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Drawers of Oil, Farmers of Wind? Common Sense, National Identity and Rural
Landscapes in Canadian Climate Politics

By

Michael Dodich

A Major Research Paper
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Political Science
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2022

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DRAWERS OF OIL, FARMERS OF WIND? COMMON SENSE, NATIONAL IDENTITY
AND RURAL LANDSCAPES IN CANADIAN CLIMATE POLITICS

by

Michael Dodich

APPROVED BY:

R. Major
Department of Political Science

J. S. Ovadia, Advisor
Department of Political Science

May 6th, 2022

Declaration of Originality

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Abstract

Despite the growing global consensus on the need for action to combat climate change, transitions to more sustainable practices will not be simple. This is especially true in the case of Canada which is a) a country that has increasingly relied on its fossil fuel sector as a primary driver of economic growth, and b) a federal state where the division of power over the energy and resource sectors are shared between the federal and provincial governments. Further complicating this is Canada's long history of natural resource extraction and its connection to Canadian national identity. After a decade of assertive support for the oil sector by the federal Conservative Party, the Liberal Party won a majority government partly due to promises to take meaningful climate action. However, despite these promises the Liberals have continued to wholeheartedly back the industry centred in the Alberta oil sands, and attempts to balance climate action with support for the oil industry has seen the balance swing heavily in favour of the latter. The ability of the oil industry and its allies in civil society to equate it with Canadian national identity and 'common sense' has entrenched its hegemony in the Canadian economy. In Ontario, the policies of a clean energy transition primarily via wind energy initiated by former Premier Dalton McGuinty have been successfully challenged by opposition at both the municipal and provincial level. One of the major obstacles has been that wind energy projects clash with, rather than fit into, ideas of rurality and what Canada is. These case studies highlight the challenges involved in green transitions, particularly in locations where natural resource extraction has historically been a central component of national identity and the national economy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Climate change presents both a unique and multifaceted political challenge. A changing climate presents threats to society in the present and future, with rising sea levels, increased frequency of severe weather and a rise in global temperature all requiring substantial policy shifts worldwide. At the United Nations (UN), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) presented member states with a special report highlighting the impacts of global temperatures rising 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018). The report argued a need to increase rates of decarbonization to slow rising global temperatures, while continuing economic growth. However, research indicates that global energy demands continue to outpace the rate at which states are combatting carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions (Jackson et al., 2018). While governments, civil society and private actors are united in their belief that sustainability-based transformations are necessary, what those transformations entail, and the scale of change required are unclear (Newell, Paterson & Craig 2020).

In Canada, the effects of climate change are already being felt. A leaked report from the federal government indicated that, “Canada is, on average, experiencing warming at twice the rate of the rest of the world, with Northern Canada heating up at almost three times the global average” (CBC News, 2019). Independent studies the next year indicate there has been a large-scale impact on the Canadian Arctic (Chung, Reid & Hopton, 2020). Climate change has become a key political issue at both the federal and provincial level. Almost every political party has a climate plan of action, although there are significant differences in their scope. Complicating policy responses is Canada’s reliance on natural resources as a key part of its export economy (MacNeil, 2021), especially the oil and gas industry (Pineault, 2018).

As described by MacNeil & Paterson (2018), there are three broad coalitions that dominate Canadian climate politics. Two of these coalitions are easily distinguishable. First, one coalition is based around environmentalists and activists that want significant action taken to combat climate change. Compromising left-wing parties (outside of Alberta), this coalition is highly critical of Canada's dependence on extractivist policies (MacNeil & Paterson, 2018). Second, on the opposite end of the spectrum lies the conservative coalition. In the twenty-first century, this coalition has formed around the policies and legacy of the Conservative government led by Stephen Harper, who branded Canada an 'energy superpower' in his first year as Prime Minister (Taber, 2006). Politically, environmental reform is present only when it does not interfere with Canadian energy extraction, and meaningful climate action is resisted. This coalition also includes provincial governments that were strongly opposed to a proposed pan-Canadian carbon pricing scheme by the federal Liberal government in 2016 (MacNeil, 2020), as well as Canadians who are climate skeptics (Zhou, 2016). These two coalitions represent near opposite approaches to Canadian climate policy.

The third, and most nuanced, coalition represents a middle ground position between the two, politically represented by current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Liberal Party of Canada), and recent Alberta Premier Rachel Notley (New Democratic Party [NDP] of Alberta). This position favours both significant actions to combat climate change, while simultaneously supporting the continued use and expansion of Canada's oil and gas reserves, particularly the Alberta oilsands (MacNeil & Paterson, 2018). After nearly a decade where climate policies were secondary under the governance of Stephen Harper, Trudeau's campaign and subsequent election prominently featured bold promises of environmental policy shifts. After being elected, the Trudeau government established a new cabinet committee on climate change and became a vocal

actor at international climate negotiations (MacNeil & Paterson, 2016). Two years into governing, Trudeau received a standing ovation at an oil and gas conference in Texas, stating that “developing fossil fuel resources can go ‘hand in hand’ with fighting climate change” (Berke, 2017). These two cases are an example of the balancing act that the current federal government is engaged in. This paper will investigate why this coalition exists, and whether such a balancing act occurs in other areas of climate politics in Canada outside the oil industry.

Due to the federalist divisions of power in Canadian politics, especially given that provincial governments have substantial control over energy policies, an analysis of environmental politics at both levels is necessary. A comprehensive review of all Canadian climate politics is beyond the scope of this paper. At the federal level, the focus will be on the oil industry, because this will allow for a thorough investigation of MacNeil and Paterson’s (2018) three climate coalitions. As stated above, the conservative or reactionary coalition began with the election of Conservative PM Stephen Harper in 2006. With ecological protection a high priority for many Canadians in 2006, the Harper government initially struck a balanced approach to environmental management (MacNeil, 2014). While the government rejected the 2002 Kyoto Accord and attacked opposition plans for a carbon tax, the government promised a cap-and-trade system and investment in renewable energy solutions (MacNeil, 2014).

This balanced approach ended with the global financial crisis in 2008 and was strengthened with a majority government after the 2011 election (MacNeil, 2014). The Harper government shifted to what scholars have described as ‘mainstream populism’ (Snow & Moffit, 2012). This entailed a more hardline stance in support of oil and gas expansion. Importantly, it also meant discussing environmental progress in totality of all economic activity. In a 2014 nationally televised interview, Harper claimed that greenhouse gases had fallen since his

government had first been elected: while this was true, it was due to declining industrial production and the 2008 global financial crisis, not because of a sincere attempt at combatting climate change (Peyton & Franks, 2016). In the same interview, Harper gave a passionate endorsement of the Canadian oil industry. Peyton & Franks (2016) describe the Harper government's time in power as a "renewed significance of the state' in resource extraction" (p. 455). Stephen Harper's government also became the heritage upon which the conservative climate coalition draws in valuing Canada's role as a non-renewable exporting nation over making significant environmental progress.

The 2015 election of a majority Liberal government led by Justin Trudeau appeared to signal a marked change in how much value Canada's role as an oil nation would be held by the federal government. During the election campaign, Trudeau announced several initiatives that pointed to a shift towards a multilateral, environmentally focused approach to international relations. These included promises to end subsidies to the oil and gas industries in line with a G20 commitment, large monetary investments in clean technology, bringing all Canadian premiers with him to the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris, and a promise to create a national climate strategy ninety days after the end of the conference (Do, 2015). The ratification of the Paris Agreement in October 2016 was another sign of a renewed commitment to multilateral institutionalism that had been lacking when Harper was PM (Parr, Paterson & Henry, 2017). On the surface, Trudeau's electoral victory appeared to signal a commitment to make substantial climate policy changes.

However, the reality is a much more complicated picture. A Bloomberg news headline declared "Trudeau wants all in on climate and oil. It's not working out" (Argitis, 2020). The federal government made changes to make climate change a more prominent political issue.

Importantly, what has not changed was “the dependence of the Canadian economy on fossil fuels” (Parr et al., 2017, p. 3). While the Harper government supported, both in terms of legislation and public speaking, the Canadian extraction industries, the Trudeau government has attempted to balance a new focus on climate politics with continued backing of said industries. It is this balancing act that places the Trudeau government in between the two opposing climate coalitions in Canada (MacNeil & Paterson, 2018). From 2015 to the present, the Canadian government has been attempting to fulfil its promise of instituting significant environmental policies while simultaneously continuing its support of the oil and gas industry. The clearest example of this dichotomy is that simultaneous to the creation of a national carbon tax, the government aggressively pursued the expansion of oil pipeline capacity (MacNeil, 2021). In the forthcoming chapters, this paper will explore the extent to which the Trudeau government’s balancing attempt has been successful in crafting climate policies and successfully navigating the variety of climate ideologies present at the provincial level.

An analysis of Canadian climate politics would be incomplete without factoring in the policies and debates at the provincial level. In Canada, electricity is almost entirely under the purview of the provinces (Rosenbloom & Meadowcraft, 2014). This paper will focus on the climate politics of Alberta and Ontario. Alberta provincial politics is an essential component of analyzing the Canadian oil industry. In the case of Ontario, the recent electoral history provides a compelling example with which to compare to climate coalitions at the federal level. From 2003-2018, the Ontario Liberal Party governed the province, led first by Dalton McGuinty and then Katherine Wynne. Renewable energy was a focal point of government policy during this period: the Ontario government phased out the use of coal in electricity generation and set the goal of doubling the amount of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2025 (Deignan, Harvey &

Hoffman-Goetz, 2013). The most important source of renewable energy in Ontario is wind energy. From 2003 to 2011, the number of planned or placed wind turbines in the province went from 10 to 900 (CBC News, 2011; Deignan et al., 2013). Wind energy has been a key component in Ontario's transition to a low-carbon province.

Despite the relatively long electoral success of the Liberal Party, and the rapid expansion of wind turbines, this transition has been a contested process. Wind energy is a key electoral issue, particularly in rural Ontario where those opposed to wind turbines have been supported by the Progressive Conservative (PC) Party (CBC News, 2011). Citizens who are opposed to the expansion of wind energy have also joined interest groups to express their opposition. These groups exist at the local (Essex County Wind Action Group), provincial (Wind Concerns Ontario) and international (National Wind Watch) level (National Wind Watch, n.d.; Rosenbloom & Meadowcraft, 2014). These various groups are united in their desire to see a moratorium on future wind turbine construction and have remained active in Ontario throughout the expansion of the province's wind energy supply. The election of PC leader Doug Ford to the office of Premier in 2018 represented a populist turn in Ontario politics. While his populist appeal was widespread, some of Ford's support came from his criticism of urban elites and his promises to scrap environmental programs as part of his criticism about the previous Liberal governments' spending (Budd, 2020). Since taking office, Ford has followed through on this promise. One notable example is the cancellation of a partially built wind farm in Prince Edward County as part of a broader cancellation of renewable energy projects that cost \$231 million: local opposition to the projects was cited as one of the main reasons for the cancellation (Crawley, 2019).

Both in Ontario and federally, the two largest political parties differ in their stances on climate politics. Each party can be placed into one of the three main climate coalitions. Federally, the Conservative and Liberal parties are the key political institutions that comprise the energy superpower and middle ground coalitions, respectively. Provincially, regarding wind energy the McGuinty/Wynne Liberal Party falls into the environmentalist coalition, aggressively pursuing or advocating for action on climate change. The Ford government aligns with federal conservatives in resisting climate action on the basis that doing so does not align with Canadian or Ontarian economic interests.

Between the federal and Ontario governments in recent years there has been an elected majority government whose climate policies place them in one of the three dominant climate coalitions. What requires further analysis is why these coalitions exist, and what actors, institutions and ideas influence them. MacNeil and Paterson (2018) argue that these three coalitions are currently engaged in a “war of position” with each other. This analysis is important for two reasons. Firstly, analysis of modern climate politics continues to focus on the unique, long-standing situation Canada is in, as the federal government must simultaneously negotiate the international and sub-national spaces given the control provinces have on energy and natural resource policies (Lifton, 2000). Trudeau’s middle ground approach is in part due to the need to try to create consensus on a national carbon price while facing stiff opposition from provinces reliant on natural resource extraction (McCarthy & Bailey, 2016). Secondly, the existence of a middle ground coalition federally means that a thorough analysis of how federal climate policies have changed as a result of a change of government in 2015. Towards the end of Harper government, news media outlets had taken to criticizing the aggressively pro-oil stance of the Canadian government (Nikiforuk, 2013). As mentioned above, despite the positive turn back

towards climate multilateralism and a domestic commitment to progressive change, the ability of the Trudeau government to make meaningful substantial change remains in question (Parr et al., 2017). Therefore, the extent to which Canada's emphasis on its natural resources vis-à-vis its climate policy has changed since the Liberals took power requires investigation.

This paper will also build upon other important aspects of climate politics and Canadian climate literature. In terms of the oilsands, it will add to works that examines the relationship between the oilsands and climate change policy (Huot, 2011). Given recent commitments by the federal government to reach net zero emissions by 2050 (Hall & Shivji, 2020), the question of how the federal government can lead on climate change policy has become increasingly relevant. Connected to this is an analysis of the similarities and differences in how the Harper and Trudeau governments responded to public attention on climate change. Young and Coutinho's (2013) analysis of the Harper government's use of language and framing in climate policy is one example of literature on this. This analysis also connects to analysis of explaining variation between political parties on climate policy (Farstad 2018). This literature will also be critical in explaining the formation and continuation of the three climate coalitions.

Research Question, Argument and Paper Structure

While debates over climate change policy are not new, the election of Justin Trudeau presents an opportunity for in-depth analysis on the nuances of Canadian climate politics. The necessity of Trudeau's middle ground coalition results from the "‘hewers of wood, drawers of water’ ideology of Canadian nationalism" (MacNeil & Paterson, 2018, p. 384). This ideology is based on Canada's long history as a natural resource-based economy, dating all the way back to the days of British North America (Barney, 2017). The Trudeau government and the Notely provincial government represent attempts to make a progressive shift in climate politics without

directly challenging the norms and institutions that this ideology underpins. A clear example of this balancing act is seen in this coalition's attitude towards the Canadian oil industry. What is less clear is what affect ideologies of Canadian nationalism have in other areas of climate policy. It is therefore necessary to investigate the extent to which ideas of Canadian nationalism influence climate policies outside of the Alberta oilsands. To do so, this paper poses the following research question: how do ideologies and imageries of Canada influence Canadian climate politics, and to what extent do they explain the major climate politics coalitions in Canada at both the national and provincial levels?

In the case of both the oilsands industry and the Ontario wind energy sector, ideology and imagery of 'Canada' is a factor in shaping opinions about climate policy. Sense of place is a critical determining factor in support or opposition for both oilsands expansion and new wind turbine projects. The view of Canada as a place of abundant natural spaces is an important part of the view that Canada is a country where natural resources as a fundamental part not only of the economy but of Canadian nationalism itself (MacNeil & Paterson, 2018). At the same time, support or opposition to new renewable energy projects is dependent on how local actors view the place around them (Bergquist, Ansolabehere, Carley & Konisky, 2020). When rural spaces are viewed as places of progress and industrialization, projects such as wind farms are viewed as another step in that process. Alternatively, opposition to these projects arises when local landscapes are seen as a place of unspoiled natural beauty. The critical difference between these two sections of the climate politics in Canada is the institutional backing that underpins the dominant ideology that supports oilsands extraction. Dominant economic and political actors play an essential role in fostering popular support for a fossil fuels accumulation strategy to the point that continued political support of the oilsands is viewed as 'common sense' (Bernauer,

2020; Carroll, 2020). Therefore, this paper argues that while ideologies and imagery of Canada can explain support or resistance to climate change policies both at the federal and provincial level, the “common sense” appeal of the idea of Canada as a country of natural resource extraction necessitates a middle ground coalition that attempts to balance climate action with support for the oilsands industry. At the federal level, this middle ground coalition in climate politics exists because of the strength of the dominant ideology and the actors that support it. This normalization of the oil sector obscures ideas of moving beyond a reliance on natural resource extraction as a key component of the Canadian economy. This has led to creation of a middle ground position that attempts to balance climate action with continued support for the status quo. In Ontario, this middle ground does not exist due to the lack of a dominant discourse either in favour or opposed to a transition to renewable energy. Rather, the wind energy sector has served as a place for a war of position between two historic blocs. On the one hand, the pro-wind energy coalition of the Ontario Liberal Party, supportive local actors and the renewable energy business sector. On the other, the anti-renewable coalition based on a neoliberal populist ideology that combines neoliberal economic arguments with localized opposition rooted in a particular view of what rural landscapes ought to constitute.

This paper proceeds as follows. Chapter Two is a literature review covering relevant works regarding Canadian climate politics, climate ideologies, analysis of oilsands policies at the federal and provincial level in Alberta, and wind energy politics in Ontario. Chapter Three details the theoretical framework that will be used in the paper’s analysis. The theoretical framework draws on critical political economy literature to provide a neo-Gramscian perspective on energy politics and transitions (Ford & Newell, 2021). Specific theoretical analysis focuses on the hegemony of pro-oilsands ideologies and the expansion of the oilsands industry as being a

‘common sense’ policy as part of efforts to transition to Chapter Four analyzes the three dominant climate in Canadian climate politics in the context of the oilsands in Alberta. Specific attention is paid to analyzing the difference (or lack thereof) in policies between the governments of Stephen Harper and Justin Trudeau, and how the domination of a specific vision of Canadian nationalism normalizes the continued expansion of the oilsands (MacNeil & Patterson, 2018). Chapter Five is a similar analysis of wind energy politics in Ontario, arguing that in Ontario ideologies of what constitutes ‘rural Canada’ influence support or opposition to wind farm expansion at the local level. The lack of dominant institutional and economic interests means that a war of position between pro and anti-wind energy actors is more fluid than in the oil industry. Finally, Chapter Six concludes the analysis of the paper and makes some remarks as to potential future research in the field.

Chapter 2: A Literature Review of Climate Governance and Oil and Wind Energy Politics

The analysis of this paper covers a variety of subject areas over a period of a decade and a half. While Chapters Four and Five analyze the oil industry at the federal level and wind energy in Ontario, this chapter provides a brief but necessary overview of the literature in three subject areas. First, this chapter explores the literature on political parties and political coalitions. Specifically, attention is paid to literature that analyzes how political parties shape ideological support for certain climate policies. Additionally, literature on the main climate coalitions in Canada, sustainability transitions, and climate skepticism amongst political actors is also summarized. Second, there is an examination of the literature surrounding Canada's oil and gas industry, analysis of the importance of the oil sands to Canada's economy, and the governance of the oil industry at the federal level of government. Finally, this chapter reviews the literature on wind energy, specifically the reasons behind support or opposition to renewable energy projects, and specific literature on Ontario's renewable energy projects.

The Politics of Climate Governance

In terms of understanding the social and political dynamics of climate governance, much work needs to be done (Howe, Tindall & Stoddart, 2021). While there is largely a broad understanding of the need to transition, the nature, end goal and drivers of this transition remain unanswered (Newell et al. 2020). This paper addresses two areas of need within the literature. First, this paper builds on new literature that has come from a resurgence of viewing the state as a site of environmental governance and contestation (Bailey, 2020; Craig, 2020). Second, scholars have noted the importance of critical political economy perspectives in the study of the state and environmental governance (Craig, 2020; Newell et al., 2020). This section examines the literature on governance, with a specific focus on political parties, coalitions and how

political parties shape support or opposition for environmental governance in developed states such as Canada.

The history of Canada's environmental politics shows a complex picture. For much of its early industrialization, Canada did not have any environmental policies short of a few national parks, in line with other developed nations at the time (MacNeil, 2014b). The constitutional division of authority that grants the provinces significant autonomy on environmental and resource policies has made creating a coherent climate policy difficult (Lifitin, 2000). At the federal level, this has created a weak environmental policy structure. Federal environmental policies have historically been in the form of voluntary reduction programs (Harrison, 2012; Nugent, 2011). Scholars have noted that this has in part been a key factor in Canada's environmental performance. Canada's greenhouse gas levels have been steadily increasing since the 1990s (Harrison, 2012; Nugent, 2011; Parr et al., 2017). Despite this, the preference for voluntary emission reduction programs has remained. For example, while the idea of a carbon pricing scheme was considered in the 1990s, Canadian federal parties realized that at the time that a carbon pricing policy did not have popular support (Harrison, 2012; MacNeil 2014b). This period was widely seen as a time of inaction at the federal level. The election of Stephen Harper in 2006 was also seen as an important point in Canadian environmental politics. After immediately declaring that the targets in the Kyoto Protocol were infeasible in 2006 (Harrison, 2012; Nugent, 2011), the Harper government withdrew from Kyoto in 2011. This signalled a change in environmental policy to one of bilateralism with major economic trading partners such as the United States (Parr et al., 2017). Harper's most important policy, environmentally, was the commitment to the oil sands as the primary driver of economic growth.

Canadian Oil Politics: Hegemony from Harper to Trudeau

Debates over climate change and natural resource policies are longstanding in Canada (Liftin, 2000). Complicating this is the importance that fossil fuels, especially oil, have had for the Canadian economy, particularly since the 1990s (Barney, 2017; Leach, 2016; Liftin, 2000; MacNeil 2014b). However, this importance reached a new peak under the Conservative government led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The Harper government's totalizing environmental design involved implementing, "discursive strategies employed to collapse 'the environment' into a singular resource extraction paradigm, a programmatic concentration of power in the executive branch of the Canadian government, and a classical conservative ideology that associates environmental regulation and management with dominion over and improvement of national territory" (Peyton & Franks, 2016, p. 455). The Harper government's stance on the environment was part its wider government strategy. Scholars have described the government overall approach as a 'mainstream populism' (Lockwood, 2018; Snow & Moffitt, 2012). This mainstream populism was based on neoliberal economic policies and a focus on expansion of the resource extraction sectors of the economy. For example, during the 2008 national election campaign the Conservatives attacked the opposition Liberal Party's plan to implement a carbon tax on the basis that it would cost jobs and raise the cost of living (Harrison, 2012; Lockwood, 2018). Beyond the economic arguments, the Harper government also issued an overhauled citizenship guide in 2009 that removed references to peacekeeping and environmentalism and replaced them with a focus on individual freedoms and responsibilities (Snow & Moffitt, 2012). Some of these moves led to a backlash, particularly in the case of the 2012 *Jobs and Growth Act*, a large omnibus bill focused on economic and environmental reforms. The Indigenous social movement Idle No More was formed in response to concerns about changes to environmental

and water protections, use of Indigenous lands for resource extraction and further concerns that these changes would not lead to equal sharing of any economic benefits with local Indigenous nations (Nicolescu, 2018; Ruml, 2020; Witherspoon & Hansen, 2013).

By far the most important aspect of the Harper government was its focus on Canada's fossil fuels industry. With a strong base in western Canada, the Harper government equated a vibrant resource sector with a strong economy and prosperity across the country and Canadian national identity (Barney, 2017; MacNeil, 2014; Peyton & Franks, 2016). While largely paying lip service to the need for environmental policy change, the government prioritized the oil sector over all others. Peyton and Franks (2016) note that there were almost three thousand separate communications between the Prime Minister's Office and actors within the global oil industry from 2008-2012. A central plank was the creation of new pipelines to expand market access to oil from the Alberta oil sands. While a more thorough analysis of this occurs in the following chapter, two of main ideas in the literature are important. First is that the Harper government saw "the 'renewed significance of the state' in resource extraction and regulation" (Peyton & Franks, 2016, p. 455). Second is what Barney (2017) terms a version of technological nationalism: combining economic arguments about pipeline expansion with a characterization of natural resource extraction being a part of Canadian national identity. Combined with the Harper government's inaction on climate change (Parr et al., 2017; Young & Coutinho, 2013), analysis shows that the Harper government set a legacy as a government concerned more with resource extraction and economic growth than climate change policy.

The literature on the Trudeau government shows a shift in attitudes towards climate change, but a continued support for the resource sector. This has been described as a middle ground coalition in Canadian climate politics (MacNeil & Paterson, 2018). Trudeau has

simultaneously pursued non-resource sector changes that are pro-climate while embracing expansion of Canada's supply of oil (Lee, 2018; MacLean, 2018a; MacNeil, 2021; Parr et al., 2017; Tindall, Stoddart & Howe, 2020). In terms of climate policy, this approach has been done primarily via two main policy planks. The first has been a reengagement in the international arena with multilateral climate change accords (Parr et al., 2017). This is in contrast to the bilateral, state-to-state approach of Stephen Harper.

The main domestic policy in Trudeau's first four years of government was the creation of a national carbon tax. While a detailed analysis of this is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to mention analysis of it in the context of the Canadian oil industry. The relatively modest price on carbon set by the Trudeau government is greatly overshadowed by a significant commitment to expand pipeline capacity, locking in large scale carbon emissions for decades (MacNeil, 2020; MacNeil, 2021). This subject has been broached in the literature in a number of ways. MacNeil (2021) criticizes this approach in three ways: in the expansion of carbon emissions locally and globally via exported oil, in reinforces Canada's stake in the unstable global commodities market, and the tendency to facilitate this via the immoral theft of Indigenous lands (p. 3). MacLean (2018b) states that Trudeau's approach fails to represent a new relationship between the federal government and the provinces that will be necessary for substantial policy changes to take place. An analysis of Canada's policy network finds that the structure of this network helps explain the persistence of the simultaneous support for fossil fuel development while embracing more robust climate change policies than under Stephen Harper (Tindall et al., 2020). Doelle and Sinclair (2019) examined changes to federal environmental impact assessment law in light of a Liberal campaign promise in 2015 to improve the process and find that the revised assessment framework rely too heavily on the previous one as a base

and therefore falls short. Overall, the literature on the Trudeau government's environmental policy highlights the relatively weak policy response vis-à-vis the promises made during election campaigns.

The final relevant section of literature is the scholarship surrounding Canada's oil industry. The oil industry has been a fundamental component of the Canadian economy since the 1990s, especially western extractivist forces (Carroll, 2020; Carroll et al., 2018; Hayden, 2014; Neubauer, 2018; Pineault, 2018). The considerable influence that the oil industry has on government policy has been termed extractive hegemony in the literature (Bernauer, 2020). This hegemony allows for the creation of an accumulation strategy that focuses on the expansion of carbon extraction despite consensus that action needs to be taken to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Carroll (2020) terms this a 'regime of obstruction'. Incorporating hegemonic practices at multiple scales, this regime protects the resource industry while allowing incremental climate policies changes outside of it (Carroll, 2020). One of the key goals for the oil industry is the expansion of pipeline capacity to transport raw or crude oil to ports or directly to the United States. Proponents of this stress the importance of the oil industry to the Canadian national economy and image. Barney (2017) terms this rhetoric technological nationalism. A vision of Canada as an energy exporting nation is combined with the real, physical expansion of pipelines (Barney, 2017). In other words, pipelines make real the vision that the hegemonic regime desires.

The level of influence of the oil industry has led some to describe Canada as a 'petrostate'. However, this is inaccurate given that, as a multiparty democracy, lacks the direct political control to be a proper petrostate (Neubauer, 2018). Rather, Neubauer (2018) argues that Canada should be conceived of as a 'petrobloc'. Utilizing a Gramscian framework and discourse analysis reveals that the Canadian industry relies not only on government support but also a

strong level of support from civil society (Carroll et al., 2018; Neubauer, 2018). Basing his analysis on Karl Marx's theories of capitalism and its core tensions, Antonio Gramsci expanded upon these thoughts to enable a thorough analysis of transformative politics, including a greater focus on culture and role of actors in maintaining capitalist relations (Rupert, 2003). Knowledge producing civil society organizations such as think tanks and business advocacy organizations play a critical role in dispensing pro-oil sands discourses nationally (Carroll et al., 2018; Raso & Neubauer, 2016). This allows for the regime of obstruction to survive changes in government, something that will be analyzed in detail in Chapter Four.

The Landscape of Wind Energy Politics

Transition to sustainability involve changes in energy supply. As a result, renewable energy farms—whether via solar panels, wind turbines, or hydroelectric power—have become a popular means of renovating or expanding electricity networks (Batel, Devine-Wright & Tangeland, 2013). For governments that choose wind power as a renewable source of energy, this means the construction of large wind turbines, often spread out in rural areas where construction permits are granted. Therefore, there is extensive scholarship dedicated to investigating the how wind energy projects are viewed in relation to the landscapes they occupy (Barry, Ellis & Robinson, 2008; Bell, Grey & Haggett, 2005; Chappell, Parkins & Sherren, 2020; Walker, Baxter & Ouelette, 2014; Wolsink, 2000; Wolsink, 2007). Wind projects represent a departure from traditional, fossil fuel sources of energy. As Nadai and van der Horst (2010) argue, “[t]hey provide us with new visual reminders that our energy comes from somewhere” (p. 144). These projects have generated controversy and opposition against them, often within the rural towns and spaces where they are built. Despite this, research indicates that proximity to renewable energy developments is not a reliable indicator of support or opposition (Mayer,

Hazboun & Howe, 2021). Therefore, one must look to other reasons that actors choose to support wind energy projects or not.

Opposition movements argue that wind turbines have negative impacts on habitats and animal life (Bell et al., 2005; Pasqualetti, 2001; Warren, Lumsden, O'Dowd & Birnie, 2005). This has been described as a “green on green” discourse (Warren et al., 2005, p. 854), in which pro-environmental arguments about clean energy are met with opponents who also define their defence of the landscape as being pro-environmental. The idea that wind turbines represent despoilment of natural, pristine, landscape is a critical part of anti-turbine rhetoric (Barry et al., 2008; Warren et al., 2005). The rural landscapes within which turbines are constructed represent a specific symbolic view of what rural spaces represent. One anti-turbine resident conveyed why they were against the construction of turbines because they would spoil the views of the local river: “[t]his is probably one of the more pristine tributaries to the river because it doesn't have a lot of building around it... the river is very, very important to me” (Bergquist et al., 2020, p. 7).

A common theme in the literature is that wind turbine opponents portray wind energy projects as the industrialization of rural spaces (e.g., Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010; Fast, Mabee & Blair, 2015; Haggett & Toke, 2006; Pasqualetti, 2001). Barry et al. (2008) characterizes this as the articulation of a romantic symbolism that views rural spaces as natural spaces that are being occupied by industrialized unnatural infrastructure. Reaction to landscape changes is informed by both the existing physical changes and by what actors' perceptions of what the land should be. If rural spaces are conceived as untouched nature, then wind energy involves a transformation into a landscape of power (Warren et al., 2005). For example, Haggett and Toke (2006) use the case study of a wind energy project in Whinash, Cumbria, United

Kingdom to show how a local opposition group argued that the wind turbines represented the ‘sacrifice’ of unspoiled stretches of natural landscapes.

Perceptions of what rural spaces are exist not only for opponents but also supporters for wind energy. While opponents view small towns or rural spaces as untouched nature, many supporters see the rural landscape as already industrialized, pointing to large scale farms, power lines, highways and other infrastructure as examples. Chapter four of this paper delves further into this divide. Research shows that “there exists multiple, dynamic perceptions of whether or not wind turbines ‘fit’ into a particular landscape” (Fast et al., 2015, p. 182). This has formed the basis for several theories in the literature. Some examples include place attachment, place identity, place symbolism and climate thinking. Place attachment and place identity refer to the ways in which symbolic interpretations of land create emotional bonds between the land the people who inhabit it (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010). Place symbolism refers to the abstract meanings that actors assign to both place and technology (McLachlan, 2009). Finally, climax thinking is used when locals refuse landscape changes that are seen to be in the public good. It involves a lack of awareness of the historical changes that have taken place (landscapes are static and unchanging), assuming that the current landscape can always meet future needs, and a lack of concern (or a blindness to) the impacts that changes to the landscape ‘here’ have in other spaces (Chappell, et al., 2020). Place, the ideology of spaces and how they inform opposition or support of wind energy will be an important part of the analysis of Ontario’s wind energy politics.

While landscape concerns are one of the dominant reasons behind opposition to wind or other renewable energy projects, other factors are also present. Some scholars have defined motives for opposition as a lack of social acceptance (Wustenhagen, Wolsink & B urer, 2007).

Lack of social acceptance has highlighted because while support for renewable energy is high, support for renewable energy projects at the local level is lower. The traditional response to this from pro-wind energy actors has been to describe this local resistance as Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) thinking (Boudet, Zanocco, Howe & Clarke, 2018; Chappell, Parkins & Sherren, 2021). NIMBY thinking views opposition at the local level being based primarily due to a desire to not have these projects built locally, rather than this opposition being to wind energy projects or policies themselves (Walker et al., 2014). While initially used a framework for understanding opposition, NIMBY thinking has largely become outdated in the literature. NIMBY does not adequately describe the complexities of opposition movements against wind energy policies (Chappell et al., 2021; Jami & Walsh, 2017; van der Horst, 2007; Walker, Baxter & Ouelette, 2015; Wolsink, 2007). NIMBY relies on the premise that actors are in favour of wind energy until they are confronted with the reality of it. However, research indicates that this is not the case and that those that oppose wind energy projects do so purely on the basis of proximity (Wolsink, 2000; Wolsink, 2007). In Ontario, the anti-wind network is strong, where people travel throughout the province to protest new energy projects (Jami & Walsh, 2017). This shows that simply defining opposition as NIMBY fail to describe the complexity of anti-wind energy actors. This also falls in line with research in other areas of renewable energy, where proximity to new renewable energy projects is not a determinant of support or opposition (see Cale & Kromer, 2015).

The effect of political parties and ideological beliefs on support or opposition to wind energy projects is another important aspect of the literature. In Norway, a study showed that political party preference was a substantial factor in predicating support for renewable energy (Chappell et al., 2021). Similar findings were found in a case study in Utah, United States

(Hazboun, Howe, Coppock & Givens, 2020). When renewable energy policies become contentious, the divides often form along political party lines. When such polarized divides do not exist, such as in Nova Scotia, Canada, it is due in part to a general consensus amongst all major political parties (Chappell et al., 2021; Walker et al., 2018). Chapter four details how political divides over wind energy in Ontario has aided in the strength of opposition movements in the province.

One final aspect of relevant wind energy literature for this paper concerns the study of wind energy politics in Ontario. In Ontario, the dominant issues raised in non-academic sources are economic benefits and questions about potential health impacts of turbines (Baxter, Morzaria & Hirsch, 2013). This is in spite of the fact that major studies have found no negative health effects associated with wind turbines or any negative impacts on sleep, another oft-mentioned issue (Colby et al., 2009; Lane, Bigelow, Majowicz & McColl, 2016). The media in Ontario has been a significant driver behind this. Songsoore and Buzzelli (2016) found that the media was a major factor in “amplifying negative perceptions about the health effects of wind turbines among Ontarians” (p. 697). Other research has shown that the Ontario media contains fright factors about wind turbines that can contribute to fears about wind energy projects amongst readers (Deignan, et al., 2013). This issue was inadequately dealt with by the Ontario government. By failing to address (sometimes overblown) concerns about health effects by the government left the industry to deal with these concerns themselves (Shaw et al., 2015).

Overall, academic research into wind energy politics in Canada shows that support or opposition depends on a number of factors: political, stakeholder and general social support, the value placed on the relevant landscapes, government policy and planning choices, and the existing electricity generation architecture (Ferguson-Martin & Hill, 2011). In a review of

Ontario's wind energy program, Fast et al. (2016) found four key factors concerning social acceptance: social health concerns, financial benefits, landscape concerns and engagement with local stakeholders. Other literature reinforces the lack of community engagement, governance issues present (Jami & Walsh, 2017) and health concerns from local actors (Hill & Knott, 2010). Research has also used historical analysis of Ontario's electricity sector to draw conclusions about the future of energy in the province. In their analysis, Rosenbloom and Meadowcraft (2014) trace the historical evolution of electricity from 1885-2013 to find three key lessons for future electricity: residual momentum, embedded principles and political and economic coalitions. In particular, the last lesson ties into research on wind energy that shows that political consensus leads to more successful renewable energy implementations.

Finally, governance is another important aspect of study in the literature. Shaw et al. (2015) argue, "public resistance is often a legitimate response stemming from inadequate governance of energy development" (p. 42). Wind energy projects intersect across multiple levels of government. In Ontario, the policies are set at the provincial level, but project resistance can manifest at both the provincial and municipal level. Bues (2018) finds that the strength of anti-wind protests in Ontario strengthened when support from municipalities was involved and was a key reason that these protests were more successful in Ontario than in Brandenburg, Germany. Governance issues with the implementation of Ontario's carbon pricing was also a factor in the ability of Doug Ford to successfully campaign against it using populist neoliberal logic (Raymond, 2020). This is an important part of the analysis of Ontario's climate coalitions in Chapter Four.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Approach and Methodology

As Paterson (2020) states, “Framing matters. How we construct climate change as a problem discloses possible responses, closing down certain options and opening up others” (p. 2). This paper’s theoretical approach must be able to explain factors of climate politics in Canada with a depth that adequately explains the many facets of climate politics. One of the areas of need in political economy literature regarding climate change is addressing the depth of social transformation that is necessary in adequately addressing and framing the issue of transformative politics (Paterson, 2021). To do so, this paper will employ a neo-Gramscian theoretical approach. Building upon Karl Marx’s theories of capitalism and its core tensions, Antonio Gramsci expanded upon this to enable a thorough analysis of transformative politics (Rupert, 2003). Because of his focus on cultural politics, situating analysis within a (neo-)Gramscian framework allows for, “understanding the cultural depth of the current climate change crisis” (Harris, 2015, p. 8). This paper therefore contributes to critical political economy perspectives, one of the two main strands of analysis in political economy literature (Paterson & P-Laberge, 2018). This chapter will provide an overview of the main themes in neo-Gramscian theory that this paper will employ in the forthcoming chapters, as well as how these themes will specifically be applied to the case studies.

Political organization is one of the key concepts at the heart of Gramscian analysis. Gramsci used the term ‘historic blocs’ to refer to specific formations of cultural groups, connected ideologies and economic structures (Levy & Egan, 2003). These historic blocs can be both the dominant actors, and those groups opposed or seeking transformative social change (Aronowitz, 2009; Moolakkattu, 2009). The three dominant climate coalitions in Canada represent three historic blocs. Importantly given the ideological divides between these coalitions,

Gramsci saw historic blocs participating in ideological struggles (Rupert, 2003). Levy and Egan (2003) state, “field-level politics can fruitfully be viewed as a contested process of assembling a historic bloc... [a]ctors seek to build coalitions of forms, governmental agencies, NGOs, and intellectuals who can establish policies, norms, and institutions that structure the field in particular ways” (p. 810). This all-encompassing definition is important in avoiding gaps in the theory that can occur under more orthodox Marxist approaches. That ideas, culture and economic factors influence and are influenced by each other avoids reducing analysis to either purely economic or ideology-based reductionism (Cox, 1983). Adopting this approach allows this paper to investigate the ways in which the various actors within each climate coalition influence each other and are influenced by economic and political policies as well as the ideologies that help define each coalition.

Culture is a critical component of Gramsci’s philosophy. Like Marx, Gramsci was concerned with history and its role in creating current conditions, but his views transcended economic materialism (Harris, 2015). As he states in the *Notebooks*, “it is not the economic structure which directly determines political activity, but rather the way in which the structure and the so-called laws which govern its development are interpreted” (Gramsci, 1977, as cited in Robinson, 2005, p. 472). What precisely culture is defined as is not universal within a state. Rather, class and specific historical moments create the ‘reality’ of one’s cultural world (Crehan, 2011). For Gramsci, the centrality of culture and its role in influencing class was important because of his interest in social change and alternatives to capitalism. His interest in how and why social change happens comes from the desire to formulate the conditions necessary to build a true alternative to a capitalist society (Crehan, 2011; Harris, 2015). Two critical Gramscian

concepts, ‘hegemony’ and ‘common sense’ build upon his ideas of culture and political organizations, and both are important in the theoretical framing of this paper.

Hegemony is a foundational concept in international relations theory, although the definition and application of hegemony as a concept differ between mainstream and critical schools of thought. Gramsci and neo-Gramscian writings are critical in understanding the application of hegemony in the context of *critical* political economy and IR literature. As opposed to the mainstream, ahistorical and universal state-centric definition of hegemony, “a critical theory of hegemony directs attention to questioning the prevailing order of the world” (Bieler & Morton, 2004, p. 86). Historic blocs are one important part in understanding (neo-)Gramscian definition of hegemony. When a historic bloc can exercise economic, political and intellectual control over subordinate groups, it becomes hegemonic (Ekers, Loftus & Mann, 2009). As opposed to mainstream notions of hegemony that focus on realist material values, a Gramscian notion of hegemony looks at how the ideology of the ruling historic bloc becomes so normalized that it renders alternatives unimaginable, thereby allowing ruling elites to govern not only through coercion but also consent (Harris, 2015).

Ideas are a critical component to understanding hegemony. As Paterson and P-Laberge (2018) state, “[r]egimes of accumulation need political support, and the Gramscian notion of hegemony is important in understanding this” (p. 9). Without political and ideological support, economic ideas (e.g., shifting to renewable energy) cannot become hegemonic. A hegemonic worldview is a society-wide vision that can reproduce itself, where ideology, symbolism and culture legitimize the behaviors of the ruling social group (Levy & Egan, 2003; Robinson, 2005). Importantly, hegemony is not entirely a top-down, imposed concept. Due to changing historical conditions, consent is continually re-negotiated with non-hegemonic groups (Moolakkattu,

2009). This re-negotiation explains the ability for dominant historic blocs to maintain hegemony for extended periods of time. An example of this is ‘neoliberal environmentalism’. Recent policies that commodify nature and privatize existing resource management regimes show how economic and political support combine: the supremacy of market-based solutions to economic problems, and the political project that seeks to continue to roll back the welfare state model in industrial countries that came before neoliberalism became hegemonic (MacNeil & Paterson, 2012). Overall, hegemony shows how the dominant economic and political actors are underpinned by institutions in civil society that encourage consent to the hegemonic social order (Cox, 1983). One of the important ways that a historic bloc becomes hegemonic is when said bloc’s ideals become what Gramsci termed common sense. Understanding common sense and how it explains Canadian government policy is critical to understanding why the Trudeau/Notely middle ground climate coalition exists.

Gramsci sought to build upon Marx’s work by combining economic analysis with political and cultural, therefore making ideology a central component of his works. Gramsci viewed history as the struggle between systems and ways of seeing the world (Robinson, 2005). Gramsci defined the way people’s worldviews as common sense. Common sense is a frequent term throughout *The Prison Notebooks* (Liguori 2009). For Gramsci, common sense “is a form of ‘everyday thinking’ which offers us frameworks of meaning with which to make sense of the world” (Hall & O’Shea, 2013, p. 8). It is a set of knowledge within specific communities (e.g., Gramsci would often discuss ‘Italian common sense’) that contains taken for granted knowledge and ways of conceptualizing the world (Crehan, 2016; Hall & O’Shea, 2013). Common sense can be seen as the popular conception of viewing the world by specific groups of actors. It is not a rigid phenomenon, evolving constantly as new ideas enter into common usage (Liguori 2009).

Importantly, common sense is not a bundle of complimentary views, but full of contradictions, conflicting stories that come together (Hall & O'Shea 2013; Liguori 2009). For example, it is possible for expansion of oil extraction to be a common sense thought even as a majority of Canadians consider climate change to be one of the most political issues presently.

In *The Prison Notebooks*, common sense is treated as part of the broader concept of culture. For Gramsci, this was a critical part of updating Marxist thought in order to better understand hegemony and add a cultural component to economic and political arguments (Crehan, 2016). And while common sense is not a coherent train of thought, it is important to understand the evolution of culture. Common sense “does have a ‘logic’ and a history... [i]t draws upon past ideas and traditions; but it also keeps evolving to give meaning to new developments, solve new problems, unravel new dilemmas” (Hall & O'Shea, 2013, p. 9). In the context of Canadian oil politics, the connection between oil and Canadian national identity is built upon the history of Canada as a country where natural resource extraction is critical. If the importance of natural resources to Canada both economically and in the popular imagination goes all the way back to the pre-Confederation days of British North America (Barney, 2017), then extracting oil and gas being common sense is the latest transformation of that common sense thinking. Because of the fluidity of what constitutes common sense, it is not something that can be countered with something completely outside of it. Rather, establishing a new common sense begins with occupying a position within the general realm of common sense, engaging with some of its ideals in order to transform it into something new (Liguori 2009). This is a necessary step in the war of position for hegemony.

Neoliberal policy solutions are an example of common sense in action. Gramsci's use of common sense allows one to conceive of there being a capitalist common sense (Watkins, 1999).

As an example, public choice theorists and mainstream economists subscribe to the notion that climate change is a problem that can be solved via market mechanisms and within the structure of capitalism itself (Paterson & P-Laberge, 2018). The idea that economic growth is good for climate change has come to be viewed as common sense, normalizing this approach and making it hegemonic (Harris, 2015). In the Canadian context, we can see this in action as the Trudeau government believes that part of the transition towards carbon neutrality involves the continued expansion of pipeline capacity as a means to generate revenue and economic growth to fund this transition. Each individual neoliberal state has its own set of logics based on its unique actors, identities and history (MacNeil & Paterson, 2012). Canada's history as a state with a strong natural resource sector, and the association of resource extraction with national identity, contributes to its modern common sense. An example would read: natural resource extraction has been the way that prosperity has been generated in Canada since its inception as a state, therefore it is the key to generate future prosperity even in a world where the government has pledged to cut carbon emissions significantly.

Viewing the debates in Canadian climate politics as a war of position opens the analysis to a multi-layered approach. As Levy & Egan (2003) argue when adopting a Neo-Gramscian approach to corporate political strategy vis-à-vis climate negotiations, 'war of position' removes the distinction between economic and political strategies. In other words, it creates a distinctive conception of power: ideological, economic, and cultural actors are aligned and coordinate their responses, which means an understanding of power that is not simply additive (Levy & Egan, 2003, p. 813). Given that the three main Canadian climate coalitions comprise actors in multiple spheres (political, economic, civil society), adopting this theoretical approach exposes the complexities in growing and maintaining these coalitions. Private firms such as oil

companies must have deep roots in civil society for the composition of a strong historic bloc that has the potential to be hegemonic (Levy & Egan, 2003). Simultaneously, previous Neo-Gramscian analysis in Canadian politics shows that these roots necessitate compromise to keep the historic bloc together, and that the variety of actors within a historic bloc creates vulnerabilities that have the potential to harm the bloc's interests (Andrée, 2011). The balancing act of the Trudeau/Notely coalition necessitates creating concessions that conform to the 'common sense' of extracting fossil fuels and that conform to the ideals of hegemonic actors.

This paper draws on literature that uses Neo-Gramscian theoretical framing in the study of climate politics. Applying neo-Gramscian concepts to questions of transitions is growing (Ford & Newell, 2021), including examining the war of position over climate governance in terms of climate markets, climate action and climate politics (Pearse, 2010). The prospect of a climate-centric transition directly challenges the established hegemony of the fossil fuel industry (Levy & Egan, 2003). The deep, structural analysis of a neo-Gramscian perspective is particularly useful in the context of climate politics. It is impossible to separate 'the environment' from issues of class, gender, economic systems and the nature of political projects. In other words, "nature is materially and ideologically enrolled and produced in hegemonic projects... in both the domain of the extraordinary and that of everyday life and work" (Paterson, 2020, p. 290). An example of this interconnectivity is the role, and the power, of the state in terms of neoliberal climate policy. An increase in market-based instruments to address climate issues does not negate the role of the state in legitimizing these approaches and helping to create stable regimes of growth and accumulation (MacNeil & Paterson, 2012; Matthews & Paterson, 2005). As such, civil society becomes "a key site of political contestation in which hegemonic

and counter-hegemonic forces seek to garner support and establish consensual legitimacy” (Ford & Newell, 2021, p. 6).

The Gramscian concepts of hegemony, historic blocs and common sense enable other important aspects of analysis. Because hegemony is a contested process both between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic actors and within the hegemonic historic bloc it illuminates struggles between corporate interests that are pro or anti climate action, as well as social movements opposing the neoliberal hegemonic model itself (Paterson & P-Laberge, 2018). Simultaneously the current neoliberal hegemony uses language to espouse the supposed universality of neoliberal markets and to mask the system’s contradictions and alternatives (Stegemann & Ossewaarde, 2018). In Canada, this takes the form of the two most recent Canadian federal government presenting fossil fuel extraction as being the ‘common sense’ policy, one that is inherently sound and logical despite the current climate crisis. While capitalist economic solutions occupy are hegemonic, genuine alternatives that form counter-hegemonic groups can exist (Harris, 2015). Part of this paper’s analysis will be investigating how counter-hegemonic groups opposed to extractivism are in a war of position in Canada, and whether genuine counter hegemonic groups exist at the provincial level in Ontario.

A neo-Gramscian perspective will have other contributions to climate politics analysis. First, analysis should highlight how hegemonic actors engaged in a war of position look beyond their narrow economic interests to engage with civil society to continue to sustain legitimacy and to accommodate pressures from counter-hegemonic groups (Ford & Newell, 2021; Levy & Egan, 2003). An example of this perspective in action is Pearce’s (2010) article on the design and implementation of market-based climate solutions. Examining climate governance, Pearce argues that three forms of climate governance exist: climate markets, climate actions and climate

justice. These three coalitions are engaged in a war of position to become hegemonic (Pearce, 2010). Additionally, this paper can explore the importance of the role of the state in neoliberal climate politics. Rather than viewing the state as a singular entity, this paper will view the state as an “arena of struggle” between various economic and political actors that compose the three main climate coalitions that seek to exercise state power in particular forms (MacNeil & Paterson, 2012, p. 235).

Methodology

In order to assess the impact of ideologies and imagery on Canadian climate politics, this paper mainly draws upon the academic literature discussed in the previous chapter. Additionally, this paper draws upon reports from institutions, for example Canadian think tanks. Primarily, peer-reviewed sources will be used to support the arguments made in each chapter. The use of peer-reviewed qualitative research allows for a nuanced analysis of each of the major aspects present in the war of position in Canadian climate politics at both the federal and provincial level. While this paper is limited in the ability to draw on primary qualitative or quantitative data, data will be taken from previous studies to support the arguments made. Additionally, Canadian media articles are also used in a secondary capacity to provide up to date data and quotes from actors relevant to the case studies. The use of language to attach policies to ideologies or national imagery is an important aspect of both case studies, and these quotes often come directly from some of the most powerful political actors. Using these methods and materials can allow for the research question to be thoroughly investigated, answered and the arguments discussed.

Chapter 4: Climate Politics and The Oil Industry: ‘who we are and what we do’

Canada’s current situation regarding fossil fuel extraction is at a critical point. While the country holds the third largest oil reserve in the world, an overwhelming majority (97.4%) is found in oil sands, requiring intensive energy and carbon emissions costs to extract and refine into bitumen, which can then be transported via oil pipelines (Carroll, 2020). Despite recent challenges to the Canadian oil industry, including a significant price drop in global oil prices (Leach, 2016), the Canadian oil and gas industry remains an integral part of its modern economy. In turn, this has led to Canada having the highest per capita emissions in the G20 (Carroll, 2020). This situation does not appear to be changing in the near term despite the public declarations of Canada’s seriousness towards combatting climate change by current PM Justin Trudeau. This chapter analyses the three main climate coalitions in Canadian politics and argues that the continuity of support for the fossil fuel extraction industry is a result of the hegemony of said industry, and the accompanying ‘common sense’ that justifies continued expansion of oil and gas extraction and exportation.

Canadian Climate Coalitions: An Introduction

The war of position between the three main climate coalitions in Canada begins with the conservative coalition that explicitly endorses the economic vision of Stephen Harper. While Harper cautiously tip-toed around environmental issues while he had a minority government, the 2011 majority government represented a turning point in environmental politics (MacNeil, 2014a). Harper’s governance is seen as a ‘lost decade’ for Canadian environmentalism (MacLean, 2018a). Internationally, Canada’s reputation suffered a serious setback. Canada was often seen as ‘competing’ with Australia to have the worst climate policy in the Global North (MacNeil & Paterson, 2016). Located geographically in the centre of the Conservative Party’s

base of support, Harper sought to make the Alberta oil sands the engine of Canada's economy. Presently, this coalition holds power provincially in Alberta. After four years of Alberta New Democratic Party rule (discussed below), former federal Conservative Jason Kenney was elected premier. One of Kenney's central campaign planks was the creation of an "energy war room" to combat climate activists and anti-oil sands opponents at a cost of \$30 million (Bernauer, 2020, p. 162). Kenney successfully styled himself as a defender of the oil industry, and therefore the economic interests of Albertans.

In near direct opposition to the pro-extractivist coalition is the coalition henceforth referred to as the environmentalist coalition. The smallest coalition in terms of political power, this coalition is represented primarily by the Green Party, as well as the New Democratic Party (NDP) Party (although critically this does not include the Alberta NDP party, discussed below) (MacNeil & Paterson, 2016). This coalition argues for immediate and significant action on climate change and opposes Canada's current reliance on natural resource extraction as the drive of economic growth. In their 2015 election platform, the NDP states:

"Canada can no longer afford to stand on the sidelines when it comes to tackling catastrophic climate change and transitioning to a cleaner, greener economy. After almost a decade of Conservative government, Canada's international reputation has suffered as a result of the failure to diversify Canada's economy and to transition to clean energy and technologies" (New Democratic Party, 2015, p. 22).

Both the NDP and Green Party platforms called for an end to government subsidies for Canadian fossil fuel corporations; additionally, the Green Party platform promised a scaling carbon tax and legislation blocking the building of pipelines from the Alberta oil sands to the Pacific Ocean (New Democratic Party, 2015; Green Party of Canada, 2015, p. 61). Opposition to pipelines is arguably the key issue that unites the actors within the environmentalism coalition. Climate justice and Indigenous social movements such as Idle No More have both publicly protested new

pipeline infrastructure being built to expand market access the oil sands (Bernauer, 2020; Witherspoon & Hansen, 2013). As Barney (2017) succinctly states, “if the bitumen cannot move, it cannot be a commodity and its exploitation will cease to be economically attractive” (p. 85). Finally, despite the hegemony of extractivism currently, these movements have had success in establishing some opposition and gaining public attention (Bernauer, 2020).

The final coalition represents not only the middle ground of Canadian climate politics but also the current ideological position of the federal government. In 2015, Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party won a majority government in part due to a growing consensus of the need for climate action and a decade of Stephen Harper worsening Canada’s international reputation on climate change policy (Howe et al., 2021; MacNeil & Paterson, 2016). The Liberal’s platform stated a desire to act on climate change. Relevant to this paper were two pledges. In addition to announcing the creation of a national price on carbon to combat Canada’s biggest polluters, the party also pledged to rebuild the government’s environmental assessment for major infrastructure projects (including pipelines), with a specific focus on including consultation from affected Indigenous groups and a focus on science-based assessments (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015; MacLean, 2018b). This focus was seen as important due to the historic shortcomings of the federal government to uphold its ‘duty to consult’ relevant Indigenous nations as a part of environmental assessments (Inman, Smis & Cambou, 2013). At the time, this created a sense of optimism that the incoming government would create some fundamental change, beginning with the ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

However, the Trudeau government has failed to live up to its aspirational billing. Despite the “progressive veneer,” the federal government has shown no intention of constraining Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions (Bernauer, 2020, p. 161). A promise in their 2019 election

platform to cut emissions from Canada's biggest oil and gas polluters (Liberal Party of Canada, 2019) has not materialized, even though the subsequent minority government would have found a willing supporter in the federal NDP party. Instead, Trudeau has attempted a "grand bargain" between carbon capital and proponents of decarbonization: a gambit that has ended up creating no substantial climate action and also angered resource proponents who no longer receive unfettered support from the Prime Minister's Office (Arigitis, 2020). Trudeau's unsuccessful navigation of the middle ground will be the focus of the common sense and hegemony sections below.

At the provincial level, the Alberta NDP (ANNDP) government that had a majority government from 2015-2019 that MacNeil and Paterson consider a prime example of the middle ground climate coalition. Like the 2015 federal election, ANNDP's leader Rachel Notley electoral win had brought initial hope that Alberta would take stronger action fighting climate change (Bernauer, 2020). The 2015 election platform promised a provincial strategy for a renewable energy strategy, as well as investments in renewable energy and strengthening of environmental standards at oil sands extraction sites (Alberta NDP, 2015). However, by the end of her first term, the government had shifted to fight for expanded export options for Alberta's resource industries. The platform states "Getting our oil to new markets requires new pipeline capacity... Alberta's oil prices were made artificially low by lack of shipping capacity... As your Premier, Rachel Notley will pressure the federal government to re-approve Trans Mountain" (Alberta NDP, p. 8-9). This policy change created public conflict between the Alberta NDP Party and both the federal and British Columbia NDP parties who are ideologically opposed to new pipeline construction (Bernauer, 2020). While oil is important to the province of Alberta,

Canada's longstanding association with natural resource extraction also ties natural resource extraction into its national imagery, discussed in the following section.

The Importance of Oil to Canada's National Imagery

If ideas are to become hegemonic and become 'common sense', the main actors within the hegemonic historic bloc must communicate its importance. For the Canadian oil industry, one critical component of this argument has been to equate the sector with Canadian national identity. This section discusses how equating the oil sands with both economic prosperity and the national interest has been an important component in contributing to the hegemony of the oil industry since the early 2000s. Although scholars have stated that climate change policy has been a coordination between state and capital for multiple decades (Nugent, 2011), the twenty-first century has marked a "renewed significance of the state in [both] resource extraction and regulation" (Peyton & Franks, 2016, p. 456). This direction of government policy changed significantly with the election of the Conservative Party in 2011. While previous state environmental policy was designed to place limits on industrial development and place limits on capital's access to nature, Harper's government effectively inverted this framework (MacNeil, 2014a). Peyton and Franks (2016) argue that this decision led to "the emergence of a 'renatured economy' that enrolls the environment as a natural object of the economy" (p. 459). The driver of this policy change was the desire to maximize the expansion of the Canadian oil and natural gas industry.

The effort to maximize the extractivist industries was accompanied by an aggressive public relations campaign. In his very first speech outside of Canada six months after first being elected in 2006, Harper told an audience of businesspeople in the United Kingdom that his government was going to utilize Canada's vast natural resources to become a global energy

superpower (Taber, 2006). Harper's speech was full of rousing analogies that painted Canada as being on the verge of a world-changing economic expansion. "[A]n ocean of oil-soaked sand lies under the muskeg of northern Alberta" (Government of Canada, 2006), Harper stated, before then comparing the upcoming process of converting said sand into crude oil to the fictional colossal island of Brobdingnag in *Gulliver's Travels* (Barney, 2017; Government of Canada, 2006). Harper further described the necessary capital, technology and labour as "an enterprise of epic proportions, akin to the building of the pyramids or China's Great Wall. Only bigger" (Government of Canada, 2006). These grandiose analogies are not just the words of a prime minister's first speech to an international business audience. They are also words designed to cultivate nationalist sentiments towards an economic project that would produce emissions and infrastructure harmful to the environment (Barney, 2017).

The desire to make the oil sands industry the centre of Canada's economic engine and national image was a long-standing desire for Harper and the Conservatives. The party's base in Western Canada means that the Harper government sought to make equate a prosperous resource industry with national prosperity (MacNeil, 2014a). Additionally, the Conservative government sought to associate environmental regulation with classical capitalist ideology that places 'the environment' within a resource extraction paradigm (Peyton & Franks, 2016). It follows from this ideological position that the tools necessary for a project 'bigger than the Great Wall' would become symbols of national identity. Former Conservative cabinet minister Jim Prentice stated in a speech that "nation-building is far from over," describing natural resource extraction as "who we are and what we do' ... [and] described proposed oil sands pipelines and several other energy projects as 'nation-building infrastructure'" (Barney 2017, p. 87). Even as lower global oil prices set in towards the end of his time as PM, Harper continued to extol the virtues of the

oil industry. In a nationally televised interview, Harper responded to questions about whether his vision of Canada as an energy superpower is sustainable with “[e]verywhere I go, elsewhere in the world, people want Canadian energy, people want Canadian oil” (Peyton & Franks, 2016, p. 454). Accompanying the positive public relations campaign were measures designed to minimize criticism of the oil industry. The Harper government banned government scientists from publicly speaking about climate change without approval and heavily criticized opposition to oil sands expansion, going so far as to suggest that Canadian environmental groups were laundering money from foreign charities, and removing references to environmentalism from the Canadian citizenship guide (MacNeil, 2014a; Nikiforuk, 2006; Snow & Moffitt, 2012).

There were several other initiatives that helped contribute to tying Canadian nationalism to the oil industry. A non-profit organization whose name would go on to be used by government members was a primary actor in this regard: Ethical Oil, a group dedicated to espousing the virtues of Canadian ‘ethical oil’ as opposed to the ‘conflict oil’ found in other states was a campaign that depicted Canada as being a responsible provider of crude in an international arena full of authoritarian and environmentally reckless oil states (Neubauer, 2020). A national campaign in 2012 to support construction of the Northern Gateway Pipeline argued that an increased supply of ‘ethical’ Canadian oil would limit international dependency on ‘conflict oil’ from states such as Iran, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, “that have atrocious human rights records and really don’t care about the environment at all” (Ethical Oil, 2013). While Canada can certainly claim to be more democratic than many states flush with oil reserves, the Alberta tar sands cannot claim to be cleanest. Converting tar sands to bitumen is more energy intensive and requires more resources than the crude oil found throughout the Middle East and Africa. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) ran several television adverts on national

television attempting to change that perception, while internationally the government spent \$24 million on advertising campaigns in Europe and California (Peyton & Franks, 2016).

Pro-industry lobbying focused not only on the supposed positives of the oil sands but also attacked opposition to it. Ethical Oil spokesperson Kathryn Marshall characterized opponents to the Northern Gateway Pipeline as “radicals” funded from foreign special interest groups who were intent on undermining “Canada’s national economic interest” (Ethical Oil, 2013). Equating pipelines with Canadian economic interests was an important part of building national identity around the oil industry. The Conservative government argued that new oil pipelines represented jobs and economic growth across the entire country (Neubauer, 2020). Environment Minister Peter Kent stated in a 2012 speech that profits from the oil sector provided the ability “to better society in the great Canadian democracy” to make the case for pipelines to the US and exports to Europe (MacNeil, 2014a, p. 99). The Conservative government’s public outreach on behalf of the Alberta oilsands and the pipelines that move the processed bitumen to market consistently equated expanded oil sands extraction with increased nationwide prosperity and attempting to project a positive image of Canada as a democratic oil state.

The 2015 election was seen as a defeat for the pro-extractivism coalition led by the Conservative Party and its blunt approach to promoting the oil sands. New PM Justin Trudeau’s declaration that “Canada is back” while attending Paris climate change negotiations shortly after being elected was seen as Canada’s return to being a climate change policy leader internationally (MacLean, 2018b, p. 909). The reality has been a much more complicated picture. To secure the middle ground between environmentalists and anti-pipeline actors on the one hand, and the continued pressure from pro-oil sands groups to ramp up resource extraction on the other has resulted in a paradoxical series of government policies. While Canada has signed the Paris

Agreement and instituted a national carbon tax, these decisions were made concurrently with the decision to pursue increased oil and gas extraction (MacLean, 2018a). The government's public statements reveal a similar paradoxical approach. One example is the way that new pipelines are claimed to play a critical role in Canada's supposed newfound commitment to sustainability (MacLean, 2018a). The imposition of the government's relatively small carbon tax would, according to Trudeau, make it even more possible to expand the access of Canadian oil to market than under the Harper government (MacLean, 2018b, p. 924). The Liberal government argues that achieving a low-carbon economy requires rapid expansion of carbon intensive fossil fuels extraction. In the following sections this chapter will demonstrate that this argument will not only result in a long-term 'carbon lock-in' that will set Canada's greenhouse gas reduction targets back, but also results in the continued hegemony of the oil industry and its role at the nucleus of Canadian economy activity.

The most important aspect of the oil sector vis-à-vis national identity is the connection to long standing ideas of 'who' Canadians are and 'what' Canadians do. The three climate coalitions identified in MacNeil & Paterson (2018) are based around the "'hewers of wood, drawers of water' ideology of Canadian nationalism" (p. 384). The idealization of Canada as a national that cultivates abundant natural resources goes back over two hundred years to the days of fur trading and logging in British North America (Barney, 2017). Proponents of the oil industry cite this ideal as a justification for expansion of oil sands extraction. Then Minister of the Environment Jim Prentice succinctly conveyed this argument in two statements to a British Columbia business audience: "[w]e should take pride in who we are and what we do... we extract resources from our abundant natural deposits and rely on the proceeds of those sales to help provide an exceptional standard of living" (Barney, 2017, p. 78). On the day that the federal

government approved the Northern Gateway Pipeline, John Manley (then President and CEO of the Business Council of Canada, and former Liberal Party MP) said, “Canadians often forget what ‘the family business’ really is—extraction of natural resources. That’s what pays the rent” (quoted in Peyton & Franks, 2016, p. 468). These quotes are two examples of the rhetoric utilized by actors engaged in advancing the standing of Canada’s extractive industries.

In the twenty-first century, the oil pipeline is “the most extensive and most important infrastructure” that connects Canadians to the landscape, under which lies the resources that sustain the ‘hewers of wood, drawers of water’ ideology (Barney, 2017, p. 80). The challenges of moving beyond fossil fuels such as oil are not a unique challenge to Canada. However, a relatively small population combined with the world’s second largest land area contributes to a frontier mentality and a limitless supply of resources (Hayden, 2014). Stephen Harper invoked these ideas of the ‘heartland’ as a part of his successful electoral bid in 2006 (Snow & Moffitt, 2012). Finally, Peyton & Franks (2016) argue that the Harper government used arguments about the economic importance of the oil industry to Canada to generate “existential certainty of bedrock values” (p. 459). The idea of bedrock values, ideas that help actors makes sense of the world around them, connects well to Gramsci’s concept of common sense. The following section details how the Harper-era Conservatives utilized the idea of extracting oil as common sense to create hegemonic stability, and how that common sense has continued to maintain that hegemony after the 2015 election of the Liberal Party.

Common Sense and Fossil Fuel Extraction

As discussed in the previous chapter, Gramsci’s concept of common sense is the concept that everyday thinking forms a framework of meaning through which worldviews are constructed. From 1990-2014, the rate of investment in hydrocarbon extraction has more than

doubled in Canada, and the percentage of that which is bitumen extraction, versus conventional crude extraction, has also increased substantially (Pineault, 2018, p. 139). And while the annual level of carbon emission in Canada has remained similar since 2000, the emissions created from exported Canadian oil were 26% higher in 2015 than 2000 (Lee, 2018). This presents a central problem for Canada: as climate change becomes one of the most salient issues in global politics, the Canadian economy has become increasingly dependent on extraction of carbon (Carroll et al., 2018). As discussed above, no elected parties have truly articulated a vision that will fundamentally challenge this development. Extractivism has become hegemonic to the point where a collapse in oil prices in 2014 and pushback on new pipeline projects have not challenged the centrality of carbon extraction economically (Pineault, 2018). This section argues that oil and gas extraction has become ‘common sense’ in the Gramscian sense, and this hinders imagining a scenario where carbon resources are not central to the Canadian economy.

The Canadian national imagery of hewers of wood, drawers of water and the reliance on natural resource extraction to the economy for over two centuries are critical to this outcome. National identity can be constructed around extractivist imagery that “legitimizes extractivism as economic destiny” (Pineault, 2018, p. 144). Harper’s declaration that Canada would become an energy superpower, and Trudeau’s belief in the importance of new pipelines to Canadian national interest are examples of this. Beginning with the Harper government in 2006 and continuing to the present, government policy decisions have made resource extraction “common sense” by discursively creating a binary between economic ideas (jobs, economic prosperity) and the environment (unused resources, a place for exploitation) (Peyton & Franks, 2016, p. 458). The goal is the creation of existential certainty rooted in what Gramsci would refer to as ‘everyday thinking’. The goal is to create a pro-extractivist ‘life politics’, “the certainty of

bedrock values that deepen the extractive paradigm by linking utility maximization to norms of goodness, care and person and civic responsibility” (Peyton & Franks, 2016, p. 458). In Alberta, examples of this are numerous. From simple phrases such as “Alberta is energy,” and “what’s good for oil is good for Alberta,” to speeches from premiers that include phrases such as “Alberta’s oil sands are the lifeblood of the economy (MacLean, 2018a, p. 57), appeals are made to ideas of common sense and obscure the economic and political processes that are necessary to do so.

This discursive work is undertaken not only from public officials, but also the private sector. An important component of hegemony (and therefore common sense) is the cohesiveness between all major actors within a historic bloc that enables the creation of a stable and long-term vision (Carroll, 2020). Fossil capital actors have also directly sponsored or created pro-extraction social media groups that moves beyond traditional marketing campaign to directly engage with citizens and create pro-resource activism at the grassroots of Canadian society (Carroll, 2020). These groups become echo chambers for create feedback loops that continually reinforce narratives that pipeline projects are in the national interest and are unquestionable economic sense in the short and long terms.

Accompanying the discursive elements of common sense are the direct actions taken to secure this narrative. Under PM Harper, government subsidies to the energy industry totalled approximately \$34 billion by 2013, a figure higher than the subsidies for the emerging renewable energy sector (Peyton & Franks, 2016). Doing so reinforces the narrative that actions that do not support immediate or expanded extraction are not in the public interest. During his leadership, the Canadian government closed or consolidated a number of environmental research facilities and research libraries, making it more difficult for non-hegemonic narratives to be created

(Peyton & Franks, 2016). And, as mentioned in a previous section, the government sought to paint some anti-resource groups as a direct threat to Canada. Adding ‘eco-terrorism’ to the list of national security threats is another aspect of creating universal discursive support for extraction (MacNeil, 2014b). The transition from Harper to Trudeau represents a change in how one-sided this discourse was, in an effort to ward off counter-hegemonic pressure as criticism of Canada’s oil industry increased and public support lessened. However, unwavering support for the industry remains. Trudeau’s quote, “I’ve said many times that there isn’t a country in the world that would find billions of barrels of oil and leave it in the ground while there is a market for it” is one example (quoted in Lee, 2018, p. 114). That it is such ‘common sense’ to extract and sell oil that Canada, or any other country, would even think otherwise about doing so reinforces the common sense narrative of expanding extraction and export. Speaking at a sustainability conference and arguing that Canada needs to continue to expand its oil and gas sector in order to fulfill its environmental goals is another (McCarthy & Bailey, 2016). Here, one can see a shift from the hard binary under Harper to one where environmental action is acknowledged, provided it does not pre-empt the fossil fuel industry. The shift from the Conservative to Liberal government has meant “a shift from the hard-denialism of Harper to a Trudeau regime that acknowledges fossil capital’s central role in the climate crisis while denying the need to decarbonize energy systems at a pace commensurate with what we know from climate science” (Carroll, 2020, p. 11). While the days of a “there is no alternative” are gone (Peyton & Franks, 2016, p. 461), the common sense narratives, subsidies and economic decisions remain largely intact. This points to how the middle ground coalition in Canadian climate politics has been captured by the hegemonic power of the pro-extraction coalition that came before it.

Examples of this common sense are a part of Canadian environmental politics at all levels. When the Kyoto Accord negotiations were taking place, the Canadian alliance of business and capital utilized the “well-worn myth” that environmental regulation would threaten jobs and livelihoods, citing neoliberal common sense ideas such as ‘national competitiveness’ and ‘made in Canada solutions’ in doing so (Nugent, 2011, p. 61). These discourses exist not only at the national level but also in the local. A study of a small town in Saskatchewan reliant on the petroleum industry is bound together in a hegemonic identity created by the combined economic power of the industry (i.e., via funding local amenities) and the ability of this industry to produce dominant discourses that create the narrative that the fate of the community is extrinsically linked with that of Canada’s oil and gas industry (Carroll, 2020). This creates an ‘us versus them’ mentality where locals come to see environmental advocates as ‘outsiders’ threatening the very community itself (Carroll, 2020). The response by pro-extractivist politicians to negative stories regarding the oil and gas industry is another example.

After an oil-train derailed in Saskatchewan, then premier Brad Wall argued that it was simply common sense to expand oil pipeline infrastructure to prevent future disasters. In doing so, Wall used the discursive framing of common sense to obscure “the regulatory corrosion and poor environment management practices of recent years” (Peyton & Franks, 2016, p. 466). Finally, in Alberta, the epicentre of the oil sands industry, Carroll (2020) details the concept of fossil boosterism: where powerful actors circulate good-news narratives and displace dissent and criticisms in the process. Overall, those invoking fossil fuel extraction as common sense can draw upon some of the main identifiers of Canadian national identity. In doing so, they help to strengthen the hegemony of oil and gas extraction and the associated political decisions regarding environmental policy decisions. The following section examines this in further detail.

Hegemony of the Extractivist Historic Bloc from 2006 – Present

Years after the Prime Minister declared Canada an emerging energy superpower, “a bloated oil and gas sector centred upon the tar sands is integral to ‘the decisive nucleus of economic activity’ that hegemony protects... building on [neoliberal] hegemonic relations... this regime is constituted through modalities of power that protect revenue streams issuing from carbon extraction, processing and transport while bolstering popular support for an accumulation strategy” (Carroll, 2020, p, 2). The election of a party based largely in Western Canada, combined with the increasing dependence of the economy on natural resource exportation, created the conditions for this hegemony to form. Rather than try to lessen the economy’s dependence, the Harper government chose to try to further cement resource extraction as the driver of economic fortune and built government environmental policy around that goal (MacNeil, 2014a). During the Harper era, the oil sector exercised direct lobbying techniques frequently. Over twenty-five separate corporations have directly lobbied the government on climate change regulations, corporate tax policies, and consultation laws on resource projects (Cayley-Daoust & Girard, 2012).

In order to further prioritize the resource industry, the Conservative government introduced sweeping environmental law reform after winning a majority government. The 2012 federal budget included changes to speed up and streamline the process of environmental reviews for upcoming pipelines and oil sands projects, justified under the guise of increased access to markets being a “national imperative” (Barney, 2017, p. 94). Follow up legislation further revised the environmental assessment process, resulting in “a strategic bias in Canada’s regulatory system in favour of extractive capital” (Bernauer, 2020, p. 161). These bills were designed to create the conditions for easier expansion of resource extraction while sacrificing

environmental protections that had previously been in place. For example, changes to the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* removed the need to conduct an environmental assessment on any new projects on or around rivers or lakes (MacNeil 2014b). These changes redefined the role of the Canadian state vis-à-vis environmental regulations (MacNeil, 2014a). They also prompted the Idle No More protests that became the foremost Indigenous environmental social movement (Ruml, 2020). When one considers how the projected Canadian identity is one of a nation with abundant and seemingly endless natural resources, changes like this serve as the means to making this imagery both easier and real.

Civil society also played a critical role in creating and sustaining hegemony during the Harper years. Neoliberal and conservative think tanks (who sometimes receive direct industry funding) aggressively promote the sector (Neubauer, 2018). Media campaigns, such as the social media campaign launched by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), are another example. The CAPP campaign centred around Canadians as ‘energy citizens’ who had the opportunity become industry advocates and become active supporters (MacLean, 2018a). Oil industry civil society also take advantage of their privileged access to political actors when their skills provide value. Facing difficult negotiations with Indigenous peoples opposing the construction of a pipeline in Northern B.C., Enbridge hired Jim Prentice, the former Conservative Party MP who was once the minister of both the environment and Indigenous ministries (Peyton & Franks, 2016). In Alberta, the oil industry has been active philanthropes, spending millions on art centres (Suncor Energy Centre for the Performing Arts), leisure centres (Suncor Community Leisure Centre) and education institutions such as the University of Calgary (MacLean, 2018a). In addition to the positive public image acts of philanthropy bring, these centres adorned with oil corporations’ names serve as an advertisement of sorts, reminding

people who the most powerful economic actors are locally. The oil industry has a big stake in establishing this correctly. Oil pipelines requires decades of extracted oil to flow through them in order to provide value and revenues are projected in decades and not years (Pineault, 2018). The aide of civil society (such as the Ethical Oil campaign) is critical here because it provides “a vital function, utilizing their specific social and cultural capital... to provide external validation for the priorities of their state and industry allies” (Neubauer, 2018, p. 251). Without this combination of state, industry and civil society, a historic bloc cannot become hegemonic.

As has been previously discussed in this chapter, the change in government from Conservative to Liberal has not had a deep structural effect on the hegemony of oil extraction to the Canadian economy nor to the common sense logic accompanying this. This hegemony became clear even before election day in 2015 when Trudeau’s national campaign co-chair was forced to resign after it was revealed he had sent advice to those in charge of the controversial Energy East pipeline on how best to lobby a new Liberal government. Dan Gagnier, who was concurrently employed as an industry lobbyist, signaled that the days of unabashed support to the industry were ending: “we need a spear carrier for those in the industry who are part of the solution going forward” (Press, 2015). This shows that there was a recognition that in order to remain in their hegemonic position, key industry actors would have to adjust, to some degree, their behavior in order to respond to counter-hegemonic challenges.

While the collapse of oil prices the year prior hurt Harper’s chances at re-election, the deep embeddedness of oil in the Canadian economy represented a continued obstacle to making meaningful change (MacNeil & Paterson, 2016). Ironically, the change of government may have in fact aided the oil industry. The direct approach of the Harper government appeared to have created a large opposition and public resentment. Under the new Liberal government, the

industry saw a continuation of steadfast support for pipeline expansion and the associated ‘carbon lock in’ that would result, while the new government’s language of environmental change gave the appearance that climate policy was being taken much more seriously than under Harper (Neubauer, 2018). By the end of his first term, Trudeau’s government had shown little progress on the environmental front but had shown significant backing of the extractive industry, including the government purchase of the Trans Mountain Pipeline when it seemed that the private sector was going to be unable to complete the project in the face of widespread Indigenous-led Idle No More protests (Bernauer, 2020; Howe et al., 2021). Since taking office, Trudeau has approved 3 new pipeline projects, two that ship bitumen to the U.S.A. and one that ships it to B.C. where it can be exported to markets in the Pacific region (MacNeil, 2021). Trudeau’s first term demonstrates two things. It first demonstrates the precarious middle ground position that Trudeau found himself in in Canadian climate politics, and it also showed that when such a balancing act is being attempted, the hegemonic discourses and actors hold a considerable advantage in influencing decision making.

A question one could raise is why, if the fossil industry is hegemonic, does there need to be a shift in the discourses surrounding it. The answer lies in the question of legitimacy and consent. As MacNeil (2014b) states, “[f]rom a Gramscian perspective, as the hegemony and continuity of industrial capitalism is predicated on broad social consent... capital is continuously engaged in processes of ‘passive revolution’ in which social forces contesting its legitimacy are gradually co-opted and integrated into the existing status quo” (p. 87). In the Canadian context, fossil capital reaches beyond its immediate concerns to acknowledge the severity of the climate crisis in order to maintain consent. Trudeau’s climate policies to this point have involved moderate state reforms to environmental policies which simultaneously attempting an expansion

of oil exports while global demand for fossil fuels remains (Carroll, 2020). In other words, “climate capitalism’s system-friendly reforms are a formula for continuity in change, managed from above” (Carroll, 2020, p. 14). This makes it possible that the civil society actors involved in Canada’s fossil fuels hegemony stand to benefit from Trudeau’s approach if the government can successfully continue to portray itself as striking a balance between environmental reform and resource extraction.

Chapter 5: Landscape Identity and Contested Wind Energy Transition in Ontario

Sustainability transitions have focused on the electricity sector as a means to lower carbon emissions. One of the most common sources of renewable energy is wind (Batel et al., 2013), and while wind as a source of power is centuries old, using wind energy to replace fossil fuels in electricity generation has increased in the twenty-first century. In Canada, electricity generation and distribution are primarily the responsibility of the provinces. In Ontario, electricity supply is almost entirely renewable in some form (hydro, nuclear, wind, solar). Despite this, Ontario's increasing use of wind energy, beginning in 2003, has been a contested process. In this way, it follows an observed trend both around the developed world: while public opinion about wind energy is very favourable, a lack of social acceptance of new wind energy projects, especially at the local level where these projects take place, is a barrier to the success of these projects (Barry et al., 2008; Wolsink, 2000; Wustenhagen et al., 2007). In other words, the transition towards renewable wind energy is a contested process. This chapter examines this contestation and argues it is still ongoing in Ontario between two climate coalitions, represented in government by the premierships of Liberal Premiers Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne (2003-2018) on the one hand and Progressive Conservative Premier Doug Ford (2018-present) on the other. This contrasts with the climate coalitions around the oil extraction at the federal level where support for the oil industry has become hegemonic in Canadian politics. In the absence of a middle ground coalition, a war of position is currently ongoing between the pro- and anti- wind coalitions, one that remains undecided as neither has become hegemonic.

Since the early 2000s, the province has been the country's most successful at decarbonization its electricity sector. The province's shift to renewable energy, including completely phasing out coal in 2014, has been termed, "the largest policy experiment to date

within North America to decarbonize an electricity system” (quoted in Bues, 2018, p. 39). Decarbonization of the energy sector began under the premiership of Liberal Party of Ontario leader Dalton McGuinty. First elected in 2003 with the promise to increase the percentage of renewables and to phase out coal, the incentive to create wind energy farms was greatly increased with the Green Energy Act of 2009, which created a Feed-in-Tariff program for large scale projects (Fast, 2015; Fast et al., 2016). This Feed-in-Tariff was successful in creating “a robust financial incentive to rapidly deploy wind energy” (Ferguson-Martin & Hill, 2011, p. 1666). The Green Energy Act allowed the Liberal government to receive multiple tenders from large companies seeking to build wind turbines in the province.

However, the Green Energy Act also marked a sharp increase in the opposition to wind energy within the province. The lack of social acceptance of these projects despite general public support for the transition to renewables has been the subject of significant academic discussion (Fast et al., 2016). One of the key issues is that while general public support for these projects is high, support from local actors in the communities where these projects are built is not as clear. Fast (2015) compiles a series of polls from 2007-2014 to detail this: while support for wind energy was always above 75% in province wide polls, support from turbine ‘host communities’ was never higher than 70% and in one poll was only 10%. This is a critical nuance regarding support for wind energy. If the transition towards sustainability is going to continue, local communities are going to continually be asked to become hosts to new energy projects or to accept new energy infrastructure (Bergquist et al., 2020). Currently, a partisan political divide remains in Ontario, specifically for the actual renewable energy policies (Hazboun et al., 2020). Broadly, this divide can be grouped into two climate coalitions, the specifics of which are discussed in the following section

Ontario's Climate Coalitions

At the Ontario level of Canadian politics, it is possible to utilize MacNeil and Paterson's (2018) climate coalitions as a means to frame the debate surround wind energy. The key difference is the lack of a political middle ground coalition. In other words, there is no Trudeau/Notley group that advocates simultaneously for climate action while continuing to support the continued use or expansion of legacy fossil fuels. Instead, Ontario has been governed first by a pro-climate action government led by McGuinty and then Kathleen Wynne, allied with environmental groups and renewable energy corporations, and then by Doug Ford who has been consistently anti-wind energy. Ford's government aligns with local opposition groups that have opposed new wind project in Ontario while supporting the expansion of natural gas supply in Northern Ontario.

The McGuinty Liberals sought to expand renewable energy supplies from the beginning. The party's 2003 platform pledged to increase the amount of new renewable energy supply to the electricity sector by ten percent by the year 2010 (Ontario Liberal Party, 2003). The Green Energy Act (GEA) represented a further step towards this in 2009. In addition to the creation of the Feed-in-Tariff system, the Act also increased the subsidies to wind and solar projects (Raymond, 2020). With the GEA was enacted, the government also updated its sustainability goals to doubling the amount of electricity from renewables by 2025 (Deigan et al., 2013). In addition to the Liberal government, non-government organizations are also a part of the pro-wind coalition. Organizations such as the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CANWEA) advocates for industry actors and rural landowners who have turbines on their property, and advocated on behalf of the government (Holtz, 2014).

This policy shift was met with opposition, particularly at the local level where new projects were approved. One important aspect of the McGuinty government's response to opposition was to dismiss criticism of wind turbine construction by framing it as a case of 'Not in My Backyard' (NIMBYism). This refers to the idea that local opposition opposing renewable energy projects such as wind farms arises because of their proximity to their location and would not exist if said projects were built elsewhere. While NIMBYism has been utilized often by wind energy proponents in response to criticism, the literature is quite clear that it does not adequately describe the opposition movement to renewable energy projects (Fast et al., 2016; van der Horst, 2007). The former premier's assertion that "NIMBYism will no longer prevail" (quoted in Walker et al., 2014) may have been a well-worn political strategy, but as will be discussed in greater detail below, emboldened the opposition to adjust their activism and to forge alliances with the Progressive Conservative (PC) Party, the main opposition to the Liberals.

The opposing climate coalition in Ontario contains the PC Party, local actors opposed to wind projects, and the non-governmental groups that advocate on their behalf. Since the beginning, opposition to wind energy has been present (Jami & Walsh, 2017). This opposition increased in intensity after the implementation of the GEA in 2009, particularly during the 2011 provincial election campaign. Then PC leader Tim Hudak stated he would place a moratorium on the construction of wind turbines, and while the PC platform pledged to continue the phase out of coal plants on the same timeline as the Liberals, it also vowed to cancel a seven-billion-dollar contract awarded to Samsung to construct renewable energy projects (CBC News, 2011; Ontario PC Party, 2011). In the leadup to the election, advocacy groups such as Wind Concerns Ontario (WCO) player were very active in trying to increase social resistance to the GEA. During the election campaign groups such as WCO "were instrumental in rallying rural communities"

against the government (Rosenbloom & Meadowcraft, 2014). Although the Liberals did win the 2011, this opposition movement was successful in bringing attention to the actors who were opposed to expansion of Ontario's renewable energy supply.

The 2018 election signalled a change in government. After taking over the leadership of the PC midway through the campaign, Doug Ford led the party to an electoral victory and a majority government, with the Liberals registering their worst ever election result (Raymond, 2020). While it would be inaccurate to assert that concerns over Ontario's electricity sector were the only reason for Ford's victory, his brand of populist politics was in part built on opposition to renewable energy. Since the election, the Ford government has cancelled over 750 previously approved wind and solar projects (Gray, 2020). This includes the cancellation of a partially built wind farm, going so far as to dismantle the already built turbines (Crawley, 2019). Ford stated he was "proud of his decision to tear up hundreds of renewable energy deals," telling the Ontario media that "if we had the chance to get of all the wind mills we would" (CBC News, 2019). Additionally, a key economic policy promise of the Ford government was to expand mining access to natural resources such as nickel and copper in the 'Ring of Fire' in Ontario's North (Hamilton-McCharles, 2019; Prokopchuk, 2019).

The Ford government, while populist in nature, is not the same as other populist movements in the developed world. Instead of focusing on immigration, Ford's campaign was built on a neoliberal populism that created a discourse that was anti-urban elite and cast middle-class taxpayers as 'the people' (Budd, 2020). Both expansion of natural resource extraction and the scaling back of renewable energy projects are key to this strategy. As part of this, Ford scrapped the government's emissions cap and trade scheme on the basis that it was too expensive (Budd, 2020). This was accompanied with a move to deprioritize renewable energy in

government decision making processes, and to pivot to addressing Ontario's future energy needs with natural gas instead (McIntosh, 2020). In doing so, Ford allied himself with rural opponents of wind farms and turbines in general. These two coalitions are both competing to become the dominant climate coalition for Ontario politics. Opposition from these groups is primarily rooted in a specific conception of what rural spaces should look like, and this is the focus on the next section.

The Imagined Landscapes of Rural Ontario

Massive towers with three huge blades, wind turbines in Ontario tower over the landscapes they are built in. While new wind turbine projects have the potential to provide benefits at the provincial scale, the visual impacts of these projects happen at the local level (Chappell et al., 2021). Therefore, local support or resistance to these projects is critical to understanding the level of acceptance of new wind projects. Just as debates surrounding the oil and gas industry are partly based on an imagined imagery of 'what Canada is', the natural landscape is a focal point in the renewables debate. At the local level, various actors' responses to new wind energy developments in related to how these actors define and symbolize place (McLachlan, 2009). When conflicts over wind turbines arise, "[they] can be understood as struggles over the conception of rurality and governance itself" (Bues, 2018, p. 34). Residents' connection to the land forms the basis for support or opposition to wind farms. Combining the emotional bonds of the family and friends they live near with a sense of familiarity of locations and landmarks creates a special place attachment (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010). This attachment can be positive, creating a sense of community and a care for the spaces where people live (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010). From the perspective of new wind farms, 'place attachment' transforms into 'place protection'. Bues (2018) describes this opposition as arising

“when new developments disrupt pre-existing emotional attachments and threaten place related identity processes” (p. 36). Additionally, an actor’s decision to support or oppose a new project depends on how well the new project visually fits into the existing landscape (Wolsink, 2000).

Whereas the imagery of Canada as a country of vast, natural spaces is a positive connotation for natural resource extraction, it has the opposite effect for new wind turbines or farms. Opponents cite concerns about the transformation of natural landscapes into landscapes of industrial power (Warren et al., 2005). In other words, “wind energy projects have been shown to aggravate tensions between those who value a landscape for its beauty to be consumed visually, and those who value the land for its capacity to produce” (Fast et al., 2015, p. 182). As the literature review revealed, there are a variety of reasons that opposition to wind farms in Ontario has arisen. However, “the key motivation for anti-windfarm campaigners is opposition to the visual despoliation of valued landscapes” (Warren et al., 2005, p. 857). This importance is a constant that binds together opposition. When other sensory concerns such as noise are raised, the visual landscape factor remains the most important, as it does for opponents to wind farms whether they are questioned about specific projects or simply their general disposition to wind power implementation (Wolsink, 2007).

This opposition, even if it is in minority, provides a very important insight into present and future Canadian energy projects. Renewable energy projects signal a new relationship between landscape and energy because they require a wide dispersion of infrastructure in spaces where they can best be utilized (i.e., wind turbines are inserted into the landscape where they can best capture the wind) and provide a visual reminder that the energy society requires comes from somewhere (Nadaï & van der Horst, 2010). This is a key distinction between wind projects and oil projects. Oil and gas reserves occur in specific places where the resource is discovered under

the ground; in this instance, infrastructure such as pipelines serves as a reminder of the natural resources that are the driver of the Canadian economy (Barney, 2017). Pipelines, sometimes under the ground, transport bitumen from sites of extraction to heavily industrialized ports or other zones, often through areas of very low population density. New pipelines don't impact residential areas or provide a contrasting visual as they are imagined. Wind turbines in Ontario have been built next to busy highways, in hills surrounding small towns and so-called 'cottage country' areas, and areas where an established 'rustic' rurality has already existed. Only one city in Alberta, Fort McMurray, is situated in and around the oil sands and its economy is based around oil extraction. In Ontario, wind turbines share the same land with multiple economic interests, including agriculture and tourism.

Debates around the impact on the landscape that wind turbines have creates a unique nuance in debates about the environment. Typically, these debates are between the need to for awareness of environmental costs versus arguments surrounding economic prosperity, with 'green' arguments neatly fitting into one side (Warren et al., 2005). Wind energy debates involve environmental arguments on both sides. Wind farm opponents argue that turbines not only spoil the natural landscape such as hills and coastlines, but also threaten local animals (Bell et al., 2005; Toke et al., 2008). This debate is further intensified when wind farms are built in places that are either prized for their natural beauty or considered particularly ecologically important (Warren et al., 2005). When wind energy becomes a contested process, visual assessment of the project is a key factor that will lead support or opposition.

Opposition to wind energy on the basis of changes to the landscape are not a unique phenomenon to Ontario. The connecting theme of this opposition across state borders is that it is based on traditional cultural reference points. What is termed the "pastoral idyll" of the United

States or the United Kingdom or the summer vacation traditions of Scandinavia is the idyll of the Canadian lakeside cottage (Fast et al., 2015, p. 188). The landscape is valued for its natural beauty, wilderness and the escape from life in modern urban areas (Fast et al., 2015). Cottage goers view rural Ontario as areas of ‘untouched’ wilderness and beautiful natural scenes that provide a comforting background. Wind turbines represent a reminder of the large-scale industrialization of urban life, ‘spoiling’ areas that are supposed to remain untouched from civilization. This view obscures the fact that cottages are reproductions of the comforts of modern life (Fast et al., 2015) and rely on a modern energy supply that wind farms can create in an eco-friendly manner. Anti-wind energy actors question why these landscapes need to be “sacrificed for national or global ends... turning the ‘rural’ or ‘wildernesses into an outdoor industrial production plant” (Barry et al., 2008, p. 73-74; 79). These examples indicate that as states (or provinces) continue to transition towards sustainable energy, opposition will not simply come in the form of legacy energy supplies versus newer green technology (Warren et al., 2005). Even as support for the transition towards sustainable energy is high, local opposition that questions the ‘greenness’ of this transition. The following section analyzes the divide between supporters and opponents of Ontario wind farms at the local level and examines how each group defines rural identity.

Debates on Rurality and Nature in Ontario

Investigating place attachment vis-à-vis new wind energy projects is important to understanding opposition to Ontario’s policy of sustainability from 2003-2018. Scholarship containing interviews with local actors in areas of new wind turbine developments have shown that place is an important factor for both supporters and opponents (Bergquist et al., 2020). When communities consider whether new wind projects ‘fit’, opposition or support is based on the

perceived identity of the local landscape (Shaw et al., 2015). Intersecting this perception is views on the economics of wind turbines. Those that perceive of turbines as invasive to natural spaces worry about the loss of property values, while supporters view turbines as providing a potential economic windfall (Krause, Pierce & Steel, 2016).

As mentioned above, opponents of wind turbines conceptualize rural landscapes as natural areas mostly free from human activity. When studying anti-wind movements in Brandenburg, Germany and Ontario, Bues (2018) found that “both anti-wind movements associated wind turbines with being ‘industrial’ objects, which were ‘imposed’ on the ‘pristine areas’” (p. 41). It is important to note that recent studies have shown no correlation between support or opposition for wind turbines and the ability to view turbines from home (Chappell et al., 2021). This further reinforces the importance of the imagery and conception of place that has been constructed over time. Just as Canadian national identity and the importance of natural resource extraction to that identity has been built upon over time, so have ideas of rurality in Ontario. This also challenges that assertion that opponents of wind turbines are an example of NIMBYism that Premier McGuinty claimed. Opponents are not merely opposed to wind turbines near them but are seeking to preserve a specific rural identity (Hill & Knott, 2010). These modern turbines are seen as opposing this long-standing identity and are opposed in three ways: as industrializing threats to natural spaces, as economic threats primarily via the decrease of property rights, and by challenging precisely how ‘green’ these projects are.

Wind turbine opponents in Ontario framed them as mechanized objects that would transform rural areas into industrial wastelands (Bues, 2018). This ‘industrial versus rural’ framing is an important part of opposition movements against wind energy. A common phrase in the vernacular of renewable energy is to refer to projects with multiple wind turbines as farms.

Opponents deliberately avoid using the term. A ‘wind farm’ conjures an image of a peaceful, clean project that also ties in nicely with a rural landscape via use of the term farm (Barry et al., 2008). Energy projects are instead given industrialized names to try to further create a divide between these projects and the rural landscape they will be built in. An anti-wind energy campaign in rural Wales referred to the proposed project as a power station, “[which] conjures up imagery of large factories with chimneys belching forth smoke and pollution... not something that fits well or will blend into their location” (Haggett & Toke, 2006, p. 117). This argument has also been made in Ontario. Wolfe Island, located in eastern Lake Ontario is host to an eighty-six-turbine wind farm finalized in 2009. A resident of the island opposed to the project invoked this industrial imagery when interviewed, stating that the turbines “are huge machines requiring hundreds of kilometres of new roads and concrete and substations. They forever change the landscape into something that doesn’t fit here. They are industrializing our natural spaces” (quoted in Fast et al., 2015, p. 186). Despite the longstanding presence of human activity on the island, wind farms are construed as invading supposed untouched natural spaces.

Another argument made involved economic damage that the project would do to the local area. Other residents stated that the turbines had destroyed the pristine landscape that attracted tourists and new permanent residents (Fast et al., 2015). Given that Wolfe Island is in a relatively remote location, new permanent residents are likely to be either recently retired people moving from urban centres or those with enough wealth to leave heavily urbanized areas. Not only do these residents move to rural spaces for their idyllic landscape, but they also possess both time and money to fight these developments (Jami & Walsh, 2017). Connected to this is the fear that wind farms will lead to a decline in property values for surrounding properties (Fast et al., 2015). This fear is not a unique concern to the residents of Wolfe Island. Another focus group in

Ontario interviewed about wind turbines stated that it was obvious that people who turned down the chance to purchase property in the area near newly built wind turbines were considering the changed aesthetics as the main reason for doing so (Bues, 2018).

Finally, opposition to projects in Ontario stems from challenging the potential environmental benefits of wind energy. National Wind Watch (NWW) is a coalition of anti-wind energy groups based in the United States that lists fifty-four Ontario based groups in its “Allies” section. Directly on the front page of the NWW website is the claim that that the benefits of wind energy are greatly exaggerated, while the NWW ‘About Us’ webpage makes the claim that, by fighting against wind energy projects that threaten the natural landscape and wildlife, the NWW and their allies are in fact advancing a stronger pro-environmental argument than environmental groups whose “unquestioning support for and promotion of industrial wind power is at odds with their concern or the natural environment” (National Wind Watch, n.d.). Compiling newspaper articles, government documents and created fact sheets and infographics, NWW explicitly makes use of terms such as ‘power station’, ‘industrial projects’, and other terms that place wind energy in opposition to traditional rural environments.

Another environmental argument advanced is that wind farms threaten the heritage value of important or unique landscapes. The Association to Protect Amherst Island (APAI)¹ submitted a request to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment that argued that the creation of a “massive wind power generation plant on Amherst Island will visually and physically diminish the heritage value of all landscape and built heritage resources” (Fast et al., 2015, p. 188). When the proposed sites for building turbines had met the criteria laid out under provincial government rules, opponents mused about trying to get the entire island as a cultural heritage landscape. As

¹ The APAI is one of two Amherst Island groups listed under the Allies – Ontario section on the National Wind Watch website <https://www.wind-watch.org/allies.php#can>.

Fast et al. (2015) notes, “[s]uch a proposal requires an idealized and romanticized view of the place fixed in an imagined peaceful past. Many older island residents do not identify with this sentiment; nevertheless the discourse of wind turbines as industrialization... acts to enable such a proposal [sic]” (p. 191). This example provides two key insights. First, it reinforces the industrialization narrative that many opponents of wind energy use. Second, it shows that conceptions of rural Ontario as pristine landscapes are based not on the historical experience of residents, but on imagined concepts of what ‘should’ constitute rural spaces. From a neo-Gramscian perspective, this creates a common sense narrative that brings together windfarm opponents. Critically, this common sense is both contested by other narratives and not backed up by powerful actors as is the case with the oil and gas industry, meaning that it is not hegemonic. This is also the guess with the opposing viewpoint that wind turbines are a positive addition to rural Ontario, discussed in the remainder of this section.

Supporters of wind energy projects conceive of their land and community differently. For example, farmers who earn a living off the land see wind turbines as another option for producing income from the land (Jami & Walsh, 2017). Instead of seeing rural spaces as areas as natural or unindustrialized, these farmers see the land as representing an economic tool. A supporter of the Wolfe Island energy project stated, “the landscape is always changing, 200 years ago there were aboriginal settlements, then farms, now there are a bunch of retirement homes on the shorelines. The wind turbines are simply the next change” (Fast et al., 2016, p. 186).

Likewise, in Haldimand County, Ontario, supporters saw wind turbines as both an opportunity to make money and as an economic opportunity given that all the local coal-fired power plants were closing (Jami & Walsh, 2017). In both instances, wind energy represents the latest in a continually changing narrative about *what* residents do to make a living and *how* they use the

land to do so. Generally, supporters of wind turbines who downplayed concerns about landscape change tended to be life-long residents of the area (Fast et al., 2015). Additionally, supporters and opponents differ in whether they consider crop/animal farming as the only economic identity of rural areas (Bergquist, et al., 2020).

If rural areas are being seen through the idealized lens of traditional farming surrounded by untouched natural areas, then wind turbines will be seen as intruding upon that vision. Meanwhile, supporters of wind energy projects view the rural landscape as constantly changing as economic needs of locals changes over time, where wind turbines are the latest form of industrialization in rural areas, after power lines, highways, and other aspects of human activity (Bergquist et al., 2020). Sixty years ago, two-thirds of rural residents lived on a farm; today, only one in eight rural Canadians directly work in agriculture, leading to the dominant perception being that rural spaces are unworked natural landscapes (Fast et al., 2015). Neither groups can claim their view on landscape it totally dominant over the other (Fast et al., 2015). In other words, neither argument about wind turbines is hegemonic nor has become a totalizing common sense in the way that continuing extraction of oil sands has become at the federal level. The final section of this chapter details this further to explain why Ontario has not seen the same middle ground coalition form in the wake of a change of government in 2018.

No Need for Compromise: The War of Position in Ontario Climate Politics

The previous sections have established that wind energy politics in Ontario has been a contested process. Protests in rural areas against wind energy projects are widespread throughout the developed world, although not all of these protests have been strong enough to affect the policy process (Bues, 2018). In Ontario, the Liberal government's policy choices and the discussions afterwards have led to an intensification of the rhetoric surrounding wind farms

(Walker et al., 2014). The backlash against the government, especially after the implementation of the Green Energy Act, was quite strong. The strength of this opposition movement was enough to get opposition politicians to call for a moratorium on turbine construction in 2011 (Walker et al., 2014). This opposition to wind energy has also build upon previous political cleavages in the province. As opposition to wind energy arose, “the politics of anti-industrial development in rural areas, and claims of NIMBY from urban quarters, seems to be combining with the pre-existing geographical division of partisan support to further fuel dissent and promote opposition to wind energy” (Walker et al., 2018, p. 678). McGuinty’s comments that opponents of wind energy were simply opposing the projects ‘in their backyard’ provided more incentive for opposition movements. As Haggett and Toke (2006) note, “[p]rotagonists who may be vulnerable to claims that they are ‘NIMBies’, may therefore attempt to universalize their cases” (p. 113-114). As with McGuinty’s NIMBY rhetoric, opposition political rhetoric has also been divisive (Chappell et al., 2021). This political commentary has aided in stoking opposition movements against the government’s renewable energy transition.

Beyond strong words and protests, this opposition has also been successful in shifting the government’s policies. These successes have included smaller delays to projects all the way up to getting temporary moratoriums passed in municipalities (Ferguson-Martin & Hill, 2011). For example, after continuous criticism about the Green Energy Act’s Fit-in-Tariff program It was disbanded in June of 2013, causing new energy contracts to not be issues for two years while a new policy was created (Fast et al., 2016). This culminated in the complete cancellation of any renewable energy procurement by the Ontario government in 2016 (Bues, 2018). The continual opposition built up pressure against the Liberal government, causing project delays, changes to policies, and outright cancellations.

This highlights one of the critical differences between the two industries studied in this paper. Ontario's green energy policy lacks a strong regulatory framework to support it; therefore, renewable energy development is tied to the Liberal Party (Jami & Walsh, 2017). The oil and gas industry in Canada is backed by a robust regulatory framework in addition to a consensus around its importance amongst mainstream political actors. With the 2018 electoral defeat of the Ontario Liberal Party, the entire governance apparatus supporting the wind energy industry was also defeated it. As will be discussed below, this has allowed the incumbent PC government to scale back Ontario's commitment to renewable energies.

While there has been a lack of broad political support for wind energy programs in Ontario, studies from other Canadian provinces show that this does not have to be the case. In Nova Scotia, support for the province's wind energy program cut across party lines (Chappell et al., 2021). In Nova Scotia, "the lack of a divide among provincial leaders was paramount and this led to the popularity of renewable energy" (Walker et al., 2018, p. 675). This included the support of the Nova Scotia Progressive Conservative Party. While opposition to wind energy projects exists in Nova Scotia, "it does not get widespread traction – likely because of the endorsements of wind energy by all political parties (Walk et al., 2018, p. 678). The lack of consensus amongst Ontario political parties has meant that anti-wind farm groups were able to successfully attach their opposition to a political party, making it an electoral issue. This is not surprising given the importance competition between political parties greatly shape attitudes towards policies (Fraune & Knodt, 2018). Another key issue was the technocratic approach to wind energy alienated those that felt they were not 'policy winners' under the Liberal government (Walker et al., 2018). Ontario citizens against wind energy projects were able to successfully tap into this alienation. Importantly, they were able to combine that with support

from political actors, especially at the municipal level (Bues, 2018). This technocratic, top-down approach not only allowed for opposition movements to gain traction, but also prevented the government's policy from coming across as a 'common sense' policy measure to combat climate change.

The 2018 election of populist Doug Ford signalled the end of government support for the other actors in Ontario's climate coalition, namely local residents who agreed to have turbines on their property, the corporations invested and manufacturing wind turbines. In 2018, ninety-six percent of Ontario's electricity grid came from carbon zero sources, although the majority of that comes from nuclear energy (seven percent was wind energy). With a number of those stations poised to go temporarily offline for restorations and Ontario's energy needs set to triple over the next decade, the new Ford government has chosen to use natural gas as a replacement instead of another renewable (McIntosh, 2021; Rosenbloom & Meadowcraft, 2014). A 2020 auditor general report stated that Ontario was at risk of missing its stated climate targets, as "the issue didn't appear to be a cross-government priority" (McIntosh, 2020). The lack of a robust regulatory framework has allowed the Ford government to pivot away from renewables, unlike at the federal level where the Trudeau government had to account for the oil industry in its climate policy decision-making.

Doug Ford's neoliberal populist critique focused on pricing attacks of the previous government's climate policies (Raymond, 2020). Neoliberal populist attacks on climate policies are not unique to Ontario. Policies that seek to transform national (or in the case of Ontario, provincial) energy systems represent a threat to the right-wing populist desire to support the underlying neoliberal market economy and more traditional jobs that fit that model (Fraune & Knodt, 2018). And, just as the conservative climate coalition at the federal level has established

that support for the oil industry represents the common sense approach, anti-wind actors have sought to exclude wind energy from the common sense solution to climate change (Haggett & Toke, 2006). For example, these groups may state that they agree about the need for climate action, but they question the urgency, the effectiveness of wind energy as a solution, and the ability of governments to solve the problem effectively (Haggett & Toke, 2006). Combined with the claim that wind turbines ‘damage’ the natural landscapes they are placed in, these critiques call into question the appropriateness of wind turbines as a policy tool. When the Ford government can cancel partially built wind farms and successfully make the argument that it does not make economic sense to continue, or that Ontario’s renewable energy supply is sufficient, it demonstrates that, despite the support of the Liberal government for fifteen years, the wind energy industry has been unable to become a common sense option.

The Ford government’s electoral success in 2018 does not signal the end of wind energy in Ontario. Rather, it demonstrates that the war of position over the province’s climate politics remains an ongoing process. Over time, quarrels over the effects they have on the landscape may fade as a new picture of the landscape that normalizes wind turbines’ existence in it emerges (Krause et al., 2016). Wind turbines represent a relatively new technology and exist in spaces previous energy options do not. Additionally, debates over new forms of energy are not exclusive to new renewable technology, as demonstrated by debates over nuclear power and hydroelectric dams shows (Wustenhagen et al., 2007). Ontario’s experience with wind energy politics highlights that “[l]ong-term energy transitions ‘will prove to be a messy, conflictual, and highly disjointed process’” (Bues, 2018, p. 35). If the transition to renewables in the energy sector is to become a more permanent process, it must be backed up by a stronger regulatory framework. Non-governmental actors involved in the wind energy industry should also seek to

build more consensus across the political spectrum, as has happened with the oil industry at the federal level. Doing so will provide a level of continuity over time as governments are replaced to challenges to the transition emerge.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Overall, the cases of the oil industry and the Ontario wind energy industry show the importance of ideology in Canadian climate politics. What separates the two cases is the dominant economic interests present at the federal level, where industry, civil society and political parties all legitimize the idea that Canada is a nation of natural resource extraction (MacNeil & Paterson, 2018). When former Conservative minister of the environment Jim Prentice stated, “we extract resources from our abundant natural resources... we’re blessed in every sense to profit as much as we do,” it reinforced this narrative (quoted in Barney, 2017, p. 78). In Ontario, anti-wind protesters receiving support from a major political party and municipalities was critical. In comparison to other jurisdictions with similar protests rooted in similar concerns about the landscape, this elevated the opposition movement and garnered more attention (Bues, 2018). Ontario also showcases that green transitions are susceptible to attacks from neoliberal populist politics (Raymond, 2020). These two case studies show that sustainable transitions in Canada are a complex, uneven process. This aligns with recent literature that green transitions will not be orderly, top-down processes (Newell et al., 2020). This chapter concludes the arguments made in previous chapters and discusses the near future for Canadian climate politics. It concludes with a discussion of areas for future research moving forward.

Moving forward, the oil sands look to remain a significant economic priority. Purchases of foreign owned assets in the oil sands, first by Canadian capital and then by the government itself, reinforces support for the oil industry (Carroll, 2020). Any progress that the Trudeau government is set to make via carbon pricing or other green policies is set to be undone if pipeline expansion goes ahead and locks in carbon emission increases for decades (MacNeil, 2020). From a neo-Gramscian perspective, the dominant historic bloc appears more than capable

of adapting to future challenges to its hegemony. The inability of the middle ground coalition to more effectively balance efforts to fight climate change, “reflects the current balance of forces in Canadian society. Oil companies have succeeded in building alliances that are much more extensive and powerful than movement for climate” (Bernauer, 2020, p. 170). This imbalance of power will stop meaningful action to curtail the carbon emissions emitting and limit climate action to other aspects of environmental policy.

While the Liberal Party’s 2015 election platform place climate initiatives at the foreground, this has not materialized. Even with a majority government for the first four years, Trudeau’s support for the oil industry has been robust. Only two years after being elected, the “unordinary” standing ovation he received from over one thousand oil industry delegates in Houston, Texas underscores this (Berke, 2017). And support for non-industry or government actors has been remained strong as well. Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) CEO David McKay called expansion of pipelines “essential” and that RBC, “has a big stake in getting this right... describing RBC as Canada’s leading energy bank” (Daub & Carroll, 2016). In his speech, McKay made the same arguments that Trudeau has, stating that new bitumen pipelines were necessary to fund a green transition. McKay’s assertion that RBC had a big stake in ‘getting this right’ refers not to the transition to sustainability, but the continued economic success of the oil industry. RBC owned the third largest number of shares in 2015 and received the second largest percentage of revenue from 2010-2015 (Carroll & Huijzer, 2018). This shows the significant embeddedness of the oil industry in the Canadian economic and financial fields.

This arrangement appears to be quite beneficial. The Liberal Party’s less alienating approach, combined with their lack of serious climate action, will allow the hegemonic actors to continue to benefit from a supportive government while criticism is less pointed (Neubauer,

2018). This support is perhaps more critical than ever. With international oil companies selling off major stakes in the oil sands due to the prospect of permanently lower oil prices, the oil sands—more expensive to extract than other sources of oil—is going through a process of “Canadianization” as international actors do not see a future in Northern Alberta (MacLean, 2018a, p. 70). Permanently lower oil prices make Canada’s plan to rapidly sell its oil supplies while global demand still lasts more tenuous (Carroll, 2020). Presently, this plan remains unchanged. As Pineault (2018) states, “a [Canadian] hegemonic class complex will purposefully exercise state power to lock in capitalist development around an extractivist trajectory” (p. 144). As long as the current historic bloc remains hegemonic, pro-oil sands development looks set to remain a priority over meaningful climate action.

From the beginning of Ontario’s wind energy program, opposition at the local level where projects are located has been strong. The differing valuation of the landscape from supporters and opponents is arises from differing visions of what rural spaces ought to look like (Fast et al., 2015). This is an important point because research indicates that as the amount of wind power projects increases, landscape issues become more important in states where resistance based on this is present (Toke et al., 2008). In Ontario, what is important is that this issue has become politicized (Holtz, 2014). Climate change debates in the province draw upon this wedge to garner support. This appears to be a continuation of previously existing partisan decisions (Walker et al., 2018). This point is further reinforced by the experience of wind energy implementation in Nova Scotia. Political consensus pushed local opposition to the political fringe (Walker et al., 2018), unlike in Ontario where the two largest parties are divided on this issue.

In contrast to oil politics at the federal level, one particular coalition has been unable to establish a hegemonic view on what the common sense approach to electricity supply should look like. Despite the promise that the Green Energy Act would create jobs and economic growth (Government of Ontario, 2009), Doug Ford's combination of neoliberal discourse and populism successfully allied with anti-wind farm actors. Even as some of the Ford government's attempts to dismantle wind energy projects is rejected in the courts, the government has invested nearly three billion dollars into natural gas plants to meet Ontario's future energy needs (McIntosh, 2020). In the fifteen years the Liberal Party was in government, they were unable to successfully make wind energy a common sense solution. Because of that, the war of position between the two main climate coalitions in Ontario remains. The lack of a hegemonic historic bloc also renders a middle ground coalition unneeded, unlike in the oil industry.

Looking ahead, the current state of Canadian climate politics has the potential to be simultaneously economically and environmentally precarious. As the demand for fossil fuels decreases, the fixed capital in the oil industry will have trouble adjusting (Carroll, 2020). Simultaneously, a relatively weak carbon price created not to upset major oil producers will not lead to lower carbon emissions, putting Canada's emissions targets in jeopardy of being missed (MacNeil 2020; MacNeil 2021). Achieving Canada's goals in the Paris Agreement would require a number of policy changes. In terms of the oil industry, this necessitates both an increase in carbon pricing measure and ending subsidies to the industry from government (Parr et al., 2017). Prior to the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 federal election, there appeared to be some signs that the Trudeau government would be making climate change a larger government focus. This included the appointment of Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland to the finance portfolio in a move that was seen as putting someone more amenable to

significant investment in climate policies in the position (Lindeman, 2020). While it is too soon to say if this will happen, the track record of the Trudeau government suggests that a substantial change in the government's stance towards the oil industry would need to occur.

While the oil industry is currently hegemonic, no hegemony is permanent and is always vulnerable to counter-hegemonic challenges. Addressing Canada's extractive hegemony should be a primary concern for counter-activism (Bernauer, 2020). The very same mechanisms that support extractive hegemony—i.e., industry lobbying, media campaigns, community engagement, academic research and government allies—can be the basis for a counter-hegemonic movement (MacLean, 2018a, p. 73-74). Such an undertaking will not be easy. It will require a coherent message that simultaneously articulates solutions to the climate crisis and Canada's economic future: without an organized movement, overcoming the strong position pro-oil actors are in will not be possible (MacNeil, 2021). Included in this must be a plan for to transition the workforce in the fossil fuels industry into the renewable energy sector (Carroll, 2020). Given the division of power between federal and provincial governments, reaching consensus will not be easy.

Despite the acknowledgement of the severity of the climate crisis, oil industry advocates remain steadfast in their support. Current Alberta Premier Jason Kenney called a green energy transition a "pie in the sky" scheme, stating that the Alberta government's focus was on jobs and growth in the oil sands (McIntosh, 2020). Kenney famously created a "war room" to combat any anti-energy campaigns (Smith, 2020). Canada's right-wing parties are, with some exceptions, wedded to supporting expansion of the country's fossil fuel industries. The most recent leadership campaign for the federal Conservative Party did not feature a single candidate articulating a green energy vision (Smith, 2020). The Harper government's energy superpower

ideology remains a strong ideological influence (MacNeil & Paterson, 2018). While this remains, articulating a transition away from fossil fuels will be met with stiff resistance. Kenney's 'war room' invokes a sense that such propositions are fundamental attacks on Albertans (or Canadians if a wider campaign were to take place).

In Ontario, the reversal of the McGuinty government's environmental policies continues. The Ford government is currently seeking to remove legislation requiring that all future electricity projects consider the promotion of renewable energy before declaring these projects to be in the public interest (McIntosh, 2021). This is occurring at the same time that projected carbon emissions are set to triple as a result of the government's shift to natural gas instead of renewables to make up the province's supply gap (McIntosh, 2021). If renewable energy transitions are to remain sustainable, the focus must be on understanding how opposition becomes strong enough to convince political actors to articulate this at the legislative level. Given that landscape concerns are so prominent in this, attention should be paid to creating a governance regime that can adequately address these concerns and articulate a vision of local landscapes that include wind turbines or other renewable technologies (Nadai & van der Horst, 2010). Doing so should involve understanding how to connect the goals of renewable energy transitions to the varied ideologies of individuals (Walker et al., 2018). Without achieving consensus on the need for future energy needs to be fulfilled by renewable sources, the war of position in Ontario climate politics will continue.

Finally, future research can investigate this topic in a number of ways. Broadly, research should continue to investigate how, and on whose terms, sustainable transitions will be undertaken (Newell et al., 2020). Neo-Gramscian theory points to the importance of cultural and social impacts on economic and political decisions. Future research can build upon the existing

literature “to further develop our understanding of the social dynamics of climate policy-making and governance” (Howe et al., 2021, p. 9). Specific to Canadian climate politics, future research should focus on the role of the state in facilitating or blocking progress on climate change. Specifically, looking into the role that the rollback of previous environmental legislation can aid in understanding the strength of pro-extractivism forces (MacNeil, 2014b). Investigating the interaction between the various climate coalitions would also be useful. With the political terrain constantly shifting (Bernauer, 2020), understanding these dynamics will be important if one is to articulate a vision for moving beyond fossil fuels. Finally, recent developments internationally are also going to potentially be important. In the United Kingdom, calls for the Conservative government to actively pursue a green transition as an economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic are an interesting contrast to conservative politics domestically (Harvey, 2021). The lack of a green energy champion on the Canadian right highlights that research should investigate why there is currently a refusal to articulate a ‘Conservative Party of Canada’ transition plan.

Moving forward, energy transitions are going to continue to affect the landscape. With that being the case, future research should focus on which types of energy governance produce the greatest consensus or adequately deal with opposition (Nadai & van der Horst, 2010). Current research indicates that long-standing cultural dispositions towards the value of the local landscape can predict the relative strength of opposition movements compared to jurisdictions where such cultural views are lacking (Toke et al., 2008). Future research should focus on how these cultural dynamics manifest themselves into strong local opposition. Additionally, attention should be paid to the relationship between local actors who value rural landscapes for their economic activity versus those that seek to preserve the landscape. Without a high level of

tolerance at the local level, wind power cannot successfully generate a major proportion of a jurisdiction's energy supply (Toke et al., 2008). Focusing on the dynamics at the local level and how these connect to climate coalitions at the national or provincial level can illuminate how debates over renewable energy will evolve going forward. Finally, attention should be paid to the rise of right-wing populism, specifically movements that occur within Canada (see Budd, 2020). These political movements have the potential to inflate the backlash against energy transitions in ways that will hamper progress. The transition to sustainable energy will not be a smooth process. In Canada, the political divisions of power, the strength of Canada's national imagery as a country of abundant natural resources, and the strength of the historic bloc supporting the national oil industry are all obstacles on the path to a green transition. As Canada's climate coalitions continue to articulate their visions for the future of Canada's climate change response, overcoming these obstacles are paramount to achieving a substantial transition that will transition Canada into the green economy of the future.

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Vita Auctoris

NAME: Michael Dodich

PLACE OF BIRTH: Windsor, ON

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1992

EDUCATION: Vincent Massey High School, Windsor, ON, 2010

University of Windsor, B.A.[H], Windsor, ON, 2014

University of Windsor, M.A., Windsor, ON, 2022