidate at the University of Saskatchewan for the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. I am being supervised by Dr. Haizhen Mou of the University of Saskatchewan and Dr. Daniel Béland of McGill University. For my research on intergovernmental conflict around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, I am looking to speak with governments, organizations, and communities who are stakeholders in the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. I have reached out to you because [justify for each person].

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to share your perspective on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project in a one-on-one interview. This can take place over the phone, or online.

Your participation in this study would be approximately two hours. This would involve an interview of approximately one hour, but can be changed to a length you are comfortable with. You will also be asked to confirm the transcript from that interview, which will take approximately thirty (30) minutes of your time. If you would like to make revisions to the transcript, that is projected to take approximately thirty (30) minutes of your time.

A list of interview questions and a consent form are attached for you to review. Please let me know if you have any questions about either.

If you have any questions about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please let me know. You can reach me by email or at +1 306-912-8562.

Thank you for your time,  
Bianca Jamal

## **Appendix E: Interview Questionnaire Provided to Participants**

Semi-Structured Interview Questions  
Bianca Jamal  
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy  
University of Saskatchewan

1. Can you tell me about yourself and your organization?
  - a. What are the goals of your organization?
  - b. Where does your organization operate?
  - c. Who does your organization serve?
  - d. What is your organization's position on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project?
2. Are there other groups that your organization would work with around pipeline issues?
3. Why do you think there is so much tension among so many actors around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion conflict?
  - a. Can you expand on that?
  - b. Are there actors or groups that you think hold sway over decision-making around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion?
    - i. Can you expand on that?
4. Do you think the change from the National Energy Board to the Canadian Energy Regulator has affected the regulatory process?
  - a. How?
  - b. Specifically, do you think the CER has affected the regulatory process around the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion?
    - i. How?
5. What motivates you to (support/oppose) Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project?
  - a. Can you expand on why that is such an asset/concern to you(r organization)?
  - b. For negative responses, why do you think that is occurring?
  - c. If uncertain, prompt if they think \_\_\_\_ has an impact. If so, how?
    - i. Inherently having oil in the ground
    - ii. Environmental concerns
    - iii. The federal government
    - iv. The Government of BC
    - v. The Government of Alberta
    - vi. Indigenous governments and/or communities
6. What do you think would end this conflict?
  - a. Do you think that could be done in the short term?
    - i. Why/why not?
  - b. If no, do you think that could be done in the long term?
    - i. Why/why not?

- c. If no, do you think that could ever be done?
      - i. Why/why not?
- 7. What do(es) you(your) organization think would decrease the level of conflict?
  - a. Do you think that could be done in the short term, within the next year?
    - i. Why/why not?
  - b. If no, do you think that could be done in the long term, within the next twenty years?
    - i. Why/why not?
  - c. If no, do you think that could ever be done?
    - i. Why/why not?
- 8. Is there anything you would like to add that you think is important, but we have not touched on?