Campus Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaigns

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Land acknowledgement

The settler-colonial city of Toronto is in the "Dish With One Spoon Territory". The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas, and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and Peoples, Europeans, and All Newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect.

I am grateful to have had the chance to live and to engage in research and activism on Dish With One Spoon land. I am profoundly grateful for the difficult and often dangerous work Indigenous Peoples have undertaken in trying to contain the damage from the global fossil fuel industry and the egregious social injury the industry imposes on non-human nature, people currently alive, and people and non-human animals who will live over many thousands of subsequent years.

1 | Research question and hypotheses

A defining feature of social movements is that they pursue a specific set of political, policy, and societal outcomes. This distinguishes them, for instance, from artistic movements, which may involve similar networks of influence and the evolution of ideas, but which lack a coherent political agenda. With regard to any particular activist agenda, it is reasonably feasible to assess whether progress is being made over any particular span of time during campaigns (social movements) like the civil rights movement in the United States (U.S.) or the push for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans- and queer (LGBTQ) equality, at least in terms of one coherent program of political action (reformist versus radical, etc).[1] Campaigns at universities calling on the administration to divest itself financially from the fossil fuel industry have been motivated primarily by concern about climate change, though also by the fossil fuel industry's record of human rights violations, toxic pollution of large areas, and support for authoritarian governments. Other allegations of criminal conduct by the fossil fuel industry include violating the rights of indigenous peoples, and even supporting authoritarian governments in killing local activists resisting fossil fuel development.

While success can be distinguished from failure, it has no monolithic definition. Activists frequently disagree on which pathway of influence is most worth emphasizing: from raising general public awareness to pressuring specific institutions to take particular actions. Thoughtful analyses of contemporary activism also highlight the psychological dimensions of participation in activist contentious politics. These are relevant from the perspective

[1]The theories of change of the Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) compared with the authors of the Leap Manifesto illustrate opposing poles on the reformist versus radical spectrum.

of operational planning for climate change activist groups hoping to make effective use of volunteers. They are also relevant in terms of the shifts in deep thinking about political change in the minds of activists.[2] Theories of change motivate broad strategic choices and the selection of tactics, and are themselves altered and refined through activist experiences of confronting those with power.[3,4,5]

The research question (RQ), therefore, is what factors explain the success of campus fossil fuel divestment (CFFD) campaigns, where success is defined using three metrics. The most straightforward question is about what causes variation in outcomes at different institutions, in terms of formal actions taken by the university. Why did Stanford choose to divest from coal only in 2014, while the University of Glasgow committed to divest completely during the same year?[6,7] While important, an exclusive focus on institutional response risks ignoring

[2]Existing accounts emphasize how divestment campaign participation affects activists, for instance: "Informal conversations suggest that many members of the campaign feel that their understandings of what it takes to generate effective political action have been sharpened through their work on divestment". One divestment organizer is quoted saying: "I do think it resulted in radicalizing people. It definitely changed my outlook and what I want to work on for the rest of my life. I one hundred percent believe that was a result of the campaign." Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance", p. 8, 9.

[3]'Theory of change' (TOC) is a core concept in the practice and study of activism. In *The End of Nature*, Bill McKibben confesses his earlier naivety about the concept, summarizing his implicit notion as: "people would read my book — and then they would change". The foundation of 350.org was McKibben's next attempt at a more promising mechanism. At the time of their merger with U.S. climate activist group 1Sky in 2011, 350.org expressed a threefold TOC: "We will directly confront the barriers to climate progress– from Big Coal to the US Chamber of Commerce, from the cabal of corrupt politicians attacking the Clean Air Act to an administration too timid to defend it. We will empower and mobilize a grassroots army– individuals, businesses, organizations, and front-line community leaders pushing for climate solutions in the United States. We will continue our work globally to build a diverse climate movement all around the world that unites for strategic mobilizations on a scale previously unimagined." On their current website for job listings, they say: "We get how social change works. It's not just about winning campaigns — it's about changing the politics of what's possible."

[4]See also comments from divestment campaigners in: Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, p. 354–5.

[5]Hirsch summarizes the theory of change of the Columbia and Barnard anti-apartheid movements as: "divestment would advance the anti-apartheid movement by putting economic and political pressure on the white regime of South Africa." Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 247.

[6]Stanford News, *Stanford to divest from coal companies.*

[7]Brooks, *Glasgow becomes first university in Europe to divest from fossil fuels.*

some of the other major tasks that were being prioritized by climate change activists and according to which success can be meaningfully assessed.

The first thing using only institutional outcomes as a measure of success misses is the skill development and increased capability of activists who have participated in CFFD campaigns. One major theory of change described by climate change activists is to turn a generation of young students into committed and capable activists trained in potent techniques like non-violent direct action and media relations, and developing more strategic thinking through experience.[8] From such a perspective, a university where divestment is formally rejected but the climate change activist movement grows in size and effectiveness may be deemed more of a success than a school where a lesser effort yielded a more favourable result. With the greatest of appreciation for the work of both campaigns, the efforts at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and l'Université Laval bear some comparison in this regard. At Laval they were lucky to be in a position where the administration they sought to persuade was already open to some of their arguments, such as about the need to make "sustainable" choices. In that environment, a highly professional and comparatively low-profile campaign to persuade key decision-makers led to a quick victory. In the UBC case, while the campaign has not produced divestment it has been an important cause for the growth of UBCC350. In cases like UBC, where CFFD campaigns have been long-running, skill development outcomes valued by activists are being attained by a larger body of activists, and feeding into other worthwhile efforts.

Indeed, these networked linkages between institutions are one of the most interesting fea-

[8]See: Yona and Lenferna, *Fossil Fuel Divestment Movement within Universities*, p. 7, 8–9.

ture of the climate change activist movement. The CFFD campaign has complex ties with divestment campaigns at other kinds of educational institutions, faith communities, pension funds, etc. It's even possible for a divestment campaign at one type of institution (a university) to contribute directly to a decision by a notionally unrelated church. Activists may also aspire to influence government decision making through divestment: "Even if the political and material entrenchment of fossil fuel industries remains in place, creating a moral crisis over divestment may function to catalyze state actions that would have a greater impact".[9] Such instances demonstrate the importance of brokers and the imperative to understanding the networks. These are networks of information and influence, certainly, but also networks of material aid: providing one another with funding and support in areas from media assistance to photography to solidarity actions. As such, another factor in the success of CFFD campaigns is whether there are identifiable cases where the divestment effort at the university contributed materially to the success of a campaign elsewhere, regardless of whether it is at a university or another type of institution.

Notably, this project will not attempt to gauge the extent to which a society-wide delegitimization of the fossil fuel industry has been advanced by CFFD campaigns, despite how a considerable number of organizers emphasize it as the most important objective of the fossil fuel divestment movement.[10] The main reason for excluding delegitimization as a metric of success is that while it may be driven in part by the networks of activists and universities being studied here, it cannot actually be observed within them. It would also

[9]Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance", p. 4.

[10]Others argue that the loss of social license has little practical importance. Christian Parenti notes that "every year oil shows up dead last as the most disliked industry in America", and yet this has not led to effective climate change policies. Parenti, *A Worthy Goal, but a Suspect Method*.

seem impossible to tie such a broad outcome convincingly to a particular activist campaign. Fossil fuel divestment at institutions like universities, churches, and pension funds may help slowly shift the political context and the thinking of decision-makers, but such shifts are too holistic and subjective to be a fit subject for study here.

1.1 RQ: What factors explain the success of campus fossil fuel divestment (CFFD) campaigns, as defined with three metrics?

1.1.1 RQ(A): Where success is institutional response

Actions which can be taken by universities in response to CFFD campaigns can be partly mapped out on a spectrum. At the least activist edge, a campaign might be entirely ignored. Beyond that, the university may issue a statement justifying a summary decision to take no action. Moving across the spectrum, they might assemble a committee to consider the question, and have that committee report a recommendation. At the most activist edge, a university may commit to some form of fossil fuel divestment, and go on to implement that commitment. Universities may also diverge from this spectrum partway across: frequently by choosing to take non-divestment action in response to the campaign and committee recommendation, as seen at UBC and the University of Toronto (U of T).

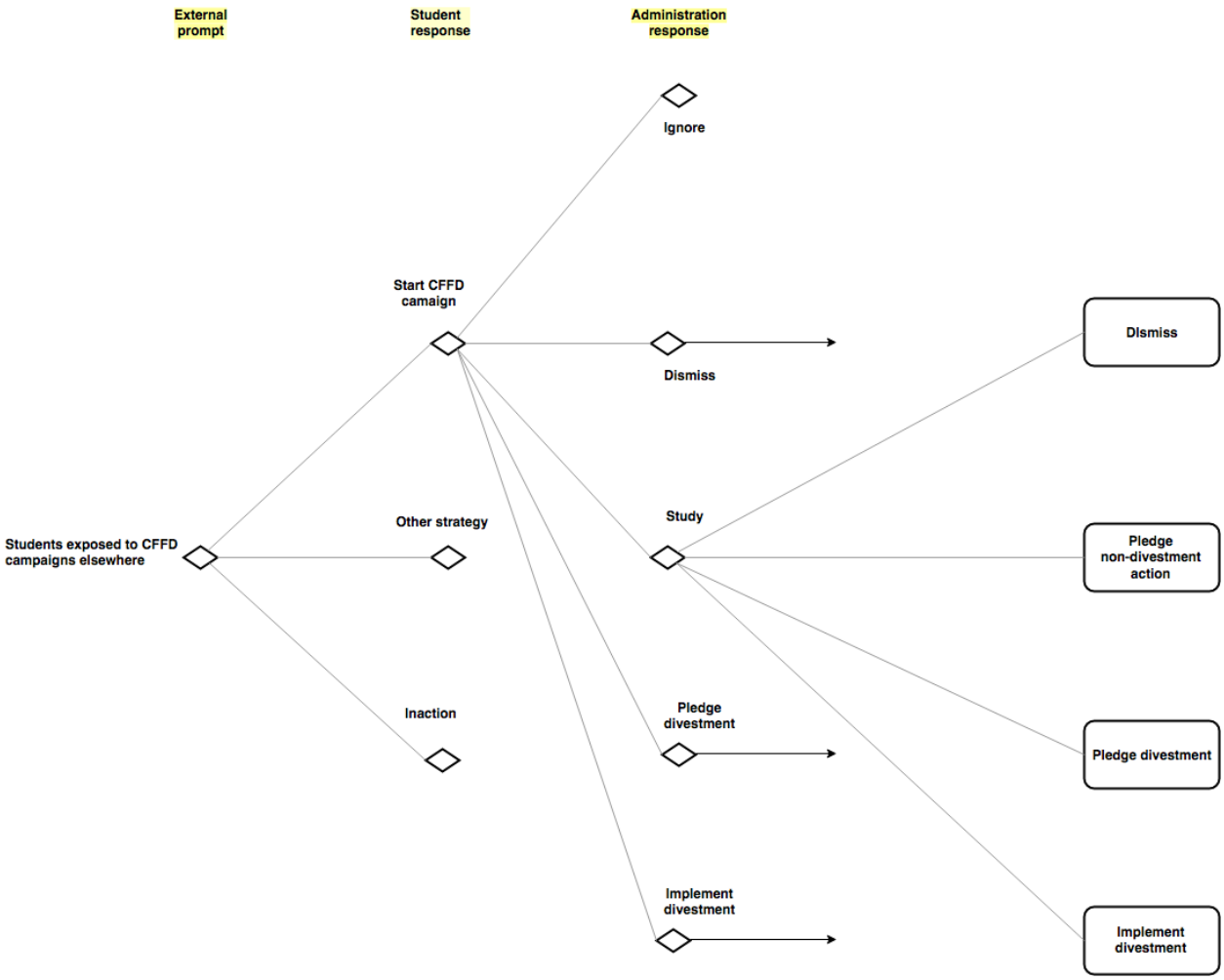

Figure 1: Possible institutional responses

What best explains variation in institutional response?

H(A1): Institutional path dependence — successful prior similar student-led campaigns raise the odds of success

H(A2): If the institution's perceived financial interests align with divestment it is more likely

H(A3): Higher strength and quality of the CFFD campaign encourages success

H(A4): Strategic choices of the campaign, including persuasive v. confrontational; long-

term alliances with other causes; and exactly what divestment to call for — likely to vary by institutional context: with the optimal level of confrontational tactics rising as the institution being targeted becomes more reflexively hostile to CFFD, blocking persuasion-based insider strategies

H(A5): Financial context of the institution (provincial or state GDP growth rate, unemployment rate, and changes in stockmarket valuations) — divestment is more likely when economic conditions are better (control)

H(A6): Perceived vulnerability to climate change increases odds of divestment (control)

Path dependence (**H(A1)**) seems likely to be relevant in a bureaucratic institution like a university, which must also provide some public justification for major decisions. The first time a university is targeted by any divestment campaign, it must choose an institutional process to respond. For any subsequent divestment petition, one of the first questions asked will be how any precedents were handled. Precedents affect the overall odds of success, and also activist strategies. Who is empowered to make decisions about your institution's endowment? An approach focused on how precedents affect procedure also blends to some extent into an approach based on bureaucratic and stakeholder politics. Identifying particular decision-makers and decision-making processes leads naturally into questions about what their interests are and who holds influence over them.

An alternative to the path dependence / historical institutionalist hypothesis could be explaining divestment outcomes based on the specific financial circumstances of each university (**H(A2)**) — including both composition of and recent performance of their endowments) or the economic conditions in the relevant jurisdiction (**H(A5)** — economic growth, unem-

ployment, or the fossil fuel industry's share of the total economy).[11,12]

Attempts at explaining variation in institutional responses on the basis of rational financial calculations are complicated because CFFD includes a financial as well as an ethical case for action.[13,14] If governments eventually become serious about constraining global climate change to less than 2 ˚C or 1.5 ˚C, as endorsed in the 2016 Paris Agreement, they have the legislative and regulatory powers necessary to prohibit the production of most of the world's remaining fossil fuels. In that scenario, it's likely that the fossil fuel reserves with the lowest extraction costs and energy requirements for production that would be prioritized during an aggressive phase-out to climate safe forms of energy.[15] Producers with exceptionally high costs and per-unit greenhouse gas emissions would be most likely to find their assets stranded in this scenario. In a scenario where humanity successfully restrains itself and avoids burning enough fossil fuels to breach the 1.5 ˚C or 2 ˚C limits, Canadian energy policy in the last couple of decades will seem especially foolish, having devoted disproportionate resources to trying to develop one of the most inefficient and destructive fossil fuel reserves on Earth, in the form of the bitumen sands in Alberta and Saskatchewan. In February 2017, Exxon Mobil "revised down its proved crude reserves by 3.3 billion barrels of oil equivalent" and

[11]For instance, in an article discussing Swarthmore's rejection of divestment, John Schwartz notes: "The college, founded by Quakers in 1864 on a few hundred wooded acres near Philadelphia, has resisted the students' demands, citing the school's investment guidelines, which since 1991 have required management for "the best long-term financial results, rather than to pursue other social objectives."" Schwartz, *Swarthmore Declines to Drop Investments in Fossil Fuels*.

[12]A similar outcome was similarly justified at American University: Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance", p. 12.

[13]See: Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment: Update*, p. 77–94.

[14]Ansar, Caldecott, and Tilbury, *Stranded assets and the fossil fuel divestment campaign: what does divestment mean for the valuation of fossil fuel assets?*

[15]As noted by the U of T campaign, the direct link between fossil fuel reserve exploitation and carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions that harm the climate ties the financial risk associated with the carbon bubble directly to the social injury imposed by the fossil fuel industry. Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment: Update*, p. 61.

"de-book[ed] the entire 3.5 billion barrels of bitumen reserves at the Kearl oil sands project in northern Alberta, operated by Imperial Oil, a Calgary-based company in which Exxon has a majority share".[16] The existence of a potentially-multi-trillion-dollar 'carbon bubble' arguably creates massive regulatory risk for the fossil fuel industry, making it a poor long-term investment on purely financial terms. There are also backward-looking assessments showing that the industry has underperformed markets as a whole in recent years and decades, meaning fossil fuel divestment undertaken years ago would have been a smart financial choice.[17] All this highlights how perceived financial interests — and interpretation of concepts like fiduciary duty — are important, and are in turn shaped by the institutions and norms each university uses to evaluate investment risks and opportunities.[18,19,20] It is also worth noting that from a societal perspective, climate change mitigation on an aggressive timescale may well be far less costly than suffering the unmitigated effects of warming of 2 $^{\circ}$C or more, particularly given the danger that we will build expensive new fossil fuel infrastructure and then need to shut it down abruptly to meet emission reduction targets.[21,22]

Strength and quality of the campaign (**H(A3)**) has multiple relevant dimensions, including the level of support from various on-campus constituencies including students, faculty, and staff; the timing and character of faculty involvement; total number of student volunteers and time committed by each; professionalism of campaign documents, events, direct

[16]Reuters, *Exxon revises down oil and gas reserves by 3.3 billion barrels.*
[17]Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment: Update*, p. 79–82.
[18]On fiduciary duty, see: Lee and Ritchie, *Pension Funds and Fossil Fuels: The Economic Case for Divestment*, p. 8.
[19]Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment: Update*, p. 77–94.
[20]Krelove et al., *Why U of T should divest from fossil fuels*, p. 16.
[21]See: Stern, *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review.*
[22]Garnaut, *The Garnaut Review 2011: Australia in the Global Response to Climate Change.*

actions, and media outreach; .[23] Importantly, this hypotheses also incorporates the degree to which campaigns have been able to manage internal disagreement while minimizing interpersonal conflict. CFFD activism is contentious not only insofar as its goals clash with the climate change and energy policies currently enacted by virtually all governments, but also insofar as participants have deep disagreements about whether climate change can be addressed through capitalist-democratic structures, as well as whether the movement ought to be reformist or radical. These and other tensions are present in all climate change activism, and their management is surely relevant to the institutional responses a campaign generates.

One open question is the extent to which the strategic and tactical choices made by campaigns affect their success (**H(A4)**), as opposed to pre-existing features of the universities where they operate. The main strategic choice made by CFFD campaigns is the degree to which they emphasize persuasion as opposed to confrontation in their engagement with university officials. Other important strategic choices include exactly what assets to seek divestment from, and any long-term alliances with non-fossil fuel divestment campaigns. Political opportunity theory and concepts like the Overton window may be applicable to assessing cases where different campaign strategies and tactics may produce different institutional responses.[24] Bratman et al. make an important point about how campaigns that make use of increasingly confrontational tactics need to find ways to keep "Light green and

[23] Because of their greater vulnerability to retribution from the university administration, pre-tenure faculty might be expected to be most hesitant in supporting CFFD campaigns. At the same time, being younger, they may be more concerned about climate change and/or more willing to see activism as compatible with professionalism.

[24] For instance: Meyer, "Protest and political opportunities".

less politicized students" involved.[25]

Campaign strategies are unlikely to be static, but will rather develop across time in response to institutional actions and other factors endogenous and exogenous to the campaign. Eric Hirsch describes a progression of strategies in the anti-South African apartheid campaigns at Columbia and Barnard: "At first, the [Coalition for a Free South Africa] CFSA tried to advance divestment by using traditional avenues of influence. In 1983, the organization was able to gain a unanimous vote for divestment by administration, faculty, and student representatives in the University Senate, but Columbia's Board of Trustees rejected the resolution. … In the next phase of divestment, the CFSA sponsored rallies and vigils to call attention to the intransigence of the Truestees".[26] This subsequently progressed into an elaborate plan to draw students to an April 4th anti-apartheid march that organizers re-established as a building-blocking act of "civil disobedience" without forewarning the participants.[27,28] As the blockade continued for weeks, the use of contentious tactics on the part of protestors led to forcible administration responses, including videotaping participants, sending them letters threatening expulsion, and obtained a court order calling on the participants in the blockade to cease and desist.[29] The end of the blockade on April 25th sharply reversed its impromptu beginning, from the perspective of participants, with a "commitment to democratic decision-making" reminiscent of the Occupy Movement in which "a serious attempt was made to reach consensus among all those on the steps; votes were held

[25]Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance", p. 8.

[26]Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 247.

[27]Ibid., p. 247-8.

[28]This is an extreme case of operational security clashing with norms of democratic decision-making.

[29]Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 249.

on only a few occasions".[30] This tactic contrasts clearly with how some non-violent occupations of the constituency offices of Canadian Members of Parliament, in which participants are carefully trained and expected to follow a code of conduct agreed upon in advance. Some of these office occupations were carried out by activists simultaneously involved in CFFD campaigns.

While the persuasive and confrontational strategies can be used together in a certain measure, campaigns must essentially either embrace the decision-making process proposed by the university and seek to encourage a positive decision through rational argument, evidence, and the development of support in various campus constituencies, or they can reject the proposed process as illegitimate and seek to pressure the university to change it.[31,32,33] An insurgent campaign that rejects a university's process loses the ability to present itself as a reasonable source of credible information, though an approach based on cooperation risks being subtly undermined by resistant administrations or opponents with private channels of influence.[34] Different dynamics may operate after the first official rejection at any particular

[30]Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 250.

[31]Curnow and Gross describe such a hybrid strategy: "building a rational and well-argued case to present to decision makers and building support on campus to push these decision makers should they balk". Still, this involves at least provisionally accepting the legitimacy of the school's decision-making process. Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 375.

[32]An attempt at a hybrid strategy was institutionalized within the U of T campaign, where an "inside game" committee sought to persuade the administration directly while an "outside game" committee concentrated on alliances and building public pressure for action. It's interesting that the same wording was used by an unconnected campaign at American University.

[33]Other work describes "an inside-outside strategy of exerting pressure upon and simultaneously collaborating with campus authorities", as well as a strategic outlook where official channels must be tried and found insufficient in order to justify radical tactics like sit-ins and occupations. Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance", p. 2, 9–12.

[34]Like new authoritarian leaders who cannot optimize their internal security services for both protection against coups and against popular uprisings, newly-formed CFFD campaigns must choose between confrontational and persuasive strategies which have contradictory tactical implications. Grietens, *Dictators and Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence*, p. 4–5.

school. Also, even if the CFFD campaign was entirely successful, it doesn't exhaust a university's capacity to act on climate change.

Another strategic question is precisely what form of divestment to seek. A common choice, essentially recommended by 350.org, is to divest from "The Carbon Underground: The World's Top 200 Companies, Ranked by the Carbon Content of their Fossil Fuel Reserves", though alternatives include calling for divestment specifically from mountaintop removal coal mining, or more broadly from institutions like banks that themselves invest in major fossil fuel projects.[35,3637,38] Some campaigns have chosen specifically or especially to target the coal industry and Canada's bitumen sands.[39] This has particular political and geographic relevance in North America as production of these fossil fuel types is concentrated in a fairly small number of political jurisdictions and plays an outsized role in their local economic makeup. Another strategic decision is what recommendation to make for divested funds: to reinvest in the stock market at large, to invest specifically in climate-safe forms of energy, to invest in on-campus energy efficiency, etc. Specific tactics, including occupation of

[35]The original Divest McGill petition was unusually demanding on this front, calling for divestment from "corporations which develop the Canadian tar sands, transport or refine hydrocarbon from the Canadian tar sands, sell products of the Canadian tar sands, or are otherwise involved in the production, distribution or sale of goods from the Canadian tar sands", "corporations which produce, refine, transport, or sell fossil fuels", and "holdings in financial institutions which have not adopted, as determined by the Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility, a policy of making no further loans to corporations that produce, refine, transport, or sell fossil fuels". Divest McGill, *The Social Injury Caused by the Exploitation of the Tar Sands and Fossil Fuels*, p. 13–4.

[36]This was followed by a remarkably brave conclusion from the committee appointed by the McGill administration: "Divest McGill had failed to demonstrate that social injury … had occurred due to the actions of a company involved in either oil sands or fossil fuels". Social Responsibility, *Report of the Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility*, p. 4.

[37]The petition Divest McGill has online now has clearly been adapted in part based on the U of T petition: `http://divestmcgill.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Feb2015_CAMSR_Submission_Brief.pdf`

[38]See also: Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment: Update*, p. 137-8.

[39]There has been much discussion about the appropriate terminology for this Canadian resource, with proponents generally favouring "oil sands" and opponents using "tar sands". This thesis will use the more accurate term "bitumen sands", since the substance is neither tar nor oil chemically. This is the term generally used in French: les sables bitumineux.

administration buildings, may also affect campaign outcomes for institutions and organizers.

One somewhat odd feature of many CFFD campaigns is that they present themselves as demanding insurgents who are somehow able to "force" divestment, while in actuality they are in a position where they need to persuade university decision-makers that divestment is prudent and desirable. Such language may be empowering and emotionally satisfying for organizers, but risks skewing the selection of strategies and tactics away from those with the best odds of success. This distinction between persuasion and forcing also relates to the perceived audience of divestment campaigns which, in the eyes of some, may be political decision-makers or the general public rather than those empowered to make investment decisions at their school. Based on Tilley's view of protest and performance, disagreement within an organization may be expected when different members are performing for different audiences. The general aspiration to de-legitimize the fossil fuel industry (which may be served indirectly by convincing a university to divest) can also be pursued directly by ongoing campaigns, taking advantage of public attention and media interest which the campaign has created.

Maybe strategic and tactical choices make a difference only in marginal cases. More confrontational tactics should be expected at schools where fossil fuel divestment is more controversial, such as those in jurisdictions that are major fossil fuel producers. At schools with ongoing Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns against Israeli conduct in the occupied territories, CFFD tactics may be less confrontational, as fossil fuel activists seek to differentiate themselves as a more palatable case. Tensions between more and less formal approaches to decision-making have also been a source of contention and conflict

within climate activist groups and divestment campaigns.[40,41,42]

The possibility that local economic conditions have a strong effect on the willingness of universities to divest (**H(A5)**) is sufficiently plausible to justify an effort at evaluation. Specifically, for a set of cases where clear outcomes have been achieved, it is possible to look for patterns in economic parameters like GDP growth and unemployment and divestment outcomes.

Perceived vulnerability to climate change impacts (**H(A6)**) is similarly worthy of a measure of examination. It is plausible, for instance, that a typical university in the Netherlands feels more directly threatened by climate change impacts than the typical school in the U.S. or United Kingdom (U.K.).

The case of divestment at l'Université Laval in Quebec City is suggestive. After being officially launched on November 29th, 2016, the campaign met with the administration on January 26th, 2017. While Alice-Anne Simard does write about standard campaign tactics like reaching out to student government, she has also written a remarkable account of how, two hours into their first discussion with Éric Bauce, executive vice rector in charge of sustainable development, the university committed to divestment.[43,44] This illustrates how

[40]For an important analysis of formal versus informal decision-making systems in activist organizations, see: Freeman, *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*.

[41]The eclipsing of formal by informal structures of decision-making is an interesting mechanism for explaining the emergence of decision-making elites within many types of organizations. It's possible Robert Michels' iron law of oligarchy applies within some climate activist groups, as broad-based communal decision-making is supplanted by informal coordination by an elite sub-group. Michels, *Political Parties*.

[42]One dimension of Curnow's study of the U of T campaign concerned the perception of expertise accorded to some organizers but not to most.

[43]Simard, *Laval makes history with fossil fuel divestment: How did they do it?*

[44]This article also illustrates deliberate attempts to communicate and coordinate success strategies between CFFD campaigns. Simard explains that the article was written because of "many messages asking one simple question: How did we make it happen?"

the constellation of potential sufficient conditions for divestment is large and that initial institutional response may be a key explanatory factor in at least some cases.[45] The case made by activists at a school that rejects divestment out of hand may be no less convincing than that of a group that succeeds quickly. In an informal personal discussion, Simard identified two explanations for why Laval chose to divest: their pre-existing branding as a school committed to sustainability (which she says they use to distinguish themselves from other Quebec Francophone universities) and the personal circumstances of Éric Bauce. Simard explained that Bauce was the second highest ranking official (as vice-recteur exécutif et au développement) at the time he decided to commit the university to divest and that he is currently running for the role of president. Simard argued that one reason for the divestment campaign's success was that it "was good political capital" for him.[46]

1.1.2 RQ(B): Where success is policy diffusion between CFFD campaigns and target institutions

What explains cases where CFFD campaigns improve the odds of divestment elsewhere, through the diffusion of effective practices to other campaigns and through target institutions being influenced by their peers?

H(B1): Institutional design characteristics and governance of the target university

H(B2): Greater involvement of brokers as defined by Hadden encourages success

H(B3): To a small extent, geographical proximity and, to a larger extent, perception of

[45] For those studying U.S. divestment campaigns, Hampshire College may be an example of an administration that was especially open to divestment arguments. Singer-Berk, *Campuses of the Future: The Interplay of Fossil Fuel Divestment and Sustainability Efforts at Colleges and Universities*, p. 45–6.

[46] Simard, *Informal conversation via Skype, 2017-03-02*.

peer status with other universities which have taken action encourages divestment[47]

H(B4): CFFD decisions on technology for knowledge sharing and decision-making

H(B5): Similarity of investment portfolios — similarity to schools that have divested encourages success (control)

H(B6): Compatibility or incompatibility of primary language used in campaigns and institutions — divestment is more likely at universities that share a language with schools that have divested (control)

H(B7): Coercion from outside authorities would promote divestment (control)

The relationship between institutional design and governance and probability of divestment is complex (**H(B1)**). For example, having one decision-maker that can over-rule another may give a CFFD campaign an extra opportunity to succeed. In cases where an institution is culturally inclined to take action on climate change or environmental issues generally, the odds of success may be best where a single individual is empowered to make investment choices. In cases where divestment is viewed with more skepticism from the outset, a more complex decision-making path involving expert review by a committee may be beneficial. CFFD campaigns which make technological choices explicitly designed to make their resources usable by others will produce more diffusion than campaigns that do not (**H(B4)**).

Jennifer Hadden's emphasis of the importance of brokers to the functioning of activist networks engaged in contentious forms of politics is likely applicable in the case of CFFD campaigns.[48] These brokers include paid staff of 350.org, students who move between schools,

[47] In particular, the odds of success are expected to rise at a university when divestment at a school which it sees as a more prestigious peer take place (divestment at Harvard would boost the odds at U of T).

[48] Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*.

and people who volunteer with multiple local organizations and seek to coordinate their campaigning. Among other behaviours, brokers instruct one another in techniques including public relations and both the training and implementation necessary for non-violent direct actions like the occupation of buildings (a tactic seen in some CFFD campaigns). They also support one another with media outreach and high profile endorsements, which can be important for doing activism in a celebrity-obsessed culture. In the U.S., the Divestment Student Network is another set of CFFD brokers, whereas in Canada this is one role played by the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition.[49,50] These brokers are the most important nodes to try to understand between these activist networks, and generating a plausible network analysis of the CFFD movement will likely depend on their cooperation, since internal dynamics of campaigns are rarely the subject of detailed reporting by the media or scholars.

Whereas Hadden found Friends of the Earth to be an important source of connections between otherwise-disparate activist networks in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change UNFCCC climate negotiations in Copenhagen in 2009, it seems likely that 350.org is playing a similar role in CFFD activism in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and elsewhere. The focus on a global brokerage role is illustrated by how (as of February 2017) 350.org was seeking to hire an Africa Regional Team Leader; Arab World Senior Campaigner; Germany Campaigner; Global Organising & Campaigning Trainer; Mobilisation Strategist; Senior Digital Campaigner, Brazil and Latin America; among others.[51] The skills they are seeking are also indicative, with any

[49] http://www.studentsdivest.org/
[50] http://www.ourclimate.ca/
[51] https://350.org/jobs/

prospective Mobilisation Strategist needing "[f]irst class project management skills, across international and multidisciplinary teams" and "cultural intelligence" manifested as being "truly interested in learning about different regions and able to articulate issues in a manner that bring people together to make progress".[52] 350.org also currently employs Isaac Astill as a divestment campaigner with 350 Australia; Richard Brooks as a "North America Iconic Divestment Campaigns Coordinator"; Yossi Cadan as a global senior divestment campaigner; Beta Coronel as a "US Reinvestment Coordinator"; Clémence Dubois as a France divestment campaigner; Cristina DuQue as a "Southeast U.S. Divestment Campus Network Organizer"; Shin Furuno as a Japan divestment coordinator; Ellen Gibson as a U.K. divestment network coordinator; Tine Langkamp as a Germany divestment campaigner; Katie McChesney as a U.S. divestment campaign manager; Liset Meddens as a Netherlands divestment coordinator; Ahmed Mokgopo as a "Africa Regional Divestment Campaigner"; Danielle Paffard as a U.K. divestment campaigner; Katie Rae Perfitt as a Canada divestment coordinator; and Christian Tengblad as a Sweden divestment campaigner.[53]

Given that interviews will be an important source of data, choosing research methods which will encourage the participation of brokers (and which will hopefully reward them with some useful broader perspective) will be an important part of the methodological design for this project. This may involve engaging with them at an early stage, devoting methodological attention to questions which they identify as highly relevant, and addressing any concerns they raise. Hadden highlights how being a broker is not without risks and disadvantages: principally, that it can lead to situations where each organization or campaign where a

[52] https://350.org/jobs/?gh_jid=563419
[53] https://350.org/about/team/

broker is involved sees them as never being "100 percent" allies.[54] In the CFFD context, this may be most applicable to divestment supporters with some institutional connection to the university, such as staff.

If **H(A1)**, regarding path dependence, is correct it's possible that CFFD advocacy efforts at an institution where the context reflexively acts against divestment may end up having stronger effects in institutions not directly targeted by the CFFD campaign but which have cultures and decision-making processes that make such proposals more likely to succeed. Seeds initially planted in barren soil may germinate elsewhere, reinforcing the extent to which the networks of influence and resource-sharing between social movement actors can have a critical effect on outcomes. This also demonstrates how an electronically connected world has profound consequences for activist work.[55]

1.1.3 RQ(C): Where success is skill development in student activists, continued involvement in climate activism, and evolving theories of change

What explains variation in the degree to which those involved in CFFD campaigns develop useful activist skills, remain involved in climate activism after the campaign, and see their theories of change evolve in ways that promote subsequent effectiveness?

H(C1): Style of decision-making within CFFD campaign

H(C2): Higher strength and quality of the CFFD campaign encourages success

H(C3): Longer campaigns support more skill development

[54] Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*, p. 51-2.

[55] Another demonstration is Bill McKibben bringing "together, on stage and via video, an impressive group of social movement leaders, organisers, climate scientists, and opinion leaders" during his tour promoting divestment in Europe. gofossilfree.org, *350.org and partners launch Fossil Free Europe tour ahead of regional divestment campaign*.

H(C4): Strategic choices of campaign (as with **H(A4)**)

H(C5): Institutional response — participants in successful campaigns will be more active subsequently

H(C6): Each individual's role in the campaign — more involvement and responsibility confer more skills and shift theory of change by more

H(C7): Campaigns with a significant supply of outside resources will have organizers develop more skills

H(C8): Socio-economic characteristics of activists and organizers

Variation in decision-making style (**H(C1)**) is largely a matter of degree of formality and scope of consultation within the campaign. Particularly with very small campaigns, decision-making may involve no formal procedures at all. In larger campaigns, groups may establish formal constitutions and hold elections for positions of responsibility. Greater organizational complexity may increase the scope for skill development by individual activists, but it may also contribute to interpersonal conflict, especially where there is a tension in decision-making between informal consensus among a small group of key organizers and transparent and inclusive democratic decision-making in planning meetings or otherwise. As with (**H(A3)**), the strength and quality of the campaign is expected to affect the experiences of activists — though the features of an ideal campaign for developing grassroots activist potential may vary from a campaign optimized to produce the strongest institutional response. Strategic choices — as with **H(A4)** — likely influence outcomes for activists, and campaigns at various levels of contention will teach different skills and prompt different trajectories for the theories of change of activists. More privileged organizers are less likely to support contentious

strategies and tactics, and less likely to develop radical theories of change regardless of campaign outcome (**H(C8)**).

The particular role an individual played in a CFFD campaign likely affects what lessons they drew from it and how it changed their behaviour. For instance, volunteers may experience different effects from organizers. Following a convention used in some 350.org groups, I will be using "activist" and "volunteer" interchangeably to refer to anybody who has exerted some meaningful effort in a campaign, while "organizers" are those who have played a major coordinating role and directed the efforts of others. Also, outcomes may differ for activists involved in CFFD campaigns exclusively, as opposed to those also involved in other environmental or social justice efforts previously or simultaneously (particularly if discussions or disagreements about allyship and intersectionality were major features of the fossil fuel divestment campaign).[56,57] Other factors which might plausibly affect subsequent activist views and behaviours include the total length of the campaign, degree to which contentious tactics like sit-ins were employed, and the extent and nature of faculty involvement.[58,59,60]

Hirsch's work emphasizes group structure, understood as including "group-level political processes such as consciousness-raising, collective empowerment, polarization, and collective

[56]In one heated argument at U of T, the possibility of endorsing the BDS campaign was discussed. Some argued forcibly in favour based on solidarity and their conviction in the campaign's moral case. Others raised the risk of attracting opposition from anti-BDS forces, or confusing the public messaging of the CFFD campaign.

[57]Inconsistent theories of change among those who advocate similar objectives are likely an important source of ongoing fissures and disagreements within the climate change activist movement, particularly in the areas of allyship and intersectionality.

[58]Notably, Swarthmore, where the whole CFFD movement began, has not so far opted to divest: Tollefson, "Fossil-fuel divestment campaign hits resistance".

[59]Walters, *Swarthmore College says it will not pursue fossil fuel divestment.*

[60]Schwartz, *Swarthmore Declines to Drop Investments in Fossil Fuels.*

decision-making".[61,62] In particular, he argues that political solidarity better explains the functioning of protest movements than rational choice or collective behaviour approaches: people participate in activism for social more than rational or narrowly individualistic reasons.[63] Hirch's empirical examples (including the anti-aparthied divestment campaign at Columbia) also bear a significant resemblance to CFFD groups, which are often comprised of "close-knit groups of politically committed activists using carefully planned strategies and tactics".[64] Hadden echoes the claim that the internal structure of groups is relevant, citing the work of Sikkink and Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery.[65,66,67]

Joe Curnow and Allyson Gross argue that the framing selected by CFFD campaigns affects the subsequent thinking of activists, arguing that integrating a climate justice frame (as opposed to a scientific, financial, or numerical one) "has the potential to shape a generation of activists to be more attentive to the racialized, classed, and gendered impacts of climate change, as well as the ways that racialization, colonialism, class, and gender influence the ways we do activism, the strategies we choose, the voices we hear and amplify, and the

[61] Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 243.
[62] See also: Hirsch, "The creation of political solidarity in social movement organizations".
[63] Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 243.
[64] Ibid., p. 243, 246–52.
[65] Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*, p. 39.
[66] Sikkink, "The power of networks in international politics".
[67] Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery, "Network analysis for international relations".

fights we invest in".[68,69,70] Bratman et al. emphasize the importance of the climate justice framing in the American University CFFD campaign, including as a means of pushing for action on the basis of the university's Methodist roots.[71] The prominence of climate justice framing and these kinds of intersectionality issues likely varies between CFFD campaigns and may have explanatory power for explaining the subsequent work of activists. It is also worth noting that the appropriateness and desirable implementation of a climate justice frame are both contested within CFFD campaigns, and that disagreements about allyship and intersectionality may be one of the most recurring and emotionally charged form of internal disagreement. One logic says: climate change politics are racialized in many ways, so CFFD groups should support Black Lives Matter; others are more wary of alienating potential supporters by endorsing causes not clearly linked to climate change in the public mind.[72] Part of the continued allure of the scientific and numerical frames, as opposed to the climate justice frame, is that they may facilitate alliances with influential groups outside progressive politics circles. [TK — Robert Benford and David Snow on collective action frames / Erving Goffman on frames as "schemata of interpretation".]

[68]Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 375.

[69]A short summary of the numerical framing is: "Even the most conservative governments in the world have agreed that global warming should be limited to no more than 2 °C. Scientists say to meet that target we can only emit roughly 565 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. But the fossil fuel industry has 2795 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide in their reserves, nearly five times too much — and everyday they spend millions of Euros looking for more." gofossilfree.org, *350.org and partners launch Fossil Free Europe tour ahead of regional divestment campaign*.

[70]A numerical emphasis was combined with the climate justice frame in Ben Donato-Woodger's presentation to the Presidential Advisory Committee on Divestment from Fossil Fuels at U of T in 2015. Krelove et al., *Why U of T should divest from fossil fuels*, p. 7–12.

[71]Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance", p. 6–8.

[72]See: Yona and Lenferna, *Fossil Fuel Divestment Movement within Universities*, p. 6–7.

One variable which may help explain outcomes for activist themselves is the prevalence of interpersonal conflict within CFFD campaigns.[73] This likely influences what groups choose to do when their petitions fail or succeed, what other organizations activists subsequently work with, and how active organizers remain overall on climate change issues. The highest degree of research subject protection will need to be maintained regarding any material deemed confidential by participants. To a limited degree the methods section of this proposal will consider subject protection (See: Subject protection), with full details to be included in this project's ethical review.

The psychological state of activists seems like a variable that, if it could be ethically tracked, would reveal something about the cycle of activist action, media response, political response (including seeing populist governments appointing climate deniers as heads of important environmental protection organizations normally more insulated from partisan politics, and seeing long periods in which major democracies are governed by parties which are not making emission cuts a priority or who are actively promoting fossil fuel production), and the slow physical unrolling of the consequences of unchecked fossil fuel use, made emotionally salient by neverending news about ice sheets cracking up and temperature records being set. Tzeporah Berman raises some important points about the relevance of morale to both the extent to which an individual suffers anxiety from their concerns about uncontrolled climate change and to the kind of behaviours they undertake in response:

> Often when we talk about global warming and climate change, people's default reaction is guilt. And that makes sense because ultimately it is our lifestyle and our dependence on fossil fuels that have created the problem. So people

[73] This may manifest in emotionally fraught in-person discussions at meetings, social media posts, emails, etc. Late-night email threads can be especially explosive.

> automatically think, *Oh my God, I've got to change the light bulbs, I've got to walk to work, I've got to save for a hybrid. It's my fault, it's all my fault.*
>
> What we see in social movement theory and psychological studies is that if a problem is so big that it cannot be easily understood, or the risks are overwhelming, people will make some changes to their lifestyle but try to forget about the actual problem. You're walking to work once a week, you're using canvas bags for groceries, but the problem is getting worse. So eventually you get off your soapbox and go back to "normal" life. (emphasis in original)[74,75,76,77]

The note she strikes about futility is especially resonant in the context of climate change activism — you can never know a proposed bitumen sands pipeline has been stopped forever, and most campus divestment proposals have been rejected. This places the concept of "cycles of contention" within the year-to-year experience of climate change activists. Nonetheless, even rejected divestment proposals constitute active resistance, and when divestment has been used as a tactic in other social movements (resisting apartheid in the South African context, tobacco regulation advocacy, the arms trade, BDS, etc), the first attempt at various universities and other institutional investors was rarely sufficient to produce a change in policy, yet the strength of campaigns were able to grow across time as sentiment in the general population more gradually shifted. This is where a theory of change based on delegitimizing the fossil fuel industry is most convincing. This also relates to the second major campaign of 350.org: resisting fossil fuel pipelines in Canada and the United States. While every temporarily-rejected pipeline proposal has the potential for resurrection, simply complicating

[74]Berman and Leiren-Young, *This Crazy Time: Living Our Environmental Challenge*.

[75]This analysis corresponds with Lindsey Doe's summary of Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance: faced with dissonance between their own beliefs and their behaviour, people are more likely to change their belief than the contradictory behaviour.

[76]Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*.

[77]Festinger and Carlsmith, "Cognitive consequences of forced compliance."

and elongating the approval process and threatening to do so for other pipeline proposals somewhat discourages pipeline proponents and their financial backers from developing new fossil fuel infrastructure. At the worst, such campaigns fail while daring greatly.

While generally speaking, it is plausible that participation in failed campaigns will shift activists towards theories of change focused on interests instead of rationality, it's worth considering other possible responses to the cognitive dissonance between their concern about climate change and their inability to make others take action on it. Instead, in the face of rejection, some activists may reinforce a belief in rational decision-making, leading to behaviour where they publicly condemn the cynicism of influence based strategies and where they reaffirm the strength of the moral case for fossil fuel divestment.

2 | Place in the literature

My hypotheses about the three dependent variables arise in part from the literature on social movements and contentious politics.[78] For instance, a great deal of research suggests that the organization and internal functioning of CFFD campaigns will contribute to their outcomes.[79,80,81,82,83,84,85] My interest in the role of brokers in activist campaigns derives from involvement with 350.org since 2011, but is also justified by the key role Hadden found

[78] See also: The literature, my research question, and my hypotheses
[79] Lipsky, "Protest as a political resource".
[80] Brill, *Why organizers fail: the story of a rent strike*.
[81] Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*.
[82] McAdam, "Tactical innovation and the pace of insurgency".
[83] Tilly, "Models and realities of popular collective action".
[84] Wong, *Internal Affairs: How the Structure of NGOs Transforms Human Rights*.
[85] Hamaekers, "Why some divestment campaigns achieve divestment while others do not: the influence of Leadership, Organization, Institutions, Culture and Resources", p. 56–7.

for them in the context of the Copenhagen UNFCCC COP.[86]

My hypotheses are also shaped by my long-running exposure to ongoing CFFD campaigns, including extensive personal involvement with the U of T campaign, as well as personal involvement in environmental activism back to the WildLIFE conference organized by Jeff Gibbs and Leadership Initiative for Earth in Vancouver in 1995. They have also been informed by continuous media monitoring on CFFD campaigns in Europe, North America, and elsewhere, as well as activist publications, mailing lists, and personal correspondence. The object of these hypotheses is to consider what explanatory power we can bring to bear on the experiences of CFFD activists and organizers in the period between 2011 and 2017, as well as those who their campaigns have sought to influence.

First, I will summarize some of the political science literature that pertains most directly to this project, especially the social movements literature. I will then specifically discuss how the literature relates to my research question and hypotheses. The literature examined here is drawn from discussions with committee members and faculty and fellow PhD students within the department, the core Canadian and public policy reading lists, branching out from initial sources to their own references, and a search of scholarly databases undertaken with the assistance of the political science librarian at Robarts. The principal databases used were WorldWide Political Science Abstracts, PAIS International, Sociological Abstracts, and FRANCIS (Humanities & Social Sciences).[87] Google Scholar was also used extensively.

[86]Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*.

[87]These databases include surprisingly little information about divestment campaigns at U of T, with WorldWide Political Science Abstracts yielding one article (ambiguously authored by either P. Rosentrial or P. Rosenthal, 1986, full text unavailable) about South Africa and one article by Avi Weinryb (2008) about BDS. PAIS International yields only one article in The Nation (Horowitz) about BDS.

2.1 Literature on divestment

In October 2011, Swarthmore Mountain Justice began calling for Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania to divest from the fossil fuel industry — specifically from firms engaged in mountaintop removal coal mining. Their campaign eventually escalated into a 32-day occupation of the college's administrative building.[88] A webpage on swarthmore.edu explains:

> The national fossil fuel divestment movement started at Swarthmore with the student group Swarthmore Mountain Justice. In 2010, a group of students traveled to West Virginia on their spring and fall breaks to learn about mountaintop removal coal mining and its effects on the communities of Appalachia. Back at Swarthmore, the students "decided on a divestment campaign as a way for us to use the power and position we have as students to move our institution's money to stop funding practices that harm people's health and communities." The fossil fuel divestment campaign, picked up and expanded by 350.org and others, has become one of the best-known organized responses to climate change.[89]

350.org subsequently identified fossil fuel divestment as a promising strategy which could be replicated in many different institutional contexts by local campaigns affiliated with but not controlled or funded by the NGO.[90,91] Bill McKibben issued a stirring call to arms in Rolling Stone in 2011, highlighting the effectiveness of divestment in the fight against South African apartheid in the 1980s, calling for a campaign to "weaken … the fossil-fuel industry's political standing", and explaining that humanity needs to "keep 80 percent of those [fossil fuel] reserves locked away underground to avoid" catastrophic climate change.[92]

[88] Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 367.
[89] swarthmore.edu, *Divestment Debates*.
[90] See: Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, p. 353–8.
[91] See also: Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance", p. 4.
[92] McKibben, *Global Warming's Terrifying New Math*.

This was followed up by 350.org's Do The Math tour in November 2012, which framed climate change numerically, as a disjoint between the total amount of fossil fuel that can be burned without unacceptable climatic effects and the known size of global fossil fuel reserves.[93] In October 2013, McKibben undertook a Fossil Free Europe Tour in Berlin, Amsterdam, Edinburgh, Birmingham, and London with the intention of launching fossil fuel divestment in Europe.[94,95] The appeal was broadly taken up, particularly in Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States. These campus campaigns are sometimes branded with "350", as with UofT350.org. Sometimes, they use "fossil free" branding, as with ULaval sans fossiles or MIT Fossil Free.[96] In 2015, The Economist called divestment 350.org's "greatest success", noting that the financial consequences of divestment are likely to be less significant than broader norm change: "to sway opinion and influence regulation".[97] By then, 220 cities and institutions had committed to divestment, including Norway's $900 B sovereign wealth fund, and a report by Mercer, an actuarial consultancy, highlighted the danger of stranded fossil fuel assets and thus the financial case for divestment.[98,99]

[93] Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 372–3.

[94] gofossilfree.org, *350.org and partners launch Fossil Free Europe tour ahead of regional divestment campaign*.

[95] Hazan, *Is divestment working?*, Three years later, a Fossil Free U.K. organizer wrote an assessment of the state of the campaign in Europe so far:

[96] One criticism of 350.org's metastasized campaigns has been that they lack the direct connection to affected communities which prompted the initial Swarthmore effort. The question of whether comparatively privileged activists can legitimately speak or advocate on behalf of climate change victims has often been raised.

[97] The Economist, *No smoking: Institutional investors should divest from oil, gas and coal only if their beneficiaries understand the trade-offs*.

[98] The Economist, *Fight the power: Investors are being pressed to sell their holdings in coal, oil and gas*.

[99] Noting for instance: "Industry sector impacts will be the most meaningful. For example, depending on the climate scenario which plays out, the average annual returns from the coal sub-sector could fall by anywhere between 18% and 74% over the next 35 years, with effects more pronounced over the coming decade (eroding between 26% and 138% of average annual returns)." Mercer, *Investing in a Time of Climate Change*, p. 7.

Research by Jessica Grady-Benson and Brinda Sarathy speaks to many of the concerns of this project in a U.S. context. With a methodology combining participant observation with surveys and interviews, they found that universities with smaller endowments and "institutional values of environmental sustainability and social justice" were more likely to divest, and that concern about financial responsibility and effectiveness are emphasized in many administration arguments against divestment.[100] They also found that divestment campaign participants develop a long-term commitment to organizing and were encouraged by their involvement to move beyond "individualised sustainability efforts" and into collective political action which focuses on climate change as a social justice issue.[101,102] Perhaps the most substantial comparison between successes at CFFD campaigns to date is Nierika Hamaekers' 2015 master's thesis.[103] This study looked at the University of Glasgow campaign, as well as one at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, concluding that "the outcomes of the chosen campaigns on the one hand were strongly affected by their leadership teams, as well as organizational structure" (speaking to **H(A3)**, **H(C1)**, and **H(C2)** and also identifying as significant "institutional and cultural constraints as well as the availability of resources" (speaking to **H(A1)**, **H(A2)**, **H(A5)**, possibly **H(A6)**, and **H(B1)**).[104] Hamaekers specifically identifies having only two case studies and an exclusive focus on institutional response

[100]Grady-Benson and Sarathy, "Fossil fuel divestment in US higher education: student-led organising for climate justice", p. 673.
[101]Ibid., p. 667.
[102]Grady-Benson also wrote her B.A. thesis on the topic: Grady-Benson, "Fossil Fuel Divestment: The Power and Promise of a Student Movement for Climate Justice".
[103]Hamaekers, "Why some divestment campaigns achieve divestment while others do not: the influence of Leadership, Organization, Institutions, Culture and Resources".
[104]Ibid., p. 3.

as weaknesses of this study.[105] Bratman et al. employed an "auto-ethnographic approach" to evaluate the CFFD effort at American University.[106] Their analysis includes a number of relevant comments on the climate justice framing, radical perspectives, and inside versus outside strategies. A short piece by Todd Gitlin considers the success of the movement in comparison to the worsening pace of climate change, calling it "necessary though scarcely sufficient".[107] He contrasts the "truth-finding, truth-telling missions" ideally attributed to universities with actual administrative practice which often consists of maximizing returns exclusively and justifying the *status quo*.[108] [TK — Alexander, Nicholson, and Wiseman][109] [TK — Ayling and Gunningham][110] Available scholarly writing on CFFD also includes a variety of student papers and theses at different levels of formality.[111,112]

There is significant scholarly literature about both historical divestment campaigns targeting things like apartheid in South Africa and the tobacco industry, as well as ongoing non-fossil divestment proposals like the BDS campaign targeting Israel. [TK — tobacco: Garfield Mahood and Dick Peltier at U of T, the Non-Smokers' Rights Association, Canada-wide campaign to change government tobacco advertising policy] [TK — Find text of Rosenthal / Rosentrial 1986 "The University of Toronto and South Africa", which apparently discusses

[105] Hamaekers, "Why some divestment campaigns achieve divestment while others do not: the influence of Leadership, Organization, Institutions, Culture and Resources", p. 57.
[106] Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance".
[107] Gitlin, "Fossil Fuels Off Campus", p. 32.
[108] Ibid., p. 32–4.
[109] Alexander, Nicholson, and Wiseman, "Fossil free: The development and significance of the fossil fuel divestment movement".
[110] Ayling and Gunningham, "Non-state governance and climate policy: the fossil fuel divestment movement".
[111] For instance: Singer-Berk, *Campuses of the Future: The Interplay of Fossil Fuel Divestment and Sustainability Efforts at Colleges and Universities*.
[112] Yona and Lenferna, *Fossil Fuel Divestment Movement within Universities*.

"the reaction on campus to the university's decision against divestment of holdings of companies with investments in South Africa"] Donald Culverson's research seeks to interpret anti-apartheid divestment efforts through a variety of political science theoretical frameworks, including resource mobilization theory, new social movements, and political process theory.[113] Chelsie Hunt, Olaf Weber, and Truzaar Dordi undertook a comparative analysis of the anti-Apartheid and CFFD movements.[114] [TK — More on their results] Hirsch's work emphasizes social factors and group organization in the recruitment and commitment level of activists, specifically in the Columbia University anti-apartheid divestment campaign in 1985.[115] In a November 2000 lecture at Illinois State University international law professor Francis Boyle proposed an anti-apartheid-style campaign against Israel at U.S. universities.[116] This led to the establishment of Students for Justice in Palestine and a BDS effort at Berkeley, with a petition circulated in 2002 and a national student conference.[117] Further on-campus BDS campaigns began in 2002 with efforts at Harvard and MIT, and broadened after 2005 when 170 Palestinian civil society organizations issued a public call to action.[118,119] Suzanne Morrison identifies "the Oslo process, changes in Palestinian civil society, and the ruling by the International Court of Justice in 2004 on Israel's wall" as important contextual factors that shaped the movement.[120] By 2004, there were active BDS campaigns on over

[113]Culverson, *Contesting apartheid : U.S. activism, 1960–1987*, p. 5–20.
[114]Hunt, Weber, and Dordi, "A comparative analysis of the anti-Apartheid and fossil fuel divestment campaigns".
[115]Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement".
[116]Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 241.
[117]Ibid., p. 241.
[118]Wiles, *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, p. 59–60.
[119]Nelson, *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & the Movement to Boycott Israel*, p. 113.
[120]Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 229.

40 U.S. campuses.[121] BDS resolutions have been successfully passed at the University of California, Northwestern, Oberlin, Stanford, Wesleyan, and other U.S. schools, though these student resolutions have not actually produced divestment by university administrations.[122] According to Avi Weinryb, U of T was the first institution to hold an "Israel Apartheid Week", beginning in 2004.[123] As Tarrow discusses, the 2010 attempted civil society flotilla to Gaza (which prompted an Israeli military response) led to an uptick in BDS activism, including a divestment campaign attempted in Britain by UNITE.[124] A similar dynamic was observed by Abigail Bakan and Yasmeen Abu-Laban in response to "Operation Cast Lead", a previous Israeli military campaign in Gaza.[125]

Ongoing BDS campaigns seem to have had an effect on institutional responses to CFFD campaigns, both by making administrations concerned about the effect of a fossil fuel precedent and by associating divestment tactics in general with highly controversial campaigns. The BDS campaign contrasts most sharply with CFFD campaigns in terms of the visibility of opposition. While fossil fuel divestment opponents have generally used private channels to try to influence university decision-makers, those opposing BDS have been much more willing to present a public argument and lobby openly. Also, in contrast to the financial argument for fossil fuel divestment, BDS campaigns are justified using political rather than financial arguments.[126] Like CFFD campaigns, on-campus BDS campaigns target

[121]Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 241.
[122]Nelson, *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & the Movement to Boycott Israel*, p. 113.
[123]Weinryb, "At Issue: The University of Toronto—The Institution where Israel Apartheid Week was Born".
[124]Tarrow, *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*, p. 2–3.
[125]Bakan and Abu-Laban, "Palestinian resistance and international solidarity: The BDS campaign".
[126]Nelson, *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & the Movement to Boycott Israel*, p. 109.

universities specifically because of their perceived role as socially-conscious thought leaders in society.[127,128] BDS resolutions are intended to "create discussion, generate publicity, and attract attention" and "spearhead a public relations/propaganda campaign focused on the delegitimization and demonization of Israel", a tactic some criticize as counterproductive".[129] The BDS movement is also self-conscious about its relationship to previous social movements. For instance, Kali Akuno has situated it in terms of the civil rights and black liberation movements in the U.S., particularly after the 1960s.[130] In the forward to Wiles' edited volume, Archbishop Desmond Tutu stresses the similarity of the South African and Palestinian cases, saying the latter "bears such remarkable parallels with the struggle of the Palestinian people for their freedom from the oppression and injustice imposed on them by successive Israeli governments", commenting also on the "almost … Pavlovian conditioned response" whereby critics of Israel are called anti-Semetic.[131] The South African connection is also highlighted in the 2005 call from 170 Palestinian civil society institutions, which calls for "broad boycotts and … divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era".[132] Scholarship on BDS is largely located within the social movements and contentious politics literature, making particular use of Charles Tilly,

[127]See: "BDS Resolutions on Campus: Their Long-Term Goal" and "Divestment Campaigns" in: Nelson, *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & the Movement to Boycott Israel*, p. 93–5, 109–15.
[128]Wilson, Reed, and Martin, *Why Divest?*, p. 12.
[129]Nelson, *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & the Movement to Boycott Israel*, p. 94, 109.
[130]Akuno, "Process Tracing: A Bayesian Approach", p. 47–58.
[131]Wiles, *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, p. xiii.
[132]Ibid., p. 62.

Sidney Tarrow, and Doug McAdam.[133,134]

It's important to interpret campus fossil fuel divestment within the broader climate change divestment movement. In early May 2017, 350.org is helping to coordinate efforts in Australia and New Zealand to encourage a major bank to divest; trying to encourage investors in Japan, China and South Korea to divest; pressuring European universities, cities, churches, pension funds, and museums (including the Louvre and the Nobel Foundation); supporting vigils for climate change victims to encourage divestment in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay; and pushing for the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University, along with the city of Cape Town to divest.[135] Among the fossil fuel divestment commitments in the gofossilfree.org database, a large fraction have been made by faith organizations — a potentially illuminating parallel to the campus efforts.[136,137,138] Medical organizations have also divested from fossil fuels, including the British Medical Association, Canadian Medical Association, and World Medical Association.[139] Pension funds have also been prominent targets for fossil fuel divestment efforts, including a campaign to divest the $170 B Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.[140] Marc Lee and Justin Ritchie at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives reviewed the economic case for fossil fuel divestment by pension funds, point-

[133]See: Gerges, *Contentious Politics in the Middle East: Popular Resistance and Marginalized Activism beyond the Arab Uprisings*, p. 547–8, 550–1.

[134]Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 229–55.

[135]López, *Email subject: Global divestment movement announces a major mobilisation this coming May, 2017-02-22*.

[136]See: Kim, *Making Peace with the Earth: Action and Advocacy for Climate Justice*.

[137]The 2015 papal encyclical (*Laudato Si'*) on climate change has motivated some of the action within faith communities. Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' of the Holy Father Francis on the Care of Our Common Home*.

[138]See also: "BDS and Christian Churches" in: Nelson, *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & the Movement to Boycott Israel*, p. 66–72.

[139]On the Canadian Medical Association, see: Hale et al., *Time to divest from the fossil-fuel industry*.

[140]Toronto350.org, *Divest the OTPP*.

ing out that in addition to regularly risk driven by climate change, pension funds invested in fossil fuels face commodity price risk, energy innovation risk, carbon liability risk, and First Nations and community opposition risk.[141,142] Scholarly analysis of fossil fuel divestment for institutional investors more broadly includes the work of Justin Richie and Hadi Dowlatabadi, which emphasizes the financial as well as the moral case for divestment.[143] Notably, all previous on-campus divestment efforts had some kind of off-campus manifestation. For instance, Kenneth M. Bond evaluated whether U.S. corporations had a moral obligation to participate in South African divestment.[144] [TK — More on tobacco, the arms trade, etc]

2.2 Environmental activism

There is also a broad literature on contemporary environmentalism, tactics and strategy, and alliances with other causes. For instance, in a short case study on the Tar Sands Blockade campaign to stop construction of the Keystone XL pipeline in Texas, Will Wooten discusses how the pipeline activists coordinated with groups like Occupy Wall Street and YourAnonNews and claims:

> To reach such a variety of groups and concerns we connected our fight with theirs, talking about their issues as well as our own. Our fight for climate justice is tied with racial justice, with environmental justice, with patriarchy and class struggle. This is the larger story we are telling and social media is a megaphone we use to connect the dots.[145]

[141] Lee and Ritchie, *Pension Funds and Fossil Fuels: The Economic Case for Divestment*, p. 5–7.
[142] See previously: Lee and Ellis, *Canada's Carbon Liabilities: The Implications of Stranded Fossil Fuel Assets for Financial Markets and Pension Funds*.
[143] Ritchie and Dowlatabadi, "Divest from the carbon bubble? Reviewing the implications and limitations of fossil fuel divestment for institutional investors".
[144] Bond, "To stay or to leave: The moral dilemma of divestment of South African assets".
[145] Wooton, "Case Study: Tar Sands Blockade", p. 67.

While they have contemporary expression, these ideas are not new. In a speech with a surprising degree of relevance to the fossil fuel divestment movement, Martin Luther King Jr. emphasized the need for an "international coalition of socially aware forces" able to "form a solid, united movement, non-violently conceived and carried through, so that pressure can be brought to bear on capital and government power structures concerned, from both sides of the problem at once".[146,147,148] King goes on to discuss efforts to coordinate an economic embargo campaign against the apartheid government of South Africa. Perhaps the most fundamental tension and axis of disagreement in contemporary environmental and climate change activism is whether each movement can succeed as a reform movement, as a radical movement, as both, or neither. Groups engaged in environmental activism must therefore find ways to mediate between participants who disagree on these questions, whether by fragmenting and requiring a particular perspective from their members or by 'agreeing to disagree' while pursuing commonly-desirable objectives.

2.3 Social movements

The study of social movements is the principle literature which can be drawn upon to better understand the fossil fuel divestment movement — and where analysis of divestment can most plausibly make a theoretical contribution Many previous social movements have relevance for understanding what is happening in response to climate change today. So-

[146]King, "Non-violence and Social Change", p. 207.

[147]Stances on violence and property destruction have been an important source of internal disagreement within environmental and climate change activist movements. For example, see: Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*, p. 132.

[148]Ironically, King was murdered just over three months after the last of his series of Massey Lectures was broadcast.

cial movements are broadly defined by Manuel Castells as: "purposive collective actions whose outcome, in victory as in defeat, transforms the values and institutions of society".[149] Alternatively, in his 1908 Nobel Prize lecture, Rudolf Eucken described how:

> The social movement, too, reveals man as not entirely limited by a given order, but as a being that perceives and judges a given situation as is confident that it can change it essentially by its own efforts.[150]

William Gamson calls social movements "one product of social disorganization" and "symptoms of a social system in trouble".[151,152] Tarrow distinguishes social movements from political parties and advocacy groups, defining them as "collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities".[153,154] Tilley defines social movements in terms of their behaviour — specifically, "contentious performances" chosen from within the repertoire of particular activist groups in order to match local circumstances.[155,156] Tilley's characterization seems particularly apt in the case of CFFD for two reasons. First, divestment campaigns are self-consciously comprised of statements and actions designed with particular audiences and thought/behaviour changes in mind, making a performance-based conception suitable. Since divestment campaigns are, in essence, efforts to alter the perceptions of decision-makers and the public, their methods can be evaluated in terms of Tilly's conception of protest as performance,

[149]Smith, *Group Politics and Social Movements in Canada, Second Edition*, p. xix.
[150]White, *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution*, p. 53.
[151]Ibid., p. 53.
[152]See also: Goldstone, "The weakness of organization: A new look at Gamson's The Strategy of Social Protest".
[153]Tarrow, *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*, p. 9.
[154]See also: Tarrow, *Struggle, politics, and reform: Collective action, social movements and cycles of protest.*
[155]Tilly, *Contentious Performances*, p. 18.
[156]See also: Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution.*

with an audience in mind, and a theory of change centred around changing norms or expectations.[157] Second, as a collective effort defined at an international level by groups like 350.org, divestment is an object case of tuning activist repertoires for campaigns targeting specific institutions.

Social movements are connected both historically and theoretically with the question of how large-scale social and political change occurs, whether voluntary human actions can induce it, and what factors contribute to whether one group or another achieves its aims. Social movements are distinguished from other forms of political organization largely because of the informal relations between participants who share a sense of collective purpose, unlike, for instance, governments or corporations. The academic study of social movements largely began within sociology, but later formed a disciplinary subfield within political science.[158] Subsequent sociological research on social movements involved pre-fossil fuel divestment campaigns as case studies.[159] Work on social movements has also taken place within organizational studies, education, environmental studies, and law and society.[160]

Work in the 1970s by scholars including Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam developed a political process approach within the theory of social movements. This perspective emphasizes changing opportunities and constraints leading to changes in institutionalized politics and the ideological views of elites. Their work in the field continued until the present, with Tilly, Tarrow, and McAdam's 2001 *Dynamics of Contention* updating earlier ideas.[161] Despite

[157]Tilly, *Contentious Performances*.
[158]Porta, "Social Movements".
[159]Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement".
[160]McAdam and Boudet, *Putting Social Movements in their Place: Explaining Opposition to Energy Projects in the United States, 2000–5*, p. 1.
[161]Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 229–30, 237–8.

Tilley's death in 2008, a great deal of theoretical development and application to empirical cases continues In the mid-1960s and 1970s, a literature on "new social movements" examined post-1960 movements defined by a postmaterialist focus, as opposed to one defined by class conflict, and which often employed unconventional political tactics like protest.[162,163] These movements shared the defining feature of informal relations with prior social movements, but were distinguished in part because they often focused on social changes in lifestyle or culture, such as the changing role of women in society or tolerance for LGBTQ lifestyles. Notably, work in the 1980s emphasized culture, ideology, and ideas and the extent to which they "inform agency", as well as "the extent to which social movements are involved in the production of and struggle over meanings".[164,165] Tarrow contended that mobilizing structures "bring people together in the field, shape coalitions, confront opponents, and assure their own future after the exhilarating peak of the movement has passed".[166] A variety of journals focus specifically on social movements, including Research in Social Movements, Conflict, and Change (established in 1977); International Social Movement Research (1988) and Social Movement Studies (2002).

The social movements literature informs my thinking on case selection and methodology, as well as hypotheses and research questions. Notably, McAdam and Boudet's research on recent opposition to energy projects in the U.S. emphasizes the importance of considering causes other than social movements when explaining political outcomes, as well as stresses the

[162]Kriesi, *New social movements in Western Europe: A comparative analysis*.
[163]On the emergence of postmaterialist values, see: Inglehart, "The silent revolution in Europe: Intergenerational change in post-industrial societies", p. 991–1017.
[164]Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 247.
[165]Snow and Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest", p. 136.
[166]Tarrow, *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*, p. 123.

need to investigate cases where social movements failed to form and organize alongside the cases where they did.[167] Ethnographic and participant observation methods are widespread in the study of social movements, and are prominent among analyses of CFFD which have been undertaken to date.

The literature on contentious politics expands the social movement literature with an emphasis on collective social interactions between decision-makers and those seeking to pressure them, taking place in public, and applicable to historical developments including the transition of states to democratic governance, ethnic conflict, revolution, and social movements including feminism and environmentalism. The Cambridge University Press book series "Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics" includes some of the most relevant recent work on environmental and climate change activism, including Hadden's work on the Copenhagen Conference of the Parties (COP) and McAdam and Boudet's research on opposition to energy projects in the U.S. It also includes valuable comparative cases of non-environmental social issues including LGBTQ rights, anti-war movements, the anti-globalization movement, resistance to foreign U.S. military bases, and the civil rights movement.

On questions of strategies and tactics, there are numerous analyses of confrontational approaches compared with those that function more through persuasion. Some scholars have emphasized how both protest and conventional tactics — both insider and outsider strategies — can be pursued by groups simultaneously.[168,169] There are, however, limits to how much such coexistence can be maintained within divestment campaigns, particularly since strate-

[167] McAdam and Boudet, *Putting Social Movements in their Place: Explaining Opposition to Energy Projects in the United States, 2000–5*, p. 2.
[168] Bernstein, *The Compromise of Liberal Environmentalism*, p. 161.
[169] Goldstone, "Bridging institutionalized and non-institutionalized politics", p. 7.

gies that engage with and therefore legitimize institutional procedures clash fundamentally with those that would seek to challenge these procedures.[170]

Peter Dauvergne emphasizes the diversity of environmentalism as a social movement:

> Environmentalism will always be a "movement of movements," with a great diversity of values and visions surfacing out of a turbulent sea of informal groupings and formal organizations.[171]

Specifically, he emphasizes disagreements about the appropriate role for markets; whether technology can solve environmental problems; the desirability of economic growth; the plausibility of eco-consumerism and corporate social responsibility as solutions; pragmatic versus radical theories of change; and different conceptualizations of the environment as a necessary support for humanity or as something with inherent value. A common theme in environmentalist organizations has been the emergence of disagreeing factions, leading to splits and the emergence of confrontational groups like the Earthforce Environmental Society in 1977 (renamed the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society) and Earth First! in 1979.[172,173] As Dauvergne notes, the phrase "movement of movements" ties environmentalism to "global resistance to capitalism and globalization", highlighting the complex ways in which the analysis and policy preferences of those in overlapping movements interact.[174] In earlier work with Jennifer Clapp, he developed a broad typology of environmentalists as market liberals, institutionalists, social greens, and bioenvironmentalists.[175,176] Diversity in the core beliefs of

[170]See: Harvey-Sanchez and Ilnyckyj, *The U of T Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign*.
[171]Dauvergne, *Environmentalism of the Rich*, p. 6–7.
[172]Ibid., p. 104–6.
[173]Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, p. 206.
[174]Dauvergne, *Environmentalism of the Rich*, p. 154–5.
[175]Clapp and Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment*.
[176]The category of "liberal environmentalists" who favour markets and believe existing political and economic systems can address problems including climate change is attributed to: Bernstein, *The Compromise*

environmental activists is also central to the debate about advocating climate policy using either a scientific or a justice framing.[177]

The relationship between environmentalism and corporate capitalism is also a major subject of contention in non-academic writing about environmentalism and political change. Naomi Klein devotes a significant portion of *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate* to arguing that the major environmental organizations have been co-opted by corporations and lost their ability to take adequate action in response to climate change.[178,179] Other notably, if not entirely convincing, texts include Micah White's *The End of Protest*, which is much stronger in critiquing contemporary activist tactics than in proposing plausible replacements, and Srdja Popovic's *Blueprint for Revolution*, which is awkward to apply in a climate change context.[180,181] Unlike mass movements against unpopular authoritarian governments, the fight against climate change is largely a fight for self-restraint. As George Monbiot argues, the fight against climate change "is a campaign not for abundance but for austerity. It is a campaign not for more freedom but for less. Strangest of all, it is a campaign not just against other people, but against ourselves".[182]

Scholarly literature on previous social movements which sought wide-scale political and economic change is relevant to the analysis of the CFFD movement. The movement to

of Liberal Environmentalism.

[177]This is central to Hadden's analysis of conventional climate advocacy versus climate justice activism. Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*, p. 45, 89–113, 114–141.

[178]Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, p. 191–229.

[179]Klein is especially vitriolic about oil and gas production which The Nature Conservancy allowed in an ecological preserve starting in 1999, and where subsequently the main species being protected died off by 2012. ibid., p. 192–5.

[180]White, *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution*.

[181]Popovic and Miller, *Blueprint for Revolution: How to Use Rice Pudding, Lego Men, and Other Nonviolent Techniques to Galvanize Communities, Overthrow Dictators, Or Simply Change the World*.

[182]Monbiot, *Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning*, p. 215.

abolish slavery in the United States and elsewhere challenged the existing economic system in a way that bears some relation to what ending fossil fuel use rapidly enough to avoid the worst impacts of climate change does today, with some similar social and political consequences. The two movements also share a broad ethical focus on what kinds of duties human beings bear toward one another, and at what point the harm you are causing to others compels you to change your behaviour. In terms of involving a concerted effort to rapidly and profoundly shift public opinion and public policy, there are also parallels with the feminist; civil rights; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans- and queer (LGBTQ) rights movements. These movements also involved major questions about allyship and intersectionality, and the ways in which progressive efforts on one front ought to be done through a joint campaign for other progressive causes. As with feminism, climate change activism emphasizes how 'personal' choices have society-wide political consequences, and both movements raise questions about how to handle that politically.[183] The CFFD campaign is also connected to other recent and ongoing social movements, including through activists involved in more than one and the diffusion of strategic thinking between campaigns. White, for instance, claims that Occupy Wall Street (OWS) "trained a new generation of activists who went on to be the base for movements ranging from campus fossil fuel divestment to Black Lives Matter", though given that many CFFD activists are students engaging in their first social movement, it may be more accurate to say that OWS was one source of brokers who worked subsequently on

[183]George H.W. Bush's 1992 comment at the Rio summit that "The American way of life is not up for negotiation" is illustrative. Arguably, the degree to which all life choices (from food to transport to reproduction) have climate consequences for everybody torpedoes the supposed independence that makes libertarianism liberating.

CFFD.[184] Other movements that clearly overlap with divestment include Canada's Idle No More movement asserting indigenous rights and anti-pipeline activism.

A final frame that bears consideration is emphasizing CFFD as activism as undertaken specifically by youth. While faculty and others have been participants in CFFD campaigns, they are almost universally described as student-driven. This is likely relevant to the effect of participation in CFFD campaigns on participants, in part because of evidence that political activities undertaken early in life are likely to be formative and habitual. [TK — Find sources from Loewen materials] Divestment as youth activism also connects to intergenerational justice and climate change. As moral philosophers like Henry Shue and Stephen Gardiner emphasize, much of the weight of considerations about climate justice comes from the unidirectional impact our choices will have on a large number of subsequent generations.[185,186] It further relates to one major theory of why governments have been so ineffective at implementing their promises regarding reductions in greenhouse gas pollution: they are led and influenced largely by older people who won't personally feel the worst impacts of climate change.

2.4 The literature, my research question, and my hypotheses

[TK — Transfer as much as possible from the hypotheses section]

At the most basic level, this project will apply existing conceptual frameworks on social movements and contentious politics to the relatively unexamined empirical case of campus

[184] White, *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution*, p. 26.
[185] Pachauri et al., *Climate ethics: Essential readings*.
[186] Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm: the Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*.

fossil fuel divestment activism.[187] The project is nonetheless connected to questions with the potential for novel theoretical development, particularly in terms of coalition-forming and its effects on the deep core beliefs of activists, the impact of participation in CFFD campaigns on the theories of change of activists and organizers, and the operation of networks of influence and resource-sharing, both between activist groups and their targets.

Questions about institutional decision-making in response to activist demands probably fit most readily into the mainstream of political science theory, with rationalist accounts competing with historical institutionalist explanations, including stakeholder and bureaucratic politics. Resource mobilization theories may be useful for analyzing efforts by CFFD campaigns to mobilize on-campus support, as well as efforts to seek endorsements and other aid from alumni and donors.[188,189] At this stage, the interesting question may be less about how *status quo* actors will respond in the near-term to demands from climate activists, but rather how climate activist concerns will progressively reshape what is politically possible.

Inter-institutional effects between CFFD campaigns and schools responding to them can be interpreted with the help of political science literature on issue emergence, networks, organizational learning, and norm diffusion. For example, there may be a norm diffusing between universities responding to divestment petitions in which the administration expresses concern about climate change, proposes incremental actions, but rejects divestment. This pattern, which can be seen at U of T and the University of Ottawa among other schools, might

[187] Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 369.

[188] See: McCarthy and Zald, "Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory".

[189] See also: Freeman, "Resource mobilization and strategy: A model for analyzing social movement organization actions".

be a strategy for placating student-driven divestment demands without risking opposition from any stakeholders opposed to divestment. Bratman et al. call this mindset "characteristic of higher education's mainstream sustainability efforts rather than transformative, as the climate justice framework would suggest".[190] Gardiner's climate justice propositions provide a political and psychological explanation for insufficient institutional action on climate change. In particular, Proposition 5 "A Threatened Discourse" highlights how we are "judges in our own case, with no one to properly hold us accountable" for the decisions we make about climate and energy.[191] Proposition 6 "Shadow Solutions" asserts that we are "susceptible to proposals for action that do not respond to the real problem" — arguably including the incremental steps proposed by some university administrations in response to divestment proposals.[192] Clearly, CFFD campaigns have substantial effects one another: from the diffusion of documents and tactics to influences on the morale of one another's volunteers. This project would contribute to the comparative work called for by Hadden, regarding how activist network structures affect performance and how context affects when tactics are complimentary as opposed to incompatible.[193]

Curnow and Gross argue that "students' attempts to bridge the dominant frames of divestment and climate justice demonstrate the hard work facing the climate movement today and indicate how underequipped settler students are to take on anticolonial and decolonizing work as part of the environmental movement".[194] They are arguably being too quick to judge

[190]Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance", p. 12.
[191]Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm: the Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*, p. xii–xiii.
[192]Ibid., p. xiii.
[193]Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*, p. 167–8.
[194]Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 378.

that the entire CFFD or climate change activist movement is shifting in this direction, possibly by virtue of taking self-selected participants in certain planning forums as indicative of the whole movement, though there has certainly been substantial effort expended by 350.org and allied groups in alliance-building with indigenous communities and non-climate social justice movements. In particular, while general acceptance of the relevance of a climate justice frame may be increasingly widespread, disagreement persists on both a normative and strategic level about how to practically implement such ideas into CFFD organizing. Hadden also emphasizes "normative contestation" and the climate justice frame as central to the "current energy in the climate change movement".[195] While this can be interpreted as primarily about efforts to change thinking outside the movement — making "coal the new cigarettes" — contestation is also occurring within the movement as people deliberate and argue about strategies and alliances.[196]

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2.5.1 Social movements

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[195] Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*, p. 175.

[196] Hadden cites a range of scholarly analyses of conflict and division among activists. ibid., p. 39.

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3 | Case selection

3.1 Considerations

At least three kinds of cases potentially bear consideration for this project. First, there are universities where climate activist groups have formed but chosen not to mount divestment campaigns. Examination of these cases may help to mitigate concerns about selecting on the dependent variable, as well as provide broader understanding about the objectives and strategies of campus climate activist groups. Second, there are CFFD campaigns which have led to a clear result. Because of the ever-present possibility that a university will choose to change its fossil fuel investment choices in the future, no campaign can ever be permanently considered over. Cycles of contention never stop overturning.[198] That said, media reports and activist communication examined to date have not revealed any universities where divestment was rejected but subsequent effort lead to a reversal, nor any universities that committed to divest at one point but later reversed course. It is naturally quite possible that cases of both types will emerge with time. There may be value in examining cases where an initial rejection has been met with major continued activist effort, such as at

[198]This is a major strategic challenge for those seeking effective climate change policies from governments. Not only must a governing power be convinced to enact them, but all subsequent governments over the decades and centuries required will need to not reverse them. This is arguably the biggest problem with general solidarity among progressive causes as a mechanism for putting effective climate policies in place. While progressive governments will hold power periodically, those times will be punctuated with right-leaning governments as inclined to remove regulation on industry as they are to impose it on sexuality and reproduction.

Harvard, McGill, and MIT.[199,200,201,202] Third, there are ongoing CFFD campaigns where the university administration has not yet made a clear, public decision.

In a sense, the problem of case selection in the context of CFFD seems akin to looking at spiderwebs on a chess board. The obvious method for mapping out the network is to follow the threads, and yet this raises dangers of selection bias and selecting on the dependent variable. As McAdam and Boudet note:

> The overwhelming tendency of scholars is to 'select on the dependent variable'; that is to study movements — by which we mean successful instances of mobilization — rather than the much broader populations of 'mobilization attempts' or 'communities at risk for mobilization' that would seem to mirror the underlying phenomenon of interest more closely".[203]

This concern motivates the interest in schools with climate activist movements that have not chosen to employ divestment tactics, as well as for looking at the "squares" and not just the "threads". As such, some method for at least considering a representative number of "squares" seems desirable, though network analysis of campaigns and university responses will necessarily involve "thread"-following.

350.org maintains a database of successful divestment campaigns at gofossilfree.org. They classify commitments as "Fossil Free" (fully divested from the 200 corporations with the largest fossil fuel reserves), "Full", "Partial", "Coal and Tar Sands", and "Coal only". They also break down organizations by type, including governments, educational institutions, for

[199]Stephenson, *Other Universities Are Divesting From Fossil Fuels—but Harvard Is Doubling Down on Them*.
[200]McCarthy, *McGill University board rejects fossil-fuel divestment initiative*.
[201]Brooks, "Banking on divestment".
[202]Nazemi and Lin, *MIT will not divest, announces climate change 'action plan' with key role for industry partners*.
[203]McAdam and Boudet, *Putting Social Movements in their Place: Explaining Opposition to Energy Projects in the United States, 2000–5*, p. 2.

profit corporations, NGOs, pension funds, philanthropic foundations, etc.[204] Laval University (listed as "Full") is the only Canadian success listed as of February 2017, though a variety of Canadian churches and private foundations have divested.

In the United States, they list:

- Boston University (Coal and Tar Sands)
- Brevard College (Full)
- California Institute of the Arts (Full)
- Chico State University (Full)
- College of the Atlantic (Full)
- ESF College Foundation, Inc. (Full)
- Foothill-De Anza Community College Foundation (Full)
- George School (Coal Only)
- Georgetown University (Partial)
- Goddard College (Fossil Free)
- Green Mountain College (Full)
- Hampshire College (Full)
- Humboldt State University (Partial)
- Naropa University (Full)
- Peralta Community College District (Full)
- Pitzer College (Full)
- Prescott College (Partial)
- Rhode Island School of Design (Full)
- Salem State University (Full)
- San Francisco State University Foundation (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- Stanford University (Coal Only)
- Sterling College (Full)
- Syracuse University (Full)
- The New School (Full)
- Unity College (Full)
- University of Oregon Foundation (Full)
- University of California (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- University of Dayton (Full)
- University of Hawaii (Full)
- University of Maine System (Coal Only)
- University of Maryland (Full)
- University of Massachusetts Foundation (Full)
- University of Washington (Coal Only)
- Warren Wilson College (Full)
- Western Oregon University (Partial)

[204] https://gofossilfree.org/divestment-commitments-classifications/

- Yale University (Partial)

In the United Kingdom they list:

- Aston University (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- Birmingham City University (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- Bournemouth University (Full)
- Cardiff Metropolitan University (Full)
- Cranfield University (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- De Montfort University (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- Goldsmiths University of London (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- Heriot-Watt University (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- King's College London (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- London School of Economics (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (Coal Only)
- Manchester Metropolitan University (Full)
- Newcastle University (Full)
- Nottingham Trent University (Full)
- Oxford Brookes University (Full)
- Oxford University (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- Queen Margaret University (Full)
- Queen Mary University London (Full)
- SOAS, University of London (Full)
- Sheffield Hallam University (Fossil Free)
- University of Abertay Dundee (Full)
- University of Arts Bournemouth (Full)
- University of Bedfordshire (Full)
- University of Cambridge (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- University of Edinburgh (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- University of Glasgow (Full)
- University of Gloucestershire (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- University of Greenwich (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- University of Hertfordshire (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- University of Kent (Full)
- University of Lincoln (Full)
- University of Portsmouth (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- University of Sheffield (Full)
- University of Southampton (Full)
- University of St. Andrews (Full)
- University of Surrey (Full)
- University of Sussex (Coal and Tar Sands Only)
- University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Full)
- University of Warwick (Full)
- University of Westminster (Coal and Tar Sands Only)

- University of Worcester (Full)
- University of the Arts London (Full)
- University of the West of Scotland (Fossil Free)
- Wolfson College, Oxford (Coal and Tar Sands Only)

As of March 11th, 2017 the list did not include four recently announced divestment commitments: Barnard College and Columbia University, in New York City; the University of Bristol and King's College London in the U.K.; and the National University of Ireland in Galway.[205,206,207,208,209,210,211]

Ideally it would be desirable to find some cases where faculty were involved from the outset and played an entrepreneurial role as group and campaign initiators; others where faculty eventually became actively involved as volunteers; and others where faculty only provided a measure of public support, such as by signing petitions or open letters.[212] It would be desirable to assess the degree to which forms of governance within organizations campaigning for divestment affect the outcomes of campaigns, both in terms of institutional decisions and impacts on participants.

It may be that RQ(A): Where success is institutional response and RQ(B): Where success is policy diffusion between CFFD campaigns and target institutions can be best evaluated

[205]McDonald, *Barnard College Endowment to Divest From Climate Change Deniers*.
[206]On the process at Barnard, see: Divest Barnard, *Can you hear us now?*
[207]Hill, *Columbia University Divests From Coal*.
[208]On the University of Bristol's website, they announced: "A key aim is to end investment in companies that derive more than five per cent of turnover from the extraction of thermal coal or oil and gas from tar sands by January 2018". University of Bristol, *University of Bristol announces new fossil fuel divestment and carbon reduction plans*.
[209]The Kings College decision was report as happening after "14 days of hunger strike by PhD student Roger Hallam" and a "24HR occupation of old Committee room". Presswood, *Kings College London has agreed to divest from fossil fuels*.
[210]King's College London, *Agreement between King's management and King's College Climate Emergency*.
[211]Galway Independent, *NUI Galway commits to Fossil Fuel Divestment*.
[212]U of T and UBC contrast on this, both in terms of the involvement of faculty from the outset in one case and not the other, and in terms of limited overall faculty support at U of T, despite energetic outreach efforts from CFFD organizers and volunteers and an endorsement from the Faculty Association.

using a larger selection of cases, within which those where the richest evidence about participant experiences is available can be used to assess RQ(C): Where success is skill development in student activists, continued involvement in climate activism, and evolving theories of change.

An important practical and ethical question for my project is whether to use the University of Toronto (U of T) as a case study. On one hand, my personal involvement in the campaign offers me a great deal of experience for evaluating the plausibility of various claims and I have pre-existing information about processes and people that have been important. During the campaign, Joe Curnow, a PhD student at U of T's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) explicitly made use of the campaign itself as a subject of study, both through multi-directional video recording of meetings and through participant observation.[213] All major planning meetings were videotaped in this way, with consent provided by participants, indicating a broad willingness for their efforts to be the subjects of academic study. On the other hand, my involvement was as an activist and not as a researcher. As a result, all the information which I have at this time was not collected under an academic ethics protocol. Also, my involvement was motivated by a desire to have the campaign succeed, rather than to produce the most defensible possible understanding of the movement as a whole. It's impossible for me to ignore my experience at U of T when answering these questions, but these issues of ethical approval and objectivity probably make the U of T case better suited for use as general background than for use as a formal case study.

[213]See: Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 371.

3.2 Cross-Canada survey

Case selection could begin with a relatively quick review to see whether any university has had meaningful climate change activist or CFFD activism since 2011. This would include:

1. Searching Google, Twitter, and Facebook to identify any 350- or Fossil Free branded campaigns at the institution[214]
2. Scanning a suitable news database for the name of the institution and "divestment", "climate change", and "fossil fuel"
3. Contacting the university administration to ask about whether any relevant campaigns have taken place
4. Contacting the student government with the same question
5. Contacting a small sample (up to 5) faculty members with specializations in environmental science or policy to ask about whether any campaigns have happened

Data from the screening would be collected into a spreadsheet and would form the starting point for more detailed examination of a subset of cases.

A survey of all of Canada's approximately 100 accredited universities could be undertaken using the screening process above. The survey would be based on Statistics Canada's Revised Tuition and Living Accommodation Costs (TLAC) survey, which has been conducted annually since at least 2007 and includes 110 educational institutions.[215] In addition

[214]Not all CFFD campaigns use either branding. For example, the campaign at King's College London was run by King's College Climate Emergency while the group at Columbia is called Columbia Divest for Climate Justice. Presswood, *Kings College London has agreed to divest from fossil fuels.*

[215]See: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bggNUTjmp3VDhF3QCk4NJGwBbh9iT2kk0IZPTyedmKg/edit?usp=sharing

to identifying most cases where climate activist groups or campaigns are present, this would provide useful survey data on which schools have groups of campaigns and if those universities share characteristics like size and location. Using multiple methods for identifying campaigns and organizations will also give me a bit of error checking capability. It would be interesting to see if there are cases where some on-campus sources are aware of campaigns while others are not.

To check the effectiveness of this method, I would begin with accredited universities in a single medium-sized province, such as British Columbia. The (TLAC) survey includes 20 educational institutions. This would allow me to reflect on the effectiveness of the fast screening process described above before applying it to the Canada-wide set.

Communication with university administrations and student unions would be attempted by email and telephone simultaneously, while faculty contact would be attempted first by email. To reduce long-distance charges, telephone calls will be made via Skype.

In cases where CFFD campaigns are found, I can get in touch with someone publicly associated with the effort and ask for an estimate of the total number of activists involved at the peak of the campaign. Based on the information from the preliminary screening, I could identify how many schools are above the threshold of having no CFFD campaign at all, as well as which have a 'major' campaign, defined in terms of some lower limit for peak number of volunteers. I could then randomly select cases of CFFD campaigns from two sets, perhaps 3–10 cases of minor campaigns and 3–10 cases of major ones. I could then add back a few schools with climate activist groups but no CFFD campaigns as controls and to avoid selecting on the dependent variable. In addition, I would add back any successful Canadian

cases, where university administrations have committed to at least partial divestment. This will ensure at least some variation in the dependent variable, as far as institutional response is concerned. As of March 2017, only Laval is in that category.

3.3 Potential follow-on work

An analysis of CFFD campaigns in Canada alone could be broadened in later research to include any of the regions where CFFD campaigns have been active and successful, including the U.S., the U.K., continental Europe, and Australia and New Zealand. Japan may also be an interesting case, as 350.org has a regional divestment coordinator there but gofossilfree.org reports no successful campaigns. There are two principal reasons why an international comparison might raise the explanatory power of this project. First, the brokers who are involved in a number of CFFD and other divestment campaigns simultaneously tend to function internationally. Second, CFFD participants see themselves as part of a global or transnational social movement where state boundaries are important in terms of decision-makers to target rather than a nationally-defined sense of shared interest or solidarity.

4 | Methods

This project will employ a variety of methods to evaluate the hypotheses associated with the three research questions, with the expectation that some methods will more effectively support research into some RQs rather than others. The principal anticipated methods are interviews, participant observation, analysis of documents, and surveys. As I begin to collect

information about the case studies, it will be possible to determine if process tracing and qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) might be applicable.

As explained above, interviews with key CFFD organizers and inter-campaign brokers will be an essential data source for network analysis.[216] As such, it seems desirable to share information about this study as early as feasible, in part so that knowledgeable organizers and brokers can contribute methodological ideas to the research design. This early outreach should include all the divestment staffers at 350.org, as well as known former staffers like Becca Rast, who was their West Coast Fossil Free Organizer in 2014. It should also include key organizers identified in the existing literature and media coverage, including Betsy Bolton, Peter Collings, Giovanna Di Chiro, Mark Wallace, and Stephen O'Hanlon at Swarthmore; Allyson Gross at Bowdoin; Chloe Maxmin at Harvard; Richelle Martin, Kayley Reed, and Christina Wilson at the University of New Brunswick; Lily Schwarzbaum at McGill; Alice-Anne Simard at Laval; George Hoberg and Kathryn Harrison at UBC; Cameron Fenton with the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition; and Sophie Baumert, Luke Evens, and Miriam Wilson at the University of Glasgow. The pinnacle objective in terms of research subjects is cooperation from organizers who are known to have worked on more than one fossil fuel divestment campaign which led to some kind of response from the authority who they were petitioning. This clearly includes the professional brokers discussed in RQ(B): Where success is policy diffusion between CFFD campaigns and target institutions. It also includes Miriam Wilson, who went from helping to organize the U of T CFFD campaign to organizing a successful campaign at the University of Glasgow, along with as-yet-undetermined

[216] Unlike our friends in government, I can't just apply machine learning tools to all their phone and internet traffic.

brokers who customized open-source materials from the the U of T CFFD campaign to divest Toronto's Trinity-St. Paul's United Church and Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts.[217,218] Family networks of brokers may be important. George Hoberg and Kathryn Harrison have been key members of the UBC effort while their daughter Sophie was a major organizer at Stanford and their son Sam was a central part of the effort at U of T. In addition to interviewing people who played a prominent role in a CFFD divestment campaign, brokers in NGOs, and volunteer brokers, it would likely be valuable to interview people who played significant roles in off-campus fossil fuel divestment, including Jeanne Moffat at Trinity-St. Paul's United Church.

Interviews will be undertaken with a semi-structured style, with high-level questions intended to determine if a particular subject is relevant in the case being examined and strings of follow-up questions on the same theme.[219] For instance, if I ask whether a BDS campaign was ever active at the same time as the CFFD campaign and learn that it was, I can ask follow-on questions about whether the campaigns attempted to coordinate, whether any collaboration actually took place, and whether the presence of the BDS campaign seemed to affect the decision-making of the university administration. Similarly, after learning that a campaign sought to function on a democratic basis through elected positions and vote-based decision making, I could follow on with questions about how that shaped the choice of strategy and tactics, as well as how it affected the morale and involvement of volunteers and organizers.

[217]Brooks, *Glasgow becomes first university in Europe to divest from fossil fuels*.
[218]Moffat, *Trinity-St. Paul's United Church Votes to Divest from Fossil Fuel Companies*.
[219]Semi-structured interviews were also used in: Singer-Berk, *Campuses of the Future: The Interplay of Fossil Fuel Divestment and Sustainability Efforts at Colleges and Universities*, p. 3, 28–29.

Participant observation played a key role in Curnow's research on the U of T CFFD campaign. It was similarly employed by Hirsch on the Columbia anti-apartheid campaign of the 1980s, in which he "spent many hours each day observing the activities of the protestors and their opponent, the Columbia administration" as the protestors peacefully blockaded Hamilton Hall.[220] There may be scope for engaging in participant observation directly as part of this project, by acting in person to observe planning sessions or actions being undertaken by CFFD campaigns. Also, much of the small existing literature comparing divestment campaigns has been written by current and former participants.[221,222]

In terms of documentary evidence, fossil fuel divestment is a promising research topic in part because campaigns have often involved highly formalized written decision-making processes, in which campaigns have put forward detailed written arguments, committees of various types have deliberated and published recommendations, and decisions made by universities have often included formal written justifications. The U of T process provides an example, with a formal petition from divestment proponents to the university (written specifically to satisfy the schools pre-existing divestment policy and updated substantially at one point because the process had taken so long), formal recommendations from a committee appointed by the administration, a response from the campaign to that committee (emphasizing the need to address harm imposed on indigenous groups by the fossil fuel industry), and the university's final decision rejecting divestment with detailed written

[220]Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 246.

[221]For example: Singer-Berk, *Campuses of the Future: The Interplay of Fossil Fuel Divestment and Sustainability Efforts at Colleges and Universities*, p. 12.

[222]Bratman et al. note: "Our methodological process involved dynamic participation within the campaigns discussed herein, sometimes involving roles as organizers, leaders, and participants, and sometimes as sympathetic observer". Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance", p. 2.

justification.[223,224,225,226,227,228] Formal petitions to other schools include the University of Denver, McGill [TK — Harvard, etc].[229,230,231] Formal presentations and speeches for which transcripts, audio, or video are available would play a similar role. In addition to providing important evidence about how various stakeholders interpret the situation and justify their actions, these documents reveal linkages between both activist campaigns and institutional decision-making processes at different schools. At least occasionally, activists produce self-conscious 'power analyses' through which they evaluate the circumstances in which they have found themselves so far, and the means through which they have sought to achieve their objectives.[232] Activist campaigns learn from one another, and university administrations are sensitive to the decisions of their peers. In a few cases, the additional insight into administration thinking and processes at public institutions might be produced through an access to information request. The time and cost requirements of such requests should however be kept in mind.

As used by Hirsch, surveys could be useful for understanding the perspectives of current and past organizers and activists in CFFD campaigns. Many people who were only some-

[223]Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment*.
[224]Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment: Update*.
[225]Karney et al., *Report of the President's Advisory Committee on Divestment from Fossil Fuels*.
[226]The UofT350.org Community Response sought to add a divestment screening criterion to exclude firms that violate the principle of free, prior, and informed consent as asserted in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Asher et al., *U of T Community Response to the Report of the Fossil Fuel Divestment Committee*.
[227]Gertler, *Beyond Divestment: Taking Decisive Action on Climate Change*.
[228]Notably, the members of the committee who endorsed divestment published a letter responding to the administration's decision in The Globe and Mail. Hoffmann et al., *A committee replies*.
[229]Divest DU, *Fossil Fuel Divestment*.
[230]Social Responsibility, *Report of the Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility*.
[231]Divest McGill, *The Social Injury Caused by the Exploitation of the Tar Sands and Fossil Fuels*.
[232]For example: Meisel and Russell, *Case Study: Tar Sands Action*.

what actively involved in campaigns may be difficult to identify, contact, and engage with.[233] Nonetheless, short web-accessible surveys might generate data that would bolster evidence on hypotheses about the effects of participation in CFFD campaigns on the subsequent thinking and political activity of activists. Such a survey could also lead to new channels of communication with brokers and organizers willing to be interviewed about their CFFD work.

[TK — Would qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) be helpful? — See Olive piece on brominated flame retardants]

A key uncertainty is how feasible it will be to interview large numbers of activists and acquire documents or other information on the functioning of campus fossil fuel divestment campaigns. In the context of the Copenhagen COP, Hadden was able to use media accounts, interviews, institutional documents, and speeches to apply a process tracing methodology to analyzing the influence of civil society activity on political outcomes and on the emergence of the climate justice frame.[234] The total amount of information available (especially interviews with key organizers and university officials) will likely establish whether an approach including process tracing would be feasible.[235,236]

One challenge is that CFFD campaigns are not always coordinated by a single organization, and they may not be active across all time periods. While a campus climate activist group may be the single most organized force advocating divestment, stakeholders

[233] Of Hirsch's 300 surveys, a remarkable 60.3 percent were returned complete., many of them by members of the university community who either were not involved in or actively opposed the divestment campaign. Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 246.

[234] Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*.

[235] Grietens, *Dictators and Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence*, p. 67.

[236] Bennett, "Process Tracing: A Bayesian Approach".

with their own decision-making capability may undertake actions that are not coordinated or even communicated with the central campaign. Especially after a university rejects divestment through a formal process there is a high likelihood of the CFFD effort fragmenting and shifting to other venues, like subsidiary colleges within a university. In part this can be addressed by treating each year from 2011 to the present at each selected university as a case study in itself.

4.1 Assessing RQ(A) Institutional outcomes

While actual institutional responses are easily observed, causal connections to factors which are hypothesized to be relevant is more challenging. One one level, the wealth of documentary evidence generally produced by CFFD efforts is very helpful here: not only do universities provide a public rationale for their decisions, but these are often highly detailed and thoroughly-referenced documents. Nonetheless, processes of justification need not follow the actual process of decision making and choices which are defended rationally may be made for reasons of stakeholder or bureaucratic politics. Furthermore, universities can be expected to try to conceal materials relevant to their decision-making, including advice from their lawyers and fund managers.[237] [TK — more]

Techniques like process tracing which depend on access to a large amount of information about internal discussions and decision-making might be more readily applied to CFFD campaigns themselves than to the universities they are targeting. At least, this might be

[237] While conceivably partly surmountable at public universities via freedom of information requests, the additional analytical power may not justify the time and expense of such requests — especially since university administrations are likely to anticipate such scrutiny and make use of ephemeral communication methods for any discussions they would prefer to keep private.

expected for campaigns that have maintained and are willing to provide access to records like minutes and where key organizers are willing to be interviewed. In contrast, both as a matter of organizational character and because they likely seek to conceal any dissenting information that might undermine their public positions, university administrations will probably be less forthcoming with this type of information. Still, the fact that most universities have made use of a quasi-public process like a committee that takes public submissions and makes public justifications should allow for at least some application of process tracing methods to evaluate the causal pathways leading to divestment decisions.

Assessments about success and failure by campaigns themselves — as well as their public statements — will also be considered, but accorded lesser importance.[238,239] In part, this is because campaigns may choose to present any outcome as a success in order to improve morale and 'create momentum'. Alternatively, campaigns may evaluate outcomes too pessimistically, as only a tiny contribution to addressing climate change overall. This is not necessarily unreasonable, in a context where the problem is worsening at a worsening rate.[240] Since even the most optimistic assessment of divestment as a tactic does not see it as adequate to address the problem of climate change, there is no danger that even complete success would "overlap … [with] the disappearance of the movement as a movement".[241,242] Even if climate change mitigation becomes incorporated into the normal political processes

[238]For instance, see: Fossil Free uOttawa, *Yes, the University of Ottawa has committed to divestment. They just don't know it yet*.

[239]For the administration's perspective, see: uOttawa, *Addressing Global Warming: uOttawa's climate commitment helps create greener economy*.

[240]Kahn, *Carbon Dioxide Is Rising at Record Rates*.

[241]Scott, *Ideology and the new social movements*, p. 10.

[242]Sandberg, Wekerle, and Gilbert, *The Oak Ridges Moraine Battles: Development, Sprawl, and Nature Conservation in the Toronto Region*, p. 160–1.

within universities, that will only be a small part of the problem solved. All evaluations of success or failure are necessarily counterfactual, since we have no way to know what would have happened if a campaign had functioned in different ways. Still, no cases of schools spontaneously divesting without student petitioning have been recorded, though that may be exactly what a certain subset of CFFD organizers eventually hope to see happen.

4.2 Assessing RQ(B) Diffusion and networks

If conducting a survey of CFFD activists and organizers, a much-desired collection of data would be the names and contact information of people who worked on more than one divestment campaign, where at least one was targeting a university. Such people have clearly been a conduit for strategies, tactics, and theoretical perspectives to spread between campaigns. They are also likely to be able to offer a unique perspective on how campaigns have differed, and the degree to which any of my hypotheses can be substantiated or refuted in the case of any of them. [TK — methods for studying diffusion between campaigns]

Close textual analysis will provide one source of insight into how university administrations influence each other in making divestment decisions. Relevant texts include not just public justifications for recent choices, but the policies and procedures which schools use for deliberation. For instance, the divestment policy at U of T explicitly makes use of a concept of "social injury" developed at Yale. Universities also refer explicitly to one another's actions and justifications when explaining their choices: using the precedent set by perceived peer institutions to justify both positive action on divestment and decisions to do nothing or respond to climate change concerns by non-divestment means. Such references may be

found in written documents, or in the transcripts of public remarks by university officials.

To some extent, interviews may contribute to understanding networks of influence between universities. Offering a flexible range of anonymity options may encourage such participation by helping to alleviate any concern on the part of university staff or faculty that their cooperation in the research or involvement in CFFD activism could be the cause for any retribution against them by their employers. In cases where a single individual is empowered to decide whether to divest or not, both they and any identifiable advisors would be desirable interview subjects. In cases where a governing board of some kind makes the decision, it may be practical to try contacting all members and seeing whether any would be willing to discuss their process or decision.

4.3 Assessing RQ(C) Effect on activists

4.4 Subject protection

While climate change politics is frequently radical, an important feature of participation in campus fossil fuel divestment campaigns is the absence of clear personal risks for participants. This stands very much at odds with some kinds of direct action campaigns against the fossil fuel industry, as when private security guards trying to push the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline attacked protestors with dogs or when Shell collaborated with the Nigerian military to kill anti-oil activists. It is also at odds with previous forms of contentious politics studied by Sidney Tarrow, which often involved “acting collectively against

well-armed authorities".[243] The most likely personal consequence of taking part in a campus fossil fuel divestment campaign is to be featured in media coverage which is generally sympathetic to the concerns and objectives of the organizers. The one set of campus stakeholders which has most clearly and convincingly described a risk to themselves from participation is junior faculty members who may fear harm to their careers as a result of antagonizing the university administration or corporate donors.

In-person discussions in support of these research questions will include both informal conversations and formal interviews. A range of discussions have already been undertaken for two main purposes: to help refine the research questions through consultation with CFFD activists and to begin the process of understanding the networks between climate activist organizations and brokers.

With the written consent of the subjects, I plan to record all of the interviews which this project will involve, whether they take place by telephone, electronic means like Skype, or in person. Each interview will be approximately 0.5 – 2.0 hours, with the average interview expected to last about an hour. This written consent will be based on a menu of available options, ranging from unlimited use including publishing the recording or transcript of the interview to the most protective option, in which the recording will not be transmitted and will only be used to make a non-identifying transcript or summary before the file is destroyed by being overwritten multiple times on the hard drive or flash memory where it was stored. Specifically, the options which I intend to provide are:

Maximum protection I will make a recording of the interview which will not be trans-

[243] Tarrow, *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*, p. 11.

mitted electronically except from a digital recording device to a computer. Using the recording, I will promptly produce a summary or transcript designed to exclude any details which would identify the subject. Once this document is complete, I will destroy the recording file(s).

Recording retained — no quotation The subject agrees that I will retain the interview recording indefinitely for reference and I will not quote any part of it in any publication arising from this research.

Recording retained — anonymous quotation only The subject agrees that I will retain the interview recording indefinitely for reference and will only use anonymous quotations in any publication.

Recording retained — quotes attributed The subject agrees that I will retain the interview recording indefinitely for reference and that I may attribute quotations to them publicly.

No confidentiality The subject agrees that any recordings, summaries, transcripts, or notes based on the interview may be published.

I will explain to subjects both the degree of plausible protection afforded to them by each option, as well as the academic and methodological advantages and disadvantages of each.[244] Subjects will be told that while interviews are in progress, they are free to stop the discussion at any time. Subjects will also be told that regardless of which level of confidentiality they choose, my treatment of research materials will be governed by my data protection policy

[244]See: Mosley, *Interview Research in Political Science*, p. 14–8.

and by my policy regarding compliance with third party requests for access, such as any received from state security (police or intelligence) services.

A clear policy will be necessary regarding any instances which I might need to report to law enforcement (such as an activists involvement in criminal activity). Part of the letter explaining the research ethics protocol to interview subjects will be a description of our policy on confidentiality in the face of lawful requests, such as a court order. I would consider any such outcome a lot more likely in the case of anti-pipeline activists, but it is worth planning for in this context as well.[245] If interviewing subjects about acts of civil disobedience — the willful and open, non-violent violation of the law for a political or moral purpose — I will be clear that I don't want to be told about any past, planned, or possible criminal acts aside from acts of civil disobedience, potentially including property destruction, etc. This measure should mitigate the chances any such official request is made, and protect subjects in case any research materials are accessed by either legal or clandestine means.

5 | Timeline

March–April 2017 Finish proposal and get departmental approval

April 2017 Finish ethics protocol and get IRB approval

April 2017 Survey test province, review screening process

[245] One comment from a divestment organizer at American University is telling in this regard: "Although I knew logically that it was highly unlikely we would get into any real trouble with the campaign, even just scolding conversations or disapproving looks from administrators made me uncomfortable". Bratman et al., "Justice is the goal: divestment as climate change resistance", p. 11.

April 2017 Initiate contact with identified brokers

May 2017 Complete cross-Canada survey, select cases

[TK — timeline for review of documentary evidence, interviews, and writing up — use Minh as a template]

6 | Chapter breakdown

Context: divestment movements Both historical and ongoing

Context: environmental and climate change activism Including relevant environmental politics and social movements literature

Survey results Which universities have climate activist groups and CFFD campaigns? What factors motivate this choice of tactic?

RQ(A) Institutional outcomes Outcomes across a spectrum, from immediate dismissal to implementing divestment

RQ(B) Diffusion and networks Influences between CFFD campaigns, and between responding universities

RQ(C) Effect on activists Large campaigns versus small ones; forms of campaign organization and governance

Conclusions

7 | Bibliography

Note: 'Link rot', in which links become ineffective because online resources are removed or relocated, is a persistent problem for academics referring to online sources. As a means of partially mitigating this problem, I will be submitting web addresses to the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine (https://archive.org/web/) for archiving. If an online resource has become unavailable, please try searching for it there. I plan to use the same procedure for the final thesis.

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