

Framing BSE: Canadian News Coverage of Canadian-born Cases of Bovine Spongiform
Encephalopathy (BSE)

by

Stephanie Marie Cram
B.A., University of Alberta , 2005

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Supervisory Committee

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. Sean P. Hier, (Department of Sociology)
Supervisor

Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh (Department of Sociology)
Departmental Member

Abstract

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Dr. Sean P. Hier (Department of Sociology)

Supervisor

Dr. Peyman Vahabzadeh (Department of Sociology)

Departmental Member

This thesis is a critical examination of newspaper coverage of Canadian-born cases of Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) discovered between May 2003 and December 2005. Data for the thesis has been compiled from three newspapers: the Edmonton Journal, the Calgary Herald, and the *Globe & Mail*. The Alberta newspapers were chosen for their proximity to the BSE discoveries, and the *Globe & Mail* was chosen for the national focus of its coverage. Using Fairclough's method of *ordering discourses*, I examine three discourses prominently featured in the coverage: the political discourse, the science discourse, and the socio-cultural discourse. I analyse the three discourses independently, incorporating relevant theory to further explicate the discourses. The primary focus of the thesis is on the newspaper coverage of the first Canadian-born BSE case, but newspaper coverage of additional discoveries are included to examine how the BSE media package changed over time.

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Introduction

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)¹ is a neurological disease in cattle that causes degeneration of the brain and spinal cord (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). In May 2003, BSE was detected in a Canadian cow in Wanham, Alberta. In response to the event, 34 countries “including the United States and Mexico, banned imports of ruminant and ruminant products originating from Canada” (Le Roy & Klein, 2005, p.383).

Nine months later, in December 2003, when the US ban on Canadian beef was soon to be lifted, an Alberta-born cow in Yakima, Washington, was reported as having BSE. According to Le Roy & Klein (2005), the cow’s Canadian origin was used “as a tool to slow and frustrate the normalization of live cattle trade across the Canada-United States border” (p. 384). The next year, in December 2004, the USDA announced that it would reopen the US border to live Canadian cattle older than 30 months of age by March 7, 2005 because no adverse effects resulted from this Canadian BSE case. However, when two BSE-positive cows were discovered in Alberta in December 2004 and January 2005, the United States Senate voted in favour of “keeping the border closed to Canadian cattle” (Le Roy & Klein, 2005, p. 384).

Although only four cows with BSE were discovered between 2003 and 2005, the impact of these discoveries on the Alberta beef industry has been far-reaching. Using critical discourse analysis, this study will explore how select Canadian newspapers framed the BSE cases discovered between May 2003 to December 2005 and reported on the cultural events organized in support of the beef industry.

¹ BSE is also commonly referred to in the media as ‘mad cow disease’ – a term created by the British media when the disease was discovered in the UK in the late 1980s.

The aim of this thesis is to explore how samples of Canadian newspapers frame the Canadian BSE discoveries. By exploring the newspaper coverage, I will demonstrate how newspapers highlight a particular understanding of the disease, and in turn, help define how audience members understand the disease. This is not to suggest that the media determines how or what citizens think about BSE but rather that they provide a context that potentially influences people in reflecting about the meaning of those events in their lives (Cohen, 1972). Specifically, I explore the extent to which the selected newspapers represent the cow as the object of risk, which I will argue is a process that prevents proper exploration of the industrial and economic reasons for the emergence of BSE. The research questions that guide this study are sevenfold:

- How do sampled Canadian newspapers represent the BSE crisis?
- How do the newspapers articulate cows as objects of risk?
- How is the Alberta beef industry represented in coverage of the BSE crisis?
- How is the origin of BSE articulated in newspapers?
- How do the different newspapers in my sample present unique discourses on BSE?
- How do the unique discourses presented encourage readers to respond?
- How do newspapers represent events organized in support of the Alberta beef industry?

I focus on the Canadian BSE discoveries because the Canadian BSE outbreak is one of the most significant food scares² in Canadian history. It also occurred recently and has attracted vast news coverage. I will use critical discourse analysis to investigate the

² Caswell (2006) defines food scares as a sudden fear or panic about the quality of a specific type of food.

newspaper coverage of BSE from May 2003 to December 2005. This timeframe was chosen based on the high number of articles that appeared during those three years; after 2005, the coverage declined dramatically.

The thesis is presented in eight chapters. In Chapter one I explain what BSE is, and the threat it poses to human health. In Chapter two I explore critical discourse analysis, and my methodological approach. In Chapter three I outline the coding scheme used and explain how the analysis chapters are organized. Chapters four through six include analyses of the three dominant discourses uncovered in the data: the political discourse, the science discourse and the socio-cultural discourse. In Chapter seven I explore how the newspaper coverage of BSE evolved over the timeframe of the analysis. Finally, in Chapter eight I conclude by exploring how specific social practices promote a particular understanding of beef commodities, and prevent an animal ethics discourse from emerging in popular media coverage.

Chapter 1 – Defining BSE

In this chapter I provide a detailed look at Bovine spongiform encephalopathy. I explain what the disease is, and outline important scientific discoveries on the disease. Aside from looking at the impact the disease has on cattle, I will also explain how the disease can impact humans. The goal of the thesis is to uncover the newspaper representation of the Canadian BSE discoveries, and this chapter provides a more thorough explanation of the disease and its threat to human health than provided in the newspaper coverage. Both the history of the disease in Britain and in Canada will also be explored in this chapter. As the discursive media package of BSE is in part defined by previous BSE discoveries in other countries, a brief exploration of the British BSE crisis is included in this chapter to trace the history of the disease which inevitably influences its coverage in the media. Finally, I will outline existing sociological research on the disease, in order to situate and differentiate this thesis from other sociological work focused on BSE.

What is BSE?

BSE is one of a group of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) – conditions which cause the “spongy degeneration of the brain with severe and fatal neurological signs and symptoms” (Le Roy & Klein, 2005, p. 382). BSE is a form of TSE that occurs in cattle; other forms of TSE include scrapie in sheep and goats and chronic wasting disease in mink, North American mule deer and elk (Le Roy & Klein, 2005).

There are competing theories on the composition of BSE, but the leading theory is that the infectious agent in TSEs is largely composed of a self-replicating protein called a

prion (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). In 1982 Staley Prusiner, a neurologist at the University of California discovered that scrapie was caused by an agent that contained no nucleic acid, which he called a prion (Leiss & Powell, 2004). Leiss and Powell (2004) states that Prusiner's theory was initially ridiculed, and critics argued that all bacteria, viruses, and living organisms contain either deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) or ribonucleic acid (RNA). Despite the initial criticisms, Prusiner's theory remains the leading theory on TSE diseases.

The first confirmed case of BSE was reported in the United Kingdom in November 1986. According to Shiva (2000), by August 1994, there were 137,000 cases of BSE, which was “more than six times the number predicted by the government in their “worst case scenario” (p. 63). BSE is believed to have been caused by feeding cattle high-protein feed which contained TSE infected remains of other animals, likely sheep and goats infected with scrapie. The rapid spread of BSE in the cattle population was caused by feeding healthy animals the remains of infected ones (ibid).

Shiva (2000) states that the shift in feeding practices to include high-protein ruminant feed to cattle diets was led by the increased need for beef products. To feed cattle properly and naturally requires a tremendous amount of space; cows feed in “shadow acres” and eat what humans cannot – straw and grass from pastures. As Shiva (2000) notes, farmers started to wonder how they could produce the most amount of meat using the least amount of space. At first high-protein grain was introduced to cattle diets in order to increase both milk and meat production, but this shift in feeding practices diverted grain from human consumption to cattle consumption. Best (n.d.) suggests that the introduction of ruminant feed to cattle diets provided a simple solution for the

requirement of high-protein feed, while also providing a solution for the disposal of unused animal parts.

Rendering plants take unused animal parts, boil them and grind them up. Initially governments did not regulate what animal parts were used for the production of ruminant feed, so ruminant feed included the parts of downer animals, along with typically unused animal parts, euthanized animals from shelters, and even road kill (Best, n.d.) The use of downer animals in ruminant feed is a major problem, considering that the symptoms typically observed of downer cows resemble the symptoms of BSE, therefore making it impossible to distinguish BSE-infected cattle from cattle suffering from other diseases.

Species Jumping

After the first discovery of BSE in 1986, the British government insisted that the disease could not cross species boundaries; the government insisted that British beef was safe to eat. The government's insistence that the disease could not cross species lines stood in contrast to the prominent theory of how BSE began. Scientists believed that cows attained BSE by consuming ruminant feed that contained sheep and goats meat infected with scrapie. Shiva (2000) claims that after "the BSE epidemic broke out, scientists started to warn that if the disease had jumped from sheep to cows, there was every possibility that it could shift from cows to humans" (p. 65). In 1990 British newspapers reported that cats started to develop a disease similar to BSE, and it was believed to be spread through ruminant protein used in cat food (Leiss & Powell, 2004). Despite all the evidence indicating that the disease could potentially cross species lines, the British government still insisted that British beef was safe to eat, and that it was not a threat to human beings.

In response to these events, British citizens started to question the public statements made by the British government. British citizens began to believe that the disease did pose a threat of being passed to humans, and Leiss and Powell (2004) outline examples of initiatives taken by citizens to secure their safety from British beef. For example, in November 1995, a school in Britain banned beef from the cafeteria, and the cook from the cafeteria was quoted as stating that they didn't believe the government message that beef was safe to eat (Leiss & Powell, 2004). In 1996, ten children from the same British elementary school were diagnosed as having a unique degenerative brain disorder (Shiva, 2000). On March 20, 1996 British Health Secretary Dorrell announced that there may be a link between the degenerative brain disorder – later labeled variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease – and the consumption of beef infected with BSE. According to Leiss and Powell (2004), the government announcement was made in a climate of extreme mistrust of the UK Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food,” and the government lost any remaining credibility that it had on the issue (p. 11).

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)

The most well known transmissible spongiform encephalopathy in humans is Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD). The disease is rare and hereditary, and affects approximately one in every one million people each year (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). People who develop CJD “lose the ability to think and move properly, [and] suffer from memory loss and progressive brain damage until they can no longer see, speak or feed themselves,” and approximately 90 percent of individuals who contract CJD die within a year (Le Roy & Klein, p. 382).

Other forms of TSEs that occur in humans include Variant CJD (vCJD), kuru disease, fatal familial insomnia, and Gerstmann-Straussler-Scheinker disease (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). All the diseases affect humans in a similar fashion – victims suffer from memory loss, and their brain mass slowly disintegrates. TSEs can be identified in cadavers by the characteristic of “spongy” brain – which literally means the existence of holes in the victims nerves cells (Leiss & Powell, 2004). Although the route of vCJD is not completely agreed upon in the scientific community, it is generally believed to be transmitted through the consumption of beef infected with BSE. What differentiates vCJD from CJD is that it can affect younger people, and there is a longer duration of illness with vCJD – those with CJD survive from approximately four months after the onset of symptoms, while those with vCJD typically survive 14 months after the onset of symptoms.

Leiss and Powell (2004) outline a tentative theory of how TSEs are contracted – they suggests that TSEs are contracted by direct contact with brain tissue of an infected person or animal. This theory does not appear in all the literature on BSE, or in the literature on TSEs. Instead, details of the disease continue to be debated, and the disease continues to challenge biologists. Other writers, such as Le Roy and Klein (2000), suggest that CJD is not specifically contracted from contact with brain mass, and instead suggest that CJD is contracted from contact with any type of meat infected with the BSE. Leiss and Powell (2004) outline other ways CJD has been contracted – unsterile instruments used in brain surgery, corneal transplants, the use of dura matter from an infected cadaver, and injections of a human growth hormone prepared from the pituitary glands of human cadavers infected with CJD. Despite the debate, the underlying

conclusion is that CJD and other TSE diseases are contracted through direct contact with body parts infected with a TSE.

The British BSE Epidemic

The BSE epidemic in Britain occurred in the late 1980s. Reports of a new disease started to appear in UK newspapers in the mid-1980s, but it was not until June 1988 that the British government confirmed BSE as a reportable disease (Leiss & Powell, 2004). Due to initial scientific reports that outline a potential connection between BSE and ruminant cattle feed the British government banned the use of ruminant feed in July 1988 (Leiss & Powell, 2004). There have been over 180,000 cases of BSE reported in England, and there have been 101 confirmed deaths from vCJD, and 36 probable deaths due to vCJD (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). Countries responded to the British BSE crisis by banning the import of British beef; the United States banned the import of British beef in 1989, and Canada banned the import of British beef in 1990 (Leiss & Powell, 2004).

The British BSE crisis caused a media frenzy that resulted in a negative portrayal of the British government, causing both British citizens and international British beef consumers to be weary of the choices made by the British government. As already stated, the British government did not initially confirm a connection between BSE and vCJD, and in fact the government skeptically responded to initial scientific reports that speculated about a connection between the two diseases. It could be argued that the actions of the British government presented a platform for how a government should *not* respond to a BSE outbreak. For example, a media display that has been widely criticized and analyzed by academics occurred in 1990 when the British Minister of Agriculture John Gummer “(force)fed his daughter a hamburger in front of live television cameras

and assured the public British beef was safe” (Best, n.d., para. 18). According to a BBC article, “[f]amilies of CJD victims accused [Gummer] and the government of whitewash,” but in response to this accusation Gummer insisted that he “always acted in the best interest of the consumer – using his own family as a benchmark” (“John Gummer”, 2000, para. 6). Leiss and Powell (2004) argue that Gummer’s actions were futile, and were in fact seen as risky behavior because by 1990 popular knowledge on BSE connected the disease to the human disease vCJD; the route of transmission was popularly recognized as eating beef. It wasn’t until March 20, 1996 that the British government confirmed a link between vCJD and the consumption of beef infected with BSE (Leiss & Powell, 2004).

Since the outbreak of BSE in the UK, international standards regarding transmissible animal diseases and sanitary safety have been implemented by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in an effort to stop the global spread of BSE. The standards set by the OIE are recognized by the World Trade Organization as international sanitary rules (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). In May 2005, the OIE classified countries into one of five BSE-risk categories: BSE free, BSE provisionally free, country of minimal risk, country of moderate risk, and country of high risk (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). The categories have been created to help beef trading countries decide who they want to trade with (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). Despite internationally implemented rules and regulations regarding transmissible animal diseases and sanitary safety, cases of BSE have been discovered in Japan, the United States and Canada.

The Canadian BSE Epidemic

As stated, the focus of this project is on the Canadian cases of BSE discovered between May 2003 and December 2005. The first Canadian case of BSE was discovered on December 8, 1993 in Red Deer, Alberta. It was determined that the cow was imported from the United Kingdom. The cow and the herd from which it resided were destroyed, as were all remaining cows in Canada imported from the UK since 1982 (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). Because the cow was imported from the United Kingdom, and because the cow and its herd mates were destroyed immediately, the threat to the Canadian beef industry was minimal. On May 20, 2003, BSE was confirmed in an Angus cow from a herd in Wanham, Alberta (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). Unlike the 1993 case of BSE, this cow was born, raised and fed in Canada. By August 2003, both the United States and Mexico banned Canadian imports of live cattle, but still maintained trade of low-risk Canadian beef products (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). In December 2003, a cow in Washington tested positive for BSE and it was concluded that the cow was born in Canada. Despite the origin of the cow, Canada placed a ban on American beef products. On December 30th, 2004 a ten-year old Alberta dairy cow tested positive for BSE and shortly after (on January 11th, 2005) a six-year-old Alberta cow tested positive for BSE (Le Roy & Klein, 2005). As a result of these pivotal BSE cases, the federal and Alberta governments implemented several initiatives to support farmers affected by the BSE. The government initiatives provided income supplements to farmers whose financial situation was dramatically affected by BSE (ibid.). Details on the specific BSE cases, and the government initiatives provided will be further elaborated on in later chapters, which will draw from specific Canadian newspapers to analyze the Canadian BSE cases.

BSE: A Sociological Topic

Considering BSE is a disease in cattle, the extent to which it is explored as a topic in sociological literature has been limited. BSE has, however, been widely used as an example in risk society theory literature (e.g., Jones, 2001; Van Loon, 2002; Tacke, 2001; Rose, 2000). Risk society theory is a strand of social theory shaped by the work of Ulrich Beck (Beck, 1992, 2000, 2003, 2004). Beck (1992) states that modernity transforms itself from first to second modernity. Important to my research is the point that second modernity is characterized by an increasing concern and effort to manage risks that have emerged as a result of rapid industrialization in first modernity. While the threat of natural risks has been reduced during the period of industrialization, modernity has introduced new global risks associated with industrial activity “such as nuclear power, [and] chemical and biotechnical production” (Beck, 1992, p. 97). According to Beck, BSE is a global risk resulting from the industrialization of the beef industry during first modernity. As previously outlined, BSE is believed to be caused by changes to cattle diets – in order to increase milk and beef production, high-protein ruminant feed was introduced to cattle diets. Through a risk society theory lens, BSE is seen as a man-made risk, resulting from changes made to cattle diets introduced to help the beef industry increase production. The change in feed practices marks a shift from a first modernity beef industry to a second modernity beef industry.

Beck’s risk society theory is helpful to situate current and future food risks in globalized food industries, while outlining the obscured position of food consumers. Beck (1998) proposes that globalization and risk are closely connected, an idea that has been further explored by Tacke (2001) in her detailed exploration of BSE as a globalized risk. The argument is simple: the increase of trade in globalized food industries promotes

the globalization of risks. What presents itself as a risk to a particular country could present itself as a risk to connected trade countries. The impact that globalized food industries have had on food consumer's choices has been explored by Green, Draper and Dowler (2003), a project not specifically focused on consumer perceptions of BSE, but rather focused broadly on the consumer perceptions of food scares.

Risk society literature has provided a strong descriptive outline of globalized industries, and the proliferation of globalized risks, which can be used to explain the current globalized beef industry and the connected risk of BSE. Considering that the limited risk society literature focused on food risks, and more specifically BSE, the literature has not entirely shaped my research, but rather has sensitized my outlook to particular understandings of global industries and the connected global risks. Considering the focus of my research is on media representations of BSE, a detailed examination of risk society literature on BSE is secondary to a focused examination of media discourse construction. According to Cottle (1998), Beck's theory has significant limitations when using it to analyze the role of media in risk society. Beck sees the media as an essential tool for disseminating information on risks, but his theory is primarily a macro-level theory lacking empirical validation. Thus, as Cottle suggests, Beck's theory is useful as a starting point for developing a contextualized and historical understanding of risk but less so when attempting to look at the representation of risk in the media, which can be considered a micro-level phenomenon.

Chapter 2 – Methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis

In this chapter I outline how critical discourse analysis has shaped my methodological approach to studying newspaper coverage on BSE. I will outline the most prominent literature on critical discourse analysis, and I will specifically focus on the work of Norman Fairclough. I will explore criticisms articulated against the approach, and will outline how my methodological approach deals with these criticisms. To conclude, I will explain the methodology used for this thesis.

Considering the importance of language to journalism, it is not surprising that a considerable amount of research speaks to the role of language in constructing social representations of reality and social relations. Research on media texts can be divided into two broad approaches: cultural and semiotic. The Glasgow University Media Group and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies have been identified as important players in defining the cultural approach to media analysis (Carvalho, 2008). Both groups produced a considerable amount of research on how media represent social issues from the 1970s. Semiotic research on media texts have focused on the transitivity of syntax, lexical structure, modality and speech acts of media texts (Carvalho, 2008). Critical discourse analysis is a unique methodological approach for studying media texts that attempt to bridge the two approaches to studying media. The two writers most often associated with the methodology are Norman Fairclough (1995, 1998, 2003) and Teun van Dijk (1998, 1991, 2005). Both writers have contributed to cultural analyses of media texts, and have both been attributed as developing rigorous systematic analyses of journalistic discourse (Carvalho, 2008). The writer I primarily draw from to develop my

methodological approach to studying the media representation of BSE is Norman Fairclough (1995a, 1995b, 2003).

Before delving into the details of Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis, it is first essential to outline the influence that Marxism has had in developing the approach. Most scholars writing on critical discourse analysis reference the influence that Marxism has had on 'critical' social research without providing an elaboration on the influence that Marxism has had on the methodology. Hammersley (1997) provides a detailed outline of the influence that Marxism has had on all critical approaches to social research, provides points that help in identifying 'critical' approaches to social research, and outlines the benefits of critical approaches to social research. According to Hammersley (1997), 'critical' approaches to social research assume that society must be seen as a totality, and that any phenomenon must be analysed against the backdrop of the specific social context. Therefore, the analysis of media texts outlined in approaches to critical discourse analysis must be done through the lens of the specific social context of the time of its production.

The benefit of critical approaches to research lies in its ability to reveal what is obscured by ideology. Hammersley (1997) suggests that cultural ideologies work at preserving the status quo, often at the expense of typically oppressed social groups, and that 'critical' social research starts a productive dialogue on what is obscured by ideology. Hammersley suggests that the work of 'critical' social research should not merely create knowledge of what is obscured by ideology, but rather should also provide knowledge of how society should be; 'critical' social research should not merely provide

an analytical look at how society is, but should also provide productive suggestions of how to better society.

In “On the foundation of critical discourse analysis,” Hammersley (1997) outlines basic tenets that can help form other critical methodological approaches within and outside the discipline of sociology, but the primary focus of the article is critical discourse analysis. Hammersley claims that the origin of the approach can be attributed to three fields of social theory: traditional Marxist theory, decisionism, and Habermas’ universal pragmatics. The influence that Marxist theory has had on the methodology should now be evident, considering critical discourse analysis is a methodological approach that can be used to attempt to uncover oppression and exploitation. The second field of social theory that can be attributed to critical discourse analysis is decisionism, which is a field of theory that exploded in the 1970s and 1980s, and draws heavily from existentialism and structuralism. Decisionism provides a break from the Marxist assumption that ideals can be rationally decided through research in the world. Instead, decisionism introduces the idea that values must be individually decided, and involves a ‘leap of faith’ or an ‘act of will’. The parallel to be drawn between critical discourse analysis and decisionism is that both demand an explicit commitment to a particular set of values to help guide research. Hammersley (1997) criticizes other methodological approaches for claiming to be value-neutral, when in fact they are not. Hammersley instead argues that the strength of critical discourse analysis lies in the fact that the value-commitments of the analyst are often made explicit. It should also be noted that decisionism assumes that all value-commitments are in fact all equally irrational, a pejorative point that can be turned around to suggest that any value-commitment can be

taken up in social research; the critical discourse analyst can argue for any set of values, just as long as they remain committed and thoroughly engaged with them. Finally, the third field of social theory that has influenced critical discourse analysis is Habermas' universal pragmatics. Following his predecessors in the Frankfurt school, Habermas criticizes Marx for his focus on labour, and instead suggests that a focus on communicative interaction is more important than a focus on labour (Hammersley, 1997). Essential to Habermas' theory is the concept of an 'ideal speech situation', which is speech free from constraint and coercion, and is therefore autonomous. According to Habermas, political life should be governed by rules decided through critical 'ideal speech situations'. Habermas' suggestion that rational thought can be achieved through an 'ideal speech situation' does stand in direct conflict with the ideas of decisionism. Hammersley does not quite work out the conflict between decisionism and Habermas' universal pragmatics, but perhaps it is safe to assume that elements of both theories are drawn from disproportionately depending on the type of critical discourse analysis work being done, and the personal opinion of the critical discourse analyst.

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

The goal of critical discourse analysis is to look beyond texts, and explore the institutional and sociocultural contexts that both influence the discourse presented in texts and may in turn be influenced by the discourse presented in texts. The strength of critical discourse analysis is that it grounds texts in reality by highlighting the dialectical relationship between texts and reality; texts draw from dominant sociocultural ideologies, but may also influence a change in dominant sociocultural ideologies.

Theory of discourse.

Before continuing, it is important to operationalize two terms that are essential to critical discourse analysis: discourse and ideology. The definitions for these terms I use are the definitions outlined by Norman Fairclough. Fairclough (1995a) identifies discourse as spoken or written language use, and “other semiotic modalities such as photography or non-verbal communication” (p. 131). By contrast, ideology is a “form of system of underlying language practice,” and “the discursive event itself,” which stresses that ideology is a process that occurs during discursive events, and that ideologies are in fact fluid (Fairclough, 1995a, p. 71). According to Fairclough’s definitions, media texts – which can include newspaper articles, TV programs, or even radio programs – are discursive events that are constituted by dominant cultural ideologies, and may in turn constitute cultural ideologies. It may seem like a lofty suggestion to state that media texts have an influence on cultural ideologies, but as an integrated component of a social system, the influence that media texts may have on cultural ideologies cannot be denied. Fairclough (1995b) states that mass media operate within a social system, and therefore media researchers should not isolate the media when analyzing social systems. Instead, Fairclough (1995b) stresses that there should be focus given in media research to the concept of power; research questions should focus on “how the mass media affect and are affected by power relations within the social system, including relations of class, gender, and ethnicity, and relations between particular groups like politicians or scientists and the mass of the population” (p. 12). Fairclough identifies that there has been an exhaustive amount of research done in media studies on ideology (Hall, 1977; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978), and more specifically research has focused

on how media language might work ideologically (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979; Hodge & Kress, 1979).

The Objectivity of News Reports.

Carvalho (2008) states that research conducted using critical discourse analysis must begin from the recognition of a problem in society. Perhaps this seems like an obvious point, considering most sociological research starts from the recognition of a problem in society, and the desire to collect data on a particular issue. But the nature of the object of inquiry in critical discourse analysis research obscures the ‘problem’ needing to be researched. The ideological work of media texts is obscured by the cultural perception that media texts present objective accounts of particular events/issues.

Thomson, White, and Kitley (2008) conclude through a comparative research project that news organizations typically present news objectively, without explicitly presenting the opinions of the news reporter or news organization. They conclude that there are different ‘voices’ taken up with different purposes. Typically for the presentation of ‘hard news’ a ‘reporter voice’ is used, which is a voice that curtails the use of explicit expressions of opinion, and instead is a voice that aims to present hard cold facts regarding particular social issues/events. In the article, Thomson et al. (2008) do provide examples of news reports that present a particular opinion, but what they stress is that the opinion is not presented explicitly, and instead is carefully presented in an implicit manner not easily recognized. Thomson et al. provide a helpful analysis of how the structuring of media texts obscures the workings of power by carefully constructing texts that appear to present objective accounts of particular social events/issues. As Fairclough (1995b) states, “connections between the use of language and the exercise of power are often not

clear to people, yet appear on closer examination to be vitally important to the workings of power” (p. 54) – a point that sums up the need for (and the power of) critical discourse analysis research.

Three Guiding Questions.

Fairclough (1995b) recognizes the inherent difficulties of analyzing newspaper articles, and his broad approach to critical discourse analysis includes several considerations that may help guide particular research interests. There are three broad questions that Fairclough asks of media text analysis to help guide media research. The first question asks: How is the world represented? This question deals with broad categorizations and representations of reality; stated differently, this questions seeks to dismantle cultural discourses. The second question: What identities are constructed regarding those introduced in media texts? This question not only outlines an inquiry into whose voice is authoritatively connected to particular social events and issues, but also seeks to thoroughly investigate how the identity is presented. Whether or not the person of authority is presented in a positive or negative light by a particular media organization is explored. And the source of identity construction is also explored; whether a particular analysis of identity is drawn from direct quotations, a generalization of what is quoted by a particular individual, or whether an analysis of identity is drawn from a interpretation of behaviour can all be explored. The final question Fairclough (1995b) asks is: What relationships are set up between those involved in a particular social event/issue? This question is important to ask in order to explore the potentially conflicting discourses presented for social issues/events. The question is also essential to ask in order to connect voices of authority to the social realm; in other words, the question helps to avoid

separating voices of authority from the often messy social environment that their discourses are reliant on. The questions indicate the three important areas of inquiry that Fairclough (1995b) states should be taken up in critical discourse analysis research: representation, identity, and relationships.

The approach to the research of media texts that Fairclough (1995b) outlines is broad, and attempts to include two types of discourse analysis: the analysis of the discourse events, and the analysis of the order of discourse. The analysis of discourse events is a critical analysis of how particular social events are represented, and incorporates an analysis of the language used in media texts. For my project, I will approach the analysis of discourse events by asking the simple question: how is BSE represented? I refrain from doing a detailed analysis of language, and instead conduct an analysis of prominent themes presented. The analysis of the order of discourse is an analysis of the type of discourses used in particular texts, and specifically explores which discourses are foregrounded, and which discourses are tangentially drawn upon in particular media texts. Fairclough (1995b) does not provide a list of discourses used in media texts, but rather suggests that researchers must define the discourses that exist for particular social events/issues, and must – through a critical analysis of media texts – determine the order of discourses. For example, regarding BSE there are three primary discourses I will be exploring in my analysis – the political, the scientific, and the socio-cultural discourses of BSE. The analysis of my data will include an exploration of how each discourse is constructed, and in turn how the discourses are related to one another.

A Critique of Critical Discourse Analysis

Due to the varying approaches to critical discourse analysis, academics developing methodological approaches for critical discourse analysis must spend a considerable amount of time distinguishing their approach from other critical discourse analysis methodologies. Fairclough (1995b) provides a thorough criticism of van Dijk's approach to critical discourse analysis. According to Fairclough (1995b), van Dijk distinguishes two types of textual analysis: macroanalysis and microanalysis. Macroanalysis of media texts are at the center of van Dijk's approach to critical discourse analysis, which is concerned with the structure of a text. Essential to this analytical approach is the relevance principle, which argues that more general information is presented at the beginning of an article, and is followed by more detailed information. Microanalysis of media texts looks at the semantic relations between propositions. Both of van Dijk's suggested approaches to media textual analysis present parallels with Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis, but there is one distinct difference between their approaches. As Fairclough (1995b) articulates, van Dijk's approach to textual analysis does not account for intertextuality. Van Dijk's approach suggests that media organizations draw from intrinsic media text structures that model how particular events/issues are presented, whereas Fairclough's approach argues that media texts draw from fluid cultural discourses, therefore forcing researchers to be acutely aware of genres and discourses drawn from in media texts. The strength in Fairclough's approach is that it presents media texts as dialectically related to reality; instead of suggesting that the content of media texts are in fact predetermined by rules and principles outlined by media organizations, he instead suggests that media texts should be seen as drawing discourses

from fluid cultural ideologies, while maintaining the potential to influence cultural ideologies.

Philo (2008) outlines four criticisms of critical discourse analysis, which all stem from the simple argument that textual analysis alone cannot account for the complexities of media text production and reception. The first criticism is that text-based analysis cannot account for the “origins of competing discourses, and how they relate to different social interest” (Philo, 2008, p. 185). This criticism outlines how text-based analysis can only deal with the data explored, and does not consider competing discourses related to specific social interests that do not appear in news reports. The second criticism is that text-based analysis cannot account for “the diversity of social accounts compared to what is present (and absent) in a specific text” (p. 185). This suggests that social accounts of particular issues/events are varied, and an analysis of media texts cannot account for the variety of opinions. The third criticism states that text-based analysis cannot account for “the impact of external factors such as professional ideologies on the manner in which the discourses are represented” (p. 185). This criticism explains how the content of media texts depend on the external sources drawn from to construct a news report, and the particular position the media organization may choose to take on a specific issue or social event. The content of media texts may also depend on market pressure, suggesting that specific angles to stories may be chosen because they are more likely favored by readers. The final criticism states that text-based analysis cannot account for “what the text actually means to different parts of the audience” (p. 185).

Philo’s (2008) criticisms downplay the potential of critical discourse analysis research, and some of his points completely misrepresent the methodology. The second

of Philo's criticisms is a point that Fairclough carefully considers in his approach. In fact, Fairclough (1995b) outlines how a systematic analysis of the content of media texts considers texts as a set of options. Through a systematic analysis of the content of media texts, opinions on the issue/event under analysis that are absent from media texts would be determined. The third of Philo's criticisms completely misrepresents the potential of critical discourse analysis. As already outlined, one of the major tenets of critical discourse analysis argues that texts are dialectically related to reality, suggesting that they draw from cultural discourses, and have the potential to influence cultural discourses. By presenting texts as intrinsically related to reality, the production of media texts cannot go uninfluenced by industry discourses. Also, an awareness of the workings of power obscured by media texts is an essential goal of critical discourse analysis research, therefore the influence of external sources used in the construction of media discourses would not go unnoticed in a proper critical discourse analysis research project. The final criticism outlined by Philo is the most popular one articulated against critical discourse analysis. The criticism is arguably valid, but as Carvalho (2008) suggests, it is perhaps unsolvable. It is also worth noting that it is the obligation of the researcher to define the parameters of their research, and to properly articulate the reasons for conducting research a particular way. To suggest that an analysis of the discourses presented in media texts requires an analysis of audience response may perhaps undermine the goals of a particular research project. Regarding my research intentions, I intend to explore how Canadian cases of BSE are represented in the media – essentially I am interested in a detailed analysis of the cultural discourses presented in newspaper coverage. The inclusion of both audience response, and an analysis of the organizational

structure of the newspaper organizations would allow for an analysis of the complete cycle of the news discourse, but is not an achievable goal given both time and resource constraints.

Another criticism articulated against critical discourse analysis is that it is an approach that does not account for the time sequence of texts, and does not clearly look at the implications of previous discursive positions on subsequent ones (Carvalho, 2008). The criticism is valid, and several critical discourse analysis projects do neglect to explore the evolution of discourses, but the nature of the methodology does not reject the potential of research interested in the evolution of discourses. Fairclough does place considerable importance on the need to critically analyze discourses that appear in media texts, and introduces methodological approaches that require researchers to order and compare discourses that appear in media texts. The attention Fairclough gives to the analysis of media discourses could be realized in a longitudinal study of the evolution of a particular discourse. In fact, it seems that in order to properly conduct any critical discourse analysis research project, there has to be time spent understanding the evolution of a discourse, in order to make judgments on its present state. In order to critically engage in the analysis of a particular discourse, it appears that an obvious step would be to ground that discourse in reality, and provide an account of how particular discursive events have impacted the present form of a discourse. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) suggest that *media packages* – or *media frames* as Gamson later defines them (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhands, & Rucht, 2002) – ebb and flow, and are “constantly updated to accommodate new events” (p. 2). My project is in fact primarily interested in the evolution of the discourse of BSE. I have conducted a detailed analysis of the first three

months of coverage of the BSE cases in Alberta in 2003, noting all thematic changes in coverage that occurred during the time period. In order to situate myself in the particular time period of my study, it was essential to gain a scientific understanding of BSE, and more importantly it was imperative that I attained an understanding of the popular media discourse of BSE for that time. The discourse of BSE that appeared in Canadian newspapers in 2003 was in fact modeled after previous media coverage on BSE – specifically the 2003 coverage was influenced by the coverage of BSE cases in Britain in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The previous chapter outlines the historical evolution of scientific research on BSE and media coverage on BSE, and is meant to situate the reader in the research project by informing the reader of important aspects of the topic to which they may or may not have been privy.

Critical discourse as a ‘sensitizing tool’

The methodology that I have created for my project does not draw equally from all the broad details of the methodology that Fairclough outlines. Instead of suggesting that I am conducting in depth critical discourse analysis research, it is instead more appropriate to suggest that critical discourse analysis methodology has been used as a ‘sensitizing tool’ for the creation of my methodology.

For my research I am primarily concerned with examining the discourses on BSE presented in media texts. I have selected three newspapers from which to draw my data on the basis of their location and circulation: the *Edmonton Journal*, the *Calgary Herald*, and the *Globe & Mail*. The *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* are Canwest publications that are widely read in Alberta with a weekly readership of 471,400 for the *Edmonton Journal*, and 501,200 for the *Calgary Herald* (Canwest Publishing

Community, 2009). I also selected the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* because they are published in Alberta where the primary BSE discovery occurred. The *Globe & Mail* was chosen because it is Canada's top national newspaper, with a weekly readership of 935,000 (Newspaper Audience Databank, 2007). Its head office is in Toronto, which allows for an investigation of the influence of national interests on the news coverage of the BSE crisis.

I gathered newspaper articles from May 20, 2003 to December 2005 using Canadian Newsstand. This timeframe is the period when Canadian newspaper coverage of BSE peaked. I analyzed newspaper coverage on BSE discoveries and the cultural events surrounding the discovery of BSE. In the selected timeframe, 1531 articles citing "BSE" or "mad cow disease" in the headline or in the text were published by the *Calgary Herald*, 1463 articles by the *Edmonton Journal*, and 949 by the *Globe & Mail*. The highest concentration of articles are found from May 2003 to December 2003, with 650 articles in the *Calgary Herald*, 675 articles in the *Edmonton Journal*, and 509 articles in the *Globe & Mail*. By breaking down the 2003 coverage into monthly segments, there is a notable concentration of articles in May, June, and July, around the time of the discovery of the first Canadian case of BSE. After July 2003 the coverage is steady, but continues to slowly drop.

Because the coverage of BSE is not evenly distributed among the months within the timeframe, I purposively sampled newspaper articles from the period of highest concentration during the selected timeframe. This approach was dictated partly by time constraints, but also by the nature of the analysis performed on the text or articles. This sampling strategy is justified on the basis of Carvalho's (2008) argument that media

analysis projects involving large amounts of data can include a sampling of selective periods, in order to fully understand ‘critical discourse moments’. Using the work of Chilton (1987) and Gamson (1992), Carvalho defines such moments as “periods that involve specific happenings, which may challenge the ‘established’ discursive positions” (p. 166). The first case of BSE in Alberta resulted in a significantly high amount of news coverage during the three months following the initial discovery which occurred on May 20, 2003. Thus, the period from May to July constitutes a ‘critical discourse moment’ that requires an extensive sampling of the articles during this period. It is likely that the ‘media interpretive package’ on BSE created during this time period will frame future news coverage on BSE in Canada. According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), “media discourse can be conceived as a set of interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue” and these packages have “the task to construct meaning over time, incorporating new events into their interpretive frames” (p. 3). For my research, I used articles that appeared on the first page of the newspapers — a decision based on the work of Erbring (1980), who has determined that the most important news is reported on the front page of newspapers. Using this criterion, I found 58 articles in the *Calgary Herald*, 50 articles in the *Edmonton Journal*, and 31 articles in the *Globe & Mail*. The initial sample was 139 articles, but was adjusted by removing articles that do not focus on BSE. For the June *Globe & Mail* sample, I had to expand the search criteria to include all articles featured in the first section of the newspaper. This decision was made after discovering that the articles for this month in the *Globe & Mail* were primarily about the Canadian economy, and only briefly cited the impact that BSE was having on the beef industry. By expanding the criteria for this month, I was able to gain a better data set that included articles that

primarily focused on BSE. After expanding the search and cutting out articles that were exclusively about BSE, there were a total of 19 articles for the June 2003 *Globe & Mail* sample.

Beyond the coverage of the first outbreak, I did a survey of the articles reporting on the three other BSE discoveries that occurred during the timeframe. The second BSE discovery occurred on December 23, 2003 when an infected cow in Washington was discovered, and was reported to be a cow imported from Canada. The third BSE-positive cow discovered during the timeframe under inquiry occurred December 30, 2004. The final BSE discovery during the timeframe occurred January 11, 2005. The articles for this data set were compiled by reading through all the articles that appear in the “A-section” of the newspapers that reference BSE; from these articles I selectively chose articles that specifically focused on the BSE discoveries in question. In the end, there were 27 articles for the December 23, 2003 discovery, 11 for the December 30, 2004 discovery, and 11 for the January 11, 2005 discovery.

I have also chosen to incorporate newspaper articles that report on barbeque (BBQ) events in support of the beef industry, because these events constitute a response to BSE by encouraging participants to consume Alberta beef and perceive it to be safe to eat. To gather this data set, I pulled all articles that mention either BSE or mad cow disease, along with mentioning “barbeque.” Overall, there are a total of 284 articles included in this mixed sample. Most of these articles do not focus on specific BBQ events, so from this initial sample I selectively chose articles that primarily focused on specific events. The final sample includes 21 *Edmonton Journal* articles, 7 *Globe & Mail* articles, and 11 *Calgary Herald* articles. The final sample was narrowed down

significantly from 284 articles to 39 articles, as the initial data sample was far too varied for this project. I am specifically interested in the collective response to the BSE crisis promoted by community, and city organized BBQ events, and I feel the final sample represents the most thorough coverage of the events that took place during the timeframe.

Data Analysis

For this thesis I am primarily concerned with the various discourses that are represented in the media coverage of the Alberta BSE crisis. Fairclough (1995b) outlines an approach to analyze the content of media texts which includes determining which discourses are foregrounded in media texts, and which discourses are tangentially drawn from in media texts; an approach which he titles the “ordering of discourses.”

In order to determine the ordering of discourses, I first compiled a list of codes which account for particular observations taken from the data. The initial code list was compiled by reading through coverage for May 2003, but as the coverage progressed, other codes became prominently featured in the articles and had to be accounted for. Therefore, the initial code list used for the project shifted in form throughout the coding phase. In order to account for the added codes, I had to read through the articles numerous times in order to assure that the data compiled for each code was as thorough as possible. In the next chapter I provide a description of each of the codes. The codes used for this project do vary in type, and the way of acknowledging references to these codes does vary based on the decided description of each code.

After compiling references for each code, I was able to connect codes which highlight specific themes in the coverage. I concluded that each theme relates to one of the three overarching discourses prominently featured in the coverage: the political

discourse, the science discourse, and the socio-cultural discourse. Each of the three discourses uniquely frame the BSE crisis, and therefore each discourse is analyzed independently in chapters four, five and six.

Chapter 3 – The Ordering of Discourses

An approach to analyzing the content of media texts that Fairclough (1995b) outlines is an analysis of the *order of discourses*. This approach to analysis looks to uncover which discourses are foregrounded in media texts, and which discourses are tangentially drawn from throughout the text. After collecting data, and coding prominent observations, I noticed discursive connections between the various codes, which were used to form prominent themes. The codes used are basic terms or concepts taken directly from the newspaper coverage, and the discursive themes refer to larger and more complex analytic concepts that reference, or draw from the basic codes.

From the list of themes, I was able to conclude that there are three discourses prominently featured in the coverage: the *political discourse*, the *science discourse*, and the *socio-cultural discourse*. In order to simplify the analysis of the representation of the BSE discoveries in Alberta, I approach my analysis by analyzing the three prominent discourses separately, discussing the themes that fall under the particular discourses and noting any distinct feature of each discourse.

In this chapter I will describe each discourse, and I outline which codes apply to each of the discourses. It must be noted that there is overlap between the discourses therefore several codes apply to two discourses. I will also provide a numerical breakdown of how many times each code appears in each of the newspapers for the three data sets: the first three months of coverage, the coverage of the three other cases of BSE, and the socio-cultural data set focused on BBQ coverage. The qualitative count of the codes was completed as a preliminary analysis, and it uncovered a couple of observations worth noting, which will be outlined in this chapter.

A more thorough and detailed analysis of the discourses will be provided in later chapters.

Political Discourse

This discourse highlights BSE as a political issue, focusing on issues of international trade and the economic damage the disease may have on particular industries. This discourse appropriates BSE as a ‘matter of concern’, and not merely a ‘matter of fact’ (Latour, 2004). According to Latour (2004), a ‘matter of concern’, in contrast to a ‘matter of fact’, recognizes particular ecological issues, such as BSE, as wrapped up in particular political and social interests. Alone, BSE is merely a ‘matter of fact’ – a disease that affects cattle. But as a political issue, BSE becomes a ‘matter of concern’ that is taken seriously by politicians and workers within the industry.

Of the three discourses, the political discourse was the most prominently featured in the first three months of coverage. In total there are eighteen codes from the list of theme codes that correspond to the political discourse presented in the media texts. The codes corresponding to the political discourse were chosen based on how closely they describe BSE as a political issue. The following is a list of the corresponding codes, and a brief description of each:

- *A call to the federal government for help*: captures any address made to the federal government for help.
- *Compensation package*: references to government compensation packages described in the newspaper coverage.
- *Good BSE inspection procedures*: notes any positive reaction to the Canadian BSE inspection procedures.

- *Negative financial impact on industry*: uncovers the financial impact BSE has had on the beef industry, and also notes all analysis of the potential impact the disease may have on the beef industry.
- *Bans on beef*: outlines descriptions of bans on beef. The code is not limited to coverage on bans on Canadian beef, but also includes mentions of bans on beef from other countries.
- *Fear*: notes any mention of the word ‘fear’ in connection to the BSE crisis.
- *Blame the Canadian government*: outlines descriptions in media texts that place blame for the crisis on the Canadian government.
- *Public confidence / consumer confidence*: notes any mention of public/consumer confidence for beef mentioned in the media texts.
- *BSE scare affects other industries*: notes any mention of both the real and potential impact BSE may have on other industries.
- *U.S. and Canada working together*: outlines descriptions of Canadian and U.S. politicians and industry officials working together to combat misperceptions regarding the safety of U.S. and Canadian beef.
- *Trade wars*: outlines descriptions of potential trade wars resulting from the BSE discoveries.
- *Labeling beef origin*: notes descriptions of the Japanese request that the United States should label the origin of cattle, in order to distinguish it from Canadian beef.
- *A need to find an origin of the disease*: focuses on the need to uncover how the initial case of BSE was contracted. This code also relates to the science discourse.

- As a code representing the political discourse, the need to find an origin of the disease is linked to trade bans on Canadian beef.
- *Isolated case*: references to how the initial BSE case is as an isolated case. This code also relates to the science discourse.
 - *Infected meat didn't enter the food chain*: outlines how and why infected cow meat did not enter the human food chain. This code also falls under the science discourse. This code is correlated to the political discourse because the articulation of this theme is typically drawn from quotes by politicians.
 - *Infected meat could have entered the food chain*: outlines how infected cow meat could have entered the human food chain. This code also falls under the science discourse. This code is correlated to the political discourse because the articulation of this theme is typically drawn from quotes by politicians.
 - *Industry facts*: notes descriptions of particular facts regarding the beef industry. This theme also falls under the science discourse. The code is correlated to the political discourse because some of the facts outlined in the media texts are regarding trading practices.
 - *Risk*: notes any mention of the word 'risk' in connection to the BSE cases. The code also falls under the science discourse. This code is included in the political discourse because the articulation of this code is typically drawn from quotes by politicians.

Science Discourse

The second discourse featured in the media coverage on the BSE crisis of Alberta is the *science discourse*. This discourse articulates BSE as an object of inquiry taken up

in scientific, objective research. Examples from texts that draw from this discourse typically feature declarative statements, and present *hard fact* on BSE, specifically outlining how it affects cattle, and how it may potentially affect humans.

In total there are eleven codes that represent the science discourse. There is significant cross-over between the political discourse and the science discourse, but I will specifically outline the science discourse representation of these codes. The following is a list of the corresponding codes, and a brief description of each code:

- *A need to find an origin of the disease*: focuses on the need to uncover how the initial case of BSE was contracted. The code also falls under the political discourse, and is connected to the science discourse because it often appears in descriptions of the scientific inquiry into the origin of the disease.
- *Isolated case*: looks to uncover how the initial BSE case is outlined as an isolated case. The code also falls under the political discourse, and is connected to the science discourse because it is often brought up in descriptions of the scientific procedures taken to discover the origin of the disease.
- *Infected meat didn't enter the food chain*: outlines how and why infected cow meat did not enter the human food chain. The code also falls under the political discourse. This code is used for the representation of the science discourse because it is often described as a result of the scientific inquiry into the origin of the Canadian BSE case.
- *Infected meat could have entered the food chain*: outlines how infected cow meat could have entered the human food chain. The code is also used for the representation of the political discourse. This code is used for the representation

- of the science discourse because the articulation of this code typically draws from quotes of scientists involved in the inquiry into the Canadian case of BSE.
- *Industry facts*: notes descriptions of investigative procedures, policies or regulations of the beef industry. This code also falls under the political discourse. The code is used for the representation of the science discourse because several of the industry facts described are regarding the BSE Canadian inspection procedures.
 - *Risk*: notes any mention of the word ‘risk’ in connection to the BSE crisis. The code also falls under the political discourse. This code is used for the representation of the science discourse because descriptions of what is risky are often discovered through scientific inquiry.
 - *BSE details*: includes any descriptions of the details of BSE – how it affects cows, what it is composed of, and how it affects humans.
 - *Poor BSE inspection procedures*: notes any descriptions of how the BSE inspection procedures are flawed, or limited.
 - *Animal feed*: notes any mention of how animal feed could have influenced the spread of BSE in Alberta.
 - *Science*: includes any mention of the word ‘science’ in connection to the BSE crisis. This code also notes any variants such as ‘scientific,’ ‘scientifically,’ ‘sciences,’ etc.
 - *Incomplete farm records*: notes any mention of how incomplete farm records are constructed as a problem adding to the BSE crisis. The code also falls under the socio-cultural discourse. This code is uniquely used for the articulation of the

science discourse because it is often brought up in connection to the scientific inquiry into the origin of BSE in Canada.

Socio-cultural Discourse

The third discourse featured in the newspaper coverage on the BSE cases in Alberta is the *socio-cultural discourse*. This discourse highlights BSE as a social issue, and typically provides a unique look at the farmers and industry workers affected by the Alberta BSE cases. Latour's (2004) term 'matter of concern' is relevant to this discourse, in that it looks at the social interests wrapped up in the issue of BSE. The difference between how BSE is constructed as a 'matter of concern' for the socio-cultural discourse, in comparison to the political discourse, is that the socio-cultural discourse constructs BSE as a 'matter of concern' for local communities. A way to explain the difference between the constructions of BSE under the two discourses is that the political discourse constructs BSE as a national, or macro 'matter of concern,' whereas the socio-cultural discourse constructs BSE as a local, or micro 'matter of concern.'

In total there are eleven codes connected to the socio-cultural discourse. The only crossover with this discourse is the code *incomplete farm records*, which is also shared with the science discourse. The following is a list of the corresponding codes, and a brief description of each:

- *Incomplete farm records*: notes any mention of how incomplete farm records are constructed as a problem adding to the BSE crisis. The code is also falls under the science discourse.
- *Drawing on BSE cases in other countries*: notes description of BSE cases in other countries, such as cases in the United Kingdom, Japan, and the United States

- *The problem isn't as big as it appears*: looks to outline how the BSE crisis is exaggerated in the newspaper coverage.
- *Consumers should still eat meat*: references encouraging consumers to eat meat.
- *Western Canada vs. federal government*: notes any mention of problematic relations between Western Canada and the federal government.
- *Information on a specific cow*: notes descriptions of the life course, and specific details regarding infected cows.
- *Eating beef*: notes descriptions of people eating beef.
- *Beef industry image*: notes descriptions of how the image of the beef industry is affected by the BSE crisis.
- *Rural vs. urban*: notes descriptions of the differences between rural and urban social environments, and the potentially conflicting perceptions of BSE typically adopted by citizens of these environments.
- *Event information*: notes descriptions of social events organized in support of the Alberta beef industry.
- *Examples of public figures eating beef*: notes descriptions of public figures consuming beef to show support for the beef industry.

The breakdown of coverage

As previously noted, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) define a media package as “a set of interpretative packages that give meaning to an issue” (p. 3). Media packages have a central organizing frame but they “ebb and flow” and are “constantly revised and updated to accommodate new events” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 2). Regarding the BSE coverage, particular events switched the focus to particular themes and particular

discourses. To gain a sense of how the BSE media package may have evolved in the coverage over the timeframe, I provide a numerical breakdown of the number of times each code is cited in the media coverage of each of the three data sets. The numerical breakdown of the coverage is found in the Appendices. Each time a code appears in a newspaper article it is counted as one citation, so if there are numerous mentions of a single theme in an article, they are accounted for separately. For the first three months of coverage data set, there are three charts: there is a chart for each newspaper that includes a breakdown of how many times each code is cited each month (Appendix A; Appendix B; Appendix C). For the BBQ coverage data set, there is one chart which breaks down the number of times each code is cited in the coverage of each newspaper (Appendix D). For the final data set, which includes articles that reference the three other discoveries of BSE within the timeframe, there are three charts: one for each of the BSE discoveries which breaks down how many times each code is cited in each newspaper (Appendix E; Appendix F; Appendix G).

After examining the numerical breakdown of the appearance of each code, there are a few noticeable consistent traits between the newspapers, but overall the numerical breakdown of the coverage does not provide much for a *critical* analysis of how the newspapers frame BSE. I will now provide an outline of the noticeable trends in coverage made apparent by the numerical breakdown of the coverage of each theme. I will outline the noticeable trends of each of the three data sets independently.

The First Three Months of Coverage.

By examining the numerical breakdown of the appearance of each code in the initial three month of coverage after the first BSE case in Alberta, I noticed a few trends in the

coverage. The trends widely vary in topic, so I will outline them in point form, and will provide a potential explanation for the thematic trends in coverage.

- There is a noticeable focus on the political discourse in the newspaper coverage on BSE. The two most consistently cited codes during the first three months of coverage are *negative financial impact on industry* and *bans on beef*. The high coverage on these two codes also indicate the focused coverage in the newspapers on economic threat BSE poses.
- The code *compensation package* is not prominently featured in the first month of coverage, but it is more thoroughly referenced in the second and third months. The lack of a focused look at compensation packages in the first month of coverage could be due to the fact that estimates regarding the financial impact of the disease may have been initially underestimated. The initial coverage on the disease was focused on finding the cause of the disease, and it was not initially apparent that industry workers perhaps needed financial support.
- The code *labeling beef origin* does not appear in the first month of coverage. This code was not initially included in the theme list, but was a prominent issue featured in the second month of coverage, so I decided to include it to the list. From June 25, 2003 onward, newspaper coverage started to outline the Japanese request that the United States label the origin of their beef, in order to assure separation of Canadian beef from American beef.
- The code *a need to find an origin of the disease* was prominently featured in the first month of coverage, but slowly dropped in appearance in the second and third months. The drop is most likely due to the nature of the investigation; initially the

- need to find where the first infected Canadian cow came from was important for the investigation to determine what the cow was fed. When the difficulties of pinning down where the cow came from became obvious, a focus on this goal quickly diminished.
- The code *U.S. & Canada working together* only appears in the *Globe & Mail*. The lack of appearance of this code in the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* may be due to the nature of the newspapers; the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* are both local papers concerned with local issues, whereas the *Globe & Mail* is a national paper concerned with national issues, such as international relations.
 - The code *Animal feed* is prominently covered in the first month of coverage, but there is a drop in appearance in the second and third months. This is most likely due to the nature of the investigation. Ruminant animal feed is typically recognized as the cause of the spread of BSE, so initial coverage prominently featured a narrative on animal feed to provide a clear explanation to readers of how the disease arrived in Canada. The second and third months of coverage did not prominently feature this theme because the coverage was focused less on an explanation for the Canadian case of BSE, and was more focused on solving the detrimental impact the disease has had on particular industries.
 - The code *event information* is referenced in both the *Globe & Mail* and the *Calgary Herald*, but is not mentioned in the *Edmonton Journal* coverage. Both the *Globe & Mail* and the *Calgary Herald* provide indepth coverage on the SARS concert, which featured a BBQ to raise money for the Alberta beef industry. The

event took place in Toronto, hence the front-page coverage in the *Globe & Mail*, and Calgary hosted a live simulcast of the event, hence the front-page coverage in the *Calgary Herald*. The *Edmonton Journal* did report on the event, but it does not appear on the front page, but does appear in the data set for BBQ event coverage.

The BBQ Coverage.

The BBQ coverage was intentionally explored in order to uncover prevalent themes of the socio-cultural discourse. Considering the nature of the data set, it is not surprising that the most prominently featured code is *event information*. Both the political and science discourses are backgrounded, but the numerical breakdown of coverage does indicate important observations regarding the backgrounded discourses:

- The codes *bans on beef* and *negative financial impact on industry* are prominently featured in the BBQ coverage. This highlights that the most pressing issue of the Albertan mad cow crisis is the fact that international trade has been cut off from Canada. But the prevalence of these codes also indicates an important point regarding the nature of the BBQ events covered in the articles: that the events are put on in support for the failing beef industry, and the message of the events is that bans on Canadian beef should be lifted because Canadian beef is safe to eat.
- The code *public confidence/ consumer confidence* is also prominently featured in the BBQ event coverage. This highlights that the BBQ events put on in support of the Alberta beef industry were intended to highlight and encourage consumer confidence in Albertan beef.

- There are three citations in the *Calgary Herald* coverage that reference the code *U.S. & Canada working together*. The three citations are all drawn from the same article, which outlines an event that both American and Canadian farmers participated in to encourage good trade relations between the two countries. The other two newspapers failed to include front-page coverage of the event, which is perhaps due to the locations of the two newspapers – as Calgary is situated closer to the United States border than Edmonton, and hence coverage of such an event is more relevant for the Calgary audience than it is for the Edmonton audience. The *Globe & Mail* failed to cover the event because it was not a large scale event warranting national coverage.
- The high prevalence of the code *eating beef* ties to the content of the coverage of BBQ events – the events promote the act of eating beef, and hence descriptions of people eating beef are highly prominent in the coverage.
- The high prevalence of the code *beef industry image* ties to the content of the coverage of BBQ events – the events promote a healthy image of the beef industry.

The Additional BSE Discoveries.

There are three other BSE discoveries within the timeframe of this project that are explored. Looking at the numerical breakdown of the themes cited in the coverage of the BSE discoveries provides a few observations, but it must be stressed that each discovery contains a unique story that cannot be fully explored in a qualitative count of the themes present in the coverage. The following are the few observations noted:

- As with the other two data sets, there is high number of citations that reference the code *bans on beef*. At the time of each of the BSE discoveries, bans on Canadian beef were still in place, and hence each BSE case is interpreted as potentially delaying plans to lift bans on Canadian beef.
- The first month of coverage on the May 20, 2003 case of BSE featured a high level of citations referencing the code *a need to find an origin of the disease*. This observation is repeated for the BSE discoveries that occurred on December 23, 2003 and December 30, 2004. The coverage on the final BSE discovery, which occurred on January 11, 2005, did not prominently feature this theme, mainly due to the nature of the BSE case. Unlike the first three cases of BSE, the final case occurred in a cow born after the ban on ruminant animal feed was introduced in 1997, therefore shifting the focus of the BSE case to potential animal feed violations. Therefore, instead of trying to find cows that may have also been infected with the disease, the coverage focused on a need to find feed producers violating federal industry policy.
- The coverage for all three BSE discoveries prominently featured citations focused on the code *animal feed*. As with the first case of BSE, ruminant animal feed is primarily presented as the most likely cause of BSE. The consistent reference to animal feed in coverage following BSE discoveries is likely due to the fact that it is most the popularly recognized explanation for the disease.

An Analysis of the Discourses

Due to the limited analytical possibilities introduced by examining the quantitative count of the appearance of each code, the focus of my analysis will be on the

content of the citations that reference each code. To organize my analysis, I will provide a chapter for each of the three discourses, using the appropriate data sets for analysis. In Chapter four I provide an analysis of the political discourse, using the data set for the first three months of coverage. In Chapter five I provide an analysis of the science discourse, using the data set for the first three months of coverage. In Chapter six I provide an analysis of the socio-cultural discourse, using both the data set for the first three months of coverage and the data set for the BBQ events. And in Chapter seven I provide an analysis of the data set for the additional BSE discoveries, in order to explore how the BSE discursive package evolved over time.

Chapter 4 – The Political Discourse

Determined by the quantitative breakdown of the media coverage of each code, the discourse most prominently featured is the political discourse. In this chapter I will explore how foregrounding of the political discourse shapes a particular understanding of the BSE coverage. In this chapter I will outline particular themes and observations regarding the political discourse, focusing specifically on the first three months of coverage. I will provide a more thorough examination of the BBQ event data in Chapter six, and I will explore the representation of the additional BSE discoveries in Chapter seven.

The political discourse frames BSE as a political matter of concern, with a heavy focus on the economic impact the disease may have on the Alberta and Canadian beef industries. As the Canadian beef industry is one of the country's largest agricultural industries, the media's focus on the potential economic impact is not surprising. By framing BSE as an economic matter of concern, the media hypothesizes the pressing need to immediately address the issue in order to curb the potentially detrimental impact to the Canadian economy.

Descriptions of Bans on Canadian Beef

The code *bans on beef* uncovers descriptions of bans on Canadian beef as a result of BSE. Several references to bans on beef are merely descriptive sentences, such as this quote from the *Globe & Mail*: "Singapore, Russia and Indonesia have now joined the growing list of nations that have banned Canadian beef products... [joining] Australia, Japan, Taiwan, New Zealand, South Korea and the United States" (Walton, 2003a, para. 28). These types of straightforward informative sentences appear throughout the data –

they are used to paint a picture of Canada's current trade relations, and they refrain from explicitly outlining the opinion of the journalist or the newspaper.

There are indications of the temporal qualities of the bans on Canadian beef covered in the newspapers. The May 2003 coverage in the *Globe & Mail* emphasizes the immediacy of the imposition of the bans on Canadian beef, a point made apparent by numerous citations collected that stress that the bans were imposed immediately after the discovery of the first Canadian born case of BSE. For example, on May 26, 2003 the *Globe & Mail* wrote that the United States, "banned Canadian beef immediately after federal officials announced the discovery of the BSE-infected cow" (Smith, 2003b, para. 24). This quote is one of several that articulate a very limited time between the discovery and the ban implementation.

The initial coverage that appears in the *Calgary Herald* introduces another temporal quality regarding the bans on Canadian beef, the coverage outlines that the bans are merely temporary. For example, on May 21, 2003 – one day after the first discovery of BSE – Lisa Schmidt and Tom Olsen (2003b) wrote that the U.S. "slapped a temporary ban on Canadian cattle" (para. 6). Several *Calgary Herald* articles published in May 2003 refer to the ban as temporary, but by June 2003 the newspaper refrains from referring to the ban as such. On May 21, 2003 U.S. Agricultural Secretary Ann Veneman is cited in the *Edmonton Journal* as stating that she was confident that the U.S. ban would be short-term (Olsen, 2003b). Other than the one quotation, the coverage that appears in the *Edmonton Journal* refrains from hypothesizing the length of the imposed bans. The *Globe & Mail* coverage also refrains from hypothesizing the potential temporality of the U.S. ban.

Financial Loss Estimates

Considering that the newspapers primarily represent BSE as an economic issue, the newspaper coverage provides the financial loss estimates incurred by the Canadian beef industry. Fowler (1991) explains that a discursive strategy used by newspapers to intensify the coverage of social issues is the use of statistical information that help articulate the grand scope of impact; a discursive strategy he calls ‘the rhetoric of quantification’.

All three newspapers outline the daily financial impact the disease was having on the Canadian economy as costing the industry \$11 million a day – a statement that is often cited in the coverage as a fact by using assertive sentences. Fairclough (1995b) states that assertive sentences present issues as *facts* and do not shed light on the personal opinion of the journalist or the ideological standing of the newspaper in which the article appears. This estimate appears early in the coverage of the crisis, first appearing in the *Globe & Mail* on May 30, 2003, and is cited throughout the timeframe of inquiry. In the *Globe & Mail* the estimate is typically cited as a fact, which can be seen in the example: “[t]he industry is losing \$11-million a day as a result of the U.S. beef ban” (Dunfield, 2003, para. 19). The *Globe & Mail* coverage, on a number of occasions, cites the Canadian beef industry as ‘losing’ \$11 million a day, or alternatively state that the first Canadian case of BSE is ‘costing’ the industry \$11 million a day. By using an assertive sentence, and not emphasizing that the loss of \$11 million a day is merely an estimate, the *Globe & Mail* is problematically citing the estimate as an unwavering fact. Alternatively, the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* coverage typically emphasize that the loss of \$11 million a day is in fact an estimate. For example, on July

10, 2003 Paraskevas (2003) writes in the *Calgary Herald* that “[t]he Canadian beef industry has lost an estimated \$11 million each day” (para. 24). At the same time, there are also sentences that appear in the *Calgary Herald* that problematically present the estimate as a fact. The *Edmonton Journal* is the only newspaper of the three that consistently reference the loss to the industry as an estimate. There are a few citations within the data that either state that the estimate is rounded up, or rounded down. For example, in the *Globe & Mail* on July 26, 2003, Dawn Walton writes that the Canadian beef industry is losing “up to \$11 million a day in exports,” suggesting that the estimate is the ceiling financial loss incurred by the industry (para. 7). In contrast, on June 25, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald*, Tom Olsen and Lisa Schmidt write that the Canadian beef industry is losing “more than \$11 million a day” in exports, suggesting that the estimated loss is the minimum amount lost to the industry (para. 12).

There are other estimates of monetary losses to the Canadian and Alberta beef industries that appear inconsistently represented in the coverage. For example, in the first three months of coverage in the *Edmonton Journal* there are several different estimates provided for the financial loss incurred by producers per animal (a ‘per head loss estimate’). The estimates range from \$200 to \$400 per head lost. Another inconsistency noticed in the *Edmonton Journal* is the estimate provided for how much the Alberta beef industry is losing per day – the estimate most often cited is \$7 million, but in one article Olsen (2003a) alternatively states the estimated loss as \$6.3 million. It should be noted that the estimated loss incurred by the Alberta beef industry only appears in the Alberta newspapers, and does not appear in the national newspaper, the *Globe & Mail*. The failure of the *Globe & Mail* to outline the loss to the Albertan beef industry seems

appropriate considering the national newspaper would more likely be focused on providing estimates of loss for the Canadian beef industry, rather than a specific localized estimate of the loss incurred by one provincial industry.

The estimates outlined in each newspaper do vary in amount and type, but the estimates are all used to alarm the audience that BSE will have a direct impact on the Canadian economy. Whether or not the estimates are accurate is not my concern, rather I am interested in how the use of financial loss estimates help in articulating the discovery of BSE as an immediate threat to the Canadian economy. The estimates outlined are very large, which helps frame the economic threat as a dire concern that requires immediate attention. In reference to salmonella coverage, Fowler (1991) expresses that the use of quantitatively large estimates in newspaper coverage cause “an alarming impact on public consciousness” (p. 166). Fowler (1991) also suggests that continued use of large estimates solidifies that impact on public consciousness. As already outlined, the estimates of financial loss are consistently referenced throughout the coverage, which draws the audience’s attention to the continued, and ever expanding, financial loss resulting from the discovery of BSE.

Impact on Tangentially Connected Industries

The coverage of the BSE discoveries and investigation paints a grim picture, which stresses that the impact that BSE has had, and will continue to have, is monumental. For example, Lorne Calvert, Premier of Saskatchewan, is quoted in the *Globe & Mail* as stating that if the U.S. ban was not lifted by August 2003, the industry would be “in a very difficult situation,” and that “no amount of public support, no amount of tax-based support, no amount of industry support will keep [the beef industry] going”

(Hume, 2003a, para. 23). The immediate impact the disease had on the industry is often described in the coverage as bringing the industry *to a standstill*. These descriptions highlight the opinion that the BSE issue is dire, and that a response is needed immediately to curb the long term financial impact the disease will have on the beef industry. The coverage emphasizes that the scope of impact includes industries obviously tied to beef production, including ranching, slaughterhouse, and meat packing industries, but there is also an indication that BSE will impact other industries such as the Canadian tourism and trucking industries. The code *BSE scare affects other industries* was included to capture references to the scope of impact beyond the obvious industries connected to beef production. An article featured in the *Globe & Mail* outlines specific issues that have directly impacted the Canadian tourism industry, and among the issues featured is BSE (MacGregor, 2003). In the article it is written that attendance to the Calgary Stampede is down from previous years, and MacGregor (2003) states that “tourism is reeling from everything from war anxiety to fear of SARS, mad-cow disease and even the possibility of catching something called ‘monkeypox’ from prairie gophers” (para. 11). In small farming counties, the impact of BSE is considerably grand. Elaine Martin, a volunteer with the North County Interfaith Outreach Society, is quoted in the *Calgary Herald* as stating that BSE has detrimentally impacted Butte Alberta, and suggests that “[t]here’s not a business in town that isn’t affected” (Schmidt, 2003j, para. 29). The article further notes that “[n]ew homes and entire subdivisions have been put on hold because of the uncertainty” (Schmidt, 2003j, para. 30). The impact BSE has on industries not directly involved in beef production is outlined by federal Minister of Health Anne McClellan, who is summarized in the *Edmonton Journal* as explaining that “one out of three Alberta

jobs is directly or indirectly related to the province's agricultural industry" (Olsen, Barrett & Purdy, 2003, para. 9). A quote from Ron Axelson of the Alberta Cattle Feeders Association that appears on July 13, 2003 in the *Edmonton Journal* highlights the various industries connected to beef production. Axelson expresses the hope that the BSE crisis will trigger various industry sectors "to forge tighter alliances, and realize how much the rancher affects the feeder affects the trucker affects the producer affects the retailer" (Markusoff, 2003a, para. 19).

Comparing the coverage in the three newspapers, there is a noticeable difference between the Alberta newspapers coverage and the *Globe & Mail* coverage. Although all three newspapers frame the scope of the disease's economic impact as extending beyond industries directly connected to beef production, the Alberta newspapers provide more thorough examples of particular industries hit by the crisis. The citations from the *Globe & Mail* merely cite that the BSE crisis has impacted – and will continue to financially impact – other industries financially, citing a few potential examples industries, but the citations do not go into much detail of *how* they are affected. The difference between the newspapers is further exemplified by the standing³ associated with the theme. The citations gathered from the *Globe & Mail* do not cite individuals directly involved in beef production, whereas the coverage appearing in both the Albertan newspapers feature citations from industry workers or politicians regarding how BSE affects other industries. The *Edmonton Journal* features quotes from a couple of politicians, and a few

³ The term "standing" is taken from Ferree et. al (2002), and means "the ability to have one's views transmitted through the media" (p. 59).

spokespersons for beef industry organizations.⁴ The *Calgary Herald* coverage features quotes from individuals who reside in communities impacted by the crisis.⁵

Kaniss (1991) explains that when local print media includes coverage on economic matters of concern, they often feature coverage on specific businesses affected by shifts in the economy, whereas national papers refrain from featuring narratives on specific businesses affected. This was observed in the coverage of the Canadian BSE cases – the *Globe & Mail* coverage did not feature articles specifically focused on particular businesses impacted by the BSE discovery, whereas both the local Alberta newspapers featured editorial articles on the Alberta trucking industry.⁶ A front-page *Calgary Herald* article details the impact BSE has had on the Alberta trucking industry, drawing quotes from local truckers who explain their personal stories (Seskus, 2003). The focused coverage on the trucking industry also appears in the coverage of the Alberta-Montana border rally, which occurred on June 24, 2003 and was organized to specifically bring focus to the impact that BSE had had on the Alberta trucking industry. Coverage of this event will be more thoroughly explored in chapter six.

Integrated Markets

Even though several countries banned Canadian beef after the discovery of the first Canadian born case of BSE, there is a primary focus in the coverage on the United States ban, due to the fact that the United States is Canada's largest beef market. In an

⁴The politicians cited are Alberta Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan, and Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik. The industry organization spokespersons cited are Gary Sargent for the Alberta Beef Producers Association, Ron Axelson of the Alberta Cattle Feeders Association, and David Oseen who serves as Reeve for the council of Lethbridge.

⁵ Both Allan Doerkson, an Albertan farmer, and Elaine Martin, a volunteer with the North County Interfaith Outreach Society, are all quoted in the *Calgary Herald* July 2003 coverage.

⁶ There are articles featured in the *Edmonton Journal* with a focused look on the Alberta trucking industry, but the articles are not featured on the front-page, and therefore were excluded from the data used for this thesis.

attempt to articulate why the United States should reconsider the imposed ban on Canadian beef, the newspapers consistently refer to the fact that the Canadian and American beef markets are integrated, and rely on one another. For example, Ralph Klein is quoted in the *Calgary Herald* as stating that without the Canadian beef industry, the American beef industry supply will be jeopardized, which he further explains by stating that thousands of Canadian cattle are finished in the United States (Olsen, 2003g). In the *Edmonton Journal*, John Stauber, Director of the Center for Media and Democracy, and co-author of “Mad Cow USA: Could the Nightmare Happen Here?” is quoted as explaining that “[t]he border is real for you and me, but for livestock, animal feed, and meat products it doesn’t exist.” Stauber further stresses that the Canadian case of BSE should be framed as a “North American case of BSE,” because the two industries in fact heavily rely on one another (Simons, para. 2).

The code *U.S. & Canada working together* was included to the code list to capture references to Americans and Canadians working together on the issue of BSE, given the perceived benefits of an integrated industry. For example, in *Globe & Mail* it is written that Agriculture officials from both Canada and the United States had been hoping to work together to make improvements to the BSE inspection procedures (Koring & Smith, 2004). In fact, the Alberta-Montana border rally on July 26, 2003 was an event that was organized to promote the bridging of the two industries. I will further explore this event in chapter six, but for now it is sufficient to suggest that the coverage of this event frames both Canadian and American participants as celebrating the benefits of the two industries being integrated.

The newspapers favor the representation of a global beef industry, which includes a specific narrative on how the Canadian and American beef industries are integrated. By using direct quotes of experts and politicians, the newspapers use this theme to implicitly articulate why the United States should remove bans on Canadian beef.

Trade Wars

With an unforeseeable end to bans on Canadian beef, the newspapers highlighted one dramatic response to the ban articulated by several Canadian government officials: the suggestion of a trade war. The first month of coverage did not feature the mention of a trade war. By June, as the economic losses to the Canadian beef industry continued to accumulate, Canadian government officials threatened a trade war with countries unwilling to open their borders to Canadian beef. The individuals quoted include: Alberta Premier Ralph Klein, Federal Agriculture Minister Lyle Vanclief, Finance Minister John Manley, and Alliance leader Stephen Harper. The views on the potential benefit of a trade war vary: Klein, Vanclief, and Manley are all cited as suggesting a trade war could benefit Canada, whereas Harper opposed the idea.

In the coverage, mention of a potential trade war is often masked in suggestive language, and does not directly reference the term ‘trade war.’ For example, the *Globe & Mail* quotes Vanclief as stating that “countries better be very, very careful because there’s trade in other things than beef” (McKenna, 2003a, para. 11). A focused look at trade with the United States is included in the coverage. In the *Globe & Mail*, Manley ‘hints’ that “Ottawa might soon take action to reduce the flow of American beef northward if the U.S. ban is not rescinded quickly” (Brethour, 2003a, para. 16). This same Manley quote is cited in the *Edmonton Journal* (Lang & Reid, 2003a). And on July 5 the *Calgary*

Herald states that “[t]wo top federal cabinet ministers sent a stern message south... warning [that] Canada could block imports of American cattle unless the U.S. swiftly opens its border to Canadian beef” (Lang & Reid, 2003b, para. 1). These examples highlight how the implicit threat of a trade war is used to aggressively demand for bans on Canadian beef to be lifted. Harper’s oppositional response to the suggested trade war is very strongly stated, using colloquial language. In the *Calgary Herald*, Klein is quoted as stating: “We have a government that deliberately called our best customers bastards and morons and other names,” and urged that Canada should not make matters worse by starting a trade war (Lang & Reid, 2003b, para. 17).

Tienari, Vaara, and Bjorkman (2003) and Brookes (1999) research references to national interests in the newspaper coverage of economic matters of concern. Tienari et. al (2003) explain that references to national interests can be both implicitly and explicitly made. The references to a trade war that appear in the coverage implicitly reference national interests, considering it is a strategic attempt to protect the Canadian economy. As mentioned in the last section, references to a global beef industry are used to articulate why bans on Canadian beef should be lifted. The argument presented is that national borders are real for citizens, but are not necessarily real for commodities of global industries. In contrast to the theme *integrated markets*, the theme *trade wars* reinforces nation-state borders in order to block trade from other countries. The suggestion of a trade war is a tit-for-tat economic strategy, which attempts to protect Canadian national interests by strategically threatening to withhold Canadian commodities from trade countries.

The Political Discursive Representation of the BSE Investigation

There are a few codes that relate to both the political and science discourses. These include: *a need to find an origin of the disease, isolated case, infected meat didn't enter the food chain, infected meat could have entered the food chain, industry facts, risk, and labeling beef origin*. These codes are all implicitly related to coverage of the BSE investigative procedures.

The primary reason why these codes have been included in the political discourse is the standing provided to politicians to both explain the BSE investigation, and to articulate whether or not BSE is a risk to Canadian consumer health. Essentially, the newspaper coverage tends to favor the voice of politicians when providing descriptions of BSE inspection procedures, often citing direct quotations from politicians. The individuals most often cited include both federal and provincial agriculture ministers, spokespersons for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), and both the federal and provincial chief veterinarians.

Directly after the discovery of the first Canadian case of BSE the newspaper coverage highlighted that initiatives were being taken to determine from where the cow originated, in order to determine if any other cattle were potentially infected with the disease. The code *a need to find an origin of the disease* was included in the code set in order to capture this observation. Aside from directly referencing quotations of politicians engaged in the investigation procedure, the coverage also includes ambiguous references to 'officials' working to uncover the origin of the disease. As the investigation progressed, the newspaper coverage tends to focus less on this code, which is most likely due to the fact that the intentions of determining the origin of the disease, although admirable, proved to be an impossible task given the nature of the Alberta beef industry.

Looking favorably at the CFIA's attempt to determine the disease's origin is highlighted in an article featured in the *Edmonton Journal* in which Gary Sargent, general manager of the Alberta Beef Producers, states that "the report proves how diligent the CFIA has been during this crisis, despite being unable to pinpoint the source of the disease" (Buium, 2003a).

The coverage of the investigation procedures also emphasizes that the first Canadian case of BSE was an isolated one. At times this point is merely presented as a hopeful hypothesis. For example, Alberta Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan is quoted in the *Calgary Herald* as stating that "[i]t was probably one cow in the herd" (Martin, 2003, para. 10). Also in the *Calgary Herald*, Federal Minister of Agriculture Lyle Vanclief is quoted as stressing that "this [was] one cow" (Schmidt & Olsen, 2003a, para. 5). The point that Canada's first case of BSE is most likely an isolated case was used as an argument for why beef trade with Canada should resume. For example, Rick Mofina and Lisa Schmidt (2003) of the *Calgary Herald* write that the tests of quarantined cattle had all come back negative, and that Canada "[has] the science that [it] need[s] to demonstrate to the United States that [they've] done that work, and that it's one isolated cow" (para. 4). In the next chapter I will explore the problematic use of the term 'science' in the newspaper coverage, but for now this quotation is being used to stress that the investigation procedures are inextricably linked to international beef trade, and are therefore inevitably political in nature. The desperate need to prove that the first BSE case should not impact trade with Canada is displayed in a quote from McClellan, which appears in the *Edmonton Journal*; it outlines her plea "to the U.S. and other major Canadian beef importers – including Mexico, Japan, Taiwan – to recognize the case is

isolated and that the province will act stringently to root out the problem” (Olsen, 2003b, para. 24).

The codes *infected meat did not enter the food chain* and *infected meat could have entered the food chain* both indirectly reference the BSE inspection procedures by hypothesizing whether or not the infected beef entered the human food chain. The codes have been included in the political discourse because of the standing given to important politicians in defining whether or not infected meat has entered the food chain. For example, Vanclief is quoted in the *Edmonton Journal* as stating: “[t]his is a very important point – it didn’t make its way into the human food chain” (Olsen, 2003b, para. 32). These two codes also appear in quotations drawn from government officials whose jobs directly engage with animal health. Dr. Gerald Ollis, Alberta’s chief veterinarian, is quoted in an article that appeared in the *Edmonton Journal* as confirming that the BSE-positive cow “was excluded from the human food chain” (Thorne, 2003a, para. 21). In the *Calgary Herald*, Dr. Claude Lavigne of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is quoted as suggesting that the calves of the BSE-positive cow “could have possibly entered the food chain” (Schmidt, 2003b, para. 8). Both Dr. Claude Lavigne and Dr. Gerald Ollis serve as voices that bridge scientific methodology with political discourse. Both doctors hold government positions, but the fact that they are both doctors of medicine means that they are commonly perceived as more authoritative than politicians, journalists, or farmers when articulating the risk the disease poses to human health. Dr. Lavigne is the only government official quoted as suggesting that BSE-positive beef could have been made available to purchase; all other government official quotes stress that the BSE-positive beef did not make it into the human food chain. Given Dr.

Lavigne's position at the CFIA, I was shocked to read his quote; yet a voice of opposition can often arise from the least likely source.

Depth of Coverage

All three newspapers describe the pertinent themes of the political discourse in a similar fashion, but there is a difference in the depths of coverage of the Alberta newspapers when compared to the national newspaper, the *Globe & Mail*. There are a few observations that highlight the different depths of coverage of the three newspapers.

First, the Alberta newspaper coverage is more specific in pinpointing where the initial BSE-positive cow was found. The *Globe & Mail* coverage refers to the cow as 'Albertan born,' but the coverage in the Albertan newspapers specifies that the cow was discovered in 'northern Alberta,' 'northwestern Alberta,' and in some coverage it is even further specified that the cow was discovered in the 'Peace River district.' The difference in how the home of the cow is represented is due to the audience exposed to the newspaper coverage. The audiences exposed to the *Calgary Herald* and the *Edmonton Journal* have local vested interest in the BSE crisis, and expect in-depth coverage outlining where the BSE-positive cow is from. In other words, the audiences of the Alberta newspapers are more likely to have unique knowledge about Alberta, and may therefore value specific Alberta spatial references. The audience exposed to the *Globe & Mail* is diverse, and outlining that the cow came from Alberta is sufficient to relate a national audience to the crisis.

The second example showing the varying depths of coverage is the coverage – or lack of coverage – of important initiatives taken to lift bans on Canadian beef. For example, in June 2003 Premier Ralph Klein and Alberta Agriculture Minister Shirley

McClellan presented an analysis of Alberta job losses, market-share erosion and economic decline due to BSE to the federal government. Both the *Calgary Herald* and the *Edmonton Journal* featured front-page coverage of this event, but the *Globe & Mail* failed to cover the event. The report presented was primarily framed from an Albertan perspective, so the failure of the *Globe & Mail* to cover this story is most likely due to the fact that the report did not have a national scope of analysis. Another example is that both Albertan newspapers at some point mention R-CALF's engagement with the BSE crisis of Alberta, while the *Globe & Mail* coverage fails to mention the organization. R-CALF is a Montana-based cattlemen organization that was vocal about its opinion on the bans imposed on Canadian beef, and advocated for the borders to remain closed to Canadian beef. On June 5 in the *Calgary Herald*, the organization is cited as "urging Washington to extend the beef and cattle ban until Canada is BSE-free for seven years" (Schmidt, 2003f, para. 13). On June 23 in the *Edmonton Journal*, John Lockie stated that R-CALF's position presents a simple argument intended to boost the American beef market (Olsen, 2003f). The failure of the *Globe & Mail* to cover the particular events is primarily due to the different scope of coverage of each newspaper. The two events are far more relevant to the Alberta newspaper audiences, and therefore the national scope of coverage of the *Globe & Mail* would fail to report on these seemingly localized events.

The final observation regarding the varying depths of coverage is the way the newspapers focus on specific actions taken by beef industry companies, such as packing plants, rendering plants, and trucking companies. There are several articles in the Alberta newspapers that focus specifically on the actions taken by particular companies resulting from bans imposed on Canadian beef – actions taken to curb the financial impact of the

bans. For example, on May 22, 2003 – only two days after the discovery of BSE – a *Calgary Herald* article noted that “[t]wo of Alberta’s largest meat-packing plants slowed or stopped production” after the Canadian cow tested positive for BSE (Schmidt, 2003b, para. 5). There are a few other citations gathered that connect the theme *bans on beef* to beef companies slowing down production. On June 3 in the *Calgary Herald* it is written that the bans on Canadian beef forced the layoffs of thousands of workers (Mofina & Schmidt, 2003), and on June 8 in the *Calgary Herald* it is written that meat packing plants across Canada had cut productions, and had laid off several workers (Lang, 2003a). In the *Edmonton Journal* a front-page article explains how the Pasta Mill, a company in Edmonton, Alberta, laid off 100 workers only days after the U.S. border was closed to Canadian beef (Markusoff, 2003b). One article in the *Globe & Mail* directly connects the bans on beef to the actions taken by companies to curb the financial blow due to BSE. Stevenson (2003) writes that meat-packing plants laid off workers only days after the border was closed to Canadian beef, but the article refrains from explaining which companies had laid off workers, and the article does not provide a numerical count of how many workers were laid off. The *Globe & Mail* coverage of how the bans impacted particular companies remains relatively simple when compared to the Alberta newspaper examples, which is primarily due to audience expectation. The Alberta newspapers provide more specific coverage by outlining how many workers have been laid off, or even by naming companies that have laid off workers, in order to connect the local audience affected by the BSE crisis to the crisis coverage. The coverage in the Alberta newspapers mirrors the social reality of the Alberta newspaper audiences, and the *Globe & Mail*’s limited focus on the social implications of the bans on Canadian beef

reflects the disconnected social reality of the varied national audience exposed to the newspaper.

Conclusion

The political discourse is the foregrounded discourse in the coverage of the Canadian-born cases of BSE. As outlined in this chapter, the newspaper coverage is primarily concerned with the economic threat BSE poses to the Canadian economy. Both descriptions of bans on Canadian beef and financial loss estimates are included in the coverage to paint a picture of the current and long term economic impact BSE poses to both national and provincial economies. The coverage describes the scope of economic impact as extending beyond the primary beef industries. The Alberta newspapers provide thorough examples of how BSE has impacted particular communities, and tangentially connected industries, whereas the coverage in the *Globe & Mail* refrains from going into as much detail.

The coverage of the first BSE discovery also includes descriptions of how the Canadian beef market is in fact entangled in a global market, stressing specifically that the Canadian and American markets are reliant on one another. These explanations are strategically used in the coverage to articulate why the United States should resume trade with Canada. Included are suggestions to improve relations with trade partners, and to strengthen the global market by properly regulating it. As a result of continued bans on Canadian beef, by June 2003 a few key politicians are cited in the newspapers suggesting the need to consider a trade war with international trade partners unwilling to lift bans on Canadian beef. This suggestion conflicts with the theme *integrated markets*, considering it emphasizes the need to seclude Canada from international trade, instead of moving

forward with initiatives to regulate and strengthen global markets. Despite the potential conflict between the two themes *integrated markets* and *trade wars*, the underlying message of each theme is that the Canadian government must act in favor of national interest, and decisions must be made to ensure a strong Canadian economy, only minimally affected by the economic threat of BSE.

The coverage that appears in each newspaper is tailored specifically for the expected audience exposed to each newspaper. Details included in the coverage does vary between the newspapers, but often the details are easily explained as resulting from the different audiences exposed to each newspaper. Aside from the differences, one key feature of the political discourse is emphasized in all three newspapers – that the opinions of politicians are valued. This observation will reappear in the chapters to follow; the opinions of politicians are valued in the descriptions of the themes of both the science and socio-cultural discourses.

Chapter 5 – The Science Discourse

In this chapter I will explore the science discourse, which articulates BSE as an object of inquiry taken up in scientific, objective research. In Chapter three I outlined which codes correlate to the discourse; here I will explore the major themes that can be drawn from the codes. As outlined in the last two chapters, the political discourse is the foregrounded discourse, and the science and socio-cultural discourses are backgrounded discourses occasionally drawn from throughout the coverage. In what follows, I will outline the unique way the science discourse frames BSE in contrast to the political and socio-cultural discourses.

As with the last chapter, I will focus on the coverage that is featured on the front page of the three newspapers for the first three months of coverage.

‘Having the Science’

Scattered throughout the coverage are references to scientific inquiry which highlight a distinction between ‘science’ and ‘politics.’ This distinction is used to argue that bans on Canadian beef should be decided based on scientific information outlining risk. The coverage articulates that the decision to ban Canadian beef has instead been inappropriately wrapped up in politics. For example, in the *Globe & Mail*, Cam Daniels, Vice President of the Canada Beef Export Federation is quoted as stating that the Japanese ban on United States beef “boils down to politics, not science” (Chase & Walton, 2003, para. 14). The United States ban on Canadian beef lingered due to the Japanese request to the United States that they ensure that U.S. beef is not tainted with Canadian beef. In June 2003, Japan threatened to place a full ban on U.S. beef if complete independence from Canadian beef was not secured by September 1, 2003.

Daniels' analysis of Japan's request highlights the common belief that politics and scientific inquiry are independent from one another. In the *Calgary Herald*, Berna Moss of Duchess, Alberta, whose son owns a feedlot near Bassano, Alberta, is quoted as stating that "[t]he science is in and proven, and it's wound up as a political issue" (Heyman, 2003, para. 23).

The importance placed on scientific inquiry for alleviating trade bans is not unusual, considering it is through scientific inquiry that we come to explain natural phenomena, and hopefully determine potential solutions for these phenomena. Essentially, it is primarily through scientific inquiry that humans come to understand their surrounding environment – scientific inquiry provides the terminology and theory to understand the external world. Although it has not had much impact on popular discourses on nature and the environment, academics in the fields of philosophy of science and science studies have questioned the extent to which society has become reliant on scientific inquiry. In *Politics of Nature*, Latour (2004) criticizes the importance placed on scientific inquiry, and states that science has become “the only salvation from the prison of the social world” (p. 13). In other words, it is only through science that we are provided with the language and concepts to understand aspects of the external world that are not readily available to the average citizen. Latour (2004) stresses the importance placed upon the scientist, who possesses the unique ability to go between the social world and the external world seamlessly, and are able to relay information about the external world to society.

The work of the scientist remains unquestioned and unchallenged because the unique knowledge and skills possessed by the scientist are difficult to attain. Scientific

information is not only unchallenged, but in fact is perceived as ‘common sense’ information. In the data, there are a couple of moments when science is conflated with common sense. For example, in the *Globe and Mail* Ralph Klein is summarized as stating that the United States should “use common sense and science” when making decisions about the ban on Canadian beef (McKenna, 2003a, para. 22). Klein’s quote also appears in the *Calgary Herald* on the same day. In the process of trying to provide a positive reason why the United States should open their borders to Canadian beef, Klein’s quote normalizes the conflation of ‘science’ and ‘common sense.’ Latour (2004) draws from the same conflation, and suggests that the work of science studies is often criticized for being too esoteric, and is hence unable to properly define “a future common sense” (p. 18). In other words, any field that attempts to challenge the tenets of scientific research is perceived as messing with an unflawed field, but is also challenging what has become our ‘common sense’ understanding of the external world, which inevitably is our scientifically defined understanding of the external world.

Valuing science to understand the external world, in the most extreme situations, not only frames scientific inquiry as ‘common sense’ knowledge, but also blatantly argues that scientific information should be accepted unchallenged, and unquestioned. On June 25, 2003, Klein is quoted in the *Calgary Herald* as stating that Japan should “accept science” in order to determine their beef trade relations with the United States (Olsen & Schmidt, 2003, para. 11). Klein’s statement frames the use of scientific information not only as common sense, but also as the only valid method of understanding the external world; his comment offhandedly suggests that there is a clear distinction between those

who ‘accept science’ and those who do not – those who are ‘with us’ and those who are not.

There is a trend in the coverage of referring to science as an entity, a process of nominalization that can, in extreme situations, personify science. For example, Ken Wiwa (2003) of the *Globe and Mail* writes that “[i]t used to be that we could trust Science to deliver us from ourselves” (para. 12). This statement not only indicates, as Latour (2004) suggests, that scientific research frees us from “the prison of the social world,” but it also refers to science as a set entity (p. 13); it downplays the group work done within the scientific community in determining ‘facts’ of the external world, and instead presents science as an entity that is easily grasped and presented as solid, unchallenged proof. Several quotes in the data present science as a stable entity by conflating the process of scientific inquiry with scientific results. For example, instead of stating that scientific research indicates that Canadian beef is BSE-free, Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew is quoted in the *Globe & Mail* as stating that: “now that the science has been put on the table,” trade can resume with Canada (Walton, 2003b, para. 20). Similarly, as already mentioned, Berna Dutchess is quoted in the *Calgary Herald* as stating that “the science is in” (Hayman, 2003, para. 23). The use of term the ‘science’ to refer to the scientific proof not only downplays the group work done in determining these facts by presenting science as a monolithic entity, it also fails to recognize a crucial aspect of the scientific model – that scientific proof is never certain, and is constantly challenged and changing. The quotation by Wiwa above is unique in that the word science is written as the proper noun ‘Science.’ The quotation takes the nominalization of ‘science’ one step further and frames science as a stable, singular identity able to “deliver

us from ourselves” (Wiwa, 2003, para. 12). Granted, the article that features this quote is an editorial article, and not a hard news article, but this representation of science proves to be problematic, and yet is apparently common. Given this common usage, it is surprising that the proper noun Science was not more often used in the newspaper coverage. As already outlined, the coverage consistently refers to ‘using science,’ ‘accepting science,’ or making decisions ‘based on science,’ so it seems like the next (problematic) step taken in newspaper coverage would be to cite science as a proper noun.

All three newspapers used for this project frame the use of scientific inquiry in the same way. The observations made in this section were drawn from the theme *science* which captures references to scientific inquiry, or as I have outlined in this section, references to the potentials of science as a stable and unchallenged entity. In the last chapter I explored the codes that are taken up in both the science and the political discourses, and argued that these codes are typically explored in reference to the investigative procedures taken to uncover cases of BSE, and the procedures taken to resolve all discovered cases of BSE. Although citations gathered for these themes do not consistently reference the term ‘science,’ they all inadvertently explore the scientific processes adopted for investigative and preventative procedures for beef safety in Canada.

Typical of all the codes that explore the investigative procedures is the naïve view of the potential of scientific inquiry – which is captured best in the citations gathered for the code *a need to find an origin of the disease*. As mentioned in chapter three, this code was heavily referenced in the first couple of months, but by the third month of coverage,

when industry officials realized that this goal was flooded with problems, the coverage of this theme dropped significantly. When BSE was first discovered on May 20, 2003, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) determined it essential to trace the life course of the cow, in order to determine where the cow lived, and to determine if other cows or potential offspring could have contracted the disease. Vital to the goal was to determine what the cow had eaten at the various farms that it had lived, considering BSE infection through animal feed has been commonly accepted as the primary way the disease is contracted. Although this seems like an appropriate way to approach the BSE crisis, the reality of the Canadian beef industry complicates this goal. Proper records tracing the life course of cattle are not the norm, and cattle are constantly shipped around, mixed into various herds, and are potentially lost among a mix of other cows. The *Edmonton Journal* wrote that “[f]inding the origin and tracing [the] travels” of the first Canadian BSE-positive cow are vital to the investigation, and that after determining the life course of the cow, “[i]nvestigators can then figure out if the animal was infected through feed, and if other animals received tainted food and are potentially infected” (Olsen, 2003a, para. 23). While I understand the need to seek the connections between cattle, in order to confirm whether or not other cattle may have been infected by the same animal feed, it is the confidence regarding the potential of BSE investigative procedures that I find troubling. The first two months of coverage extensively featured coverage of the code *a need to find an origin of the disease*, but none of the newspapers featured critical examinations of the limitations of the investigative procedures. The confidence in the investigation procedures highlighted by the newspapers is helpful for quelling public fears, but at the same time, the newspapers should outline how the investigative procedures might not be

able to determine, with certainty, that Canadian beef is one hundred percent BSE-free. The conditions of the Alberta beef industry, as already outlined, complicate the investigation. To gain a solid understanding of *exactly* what the cow ate at each of the farms that it lived would be difficult: even if the CFIA were to track down the brand or source of animal feed, to get a sample of the *exact* feed that the cattle had eaten would most likely be impossible. To gain a solid understanding of *exactly* which other cows have eaten the same feed that the first BSE-positive Canadian cow ate would be difficult, if not impossible, because cattle are passed between farms, and aside from the ear tag that marks where the cow was born, there is often no indication of where it traveled after birth. Further, to gain a solid understanding of *exactly* how many cattle the cow gave birth to and the *exact* location of the offspring would be difficult – impossible even considering up-to-date records of births and sales of cattle is not the norm of the industry. In Chapter eight I will discuss, from an animal ethics standpoint, why careful attention should be paid to the life course of cattle. For present purposes, I will simply state that a more complex consideration of external forces influencing the life of cattle could be helpful for farmers to consider when keeping up-to-date records of their cattle.

One tool used to help in the investigation to find the origin of the disease is DNA testing, which is meant to determine the bloodline of the cow. On May 23, 2003, in the *Globe & Mail*, it is written that farmer Trevor McCrea was waiting for DNA testing to see if the BSE-positive cow originated on his farm (Walton, 2003a). Similarly, on May 31, 2003, in the *Calgary Herald* it is written that officials are “waiting for results of DNA testing that could determine the birthplace of the animal” (Schmidt, 2003a, para. 33). The intention of conducting DNA testing is to attempt to link other cows to cow zero, and

hopefully come to a better understanding of where the disease originated. The *Edmonton Journal* wrote that “DNA testing will be used because record keeping is too sketchy beyond the past two years” (Thomas, 2003, para. 9). This quote highlights the reality of the Alberta beef industry – that farmers do not maintain detailed farming records – but it also places a lot of weight on the potential for DNA testing to explain the route of the disease. In fact, the quote seems to completely ignore the messy reality of the Alberta beef industry, and instead argues all details regarding the Alberta infection will be determined through proper scientific inquiry. DNA testing could provide a link between specific cattle, but it cannot answer the potentially more pressing question: what did the infected animal eat?

Unwavering certainty that ‘we have the science’ needed to understand BSE, and its impact to cows and humans is displayed in the coverage, and is a prominent idea connected to the code *infected meat didn’t enter the food chain*. The coverage stresses that humans are not at risk for Creutzfeldt-jakob disease, because infected meat did not enter the human food chain. There are two prominent arguments presented that articulate the safety of Alberta beef for human consumption. First, all three newspapers outline the chain of events related to the first Canadian case of BSE as follows: that the infection “was found; it was pulled from the food chain; it was pulled from the feed chain” (Mahoney, 2003, para. 4). Second, BSE prions are localized in the spine and brain of cattle, and because “Canadians don’t usually eat food products made with brains or spinal cords... they’re unlikely to ingest many prions” (Smith, 2003a, para. 12). The quote above is directly taken from Dr. Neil Cashman, of the University of Toronto’s Centre for Research in Neurodegenerative Diseases, who is a prominently featured voice in

articulating the safety of Alberta beef. On June 15, 2003 Cashman is quoted in the *Edmonton Journal* as stating that “[a] steak on the barbecue comes with zero risk” (Pederson, para. 13).⁷ In fact, the potential risk to humans that BSE inflicts is downplayed throughout the coverage in all three newspapers: proof of this observation has been gathered for the code *risk*. The coverage typically refrains from articulating that there is no risk, but rather frames the risk to humans as being *low*. For example, Dr. Claude Lavigne of the CFIA is quoted on in the *Globe & Mail* as articulating that “the risk to human health from this one case of BSE is low” (Walton, 2003a, para. 29). In the last chapter I discussed the importance of the voice of politicians in articulating the risk to humans that BSE may inflict. For this chapter, I want to explore the credit given to the voice of scientists, and those directly engaged in the BSE inspection procedures. Surprisingly, the articulation of risk is generally done by politicians engaged in the BSE crisis – such as the provincial and federal Agriculture Ministers – and there are minimal references that cite scientists engaged in the investigation procedures. On May 21, 2003 in the *Globe & Mail* it is written that *researchers* declare that the risk to humans is minimal (Smith, 2003a). Or on June 13, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald* it is written that *federal scientists* have taken part in a letter writing campaign to the United States articulating that several cuts of meat are of relatively low risk to having mad cow disease (Schmidt, 2003g). Other than those two references, there are minimal references in the first three months of coverage that directly cite scientists.

In downplaying the risk to humans, it is not enough to merely state that the risk is minimal, or non-existent; instead, specific examples are drawn upon in order to articulate

⁷ This quote was gathered for the theme *risk*

the risk to humans, from a ‘scientific perspective.’ For example, Cashman’s statement that “[a] steak on the barbecue comes with zero risk” is very specific in articulating what is not a risk (Pederson, 2003, para. 13). Or, on May 21, 2003 in the *Globe & Mail* Douglas Powell, the scientific director of the Food Safety Network at the University of Guelph, is quoted as stating that “[t]hese kinds of tiny risks are everywhere in the food system already,” and that “illnesses caused by fruits and vegetables will likely remain more common than problems from meat” (Smith, 2003a, para. 14). Powell’s quote articulates meat as *not risky* by emphasizing what is in fact *most* risky.

Uncertainty

Up until now I have outlined a popular theme in the coverage that indicates, with certainty, that the government ‘has the science’ it needs to conduct proper research to curb the impact of BSE. In contrast, there are indications in the coverage that demonstrate the need to suspend certainty regarding knowledge of BSE, and recognize the limitations of scientific inquiry.

There are moments in the coverage which highlight that the potential of determining the origin of the disease may be limited, if not impossible to determine – which is highlighted by the data collected for the code *a need to find the origin of the disease*. The coverage that appears in all three newspapers does attempt to make assumptions regarding the life course of the first Canadian BSE-positive cow, but at the same time these preliminary assumptions highlight the apparent uncertainty regarding where the cow was born, and where it may have lived throughout its life. For example, in the *Globe & Mail* Dawn Walton explains that there are two possibilities of where cow zero may have been born: either a Saskatchewan farm or an Albertan farm (Walton,

2003a). The Alberta newspapers are more detailed in outlining the potential birthplaces of the cow. In the *Calgary Herald* the birthplace of cow zero is narrowed down to “a farm near Baldwinton, Sask., and an unidentified ranch in northern Alberta” (Schmidt, 2003c, para. 11). Similarly, on May 26, 2003, it is written in the *Edmonton Journal* that the officials were still unsure of where the cow was born, but have identified two potential ‘pathways’: one, that the cow was born at a Barrhead/Lake Isle farm, and the other, that the cow came from one of two farms in Saskatchewan near Lloydminster (Thomas, 2003). The fact that the newspapers vary in their coverage and specificity of the where the cow lived, indicates the initial uncertainty of the investigation during the first month of coverage. The specificity of outlining the birthplace of the cow does not improve in later months of coverage; in fact, the newspapers do not conclusively define where the cow was born. As outlined in chapter three, the coverage of the theme drops significantly in the third month of coverage, most likely because the initial goal of pinpointing where the cow was born was decided as difficult, if not impossible, to determine. It should also be stated that the uncertainty regarding the origin of the disease is still framed in a neutral way, deflecting the possibility of pejoratively perceiving the uncertainty. For example, in the article outlining two potential life course paths, the journalist refrains from analyzing the uncertainty of the birth place of the cow as a potential key problem of the investigation.

The initial coverage of the first case of BSE highlights the hypothesis that it was an isolated case, yet typically refrains from presenting, with certainty, that the case is *in fact* isolated. For example, in the *Calgary Herald*, Shirley McClellan, Alberta’s agriculture minister, is quoted as stating that “it was probably one cow in the herd,” but

goes on to explain that the government can not tell “whether there will be one other cow” (Martin, 2003). Similarly, on May 21, 2003 Dr. Griffith, of the Canadian Research Institute for Food Safety, is quoted as stating: “My guess is that this is an isolated case” (Smith, 2003a, para. 23). In the first quote, the use of the adverb *probably* highlights the uncertainty of the statement, and in the second quote the use of the noun *guess* highlights the uncertainty of the statement. The uncertainty outlined in the initial coverage as to whether or not the first case of BSE is in fact isolated is somewhat expected.

Although the code *infected meat could have entered the food chain* is not featured many times in the first three months of coverage, this code highlights the government and media discourse regarding the uncertainty of whether or not the infected meat entered the human food chain. This code typically appears in sentences that outline the opinion of the journalist, and does not appear in direct quotations drawn from government and industry officials. Essentially, this theme appears in journalists’ hypotheses that are directly influenced by what officials have stated, and what they have refrained from stating. For example, the *Globe & Mail* wrote that “[l]eading food-safety experts say meat remains safe in Canada, even though authorities haven’t determined whether infected products landed in supermarkets” (Smith, 2003a, para. 5). It is interesting the way the coverage frames how infected meat could have entered the food chain – while all three newspapers stress that the first detected BSE-positive cow discovered did not enter the human food chain, some articles explain how cow zero could have had up to five calves, and this calf meat could have entered the human food chain. The transmission of the disease from mother to calf is not guaranteed by current research, so the threat that the calf meat could pose to citizens may or may not be of concern. The only direct industry official quote

referencing this code appears in the *Calgary Herald*; Dr. Claude Lavigne of the CFIA stated that the “calves could have possibly entered the food chain” (Schmidt, 2003b, para. 8). The fact that the quote uses both the words *could* and *possibly* highlights the extreme uncertainty of Lavigne’s analysis of BSE risk to Canadian citizens. An editorial article which appears in the *Calgary Herald* on May 21, 2003 is critical of the BSE investigation procedures; the journalist Don Martin argues that there could be another 10 cases of BSE, or another 100 cases – even worse there could be infected meat “already in the food chain” (Martin, 2003, para. 10). The code *infected meat could have entered the food chain* primarily appears in speculative coverage, highlighting the opinion of the journalist, and perhaps even the opinion of the newspapers.

The overarching discourse of *uncertainty* is not limited to the coverage of the investigation procedures, and appears in reference to explanations of the disease itself, and its threat to human health. The primary code that highlights this observation is *BSE details*. As outlined in chapter two, the research on BSE is not conclusive, and there are still details regarding the disease, and the connected human disease CJD that have not been conclusively agreed upon. The coverage that appears in all three newspapers tends to introduce specific information on the disease with statements such as “scientists believe,” or “it is believed,” which frames the scientific information that follows these statements as hypotheses, and not facts. For example, early in the coverage on May 21, 2003, in the *Globe & Mail* it is written that “[s]cientists believe that humans develop the ailment known as new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease by eating tissue from the central nervous system of cattle” (Mahoney, 2003, para. 23). On May 22, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald*, it is written that Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease is “believed to be caused by people

eating meat from BSE-infected cattle” (Schmidt, 2003b, para. 17). A similar sentence appears on May 25, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald*, which outlines how Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease is “believed to be caused by eating infected meat” (Schmidt, 2003d, para. 22). These articles refrain from using assertive sentences when explaining details of the disease, most likely because there remains much debate about how the disease is contracted, how it originated, and how it is passed to humans. In the *Edmonton Journal* on May 21, 2003 it is written that “[s]trong evidence links bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease, with a fatal brain disease in humans called variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, or vCJD” (Ruttan, 2003, para. 5). The sentence hypothesizes a link between CJD and BSE, without framing the link as a fact – by writing ‘strong evidence,’ the sentence suggests that there is enough evidence to indicate, but not necessarily guarantee, a link. If the sentence was instead written as ‘evidence links BSE and CJD’, the sentence would more effectively highlight the link as a conclusive fact.

Discursive opportunity event: International research team

An event that received a lot of newspaper coverage was the arrival of an international research team to Canada to investigate the Canadian BSE investigative procedures. The scientists – from Europe, the United States, and New Zealand – arrived in Canada on June 7, 2003. They were invited by the Canadian government to conduct a detailed investigation of the BSE inspection procedures. All three newspapers do provide coverage of the event, but the *Globe & Mail* provides coverage reporting on the arrival of the team of investigators, and also providing coverage of the findings of the investigation. The *Calgary Herald* and the *Edmonton Journal*, on the other hand, provide more thorough coverage of the results of the investigations

When the investigation team first arrived in Canada on June 7, 2003 the *Calgary Herald* confidently tied the investigation to the request to lift U.S. beef bans, by speculating that “Ottawa is expected to start making a formal appeal to the United States and other key importers to lift a ban on Canadian beef,” pending the results of the international review (Schmidt, 2003h, para. 1). The article from which the quote was drawn hypothesizes that the results of the international review should hopefully serve as the proof needed to lift the United States ban on Canadian beef. There are a couple of *Globe & Mail* articles that explore the international review; unlike the *Calgary Herald* article, however, the *Globe & Mail* coverage explores the event in a pejorative light by citing a quote by Ulrich Kihm of the international review board, who states that “[t]he risk is there that you will find a second or third case, or even more” (Hume, 2003c, para. 7; Lunman, 2003, para. 3). Instead of suggesting that the international review will result in bans on beef being lifted, the quote from Kihm highlights the potentially damaging impact of the investigation – that there will be other cases of BSE discovered, which would further prolong bans on Canadian beef. Kihm is also quoted in the *Globe & Mail* as stating that Canada has “done a very, very good job of investigating all the details, collecting the data, [and] taking conclusions from them” (Lunman, 2003, para. 14), which highlights that Canada has done good work to uncover the scope of impact of BSE, and to have worked hard to assure Canada is BSE-free.

Coverage of the event reappears at the end of June 2003 and throughout July 2003, which typically focuses on the results of the investigation. On June 28, 2003 in the *Edmonton Journal* it is written that the “panel of international experts, who examined the single case of mad cow disease discovered in Alberta in May, have recommended a ban

on rendering certain high-risk parts of cattle and other ruminant animals as feed for hogs, poultry, pets and fish” (Lazin, 2003b, para. 7). A similar focus on animal feed is outlined in the *Globe & Mail*, where it is written that the report recommended that Canada ban the use of all cattle remains in feed (Laghi, 2003). Aside from insisting on banning ruminant animal feed, the international team also urged the country to “improve disease testing and surveillance” (Laghi, 2003, para. 14).

Conclusion

As stated at the outset of the chapter, the science discourse is one of the two backgrounded discourses that appear in the newspaper coverage of the Alberta BSE crisis. The primary reason why I included an analysis of the representation of scientific inquiry was to capture the complex nature of ecological crises, which are wrapped up in a web of competing and connected political and scientific discourses.

As outlined in this chapter, the representation of the potentials of scientific inquiry are complexly represented in the media coverage of the Alberta BSE crisis, considering both themes of certainty and uncertainty are weaved into the newspaper coverage. The complex representation of the potentials of scientific inquiry is encouraging, but what remains most problematic in the newspaper coverage is the representation of science as a stable, unchallenged entity.

Chapter 6 – The Socio-cultural Discourse

In this chapter I will explore the socio-cultural discourse, which articulates BSE as a social issue, typically providing a unique look at the experiences of farmers directly impacted by the crisis. As noted in Chapter three, the socio-cultural discourse frames BSE as a micro matter of concern – as a matter of concern for small farming communities directly engaged in beef production. In Chapter three I outlined the various codes connected to the socio-cultural discourse; here I will articulate major themes drawn from the codes.

For this chapter I will focus on two data sets: the data set for the first three months of coverage, and the BSE barbecue events data set. The primary reason for including the barbecue events data set was to gain an understanding of the social response to the crisis. The reason I specifically looked at barbecue events was because of an initial observation I drew from the data that the typical event put on in support of the beef industry involved the consumption of beef.

Historically Situating the Canadian BSE Epidemic

The code *drawing on other BSE cases* explores the impact that BSE has had on other countries, such as Japan, Britain, and the United States. This code does look at the economic impact the disease has had on the economies of the countries, but the majority of the references to this code focus on the cultural impact the disease has had on these countries. This code is essential to gain an understanding of how the coverage of the Canadian BSE crisis references previous cases of BSE, and how the coverage frames the impact the disease has had on other countries. Essentially the code captures how past cases of the disease inevitably impact how the media frames Canadian BSE cases.

One observation regarding this code is that there are several references to the count of vCJD cases that have resulted from BSE outbreaks in other countries. For example, in the *Globe & Mail* it is written that “[a]bout 130 people were diagnosed with vCJD in Britain after the BSE outbreak there” (Smith, 2003b, para. 23). In another *Globe & Mail* article it is written that “[m]ore than 125 people died in Britain after eating meat from BSE-infected cows” (Malarek, 2003, para. 6). In the *Calgary Herald* it is written that “[m]ore than 100 people have died in the United Kingdom from eating beef from the cattle stricken disease” (Robertson, 2003, para. 10). Similarly, in an *Edmonton Journal* article it is written that the “UK has now had 135 cases of vCJD, with six people still alive” (Ruttan, 2003, para. 7). The specificity of the count of cases of vCJD does vary between the newspapers, but common to all the newspapers is the need to outline the impact that BSE has had on other countries. By providing the up-to-date count of cases of vCJD the coverage shifts the focus from the impact that BSE has had on cattle of the UK to a focus on the impact the disease has had on British citizens. Providing a count of cases of vCJD is also essential to induce fear in the newspaper audience, which in turn frames BSE as a potential threat to citizen health that must be controlled.

Unique to two articles featured in the *Globe & Mail* is the suggestion that knowledge of BSE discoveries in other countries is common knowledge. For example, in the *Globe & Mail* it is written that “[e]verybody knows the devastating effects of the disease” on the European beef industry (Ibbitson, 2003, para. 3). In another *Globe & Mail* article it is written that “everybody remembers how the neurological illness scared consumers away in Europe and Japan” (Smith, 2003a, para. 4). The articles from which these quotes are drawn assume that the audience of the *Globe & Mail* already has a

‘common’ understanding of the disease drawn from coverage that appeared in Canadian newspapers on the European cases of BSE. The references also highlight a trend of the socio-cultural discourse: references to the discourse often use conversational language. Fairclough (1995b) outlines that the use of conversational language has become popularized in media coverage, and he defines the use of conversational language as *cases of conversationalization*. Both of the quotations are written in a way to directly reference the reader, and it is as though the journalist is speaking to ordinary people, sharing a common ‘lifeworld’ (Habermas, 1984). The Albertan newspapers fail to suggest knowledge of international BSE cases is ‘common knowledge’ – which could be due to the stylistic choices of the journalists, or could be due to expectations of audience knowledge.

The coverage of the theme *drawing on BSE cases in other countries* also commonly differentiates Canada’s situation from what has happened in other countries. By differentiating Canada’s experience with BSE from other countries experiences with BSE the coverage downplays the impact to Canadian citizens that BSE poses. For example, in a *Globe & Mail* editorial article it is written that “Canada’s experience with BSE has been much different” than the UK experience, considering there has been “only one infected animal... and it was not used as food for humans” (Brethour, 2003a, para. 13). Similarly, on July 14, 2003 in the *Edmonton Journal* it is written that Canada’s BSE outbreak was “not an outbreak like Britain’s. No one was sick. No one was dead” (D’Aliesio, 2003a, para. 4). Although these sentiments are sincere in their attempt to downplay the threat of BSE, they fail to recognize an important point: that symptoms of vCJD can take years to appear, so the Canadian cases of vCJD may have yet to appear.

Historically situating the Canadian case of BSE by comparing the Canadian BSE crisis to past discoveries of BSE in other countries is essential to help hypothesize the potential long term affect the disease may have on the Canadian beef industry, and Canadian citizens. To use an idiom, the coverage of BSE in Canada *comes with baggage* – initial coverage of the first Canadian case of BSE was already framed by coverage of previous cases of BSE. The most extreme cultural impact of the disease was observed in the UK in the early 1990s, and in turn is used in the coverage of the Canadian BSE crisis as an example of what could potentially happen in Canada if the situation turns out to be worse than initially expected, if in fact there are far more than one cow with BSE.

The Disgruntled Albertan

In historically situating the Canadian BSE crisis, there is a focus in the coverage on the complexity of provincial politics, highlighting the commonly held belief that Western provinces are often disconnected from national politics. This belief is essential to gaining an understanding of Canada's political culture, to explicate how Canada's political culture could influence how the BSE crisis is framed in the coverage. Initially I assumed the theme of the *disgruntled Albertan* would be prominently featured in the Alberta newspaper coverage, and perhaps be avoided in the national paper the *Globe & Mail*, which is a newspaper that favors central Canadian coverage, with a focus on national politics. The code *Western Canada vs. federal government* was included to capture the references to the political division between Western Canadian provinces, and federal government politics.

On May 21, 2003 in the *Globe & Mail*, Ibbitson (2003) writes that “[i]f there is an archetypal angry, alienated Westerner, it must surely be an Alberta beef farmer” (para.

10). Ibbitson states that “[h]ow the federal government handles [the BSE crisis] is crucial,” explaining that the federal government was criticized for not responding quickly enough to the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic (para. 8). Ibbitson outlines the major problem faced by Albertans directly affected by BSE, seeking help from the government: the epicenter of the BSE crisis is not “Liberal-friendly Toronto,” but rather is Conservative-leaning Alberta (para. 9). Even before the BSE crisis, the tension between Alberta and the Canadian federal government was well established. An article published in the *Edmonton Journal* on June 10, 2003 writes that the “relations between Ottawa and the West is nearing an all-time low” (Olsen, 2003d, para. 21). In the article, Manitoba Premier Gary Doer is summarized as suggesting that Ottawa’s handling of SARS was significantly better than the federal government’s response to BSE. A direct quote from Doer is included: “[t]he situation there is treated one way, the situation here is treated in an entirely different way. One industry versus another. We can nation build better than that” (Olsen, 2003d, para. 23). One particular difference highlighted in the *Edmonton Journal* article is eligibility for employment insurance, which was relaxed for people out of work due to SARS, but not for those impacted by BSE.

Early into the BSE crisis, coverage compares the crisis to the Canadian SARS epidemic centered in Toronto. The comparison drawn highlights how the federal government should, and must respond similarly to BSE as it did to SARS. Alberta Premier Ralph Klein is the individual cited the most often comparing the two Canadian health epidemics. In the *Edmonton Journal*, Klein is quoted as stating that “[Western Premiers] think the federal government should treat Alberta, B.C., Saskatchewan – wherever beef is produced – the same as they did regarding SARS” (ibid., para. 25). In

another *Edmonton Journal* article Klein suggests that “the federal government has a moral obligation to respond as quickly to the mad cow crisis as it did to the SARS emergency in Ontario” (Olsen, 2003d, para. 17). The comparison between the two epidemics is in part fueled by the idea that Western provinces have historically been treated differently by the federal government, which is a point highlighted by the *alienated West* theme. As Ibbitson’s (2003) article articulate, the federal government was criticized for their slow response to the SARS epidemic, a point that Klein and the *Edmonton Journal* coverage fail to recognize. In selectively choosing the opinions taken regarding the issue of BSE, and failing to recognize the complex nature of the SARS epidemic, the *Edmonton Journal* is able to reaffirm the *alienated Western* theme. The failure to recognize the complexity of the SARS epidemic also highlights an important point regarding media coverage of social issues: they require a scapegoat, and most likely no matter how promptly a government responds to a social issue, there will be a reporter willing to look critically at government initiatives, and the limitations of the initiatives.

A critical examination of the federal government’s involvement in the BSE crisis is highlighted in an *Edmonton Journal* article published June 15, 2003 that looks at a poll aiming to uncover how BSE will impact consumer eating habits. According to the poll organized by the Consumers’ Association of Canada (CAC), eleven per cent of Canadians decided to significantly cut back on their Canadian beef consumption due to fear of BSE. Mel Fruitman – a spokesperson for the CAC – is quoted as stating that the federal government has only released confusing explanations of the risk of BSE. Fruitman suggests that a clear and concise list of risks should be released by the federal government, and argues that he “[has not] seen anything coming out of the federal

government like this” (Pederson, 2003, para. 20). Again, this article highlights how the media is often quick to find a scapegoat for social issues. The fact that the federal government – and not the provincial government, or particular organizations – is framed as the scapegoat in this article may primarily be due to the audience for which it was written. Throughout the *Edmonton Journal’s* coverage of the BSE crisis, any focus on Premier Klein’s involvement is consistently covered with a positive spin, so blame had to be given to someone or something already commonly framed in the newspaper in a negative light – the federal government. As already mentioned, the discourse of the *alienated West* is brought up in all three newspapers, but the focus on this theme in the Alberta newspapers is far more saturated, and it is typically framed in a way that indicates it is a common, and even factual, understanding of Canada’s political culture. In another article featured in the *Edmonton Journal*, the blame for poor relations between the federal government and Western provinces is blamed specifically on Prime Minister Jean Chretien. In the article, which outlines Paul Martin’s political platform, Fife (2003) writes that poor federal-provincial relations will have an impact on the federal government’s response to the BSE crisis. Specifically, the article explains that poor federal-provincial relations can be blamed on “Jean Chretien’s long record of street fighting with the provinces” (Fife, 2003, para. 2).

The discursive event that received a considerable amount of coverage, and best articulated the theme of the disgruntled Albertan, is the public suggestion by Ontario Agriculture Minister Helen Johns that the Canadian beef market should be divided into separate zones or regions. According to Johns, dividing Canada into independent beef zones would help justify why the United States should resume trade with particular zones

of Canada. This announcement was first reported in the *Globe & Mail* on May 28, 2003, only a week after the discovery of BSE. In the article it is written: “[p]rovincial relations became the latest victim of mad-cow disease yesterday with Ontario suggesting it should ban Alberta beef, invoking furious reaction from western farmers and politicians” (Dunfield, 2003, para. 2). The quote uses colloquial language by referring to provincial relations as the latest *victim* of BSE, a joke that highlights the scope of impact of BSE. Not only does BSE threaten the health of cattle and Canadian citizens, it also is the crux of political disputes between provinces.

The discursive event first appeared on May 30, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald* (Schmidt, 2003a), but the announcement did not receive front-page coverage in the *Edmonton Journal*. In both the *Globe & Mail* and the *Calgary Herald* articles Klein is quoted. In the *Globe & Mail* a very informal, conversational quote by Klein is included: “[t]his is Canada, eh? We work so hard to break down regional differences and to achieve unity... [a]nd then these comments come back which aren’t constructive at all” (Dunfield, 2003, para. 7). Klein also highlights the idea of unity in the quote that appears in the *Calgary Herald*: “I’m frustrated because I believe that everyone should understand that this is a Canadian issue, it’s not an Alberta issue” (Schmidt, 2003a, para. 11). The coverage of this discursive event does favor Klein’s opinion, suggesting that Johns’ trade solution is not feasible, and goes against all initiatives attempting to peacefully connect provinces. In fact, the overwhelming negative response to Johns’ suggestion forced the Minister to make a public apology, an event which received front-page coverage in the *Calgary Herald* (Schmidt, 2003e).

Symbolic Impact

In the last section, I suggested that international cases of BSE are often referenced in newspaper coverage to hypothesize the potential impact to the Canadian beef industry and Canadian citizens. The long term impact that BSE can have on Canada, and more specifically Alberta, is not merely in terms of economic impact; perhaps most damaging is the impact that BSE may symbolically have on the Alberta beef industry image. Alberta is best known for two key commodities – oil and beef. For years, Alberta beef has been promoted on both a national and international scale as the ‘best beef in the world.’ The branding of Alberta beef has been largely due to the work of the Alberta Beef Producers, who have initiated several campaigns in an attempt to promote Alberta beef within and beyond Canada. The Alberta Beef Producers formed in 1969, and initially collected fees from cattle sales in order to support the organization. The “primary mandate of the organization was to serve as a lobby group to promote the interests of provincial cattle producers at the federal level” (Blue, 2009, p. 236). The organization started their first major marketing campaign in 1988, in connection with the Winter Olympics Games in Calgary, Alberta. Blue (2009) explains that the campaign consisted of postcards, posters, and billboards featuring three cowboys along with the slogan “If It Ain’t Alberta, It Ain’t Beef” (p. 236). The organization has since modernized this initial campaign by introducing new spokeswomen for the organization called the “ranchERS” – three female cowboys who have replaced the male cowboys that initially appeared in the campaign. Recently, the organization has introduced a new campaign called the “Raised Right” campaign, which is advertised on 16 trucks, and on grocery cart advertisements appearing in over 133 Alberta supermarkets.⁸

⁸ Outlined on the organization’s website: <http://albertabeef.org/consumers/marketing-campaigns>

The branding campaigns sponsored by the Alberta Beef Producers organization were created in an attempt to differentiate Alberta beef from beef produced in other regions within Canada, while attempting to stake out a place in the global beef market, as was made apparent in the organization's initial campaign targeting the international Olympic audience. In an attempt to articulate the complexity of branding campaigns, such as the Alberta Beef Producers campaigns, Blue (2009) explains that brands are different from advertisements, considering they are not simply images attached to commodities, but are rather "complex communication devices that frame exchanges across disunified and disparate times and spaces" (p. 233). Blue also maps out the two ways in which brands make use of culture to govern consumer activity. First, brands attempt to "shape the perceptions, feelings, and behaviours of target audiences," and second, they "work on and through the ongoing production of common social worlds by embedding themselves into existing webs of meaning" (Blue, 2009, p. 234). Essentially, the strength of a branding campaign not only relies on its ability to shape audience perspectives, but to also remain relevant within the pre-existing cultural framework. The Alberta Beef Producers initially shaped the idea that Alberta offers a unique beef experience through the "If It Ain't Alberta, It Ain't Beef" campaign, by emphasizing Alberta beef's authenticity, by differentiating it from other 'lesser' types of beef. As the campaign evolved and included female spokeswomen, the organization attempted to reflect the reality of the Alberta beef industry by suggesting that there are in fact female ranchers. Finally, the new "Raise Right" campaign attempts to indicate Alberta beef industrial practices produce beef safely and securely, and was most likely a campaign implemented in response to the Alberta BSE crisis.

In order to capture references to Alberta beef culture, I included in my code list *Alberta beef industry image*. There are not many references for this code, but in the newspaper coverage of BBQ events it is often articulated that protecting the Alberta beef industry image is essential to maintain a thriving, and lively industry. As is written in the *Globe & Mail*: “the stigma of being added to the list of countries where mad-cow disease has struck will not be easily erased” (Ibbitson, 2003, para. 7). As the quote highlights, the stigma of BSE is seen as having long term effects on the industry, affecting consumer confidence, which in turn impacts the financial stability of the industry.

The coverage does conflate Alberta beef with local patriotism, which is an indication of the success of the Alberta Beef Producers’ branding campaigns. Essentially, Albertan identity is seen as inextricably linked to the beef production industry, so a hit to the beef industry is also seen as a jab at Albertan identity. On May 21, 2003 in the *Edmonton Journal*, a front-page editorial article outlines the importance that the beef industry has in articulating an Albertan identity (Simons, 2003b). The article explains that “[b]eef is ‘our food,’ and is ‘inextricably tangled up in our Alberta culture, our identity’” (Simons, 2003b, para. 13) A notable observation about the article is the use of conversational language, which indicates that it was written specifically for an Albertan audience. The use of conversational language helps in articulating the social reality of Alberta, and because it was written by someone who identifies as an Albertan – as made apparent by the use of the pronoun ‘our’ – the statements made are most likely interpreted as valid and authentic.

Important political figures and spokespersons are also quoted indicating the same connection between Albertan identity and beef. In the *Calgary Herald*, Christine

Cockwill of the Alberta Beef Producers is quoted as stating that “[t]here’s a lot of pride in Alberta when it comes to beef,” and goes on to explain that attendance at the Calgary Simulcast of the SARS concert and barbecue shows Calgarian dedication to the beef industry (Semmens, 2003a, para. 7). Premier Ralph Klein is quoted in the *Globe & Mail* as stating that “[c]attle is very important to Alberta,” and “[e]nergy is very important to Alberta (McKenna, 2003b, para. 5). Klein’s simple statement personifies Alberta and indicates that cattle and energy are the top priorities of the province. Klein’s statement also highlights the priority given to issues regarding Alberta’s top industries – the cattle and energy industries.

Barbecue Events

Over the two year timeframe chosen for this project, there were several barbecue events organized to raise awareness and support for the Alberta beef industry. The events covered in the newspaper coverage varied in size from small community barbecues to large national barbecues. All three newspapers provided coverage for events varying in size, with the SARS concert and barbecue event receiving the most coverage. There are a couple of types of events that appear in the coverage: BBQs with a BSE focus, BBQs incorporated to non-BSE themed events, a traveling rally, a traveling beef sale event, and finally yearly BBQ events. I will now explore the different types of events, outlining which events are covered in the different newspapers, and will consider how the coverage of the specific events frames the BSE crisis.⁹ I used both the first three months of coverage data set and the BBQ events data set to determine this list of events.

BBQs with a BSE focus.

⁹ It should be noted that the events outlined in this section were only the events that appeared in the newspaper coverage.

These events are barbecue events that have been organized with the main purpose of showcasing Alberta beef – typically community organized events. The coverage of these events is limited to the Alberta newspapers, which is not surprising considering these events are small, and all took place in Alberta cities and towns. The following chronological list is of the barbecue events covered in the newspapers that promote a focus on the impact of BSE:

- May 29, 2003: Community barbecue that occurred in Smoky Lake, Alberta. This event appeared in the *Edmonton Journal* coverage on May 30, 2003 in an article titled “Smoky Lake residents pull together in barbecue” (Lazin, 2003a).
- June 14, 2003: The Alberta government organized a barbecue to thank the media for their dedication to providing good coverage of the first Canadian case of BSE.
- August 6, 2003: Lamont county cattle farmers organized a community barbecue event. This event appeared briefly in *Edmonton Journal* coverage on August 7, 2003 in an article titled “12 counties declare economic disaster” (Brooymans, 2003a).
- August 13, 2003: Epcor organized a noon hour barbecue at the company’s downtown Edmonton office building, and donated \$3900 worth of beef to the Edmonton food bank. This event appears in an *Edmonton Journal* article published August, 14, 2003 (Buium, 2003c).
- September 1, 2003: The Kinsmen club organized a barbecue for Labour Day in Edmonton, Alberta. This event appeared at two periods in the *Edmonton Journal* coverage. At the beginning of July, this event was initially announced, and the announcement appears in an article published on July 8, 2003 (Penner, 2003a) and

again on July 11, 2003 (“Time to reopen border”, 2003). The event is also mentioned in an *Edmonton Journal* article published the day before the event on August 31, 2003 (Thorne, 2003b). Finally, the event is mentioned again in an *Edmonton Journal* article describing what happened at the event, published September 2, 2003 (Thorne, 2003c)

- October 27 – 29, 2004: A Camrose farmer organized an event called “The World’s Longest Barbecue,” which is a continuous barbecue stretching over three days. The event was mentioned in an *Edmonton Journal* article published on October 28, 2003 (Green, 2003).

BBQs incorporated to non-BSE themed events.

These events do not have a primary BSE-theme, but are rather events that have incorporated a barbecue to show support for the beef industry. These complex, multi-themed events are events that were organized before the start of the BSE crisis, and the event organizers decided to incorporate a barbecue closer to the date of the event. The following is a chronological list of non-BSE themed events covered in the newspapers:

- July 30, 2003: The city of Toronto organized the SARS fest concert, featuring the Rolling Stones. This event was organized to bring awareness to the SARS epidemic, showing that Toronto is a safe place to visit. This event is the most cited in the coverage of all three newspapers. The event organizers decided to incorporate a barbecue to the event to show support for Alberta ranchers. As outlined in the coverage, the city of Calgary organized a live simulcast of the event at the Saddledome.

- August 9, 2003: In Edmonton, Alberta there was a special event organized to celebrate Commonwealth stadium's 25th anniversary, which coincided with an Edmonton Eskimo football game. An *Edmonton Journal* article writes that beef will be promoted at the event, in lieu of the fact that the city of Edmonton decided not to have a simulcast of SARS fest (O'Donnell, 2003).
- August 23, 2003: The Canadian Derby took place at Northlands Park in Edmonton, Alberta. In an *Edmonton Journal* article it is explained that the promotion of beef at this event was partly influenced by the decision made by the city of Edmonton to not have a simulcast of SARS fest (O'Donnell, 2003).

Traveling rally.

Several of the barbecue events are referred to as rallies, given that the purpose of the events are to protest against bans on Canadian beef. One rally mentioned in the *Calgary Herald* and in the *Globe & Mail* is a unique traveling rally. The event took place on July 26, 2003 and was a rally that started in Manning, Alberta and headed south to Coutts, Alberta which is near the Alberta-Montana border. This event is mentioned in two articles that appear in the *Calgary Herald* – the first article was published the day before the event on July 25, 2003 (Thompson, 2003) and the second article was published the day after the event on July 27, 2003 (Heyman, 2003). The event is mentioned on July 31, 2002 in the *Globe & Mail* (Walton, 2003e).

Traveling beef sale event.

Several of the barbecue events also provide the opportunity for attendees to buy Alberta produced beef. One unique continuous event that took place throughout the summer of 2003 appearing twice in the coverage was the Great Canadian Cattle Drive – a

cross-Canada traveling beef sale organized by Alberta feedlot operator Rick Paskal. The arrival of the caravan to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan was covered in the *Globe & Mail* on June 21, 2003, but the article fails to identify the event as ‘the Great Canadian Cattle Drive’ (“Hamburger goes for a looney [sic] a pound,” 2003). The traveling caravan is dubbed as ‘the Great Canadian Cattle Drive’ in an article that appears on November 9, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald* (Teel, 2003).

Yearly BBQ events.

These events were organized with the intent of occurring every year in order to maintain local support of the Alberta beef industry. All of the yearly events were organized in 2003, in response to the detrimental impact that BSE had on the Alberta beef industry.

- **Beef Month:** In an article appearing in the *Edmonton Journal* on July 24, 2003 Edmonton Mayor Bill Smith is quoted as announcing that August is Beef Month in Edmonton (O’Donnell, 2003). This announcement is framed in the article as being decided in lieu of the fact that the city of Edmonton decided to not provide a simulcast of SARS fest.
- **World’s Longest BBQ:** This event should not be confused with the Camrose event of the same name. This event was organized by food activist Anita Stewart, along with Cuisine Canada, and is a cross-Canada barbecue that occurs every August long weekend. The event is briefly mentioned in an *Edmonton Journal* article published July 21, 2004 (Schultz, 2003). To my knowledge, the event still occurs every August long weekend.

- Camrose's World's Longest BBQ: This event initially took place October 27 – 29, 2003. The event was initially supposed to be a one-time event, but after the success of the first year, the organizers decided to make it an annual event.

According to the website of the event, it occurred three years in a row, each year with extended BBQ hours to compete with the previous year. By the third year, the event dropped in popularity, so the organizers decided to make it the final year.¹⁰

Eating the Cause

Although the events outlined in the last section vary in type, they all promote the idea that consuming beef is a way to support the industry, and demonstrate to the world that Alberta beef is safe to consume. The attendees of the events collectively resisted the risk discourse typically associated with Canadian beef by consuming copious amounts of beef. In his later writings, Foucault presents social agents as having the capacity to create themselves, and essentially resist the influence of power. Accordingly, Foucault defines ethics as “the practice of liberty, the deliberate practice of liberty,” therefore providing the “individual with the capacity for action – to change itself and the world in which it lives” (Hofmeyr, 2006, p. 217). From this perspective, Foucault is indicating that praxis can in fact influence our larger surroundings, but it must be stressed that Foucault also insists that “[e]very act of resistance instates new relationships of power” (Hofmeyr, 2006, p. 222). What I want to draw from Foucault's ethics is the attention he pays to praxis, and add to his definition of ethics a simple point: that praxis demands a body. Barbecue events put on in support of the Alberta beef industry after the discovery of a

¹⁰ This information was taken from the website for the event. The website address is:

Canadian-born case of BSE attracted like-minded individuals willing to patriotically and corporally demonstrate their investment in the Alberta beef industry by using their bodies as the sites of resistance to the global risk discourse of Canadian beef.

In order to assure Canadians that they are in fact safe from the threat of BSE, the newspaper coverage draws from the opinions of important industry officials to articulate that Canadians should continue to consume Alberta (or Canadian) beef. The code *consumers should eat meat* highlights the idea that consumers should remain dedicated Canadian beef consumers, and show support for the industry by consuming copious amounts of beef. The newspapers often draw quotes from politicians, or spokespersons from organizations specifically engaged in the Alberta beef industry to articulate that consumers must eat meat. For example, Alberta Agriculture Minister Shirley McLellan is quoted in the *Globe & Mail* as suggesting that it is “important that [consumers] ask what they are purchasing,” in order to make sure that they are in fact supporting the Alberta beef industry with every purchase of beef (Brethour, 2003b, para. 26). The same article writes that McLellan intended to pass a “buy-Canadian campaign” onto the federal government, a campaign she frames as an option to help the industry stay afloat (Brethour, 2003b, para. 27). Another individual who is often quoted is Christie Cockwill, the promotions director for the Alberta Beef Producers organization. On July 22, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald*, Cockwill is quoted as stating that “[a]ny promotion or encouragement to Calgarians and Canadians to enjoy Alberta beef, to enjoy Canadian beef, is really important now... [and] [i]f we keep everybody eating [beef] we will get through this” (Reid, 2003, para. 13). She is also quoted in the *Calgary Herald* as stating that the message that Canadian beef is safe must continue to be spread nationally and

internationally, and that “the best thing people can do to help right now is eat more of it” (Semmens, 2003a, para. 8). Finally, on July 24, 2003 in the *Edmonton Journal* she is quoted as stating that “Albertans can help the industry by adding beef to one extra meal a week” (O’Donnell, 2003, para. 11). Granting McLellan and Cockwill standing on the issue of the safety of Canadian beef suggests that the newspapers value their opinions on the issue. More importantly, audience expectation guides the use of quotes from McLellan and Cockwill; both are interpreted as possessing unique knowledge of the industry and beef quality standards that properly inform their opinions on the quality of beef, and whether or not Canadians should continue to consume Alberta beef. It should also be mentioned that both McLellan and Cockwill have a vested interest in promoting beef consumption – McLellan must act favorably for the agricultural industry in order to assure a profitable season, and Cockwill’s job as promotions manager for the Alberta Beef Producers requires her to promote the sale of Alberta beef.

The code *event information* captures references to information on various events put on in support for the Alberta beef industry, and captures references made specifically to people collectively showing support by eating beef. Several of the articles that announce particular events days or even weeks before the event could be interpreted as good publicity that is helpful in attracting a collective of beef eaters. In fact, the coverage leading up to both the Calgary Simulcast of the SARS concert and the Northlands Kinsmen Labour Day barbecue specifically outline that the barbecued goods will be free to attendees – which will inevitably help in attracting a crowd. On July 25, 2003 an article on the Calgary Simulcast of the SARS concert appearing in the *Calgary Herald* boasts that the “event will begin at noon with a series of free concerts by local artists and

a free barbecue from local beef producers” (“Free stones simulcast tickets available at Co-op today”, 2003, para. 8). On July 22, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald* it is written that the simulcast will be used as “a showcase for the beef industry,” and that free burgers and other beef products will be given to attendees (Reid, 2003, para. 10). The *Herald’s* promotion of the event indicates that the newspaper texts are pieces of *social practice* (Fairclough, 1995b), suggesting that the promotion of the event was used as a way to urge readers to consider attending the event; the promotion of the event was used to hopefully trigger a particular social response.

The code *eating beef* was incorporated to the code list in order to capture references in the coverage describing people eating beef. There is considerable cross-over between the code *event information* and *eating beef* considering descriptions of barbecue events often include descriptions of people eating beef at the events. References to people eating are, at times, described using colloquial language and idioms. For example, in a *Calgary Herald* article on the provincial government barbecue put on to applaud media coverage of the crisis, it is written that reporters were “[invited] to chow down by Tory whip Carol Haley” (Olsen, 2003e, para. 5). On July 31, 2003 in the *Edmonton Journal*, it is written that attendees of the Calgary Unity Concert “chowed down with great delight in a most eloquent demonstration to skeptical, poorly informed foreign consumers that Canadian beef is both safe and absolutely delicious” (“Stones restore our tarnished image”, para. 6). Similarly, in the *Edmonton Journal* it is written that Edmontonians “chewed on \$2 hamburgers” at the noon-hour Epcor barbecue on August 13, 2003 (Buium, 2003c, para. 3). As mentioned earlier, the use of conversational language is a common trait of the socio-cultural discourse, and both colloquial language and colloquial

idioms are important tools to highlight conversational language. Journalists reporting on the above mentioned barbecue events use colloquial idioms such as “chowed down” and “chewed on” as a way of informally conversing with the newspaper audience. The use of colloquial language refrains from reporting on particular events from a disconnected, high-brow point of view, and instead allows media texts to speak to the audience using ‘common language’ representative of the type of language typically used by the audience.

The articles compiled from the *Globe & Mail* for this project refrain from using colloquial idioms for eating, which is in part due to the limited coverage of barbecue events. There is one reference to eating that is written in an informal, conversational manner regarding the SARS concert. In an article that was published on July 29, 2003, it is written that the SARS event “wasn’t suppose to be about the beef, but a hearty helping will be on many lips” (Walton, 2003d, para. 2). The article is an editorial piece; the quotation demonstrates the use of conversational, informal language typical of editorial articles that highlight the opinions of the reporter often in a flashy, creative manner.

The references made to eating meat, and descriptions of barbecue events that mention people eating beef highlight the importance of a body in resisting the global risk discourse typically associated with Canadian beef after the discovery of the first Canadian case of BSE. The need to express confidence in local beef threatened by BSE by consuming beef is common to the media history of BSE. In 1990, the British Minister of Agriculture John Gummer force fed his daughter a hamburger in front of live television cameras and assured the public that British beef was safe to eat. Gummer intended to display his confidence in British beef by using his family as a benchmark, but instead his actions were criticized by the media and the media stunt is still to this day

negatively interpreted. In fact, the event was referenced in a *Globe & Mail* article which suggests that a photo opportunity of Prime Minister John Chretien eating an Alberta strip loin for lunch a few days after the discovery of BSE was reminiscent of the John Gummer media stunt (Strauss, 2003). Unfortunately the format of the data used in this project is limited to written texts, and does not include pictures that may have accompanied the articles. Specific politicians that are particularly vocal regarding the issue of BSE in Canada – such as Ralph Klein – were most likely pictorially represented at barbecue events, either participating in the preparation of the barbecued commodities, or eating beef. The Camrose event, ‘the World’s Longest Barbecue,’ does have a website, and several pictures featured in the photo gallery contain Klein flipping burgers on the grill.¹¹ As with Gummer’s media display in 1990, Canadian politicians participated in the production and consumption of Alberta beef at barbecue events to corporally display their supreme confidence in the quality of Alberta beef.

The Importance of Place

Understanding the body as a site of resistance is not enough to gain the full picture of the discourse presented by the media coverage of the barbecue events, it is also important to explicate the importance of place. Lockie (2001) explores the connection between place, food, and identity in Rockhamptom, Australia; he stresses the need to regard ‘space’ and ‘time’ as social constructs in attempting to work through regional identities connected to specific types of cuisine, or specific types of food production. Lockie suggests that space is “conceptualized as both signifier and signified; as both a site at which food consumption may take place, and as a contingent and potentially

¹¹ The website: www.worldslongestbbq.com

contested set of meanings that may themselves be consumed through those practices associated with food” (p. 241). In understanding time as a social construct, he notes that it is “possible to map food practices temporally in order to examine the ways in which they have changed over time” (p. 241). It is also possible to “map the meanings through which their temporality is constructed,” which Lockie explains using the examples of “Sunday roast[s]” or “nouvelle cuisine” (p. 241). Both the temporal and spatial social constructs “are embodied in the notion of ‘place’” (Lockie, p. 241). Embedded within the coverage of the barbecue events and the less specific coverage of the BSE crisis are references highlighting that it is important that consumers make a conscious effort to buy and consume Alberta beef to show support for the beef industry. Incorporated to the code list is the code *consumers should still eat meat*, which captures references that urge Canadians to continue to eat Canadian beef, and refrain from eating beef that is produced in other countries.

In the last section I explored the code *consumers should still eat meat* in reference to the theme of bodies being used as the site of resistance to the global risk discourse typically associated with countries inflicted with BSE. Quotes from Shirley McLellan and Christie Cockwill articulated that consumers should show support for the Alberta beef industry by continuing to consume Alberta beef, and they both use their voices of authority to emphasize that Canadian beef is safe to consume. It is also important to consider the intended audience of the suggestions of McLellan and Cockwill – the messages espoused by both that beef should still be consumed is primarily geared to Canadian consumers. The focused look on the Canadian consumer is mainly due to the audience exposed to the newspaper coverage, but I believe the coverage also emphasizes

the strength in conviction of Canadians supporting the 'buy-Canadian' campaign. By consuming Albertan/Canadian beef, Canadians can show their continued confidence in the Canadian product. On May 31, 2003 there was a survey reported in the *Calgary Herald* that looked specifically at Canadian consumer response to the discovery of BSE. The survey determined that 83% of Canadians did not plan to change their beef consumption habits, and a mere 11% of Canadian consumers surveyed reported that they did plan on reducing their Canadian beef consumption (Schmidt, 2003e). This finding was reported in the newspaper to affirm to the Canadian audience that Canadians are still consuming Canadian beef products. From a political standpoint, the use of the survey results could be used to articulate to international beef markets the need to reconsider beef bans, by arguing that if Canadians are still eating Canadian beef, so should international consumers.

The Political Potential of Barbecue Events

Most of the events put on in support of the beef industry were grassroots initiatives that helped encourage local communities to continue to consume Alberta beef. The scope of impact of the small grassroots events is limited, and the events were most likely not reported on by the international media. In fact, several of the events that occurred in Alberta did not even receive national coverage, which highlights the very limited scope of coverage that Alberta events could attain. Two events were successful in receiving wider coverage: the SARS Fest concert in Toronto, and the Alberta-Montana border rally. The nature of the events allowed for direct contact with international consumers – the border rally was attended by American farmers, and the Toronto concert attracted an American, and even international audience.

The political potential of these two events rely on the fact that they both directly engage with the competing American discourse outlined by R-CALF, who articulate the need to keep the United States border closed to Canadian beef. By incorporating an American audience, both events are able to compete with the discourse of R-CALF by displaying that not all Americans want to keep the border closed to Canadian beef. The other grassroots barbecue events did not work against competing discourses, and rather re-iterated the dominant discourse of Alberta – that BSE is an Albertan issue that threatens one of the province’s top agricultural industries. The attendees of the grassroots barbecue events likely consisted entirely of Albertan residents. Both SARS Fest and the Alberta-Montana border rally events, on the other hand, were attended by international consumers, successfully incorporating international bodies to the collective act of resistance to the global risk discourse typically associated with Canadian beef.

The Alberta-Montana Border Rally.

On July 25, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald*, it was reported that the Alberta-Montana rally in Coutts, Alberta “expected to attract thousands of Canadians and Americans who want the U.S. government to lift the ban on Alberta beef” (Thompson, 2003, para. 1). The article – published the day before the event – touted that the event would have 25,000 burgers to give away, and that over 30 companies were sponsoring the event. An article published in the *Calgary Herald* on July 27, 2003, one day after the event, reported that the crowd of supporters at the event, many of which were “wearing special rally shirts reading Neighbours helping Neighbours,” listened to “speeches from politicians from across Alberta, Saskatchewan and Montana” (Heyman, 2003, para. 3). The event also received coverage in the *Globe & Mail*, in an article which reported on the Calgary Unity

Concert and the Alberta-Montana border rally (Walton, 2003e). The event was successful in bringing together Canadian and American farmers and politicians, and was successful in symbolically presenting to both Canadian and American media audiences that both Canadians and Americans are dedicated to the issue of BSE. In the article published in the *Calgary Herald*, it is written that Brooks Mayor Don Weisback spent a considerable amount of time promoting the event in communities in Montana, participating in several media interviews, and he enthusiastically claimed that he expected the event to be “the largest U.S.-Canadian rally ever” (Thompson, 2003, para. 10). Essentially, the event was successful in effectively spreading the dominant Canadian discourse demanding that American bans on Canadian beef be lifted.

The coverage of the Alberta-Montana rally successfully argues for the Canadian discourse by using two arguments. First, the coverage explored a theme already outlined in chapter three – that the Canadian and American borders are integrating, and that the separation of the two markets may prove to be difficult, if not impossible. Member of Parliament Monte Solberg of Medicine Hat is quoted in the *Calgary Herald* as stating that “[w]e have an integrated border,” and that Americans and Canadians want to work together (Heyman, 2003, para. 12). Gary Iverson, mayor of the United States border town Sunburst, Montana, is quoted in the *Calgary Herald* as stating that the impact of Canadian BSE has been felt in his community, and in particular has impacted the feeding industry. Iverson is quoted as stating that “[t]here’s [sic] a lot of ranchers with a lot of extra feed – beef, barley and oats” (Thompson, 2003, para. 16). The nature of the event itself promoted this theme, considering the event occurred at the border, and attempted to

symbolically bridge the Canadian and American beef industries by inviting Americans consumers to make the trip across the border to Coutts in order to participate.

The second argument for the Canadian discourse in the coverage of the event is articulation of the need to lift American bans on Canadian beef by emphasizing the need for the Americans to maintain positive relations with Canada. The suggestion is that the United States should not take dramatic action against the Canadian beef industry, in order to assure a favorable Canadian response if the United States beef market is ever caught in a similar situation. In the article published July 27, 2003 in the *Globe & Mail* MP Monte Solberg “warned Americans they should set a good precedent with Canada in this beef crisis, so that if their country was ever hit by mad cow disease they’ll be able to turn to our country, having helped us in our time of need” (Heyman, 2003, para. 11). The event was an open invitation to both American beef industry representatives, and American beef consumers, and attempted to symbolically represent positive relations between the American and Canadian beef industries. One could even interpret the event as a media potlatch. Mauss’ (1990) pivotal work on gift exchange explains that participation in a potlatch inevitably results in the obligation to reciprocate, essentially suggesting that by consuming the food, or taking the offerings of your neighbour requires the need to, at some point, reciprocate that offering. The Alberta-Montana border rally was an open invitation to American consumers to participate in the event, and consume Canadian beef for free, with the hope that the participants would return to the United States with a positive outlook of the Canadian beef industry. And Solberg’s warning indicates, the event serves as the offering needed to promote favorable relations between the two

countries, and setting the standard of future relations between the two countries if the United States beef market is threatened by BSE.

SARS Fest / Calgary Unity Concert.

The event most reported on in all three newspapers is the SARS Fest concert, and the connect simulcast of the event in Calgary labeled the 'Calgary Unity Concert'. There are several reasons why this event received the most coverage in the newspapers. First, the event was considerably larger than any of the other events covered in the newspapers, and actually included two separate, yet connected events – the SARS concert in Toronto, and the Calgary Unity Concert. Second, because the event occurred in Toronto it received considerable coverage in the *Globe & Mail*, which is a national paper with a strong leaning toward Ontario news coverage. Third, the event received a lot of coverage because of the celebrities attending the event, most notably the fact that the Rolling Stones head-lined the concert. And finally, the events received considerable coverage because of the multi-themed nature of the events.

As already outlined, this event was initially created to promote tourism in Toronto, after the drop in Toronto tourism was linked to the SARS epidemic. Organizers of the event decided to include a barbecue to show support for the Alberta beef industry, shortly after the discovery of the first Canadian born case of BSE on May 20, 2003. In fact, the first mention of the newly incorporated barbecue was as early as May 23, 2003 – a short three days after the BSE discovery – in the *Globe & Mail* (Yourk, 2003). MP Dennis Mills was quoted as stating that organizers thought: “What better way to help the beef industry than hold a barbecue to feed the crowds?” (Penner, 2003b, para. 3).

The coverage promoting the event highlighted the political and social impact the event would hopefully have, specifically touting the hopeful impact it would have on international attendees. For example, Dennis Mills, the organizer of the event and an MP for the city of Toronto, was quoted as stating that he “hopes the concert will be crucial in breaking the ban on exports of Canadian beef to the U.S.” (Adams & Dixon, 2003, para. 11). More specifically, Mills is quoted as stating that the barbecue was included so that “Americans or anyone else who attends will go back to their communities and say, ‘Wow, that Canadian beef is awesome’” (Adams & Dixon, 2003, para. 11). Similar to the Alberta-Montana border rally, this event attracted an international audience, which primarily consisted of Americans. In fact, the barbecue was dubbed the ‘barbecue without borders’ – a label that highlights the perceived impact of the event, which organizers hoped would bring American and Canadian beef consumers together to positively celebrate, and corporally enjoy Canadian beef products. On July 10, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald* it was estimated that 60,000 Americans were expected to attend the event, and Mills contacted the association that organizes competitive barbecues, and decided to include barbecue teams from “as far away as Alabama and New Mexico” (Penner, 2003b, para. 9). The fact that they brought American barbecue teams in to participate in the event highlights the primary theme of the event, that it is in fact a barbecue without borders, incorporating a variety of nations to help out the Alberta beef industry in its time of need.

Although connected, the Calgary Unity Concert is a bit different in nature when compared to the SARS Fest concert. As already outlined, the SARS Fest concert was successful in bringing together Canadian and American consumers, and as the organizer

MP Dennis Mills articulated, the event hoped to sell beef to American concert attendees so that they take a positive outlook of Canadian beef home with them. The Calgary Unity Concert, on the other hand, was organized primarily for a Canadian audience. It was a free event, and tickets were available at local grocery stores on a first come, first serve basis, and as already mentioned, the event and ticket releases were advertised in the local paper, the Calgary Herald. As the name of the event emphasizes, the purpose of the event was to *unite* Calgarians, and to help out the failing beef industry of Alberta primarily located in rural Alberta. Whereas the SARS Fest concert, and connected Barbecue Without Borders attempted to bridge a connection between Canadian and American beef enthusiasts, the Calgary Unity Concert attempted to bring *Calgarians* together, and did not do much to connect the crowd to a larger national, or international community. The Calgary Unity Concert did receive national coverage in the *Globe & Mail* in an article published July 29, 2003 that presented the disgruntled argument that BSE was becoming the star Canadian issue highlighted at SARS Fest, taking attention away from SARS (Walton, 2003d).

Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the socio-cultural discourse presented in the newspaper coverage of the Alberta BSE discoveries. There are two prominent features of this discourse. First, there is a focus on historically situating the Canadian BSE discoveries. By referencing the BSE crisis of Britain, the Canadian newspaper coverage is able to hypothesize the social impact the disease may have on the Canadian beef industry, and on Canadian/Albertan culture. And by wrapping the BSE crisis into interprovincial politics,

the media coverage paints a picture of the Canadian political culture, which inevitably influences how the coverage is framed.

The second feature of this discourse is the coverage of the collective social response to the crisis, which is to eat beef to show support for the failing beef industry. This feature of the discourse typically appears in coverage of barbecue events put on in support of the beef industry. The excessive nature of the events seems a bit over-the-top, not to mention the excessive unhealthy nature of the Canadian initiative to increase beef consumption. In the concluding chapter I will discuss how the fetishization of beef encourages this problematic collective response.

Chapter 7 - The Evolution of the BSE Media Package

In this chapter I will explore the data set that includes the initial coverage of the three other BSE discoveries that occurred between May 20, 2003 and December 31, 2005. This data set was included to the study to explore how the discursive media package of BSE evolved, to gain an understanding of how previous BSE events may have influenced how other cases of BSE are framed in the newspaper coverage. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) explain that a media package is “a set of interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue” (p. 3). Media packages have a central organizing frame, but they “ebb and flow” and are “constantly revised and updated to accommodate new events” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 2). Gamson and Modigliani’s definition of media packages takes into account the evolution of particular social issues, and argues that a media package for a particular social issue is inevitably influenced by the historical timeline for the particular social issue.

Unique storylines

Of particular importance is the unique storyline for the additional BSE cases explored in this study. The storylines accompanying the second, third and fourth cases of BSE do not necessarily directly impact the media package; rather, the details of the discoveries, including where the infected cows were found, and the leading explanation for how the disease was contracted, help in differentiating the cases from the initial May 20, 2003 Canadian case of BSE. The following is an outline of the three additional cases of BSE included in this study, and includes descriptions of themes and observations unique to each of the BSE cases. Later in the chapter I will explore observations related to all three BSE cases.

Second Canadian BSE case: The Mabton Case.

On December 23, 2003, a Holstein cow in Mabton, Washington tested positive for BSE. The cow apparently became paralyzed after giving birth to a calf, and later died. A sample of the cow's brain was sent to the Central Veterinarian Laboratory in Waybridge, England, and on December 25, 2003 it was confirmed that the cow tested positive for BSE (Markusoff & Paraskevas, 2003). Early into the investigation newspaper coverage speculated that the cow may have been born in Canada and by January 2004 media coverage confirmed the Canadian origin of the infected cow.

In response to the Mabton case, the Canadian federal government placed a partial ban on U.S. beef and cattle imports. On December 26, 2003 in the *Edmonton Journal* it is written that "Ottawa set itself apart from much of the international community... by only partially banning U.S. beef and cattle imports" (Markusoff & Paraskevas, 2003, para. 5). Agriculture Minister Bob Speller is quoted in this article explaining the partial ban was decided based on scientific assessment of the risk to humans (Markusoff & Paraskevas, 2003). The federal government's decision was criticized by the Canadian media, and the decision is framed as decided based on fear. Cathy Holtslander of the Council of Canadians is quoted in the same article as expressing that "Canada is afraid to (anger) the United States and do to them what they did to us" (Markusoff & Paraskevas, 2003, para. 21). In the *Calgary Herald*, it is written that some interpret the decision as "an attempt to placate Canada's larger trading partner" (Lang, 2003c, para. 12). In the same article it is written that Ottawa's partial ban also angered health advocates, who argue that the partial ban "doesn't eliminate the risk of exposing Canadians to mad cow disease" (Lang, 2003c, para. 9). Included in the newspaper coverage was talk of the United States resuming trade

with Canada but after the discovery of the Mabton case, the United States decided to delay its proposal to allow Canadian cattle imports – a decision based on the speculation that the Mabton case may have been shipped from a Canadian ranch (Schmidt, 2004a).

A link between the Mabton case and the Canadian beef industry is outlined in two articles, one appearing in the *Edmonton Journal*, and the second appearing in the *Calgary Herald* – both written by Jim Farrell, and both very similar aside from minor differences in sentences and structure. Both articles focus specifically on Jim Floris, a Matsqui, B.C. livestock dealer who speculated that the Mabton BSE-positive cow was born at his ranch, and was “part of a shipment he sent south” (Farrell, 2004b, para. 11). Despite the potential link to Canada, both articles criticize the United States BSE inspection procedures, which have the effect of deflecting blame from Canada. A fact regarding the U.S. beef inspection procedures highlighted in all three newspapers is the fact that officials of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) were initially unable to confirm the age of the infected cow. In the *Calgary Herald* it is written that “initially USDA officials announced [the cow] was 4 ½ years old,” and later revised the age estimate to 6 ½ years old (Farrell, 2004b, para. 9). By highlighting the flaws of the United States investigation procedures, the Canadian newspaper coverage of the Mabton case frames the case as an American issue, in order to downplay the cow’s link to a Canadian ranch. In fact, there are two articles in the data set that specifically focus on the flawed U.S. tracking system, which further solidifies the idea that the BSE case is neither a Canadian issue, nor a North American issue, but rather it concerns only the United States. On January 21, 2003 in the *Edmonton Journal*, an article further explicates flaws of the United States tracking system (Markusoff, 2004). In this article Diane Ward, an

investigator with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, outlines several loopholes in the United States tracking system that do not ensure the United States is fully protected from BSE. A similar article appears in the *Globe & Mail* on January 16, 2004 (“U.S. identifies feed violations at six plants”, 2004).

Early coverage of the Mabton BSE case includes speculations of the impact to the Canadian market. In the *Edmonton Journal* it is written that “Alberta financial institutions that suffered losses from the ripple effects of Alberta’s mad cow case last spring are watching developments closely” (Marck, 2003, para. 19). Similarly, on December 28, 2003 in the *Calgary Herald*, Arno Doerkson, chairman of Alberta Beef Producers is quoted as stating that “there’s grave concern about what [the Mabton case] could mean for Alberta” (Semmens, 2003b, para. 3). The timing of the discovery prevented an immediate analysis of the impact to the Canadian market. The BSE confirmation occurred on Christmas Day 2003, and considering several companies and industries shut down over the Christmas holidays, the impact to the Alberta beef industry remained speculative until the New Year. An article published on January 2, 2004 in the *Globe & Mail* highlights this point (Jang, 2004a). The article explains that the impact of the Mabton case had yet to be experienced by the Alberta beef auction industry, considering Alberta auctions were closed during the Christmas break, during which time the Mabton case was discovered, and the potential link to the Canadian industry was speculated. In fact, the *Globe & Mail* article hypothesizes that the outcome of the first beef auction in the New Year would indicate the impact the Mabton case would have on the Alberta beef industry. In the *Edmonton Journal*, Marck (2003) states that “cattle prices at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange were off about five per cent,” but the impact

to the Canadian market had yet to be determined because “markets [were] closed for the holiday period” (para. 1).

On January 6, 2004 in the *Calgary Herald*, an article titled “Border indecision stalls cattle market: U.S. awaits investigation results” briefly explores the impact the Mabton case has on the Alberta beef auction industry (Schmidt, 2004a). As the title of the article indicates, the article foregrounds the political discourse, considering it primarily explores how the Mabton case could potentially impact trade relations with the United States. The article also focuses on the socio-cultural discourse by prominently featuring quotations drawn from workers of the Highwood Livestock Auction in High River, and from Calgary Stockyards Ltd., which holds weekly cattle auctions in Strathmore, Alberta. The quotations incorporated in the article provide in-depth descriptions of the impact the U.S. case of BSE has had on the auction of beef in Alberta. A January 7, 2004 article in the *Edmonton Journal* provides a narrative of how the U.S. case of BSE has impacted the beef auction at the Nilsson Brothers Livestock Exchange near Clyde, Alberta (D’Aliesio, 2004). Unlike the *Calgary Herald* article, this article foregrounds the social-cultural discourse considering it contains rich descriptions of the impact the Mabton case of BSE has had on local beef auction sales in Alberta. Further, the article provides a focused look at the opinions of Sheldon Wilcox, the manager of the Nilsson brothers Livestock Exchange, and Jim Spearin, a farmer selling cattle at the auction. The articles appear in the newspapers only one day apart, and each focused specifically on auction houses near the newspaper’s home city: the *Edmonton Journal* article provides a focused look at an auction house in Clyde, a town situated just north of Edmonton, and the *Calgary Herald* article features the auction houses in High River and Strathmore, both situated near

Calgary. An article published in the *Globe & Mail* speculates the potential impact the Mabton case will have on Alberta cattle auction sales, but there is no follow-up article in this newspaper exploring the actual impact to the industry (Jang, 2004b).

Despite the fact that there is a discourse that frames the Mabton case as being an American issue, there is a secondary discourse that critically examines Canada's BSE inspection procedures. An article that appears in the *Calgary Herald* focuses specifically on Canada's BSE testing procedures (Teel, 2004). This article includes a comparison of the Canadian and Japanese investigative procedures claiming that the Japanese BSE testing standards are too excessive, but also insists that Canada should improve their BSE testing procedures by "testing all its cattle over 30 months at slaughter, or about 600,000 animals annually" (Teel, 2004, para. 7). Bradford Duplisea, a researcher with the Canadian Health Coalition is quoted in two articles stressing that Canada should consider BSE a serious issue. Duplisea is quoted in the *Edmonton Journal* on December 26, 2003 as stating that Canada has "never taken mad cow seriously," insisting that Canada has "not applied the most basic precautionary measures to protect Canadians against mad cow disease" (Markusoff & Paraskevas, 2003, para 20). A similar quote appears in a *Calgary Herald* article (Lang, 2003c). Duplisea's opinion is quite different than the typical discourse presented, which articulates the Mabton case as being an American issue, stressing that Canada's BSE inspection procedures are sufficient according to international standards.

Third Canadian BSE case: The Dairy Cow Case.

On December 30, 2004, an Alberta Dairy Cow tested positive for BSE. The cow was initially suspected as being a 'downer' cow but tests later confirmed that the cow

died of BSE. The cow's location was not confirmed in the media coverage; in fact, Gary Little, a CFIA senior veterinarian, refused "to disclose the farm's location, but said there were less than 200 head of cattle" on the farm (Markusoff, 2005b, para. 2). By January 2005 it was confirmed that the cow resided on farm in Barrhead, Alberta ("Vet credits incentive for reporting of 'downer' cow", 2005). According to Schmidt (2004b), the dairy cow was ten years old, but Teel (2005) specifies that the cow was in fact a little over 9 years old, and was born in October 1996. Because the cow was born before the implementation of the ruminant feed ban in 1997, the coverage cites the route of infection as contracted through ruminant animal feed consumed before 1997. The cow was found on a hobby farm, was a family pet, and therefore the animal remains never entered the human food chain (Teel, 2005).

The coverage differentiated the dairy cow case from the two previous Canadian cases of BSE. Gary Little is quoted in the *Edmonton Journal* as stating that the new case can be differentiated from the initial case of BSE, specifying that investigators lacked pertinent information for the first case, but had access to important information to ensure the dairy cow investigation moved quicker (Brooymans, 2005). Darcy Davis, President of the Alberta Beef Producers, is summarized as stating that "[f]armers in the dairy industry are more concerned about breeding records than are beef producers" (Brooymans, 2005, para. 18). This fact expanded the BSE media discourse by highlighting the differences between the Canadian beef and Canadian dairy industries, and was an instrumental point in differentiating this case from the other two Canadian cases of BSE.

The political discourse is foregrounded in the coverage of the dairy cow case of BSE, which is not surprising considering the newspaper coverage of the first and second

cases both foregrounded the political discourse. The timing of the discovery problematically coincides with the December 29, 2004 announcement from the United States that full beef trade with Canada should resume on March 7, 2005. Despite the unfortunate timing of the discovery, the initial coverage of the dairy cow case highlights that the USDA “had expected additional cases of BSE,” and that the current case “would not affect its new considerations of Canada as a ‘minimal risk region’” (Markusoff, 2005a, para. 19). In fact, the coverage specifies that other Canadian cases of BSE were expected, considering the increased surveillance resulting from the occurrences of two previous cases of BSE. On December 31, 2004 in the *Calgary Herald* it is written that “[n]ew U.S. trade rules account for any other positive test results for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and will not delay plans to open the border in March” (Schmidt, 2004b, para. 6). Gary Little is quoted as stating that Canada “openly conveyed the possibility of more BSE cases when it was negotiating with the United States to get the border open” (Ebner, 2004, para. 11). In fact, the *Calgary Herald* specifies that “Canada can find up to 12 positive cases of BSE in older cattle per year and still maintain its minimal risk status” (Teel, 2005, para. 28).

The first attempt to connect the three Canadian cases of BSE occurs in the coverage for the dairy cow case of BSE. On January 3, 2005 it is written in the *Edmonton Journal* that investigators have “suggested that all three mad cows might have eaten from the same contaminated source” (Markusoff, 2005a, para. 4). It is further elaborated that the theory was developed by a CFIA investigator who outlines that the “second BSE case found in Washington state and the first one from May 2003 had eaten feed from the separate feed mills, but both feeds contained protein pellets containing products from an

Edmonton rendering plant” (Markusoff, 2005, para. 5). The possibility of confirming this theory is criticized in the same article, and in fact the CFIA released a statement stating that it is virtually impossible to absolutely confirm a link between the cows, considering “one cannot inspect what an animal might have eaten several years prior to its death” (Markusoff, 2005, para. 11). This theory is only outlined in the one article, and in an article published in the *Edmonton Journal* the following day, a conflicting statement is written: “[t]here is no preliminary evidence showing any link between the latest case and Canada’s two previous ones” (Markusoff, 2005b, para. 9). Later in this chapter I will further explore how the media coverage frames cases by highlighting the connections to other cases of BSE.

Fourth Canadian Case of BSE: The Innisfail Cow.

On January 11, 2005 the fourth Canadian case of BSE was discovered on a farm near Innisfail, Alberta. The cow was approximately six years old, and officials insisted that the meat of the cow did not enter the food chain. This case was different than the other three cases because it was the first cow that tested positive for BSE that was born after the 1997 implemented ban on ruminant feed. The case was discovered less than one month after the dairy cow case discovered December 30, 2004.

The coverage on the fourth BSE case focused considerable attention on the fact that it was the first BSE case to appear in a cow born after the 1997 feed ban was implemented. As noted in the *Globe & Mail* on January 12, 2005, the case “marked a grim first in the mad-cow saga with the discovery of the disease in an animal born after the chief bulwark against the spread of BSE was put in place – fueling fears that the United States could delay reopening its market to shipments of Canadian cattle”

(Brethour & Harding, 2005, para. 2). The fact that the fourth case occurred in a cow born after the ruminant feed ban is written about in all three newspapers. In an *Edmonton Journal* article Sadava (2005) explains that “the USDA issued a statement saying it would stand by its decision to reopen the border... [but the] new case brought a more cautious response, because the latest infected cow was born after Canada’s feed ban was put in place.” (Sadava, 2005, para. 9). Similarly, in the *Calgary Herald*, Schmidt (2005) writes that “the animal’s age – born after the 1997 ban prohibiting ground up cattle parts from being fed back to other cattle – raised questions about the effectiveness of Canada’s feed rules to prevent the spread of mad cow disease” (para. 7). Considering the way which data was compiled – focusing on the coverage that appears only one month after the discoveries of the three additional BSE cases – I was unable to gain a sense of how the BSE cases *actually* influenced the United States decision to resume trade with Canada, but the initial coverage of the cases does not present an optimistic story. Rather, the papers focus on the potentially damaging effects the additional cases will have on the progress taken to resume trade.

Consistent with the previous coverage of BSE in Canada, Ralph Klein is a prominent voice featured in the coverage. Unlike previous moments highlighting Klein’s overwhelming support for the Alberta beef industry, the coverage focusing on Klein regarding the fourth case of BSE paints a much more negative picture of his involvement with (and opinion on) the issue of BSE in Canada. In the *Edmonton Journal*, Sadava (2005) writes that at a news conference Klein expressed frustration that the latest infected cow was born after the feed regulations were changed; Klein is directly quoted: “[a] feed ban is only as good as the people who support it and play by the rules” (Sadava, 2005,

para. 12). Klein is also quoted in the same article with a direct message to farmers: “for God’s sake, this is so serious, this has cost so much money, play by the rules” (Sadava, 2005, para. 12). Sections of this quote are drawn from, or summarized in other articles included in the data set. As expected, response to Klein’s statement was not favorable. Instead, as the *Calgary Herald* noted on January 13, 2005, “[r]anchers in southern Alberta [were] furious over Premier Ralph Klein’s comments, which they believe put the blame for the latest mad cow woes squarely on their shoulders” (Richards & Fekete, 2005, para. 2).

Another voice given considerable standing in the coverage of the fourth case of BSE was the United States organization R-CALF. I have mentioned this organization a couple of times already in connection to the first discovered case of BSE. Coverage focusing on the opinions espoused by the organization for the first case appeared in the two Alberta newspapers, but the *Globe & Mail* failed to provide coverage on the organization’s involvement with the Canadian BSE crisis. I have explained this observation as having to do primarily with location – R-CALF is a Montana based organization with a strong local focus whose opinions may not have reached further east, and hence were not covered by the Toronto-centered *Globe & Mail*. In the coverage of the fourth BSE case, all three newspapers provide a focus on R-CALF’s actions after the fourth BSE discovery. In the *Calgary Herald*, it is reported that R-CALF “launched a lawsuit against the USDA, arguing Canadian imports pose health risks for American consumers” (Schmidt, 2005, para. 26). Similar reports appeared in both the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Globe & Mail*. For the first Canadian case of BSE, R-CALF primarily served as a voice of opposition that received minimal coverage in Canadian newspapers.

But by taking direct action against the United States government, the organization became more thoroughly engaged in the politics of BSE, garnering a stronger voice and becoming an important player in the crisis.

A Canadian Issue

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) explain that media discourses on social issues ‘ebb and flow,’ in an attempt to incorporate new events to the timeline of media coverage for particular social issues. The code *drawing from BSE cases in other countries* was included to the code list to gain an understanding of how past BSE cases – primarily British and Japanese cases – are used to frame the initial coverage of the first Canadian-born case of BSE. In previous chapters it is suggested that the coverage of international cases of BSE is used to speculate the potential social and economic impact the disease will have in Canada, or are used to compare the Canadian experience to other international experiences with the disease. The coverage for the second, third, and fourth Canadian cases of BSE do not extensively reference international cases of BSE, but rather limit the historical references to previous Canadian cases of BSE. The first Canadian-born case of BSE helped to place Canada on the international map of countries impacted by the disease, but the second, third and fourth Canadian-born cases of the disease helped in articulating a strictly Canadian experience with the disease. In other words, as further Canadian cases of BSE are discovered, the coverage becomes more strictly Canadian-focused; the Canadian media adopts a strictly Canadian-BSE media package. The need to continually reference the British or Japanese experience with BSE becomes obsolete, as Canada’s unique experience with the disease has been well

documented, and is a more specific representation of the newspaper audiences' personal experiences of the cultural and economic impact of the disease.

Foregrounded Political Discourse: The Limitations of the Data

The newspaper coverage for the additional BSE cases incorporated in this study foreground the political discourse outlined in Chapter four. The data gathered for the second, third and fourth cases of BSE include newspaper articles appearing in the first section of the newspapers that specifically reference the particular cases of BSE. There are a few editorial articles included in the data set, but aside from that, the articles included are primarily hard news articles with a strict political discursive focus. The fact that the political discourse is foregrounded in the coverage of the additional BSE cases is not surprising, considering the political discourse was also foregrounded in the coverage of the first Canadian-born case of BSE. The manner in which the data was collected does, however, prevent a more thorough collection of articles with either a scientific or socio-cultural discursive focus. For the first case of BSE, I included to the data set all articles that appear on the front-page that cite either the term 'BSE' or the term 'mad cow disease' between May 20, 2003 and July 31, 2003. For the additional cases, the articles compiled appeared within the first section of the newspapers (not merely the front page), and the focus of the articles is strictly the BSE discoveries. The data compiled for the first Canadian-born case of BSE was less restrictive in terms of content – essentially the articles just had to reference BSE or mad cow disease – which allowed for more varied coverage of the discovery. The restrictions imposed on data collection for the additional BSE cases help in narrowing the focus to primarily hard news articles accounting for developments in the BSE investigations.

As outlined in Chapter 4, a characteristic of the political discourse is a focus on trade relations, and developments in improving beef trade relations specifically with the United States. A similar observation can be noted regarding the newspaper coverage of the additional BSE cases included in this study. Ferree et al. (2002) argue that current discursive opportunity structures influence the way that particular social issues are presented in the media. A discursive opportunity structure refers to the political and cultural settings that influence how a particular issue is represented in the media at a particular moment in time (Ferree et al., 2002). The coverage of the additional BSE cases focuses heavily on the developments taken to improve beef trade relations with the United States. The BSE discovery narrative is presented in conjunction with the trade ban narrative, and each new discovery of BSE introduces the opportunity for the media to reassess current trade bans, and hypothesize how the new BSE case could potentially influence trade ban developments.

Conclusion: Steady Coverage

The additional cases of BSE included in this study did not cause an alarming spike in newspaper coverage. In all three newspapers, the appearance of front-page newspaper articles focused on the developing stories of the additional BSE cases were very limited in number, which is perhaps not surprising considering the hype surrounding particular social issues tends to wane over time in media coverage. The first Canadian-born case of BSE caused a scurry of panic in the media, including repeated reports on the impact to the industry, and reports hypothesizing the continued impact to the industry. By July 2003, however, the coverage of the initial case dropped significantly, and the front-page focus on the issue of BSE consistently dropped over time. The additional cases of

BSE allowed for a continued focus in the media on the issue of BSE. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) explain that journalists look for ‘pegs,’ which are “topical events that provide an opportunity for broader, more long-term coverage and commentary” (p. 11). Pegs do not necessarily need to cause a spike in coverage, but instead they provide unique opportunities to re-introduce particular social issues that may have slipped from current media coverage; pegs re-ignite media topics that were once hot, and popular.

The coverage immediately following the discovery of the additional BSE cases did not repeat the initial fearful discourse present the coverage of the first Canadian-born case of BSE. Instead, as Gamson and Modigliani’s (1989) definition of ‘pegs’ indicates, the additional cases of BSE maintained steady coverage of the issue, introducing additional facts and details to the Canadian historical timeline of the disease. The coverage on the additional cases helped to articulate the unique Canadian BSE experience by referencing past Canadian BSE cases, and by refraining from highlighting international BSE cases. The newspaper coverage for the additional BSE cases focused primarily on the unique storylines of the cases, which at times introduced new discoveries or facts regarding the disease. Finally, the coverage on the additional cases maintained the political discursive focus that dominated the coverage of the first Canadian born case of BSE, helping to maintain a focused look at the developing storyline regarding the initiatives taken to dismantle bans imposed on Canadian beef.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

Through this thesis, I have attempted to explore the three major discourses present in the newspaper coverage for the BSE crisis in Alberta from May 20, 2003 to December 31, 2005. I named the three discourses: the political discourse, the science discourse, and the socio-cultural discourse. All three discourses are weaved throughout the coverage, converging and meshing in particular articles, and each providing a unique outlook to the BSE crisis.

To conclude I want to first compare my research to the sociological research done on risk society theory, which frames BSE as a modern risk. I will then discuss the limitations of risk society theory when applied to media research. Finally, I will explore how a critical discourse on industrial practices and the treatment of cattle are excluded from newspaper coverage in order to maintain the status quo outlook of humanism, which values human needs and wants over a careful consideration of nature.

Uncritical Examination of Industrial Practices

In Chapter one I noted that work in sociology focusing on BSE is limited, but the disease has been featured as an example of a ‘modern risk’ in risk society literature (e.g. Jones, 2001; Van Loon, 2003; Tacke, 2001; Rose, 2000). Risk society literature did not shape my research, but rather it was used as a sensitizing concept that has shaped particular ideas regarding global industries, and connected global risks. According to Beck’s (1992) risk society theory, modernity transforms itself from first to second modernity. A characteristic of second modernity is an increased concern and effort to manage risks that have emerged as a result of rapid industrialization in first modernity. According to Beck’s theory, BSE is a global risk resulting from the industrialization of

the beef industry during first modernity. BSE is a man-made risk, resulting from changes made to cattle diets introduced to help the beef industry increase production. According to Shiva (2000), BSE arose by “feeding healthy cattle the remains of infected cattle” (p. 63).

According to Cottle (1998), Beck’s theory has significant limitations when used to understand the role the media plays in shaping conceptions of risk, which was confirmed in my thesis. Cottle suggests that Beck presents conflicting accounts on the nature and role of the media. At times Beck suggests that the media is a forum open to public debate on modern risks, and at times he stresses the importance of the expert in articulating risks, inevitably denying public debate on risks. Whether or not the media is open to public debate on risks, Beck’s theory ignores a crucial point regarding the media – that “[g]iven the commercial and competitive underpinnings to the mass media, as well as their constitutive role in popular culture, it is likely that their representation of risk... may deliberately be framed in terms that resonate with ordinary concerns and popular culture” (Cottle, p. 15). This point could not be more evident in the results of my analysis of newspaper coverage of BSE in Alberta. The newspaper coverage refrained from providing a dialogue on the repercussions of the industrialization of the beef industry. The route of transmission of BSE between cattle is articulated in the media as being caused by ruminant feed, but a critical dialogue on the problematic change in feeding practices during the industrialization of the beef industry is missing in the newspaper coverage. Instead, the media coverage is primarily concerned with the impact the disease will have on the financial stability of the beef industry. The Alberta newspapers provide a focused, sympathetic look at the impact BSE has had on the beef industry, and at times

this focus is acutely realized in editorial articles focusing on the personal experiences of small town farmers. Even the *Globe & Mail*, whose audience is far more diverse than the Alberta audiences, and potentially unaffected by BSE, did not provide a critical examination of the industrialization of the beef industry.

Unacknowledged Life

A missing critical dialogue on the industrial practices causing BSE is not merely due to the ‘ordinary concerns’ of farmers and economists, but is also in part due to cultural consumption practices that frame a particular understanding of beef products. I take the position that meat is fetishized in North America, and that the fetishization of meat supports a particular popular understanding of beef commodities (Cram, 2009). The theorist that informs my understanding of fetishism is Marx. According to Marx, the real value of a commodity is “analysed as a social relation determined by the amount of labour that has gone into its production,” suggesting that value has nothing to do with the physical form of a commodity (Dant, 1996, p. 500). The fetishized value of an object “obscures the real relationship between people” that produces the object, and instead of being determined by the work put into making a commodity, the fetishized object’s value is determined by the exchange value (Dant, 1996, p. 500). In an attempt to dismantle the fetishized value of meat, an attempt must be made to “account for the obscured relationships behind the commodity of meat,” by recognizing “not only the relationship between human workers, but also the relationship between humans and the commodity itself – the once living animal.” (Cram, 2009, p. 2). The newspaper coverage affirms the popular fetishized value of beef, by failing to account for the life of cattle. Details of the lives of infected cattle are accounted for in some newspaper articles – details including

where the cows lived, and what they ate – but these details were only accounted for in connection to the BSE investigation, which was conducted to secure that Canadian beef was safe for consumers to eat. Early in the coverage, Alberta Agriculture Minister Shirley McClellan is quoted in the *Edmonton Journal* as stating that “it would be unfair to slaughter [the estimated] 1,000 [cows]” that are quarantined (Thorne, 2003a, para. 2). Again, this concern for cow life is not due to an actual concern for the lives of cattle, but rather McClellan is suggesting that the slaughter of cattle would be unfair for ranchers who would take a financial hit if their herds are slaughtered.

The newspaper coverage promotes a humanist discourse, which posits a break between humans and nature. Instead of recognizing the apparent relational connection between humans and nature, humanism instead promotes the idea that humans are rational beings capable of controlling the surrounding ‘natural’ environment. Hardt and Negri (2000) state that “[t]hrough the process of modern technological transformation, all of nature has become capital, or at least has become subject to capital” (p. 290). With this in mind, the cow – as non-human, as part of nature – becomes capital, and is used at the whim of humans. Particular social practices help to promote the humanistic, fetishized representation of beef. Dant (1996) makes an important point regarding commodity fetishism – that the fetish quality of a commodity is maintained through “ritualistic practices that celebrate or revere the [commodity]” (p. 510). Dant further explains that commodity fetishism “involves the social negotiation and sharing of the value of the object” through ritualistic practices that include “celebrating the object, revering it, setting it apart, displaying it, extolling and exalting its capacities, eulogizing it, [and] enthusiastic use of it” (p. 511). In the newspaper coverage, the ritualistic practice of

celebrating the commodity of beef is best displayed in the positive representation of BBQ events explored in Chapter six. An important point to be made about the BBQ events is that they promote the celebration of the *commodity* through act of consumption, and the origin of the commodity – the cow itself – is not celebrated (Cram, 2009, p. 8). In other words, a recognition and celebration of cattle life is excluded from the discourse these particular events promote, and instead the events focus primarily on the unique qualities of the commodity beef.

As Cottle (1998) suggests, popular media coverage is framed to resonate with “ordinary concerns and popular culture” (p. 15). Therefore, the uncritical fetishized representation of the commodity of beef is the primary discourse highlighted in the media because it mirrors the audience perception of beef. If the media were to begin to critically examine the industrial practices resulting in BSE, it could potentially result in a discourse aimed at detangling the political initiatives and popular social practices that continue to turn a blind eye to the unethical treatment of cattle. Perhaps the media is, as Beck suggests, a ‘public forum’ open to critical debate on particular social issues, but what constitutes ‘critical debate’ is framed by the personal interests, and the common concerns of the audience. In the end, humanism wins, and the impact particular ecological crises, such as BSE, have on humans is given primacy in newspaper coverage.

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Appendix A

The numerical breakdown of themes cited in the first three month of coverage in the Edmonton Journal (May 2003 – July 2003)

	CODE NAME	MAY 2003	JUNE 2003	JULY 2003	
Political Discourse	A call to the federal government for help	2	3	0	
	Compensation package	0	10	6	
	Good BSE inspection procedures	2	2	2	
	Negative financial impact on industry	10	9	6	
	Bans on beef	6	12	17	
	Fear	0	2	0	
	Blame the Canadian government	0	2	0	
	Public confidence / consumer confidence	3	4	2	
	BSE scare affects other industries	2	4	3	
	U.S. and Canada working together	0	0	0	
	Trade wars	0	0	1	
	Labeling beef origin	0	2	6	
	Science Discourse	Isolated case	5	1	3
Infected meat didn't enter the food chain		5	1	0	
Infected meat could have entered the food chain		0	0	0	
Industry facts		1	1	3	
Risk		3	2	0	
A need to find an origin of the disease		8	0	2	
BSE details		3	2	0	
Poor BSE inspection procedures		6	3	2	
Animal feed		16	6	4	
Science		1	3	0	
Incomplete farm records		4	0	0	
Socio- Cultural Discourse		Drawing on BSE cases in other countries	3	1	3
		The problem isn't as big as it appears	0	0	1
	Consumers should still eat meat	0	0	0	
	Western Canada vs. federal government	0	2	1	
	Information on a specific cow	2	0	0	
	Eating beef	2	1	1	
	Beef industry image	3	0	0	
	Rural vs. urban	0	0	0	
	Event information	0	0	0	
	Examples of public figures eating beef	0	1	0	

Appendix B

The numerical breakdown of themes cited in the first three months of coverage in the Calgary Herald (May 2003 – July 2003)

CODE NAME		MAY 2003	JUNE 2003	JULY 2003	
Political Discourse	A call to the federal government for help	0	2	1	
	Compensation package	1	20	6	
	Good BSE inspection procedures	4	5	0	
	Negative financial impact on industry	12	16	9	
	Bans on beef	14	17	13	
	Fear	0	0	0	
	Blame the Canadian government	1	0	0	
	Public confidence / consumer confidence	2	3	2	
	BSE scare affects other industries	1	1	4	
	U.S. and Canada working together	0	0	0	
	Trade wars	0	0	2	
	Labeling beef origin	0	2	5	
Science Discourse	Isolated case	4	1	0	
	Infected meat didn't enter the food chain	2	1	0	
	Infected meat could have entered the food chain	3	0	0	
	Industry facts	3	2	3	
	Risk	2	2	2	
	A need to find an origin of the disease	9	1	0	
	BSE details	7	0	0	
	Poor BSE inspection procedures	0	3	0	
	Animal feed	7	0	1	
	Science	0	2	2	
	Socio- Cultural Discourse	Incomplete farm records	2	0	0
		Drawing on BSE cases in other countries	4	0	1
The problem isn't as big as it appears		1	0	0	
Consumers should still eat meat		3	0	2	
Western Canada vs. federal government		6	0	1	
Information on a specific cow		0	0	0	
Eating beef		2	0	2	
Beef industry image		0	0	6	
Rural vs. urban		0	0	3	
Event information		0	0	7	
Examples of public figures eating beef	0	0	0		

Appendix C

The numerical breakdown of themes cited in the first three months of coverage in the Globe & Mail (May 2003 – July 2003)

	CODE NAME	MAY 2003	JUNE 2003	JULY 2003	
Political Discourse	A call to the federal government for help	4	0	3	
	Compensation package	1	11	3	
	Good BSE inspection procedures	3	7	2	
	Negative financial impact on industry	10	6	10	
	Bans on beef	6	17	6	
	Fear	0	0	0	
	Blame the Canadian government	0	0	0	
	Public confidence / consumer confidence	3	2	0	
	BSE scare affects other industries	1	3	1	
	U.S. and Canada working together	0	2	1	
	Trade wars	0	1	0	
	Labeling beef origin	0	2	4	
Science Discourse	Isolated case	2	0	0	
	Infected meat didn't enter the food chain	2	0	1	
	Infected meat could have entered the food chain	3	0	0	
	Industry facts	2	3	3	
	Risk	5	2	1	
	A need to find an origin of the disease	9	5	1	
	BSE details	7	1	0	
	Poor BSE inspection procedures	0	3	5	
	Animal feed	9	4	1	
	Science	0	4	3	
	Socio- Cultural Discourse	Incomplete farm records	2	0	0
		Drawing on BSE cases in other countries	7	1	2
The problem isn't as big as it appears		0	0	1	
Consumers should still eat meat		0	0	2	
Western Canada vs. federal government		5	0	0	
Information on a specific cow		5	0	0	
Eating beef		1	0	1	
Beef industry image		1	2	0	
Rural vs. urban		0	0	0	
Event information		0	2	1	
Examples of public figures eating beef	0	0	0		

Appendix D

The numerical breakdown of themes cited in 'BBQ' coverage (May 2003 – December 2005)

	CODE NAME	Globe & Mail	Edmonton Journal	Calgary Herald
Political Discourse	A call to the federal government for help	0	0	0
	Compensation package	0	3	0
	Good BSE inspection procedures	0	2	0
	Negative financial impact on industry	3	4	6
	Bans on beef	2	7	10
	Fear	0	0	0
	Blame the Canadian government	0	0	0
	Public confidence / consumer confidence	2	3	7
	BSE scare affects other industries	0	0	0
	U.S. and Canada working together	0	0	3
	Trade wars	0	0	0
	Labeling beef origin	0	0	0
Science Discourse	Isolated case	0	1	0
	Infected meat didn't enter the food chain	0	0	0
	Infected meat could have entered the food chain	0	0	0
	Industry facts	0	0	1
	Risk	0	1	1
	A need to find an origin of the disease	0	0	0
	BSE details	0	0	0
	Poor BSE inspection procedures	0	0	0
	Animal feed	0	0	1
	Science	0	5	2
	Incomplete farm records	0	0	0
	Drawing on BSE cases in other countries	1	0	0
Socio-Cultural Discourse	The problem isn't as big as it appears	0	0	1
	Consumers should still eat meat	0	0	0
	Western Canada vs. federal government	0	0	0
	Information on a specific cow	0	0	0
	Eating beef	1	9	4
	Beef industry image	2	8	5
	Rural vs. urban	0	0	0
	Event information	8	27	24
Examples of public figures eating beef	1	1	0	

Appendix E

The numerical breakdown of themes cited in coverage of December 23, 2003 BSE discovery

	CODE NAME	Globe & Mail: 4 articles	Edmonton Journal: 7 articles	Calgary Herald: 16 articles
Political Discourse	A call to the federal government for help	0	0	0
	Compensation package	0	1	2
	Good BSE inspection procedures	0	0	0
	Negative financial impact on industry	3	4	9
	Bans on beef	5	10	15
	Fear	0	0	0
	Blame the Canadian government	0	0	0
	Public confidence / consumer confidence	0	0	5
	BSE scare affects other industries	1	2	1
	U.S. and Canada working together	0	0	0
	Trade wars	0	0	0
	Labeling beef origin	0	0	0
	Science Discourse	Isolated case	0	0
Infected meat didn't enter the food chain		0	0	0
Infected meat could have entered the food chain		0	0	0
Industry facts		0	1	3
Risk		0	3	6
A need to find an origin of the disease		4	4	6
BSE details		0	2	3
Poor BSE inspection procedures		0	1	2
Animal feed		6	1	2
Science		1	3	6
Socio-Cultural Discourse	Incomplete farm records	0	0	0
	Drawing on other BSE cases	1	1	7
	The problem isn't as big as it appears	0	0	0
	Consumers should still eat meat	0	0	0
	Western Canada vs. federal government	0	0	0
	Information on a specific cow	0	2	2
	Eating beef	0	2	2
	Beef industry image	0	0	1
	Rural vs. urban	0	1	0
	Event information	0	0	1
Examples of public figures eating beef	0	0	0	

Appendix F

The numerical breakdown of themes cited in coverage of December 30, 2004 BSE discovery

	CODE NAME	Globe & Mail: 3 articles	Edmonton Journal: 4 articles	Calgary Herald: 4 articles	
Political Discourse	A call to the federal government for help	0	0	0	
	Compensation package	0	1	0	
	Good BSE inspection procedures	0	2	2	
	Negative financial impact on industry	1	1	0	
	Bans on beef	3	3	6	
	Fear	0	1	1	
	Blame the Canadian government	0	0	0	
	Public confidence / consumer confidence	0	0	0	
	BSE scare affects other industries	0	0	0	
	U.S. and Canada working together	0	0	0	
	Trade wars	0	0	0	
	Labeling beef origin	0	0	0	
	Science Discourse	Isolated case	0	0	0
Infected meat didn't enter the food chain		1	0	3	
Infected meat could have entered the food chain		1	1	0	
Industry facts		1	0	1	
Risk		2	1	4	
A need to find an origin of the disease		0	5	1	
BSE details		1	1	0	
Poor BSE inspection procedures		0	1	0	
Animal feed		3	4	4	
Science		1	0	2	
Socio-Cultural Discourse		Incomplete farm records	0	0	0
		Drawing on BSE cases in other countries	2	0	3
		The problem isn't as big as it appears	0	0	0
	Consumers should still eat meat	0	0	0	
	Western Canada vs. federal government	0	0	0	
	Information on a specific cow	2	1	4	
	Eating beef	0	2	0	
	Beef industry image	0	1	0	
	Rural vs. urban	0	0	0	
	Event information	0	0	0	
Examples of public figures eating beef	0	0	0		

Appendix G

The numerical breakdown of themes cited in coverage of January 11, 2005 BSE discovery

	CODE NAME	Globe & Mail: 3 articles	Edmonton Journal: 2 articles	Calgary Herald: 6 articles
Political Discourse	A call to the federal government for help	0	0	0
	Compensation package	1	2	0
	Good BSE inspection procedures	0	2	2
	Negative financial impact on industry	0	0	2
	Bans on beef	3	1	8
	Fear	0	0	1
	Blame the Canadian government	0	0	0
	Public confidence / consumer confidence	1	1	0
	BSE scare affects other industries	0	0	0
	U.S. and Canada working together	0	0	0
	Trade wars	0	0	0
	Labeling beef origin	0	0	0
	Science Discourse	Isolated case	0	0
Infected meat didn't enter the food chain		2	0	1
Infected meat could have entered the food chain		1	0	0
Industry facts		1	0	2
Risk		1	1	4
A need to find an origin of the disease		1	0	0
BSE details		4	0	2
Poor BSE inspection procedures		0	0	1
Animal feed		8	4	8
Science		2	2	2
Incomplete farm records		0	0	0
Drawing on BSE cases in other countries		1	0	0
Socio-Cultural Discourse		The problem isn't as big as it appears	0	0
	Consumers should still eat meat	0	0	0
	Western Canada vs. federal government	0	0	0
	Information on a specific cow	0	3	2
	Eating beef	0	0	0
	Beef industry image	0	0	1
	Rural vs. urban	0	0	0
	Event information	0	0	1
	Examples of public figures eating beef	0	0	0