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Framing Climate Policies: Discourse Analysis of Carbon Pricing Debates in Canada and Australia

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Abstrakt

Cílem této práce je provést analýzu a komparaci diskurzů, jež používali Stephen Harper a Tony Abbott během jejich předvolebních kampaní v letech 2008 (Kanada) a 2013 (Austrálie), kde klimatická politika hrála neobvykle důležitou roli. Práce staví na hypotéze, že podle teorie post-materialismu a environmentální Kuznetsovy křivky by tak vyspělé, demokratické země jako je Kanada a Austrálie měly být v čele v boji proti změnám klimatu. Nicméně ve skutečnosti mají jedny z nejhorších výsledků so se týká snižování emisí skleníkových plynů. Oba zkoumaní političtí představitelé veřejně slíbili, že podniknou kroky ke zmírnění dopadu jejich ekonomik na změny klimatu. Avšak když během předvolební kampaně vyvstala otázka zavedení daně z uhlíku, tedy jednoho z nejefektivnějších opatření pro snižování emisí, Harper a Abbott se proti této politice ostře postavili a svým negativním rámováním celé diskuze tuto politiku takřka zdiskreditovali. Tato práce využila kritické diskurzivní analýzy k tomu, aby odkryla typ rámování a dalších diskurzivních strategií, které Harper a Abbott použili ve svých vyjádřeních o dani z uhlíku. Výsledky analýzy ukázaly, že oba představitelé použili všechny typy rámování, které jsou typické pro diskurz odrazující od užití klimatických politik. Všechny diskurzivní strategie, jež Harper i Abbott používali, vedly spíše k vyvolání emotivních reakcí, než k vytvoření prostoru pro faktickou diskuzi, což v důsledku vedlo ke zvýšení polarizace debaty o politikách oceňování uhlíku v obou zemích.

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze and compare the discourses of Stephen Harper and Tony Abbot during federal election campaigns where climate policies played an unusually important role (2008 in Canada and 2013 in Australia). The study builds on a hypothesis, that according to the post-materialist theory and the Environmental Kuznets Curve, such economically advanced, democratic countries as Canada and Australia should be at the vanguard of climate action. However, in reality they are some of the worst performers when it comes to tackling carbon emissions. Both Harper and Abbott publicly promised to put in serious efforts to tackle climate change. However, when the question of setting a national price on carbon came up for discussion during the above-mentioned election campaigns, they both not only opposed it, but even tried to discredit it by framing the whole debate in overwhelmingly negative terms. In order to uncover what kind of frames and other discursive strategies the two politicians used to shape the debate, critical discourse analysis was applied to their public statements on the policy of carbon tax. Results of this analysis show that they used all of the frames that are typically associated with anti-climate action rhetoric and even some non-typical ones that worked specifically for their countries. All of the discursive strategies they used were more conducive to heightened emotional reactions, rather than fact-based conversations, which further polarized the national debates on carbon pricing policies.

Klíčová slova

klimatická změna, klimatická politika, daň z uhlíku, kritická diskurzivní analýza, rámování, Kanada, Austrálie

Keywords

climate change, climate policy, carbon tax, critical discourse analysis, framing, Canada, Australia

Rozsah práce: 109 774 znaků

Prohlášení

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V Praze dne 31. 7. 2017 Kateřina Davidová

Poděkování

Na tomto místě bych ráda poděkovala svému vedoucímu práce Janu Hornátovi za jeho vstřícný přístup a užitečné připomínky, a Freye, Christianovi a rodině za jejich vytrvalou podporu.

Table of contents

"The way in which the world is imagined determines at any particular moment what men will do."
Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion, 1922, p. 14

1. Introduction

The awareness about the global changes of climate and the acknowledgement by the vast majority of the scientific community that these changes are linked to human industrial activity[1] is a relatively recent phenomenon – first scientific concerns about the rising levels of human-induced emissions of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and their links to the changing climate arose in late 1970s. Back then, the largely uncoordinated warning voices gathered at what is nowadays known as the First World Climate Conference, which took place in 1979 in Geneva under the auspices of the World Meteorological Organization. The concluding declaration appealed to the nations of the world "to foresee and prevent potential man-made changes in climate that might be adverse to the well-being of humanity."[2]

Soon enough, the concerns of a rather small community of experts[3] translated into widespread social and political concerns (at least on the "Western" side of the Iron Curtain), inspiring the activities of the growing green social movements, which in turn began to generate more pressure on the political representatives to take action. Concrete policies thus began to be implemented (and experimented with) in order to slow down, or ideally reverse, the climatic changes.

Out of the many various policies that can to greater or lesser extent mitigate the causes and effects of climate change, reducing the generation of emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) through economic incentives has become widely regarded as the most efficient way of dealing with the problem, both at national and international

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[1] John Cook, ed., "Consensus on Consensus: A Synthesis of Consensus Estimates on Human-Caused Global Warming," *Environmental Research Letters* 11, no. 4 (April 13, 2016), http://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/11/4/048002/pdf.
[2] John W. Zillman, "A History of Climate Activities," *World Meteorological Organization - Bulletin* 58, no. 3 (2009), https://public.wmo.int/en/bulletin/history-climate-activities.
[3] The First World Climate Conference in 1979 was attended by approximately 350 specialists from around the world, compared to the estimate of over 38 000 delegates at the UNCCC Paris Conference in 2015.

levels. Based on simple economic reasoning, in order to encourage reduction of the undesirable GHG emissions (especially those of CO2), it is necessary to put a high-enough price on them to make it economically unviable to emit them in too high amounts. This can be done either by setting a direct price on carbon generated by industrial activities or contained in transport fuels (i.e. a carbon tax) or by setting a cap on the total volume of carbon levels allowed to be emitted by an economy (or industry) as a whole and then letting the market determine the price of the carbon itself (i.e. a cap and trade).[4] The first country to implement such a carbon pricing instrument was Finland when it imposed a carbon tax in 1990, and as of 2016, there were about 40 national and 20 sub-national jurisdictions in the world having a certain price on CO2 emissions in place.[5]

However, as every action provokes a reaction, it was almost simultaneously as the discussion on these policies began to take shape that the counterargument emerged against the need to actively address the issue of climate change altogether. It rested on the (here simplified) premises that A) climate change does not exist, B) if it exists, it is a natural development rather than a human-induced deviation from the norm, C) if it exists and is caused by human activity, countries are not obliged to do anything since national economic interests always take precedence over global climate interests and there is no proof that any of the costly measures will have the desirable effects.[6]

Just like with any other contentious issue, the public debate on whether and how to tackle climate change has become highly politicized and polarized. And the fact that the underlying scientific knowledge is now far more advanced than it was in 1970s has not helped to disperse the antagonism. Researchers have repeatedly proven that people's perceptions of climate change as a major risk are influenced far more by the individual's political inclination than by his or her scientific knowledge of the

[4] The World Bank, "Pricing Carbon", 2017, http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/pricing-carbon#CarbonPricing.
[5] The World Bank, "State and Trends of Carbon Pricing" (Washington DC, October 2016), https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25160/9781464810015.pdf?sequence=7.
[6] Bjørn Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

matter.[7] Or in other words, those identifying themselves with more conservative values are less prone to see climate change as a pressing issue in need of addressing than those with more liberal inclinations.[8] Some authors have even gone so far as to claim that one's position on climate change is one of the few key "identity" issues, which define what it means to be a liberal or a conservative party supporter.[9]

Furthermore, researchers have found out that people in countries with higher levels of per capita national income and generally well secured material affluence tend to value environment more and thus are more willing to support environmental policies even despite their potential economic costs.[10] According to this theory, countries with long enough history of high levels of per capita GDP, where whole generations were able to grow up without having to fear for their fundamental economic and physical security – such as for example Canada and Australia – should now be at the post-material stage of the value pyramid, where mass public support for environmental policies can thrive.[11]

Moreover, another established theory proposes the hypothesis that while (in general terms) increased industrial production generates higher environmental degradation, once a country reaches a certain "turning point" of per capita income, this trend reverses and the negative environmental effects of its industrial activity start to fall, even as the overall productivity keeps increasing. This happens partly due to the increased popular demand for better environmental quality and partly due to

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[7] Lorraine Whitmarsh, "Scepticism and Uncertainty about Climate Change: Dimensions, Determinants and Change over Time," *Global Environmental Change* 21, no. 2 (May 2011): 690–700.

[8] Aaron M. McCright and Riley E. Dunlap, "The Politicization of Climate Change and Polarization in the American Public's Views of Global Warming, 2001–2010," *The Sociological Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2011): 155–94.

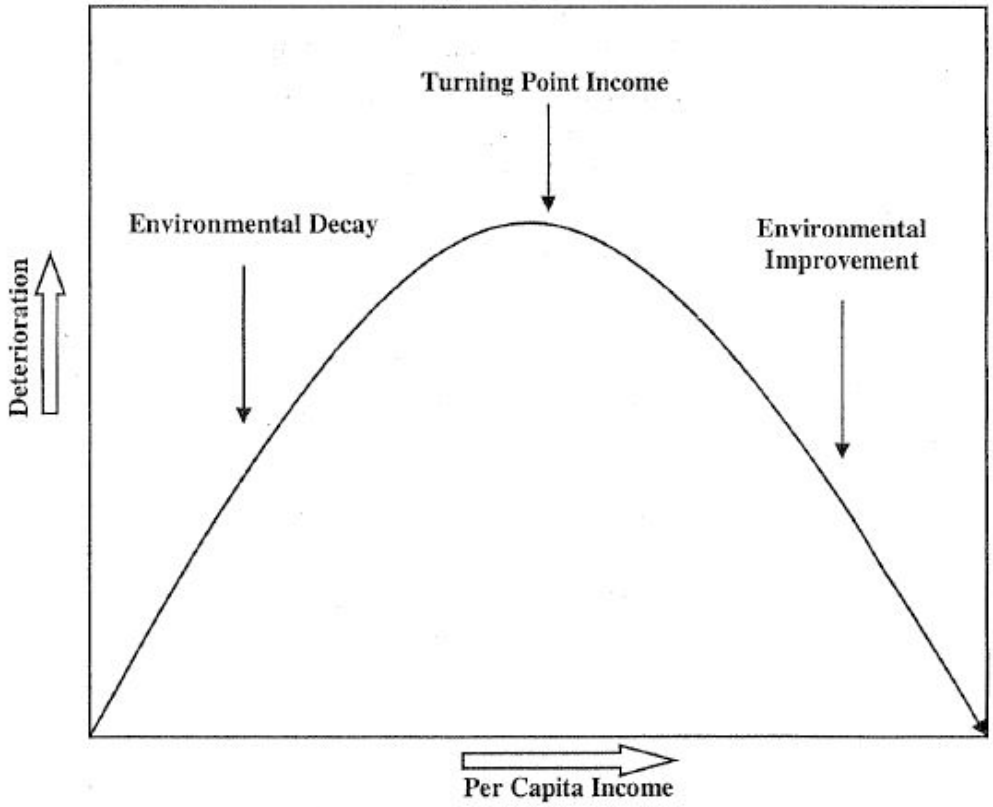
[9] Matthew C. Nisbet, "Communicating Climate Change: Why Frames Matter for Public Engagement," *Environment*, April 2009, http://www.environmentmagazine.org/Archives/Back%20Issues/March-April%202009/Nisbet-full.html.

[10] Ronald Inglehart, "Public Support for Environmental Protection: Objective Problems and Subjective Values in 43 Societies," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 28, no. 1 (March 1995): 57–72.

[11] This theory has been challenged (see Dunlap and Mertig, 1997) on the grounds that environmental concerns were found to be high also in certain non-industrialized, low per capita income countries, which do not fit the definition of a post-materialist society. This might, however, be due to the fact that climate change tends to affect some developing countries unevenly more than the developed ones (e.g. small island states or economies relying heavily on agriculture).

higher levels of resources available for investment into more efficient (and therefore less environmentally-degrading) production technologies.[12] The graphical representation of this theory, the so-called Environmental Kuznets Curve, can be seen in Figure 1 below.[13]

Figure 1: The Environmental Kuznets Curve



Source: Yandle et al., "Environmental Kuznets Curves: A Review of Findings, Methods, and Policy Implications" (PERC, April 2004), https://www.perc.org/sites/default/files/rs02_1a.pdf.

Following up on the assumptions posited by the two aforementioned theories, the two countries examined in this paper – Canada and Australia – should be at the vanguard of global environmental policy. Both Canada and Australia continuously

[12] Andrew Steer et al., "World Development Report 1992: Development and the Environment" (The World Bank, 1992), pp. 38-39.
[13] Some scientists have challenged the Environmental Kuznets Curve (see for example Stern, 2004). The main reason for its critique is the fact that industrialized countries still use the highest total amounts of energy (even though the ratio to their GDP falls, i.e. decoupling) and they still emit the highest total amounts of GHG. Furthermore, evidence shows that some developing countries have adopted environmental measures with only a very short time lag after the developed ones and have in some cases even outperformed them.

score highly in the global per capita gross domestic product rankings (they both belong to the world's top 25 "richest" countries),[14] which means they should ideally both have high levels of sustained abundance as well as high levels of available resources that can be invested into clean innovations. Likewise, they have both been enjoying a prolonged period of peace, which further supports the post-materialist argument about physical and material security.

Nevertheless, the reality of the past decade has diverged substantially from these theories. Due to a number of influencing factors, the environmental and climate policies employed by the two countries have failed to prove them to be the global leaders they are arguably so well suited for. Under the conservative governments of Stephen Harper and Tony Abbott, Canada and Australia not only fell short of advancing the efforts to mitigate climate change and environmental degradation, but even went as far as to reverse some of the previously achieved progress.

Harper led Canada to its withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol in 2011, thus reneging on the country's binding international climate commitments.[15] Furthermore, during the federal election of 2008, Harper's Conservatives successfully campaigned on the ticket of opposition to the proposed national carbon pricing scheme, embodied in the so-called "Green Shift" plan advocated for by the second strongest contestant, the Liberal Party of Canada.[16] Similarly, in Australia, Abbott's Liberal Party (which in this case, however, holds conservative views) was vocally opposing the carbon tax enacted by the then-governing Labor Party in 2011 and saw this strategy come to fruition with the victory of the federal election of 2013, where carbon tax became one of the key deciding issues.[17] The tax was then repealed by the Abbott government in the coming year.

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[14] According to data published by the World Bank (http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?year_high_desc=true) and the IMF (https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/01/weodata/index.aspx).

[15] "Canada's Withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol and Its Effects on Canada's Reporting Obligations under the Protocol" (UNFCCC, August 20, 2014), https://unfccc.int/files/kyoto_protocol/compliance/enforcement_branch/application/pdf/cc-eb-25-2014-2_canada_withdrawal_from_kp.pdf.

[16] Nicola Jones, "Green Issues Dominate Election," *Nature* 455 (September 17, 2008): 268–69.

[17] Christopher Rootes, "A Referendum on the Carbon Tax? The 2013 Australian Election, the Greens, and He Environment," *Environmental Politics* 23, no. 1 (2014): 166–73.

These political developments (coupled with the countries' heavy reliance on fossil fuels) have consequently had negative effects on Canada's and Australia's overall levels of greenhouse gas emissions in the years to follow and remain to do so until now. It is reflected for example in the countries' standings in the Climate Change Performance Index, which currently ranks Australia 5th worst and Canada 7th worst out of the world's 58 largest emitting countries that are being regularly evaluated.[18]

The question which thus arises (and which is going to be examined closely in this paper) is the following: How have the political leaders legitimized their setback against climate policies in countries that according to theories are poised to be the frontrunners in environmentally-concerned policy-making? In searching for the answer, the method of critical discourse analysis will be utilized with the aim of uncovering the underlying frames, which were used by Harper and Abbott to justify their oppositions to proposed climate measures (namely the carbon tax) in their respective countries.

Materials subjected to the discourse analysis will cover TV debates, addresses, press conferences and interviews with the two politicians. As for the time perspective, the examination will focus on the period directly preceding the federal elections in which the topic of carbon pricing played a remarkably important role, i.e. 2008 in Canada and 2013 in Australia. The comparison of the two similarly developed countries with similarly long democratic tradition will serve to determine whether they have used some common discursive strategies and whether there can be some general conclusions drawn from that.

1.1. Literature review

This paper builds on the theoretical assumptions that the more economically developed a country becomes (provided it retains a reasonably high equality of income distribution), the more environmentally conscious its public should be. For this, the theoretical background was provided by Inglehart's article "Public Support for Environmental Protection: Objective Problems and Subjective Values in 43

[18] Germanwatch, "Climate Change Performance Index", 2017, http://germanwatch.org/en/ccpi.

Societies" (1995), as Inglehart was the first scholar to link together these value changes and bind them into the theory of post-materialism. A related theory posits that as a country reaches a certain point in its industrial development, its environmental degradation will thenceforth fall, even as it continues to develop further. A report by the World Bank called "World Development Report 1992: Development and the Environment" (1992) was used as a basis for this theory, since it was one of the first instances this development has been identified and described in detail.

From the methodological point of view, several works on critical discourse analysis (CDA) were consulted. One of the most significant scholars in the field is Van Dijk. His monograph *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (1985) now belongs to classical works on the topic and provides a coherent and reliable overview of the various peculiarities of CDA. Similarly, Fairclough's classic book *Language and Power* (1989) provided an intriguing analysis of how language and discourse can be used to dominate and manipulate societies. Last but not least, Wodak's extensive monograph *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2001) served as a useful guiding material for understanding how CDA can be applied in practice.

Apart from the works of the most prominent CDA scholars, less known pieces were consulted in order to form as comprehensive view on the topic as possible. Out of these, the chapter on critical discourse analysis in Sheyholislami's dissertation thesis defended at Carleton University (2001) has proven to be the most useful one, as it provided a good synthesis of all of the main strands of CDA and its most notable authors. In order to understand also the shortfalls of CDA, the journal article "Critical Discourse Analysis and its Critics" by Breeze (2011) was used as it very clearly outlines all the main critiques of CDA and their proponents.

Another theoretical concept used in this paper is framing. There has been a multitude of works written on this matter, one of the very first ones being Kahneman and Tversky's *The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice* (1981), which looks at the psychological aspects of human-decision making and how it can be influenced by different framing of the issues. Further authors have taken the psychological findings of Kahneman and Tversky and applied them to various other fields, such as political sciences. In this respect, the most useful works were those by Druckman ("The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence" and "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?", both from 2001), who described

the implications of framing in political discourse on political engagement of the public, which is particularly valid for the objectives of this paper.

The cognitive linguistics aspect of framing was covered by works of Hart (*Critical Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Science*, 2010) and Lakoff (*Metaphors We Live By*, 1980, and a slightly more popularized, yet still relevant *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know your Values and Frame the Debate,* 2004). Especially Lakoff's contributions on the use of metaphors in discourse were found to be very pertinent to what this paper is trying to analyze. Finally, a general synthesis of the most important developments in the academic research on framing to date was provided by Scheufele and Iyengar's chapter on "The State of Framing Research: A Call for New Directions" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication* (2014).

Last of the theoretical foundations for this paper lies in the literature analyzing the existing frames that can be found in discourses on climate policies around the world. While efforts were put into finding as many theoretical underpinnings as possible, the list of the consulted sources is not exhaustive, since the debate on climate change is a fast-changing one and new frames are emerging as quickly as the old ones are disappearing. Furthermore, given how geographic and political specifics affect the perceptions of climate change in different countries, it is very hard to make any sorts of generalizations.

Nevertheless, out of the existing research on this topic, the works of Nisbet ("Communicating Climate Change: Why Frames Matter for Public Engagement", 2009), Nordhaus and Schellenberger ("The Death of Environmentalism: Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World", 2004) and Hovden and Lindseth ("Discourses in Norwegian Climate Policy: National Action or Thinking Globally?", 2002) were identified as the most comprehensive and relevant ones to this paper. For the country-specific case studies, analyses by Way ("Canadian newspaper coverage of the Alberta oil sands: The intractability of neoliberalism", 2013) and Christoff ("Climate Discourse Complexes, National Climate Regimes and Australian Climate Policy", 2013) were consulted. These were useful in outlining the general climate discourse frameworks in Canada and Australia, however, they both mostly looked at what kind of frames were being perpetuated by the media, and not used directly by the country's leading political figures, as was done in this paper.

1.2. Structure

The paper is divided into two major parts. The first one of them outlines the theoretical foundations of the work, introducing the concept of critical discourse analysis and its main tenets. It looks at some of the relevant discursive strategies such as schemata of interpretation, metaphors, or topoi, which can be applied to discussions about climate policies. Furthermore, it focuses on the related concept of framing and it summarizes the typical kinds of frames, which can be found in climate change discourse. The second part is dedicated to presenting the results of the research, which was done by applying the methods of critical discourse analysis to the pre-election debates on carbon pricing policies in Australia and Canada. It finishes with interpretations and implications of the found results.

2. Theoretical background

In order to find out which legitimation strategies[19] and argumentation schemes the politicians in Canada and Australia used to justify their counter-climate policies, the methodology proposed by critical discourse analysis (CDA) will be used as a reference framework for the analysis of their statements. CDA is particularly useful for deeper examination of the hidden strategies in political communication. It is especially fit for the analysis of political issues where the distribution of power is concerned, since it does not purely aim to analyze the given discourse from a neutral, linguistic point of view like classical discourse analysis does, but it strives to uncover the ideological bias, implicit manipulation and attempted domination that is present in the language.[20] The purpose of this chapter is thus to outline the main principles of

[19] Legitimation is understood as a process of making something acceptable to a certain group or a society as a whole, according to their established norms. The term "legitimation strategies" is then used to signify "specific, not always intentional or conscious, ways of employing different discourses or discursive resources to establish legitimacy". See Vaara et al., "Pulp and Paper Fiction: On the Discursive Legitimation of Global Industrial Restructuring," *Organization Studies* 27(6), 2006, p. 794.

[20] Ruth Wodak, "What CDA Is about – a Summary of Its History, Important Concepts and Its Developments," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michal Meyer (London: SAGE Publications, 2001).

CDA, its application to the research question posed in this paper and the key concepts related to it – frames, framing and discourse.

2.1. Frames and framing

There are many ways of influencing public opinion in liberal democratic systems (i.e. systems, where the market for ideas and expressions is free and competitive, rather than determined by the state). Such instruments of exerting influence over the public mind are for example agenda-setting, priming or framing. And it is framing that is particularly pertinent to the research question of this paper.

The beginnings of the study of framing date back to the 1980s, when frames were examined from the perspectives of sociology (Erving Goffman, William Gamson and Andre Modigliani), psychology (Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky) and linguistics (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson).[21] It soon attracted wider attention and has since been adopted by many other scientific disciplines. In the past twenty years, the study of framing as a tool for shaping the public discourse has risen to prominence and framing analysis as a scientific method is now being used extensively in political communication studies as well as in other strands of political and social sciences.[22]

The key role of framing analysis is to determine not *what* is being communicated, but *how* is it being presented to the audience.[23] The very same fact can be framed in very different ways resulting in very different public reactions. The basis of framing thus lies in the psychology of human mind – or in more precise terms, the imperfection of human perception and decision.[24] An example of this might be the well-known study, which found out that the surveyed participants would more likely decide to undergo a surgery if they were given a 90% chance to live, but would be more likely to decide against the same surgery if they were told there is a 10% chance

[21] Dietram A. Scheufele and Shanto Iyengar, "The State of Framing Research: A Call for New Directions," in *Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*, ed. Kate Kenski and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, 2014, p. 3.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., p. 3.
[24] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice," *Science* 211, no. 4481 (January 30, 1981).

of dying.[25] In other words, the very same fact presented in two different "frames" renders two different reactions.

When applied to political communication, the choice of the frames in which certain policies are presented is essential for generating (or losing) public support – the necessary prerequisite for political action in liberal democratic systems. As Goffman puts it, frames are general "schemata of interpretation" that people use to "locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences."[26] Similarly, Lakoff says frames are "mental structures that shape the way we see the world."[27] In other words, all information that people receive is processed against some kind of a pre-existing mental framework and this framework affects their interpretation of the received facts. Therefore, the frameworks which the politicians decide to activate (deliberately or subconsciously) are crucial for the impact of their communications.

Despite numerous attempts at distinguishing the features that are unique to framing as opposed to other methods of influencing the public opinion and providing a narrow definition of framing, the scientific community still holds on to the rather broad definition which encompasses all of its many aspects. Most of the time, framing is defined not by what it *is*, but what it *is not* (i.e. spin, salience, media attention, agenda-setting, priming, back-grounding or fore-grounding of selected information etc.). It is nonetheless possible to distinguish at least two main conceptual strands of understanding the way framing works.[28]

2.1.1. Emphasis framing

The first one of them, *emphasis framing*, is a type of framing where its practitioners highlight certain subset of potentially relevant considerations of issues or events over

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[25] Elisabeth Wehling, "The Far Right Is Winning the Word War," *The Daily Beast*, February 19, 2017, http://www.thedailybeast.com/how-the-far-right-is-winning-europes-word-wars-and-its-elections.
[26] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), p. 21.
[27] George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (White River Junction: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004), p. XV.
[28] Scheufele and Iyengar, "The State of Framing Research: A Call for New Directions," p. 6.

other equally relevant subsets of considerations. The effective use of such frames (which are also sometimes called issue frames) results in the receivers focusing predominantly on the emphasized considerations (or perspectives) when constructing their opinions, and sidelining the other considerations. Such influence at individual levels can then translate into effects on the overall society. It can be visible for example in the case of government spending on the poor; if framed as giving the poor people the chance to climb up the social ladder, the public support for government spending tends to be higher than when framed as increasing the tax burden on citizens.[29]

Emphasis framing is often used in election campaigns where it has been observed that if one of the stronger candidates frames the campaign in economic terms, for instance, then voters tend to evaluate all the other candidates on basis of their economic policy.[30] Several studies have also shown that people tend to automatically think of the frame that is most readily accessible to them, i.e. for example the one promoted most visibly by the media. However, further research on the topic has proven that when making up their mind, people not only choose the consideration most conveniently accessible to them, but that they actually consciously think about the relative importance of the issues presented to them by the frames and choose accordingly. In other words, frames work through altering belief importance of the people subjected to them.[31]

2.1.2. Equivalence framing

The second major concept is called *equivalence framing* and it focuses on the ways in which describing a phenomenon using different, yet substantively equivalent, words and phrases can cause the respondents to alter their views of the phenomenon. For instance, according to research done by Tversky and Kahneman, people tend to be more risk-averse if they are risking losing what they perceive as a good thing and more risk-seeking if they are risking losing a seemingly bad thing, even though the

[29] James N. Druckman, "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?," *The Journal of Politics* 63, no. 4 (November 2001), pp. 1042-1043.
[30] James N. Druckman, "The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence," *Political Behavior* 23, no. 3 (September 2001), p. 230.
[31] Druckman, "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?", p. 1043.

odds of getting one or the other are exactly the same, therefore the substance is equivalent. Similarly, according to Quattrone and Tversky, individuals are more likely to be in favour of a new economic program if it is described as resulting in 95% employment rather than when it is described as resulting in 5% unemployment. Positive framing thus generates more positive responses and negative framing generates more negative ones.[32]

Similar effect has been observed in the wording of public opinion survey questions. The respondents' preferences change when the surveys use words with higher sentimental values, even though the questions posed in them retain the same logical meanings (e.g. more people tend to "not allow" something rather than "forbid" it). It can therefore be summarized that equivalence framing builds upon the psychological findings that human reactions to the same information differ significantly based on whether the said information is portrayed in a positive or a negative light and whether the words used to describe it convey any discernible sentimental values.[33]

2.1.3. Framing effects

While the two types of framing vary in the concrete strategies they employ in order to achieve their goals of shaping the public opinion, their bases are grounded in similar psychological roots. As Druckman argues, both equivalency framing effects and emphasis framing effects "work by causing individuals to focus on certain aspects or characterizations of an issue or problem instead of others."[34] Based on the aforementioned studies of how people's cognitive abilities are influenced by framing, it can be contended that frames often play a superior role to facts when it comes to the formation of public opinion on practically any political issue, including climate policies. This effect intensifies when the issue is naturally complex and ambiguous, such as the issue of climate change.

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[32] Druckman, "The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence.", pp. 228-229.
[33] Ibid., p. 229.
[34] Ibid., p. 230.

In order to answer the main research question of this paper, i.e. how have Tony Abbott and Stephen Harper legitimized their positions towards climate action and raised sufficient public support for their policies to win the general elections in their respective countries, both emphasis and equivalency frames will be looked for in their pre-election discourses. In order to disclose and determine which frames they used and how, a method of critical discourse analysis will be applied to their statements in pre-election speeches and debates.

2.2. What is discourse?

Prior to delving deeper into the intricacies of critical discourse analysis and its application as a research method in this paper, it is important to define the concept at its very core – discourse. Since the concept of discourse is rather broad and it tends to fluctuate to encompass many different meanings, a few narrower definitions were selected to demonstrate how discourse is particularly understood in this paper.

First of all, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines discourse as "a mode of organizing knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts."[35] This is useful as a starting point in establishing that discourse relates to human knowledge and the way it is conveyed through the use of language. However, the critical feature of discourse lies in the role it plays in constructing people's perception of reality. Furthermore, the understanding of discourse should not be limited only to the immaterial written or spoken word, but should also include the material world (i.e. the practices), since discourse has the power to affect that.[36]

Norman Fairclough sees discourse precisely as "a form of social practice,"[37] while Michel Foucault refers to discourses as "systems of thought" and views them as social processes of power exertion and legitimation.[38] Similarly, Gunther Kress elaborates that "discourses are systematically-organized sets of statements which give

[35] Merriam-Webster, "Discourse", 2017, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discourse.
[36] Derek Hook, "Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History : Foucault and Discourse Analysis," *Theory and Psychology* 11, no. 4 (2001): 521–47.
[37] Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (New York: Longman, 1989), p. 17.
[38] Hook, "Discourse, Knowledge, Materiality, History : Foucault and Discourse Analysis.", p. 37.

expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Beyond that, they define, describe and delimit what is possible to say and not possible to say (and by extension – what is possible to do or not to do) with respect to the area of concern of that institution, whether marginally or centrally."[39]

With respect to the question of argumentation and legitimation of certain policies, as set out in this paper, perhaps the most useful interpretation of discourse comes again from Kress: "A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organizes and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about."[40] Therefore, to summarize, this paper understands discourse primarily as a kind of underlying environment in which particular words and language schemes are used in public communication and in which such words and schemes are understood as reality.

2.3. Critical discourse analysis and its main characteristics

The power of words has been studied by philosophers and scientists for centuries, even millenniums, yet it only began to be systematically examined as a research field on its own in the second half of the 20th century. Building on the early 20th century's foundations set by structuralism (most notably embedded in the works of Ferdinand de Saussure and later Claude Lévi-Strauss), the critical study of language and discourse attracted widespread intellectual attention with the "linguistic turn" in the mid-1960s.

It was predominantly influenced by the works of the post-structuralist thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan or Roland Barthes. In line with Barthes' crisp observation that "language is never innocent,"[41] the scholars of linguistics, but also psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science and numerous other disciplines, have turned to discourse analysis to help them disclose and dissect the concealed power structures of human societies that are being perpetuated through the use of language. This view is especially inspired by the

[39] Gunther Kress, *Linguistic Processes in Sociocultural Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 6-7.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 16.

concept of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci, who claims that domination may be achieved not only through physical force, but also through "the persuasive potential of discourse."[42] Furthermore, the findings of Jürgen Habermas on the strategic use of language are also particularly pertinent to discourse scholars.[43]

Since the 1970s, discourse analysis has been considered not solely a scientific method, but a scientific discipline in its own right. Even though discourse analysis is nowadays used cross-disciplinarily, its foundation lies firmly in the field of critical linguistics, which stems from systemic functional linguistics as delineated by Michael A. K. Halliday.[44] Critical linguists aim to understand how language generally works and more precisely how it works in manifesting hidden ideologies of those who use it. Societal power structures and their reinforcement through discourse are at the forefront of interest for critical linguists, since "ideologies have often been identified with false beliefs, or false consciousness as being inculcated by dominant groups in order to legitimate or obscure their dominance,"[45] as Van Dijk puts it.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) has drawn inspiration from both critical linguistics and early discourse analysis, which means it sees language primarily as a "social act," [46] integral to social processes and inseparable from its social consequences. Moreover, it is considered critical because it rejects the strife for academic neutrality and instead aims to openly expose the political and social inequalities perpetuated by written and spoken communication.[47]

The current research on CDA incorporates the findings of its predecessors and elaborates them into further distinct models. Some of the most influential modern-day scholars of CDA include the above-quoted Teun Van Dijk, Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak.

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[42] Encarnacion Hidalgo Tenorio, "Critical Discourse Analysis, An Overview," *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 10, no. 1 (2011), http://ojs.ub.gu.se/ojs/index.php/njes/article/view/658/609, p. 188.
[43] Ibid., p. 189.
[44] Jaffer Sheyholislami, "Critical Discourse Analysis" (Carleton University, Ottawa, 2001), http://elearn.uni-sofia.bg/pluginfile.php/165446/mod_resource/content/1/1%20What%20is%20CDA.pdf.
[45] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Discourse Semantics and Ideology," *Discourse & Society* 6, no. 2 (1995), p. 258.
[46] Sheyholislami, "Critical Discourse Analysis," p. 1.
[47] Wodak, "What CDA Is about – a Summary of Its History, Important Concepts and Its Developments," p. 9.

Van Dijk, the most referenced author of discourse theory, focuses primarily on the analyses of news articles and highlights the need to analyze any text in its broader, contextual framework in order to uncover its ideological bias. In the *socio-cognitive model* of discourse analysis, which he has devised, Van Dijk argues that due to the presence of ideologies, discourse has an important cognitive function in the society. In his view, ideologies are "abstract mental systems that organize [...] socially shared attitudes" and thus "indirectly influence the personal cognition of group members" and their understanding of any discourse.[48]

Wodak's model of discourse theory is referred to as *discourse sociolinguistics* and is characterized by the emphasis on the incorporation of all available background information into the analysis of texts, including the historical ones. She believes that language "manifests social processes and interactions"[49] and no communication is ever devoid of an underlying ideological tinge. In her words, discourse sociolinguistics "is an approach capable of identifying and describing the underlying mechanisms that contribute to those disorders in discourse which are embedded in a particular context [...] and inevitably affect communication."[50]

Finally, Fairclough has used the term *critical language study* for his approach to critical discourse analysis and he ties the changes in general social and economic development to the changes in language and discourse (without suggesting causality in one way or the other). CDA is thus used as a method to map the relations between the societal and the linguistic level. Large part of his work also focuses on the capacity of the media to exert "domination based upon consent rather than coercion" through the shaping of interpretative frameworks of the recipients of the mediated stories. Together with Noam Chomsky he argues that the media essentially serves to manufacture social consent by perpetuating the interpretative point of view of the ruling class.[51]

2.3. Application of critical discourse analysis to climate policy debates

[48] Sheyholislami, "Critical Discourse Analysis," p. 4.
[49] Ibid., p. 5.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., pp. 6-11.

As outlined above, CDA is a rather versatile theory, whose methods can be applied to a variety of research questions. In this paper, it will be applied to uncover the types of frames used by Stephen Harper and Tony Abbott in their pre-election communications where climate policies were discussed and public opinion on them was shaped.

The analysis will aim to discern the strategic use of language in their argumentations against the discussed policies, to uncover the potential manipulation strategies in their speeches and to identify the "schemata of interpretation" that they tap into.

The following sub-chapters outline several of the key concepts and strategies, which the author deems particularly relevant for discourse analysis of political discussions about climate policies and which will then be looked for through the application of CDA on the cases of Canada and Australia.

2.3.1. Schemata of interpretation

According to Goffman, the goal of discourse analysis of frames is to "try to isolate some of the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense of events and to analyse the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject,"[52] which is precisely what the research part of this paper will aim to do. It is important to detect the use of primary frameworks or schemata of interpretation in communication about political issues because, as Goffman argues, "we tend to perceive events [or phenomena] in terms of primary frameworks, and the type of framework we employ provides a way of describing the event [or phenomenon] to which it is applied."[53]

On a similar note, Nisbet contends that "a frame links two concepts, so that after exposure to this linkage, the intended audience now accepts the concepts' connection."[54] Thus, apt framing can create or reinforce connections in people's

[52] Mat Hope, "Frame Analysis as a Discourse-Method: Framing 'Climate Change Politics'" (Post-Graduate Conference on Discourse Analysis, University of Bristol, 2010).
[53] Ibid.
[54] Nisbet, "Communicating Climate Change: Why Frames Matter for Public Engagement."

minds, which otherwise would not be there. And since "perception is reference-dependent"[55] (as Kahneman and Tversky concluded in their original research on the topic), the ability to create or shape such referential frameworks is eventually the ability to influence people's perceptions of reality.

2.3.2. Metaphors

An important strategy that can affect the perception of a discussed matter is the use of metaphors in discourse. Baker and Ellece define metaphor as "a way of representing something in terms of something else"[56] and Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphors are "pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action."[57] The use of metaphors is never neutral as it accentuates certain features of the discussed matter over others and conversely takes attention away from those features of the discussed matter that are not in line with the given metaphor. A very common metaphor is thinking of political debates as *games* or even *wars*, which perpetuates the understanding that one side is always a winner and one is always a loser, making it harder to reach a certain common ground.[58] The use of such metaphors then sidelines all alternative understandings of the issue.

2.3.3. Topoi

The concept of *topos* (pl. *topoi*) comes from Aristotle and it translates as "a place where arguments can be found."[59] CDA understands topoi as "standard argumentation schemes which represent the common-sense reasoning typical for specific issues."[60] Topoi are used in discourse in order to support a claim without actually using a

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Paul Baker and Sibonile Ellece, *Key Terms in Discourse Analysis* (London: Continuum International, 2011), p. 70.
[57] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 4.
[58] Ibid., p. 5.
[59] Christopher Hart, *Critical Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Science* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 66.
[60] Ibid.

concrete, well-founded argument, making use of the fact that people generally connect the topoi with the conventionalized argumentation schemes they are related to. Topoi are often used to justify and legitimize certain positions. A very common practice is applying the topoi of *danger* or *threat* to things which are not necessarily that, which naturally evokes the feeling that these things need to be averted or stopped.[61] Such a perspective then helps legitimize potential further policy steps that would normally be much harder to advocate for.

2.4. Limits of critical discourse analysis

While considered to be a useful tool for thorough examination of text and talk by many, critical discourse analysis also has its critics who point out to its weaker spots and analytical limitations. Over the recent years, CDA has established itself as a respected scientific discipline with its own conventionalized paradigm.[62] However, even some of its proponents find this development problematic since they feel the universal recognition of CDA goes against its very core principle of critical reflection, which should be applied to itself as well. Other critics point out to the mostly negative focus of CDA studies, arguing that its practitioners should instead try and highlight some of the positive uses of discourse, which can inspire positive action.

Critics from outside the field of CDA have furthermore pointed out to the perceived impartiality of its application, most outspoken of these being Widdowson. He argues that due to lacking a unified methodology, the CDA researchers more often than not choose the words and phrases to be examined intuitively, because they feel those will best disclose the hidden ideologies. It is then possible, according to Widdowson, that the same researchers will also intuitively ignore other parts of the text, which may contain contradictory information. Thus, by trying to uncover ideologies, the researchers are in fact themselves acting ideologically.[63]

Others yet have focused their critique on the very founding assumptions and ambitions of CDA. One of such critics, Hammersley, posits that first of all the

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[61] Baker and Ellece, *Key Terms in Discourse Analysis*, p. 152.
[62] Ruth Breeze, "Critical Discourse Analysis and Its Critics," *Pragmatics* 21, no. 4 (2011), p. 493.
[63] Ibid., p. 503.

underlying conviction that we need to apply rational critique to discourse is not unproblematic and should not be taken for granted. Moreover, he also disputes the goal of CDA to "offer a comprehensive understanding of society as a whole and how it functions" as too ambitious and in need of self-reflection as well.[64]

Lastly, the criticism of the limits of CDA's understanding of the society lies in its inability to encompass all of the different contextual variables, which may influence the final outcome. Despite keeping the need for contextual positioning of the examined material, due to natural constraints of scope, researchers using CDA are always posed with the choice of which particular texts and which particular parts to examine. Therefore, the discourse will always be analyzed in a certain degree of isolation.[65] Moreover, the researchers always approach the texts from their own point of view, interpreting the contextual setting through their own understanding, which might differ from the various understandings of the original receptors of the texts.[66] Being aware abovementioned pitfalls of CDA, this research will try to present as unbiased results as possible, while acknowledging its own limitations.

3. Typical frames in climate change discourse

Before embarking on the critical discourse analysis of the Canadian and Australian case studies, it is important to introduce the general scientific findings on this topic to date. Previous research has identified several frames, which typically appear in discourses about climate change and related policies, which will be presented in this chapter.

First of all, it is interesting to note that the term "climate change" itself is a frame. The origin of its widespread usage in the media in the US and subsequently across the world can be traced back to 2003, when Frank Luntz, a language consultant to George W. Bush, filed a memo advising him to start using "climate change" instead of "global warming" in all official government communications in order to fight the "stringent environmental regulations" supposedly hampering the US economy. As Luntz argued in his memo, ""climate change" is less frightening than "global

[64] Ibid., p. 498.
[65] Ibid., p. 506.
[66] Ibid., p. 511.

warming,""[67] and therefore it does not evoke such a strong sense of urgency or call for action in the recipients of the message. Furthermore, the word "change" is more neutral and unaddressed, therefore it disperses the feeling of accountability for what is happening with the planet.

Similarly, one of the main frame divides present in discussions on the issues related to climate change is between portraying the environment as something *natural*, disconnected from the humankind versus something that inherently has a certain *social* dimension as well. As Feindt and Oels point out, "environmental policy problems are effects of social constructions even though they concern "natural" objects"[68] and it is thus detrimental to any successful policy when the environmental and social frames are distinguished and artificially positioned against each other. The "natural" portrayal of environment and climate also imagines people as mere observers, user or admirers of the natural world and thus sidelines the contribution humans make to climate change and its possible mitigation activities.[69]

Another major divide, which can be traced implicitly in almost any discourse on climate change, is the one positioning against each other the "economic growth" frame versus the "environmental protection" frame. Despite numerous studies now proving that these are not mutually exclusive goals, it is still the first go-to argument of the opponents of climate policies, and through its zero-sum approach it perpetuates the belief that economic growth and environmental protection are not mutually achievable and that one must choose between one or the other.[70]

Moreover, when it comes to debating the policy choices of continuing with the highly energy-intensive industrial activities versus limiting greenhouse gases through various means, Way points out four frames which are most widely used in the public discourse: *economic frame*, *environmental frame*, *social frame* and *energy security*

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[67] George Lakoff, "Why It Matters How We Frame the Environment," *Environmental Communication* 4, no. 1 (2010), p. 71.
[68] Peter H. Feindt and Angela Oels, "Does Discourse Matter? Discourse Analysis in Environmental Policy Making," *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* 7, no. 3 (September 2005): 161–73.
[69] Brian J. Burke et al., "Nature Talk in an Appalachian Newspaper: What Environmental Discourse Analysis Reveals about Efforts to Address Exurbanization and Climate Change," *Human Organization* 74, no. 1 (2015).
[70] Andrew J. Hoffman and Marc J. Ventresca, "The Institutional Framing of Policy Debates: Economics Versus the Environment," *American Behavioral Scientist* 42, no. 8 (1999): 1368–91.

frame.[71] Based on her analysis of the media discourse on tar sands exploration in Canada, Way further elaborates on a theory that these policy frames are used to either *augment* the currently dominant neoliberal discourse, advanced by the establishment, or they can be used to promote the so-called *transformative* discourse, which "contests the core principles of the existing policy frame."[72] Way found out that all of the four major frames were used in a way that perpetuated the augmentative discourse, including even the environmental frame, which has the highest potential to promote the transformative discourse but which in vast majority of cases was still used to advocate for "solutions within the neoliberal policy frame rather than outside of it."[73]

Interestingly, even in countries and societies which are at the forefront of fighting against climate change, two discursive strands occur, one more action-encouraging than the other. Based on a study of Norway, Hovden and Lindseth have identified two principal climate change discourses: the *national action* discourse and the *thinking globally* discourse. The *national action* discourse amplifies the desire to be an environmental pioneer and to encourage national reduction of GHG emissions, no matter the international situation. In other words, to lead by example. The *thinking globally* discourse, on the other hand, takes into account the international dimension of climate action and emphasizes the need to look for the most cost-effective – that means most internationally-coordinated – ways of reducing the GHG emissions. If this discourse dominates in national politics, the domestic efforts to reduce emissions will only be limited.[74]

Nisbet has identified further common frames in his study of climate change communication in the US and since he views climate change as one of the key issues defining people who identify as liberals or conservatives, he has divided them into those used predominantly by each of the two groups. According to Nisbet, conservatives have been long perpetuating the frame of "dire economic consequences" resulting from tighter environmental regulations, as well as the "unfair

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[71] Laura A. Way, "Canadian Newspaper Coverage of the Alberta Oil Sands: The Intractability of Neoliberalism" (University of Alberta, 2013), https://era.library.ualberta.ca/files/b5644s81h/Way_Laura_Fall_2013.pdf, p. 139.
[72] Ibid., p. 11.
[73] Ibid., p. 151.
[74] Eivind Hovden and Gard Lindseth, "Discourses in Norwegian Climate Policy: National Action or Thinking Globally?" (University of Oslo, 2002), http://www.prosus.org/publikasjoner/Rapporter/2002-10/Rapp10.pdf, p. 7.

burden" frame, alluding to the perception that America will be worse off if it regulates its own industries without other major economies following suit. Furthermore, the "scientific uncertainty" frame has been widely summoned by conservatives, suggesting that the scientific community's findings on the causes and consequences of climate change are inconclusive. These frames have been highly successful ever since they were first introduced in the 1990s and have contributed to downplaying the urgency of climate action among many Republican voters.[75]

Liberals, on the other hand, have tried countering these narratives by using the "Pandora's box" frame of impending global catastrophe if we do not act immediately, yet it has not been able to effectively oppose the very strong "scientific uncertainty" frame, which can be used to dismiss these claims as unfounded alarmism. Moreover, this frame is dangerous even from the environmentalists' point of view as when it presents the daunting vision of a nearly inevitable catastrophe and does not offer a viable solution, it risks turning even keen listeners into the state of despair and apathy, rather than proactivity. It also lacks the dimension of what are the root causes of the problem and who is responsible.[76]

In order to remedy that, another liberal frame has come to be more widely used particularly in the recent years and that is the "public accountability" frame. It clearly points fingers to what and who is accountable for the environmental changes occurring and strives to generate public pressure on politicians and other stakeholders to take responsibility for climate action (or face criticism for inaction). However, according to Nisbet, such framing has only further alienated the conservatives from the issue, as they perceive it as a sign of arrogance of the self-proclaimed liberal elites.[77]

The frame of "public health" has also emerged in the past years, which brings the problem of climate change closer to the audiences in developed countries which are not yet directly affected by its immediate effects (such as rising sea levels, widespread droughts etc.), but which are nonetheless at risk of health complications resulting from it. As a cross-party frame, it is potentially well suited to reach some

[75] Nisbet, "Communicating Climate Change: Why Frames Matter for Public Engagement."
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

common ground between the two opposing groups, yet it has thus far not proven strong enough in itself to radically increase public support for climate policies.[78]

Nordhaus and Schellenberger suggest a new frame of "economic development" should be introduced (and to some extent already has been) in order to bridge the gap between the conservative and liberal understandings of climate change. By virtue of being rather vague and versatile, the "economic development" frame can be used to evoke job growth, investment and increased market competitiveness, as well as innovative low-carbon technologies and sustainable economic prosperity – tapping into each group's primary referential frameworks.[79] Lockwood agrees and based on his research suggests that instead of using the environmental basis to argue for climate action, it would be more efficient to frame it "in other terms, such as energy security or job creation" as this would help build "a more sustainable political basis for bold climate policies."[80]

Currently, the consensus is that in order to counter the powerful climate skeptic frames, it is necessary to first look beyond the scientific quarrels on who or what causes the temperature rises (and to what extent) and instead to focus on outlining the solutions that can be achieved in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, these solutions should be communicated through the narratives of compelling stories that people can relate to.[81] And in order to reach also the conservative segment of the population, the stories should be centered around the cultural values these people uphold, such as morality and ethics (especially for those who identify themselves with Christian beliefs), energy independence and national security, patriotism and increased national competitiveness and, above all, market-based approaches to the problem. Focusing on the governmental interventionist aspect of the potential

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[78] Ibid.
[79] Ted Nordhaus and Michael Schellenberger, "The Death of Environmentalism: Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World" (The Breakthrough Institute, 2004).
[80] Matthew Lockwood, "Does the Framing of Climate Policies Make a Difference to Public Support? Evidence from UK Marginal Constituencies," *Climate Policy* 11, no. 4 (July 2011): 1097–1112.
[81] Adam Corner, "Science Won't Win over the Climate Change Sceptics - We Need Stories," *The Guardian*, December 2, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/behavioural-insights/2014/dec/02/science-wont-win-over-sceptics-climate-change.

solutions, on the other hand, will likely cause more alienation of the conservative listeners.[82]

Since both Stephen Harper and Tony Abbott come from conservative, right-leaning parties, it is possible to expect that some of the abovementioned features of conservative discourse will be present in their communications on climate policies. However, prior to the examined elections, both of the politicians had publicly proclaimed their ambitions to help fight climate change while being in their public roles.[83] Therefore, it could be expected that they would use precisely the kind of abovementioned frames, which would resonate with the conservative-leaning voters while still aiming to generate support for their proposed climate policies. If their proclaimed intentions to reduce Canada's and Australia's GHG emissions were sincere, it should be detectable in their discourse on the topic. The next chapter will try to uncover the frames they used when communicating their policies prior to general elections and analyze whether these frames fell into those categories, which encourage climate action, or rather the opposite.

4. Analysis of climate policy discourses in Canada and Australia

The research part of the paper applied critical discourse analysis to the speeches and statements of Tony Abbott and Stephen Harper concerning the directions of their countries' climate policies and in particular the policies of pricing carbon emissions. The examined time period covered the year 2008 in Canada (up until the election on 14th October) and the year 2013 in Australia (with the election taking place on 7th

[82] Michelle Klampe, "Framing Discourse around Conservative Values Shifts Climate Change Attitudes" (Oregon State University, April 25, 2016), http://oregonstate.edu/ua/ncs/archives/2016/apr/framing-discourse-around-conservative-values-shifts-climate-change-attitudes.

[83] Stephen Harper said in 2007 that he believed that climate change was "perhaps the biggest threat to confront the future of humanity today." Source: http://www.canadianprogressiveworld.com/2016/02/10/the-curious-disappearance-of-stephen-harpers-speeches/. Similarly, Tony Abbott stated in 2013 that he believed "climate change is real, that humanity does make a contribution and that you need a strong and effective policy to deal with it." Source: http://sussanley.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Tony-Abbott-National-Press-Club-310113.pdf.

September). Since the political debate on carbon tax in Australia started already in 2011 when it was introduced by the Labor government, the Australian analysis included a few most significant statements by Tony Abbott addressing the carbon tax also in the years 2011 and 2012. In Canada's case, it confined solely to the election year of 2008, since the country has never enacted carbon tax on the federal level and the debate was thus spurred only when it was proposed by the election platform of the Liberal Party.

The examined material included party manifestos, for they clearly outlined the leaders' policies and served as a springboard for any further discussions be it in the media or in the public sphere. Furthermore, high-profile public appearances of the politicians such as national TV debates, interviews, press conferences and debates in the parliament were all subject of the research. While the discourse in the media was not examined as such, some media articles were used as sources for the statements that the politicians made during their campaigns and were then mediated through the press. The newspaper articles served a purely auxiliary role, however, as the main purpose of the research was to examine the direct words of the two party leaders, not what was being reported about them by the media, in order to get as undistorted image of what discourse strategies they were using as possible.

The choice of pre-election discourse is important for two reasons. Firstly, the public is more perceptive of political debates prior to elections of national scale and the general intensity of public discussion on various policies is heightened during this time. What Tony Abbott and Stephen Harper said during this time thus received arguably more attention and generated more discussion than it would do in politically less engaging times. Secondly, there are few more suitable occasions to analyze framing than during an election campaign. As Wehling puts it, "election campaigns, especially of the calibre of national elections, always serve two purposes: to win an election and to promote one's worldview in the minds of fellow citizens."[84] Therefore, it can be extrapolated that those who are successful at winning the election (as Abbott and Harper were) had also been successful at promoting their worldviews among the electorate.

It is, indeed, always hard if not impossible to determine what was the cardinal issue or opinion that decided any given election. It would be an oversimplification to

[84] Wehling, "The Far Right Is Winning the Word War."

claim that the elections examined in this paper were won on the basis of Harper's and Abbott's positions towards carbon pricing as the final result was a combination of myriads of contributing factors. However, as Wehling further argues, elections are won by those who set "the right frames as the backdrop against which facts are processed by voters."[85] Therefore, for the purpose of our frame analysis, we can conclude that the climate policy frames set by Abbott and Harper were more successful than those of all of their opponents, and it can therefore bring interesting insights to examine them more closely.

4.1. Research design

The research was designed in a way to detect and uncover as many frames, metaphors, topoi and schemata of interpretation that were used in the discourse as possible. At the most basic level, the research looked at what choice of language and terminology (e.g. "tax" vs. "price" vs. "scheme") the politicians made when describing the carbon pricing policy – in other words, their use of *equivalence framing*. Their general stance towards the policy was also noted (e.g. positive or negative, supporting or discouraging). Furthermore, by looking at what elements of the carbon tax policy the speakers highlighted and what elements they left largely overlooked, the analysis uncovered how *emphasis framing* was used by the speakers and what kind of reaction they were trying to arouse in the audience (e.g. positive or negative).

At a more profound level, a detailed analysis of the concrete frames that can be typically found in climate change discourse was conducted. The frames from Chapter 3 were divided into two groups – climate action encouraging ones and climate action discouraging ones – and these were then looked for in Abbott's and Harper's discourses. The encouraging certain action are: *Pandora's box*, *public accountability*, *public health* (Nisbet), *economic development* (Nordhaus and Schellenberger), and *national action thinking* (Hovden and Lindseth). Those discouraging ones are: *dire economic consequences*, *unfair burden*, *scientific uncertainty* (Nisbet), and *global action thinking* (Hovden and Lindseth).

[85] Ibid.

Such multi-layered analysis can uncover inconsistencies in their arguments and discrepancies among their statements, which are not usually easily detectable to ordinary listeners. Such inconsistencies and discrepancies can be signs of hidden agenda of the speakers, of their attempts at ideological manipulation or legitimization of their hypocrisy. The research results below should shed more light on whether this was the case with Abbott and Harper or not. Finally, as previous research[86] suggests that both Canadian and Australian political discourses on climate policies have been dominated by the *economic frame*, as opposed to the *environmental frame,* the analytical part of this paper also aimed to either confirm or disprove this hypothesis.

4.2. Research results

The critical discourse analysis of pre-election debates and speeches made during the election campaigns of Stephen Harper and Tony Abbott was conducted in order to uncover the types of frames used by the two politicians while discussing climate policies and to help understand how the overall discourse might have been shaped by these particular frames. Drawing from the theoretical background, the analysis was looking for the schemata of interpretations employed, the topoi evoked and the metaphors alluded to in the speeches.

Both Harper and Abbott have on many occasions throughout the examined period (prior to federal elections of 2008 in Canada and 2013 in Australia) publicly presented themselves as environmentally conscious politicians, with thorough concerns about climate change. The election manifestos of the Australian Liberals and the Canadian Conservatives at the given time both mentioned a determination to protect the natural environment and to alleviate the impacts of climate change.[87]

[86] For Canada see for example Way, „Canadian newspaper coverage of the Alberta oil sands: The intractability of neoliberalism“, 2013. For Australia see for example Christoff, „Climate Discourse Complexes, National Climate Regimes and Australian Climate Policy“, 2013.

[87] The 2008 Conservative manifesto for instance included the line „The Conservatives have committed to reducing Canada's greenhouse gases by 20 percent below 2006 levels by 2020, and cutting air pollution by 50 percent by 2015.“ Source: http://www.itac.ca/pdf/20081007-Platform-e.pdf. The Liberal Party manifesto of 2013 promised to „take direct action to reduce carbon emissions inside Australia, not overseas – and also establish a 15,000-strong Green Army to clean-up the

However, when it came to discussing concrete climate policies such as carbon tax or cap and trade, which put a price on GHG emissions and thus can bring tangible results, the rhetoric of the two politicians turned significantly more antagonistic towards it, indicating a degree of hypocrisy in their stances.

This might have been in order to accommodate to the public opinion, which at the examined times was overwhelmingly concerned about climate change (if not particularly ready to pay a price for preventing it), according to surveys.[88] Therefore, to stand openly against any climate policies would have been politically unviable even for conservative politicians. However, it could also have been the case of political "greenwashing", when politicians pretend to place environmental concerns on top of their agenda, but in reality they put economic priorities first, either due to succumbing to lobbying pressures or in order to appeal to as large segment of the public as possible.[89] No matter the reason, this sort of covert "double speak" by leading national politicians is ultimately detrimental for any climate change mitigating efforts, both domestically and globally, and therefore it should always be exposed and disputed.

To this end, the critical discourse analysis was applied in order to uncover the hidden frames used by Harper and Abbott in their discourses on carbon tax and cap and trade and to discern the legitimization strategies, which were used in order to justify their seemingly conflicting views on the given climate policies. Furthermore, it looked at discrepancies and inconsistencies between their statements, which might suggest some hidden ideological agenda or manipulation. The results from Canada and Australia were compared and contrasted in order to highlight the similarities and notice the differences.

4.2.1. Research results for Australia

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environment." Source: http://lpa.webcontent.s3.amazonaws.com/realsolutions/LPA%20Policy%20Booklet%20210x210_pages.pdf.

[88] For Canada in 2008 see: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/04_climate_change_opinion.pdf, and for Australia in 2013 see: https://publications.csiro.au/rpr/download?pid=csiro:EP1312080&dsid=DS2.

[89] Peter Seele and Lucia Gatti, "Greenwashing Revisited: In Search of a Typology and Accusation-Based Definition Incorporating Legitimacy Strategies," *Business Strategy and the Environment* 26, no. 2 (February 2017): 239–52.

The research analyzed publicly made statements by Tony Abbott in the run up to the federal election of 2013. Twelve public occurrences were covered, including interviews, national TV debates, parliament addresses and press conferences. Given the fact that the carbon tax (already in place) was one of the key election issues in 2013 and that Abbott had made the promise to scrap it his core election priority (he even called the election a "referendum on the carbon tax"),[90] the general intensity of the discussion on the topic was considerably higher in Australia than in Canada, therefore it will be analyzed first, despite it occurring chronologically later.

When arguing against the use of the carbon tax, Abbott used a wide array of frames, metaphors, and topoi, which legitimized his opposition to it and, if taken into broader consequences, eventually helped him win the election. This sub-chapter will summarize what the critical discourse analysis of Abbott's statements has found. First of all, his choice of language when talking about the policy was solely reserved to calling it a carbon "tax", as opposed to other possible names such as carbon pricing "policy" or "scheme". Previous research[91] suggests that the word "tax" implicitly evokes the most negative connotations out of all of its equivalents and therefore is the most likely to generate negative responses to the policy.

Furthermore, he often linked the talk about the carbon tax with the talk of other supposedly "unnecessary" taxes such as the mining tax and the company tax (see examples (1), (2) and (3)), which he argued needed to be reduced or completely abolished in order for the Australian economy to thrive. Such repeated linkage creates a strong referential framework, which associates the carbon tax with damaging the economy. By calling it "unnecessary", Abbott completely backgrounded its main purpose – the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions resulting from industrial activity – and instead foregrounded its possible negative economic effects, which is a classic example of *emphasis framing*. Detaching the tax from its environmental background makes it more acceptable for more people to oppose it. Moreover, Abbott put little effort into explaining how exactly the carbon tax would damage the economy (as it was outlined above, it might not necessarily be the case in the long-run) and instead

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[90] Tony Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Pre-Election National Press Club Address," *AustralianPolitics.com*, September 2, 2013, http://australianpolitics.com/2013/09/02/tony-abbott-npc-address.html.

[91] Wendy Bacon, "Sceptical Climate Part 1: Climate Change Policy 2011" (Australian Centre for Independent Journalism, 2011), http://investigate.github.io/sceptical-climate/part-1/.

appealed to the *common sense* reasoning, which is typical for the use of topoi as justification strategies without providing solid, evidence-based argumentation.

> (1) We need to scrap **unnecessary** taxes like the carbon tax that reduce our comparative advantages.[92]

> (2) We pledge to the families of Australia that we will never make your lives harder by imposing **unnecessary** new taxes and we will free Australians from the burdens of the carbon tax.[93]

> (3) What we need to do is grow a stronger economy. That's why it's so important to reduce **unnecessary** taxes, eliminate **unnecessary** taxes like the carbon tax and the mining tax which have damaged confidence...[94]

Another strategy that Abbott made use of is a so-called *adversarial framing,* which sets against each other two sides, one being framed as the right one, the other as the wrong one – tapping into the traditional *us vs. them* dichotomy. In pre-election debates it is indeed a common practice to attack the members and policies of the opposing parties. However, in this case the personal attack on the Labor Party was combined with an attack on the carbon tax as such (see example (4)). In this case, the "them" was the incumbent Labor government, which was presented as untrustworthy, unreliable or even outright incompetent (due to the imposition of the carbon tax), while the "us" was the Liberal Party bringing the desired stability and certainty to the ordinary Australians (by abolishing the tax).

> (4) Deep in the **DNA of every Labor member** opposite, I regret to say, is an instinct for higher taxes and greater regulation and isn't that just what we are getting under this **carbon tax** proposal: more taxes, more bureaucrats, more

[92] "Our Plan: Real Solutions for All Australians" (Liberal Party of Australia, January 2013), http://lpa.webcontent.s3.amazonaws.com/realsolutions/LPA%20Policy%20Booklet%20210x210_pages.pdf.
[93] Ibid.
[94] "Rudd v Abbott: The Debate in Full – Transcript," *The Guardian*, August 11, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/11/rudd-v-abbott-the-debate-in-full-transcript.

> regulation, more burdens on the life of **the Australian people**, more economic pain for no environmental gain whatsoever.[95]

Invoking such primary referential frameworks as *trust vs. deception* and *certainty vs. risk* naturally causes the audience to favour the group that is being associated with the former qualities. Thus, after creating the linkage between the Labor Party and the carbon tax, the audience is now more likely to associate the negative qualities not only with the party itself, but with the carbon pricing scheme as well. The use of this strategy is documented in examples (5), (6), and (7).

> (5) They [Labor] said before the election there wouldn't be a tax, now they say it won't hurt you. The only **certainties** are that **Labor tells lies** and the public pay.[96]

> (6) **Labor can't be trusted** to tell the truth and it can't be trusted to manage the economy – and the **carbon tax** is where Labor's economic deficit and **Labor's trust deficit** coincide.[97]

> (7) But the worst deficit is not the budget deficit but the **trust deficit**. This election is all about **trust**. Who do you **trust** to reduce power prices and gas prices? **Trust the party that will abolish the carbon tax**, not the one that inflicted it on you.[98]

As a matter of fact, calling out the Labor Party for lying to its electorate can be justified in this case, since it was the then Labor Prime Minister Julia Gillard who first introduced the carbon tax in 2011 after having promised not to do so. However,

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[95] Tony Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Speech on the Carbon Tax," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, September 14, 2011, http://www.smh.com.au/environment/tony-abbotts-speech-on-the-carbon-tax-20110913-1wopf.html.
[96] Tony Abbott, Interview by the Grill Team, Triple M Radio, February 25, 2011, https://www.themonthly.com.au/blog/russell-marks/2014/05/27/1401138538/tony-abbott-said.
[97] Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Pre-Election National Press Club Address."
[98] Tony Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Campaign Launch Speech: Full Transcript," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, August 25, 2013, http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/federal-election-2013/tony-abbotts-campaign-launch-speech-full-transcript-20130825-2sjhc.html.

persistently linking the party's failure to keep its word to the concept of carbon tax itself does more than simply discrediting the opponent – it discredits the policy, too, not based on facts, but based on the artificial and simplified referential framework it creates.

Taking this strategy almost ad absurdum, Abbott also claimed that the carbon tax would be a disaster for Australian democracy (8), appealing to one of the fundamental values of the Australian society, which naturally puts the carbon tax in an undesirable position.

> (8) This carbon tax proposal from the Government would be **disastrous for our democracy**. It's **disastrous for the trust** that should exist between members of parliament and their electorates.[99]

Invoking another primary referential framework of something that is "foreign" and therefore suspicious, Abbott presented the carbon tax as a "transfer of wealth" from Australia to foreign countries (see excerpts (9) and (10)). He referred to the fact that under the Labor's plan it would be possible for Australia's largest emitters to purchase emission permits from overseas (similarly to the carbon trading mechanism under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme). However, it is a very one-sided presentation of the issue as the main goal of the carbon tax is to incentivize emission reductions and if the costs of buying up overseas permits became unsustainable for some Australian businesses, they would have to find a way to emit less and thus the carbon tax would in the end fulfill its purpose. Yet, when it is taken out of context and emphasis is placed on the "foreign" aspect of the whole transaction, it evokes suspicion and mistrust, both for the scheme and for the party that enacts it.

> (9) We aren't reducing our emissions, we are just engaging in a massive **transfer of wealth** from this country to carbon traders overseas.[100]

> (10) We only achieve an 80 per cent cut in emissions by purchasing in that year alone over $150 billion worth – that's right, $150 billion – of carbon

[99] Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Speech on the Carbon Tax."
[100] Ibid.

> credits from abroad. This is by far the **biggest wealth transfer** from Australians **to foreigners** that's ever been contemplated.[101]

Moreover, the notion of *lost control* over the management of the country and its economy was brought to the discussion, calling upon the most fundamental duties of the government and implying that the party which has enacted the carbon tax is not capable of providing the most basic national, social and economic security. By contrast, the party which brings the carbon tax down will automatically provide all of those safeguards (as seen in examples (11) and (12)), which further reinforces the simplistic association that carbon tax equals an incompetent party.

> (11) ...the **functions of government** are to deliver a **stronger economy**, to provide **national security**, and to build a **stronger and more cohesive society**.
> We will deliver a stronger economy by getting taxes down, we'll **abolish the carbon tax**...[102]

> (12) We will **scrap the carbon tax**. We will get the budget back **under control**.[103]

Apart from this, the typical frame of "dire economic consequences" was used heavily in Abbott's discourse, often coupled with the frame of "unfair burden". Throughout the Liberal Party's campaign, Australia's economy was depicted as ailing – a predicament for which the carbon tax was accused of being the main culprit (see (12) and (13)). The tax was put in connection with such economic effects as fall in foreign and domestic investment, reduced credit rating, increased commodity prices and increased unemployment. Particular emphasis was placed on the decline of the mining sector (14), which is one of the largest contributors to Australia's GDP and is therefore highly cherished.

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[101] Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Pre-Election National Press Club Address."
[102] Tony Abbott, "Press Conference: Parliament House – Transcript" (Canberra, 2013), http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media/pressrel/2643205%22.
[103] Ibid.

(12) ...this tax is all **economic pain** for no environmental gain.[104]

(13) The carbon tax hits households, threatens jobs and **damages the economy**...[105]

(14) ...if the **mining boom is over**, at least in part, it's because Mr Rudd's Government has **killed it** with things like the Carbon Tax...[106]

Furthermore, since Australia's carbon price was at the time higher than that of the EU and there was no similar scheme in place in any other major economy around the world, the idea of Australia being unfairly burdened by the tax was easily sold. Sticking to the carbon price would put Australia into a competitive disadvantage in comparison to its key trading partners, according to Abbott (15). And given the fact that at the time there was no international agreement binding the world's greatest emitters to curb their GHG emissions (the Kyoto Protocol was only binding to developed countries, which excluded China, India and other major emitters), it was easy to give the impression that Australia would stand alone in its fight against climate change.[107]

The problem was posed not in a way that would ask "what can we do to make more major emitters cooperate with us to reduce our emissions together" or "how can we lead by example" as it could be under the *national action* frame found in some of the Northern European countries for example. Rather, the discursive framework of *thinking globally* was employed, which instead evokes questions such as "why should we pay for our emissions when the rest of the world does not" or "why should we be the first ones to take actions, what good is in it for us"? When framed this way, it naturally raises concerns with the public about the country's economic performance

[104] Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Speech on the Carbon Tax."
[105] Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Pre-Election National Press Club Address."
[106] "Rudd v Abbott: The Debate in Full – Transcript."
[107] This was not entirely true, since many countries had adopted carbon pricing schemes or other policy measures to limit carbon emissions prior to 2013 already. However, it is true that at international level, the negotiations were still stalling following the catasthropical UNFCCC conference in Copenhagen in 2009.

and it completely overlooks any of the opportunities of transforming the country's economy to a more low-carbon model.

> (15) Since Copenhagen, if anything, **the rest of the world** has been moving **against carbon taxes** and emissions trading schemes and in the period in which Australia intends to reduce its emissions by five per cent, China is forecast to increase its emissions by 500 per cent and India by 350 per cent.[108]

However, Abbott only ever mentioned the immediate effects of the carbon price on the economy (i.e. the temporary spike in energy prices and thus the increased costs of manufacturing), without mentioning the possible positive effects that the tax could have over the long run (collected money could be invested into clean energy subsidies, more jobs could become available in the renewable sector, Australia could get a comparative advantage in research and development of green technologies etc.). What Abbott did was therefore a classic case of selective framing, only mentioning one side of the story and omitting the other.

Furthermore, the topos of burden which he used (16) is often used as a legitimation strategy, as it triggers negative emotional reactions, making the audience feel that they are being disadvantaged or even misused. This further generates feelings of fear and/or anger. Using emotions, rather than facts, is an easy way of persuading the public that certain policy should be abolished in order to get them rid of this perceived burden and set them free. To this end, the metaphor of shackles was also invoked by Abbott, further exacerbating the sense of severity of having the carbon tax in place.

> (16) We will **unleash** the real economic potential in our mining industry by removing the **shackles** and **burdens** holding the industry back and by making the industry more productive and globally competitive.[109]

Furthermore, the topos of bureaucratic burden (17) was used, highlighting those elements of the policy, which are most likely to be the least popular with the public (more bureaucracy is rarely seen as a positive thing in any society as it costs

[108] Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Speech on the Carbon Tax."
[109] "Our Plan: Real Solutions for All Australians."

the state more money and is usually associated with inefficiency). The tax was further associated with more regulatory burdens (18) on small businesses, accused of hampering their productivity. While a nation-wide carbon tax certainly requires certain bureaucratic underpinning, it is believed by the economists[110] to be one of the least administratively demanding policies to limit emissions, as opposed to a combination of various governmental standards, regulations and pay-offs, which would arguably be the case under the Direct Action plan which Abbott proposed as a replacement to the carbon tax.[111]

> (17) ...and isn't that just what we are getting under this carbon tax proposal: more taxes, **more bureaucrats**, **more regulation**, **more burdens** on the life of the Australian people.[112]

> (18) We will cut government **red and green tape** and reduce the **regulatory burdens** that small businesses face.[113]

Moreover, the topos of burden was combined with the topos of threat and applied to the micro level as well – family economies. As with any other election topic, the closer it is to the electorate, the more attention it draws. Abbott thus used the threat of rising electricity and gas prices and consequentially rising costs of living for families across Australia to justify scrapping it. By getting rid of the tax he would bring remedies to the average Australians struggling to pay their energy bills. See examples (2) above, and (19) and (20) below.

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[110] Alex Bowen, "The Case for Carbon Pricing" (The Grantham Research Institute in Climate Change and the Environment, December 2011), http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/PB_case-carbon-pricing_Bowen.pdf.
[111] Matt Wade and Gareth Hutchens, "Tony Abbott's New Direct Action Sceptics," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, October 28, 2013, http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/tony-abbotts-new-direct-action-sceptics-20131027-2w9va.html.
[112] Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Speech on the Carbon Tax."
[113] "Our Plan: Real Solutions for All Australians."

(19) We will abolish the carbon tax – because that's the quickest way to **reduce power prices** and take the pressure off **cost of living** and **job security**.[114]

(20) We will abolish the carbon tax which will see an immediate **10 per cent reduction in electricity prices.**[115]

This threat was even further exaggerated with claims that the price of carbon will keep increasing to sky-high levels over the next decades, if it is not abolished now. Here, the carbon tax was even compared to a snake attack (21), a metaphor evoking feelings such as danger, fear or pain. Both exaggeration and the use of metaphors are common practices for speakers who base their arguments on ideological backgrounds, instead of solid facts.

(21) And the carbon tax, don't forget, just **goes up and up and up**. It's $29 a tonne in 2015, it's $37 a tonne in 2020, it's $350 a tonne in 2050, if it's not repealed. Now, it is, as I've been saying, a **python squeeze, not a cobra strike**, but it starts to hurt from day one.[116]

Moreover, Abbott did put a precise figure[117] on the yearly savings an average Australian family would make when the carbon tax is scrapped (see (22) and (23)). Framing the issue in terms of personal financial gains ("your family will be better off") naturally resonates well with the public. However, the sum Abbott used was taken out of a larger context, not taking into account for example the costs that the changing climate is imposing on the Australian public every year due to increased draughts, bush fires etc.

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[114] Tony Abbott, "Budget-in-Reply" (Canberra, 2013), http://capitalhilladvisory.com.au/budget-in-reply/.
[115] "Our Plan: Real Solutions for All Australians."
[116] Tony Abbott blames carbon tax for "uncertainty," interview by Leigh Sales, ABC, August 22, 2012, http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2012/s3573785.htm.
[117] Abbott claimed that an average household would save $550 a year, while researchers have estimated the savings to be roughly $110 per year. Source: https://theconversation.com/fact-check-will-scrapping-the-carbon-price-lower-electricity-prices-14408.

It is necessary to note that Australia did suffer from unusually high electricity prices at the time, but it was largely due to poor government regulations of the competition on the market and high network costs, rather than due to the recently introduced price on carbon. While energy prices might rise to some extent as a result of the carbon tax, it is estimated to only account for about 5% of the total cost.[118] Abbott's argument was thus factually wrong.

> (22) ...our carbon tax cuts are designed to increase jobs, to improve **job security** and help people with their **cost of living**. Abolishing the carbon tax will mean a **$550 a year saving** for the average household.[119]

> (23) We'll scrap the carbon tax so **your family** will be **$550 a year better off**.[120]

Last but not least, Abbott used the frame of "scientific uncertainty", which is typically found in the discourse of climate skeptics. On several occasions, he questioned the conclusiveness of climate science (24), which downplayed the significance of climate change as such and created the impression that ambitious climate policies such as the carbon tax were not as necessary as their proponents were presenting them to be. He supported his position with references to the Climategate affair of 2009, when thousands of email conversation among leading climate scientists were leaked. Such a frame reinforces the feeling of Australia being unfairly dragged into adopting an economy-wrecking policy, which might not even be needed.

> (24) I think people are **less anxious about climate change**... I think they're more conscious of the fact that the **argument among the experts is not quite the one-way street** that it might have seemed four or five years ago.[121]

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[118] Dylan McConnell and Alan Pears, "FactCheck: Have Power Prices Gone up 94% under Labor?," *The Conversation*, July 14, 2013, https://theconversation.com/factcheck-have-power-prices-gone-up-94-under-labor-15701.
[119] "Rudd v Abbott: The Debate in Full – Transcript."
[120] Abbott, "Tony Abbott's Campaign Launch Speech: Full Transcript."
[121] Tony Abbott interview: "The prime minister is probably a little more than first among equals," interview by Michelle Grattan, *The Conversation*, September 2, 2013,

Overall, it can be concluded that Tony Abbott used all of the typical frames discouraging climate action (as outlined in Chapter 3) as well as a number of other discursive strategies, such as topoi and metaphors, which had the effect of accentuating the negative features of the carbon tax at the expenses of the positive ones. Those who heard Abbott's speeches, interviews and debate contributions thus were more likely to view the carbon tax against a negative referential framework than they might have had otherwise. While they are not conclusive, the results of the critical discourse analysis suggest that through the use of the above-stated strategies, Abbott justified his opposition to the carbon tax so well that it eventually helped him with the federal election.

4.2.2. Research results for Canada

As mentioned previously, the question of carbon tax did not play such a significant role during the federal elections in Canada in 2008 as it did in Australia in 2013. None of the contenders claimed (as opposed to Australia) that the election would be in any way a referendum on whether the country should implement the carbon tax or not. And while Australia had already introduced the carbon tax before the election took place and the issue thus became very tangible to the public, the Canadian discussion revolved around the theoretical possibility of its introduction and was therefore slightly less intense. Nevertheless, the issue of climate change and its mitigation through the pricing of carbon emissions was present rather copiously during the pre-election debates. One commentator even called it "the first climate election" in Canada.[122] After all, one of the most discussed policy plans in the run up to the election turned out to be the Green Shift[123] (proposing the introduction of a nation-wide carbon tax), which was put forward by the Liberal Party, and to which the Conservative Party stood in vocal opposition.

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https://theconversation.com/tony-abbott-interview-the-prime-minister-is-probably-a-little-more-than-first-among-equals-17750.

[122] Jones, "Green Issues Dominate Election."

[123] For the Green Shift plan see: https://www.poltext.org/sites/poltext.org/files/plateformes/ca2008lib_plt_eng._05012009_111617.pdf.

Eleven public appearances where Stephen Harper spoke about climate policies prior to the federal election of 2008 were analyzed in the research part of this paper. These included the official pre-election leaders' debate, election rallies, speeches in the parliament, interviews and press conferences. Many of the frames and strategies present in Tony Abbott's discourse were also found in Harper's statements, however, as will be shown below, he also used some which were particularly tied into some of the national specifics of Canada such as federalism and the relations among provinces and territories.

The overall situation for Harper was also slightly different to that of Abbott, since the election took place against the backdrop of the commencing financial crisis, therefore the management of the country's economic performance was on top of the priority list for voters on both sides of the political spectrum. Harper also had a slightly more favourable starting position to Abbott, since he was seeking to be re-elected as Prime Minister, unlike Abbott who entered the electoral race as leader of the opposition and therefore had to persuade the electorate that he would do a better job at governing the country than the current office holder.

Given the fact that the Liberal Party came second in the 2008 general election, losing 18 parliamentary seats compared to its previous term, some commentators have come to the conclusion that the election results proved that the Canadian public rejected the transition towards greener policies (as embodied in the Liberal Party's Green Shift).[124] However, it is hard to determine to which extent was Harper's victory (who gained 16 seats, but was still lacking majority) based on his opposition to the proposed carbon tax and to which it was influenced by his stance towards other policies, especially economic ones.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to look at his discourse strategies and framing of the carbon tax debate, especially because it reveals a high level of inconsistency in his position towards tackling climate change. In 2007, Harper claimed that Canada would set emission reduction targets that are "ambitious, but realistic" and that under his leadership the country would "in a relatively short period of time restrain and reverse the growth of GHG emissions […] and lower Canada's emissions 20 per cent below

[124] John Williamson, "Green Shift: A Loser Worldwide" (Fraser Institute, 2008), https://www.fraserinstitute.org/article/green-shift-loser-worldwide.

2006 levels by 2020 and aim for a reduction of 60 to 70 per cent by 2050."[125] However, throughout his time in office he failed to support any concrete measures that could bring about such results, especially when it came to regulating the oil sands sector, which is one of the single largest contributors to GHG emissions in Canada. Indeed, he even withdrew the country from the Kyoto Protocol in 2011 when it became clear Canada would not be able to meet its targets under the agreement.

In the 2008 election manifesto, Harper's Conservatives proposed the introduction of a "North America-wide cap and trade system for greenhouse gases and air pollution, with implementation to occur between 2012 and 2015."[126] As will be shown further below, the inclusion of the US in any carbon pricing scheme Canada would adopt was a crucial condition for Harper. However, this plan was never realized and over time Harper's rhetoric grew more and more hostile towards any carbon pricing policies – the 2011 election manifesto no longer mentions any concrete steps for Canada to limit its production of greenhouse gases.[127]

The analysis of Harper's discourse during his campaign for the 2008 federal election documents the beginning of this change of mind, especially pointing out the discrepancies between his support for cap and trade on paper and opposition to the carbon tax in his speeches, which both employ the same basic economic principle of pricing the undesirable and incentivizing the desirable. As discussed earlier, such political double speak is dangerous for climate efforts, as it gives a false impression that something is being done while in reality the actions do not match the words.

Similarly to Abbott, Harper frequently reinforced the linkage between the Liberal Party and their carbon tax proposal, establishing a referential framework in which the two equal each other. Negative features that were being associated with the Liberal Party (or its leader Stéphane Dion) were thus through this analogy being associated with the carbon tax as well. Despite not using the "unnecessary tax" frame,

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[125] Andrew Leach, "Why Don't We Have GHG Policy for the Oil Sands? Blame Stephen Harper" (Institute for Research on Public Policy, April 14, 2015), http://policyoptions.irpp.org/2015/04/14/why-dont-we-have-ghg-policy-for-the-oil-sands-blame-stephen-harper/.

[126] "The True North Strong and Free: Stephen Harper's Plan for Canadians" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2008), http://www.itac.ca/pdf/20081007-Platform-e.pdf.

[127] "Here for Canada: Stephen Harper's Low-Tax Plan for Jobs and Economic Growth" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2011), https://www.poltext.org/sites/poltext.org/files/plateformes/can2011pc_plt_en_12072011_114959.pdf.

Harper did built his election campaign on the promise of not raising taxes,[128] which was to some extent also intended as a counter-position to the proposed carbon tax, thus equalizing it with any other types of taxes and minimizing its environmental dimension.

Harper also used the same primary referential frameworks of *trust vs. deception* (excerpt (1)) and *certainty vs. risk* (excerpt (2)). In (1) Harper referred to the promise of the Liberal Party to introduce tax breaks for individual taxpayers and small businesses in order to offset the extra expenses that would be incurred on them as a result of the carbon tax. Thus, through various tax cuts and tax credits, the final government revenue from the carbon tax would be "neutral", but larger share of the tax burden would be shifted onto the largest emitters of CO2. Harper, however, presented Dion as somebody who cannot be trusted and thus the public cannot be certain that the tax breaks would eventually be introduced (he repeatedly proclaimed his disbelief of Dion's promise to bring in the tax cuts and accused him of having "hidden agenda"[129] behind the taxes). The whole carbon tax plan was thus framed as deceptive and those advocating for it as inherently untrustworthy.

> (1) Mr. Dion has already **broken his promise**. [He said] he would not have a carbon tax [but] when he gets into office **he'll put a carbon tax** on gasoline and everything else. And it will not be revenue neutral.[130]

By extension, Harper employed the referential framework of *certainty vs. risk* in his discourse, too. Even though he did not bring the issue of national security into question (like Abbott did), Harper did suggest that under the potential government of Stéphane Dion the country's economic situation would be uncertain, if not outright catastrophic. The strong concept of *maintaining control* over the economy was evoked in Harper's speech as well (2), again linking the party which wants to introduce the carbon tax with poor economic management over the country's budget and the party which opposes it with certainty and good governance. As opposed to

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[128] See for example the English pre-election debate: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXQgqbXqggE.
[129] "Harper Takes Aim at Liberal Green Shift Policy," *CTV News*, August 15, 2008, http://www.ctvnews.ca/harper-takes-aim-at-liberal-green-shift-policy-1.316530.
[130] "Dion Introduces 'Green Shift' Carbon Tax Plan," *CBC News*, June 19, 2008, http://www.ctvnews.ca/dion-introduces-green-shift-carbon-tax-plan-1.303506.

Abbott, he could not be as concrete in his attack on Dion, since Dion had not previously led the country unlike Kevin Rudd who was the incumbent Prime Minister in Australia. Nevertheless, in time of an impending financial crisis, the public is particularly sensitive to any potential threats to their economic wellbeing and such framing is thus very powerful, even if not entirely substantiated by evidence.

> (2) There will either be Prime Minister Dion, who will tackle our economic problems by **increasing spending that we cannot afford** and increasing taxes to pay for it. Or our government, which will keep **spending under control** and keep taxes going down.[131]

Along the same line of argumentation goes the typical frame of "dire economic consequences," which was also used abundantly by Harper when talking about the Liberal Green Shift policy plan. Coupled with an extensive use of exaggeration, he for instance called the carbon tax an "economic catastrophe"[132] for Canada or labeled it "crazy economics" that would "screw" the ordinary Canadians.[133]

He also employed the topos of burden and the topos of threat. The topos of burden was not used as extensively as in Abbott's discourse and Harper refrained from using metaphors such as the shackles used by Abbott, although he did call the Green Shift a plan which would "stifle"[134] the national economy, evoking an imposed burden as well. The topos of threat was, however, much more prevalent. Harper for example suggested that the carbon tax would lead to increased interest rates (3), which would add further strain on the economy during the times of recession.

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[131] "Dion Put on Defence as Harper Renews Attacks," *CTV News*, October 9, 2008, http://www.ctvnews.ca/dion-put-on-defence-as-harper-renews-attacks-1.331468.
[132] "Liberal Carbon Tax Threatens National Unity, Economy: Harper," *The Canadian Press*, September 14, 2008, https://web.archive.org/web/20080914030144/http://canadianpress.google.com/article/ALeqM5guTSMQRJqWWNB97ASPKDGOMEpQvA.
[133] "War of Words on Green Shift," *The Star*, September 8, 2008, https://www.thestar.com/opinion/2008/09/07/war_of_words_on_green_shift.html.
[134] Chris Morris, "Liberal Green Shift Is 'Green Shaft,' Says Harper," *The Star*, August 14, 2008, https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2008/08/14/liberal_green_shift_is_green_shaft_says_harper.html.

Furthermore, Harper quoted economic models predicting[135] the carbon tax would throw the country into a major recession (4), equal to the recession of 1981 and 1982, which saw the highest rates of unemployment since the Great Depression.

Comparing a policy, which is not yet enacted, to a widely known historical event with clearly negative connotations causes public distrust or even fear of the given policy, even if the historical parallels are partially or wholly inaccurate. Yet, once such a threat is constructed, it is hard to disperse it, as people in general tend to be risk-averse and often lack full information about such complex policies as the carbon tax. It can thus be argued that voters would, on average, err on the side of caution and avoid voting for a party which proposes a supposedly hazardous policy.

> (3) If you elect Prime Minister Dion, who would impose and raise carbon taxes and run deficits, **interest rates will go up**.[136]

> (4) That modelling demonstrated very clearly that such policies [i.e. the Green Shift] would cause a **big recession** in this country – a recession **equivalent to the recession of the early 1980s**.[137]

Just like in the Australian case, the topos of threat was extended not only to the national economy as a whole, but also to the standards of living of individual citizens, and in particular middle-class families. While in Australia the main "threat" were the increasing prices of electricity (which were not entirely caused by the introduced carbon tax, as it has been explained), in Canada the threat of rising costs of living covered a wider array of goods and services (even including the barbeque). The explanation could be that while in Australia the carbon tax was already in place and some changes in prices were thus measurable (Abbott put a precise figure on the cost of carbon tax to individual families and the savings they would make without it), in

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[135] The modelling Harper used to make this analogy was found to be outdated and it did not calculate with the tax cuts that the Liberals were proposing in order to offset some of the negative effects of the new tax on carbon.
[136] "Dion Put on Defence as Harper Renews Attacks."
[137] "Green Shift Touted as Both Saviour and Damnation," *The Globe and Mail*, September 11, 2008, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/green-shift-touted-as-both-saviour-and-damnation/article1061161/.

Canada Harper could only speculate as to what exact impact on what products services would the potential carbon tax have.

Nevertheless, the topos of threat can be used also in abstract terms, since it predominantly taps into emotional reactions, not rational ones. The talks of hurting "average Canadians"[138] and making the costs of living "unbearable"[139] to low-income families resonate very well with the intended audience, even if no numbers are quoted. Harper used the typical argument of carbon tax increasing the costs of operation for large manufacturers and energy companies, who will then in turn pass it on to the consumers through increasing their prices (excerpts (5) and (6)).

> (5) Manufacturers, oil refineries, and every company that faces carbon taxes will **pass on their costs to consumers**.[140]

> (6) It will **drive up the price of everything** – transportation, groceries, electricity, heating, even propane for our BBQs. We have got to fight it with everything we've got.[141]

While it is true that the carbon tax generally leads to increased prices of fuels and electricity, it is possible to offset this effect with various corporate or personal tax breaks, thus the final added cost to the end consumer can remain minimal, while they are incentivized to use less of the CO2 intensive products. The experience from British Columbia, where the Liberal provincial government introduced a carbon tax in 2008, shows that this is exactly how the carbon tax can work, replacing the often very complicated governmental regulations and bringing down the overall CO2 emissions in an efficient manner.[142]

Interestingly, Harper did no use the "scientific uncertainty" frame when talking about climate change; that is, he did not dispute its existence. One explanation

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[138] "Dion's Green Shift Threatens National Unity: Harper," *CBC News*, September 11, 2018, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/dion-s-green-shift-threatens-national-unity-harper-1.739593.
[139] Morris, "Liberal Green Shift Is 'Green Shaft,' Says Harper."
[140] "Dion's Green Shift Threatens National Unity: Harper."
[141] Morris, "Liberal Green Shift Is 'Green Shaft,' Says Harper."
[142] Eduardo Porter, "Does a Carbon Tax Work? Ask British Columbia," *The New York Times*, March 1, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/02/business/does-a-carbon-tax-work-ask-british-columbia.html.

for this is the fact that Climategate did not take place until November 2009, which is more than a year later than the federal election in question. Similarly, the unsuccessful UNFCCC conference of parties in Copenhagen had not yet happened in 2008 and therefore there was a stronger sense of international consensus on the need to mitigate climate change. For these reasons, among others, the prevailing public opinion at the time of Harper's campaign was that climate change is a relevant problem, which requires a certain form of active response from the government.[143] Openly dismissing the evidence on climate change would therefore be politically unwise at this time.

Moreover, as mentioned previously, Harper's discourse on climate action exhibited signs of greenwashing. While in 2008 he proposed a North-American cap and trade policy to curb carbon emission, in the next election three years later, when the international situation had changed, there was no longer any mention of carbon pricing policies of any kind in the Conservative manifesto. And even in 2008, the approach he proposed to bring down Canada's carbon emissions was criticized by environmental organizations for favouring large energy corporations and not actually reducing the amount of emissions the country would produce overall.[144] For the general public, however, it seemed like he was willing to do something about the country's emissions, just not through the "crazy" carbon tax proposed by the Liberals. In the hindsight and with the knowledge of how little Harper eventually did to reduce the country's GHG emissions at the federal level, what might have seem like an inconsistency in opinions at first, now seems more and more like a deliberate manipulation.

Another strategy which can be found in Harper's discourse and which can point out that his willingness to tackle climate change might not have been genuine is the use of the *thinking globally* discursive framework. As outlined in Chapter 3, the *thinking globally* frame does not incite the need to act nationally on climate change,

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[143] "Canadian Public Opinion about Climate Change" (The Environics Institute for Survey Research, 2015), http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/downloads/2015/Environics%20Final%20Report%202015.pdf.

[144] Harper proposed the so-called intensity-based targets, which reward companies if they can reduce their emissions per unit (e.g. per barrel for oil companies). However, as long as the per unit intensity decreases, the overall emission of CO2 can go up without punishment (e.g. more barrels of oil can be produced as long as the emission intensity is kept down).

but rather to only act if other countries follow suit. In Harper's case, the other countries necessary to act were the United States and Mexico (7).

> (7) We will work with the **United States** and **Mexico** to develop and implement a **North America-wide cap and trade system** for greenhouse gases and air pollution, with implementation to occur between 2012 and 2015.[145]

In particular, the inclusion of the United States was of crucial importance for Harper, since it is by far the largest exporting market for Canada as well as its largest importer. It makes economic and environmental sense to include the largest trading partner and a direct neighbour in the cap and trade scheme, to avoid carbon leakage and fleeing of manufacturing jobs abroad. However, some authors have also argued that Harper included the condition of US cooperation in his plan out of speculation as well, hoping that it would take the US Congress too long to approve this kind of legislation and it might eventually die out on the US side (which is precisely what happened in 2010 in the US Senate).[146]

Interestingly, unlike Abbott, Harper did not make an explicit use of the *unfair burden* frame when talking about Canada adopting the cap and trade scheme, even though the insistence on US as a cooperating partner alluded to it implicitly. Similarly, the argument of loss of economic competitiveness compared to other countries without the price on carbon in place was not used either; Harper focused his economic argumentation more on the domestic side of the issue, which is closer to the electorate, rather than on the more intangible dimension of international trade.

Last but not least, Harper used a very Canada-specific strategy to legitimize his opposition to the carbon tax. In Canada, the relation between the provinces and territories and the federal government in Ottawa is a sensitive one. Provinces, especially Québec, take pride of their high level of independence and questioning the federative arrangement of the country is close to a political suicide. Therefore, when Harper said that the ultimate purpose of the tax is "get more money and power in

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[145] "The True North Strong and Free: Stephen Harper's Plan for Canadians."
[146] Jennifer Ditchburn and Graham Fox, eds., *The Harper Factor: Assessing a Prime Minister's Policy Legacy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016).

Ottawa,"[147] he hit a strong note with citizens in many of the country's regions and provinces, which resent any policies that could bring further centralization, even though it was not the purpose of the tax at all. But the topos of threat to the unity of the federation (8), the metaphor of a step in the wrong direction (9) or an outright destruction of common national progress (10) are all very powerful and once the analogy between these and the carbon tax is made, it is hard to disperse it.

> (8) The carbon tax will do more than undermine the economy – by undermining the economy and by **re-centralizing money and power in Ottawa**, it can only **undermine** the progress we have been making on **national unity**.[148]

> (9) We've gone out of our way in the last few years to get the federal government working on its own jurisdictions, respecting provincial jurisdiction, so I think this would be a **step in the wrong direction**.[149]

> (10) I tell you that this new tax on carbon is going to **destroy** all that our government has **built** in the last two and a half years.[150]

Overall, Stephen Harper's discourse on the carbon tax included all of the discouraging frames from Chapter 3, just as it was the case with Tony Abbott. However, his speech did not involve as many metaphors as Abbott's did (for example the metaphor of a snake attack, or the "disaster for democracy" analogy were not present with Harper). On the other hand, he made use of some national specifics, which are very typical for Canada (such as their sensitive relation to federalism and concentration of power in Ottawa) in order to denounce the tax plan. Nevertheless, from a discursive perspective, it can be concluded that Harper's argumentation schemes seemed slightly less elaborate and more randomized than those of Abbott, yet at the same time they showed higher levels of inconsistency and hypocrisy.

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[147] "Liberal Carbon Tax Threatens National Unity, Economy: Harper."
[148] "Dion's Green Shift Threatens National Unity: Harper."
[149] Ibid.
[150] "Green Shift Touted as Both Saviour and Damnation."

4.3. Interpretations and implications of the results

Coming back to what the research set out to discover, it can be concluded that both Harper and Abbott used both equivalence and emphasis framing in a way that highlighted negative features of the carbon tax policy and thus instigated negative reactions towards the policy in their listeners.

In both countries, the word "tax" was by far the most prevalently used one for describing the carbon pricing policies. As mentioned previously, the word "tax" is more likely to automatically evoke negative impulses in the audience that any of its other equivalents. This is mainly due to the fact that a "tax" is perceived as something aimed at individual citizens and consumers, rather than at large corporations. While those who would wish to present the policy in an attractive way could call it for example a "price on emissions" (therefore generating a feeling that something undesirable is being priced in order to get rid of it), those who do not wish to see the policy implemented would opt for the word "tax". While pricing out something undesirable and unwanted can be viewed as an attempt at making people's lives better, introducing a new tax will usually be perceived as an attempt at making people's lives worse.

Furthermore, campaigning on the ticket of raising taxes is never easy and therefore the proponents of the scheme (Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd in Australia and Stéphane Dion in Canada)[151] all tried to avoid that word as much as possible. The prevailing discourse, however, ended up calling it a "tax" in both cases – a state to which Abbott and Harper contributed significantly.

The implication of this development is that in future elections, it will be harder for anyone in Australia and Canada to campaign on the ticket of introducing a carbon pricing scheme (even a cap and trade), as they will risk sliding back to calling it a "tax" and the substance of the policy will be sidelined by the discussion about its name.

When looking for the typical frames present in climate change discourse, we can see that both Abbott and Harper used overwhelmingly the discouraging ones

[151] Julia Gillard, the former Australian Prime Minister, for example tried calling the scheme a "carbon pricing policy" when she first introduced it. However, after once agreeing in 2011 that it would be "effectively like a tax", the brand never got away. She later admitted she regretted ever calling it a "tax".

rather the encouraging ones, despite both of their parties' manifestos claiming to make climate action one of their policy priorities. Furthermore and not surprisingly, the *economic* frame dominated in their discourses over the *environmental* one, confirming previous research findings (see Way, 2013 and Christoff, 2013).

However, while in Australia it seemed more like a coordinated attack on the carbon tax, in Canada it was more randomized. Harper for example did not use the *scientific uncertainty* frame, which questions the very reason for carbon pricing policies to be put into place. Indeed, he even campaigned for the implementation of a cap and trade system together with the US and Mexico, even though it never materialized. There are two possible interpretations for this – and two subsequent implications.

Firstly, since the debate in Australia lasted longer, was more medialized and was framed as a deciding issue at the election, Abbott needed to use all of his possible "weapons" to win the self-proclaimed "war" over the carbon tax. The analogy of war is not as exaggerated as it might seem, since one political commentator called the carbon pricing a "killing field"[152] of Australian politics. Such high polarization does not bode well for climate mitigating efforts as the issues is so complex and encompasses so many causes, that the more consensus can be forged on how to tackle it, the better. Abbott did not only aim at defeating the carbon tax; he aimed at discrediting it and its proponents. By making the issue so personal and polarized at such high political level, Abbott instilled a lasting divide among the electorate of the two parties in question and thus might have done even more damage to Australia's climate efforts than what it might have initially seemed.

Some researchers have already noticed a high level of political polarization on the issue of climate change and have argued that opposition to climate science has become something akin to a "badge of honour" for far right adherents in what they argue to be part of an "Australian culture war".[153] Such antagonism might have been galvanized (intentionally or unintentionally) by some of Abbott's discourse strategies.

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[152] James West, "How the Carbon Tax Became the 'Killing Fields' of Australian Politics," *The Guardian*, September 6, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/sep/06/election-2013-carbon-price-australian-politics.

[153] Paul Mason, "Climate Scepticism Is a Far-Right Badge of Honour – Even in Sweltering Australia," *The Guardian*, February 20, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/feb/20/sweltering-aussies-rightwing-climate-of-fear.

It is very unlikely that a fixed price on carbon (or anything that could be called a tax) would be introduced any time soon, even though the current government is now tentatively starting up a cap and trade system, albeit with the prices per tonne of CO2 being very symbolic and under as little media attention as possible.[154]

In Canada, the debate in 2008 was arguably less polarized, even though it was mostly due to the fact that at the time Harper wanted to be perceived as a politician supporting climate action, just not in the way the Liberals proposed it. One of the explanations can be the fact that the public opinion was at its highest support of governmental action against climate change – it has not reached the same levels ever since.[155] Disputing the bases of climate science would thus be unwise. Moreover, since the carbon tax had not been enacted at the federal level and there were no broken promises surrounding it, Harper arguably had less "ammunition" at his hands than did Abbott to fight against it.

However, not too long after the election took place, Harper's position on climate change hardened and he eventually presided over the withdrawal from Kyoto, casting Canada into the role of an international climate pariah. In retrospect, Harper's slightly milder tone on the carbon tax thus seems to have been more of a political strategy than a genuine concern. By not completely antagonizing the supporters of the carbon tax, however, Harper left more room for future leaders to maneuver in – although with some limitations.

It has been precisely the case with the newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, whose government introduced a plan for a federal carbon pricing scheme in late 2016. It is set to come into effect in 2018, with the initial price being $10 per tonne of C02, gradually increasing to $50 per tonne by 2022. It might seem as a high number, but the regulations could be much more stringent. For instance, the emissions from the highly carbon-intensive oil sands sector will be capped at 100 MT of carbon per year – for comparison, the current emission production is 70 MT of carbon per year, so they could actually produce even more under the new climate action plan. Furthermore, due a system of subsidies in place, the real price the oil sands companies will have to pay under the scheme is estimated to be between -$0,50 to +$0,75 per

[154] The World Bank, "Pricing Carbon", 2017, http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/pricing-carbon#CarbonPricing.
[155] "Canadian Public Opinion about Climate Change."

barrel of oil.[156] At such a low price (or even in fact no price at all), the system is does not incentivize any investments into cleaner technologies, while at the same time it gives the impression that something is being done about the country's carbon emissions.

We can see that the climate policy hypocrisy that was present in Harper's early years as Prime Minister remains very much part of the Canadian politics up to date. One reason is definitely the incredible importance of the oil sands development for Canadian economy. Given the long-term nature of the oil sands excavation projects, the country needs to provide a stable environment for the investment into these projects to continue. Especially following the drops in the price of oil in recent years, no government would want to risk further endangering the investments into the sector. It is the economic reality that any leader has to deal with. However, as Harper started a trend of using double-speak in the climate policy discourse, it is easier for the politicians to continue with it even nowadays.

5. Conclusion

This study was based on the theoretical assumption that as countries progress in their material developments and acquire certain levels of material affluence, their societies should grow increasingly more concerned about non-material issues such as the quality of their natural environment or the climate. Moreover, as the Environmental Kuznets Curve suggests, once a country reaches past a certain "turning point" in its economic development, its industrial activities become less polluting even as the country's production continues to grow.

According to standard measurements of economic prosperity and resource abundance, both Canada and Australia are countries that fit the above-stated definitions and should therefore have highly environmentally-concerned societies and less polluting economies than the vast majority of the rest of the world. However, as it currently stands, they are some of the worst performing countries when it comes to cutting down on carbon emissions.

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[156] Dina Ignjatovic, "What Does the Carbon Tax Mean for the Canadian Oil Sands?" (TD Economics, November 22, 2016), https://www.td.com/document/PDF/economics/special/Canadian_Oil_Sands.pdf.

One of the reasons for this is undoubtedly their massive reliance on the exports of primary resources (coal in Australia and oil in Canada) and high percentage of energy being generated from fossil fuels. However, if the countries had leaders who were determined to take bold action against climate change, it would not be impossible even with such starting conditions.

Both Stephen Harper and Tony Abbott proclaimed, at repeated occasions, that they were serious about tackling climate change and reducing their countries' carbon emissions. They both included these pledges in their election manifestos of 2008 (Harper) and 2013 (Abbott). However, when it came to discussing the concrete climate policies that could be enacted in order to make some substantial reductions in the carbon emissions, their discourse turned significantly more antagonistic. The questions this paper has therefore asked are: How did they legitimize such a twist? What frames did they use to justify their positions?

Indeed, it is not possible to claim that the elections were decided purely on one topic (and that the topic was climate change). Every election result is an interplay of a large number of contributing factors. However, every democratic election is also a litmus paper of the general directions in which the society is headed, and looking at the winning party's discourse is a good way of seeing what kind of direction it might be.

After applying critical discourse analysis to Harper's and Abbott's statements on carbon pricing policies made during the run up to the respective elections, a rather complex combination of frames, metaphors and other discursive strategies was discovered with both. For both of them, the *economic* frame dominated over the *environmental* one, setting the overarching tone of their discourses. Out of the typical frames found in climate discourse, the most frequently used one in both cases were the *dire economic consequences* frame and related to it the *unfair burden* frame. The topos of threat of seemingly endlessly rising electricity prices and costs of living was also often employed.

Other strategies included invoking the argumentation schemes of risk, uncertainty, deception, loss of control or even threats to democracy (Abbott) and national unity (Harper). Abbott also used the frame of *scientific uncertainty* to challenge the conclusiveness of climate science and the underlying need for climate policies altogether. Both also advocated for any action to be taken only globally, with

other major developed and developing economies taking part, as opposed to Australia and Canada leading the way with their own bold national policies.

When contrasted with their official party documents and even their own statements from earlier times openly promising to take meaningful action against climate change, the disparity is striking. It is arguably due to the high levels of hypocrisy that Harper and Abbott used such a wide array of strategies aimed at legitimizing their stance towards the carbon tax, which was in many ways inconsistent with their proclaimed intentions to take climate change seriously. As a result, their discursive attacks against the carbon pricing policy were based on igniting emotions, rather than presenting facts, in order to hide this inconsistency.

Such argumentations, however, are the hardest to refute. The leaders of the opposition parties tried to disprove Abbott's and Harper's factual inaccuracies about the proposed policies, but found themselves unable to effectively counter their narratives. Researchers suggest that the most efficient frame to use when trying to generate support for climate policies is the one of *economic development* – to highlight the new jobs that can be created as a result of cleaner energy generation, the increased international competitiveness of the economy thanks to the technological advances. However, when faced with argumentations tapping into some of the primary referential frameworks such as threat or risk, even this frame will usually fall short, as it does not provoke such a strong emotional response.

If the advocates of ambitious climate policies want to counteract the discourse used by politicians like Harper and Abbott, they are faced with a stark choice of either adopting the same argumentation strategy as their opponents and use some primary referential frameworks in their advantage, or continue fighting an uneven war of emotions versus facts. With climate change debate remaining highly polarized in both of the countries, the hopes for reconciling the two sides and establishing a less heated and more constructive discussion are low. Adopting the language of the opposition, however, might not be an acceptable option for everyone. Thus, uncovering and exposing some of the discursive strategies used by those trying to obstruct any meaningful climate action might be a possible way towards a more fact-based discourse.

Resumé

Tato práce se zabývala problematikou rámování debat o klimatických politikách (konkrétně o politice daně z emisí oxidu uhličitého) v Kanadě a Austrálii. Vycházela z předpokladu, že to, v jakém referenční rámci je konkrétní politika představena následně ovlivní, jak bude přijata veřejností a zda bude úspěšně zavedena či nikoliv. Na případových studiích Kanady v roce 2008 a Austrálie v roce 2013 práce zkoumala právě tento vliv rámování ze strany konzervativních politiků Stephena Harpera a Tonyho Abbotta na celkový diskurz o tématu. K tomuto účelu bylo využito metody kritické diskurzivní analýzy, která je zvláště vhodná pro hlubší analýzu textu a mluveného slova s cílem odkrýt případné manipulativní strategie, či argumentační inkonzistence. Pro výzkum byly vybrána předvolební veřejná prohlášení obou politiků, která se nějakým způsobem věnovala politice daně z uhlíku, tedy například předvolební debaty, rozhovory, tiskové konference, projevy v parlamentu i oficiální stranické dokumenty vyjadřující se k této politice.

Při zkoumání vycházela práce z dosavadních poznatků o rámování klimatických politik, které byly popsány v předchozích výzkumech. Díky tomu bylo možné vytipovat často užívané diskurzivní rámce a rozdělit je na ty, jež podporují aktivní klimatickou politiku a na ty, jež od této politiky spíše odrazují. Příkladem pozitivního rámování podporujícího akci může být např. důraz na možné katastrofické následky neomezeného globálního oteplování (tzv. Pandořina skřínka), s tím související dopady na zdraví obyvatel, či méně hrozivý rámec všeobecného hospodářského rozvoje jakožto důsledku přechodu na nízkouhlíkovou ekonomiku. Naopak negativní rámování, jež odrazuje od jakékoliv konkrétní akce proti změnám klimatu či přímo zpochybňuje jejich existenci, využívá především argumentaci negativních následků pro ekonomiku (ať už národní, či osobní) v důsledku zvýšených cen energií. Častý je také argument nespravedlivé zátěže, tedy „proč by měla jedna země dobrovolně snižovat svojí ekonomickou konkurenceschopnost, když ostatní tak nečiní“. V neposlední řadě sem patří zpochybňování průkaznosti vědeckých důkazů, že klimatická změna v důsledku lidské aktivity vůbec probíhá.

Po aplikaci kritické diskurzivní analýzy na diskurzy Stephena Harpera a Tonyho Abbotta došla práce k závěru, že oba političtí představitelé využívali výhradně negativní rámování politiky daně z uhlíku. Diskurz Tonyho Abbotta by se

dal označit za koordinovaný útok na uhlíkovou daň. Diskurz Stephena Harpera nebyl tak propracovaným, avšak také vykazoval všechny známky negativního rámování. Celkově se dá říci, že oba politici byli „úspěšní“ v nastavení diskurzivních rámců ohledně dané politiky, jelikož v obou zemích nakonec volby vyhráli. Dodnes je debata o uhlíkové dani v těchto zemích velice polarizovaná (v Austrálii ještě více než v Kanadě) a je proto těžké najít zde konsensus napříč politickým spektrem, který je pro efektivní snižování emisí skleníkových plynů nezbytný.

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