Campus Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaigns

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Contents

1 | Research question

1.1 What factors are correlated with the success or failure of campus fossil fuel divestment (CFFD) campaigns, as defined according to three metrics? To what degree can causal claims be substantiated through case studies?

Independent variables

Institutional characteristics Public versus private universities; policies in place regarding divestment; specific individuals or bodies empowered to make divestment choices; overall governance system; content of investment portfolio (and history of recent returns); political context; financial or other relationships with fossil fuel corporations

Institutional history Divestment precedents, both successful and unsuccessful

Campaign origin Whose initiative? Initial resources, if any, provided by outside organizations

Campaign organization Decision-making procedures, organizational structure — Are there elected positions? Does decision-making happen in an accessible forum?

Campaign strategy Whose behaviour are they trying to change, and through what broad means? Any enduring alliances with outside organizations or campaigns? To the extent

it can be determined, what theory of change was the campaign initially based on? Did it shift, or was it contested while the campaign was going on?[1,2,3]

Campaign tactics Persuasive versus confrontational, short-term cooperation with other groups or campaigns, media and public relations strategy

Campus activism landscape Specifically, other ongoing divestment campaigns? In particular, is a BDS campaign happening at the same time?

Timing Which other fossil fuel divestment campaigns had succeeded or failed before or during this campaign? Did any relevant changes in the political leadership of the relevant jurisdiction take place? Were economic times good or bad while the campaign was going on, both locally and nationally? What happened to fossil fuel prices during the campaign?

Student commitment Number of volunteers and organizers; frequency of meetings; total investment of time and resources

[1] '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". In a sense, the foundation of 350.org can be seen as 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."

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

[3] 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.

Faculty involvement When, if at all, did faculty become involved? In what capacity? To what degree did they influence the choice of strategy and tactics?

Dependent variables

Campaign success, as assessed via three metrics:

Institutional response Including public statements, the establishment and reporting of committees, and changes to investment strategies (as well as any public justification — economic, ethical, or both — for why changes were or were not made)

Influence on outside actors Including other universities, institutional investors, and decision-makers (for instance, the University of Toronto (U of T) divestment brief was used in locally-tailored form by successful campaigns at the Trinity St-Paul United Church in Toronto and the University of Glasgow)

Training and motivation of activists Status of volunteers in ongoing fossil fuel divestment campaigns, subsequent activist work done by former divestment campaigners, and changes to the theory of change of activists who have been involved in divestment

In general, we can judge CFFD campaigns to be more successful when they induce positive institutional responses from universities, especially commitments to divest; when similar institutional responses occur elsewhere in ways that can be connected back to a CFFD campaign, including the use of materials or explicit acknowledgment by the second institution; and when former CFFD participants remain active in social justice and environmental campaigning, develop useful skills, and develop theories of change that contribute to effective

future action. Universities can also take actions which are worse than doing nothing: a possibility which must be considered when evaluating the success of CFFD campaigns.

Assessments about success and failure by campaigns themselves — as well as their public statements — will also be considered, but accorded lesser importance. 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. 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.

2 | Hypotheses

My hypotheses about the three dependent variables have been developed on the basis of 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. This has been shaped and supplemented through the academic literature on social movements, activism, and large-scale political change since

I came to U of T in 2012. The object of these hypotheses is to consider what explanatory power we can bring to bear on the experiences of campus fossil fuel divestment activists and organizers in the period between 2011 and 2017, as well as those who their campaigns have sought to influence.

2.1 H1: Institutional responses will be most readily explained by path dependence, specifically in terms of the existence and outcome of prior divestment campaigns, and the decision-making processes targeted by activists.

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? What at their interests? Who influences them?

The path dependence / historical institutionalist hypothesis could be contrasted with effort to explain divestment outcomes based on the specific financial circumstances of each university (including both composition of and recent performance of their endowments) or the economic conditions in the relevant jurisdiction (economic growth, unemployment, or the fossil fuel industry's share of the total economy).[4]

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

[4]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*.

case for action.[5] 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. Producers with exceptionally high costs and per-unit greenhouse gas emissions may be those who are most likely to find their assets stranded in such a scenario. In February 2017, Exxon Mobil "revised down its proved crude reserves by 3.3 billion barrels of oil equivalent" and "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".[6] This 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.[7]

One open question is the extent to which the strategic and tactical choices made by campaigns affect their success, 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. Political opportunity theory and concepts like the Overton window may be applica-

[5]See: Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment: Update*, p. 77–94.
[6]Reuters, *Exxon revises down oil and gas reserves by 3.3 billion barrels.*
[7]Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment: Update*, p. 79–82.

ble to assessing cases where different campaign strategies and tactics may produce different institutional responses.[8]

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".[9] 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.[10,11] 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.[12] 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

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

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

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

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

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

held on only a few occasions".[13]

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.[14] 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.[15] Different dynamics may operate after the first official rejection at any particular 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

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

[14]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.

[15]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.

in major fossil fuel projects.[16,17,18] Some campaigns have chosen specifically or especially to target the coal industry and Canada's bitumen sands.[19] 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 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

[16]The original Divest McGill petition was unusually demanding on this front, but it cannot be easily located at the moment.

[17]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

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

[19]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.

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 BDS campaigns, 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.[20,21,22]

The case of divestment at Université Laval in Quebec City is suggestive. 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.[23,24] This illustrates how the constellation of potential sufficient

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

[21]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*, TK page.

[22]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.

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

[24]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?"

conditions for divestment is large and that initial institutional response may be a key explanatory factor in at least some cases. 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.

2.2 H2: Some work done by campus fossil fuel divestment campaigns will be easily transferrable to comparable campaigns at other institutions, but such influence will generally be *ad hoc* rather than coordinated between activist groups.

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.[25] These brokers include paid staff of 350.org, students who move between schools, 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.[26,27] 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.

[25] Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*.
[26] http://www.studentsdivest.org/
[27] http://www.ourclimate.ca/

Whereas Hadden found Friends of the Earth to be an important source of connections between otherwise-disparate activist networks in the context of the 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.[28] The skills they are seeking are also indicative, with any 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".[29] 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 Per-

[28] https://350.org/jobs/

[29] https://350.org/jobs/?gh_jid=563419

fitt as a Canada divestment coordinator; and Christian Tengblad as a Sweden divestment campaigner.[30]

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 broker is involved sees them as never being "100 percent" allies.[31] In the CFFD context, this may be most applicable to divestment supporters with some institutional connection to the university, such as staff.

If H1, 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.

[30] https://350.org/about/team/

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

2.3 H3: Involvement in fossil fuel divestment campaigns will have mixed results for activists, with some becoming more enthusiastic and involved and others becoming dispirited and uninterested in further involvement. Theories of change held by activists will shift from those focused on the power of rational argument (and perhaps mass actions like marches) to compel decision-makers to those focused on stakeholder and bureaucratic politics.

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).[32] 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.[33,34,35]

[32] 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.

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

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

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

Hirsch's work emphasizes group structure, understood as including "group-level political processes such as consciousness-raising, collective empowerment, polarization, and collective decision-making".[36,37] 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.[38] 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".[39] Hadden echoes the claim that the internal structure of groups is relevant, citing the work of Sikkink and Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery.[40,41,42]

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 fights we invest in".[43] The prominence of climate justice framing and these kinds of intersec-

[36]Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 243.
[37]See also: Hirsch, "The creation of political solidarity in social movement organizations".
[38]Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 243.
[39]Ibid., p. 243, 246–52.
[40]Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*, p. 39.
[41]Sikkink, "The power of networks in international politics".
[42]Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery, "Network analysis for international relations".
[43]Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 375.

tionality 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. Part of the continued allure of the scientific and numerical framses, as opposed to the climate justice frame, is that they may facilitate alliances with influential groups outside progressive politics circles.

One variable which may help explain outcomes for activist themselves is the prevalence of interpersonal conflict within CFFD campaigns.[44] 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

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

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 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)[45,46,47,48]

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,

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

[46] 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.

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

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

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 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.

3 | Place in the literature

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).[49] Google Scholar was also used extensively.

3.1 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.[50] 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

[49] 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.

[50] Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 367.

> 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".[51]

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.[52] 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.[53] 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.[54] 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.[55]

[51] swarthmore.edu, *Divestment Debates*.

[52] See: Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, p. 353–8.

[53] McKibben, *Global Warming's Terrifying New Math*.

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

[55] 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.

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.[56] 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.[57,58] Chelsie Hunt, Olaf Weber, and Truzaar Dordi undertook a comparative analysis of the anti-Apartheid and CFFD movements.[59] [TK — More on their results] [TK — Alexander, Nicholson, and Wiseman][60] [TK — Ayling and Gunningham][61] 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.[62]

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

[56]Grady-Benson and Sarathy, "Fossil fuel divestment in US higher education: student-led organising for climate justice", p. 673.

[57]Ibid., p. 667.

[58]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".

[59]Hunt, Weber, and Dordi, "A comparative analysis of the anti-Apartheid and fossil fuel divestment campaigns".

[60]Alexander, Nicholson, and Wiseman, "Fossil free: The development and significance of the fossil fuel divestment movement".

[61]Ayling and Gunningham, "Non-state governance and climate policy: the fossil fuel divestment movement".

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

non-fossil divestment proposals like the BDS campaign targeting Israel. [TK — South Africa and tobacco] [TK — Find text of Rosenthal / Rosentrial 1986 "The University of Toronto and South Africa", which apparently discusses "the reaction on campus to the university's decision against divestment of holdings of companies with investments in South Africa"] 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.[63] 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.[64] 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.[65,66] 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.[67] By 2004, there were active BDS campaigns on over 40 U.S. campuses.[68] 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.[69] According to Avi Weinryb, U of T was the first institution to hold an "Israel Apartheid Week",

[63]Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 241.
[64]Ibid., p. 241.
[65]Wiles, *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, p. 59–60.
[66]Nelson, *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & the Movement to Boycott Israel*, p. 113.
[67]Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 229.
[68]Ibid., p. 241.
[69]Nelson, *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & the Movement to Boycott Israel*, p. 113.

beginning in 2004.[70] 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.[71] 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.[72]

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.[73] Like CFFD campaigns, on-campus BDS campaigns target universities specifically because of their perceived role as socially-conscious thought leaders in society.[74] 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".[75] The BDS movement

[70] Weinryb, "At Issue: The University of Toronto—The Institution where Israel Apartheid Week was Born".
[71] Tarrow, *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*, p. 2–3.
[72] Bakan and Abu-Laban, "Palestinian resistance and international solidarity: The BDS campaign".
[73] Nelson, *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & the Movement to Boycott Israel*, p. 109.
[74] See: "BDS Resolutions on Campus: Their Long-Term Goal" and "Divestment Campaigns" in: ibid., p. 93–5, 109–15.
[75] Ibid., p. 94, 109.

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.[76] In the forward to Wiles' edited volume, Archbishop Desmond Tutu stresses the similarity of the South African and Palestianian 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.[77] 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".[78] Scholarship on BDS is largely located within the social movements and contentious politics literature, making particular use of Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, and Doug McAdam.[79,80]

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,

[76] Akuno, "Process Tracing: A Bayesian Approach", p. 47–58.
[77] Wiles, *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement*, p. xiii.
[78] Ibid., p. 62.
[79] See: Gerges, *Contentious Politics in the Middle East: Popular Resistance and Marginalized Activism beyond the Arab Uprisings*, p. 547–8, 550–1.
[80] Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 229–55.

along with the city of Cape Town to divest. [TK — Cite as 2017-02-22 email from Jenny Zapata López] 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.[81] Medical organizations have also divested from fossil fuels, including the British Medical Association, Canadian Medical Association, and World Medical Association.[82] 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.[83] 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.[84] [TK — More on tobacco, the arms trade, etc]

3.2 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

[81] 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.

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

[83] Ritchie and Dowlatabadi, "Divest from the carbon bubble? Reviewing the implications and limitations of fossil fuel divestment for institutional investors".

[84] Bond, "To stay or to leave: The moral dilemma of divestment of South African assets".

> 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." [TK — Cite text from ENV381]

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".[85,86,87] 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.

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

[86] 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.

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

3.3 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. Social 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".[88] 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."[89]

William Gamson calls social movements "one product of social disorganization" and "symptoms of a social system in trouble".[90,91] 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".[92,93] 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.[94,95] Tilley's characterization seems particularly apt

[88] Smith, *Group Politics and Social Movements in Canada, Second Edition*, p. xix.
[89] White, *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution*, p. 53.
[90] Ibid., p. 53.
[91] See also: Goldstone, "The weakness of organization: A new look at Gamson's The Strategy of Social Protest".
[92] Tarrow, *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*, p. 9.
[93] See also: Tarrow, *Struggle, politics, and reform: Collective action, social movements and cycles of protest.*
[94] Tilly, *Contentious performances*, p. 18.
[95] See also: Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution.*

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. 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.[96] Subsequent sociological research on social movements involved pre-fossil fuel divestment campaigns as case studies.[97] Work on social movements has also taken place within organizational studies, education, environmental studies, and law and society.[98]

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, Tar-

[96]Porta, "Social Movements".

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

[98]McAdam and Boudet, *Putting Social Movements in their Place: Explaining Opposition to Energy Projects in the United States, 2000–5*, p. 1.

row, and McAdam's 2001 *Dynamics of Contention* updating earlier ideas.[99] Despite 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.[100,101] 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".[102,103] 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".[104] 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 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 tran-

[99]Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 229–30, 237–8.
[100]Kriesi, *New social movements in Western Europe: A comparative analysis*.
[101]On the emergence of postmaterialist values, see: Inglehart, "The silent revolution in Europe: Intergenerational change in post-industrial societies", p. 991–1017.
[102]Morrison, "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement", p. 247.
[103]Snow and Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest", p. 136.
[104]Tarrow, *Power in movement: Social movements and contentious politics*, p. 123.

sition 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.

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."[105]

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.[106,107] As Dauvergne notes, the phrase "movement of movements" ties environmentalism to "global re-

[105]Dauvergne, *Environmentalism of the Rich*, p. 6–7.
[106]Ibid., p. 104–6.
[107]Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, p. 206.

sistance to capitalism and globalization", highlighting the complex ways in which the analysis and policy preferences of those in overlapping movements interact.[108] In earlier work with Jennifer Clapp, he developed a broad typology of environmentalists as market liberals, institutionalists, social greens, and bioenvironmentalists.[109,110] Diversity in the core beliefs of environmental activists is also central to the debate about advocating climate policy using either a scientific or a justice framing.[111,112]

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.[113,114] 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.[115,116] Unlike mass movements against unpopular authoritarian

[108]Dauvergne, *Environmentalism of the Rich*, p. 154–5.

[109]Clapp and Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment*.

[110]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 of Liberal Environmentalism*.

[111]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.

[112][TK — Robert Benford and David Snow on collective action frames / Erving Goffman on frames as "schemata of interpretation".]

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

[114]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.

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

[116]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*.

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".[117]

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 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.[118]

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

[118]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.

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.[119,120] 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.

3.4 The literature, my research question, and my hypotheses

[TK — To be fleshed out following 2017-03-02 meeting with Andrea Olive]

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 fossil fuel divestment activism.[121] The project is nonetheless connected to questions with the potential for novel theoretical development, particularly in terms of coalition-forming and its

[119] Pachauri et al., *Climate ethics: Essential readings*.
[120] Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm: the Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*.
[121] Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 369.

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.[122] 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. 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.[123]

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".[124] They are arguably being too quick to

[122]See: McCarthy and Zald, "Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory".
[123]Hadden, *Networks in Contention: The Divisive Politics of Climate Change*, p. 167–8.
[124]Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 378.

judge 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".[125] 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.[126]

3.5 Key texts

3.5.1 Social movements

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

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

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4 | Case selection

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 turning over.[128] 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 Harvard, McGill, and MIT.[129,130,131,132] Third, there are ongoing CFFD campaigns where

[128]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.

[129]Stephenson, *Other Universities Are Divesting From Fossil Fuels—but Harvard Is Doubling Down on Them*.

[130]McCarthy, *McGill University board rejects fossil-fuel divestment initiative*.

[131]Brooks, "Banking on divestment".

[132]Nazemi and Lin, *MIT will not divest, announces climate change 'action plan' with key role for industry partners*.

the university administration has not yet made a clear, public decision.

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 profit corporations, NGOs, pension funds, philanthropic foundations, etc.[133] 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)

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

- 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)
- 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)

[TK — Number of students, location, size of endowment for each]

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.[134] 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.

One major motivation for the CFFD campaign is the idea that universities are thought leaders and that their decisions to divest would encourage other investors to consider regulatory risks to the fossil fuel industry, while also delegitimizing the industry in the eyes of public policy-makers and the general public.[135] By delegitimizing the fossil fuel industry

[134]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.

[135]Chloe Maxmin, coordinator of Divest Harvard, explains: "What the fossil fuel divestment movement

in the same way anti-tobacco campaigns previously achieved, new political possibilities like prohibiting them from advertising or making political donations might become possible.[136] Based on that, a case could be made to focus attention on the highest-profile schools that have made some kind of divestment commitment, notably: Laval, Georgetown, Stanford, The New School, the University of California, Yale, King's College London, the London School of Economics, Oxford, and Cambridge. At the same time, it would be worthwhile to look at similarly high-profile schools where a campaign took place but divestment was entirely rejected, such as: UBC, the University of Toronto, McGill, Harvard, and MIT.[137]

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.[138] 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

is saying to companies is your fundamental business model of extracting and burning carbon is going to create an uninhabitable planet. So you need to stop. You need a new business model." Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, p. 354.

[136] Ibid., p. 355.

[137] Curnow and Gross refer to Dalhousie, McGill, and UBC as "high-profile rejections", which can be contrasted with quieter ones at Trent and the University of Calgary. Curnow and Gross, "Injustice Is Not an Investment: Student Activism, Climate Justice, and the Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign", p. 372.

[138] See: ibid., p. 371.

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.

5 | Methods

As explained above, interviews with key CFFD organizers and inter-campaign brokers will be an essential data source for network analysis.[139] 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. 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; and Cameron Fenton with the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition. The pinnacle objective in terms of research subjects is cooperation from organizers who are known to have worked on more than one

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

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 H2: Some work done by campus fossil fuel divestment campaigns will be easily transferrable to comparable campaigns at other institutions, but such influence will generally be *ad hoc* rather than coordinated between activist groups. 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 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.[140,141] 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; [TK — others]

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

[140]Brooks, *Glasgow becomes first university in Europe to divest from fossil fuels*.
[141]Moffat, *Trinity-St. Paul's United Church Votes to Divest from Fossil Fuel Companies*.

Hamilton Hall.[142]

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 justification.[143,144,145,146,147] Formal petitions to other schools include the University of Denver, [TK — McGill, Harvard, etc].[148] 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. Activist campaigns learn from one another, and university

[142]Hirsch, "Sacrifice for the cause: Group processes, recruitment, and commitment in a student social movement", p. 246.
[143]Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment*.
[144]Toronto350.org, *The Fossil Fuel Industry and the Case for Divestment: Update*.
[145]Karney et al., *Report of the President's Advisory Committee on Divestment from Fossil Fuels*.
[146]Asher et al., *U of T Community Response to the Report of the Fossil Fuel Divestment Committee*.
[147]Gertler, *Beyond Divestment: Taking Decisive Action on Climate Change*.
[148]Divest DU, *Fossil Fuel Divestment*.

administrations are sensitive to the decisions of their peers.

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 somewhat actively involved in campaigns may be difficult to identify, contact, and engage with.[149] 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.

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.[150] 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.[151,152]

[149] 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.

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

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

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

5.1 Subject protection

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. 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.

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