Lines of Dissent: Representing Pipeline Resistance in Corporate Canadian Print Media

by

Nicole Van Lier

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Social Justice Education
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Nicole Van Lier 2015
Lines of Dissent: Representing Pipeline Resistance in Corporate Canadian Print Media

Nicole Van Lier

Master of Arts

Department of Social Justice Education
University of Toronto

2015

Abstract

The Enbridge Line 9 reversal is part of a national development plan to expand Canada’s underground pipeline network that extends outward from Alberta’s tar sand epicentre, an industrial project dedicated to the extraction of the most carbon-intensive oil in the world. This research draws on insights gained from the fields of critical geography, political economy, and critical media studies to undertake a critical discourse analysis of the systemic articulations of grassroots Line 9 resistance generated by corporate Canadian print media, and the discursive regulation of political dissent. Representations are juxtaposed with insights offered by three key activists involved in anti-Line 9 campaigns in Toronto. I argue that the contestation of material forms of political engagement, the intersection of private property and embodied resistance, and the depoliticizing effects of militarized constructions of activism, operate as environmental governance technologies that may work to narrow or discourage civic participation in pipeline resistance efforts within a neoliberal state threatened by climate change.
Acknowledgments

I will forever be thankful to my supervisor, Terezia Zoric, whose kind and steady guidance during this thesis, and throughout my degree, has been the cornerstone of my intellectual and activist development. Her commitments to theoretically-informed praxis inspired the conceptualization of this project, and her wisdom, her astute insights, and her warmth and good humour were energizing forces in this lengthy, sometimes arduous process. Thank you to my second reader, Peter Sawchuk, for his generosity and high-level feedback that helped to fortify the methodological and intellectual structure and integrity of this work.

This thesis would not have seen its completion without my mom, my sister, and my grandma — the three inspiring women who ground me, who have never wavered in their love, and who have been immeasurable and reliable supports throughout my life.

I would also like to thank the Social Justice Education faculty and my student colleagues for the learning that laid the groundwork for this project, and to Caitlin, Jaclyn, Eunice, and Suzanne, in particular, for their patience, advice, and encouragement throughout the writing process. To Katie, for the innumerable discussions on climate activism that have shaped in important ways my own worldview and fundamental portions of this analysis. To Sarah, who was an admirable and much appreciated cheerleader from afar.

Finally, I would like to offer my thanks and solidarity to the courageous Indigenous and climate activists who are engaged in the most important work of all. To my three informants for sharing their valuable insights, and to the countless others in Toronto and across Canada who are resolute in their resistance against the neoliberal assault being waged on our communities, our ecologies, and our futures.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Introduction

Chapter 1 Literature Review

1 Neoliberal Environmental Governance in Canada

1.1 Defining Neoliberalism

1.2 Neoliberal Governmentality

1.3 Neoliberalism as an Environmental Project

2 Discursive Representations of Climate Change

3 Media as Implicated in (Environmental) Governance

3.1 Media Representations of Climate Change

Chapter 2 Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks

4 Theoretical Framework

5 Methodology

5.1 Interviews

5.1.1 Selection of Key Informants

5.1.2 Interview Structure & Analysis

5.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

5.2.1 Media Discourse Analysis

5.2.2 Intertextual Analysis of Social Action Representation

5.2.3 Data Collection & Analysis

Chapter 3 Representing Dissent

6 A Thematic Analysis of Informant Interviews
List of Figures

1. Figure 1: Springer’s (2012) Conceptual Model: ‘Neoliberalism as Discourse’

2. Figure 2: van Leeuwen’s (2008) Social Action Network
List of Appendices

1. Appendix A: Interview Guide

2. Appendix B: Critical Discourse Analysis Data Codes
Introduction

On March 7, 2014, hundreds of climate activists congregated outside the Ontario Legislative Building in Toronto to voice their objection to the most recent ruling issued by the National Energy Board of Canada: an approval of Enbridge Inc.’s proposal to reverse the westward flow of the 38-year-old Line 9 pipeline that travels between Sarnia, Ontario and Montreal, Quebec. The Line 9 project is part of a broader national plan to expand Canada’s underground pipeline network that extends outward from Alberta’s tar sand epicentre: the largest industrial project in human history dedicated to the extraction of the most carbon-intensive oil in the world (Pembina Institute, 2013). Pipelines have become big oil’s justification for ongoing commitments to tar sand expansion, opening new and essential pathways for extracted bitumen to find its way to foreign markets amidst dwindling American demand. The Federal Conservatives have put all of their economic eggs in the tar sands, a move they claim will launch Canada into heightened realms of geopolitical power as one of the world’s foremost energy superpowers. Pipelines have also become the most consistent and high-profile target for Indigenous, climate, and environmental justice movements sweeping across North America. For activists, pipelines symbolize the deluded and nefarious aspirations of a neoliberal capitalist government that has proven it will sacrifice the socio-economic and ecological wellbeing of its populace for narrowly-held wealth and international leverage. These development projects reveal the intensifying collusion of industry and government, who’s goals and intentions for Canada are becoming increasingly — and worryingly — inextricable, and especially so against the backdrop of runaway climate change.

While not the largest pipeline under development, Line 9 poses serious dangers to residents and ecosystems along its route, one that runs through some of the most densely populated
regions in Ontario and Quebec, and that crosses every major watershed feeding into Lake Ontario. In order to move viscous bitumen through pipelines, it is diluted with corrosive and carcinogenic chemicals and pumped through at a pressure higher than that used for conventional oil. That Line 9 is also an aging pipeline constructed to transport conventional oil in the opposite direction, adds to the likelihood of an oil spill that would threaten sources of drinking water for millions of Canadians. Of greater concern still is the havoc this tar sands expansion project wreaks on the climate, carrying consequences for communities and ecologies far beyond the Canadian border. These pipelines are in direct violation of Indigenous treaty rights, and are an example of the ongoing violences of Canada’s settler colonial project now deeply entrenched in a neoliberal capitalist regime.

Over the course of the last decade and in reaction to intensifying pipeline and climate resistance, the Canadian government has implemented a series of regulatory maneuvers to shut down the climate debate. These have included more stringent auditing of environmental NGOs; defunding scientific research on climate change while subjecting scientists to a strict review of research findings in advance of publication; narrowing participation criteria for hearings by the National Energy Board (NEB) that evaluate risks associated with infrastructure development projects; heightened surveillance of climate activists by CSIS and the RCMP; and most recently, passing ‘anti-terror’ legislation that criminalizes and labels as terrorists all those who engage in activity opposing Canadian national interests, including the development of ‘vital’ infrastructure.

Climate activists across the country have persisted despite these precarious conditions, and the anti-Line 9 movement has been a particularly visible one in Ontario. Since 2013 in Toronto, activists leading ‘No Line 9’ campaigns have connected to form a city-wide Coalition Network, bringing together neighbourhood groups, Indigenous and grassroots activists, faith-based communities, environmental organizations, and community networks. The organizing structure
remains decentralized, with each group using different tactics to advance their own local campaigns, but the Coalition Network has created a space for joint strategizing, shared decision-making, and collaboration on common goals. This has resulted in a diverse, flexible, and well-supported alliance of activists with significant capacity for action. Their efforts, lead by frontline Indigenous communities and in concert with the efforts of activists elsewhere in Ontario and Quebec, and have proven to be a significant impediment to Enbridge securing “Leave to Open” from the NEB.

Given this fraught political context in Canada and the necessity of climate activism, this thesis focuses on an exploration of the regulation and representation of dissent within the context of Line 9 resistance in Toronto. Using mainstream Canadian print media as the primary site of analysis, the project undergoes a critical investigation of the de/legitimizing articulations of forms of political dissent via the circulation of news discourses, which have the capacity to shape and inform public opinion and attitudes (van Dijk, 2001; Hansen, 2010; Fairclough, 1995; 2010). Efforts are also made to uncover some of the ways in which said representations have shaped or influenced the goals, strategies, and tactics of activists involved in anti-Line 9 campaigns in Toronto. This research draws on insights gained from the intersectional fields of critical geography, political economy, environmental justice theory, and critical media studies. The project’s central research questions are:

1. What are the systemic formulations and constructions of pipeline resistance generated by mainstream corporate Canadian print media and how do these reported representations de/legitimize different forms of political dissent?

2. How do these representations govern the interactions of dissenting actors with the social, political, and ecological environment? In what ways do representations of dissent shape or inform the goals, strategies, and tactics of activists who oppose the Line 9 project in Toronto?
These questions attempt to address a noted gap in the literature that involves a virtual absence of scholarship dedicated to Canadian political tar sand resistance, and that offers limited understandings of the dialogic relationships between political action and its ideological representation. Research is carried out via a critical discourse analysis of 106 print newspaper articles appearing in 23 corporate Canadian news outlets, drawing on a discursive framework developed by van Leeuwen (2008) to decode representations of social action and their de/legitimizations. Discursive representations of Line 9 dissent are put in conversation with insights offered by three key informants who have held central organizing roles in anti-Line 9 campaigns in Toronto. Informants participated in interviews that aimed to explore the degrees to which activists felt the media accurately and justly represented the issue and their actions, and the extent to which media interactions and representations influenced campaign strategizing and their political outlook. Accordingly, the project aims to expand upon broader theoretical conceptualizations of: i) the dialogical relationship between (ideological) representation and (political) action; ii) the role of this relationship within a larger project of environmental governance. It also seeks: iii) to expose expressions of environmental governance within the under-explored territory of the neoliberal Canadian nation-state threatened by climate change.

This thesis is organized into three main chapters. The first chapter provides a review of relevant literature in relation to: processes of neoliberalization and environmental governance on colonized land; a politics of social activism and public dissent; and media representations of climate change. The second chapter outlines in more depth the application of Springer’s (2012) theoretical framework of neoliberalism as “a circuitous process of socio-spatial transformation” (p. 133), as well as methodological considerations for the project’s research design and data collection. The final chapter engages in an analytic reading of the surveyed data, putting in conversation findings generated by the critical discourse analysis and the interviews with key
informants. Gained insights point to the contestation of material forms of political engagement, the validation of verbal or symbolic expressions of dissent, the intersection of private property and embodied resistance, and the depoliticizing effects of militarized constructions of activism, as governing technologies that define the scope and bounds of legitimate dissent, and in doing so, reinscribe multiple neoliberal logics that may work to influence civic participation in ongoing pipeline resistance efforts.
Chapter 1
Literature Review

As a settler colonial nation-state with deepening commitments to a neoliberal regime, Canada’s governing elite has concerted investments in regulating the ways in which its institutions, its policies and programs, and its citizenry interact with the land. The authorization of private property rights, the commodification of nature, the externalization of pollution and other forms of environmental degradation, and the targeted violences played out on Indigenous and racialized bodies, coalesce to obscure and to naturalize particular engagements with the land that are both produced by, and reproduce processes of neoliberalization on colonized territory. Scholars working within anti-colonial and political economy traditions have long since exposed the multiple, ongoing, and intersectional violences of settler colonialism and neoliberal globalization in their material and immaterial manifestations, and the ways in which these transgressions are resisted. Yet there remains little scholarship exploring the relationships between Canada’s neoliberal political economy, dominant forces of environmental governance, and the politics of resistance under the burgeoning and imminent threat of global climate change. Boycoff (2009), in his exploration of the intersections between media and environmental politics, argues that “meaning is constructed, maintained and contested through intertwined sociopolitical and biophysical processes” (p. 435). This note is significant in relation to environmental governance, as it clarifies that regulated conduct is shaped simultaneously by the discourses that construct, interpret, and legitimize certain interactions with the environment, as well as by the natural environments in which they occur. It is becoming increasingly relevant then, that we pursue an exploration of the ways in which climate change is transforming our relationships to non-human nature within the socio-economic terrain of neoliberalism.

Despite clear scientific consensus that anthropogenic activity is dramatically altering the climate (IPCC, 2013), the scope, scale, and targets of climate change mitigation efforts remain
intensely contested topics for multiple factions of society, including government officials, policy-makers, industry affiliates, NGOs, and activists. Given Canada’s current rate of fossil fuel consumption, it becomes a difficult task for many to envision an alternative energy economy whereby the vast majority of our energy is sourced via renewable energy infrastructure. The federal Conservatives, backed by multi-national corporations with vested interests in the Albertan tar sands — like Enbridge, TransCanada, and Suncor — consistently argue that Canada’s economic future and status as an emerging geopolitical power lies in the state’s ability to export natural resources, the most significant of which is oil (Klein, 2014; Paehlke, 2008). A more centrist analysis, such as the one put forward by Paehlke (2008), suggests that it is not so much about abandoning tar sand exports altogether, but about adhering to sustainable levels of fossil fuel extraction and consumption in light of climate change. He argues against the construct of a binary that pits economy and environment against one another, claiming that we need to give our attention to both, simultaneously.

There are many other theorists who would agree that the binary Paehlke (2008) identifies is a problematic one, but do so from an entirely different position. Increasingly, critical geographers, leftist political economists, and anti-colonial and environmental justice scholars are calling for the need to build alternatives to the globalized, neoliberal capitalist economy that is commonly cited as the structure upon which the rise of climate change can be pinned (Simms, 2009; Klein, 2007; 2014; Albo, 2007; Harvey, 2005; Davis, 2010). The concern with this binary that positions the environment at odds with the economy lies not so much in competing interests, but in the artificial separation of these paradigms to begin with. A capitalist political economy that requires the extraction of material resources at a rate that far exceeds the regenerative capacity of a finite planet is evidence of a faulty logic on which capitalism is predicated: that the ecological limits of the planet can be ignored in support of limitless economic growth (Simms, 2009; Klein, 2014).
More troubling still is the understanding that the ecological consequences that result from these practices — increasingly frequent and severe weather events; famine and water scarcity due to desertification; rising sea levels; environmental displacements — are not universally felt, but disproportionately experienced by marginalized Indigenous, racialized, female, working class and low-income communities, most predominantly in the Global South though in North America as well. In short, under a neoliberal capitalist regime in which corporate supremacy reigns, the price of Canada’s global and economic security as an “energy superpower” comes at the direct expense of those most marginalized by the neoliberal capitalist system itself.

In Canada specifically, the tar sands are an example of “ongoing processes of environmental racism, Indigenous oppression and violence” (Preston, 2013) responsible for health impacts and loss of life for many members of First Nations communities in Northern Alberta, and implicated in the nation-state’s violent settler colonial project. Tar sand expansion projects and pipeline infrastructure, of which Enbridge’s Line 9 reversal is a part, also travel through numerous racialized and working class communities, and are a continuation of the ongoing environmental racism in Canada, identified by Mascarenhas (2012) and other scholars (Preston, 2013; Klein, 2007; 2014; Simms, 2009). Considerable scholarship to date has concentrated on documenting the devastating effects of neoliberal capitalism on the environment (Heynan, 2007; Klein, 2007, 2014; Simms, 2009; Fletcher, 2012); the toxic ways in which neoliberalism injures political engagement by systematically overriding democratic discourses and institutions (Giroux, 2004; Harvey, 2005; Albo, 2007); and the social injustices that result from neoliberal capitalism as an extension of the Canadian national settler colonial project (Preston, 2013; Coulthard, 2008). To therefore suggest that climate change is merely an ecological issue, and one that can be resolved through conservation efforts or a modest lessening of our dependence on fossil fuels, such as the position put forward by Paehlke (2008), fails to take into consideration the social, political and
economic structures that are responsible for the twin exploitations of people and planet. Climate change is an issue of social, economic and environmental proportions requiring interventions that prioritize intergenerational human and non-human well-being above corporate profit; that increase rather than narrow democratic avenues for participation; and that look for alternatives to capitalism that respect the limits of a finite planet.

Accordingly, many Indigenous and grassroots activists, environmental NGOs, lobbying groups, labour unions, and community networks mark the Albertan tar sands as the primary target for anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, environmental resistance. High-carbon activities associated with the extraction, processing, and refinement of tar sands bitumen are collectively the leading contributor to Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions (Pembina Institute, 2013; Swart & Weaver, 2012; Greenpeace, 2012) and responsible for Canada’s deteriorating status on the global stage as one of the world’s worst climate polluters. Bitumen involves an excavation and refining process that produces approximately four times more carbon than that of conventional oil, and requires massive amounts of fresh water (Pembina Institute, 2013; National Energy Technology, 2008). To access bitumen, Indigenous treaty rights have been violated and vast expanses of Canada’s boreal forest — ironically, one of the world’s largest carbon sinks — have been destroyed, posing threats to wildlife, and to the many First Nations communities who have either been displaced, or whose primary sources of sustenance have now been so polluted they pose life-threatening health risks when consumed. Beyond the immediate and significant material effects, the tar sands epitomize reconfigured relations to the land common to neoliberal regimes.

---

1 Examples include coalition efforts by: Idle No More, Occupy, Fossil Fuel Divest, the People’s Climate movements, the Indigenous Environmental Network, the Climate Impact Network, the Tar Sands Solutions Network, Greenpeace Canada, 350.org, Environmental Defence, Toronto East End Against Line 9, Toronto West End Against Line 9, Jane Finch Action Against Poverty, Rising Tide Toronto, the Council of Canadians, the Citizen’s Climate Lobby, Lead Now, Public Interest Research Groups, Scientists for the Right to Know, the Canadian Federation of Students, the Ontario Federation of Labour, and many more.
These relations are generative of a series of powerful discursive and material shifts enshrined in neoliberal policies, ideologies, and discourses, a number of which will be detailed in more depth below, but include: the artificial reduction of ecologies to singular, bounded entities that facilitate the privatization of nature (Henyen & Robins, 2005); the proliferation of a logic of commodification to which nature is routinely subjected (Brenner & Theodore, 2007); and the reconfiguration of social relationships to non-human nature, primarily through private property regimes and spatializations (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004). This growing body of scholarship draws attention to the need to conceptualize neoliberalism as an environmental project (Albo, 2007; Himley, 2008; Bakker, 2010; McCarthy & Prudham, 2004; Klein, 2014) as much as it is a scheme that redirects wealth into the hands of a governing elite (Harvey, 2005; 2007; Albo, 2007; Klein, 2007). It is against this backdrop that I situate the tar sands, its infrastructure, and the mounting calls for resistance.

1 Neoliberal Environmental Governance in Canada

The maintenance of particular relations to non-human nature are imperative to the functioning of neoliberal capitalism — namely, the privatization, commodification, and marketization of natural resources (Henyen & Robins, 2005; Brenner & Theodore, 2007; McCarthy & Prudham, 2004; Albo, 2007; Klein, 2007). In parallel, Canada’s current industry-backed, neoliberal government is intent on deepening Canadian dependency on fossil fuels for massive, though narrowly-held, corporate economic gain. Expressions of dissent that stand in the way of this profit-making potential — including climate activism — are understood as threats, and increasingly, as criminal activity requiring state-enforced discipline and correction. Given these factors, it becomes apparent that the state has a vested interest in regulating the conduct of its institutions and its citizenry in relation to the land, and especially in relation to the tar sands.
Neoliberal environmental governance is performed via a myriad of complex, interwoven, mutable mechanisms. In Canada, these include entrenched ideologies of individualism, to the deregulation of corporations, to underfunded scientific climate research, to anti-organizing legislation, to the public dismissal of Canada’s colonial history by the head of state. In order to examine the contours of neoliberal environmental governance in Canada, it is first necessary to define neoliberalism in light of prominent scholarship and to situate neoliberalism in relation to current literature on governmentality.

1.1 Defining Neoliberalism

A salient observation that emerges across multiple theorizations of neoliberalism is that it is less a cohesive, monolithic doctrine or set of practices than a series of dynamic processes that require systematic critique and interrogation (Brenner & Theodore, 2007; McCarthy, 2012; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Harvey, 2005; Springer, 2012). In an attempt to denaturalize these processes, scholars point to the tensions and disparities that exist among and between local iterations of neoliberalism, and the varying degree to which they mirror global neoliberal trends (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Harvey, 2005). As Harvey (2005) notes, this pattern of uneven geographical development inspires interminable pulses of competition which further entrench regional, national and international economies vying for capital accumulation in ongoing processes of neoliberalization. This cycle contributes in part to expanding wealth disparity and to the ongoing restructuring of class relationships to capital (Harvey, 2005; 2007; Albo, 2007) — a restructuring that carries with it austere social, political and environmental consequences. Harvey (2005)

---

2 In his ‘Speech From the Throne’ on October 16, 2013, Prime Minister Stephen Harper professed, “our founders … dared to seize the moment that history offered. Pioneers, then, few in number, reached across a vast continent” and “forged an independent country where none would have otherwise existed.” (Seizing Canada’s Moment: Prosperity and Opportunity in an Uncertain World, Speech from the Throne, 2013)
characterizes this class project in light of a politics of ‘accumulation by dispossession’, in which processes of neoliberalization rely increasingly on violent tactics of expropriation to funnel capital into the possession of a ruling corporate class. This practice involves four central features, namely: the privatization, commodification and/or corporatization of public assets; practices of financial deregulation to extend the size and scope of financial institutions within increasingly manipulable market conditions; the massaging and exploiting of crises to widen local and global wealth disparities; and the application of state interventions in the reversal of capital flow from the poor to the wealthy (Harvey, 2005). Under the application of ‘accumulation by dispossession’, Harvey (2005) subsumes a number of practices, the most pertinent of which include, “the suppression of rights to the commons; ... the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption; [and] colonial, neocolonial and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources)” (p. 159). Ironically then, neoliberalization, which in theory advocates for a non-interventionist style of governance, depends heavily on the “active mobilization of state power” (Brenner & Theodore, 2007, p. 154) to delimit the conditions under which its own powers are operative (Albo, 2007; Peck & Tickell, 2002).

Accordingly, Dean (2014) notes that such processes must be attributed to a regime of governance “of and by the state” rather than to a neoliberal state itself, cautioning against an anti-state critique of neoliberalism that would simultaneously undermine recognition for the important function of centralized state power in the establishment and administration of robust democracies. Dean echoes the arguments put forward by cited political economists and critical geographers who contest neoliberalism as a cohesive, monolithic project, but puts forward a poststructural interpretation that positions neoliberalism as a “thought collective.” This conceptualization can then account for the range of perspectives under a common intellectual
framework, and the resulting variegation of development at the national and transnational levels. Dean (2014) contends that neoliberalism should be understood as less an ideology than a militant and hegemonic movement “born of crisis,” and one that is concurrently shaped and emboldened by the presence of crisis. “Indeed, one of the constituent features of neoliberalism as a thought collective has been its relation to crisis, headlined by Milton Friedman’s view that ‘only a crisis — actual or perceived — produces real change,’” (Dean, 2014, p. 157). Undoubtedly one could define the current state of affairs in Canada as rife with crises that have spiralled out of deepening neoliberalization by the Conservative government, taking as their casualties Indigenous sovereignty, ecological integrity, organizing rights, freedom from surveillance, liveable employment, accessible public education, and robust scientific research, among others.

Presenting a hybrid theorization of neoliberalism, Springer (2012) attempts a reconciliation of what he considers to be a false dichotomy between material and poststructural interpretations. Springer (2012) argues that our conceptualizations of neoliberalism are inadequate if understood as exclusively a set of top-down or bottom-up processes, or as those independent of ideological structures and conventions in the Marxian sense, and regulatory mechanisms of governance in the Foucauldian sense. His argument extends the work of other scholars who have similarly defended a re-examination of the possibilities of overlap between two foundational bodies of theory that may not be as polarized as previously argued (Larner, 2000; Jessop, 2007). Jessop (2007) explains that “while Marx seeks to explain the why of capital accumulation and state power, Foucault’s analyses of disciplinarity and governmentality try to explain the how of economic exploitation and political domination” (p. 40), concluding that although unique in approach, these fundamental points of inquiry are not beyond the scope of dialogue. Accordingly, Springer (2012) offers a more flexible understanding of neoliberalism as a “circuitous process of socio-spatial transformation” (p. 133) — or discourse — that is “duly
aware of both ‘structure’ and ‘agency’” (p. 135). While his analysis seemingly leans towards the immaterial, Springer (2012) contends that material processes of neoliberalization are inseparable from their discursive configurations that construct, explain and champion ‘real world’ structures and practices. This conceptualization underscores the notion that all power/knowledge\(^3\) is produced for particular subjects, with some intended (often regulatory) purpose, while simultaneously attending to the manifest hegemonic structures that create material conditions for particular expressions of individual agency. Springer (2012) contends that “a culturally informed critical political economy has a major role to play in developing politically enabling understandings of the entanglements of power\(^4\) in an increasingly interdependent neoliberal world,” (p. 134).

McCarthy (2012) echoes this point, acknowledging that there is considerable scholarly agreement, whether taken from a poststructural or political economy vantage, in the underlying shifts and logics involved in processes and discourses of neoliberalization. Although theorists appear to have formulated their understandings of neoliberalism in seemingly discrete ways, common to the theorizations already profiled is the notion that processes of neoliberalization prompt a restructuring of society along market lines (McCarthy, 2012). Also shared among prominent scholarship is, as Springer (2012) notes, the understanding of capitalism as the central problem, and the attempt to “decode and destabilize relations of capitalist axiomatics” (p. 140). It is worth stressing the importance of contextualizing these axiomatic relations as occurring within

\(^3\) Foucault (1980) defines the concept of power/knowledge as the relational nature between the production of knowledge under particular conditions of power, which gives rise to certain possibilities for the meanings or ‘truths’ that come to inform people’s rationalities, subjectivities, and conduct.

\(^4\) Springer (2012) borrows this conceptual term from Sharp, Routledge, Philo, & Paddison (2000), who use ‘entanglements of power’ to argue the inseparability of practices of domination from those of resistance.
the circumstances of a warming planet so that proffered destabilizations might also move us closer to social and ecological justice.

1.2 Neoliberal Governmentality

McCarthy (2012) defines neoliberal governmentality as the “consequent subordination of social and political life to the economic realm” (p. 184). Operating from a position that locates the individual as the primary focus of attention, neoliberal governmentality is understood to be a regulatory project that circulates a neoliberal political rationality throughout society (McCarthy, 2012; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Dean (1999) succinctly explains that as part of this rationality, the free and enterprising individual becomes the subject upon which governmental objectives and interests are transferred and performed. This is based on a revised understanding of freedom that favours individual autonomy over goals of collective emancipation more characteristic of social movements (Dean, 1999). Framed by Foucault (1977) as ‘the conduct of conduct’, neoliberal governmentality operates by regulating the choices of the individual agent through a manipulation of the context — or environment — in which that agent acts (Dean, 1999). Operating via discourse as knowledge production, a neoliberal political rationality becomes internalized as a set of ‘common sense’ assumptions about the world.5 Harvey (2005) underscores an important consideration, however, that takes stock of widespread variation in the uptake of neoliberal logics as an embedded feature within the imaginaries and worldviews of society at large. Harvey (2005) argues that this variation has much to do with the degree to which

5 For example: that the ecological can be governed by the socio-economic and therefore manipulated to meet human needs and wants; that the “purpose” of the environment is to serve human needs and wants which supersede those of the planet; that social and ecological responsibilities are the domain of individuals rather than states and thus are carried out through small-scale solutions; that Western economic development is indicative of a higher quality of life.
a citizenry believes in the viability of collective resistance and values a culture of cooperative social responsibility.

If we understand governmentality then as a regulation of individual choice, we move away from the centralizing role of the state in the governance of a population. This is, in and of itself, a very neoliberal notion to promote decentralized, non-interventionist styles of governance, and yet in actuality, we know that the implementation of neoliberalism as a particular governance regime requires state intervention. Similarly, it is not the intention of this analysis to deny that state tactics condition individual choice. In the context of activism and social movements, for example, surveillance and policing, anti-organizing and ‘anti-terror’ legislation, the denial of Indigenous sovereignty via treaty violations and lack of consultation, are mechanisms that take direct effect over individual behaviour. By extension, Keil (2002) argues that such neoliberal technologies should not be read as state governance from afar, but as “a project of re-regulating the everyday lives of people through ideological/discursive, economic and political interventions” (p. 583). Here, a poststructural lens helps to uncover the ways in which particular behaviours are interpreted and understood according to dominant circulating discourses and knowledges, that then become internalized and in turn, manifest materially through action.

Keil (2002) applies a governmentality analysis to the urban Toronto context in his survey of new technologies of power produced via a neoliberal political economy, in which he explores some of the dominant political rationalities that guide the Torontonian in everyday life. He contends that common understandings of citizenship have been “shifted strongly to the novel concept of the individualized subject responsible for his or her own well-being,” citing the “criminalization of marginal behaviours and spaces” (p. 595) as one among multiple influencing factors. We are beginning to see the criminalization of activist interventions with the introduction
of regulatory mechanisms like proposed anti-Boycott Divestment Sanctions legislation or the passing of Bill C-51 otherwise known as the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015, which makes possible the classification of actions that compromise the “economic and financial stability of Canada,” including “interference with critical infrastructure” as belonging to a program of ‘eco-terrorism’ (Open Parliament, 2015). This discursive shift is evidence of the production of particular subjects — “eco-terrorists” to be specific — that Keil (2002) notes are the consequence of particular socio-political, economic and environmental conditions that evolve and coalesce under neoliberal capitalism. In response, this project seeks to uncover some of the subtle and dialectical ways media representations of pipeline resistance make possible various governing technologies that contribute to the de/legitimization and regulation of a politics of dissent.

1.3 Neoliberalism as an Environmental Project

As previously referenced, neoliberal environmental governance involves the regulation and restructuring of relationships to nature. Himley (2008) summarizes it succinctly as “the ongoing drive to commodify nature and fold ecosystem processes into the market” (p. 439). This can be expanded to include the subjection of non-human nature to a logic of commodification (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004; Brenner & Theodore, 2007), the privatization of land and natural resources, the elimination of environmental regulation standards to maximize corporate gain and induce competition between localities, and the reorganization of interactions with non-human nature that advance such economic subjectivities as the enterprising individual (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004), and include the development of private property relationships that erase nature’s ties to “complex social constraints [by] placing it under the auspices of the self-regulating market” (Polyani, 1944 in McCarthy & Prudham, 2004). Neoliberalism as an
environmental project accordingly carries with it a number of social and political costs and implications that are tied to practices of environmental manipulation.

Much has been written in the fields of critical geography, cultural theory and political economy, about the toxic ways in which neoliberalism systematically overrides democratic discourses and institutions to enervate political engagement (Giroux, 2004; Harvey, 2005; Albo, 2007; Klein, 2014). Scholars have argued that a social, political, and economic culture of competition intensifies under a neoliberal regime as localities are not only encouraged, but given explicit permissions, to cut environmental protections and reduce the capacities of collective political and institutional entities in favour of deregulated economic growth (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Albo, 2007; Davis, 2010; Klein, 2014;). This simultaneously works to delimit the potential for the practical and effective application of grassroots or “bottom-up” political action (Peck & Tickell, 2002).

With an eye to the Canadian context, Laforest (2012) surveys the uneven democratic landscape in Canada over the course of the last two decades, tracing the shifting avenues of political representation by tracking the diminution of federal funding to the national voluntary sector. She argues that systematic funding cuts to advocacy organizations over time have led to their delegitimization as political actors and to decreased opportunities for citizens — particularly those from marginalized communities — to participate in forms of political expression and claims-making that stand to influence the directives of political parties and institutions. She argues that federal cuts occurred in parallel with a deepening neoliberal discursive shift that presented an intellectual challenge to the notion that a strong and viable voluntary sector supports public interests. Rather, special interest groups were portrayed as syphoning off governmental provisions via their collective bargaining power that were
considered to be “economically inefficient and undemocratic” (Laforest, 2012, p. 187). A dramatic rise in populism coincided with this shift in support of images of the citizen as the “independent and rational actor” (p. 191). As a result, the advocacy organization was supplanted in the collective imagination by the individual citizen as the most credible voice for the public, and Laforest (2012) contends that this individualization of claims-making processes has had serious implications for the power and efficacy of united political action in Canada. “Strong social infrastructure that supports democratic participation requires appropriate conditions to sustain it, which includes an institutionalized framework, governance arrangements, and resources; all of which have been sorely lacking in Canada” (Laforest, 2012, p. 182). This trend of weakening social infrastructure in Canada has persisted into the current decade. Particularly troublesome is the systematic targeting of environmental organizations through increased surveillance, auditing, cuts to their federal funding and challenges to their charitable status — neoliberal interventions by Canada’s Conservative government intent on minimizing or obstructing altogether any political or social action that could interrupt industrial progress and corporate profit (Barlow, 2015).

2 Discursive Representations of Climate Change

With reference to climate governance more specifically, scholars have noted particular discursive renderings of climate change that have material implications for social and political engagement. In an exploration of environmental policy development, Angela Oels (2005) delivers a theoretical framework that views the politics of climate change through Foucault’s concept of governmentality. She argues that climate change has been discursively and
operationally rendered governable through a regulatory shift away from biopower\textsuperscript{6} to one of advanced liberal government. Under this framework, she contends that a growing proclivity for market-based and technocratic solutions under neoliberal governance have driven efforts to depict climate change as governable via the market-driven availability of cost-effective technological solutions. In contrast to an articulation of climate change as a question of human survival that requires an array of global management strategies as well as state intervention, Western industrialized nations have transitioned to conceptualizations that predominately frame climate change in economic terms, whether that be as an “economic opportunity for innovation and for saving (energy) costs” (p. 200) as in the EU, or as inciting “reduced international competitiveness and costs to the economy” as in the United States. Oels (2005) argues that discursively lacing climate change with the threat of state failure has obfuscated any moral ground for action, and instead evaluates possible courses of action according to a cost-benefit analysis, whereby action is understood to be legitimate only “if the costs of destruction caused by climate change exceed the costs of preventing it” (p. 201). Accordingly, the possibilities for policy making have been subsequently narrowed over the course of the last two decades to those that prioritize the extension of market-based solutions (Klein, 2014; Castree, 2009), to the detriment and alienation of more critical views that have championed less consumptive lifestyles or “questioned the ecological viability of a capitalist economy” (p. 198). Instead, what we have is a “rapidly growing derivatives market of futures and options” (Swyngedouw, 2010, p. 220) that has significant implications for the appropriation of mitigation efforts which strengthen investments in a neoliberal political economy, and that delimits the parameters within which constituents may resist or influence environmental policy development.

\textsuperscript{6} Foucault (1990) defines biopower as a disciplinary technology under which the state takes as its purpose the regulation of activity that supports life.
Additionally, a number of contributions made by critical scholars have together developed a more nuanced understanding of the tensions that exist between the varying degrees and natures of environmental (de)politicization that neoliberal environmental governance inspires. In a comparative thematic analysis between European representations of global climate change and theorizations of what many political philosophers assert to be the current ‘post-political’ condition, Swyngedouw (2010) argues that a rise in populist, neoliberal logic has ironically worked to depoliticize the environment and our political imaginary. Similar to Oels’ (2005) identification of biopower as one of the original organizing principles for climate policy, Swyngedouw (2010) notes that this populist rhetoric has survived in mainstream renderings of climate change in Europe, invigorating the notion of a global humanitarian crisis that provokes “a common condition or predicament [and] the need for common humanity-wide action, mutual collaboration and cooperation” (p. 223). While this, on the surface, does not appear to be problematic, Swyngedouw (2010) argues that the mobilization of ‘global humanity’ as a political subject ignores the complexities and inequalities of varyingly-privileged populations who will experience oncoming consequences of global climate change in very disproportionate ways. The erasure of these complexities and of the differing social, political and ecological goals of communities and nation-states around the world, in combination with the pervasiveness of dogmatic human-nature relations that abet a “non-disputed [neo]liberal capitalist order,” ultimately work to threaten the spaces that “call the democratic political being into order” (p. 223). Populist depictions of climate change have increasingly relied on a neutralized discourse of scientific expertise that reduces the phenomenon to facts and figures, while similarly overlooking the connections to the political programs responsible for the onset of climate change in the first place (Swyngedouw, 2010). Additionally, populists make their appeals directly to the elite, rather than engaging in a politics that calls for the elites’ removal. Under neoliberal capitalism, regimes
of government have worked to convince their respective populace that capitalism is a viable — and perhaps the only — solution to the establishment of a new climate, most evidently advertised through cap and trade schemes that further privatize and commodify nature (in this case, CO$_2$). Positioning climate change as a universal threat to both humanity and to ‘nature,’ while not untrue, has resulted in a post-politics “in which ideological or dissensual contestation and struggles are replaced by techno-managerial planning, expert management and administration” (Swyngedouw, 2010, p.225), a finding aligned with Oels’ (2005) earlier analysis of shifting climate policy discourses. Swyngedouw’s (2010) argument is well-founded — without a more nuanced analysis, this type of rhetoric impels material processes that weaken democratic structures and reproduce market-driven relationships with nature.

Presenting a counter-perspective, McCarthy (2012) takes note of the overt politicization of the environment that has occurred in the United States. As Canada’s influential geo-political neighbour with whom media and other forms of knowledge production are shared, this account bears important considerations for the evolution of climate change discourse in Canada. A more detailed account of this Canadian rhetoric is outlined below. McCarthy (2012) explains that in the United States, climate change has been similarly framed by a discourse of science experts, though one that has been fraught with contention over degrees of scientific consensus. While more recent polls have shown that a majority of the American public now believes that climate change exists and has anthropogenic origins, solutions — as opposed to the phenomenon itself; — have been framed as risks to economic security and as pathways to be avoided if they provoke any curtailment of economic growth (Swyngedouw, 2010; Oels, 2005). This pitting of the environment against the economy is reminiscent of the artificial paradigmatic binary referenced above, in which the economy and the environment are erroneously conceptualized as independent forces at odds with each other. In a similar vein, the economic sphere has been
increasingly politicized under processes of neoliberalization as democratic participation via institutions, political representation and social relations have diminished (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Under the pretense of protecting the viability of the liberated market from political intervention and influence, the American state has increasingly relied on heightened surveillance, policing, and military tactics which similarly work to forestall democratic and political interference from the left (Albo, 2007). These trends are likewise evident in the Canadian context, particularly with recently passed anti-terror legislation (Bill C-51) that dramatically alters the scope of surveillance in Canada — to the extent that a new category of dissidence, “the eco-terrorist”, is a label now applied to many environmental activists, and Indigenous activists in particular (Barlow, 2015).

Yet despite this dire outlook, social movements — and environmental movements in particular — have been cited by scholars as some of the strongest forces of opposition to neoliberal governance (Hartwick & Peet, 2003; McCarthy & Prudham, 2004; Harvey, 2005). Harvey (2005) notes that collectivities stand the best chance at social transformation. Hulme (2009) echoes this sentiment, highlighting that climate change brings with it a rare window of political opportunity in which reconsiderations of our social, political, economic, and environmental relations, structures and institutions can be debated and exercised. Yet their political weight also makes social movements a target for state suppression when promoted goals and priorities stand counter to those associated with a neoliberal state program (Laforest, 2012; Harvey, 2005; Barlow, 2015). Peck & Tickell (2002) have already cited a trend in eroding political and institutional resistance to neoliberalism, while Harvey (2005) explains the tendency of states to resort to “coercive legislation and policing tactics” (p. 77) to extinguish expressions of opposition to corporate supremacy — tactics that have rapidly emerged in Canada over the course of the last decade. Yet it is precisely because of these conditions — active resistance
against the state and actively resisted by the state — that a growing collection of scholarship is increasingly and purposefully attending to the role of social movements and non-state actors in analyses of environmental governance (Himley, 2008). Keil (2002) likewise evaluates environmental justice conflicts in light of their rich potential to provide pathways for more sustained investigations into multiple forms of resistance against the urbanization of neoliberal environmental governance, citing the urban as the foremost stage for the development of social and cultural forms of critique of neoliberalism. Keil (2002) highlights a number of lenses of urban neoliberalism that are present in the context of Toronto, including alterations to ‘the space of politics’ with the amalgamation of urban centres which concentrated left-leaning voter bases and expanded the jurisdiction of the right in untouched rural or exurban municipalities; use of the ‘reluctant global city strategy’ to rebrand Toronto as a competitive, cosmopolitain city suitable for international capital investment; the simultaneous process of ‘rescaling of the urban imaginary’ to centre Toronto’s global prominence as a denationalized nexus within the global economy; and commitments to ‘ecological modernization’ which, as mentioned, reorders social relationships with nature through the twin processes of privatization and marketization. As a counter pursuit, Himley (2008) asserts firmly that contestations against such highly unjust forms of neoliberalization may be achieved through reimagined avenues of environmental governance, including the establishment of alternative decision-making bodies or the application of collective critique and debate of existing public policies.

While there is a thread of optimism across these analyses, other scholars have questioned the degree to which environmental activism and social movements can build enough sustained capacity to form a stronghold of effective political resistance against deepening neoliberalization. Much like Peck & Tickell (2002) who acknowledge the attrition of such pockets of resistance, Laforest (2012) contends that in a variable landscape of political representation and participation,
“it remains to be seen whether citizen engagement initiatives can fill the democratic void” (p. 191). Laforest’s (2012) study found the deterioration of associational networks in Canada, which signals a concern for the viability of Canadian social movements. A current in social movement theory suggests that large, loose networks made up of ‘weak’ associations — namely, acquaintances, colleagues, and allies — tend to have more resiliency and stability than those composed primarily of a tight-knit circle of activists (McCarthy & Zald, 2003). That opportunities for building and expanding advocacy networks across Canada have been narrowed due to federal defunding, presents a possible cause for concern regarding the diversity of forms of political resistance that can be exercised in Canada. Another consideration worth raising is found in Holifield’s (2007) critique of the development of environmental justice policies under the Clinton administration, in which he found that policies endeavoured to equip and empower marginalized communities to better manage environmental hazards faced by their constituents, rather than implement interventions that would mitigate or redistribute environmental risks themselves. The broader concern is that the avenues for environmental activism are often themselves vulnerable to neoliberalization, including those that originate from a justice-oriented framework. Again, this prompts a consideration of the extent to which environmental activism can bring about a politics of resistance that is impervious to — or at the very least, redeemable from — processes of neoliberalization. These questions are particularly pertinent given tensions between the nature of the threat climate change presents, the hegemonic culture of individualized political engagement, and the necessity of responses that are both collective and multi-scalar, democratic and environmentally-just. Moreover, the need to expand research within the Canadian context gains additional relevance as Canada’s status as a global climate polluter worsens.
3 Media as Implicated in (Environmental) Governance

Foucault’s concept of governmentality can be summarized as the regulation of conduct via the circulation of discourse that, through relations of power, comes to be known and understood as truth. Foucault terms this technology ‘power/knowledge’ to address the interrelated nature of the connections between knowledge and power. Foucault therefore diverges from a conceptualization of power as ‘top-down’ and exercised exclusively at the level of the state. By extension, Foucault contends that governmentality, while enacted in part by government institutions and political actors, occurs via discourses produced by many players at many levels. Much of the aforementioned scholarship has addressed the ways in which a neoliberal regime functions to define the contours and to narrow the scope of active political engagement more broadly (Swyngedouw, 2010; Giroux, 2004; 2008; Harvey, 2005), and with specific reference to the Canadian context (Keil, 2002; Klein, 2014; Albo, 2007; Laforest, 2012; Barlow, 2015). The media, as an institution in its own right and with ties to both government and industry, (re)produces and disseminates knowledges and discourses that have the capacity to shape and inform public opinions and attitudes (van Dijk, 2001; Hansen, 2010). As Laforest (2012) notes, “a significant part of the conditions of engagement are the discursive practices and processes through which the state promotes and justifies routes to political representation” (p. 183).

Mainstream corporate media, as a proxy voice of the state with a tendency to de/legitimatize non-state political actors and actions, thus offers significant sites of inquiry into articulations of neoliberalization and neoliberal governmentality. Accordingly, Himley’s (2008) assertion that investigations into governmentality centre the socio-spatial contestations and struggles of different political actors against particular governance arrangements, is apt. Social groups operating in different geographical regions may confront varying conditions that define the
contours for meaningful participation in decision-making, particularly when decision-making centres around the use and management of natural resources (Himley, 2008). Media as a producer of power/knowledge then, is of particular relevance as a window through which we gain a more nuanced understanding of the subtle ways relations with the land and with non-human nature are regulated, and particularly when they contradict state interests.

Emerging from the cultural studies tradition, Giroux’s (2004) critique of neoliberalism as a new site of public pedagogy gives credence to the cultural dimensions of neoliberalism. For Giroux, discourses are produced and disseminated from what he calls “the educational force” of culture writ large, a conclusion which prompts consideration of the nuanced ways in which processes of neoliberalization come to transform cultural norms. Public pedagogy becomes deeply politicized as norms, values, and customs are (re)constituted via a myriad of social institutions that increasingly subscribe to a hegemonic corporate agenda. He adds that,

as knowledge becomes abstracted from the demands of civic culture and is reduced to questions of style, ritual and image, it undermines the political, ethical and governing conditions for individuals and social groups to either participate in politics or construct those viable public spheres necessary for debate, collective action, and solving urgent social problems (Giroux, 2008, p. 122).

If we understand media discourse as a site of public pedagogy, it is necessary then to develop a more robust empirical understanding of the possible ways in which representations of political dissent may influence and become implicated in the neoliberalization of democracy. This warrants particular attention when represented dissent is aimed at the one of the most visible and most subsidized national industries in Canada, and when corresponding media discourses have the potential to inform the political conditions under which citizens engage on issues of climate justice.
3.1 Media Representations of Climate Change

A considerable body of scholarship to date has narrowed the focus of discursive representations of climate change to those appearing in mainstream media (Carvalho, 2005; 2007; Hansen, 1993; 2010; Yonge & Dugas, 2011; DiFrancesco & Young, 2010; Boycoff, 2009). In a review of three British mainstream news publications and associated coverage of climate change, Carvalho (2005) identifies moments where deeply-rooted ideological positions came to inform news discourses, as well as the legitimacy of social actors who represented differing value systems. Her research findings indicated that a consideration for the global repercussions of climate change was obstructed via the presence of discourses reinforcing dominant ideological attitudes pertaining to free-market capitalism and neoliberalism. Unlike Oels (2005), who advocates for the discursive reinvigoration of climate change as a global phenomenon in order to better justify a more robust international policy framework for mitigation, Carvalho (2005) argues along the lines of Swyngedouw’s (2010) analysis, cautioning that such a presentation of climate change in British newspaper discourse has lead to the issue being effectively cast out of domestic responsibility. While conflicting, these perspectives together illuminate the dynamic ways in which nations governed by neoliberal programs and rationalities are able to bend discourse, even in response to a threat as totalizing as climate change, in ways that protect and advance objectives aligned with the larger neoliberal project.

Within the Canadian context, DiFrancesco & Young (2011) investigate the treatment of climate change according to visual representations in print news media. They found that while Canadians’ awareness of climate change was generally high, based on contextual framings of the images as well as the frequency of coverage, there was no overall sense of urgency associated with the issue. Di Francesco & Young (2011) argue that climate change has not yet become a
direct lived experience for Canadians, and that a lack of material associations with climate change has accordingly minimized the temporal threat it presents. In a study of textual representations of climate change in Canadian print media, Young & Dugas (2010) found parallel themes related to the decontextualization — or what they argue has become the “banalization” — of climate change. They argue that a focus on intersections of climate change with “everyday business and politicking” has contributed to a decontextualization of the issue that a greater focus on causation and impact could have otherwise helped to deflect (Young & Dugas, 2010, p. 1). Rather than news coverage that reports on natural or scientific events, or that makes explicit their connections to climate change, the majority of coverage likens climate change to a topic of “daily political sparring, arts and culture, and technology and business trends” (Young & Dugas, 2010, p. 11). Another finding of note was the limited role played by “ordinary citizens” in climate change discourse in national outlets in Canada, which focuses instead on discussions that engage politicians and scientists in attributions of blame for climate change, or in accusations of bias for or against climate change mitigation (Young & Dugas, 2010).

These studies collectively engage a discussion of the ways in which political contexts influence both the constructions of media representations and the centring of particular voices. Scholarship by Boycott (2009) attends to the cyclical relationship that exists within contested spaces of mass media and environmental politics. He argues representations of climate change can condition public responses and considerations for action that in turn, inform future representations and coverage. Consequently, Boycott (2009) contends that media representations are both “negotiated through… and influence a spectrum of possibilities for environmental governance (p.440). As previously outlined, there are a number of recently implemented policies and programs that have contoured the current socio-political landscape in Canada, and that
demonstrate the government and its institutions are keeping a watchful eye on the activities of those partaking in environmental activism and climate change mitigation (Barlow, 2015).

In parallel with the intensifying regulation of particular activities are processes of deregulation under which environmental assessments and legislative protections have been erased, as well as the distortion of government investments in tar sands expansion that include billion-dollar subsidies and aggressive lobbying for infrastructure, such as TransCanada’s Keystone XL pipeline. These conditions function to shape and inform public engagement, as well as constructed representations of engagement in venues like mainstream media. Giroux (2004) persuasively argues that “the crisis of democracy cannot be separated from the dual crisis of representation and political agency,” yet Boycoff (2009) notes that the corresponding “connections between media information and potential behaviour are not straightforward” (p. 448). Rather, while media coverage does not define engagement, it has great potential to condition its possibilities (Boycoff, 2009). The analytical focus then, turns to the ways in which media representations become an influencing force in the establishment of possible environmental governance technologies that include the regulation of individual (political) actors and their conduct. More specifically, this project seeks to further clarify if and how representations of Line 9 pipeline resistance come to function as potential mechanisms through which the regulation of dissent can operate.
Chapter 2
Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks

4 Theoretical Framework

To engage with the politics of social activism and public dissent, climate change, and the construction of formal and informal discourse, this thesis will incorporate the Foucauldian concept of governmentality (Foucault, 1991; Dean, 1999) into a theoretical framework that combines key perspectives from the fields of critical geography, political economy, and critical media studies, as they pertain to neoliberalism and the environment. In particular, this framework makes use of Springer’s (2012) circuitous conceptual model of neoliberalism to explore in more depth the interconnected material and discursive relationships between ‘neoliberalism as state form’ and ‘neoliberalism as governmentality,’ within the context of the intersectional socio-spatial transformative processes Springer (2012) and other scholars (Peck & Tickell, 2002; McCarthy & Prudham, 2004, Harvey, 2005) describe. This framework allows for an investigation into the ways in which a discourse of dissent can be incited to govern forms of political participation that resist or propagate the neoliberal paradigm to which Canada’s governing elite generally subscribes. This research aims to contribute to broader empirical and theoretical work which considers the implications the neoliberal paradigm has for climate change, for a politically-engaged citizenry, and consequentially, for the movement towards social, economic, and environmental justice.

Springer’s (2012) reconceptualization of ‘neoliberalism as discourse’ is an intersectional effort to harmonize the often-cited tensions between theorizations of neoliberalism developed by materialist Marxian political economy traditions and those by Foucauldian poststructuralists. Rather, Springer (2012) argues for a dialectical approach that advances scholarly understandings
of the mutually constitutive nature of discursive and material processes of neoliberalization. Springer (2012) writes,

Understanding neoliberalism as discourse allows for a much more integral approach to social relations than speech performances alone. This is a discourse that encompasses material forms in state formation through policy and program, and via the subjectivation of individuals on the ground, even if this articulation still takes place through discursive performativities. …Materiality and discourse become integral, where one cannot exist without the other (p. 143).

Offering a concise survey of existing literature, Springer (2012) summarizes four prominent understandings of neoliberalism: as an ideological hegemonic project; as policy and program; as state form; and as governmentality. In a Canadian context, taking stock of both the material and immaterial manifestations of neoliberalization involves attending to the ideological logics and value systems such as individualism, competition, free-market idealism, and the commodification of nature; the programs that involve deregulation, privatization, depoliticization, corporatization and the prioritizing of economic over ecological interests; the policies that strip provincial jurisdiction over environmental assessments and community consultations, that criminalize environmental activism, that muzzle climate scientists and that routinely and violently contravene Indigenous treaty rights; the interventionist settler-colonial state that increasingly relies on policing and surveillance, and that purposefully refashions social institutions and democratic structures with an eye to “small government”; and the ways in which these conditions constitute a ‘commonsense logic’ that both governs and makes sense of the actions of (de)legitimized socio-political actors. It is this last point that is of primary interest to this analysis within the context of pipeline resistance.

While Springer’s (2012) overview of the dominant understandings of neoliberalism is helpful, for the purposes of this analysis, the compelling nature of his approach is twofold. First, Springer (2012) advocates for a conceptualization of neoliberalism that appreciates “the elaborate and
fluctuating interchange between the local and extralocal forces at work within the global political economy” (p. 136). Like previously mentioned scholars, Springer (2012) argues against ‘neoliberalism as monolithism’, advancing an understanding that centres the dynamic, processual, and hybridized nature of neoliberalism, “contingent upon existing historical contexts, geographical landscapes, institutional legacies and embodied subjectivities” (p. 135-6). Springer (2012) is careful to note, however, the importance of recognizing that processes of neoliberalization play out across multiple scales of governance, cautioning against an exclusive preoccupation with the local. He argues that doing so can lead to a disarticulation of the “similar patterns of experience across space”, and a subversion of “efforts to build and sustain shared aims of resistance beyond the micro-politics of the local” (Springer, 2012, p. 136). Springer’s (2012) conceptual model therefore allows us to situate Line 9 resistance across multiple scales, as a contextualized local activism, and as part of a broader national resistance movement against the tar sands and its infrastructure. This model also creates space to put in conversation the circulating (local and national) media discourses on pipeline resistance with the increasingly fraught material conditions created by the Canadian state, both of which work in concert to generate technologies aimed at regulating civic political conduct.

Second, just as processes of neoliberalization cannot be pinned to individual scales, Springer (2012) argues that our understandings of neoliberalization are incomplete without a consideration of the ways in which each neoliberal configuration is positioned in relation to the others. In constructing ‘neoliberalism as discourse’, Springer (2012) identifies possibilities for dialogic, interconnected transactions that can and do exist among and between configurations (see Figure 1). He contends that,

While there are inevitable tensions between the four views of neoliberalism that are not entirely commensurable, their content is not diametrically opposed, and indeed a
considered understanding of how power similarly operates in both a Gramscian sense of hegemony and a Foucauldian sense of governmentality points toward a dialectical relationship (Springer, 2012, p. 143).

According to Springer (2012), ‘neoliberalism as discourse’ provides a richer interpretation of dominant social relations than examinations of discursive governing technologies or hegemonic structures in isolation, because power functions and operates throughout. Just as the social, political, and economic institutions of the state — increasingly controlled by a ruling corporate elite — put forth hegemonic neoliberalized worldviews that inform the material and cultural grounds upon which social actors engage, processes of internalization and subjectivation induce conduct across multiple scales that can simultaneously strengthen and unsettle the neoliberal project. Springer (2012) writes, for example, that the regulation of conduct “is part of how neoliberal hegemonic constellations have assembled themselves, particularly through networks of think tanks” (p. 138), made up of individual actors who collectively can be understood to constitute membership in a ‘transnational capitalist class’ (Carroll, 2010). Yet active resistance insinuates that the naturalization of hegemonic beliefs, explanations, or values is not an even or all-encompassing pursuit, nor is it impervious to material and cultural critiques. Springer (2012) notes that logically, “situated actors face various forms of incorporation and resistance dependent upon context, and thus mutate their approaches to neoliberal governance accordingly. As such, the notion of hegemony is not diametrically opposed to a more nuanced understanding of neoliberalization” (p. 138-9), but rather is enhanced by it. This consideration gains particular relevance given that processes of neoliberalization are now being carried out under the auspices of a warming and increasingly vulnerable planet. The intensifying, though disproportionately threatening, material conditions of climate change, not to mention the increasingly frequent cultural allusions to a forthcoming apocalypse, work to illuminate not only the cracks in the systems, the structures, and the logics of neoliberalization, but the ways in which these processes
are adapting to a context characterized by rising (economic and ecological) precarity. An analysis of neoliberalism that fails to account for these dialectic and fluid facets of power provides a snapshot of the crisis that captures only half its face.

To apply Springer’s (2012) model, there is an apparent dialectic relationship between the programs and policies developed by a given state formation that then govern the activities of the state itself, including future pursuits of policy making. This relationship includes the myriad ways in which state formations shape the thinking and behaviours of citizens (understood as governmentality), the ways in which citizens’ ideas and actions (understood here in the context of activism) influence state formation, and the ways in which power flows throughout. To expand on this abstractly, a neoliberal state impoverishes, deriving its power from material conditions of exploitation that leave many individuals and communities socially and economically marginalized. These conditions, in concert with eroding democratic structures and increased surveillance (neoliberalism as policy and program), and pervasive commitments to individualism and competition (neoliberalism as ideology), can contribute to a perceived, self-regulating sense of powerlessness that transfers power to the state’s increasingly authoritarian neoliberal agenda via the inhibition of active political engagement. The ideas and actions of citizens may still work to modify state formation — even preserving the status quo involves degrees of adaptation in a process as dynamic as neoliberalization — but perhaps the potential for resistance is impacted. Accordingly, Springer’s (2012) model helps to map and think through the multiple, dialogic, and power-laden forces involved in sites and exchanges of neoliberalization. In doing so, Springer (2012) develops a more dynamic depiction of neoliberalism as a “circuitous process of socio-spatial transformation” (p. 133).
More specifically, ‘neoliberalism as state form’ comes to involve the restructuring and reordering of the state — its institutions, management systems and social agendas — with the goal of maximizing productivity (Springer, 2012, p. 137). If we follow Harvey’s (2007) theory of creative destruction, or similarly, Peck & Tickell’s (2002) theory of “roll back and roll out” neoliberalism, this includes both creative elements (e.g. transforming Canada into a global energy “superpower” via expansion of the tar sands and its infrastructure) and destructive elements that eliminate all that stands in opposition to this creative vision (e.g. environmental assessments, scientific research on climate change, Indigenous treaty rights, democracy). In the hyper-authoritarian context of El Salvador between 1962 - 1981, Paul Alameida (2003) explores the expression of collective resistance within the context of shifting moments of political opportunity and threat. As the contemporary political landscape in Canada has increasingly come to be associated with the threats of economic and ecological failure, and the continuing erosion of rights, it is against this particular state formation that this analysis contextualizes its interrogation of political engagement via Line 9 pipeline resistance.

Noted Foucauldian scholar and prolific writer on governmentality, Mitchell Dean (1999) defines government as “any attempt to shape with some degree of deliberation aspects of our behaviour according to a particular set of norms and for a variety of ends,” (p. 18). Dean (1999) notes the deeply rooted connections between government, administration, and politics, with the bodies, lives, and selves of a governed populace, arguing that “government is crucially concerned to modify a certain space marked out by entities such as the individual, its selfhood or personage, or the personality, character, capacities, levels of self-esteem and motivation individuals possess” (p. 20). Within the context of political engagement and a politics of dissent, ‘neoliberalism as governmentality’ becomes about the regulation of the neoliberal citizen as political subject. Famously described by Foucault (1991) as “the conduct of conduct”,
'governmentality' therefore invites us to consider the ways in which the dominant political and economic paradigm comes to regulate the choices of citizens through processes of internalization and modes of subjectivation.7 Ultimately, the regulation of choice facilitates the expression of certain behaviours over others, and commonly those aligned with state priorities. This regulation is not, however, easily accomplished (nor pragmatically understood) within the context of advanced liberal democracies, in which Dean (1999) notes there exist discourses, rationalities, and subjectivities that run counter to traditional neoliberal tenets. He writes, we must consider “how neoliberal rationalities can exist in complex interrelations with neoconservatism and populist anti-governmental reaction, as with debates on morality and community” (Dean, 1999, p. 176). Examples of the counter-neoliberal reactions of which Dean (1999) writes are multiple, evident in worldwide historical and contemporary political resistance movements that suggest neoliberal rationalities are perhaps not as compelling or totalizing as some scholars have argued (Kalb, 2012). Counter-neoliberal thinking also surfaced in discussions with informants who spoke of anti-capitalist perspectives and deliberate intentions to de-individualize activism and dissent. This goal was fundamental to their campaign dialogue and strategizing, which was as equally committed to the establishment of strong, collective social movements as it was to the interruption of the Line 9 project itself.

With this in mind, this theoretical framework will focus on the nuanced discursive interventions that both legitimized and delegitimized pipeline dissent within Canada’s neoliberal political and economic regime. Additional consideration will be paid to the context in which said discourses were circulated: via mainstream newspaper articles which collectively comprise one

---

Foucault (1995) describes the mode of subjectivation as the internalization of expectations that inform subjects of their moral obligations.
of the primary vehicles responsible for the representation of activists’ actions, and which are intimately involved with knowledge production and power relations (Fairclough, 1995; Matheson, 2005). Central inquiries will focus on how mainstream news discourse on Line 9 activism produces particular rationalities with regard to political action, and how activists are subsequently engaging with media through their active political dissent. In particular: who are seen as legitimate social and political actors in Canada? what types of actions are considered legitimate expressions of political engagement and by whom? and how are citizens with agency motivated to engage in particular ways with their socio-political and ecological environments? These inquiries will be analyzed in light of the challenges or reinforcements they pose to the broader governing logics of Canada’s neoliberal political economy.

5 Methodology

To engage with these inquiries, I apply a critical discourse analysis to a selection of Canadian newspaper articles that include representations of Line 9 resistance. Print media (re)produces and disseminates discourses that have the capacity to shape and inform public opinions and attitudes (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2001; Matheson, 2005; Hansen, 2010). Put another way, media discourses function as public pedagogy, priming shared understandings of society’s problems and their respective solutions, and delineating who the legitimate social actors are in a given context (Kelly, 2011, p. 186). While there have been multiple attempts to document the performative functions of media discourse in relation to climate change (Carvalho, 2005; 2007; Boycoff, 2009), including within a Canadian context (DiFancesco & Young, 2010; Young & Dugas, 2011), what remains obscure is whether (and if so, how) constructed representations of dissent inform local activism on the ground, and alternately, if and in what ways local activism prompts the construction of given representations in media. Given the Alberta tar sands have
been identified as the largest contributing source of Canadian greenhouse emissions (Pembina Institute, 2013), it is disquieting that only a modest amount of critical attention has thus far been paid to Canadian political opposition of the tar sands and its infrastructure. Virtually no scholarship exists on the Line 9 pipeline. Accordingly, this project seeks to take a small step towards closing this sizeable gap in the literature, one that gains particular relevance in light of the worsening conditions for political intervention and mitigation efforts attending to climate change — the most substantial socio-economic and environmental threat facing present and future generations.

In an effort to address the aforementioned relational ambiguity between political action and representations of dissent, I also conduct semi-structured interviews with three key activists involved in an anti-Line 9 campaign in Toronto. Interviews offered layers of contextual information that were important to this analysis for multiple reasons. First, the experiences and interpretations of the three informants provided a helpful frame of reference and a more comprehensive understanding of Line 9 resistance efforts, offering details of direct actions as well as the motivations behind them that were not captured in the articles themselves. This information was equally important in order to better ground the discourse analysis in materiality, understanding that discursive representations were not abstractions, but interpretations of actions carried out by particular actors, with a given set of identities, lived experiences, and beliefs, acting within particular socio-political and geographic conditions, and whose resistance was targeted at a contentious material project. In addition, the interviews provided greater insight into some of the internalized (neoliberal) logics informants have encountered among both participants and witnesses of their resistance, or that have possibly influenced strategizing itself, and the ways in which informants are working through attempts to subvert these logics. This provided a reference point from which to compare and contrast how such rationalities were technologically
mobilized in the newspaper discourses on political engagement. From another angle, key informants and their activist peers were not only actors captured by the discourse, but constitute an important segment of the audiences and recipients for whom media discourses are intended. Finally, insights gained from the interviews, in combination with analyzed media discourses, helped to address the multiplicities of scale across which this resistance is unfolding. The interviews put in conversation local and national media representations with a localized activism that simultaneously understands itself to be part of a broader tar sands resistance movement across North America. The interviews therefore functioned as a tool from which to explore dialogic possibilities between action (as reported by informants) and its representation.

In order to approach both data sets in relation to one another, I combine two methodological applications that seek to put in conversation identified representational configurations with salient themes that emerged in discussions with key activists. To the interview transcripts, I apply a thematic mapping methodology fleshed out by Attride-Stirling (2001) which introduces the construction of thematic networks that explore the interconnections between explicit and implied meanings. Meanings are accessed via a multi-layered excavation of salient themes within texts which are then reorganized and mapped in relation to each other according to basic, organizing and global themes. These thematic networks are depicted in web-like structures to “remove any notion of hierarchy, giving fluidity to the themes and emphasizing the interconnectivity throughout the network” (p. 389). Attride-Stirling (2001) cautions, however, that the networks themselves should not be construed as the analysis itself; rather they function as a tool that aids in the facilitation and illustration of textual interpretation.

To identify and analyze representations of dissent within surveyed newspaper articles, I make use of van Leeuwen's (2008) 'social action network' (see Table 1), a descriptive framework which critically reorganizes representations of social action according to five sociosemantic
categories and their adjunct classifications. While the framework is applied to the data set in its entirety, for the purposes of this analysis, particular attention will be paid to the following three categories in light of the frequent and multiple ways they functioned to de/legitimize representations of social action: semiotic versus material action; activation versus deactivation; and agentialization versus deagentalization. The remaining two categories, abstraction versus concretization, and single- versus over-determination, are more concerned with the generalizability of actions as well as their metaphorical interpretation, but were not generally found to have de/legitimizing effects in representations of social action identified within this data set. Additionally, van Leeuwen (2008) deals more specifically with the discursive construct of legitimation, which he defines as a set of constructions that specifically re-contextualize representations to offer de/legitimizing evaluations of social practices. He notes that de/legitimations will often answer the question, “‘why should we do this?’ or ‘why should we do this in this way?’” (p. 105). There are four primary constructions of legitimation, two of which were statistically more significant in the data set: moral evaluation; and rationalization. The analysis therefore focuses on their application above the two remaining legitimatization constructs.

5.1 Interviews

5.1.1 Selection of Key Informants

In order to contextualize the critical study of representations, I interviewed three key activists with extensive knowledge and experience regarding Line 9 resistance in Toronto, as determined by their involvement in the envisioning, organizing, strategic planning and participation in actions opposing Line 9. While interviewees were involved in such activities in shifting roles and capacities over the course of the campaigns, they are also activists who have demonstrated a
continued commitment to Line 9 resistance. As the Line 9 campaign in Toronto is a
decentralized amalgamation of a number of sub-campaigns led by grassroots organizations,
neighbourhood committees, and environmental NGOs — all of which operate under slightly
different mandates and with different regional and constituency-based communities in Toronto
— the intention was to interview activists who could represent some of the different groups
working within the broader Coalition Network. As the Coalition Network itself creates a space
for joint strategizing and organizing across factions, and as all three informants reside in
Toronto, the key informants therefore share a common organizing environment, working within
the same (or similar) socio-political and geographic parameters. In addition, they have each had
experiences working with activists in other communities opposing Line 9 within the Golden
Horseshoe area in southern Ontario. They are all legal adults above the age of 18, and have all
had experiences interacting with the media, as well as engaging in discussions of media strategy
related to Line 9 resistance. In addition, selected informants orient their resistance from an
environmental justice perspective, understanding climate change as a socio-economic
phenomenon as much as it is an ecological one — a notion that is central to the broader critique
offered in this analysis. Accordingly, the three informants have as their fundamental objective,
systemic change that requires anti-capitalist, anti-neoliberal, anti-colonial and anti-racist
interventions. These perspectives are generally well-represented by members within the
Coalition Network, though it is unknown to what extent they constitute a critical framework for
each of the smaller factions.

More specifically, Anna is a white female who self-identifies as a settler on illegitimately
occupied territory. She has primarily been involved with Indigenous solidarity work throughout
the course of her activist career, and characterizes her environmental activism as such,
particularly in relation to climate change mitigation. She came to the Line 9 issue through her
work with the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, as well as a grassroots action group that has taken a central role in organizing many of the direct actions against Line 9. She is a lead organizer with this action group, and plays a central role in coordinating efforts within the Coalition Network. Graeme is a racialized male and first-generation immigrant who is an active member of a community-led grassroots anti-poverty coalition of residents in a low-income, racialized neighbourhood in Toronto along the Line 9 pipeline route. He has represented this community coalition within the Network and has played a direct role in organizing education events and discussions on Line 9 for the community coalition, as well as organizing and participating in other direct actions and resistance efforts by the larger Network. Finally, Michael is a retired white male who founded an anti-Line 9 neighbourhood committee in Toronto which has proven to be one of the most active groups both within and outside of the Network. Michael represents this committee at Coalition Network meetings where he is a diligent and thoughtful contributor to campaign strategy discussions. He has produced or contributed to much of the campaign literature that is used at outreach events by multiple groups within the Network.

Social-locations described here are only those defined and referenced by the participants themselves. In order to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used throughout this project. Interviews were limited to three key informants due to the project’s limitations in scope and time.

5.1.2 Interview Structure & Analysis

I conducted one semi-structured interview with each informant, each of which was approximately 90 minutes in length. The interviews endeavoured to generate rich descriptions of activists’ prior and present experiences of environmental activism and pipeline resistance, as well as their characterizations of the role of environmental activism in society, and their
objectives as (environmental) activists, both broad and narrow. The interviews also asked informants to reflect upon their conceptualizations of the Line 9 campaign, as well as the degrees to which they felt mainstream media accurately and justly represented the campaign and any corresponding actions or expressions of dissent; the degrees to which the media publicized or ignored a given argument or perspective; and the degrees to which media representations influenced campaign strategizing. Interview questions (see Appendix A) included a mix of narrative or descriptive questions (e.g. questions involving personal histories of activism) and those that sought the informant’s personal opinions or beliefs (e.g. questions pertaining to political orientations and affiliations). The sequencing of questions was organized in such a way that interviewees were invited to think through the philosophical and ethical underpinnings of their activism and the role of the activist more broadly, before moving into more personal accounts of environmental justice and pipeline activism, and the role of media in their experiences of activist strategizing. Informants were offered opportunities to clarify and/or revise statements in interview transcripts so as to increase interviewee confidence that provided answers spoke most directly to their experiences. A thematic analysis was then applied across the three interview transcripts, reorganizing data into thematic networks according to the basic, organizing, and global themes that emerged.

5.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis, at its most rudimentary, is a study of the relational social practices of meaning-making (Fairclough, 1995; 2010; van Dijk, 2001; 2008). Its prevalence in critical social research traditions is predicated on its dialectical interrogation of power and the multiple ways it conditions and is conditioned by discourse. Discourse is employed here in the Foucauldian sense to mean a complex and interwoven set of (communicative) exchanges that
facilitate representations of the material world under particular power and social conditions, and which come to have material effect through their operationalization (Foucault, 1980). Power is similarly understood via Foucault (1980) as having both productive and oppressive capacities, and as rooted in the material. In his reading of Foucault, Donald Matheson (2005) contributes an important methodological note towards an analytic approach that “look[s] for patterns, series, hierarchies in language that position people within certain roles and ways of thinking” (p. 10), while Potter (2001) similarly emphasizes a focus “on specific practices tied to occasions and settings” (p. 41) in order to lend a more material focus to discursive analysis. Given these directives, it is imperative to contextualize discursive practices in Canada within the multi-scalar processes of neoliberal capitalism, which involve “dialectical relations between its discursive and ‘extra-discursive’ elements” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 12). Consequently, Fairclough (2010) insists on the importance of analyses that attempt to clarify the role of language and discourse systems in the perpetuation of modern capitalist societies.

5.2.1 Media Discourse Analysis

Media discourse in particular has a number of specific attributes that require attention. Fairclough (2010) argues media discourse is best understood as “a class of texts which are specialized for moving resources for meaning-making between texts, and more abstractly between different social practices, fields, domains and scales of social life” (p. 75). In other words, Fairclough (1995; 2010) draws our attention to the multi-functional aspect of media texts, which simultaneously construe the world and carry out social relations. News media is particularly effective in its multi-functionality, producing a discourse that originates out of available social norms, values, and assumptions, and that provokes both ideational and interpersonal exchanges (Matheson, 2005; Fairclough, 1995).
discourse also has the notable capacity to dictate what issues, events, or ideas are considered ‘newsworthy’. Stuart Hall and colleagues (1978) define this notion as that which “represent[s] the changefulness, the unpredictability and the conflictual nature of the world,” but add that ‘newsworthy events’ are never

allowed to remain in the limbo of the ‘random’ - they must be brought within the horizon of the ‘meaningful’. This bringing of events within the realm of meaning means, in essence, referring unusual and unexpected events to the ‘maps of meaning’ which already form the basis of cultural knowledge, into which the social world is already mapped (p. 54).

And while these ‘maps of meaning’ are commonly shared, Matheson (2005) argues that often in news media, the productive aspect of meaning is exclusively accessed by those in positions of power. This should not be confused, however, with the inter-personal or cognitive aspect of meaning-making that occurs during the consumption of news discourse. In a re-envisioning of frame theory, Marc Steinberg (1998) argues for an ‘interindividual’ framework in which meaning is understood as unstructured, dialogic and produced between interlocutors. “The degree to which collective-action frames resonate with potential adherents and sympathizers thus partly depends on their narrative fidelity with prominent ideological visions” (Steinberg, 1998, p. 846). That is, the production of news media and the positioning of issues or sources in relation to ‘maps of meaning’ may itself be under the control of media outlets, but the ways in which that discourse is digested is less easily controlled, and depends in part upon the compatibility between the ideational ‘maps of meaning’ mobilized by the journalist and the reader. Discourse (including news discourse) should then be understood as dynamic, porous, and interstitial — living in the in-between. Springer’s (2012) theorization is compatible with Steinberg’s (1998) argument, underscoring that instead of concentrating our efforts solely on assigning fixed or stable meanings to junctures where the material and immaterial converge, “neoliberalism understood as a discourse is attuned to processual interpretation and ongoing debate” (p. 143).
Hallin (1987) additionally cautions against understanding media discourse as functioning exclusively in favour of the dominant order, underscoring that a comprehensive media theory analysis should also “be able to account for news reporting which helps destabilize the powerful” (p. 308).

5.2.2 Intertextual Analysis of Social Action Representation

The relational nature of discourse is also relevant when understanding how media texts on a given topic function together. Media texts, Fairclough (2010) asserts, should be conceptualized as forming interconnected chains or networks of communicative events, a helpful notion when considering the way news media often overcomes temporal and spatial disjunctures that would otherwise distance events in time and space. These properties of news media call for the application of an intertextual analysis that interrogates not only how discourses are constructed around a particular topic, but how they operate and evolve across their historical and geographic dimensions.

The intertextual discourse analysis employed in this thesis relies on van Leeuwen’s (2008) ‘social action network’ (see Figure 2) to categorize constructions of active political dissent across the collection of newspaper articles on Line 9 activism, a data set which reflects discourses operating on both local and national scales. The framework includes five sociosemantic categories of action, each of which have classificatory extensions that allow for a very narrow and specific interpretation of each representation. This ‘social action network’ was also considered in relation to van Leeuwen’s (2008) four constructs of legitimation which qualify or justify certain social practices over others. Within this analysis, a legitimized action was defined as any representation that characterized an act as an acceptable or appropriate course of action within a given context, while a delegitimized action was defined as any representation that
characterized an act as an unacceptable or inappropriate course of action within a given context. While some of van Leeuwen’s (2008) categories are presented as either/or options (represented in Figure 2 by squared brackets), other categories can be applied simultaneously (represented in Figure 2 by rounded brackets). De/legitimizations were therefore achieved in multiple ways, either via a single category or by employing multiple categories in combination. At times de/legitimizations were contained within an individual representation, while others spanned the length of a paragraph or a text in its entirety, or were found in parallel representations across multiple texts.

As noted previously, all five categories appeared across the data set, however particular attention was given to the use of categories that also performed de/legitimizing functions, namely: semiotic versus material action which qualified the signification or the impact of a given action; activation versus deactivation which foregrounded or obscured the actions (and accountabilities) of different social actors; and agentalization versus deagentalization which naturalized certain actions, while assigning agency (and accountability) to others. Moral evaluations, as a legitimation construct, de/legitimized through the use of evaluative adjectives or analogies, while rationalizations provided explanations for actions based on constructed purposes or assumed truths. A more detailed explanation of the performative de/legitimizing functions of each category and construct is outlined below.

van Leeuwen (2008) distinguishes between two interpretations of any given action — material representations that emphasize the act of doing, and semiotic representations that foreground the meaning of an act. This differentiation is an important one, as it distinguishes those actions that are represented as having “at least potentially, a material purpose or effect” from those “action[s] which [do] not” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 59). Grammatically speaking, material representations of action cannot take an idea or proposition as an object, whereas
Semiotic representations can (p. 60). Semiotic actions, being communicative acts, are also more often than not constructed as involving nonbehavioural verbal processes — as quotes or renditions of reported speech — though behaviouralized semiotic representations are also possible. This occurs when the meaning behind a communicative act is not conveyed, as in the example, “she spoke at length”. Form or topic specifications provide information about the type or content of a communication, and are required for semiotic representations to be classified as nonbehavioural (or in other words, as actions that convey meaning). Both material and semiotic actions can be described as transactive, if they are constructed as an instrumentalization (having an effect on things or ideas), or as an interaction (having an effect on people) (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 61). Material or semiotic actions that do not have such effects are considered nontransactive, or as actions that have no impact on their surroundings. van Leeuwen (2008) notes that the ability “to transact” requires a certain amount of power (p. 60), such that lower status actors are typically represented as carrying out nontransactive material actions which convey no effect, or behaviouralized semiotic actions which convey no meaning. In this thesis, these types of representations were considered to be delegitimizing constructions. The type of effect enacted, however, was also a measure of de/legitimization. In this sense, if an actor was represented as having a negative impact on the world, this was considered a delegitimized representation of that action, even though the representation was transactive and the agency of the actor maintained.

The second major category from van Leeuwen’s (2008) ‘social action network’ involved the distinction between the activation and deactivation of a represented action (p. 63). Activated representations are dynamic, whereas deactivated representations are static — constructed as entities rather than processes. Deactivation occurs most often through objectivation whereby nominalizations are applied to represent a given action as a phenomenon — “construction” —
rather than as an active and dynamic process — “to construct”. Objectivations make invisible the actor who carries out the act, which can be applied to obscure agency or accountability for a given action, or if used routinely, to minimize the degree of (positive or negative) impact a social actor has on the world. Deactivated representations can also involve descriptivization, which occurs when actions (or reactions) are depicted as permanent qualities of a given social actor.

The final social action category addresses representational processes of agentalization and deagentalization, which indicate whether or not an action is constructed as having occurred through human agency. van Leeuwen (2008) notes three types of deagentalizations, that include eventuation (representing an action as an event that happens free of human intervention), existentialization (representing an action as something that “simply exists” (p. 67)), and naturalization (representing an action as the result of natural, inevitable, or abstract processes). Deagentalizations strip actors of their agency, and can work to de/legitimize an action in different ways. For example, activists represented as fighting against actions or idea otherwise constructed as inevitable (e.g. the use of fossil fuels) gives their resistance the appearance of futility.

In addition to van Leeuwen’s (2008) ’social action network’, his repertoire also includes four constructs of legitimation, two of which were explored in depth in this thesis: moral evaluation, and rationalization. Moral evaluations assign a particular value to a representation, whether that be through the use of evaluative or qualifying adjectives, through abstractions that distill a particular quality from an action, or through the construction of analogies that compare one action to another action that is commonly associated with positive or negative values. Rationalizations attempt to justify or explain an action, and can be used to de/legitimize social practices “by reference to their goals, uses, and effects” (instrumental rationality) or “by reference to a natural order of things” (theoretical rationality) (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 113).
5.2.3 Data Collection & Analysis

This analysis was interested in mainstream corporate media sources exclusively, as these publications produce widely circulated and accessible knowledge that is a primary source of information for Canadians (Newspaper Audience Databank Inc., 2012). Given mainstream media outlets are privately owned businesses, it is foreseeable that they would have vested interests in an economic system that prioritizes profit-making, and accordingly, a particular stake in the maintenance of the national neoliberal project. As economic privatization deepens, as wealth disparities grow, and as the federal Conservatives continue to delimit state interventions, institutions are increasingly aligning themselves to a neoliberal capitalist order so as to persevere in a climate of unbridled competition. An institution in its own right, the economic structures of mainstream media are no exception as a significant number of national and regional outlets have been subsumed and are now controlled by a small elite of mega-media conglomerates like Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd., Bell Globemedia Publishing Inc., or Postmedia Network Inc. Responsible for the dissemination of news information, media outlets — including online and televised sources — have significant potential to shape and condition circulating social, political, and economic discourses by determining who and what constitutes ‘news’, as well as how each news story is covered. In an increasingly competitive market, and one where readership is steadily declining due to the extinction of newspapers and the proliferation of online news aggregators (Communications Media Inc, 2010), news media outlets are having to depend on revenue generated through advertising space (Fairclough, 1995). Large-scale readerships are no longer celebrated for the extent of their scope or outreach, but for their marketing potential, and thus mainstream news is no longer about the dissemination of information, but the commodification and marketization of media outlets as advertising platforms. It is no surprise
then, that the ideological foundations of mainstream media outlets are defined by commitments to a corporate, capitalist economic order — the order upon which their survival is dependent. This helps to explain why mainstream content may at times take a critical position of a particular government administration, for example, but why there is a dearth of content that poses direct challenges to the capitalist status quo.

The flip side of this coin therefore required the elimination of publications yielded in the search that are classified as alternative news sources. As contributors to counter-culture narratives, the political leanings of alternative media sources (e.g. the Tyee, Ricochet, Rabble.ca, Democracy Now, the Real News Network) — while undeniably diverse and nuanced — are often shared by, or complimentary to, those of leftist activists. Alternative sources are quite often engaged in a critique of hegemonic social, political, and economic systems as a form of leftist resistance in their own right. Accordingly, alternative media journalists are often activists themselves, and frequently take explicit positions in their writing, rather than trying to construct articles as objective or factual as in mainstream news. Activism is generally represented as a legitimate form of political engagement, and many grassroots activists have well-established contacts at alternative media outlets. As such, negotiations and representations of activists, actions, and campaign message boxes in alternative outlets are undoubtedly different than those experienced by activists in relation to mainstream corporate media.

As my project seeks to untangle the relationship between media discourse and action, and the ways in which such relationships may be implicated in the maintenance (or interruption) of Canada’s neoliberal project, I consequently narrowed my focus to articles found in corporate Canadian news publications. I conducted archival research of newspaper articles pertaining to Line 9 activism that appeared in national and regional Canadian English-language publications, including The Globe and Mail, the National Post, the Toronto Star, the Edmonton Journal, the
Montreal Gazette, the Whitehorse Star, the Guelph Mercury, and The Hamilton Spectator. While scope in readership varies significantly among the outlets, each of the surveyed papers are published by one of three media conglomerations: Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd., Bell Globemedia Publishing Inc., and Postmedia Network Inc. Due to time constraints, I did not attend to articles posted only via the online platforms of each media outlet. Articles were accessed through the ProQuest Database using “Line 9”, “pipeline”, “activism” and “activist” as search terms. It is important to note these search terms did not generate a comprehensive collection of all mainstream print media coverage on the Line 9 issue itself, despite it having received only a modest amount of attention to date. As the focus of this analysis is on representations of political dissent via pipeline resistance, only those articles with explicit reference to activism and resistance efforts were included. The timeframe from 2006 to 2015 was established in order to survey all relevant mainstream media coverage since Enbridge submitted its Line 9 proposal to the NEB. These search parameters yielded 106 articles between 2009-2015 in 23 publications.

In order to provide a contextual overview of journalistic content, the data set was also coded using a survey (see Appendix B) that identified representations as they related to broad categories, including: the de/legitimization of pipeline resistance; major social actors including industry and government; and framings of the Line 9 issue.
Chapter 3
Representing Dissent

In this chapter, I undertake an investigation of the production of de/legitimizing representations of pipeline resistance in mainstream Canadian print news media and the ways in which these representations serve to govern Toronto activists through the material and immaterial regulation of dissent. I focus my analysis on the central research questions considered in this project, namely:

1. What are the systemic formulations and constructions of pipeline resistance generated by mainstream corporate Canadian print media and how do these reported representations de/legitimize different forms of political dissent?

2. How do these representations govern the interactions of dissenting actors with the social, political, and ecological environment? In what ways do representations of dissent shape or inform the goals and strategizing of activists who oppose the Line 9 project in Toronto?

As noted previously, this discussion therefore seeks to expand upon broader theoretical conceptualizations of: i) the dialogical relationship between representation and (political) action; ii) the role of this relationship within a larger project of environmental governance. It also seeks: iii) to expose expressions of environmental governance within the under-explored territory of the neoliberal Canadian nation-state threatened by climate change. Before delving into a comprehensive discussion of findings via the application of a critical discourse analysis, I begin by offering a concise summary of the salient themes that arose during my interviews with three key activists involved in the anti-Line 9 campaign in Toronto. The interviews are meant to provide a contextual frame upon which discursive representations can be mapped, understanding these representations as the constructed actions of particular individuals, operating materially across multiple scales, within given spatial and temporal parameters.
6 A Thematic Analysis of Informant Interviews

After concluding discussions with key informants, I applied Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic mapping methodology across the interviews and found two global themes around which a number of organizing themes could be arranged: the first in relation to political action itself and the second in relation to the context in which this action occurs. As a general summary of these discussions, the three activists collectively felt that environmental activism as a broad category of political engagement is coming up against two primary challenges: the depoliticization of environmental issues (global theme 1) and an increasingly hostile political climate that makes pipeline resistance in particular, a more precarious pursuit (global theme 2).

6.1 Materiality of Political Engagement

As will be examined in more detail below, the materiality of political engagement and activism was an organizing theme around which two key informants framed their purposes for engagement. Scales of action was also identified as an organizing theme that shared overlapping basic themes with the materiality of engagement, found across the three interviews. Not surprisingly, all three activists defended pipeline resistance as a significant and necessary means of political engagement, broadly defined as the influencing of decision-making and public opinion through personal and public advocacy for the improvement or betterment of the lived conditions of all members of society. The material potential for change was at the root of Graeme’s interest in activism, primarily in relation to his understanding of his own purposes for engagement. He explained his motivations were driven by his lived experiences and the desire to understand in greater complexity (for the purposes of their successful interruption) the role systems like neoliberal capitalism play in the sanctioning of poverty conditions, particularly for
members of the Global South. For Graeme, environmental activism was and is about improving the circumstances in which people live — improving their freedoms, their access, and their rights to a sustainable way of life that meets people’s needs and offers an acceptable standard of living. Graeme was firm in his conviction that it is the same exploitation of land and resources that is responsible for conditions of poverty for most of the world’s communities. He says,

What’s happening to the climate is a direct result of what’s happening in our social system. It flows out of the injustices and inequalities that are built into the social system, and so that has to be centred whenever we think about broader environmental harm and how we change things for the better.

Materiality was common to Michael’s conceptualization of activism as well, which he argued was more something you do, rather than an identity you assume. For Michael, his own environmental activism was framed in relation to a macro-movement for the advancement of “justice, peace, progress, and prosperity”. Interestingly, however, Michael stressed the importance of local level engagement, using issues like Line 9 as more of a means than an end for transferring engagement to supra-national issues like climate change.

For Anna, however, activism was much more a pedagogic undertaking, understood as vehicle through which structural problems could be exposed and explained. It was her belief that education was central to mobilizing public engagement, and making explicit the ways in which material projects like Line 9 are connected to systems of oppression. Anna’s starting point was the settler colonial state, defining her activist project as contributing to its disruption in favour of Indigenous sovereignty. Materiality was not absent from her critique, as she cited both the grave consequences an oil spill would bring, as well as the loss of Indigenous lives and harm to northern Albertan communities in close proximity to the tar sands, as reasons for working to prevent the reversal of Line 9. Like Graeme and Michael, Anna understood Line 9 resistance as a
micro-level action that, in combination with other efforts, could eventually lead to macro-level change.

### 6.2 Environmental Depoliticization

In addition, materiality was an organizing theme in relation to legitimizing political participation, particularly for Michael who spent much time attending to a localist discourse that finds many parallels in the discursive representations discussed below. He argued that emphasizing an individual’s personal stake in a project like Line 9 — whether that be through concern for safe drinking water or for a decrease in property values — fosters the feeling that they have permission to engage in macro issues, like climate change, that can otherwise seem inaccessible. In reflecting on his own experiences and interactions with the public, Michael elaborated that climate change is perceived as too remote an issue; “it’s for the scientists and the politicians, not for us.” He raised this as a sign of depoliticization around an intensely political issue, which Indigenous and climate activists in North America have been working hard to counter.

Similarly, Graeme remarked upon the well-established trend in climate activism that relies too heavily on scientific facts as a means of radicalizing support for the issue. He claimed instead that it has the opposite effect.

Facts themselves can tell you what reality is, but they can’t tell you what to do with it. If your political and moral horizon is very small, you’re not going to be thinking about social transformation. You’re going to say ‘oh, those are the facts. That’s terrible. We’re screwed.’ And that’s actually what happens.

He added that we cannot continue in this vein, “learning the facts and then relaying them, thinking that this will radicalize and politicize people, [because] it often has the opposite effect.” Graeme noted a similar depoliticizing effect in referencing the appropriation of justice-oriented
environmental movements both by corporate greenwashing, and by rampant individualism. Rather than tackling issues as they pertain to broader systemic formulations, he noted that much of what we see today as environmental activism is merely about individual contribution (often via our wallets) and lifestyle change. Anna also alluded to this organizing theme of depoliticization, but acknowledged it in relation to the ongoing obfuscation of colonialism by popular environmentalism, which she said movements like Idle No More were helping to confront.

6.3 A Precarious Political Climate

What adds considerably to this challenge of expanding engagement is the progressively virulent political climate under the Conservative administration that has begun to treat environmental activism as a criminal activity. The informants cited multiple barriers to participation, including legislation that calls for heightened surveillance of environmental groups and activists; Bill C-51’s criminalization of efforts that compete with Canada’s national interests, (which carries particular consideration for activists resisting pipeline development); internet technology which makes possible and available a permanent record of one’s political activities; and a general lack of exposure to collective engagement as a result of a political and economic system that privileges and rewards individualism. Informants noted this particular context is prompting a number of their contacts to reconsider their involvement in pipeline resistance, and is giving rise to internal discussions amongst organizers of how to adapt resistance tactics and strategies under increasingly uncertain conditions.
6.4 Conceptualizing the Line 9 Campaigns

With more specific regard to the broader Line 9 campaign itself, the key activists who were interviewed spoke about the ways in which their organizations and the Coalition Network have conceptualized their campaigns. The explicit and shared macro-level goal has logically been to prevent the reversal of the Line 9 pipeline that spans from Sarnia, Ontario to Montreal, Quebec in an effort to prevent the export of tar sand bitumen. The interruption of Line 9, like all pipelines, was therefore conceptualized by the Network Coalition as an intervention and a barrier against tar sand expansion, and was framed as such by each of the interviewed activists, as well as in the grassroots literature produced by and for these campaigns. The degree to which this goal was the primary motivation for the three activists, however, varied. For Graeme, it was anti-poverty work that served as the primary motivation for resisting Line 9, which traverses through a low-income neighbourhood in Toronto of which he is actively involved. For Michael, this constituted his central concern and primary purpose, not so much because he saw Line 9 as the heart of the matter, but because he understood it to be the best ingress for Toronto residents to build capacity towards broader climate change mitigation efforts. For Anna, the goal of interrupting the Line 9 project was always framed as an act of solidarity with Indigenous communities. She came to the Line 9 issue in response to a call put forward by Idle No More and other Indigenous resistance efforts that saw Line 9 as another example of the colonial and imperialist exploitation of traditional territories. This call was simultaneously heard by NGOs and grassroots organizations who eventually became part of the wider Coalition Network. Central messages of the campaigns according to key activists within the Network and their campaign literature, were therefore centred on preventing tar sand expansion as a means of addressing both runaway climate change, and harm to Indigenous communities. As will be
discussed in more detail below, messages that were more consistently represented in newspaper articles involved the risk of oil spills, particularly in relation to the contamination of drinking water. When Indigenous communities were mentioned, representations were framed almost exclusively in terms of consultation rights, rather than inherent claims to the land.

Key informants noted that the targets of the Line 9 campaigns changed depending on the strategy or action taking place, but included Enbridge, municipal and provincial governments, and the NEB. Strategies employed by the Coalition Network and groups working within it were responsive to the progression of Enbridge’s project proposal and ranged from dilatory tactics (i.e. any tactic understood by activists from the outset as unlikely to be effectual, but likely to forestall the Line 9 approval process), to outreach and education, to those that directly interrupted pipeline maintenance and construction. Some of these tactics included: leafleting and door-knocking in Toronto neighbourhoods and in GTA communities along the pipeline; conducting mock spills and highway blockades; organizing letter campaigns to the provincial government to call for an environmental assessment of Line 9; hosting ‘apply-a-thons’ for the submission of applications for intervener status in the NEB hearings; raising Line 9 as a local issue during mayoralty debates in Toronto; holding rallies outside Queen’s Park in Toronto; intervening during one day of the NEB hearings after applications had been rejected on the grounds that climate change was not one of the panel’s considerations; engaging with City Councillors to motion a ban on the transportation of diluted bitumen through Toronto; appeals to the NEB to force Enbridge to install more safety valves; the occupation of multiple Enbridge worksites throughout the Golden Horseshoe in southern Ontario; and most recently, court support fundraising and educational events for the Chippewas of the Thames legal challenge of the Crown’s failure to consult on Line 9.
Importantly, the key activists shared a common perspective that the capacity built by the Coalition Network accounted for much of the success of the campaign — which significantly raised the profile of Line 9 in Toronto and throughout the province, and has contributed to the delay of Enbridge securing “Leave to Open” by more than 15 months since the NEB’s originally proposed date of June, 2014. Accordingly, all three activists were optimistic that if and when Line 9 goes online, the capacity generated from this campaign could and would be carried forward to the ongoing fight for climate justice.

7 Critical Discourse Analysis

In order to interrogate representations of political dissent, this analysis draws on a descriptive framework developed by van Leeuwen (2008) that is used to unveil and deconstruct modes of depicting social action and their de/legitimization. More specifically, I discuss findings related to four sociosemantic categories: material action; semiotic action; objectivation; and naturalization; as well as two constructs of legitimization: moral evaluation; and rationalization. Frequently, categories and constructs were found to operate in concert with one another, and as such are considered simultaneously.

Taking a methodological note from Steinberg (1998), it is important to frame identified technologies in terms of their governing possibilities or potential. The ‘inter-individual’ construction of meaning asserts that different actors will interpret de/legitimizing depictions of Line 9 resistance in multiple ways, dependent on variances in political worldviews, social locations, histories of activism or arrest, personal or professional affiliations, knowledge of relevant subject matter, and so forth. In other words, as much as this analysis recognizes the individual specificities of the activists featured in the discursive representations, it must also acknowledge differences in the recipients of news media discourses. Identified governing
technologies are by no means absolute. What becomes clear, however, is the participation of mainstream media in the circulation of discursive technologies that prompt a consideration of how one politically engages with one’s surroundings on issues of climate change broadly, and on Line 9 specifically, within a neoliberal regime. Foucault (1980) argues that particular truth-claims become visible through the veiling of others, mediated by and through existing power relations. While negotiations may be varied, mainstream media discourses set down some of the conceptual material with which we work and engage. In this particular collection of articles, it was found that, though nuanced, mobilized technologies by and large defended deepening processes of neoliberalization with reference to political engagement. Yet revealing the ways in which particular technologies are deployed — the obfuscation of Indigenous land rights through a discourse of ‘nonproperty’, for example — aids us in working towards their interruption. In concert with tightening regulatory state controls on climate and anti-pipeline activism, mainstream media representations of Line 9 resistance therefore offer possibilities for the shaping and defining of legitimate political actors, interventions, and arenas that may work in subtle and uneven ways to narrow or discourage civic participation.

The following discussion is divided into three sections. The first (7.1) explores in depth the representation of action in material or semiotic formulations, and considers the patterned and nuanced ways in which these categorizations function to de/legitimize dissent. The second section (7.2) examines the treatment of embodied forms of dissent, particularly in relation to activists’ tactic of occupying Enbridge worksites, and the ways in which its delegitimization upholds the institution of private property and the settler colonial project. Attention is also paid to the representation of the Indigenous body. Finally, the third section (7.3) reviews the depoliticizing use of militarized language and its relationship to surveillance as a disciplinary technology involved in the of regulation of dissent.
7.1 Material versus Semiotic Representation

Both the materiality and the signification of social action surfaced in the discourse analysis as salient organizing principles for understanding represented conduct. As the following section will demonstrate, the materiality and semiotics of social actions are involved not only in their constructed representation, but in their de/legitimation, operating at times in complementary, and at times in contradictory, ways. While discussed below in isolation, it is worth mentioning that the material and immaterial aspects of actions — their spatial realizations and their discursive representations — are understood here as intersecting and mutually-informing forces.

While in reality the actions we carry out each day occupy an interstitial space grounded simultaneously in material effect and in cognitive signification, when analyzing representations of social action, van Leeuwen (2008) distinguishes between actions material and semiotic because of the different discursive functions they perform. As expected, material representations emphasize actions or behaviour that are ‘done’, that have the potential to influence, alter or manipulate some aspect of the physical world. Semiotic actions, on the other hand, foreground the meaning of a given action, representing them as communicative acts that convey concepts, ideas, interpretations, or significance. Material and semiotic representations are themselves two possible interpretations of a given action, and function by foregrounding and obscuring corresponding material or semiotic features of that action. Both semiotic and material actions can be transactive — those actions that involve both an actor and, as Halliday (1985) explains, “some entity (person, creature, object, institution, or abstraction); or some process (action, event, quality, state or relation)” (p. 108). In other words, transactive actions have some effect on the world, which van Leeuwen (2008) further categorizes into interactive effects (involving people) or instrumental effects (involving things). Conversely, both semiotic and material actions can be
nontransactive, represented merely as behaviour that does not have an impact on anything or anyone. This distinction is important, as actors who are represented as able to ‘transact’, are understood to be more powerful operators with a higher degree of agency and influence.

While this analysis foregrounds social action in the form of political dissent, it was necessary to distinguish amongst the multiple social actors who appeared in the surveyed newspaper articles. By and large, dissenters were represented overwhelmingly as ‘activists’. For the purposes of this analysis, I included in this category anyone expressing dissent against the Line 9 pipeline reversal project, including Indigenous activists and communities, grassroots activists, environmental organizations and NGOs, as well as actors broadly identified in the articles as ‘environmentalists’, ‘protesters’, ‘critics’, and ‘opponents’. Actors who were affiliated with a given social institution (e.g. municipal councillors; politicians; police officers; etc.) were not included in this category, even if they expressed dissent (which coincidentally occurred only once). As civic political engagement is a point of interest in this analysis, this was a deliberate effort to distinguish between actors operating within and outside of social and political institutions. An interesting distinction is that while some activists referenced in the newspaper articles were representing large environmental organizations like 350.org or Environmental Defence, key informants and the majority of those activists involved in the Coalition Network are grassroots activists, working without affiliations to NGOs or political parties. Informants expressed a common sentiment that environmental NGOs in general have become increasingly corporate entities, making side deals with industry or government to claim victories that are used to generate donations, running decontextualized national campaigns that rely on passive tactics like petitions, or taking positions on issues that are too centrist to incite the type of structural change for which informants and their peers are working. Political parties were similarly understood to be too entrenched in the neoliberal system to be counted as reliable allies or
channels for advocacy, referencing Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne’s endorsement of the tar sands and failure to push for an environmental assessment on Line 9 in particular. Most importantly, key informants underscored the necessary role of grassroots organizing in the establishment of long-term social movements for justice.

The category of ‘industry’ included spokespersons, representatives, executives, and CEOs of big oil corporations (overwhelmingly Enbridge, in this case), as well as lobby groups like the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, and associations like the Oilsands Veterans Association of Alberta. Other categories of actors included ‘government’, ‘police’, ‘the National Energy Board of Canada’, and ‘other’, though they are not featured in this discussion.

Overall, there was a significantly greater frequency of semiotic representations for all categories of social actors. Activists were represented 73% of the time as performing semiotic actions, while industry was represented in semiotic terms 84% of the time. When combining industry with all other social actors, semiotic representations jumped to a rate of 90%. Conversely, this also indicates that activists had the highest rate of material representations. Though these figures are superficial, an initial reading suggests that given activists were represented to a greater degree by their behaviour over any other social actor, more attention was therefore paid to what activists did compared to what others did. As such, it appears that activists’ material actions are more visible than those of their counterparts. As material actions often involve a specific purpose that intends to elicit a particular effect, these findings also suggest that activists are represented as having the most potential to effect change on the physical and semiotic world, whether they are successful in their pursuits or not. To determine the extent to which this is actually the case, requires a much deeper analysis. My findings discussed below indicate that this is not such a hard and fast conclusion to draw. As a methodological reminder, de/legitimizations were achieved in multiple ways, either through one
of the identified constructs of legitimation or representation, or via content and organization, such as word choice, overall tone, or framings of a given representation.

7.1.1 Semiotic Action

Activists’ semiotic actions were considerably varied, offering descriptions, explanations, convictions, interpretations, theorizations, rationalizations, admonitions, and challenges to commonly held assumptions. Frequently used verbs that represented activists’ semiotic actions included ‘claim’, ‘warn’, ’argue’, ‘contend’, ‘oppose’, ‘demand’ and ‘call on’, many of which are grammatical signals of the dissenting communication that followed. For example, the following representation appeared in an article in which activists’ concerns were validated: “environmentalists warn that a plan by Calgary-based Enbridge Pipelines to reverse the direction of flow and start pumping crude oil eastward from Alberta could expose our region to contamination” (Mercer, 2012, Waterloo Region Record). The use of the verb ‘warn’ immediately projects risk or controversy onto Enbridge’s plan, with the justification for this warning (‘exposure to contamination’) placed at the end of the sentence for emphasis. Broadly speaking, however, activists’ semiotic actions were delegitimized (55%) slightly more than they were legitimized (45%). Representations included both when activists were the speakers themselves, for example in direct quotations or in renditions of reported speech, or when their actions were the object of a representation expressed or evaluated by another actor.

After distilling these actions into transactive and nontransactive representations, it was found that activists’ semiotic actions were more commonly represented as transactive (64%) than nontransactive (36%). However, these transactive representations were delegitimized significantly more (63%) than they were legitimized (37%). This same frequency was found
when transactive representations were further deconstructed into their interactive and instrumental categories. Thus, the majority of delegitimizations did not depend on whether activists’ semiotic actions were depicted as influencing people or as influencing things or events, only that the actions in general had an effect on the world. The significantly higher rate of delegitimizations also indicates that the majority of activists’ semiotic representations were constructed as having a negative impact on the world. Nontransactive representations did not have as much of a discrepancy, but interestingly, these actions were legitimized (58%) more frequently than they were delegitimized (42%). This is not inconsistent with the previous finding; it appears that activists have a better chance of their semiotic actions being depicted favourably when they are of little semiotic consequence.

Consider the following two examples:

1. “There is nothing positive in the unnecessary and inflammatory threat - and, make no mistake, it is a threat - of violence by Six Nations activists if Enbridge Gas proceeds with its plan to pipe western-Canada-produced raw oil product through Flamborough” (Howard, 2012, Hamilton Spectator).

2. “But Council national energy campaigner Maryam Adrangi, reached in Whitehorse Thursday, said significantly changing the function of an aging pipeline bisecting a densely populated area is fraught with danger out of all proportion to benefits (Kirsch, 2012, Guelph Mercury).”

The first example appears in an article which discusses the appropriateness of activists’ tactics in communicating their resistance to the Line 9 reversal, concluding that though their concerns may be valid ones, they are undermined by the ‘threats of violence’ and other unnecessarily extreme tactics activists have thus far engaged in. This same ‘threat of violence’ is referenced in other articles, described in varying degrees of denunciation from ‘violent protests’ to ‘civil disobedience’. In all articles where this comment by Six Nations activists is referenced, the depiction is a delegitimized one, here via evaluative adjectives like ‘unnecessary’ and ‘inflammatory’ that imply the gratuitous nature of the action, and stirring language like ‘threat’
to spotlight the intentionality of the possible acts of violence to come. While the
delegitimations fall on all dissenting activists in this article, this is a particularly good example of the type of incriminating depictions of Indigenous activists that are often found in mainstream media. The prevalence of criminalizing portrayals of Indigenous activists was noted by Anna, who was particularly cognizant of the increased risks faced by these activists as targeted frontline actors. On a hopeful note, she perceived there to be growing understanding among Line 9 resisters of the need to support the demands of Indigenous communities, and to work simultaneously for the rejection of legislation that works to criminalize their activism.

Conversely, the second representation appears in an article which foregrounds the Council of Canadians’ concerns and efforts to raise awareness over the possible consequences of reversing an aging pipeline. Adrangi’s comment comes at the end of the article as a direct rebuttal to a position taken by industry affiliates in one of the few renditions that appear on industry’s behalf. This representation is surprisingly nontransactive because Adrangi’s comment is not shown to have any direct impact. It is the last line in the article, so while it offers a closing remark in favour of dissenting views, it does not elicit any kind of response. The representation embedded within the rendition, beginning with “significantly changing…”, also lacks specificity. It does not include an explicit explanation of how the reversal impacts the physical world, only that it would be dangerous. More importantly, however, is that there is no obvious actor in the embedded representation, a condition otherwise required to be considered transactive. Instead, the actor responsible for the reversal — Enbridge — is objectivated via the progressive noun ‘changing’ and the nominalization ‘function’. Rather than explicitly attributing this dangerous plan to Enbridge, the company’s accountability for the increased risk is obscured. This is a common trend in activists’ nontransactive semiotic representations — the action is often legitimized when the actor (most often, Enbridge) is objectivated. Enbridge’s actions are treated
with significantly less visibility, even when the representation involves activists expressing dissent for Line 9, and even when this dissent itself is legitimized. Despite informants identifying Enbridge as the most important campaign target, this trend ultimately has a depoliticizing effect for Enbridge, minimizing their accountability and accordingly, their status as a warranted political target for resistance.

7.1.2 Semioticization of Material Action

Another trend found in the discourse was the tendency to represent activists’ material actions according to semiotic interpretations. This occurred in both behaviouralized and nonbehaviouralized semiotic representations, though they functioned in different ways. Semiotic actions are classified as such because they are communicative and convey meaning. Behaviouralized representations are those where the meaning intended to be communicated is not offered or explained alongside the action. Conversely, nonbehaviouralized representations are those where the meaning is revealed, resulting in an embedded representation, or as van Leeuwen (2008) describes, “a representation-within-the-representation” (p. 61). Nonbehaviouralized actions often involve reported speech, whether in the form of a direct quote or a rendition. They can also involve form or topic specification, where the type of communicative act (e.g. a warning, a request, a summary, etc.) or the topic of which the act is about (e.g. a weather warning, a medical request, a scientific summary, etc.), is expressed within the representation. van Leeuwen (2008) instructs that when a semiotic representation does not include a quote, rendition, or topic specification, the intended meaning behind the semiotic action is not conveyed and is therefore categorized as behavioural.
7.1.2.1 Nonbehavioural Representations

Given journalistic writing conventions rely heavily on nonbehaviouralized reported speech — and particularly whenever meaning is communicated, so as to associate opinions with different sources and not the journalists themselves — it is not surprising that such an abundance of semiotic representations was found for all categories of actors. From the vantage point of van Leeuwen’s (2008) explanation regarding embedded representations, however, it was of interest to this analysis to understand how and to what degree embedded representations were themselves represented semiotically or materially. Only quoted or rendered speech that discussed actions were included in this portion of the analysis. Those communicating a reaction were excluded, as reactions are cognitive processes and therefore treated by van Leeuwen (2008) as a category altogether apart from actions. Nonbehaviouralized representations were first divided by the actor who’s speech was being reported (e.g. a quote by an activist), and were then re-categorized twice, according to the object of the embedded representation (e.g. a quote by an activist discussing Enbridge), and subsequently according to whether or not the embedded representation was material (e.g. discussing Enbridge’s actions) or semiotic (e.g. discussing the meaning behind Enbridge’s actions). In all cases of activists’ reported speech, it was found that embedded representations were considerably more material. The effect of this trend — of ‘semioticizing’ material actions via activists’ reported speech — is twofold. First, by virtue of the original representation being a quote or rendition, the material actions or consequences activists report are automatically relegated to ‘opinion’ rather than ‘fact’, ultimately making it easier for other represented actors, for the journalist, or for the readers, to refute or dismiss their claims. Second, although a quote or rendition opens up the possibility of offering an interpretation, activists’ material quotes were often void of evaluative language — they spoke about the ‘what’ but not
the ‘so what’. Activists were therefore frequently constructed as actors who, when speaking about the materiality of the world, offer little or no associated signification. While informants expressed it as an intentional campaign strategy to emphasize the materiality of Line 9 and its consequences, these particular representations have a likened effect to that of behaviouralized semiotic representation: it reads simply as reported behaviour of no consequence. Due to the lack of semiotic interpretation attached to the majority of activists’ embedded material representations, our attention remains focused on the material effects, even when the original representation is semiotic — or intended to communicate meaning.

When viewed in combination with other trends found in this analysis, the semioticization of material action ultimately carries delegitimizing implications for activists’ reported speech. First, it works to temper industry’s accountability for the material impacts of their actions. Activists are represented as calling attention to the material consequences of industry and its infrastructure, but aren’t always depicted as explaining the resulting implications (and often when they do, as previously discussed, Enbridge is objectivated out of the representation). Thus, industry accountability is ultimately downgraded. Second, industry’s reported speech of activists’ material actions is more frequently semiotic. Though still constructed as opinion, industry’s renditions of activists’ actions therefore appear more salient than activists’ renditions of industry’s actions. Finally, semiotic representations of activists’ reported speech that lack evaluations also opens up the possibility for journalists to assign their own meaning. Because this meaning then appears in the article as unattributed to a given source, it gives the impression of fact, rather than opinion, and ultimately carries more weight. These last two findings are discussed in more depth below.

More specifically, in quotations and renditions where activists speak about themselves and their own dissent (actions, motivations, objectives, ideas, etc.), embedded representations depict
activists as offering meanings, descriptions, and interpretations approximately 40% of the time and referencing their material actions approximately 60% of the time. According to such representations of activists’ speech across newspaper articles, this frequency depicts activists as spending slightly more time communicating about what they are “doing”, as opposed to what their actions signify. For example, in reference to a highway blockade, one activist is quoted as saying,

We did what we set out to do. We held that space for 90 minutes and talked to a lot of people going by. A lot of people were in support of what we were doing and thankful for what we were doing (Yankus, 2013, Flamborough Review).

While this can be taken as a legitimizing representation in many ways — the activist highlights the accomplishment of their goal and the support they received from the local community — the semioticization of this material action emphasizes that the success of the direct action is an opinion. Moreover, the quote offers a very limited explanation of why the action was significant, made shallow by the lack of information regarding what the action was meant to communicate, or what activists talked to locals about. A more persuasive representation would have been to represent the quote materially from the outset, and to explain the significance of the action in more depth — “activists did what they set out to do, holding the space for 90 minutes and talking to locals about the likelihood of an oil spill if the Line 9 reversal project is approved,” for example. Again, this demonstrates that even in semiotic representations, embedded representations depict activists as representing themselves in more material terms. Given that a significant majority of activists’ material and semiotic actions are also represented as transactive (67%), as evident in the quote above, the upshot of this trend is the construction of activists who see themselves as social actors with a reliable capacity to transact — to have a consistent and considerable impact on the world. This point will be expanded upon in further detail in a subsequent section that discusses the de/legitimization of activists’ transactive actions.
Conversely, while surveyed mainstream media in general over-represented activists and their material impacts, industry’s quotations and renditions focused more on what activists’ actions symbolized. When activists were the object of embedded representations as reported by industry, activists were represented much less materially (35%), a rate of occurrence that is almost directly inverse to how activists are depicted as representing themselves. Industry’s reported speech therefore spent more time focusing on the signification of activists’ actions, rather than on what they were able to do or accomplish. This was particularly salient in industry’s representations of activists’ occupations of Enbridge worksites, focusing more predominately on the ‘illegality’ of the action, rather than on its material effect — halting construction work for over week; loss in revenue due to the delay — effects that informants took as small but valuable victories towards the overall interruption of Line 9. On the occasions that this effect was mentioned, it was described as counter-productive, as environmentalists obstructing work that is making the pipeline safer (Wetselaar, 2014, Toronto Star; North York Mirror, 2014). Enbridge was ultimately able to delegitimize activists’ actions by emphasizing the semiotic nature of a very material direct action.

A similar distribution is found when the object of activists’ reported speech is industry, 59% of whose actions are represented as being reported by activists in material terms. As such, activists are represented as devoting more time to describing what Enbridge is doing (e.g. reversing an aging pipeline; performing a deficient number of integrity digs; transporting tar sands oil; failing to consult with Indigenous communities), while giving slightly less coverage to describing what these actions or consequences denote (e.g. increased risk of contamination of drinking water; tar sand expansion; runaway climate change; legitimizing colonial relationships; putting profits before people). In addition, when evaluative language was present in activists’ reports of industry, it was likely to be in the form of a reaction, rather than a semiotic action.
Take for example, the following quote by an activist: “I'm appalled that they haven't given any information to the community about what is happening with Line 9 here” (North York Mirror, 2014). The term ‘appalling’ is certainly evaluative, but instead of using this word as an evaluative adjective to assess Enbridge’s lack of transparency as in, “their lack of transparency is appalling”, the activist is quoted as saying “I’m appalled” — transforming the evaluation into an emotional response. While the difference may appear subtle, this type of representation emphasizes the reactive nature of the interpretation, individualizing concern for significant (in)action for which Enbridge should be held to account. As mentioned above, this suggests that there were slightly fewer representational opportunities for activists’ to offer their (non-reactive) interpretations on the significance of industry’s actions. Explanations of the significance of these material actions hold industry accountable for corresponding material consequences by constructing actions as choices, rather than as naturalized behaviour. Activists were certainly represented as qualifying Enbridge’s actions, as in the quote, “Enbridge is only doing a couple hundred integrity digs” on a pipeline that has 13,000 anomalies (emphasis added, Etobicoke Guardian, 2014). The lack of clarifying significations, however, made it easier for Enbridge to refute in subsequent quotes or renditions. In the example above, the activist’s qualification was interpreted to mean that Enbridge should be doing more integrity digs, prompting a response by Enbridge that “clarified” that most of the anomalies were benign, and that their inspection technology was highly sophisticated: ‘‘If there is a crack within a crack, [the inline inspection technology tools] can report that no matter how low the depth is or how benign the feature.’ The ‘vast majority’ of the 13,000 pipeline anomalies cited by protestors as making the pipeline unsafe are ‘benign,’ White said” (Etobicoke Guardian, 2014). Key informants described instances where the original interpretation of a dissenting quote was positioned by journalists in such a way as to either favour an industry perspective, or to set it up as one industry could debunk
without difficulty. The above quote is an example whereby Enbridge’s incompetence as justification for the termination of the Line 9 project altogether is obscured in order to highlight Enbridge’s “active commitments” to safety. Unsurprisingly, it was found that industry’s own nonbehaviouralized representations of itself were overwhelmingly material (83%), and overwhelmingly positive, as in the previous example.

Furthermore, it was also often the case that the journalist would attach significance to the actions of social actors — whether activists or industry — though semiotic representations. In the case of industry, journalists’ significations most predominately tied the importance of Line 9 to the economy, job creation in Ontario and Quebec, national energy security, national interests, and Canadian prosperity. In the case of activists, the effect was predictably the opposite. In the following example, the journalist provides a semiotic interpretation of activists’ material efforts to resist pipeline expansion, implying this resistance is indicative of a stretching multi-national ‘battle’ over the tar sands: “It’s one of the first signs that the North American-wide battle over oil pipelines has arrived in Ontario, as environmentalists try to plug all the outlets for crude from Alberta's oilsands” (Green, 2013, Toronto Star). For both industry and activists, the author's semioticizations have a naturalizing effect whereby offered significations are removed from the realm of ‘opinion’ via a cited source, and represented as an objective and factual piece of information. The upshot of placing a greater emphasis on material actions as represented both by and of activists and industry, is the generation of more articles that presented either a “balanced” perspective on the Line 9 pipeline project, or that legitimized it expressly. By minimizing the number of opportunities represented actors had to offer their own semiotic interpretations, Enbridge was often excused of its accountability for probable — though undesirable — consequences, and journalists were free to attach to any action the significations of their choosing. That these significations predominately sympathized with industry is not surprising
given the mainstream media’s stake in a neoliberal capitalist economy as a privatized and corporate institution.

Additionally, it was found that when activists speak specifically about infrastructure (the pipeline itself), embedded representations by activists are depicted as overwhelmingly material (92%). In interviews with key informants, all three activists spoke about an effort by Line 9 activists to emphasize the pipeline as a local issue with real material consequences, as well as to deliberately expose its connections to broader concerns like climate change, which can often seem abstract and inaccessible. Emphasizing the materiality of Line 9 and making tangible its consequences was seen by key campaigners as an opportunity to create an entry point for political engagement and resistance to more global concerns like tar sand expansion, runaway climate change, capitalism and settler colonialism. While the local consequences of Line 9 were abundant — contamination of both land and drinking water were the most cited consequences, appearing in 44% and 84% of articles respectively where consequences were mentioned — broader concerns, like climate change, were less often referenced, making material evaluations of infrastructure in newspaper articles a less likely avenue for establishing tangible links to issues often perceived as immaterial.

As a final point of interest for the content of nonbehavioural embedded representations, both activists and industry were represented as speaking about themselves and about their opponents more or less equally. Activists spoke only slightly less about their own actions (46%) than they did of industry and its infrastructure (54%), while industry spoke about itself slightly more (53%) than activists (47%). Given the back-and-forth nature of most articles, this modest inversion is a logical one, and more likely attributed to journalistic writing conventions that structure articles dialogically.
7.1.2.2 Behavioural Representations

While behavioural semiotic actions were rare, the semioticization of material actions continued as a salient pattern of representation. As noted earlier, however, this pattern performed a function unique from that of nonbehaviouralized actions. Rather than foregrounding the materiality of an action despite its semiotic interpretation, behaviouralized actions downgraded both the materiality and the semiotic meanings of otherwise very symbolic and very material actions. This had both legitimizing and delegitimizing implications.

For example, in the following representation, “They made their point. Activists from across southern Ontario were heard loud and clear as they blockaded Highway 6 just north of Waterdown” (Hamilton Spectator, 2013), the use of ‘heard loud and clear’ indicates to the reader that this material action is predominately a communicative act. This is a behaviouralized representation, however, because exactly what the blockade is intended to convey is absent — it lacks a topic specification. While this action is later described in the article as “a mock spill at the site where the company's pipeline passes under the highway” (Churchill, 2013, Hamilton Spectator) — an act of physical embodiment and one that has direct material consequences to boot (the impediment of traffic, for one) — the original representation lacks any explanation of either the material impacts or the symbolism behind the action. The location of this representation in the article — the opening line — is significant, as it is often the case that readers will scan the majority of articles when reading a newspaper, a fact that is well-understood by journalists who structure and organize article content accordingly (Fairclough, 1995). The article itself does not delegitimize this action in terms of framings or evaluative language, but this form of representation minimizes the power and status of the activists and
doesn’t do as much to counteract representations in other articles where this particular blockade was delegitimized.

Arguably, it could be considered that downgrading the material effects of a blockade contributes to a more positive representation overall, as blocking traffic is not something most people would consider a desirable impact. However, by simultaneously downgrading the symbolism and the materiality, activists are represented as engaging in a disruptive action without cause. Given that the majority of activists’ actions were constructed as having negative effects via their delegitimizations (to be discussed below), a more compelling representation to counteract some of this negativity would have been to represent this intersectional action transactively, framing the material effect of blocking traffic as legitimized via its semiotic capacity and via discourses of courage, creativity, responsibility, or the necessity for political action against fossil fuels, all of which appeared in other articles. The way the blockade is represented above passively obscures a perceived ‘negative’ effect on the world (impeding traffic) by erasing not only its signification, but its transactive power. Showcasing the action as carried out by powerful social actors capable of real effects on the world — and legitimizing these effects because of what they signify, even if inconvenient — would have transformed the action into one of legitimized political resistance, not merely behaviouralized disruption.

As a final point of discussion on the semioticization of activists’ material actions, a curious inversion is noticeable in the following quote by Al Monaco, CEO of Enbridge, in which he discusses the company’s efforts to work closely with First Nations communities along the Line 9 route: “‘My focus is to build that trust,’ he said" (Cattaneo, 2013, National Post). Rather than semioticizing an otherwise material action, the embedded representation — which is semiotic — is crafted by Monaco very materially through the use of the verb ‘to build’, as opposed to the
verb ‘to establish’, for example, which would convey the same intentions. In assigning an element of materiality to an otherwise semiotic action, industry’s agency is preserved. This is especially important in this depiction which presents Enbridge as focused on cooperation with affected Indigenous communities, a misconception that especially offended Anna. In her experiences working with Indigenous activists, many had shared knowledge with her of Enbridge’s attempts to buy off Indigenous communities under the guise of consultation. Anna summarized their accounts of Enbridge exploiting the dire economic circumstances of Indigenous communities by brandishing much-needed income in exchange for permission to develop pipeline infrastructure, an activity that carries simultaneous and serious repercussions for Indigenous health, ways of life, and sovereignty.

7.1.3 Material Action

Like their semiotic variants, representations of activists’ material actions involved a wide range of activity, including establishing new organizations, organizing protests and rallies, launching court challenges, working with communities and allied partners, fundraising, petitioning, and hosting educational events, all of which were framed as direct efforts to oppose Line 9. While activists were represented as engaging in multiple acts of resistance, however, the largest percentage of media coverage was allocated to the reporting of activists’ direct actions, particularly in the form of occupations of worksites, as well as a highway blockade, and interruptions during one day of the Line 9 NEB hearings. Despite this concentrated coverage, Anna explained that there had been seven direct actions within the course of a year, most of which were largely ignored by mainstream media. An example was the more recent ‘Dam Line 9’ occupation near Innerkip in August, 2014 which, despite efforts to reach out to national outlets like The Globe and Mail or the Toronto Star, went unreported in GTA papers until a
solidarity action was held at an Enbridge worksite in Toronto. The *Toronto Star* eventually picked up the story but even then, the only information reported about the week-long ‘Dam Line 9’ occupation was the arrest of 5 activists. Anna mentioned that it had been a quiet action despite its lengthier duration, generating little interaction from Enbridge or the police until the very end. Informants spoke of the ‘newsworthiness’ of direct actions that tend to draw more media attention than other tactics. However, the lack of coverage of this and the other Line 9 occupations presents cause for consideration. Despite the often inflammatory language around the illegality of occupying private property in most newspapers that covered at least one of the occupations, it’s clear that occupations themselves don’t always warrant attention by corporate media, or by Enbridge. It appears this strategy of ignoring embodied dissent might have been employed as a way to disregard occupations as expressions of political concern or legitimate political engagement, particularly as they became more frequent.

In general, material representations of activists’ actions were delegitimized more often (53%) than they were explicitly legitimized (31%). A small portion of material representations (16%) were categorized as ‘neutral’ — neither legitimized nor delegitimized — in the few cases that none of the legitimation constructs were detectable in the article and (but not or) in cases where articles additionally gave equal weight to both industry and activists. This occurred most often in ‘sound bite’ articles that were approximately 100 words in length, and which were featured in the *Calgary Herald*, the *Edmonton Journal*, and the *Windsor Star*.

Activists’ transactive material representations were significantly greater in frequency (76%) than their nontransactive actions (24%). Transactive material actions were legitimized only 34% of the time, however. Like in their semiotic variations, there was no significant difference related to the overall representational frequency or to the balance of de/legitimate interactive and instrumental material actions, such that the distinction between whether their actions affected
people or things was of no importance, only the distinction between whether or not their actions had any material impact. More specifically, of those material representations that dealt exclusively with the occupation of Enbridge worksites, only 24% were found to be legitimized. The publications that offered more positive renderings of this resistance tactic were limited in scope and reach, appearing in small, local outlets like the *Stratford Gazette* and the *North York Mirror*, and twice in the *Hamilton Spectator* and the *Guelph Mercury*, both medium-sized publications with predominantly local readerships. The minimal frequency of legitimizations and the outlets’ narrow audience suggest the legitimate representations of occupations may not have carried much weight beyond their local contexts.

The distribution of legitimized and delegitimized nontransactive representations followed a similar pattern to that of transactive representations, with only 20% being constructed as legitimate actions. For example, in an article reporting the arrival of police to remove protesters from a 6-day occupation of an Enbridge worksite, one representation reads, “At least four immediately chained themselves to the fence as others scattered” (Grover & Daniel, 2013a, Hamilton Spectator). This representation is nontransactive, as the goal of chaining one’s body is not reflected. The use of the verb ‘scatter’ to represent those activists who left the worksite implies a sense of escape, as if the activists are “fugitives” fleeing the consequences of their “unlawful” actions. This representation is a particularly good example of the delegitimization of embodied dissent, as none of the actors are assigned an identity; whether fleeing or obstructing, the actors are reduced to their bodies alone, a representative choice that van Leeuwen (2008) notes is common to portrayals of low-status actors.

7.1.4 Material Pipelines in an Immaterial Climate

As mentioned previously, a common thread that arose in interviews with key activists involved in Line 9 campaigns revealed deliberate intentions to use Line 9 as a ‘stepping stone’ to
engage the public on broader issues of climate change, climate justice, as well as anti-capitalist, anti-poverty, and anti-colonial resistance. Especially thanks to the Coalition Network that brought together a considerable number of organizations active in resisting the pipeline, the capacity built by the campaigns, and the growing number of members in each of the organizations, was seen as a major accomplishment and as progress towards the establishment of a broader social movement that could be carried forward in ongoing and future struggles.

Graeme, in his interview, commented,

It’s really remarkable what’s happened with this campaign. The amount of energy that’s been put into it and the amount of capacity that’s been built in resisting this is great. It’s all over the city. … a lot of it is very forward-looking. This campaign is not simply about this pipeline; a lot of its focus ends up being on the tar sands, or on climate change and thinking about transforming our reliance on coal and other forms of fossil fuels. …the broader organizations and capacities that have been built will continue to go into the environmental movement, into Energy East, into other environmental justice issues and beyond.

As he notes, the campaign’s conceptual targets were about more than just the pipeline itself.

Rather, it was about using Line 9 as an avenue and an entry point for political action against climate change, which can otherwise seem like an inaccessible and immaterial issue to engage in. According to Michael’s views, one of the most effective ways of making climate change more accessible to local communities was to personalize it by making it material. He states,

The challenge that we face in building environmental advocacy around climate change, in the sense of direct involvement in public advocacy, is to find a way in which people feel they have permission to act on their own behalf on the public stage. … When people feel empowered to participate in the process, they will leap to the bigger questions on their own. You don't have to push it at them, it comes naturally. People know about climate change. All the polls show that there is very great concern, deep concern in the population, but they have no way of getting at the question. … That is why we took our particular approach with the way we conceptualized Line 9: we tried to present it as personally and materially as possible, like when we got a statement from the City that said they might have to shut off the water if there is a break in Line 9. That makes it tangible and personal for someone living where we are, which is not right on the Line.

As referenced earlier, activists were successful in their attempts to draw attention to the material consequences of the Line 9 project, as media outlets materially represented their comments on
infrastructure 92% of the time. The unfortunate finding is that despite activists’ expressed commitments to connecting Line 9’s implications to broader issues, climate change and global warming only appeared in 20% of all articles surveyed. Of that small subset of articles, it was explicitly cited as a direct consequence of Line 9 at a rate of 55% — only 11 times in a collection of over 100 articles. These representations were often clear, powerful, and effective — for example, an activist during an occupation says, “chief among my reasons to oppose the pipeline renewal project is that it continues the exploitation of Alberta's oilsands and continues greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, which proves something of an existential threat to society” (Etobicoke Guardian, 2014). Yet the infrequency of these representations ultimately signals to readers who know little or nothing of Line 9 that it is not an explicit climate issue. Media outlets could therefore not be counted on to routinely connect the dots between the pipeline reversal, tar sand expansion, and the exacerbation of climate change, despite this being a central campaign message.

Not only did the limited frequency dilute this connection, but the remaining 45% of climate change references were tied to competing discourses that directly undermined activists’ message. While there were no cases of climate change denial, a number of cited sources were adamant in their denial that pipelines were a direct cause of climate change or increased greenhouse gas emissions, claiming the same amount of oil would be burned whether it came from Alberta or Saudi Arabia (Levant, 2014, Whitehorse Star). This of course, obscures the fact that the extraction processes involved in bitumen mining are four times more carbon-intensive than activities involved in the extraction of conventional oil (Pembina Institute, 2013). Pipelines were portrayed in the newspaper articles by journalists as “the latest victim” of anti-development and climate activists alike and an erroneous symbol for greenhouse gas emissions (Cattaneo, 2013d, National Post; Kerr, 2014, National Post). Additionally, the NEB played an important role in
downgrading the connection to climate change in two ways. The first was through its approval of Enbridge’s Northern Gateway pipeline in British Columbia that paved the way for the eventual approval of Line 9, and the second was by reminding the public that during NEB hearings, the Line 9 panel would not be considering comments related to climate impacts. For example, “in providing a ringing endorsement Thursday of Enbridge Inc.’s Northern Gateway pipeline, a National Energy Board panel sent a clear message to environmental activists: Climate change and anti-oil campaigns don't belong in regulatory processes” (Cattaneo, 2013c, National Post). The upshot of these combined representations suggests a missed political opportunity to construct climate change as a tangible issue with a clear access point for action and resistance. Climate change thus remained an abstract and remote concern, and a largely politically-inaccessible issue in analyzed articles.

7.1.5 Materiality as Governing Participation

When exploring in more depth the moments when political engagement was legitimized, it became readily apparent that a key determining factor was whether or not the individual could claim to be directly and materially affected by the pipeline project. This was true whether or not the individual was in support of or opposed to Line 9, and surfaced as an identifiable governing technology in encouraging or discouraging participation. This technology appeared in multiple forms across discourses present in this collection of articles. Private property surfaced as the most salient theme around which participation was de/legitimized, and was reinforced by industry, their affiliates, and activists alike, though in markedly different ways. In terms of delegitimization, private property was employed primarily by industry to discredit activists engaging in occupations of Enbridge worksites. Consider the following examples:

1. “They are on our property and they are there illegally.” (Grover, 2013, Guelph Mercury)
2. “Company officials said Saturday there is no timeline as to when the company might try to take back possession of their property. ‘It's between the police and our lawyers and legal team and that's something we will work through in a legal, authorized fashion through the courts,’ aid Graham White, manager of business communications and public affairs.” (Escott, 2013, Hamilton Spectator)

The first quote is spoken by Enbridge’s senior advisor of public affairs, who validates the corporations’ position by upholding legal private property rights. The second quote uses a similar strategy in order to justify an escalation of tactics that is presented as “authorized”. Here, private property intersects with moral evaluations revolving around the legality of the direct action, portraying the subversive nature of occupations as a resistance tactic through discourses of law and criminality. Private property here is prioritized above civic engagement and protection for the land, defining and governing legitimate actions and forms of engagement.

Representations also deployed a private property discourse to legitimize the presence and work of employees who arrived or were found at occupied worksites. The following representation of protesters “storming the compound and locking employees inside” (Grover & Daniel, 2013b, Flamborough Review), casts an innocent and sympathetic gaze on employees, facilitated by an inverted hierarchy of rights whereby workers have been “trapped” on their own property. Activists also used private property at times to justify or legitimize participation in Line 9 resistance efforts. In expressing concern over the potential of an oil spill, a Toronto activist says, “you don't want a leak on your property” (McDiarmid, 2014, Toronto Star). Similarly, musician Sarah Harmer explains in an interview that the reason she applied for and was successfully granted intervener status in the NEB hearings was because Line 9 “is on our property, in our backwoods, right by the provincially significant wetlands, and the Jefferson salamander” (Rockingham, Hamilton Spectator, 2013). Other activists pointed to ‘not in my back yard’ activism — or NIMBYism — a particular strain of localism that at its most superficial level, is directly conflated with private property rights.
This links to a political tension that informants were negotiating in various ways regarding the degree to which NIMBYism, or other localist mantras, can move us beyond an individualized version of activism. For Michael, highlighting the local relevance of Line 9 was understood as a strategic means of leading people to take action on larger, collective issues, like climate change. Graeme, on the other hand, felt this approach was limited in its usefulness, and could evolve into a potentially damaging intervention that would prevent us from moving forward politically. He expressed that,

People in anti-pipeline activism tend to go for the low-hanging fruit and say, ‘well, we should talk to people about the potential risk of an oil spill and that oil spill impacting their community and their own property rates, or whatever, and that being an easy in. And then once we have their attention, we can talk about other things’ — this idea that we have to get our foot in the door. And I would say that actually you have to consider which door you want to get your foot into, because if you open some doors, I think some others become harder to open. If you get people to think about themselves and their own particular interests, it might be harder for them to think about broader things like climate change… and its current impacts in the Global South.

He concluded that if we are to build a long-term social movement that can grow and sustain its own capacity, we need to resist the temptation of putting forward the individualistic, localized argument and emphasize collective priorities from the start.

In stark contrast to Graeme’s worldview, participation in the NEB hearings was also intensely individualistic, determined by whether or not individuals could prove they were “directly impacted” by the pipeline. This condition was enshrined in federal legislation to reduce participation after 4,000 individuals appeared to testify against the Northern Gateway pipeline proposal in British Columbia. “Direct impacts” were not exclusive to private property, but also reinforced a discourse of localism which, as informants explained, was accomplished by implementing a very narrow radius along the pipeline route to define and identify frontline communities. While never explicitly clarified, the neighbourhood group Michael founded was unsuccessful in their attempt to attain intervener status, despite representing communities living
8-15km downstream from Line 9. In a letter to Enbridge detailing their rulings on participation, the NEB deemed these neighbourhoods as “not in close vicinity to the pipeline route,” concluding that the group “did not persuasively demonstrate a specific and detailed interest that would be directly affected by the Project” (National Energy Board, 2013). It was this logic that justified the granting of intervener status to 14 First Nations communities, not their inherent claim to the land, the duty of the Crown to consult regarding development projects on traditional territories, nor the ongoing violation of treaty rights.

This form of governance reaffirms an individualized style of political engagement, common to neoliberal political regimes preoccupied with maximizing individual rights and minimizing collective ones. In concert with an emphasis on directly-felt material impacts, these discourses work to reaffirm traditional neoliberal values like the supremacy of private property; to reduce a national issue like tar sand infrastructure to the terrain of the local; and to obscure Canada’s project of settler colonialism by validating Indigenous participation on the grounds of proximity and material impact rather than land rights.

### 7.1.6 Materiality as Contested Terrain

Given that representations were more likely legitimized when they were semiotic (45%) versus when they were material (31%), the politics of dissent, as represented via discursive media representations regarding Line 9 resistance, manifests in its most contested form when related to aspects of materiality and the physical world, rather than when related to debated concepts or ideas. This suggests that it is less problematic to verbally or symbolically express dissent than it is to physically or materially express it; a rationale that operates as a governing technology with regard to the regulation of public engagement on this issue. Related to this is the construction and affirmation of legitimate and illegitimate arenas for political engagement in the
Canadian political imaginary. Through discourses of law and rational governance, citizens are expected to follow appropriate channels for participation through their elected municipal councillors, provincial and federal MPs, through political party representatives and affiliates, or through recognized lobby groups. This engagement is by and large semiotic and relegates more active, material engagement to an illegitimate arena at the margins of democracy. Here, Blomley’s (2003) notion of the frontier emerges, which demarcates the boundaries of acceptable political participation. Spaces beyond this discursive arena — like the land itself, upon which many grassroots activists play out their demands — is radical, fundamentalist territory, constructed as a legitimate national threat. So long as climate activism foregrounds the material interruption of economically-significant infrastructure and private property, and so long as national interests are defined exclusively in capitalist terms, Canada’s wealthiest industry proprietors who stand to lose the most — and who are now largely indiscriminate from government officials — will mobilize their resources in retaliation. The disparaging and inflammatory mainstream media discourses, and the lack of comprehensive coverage of Line 9 occupations more broadly, amounts to the corporate dismissal of material action as political engagement. The reconfiguration of state formation with the introduction of particular state policies and programs that place limits on expressions of physical dissent, are reactionary measures in response to the threat of activists obstructing national access to new capital markets. Their severity suggests that pipeline resistance has become a force to be reckoned with, and their intent is to stamp out this resistance at a time when both the economic and the ecological climates are becoming more vulnerable. These measures include, but are not limited to: federal legislation that criminalizes environmental activism (Bill C-51); federal legislation that removes environmental assessments from municipal and provincial jurisdiction (Bill C-38); heightened surveillance by the RCMP and CSIS on environmental activists and NGOs; routine police
presence and occasional arrests at public direct action events; and the strict enforcement of private property rights by individuals, corporations, and institutions alike.

As such, both material and immaterial forces intersect to ground the realm of contestation in the material. These forces work simultaneously to govern political participation (and dissent) by delineating semiotic expression as its most appropriate form, and by defining the legitimate spaces within which it can be articulated. These technologies of participation are evident within and in part configured through mainstream media discourse on Line 9 resistance, and supersede even the logic of “direct impact”, a condition that justified and granted access to intervener status at an NEB hearing, for example, but never the occupation of an Enbridge worksite. Semiotic dissent is reinforced simultaneously by aligned and moralized discourses of democracy and civil obedience, which grant the right to an opinion and to (some versions of) freedom of expression, but not the right to operate outside the law or institutional authority — even when it is these entities that are directly compromising the health and wellbeing of people and planet.

7.2 Embodied Dissent

Making up a significant portion of the surveyed media coverage (29%) on Line 9 dissent were those articles that reported on direct actions — specifically, the Highway 6 blockade, a one day interruption of the NEB hearings, and three separate occupations of Enbridge worksites. As informants noted, this coverage did not constitute the full set of direct actions engaged in by Toronto activists over the course of their campaign, however the actions that did receive media attention were those that generated the most coverage of any single act of resistance. As noted previously, only 24% of direct action representations were legitimized by mainstream media. Yet although the majority of representations were not favourable ones, two key informants expressed during their interviews that the elevated media coverage of direct actions was often a mediating
factor in deciding how and when to resist the pipeline. There is a tension here related to
governance that activists frequently negotiate: the decision to engage or not in direct actions that
may contribute to further delegitimization of their cause and that may present certain material
risks (including arrest and legal proceedings), but that will also likely attract more media
attention and create material repercussions for industry. Key informants expressed differences of
opinion on this point. Michael argued that the level of media attention given to direct actions was
contributing to conditions that were forcing activists to escalate their tactics in ways they
wouldn’t have otherwise done, whereas Anna believed that direct actions — and occupations in
particular — were some of the more effective tactics activists had at their disposal.

The delegitimization of these actions primarily employed two of van Leeuwen’s (2008)
legitimation constructs: moral evaluations (primarily through analogies) and rationalizations. The
following example is taken from an article in the National Post, which reports on an occupation
of a worksite near Hamilton, Ontario.

Early Wednesday, police raided the Enbridge pumping station and arrested 20 people. But
that is unlikely to be the end of the matter. The protest was supported by numerous
environmental groups, Idle No More and the Occupy movement. This is the activist
equivalent of a camel — a veritable horse designed by committee.” (National Post, 2013).

In addition to exaggerated language that portrays the police as “raiding” the worksite, the author
offers a delegitimizing analogy, comparing this occupation to a “camel” — a disparaging term
used to refer to a plan of action that lacks coherence and cohesion due to the involvement of
multiple participants. Not only does this highlight the supposed inefficacy of the action, but in
doing so, delegitimizes activists’ organizing skills and capacities, not to mention collective
decision-making in general. This depiction (mis)represents the occupation as haphazard,
irresponsible, and lacking vision, costing a hard-working company undue expense without a just
or united cause.
An additional example demonstrates the use of a rationalization by Enbridge to invoke an injunction which thereby delegitimized activists’ occupation. The article states the injunction “calls for ‘unauthorized people’ to halt interfering with Enbridge property and seeks police assistance in removing the ‘unauthorized people’” (Grover & McBride, Hamilton Spectator, 2013). This representation reveals a justification for the injunction via a legalized private property discourse that rationalizes the forced removal of ‘unauthorized’ occupants ‘interfering’ with Enbridge property. The occupation is immediately constructed as an illegitimate activity. Enbridge business communications manager, Graham White, later provides a further rationalization on the grounds that “‘it was clear (the protesters) wouldn't [leave] if we asked them to’” (Grover & McBride, Hamilton Spectator, 2013).

7.2.1 The Private Property Frontier

In theorizing these expressions of embodied dissent by Line 9 activists, it is useful to draw on spatial analyses which conceptualize the body as space. Of particular relevance is Sherene Razack’s (2002) work, which understands space as a social project that “uncover[s] how bodies are produced in spaces and how spaces produce bodies” (p. 17). Echoing Foucault’s argument, she contends that the body is routinely the “object and target of power” (p. 11), and a space upon which the law can be enacted. In the context of an occupation, it is the body upon which the disciplinary processes of arrest, removal, and detainment are performed. Both intertwining material and semiotic elements of activists’ dissent are embodied, as activists simultaneously use their bodies as physical and metaphorical barriers to the progression of the Line 9 project, to tar sand expansion, to exacerbated climate change, and to the ongoing exploitation of Indigenous peoples and their stolen lands. The use of barriers is not a tactic exclusive to activists, however: the Canadian state has created a number of legislative barriers through the criminalization and
surveillance of pipeline resistance; the NEB enforces legislated participation barriers to their hearings; industry exploits the economic barriers experienced by Indigenous communities to buy off their consent under the veil of consultation. The latter examples of barriers, however, are quite often rationalized or naturalized in discursive representations. For example, Minister of Natural Resources, Joe Oliver, justifies the NEB’s inaccessible application process, and its undemocratic, often subjective criteria ruling participation rights, by arguing in favour of recent legislation that imposes tighter controls over the hearing process. He offers a rationalization that states the legislation “protect[s] the hearing from being used as a tool to delay decisions” (Kane, Toronto Star, 2013), constructing broad-based participation as strategic, rather than as a legitimate expression of political opinion. In a similar vein, one journalist writes, “project proponents have the right to an efficient process just as project opponents have the right to be heard” (Cattaneo, National Post, 2014). As indicated previously, corporeal barriers (e.g. occupations, blockades, etc.) are routinely delegitimized.

In his critical treatment of geographies of law, Nicolas Blomley (2003) introduces the concept of the frontier to denote a critical spatialization where violence, law, and space intersect; the spatial and temporal point at which the law confronts the lawless, each defined in the juxtaposition of the other. Blomley (2003) argues that the frontier, “always and ever recursively related to social relations” (p. 123), is integral to the maintenance of private property regimes. The frontier acts as both a figurative and a spatial boundary line that contours interpretations of law by defining “a violent world of non law” (p. 124). Similarly, it demarcates the limits of private property by constituting spaces of “nonproperty”.

As Blomley (2003) notes, “property also offers an important means by which we assign order to the world, categorizing and coding spaces and people according to their relationship to property. This has both material and symbolic effects” (p. 122). Private property thus
territorializes space, assigning ownership that affords proprietors the right to invite or exclude individuals from their property at will. This status and its corresponding material powers are established and authorized by a contract dually authenticated in legal terms and in social practice. Accordingly, this legal framework operates as a disciplinary mechanism to organize and to govern conduct in space. The introduction of an unsolicited body on private property announces a wilful breach of both social and legal contract that private property both sustains and relies upon in equal measure. During activists’ occupations of Enbridge worksites, it is the body that interrupts the sanctity of private property which effectively conditions and constructs this action as an unlawful violation, rather than an act or expression of political dissent. As one journalist writes for the Hamilton Spectator, “Is there reason to be concerned about Enbridge Pipelines’ plan to revamp an oil pipeline that runs through Hamilton and the GTA? The answer is yes. But that doesn't justify, at all, protesters occupying Enbridge property in the hamlet of Westover in Flamborough” (Elliott, 2013, Hamilton Spectator). The body, operating within the context of private property, supplies the terrain upon which spatial relations of law and political action collide. As Blomley (2003) notes, “space itself is not only produced through performance, but is simultaneously a means of disciplining the performances that are possible within it” (p. 122). This junction then, of unauthorized political action in private spaces, cements a new frontier that delineates the margins of legitimate and illegitimate expressions of dissent, and casts embodied assertions firmly outside the domain of recognized and permitted political engagement. The violences of arrest, of forced removal, of denials of Indigenous land rights, of prioritizing corporate profit above social and ecological welfare, are rationalized as “a lesser or necessary evil and as a response to our inability to live a truly free life, a life without external discipline and constraint” (Sarat and Kearns, 1991, p. 222). Police and law enforcement “are perceived as restorers of order” (Friedenberg 1971, 43), often referenced in the newspaper
articles as the social actors relied upon to “keep the peace” (Grover, 2013, Guelph Mercury; Grover & McBride, 2013, Hamilton Spectator). The violence of the private property regime is effectively veiled, while neoliberal commitments to individualism, privatization and corporate supremacy are preserved.

The relationship between private property and the frontier is also important when considering the land that is being exploited and put at risk once Enbridge secures its “Leave to Open” and Line 9 becomes operational. When land is understood primarily in terms of ownership, propagated by this constructed binary of property/nonproperty, it justifies who is authorized to enforce protections. This is exemplified in the logic behind the use of proximity and “direct impact” which the NEB, the federal government, and industry collectively uphold as determinants of whether or not an opinion is deemed legitimate. Although Line 9 bisects many communities and urban centres, there are also large segments of the pipeline that travel through rural, “nonproperty” spaces. Under this framework, there is no actor bestowed with authority to intervene or convey dissent. The establishment of “nonproperty,” as a referent to the notion of property itself, is especially troubling from an anti-colonial framework. It is not only the colonial declaration of land ownership that has and continues to violently displace Indigenous communities from their traditional territories, but the creation of “nonproperty” that additionally erases Indigenous claims to the land. As Blomley (2003) notes, “the formation of national identity is, in part, a meditation on the meanings and significance of land as property” (p. 122) and within a settler colonial context, I would add to this, land as “nonproperty.” A private property regime is thus directly tied to ‘neoliberalism as state formation’, both in terms of reinforcing settler colonial relationships through the erasure of land claims and the establishment of rightful European ownership, and in terms of strengthening neoliberal values whereby both the rights of the individual and the rights of capital supersede collective and ecological needs.
The confrontation of embodied political activism with the private property regime elucidates how Canada’s state formation works in conjunction with ‘neoliberalism as governmentality’ to regulate the conduct of political actors in space. The delegitimization of embodied political dissent via the private property regime is consequently an especially violent pursuit for the Indigenous body resisting colonial occupation and neoliberal exploitation of the land.

7.2.2 Criminalizing the Indigenous Body

The violence of settler colonial projects is ensnared in a twin venture of erasure: these projects are predicated not only on disappearing all traces of Indigenous bodies from the land, but on masking the practices and processes through which this displacement and subsequent erasure occurs. As noted earlier, the private property regime is one example of naturalized processes of displacement. When Indigenous activists (re)occupy sites conferred with private property rights, such as Enbridge worksites which are additionally understood as sites that facilitate labour in service of Canadian national interests, this contestation draws attention to the very practices of displacement the settler colonial state must conceal. Activists’ occupations, whether directly or indirectly, challenge the authority of private property, but when this act of resistance involves Indigenous bodies, there is a material and symbolic inversion of the status quo. As much as Indigenous activists have chosen to resist Line 9 in protection of water and their communities, this action is also immediately vested with a distinctive air of land repossession in lieu of dispossession.

Corresponding representations of Indigenous activists are undoubtedly an attempt to criminalize the Indigenous body that not only resists pipelines, but resists erasure altogether. The delegitimizations of Indigenous activists in this collection of articles were particularly inflammatory. As Fairclough (1995) cites the ability of news reporting to overcome temporal and
spatial dislocations, representations also make use of historical examples of Indigenous “violence” to delegitimize current resistance efforts. For example, “a gang of 20 protesters broke into a pumping station along Line 9, ordered employees to leave, and went on a six-day crime spree, Oka-style” (Levant, Whitehorse Star, 2014). Here, multiple references of illegality delegitimize the occupation enacted by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists, however the delegitimization is qualified by a reference to embodied Indigenous resistance during the Oka Crisis. This representation serves to morally evaluate and attach significance to both current and historical acts of resistance, characterizing them equally through a discourse of criminality. Once again casting embodied dissent as an act outside the law simultaneously portrays Indigenous activists as criminals, and reestablishes the authority and control of the Canadian state.

It is likely that this level of analysis extends beyond the awareness or attention of the average newspaper reader, or perhaps even the journalists who authored the articles themselves. Yet these representations can be used to decode the ideological positions they reflect and shed light on the subtle ways the settler colonial project, upon which the neoliberal regime is predicated, is protected and preserved.

7.3 Militarizing Pipeline Resistance

Within the context of de/legitimizing political engagement concerning pipeline development projects and Line 9 in particular, mainstream media representations routinely incorporate military analogies. As van Leeuwen notes, analogies are moral evaluations that legitimize or delegitimize by appraising an action in light of its similarities to another. The military analogies that follow are both explicitly and implicitly realized through the application of terms that more commonly describe military practices, mobilizing schema that then transfers associated values or affiliations onto the original action. These militarized representations speak to ideological
positions that regard anti-pipeline resistance as an affront to national interests, rather than a legitimized expression of political engagement. Environmental activism in this vein is constructed in numerous articles as a ‘battle’ upon which ‘opponents’, ‘foes’, and ‘enemies’ vie for status, legitimacy and power, and for control over the direction of Canada’s energy economy. Discursive allusions that appear in this collection of articles are multiple and varied, including references to ‘conflict’, ‘war’, and ‘face-offs’, images of ‘convoys’ and ‘foes’, and actions like ‘fight’, ‘seize’, ‘attack’, and ‘defend’. While these allusions more often than not appear in articles that explicitly promote a pro-industry position, they have been used to represent actions by both activists and industry alike, and therefore have a more complicated role in representing activists’ actions, with implications for both legitimized and delegitimized portrayals. Consider the following two examples:

1. “The battle over Alberta's oil sands is spreading east as governments in Quebec and the eastern U.S. are confronted with aggressive moves by western crude producers to access new markets.” (McCarthy, 2012, Globe and Mail)

2. “It used to be known as character assassination. Today it's the environment in which Canada's largest pipeline companies, TransCanada Corp. and Enbridge Inc., find themselves. They are on the front lines of the war between oil producers looking for new markets and opponents of oil extraction pushing to speed up the transition to renewable energy” (Cattaneo, 2013b, National Post).

In the first, industry is depicted as the aggressor, albeit the recipient of the attack in this case is government. This representation diverges from the norm which otherwise pits industry and activists against each other. It also leads to an obfuscation of the fact that government and industry are in undeniably close association when it comes to buttressing the oil and gas sector from any kind of intervention. Contrary to the first, the second representation has industry portrayed as a target under attack through the metaphorical use of ‘front lines’ which indicates proximity to an enemy — in this case, ‘opponents of oil extraction’. Dissenting activists are depicted as manipulative and vengeful, engaged in ‘character assassination’ which not only
renders big oil corporations as sympathetic protagonists, but personifies them. Corporate personhood is an established hallmark of neoliberalism, affording many of the same individual rights and freedoms to corporations, and is evidence of a neoliberal ideological construct that has worked its way into mainstream discourse. Both analogies in this second example work to delegitimize activists’ actions, translating their legitimate dissent into spiteful and attacking acts of misinformation.

Another major consideration is the routine and explicit portrayal of activists as the instigators of conflict, evidenced in the following two examples. Both examples speak to explicit representations of militarized action, however it is worth noting that this depiction is not exclusive to efforts of industry or journalists’ alone. Rather, activists themselves are participating in the proliferation of this analogy, as is seen in the second example spoken by a representative from Hamilton350.org. Interestingly, key informants differed from the discourse on this point. Informants certainly understood the Line 9 issue as part of a broader attack on people, the environment, and on democracy, but they didn’t identify themselves as ‘wagers of war’ or engaged in battle. Rather, informants were adamant in their convictions of themselves as rational, political actors, and of their activism as a warranted form of political engagement.

1. “All projects have come under heavy opposition from environmentalists, who are waging a public relations war against [NEB] approvals as a way to choke oil production growth.” (Cattaneo, 2013a, National Post)

2. "The next major battle will be the first spill.” (Hayes, 2013, Hamilton Spectator)

The first example is composed of contradictions which both reduce activists’ dissent to the realm of image maintenance, while exaggerating the effect of their defamatory attacks with qualifiers like ‘heavy’, and with allusions to violence using verbs like ‘choke’. Consequently, activists’ actions are delegitimized. In contrast, the direct quotation by Hamilton350.org uses the analogy of the battle to naturalize both the inevitability of a Line 9 oil spill, as well as the organization’s
continued anti-pipeline resistance. The effect is ultimately a legitimizing one, primarily through this double-pronged naturalization, which van Leeuwen (2008) notes, is an evaluation that disguises its moral order as a natural one. By constructing both spill and dissent as inevitable occurrences independent from the trigger of human intervention, the quoted activist ascribes a level of certainty to the dangers posed by Line 9 that simultaneously strengthens his own conviction. While this is ultimately a compelling rendering of activists concerns, as well as their agency, it nevertheless advances characterizations of militarized activism.

7.3.1 Depoliticizing the Struggle

There are a number of (at times, competing) ways military analogies lead to a depoliticization of the Line 9 reversal project. As mentioned earlier with reference to Steinberg (1998), it is not the intention of this analysis to elucidate the degrees to which identified constructions influence their readers, or the impossibly convoluted ways in which they take effect in practice. Rather, this section aims to identify and untangle the associations of militarized discursive constructions to the de/legitimization of anti-pipeline activism, and the resulting ways in which they prompt a depoliticization of the Line 9 issue. Possibilities for the regulation of pipeline resistance are subsequently discussed.

In practice, activists’ material actions are most often delegitimized via their arrests, surveillance, and the legislation that authorizes these practices. As evidenced by these practices and as mentioned in an earlier section, much of the contestation appears to take place in the material realm. Yet there are multiple attempts in the articles by industry, or by journalists themselves, to relegate the battle to the discursive realm, as one of “public relations” and reputation (Cattaneo, 2013a), or as in the following quote by Enbridge CEO, as “a battle of misinformation” (Healing, 2013, Calgary Herald). Activists, for example, were named in a
number of articles as ‘critics’ of the oil industry, a label that emphasizes their semiotic rather than their material resistance. Cultivating a perception of the dispute as one of semiotics serves to depoliticize the issue by obscuring the material risks and consequences of continued reliance on fossil fuels, and by suggesting that the dispute has an easy solution — one of education and access to “correct” information. This works to rationalize the efforts referenced in a number of articles that Enbridge made to consult with Indigenous communities, and to host information sessions with those residents along the pipeline route. That the conflict is configured as one of disparate interpretations also implies this is not an issue that warrants material engagement, and serves to further delegitimize the examples of embodied activism discussed previously.

Additionally, the collection of representations cited above perform a discursive function that carries governance implications for the regulation of anti-pipeline activism and political dissent: activists and their industry counterparts are constructed as combatants of equal stature. It is not so much the case that media regularly legitimates both positions — many of these analogies appear in articles that are explicitly pro-industry — however, both activist coalitions and corporations are frequently represented as actors with comparable harm potential. As noted earlier, this appears to be a corollary of the neoliberal notion of the ‘corporate individual’ which levels the playing field in terms of who has the right to intervene and to express an opinion on an issue pertaining to Canada’s “national interests”. While this preserves activists’ agency and casts them as part of a powerful movement with growing resistance (which could arguably be said to help their cause), the inflation of activists’ power over corporations, particularly when this power is more often than not delegitimized, can also be harmful because it is simply inaccurate in the current neoliberal context. This should not be taken as a pessimistic account of the circumstances at hand — certainly environmental activism can and does carry its own weight and momentum, and has earned some considerable past victories over processes of neoliberalization. Added to
them is the fact that despite project approval by the NEB in March of 2014, at the time of writing more than a year later, Enbridge has still not been granted “Leave to Open”, and Line 9 remains a dormant pipeline, in large part thanks to the generated visibility and resistance efforts by communities across Ontario. But the likelihood of Line 9’s eventual operation is, as Hamilton350 noted, only a matter of time. All three informants echoed this sentiment, expressing a reasonable degree of confidence that Line 9 will eventually become operational. This highlighted a real tension for informants who continue to resist against something that seems inevitable. Beyond the colossal power of big oil, this was also signalled by the departure of NGOs originally working on Line 9 resistance, who “jumped ship” to focus on larger pipelines like Energy East once the NEB granted Enbridge approval. This abandonment of resources was initially a hard blow for the Coalition Network, but their capacity didn’t dwindle as expected, reaffirming for informants and their peers the power of grassroots resistance. The NEB has most recently called for hydrostatic testing that will delay the project another estimated 6 months. While these are significant gains, informants were simultaneously cognizant that they are not indicative that the “war” has been won. All three informants were committed to ongoing resistance efforts and believed that these delays were important, but there remained a complete absence of confidence that the NEB was a fair arbiter in this process, and considerable skepticism that their resistance efforts would be enough to thwart big oil from seeing through their project. This delay, while undoubtedly costly, is ultimately not one a multinational corporation like Enbridge can’t absorb. Embellishing activists’ ability to inflict damage at the very least allows companies to be painted with a sympathetic brush, and at worst, provides justification for their continued monopoly over Canada’s (energy) economy.

An example of ‘neoliberalism as governmentality’, these representations function as a technology that may have the concurrent effect of convincing readers that pipeline development
is indeed a contentious issue that warrants debate (and perhaps even resistance), while simultaneously making the issue an inaccessible one. While it is beyond the scope of this project to test this theorization systematically, if the current political terrain is understood to be one of dwindling democracy, civic apathy, and deepening neoliberalization as the literature suggests, it seems probable that portraying pipeline resistors as wagers of war and battle would either have an off-putting effect, or would make for a convincing argument that this particular strain of environmentalism is resigned to the far left, to be taken up by the radical activist rather than the conscientious citizen. It has a similar effect to wrapping climate change in a discourse of expertise, which Carvalho (2005; 2007) noted was prevalent in British media renderings, and which Michael noted was a common misconception among the public with whom he had interacted: it ultimately convinces the reader that this issue is beyond reach.

When market logics, nationalism, energy security, and job creation come together to define the battleground, when fossil fuels are naturalized as a primary energy source, and when counterclaims of climate change are few and far between, the prevalence of constructions of the ‘radical environmental activist’ are not unforeseen, and are particularly aggrandized when rendered in militarized language. For example, the following quote from the Minister of Natural Resources, John Oliver, uses the term ‘hijack’ to describe activists’ efforts to demand the NEB panel give consideration to a much wider array of participants during the hearings: “Some of these groups are trying to game the system. They are trying to hijack our regulatory process, take advantage of the openness of it, and delay projects” (Cattaneo, 2014, National Post). The use of this term ties these actions to a discourse of terrorism, rather than one of democracy and freedom of expression. Given the heightened national context of anti-terrorism, and contentious anti-terror legislation that escalates the potential of infractions for environmental activists (and anti-pipeline activists in particular), this material and discursive backdrop sets the stage for a
spectacle. It may seem counter-intuitive that sensationalizing pipeline resistance could have a depoliticizing effect, however ‘activism as spectacle’ immediately constitutes the reader as an observer of action, rather than a potential participant of it. As another mode of ‘neoliberalism as governmentality’, this discursive performance of activism, in addition to the increasingly unapologetic consequences for active dissent, creates conditions for engagement that span the lengths of curious observation to scrutiny to voyeurism. The opportunities and the practicalities of material engagement become increasingly fraught and not without risk, and may be enough to dissuade even the “politically engaged” or the “concerned” citizen from transitioning out of inaction.

7.3.2 Surveilling the Spectacle

The creation of the spectacle also has a role to play in governing the conduct of individuals who do choose to engage in acts of pipeline dissent. Drawing attention discursively to activity that is frequently invalidated, while simultaneously obscuring industry activity through objectivation, heightens the visibility and the illegitimacy of this resistance. Whether this trend stems from external pressure to boost the ‘newsworthiness’ of an article and its subsequent representations, whether it denotes the author's genuine opinions, or whether it reflects a given set of parameters from within which journalists must represent dissenting activity, the effect is a magnified sense of surveillance for pipeline resistors. One of the articles makes explicit reference to this, stating, “the RCMP and CSIS have identified "extremist" environmental groups and aboriginal protesters as a potential source of domestic terrorism, thereby justifying the monitoring and infiltration of such groups,” (McCarthy, 2013, The Globe and Mail). A key informant shared that this perception had given pause to a small number of committee members,
who eventually left the group out of concern for what certain consequences could mean for their careers or personal prospects.

Of particular relevance here is Foucault’s (1977) extension of the panopticon, which he invokes as an apparatus of power that functions through an individualized disciplinary mechanism of real or perceived surveillance. By subjecting actors to ‘a field of visibility’, individual conduct is regulated through a subject’s internalization of and performance within particular relations of power. Examining the evolution of the factory workspace, Foucault echoes Marx when he writes, “Surveillance thus becomes a decisive economic operator both as an internal part of the production machinery and as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power” (p. 175). Here Foucault raises two observations of note. The first is that this disciplinary power can be ascribed onto any individual actor, such that authority figures and citizens alike are able to carry out acts of surveillance and participate as regulators of conduct. This decentralized form of surveillance assures the fluid operation of power, even when no such surveillance is enacted. Secondly, as surveillance became part of the architecture of the factory workspace, it assumed an operative role in the regulation of labour and the subsequent production of capital. While the scope and context have changed, there are parallels that can be drawn to the economic functions of surveillance in response to targeted resistance against Canada’s most economically-significant industrial project: the tar sands. Strategic legislative endeavours to expand the scope of surveillance by Canada’s Conservative administration function in concert with discursive representations that heighten the visibility of pipeline resistance. Together, these efforts produce conditions that discipline resistance in both subtle and obvious ways, serving as an attempt to mitigate expressions of dissent while maintaining at least a modest illusion of democracy.
In their extensive study on the interconnections between language and conflict, Schaffner and Wenden (1995) identify the tendency in American news media to put forward representations that reveal ideological positions in favour of militarization and war as an acceptable means of regulation and of inter-group or international conflict resolution. They argue that the power of language to “promote values, sustain attitudes and encourage actions that create conditions that can lead to war” (p. xvii), suggests that the propagation of militarized rhetoric in media has a role to play in the material manifestation of warfare. “Language can also disguise the world. It can channel access to it in a specific way or structure it according to particular and not always honourable aims and purposes” (Schanffner & Wenden, 1995, p. xiii). They note, in particular, the semiotic function of language to reproduce and to prompt representations of a given enemy that further justify material processes of militarization and acts of war. While the use of militarized language referenced in this analysis is employed metaphorically, there are parallel implications for the regulation of political dissent. Within the context of war, Schaffner and Wenden (1995) elucidate the dialogical relationship between discourse and action that synchronously governs conduct and its representation. The interlocking natures of discourse and action suggest the application of militarization analogies in surveyed articles and the moral evaluations they provoke, accomplish more than the conceptual illegitimacy of pipeline resistance alone; rather, it is probable that they contribute, albeit in intricate and convoluted ways, to the creation of material conditions in Canada that discourage active dissent against the tar sands and its infrastructure.
Conclusion

Through a consideration of some of the relationships between the representation of political action and its material practice within the fraught terrain of tar sand pipeline development and its resistance, this analysis has identified the mobilization of possible governing technologies in mainstream media coverage of anti-Line 9 activism. The multiple constructions of material action as an illegitimate form of political engagement work in parallel, and perhaps in response to, increasing pressures identified by informants to participate in more ‘extreme’ expressions of dissent. The inverse legitimations of semiotic expressions of dissent come up against the futility of these avenues in practice, as expressed by informants who cited inaccessible NEB processes and frustrating interactions with local MPPs who failed to advocate for an environmental assessment, as telling examples of the corruption of established democratic structures in Canada. The invisibilization of industry (and government) accountability for worsening environmental and social conditions is juxtaposed with the intensifying spectacle of activists and their material engagements — scrutiny that informants note has already taken some toll on community participation. The establishment of legitimate and illegitimate political arenas through the radicalization and criminalization of physical dissent reflects a parallel negotiation by informants surrounding the deconstruction of ‘illegitimate’ political arguments — the strategic choices involved with centering more honest anti-capitalist positions knowing they may alienate otherwise-supportive citizens. The delegitimization of embodied dissent via a private property regime functions in concert with discursive and material efforts to criminalize the Indigenous body, whose resistance denies erasure by a neoliberal capitalist settler colonial state. The depoliticizing effects of militarized language constructs activists as instigators and harmful opponents of national interests, and contributes to the construction of climate change as an
extreme, and therefore politically-inaccessible issue for the ‘conscientious’ citizen. This is a rationality informants have found important to reverse. These technologies, in concert with progressively uncompromising state regulations, may work to narrow — or at the very least, make uncertain — ongoing or future civic engagement on this issue.

These insights support the notion that the management and regulation of political resistance is a real factor for neoliberal states engaged in the ongoing pursuit of capital accumulation, and also suggest that pipeline resistance is starting to take real effect. Through material delegitimizations by the state, reinforced by discursive delegitimizations in corporate mainstream media, activists are now fighting against multiple fronts: the effects of invasive resource extraction that compromise the health and wellbeing of communities, their resources, and their environments; and the increasing weight of the state’s punitive arm, intent on squashing pipeline dissent through the imposition of harsh legal consequences, heightened surveillance, and the redefinition of democratic engagement. It seems paradoxically redundant and imperative to underline explicitly that it is a perverse inaccuracy to position the activists fighting for collective social and environmental wellbeing as a national threat when the true danger we face is accelerated climate change, and a deeply unjust and inhumane political-economic system.

To continue or advance these insights, there are multiple avenues for further investigation. Following the research design of this project, a more comprehensive study might consider broadening the number of participants interviewed to include activist networks opposing Line 9 at other sites along the pipeline route, and/or conducting multiple interviews with participants throughout the course and evolution of anti-Line 9 campaigns. More research is needed on other anti-pipeline and tar sand resistance campaigns across the country. Another approach might undertake a contrasting analysis of alternative print or online media to unearth the technologies
and discourses used to counter neoliberal or settler colonial logics, or perhaps the subtle ways these logics are unintentionally reinforced. A political economy study of the role of alternative media sources in creating new spaces for news information, or alternately, fighting to exist in spaces increasingly dominated by corporate media — and any corresponding effects on their messaging, their readerships, or the activists with whom they so often align — would also offer important insights for the representation and practice of a politics of dissent. An interdisciplinary investigation could explore the strategies Indigenous and climate activists are employing to overcome anti-organizing legislation and the rising precarity of pipeline resistance in Canada — for example, the legal support organizations and allies that are becoming more active climate advocates — and/or the simultaneous dependencies these precarious conditions create for activists on particular state institutions — for example, the growing trend to rely on Canada’s biased judicial system to uphold Indigenous land and consultation rights in ongoing pipeline development disputes.

With regard to activist praxis, this study points to a number of considerations that may warrant more focused discussions on the use and development of media engagement tactics. Valuable strategies for activists communicating about contentious political issues with media would seem to include, but are not limited to: explicitly naming political targets whenever addressing the material impacts of their actions, so as to emphasize accountability; routinely outlining the significance of the target’s exploits in order to construct these actions as deliberate choices, rather than as naturalized behaviour; using evaluate language that is transactive, not reactive, in order to prevent individualized representations of issues or concerns. Additionally, a practice that a number of groups make use of but that may merit broader application, is the provision of media training to grassroots activists who regularly engage with mainstream media.
That a plausible timeframe for effective climate change mitigation is becoming increasingly narrow illuminates the relevance and the urgency of this and future research. This is both a factual and a strategic claim because the truth of the matter is, climate activists are not the only ones working against a ticking clock. Both industry and government are well aware that global interest in Albertan oil is waning and without the market signals that fossil fuel infrastructure more or less secures, even in exclusively economic terms the tar sands venture is becoming a visibly futile one. Multiple institutions and organizations have articulated the need to interrupt tar sands development, and move away from projects and infrastructure that lock Canada into high-carbon energy economies. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development warns of the toll the Canadian ‘petrodollar’ will take on other sectors of the economy (OECD, 2008). Chief economist of the International Energy Agency, Fatih Birol, argues fossil fuel infrastructure makes it harder and more expensive to ensure energy security and to reach international climate goals (IEA, 2011). Climate scientists have taken a firm stance that remaining tar sand oil must remain in the ground if we are to have any chance of staying within the 2 degrees of warming threshold advised by the IPCC (Swart & Weaver, 2012). And though it is no challenge to round off the violentes of Canadian nationalism or the current Conservative administration, neither the anti-Line 9 campaigns nor this analysis are seeking to advance an anti-state critique. Informants were adamant in their assertions that the state is the primary vehicle through which the most effective change can and must be accomplished, but the extreme socio-economic and ecological injustices seen the world over demand a different kind of state to solve this crisis — one that unapologetically puts people and planet first.

As a final note, McCarthy and Prudham (2004) offer two important insights: that the “the hegemony of neoliberalism is made most evident by the ways in which profoundly political and ideological projects have successfully masqueraded as a set of objective, natural, and
technocratic truisms”; and that it is forms of political resistance that “give the lie to such disguises, exposing the political negotiations and myriad contradictions, tensions, and failures of neoliberalizations” (p. 276). Line 9 resistance has certainly accomplished this feat, a series of campaigns that successfully brought visibility to what was intended to be a quiet, inconspicuous pipeline project, and to the undemocratic structures and institutions that have made possible its progress to date. While mainstream media may not be a reliable avenue to attract new campaign participants, informants acknowledged the capacity for Line 9 and pipeline resistance remains strong. And this is cause for hope. Optimism is a much needed perspective in this fight, and as Mike Davis (2010) writes, the only one that counts. We must move forward with,

...A willingness to advocate the Necessary rather than the merely Practical. A growing chorus of expert voices warn that either we fight for ‘impossible’ solutions to the increasingly entangled crises of urban poverty and climate change, or become ourselves complicit in a de facto triage of humanity (p. 46).

The task before us then, requires a rewiring of ourselves, our institutions, and our social and economic structures, to advance collective ways of living that respect the finite limits of the planet. For this, we must fight — or at the very least, die trying. Resignation is the one line that can never be crossed.


Healing, D. (2013, November 30). Pipeline proponents urged to take pride in projects; Broadcaster Rex Murphy receives standing ovation. Calgary Herald, B.4


To depict neoliberalism as a multifaceted discourse with mutually-constituting material and immaterial components, Figure 1 can be dissected in multiple directions, attending to i) the dialogic relationships between each neoliberal construct and its three counterparts, and to ii) the circuitous interactions (read clockwise and counterclockwise) between the four constructs as a whole unit. Springer (2012) also notes, “the structure of hegemony that neoliberalism as discourse seemingly invokes is only possible through the discourse of neoliberalism itself. There is no ‘before’ discourse, and accordingly Figure 1 shows no point of entry” (p. 141).
Figure 2: Van Leeuwen’s (2008) Social Action Network
Appendices

10 Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. How would you characterize (environmental) activism?

2. In your experience, how would you characterize the political climate for environmental activists in Canada? in Toronto?

3. In what ways are you an activist? What are your objectives as an activist?

4. Do you see (environmental) activism as a legitimate form of political engagement? Why/why not?
   a) In your experience, what forms of environmental activism are effective as means of radicalizing/mobilizing citizens/communities?

5. From your perspective, how does your understanding of activism compare to that of other activists with whom you work? to other Line 9 activists?

6. What brought you to environmental activism?
   a) Describe your history of socio-environmental activism.
   b) Describe your history of ‘pipeline activism’.

7. How do you conceptualize the Line 9 campaign?
   a) What are its goals/intended purposes of the campaign?
   b) What are the primary strategies used to achieve these goals?
   c) Who are the targets of the campaign?
   d) What are the primary messages of the campaign?
      i) (How) have they evolved?
      ii) Who are they directed to?
   e) How does the Line 9 campaign fit into the broader environmental movement?
   f) Accomplishments to date? Current state of campaign?

8. How do you see your role as an activist within the Line 9 campaign?

9. Describe your relationship to the media as an activist; as a Line 9 activist.

10. What are your primary media sources for information on environmental issues? Why?

11. In your opinion, describe the extent to which mainstream media has accurately or justly represented pipeline activism in general? the Line 9 campaign specifically?

12. Describe any moments where the media has factored into your campaign strategy in some way.
13. Has the campaign ever prioritized a particular perspective/argument/action in order to get media coverage? What were the resulting implications?

14. How important do you believe mainstream media coverage is to (environmental) campaigns? to the Line 9 campaign?

15. To the best of your knowledge, has the work/approach/coverage of the mainstream media been favourable or detrimental to the Line 9 campaign?
## Appendix B: Critical Discourse Analysis Data Codes

1. The article ______ on political engagement/activism.
   1. focuses on
   2. mentions
   3. doesn’t mention

2. The article ______ resistance to Line 9.
   4. focuses on
   5. mentions
   6. doesn’t mention

3. The article predominantly centres a(n) _____ perspective.
   7. environmental
   8. anti-colonial
   9. justice (environmental, social, economic)
   10. economic
   11. industry
   12. government
   13. neutral
   14. other: _____

4. Resistance is framed as originating from: (select all that apply)
   15. environmental groups/NGOs
   16. grassroots/local activists
   17. Indigenous activists
   18. other: _____

5. Who are the other actors named? (select all that apply)
   19. none
   20. government
   21. industry
   22. other: ______

6. Is opposition to Line 9/pipelines framed by media as legitimate?
   23. yes
   24. no
   25. neutral

7. If yes, why: ______

8. If no, why: ______

9. Opposition is explicitly framed as: (select any that apply)
   26. non-violent
27. responsible
28. necessary
29. violent
30. extreme/radical
31. a threat/hazard/risk
32. unnecessary
33. other: ______

10. Consequences of pipelines/Line 9 are framed as affecting: (select all that apply)
   34. climate change
   35. water contamination
   36. land
   37. Indigenous land rights/colonialism
   38. harm to people (non-specific)
   39. harm to Indigenous communities
   40. harm to non-Indigenous communities
   41. harm to racialized communities
   42. harm to low-income communities
   43. harm to future generations
   44. democracy
   45. other: ______

11. Consequences of project interruption are framed as affecting: (select all that apply)
   46. the economy
   47. energy security
   48. Canadian growth & prosperity
   49. other: ______

12. Line 9 is framed as a ______ issue. (select all that apply)
   50. local
   51. provincial
   52. national
   53. global

13. Opposition’s targets for intervention are framed as including: (select all that apply)
   54. local communities
   55. municipal government
   56. provincial government
   57. federal government
   58. industry
   59. NEB
   60. other: ______

14. Opposition’s tactics are framed as including: (select all that apply)
   61. direct actions (blockades, occupations, etc.)
   62. protests/rallies
   63. educational events
64. leafleting
65. door-to-door
66. government meetings
67. community meetings
68. other: ________

15. Opposition’s objectives are framed as:
   69. stopping L9/pipelines
   70. preventing tar sand expansion
   71. preventing climate change
   72. protecting the environment (land, water, etc)
   73. minimizing dependence on fossil fuels
   74. preventing harm to people
   75. protecting Indigenous rights
   76. seeking consultations
   77. seeking environmental assessments
   78. building political capacity
   79. restoring democracy
   80. other: ______

16. Themes re: political engagement:

17. Broader themes/thoughts: