

**COWS IN THE CITY: CANADIAN DAIRY FARMER PROTESTS IN OTTAWA**

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# Cows In the City

**Abstract**

It is not very often that you see a cow or tractor in downtown Ottawa, in front of the home of the Canadian Federal Government. However, this has happened in both 2015 and 2016 in response to international trade agreements. This study explores different factors impacting dairy farmers decisions to protest international trade agreements in Ottawa. The theoretical foundation for this research is political opportunity theory, which is further expanded by the complementary theories of multi-institutional politics perspective and resource mobilization theory. The theoretical approach is deepened through exploring the rich history of Canadian dairy and how that history informs dairy farmers material and non-material interests when understanding international trade agreements. The study uses qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews and life history interviews over two months of data collection, which in turn centred the voices and perspectives of dairy farmers. Moreover, these methods were enriched through the use of visual ethnography to elicit further emotions or perspectives from farmers through images of historic and current dairy protests. The study found that dairy farmers have concerns about the dairy industry, much of which tended to focus on their families, farms, and futures. Through the interviews, it was revealed that dairy farmers were strategic in the timing and choice to protest in Ottawa beyond location with sophisticated mobilization efforts. However, there is also significant tension the motivations for protesting and how dairy farmers interpreted the protests varied across all participants. Overall, the study concludes that protests in the future will need to adapt and change to reflect dairy farmers' vulnerabilities that could be further exacerbated by tensions within policy priorities, protest choices, and popular opinion.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Cows and tractors and protestors, oh my! When imagining what Parliament Hill looks like on a normal day, it is certain that cows and tractors are not expected. However, there have been numerous days in the past decade where cows, tractors, and protestors have created a spectacle on Parliament Hill in the name of dairy farming (Fedio 2016; Oliver, 2016). The protests often resulted in dairy farmers lining the streets of downtown Ottawa from the morning till evening for the day of the protest, many of which had left their small communities to take a stand against new and changing international trade agreements. Many of the protestors were dairy farmers of all ages and genders from the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, all wearing matching blue shirts provided by their local dairy associations, with signs in French or English asking for the government to protect dairy farming. Dairy farmers have reacted to the renegotiations of international trade agreements. The most recent protests include the renegotiations of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 2016 which resulted in a protest on Parliament Hill against changes to dairy importation and dairy tariffs. Similar protests emerged during the negotiations of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) in 2015 which threatened to change the allowed amount of dairy importation. These trade negotiations posed the potential to alter the dairy economy by allowing the importation of products and dairy that farmers perceived as undercutting the prices and competitive advantage of Canadian dairy (Pouliot, 2017; Nogueira et al., 2012; Qualman, 2007; Smith, Doyle, and Director, 2018). The reactions and protests to these international trade agreements will be explored throughout this thesis.

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Many rural areas in Canada have built their communities around agriculture and threats to the dairy industry directly threaten the viability of these communities. This work examines how dairy farmers rationalize their participation in protests and view political and media responses to their work and situates these research findings within broader academic debates on the function of rural protest, the role of farming communities in trade negotiations, and future of the Canadian dairy industry.

Small rural communities are arguably the backbone of agriculture in Canada. Many small rural communities across Canada rely on the agriculture industry, both directly and indirectly, through their livelihoods, communities, and history. Although international trade agreements happen within the largest platform in the world, their impacts are felt locally by farmers. This thesis will examine how dairy farmers view the impacts of trade agreements in relation to the economic and social health of rural communities. Their decentralized location and lack of influence in cities may help explain why provocative action from rural farmers, such as bringing cows and tractors to Parliament Hill, has captured some media attention. Cows in the city and the language used to justify their presence offer potential for understanding how dairy farmers can assert their right to the city by bringing the rural to urban Ottawa, and through this, highlight their sense of exclusion from federal politics and policy. However, very few analyses have been conducted to assess the more complex driving forces, motivations, and objectives of individuals within new and changing protest movements in agriculture (Van der Plough, 2020). In particular, a majority of research takes place outside of Canada (Kumar, 2021; Krishnamurthy, 2021; Ren, 2017; Van der Plough, 2020; and Demeulenaere, 2014) or when the focus is on Canada, it is historical (Sharp, 1948; McMath, 1995, 1974; Scott, 1977A,

Scott, 1977B and Goodwyn, 1978). In Canada, research related to dairy tends to focus on technical issues of trade agreements, dairy production, and other economic factors within the dairy industry (Roche, S., et al. 2020; Nogueira, L., et al. 2013; Rude and Henry, 2013; Mussell, Al., et al. 2013). This research aims to juxtapose this by increasing the amount of analysis on the topic of dairy protests in response to international trade agreements because international trade agreements are renegotiated frequently. Since they are renegotiated often, it is important to understand how dairy farmers have reacted in the past and may respond in the future. Moreover, the research findings can be used by government, dairy lobbies and organizations, and other agricultural commodity industries to inform future decisions and actions. This research was prompted by the consideration of themes such as the rationalization of rural / urban protests, conflicting interpretations of international trade, and the voices of dairy farmers within international trade negotiations and treaties. This is important because not all literature on urban protests can be applied to rural actors and this research provides potential insights for society at large to understand the actions of rural protestors in the city. This thesis attempts to provide context and potential answers to understand dairy farmer protests. Overall, this thesis is an explorative analysis of dairy farmers' understanding about their decision to protest, their motivations, and how other current events could potentially impact their future choices to protest.

### **1.2 Research Questions and Methods**

To situate the research within the tension between dairy farmers, the policy process, and broader society, the research questions and methods attempt to centre the perspectives and voices of the farmers themselves. This research will examine how dairy farmers

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understand themselves and their role within the large context of economic and policy decisions in Canada. To do so, this study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1) How do dairy farmers interpret trade agreements and their impact? And 2) Why have dairy farmers taken their collective protests to the city? In asking these questions, I explore the how the tensions experienced by dairy farmers, their communities, and with other actors were mobilized to protest.

To answer these questions, I will draw on qualitative research completed in 2022, which focused on the case study of Ontario dairy farmers using the 2015 and 2016 Parliament Hill protests in response to the international trade agreement renegotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement and Trans Pacific Partnership (McGregor, 2018; Fedio, 2016; Wingrove & Skerritt, 2018). Canadian dairy is a supply managed good, meaning that there are regulations and mechanisms in place that limit the production of dairy and the amount of dairy that is allowed into Canada on low tariffs or tariff free. The case study will be supported with contextual protests and history from just before the establishment of supply management since it is essential in understanding the landscape of Canadian dairy protests. In 2015, the beginning stages of renegotiation for the Trans Pacific Partnership, a trade deal for Canada and 10 Asia Pacific countries, highlighted that significant changes to dairy product importations and tariffs would be renegotiated (Government of Canada, No Date; CBC, 2015). This resulted in a protest on Parliament Hill, with farmers from eastern Ontario and Quebec arriving with their cows, tractors, and signs. Similarly, in 2016, a culmination of issues related to international trade agreements brought dairy farmers back to Parliament Hill. This included the Trans Pacific Partnership and the Comprehensive European Trade Agreement, wherein dairy farmers suffered trade

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losses and controversy over compensation of those losses (Fedio, 2016). Moreover, they were protesting the NAFTA renegotiations about dairy losses and the inclusion of powdered dairy, which is not considered a true dairy product but is marketed as one, was being imported to Canada tariff-free (Fedio, 2016). According to the Dairy Farmers of Canada when asked by journalists, they estimated 3000 dairy farmers were on Parliament Hill, with 2000 from Quebec and 1000 from Ontario participating with their cows, tractors, and matching blue shirts (Fedio, 2016). This was replicated in 2018 on a smaller scale outside of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's riding office in Quebec during the continued renegotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement (McGregor, 2018). All three protests from dairy farmers are connected to a long history of dairy protests in Canada, especially those since the establishment of supply management (Peta, 2020; Muirhead, 2014; Scullion, 2006). However, it is important to note that although these protests are similar, they are not homogenous as they are in response to different threats against supply management through international trade agreements. Their similarities, both in the proximity of timing and the merging of their concerns overlapping is the reason why the case study has grouped the 2015 and 2016 protests on international trade agreements together.

To allow for the centering of dairy farmers' voices and perspectives within their own culture, qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews and life history interviews over two months of data collection took place in 2022. These interviews also used photo elicitation to uncover interpretations, context, and meaning from the images of dairy farmer protests. Recent protests are built upon a longer period of action, wherein dairy protests have happened since before supply management in 1967 (Peta, 2020). Photo elicitation is

the process in interviews where the interview exchange is guided by photos and images to encourage an emotional and personal response from the interviewee (Lapenta, 2011). Interviews benefit from this process because the use of images supports memory retrieval and allows for interviewees to provide context which is often difficult to explain (Lapenta, 2011). As other researchers such as Schwartz have highlighted, photo elicitation challenges the presentation of “photographs as objective evidence” and supports the discussion of context, participation, and experience (Schwartz 1989). These conversations are used to examine and compare the photography presented to dairy farmers personal experience or interpretation. Furthermore, visual qualitative research and analysis have been done to examine the meaning and impact of language, rhetoric, and slogans with images from dairy farmers protests over history. Discussion was prompted by the images, aiding in the identification and analysis of discontent from dairy farmers throughout history and revealing motivations for participating in mobilize protests to urban areas. This was continued through visual analysis of images of dairy protests throughout history and discussion of changes in Chapter 5. To collect historical images, I used the online Canadian Dairy Commission Archives, the Ontario Dairy Commission archives, and newspaper archives through university libraries.

Grounding this research in local communities has aided in the uncovering of the motivations and perspectives of dairy farmers by recognizing their agency. Furthermore, the language used by interviewees during photo elicitation have unearthed interpretations and personal perspectives. Patterns of language used by dairy farmers during protests and how they talk about their representation in the media has been uncovered. This research will open the conversation about how to interpret and understand the nature of protests

within dairy farmer communities. Naming the common phrases and patterns of agrarian protest rhetoric is significant; their motivations and language must be recognized for their discontent to be understood and further explored. However, the tension of future protest actions and motivations could also be impacted by external factors outside of the dairy industry. For example, the 2022 Trucker Convoy protests which took place in Ottawa could also have implications on motivations and language used, which Chapter 5 examines as a potential factor that will impact dairy protests in the future.

### **1.3 Context and Background**

My research will examine how dairy farmers in eastern Ontario interpret, understand, and act upon the impacts of international trade policy. The literature review engages with 3 distinct areas of literature: social movement theories, impacts of international trade agreements, and dairy farming in Canada. Current literature related to dairy farming focuses on a variety of practical and technical dairy policy. In particular, current literature currently focuses on supply management, economic outlooks of the Canadian dairy industry, and best practices for dairy production (Roche, S., et al. 2020; Nogueira, L., et al. 2013; Rude and Henry, 2013; Mussell, Al., et al. 2013). Supply management is a policy tool that regulates an industry or product by stabilizing the amount of production and price, Canadian dairy is a key example of a supply managed commodity. The literature review examines and assist in answering the research questions, that help situate how dairy farmers perceive themselves and role within the broader policy arena of international trade agreements. To do so, the literature review begins by examining social



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movements and arguing that political opportunity theory, which argues that social movements purposely take action at a specific time due to a window of opportunity, is best suited to understanding the actions of dairy farmers. Moreover, it includes an exploration of literature on international relations which examines international trade deals which could discuss the loss rural Canadians would feel if supply management. Since supply management helps regulate the Canadian dairy industry and limits the importation of dairy, if it was discarded or changed there are significant impacts for people involved (Muirhead, 2013; Nogueira, L., et al. 2013; Skogstad, 2008). Furthermore, the literature review examines literature on historic dairy farmer movements, as well as connecting literature examined throughout the review to dairy farmers in Canada now.

Interesting literature regarding international trade agreements highlights how Canada uses cultural commodities legislation for protectionism policy and notes that agriculture is not legally considered a cultural commodity in Canada (Peta, 2019). Cultural commodities are items that are sold as an extension of culture both formally through regulations or informally through marketing, with a primary example of both formal and informal being French wine (Peta, 2020). In many circumstances, agriculture can be a cultural commodity, this perspective will be used in my literature to explore how other countries use this policy and perspective. Moreover, it will connect to the cultural value in which dairy farmers understand themselves and the informal means in which Canadian dairy implements cultural commodities in Canada (Peta, 2019; Charlebois, et. Al., 2021). Literature that researches dairy policy will be used to reflect and recognize the impact it has on communities and culture. This literature helps provide understanding of dairy farmers' experiences and perspectives, particularly as it relates to being excluded from

policy arenas and actors. The fieldwork findings of this study situate brings up new perspectives within the intersection of dairy studies, (Skogstad, 2008; Muirhead, 2014; Peta, 2020; Charlebois et. Al., 2021), social movements (Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Meyer and Minkhoff, 2004; Armstrong & Bernstein, 2008; Goodwin & Jasper, 2020), and international political economy (Malhotra et. Al., 2013; Dodson, 2015; Almeida & Chase-Dunn, C., 2018; De Vries et. Al., 2021; Walter, 2021).

To situate this literature and conversation locally, my research will take place within eastern Ontario, with specific emphasis on the Kingston to Ottawa region. Eastern Ontario is home to the Canadian Dairy Commission Offices, the head office of The Dairy Farmers of Canada, and as of 2020, over 750 dairy farms (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs). Possibly even more significance within the region is that since 2007, eastern Ontario has lost the largest total of dairy farmers which is more than any other region in Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, 2021). Although there are face value numbers of dairy farmers, there are also communities and families relying on the livelihoods of dairy farmers that are impacted by international trade agreements. Furthermore, in selecting eastern Ontario, I have selected an area of Ontario that has easier access and ability to attend dairy farmer protests on Parliament Hill while still have many rural communities – although attending protests when cows need to be milked does come with its own complications!

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

At a time when public space activism, the rural/urban divide, and globalization are often topics of daily discussion, a rich understanding of the dairy farmer protests provides

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an opportunity to highlight the intersection of these issues. This research explores a highly relevant topic to dairy farmers and its methods of research could possibly be applied to other situations in the future as more intersections arise and its findings can be compared to similar protests in Canada around the world. Moreover, the research can be used to inform future advocacy done by dairy farmers. In challenging the current narrative around rural politics and policy, this research centres the voices of those most impacted and discontent. Furthermore, this study supports examining dairy farmers' rationalization for protesting from a holistic perspective that includes, interacts, and engages actors, because dairy farmers are best suited to highlight their experience and concerns. Specifically, it supports that the impacts of international trade agreements need to be examined through a decentralized approach to include actors such as dairy farmers, media, and government. Through including a wide variety of actors, more perspectives and impacts of international trade could be explored. In particular, the reflections of this study can also be considered in light of future actions in response to international trade agreements.

Academically, this research is significant because it contributes to rural studies and policy literature by centring the shared experiences of dairy farmers with domestic and international trade policy. Rural voices being highlighted in academic fields such as international relations and political science enrich the way readers engage with this research. Moreover, this research is significant because it deepens literature on dairy farming, by identifying dairy farmers as not only passive receivers of policy impacts but also agents with the capacity to engage and challenge policy through action and protest. For instance, Van der Plough (2020) has suggested that farmers are often belittled and described simply as "Angry Farmers" in academic and popular literature, meriting the

further exploration of how dairy farmers describe their actions (Van der Plough, 2020). This deepening of literature is important as it ensures that dairy farmers own perspectives are highlighted within conversations about their protests and industry that otherwise would not normally include them. Although this approach could result in bias in favour of the dairy industry, this case study is not meant to support the claims or values of dairy farmers. Rather, the case study is attempting to shed light on the ways in which dairy farmers justify their actions and the varied perspectives of dairy farmers within the social movement. The visual analysis and methods aspect of this research is also meaningful and impactful because it supports deeper and more meaningful discussion guided by farmers' lived experience. Moreover, the research findings exemplify the way in which visual methods can successfully be used in social research to uncover perceptions and perspectives.

### **1.5 Organization and Logic of Thesis**

This thesis is structured into six chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter which gives readers the groundwork to understand this research and further situates this research into a broader context. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 is a literature review which examines and explores literature on the topic, while also providing an overview of trade agreement and supply management. This literature review specifically examines literature on dairy policy and how farmers are represented and discussed within these texts. After concluding the literature review, Chapter 3 provides and explains the methodological framework and practices used throughout the research, in addition to background information of the protests and timeline of actions. This chapter will outline the means of participation recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. The methodological

framework will guide the structure used in the subsequent analytical Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 examines the main findings of the research and argues that dairy farmers have a shared sense of vulnerability that starts at their farms and extends across Canada. Furthermore, Chapter 5 builds upon Chapter 4 by arguing that although there are shared feelings of vulnerability, dairy farmers have many different motivations that are changing in both historical and current contexts. The final chapter, Chapter 6, is the conclusion which summarizes the research and findings from this study by specifically highlighting that dairy farmers' concerns are directed in response to specific actions but are situated and fuelled by concerns that centre their family and community. Moreover, it provides reflections from the study about provocative protests, how they are shaping and contributing to current discussions of Canadian policy choices, and the space for future studies in protest movements.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview and Organization**

Chapter 1 established the scope of this research, situating it within the history and context of dairy farming in eastern Ontario. Chapter 2 argues that political opportunity theory and the exploration of both material and non-material interests provide a means to holistically understand the intersections of international trade agreements and social movements among Canadian dairy farmers. Moreover, the chapter identifies what theoretical approaches might be most helpful in explaining why dairy farmers take their protests to the city. There is literature on agrarian protestors and farmers' movements globally, specifically in India, China, and across Europe (e.g., Kumar, 2021; Krishnamurthy, 2021; Ren, 2017; Van der Plough, 2020; and Demeulenaere, 2014). Additional research in North America that examines farmer protest movements is predominantly historical (e.g., Sharp, 1948; McMath, 1995, 1974; Scott, 1977A, Scott, 1977B and Goodwyn, 1978). However, the circumstances wherein global or historical protests can often be differentiated from Canadian dairy protests in two regards. Firstly, Canadian dairy farmer protests interact with international trade agreements within the specific context of being a restrictive market that have quota and tariff regimes that are inherently tied directly to the welfare state (Peta, 2020). Secondly, Canadian supply management and dairy boards follow differing dairy policies and practices from international dairy practices (Skogstad, 2008; Peta, 2020; Charlebois et. Al., 2021). Both, supply management and international trade agreements are discussed in depth in Chapter 2. The organization of the literature review is oriented around establishing the foundational

literature needed to explore dairy protests within a contemporary Canadian context, which is shaped by domestic institutions that have developed and interacted with international trade policy in changing ways over time.

The literature review has been organized into four sections that seek to provide a theoretical and contextual analysis of existing literature. Section *2.1 Overview and Organization* provides a high-level synopsis and explanation of the literature review. The literature review begins with section *2.2 Protests and Social Movements*, which argues that political opportunity theory be expanded by definitions from other similar theories provides valuable insights and perspective to examining why dairy farmers take their protests to the city. Following this, section *2.3 International Trade Agreements* provides an in-depth exploration of relevant international trade agreement changes and argues that both material and non-material interests are essential to understanding how dairy farmers interpret the impact of international trade agreements. To contextualize the theories from the earlier sections, section *2.4 Canadian Dairy Farming and Protests*, examines Canadian dairy farmers' history and current landscape by arguing that the context of dairy farmers differentiates themselves from other farmer protests through connecting earlier sections' theories to the current Canadian dairy context. The final section, Section *2.5 Conclusion*, provides reflections on the discussion, gaps in the literature, and concluding thoughts.

### **2.2 Protests and Social Movements**

Protests and social movements happen across the world for many different ends. As an interdisciplinary project, this research engages with theories from various disciplines. Although the research is situated within the intersections of sociology, political science and

geography, this section is oriented and positioned within political sociological theories. This section is the foundation for supporting the engagement with the research question: *why do dairy farmers take their collective protests to the city?* and by extension it explores what theories offer suitable explanations to answer the research question. In establishing and situating the research within literature, the section argues that political opportunity theory should be expanded by aspects of supporting theories, which allows for the most holistic exploration of why dairy farmers take their collective action to the city. Although this section predominantly argues for the use of political opportunity theory, definitions from other theories are helpful and assist in understanding parts of social movements not addressed by political opportunity theory.

Political opportunity theory<sup>1</sup> emerged within sociology and political science studies in the 1950s. Its original purpose was to define social movements and understand the context within which social movements arise and the institutions with which they interact, even in democracies that would be considered healthy (Meyer, 2004). Leading scholar, Charles Tilly (1964; 1978) focused on the contexts of protests within social movements: the political, demographical, and economic contexts (Goodwin & Jasper, 2020). Context can be understood as the conditions and circumstances that inform, impact, and influence a situation. For social movements, the background creates the settings in which the social movement situates itself and arises in. These circumstances allow for factors that can determine the success and viability of the protest or movement. These contexts are state-

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<sup>1</sup> Political Opportunity Theory is known as Political Opportunity Structure or Political Process Theory. For consistency and in response to academic debate, it will be solely referred to as political opportunity theory to reflect the trend of recent scholarship. See Broe and Duyvendak (2012) for more on the debate.



centred, meaning it assumes that society is organized around and by the state, often called the polity model (Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Armstrong & Berstein, 2008). As Tilly wrote in 1986, “Increasingly the action (or, for that matter, the inaction) of large organizations and nation-states has created the threats and opportunities to which any interested actor has to respond” (Tilly, 1986, p. 77). The world outside the social movement is the space for political opportunity (Tarrow, 1994; Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). What emerges when reflecting on the space for political opportunity is the most essential aspect of political opportunity theory: what is an opportunity?

The word “opportunities” can mean many things, so much so that the term “opportunities” itself has allowed for a wide variety of scholarship. Types of opportunities collected and highlighted by Goodwin and Jasper (2020) include cultural, organizational, transnational, international, discursive, emotional, and unwanted opportunities. While interesting, the ability to be so many types of opportunity leaves room for the criticism of excessive inclusivity because it lacks criteria to exclude every single possible option for an opportunity. This criticism is often combatted by using a definition not exclusive to type but also to *time*. “The concept of windows of opportunity complies with the accepted definition of opportunities as something timely and favourable to some end or purpose. Opportunities are special because they are temporary” (Goodwin & Jasper, 2020, p. 17). Specifically, political opportunity theory is interested in the *here* and *now*, meaning they are interested in the context of the specific event which is why it is often referred to as a window of opportunity. For this case study, the *here* is Parliament Hill and the *now* is during the 2015 and 2016 protests in response to trade negotiations. It is during the 2015 and 2016 international trade deal negotiations for NAFTA (now CUSMA) and CETA that dairy

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farmers acted on how the *here* and *now* because it would impact their future. Protesting international trade agreements when they are not being negotiated would not have been an ideal time. To have more impact on policy choices, dairy farmers use the negotiation and renegotiation of trade deals that have impact on dairy directly as a window of opportunity. Dairy farmers protest on Parliament Hill because it is where the federal government operates, meaning it is where both the parliamentarians and federal government employees working on international trade deals work. It is during the 2015 and 2016 dairy protests where trade liberalization was proposing changes that could potentially erode the dairy market (The Canadian Press, 2015; Peta, 2020). Using a combination of both timing and type is helpful as it creates a means to understand why dairy farmers go to the city as a collective to protest. The timing and type contribute to the openness for protests to emerge from (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). For dairy farmers, this timing and *now* aspect are the changes in international trade agreements and the governments' interactions with them. However, the opportunity aspect of political opportunity theory also assists in answering the research question on the collective part. Changes in international trade agreements which target the sector as a whole might provide a reason for collective mobilization and shared grievances across dairy farmers. However, authors Meyers and Minkoff suggest that to develop political opportunity further, mobilization and political influence must be examined (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004).

Although focused on the strategic dilemmas and problems that protests and social movements face practically, resource mobilization theory has helpful definitions to support the use of political opportunity theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Rather than attempting to answer the *why* it attempts to answer *how*. Resource mobilization assumes that there is

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always enough discontent and grievances in society to succeed in effective social movements, organized, disposable power, and access to resources with types of resources being moral, cultural, human, material and social-organizational (Edwards & Gillham, 2013; Turner & Killian, 1972; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). In accepting this, resource mobilization also accepts that discontent can be manipulated, re-defined, or even created by other actors or organizations (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The managing of discontent highlights the existence of the social movement industry. The social movement industry is the economic activity and structures based entirely on creating social movements, and the entrepreneurial manner in which organizations or movements change and expand to acquire funds and support (Edwards & Gillham, 2013; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Moreover, social movement industries have dramatically changed over the course of history. In 2022, the social movement industry includes the entrenched nature of social media, consultancy firms for communication management, and online fundraising platforms. This is relevant to dairy farmers because of the many non-individual actors such as the dairy marketing boards across the provinces that interact with dairy protests. The dairy marketing boards are organizations paid for by dairy farmers to lobby, regulate and advertise dairy on their behalf. resource mobilization theory defines social movements as a set of preferences oriented around social change (Edwards & Gillham, 2013; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Using this definition of social movements, resource mobilization theory categorizes three types of individuals: *adherents* who share the social change preferences, *constituents* who contribute resources to the movement, and *bystanders* who watch the movement (Edwards & Gillham, 2013). In the case of dairy farmers, the adherents are dairy farmers, their families and those who have a vested industry in the dairy industry such as dairy feed

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suppliers and veterinarians who take action by protesting on parliament hill. Uniquely for this specific case study, every dairy farmer is also considered a constituent since they are required to pay the dairy marketing boards and thus contributing resources. Bystanders are the general Canadian public and even Members of Parliament, who the dairy farmers and their supporters are trying to convince through protest to that Canadian dairy needs to be protected. How social movements make bystanders into constituents and constituents into adherents is extremely important because this process increases access to resources for a social movement. The mechanisms of resource access are self-production, aggregation, coaptation/appropriation, and patronage, which for dairy farmers is often through self-production by paying their dairy marketing board fees monthly and by using the others as supplementals. In pooling these resources, social movements must strategically coordinate and convert the resources to be useable to create collective action (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). The converting of resources is considered the mobilization process, including the mobilization of money, mobilization of labour, creation or existence of movement structures, and organization/capacity building (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). For dairy farmers, a majority of this mobilization is undertaken by the dairy marketing boards on the local scale through the organization of protests and the buses that take farmers to the protests. The dairy boards collect financial resources from the dairy farmers fees that are paid to the boards to do advertising, lobbying, and regulation work. Moreover, their resources of individuals often include the local volunteers on the dairy boards, who mobilize their local network of dairy farmers and those who support the dairy industry.

Using the resource mobilization assumption of stable levels of discontent and grievances in society, political opportunity theory is used to help explain why dairy farmers

take their protests to the city. As argued in Chapter 4, the reason farmers take their protests to the city is not exclusively and entirely due to increased levels of discontent; instead, it is an opportunity for dairy farmers to respond and act, which causes the social movement to mobilize around. Specifically, these opportunities are often indicated by the news cycles during trade deal negotiations that dairy farming will take a financial hit (The Canadian Press, 2015). Moreover, its definition of different individuals provides a means to categorize dairy farmers, community members, the dairy boards, and so on as actors within the social movement. Resource mobilization also supports political opportunity in examining institutions or organizations outside of the state and polity model.

To further expand the polity of political opportunity theory and push its understanding, I have selected multi-institutional politics perspectives, which argues that exploring relationships of domination and challenges to domination are paramount to the scholarship. Likewise, its definition of society impacts its understanding of domination. Friedland et. Al., (1991) contend that society is multi-institutional, with central institutions of the West including the “capitalist market, bureaucratic state, democracy, nuclear family, and Christian religion” (Friedland et. Al., 1991, p. 232). Instead of assuming which type of institution is most important, this approach views institutions as nested and overlapping, while also existing in material and symbolic ways (Armstrong & Bernstein, 2008). Using this definition to expand political opportunity theory allows for exploring grievances and conflict not exclusively directed at the state. Understanding the nested and overlapping nature of institutions is especially prominent for dairy farmers, where there are several layers of institutions interacting and impacting their industry. Within the dairy industry, dairy farmers interact with regional, provincial, and federal dairy marketing boards, which

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are in charge of the advertisement and management of dairy politics. For this case study, there are the individual farmers regional or municipal dairy board such as the Leeds and Grenville Dairy Board, Dairy Farmers of Ontario, and Dairy Farmers of Canada. The geography of the case study can be seen in Appendix Item A. These different institutions all interact with federal and provincial departments and legislative offices. Provincially, this means interacting with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and their local Member of Provincial Parliament. Federally, institutions include the Canadian Dairy Commission which determines dairy pricing, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Global Affairs Canada which negotiates trade deals, and their respective ministers, deputy ministers, and parliamentary secretaries. Additionally, for the federal government there is also interaction with the shadow cabinet ministers and their political parties for the same files. Moreover, all three of these organizations interact across levels and layers of the political institutions. Extending beyond these institutions with this definition of society informs the conception of a social movement, meaning a social movement is a collective action with an ability to organize outside of institutions that defend domination and the status quo (Snow, 2004; Armstrong & Bernstein, 2008).

The multi-institutional politics perspective understands politics in a decentralized and Foucauldian way, wherein all types of institutions are political, and power is not localized within the state (Foucault, 1980; Armstrong & Bernstein, 2008). The multi-institutional politics perspective recognizes that most people are active or, at the very least potential social movement participants (Armstrong & Bernstein, 2008). It emphasizes the importance of challengers, who are often linked or involved in the institution whose power is being questioned. These actors are insiders with knowledge of vulnerabilities,

expectations, and points of contention to navigate the arena successfully. This theory is especially important as authors such as Meyer and Minkhoff have advocated for the expansion of political opportunity theory through the addition of other theories. For this case study, multi-institutional politics perspectives and resource mobilization assist in doing so.

As all three theories suggested, context is essential. While the discussed theories have merit and value within the scholarship, not all their theoretical focuses and outcomes fit the scope of this research project. Due to their different foci the definitions and specific aspects of their theories support a well-rounded understanding of the dairy farmer protestors. This section is considering what theoretical approaches might be most helpful establishing the foundational approach to answering why dairy farmers take their protests to cities? – emphasis on the *why*. Political opportunity theory provides the best means to answer the *why* because of its approach to understanding the broader political scene protests are situated in, and context-based answers.

Focusing on the opportunity and recognizing that the opportunity may not entirely define their discontent is insightful, especially for this case study. This is further supported by resource mobilization concepts of understanding that there are always grievances present in social protests, which can be engaged in various ways. In particular, the grievances of individuals can also be directed at non-state institutions using the multi-institutional politics model. Using political opportunity theory with resource mobilization definitions of adherents, constituents, and bystanders can also help examine their protests' rural and urban aspects, wherein the selection of city dwellers as bystanders is purposeful. Going forward, political opportunity theory with definitions and aspects of resource

mobilization theory and multi-institutional politics perspectives are used in further analytical chapters to examine Canadian dairy farmers who protest.

### **2.3 International Trade Agreements**

International trade agreements are an important aspect of our current global landscape. Although trade agreements are normally at the international scale between nation-states, their impacts are felt locally. International trade agreements are felt when shopping at the grocery store, in investments, and even on farms. Exploring how international trade agreements impact people and for this case, dairy farmers, is essential in understanding their actions and responses. This section is oriented by attempting to identify what theoretical approaches are helpful in analyzing and understanding dairy farmer interpretations of trade agreements and their impact. Moreover, the section focuses on the micro scale concerns of dairy farmers. Following this, to properly explore and answer this question, political economy and globalization are examined. Although political economy and globalization happen on the macro scale, it is essential to understand their functionality, purpose, and because it is the macro scale that dairy farmers interpretations are responding to on the micro scale. To do so the section situates dairy farmers institutions, trade mechanisms that impact the industry, and supply management – this context is essential to understand the entire sections discussion of international trade agreements and their impacts. The discussion is followed by exploring material and non-material impacts. This section argues that both material and non-material impacts are important, rather than selecting between material and non-material impacts. Moreover, it argues the relevance of the scholarship approach attempting to understand why low visibility issues with



globalization, that otherwise would not receive attention, become noticed (Walter, 2021). Most of the literature on international trade agreements exists within political science, economics, and international relations (Milner, 1999). There is a significant convergence of this scholarship within international political economy; as a result, this section of literature is situated within international political economy (Berger, 2000). However, to situate this literature one must first understand Canadian dairy supply management and its mechanisms within international trade agreements.

Canadian dairy is a heavily regulated industry, that abides by supply management rules through a marketing system. Supply management is a regulatory framework that is used in Canadian agriculture for dairy, poultry, and eggs. Supply management was first introduced to in Ontario and Quebec during the 1960's in response to instability for farmers incomes, prices, and in interprovincial trade agreements (Heminthavong, 2018; National Farmers Union, n.d.). This instability resulted in the creation of the Canadian Dairy Commission Act in 1966, with some revisions resulting in Canada's current supply management's system being introduced in 1972 with the Farm Product Marketing Agencies Act. The Parliamentary Library of Canada's backgrounder on supply management for parliamentarians breaks down supply management into three pillars: production control, pricing mechanisms, and import control (Heminthavong, 2018).

The first pillar of supply management is production control, which ensures the stability of prices by preventing surpluses and shortages (Heminthavong, 2018). For dairy farming, production control means not producing or creating excess milk beyond the market demands (Heminthavong, 2018; National Farmers Union, n.d.). Excess milk that was not sold, used to be thrown out since it is a perishable good (National Farmers Union,

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n.d.). To implement production control, a marketing system is used. The dairy marketing system is created of provincial dairy marketing boards in charge of buying and selling the dairy produced. To ensure there is not over or under production, the provincial dairy boards use a quota system that determines their daily kilograms of butterfat production (Heminthavong, 2018). There is a minimum amount of quota farms must have to operate and sell dairy, with the purchase and sales of quota also being organized by the provincial dairy boards (Heminthavong, 2018; National Farmers Union, n.d.). After the production of dairy as determined by their quota amount, dairy from the farms is collected and then sold, which is then subject to the pricing control.

The second pillar of supply management is pricing control, which is implemented through the guarantying of prices farmers get for their product. This is done by applying a costing formula that considers dairy farmers inputs (National Farmers Union, n.d.). This means dairy farmers sell milk for a minimum price based on the cost of their production market conditions and production costs. For dairy farmers, their production cost includes inputs such as gas, equipment, and feed to receive a stable income (Heminthavong, 2018). This price is considered the farm-gate price, which is negotiated by the provincial dairy boards and does not directly translate in the price seen at grocery stores (Heminthavong, 2018; National Farmers Union, n.d.). The price control mechanism is often debated for its impact on consumers, with some arguing that it provides stability while others argue that it forces consumers to pay higher prices (Heminthavong, 2018).

The third pillar of supply management is import control, which limits the importation of dairy into Canada that enter under low or free tariff rates (National Farmers Union, n.d.; Heminthavong, 2018). The limiting of importation is done through a

mechanism called “Tariff Rate Quotas” (National Farmers Union, n.d.). The government of Canada defines a tariff rate quota as “A quota that establishes a limit on the quantity of a product that may be imported at a lower (within access) rate of duty but places no limit on the amount of product that may be imported at a higher (over access) rate of duty.” (Government of Canada, n.d., sec. 1.). An example of how import control translates to the products available in grocery stores, if you go to a grocery store in Canada, an overwhelming majority of the dairy products on shelves will be Canadian and have similar prices. If you go outside of Canada, the dairy products are more likely to be from a variety of countries with a variety of prices. However, import controls are changing with international trade agreements.

Although created as a means to have stability within Canada, it has also brought forward instability during international trade agreements. Canada has been successful in its effort to protect its supply management system during previous of international trade agreements (Heminthavong, 2018). However, recently agreements such as the Canada – United States – Mexico Agreement (CUSMA, Formerly NAFTA), increases the amount of dairy import quotas and other supply managed products (Heminthavong, 2018). The Library of Parliament background paper highlights that:

Canada will grant the United States increased access to supply-managed products in Canada. Canada will also increase its dairy import quotas by 500% in the sixth year after the Agreement comes into force, and then provide a 1% annual incremental increase thereafter until the 19th year. (Heminthavong, 2018, sec. 4)

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This is a significant increase, and when reflecting on the example of grocery store products mentioned earlier, the likelihood of dairy products from Mexico or the United States being in Canadian grocery stores is increasing.

There have been three recent trade agreements in the last decade that have been of particular interest to dairy farmers with overlapping timelines starting in 2014 under Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party of Canada majority government during which negotiations began. The first trade agreement was CETA, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with the European Union which was negotiated and finalized in 2014, it included increasing European access to Canada's dairy market with fine chesses (Government of Canada, 2021A). In particular, "as part of this agreement, Canada allowed for 17.7 million kilograms of cheese to enter the domestic dairy market, duty-free, through the allocation of Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ)." (Dairy Processors Association, n.d.). As CETA went through legal review and translation, negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership continued with news reporting during announcing in the fall of 2015 discussions included demands from other countries for import quota's higher than CETA (The Canadian Press, 2015). On the eve of the TPP potentially being confirmed and finalized, dairy farmers protested on Parliament Hill (CBC News, 2015). Some reporters even noted that downtown Ottawa smelled of fertilizer from their tractors (CBC News, 2015). Images from this protest can be seen in Section 3.8 in Image 5, 6, and 7. Six weeks after the 2015 Parliamentary dairy protests a federal election took place. This election ended Prime Minister Harper's majority and brought in a new Liberal Government majority under Justin Trudeau. During this election, the Dairy Farmers of Canada had an extensive

“Federal Election Kit” with material for dairy farmers to send to their potential Members of Parliament (Dairy Farmers of Canada, 2015).

After being elected Prime Minister, Trudeau also began undertaking renegotiations of the North American Free Trade agreement. NAFTA brought forward the potential for dairy products from the United States to enter Canada. Moreover, the trade agreement was an opportunity to end the importation of diafiltered milk, also known as powdered dairy entering from the United States (Fedio, 2016). At the same time in 2016 the TPP and NAFTA were both being negotiated (Fedio, 2016; CBC News, 2015). During this time, negotiations continued, and the Dairy Farmers of Canada organized a protest on World Milk Day, June 1<sup>st</sup>. This protest had an estimated 3000 dairy farmers with many signs about international trade agreements (Fedio, 2016). Images of this protest can be seen in Section 3.8 in Images 8, 9, and 10. This protest was specifically responding to NAFTA negotiations and their demands for compensation related to CETA and the TPP.

By the fall of 2016, CETA was officially signed by Prime Minister Trudeau and within a month, an initial compensation package for dairy farmers was announced (McGregor, 2016). The compensation package at the time was worth \$350 million dollars to support innovation and modernization on farms. During an announcement for the compensation, federal agriculture Minister McCauley said that the “new assistance package was designed based on what the government heard from the dairy sector during consultations in recent months.” (McGregor, 2016). Minister McCauley’s quote highlights the special role dairy marketing boards play in addition to the protestors. After the signing of CETA, the TPP would eventually become the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) after President Donald Trump pulled out

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of the deal in 2017. CPTPP was eventually signed in 2018 as was CUSMA (Formerly NAFTA) (Government of Canada, 2021C). The Dairy Farmers of Canada highlighted that these three trade agreements “represent an annual perpetual loss of \$450 million in revenues for dairy producers” (Dairy Farmers of Canada, 2021B, p.g. 2). Moreover, this loss can be further understood through percentages of market shares. This is summarized well by Charlebois et. al when writing:

The CPTPP has cost the industry 3.25% of its market (CPTPP, 2020), CETA consumes an additional 1.3% of the market, and CUSMA recently gave an additional 0.5% access to American dairy farmers (who already receive 3% of Canada’s market). The combined effect of these free trade agreements will harm the industry in the short-term by 8.05% of the Canadian domestic market, limiting domestic production quotas, and taking revenue away from Canadian dairy farms. (Charlebois, et. Al., 2021, p. 2)

In total to compensate dairy farmers for the financial impacts of international trade agreements, the Government of Canada has created several programs and means for funds (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2022A). Starting in 2019, the Government of Canada has had two significant compensation announcements. The Dairy Direct Payment Program is a direct result of CETA and CPTPP agreements which in total dairy farmers will directly receive a \$1.75 billion dollars and \$250 million in innovation investment funding (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2022A). As a result of CUSMA, the Government of Canada announced in 2022 that dairy farmers would be receiving \$1.2 billion dollars as compensation (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2022B; Government of Canada, 2022). As explored through the detailed explanations of CETA, CPTPP, and CUSMA (NAFTA),

it is the relationships between dairy farmers, the Government of Canada, and international trading partners that interests political economy literature.

Political economy studies the relationships between the markets and state structures it creates with society and individuals. These relationships often discuss labour, market value, societal impacts of economic choices, or power dynamics in the economy. Political economy is an old tradition of scholarship, with the likes of Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, and Adam Smith having written on it. In situating this research within international political economy, it is specifically interested in the relationship created through the state as explored in *section 2.2 Protests and Social Movements*.

A component of political economy are international trade agreements, an often mentioned but very contentious process for countries regulate the buying and sell resources. A majority of international trade agreements happen globally involving countries that are members of the World Trade Organization. This research focuses on Canadian bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements that directly impact dairy, which happen within the World Trade Organization frameworks. Free trade agreements are “a treaty between two or more countries under which all tariffs are eliminated on goods produced in member countries while tariffs on trade with non-member countries are maintained.” (Athukorala, 2020, p 13). However, in practice, many free trade agreements have exceptions where tariffs continue. For proponents, the removal of tariffs is significant because they help create open market competition, meaning consumers get better prices and producers are often forced to lower their price. As mentioned earlier, in recent years, Canada has signed three free trade agreements with impacts to dairy: The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA, signed 2016 and provisional force 2017) with the European Union, The

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP, signed and entered force in 2018), and The Canada–USA–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA, signed 2018 and entered force 2020) (Charlebois, et. Al., 2021, p. 2; Heminthavong, 2018). Although these trade agreements were signed and entered force in dates ranging from 2016 to 2020, negotiations for these trade agreements had begun years before. Negotiations are what that provide windows of opportunities for dairy farmers to take action, as it is a time where things have not been officially decided and thus, they must act before they are signed. International trade agreements are also symbolic because of the way in which they represent intentional partnerships and cooperation between nation-states. Moreover, their symbolic nature also happens beyond the global at the local level. Domestically countries decisions during trade agreements signify and symbolize the government's priorities, which have local level impacts.

When exploring the types of impacts and interests involved in international trade agreements, international trade agreement literature generally agrees upon two types: material and non-material (Walter, 2021). Material interests are the economic and financial aspects such as income, job viability, and market choice. While non-material interests are the social, cultural, and familial priorities and perspectives of an individual such as values, language, and even norms. These interests and impacts are significant ways to understand how society and individuals understand and interact with international trade agreements. International trade agreements can pose a threat to existing economic structures and, by extension, the groups that rely on their protections and structure (Almeida & Chase-Dunn, C., 2018). These impacts and threats create what are sometimes depicted as international trade agreements ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ (Walter, 2021; Almeida & Chase-Dunn, C., 2018).



A significant amount of literature that examines material, non-material, or a combination of both is done in relation to backlash against globalization (Walter, 2021; Mansfield, Milner, H. V., & Rudra, N., 2021). Globalization is the “deepening international integration that encompasses information exchange, world cultural and policy diffusion, and the interdependence of trade and production and how these relationships develop and unfold within nation-states.” (Almeida & Chase-Dunn, C., 2018, p. 190). Using this definition, there are several distinct approaches to studying, questioning, and understanding globalization. How material and non-material impacts relate to the backlash to globalization, has been explored widely through topics such as authoritarianism, cultural grievances, or strengthening democracies (Walter, 2021; Ballard-Rosa C. et. Al., 2021; Carreras et. Al., 2019; Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014). Another explores what the material and non-material motivations promote and what the world would be like if backlash against globalization was successful with the mass implementation of protectionist or nationalist policies (e.g., De Vries, 2018). The approach my research is undertaking is one that questions when and how previously low visibility issues and interests with globalization become noticeable (Walter, 2021; De Vries et. Al., 2021). This last approach is fundamental to this research. This approach of questioning emphasizes the *why*, which connects to political opportunity theory by emphasizing the importance of why dairy farmers protest on parliament hill and when they do so. Moreover, the approach aids in the use of political opportunity theory by in providing an analytical lens to understanding why dairy farmers are responding to a global issue for local concerns by and thus assisting in establishing the theoretical foundation needed to answer the research question of “*Why do dairy farmers take their collective protests to the city?*”. Dairy farmers are responding to

global events for its impact on their local and daily lives, which is why this approach can be used to understand and categorize how dairy farmers interpret trade agreements and their impacts. This section argued for importance of material and non-material interests and impacts, the next section explores both individually.

The impacts of international trade agreements can be material and immaterial, however both are important to understanding the impact of international trade agreements (Walter, 2021). Often referred to as “materialists,” this traditional literature perspective is concerned with the material, also known as economic, impacts of international trade. For dairy farmers, materialists would be concerned with their loss of market growth or the value of their investment in the industry. While the immaterial interests would be the loss of community, concerns about family success, and even threats to the culture of small farming communities. This perspective represents the self-interests of individuals, which much of traditional economic literature is based on. Generally, the ‘winners’ of international trade are consumers who are expected to gain improved material interests through lower costs, increased choice and purchasing power. However, for the ‘losers’ of international trade, studies are not just concerned with actual outcome and impact; they are additionally concerned with perceived threats. Grievances caused by material concerns can cause conflict, especially during times of economic scarcity (Golder, 2016). Groups more likely to experience negative material impacts are those involved in industries exposed to import competition, increased offshoring, and those in low-skilled occupations (Walter, 2021). However, while large-scale material impacts are sometimes viewed as easy to calculate, this is more difficult to do so on an individual level (Walter, 2021; Malhotra et. Al., 2013).

This highlights the importance of hearing directly from individuals and exploring the circumstances they are in.

Unlike material impacts, non-material impacts at the individual level are harder to measure precisely (Walter, 2021). Non-material impacts and interests are the beliefs and values of identity, ideology, culture, or non-economic concerns such as values and traditions (Walter, 2021). Rather than economic concerns, non-material interests additionally include predispositions such as nationalism, prejudice, ethnocentrism, and cosmopolitanism (Sabet-Esfahani, 2014). The value of exploring non-material impacts is that “cultural values can provide a prism through which economic developments are interpreted” (Walter, 2021, p. 430). Non-material impacts and interests are context dependent. This means the actions they support to protect or uphold, differ depending on whose interests are being examined. Literature on non-material interests and impacts of globalization include topics such as national sovereignty, right-wing authoritarianism, negative sociotropic effects, and the environment (Ecker-Ehrhardt, 2014; Jedinger, & Burger, 2020; Mansfield & Mutz, 2009; Duina, 2019).

Government responses to material and non-material interests and impacts often happen through protectionism measures. As described earlier, Canadian protectionist measures happen through mechanisms such as tariff rate quotas, which uses quota to limit the amount of free trade important on specific products. After going over the quota limits, products are charged a higher tariff rate rather than the free or low tariff rate. However, there is an emerging response from non-governmental actors, often those within the business sector that is particular to non-material interests. This response is the commodification of culture to mitigate impacts and promote interests (Gottdiener, 2000).

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The commodification of culture is a process by which products or items are sold as an extension or expression of culture. Culture commodification often happens for food because “They signify lifestyle, celebration and ritual, nutritional concerns, and personal, ethnic, regional, and national identities” (Lind & Barham, 2004, p. 47). An example of cultural commodification is geographical indicators on French wine labels used as an extension to French culture (Peta, 2020). Cultural commodities are different for the consumer and producers: for consumers, it uses purchasing power aligned with their non-material interests, producers, it is a means to protect their interests (Gottdiener, 2000; Lind & Barham, 2004; Peta, 2019). However, cultural commodity protections can also be used to protect the material interest of a cultural item. Within Dairy farming, cultural commodities have arisen through the use of emblems and symbols such as the blue cow, that indicate a product is made in Canada. Although this is not a legal definition of cultural commodities, the dairy industry is using practices and tools to replicate this in Canada (Peta, 2019; Charlebois et. Al., 2021). Moreover, dairy farmers also tend to use other cultural commodities that are symbols to indicate local farming or their association with local farming, both on products and in communities. More of these specific symbols and ideas are discussed in the next section of the literature review and during the analytical chapters. In a world where so much is commodified, separating material and non-material interests is difficult.

Emphasizing the importance of material and non-material interests and impacts is significant. In recognizing both material and non-material interests allow individual actors to personally identify their personal concerns with international trade agreements even if they are a combination of both kinds. During interviews, dairy farmers did not identify their

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concerns as material or non-material, rather they told stories that exemplified how both interacted with each other and were impacting them. By recognizing the varying degree in which dairy farmers perspectives and interests could differ from other movement supporters, assists in describing the wide variety of perspectives involved. For dairy farmers, this means that individual they may have both material and non-material interests that motivate their actions. Rather than selecting a specific reason for dairy farmers' protests such as lower prices or rural community decline, this categorization supports exploring a broader range of potential motivations and how different motivations interact with each other. Moreover, it emphasizes differing perspectives within the movement from different actors and provides a way to understand these differences as motivated by material or non-material factors. Political opportunity and social movement theories also examine different values and motivations. This convergence with political opportunity theory connects to its importance, wherein these interests and impacts of dairy farmers have existed far before modern protests and this case studies very context specific. Political opportunity theory argues that these non-visible issues take hold of opportunities that arise and take advantage of them for action to make their issue noticeable (De Vries et. Al., 2021). Moreover, it connects with a larger growing phenomenon of protesting against globalization and how global issues have local impacts (Dodson, 2015). With the focus on context and how different types of interests can provide a prism of understanding, it recognizes the interconnected and nested nature of these issues within policy actors and arenas. Overall, understanding material and non-material interests through the approach of political opportunity and timing is extremely relevant while still providing a means to explore conditions and circumstances.

## 2.4 Canadian Dairy Farming and Protests

This section provides an overview to the Canadian dairy industry, protests, and the theories used in earlier sections. It argues that literature on global dairy protests lacks a similar English, Western, and historical context to Canada for comparison and analysis, requiring its analysis to be done using political opportunity theory and the approach of understanding material and non-material interests. This section starts by examining Canadian dairy farming history, supply management, and areas of interest in current literature.

Canada's dairy sector is a historied, both culturally and economically.<sup>2</sup> Before 1900, Canada's dairy industry introduced the factory system for dairy products and predominantly serviced Great Britain due to American tariffs on dairy and cattle (Peta, 2020; Innis et. al., 2018). By the early 1900s, exports were declining, consumption was flatlining and competition was increasing on the international market. This led to attempts to regulate the dairy industry in Canada (Peta, 2020; Innis et. al., 2018, McCormick, 1968). During the 1930s, changes to global tariffs and quotas outside of Canada, meant that exported dairy was extremely limited, while Canadian dairy legislation and decentralization gave rise to provincial dairy boards (Peta, 2020; Muirhead, 2014). Following these changes, multiple attempts were made to protect the market within Canada as dairy farmers struggled to make stable income; the Agriculture Stabilization Act was introduced in the 1950 to provide financial support to dairy producers who were struggling to make stable incomes (Peta, 2020; Muirhead, 2014). However, this stabilization of income did not support

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<sup>2</sup> This section provides a brief overview of the history of the industry, for a more in-depth discussion of Canadian dairy history, the author recommends McCormick (1968) and Innis et. al., (2018).

innovation and resulted in other crises (Peta, 2020). In 1960s, the Canadian Dairy Commission was established as a crown corporation in order to address the over production and insufficient prices of dairy in Canada (Muirhead, 2014). The Canadian Dairy Commission was first created to help with the coordination of dairy policy but did not properly address the structural market concerns creating insufficient income. The creation of the Canadian Dairy Commission did not calm the fears and concerns of dairy farmers who wanted structural changes, and in 1967, 10,000 dairy farmers stormed Parliament Hill (Rusk, 1967). The protestors broke through the front doors of Parliament, resulting in “probably the first time the doors to the centre block have been locked against Canadians” (Rusk, 1967, p. 1). As a result, the 1970s brought forward the implementation of supply management, which structurally addressed the concerns over pricing by regulating the price, production, and importation of dairy. This was done through the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act first implemented in 1972, which was the legal and legislative means that instituted supply management in Canada (Heminthavong, 2018).

The Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act had the power to authorize the establishment of supply management. This was given retroactively to the Canadian Dairy Commission that was created in 1966 (Heminthavong, 2018). In turn this created more subsidies, which were designed to support and stabilize the income of dairy farmers (Peta, 2020). Explained by Peta (2020) below:

As a result of the establishment of supply management, dairy was no longer just a commodity, but rather became an agricultural product that was associated with the economic well-being of the producer and the emergence of the Canadian welfare state in the 1960s. (Peta, 2020, p. 43)

However, in an attempt to stabilize the dairy industry through supply management and reduce excess quota on the market, quota cuts late in 1972 brought dairy farmers back to Parliament Hill in significant numbers (Scullion, 2006). It is estimated again that almost 10,000 dairy farmers protested on Parliament Hill about these quota cuts (Scullion, 2006). The protest resulted in some protesters throwing powdered dairy on the federal agriculture minister. The Vice President of the Canadian Dairy Commission at the time is quoted saying “The 1976 quota cuts were a temporary disaster. The cuts were very harsh and negative to a relatively new system.” (Scullion, 2006). The 1972 protests can be seen in section 3.8 in images 2 and 3. The introduction of supply management is essential to this literature and situation in which dairy farmers in Canada find themselves.

As a crown corporation, the Canadian Dairy Commission oversees the implementation and frameworks of dairy supply management. Supply management is a means to regulate, stabilize, and ensure the income of producers. In Canada, supply management it is used for dairy and poultry (Cardwell, R, Lawley, C. & Xiang, D.,2015; Peta, 2020). Although similar in name, Canada’s now defunct Wheat Board, was not a form of supply management, rather a pooling agency to sell wheat without limits or quotas on supply creation (Wolf., et. Al., 2014). In Canada, its original form was quantitative measures such as limited external market access and linking domestic supply and demand (Peta, 2020). Today, supply management in Canada is based on a production quota system, wherein the Canadian Milk Supply Management Committee (CMSMC) determines a consumer price for dairy based on demand and cost inputs from producers (Charlebois et. Al., 2021). The Canadian Dairy Commission chairs the Canadian Milk Supply Management Committee, which is comprised of provincial delegates from dairy marketing



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boards (Charlebois et. Al., 2021). The quotas are given to the provincial dairy marketing boards to be distributed to farmers (Charlebois et. Al., 2021). Supply management strategies were popular; however, countries such as Australia, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the European Union have gotten rid of them (Charlebois et. Al., 2021). A significant reason for the removal of supply management internationally is directly tied to pressures for free trade agreements. With other countries successfully phasing out supply management, Canada's current policies are often under attack by proponents of free trade during trade agreements to be removed to ensure international dairy access to the Canadian market. The history and legislative construction of supply management for dairy farming in Canada has informed, shaped, and framed how current dairy farmers understand and interpret government trade policy. Moreover, this history informs the interests and impacts dairy farmers may feel are at risk as international trade agreements are introduced and changed.

Although Canada has used tariffs and supply management strategies protectionist such as the tariff rate quotas, production control, and pricing mechanisms to protect dairy in the past. The pressure to remove tariffs and supply management are intense in relation to international trade agreements. Other countries have significant protectionist measures on agriculture, such as Russia, Taiwan, and The United States of America (Belova, 2018; Schmidt Hernandez, 2018; Nguyen et. Al., 2021). For dairy farmers, a protest in 1998 centred around the allowance of butter fats into Canada without tariffs (Scullion, 2006). Although rules at the time limited the importation of dairy products, there was a loop hole for butterfat (Scullion, 2006). Dairy farmers protested across Canada in different cities and an image of their protest in Vancouver can be seen in Section 3.8 in image 4. This protest

was significant as it highlighted how important the thoroughness of international trade agreements and supply management are to dairy farmers throughout history. During the negotiations of CETA, CUSMA, and the CPTPP, supply management and protectionist measures to continue regulating the Canadian dairy market. However, it is important to note that supply management measures are supported by over half of Canadians according to recent research (Charlebois, et. Al., 2021). Moreover, the same research found that:

Based on the national survey, 53% of respondents strongly agree that dairy farming is an important industry in Canada, while 66% somewhat agreed or strongly agreed to the statement: “Dairy farmers in our country are an important part of what it means to be a Canadian” (Charlebois, et. Al., 2021, p. 10)

This is relevant, as it suggests a non-material interest in dairy farmers themselves and, by extension, their products.

As explored earlier, threats to non-material interests can be a motivation for social movements. Although Canada uses distinct protection measures for dairy, it does not use cultural commodity justifications to protect food or agriculture in Canada. This is unlike countries such as France that use cultural commodities to protect non-material interests such as wine (Meunier, 2000; Peta, 2020). Academic literature has identified three potential categories of cultural commodities: *high culture*, such as ballet, theatre, art, literature, and opera; *ethnic culture*, such as traditional art and storytelling, folk music and dance, and architecture; and *popular culture*, such as popular television, film, music, literature, journalism, and news. However, cultural commodities are also particularly evident within food and agriculture, related to the communities that produce, eat, and are native to them. As a result, there is emerging literature about the ways in which Canadian agricultural

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industry and government agencies could utilize cultural commodity protections for dairy (Peta, 2020; Peta, 2019). Perspectives of cultural commodities are important because they align with and support the idea that dairy and dairy farmers have cultural value and meanings to society in Canada. This value informs the interests that dairy farmers and others protested on Parliament Hill for. However, it is important to note that there is risk involved with designating Canadian dairy as a cultural commodity solely based on its value for Canadian society. In particular, it could be overused and justified for similar products or industries that are backbones of rural communities but also at times precarious. But by highlighting these differing perspectives, it supports the idea of analyzing whether the movement used these interests and values at the specific time of international trade renegotiations as an opportunity to mobilize and create change. It is the renegotiations and their potential impact that brings together dairy farmers in their community to act and protest.

The cultural value of dairy farmers in Canada also differs from the global literature on other jurisdictions and countries in understanding their role in Canadian society. Most of the global literature on farmers' protests happens within the *Journal of Peasant Studies*, which often discusses a lack of value, power, and hierarchy from farmers. This is especially true in the literature about the Indian farmer protests and their relationship to the caste system (Kumar, 2021). Dairy farmers in Canada would not consider themselves peasants and, in many ways, are power holders in that they have provincial and federal boards, associations, and organizations. The Canadian dairy lobby is powerful and, in many ways, works to ensure the preservation of supply management (Peta, 2020). For this case study, the Dairy Farmers of Canada are the agents of change who advocate for the strengthening

and endurance of institutions such as supply management. The federal dairy marketing board is the Dairy Farmers of Canada and acts as the national lobby for dairy interests. Similarly, the provincial dairy boards and local regional dairy boards act as the dairy lobby at those levels of government. A further description of the make-up, roles and responsibilities of the marketing boards and associations can be found in section 3.4 Dairy Power Structures. Using political opportunity theory and resource mobilization, the Canadian dairy lobby can be understood as an institution to mobilize resources and support the social movement itself. This suggests that dairy farmers in Canada have or at the very least, have access to agency, power, and influence. Some authors and literature have argued that protests in Egypt, Netherlands, and Zimbabwe are power struggles, within society or farms themselves (de Lellis, 2019; De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Rutherford, 2014). However, regardless of motivations, power, and location, there have been examples of political opportunity theory on farmers' protests such as in Poland, France, and Europe more generally (Forys, 2021; Roederer-Rynning, 2002). While providing insights, political opportunity theory emphasizes context, for Canadian dairy farmers, their context and timing of protests differentiates them from others. Using political opportunity theory and the established understanding of interests allow for this research to examine the specific circumstances Canadian dairy farmers are situated in to be at the forefront of this research. It allows for an exploration of understanding the city and occupying it with rural items as an integral part of the social movement. The opportunity could be to make a statement and spectacle. To create this spectacle, protestors use different resources such as human, cultural, and social as categorized by resource mobilization (Edwards & Gillham, 2013).

## 2.5 Conclusion

This literature review has argued the key theories and concepts that are used in the analysis of farmer protests in Canada. Section *2.1 Introduction* outlined the following sections and explained the logic of the section. The main sections, *2.2 Protests and Social Movements* and *2.3 International Trade Agreements* provided the theoretical framework foundation. Section *2.4* provided contextual explanations about dairy farmers in Canada. Section *2.5 Conclusion* summarized the arguments, the literature explored, and identified gaps within the literature.

During the theoretical sections, two distinct and interconnected arguments were made. For *2.2 Protests and Social Movements*, three theories were explored: political opportunity theory, resource mobilization theory, and multi-institutional politics perspective. Political opportunity theory explores and examines *why* and *when* social movements arise around a specific time, space, and circumstance. It was argued that political opportunity theory, with aspects and definitions of actors, mobilization and expanding beyond the polity model from the two other theories, supports the most holistic foundational approach to assist in answering *why do dairy farmers take their collective protests to the city?* Similarly, section *2.3 International trade agreements* situated itself in exploring the international political economy, international trade agreements, and the interests and impacts involved in international trade agreements. To support the future analysis of the research question “*how do dairy farmers interpret trade agreements and their impact?*” it argued that both material and non-material interests and impacts are needed to fully understand how dairy farmers understand international trade agreements.

The contextual aspect of the literature review happened in section 2.4 *Canadian Dairy Farming and Protests*. This section provided a historical background of dairy farming in Canada, the creation of supply management, and differentiated it from global farmer protests. Overall, *section 2.4* argued that Canadian dairy farmers are situated within a intersection of literature bodies and requires the use of previously discussed theories to understand properly.

Overall, this literature review highlighted the topics related to modern Canadian dairy farmer protests or farmers' voices on topics altogether. Going forward, this research focuses on centring the voices of dairy farmers and the contexts they are situated in. Moreover, the analysis of dairy farmer opinions was done using the theories argued for in this literature review. Chapter 3 uses the broader contextual information provided to further focus on the case study local circumstances and conditions. Chapter 4 analyzes interviews and data using political opportunity theory and identify grievances as material or non-material to explain the multiple and interconnected motivations of protesters.

## Chapter 3: Research Setting and Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

As a follow up to Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, which provided high-level details and exploration of the topic broadly, Chapter 3 provides insight into the local context of the research, the methodology used, and a justification for the research choices. This chapter has two goals: first, identifying and examining the research setting by introducing Eastern Ontario and situating dairy farmers locally and within power structures; second, to explain and justify the research methodology used during the research process.

*Section 3.1 Introduction* sets out the landscape and logic of the chapter. The first goal of the chapter, introducing the research setting, is addressed in the first half of the chapter. *Section 3.2 Introducing Eastern Ontario* provides a description of the geographic, social, and general landscape of the area. To further situate dairy, *Section 3.3 Dairy in Eastern Ontario* examines the state of dairy farming in eastern Ontario and *Section 3.4 Dairy Power Structures* in Eastern Ontario examines the different actors and their roles in the region and in dairy more broadly. *Section 3.5 Positionality* bridges the local context and research methodology by discussing the researcher's positionality in the community. After the bridging provided by *Section 3.5 Positionality*, the second half of the chapter aids in explaining the research methodology. *Section 3.6 Research Methodology and Justification* describes and argues for using a qualitative case study while also providing an overview of the other methods used. *Section 3.7 Recruitment* outlines the processes and procedures undertaken during the recruitment of research participants. Following this, *Section 3.8 Photo Elicitation* describes the process, image selection, and reasoning for

selecting the method. To examine and explain how the data collected was used, *Section 3.9 Data Preparation and Analysis* outlines the tools and processes used to prepare and analyze data. *Section 3.10 Study Limitations* discusses the circumstances and conditions that restricted the study. Finally, *Section 3.11 Conclusion* provides a high-level summary of the discussions had throughout the chapter and final reflective thoughts.

### **3.2 Introducing Eastern Ontario**

Ontario is Canada's largest province by population, with over 14 million residents. Its economy is diverse, including sectors from agriculture to manufacturing to high technology. The province is often broken down into five geographic regions: Northern, Southern, Eastern, Central<sup>3</sup>, and Western Ontario. This research focuses on the region of Eastern Ontario as its case study location. Eastern Ontario is home to over 2 million residents, spread across over 200 communities and represented by 113 municipalities (Government of Ontario, 2019; Eastern Ontario Leadership Council, 2014). Most of these residents are located within the region's two largest cities: Ottawa and Kingston. The region of Eastern Ontario spreads across 49,000 km<sup>2</sup> and a map of the region can be seen in Appendix Item A (Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus, 2007). Agriculture and agribusiness are a driving force within Eastern Ontario and are often identified as a key economic force by communities across Eastern Ontario (Eastern Ontario Leadership Council, 2014). This is especially prominent in rural counties and communities as:

Eastern Ontario's counties held a greater proportion of labour force in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (3.92%) when compared to the separated cities

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<sup>3</sup> Central Ontario is sometimes defined as the Greater Toronto Area or broken down into Central East and Central West. For simplicity, it will be referred to as Central Ontario.



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(0.59%) and the province (1.52%), indicating that a great deal of primary industry activity still occurs in Eastern Ontario's rural side. (Eastern Ontario Leadership Council, 2014, p. 14)

There are 51,950 farms in Ontario and Ontario itself accounts for 1/4<sup>th</sup> of all farm revenue in Canada (Government of Ontario, 2021).

### **3.3 Dairy in Eastern Ontario**

As of 2021, there were 756 dairy farms in Eastern Ontario. These dairy farmers are geographically divided into the Dairy Farmers of Ontario counties of Dundas, Frontenac, Glengarry, Grenville, Lanark, Leeds, Lennox and Addington, Ottawa-Carleton, Prescott, Renfrew, Russell, and Stormont (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs 2022). It is important to note that these counties do not directly translate into the current counties and municipalities of the region, for example: Leeds and Grenville is actually known as the United Counties of Leads and Grenville. However, the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs use these counties to track changes in production and the quantity of farms and for continuity. In 2016, there were 75,251 dairy cows in Eastern Ontario and 311,960 in the Province of Ontario as a whole (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2022).

When examining the dairy industry broadly, there are increasing pressures impacting farms in Ontario. In particular, the government of Ontario identifies tight profit margins, emerging technology, future changes to supply management and quotas, and increased demands on net farm incomes in relation to affordability of life (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010). These factors are contributing to decreasing

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farms, which is especially true for small farms with fewer than 100 cows (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010). Data provided by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs highlighted that within eastern Ontario, the number of dairy farms is decreasing. In fact, of the 1195 dairy farms ceasing operation in Ontario between 2007 and 2021, just over 37% were lost in Eastern Ontario equalling 444 less dairy farms (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2022). Although there is a general trend of decreasing farms is happening across Ontario, Eastern Ontario lost the largest number of farms (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2022). As many farmers are noting, shrinkage in the industry is widespread and very visible. Production however, in total, is steady with some gradual increases and production per farm is increasing across eastern Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, 2022). While not the focus of the study, this trend highlights the pressures and changes within the industry in the region. Moreover, it relates to the significant shift that dairy farmers in interviews discusses such as shrinkage. These trends could be an indicator of the factors impacting dairy farmers daily and fuelling frustrations with business viability and working conditions. Moreover, these trends could impact the ways in which dairy farmers interpret the impacts and interests they have in relation to international trade agreements. Some of these trends could be attributed to changes or policies that are made by or advocated for by the Canadian Dairy Commission, the Dairy Farmers of Canada, and the Dairy Farmers of Ontario. The importance and meaning of these institutions and farms are explored in the following section, *3.4 Dairy Power Structures in Eastern Ontario*.

### 3.4 Dairy Power Structures in Eastern Ontario

An essential part of situating the local context for dairy farmers in Eastern Ontario is placing them within the power structures of dairy farming. Eastern Ontario is significant to dairy farmer protests because of their proximity to the Canadian Dairy Commission Offices and the head office of The Dairy Farmers of Canada, since both are located in eastern Ontario. As explored in *Chapter 2, Section 2.4*, the Canadian Dairy Commission was established by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in 1966 to help regulate supply management. Today, the Canadian Dairy Commission:

Provides a framework for managing Canada’s dairy industry, a shared federal and provincial responsibility. It serves as a facilitator and intervener in forums that influence Canada’s dairy policy and coordinates federal and provincial dairy policies. (Canadian Dairy Commission 2022, para. 1)

Although the majority of the powers are held by the federal government, the provinces have roles in setting the price of quota. Dairy farmers in Eastern Ontario are a member of both the Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) and the Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO). The Dairy Farmers of Canada are a farmer-funded and -run organization that is “the national lobby, policy and promotion organization representing all dairy farmers in Canada. DFC strives to create stable conditions for the Canadian dairy industry, today and for the future.” (Dairy Farmers of Canada, 2019, p. 2). There are three representatives for the province of Ontario on the DFC board of directors. Dairy Farmers in Eastern Ontario are represented by three representatives on the twelve-member board of directors for the DFO (Dairy Farmers of Ontario, 2022A). Moreover, Eastern Ontario counties have been divided into 4 zones

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wherein each has one Field Service Officers and a Regional Field Services Manager who focus on regulatory compliance and inspections (Dairy Farmers of Ontario, 2022B).

Locally, dairy farmers sit on a dairy board for their county or region. For example, interview participants described how farmers living in Leeds and Grenville would have the opportunity to sit on the Leeds and Grenville board. Each local dairy board has a small marketing budget that can be used to sponsor a hockey team, hold a raffle for fundraising, or put an ad out on the local radio. Many farmers noted that these boards are often an opportunity to learn from and interact with farmers across different generations. An interesting example arose with dairy farmers learning about historic protests from interactions with their local dairy board. The local boards are also a source of knowledge sharing about the industry, often to compare strategies and challenges. Additionally, dairy farmers who were interviewed described how dairy farmers are also involved in other local organizations related to farming such as the Plowman's Association, the International Plowing Match, the Ontario Farmers Association, and other local farm organizations not strictly related to dairy. These organizations, while local in scale, come with power structures and hierarchy.

There are also informal power structures within communities due to a variety of reasons such as farm and quota size, location, family, and other class structures. Power within the industry is often associated with who has the most quota. This means that larger farms can have more influence on the industry and community priorities. This dynamic was even discussed by participants during interviews and could be due to the access to recourses or even the ears of industry leaders and board members. Similarly, a farm or farmer's prominence can impact their power within the community, because of their family,

location, class, race, or even their gender. Although these power dynamics are not unexpected in society, they are important to recognize because it may impact the way in which participants respond or how they interact with protests. Moreover, it changes their role and personal positionality within the community.

### **3.5 Methodology and Justification**

This research is a qualitative case study of Ontario dairy farmers protesting on Parliament Hill in 2015 and 2016 in response to international trade agreement renegotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement and Transpacific Partnership (McGregor, 2018; Fedio, 2016; Wingrove & Skerritt, 2018). Moreover, this case study is supported by the inclusion of the impact on historic Canadian dairy protests since the establishment of supply management in 1967. The case study region was selected for four key reasons. The first reason is to narrow the scope of the study; selecting a smaller region allowed the study to be feasible for a master's thesis. The second reason follows the first; this particular geographic location was selected because Eastern Ontario is predominantly rural while still allowing for easy access to cities such as Ottawa and Parliament Hill. This is important because it demonstrates that dairy farmers outside choose to take their protests to the city. The third reason is my lived experience in the community and within rural Eastern Ontario. Having familiarity and familial connections to the area provided the researcher and participants with confidence and prior understanding. The fourth reason is the time proximity and overlapping nature of the 2015 and 2016 protests, with both being on Parliament Hill and in response to a variety of international trade agreement concerns.

This research used qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews and life history interviews over two months of data collection. This allowed for the centring of dairy farmers' voices and perspectives within their own culture. I selected qualitative methods as it is my personal understanding that international trade agreements and their impact on dairy farmers could not be captured in quantitative methods. Using semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity for further inquiry, clarification, and because they allowed the research to have conversations guided by what dairy farmers wanted to speak about (Mayan, 2016). Moreover, semi-structured interviews provide flexibility and space to be varied in the types of discussions had (Kallio, Pietilä, A.-M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M., 2016). Three semi-structured interview guides were created to hold initial key informant interviews, general participant interviews, and protestor follow up interviews. The decision to have a set of key informant interviews was done to help provide context and fill gaps within the research prior to doing more interviews. This included asking information about interactions with the dairy marketing boards and context not readily available without inside knowledge. Moreover, the key informant interviews were used as a measure to prepare for general participant interviews and create an opportunity to adapt the wording and order of questions used in the other interview guides. Initial key informant interviews were conducted using the key informant interview guide with specific community dairy farmers who are well connected in Eastern Ontario. Additionally, participants who revealed or discussed significant involvement or insight also answered questions on the key-informant interview guide. Following the initial interviews with key informants, more participants were recruited based on recommendations and suggestions from the key informants, and more interviews were held. If a participant indicated they

have protested, the researcher transitioned to using the follow-up interview guide to ask about protests. This was done to ensure that people who actively participated in a protest could share more directly about the experience. During the interview process, each participant who had indicated their participation in a protest had time during the interview to go through questions used on the protestor interview guide. Each interview used photo elicitation to provoke and engage with emotions, thoughts, and perspectives on dairy protests throughout history.

### **3.6 Recruitment**

Participant recruitment took place by the researcher in Eastern Ontario and was supported by the researcher's connection to the area within rural Eastern Ontario using the snowball technique. Participant recruitment took place in two stages, the initial key informant stage and then widespread informed recruitment. The key informant recruitment stage was done with dairy community leaders. During the key informant interviews, the researcher inquired about any potential participants the key informant would suggest, with a particular interest in potential participants who have protested before. Several key informant interviews were pre-determined based on their role in the community and the researchers understanding of their knowledge. However, some interviewees revealed themselves to be key informants as knowledge and power holder; they were then asked questions from the key informant interview question set. After the initial key informant interviews, potential participants identified by the key informants were contacted and recruited in addition to contacting identifiable farms throughout the region. Farms and dairy farmers were additionally contacted via email or phone during the recruitment phase. Moreover, recent dairy farming

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protestors who have spoken with the media were recruited if their farm is within eastern Ontario. All research participants were contacted using the same script created during the ethics approval process through the Grenfell Research Ethics Board. Participants were recruited through a variety of means such as the phone, in person, or digitally through email, social media, and website contact forms. Interestingly, only participants contacted through referrals from the community or other dairy farmers accepted the research interview invitation. This trend speaks to the importance of the researchers lived experience and embeddedness into the community.

In total, there were 12 participants who accepted the invitation to be interviewed. Upon arrival, at several farms there were spouses, family members or partners present resulting in 15 participants. Regarding gender, 2 of the 15 participants identified as females and 13 identified as male. There were 4 key informant interviews held throughout the process, and likewise there were 8 of general participant interviews. Of the 12 interviews held, 9 of the farms/key participants in the interview had protested in the last 30 years. Several of the farmers were unable to remember which specific protest they had attended. Table 1 on the next page highlights the farmers who participated in the research. Due to privacy concerns the age, education levels, and particulars about the history of the participants farmers cannot be shared. Table 2 provides the interview lengths, with the average length being approximately 59 minutes. Similarly, due to privacy, interview lengths are shared without identifying which participants or farmers they represent.



<b>Table 1: Participant Data on Previous Dairy Protest Experience</b>	
<b>Had Attended a Dairy Protest</b>	<b>Had Not Attended a Dairy Protest</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participant 1</li> <li>2. Participant 2</li> <li>3. Participant 4</li> <li>4. Participant 5</li> <li>5. Participant 7*</li> <li>6. Participant 8</li> <li>7. Participant 10</li> <li>8. Participant 11</li> <li>9. Participant 12</li> <li>10. Participant 13</li> <li>11. Participant 14</li> <li>12. Participant 15</li> </ol> <p>*Attended protests on topics other than dairy as well.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participant 3</li> <li>2. Participant 6^</li> <li>3. Participant 9^</li> </ol> <p>^Indicated they would have attended but didn't due to location or family commitments.</p>

<b>Table 2: Interview Length in Minutes</b>			
* Indicates interviews with multiple participants			
45.53	46.46	51.27	54.34
54.52 *	56.20	57.52	59.51 *
61.24	63.06	65.21	87.29
<p><b>Average Interview Length: 58.51</b>  <b>Shortest Interview Length: 45:53</b>  <b>Longest Interview Length: 1:27:29</b></p> <p>Note: the data in the table is organized from shortest to longest, not in order of the interview date.</p>			

A majority had attended the protests in 2015 and 2016. Of the 15 participants, 12 had protested before. three participants, which correlated to three different farms, had never protested before, with two indicating their lack of participation was due to familial commitments and/or location at the time. Only one participant indicated that they had participated in a protest unrelated to farming. This variety in participants was surprising, since the researcher did not know the protest background of any of the participants prior to

interviews. It was important to the researcher that there was a variety of perspectives within the participants and this result was unexpected. It is essential to note that if this study was replicated elsewhere or at another time with different participants, it would be unexpected to get these results again. There was also a wide variety in education levels of the participants, many of whom identified their level of education during the interview when discussing their life on the farm.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, there was variety in ages involved which provided an additional layer of interest and perspective. This variety across age, education, protest experience, and so on were extremely helpful in ensuring that different experiences were analyzed. The average time for an interview was around 50 minutes to one hour, with some being shorter and others longer.

### **3.7 Photo Elicitation**

This section provides an explanation of what photo elicitation is and a justification for the use of photo elicitation within the interview process. Both the key informant and general participant interviews used photo-elicitation to uncover interpretations, context, and meaning from the images of dairy farmer protests. Photo elicitation is the process in interviews where the interview exchange is guided by photos and images to encourage an emotional and personal response from the interviewee (Lapenta, 2011; Harper, 2002). Interviews benefit from this process because the use of images supports memory retrieval and allows for interviewees to provide context which is often difficult to explain (Lapenta, 2011; Harper, 2002). As other researchers such as Schwartz have highlighted, photo-

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<sup>4</sup> For the privacy of interviewees and to not disclose identifying information, a table of the participants education levels and ages have been excluded from the thesis.

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elicitation challenges the presentation of “photographs as objective evidence” and supports the discussion of context, participation, and experience (Schwartz 1989, p. 120) Furthermore, visual qualitative research and analysis was done to examine the meaning and impact of language, rhetoric, and slogans with images from dairy farmers’ protests over history. The discussion prompted by the images, examining the intent within dairy farmers, discontent from dairy farmers throughout history. To collect historical images, the Canadian Dairy Commission Archives, the Ontario Dairy Commission archives, and newspaper archives through university libraries were used.

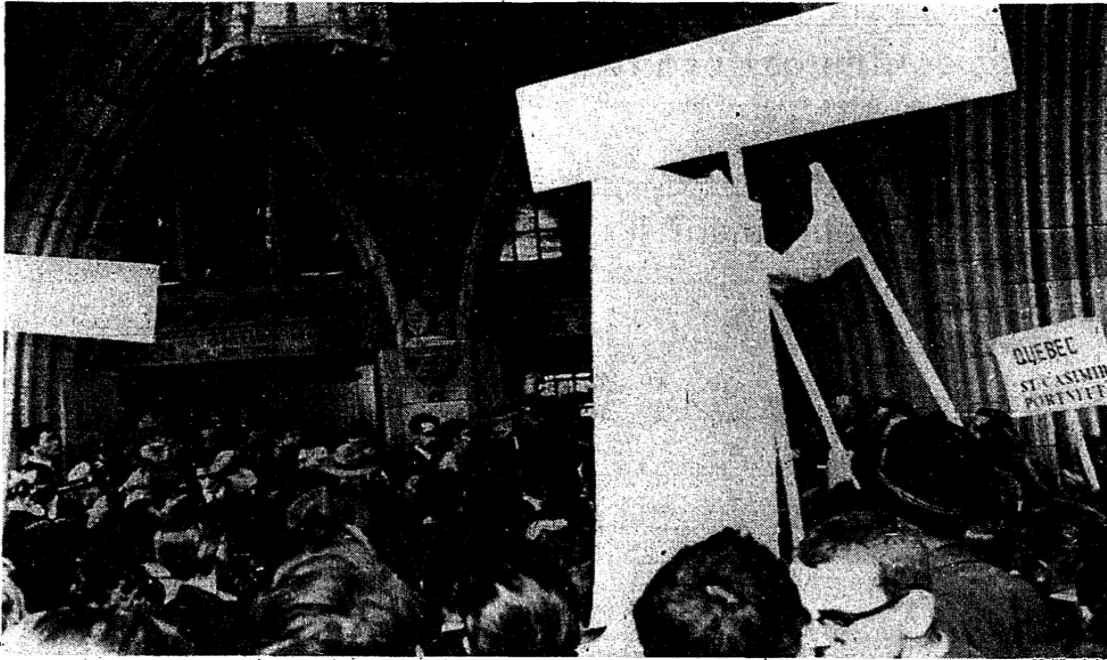
An important aspect of photo elicitation is image selection. To justify the images selected, the images on the following pages were selected from a collection from the last 50 years of dairy farmer protests using the criteria created for this research specifically:

1. Prominence: Does this image capture a moment in history that is prominent in discussions or coverage of dairy protests? Is the image the most used or referenced image for this event?
2. Imagery: Does this image convey its meaning with a simple explanation or caption? Does the image have an opportunity to provoke thought, emotion, or reactions? Does it provide points of conversation?
3. Relevance: Does the image represent a protest or social movement of dairy farmers in response to international trade agreements or federal dairy policy?
4. Temporal Spread: What year is the image from? Does it fill a gap within history?

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Historical images were selected from the “The Canadian Dairy Commission: A 40-year Retrospective” by Erin Scullion (2006). Using the criteria mentioned, 4 images were selected. Below are the 4 historic images and their original citations. Image 1 through 4 below represent historic dairy protests from 1967, 1976, and 1998 that were discussed in Section 2.4 when exploring the history of Canadian dairy. Each image depicts a dairy farmers social movement protesting within a city, some of which were discussed in the *Chapter 2: Literature Review*. During interviews, these images were used as a point of reflection about changes in the dairy industry. For older dairy farmers, the images are likely to produce more responses due to age and ability to remember the protest.

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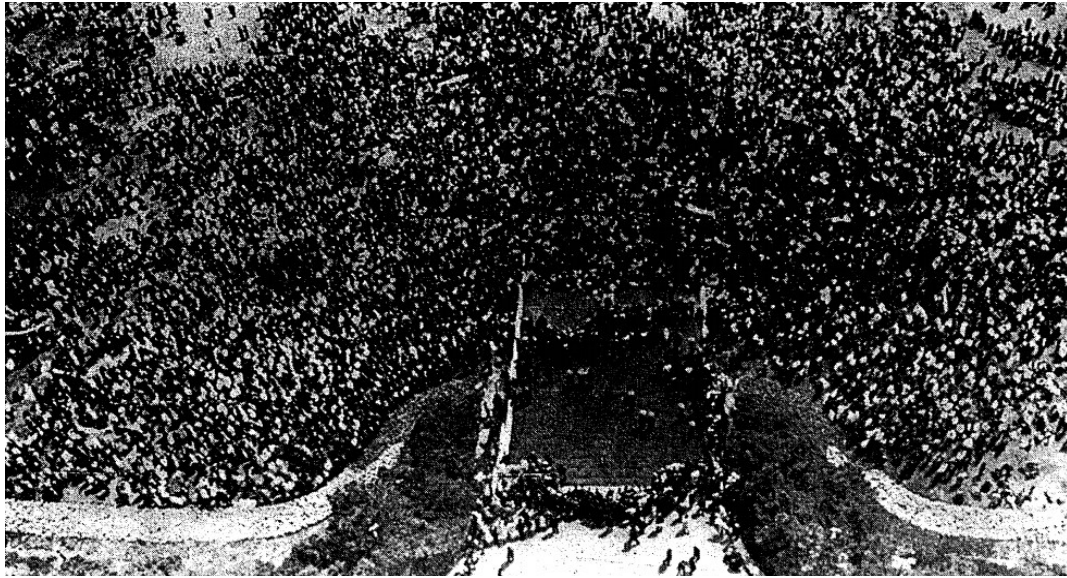


**Image 1 (Above):** Irate farmers storm House to climax milk price battle, Rusk, 1967

**Source:** Rusk, James. (1967). "Irate farmers storm House to climax milk price battle," *The Globe and Mail*, 1.

**Image 2 (Left):** March on the Hill, Canadian Dairy Commission Archives, 1976

**Source:** *Image found via Scullion, Erin. (2006). The Canadian Dairy Commission: a 40-Year Retrospective. Canadian Dairy Commission.*



**Image 3 (Above):** March on the Hill, Canadian Dairy Commission Archives, 1976

**Source:** *Image found via Scullion, Erin. (2006). The Canadian Dairy Commission: a 40-Year Retrospective. Canadian Dairy Commission.*

**Image 4 (Above):** Dairy producers march in Vancouver in January 1998 to protest imports of butteroil/sugar blends, *The Canadian Dairy Commission: a 40-Year Retrospective.* Source: Dairy Farmers of Canada

**Source:** *Image found via Scullion, Erin. (2006). The Canadian Dairy Commission: a 40-Year Retrospective. Canadian Dairy Commission.*



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Similar to the historic photos, the same criteria were used for the selection of modern images. However, more recent protests had a significantly larger selection of photos due to the increasing availability of cameras and the handout reflected that more images per protest were used. The quality of the images is also significantly improved. It is possible that because of photo quality, the modern images could be more likely to create responses. The criteria helped support in selecting the most prominent and diverse selection of photos. The images in the following pages are from the 2015 and 2016 parliamentary protests about changes to importations and NAFTA.



**Image 5 (Below):** Farmers Spill Milk Over Trade Deal Concerns

**Source:** Wattie, Chris. (2015). "Farmers Spill Milk over Trade Deal Concerns."  
*The Globe and Mail.*

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**Image 6 (Above):** Farmers Spill Milk Over Trade Deal Concerns

**Source:** Wattie, Chris. (2015). "Farmers Spill Milk over Trade Deal Concerns." *The Globe and Mail*.

**Image 7 (Below):** Farmers Spill Milk Over Trade Deal Concerns

**Source:** Wattie, Chris. (2015). "Farmers Spill Milk over Trade Deal Concerns." *The Globe and Mail*.





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**Image 8 (Above) and Image 9 (Below):** Milk Producers Protest on Parliament Hill in Favour of Supply Management, Fedio, 2016

**Source:** Fedio, C. (2016). Dairy farmers take trade protest to Parliament Hill with cow and tractors in tow. *CBC*.





**Image 10 (Above):** Milk producers protest on Parliament Hill in favour of supply management, Fedio, 2016

**Source:** Fedio, C. (2016). Dairy farmers take trade protest to Parliament Hill with cow and tractors in tow. *CBC*

Participants were given printed pages of all the images with its citation and title from other dairy farmer protests in the middle of the interview and asked to give their feelings, thoughts, and perspectives on the images. The researcher read the title of the image and the year, while also providing context if the participant had little knowledge of the protest. A selection of historic and recent protests was selected to be inclusive of age, life history, and previous engagement. Moreover, in selecting a range of images from throughout the last 50 years, it allows for the possibility that farmers have witnessed the changes in protests or the issues causing protests.

The choice to use photo elicitation within the interviews is very intentional for two reasons: the first is the theoretical support of using images to uncover and engage emotions (Harper, 2002). This is a practice used in qualitative research often and is becoming more prominent in ethnographic work. The second is to assist in the interviewing process, wherein, if all else fails, photo elicitation provides a means to change topics and steer the conversation to the intended topics. If participants have little to say about the photos, it is a powerful demonstration about detachment or separateness from history or from the protest movement. However, even the smallest aspect of images such as blue shirts or the tractors in the image have meaning. A common discussion for participants not providing much response to the images were about slogans and branding used in the protests. Since the meaning and significance of specific items in images are particular to the individual interviewee, the responses from participants are varied and particular to the participant.

### **3.8 Positionality**

A significant reason for selecting Eastern Ontario for the case study is due to my lived experience in the region. In particular, I have lived in a small community within the rural area of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and have familial ties in Eastern Ontario. This gave me credibility and access likely not given to people that would be considered outsiders because of my knowledge and connections.

These community and familial connections make me an insider, meaning I have membership status within the dairy farming community opposed to being a wallflower researcher (Alder and Alder, 1987). I have what is referred to as a peripheral membership, through community and familial ties. I am not just a researcher, rather I am a neighbour

and community member. Through this membership, I more easily was able to connect and use community gatekeepers to access other interviewees (Alder and Alder, 1987). These connections have been a powerful tool within the research process impacting recruitment and providing me with significant access to referrals. This can be exemplified through the success of recruitment and pre-interview interactions happening over text messages and personal phone numbers, while there was no success in contacting dairy farmers through business emails and phone numbers. Moreover, as noted by other researchers, peripheral membership reduced the perceived risk in confiding in me as a researcher (Alder and Alder, 1987; Hoffman, 1980). A positive impact is also further extended through a sense of empathy and understanding that outsiders may not have had (Gair, 2012). Peripheral membership has the least bias due to a lack of experience, but there are negative impacts and considerations for having peripheral membership.

My credibility and access means that I needed to further position myself to manage and negate things that could undermine my credibility and access. As a peripheral member, I was acutely aware of how my membership was contingent on my behaviour, knowledge, and commitment (Alder and Alder, 1987). Since I do not have direct experience or participation in dairy farming, I acted to mitigate other factors that would undermine my membership status (Alder and Alder, 1987). My gender as a young woman is a significant part of that, since farming is often considered a masculine and a very gendered role. Moreover, the age of farmers tends to be older. Being a young woman, my skills and knowledge are often questioned. Likewise, I had to take care to ensure I dressed appropriately, spoke confidently, and managed potentially awkward power dynamics. Rather than wearing professional or business clothing, I wore plain clothing that could get

dirty such as jeans and boots that would allow me to look as though I fit within the farm. I avoided bright colours and even my equipment such as the handheld recorder, bag, and clipboard was monotone in style. Prior to interviews, I reviewed information, acronyms, and my interview questions to ensure I was as confident as possible. The key informant interviews assisted in this by creating space to navigate the awkward power dynamics of being the researcher with extensive academic knowledge but also being young interviewing someone with extensive lived experience and knowledge.

When writing this thesis, I've been able to watch sheep and donkeys from my window and on my walks, I would see cows, horses, goats, and llamas. I believe having lived in the community for the entirety of my thesis has distinctly changed how I've written this thesis and how I understand my community. I am not writing about a group far-off, rather I am writing about my own communities and their diverse perspectives, desires, and experiences. This section has been situated within the significant amount of academic literature on insider/outside status as a researcher, while acknowledging my membership as a peripheral and working to mitigate possible challenges and biases to my status.

### **3.9 Data Preparation and Analysis**

This section describes the steps taken during data preparation and analysis. The research was conducted solely by the author of this thesis. The primary means of data collection took place during interviews that were recorded using a handheld recorder and microphone that was attached to participants shirts or placed in front of them. The interviews took place seated and at a table or desk. Interviews were transcribed using Descript, a software that allowed for the smooth transcription of interviews. Interviews

were transcribed in full and filler words were removed for clarity. Moreover, interviews were transcribed in a timely manner and done so within a week of the interview. After the transcription of the interviews, the interviews were compiled into a single document totalling over 250 pages. This document was read through and listened to multiple times. After each time of listening, I made corrections to transcriptions and on a separate document made notes of themes that were prominent when reviewing. After reviewing the document, I coded the document thematically and synthesised into a 75-page document using the themes identified before coding and additional themes identified while coding. This consisted of copying and pasting quotes or particular discussions into the proper thematic code category or sub category. The thematic coding included categories such as institutions, protests, community, and trade. Within these categories, there were sub-categories, which categorized the themes into specific topics related to the theme. This is exemplified in Table 3 on the next page with the categories and sub-categories after being finished coding and reviewing. Table 3 presents the categories in which the order they appeared when reviewing the documents. On the further right column of Table 3, the number of pages dedicated to each category is listed to indicate the frequency of each category and theme. After being coded, the categorized thematic document was then reviewed multiple times for cross cutting connections and analyzed. The analysis consisted of exploring the intersections of themes that were largest and most compelling when combined in attempting to answer the research questions.

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Sub-Categories</b>	<b>Number of Pages</b>
<b>International Trade</b>	- Impact and Fears - Perception - Loss/Losers of Trade Deals	11
<b>Family</b>	- Legacy - Generations - Access to Farms	3
<b>Institutions</b>	- Trust - Involvement - Interaction	5
<b>Government</b>	- Voting - Political Figures - Dairy Organizations	10
<b>Education</b>	- High School - Importance of Education - Post-Secondary Supports	1
<b>Marketing</b>	- General Marketing - COVID-19 Changes - Blue Cow Symbol - Families in Marketing - Organizational Changes	5
<b>Media</b>	- Fairness - Engagement	2
<b>Consumers</b>	- Benefits - Purchasing Habits - Understanding Dairy	5
<b>Protests</b>	- Protests Attended / Experiences - Motivations - Community - Importance - Cities - Items - Perception of Protests Not Attended - Perceptions of Motivations - Impact of Protests – Positive - Motivation for Not Attending - Impact of Protests – Negative - Individual Acts of Protest	10
<b>Supply Management</b>	- Quality - Price Setting - General Support - Quota - Criticisms - Benefits to Consumers	5
<b>Changes and Trends</b>	- Increasing Costs - Being Pushed Out - Paperwork - Size of Farms	7
<b>Community</b>	- Employment Beyond Family - Team on The Farm - Engaging with Community	2
<b>Costs</b>	- On The Farm - Off The Farm	1

Categories	Sub-Categories	Number of Pages
<b>Fears</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Viability for Family</li> <li>- If Not Farming, Then What?</li> <li>- If Supply Management Goes Away</li> <li>- Canadian Trade Agreement Losses</li> </ul>	5
<b>Advice for Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food Security and Sovereignty</li> <li>- Listening to People</li> </ul>	2
<b>Other</b>	This section captured interesting quotes that did not relate to any of the above	1

### 3.10 Study Limitations

Regardless of efforts made to ensure the validity and soundness of the study, there were limitations to the study. There are four limitations to the study: location, participants, COVID-19, and design. The location of the study limits and eliminates interviewing farmers from outside of eastern Ontario. Participants were limited on two fronts the first being language. Only English-speaking farmers were interviewed or invited to interview due to the researcher's language abilities. Participants were further limited because individuals were not asked to identify as protestors or non-protestors when recruited. Moreover, due to the study participants being recruited through my community and familial connections, there is a possibility of bias in the data collected and presented. Future studies would do well to examine areas outside of eastern Ontario, French-speaking farmers, and more variety in protestors versus non-protestors. Overall, an underlying and broad limitation on this study were the constraints created by COVID-19 pandemic public health measures. Both the researcher and participants were directly impacted by the pressures of Covid-19 such as experiencing limited capacity, lack of access to supports, and labour shortages. Moreover, the timeline changes created by COVID-19 and provincial



restrictions meant interviews happened at an inopportune time. For example, since interviews were held during May and June which is calving and cropping season, the timing of interviews was somewhat limited in the beginning, with several farmers asking for me to ask them again in a week for their availability. Due to cropping season, interviews were often scheduled spontaneously or at the last minute to happen on days when the weather was poor. A future study done outside of the restraints and pressures of COVID-19 may produce different responses or answers from dairy farmers. Overall, the fourth limitation is the design of the study itself, in particular the size and scope of the project. Due to the selection of several protests as a single case study, there are difficulties in reigning in the scope and size of the project while doing justice to the significance of each protest. Moreover, due to a lack of screening regarding participant age or their protest experience, the study at times provides vague answers and is unable to have the variety of participants that would be desirable. As a result of the study design, at times the research presents dairy farmer protests throughout history as a monolith when this is not the case.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to inform, describe, and justify the research setting and methods used throughout this thesis. This was done in two distinct means, by situating the research within the local context in the first half and the second half addressing methodology and research processes. *Section 3.1 Introduction* provided an overview to the sequential logic of the following sections. To situate the research within the local context, *Section 3.2 Introducing Eastern Ontario* described the geography, population, and overall context of Eastern Ontario. *Section 3.3 Dairy in Eastern Ontario* described current trends in

production and farms within the region by county. Following this, *Section 3.4 Dairy Power Structures in Eastern Ontario*, situated eastern Ontario dairy farmers within the local, regional, provincial, and federal power structures. *Section 3.5 Positionality* examined the researcher's individual role within the local context of eastern Ontario and its impacts on the research, highlighting their role in community.

Transitioning into methodology, *Section 3.6 Methodology and Justification* provided an overview and description of the research process and the reasoning for its selection. *Section 3.7 Recruitment* described the way in which participants were invited to participate and data on who participated. Following this, *Section 3.8 Photo Elicitation* provided an explanation of photo elicitation, the criteria that images were selected with, and the images used for the process. *Section 3.9 Data Preparation and Analysis* detailed the software and processes used once the data was collected and the means for which the data was analyzed. In a reflective shift, *Section 3.10 Study Limitations* discussed the circumstances and conditions that restricted the study and should be considered for future studies. Finally, *Section 3.11 Conclusion* provided a final overview of the chapter and its goals. Overall, *Chapter 3 Research Setting and Methodology* fulfilled its goals of assisting the reader in understanding the local context and describe the research process. Going forward Chapter 3 has provided a foundation for research methodology and work needed for the analysis and concluding chapters of the thesis.

## Chapter 4: Vulnerability

### 4.1 Introduction

Previous Chapters 1, 2, and 3 have established the scope, literature, and methods used throughout the research process. Chapter 4 begins the analysis of the data collected during field work, and in particular it examines the reoccurring sentiment observed during interviews that dairy farmers feel everything is at stake. This chapter argues that the underlying sentiment of vulnerability fuels their interpretations of international trade agreements and motivations for protest. This vulnerability is due to dairy farmers fearing that their livelihood, investments, and legacy are at risk. The organization of this chapter reflects the interconnected nature of farmers' daily life with their protest motivations and interpretations of international trade agreements.

Chapter 4 is an analytical chapter organized into five sections to explore and analyze the themes of risk and fear. *Section 4.1 Overview and Organization* lays out the logic of the chapter and provides a summary of the chapter's argument. *Section 4.2 Life on the Farm* connects to the literature review by considering the unique cultural context of being a dairy farmer along with their legacy, community, and independence. *Section 4.3 Trade Agreement Impacts and Interpretations* uses the context explored previously to orient how dairy farmers perceive the impacts of international trade agreements throughout the process (Walter, 2021; Tilly, 1964; 1978, Goodwin & Jasper, 2020). *Section 4.3 Vulnerability Beyond the Farm* examines how the vulnerability of dairy farmers extends beyond their families to the staff and businesses they use, their local communities, and extends across Canada. In the conclusion, *Section 4.5* summarizes the arguments and findings from the chapter. This chapter's logic, organization, and style are meant to reflect a narrative

understanding of how dairy farmers' vulnerability is nested throughout their daily lives, through international trade agreements and, by extension, their communities.

#### **4.2 Life on The Farm**

A distinct feature of dairy farms in eastern Ontario are the large professional signs that proudly display the name of the farm to all that drive by. The names of these signs for dairy farms often incorporate the family name or if they don't, they tend to note what family runs that farm or the year it was established. However, the deep-rooted legacy and importance of family for dairy farms goes far beyond the sign at the end of the driveway. As you make your way up the driveway, the family home and barn are often right there and as one farmer would put it:

I go out those doors every day at six o'clock in the morning. You walk across a field, see the barns and the cows in the field, and you look off to the east, you see the sun coming up and, you know, you hear the birds chirping, or you hear a distant vehicle on the road, like a mile away. It's like this is the best place to live.

(Participant 10)

Some of the homes and barns are new, some are older, but all hold significant meaning to the farmers and their families. *Section 4.2 Life on The Farm*, examines the dairy farmers daily lives on the farm with their families, and broader community. Following political opportunity theory, this chapter examines the demographical and economic contexts for which dairy farmers live their lives in (Tilly 1964; 1978, Goodwin & Jasper, 2020). Moreover, understanding their daily lives and cultural values provides a prism to explore their interpretations of international trade agreements (Walter, 2021). This section argues

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that this familial experience is a significant reason for their deeply rooted sense of vulnerability.

All farms visited for this research ended up being family farms with at least 2 generations. The oldest farm dated back to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and the newest began in the mid-nineties. Moreover, many of these farms were started by immigrants, predominantly from the Netherlands. Regardless of their generation on the farm or in Canada, farmers were extremely proud of their legacy. When describing their farm, farmers often discussed it generationally and as one farmer noted, “A lot of the farms down here are family farms with two or more generations, we’re seeing at some farms they’ve got three generations involved” (Participant 3). When discussing their goals for the family farm, most already had plans for who in their family would take over the farm or had hopes for continued legacy. This generational involvement is both interesting and complicated, mixing family and business. Moreover, when farmers perceive vulnerability as being exacerbated through proposed changes such as international trade agreements and action is needed, they feel responsible to act. This responsibility translates into protests being representative of protecting their family and livelihood. In fact, many farmers highlighted that they wanted to ensure their individual family sent someone from their farm to be at the protest to ensure they were represented.

When discussing their farms, the language of “partnership” came up often for example: “We have a partnership agreement on our dairy farm between my son, grandson and myself” (Participant 2) and “We bought the farm in 1994 as a partnership and had our family here” (Participant 12). Although they are family farms, they are also businesses with significant money and investments, which makes partnerships and agreements extremely

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important. Many farmers' asset value in farm equipment, quota, and barns is in the millions. For example, in Ontario, a single kilogram of butterfat is worth \$24,000 which roughly equates to one cow's milk production, meaning for a barn with 100 milking cows the quota alone is worth \$2.4 million (Monthly Trade of Milk Quota by Province, Government of Canada, August 4, 2021). However, with increasing efficiencies and technological changes, a single kilogram of butterfat often doesn't correlate to a single cow, meaning more quota is needed. A common saying throughout the interviews was that farmers were "asset rich, cash poor" meaning that although their asset value is high, it is difficult to liquidate or access that money and there is little available cash. Having high asset values and low levels of cash makes buying out family members, transitioning between generations, and retiring extremely difficult. Moreover, it puts a significant amount of pressure on current farmers to be as profitable as possible to provide for family members. One farmer worried about what would happen to him if dairy farming stopped being a viable option:

Am I going to have a future? I'm in that age bracket to be able to retire. If something goes wrong here and I'm not able to earn an income from farming, what do I have left to make some money from here? (Participant 1)

This vulnerability extended to their family as well, not only for providing for family but for providing a future for their family. The generational struggle to make money is one way the family nature of life on the farm reinforces their vulnerability when feeling the impact of international trade agreements. Rather than concern for themselves as an individual, they must plan and work on the farm to provide for several generations in the future. Instead of seeing trade agreements as an opportunity for viability, they view them as another barrier

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to long-term, generational success. Another factor reinforcing vulnerability and changing life on the farm are the technical changes.

Like technology globally, there have been significant changes to the way dairy farming happens in Canada. One of the largest changes is the type of systems used to house, milk, and feed the cows. Although the type of farming equipment used by participants varied between robotic and non-robotic barns, all participants explained experiencing significant technical and technological changes on the farm. Farmers often noted that technological trend changes happen often:

When I was in college and that was only 20 years ago, the big fad was everybody had to have a freestyle barn with a milking parlour. Now everybody's switching over to a robot and just the fact that that's going around and there'll be something else here in another 10 years to do. (Participant 13)

Moreover, the reason and tone of the changing technology is supported by an overall attitude shift about animal health:

The whole industry has shifted. So I've been farming since let's say 1990. So 30 years plus, and the change in the industry is dramatic in that time. It's all about cows. They aren't bred for production any longer, they're bred for health, fitness, and disease resistance. That's the only thing you're focused on now is their welfare. If you focus on the welfare of the cattle, everything else follows. And I don't know a farmer left hardly that welfare is not their focus. (Participant 12)

As the industry shifts, these changes at times can force dairy farmers out of the industry. Many farmers discussed how increasing paperwork to improve transparency around cow health has left older farmers bewildered and confused. Even though there has been

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significant change on each farm since their beginnings, these changes are also steeped in familial history and nostalgia.

Family farms and the choices they make about technology are family choices. For one farmer, choices about future decisions on technology are waiting until his daughter finished university and returns to the family farm. When asked about switching to robotics, the farmer noted that:

That's something my daughter is going to have to be involved in because she's the one that's going to have to live with that and carry it forward. I just turned 59, so I'm not ready to quit working, but I'm also not going to be the one that's operating the farm in 15 years. (Participant 12)

For another farmer, going to the stables reminds him of his father who has since passed: “I guess when I go to the calf stable, he used to feed the calves all the time and that was his job the last 20 years” (Participant 7). When this farmer implemented robotic feeding changes to the calf stables, he was worried his father would be upset, but he fondly remembered that his father joked and said, “I never thought I'd be replaced by a machine” (Participant 7). Across many of the farms, I heard similar stories about children growing up, families making changes, and about how proud they were their family succeeded. Items that highlighted these changes were common around their homes and farms. Some families had historic farm equipment on display, others had families had framed pictures of family members with cows. One family even had aerial images of the farm over history along their staircase. Regardless of their vulnerability or daily difficulties, it was extremely evident dairy farmers were proud of their farm, family, and legacy. Due to many of the families’



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origins being rooted in immigration, many farmers discussed how hard their family had worked to get them where they are today. One farmer noted that:

Mom and dad came here after the war and were sponsored by the farmer on this farm in 1953. Two years later, they were able to buy the farm from the sponsor. So, we're still on the same farm. Their dream was to have a farm and it was tough in those days. (Participant 8)

This was one of many non-material indicators about heritage, family, and about cultural norms of dreaming about a successful farm. Although it was tough then, many farmers also lamented about how tough it currently is with rising costs, pointing to the significance of material factors in everyday life and business operations.

Life on the farm is also distinctly shaped by the costs of everyday inputs farmers need to run the dairy farms that are not paid for in advance such as gas and fertilizer. As one farmer highlighted:

There has been such a huge increase [in dairy prices], but our costs have gone up probably 25 to 30%. For instance, as a litre of diesel fuel last year [2021] cost me 90 cents. And this year [2022] it costs me \$2 and 4 cents. A ton of fertilizer last year cost me a \$675 and this year it cost me \$1,350. So, no matter how you look at either one of those, they're exactly double or more than double. And so those are two of the biggest inputs we have on the, on the farm. And that this year is really going to be difficult for farmers that are highly leveraged. (Participant 2)

Other costs such as crop, feed, and propane are often paid for in advance or the price is locked in the year prior meaning they were not worried about cost for this year. However, many farmers were worried about what these costs would be for next year. Since their farm

is both their business and their family, increasing costs and inflation at the grocery store are also difficult. Farmers often highlighted that although they are producers, they are also consumers, and they struggle with rising costs like everyone else. Farmers are in a distinct moment of change, with dramatic shifts happening to technology, animal welfare, generational interest, and quality control standards. A significant struggle faced by dairy farmers is their vulnerability to external factors such as international trade agreements which is discussed in *Section 4.3 International Trade Agreements*.

### **4.3 Trade Agreements**

With increased international trade agreements, in turn, globalization has also increased. Likewise, with increased international trade so too have the frustrations and concerns of dairy farmers been impacted. This section examines dairy farmers' feeling of vulnerability in relation to international trade agreements and how they interpret the impact international trade has on them. Moreover, it reemphasizes the literature review's argument of the importance of exploring both material and non-material interests, which argued that economic and non-economic impacts of globalization are nested and layered (Walter, 2021; De Vries et. Al., 2021, Gottdiener, 2000). Overall, it is guided by a quotation that highlights dairy farmers' international trade agreement experience with, as one farmer put it: "When those negotiations are going on, we all live in fear. What is the government going to do to us this time?" (Participant 2). To properly examine dairy farmers' sense of vulnerability, this section begins by highlighting how dairy farmers understand the need for international trade. Following this it highlights dairy farmers' practical understanding of international trade agreements and market growth loss for dairy and dairy products. And finally, the

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section examines the different ways dairy farmers feel impacted by trade agreements after a trade deal is implemented. Overall, the section examines how throughout the process of international trade agreements, dairy farmers are vulnerable and feel their fears are legitimized.

Regardless of dairy farmers' perspectives and feelings on international trade agreements, dairy farmers understood that they are necessary and needed. Like other consumers, they interact with the benefits of international trade daily. However, dairy farmers had concerns about specific measures of trade agreements such as CETA, NAFTA (now CUSMA), and the TPP that proposed and implemented changes to importation limits and tariffs. It is the impacts or potential of such measures for them, which results in dairy farmers, their families and communities taking action through protest. It is important to highlight that dairy farmers are responding to international trade agreements that have impacts on dairy and they ignore those that do not involve dairy. When thinking about trade agreements, a difficult part for dairy farmers as individuals is that they have little role in the process. While certain agricultural lobby organizations such as the federal and provincial dairy boards play a formal role in lobbying government and in the negotiation process by providing their feedback, the interests of small-scale farmers are in tension with larger forces promoting trade liberalization for other sectors. Moreover, agricultural lobbies and dairy organizations have an indirect role within the process, through press releases, media, and meeting with key parliamentarians. A farmer highlighted that this process means placing trust in institutions and organizations: "From the producer side, we have very little control. We have to trust that whoever is being our negotiators are doing what's best for us as far as they can" (Participant 1). They must trust the federal government,

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provincial dairy organization, and federal dairy organization. Many highlighted that their trust in these institutions, in particular governments, was ailing as shrinkage in the industry has resulted in weakened political power. As one farmer put it:

The biggest concern I have, having been in politics all my life is that as those numbers shrink, we have a lot less clout with both provincial and federal government politically. And so our vote, if you will, at election time, doesn't mean near as much as dairy farmers that at once did. (Participant 2)

Dairy farmers' clout and influence used to be significantly larger. As dairy farmers' vulnerability to other variables such as rising costs, familial pressures, and technical changes as highlighted in *Section 5.2*, forces more farmers out, those still farming are also negatively impacted.

When asked about how international trade agreements impact dairy farmers, a majority were well versed in the loss of market growth that was "traded away" or as other farmers worded it, was conceded for other aspects of the trade agreement. Canadian dairy farmers through supply management have a majority share of the dairy production market, as demand increases there is an opportunity for market growth. A market growth loss is when instead of the demand resulting in quota for purchase for dairy farmers, this production happens outside of Canada (Dairy Farmers of Canada, 2021). A farmer clearly laid out the loss by explaining that:

They have given away 18% of our market with different trade deals and we got nothing in return. And 18% of 40 cows would be four or five cows. And when we make \$9,000 a cow, that's \$45,000. If I had another \$45,000, it could help me pay for this price of gas we've got now and the price of fuel and the price of fertilizer

and the price of seed and everything else and the price of machinery. (Participant 11)

As this farmer highlighted, the loss of market growth is also a loss of potential income and opportunity for Canadian growth given to another country. The Dairy Farmers of Canada in a pre-budget submission for 2022 wrote that:

By 2024, up to 18% of our domestic dairy production will be outsourced to foreign producers, who will supply the milk for imported dairy products that replace those made with Canadian milk on our store shelves. DFC estimates that the combined market access granted under CETA, CPTPP, and CUSMA is equivalent to an estimated average annual loss of \$450 million in farmers' revenues. (Dairy Farmers of Canada, 2021)

Moreover, it hints at the tensions between accepting government subsidies and pay-outs, which is discussed later in the section. Some of this potential growth loss has impacts on the viability of the farm as they recognize the need to grow to continue being profitable or to provide a livable income for their family. Although some farms are stable, increased costs and investments require that farmers grow to have profit:

This last one, the CUSMA (Canada United States Mexico Agreement, formerly NAFTA), I feel personally it's kind of stalled out our industry, right? It's taken all our growth markets, so that seven or 8% or whatever. That's kind of what our growth was every year. But if we have to give that away to the United States' milk coming in, you know, then we're kind of stalled out. So I know they just put a halt on new

entrance programs. So that alone tells you right there there's any growth right now in the market. Right? Which scares me a bit for the future. (Participant 6)<sup>5</sup>

New entrance programs are programs designed by the provincial dairy boards to support new farmers to enter the industry and providing them with a minimum amount of quota. The halting of new entrance programs is an indicator to established farmers and those interested in the industry that there is a lack of growth or room for growth in the industry. In addition to lack of market growth, dairy farmers felt vulnerable against trade agreements in the erosion of supply management.

Supply management for dairy is often a point of contention within Canada's international trade agreements. Few current dairy farmers remember the time before supply management, which saw dairy being sold on the market for varying prices by region and there were no mechanisms for pricing, production, or imports. Instead of witnessing its introduction, dairy farmers explained that the feeling that they are watching the slow demise of the program. In response to a query about what worries them about international trade agreements, a farmer said:

Well, it is just slowly undermining our system our supply management system.

That's the biggest worrisome I have about it. You know, the system, how long has this system vendors? Since 1965, I think and you know, it's worked extremely well.

You know, a lot of countries look at our system and, and envy it, we've seen it in

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<sup>5</sup> The Dairy Farmers of Ontario, have a program called the "New Producer Program" designed to support new farmers to enter the dairy industry with a set amount of quota to provide a liveable income that they otherwise would be unable to acquire or purchase. In 2021 the application for the 2022-year program was suspended due to low Quota volumes being sold. Applications for 2023 opened around the same time this interview took place.

Web Archive: [https://web.archive.org/web/20211217170729/https://new.milk.org/Industry/Programs-and-Policies/DFO-New-Producer-Program-\(NPP\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20211217170729/https://new.milk.org/Industry/Programs-and-Policies/DFO-New-Producer-Program-(NPP))

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Europe, they had it supply management system and they abolished it and it all went to chaos. (Participant 6)

Like many farmers, interview participants suggested that allowing dairy products not regulated by supply management into the market undermines the system itself. One farmer explained their concern that it will continue with each trade agreement:

We can fully expect continual challenges on the international trade front for the foreseeable future. That is not going to go away. In fact, and I expect, with every trade agreement, things are going to increase the imports coming through. So our dairy industry. Not our dairy industry. The let's say the quota system is going to become weaker by the decade. (Participant 12)

This participant highlighted a significantly important aspect, which are the incremental changes in policy that are eroding supply management. As the dairy industry gets weaker, their vulnerabilities will become more significant due to pressure put on financial, social, and familial constraints. As argued in the literature review, the varied vulnerabilities, and pressures that dairy farmers experience present both as material and non-material concerns. Moreover, weakened supply management in hand erodes dairy farmers' perspectives on the federal government.

A growing vulnerability within international trade is that trade agreements impact dairy farmers trust in government. Rather than believing that government will protect the industry, some of the dairy farmers viewed weak government as a reason for their vulnerability. It is through the dichotomy of strong versus weak governments arose during conversations about their lack of trust in the Canadian federal government. Some farmers highlighted that the United States' government was strong, while Canada's was weak. The

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dairy farmers' particular choice in the United States may be due to the proximity of Eastern Ontario to the United States or due to their particular focus on President Donald Trump's frustrations with Canadian supply management. However, when probed about what made government weak, there were few clear examples for that meaning. When asked about their trust in the Canadian government, one clearly state "No, I don't always have confidence in our government" (Participant 8). Moreover, dairy farmers highlighted during interviews that they felt like pawns used by government, their vulnerability being that government pre-destined them to be the "losers" of trade agreements. One farmer noted feeling this by saying:

When they have these trade deals, you know, there's always a winner and loser, and it just seems like dairy, dairy seems to get hit a pretty good hit every time they use that. It just feels like when they use a dairy a pawn and I don't find the Canadian government strong enough to just say no. (Participant 8)

Feeling that dairy was used as a pawn by government was a common feeling among dairy farmers. Multiple farmers highlighted that they felt like pawns for the car or battery industry, which benefit from trade liberalization through the facilitation of exports to the large United States market. Much of this feeling like pawns was also associated with a feeling that government could make decisions and have significant impacts on them that they don't even know about. Similar to academic literature, dairy farmers identified to the depiction of winners and losers in international trade agreements (Walter, 2021; Almeida & Chase-Dunn, C., 2018). This is directly related and has fuelled their fear of not knowing what government would do was significant:



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Because it's the unknown, what the government can do. You don't believe or trust. It's that having that trust and your government to, you know, quick decisions can be made that they don't care what we think, it's a scary thing. (Participant 14).

This lack of trust, fear, and creates a complicated relationship in accepting compensation or discussing subsidies.

An intriguing aspect related to supply management, was international trade agreements and subsidization. Canadian dairy farmers do not receive subsidies through supply management, due to its production being directly related to market demand. This is something many dairy farmers were very proud of and held as a key aspect of why supply management was so great. However, with market loss during trade agreements like CUSMA and CETA, dairy farmers were compensated for their market growth loss. This compensation was crucial for dairy farmers:

The fact that the industry pushed the federal government to compensate dairy farmers for loss of market has been crucial. It has enabled us to plug a few holes in our system here, buy an asset or pay off a loan to help us make better, cause it's a direct loss and the loss is because of international trade, it was a trade. We gave the industry away, our portion of it, a percentage to gain something back. So if in their wisdom, they believe the consumers, the Canadian consumer benefited from the trade deal by sacrificing a portion of the industry, then I feel justified in accepting the compensation package because we're doing something for the better of Canada according to the government. (Participant 8)

This dairy farmer spoke of the compensation that the Dairy Farmers of Canada has been pushing for as a result of CETA, TPP, and CUSMA (Dairy Farmers of Canada, 2021A).

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As a result of CETA and TPP, compensation packages were created and in 2022, the government of Canada reaffirmed that dairy farmers would also receive compensation for CUSMA (Government of Canada, 2022). As an example, the Government of Canada wrote that as a result of CUSMA, “From 2024 to 2029, the owner of a farm with 80 milking cows may receive compensation through a direct payment of about \$106,000 in six yearly instalments on a declining scale” (Government of Canada, 2022). The compensation packages for CETA and TPP were similar in nature to CUSMA. It is essential to understand that dairy farmers heavily distinguished the difference between compensation for market growth loss and subsidies. Many farmers highlighted their pride in the industry not receiving subsidies and recognized the government pay-out post trade agreements as compensation. The farmers noted that in other countries without supply management, there is a significant number of subsidies and government compensation constantly. A farmer highlighted that in Canada:

We're totally self-sufficient, whatever the marketplace is. That's where we get our money from. Whereas in the United States and other countries, they don't get enough money necessarily for their product. And so, the government subsidizes them. (Participant 2)

Dairy farmers want to be totally self-sufficient, but many believed that trade agreements erode their ability to do that by chipping away at supply management, which they view as their only means to be self-sufficient. Moreover, their ability to be self-sufficient is becoming more unrealistic due to changing market demands and the aging of previous legislation that protected them.

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After trade deals are implemented, dairy farmers are faced with big decisions. For some, it changes their farm strategies, viability, and long-term goals. One farmer said that:

Once the agreement is signed, then we know what the field looks like. So you can make a decision. Are you going to stay in the industry? Are you going to exit the industry based on how much of your market did you lose? (Participant 2)

Highlighting how vulnerable dairy farmers are to trade, this quote recognizes that dairy farmers must make extremely difficult decisions after they are implemented. In addition to struggling with choices to stay in the industry, it seems that there is no longer clear certainty after a trade deal is implemented. Dairy farmers also noted their frustrations with having to deal with legal challenges on how Canada is fulfilling their parts of the trade agreement. For example, one farmer explained that, “There's all kinds of trade rules that have to be adhered to and challenges. But, you know, there was one in May and now New Zealand is mounting another one, and the US is going into another one” (Participant 12). The farmer followed up by saying:

So, it is basically, it's a fight that's never gonna go away. We never can let our guard down. And if our farm, if the dairy farmers of Canada, even let their guard down for a minute on the international scene, we could lose our industry because we're small potatoes on the international scene. (Participant 12)

These quotes highlight how dairy farmers view protecting dairy from its vulnerability to trade liberalization will forever be a constant battle. Similarly, the constant battle continues in difficulties over marketing.

An interesting vulnerability dairy farmers experience after a trade agreement is signed, is the difficult decision about how to market Canadian dairy. With larger shares of

the Canadian market being taken up by dairy producers from outside of Canada, their marketing strategy must change. Specifically, the increase of non-Canadian producers and products make their prices and products less competitive since their prices are pre-determined by the Canadian Dairy Commission. As one farmer highlighted the need for changing marketing to enhance their dwindling competitiveness:

It is a sore spot too, because we pay for promotion and advertising to sell cheese, butter, dairy products. So, these people can come in, sell the product on our marketing cost and they don't have to paid for the advertising. We grow up our market, but also helping them along the way though, too. (Participant 3)

There is a struggle with non-Canadian dairy benefitting from their advertising budgets. All Canadian dairy farmers pay fees towards milk board advertising budgets and non-Canadian dairy producers obviously aren't required to do that. This brought forward the solution of Canadian specific dairy marketing such as the blue cow. The blue cow is a symbol of Canadian produced and manufactured dairy placed on products. The interest in local food and products has been growing over the last several decades, with clear examples such as fast-food advertisements highlighting Canadian beef or eggs. The blue cow logo is so prominent that restaurants such as McDonalds include the blue cow logo on items such as their ice-cream cones (Dairy Farmers of Canada, 2020). Beyond supply managed goods, farmer's markets and local food has risen in popularity and accessibility. For the blue cow, it could be argued that the emblem is an attempt to encapsulate the community and culture behind dairy farming (Peta, 2020; Lind & Barham, 2004). As explored in the literature review, cultural commodities, even if informal, are meant to signify how purchasing Canadian dairy is a moral or superior choice. Yet, dairy farmers still struggle in marketing

the blue cow because of a lack of interest from both manufactures and from consumers. One farmer highlighted that when he goes to the grocery store, he purposely tells people struggling to pick out what to buy about the blue cow. Although this marketing has been around for a while, dairy farmers noted that the pandemic made the industry shift focus more directly to the consumers since the restaurant industry was struggling. *Section 4.4 Vulnerability Beyond the Farm* examines and highlights that educating consumers about the importance of Canadian dairy is essential to dairy farmers as they attempt to address their vulnerabilities.

Overall, dairy farmers feel the impacts of international trade agreements before, during, and after they are implemented. Moreover, they are vulnerable at all times of the process because their vulnerability is financial, social and familial. The beginning of this section highlighted how dairy farmers understand the need for international trade agreements. Following this, it explored their experiences or lack thereof within the process of international trade agreement renegotiations. Moreover, it then examined how significant the loss of market growth is and how it slowly undermines the core principals of supply management. Finally, this section examined how after trade agreements are implemented dairy farmers struggle to trust government, accept compensation, and market their dairy. This entire section highlighted how dairy farmers have layered vulnerabilities with varied risks that are impacted by international trade agreements.

### **4.4 Vulnerability to Responsibility**

As highlighted in previous sections, dairy farmers shared the feeling of personal vulnerability both because of overall industry pressures and international trade agreements.

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However, dairy farmers also shared this widespread sense of responsibility in their roles as food producers, employers, contractors, and community members. This section explores how dairy farmers' sense of personal vulnerability and responsibility extends beyond the farm by discussing their farm teams, supply management, environmental impacts, and food production for Canadians. In one of the most moving quotations from dairy farmers, one said:

And it can't just be how it affects the few thousand dairy farmers, because we don't matter as people, there's not enough of us to matter, but what has to matter is what it's going to do to how's it going to change the culture? How is it going to change the environmental advances we make? It has to matter to the country. We have to tell our story in a way that makes people know how these changes will change the country. (Participant 12)

Section 4.4 nuances many different forms of vulnerability highlighted implicitly by dairy farmers within this analysis, telling the story of how dairy farmers' positionality impacts those beyond the farm and into communities not only in Eastern Ontario. The section begins by exploring the tension and relationship between dairy farmers' sense of vulnerability and responsibility. Following this, it explores how dairy farmers view their responsibility, even when rooted in their vulnerability to shifts in the industry. The section finishes with a discussion and analysis of how dairy farmers view their responsibility to provide food to Canadians and their role in food security.

Rather than labelling themselves as vulnerable, dairy farmers noted the responsibilities they take on and how their success impacts people beyond the farm. Dairy farmers across Canada are extremely involved in their communities. They are coaches,

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volunteers in organizations, and even politicians. Moreover, they participate in their community in multitudes. When asked why they are involved in their community, many noted that they felt responsible to give back to future generations. As one farmer credited their upbringing, “We were raised in and to contribute to the wellbeing of others in our church and independent school” (Participant 8). This commitment to others was repeated across the farmers. Moreover, many farmers highlighted that they felt a sense of responsibility to their team on the farm.

One of the ways dairy farmers’ vulnerability impacts people and community off the farm is through decreasing or changing their “team.” Dairy farmers’ family on the farm is just part of their “team” that ensures a smooth operation. Consistent team members that were highlighted were the veterinarians, feed specialists, crop specialists, mechanics, welders, and other trades people such as technicians. These people are important to the farm, as one farmer highlighted their larger community and aptitude for change are the reasons they enjoy farming so much:

Farming's just a great business to be involved with because even the service people have changed, even the people that drive up this driveway, my nutritionist, my vet, their whole outlook changed in the last few decades in that our responsibility being them speaking about this moment is to help the farmer, help the cows. And we do that. We're going to be profitable. They see that their job is to help me help the cows and. And so the people that drive up this driveway, aren't selling feed or equipment, they're selling me solutions. And, and so their attitude changed. They want to discover what my needs are and why those needs are existing. And then they help me solve those problems. (Participant 12)

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However, when money is tight and farmers feel the impact of market growth loss and inflation, they must cut back on services where they can. For some, this means having veterinarians visit once a month instead of every two weeks. For others it might mean not buying parts local or using scraps around the farm instead of buying new. When asked about how trade impacts his team on the farm one participant said,

If things are tight on the farm they lose. Well definitely the trades people like your mechanic guys and that. As things are tightening up for us, I find a lot of guys are trying to do things cheaper and cheaper. (Participant 6)

Many participants underscored that doing things cheaper means people in their communities and beyond lose out on job and financial opportunities. This can cause wide reaching impacts. In Eastern Ontario especially, a number of communities have industries related to agriculture or at the very least, support agriculture through their services and products. Moreover, these businesses are often small businesses that are run by people and families the farmers know personally. They feel responsible for their team, the prosperity of those people and their families. However, most importantly, dairy farmers also view their role as responsible for food in Canada.

Although the dairy farming industry is in a time of crisis and change, dairy farmers view their job as milk producers as a responsibility to provide the Canadian public with food. Currently, the world is dealing with COVID-19 supply chain struggles, a war in Ukraine, and extreme weather, all of which directly impact agriculture globally. Multiple participants noted that this has contributed to inflation and concerns about cost of living in Canada and abroad. Overall, food insecurity is raising globally and in turn, so is the awareness for food sovereignty in Canada. Because of supply management, Canadian dairy



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farmers ensure there is a constant supply for all of the consumer's demand. However, as trade agreements erode supply management and the viability of the industry becomes more difficult, their ability to do so is under threat. Dairy farmers clearly see their role within the food system in Canada. It's also important to know that a majority of dairy farmers also do cash crop, meaning they grow beans, corn, or wheat, which is sold to the market. Many farmers said that,

I just wish Canadians really felt strongly about food sovereignty. I wish everyone would want all their food to come from their own country. That way, if anything ever happened, we knew our food source was still secure. (Participant 4)

This perspective of being on guard highlights how important they view their role. It is important to note that when dairy farmers speak about food sovereignty and security, many lack the academic background and theoretical perspectives informing the difference. Rather, dairy farmers tended to use these words interchangeably when speaking. Overall, dairy farmers have been highlighting their role within Canada's food system, and by extension their responsibilities and roles within that system.

For dairy farmers, supply management is a means to achieve greater power over the Canadian food system and supply chain. As one farmer said, "The system [supply management] that we have gives them the greatest food security of any country in the world, simply because we're committed under the agreements that we have to produce the product" (Participant 2). Instead of being at the whim of changing markets, Canadian dairy farmers respond directly to the demands of consumers in Canada. Although Canadian dairy farmers only produce milk for Canada, they recognize global impacts. For example, several participants highlighted the war in Ukraine and the lack of grain coming in from the global

market. Rather than being dependant on other countries, dairy farmers spoke about how their responsibility for feeding Canadians dairy helps reduce reliance on other countries. For dairy farmers, it is through supply management and their role within the Canadian food systems to achieve food sovereignty and security.

Supply management is a significant point of both vulnerability and responsibility. Although threats against supply management are significant and contribute heavily to the vulnerability of dairy farmers, they are also a source of growth for responsibility. To provide all of the dairy needs for Canadians is a significant amount of responsibility. However, this responsibility is also for their team on the farm by providing employment and sources of income for other people and businesses. This section has highlighted the responsibility that dairy farmers undertake, when they envision their role within the food system in Canada, including their references to contributions to food production, food security and food sovereignty. Moreover, it highlighted the global nature of how international pressures on the food system highlight the importance of dairy farmers local actions. Overall, dairy farmers' vulnerability is also where their sense of responsibility starts which creates a significant amount of tension for dairy farmers to navigate.

### **4.5 Conclusion**

*Chapter 4: Vulnerability* examined and explored the shared sentiment of vulnerability among dairy farmers across eastern Ontario. This chapter was oriented by the shared underlying sentiment of vulnerability that dairy farmers identified. Moreover, the chapter built upon the foundation of literature examining material and non-material concerns as explored in the literature review. Their fear often materialized in the concern

about that if something happened to the farm, what would happen to everything else? But more specifically, what would happen to the business, to their family members, employees, contractors, and even their animals? The concerns of dairy farmers extend far beyond individual concerns and highlight how dairy farmers situate themselves within society and their community. The chapter argued that dairy farmers shared a sense of vulnerability, which has impacted a wide variety of groups. Their vulnerability is shared with their family, during international trade agreements and with their community.

Overall, the introduction laid out the flow and organization for the chapter. The first section examined familial vulnerability by telling the fears, worries, and concerns dairy farmers have for their families. In particular, it put a spotlight on the nested and layered nature of work, family, and legacy for dairy farmers. *Section 4.3* analyzed vulnerability within the unique context of living on the farm, re-emphasizing the foundation for which dairy farmers interpret international trade agreements. Moreover, the section addresses the unique vulnerability dairy farmers experience as identified by dairy farmers themselves. It took the vulnerabilities identified earlier and highlighted how they would impact their local communities and country. The conclusion summarized and provided a high-level synopsis of the chapter, which highlighted that the vulnerability of dairy farmers does not happen in a vacuum and its impacts are widespread.

## Chapter 5: Motivations and Interpretations

### 5.1 Introduction

When reviewing images and videos of dairy farmer protests over the last several years in response to international trade agreements, it is easy to assume that the farmers there all have the same reasons for attending. However, this chapter examines how this assumption is too simplified and overlooks the many different motivations for those in attendance. The previous analytical chapter, *Chapter 4: Vulnerability*, built upon the exploration and foundation of the introduction, literature review and methodology of the thesis. Chapter 4 explored the shared sentiment and underlying feeling of vulnerability among dairy farmers. Moreover, it examined how their shared fear and vulnerability impacts them during international trade agreements and their broader communities. Due to the wide range of vulnerability as examined in Chapter 4, dairy farmers also had a range of different motivations for protesting in the city. When examining these different motivations, there was also reflections and commentary impacted by current events.

As explored in Chapter 4, dairy farmers feel a deep sense of vulnerability, which in turn creates a great amount of responsibility as well. Dairy farmers' concerns about their employees, animals, and families all draw upon their deep sense of responsibility to others and their community. Likewise, when dairy farmers are at risk of further crisis from international trade agreements, they feel a responsibility to act. However, although there is shared sentiment of vulnerability and responsibility, the motivation to protest is not universal among dairy farmers. To properly explore the variety of different motivations among dairy farmers, the chapter begins with the introduction to outline the logic and

argument of the chapter. *Section 5.2 Dairy Protests* provides a narrative description of dairy protests in Canada over history, exploring the common sounds and sights of the protests. *Section 5.3 Motivations*, examines three different motivations of dairy farmers identified during interviews, and the tensions between these differing motivations. Following this, *Section 5.4 Freedom Convoy*, highlights how the proximity of the interviews to the Ottawa 2022 protests framed the conversations with farmers and possibly impacts protests going forward. Finally, the chapter concludes with *Section 5.5 Conclusion*, which provides a synopsis of the chapter's arguments that dairy protests over time have changed and have become more sophisticated over time. Moreover, it highlights how other external factors will impact how they change in the future.

### **5.2 Dairy Protests**

Many protests disrupt the normal sounds and sights of city life. This is especially true for dairy protests where you might even hear a moo from a cow! This section describes and explores dairy protests in Canada, both historically and more recently. Understanding the logistics and presentations of the protest are essential to explore prior to understanding the motivations of dairy farmers. The second section starts by exploring and noting historic protests. Following this, more modern protests are discussed by examining the logistics of getting to the protests, what items they bring and use, and what happens when they are at the protests. By telling a story of how different dairy protests have looked throughout history, it creates a foundation for understanding the many different motivations of protestors. The section concludes with a high-level synopsis of the overall argument that dairy protests throughout history have used sophisticated mobilization efforts.

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Since the installation of supply management in the 1960's, there have been many dairy farmer protests, all as diverse as the farmers themselves. In 1967, an estimated 10,000 dairy farmers protested on Parliament Hill over low dairy prices (Rusk, 1967, p. 1). As discussed in the literature review, these protests damaged the doors of Parliament Hill in an attempt to get in (Rusk, 1967). This intensity was not exclusive to the protests. It also happened in their meetings with government, as one farmer said:

From talking to some older farmers, when they first brought supply management in back in 1965, when it began, the Agriculture ministers, provincial and federal, along with the farm leaders, I guess it was pretty heated and sometimes they had to have a police escort to meetings, from what I've been told and that. (Participant 3)

The intensity of the protests represented the gravity of the situations, and their frustrations over low dairy prices from the Canadian Dairy Commission during the early days of supply management. Moreover, this intensity was felt in the stories that filled some of the farmers' homes when they were children. Interestingly enough, the dairy farmers who recalled this ended up protesting for the preservation and protection of supply management.

This shift in protesting to support and strengthen supply management happened fast and by the 70's protestors threw powdered dairy at the agricultural minister over quota cuts (Scullion, 2006)! The protests continued, with institutional support of organizing and mobilization from the United Farmers of Ontario and their provincial counterparts (Scullion, 2006). This trend of upfront institutional support continued to the late 1990's with protests over supply management failures surrounding butter, prices, and quota cuts. Rather than organization from the Ontario Farmers Union, there has been a more recent shift in local dairy boards and provincial dairy boards taking on a role as logistical supports. As

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one farmer noted, “There was an organized bus trip to Ottawa in the early nineties. And yeah, I went down with my dad” (Participant 1). The dairy boards, whose organization and governance were explored in Chapter 3, helped support farmers get to the protests on buses, is an important and significant aspect to note. The mobilization to getting to protests being organized by the dairy boards is another clear example of resource mobilization theory in practice, using their capacity and capital to organize and mobilize people into adherents (Edwards & Gillham, 2013). During interviews, dairy farmers noted that although the dairy boards didn’t make statements of support, they supported farmers to make a statement by protesting. However, getting on the bus to protest is just the beginning of a dairy farmer protesting.

One of the first logistical questions of a protest is about where to have it and how to get there. Some farmers travelled to the protests carpooling, but an overwhelming majority of dairy farmers who were interviewed identified that they got to protests on a bus. As mentioned, these buses are often mobilized by the provincial or local dairy boards. However, these bus rides are not just a means of transportation, they are a significant source of their organizing. These bus rides are important because on the bus signs were made, shirts were handed out, and community was built by gathering local farmers. This was captured well by one farmer who said:

We had a bunch of farmers there. We all got a white t-shirt, four hours on a bus. Yeah. It was awesome. This is neat. I get a day off the farm, and I get to talk with my co-producers on the bus for three or four hours and the agenda that we have. (Participant 8)

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As explored in Chapter 2 and resource mobilization theory, by organizing bus rides dairy boards play a role as constituents by providing resources to the movement (Edwards & Gillham, 2013). Rather than dairy boards being bystanders watching the protests, they support the mobilization process as constituents themselves through their resources. Moreover, their actions help expand the social movement by making dairy farmers choice to be adherents as easy as getting on a local bus (Edwards & Gillham, 2013). It is through their resources, that their social movement mobilizes through institutional capacity, labour, and organizational strategies.

When many of the farmers arrived to Parliament Hill to protest during the years, the scene was often busy, hectic, and very loud. For those that have never been to or seen Parliament Hill, it is a large space that is contained to the downtown core of Ottawa. In particular, the buildings of Centre Block, West Block, and East Block create a large rectangular lawn connected to Wellington Street by walking paths. It is on Wellington Street and the front lawn of Parliament that dairy farmer and many others, protest on. Wellington Street during modern dairy protests is often lined with cows, tractors, and trucks. When talking to dairy farmers about other protestors bringing their cows or tractors, it was often a decision of logistics. Only farmers with tractors in proper condition could take them to Parliament. Similarly, only those living very close to Parliament brought their cows. An interesting observation is that new livestock policies from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency were implemented since the 2016 protests around dairy cows leaving their property, which increases regulation and paperwork (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2022). Although a decision for health and quality control, this policy change will likely have an impact on dairy farmers' ability to bring a cow to protest in the future. Dairy



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farmers I spoke to noted that bringing these items made people from the city curious about their cause, because the rural items were so out of place in the city. Some farmers even wished they could have brought their own tractors or cows as well. Another key aspect of what happens during dairy protests, are the speeches that happen on Parliament Hill.

A common practice mentioned by farmers was having speeches from various farmers and community leaders. Often, speeches are given at Parliament Hill by leaders in the community who sit on local dairy boards. The provincial and national dairy boards are less likely to give speeches but are certainly there to listen. However, it is important to note when asked what was said in the speeches, most dairy farmers couldn't recall. They generally remembered that the sentiment was about protecting supply management and Canadian dairy. However, some dairy farmers noted that it was customary for Members of Parliament to talk to the crowd or the speakers as well. Although there is no formality of what types of Members of Parliament attend, they are often those connected to rural regions, farming communities, or the agriculture minister. As seen in Image 1, with the minister of agriculture speaking at the event – in that case it was not well received, and the minister was covered in powdered dairy. Moreover, it is important to note that their attendance at times is not covered by media. One farmer even compared the decision for most MPs to not speak to the Trucker Convoy by saying:

The difference then was even though it was on TV, I remember they came out and spoke in front of the Senator Block as a speaker, they came in and met the people. At least some politicians did come out and spoke and they were on the news, whether they agreed with it or not. (Participant 13)

This is important to note, as many protestors highlighted motivations that were specific to government's action and inaction, especially their responses to the dairy protests.

Overall, this section has highlighted the noises, sights, and activities that happen during the dairy farmers' parliamentary protests. Moreover, it argued that international trade agreement negotiations created windows of opportunity for farmers to protest and make their demands public. Although seemingly basic things, understanding how dairy farmers' protest actions formulate are important to providing insight into their processes. First, the section began by describing historic dairy farmer protests and the precedence set by their strategies and actions. These points were followed by a discussion of shifts in the protest trends and practices about the involvement of organizations and formal institutions such as dairy boards. Moving to recent and modern protests, the section examined the strategies and mobilization practices of dairy farmers protests. Moreover, it examined the logistics of getting to the protests, what happened at the protests, and how they interpret things such as speeches. Finally, this section concluded with a summary of the chapter and the analysis undertaken.

### **5.3 Motivations**

Asking why people protests a simple but loaded question that results in many different answers for researchers who have studied the phenomenon. This section examines the different motivations of dairy farmers for protesting. As argued earlier, political opportunity theory highlights that protests and social movements are built upon a specific moment or window of opportunity to turn discontent into a motivation to act through mobilization. The earlier section highlighted how groups are mobilized. However, this

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section goes further into examining the different motivations of the dairy farmers that were mobilized. This section clearly argues that there are three general themes in differing and disagreeing motivations, even though dairy farmers have a shared sense of vulnerability and goal to protest on Parliament Hill. This section begins with exploring the motivation to protest as a means to be heard by government, media, and consumers. Following this, a more targeted motivation of challenging government is explored and discussed. In response to these two motivations, several farmers' response was concerns about aggression and messaging during the protests from the different motivations. Out of these concerns, a third motivation is examined, which is to educate the general public and government about the impacts of international trade agreements. Finally, the section concludes with a summary of the argument and sections exploration, while highlighting the variety of different motivations and perspectives within each general theme.

Videos of protests in 2015 and 2016 are loud. There are vehicles honking, chanting, and you might have even heard a "moo." There are also signs, with different slogans and phrases, with one particularly cheeky slogan saying, "Stop Creaming Us." (See Image 10 in Chapter 3). Moreover, it can be seen in the images on the next page. It comes as no surprise that many dairy farmers identified that the reason, they protested in the city was to be heard, but what does that mean? This motivation explores the different ways some dairy farmers viewed protesting in the city as an opportunity to be heard, including by government, media, and the general population. It first explores what makes protesting in the city an opportunity to be heard. Likely the most common sentiment among dairy farmers when asked why they would go protest in the city was that it couldn't be a protest if no one came to the farm to see their protest. In fact, one farmer even said point blank that

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**Image 11 (Above):** Dairy farmers take part in a protest in downtown Ottawa on Tuesday, September 29, 2015.

**Image 12 (Below):** Dairy farmer Chris Ryan of Saint Isidore, Ontario holds onto a dairy cow as he protests in front of Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Tuesday, September 29, 2015. (Note: sign reads “Government Stop Protein Imports Now!”)

**Source:** Kilpatrick, Sean. (2015) *Dairy farmers protest in Ottawa*. CTV News, image via Canadian Press



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the reason they went to the city was, “Because they won't come to the farm” (Participant 4). This is a significant aspect of their motivations to be heard; they recognize that the audience matters. One farmer highlighted this by saying:

Most of the people in the rural are all facing the same problem, they know what the problem is. That's not the people they have to get across to, they have to go to the cities. That's where the people are most of time. It's urban people that we need to try and get the point across to or persuade or whatever. Most time the rural community, everybody affected. It's just like me going out the back door and yelling, ya know? Nobody is going to hear me. (Participant 3)

Going to the city represents a clear identifiable way to ensure that they can be heard. Moreover, it highlights how dairy farmers identify urban actors as the target for changing opinions and who they need to persuade. Possibly more important than just an opportunity, protests try to engage with a wider population. Their target audience is urban actors, such as media, government, and consumers.

The location of the dairy protests on Parliament Hill assists in identifying one of the key groups that they want to be heard by. Parliament Hill is the heart of government in Canada, and many would believe that protesting there should directly translate into government listening or interacting. It is important to note that more recent protests such as those in 2015 and 2016 were strictly held in Ottawa. This is significant because Ottawa is the capital city of Canada, where elected representatives from across Canada make law and policy. Moreover, Ottawa is where the Government of Canada, its leaders and their employees who work on international trade agreements and treaties reside. Making sure

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government heard them was important to some; one even noted that protestors had to go where government was: “Where your government is, I guess you have to go and make your stand in front of that building.” (Participant 5). Moreover, being heard meant also acknowledging and talking about what was going on with Canadian dairy. One farmer noted that, “The problem with other countries like the U.S., they're really good at not talking about stuff” (Participant 4). And protests for some dairy farmers is an opportunity to actually discuss the vulnerability of the Canadian dairy industry and what is at stake—a significant step in getting the recognition of their struggles and concerns, is getting the media’s attention.

When dairy faces significant risk during the renegotiations of international trade agreements that threaten to change free trade mechanisms that support dairy, they struggle to be heard. However, every international trade agreement renegotiation does not threaten dairy, dairy farmers face risk when specific provisions that undermine supply management and tariff rate quotas that create uncertainty for dairy farmers are being negotiated. One farmer plainly said, “You know framers aren't really portrayed that much in the media.” (Participant 9). According to those interviewed, dairy farmers feel that their concerns and perspectives aren’t being heard or sought after by media. Protesting in the city is a means to ensure that media does engage with them. Being heard means making sure the protest can make headlines. For some farmers, this meant provocative slogans, bringing their tractors, or even bringing their cows. Although how media interprets their messages is varied and debated, dairy farmers want their messages of vulnerability to be heard. As one farmer noted: “Maybe they focus more on the cow's name and not what the actual protest was about. Right? So I don't think reporters maybe understand agriculture either. Right?”

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(Participant 6) However, these focuses on palatable things such as the cows' name is an important strategy to get media engagement. The media focused and talked to farmers who had intriguing items with them such as Ninja the Cow in 2016 (Fedio 2016; Oliver, 2016). Protesting in the city was something that some farmers viewed as an opportunity to be heard by media and by extension, the general public. Being heard is something farmers felt proud of when reflecting on the protests, as one farmer said, "I find that quite impressive that people, that many people got together to, to make their voice heard." (Participant 5).

Several farmers identified their motivation for protesting was to challenge government. So, what does it mean to challenge government? One farmer clearly laid out what it meant to them:

There is a place for protesting to put the governments on notice that things are not well, and the government is in position to make things better. Sometimes they have the ability to make decisions, to guide policy makers and to making better policy.  
(Participant 8)

In particular, farmer highlighted that they are targeting government because they feel that they are sacrificing the dairy industry for the benefit of consumers or other industries in trade agreements. The idea of challenging government made some of the farmers really excited to protest. One farmer described their excitement by saying:

I found it [protesting] kind of interesting and it was neat to do it sort of thing, because we were challenging the government that, you know, you say it's an important industry, but you're not prepared to, to protect us. Because at that time there was a big challenge from the United States saying that it was an unfair

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industry, and we were concerned whether the government was going to waiver on it or not. (Participant 1)

As this quote highlights frustration solely with the government's action even with outside factors impacting their decision, some motivations of the dairy farmers fall within the polity model of social movements, which focuses frustrations and actions on government (Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Armstrong & Berstein, 2008).

Another aspect to examine with the motivation to challenge, is that they are challenging a government that doesn't reflect their reality. For some farmers the big tractors represent the very different lives they lead from government and is meant to challenge their perspectives. This was a common conversation, with one farmer even noting that:

Pierre Poilievre, recently he did a photo op at some farm and he just looked massively out of place. It's okay, I would look massively out of place in certain environments as well, but they all look out of place. All of the, all of the politicians look out of place. (Participant 9)

As the quote exemplifies, dairy farmers sometimes struggle to see themselves in government, and their actions are purposefully disruptive, which concerns many dairy farmers. As a result, they protest to challenge government, and likely, a society that is quickly becoming very removed from rural life and lacks an understanding of what dairy farmers do.

For both motivations explored earlier, there were some farmers who had major concerns with their tactics. In particular, some farmers were worried about what message was being sent to government through rowdy protests and rallies. It is important to note that to some, the tractors in the pictures of recent dairy protests represent rural country life.



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To others, it represents a significant amount of money, feeding into the assumptions that dairy farmers are rich. When asked about people bringing their tractors, one farmer said “I've said it for years. I was like, you're shooting yourself in the foot, by bringing these big fancy tractors places” (Participant 7). Moreover, they worried about setting a bad precedent, as one farmer noted that “Sometimes the damage is greater, than what the good that you have done in the past.” (Participant 3). This concern was likely heightened by the negative reactions to the 2022 Ottawa Trucker Convoy protest, which happened only 3-4 months before the interviews and is discussed in Section 5. 4. Although some farmers just want to be heard or challenge government, media, and consumers, other farmers are more specific in their reasoning for protesting. Some farmers are focused instead on education, as one farmer said, “We want to be in their ear, not in their face” (Participant 10).

So, what does it mean to be in government's ear? Or the consumer's ear? When identifying education as a motivation, dairy farmers were clear that it was their responsibility to change the perceptions of people about dairy farming. For some dairy farmers, the education should have started before the protest. As one farmer who had not protested before highlighted:

Do I disagree with what these guys are not doing? No, they felt strongly about that and they protested to send a message. That's their right, the right to protest should always exist. And at this point, was that the right decision? I can't say for sure, but my thinking is some communication education might've prevented that. (Participant 12).

Moreover, the need to educate increases with each government as one farmer highlighted “With every new government that is formed as, you know, like those new MPs or people

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in government, that's like, they're one more generation away from the farm. You know, we have to educate.” (Participant 10) By extension, this need to educate increases with society as society’s connection to the farm grows. But how do you educate at a protest? The focus on education at protests is done through a variety of ways: talking to media, posting about why they protest to their social media, and through marketing.



**Image 13 (Below):** Farmers Spill Milk over Trade Deal Concerns

**Source:** Wattie, Chris. (2015). “Farmers Spill Milk over Trade Deal Concerns.” *The Globe and Mail*.

At the protests, a clear avenue for education was items and the Blue Cow emblem: “We all had shirts, blue shirts and support supply management signs” (Participant 10). This is exemplified well in Image 13 above, wherein most people have coordinated signed and shirts. Through coordinated actions, dairy farmers recognized that they could educate the public by showing a united front, when looking at an image of protests one farmer said:

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I think it's awesome, right? They're identifying themselves and it's a peaceful way to identify themselves, and it lets the public know who's there and what, what they're doing. This looks like a pretty peaceful group, but the signs are pretty awesome. And I think identifying yourself as a, as a group, it kind of unites you together as well. (Participant 6).

Moreover, through educating people about the blue cow emblem and creating a clear association, they are educating consumers to look for the blue cow when they go shopping. In particular, they are identifying a clear way consumers can support dairy farmers in Canada, highlighting the role of bystanders in the social movement (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). The blue cow is a way to support the movement and learn about their food supply, as one farmer highlighted: “There has to be some education I think, into, to your food supply and the importance of your food supply, because it's still one of the basic things that people need.” (Participant 5). By protesting to educate, they are educating government, media, and consumers about the impact of international trade on their lives. Even farmers who had never protested, recognized that it was important that the protests were about discussion and education: “If they have a good message and some good talks that's helpful” (Participant 3). Through good messaging at protests, dairy farmers have the ability to have an impact on international trade agreements and educate the Canadian public. This can be seen in the Image 14 on the next page where a pedestrian walks by and engages with someone’s cow (Kilpatrick, 2015). It is also important to note that dairy farmers also take their responsibility to educate seriously beyond protesting. They host open farm days, go to schools, and work in their community to educate them about dairy farming.



**Image 14 (Left):** A pedestrian talks to a young farmer as he walks a cow down Wellington Street as he joins fellow dairy farmers taking part in a protest in downtown Ottawa on Tuesday, September 29, 2015

**Source:** Kilpatrick, Sean. (2015) *Dairy farmers protest in Ottawa*. CTV News, image via Canadian Press.

This variability and individuality in motivations for protesting international trade agreements is significant. It recognizes that the international trade agreement negotiations itself is the opportunity that dairy farmers mobilize around to act upon. Although dairy farmers vulnerabilities and responsibilities are impacted by forces such as shrinkage, industry shifts, and the rural – urban divide, they protest international trade agreements in the city because it is one of few clear opportunities to act. This case study therefore is well explained by political opportunity theory, which argues that social movements act in response to specific moments in time considered an opportunity (Tarrow, 1994; Meyer &

Minkoff, 2004). Political opportunity theory could be applied here in recognizing that they act because the specific moment in time is due to the inaction and actions of government that impact dairy farmers during international trade agreements. Moreover, as suggested in the literature review, resource mobilization could be applied here to further explore the how dairy farmers discontent is channelled into action (Edwards & Gillham, 2013; Turner & Killian, 1972; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). For dairy farmers, resource mobilization would argue that dairy farmers likely always have vulnerabilities and responsibilities creating discontent as explored in Chapter 4. However, it is through this exploration of differing motivations that it becomes clear that dairy farmers use a multi-institutional approach to understanding their vulnerabilities: consumers, media, and government must be engaged. The multi-institutional approach, which argues that it is essential to consider that different institutions all share different levels of power, rather than focusing solely on the polity model of government (Friedland et. Al., 1991; Snow, 2004; Armstrong & Bernstein, 2008). Even though the motivations and approaches are different, with varying focuses and goals, dairy farmers want to change to address their vulnerabilities and responsibilities.

This section has highlighted deep intersections of the motivations of dairy farmers protesting in the city. First, by introducing the motivation to be heard by government, media, and consumers, it explored that being heard means listening to the impacts of international trade agreements on their daily life and having their experiences shared. A similar, but distinct motivation explored in this section consisted of how some dairy farmers wanted to challenge government, in particular a government they perceived as not understanding them and their lives. In response to these two motivations, the section explored concerns other dairy farmers have about these messaging and actions. Further, it

examined their alternative motivation of educating not only government, but the media and consumers as well. Finally, the section concludes by connecting all three to political opportunity theory, resource mobilization theory, and the multi-institutional approach explored in the literature review.

### **5.4 Trucker Convoy**

Many of the discussions throughout the interviews in March and June 2022 were framed by current events happening around the world. This included Ontario's 2022 provincial election, the upcoming 2022 Fall Municipal Elections in Ontario, and the most prevalent, the February 2022 Trucker Convoy. The research focus on dairy farmer protests was decided upon before the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Insurrection in the United States. For a significant amount of time throughout the research, the January 6<sup>th</sup> Insurrection was expected to be the most current topic shaping the discussion. However, the 2022 Trucker Convoy in Ottawa had the most significant role in shaping the conversation. This section explores the interesting way the 2022 Trucker Convoy shaped conversations and impacted the research outcomes. Moreover, this section examines the similarities, differences, and how the convoy has become a point of comparison. First, the section begins by describing the 2022 Trucker Convoy and its coverage. The section then examines similarities and differences. Finally, the section examines the potential long-term impacts that the convoy will have on future dairy protests in Canada and on Parliament Hill.

In February of 2022, a large-scale protest happened at Parliament Hill and downtown Ottawa that lasted over 2 weeks. The protest was originally motivated by frustrations about truck drivers being required to have COVID-19 vaccinations to cross the

border. However, the protest was quickly engulfed by people's frustrations about COVID-19 restrictions in general. The Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC) wrote that, "The scenes that unfolded in downtown Ottawa over the past three weeks have been described by people living there as disruptive and frightening." (Hogan, 2022). The protests garnered international news coverage, with Al Jazeera describing the event as:

Hundreds of Canadian truckers and their supporters have maintained a protest in the Canadian capital for more than two weeks in anger about coronavirus restrictions. The so-called "Freedom Convoy", which began arriving in Ottawa in late January, was formed in response to a vaccine mandate requiring truckers to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to cross the land border between Canada and the United States. (Al Jazeera, 2022)

Other international news organizations such as the BBC described the protest as well:

The protests began with a truck convoy heading to Ottawa to oppose a vaccine mandate for truckers crossing the US-Canada border, but eventually became about a broader opposition to pandemic restrictions and Mr. Trudeau's government. (BBC News, 2022)

As highlighted, the protest devolved into an occupation of the city with transports, trucks, and buildings gridlocking the city with constant honking and noise. Moreover, the protest was extremely controversial with Canadian media organization CTV writing that: "The trucker convoy, which originally protested vaccine mandates for truckers, had moments that shocked many Canadians including disrespecting the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Nazi symbols and turning the Canadian flag upside down" (Sturgeon, 2022). Overall, the Trucker Convoy became a controversial, significant, and impactful event in society.

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Since interviews took place in the early summer of 2022, the convoy protests were on everyone's minds when asked about protests. Some farmers supported the protests, others did not. Other perspectives fell in between, supporting the right to protest but disagreeing with how it devolved and occupied the city. Overall, the Trucker Convoy impacted the discussions by being a distinct point of reference when discussing protests and thus becoming a fixation for comparison. Becoming a point of comparison often meant that topics such as violence in protests, trust in media, and the right to protest came up more often than expected. Moreover, it is significant that the trucker convoy is recognized as a point of comparison because it influences the topics and perspectives that dairy farmers spoke about. Moreover, it made discussing protests more controversial than before.

When examining the pictures and coverage of historic protests, including those used in the methodology of photo elicitation, these protests were loud, provocative, and at times violent. One farmer even noted that historic protests were likely violent and rowdy, but that a key difference was that news was not instantly shared via the internet or cell phones as it is today. The farmer said:

Just like protest, the protests in Ottawa, just this past February, the freedom protest and that, but they had the same thing back then. People living now are more aware of it now, we get news within minutes before it was, you'd be a week or, a weekly news thing or a monthly, or whenever the paper came out. But now sending it, just text a picture and, within minutes, so anything. yeah, so I see. It's all new it's not really new. It happened back then too. (Participant 3)

This discussion related to the Trucker Convoy protest, where the actions of those protestors were live streamed, photographed, and shared instantly to people across Canada and the



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world. This was one of the first comparisons to the Trucker Convoy encountered throughout the research; it was indicative to a common trend that would continue throughout the interviews.

To many interviewees, dairy farmers and the Trucker Convoy protest are extremely similar. They used similar tactics of items and provocative statements such as the tractors. However, some dairy farmers noted that there was a clear and distinct difference between dairy protests and the trucker protests. One farmer noted a clear distinction: “Farmers have to go home that night and go milk cows, truckers tent” (Participant 4). In an interesting comparison, by protesting to protect supply management, dairy farmers make it so that they cannot protest for long periods of time such as the truckers. The farmers must return to the farms to milk and ensure that they continue to uphold their supply management agreements. Although this is a key distinction, it is likely that future protests by dairy farmers could be perceived differently than before. In fact, rather than protesting on Parliament Hill with their cows and tractors, dairy farmers may have to reimagine how to defend supply management and against international trade agreements.

Through the discussion of comparison and differences, some dairy farmers understood how the atmosphere of protests can quickly get out of hand. As one farmer said

I was totally opposed to the way that they protested this winter in Ottawa, where they took over Ottawa, they were just hooligans most of them. But at the same time, I understood how that could take place and the comradery of how they all got together. Because once you get involved in something like that, you get all wound up in that kind of thing. And they just lost sight of common sense, unfortunately,

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down there this winter. And see that's it was that sort of thing when we were there with the big tractors and all that. (Participant 2)

This farmer touches on an important note that protests can easily be perceived by people as “getting out of hand” and that the actions of the trucker convoy may have long term implications on the protest strategies of dairy farmers. Moreover, it highlights how their tactics may be interpreted differently going forward. For example, many farmers thought the cows, tractors, and trucks engaged people living in the urban centre. After the 2022 convoy, this could be interpreted differently and may not engage people the same way.

An important reflection and analysis that emerges from examining the interviews was that there was no clear relationship between support for the Trucker Convoy and their motivation to protest. In fact, some of the farmers who noted they supported the Trucker Convoy had never protested before in their lives. However, there was also a significant amount of distrust in “mainstream” media such as the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC), Global News, and CTV News from dairy farmers. This predominantly came from farmers who supported the Trucker Convoy. While this distrust in the so called “mainstream” media cannot be tied directly to the Trucker Convoy, it does speak to a larger trend in Canada and globally of disinformation and a lack of trust in news sources which the trucker convoy mobilized on heavily (Brin & Charlton, 2022). When discussing their distrust of media, it was common for dairy farmers to mention the Trucker Convoy. Many farmers highlighted that they got their news from a variety of sources such as YouTube, social media, and on the TV, with varying levels of trust. One farmer captured the difficulty with present “mainstream” media when saying, “The media seems to have their own agenda. You know, one media news channel can make it look totally different than the one.

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It's just that's what you want to see or what you want to believe, what you want to read.”

(Participant 4). Similarly, another said:

I definitely think the media just reports what they want to report, or they report what they think people want to read. I'm not sure. So, but no, I don't trust the media a hundred percent. I wouldn't base my information or my thought process on what the media tells me, I'm going to dig deeper and get the facts. (Participant 6)

This distrust in so-called “mainstream” media from some farmers could point to further discontentment beyond international trade agreements and dairy. Moreover, the discontent highlights a global shift in increased distrust and polarization, which may or may not point towards some dairy farmers being possible constituents to be mobilized for in the future. Another important impact of the trucker convoy protests is how it will change dairy protests going forward.

The public’s perception, especially those living in Ottawa, of protests in the aftermath of the 2022 Trucker Convoy has likely changed drastically, even if those protests are very different from the convoy’s protest. For practical reasons, the protests in the future will be changed by the items and ways in which dairy farmers go to Ottawa. As a result of the 2022 Trucker Convoy, there are now more complicated laws around the blockades of roads and essential infrastructure. In addition to laws around blockades, there is now the possibility and precedent for more extreme government responses such as the *Emergencies Measures Act* (Pasieka, 2022). Even if the *Emergencies Measures Act* is not used, strategies and tools used to deescalate the protests such as tow trucks and other police responses are getting significant investments from provinces such as Ontario (Pasieka, 2022). Moreover, people’s perceptions of the protests have changed. There is an apprehension about protests

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happening on Parliament Hill without a clear date for arrival and departures from people living in Ottawa will continue to change perceptions about protests in downtown Ottawa in particular. Although many small-scale dairy farmers may have to return at night to milk their cows, this is not information the general public would know. Moreover, while this was true for the smaller farms interviewed, this may not be the case for larger more industrial sized farms or farms with more hired labour. The reception from Ottawa and other urban centres may not be educational as some farmers mentioned earlier preferred. Likewise, the concern from the general public extends in regard to noise levels and the city of Ottawa, diverse and vulnerable populations, and overall respect for the political process. Although many farmers in interviews indicated that they would gladly go protest for supply management or against certain changes to international trade agreements, it is likely that protests going forward will be different. In the future, protests in Ottawa by necessity will be different in the way they are organized and mobilized, their institutional support or involvement, and how the public interacts with them.

In conclusion, this section highlighted the impact of the 2022 Trucker Convoy on the interview responses. Although the dairy farmer protests at the focus of this study happened before the 2022 Trucker Convoy, it is essential understand the impact the of the 2022 Trucker Convoy. Most importantly, understanding how it has impacted people as they reflect on the protests and how protests will be changed going forward. As highlighted throughout this thesis, context is important, and the 2022 Trucker Convoy is part of the context in which protests and demonstrations research must now recolonize and build upon. This section has recognized the many ways in which dairy farmer protests have been impacted and changed. First this section explored what happened during the 2022 Trucker

Convoy, highlighting both Canadian and international coverage. The section followed this by noting the importance of the trucker convoy becoming a point of comparison. After understanding the importance of recognizing the 2022 Trucker Convoy as a point of comparison, the section then examined the similarities and differences. The section finished by discussing more broad and general impacts that the trucker convoy has on protesting and on dairy farmers.

### **5.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has analyzed important factors related to dairy farmers protesting. The chapter began with an introduction highlighting the logic and sequence of the chapter. *Section 5.2 Dairy Protests* examined the changing trends and impacts of dairy protests throughout history, while exploring the logistical and mobilization efforts used to protest. Following this, *Section 5.3 Motivations* examined three different motivations of dairy farmers to protest, as well as the concerns some farmers have with the message and tactics of some protestors. It did so by highlighting and arguing for the importance of understanding that dairy farmers have been mobilized for the same social movement but have very different motivations. *Section 5.4 Trucker Convoy* examines another controversial protest and its impact on the interviews as a protest of comparison, while highlighting common points of comparison. The chapter concludes with *Section 5.5* providing a summary of the topics explored. Overall, this chapter explored a range of aspects related to the mobilization, motivations and current impacts on dairy protests. It examined both the historic impacts of previous protests and its trends, as well as modern impacts through the trucker convoy. In doing so, it argued that the context in which these

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protests happen are extremely important. Both historical and current influence of protests have an impact on understanding dairy farmers choices to protest. Moreover, it highlighted the diversity of reasons for farmers to protest in the city while connecting to literature. In connecting to the literature, it exemplified a clear application of political opportunity theory, with support of resource mobilization theory and a multi-institutional perspective to truly understand the actions of dairy farmers. In the concluding section examining the 2022 Trucker Convoy, it highlights how current protests will continue to impact and possibly change how dairy farmers take action in the future.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### 6.1 General Conclusion

Dairy farmer protests highlight the increasing intersections and tensions between globalization, protests, and rural concerns. This research was undertaken to examine and attempt to understand dairy farmer protests in response to changing international trade policies. Specifically, it has focused on the 2015, 2016, and 2018 protests on Parliament Hill, while understanding and situating them in both the historical and current context of protests and the dairy industry. This chapter begins with Section 6.1: Summary, which examines the previous chapters and highlight their contributions to answering the research questions. It first explores the theoretical and background chapters, and then the analytical chapters. After examining each chapter's contributions, Chapter 6 then enters into Section 6.2, which outlines the key research findings and contributions. It highlights the contributions of this research to the scholarly literature, to policy, and to the community. The chapter then concludes with Section 6.3, which is be a reflection on the tensions between dairy farmers vulnerability and their will to protest in relation to the current attitude towards protests.

To understand dairy farmers' involvement in the protests, there were two research questions: 1) *How do dairy farmers interpret trade agreements and their impact?* And 2) *Why do dairy farmers take their collective protests to the city?* The first question calls to consider ways dairy farmer situate themselves within society and the economy. Moreover, it encouraged me to explore the differing priorities of dairy farmers. The second question raised the issue of looking beyond the notion and assumption that cities are where people

protest without consideration. In particular, it allowed me to examine the complexities of protesting as an outsider in a space that does not reflect the reality of where the items and people come from, in this case being rural towns and farms. My research has answered the research question by exploring and understanding the many different ways dairy farmers conceptualize their responsibility and roles within society. The second question prompted us to explore why dairy farmers respond to international trade agreements by protesting in the city, and the motivations and histories of dairy protests in the city. To answer these questions, the thesis was structured in a means to first provide a contextual and theoretical foundation through Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

The research foundation began with *Chapter 1: Introduction*, which first situated the research goals, questions, and methodology in the context of both the research setting and literature. This chapter contributed to the overall answering of the research questions by establishing the parameters and importance of answering these questions. Similarly, *Chapter 2: Literature Review*, used this foundation to explore literature in protests and social movements, international trade agreements, and Canadian dairy farming. First, by arguing that political opportunity theory is best suited to assist in answering why dairy farmers go to the city and identifying means for opportunities to mobilize and protest (Tilly 1964; 1978, Goodwin & Jasper, 2020), the section argues that both material and non-material interests and impacts are important and necessary to conceptualize the way dairy farmers understand the impact of trade on them, their farms, and communities (Walter, 2021; De Vries et. Al., 2021, Gottdiener, 2000). The second chapter returns to the local dairy farm by situating the previous literature explored within the history and contexts of Canadian dairy farming. In particular, the chapter highlighted the different contexts of



responsibility throughout their interactions on the farm, in their community, and nationally in which dairy farmers contribute and interact with the world. This is used to support the literature reviews arguments for using political opportunity theory and the importance of understanding both varied material and non-material interests from dairy farmers. Through this, I have taken political opportunity theory development in a new direction; understanding it in conjunction with other social movement theories. In particular, I highlighted how through individual choices, dairy farmers take collective action and have applied a literature theory on collective action with the assistance of resource mobilization theory and multi-institutional perspectives. To properly answer the questions, a qualitative research method using a snowball method for qualitative interviews with photo elicitation was chosen because it provided a means deeply explore the perspectives of dairy farmers in eastern Ontario (Mayan, 2016; Kallio, Pietilä, A.-M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M., 2016). In total, 12 interviews were held at different farms from across eastern Ontario, with 15 farmers participating in total, with a variety of differing levels of participation from participants.

Using the foundation and theoretical knowledge from Chapters 1, 2, and 3, The analytical chapters of 4 and 5 more directly attempt answer the research questions. *Chapter 4: Vulnerability*, discussed and analyzed how dairy farmers during interviews highlighted a shared sense of vulnerability. This vulnerability happened both at home on the farm, during international trade agreements, and beyond the farm in their community and Canada. Their shared sense of vulnerability also has tensions with the significant amount of responsibility dairy farmers feel for their family, community, and country. It is through their shared sense of vulnerability and responsibility that dairy farmers interpret

international trade agreements. In particular, dairy farmers discussed the impacts of international trade agreements by using examples about how they cut back on other local businesses, how it was difficult for their family, and about how it impacted consumers through cost as well. *Chapter 5: Motivations and Interpretations*, further builds upon the analysis of Chapter 4 by examining the differences among dairy farmers. Although they have a shared sense of responsibility and vulnerability, there were a variety of motivations for dairy farmers to protest. It examined how dairy protests have changed over time with the dairy industry through the use of violence, sophistication of mobilization efforts, and branding at the protests. Moreover, it examines how dairy farmers are mobilized to protest through a direct connection to the literature reviews suggestions of political opportunity theory and resource mobilization theory. The chapter then examines how these varied emotions and actions will be required to change going forward due to the 2022 Trucker Convoy Protest.

### **6.2 Summary of Research Findings and Contributions**

Overall, this thesis has highlighted a significant amount of tension within goals, actors, and priorities in relation to dairy farmers. In particular, the tension between prioritizing dairy farmers and their rural communities versus the Canadian population through trade liberalization. Through the nuancing of tension, the thesis has contributed to literature, policy, and community. This section summarizes the research findings, contributions and further research. To do so, the section will first explore three different articles that this thesis is particularly built upon and how this thesis contributed to further to the article. Moreover, it highlights contributions from the research beyond academia with

a particular emphasis on policy and community. Finally, this section concludes with examining future research opportunities and areas for exploration.

This research began by identifying that dairy farmers were responding to proposed changes and negotiations of international trade agreements with their protests. The 2015 protest example is significant as it took place when the TPP was expected to be signed that week. My research has applied literature on the backlash against globalization, which has highlighted that dairy farmers' actions are similar to trends happening globally (Walters, 2021; Mansfield, Milner, H. V., & Rudra, N., 2021; Dodson, 2015) This phenomenon of protesting against globalization was highlighted and captured well through Stefanie Walter's review article entitled "The Backlash Against Globalization" (2021). Walter's article highlighted the two types of intersecting interests that are impacted by globalization: material and non-material. This article was used to assist in identify different interests of dairy farmers, which during interviews included family, community, food production priorities and financial viability. The identification of social and economic interests in concerns assisted in answering the research question of how dairy farmers interpret international trade agreements. Moreover, by identifying the different ways dairy farmers understand international trade contributes to policy by highlighting that more work needs to be done to mitigate both the social and economic concerns of dairy farmers equally. Although dairy farm lobbies such as the Dairy Farmers of Canada have the ability to mitigate some of the negative impacts of trade deals, market share or growth loss is still impactful and compensation does not entirely fix the situation. Similarly, for the dairy farmer community, it recognizes that the dairy industry must communicate the interdisciplinary of their concerns and paint a picture of both social and economic concerns. In

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situating the research globally in connection to the backlash against globalization, it captures the difficult tensions from their families, communities, and industry that dairy farmers struggle with while attempting to protect the dairy industry and supply management during international trade negotiations.

My research builds upon this by diving deeper into how dairy farmers conceptualize the significance of the dairy industry. In situating dairy farmers within the global nature of international trade, the second piece of literature and research is done by author Conner Peta. Conner Peta, a researcher into Canada's dairy industry and cultural commodities highlighted the importance of history, community, and culture through his article "Canada's Supply Management System and the Dairy Industry in the Era of Trade Liberalization: A Cultural Commodity?" (2019). Peta's article highlights the cultural and historic argument that dairy farmers use to protect the dairy industry. As explored in Chapter 4 and 5, to dairy farmers, protecting the dairy industry also means protecting and prioritizing food security, rural communities, and families. For example, a successful dairy industry means that local dairy farmers have the means to invest in other local businesses such as crop specialists, veterinarians, and farm supply dealers. These findings and research contribute to policy, by first recognizing that the argument to protect the institutions of supply management is as much of a social choice as an economic one as well. Moreover, it recognizes that even though there is no legal cultural commodity designation for trade in Canada at the moment (Peta, 2019), there is a significant amount of culture associated with dairy in Canada. In particular, it examines capitalizing on the cultural value through emblems such as the Blue Cow. While Peta's (2019) article contributed to industry, my

research builds upon this by contributing to the dairy community and the importance of highlighting this culture on the local level.

Using political opportunity theory, this research has contributed theoretically by arguing that the timing of their negotiations and announcements have an impact on the actions dairy farmers will take. When dairy farmers protest, they use opportunities which happen at a specific moment in time with an opening for action to be taken (Goodwin & Jasper, 2020; Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). The third foundational article comes from the expansive literature on political opportunity theory written by David Meyer. In particular, David Meyer's article with Debra Minkoff entitled "Conceptualizing Political Opportunity" (2004). This article builds upon political opportunity theory first proposed by Charles Tilly and the critiques of it. It argues that "we need to understand the interplay of opportunity, mobilization, and political influence." (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004, p. 1485). Building upon this, I identified political opportunity theory as a pathway for an explanation to the actions of dairy farmers to protest on Parliament Hill in conjunction with theories for considerations of mobilization and institutional influence. Specifically, using political opportunity theory in addition to the knowledge and understandings of resource mobilization theory and a multi-institutional perspective to understand their actions. In using political opportunity theory to explore dairy farmers choices to protest. Suggesting that proper notice and discussions with the dairy industry is extremely important. Moreover, it contributed to community by serving as a strong reminder that in times of crisis, the dairy community comes together quickly to support each other and demand change.

Overall, this research has contributed to literature by building upon foundational and recent scholarship in an inter-disciplinary way. Its foundational articles are recent, while also being tied to a long history of insightful scholarship across disciplines. The research has attempted to bridge the gap between technical literature on supply management and dairy farming with sociology and protest studies. Specifically, it has done so engaging with a topic not currently explored: dairy protests within Canada. By selecting a diverse setting, this research has contributed to literature by providing an interesting and insightful case study for future reference. This research has been timely, due to the increasing levels of food insecurity, protests on Parliament Hill and a growing rural/urban divide. However, there is also a significant amount of room for future research.

Going forward there is more research and work to be done to understand the perspectives and goals of protesting dairy farmers. A clear area for future exploration is the tension between consumers versus producers. Many of the dairy farmers interviewed talked about the tension of having different values and perspectives from urban consumers. Moreover, many highlighted that they themselves were consumers but still othered consumers different from them. This could be built upon in the future using a literature review technique that includes the voice of consumers. This could include exploring the impacts of changes to supply management on consumers or other specific groups within Canada. This research could also be built upon by examining other research settings outside of eastern Ontario. For doing research in a different community or region could produce drastically different results – especially those in relation to protest experiences of the participants. Similarly, this research could be done to examine why and how other supply managed agricultural industries act in response to international trade agreements. Different

results could be examined if the research was undertaken through different disciplines or was larger in scope. For example, if this research was a larger more expansive project it could have examined and compared political opportunity theory assumptions of opportunities presenting themselves to actors versus entrepreneurial opportunity theory assumptions of actors creating opportunity for themselves (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). In the future, this research could be continued or expanded upon in multiple ways.

### **6.3 Tensions in Future Protests and Dairy Farmer Experiences**

Beyond the research done in this thesis to nuance and explore the current tensions surrounding dairy farmers this paper also highlighted that there will be more tensions in the future. There is no indication that the responsibilities and vulnerabilities of dairy farmers will be eased in the near future either. The rapid shifts within the industry are being compounded with a cost-of-living crisis, a growing rural/urban divide, and a changed relationship with protest movements. As discussed in Chapter 5, historically and until the recent present, dairy farmers have taken to Parliament Hill to deal with this discontent based on windows of opportunity related to international trade. However, the 2022 Trucker Convoy in Ottawa has likely drastically changed how protests will be received and understood going forward. This tension for dairy farmers between wanting to protest to honour their traditional and often successful response to issues versus the harm, distrust, and overall distaste for rural protests in urban settings is going to be a challenge. It will also likely arise in the near future when trade agreements are renegotiated or when dairy prices are not increased to a suitable price for the dairy industry. To navigate this tension, dairy farmers wanting to protest will need to considerably re-evaluate specific tactics often

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used during their previous protests. This could include bringing of large rural items such as cows and tractors, their messaging tactics, or even if they should protest at all. Moreover, it will also mean that the resources and means often provided to protests by the dairy industry and dairy board will have to be dramatically reconsidered. Dairy leadership will also need to take a significant role in helping guide the dairy community away from making similar mistakes to the 2022 Trucker Convoy. Protests should have specific, realistic, and actionable policy asks for the government and consumers. Similarly, there will need to be clear timelines for protesting communicated with the public to avoid concern for a repeated 2022 Trucker Convoy like protest. To successfully protest in the future, dairy farmers will need to work to mitigate the tensions between a provocative protest and general public relations.



Appendix

Item A. Map of Eastern Ontario



(Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus, 2007).

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