Fueling the Future:
Narrative Constructions of Energy Transition in Alberta

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Abstract/Résume

This master's thesis interrogates how pro-oil government and industry engage with the politics of energy transition, asking the following questions: how do actors with a vested interest in maintaining oil and gas production engage a potential future beyond fossil fuels? Which narratives do industry and government draw upon to articulate their vision for the future of energy? Which stakeholders appear as central characters in these narratives? To answer these questions, I analyze Twitter data and legislative transcripts from the first quarter of 2021, using narrative analysis, to compare how the Government of Alberta and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers depict the future of energy production in Canada. I demonstrate that government and industry deploy convergent narrative portrayals of energy transition as presently underway, but dependent upon continued production of oil and natural gas. Both actors activate 'green' and 'economic' frames in equal proportion, relying upon the ideal of technological innovation as the bridge to make unabated extraction compatible with lowering emissions. In this narrative, oil and gas companies are portrayed as both a fragile victim and a valiant hero, requiring government defence against villainous foreign governing bodies and environmental activists. Indigenous Peoples and energy sector workers emerge as secondary victims in this story: both groups are framed as entirely dependent upon fossil fuel production for economic prosperity and at risk of losing quality of life at the hands of out-of-touch politicians and activists.

Ce mémoire de maîtrise interroge la manière dont les gouvernements et l'industrie pro-pétrole s'engagent dans la politique de transition énergétique, en posant les questions suivantes : comment les acteurs ayant un intérêt direct dans le maintien de la production de pétrole et de gaz s'engagent-ils dans un avenir potentiel au-delà des combustibles fossiles ? Quels sont les récits sur lesquels l'industrie et le gouvernement s'appuient pour articuler leur vision de l'avenir de l'énergie ? Quelles parties prenantes apparaissent comme des personnages centraux dans ces récits ? Pour répondre à ces questions, j'analyse les données Twitter et les transcriptions législatives du premier trimestre 2021, en utilisant l'analyse narrative, pour comparer la façon dont le gouvernement de l'Alberta et l'Association canadienne des producteurs pétroliers dépeignent l'avenir de la production d'énergie au Canada. Je démontre que le gouvernement et l'industrie déploient des représentations narratives convergentes de la transition énergétique comme étant actuellement en cours, mais dépendant de la production continue de pétrole et de gaz naturel. Les deux acteurs activent les cadres « verts » et « économiques » dans les mêmes proportions, en s'appuyant sur l'idéal de l'innovation technologique comme moyen de rendre l'extraction continue compatible avec la réduction des émissions. Dans ce récit, les compagnies pétrolières et gazières sont présentées à la fois comme des victimes fragiles et des héros courageux, qui doivent être défendus par le gouvernement contre les méchants organes de gouvernance étrangers et les militants écologistes. Les peuples autochtones et les travailleurs du secteur de l'énergie apparaissent comme des victimes secondaires dans cette histoire: ces deux groupes sont présentés comme entièrement dépendants de la production de combustibles fossiles

pour leur prospérité économique et risquent de perdre leur qualité de vie aux mains de politiciens et d'activistes dépassés.

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This thesis is dedicated to my dead dog Treble, who had bad breath and didn't know what oil was, but somehow still managed to live fifteen years as the very best girl in the world.

List of Abbreviations

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP)
Canada Energy Regulator (CER)
Community-Industry Response Group (C-IRG)
Designated Public Office Holders (DPOHs),
Environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs)
Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)
International Energy Agency (IEA)
Keystone XL Pipeline (KXL)
Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)
New Democratic Party (NDP)
Royal Mounted Police (RCMP)
United Conservative Party (UCP)
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

> Although it would be an exaggeration to say we are all greens now it is true to say that green politics has become an established perspective in political and moral debates…green politics in this sense is no longer 'green', in the sense of 'immature', and nor is a concern with the environment the exclusive province of self-proclaimed greens **(**John Barry 1999, 1).

As noted by John Barry, we may not all be greens, but we certainly all talk like greens do. The days of outright climate denial have given way to the era of climate delay (Lamb 2020), whereby oil and gas companies are increasingly framing their image in the language of environmentalism without matching words with actions (Li et al 2022). As the nonrenewable status quo comes under increasing material threat due to escalating impacts of climate change, the interests of the fossil fuel industry and the willingness of government to bend towards them has become a subject of fascination for observers across academia, popular media, and activist circles. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the most intensive corporate carbon emitters and the governments who sustain them are increasingly infusing their communication with the language of sustainability: talking green has been made compatible with continued, unabated extraction.

In this context, terms like "energy transition" are essentially contested. Two people may use the term interchangeably, while holding completely different imaginations of what a post-transition world looks like: from small technical tweaks to the status quo, to a broad reimagining of how we live and exist in relation to one another. What all these visions seem to hold in common, however, is a focus on altering systems of energy production and consumption to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. Where one lands in this spectrum of reimagining is informed by their broader worldviews, which are communicated through discourse, what Dryzek (1997) describes as "a shared way of apprehending the world" (8). He writes, "embedded in language it enables subscribers to interpret bits of information and

put them together into coherent stories or accounts. Each discourse rests on assumptions, judgements and contentions that provide the basic terms for analysis, debates, agreements and disagreements" (ibid).

The question of what Canada's energy transition will look like — from pace to scale to technical strategies — remains a live debate. This uncertainty has generated contentious conversations on national, provincial, and municipal levels concerning the path forward. Surging temperatures and public interest in lowering them is complicated by Canada's status as a major producer of fossil fuels: the country is home to some of the largest proven oil reserves in the world, ranking third after Venezuela and Saudi Arabia (NRCan 2019). The process of extracting and refining bitumen from petroleum deposits is the single fastest growing source of carbon dioxide emissions in Canada (Adkin 2016, 3). Discussions of the future of our energy systems are most heated in what Haarstad and Wanvik (2017) call "extractive hot zones" — places at the very beginning of the global system of hydrocarbon production (442), where the easily abstracted politics of energy transition are made very concrete. In Canada, the conversation on energy transition is most polarized in the province of Alberta, where the vast majority of the country's oil reserves are located (Kellogg 2021, 141). As phrased by Brownsey (2007): "The oil and gas industry likes to think of itself as national in scope…[but] despite an increase in production in the East Coast Offshore, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and the north, Alberta still dominates the industry" (93). Given the concentration of the energy sector in Alberta, the province is a crucial case study (Gerring 2007) to glean knowledge on competing energy transition discourses.

Focusing on Alberta in an effort to interrogate energy transition discourse in Canada is particularly important, as Canadian climate and energy policy is highly decentralized. The story

of the Canadian oil and gas industry is dominated by power struggles between different levels of government. However, the provinces ultimately hold constitutional jurisdiction over issues relating to natural resources under section 109 of the Constitution Act (Brownsey 2007, 93). Without ambitious leadership on the federal level, individual provinces are given significant power in determining their own energy policy, functioning "akin to ten small countries, with highly diverse resource endowments" (Harrison 2015, 39). Carter et al (2017) argue that this dynamic has driven a pattern of policy convergence in provinces that are economically dependent upon oil and gas extraction, around policymaking that prioritizes economic development over environmental policy. Acknowledging the vast power the province holds over fossil-fuel production in a warming world, Lawson (2022) refers to Alberta as "a consequential canary in a consequential coal mine" (2). Focusing on energy transition on the provincial level provides valuable insight on specific regional discourses that may not be as predominant on the national level, but will have a significant impact on national politics due to the power provinces have in determining their own climate and energy policy.

The goal of this project is to begin to map this field of discourse, in a context that epitomizes a rapidly shifting socioeconomic and political debate. The following questions guide this research: 1) How do actors with a vested interest in maintaining oil and gas production engage with the impending reality of energy transition? 2) Which narratives do industry and government draw upon to articulate their vision for the future of energy? 3) Which stakeholders appear as central characters in these narratives, and how do the victims, villians, and heroes of these stories overlap and diverge? To answer these questions, I compare tweets and Hansard debates from the United Conservative Party of Alberta (UCP) with tweets from the largest fossil fuel lobbying group in Canada, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers.

In this paper, I argue that the United Conservative Party and Canada's oil industry deploy nearly identical narrative portrayals of energy transition as underway, but dependent on the continued dominance of oil and gas in the global energy mix. I demonstrate that, while both actors rarely refer to specific low-carbon energy production technologies, they rely upon activating 'green' and 'economic' frames in tandem to push their preferred outcome of prolonged fossil fuel production. This 'greening' of oil and gas production is articulated through a shared language of industry heroism and victimhood, whereby the energy sector is portrayed simultaneously as a fragile victim and a valiant hero: the fossil fuel industry is depicted as the backbone of society with a long future, while also requiring unrelenting defence from the government. Foreign governing bodies and environmental activists are depicted as the primary villains threatening harm, with Indigenous Peoples and energy sector workers emerging as secondary victims to foreign adversaries in this narrative. The fates of government, industry, and the nation are rendered indivisible and dependent upon continued unabated extraction.

The remainder of this paper is structured into four parts. Chapter 2 serves as a literature review, familiarizing the reader with research on discursive approaches to energy transition. I trace the shift in corporate communications from outright climate denial towards climate delay and identify various trends in framing modes of energy production. Next, I highlight the dominant narratives on energy in Canada, including dirty oil, ethical oil, petronationalism, and more. Finally, I explore the intertwined connections between the oil and gas industry and the state in Canada, identifying patterns in funding, lobbying, and rhetorical support to establish the importance of viewing government and industry narratives as discursively linked.

In Chapter 3, I explore the long-standing tradition of studying narratives in environmental politics, introducing narrative analysis as my theoretical framework. I provide conceptual

definitions, exploring ambiguities in the meaning of 'energy transition' and arguing for a theoretical approach which takes discourses of *destruction* (winding down fossil fuel production) just as seriously as those of *creation* (ramping up low-carbon energy production). Then, I contextualize the first quarter of 2021 as a potent period to study transition-related narratives in Alberta and describe my methodological process for comparing tweets and legislative data from the Alberta Hansards.

I present three main findings from my analysis in Chapter 4. First, both government and industry acknowledge that an energy transition is underway and carve out a discursive space for a long future of oil and gas, portraying industry as leaders in carbon emissions reductions. Second, industry emerges as both hero and victim, leading carbon reduction innovation efforts, upholding the Canadian economy, producing products that sustain society, and meeting global energy demand with ethically produced oil, all while being unrelentingly attacked by out-of-touch foreign critics. Third, energy sector workers and Indigenous Peoples emerge as secondary victims of foreign adversaries and internal traitors targeting Alberta's energy industry.

Chapter 5 concludes this analysis, providing an overview of the paper and highlighting the importance of narratives in entrenching material realities by looking at the evolution of energy transition discourse in Alberta from this snapshot in 2021 to the following years. I argue that, with the ever-greening of energy discourse in Canada, it is more important than ever to retain analytical clarity in viewing transitioning to low-carbon energy systems as both a ramping up and winding down, creation *and* destruction, rather than over-focusing on the deployment of low-carbon energy technologies.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

The mutually reinforcing dynamics of increased urgency, attention, and feasibility in the face of continued fossil fuel production has driven a flurry of research about energy transition in the last decade. This *urgency* is rooted in the undeniable truth that 2013 to 2023 was the warmest ten-year period in recorded history, with 2023 breaking all records as the hottest year on record, 1.45 degrees celsius above pre-industrial baseline temperatures (World Meteorological Association 2024). In the last ten years, concern in Canada over the threat of climate change has been mounting as exposures to severe climate impacts have hit increasingly closer to home. Canadians rank as the third highest per-capita carbon emitters in the world (Ritchie et al 2020) and public opinion research indicates that they are beginning to feel the heat: indexed findings from two decades of polling demonstrate that though belief in anthropogenic climate change in Canada dropped from 2007 to 2011, it has been steadily rising since then (Mathana 2021). A large majority (over 75%) of Canadians are very concerned about the threat of climate change (Hatch 2021, 5). It is no longer possible to ignore the fact that a fire in British Columbia, a drought in Alberta, and a heatwave in Quebec are all rooted in the reality that Canada is warming twice as fast as the world on average (NRCan 2022).

With increased urgency has come greater *attention*: the oil sands have reached the final act of a decades-long crisis of public image. Brulle et al (2020) studied the evolution of five major fossil fuel corporations' advertising spending, finding that total annual promotional expenditures rose from $35 million on average from 1986 to 1998, to an average of $102 million per year from 1997 to 2004, to an average of $217 per year between 2008 and 2016 (93). All five companies in this study operate productions in the Alberta oil sands. The authors identify the key factors in this spending rise as negative media coverage and/or the impending threat of greater

government regulation (98-99), indicating that *attention* is a crucial factor driving industry discourse on climate and energy transition. The signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015 intensified this trend: the governance framework created a new "lowest common consensus on climate" as governments around the world sought to draft decarbonization strategies to adhere to a 1.5 degree warming goal, making the outright denial of the anthropogenic origins of climate crisis untenable (Rajak 2020, 473). Si et al (2023) found that Shell, ExxonMobil, BP, and TotalEnergies all began publicly communicating rapidly about renewable energy on social media post-2015 after relative silence before the signing of the Paris Agreement.

While public opinion tends to be skeptical of direct acts of civil disobedience taken by protestors (Hennig 2020; Fisher et al 2023), efforts from a mass coalition of Indigenous land and water defenders, environmental activists, and anarchists (Bosworth 2022, 3) have been successful in pressuring a global movement away from fossil fuels. In fact, social resistance to energy projects has been successful in delaying, and in some cases cancelling, both fossil-fuel and low-carbon energy projects alike (Janzwood 2020; Temper et al 2020). In 2021, controversy over expanding fossil fuel infrastructure had grown so much that Trans Mountain Corporation successfully made a bid to the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) to allow the company to keep their insurers names a secret from the public, arguing that insurers were "increasingly reluctant" to cover pipeline projects (Bakx 2021).

Moreover, the global movement to divest from fossil fuels has grown beyond its roots on college campuses. For example, in 2021 the third largest public pension fund in the US — the New York Pension Fund, which holds $226 million in assets — announced plans to divest from fossil fuel stocks (Barnard 2021). With the exception of its investment in Suncor Energy, the fund sold off securities totalling $7 million USD from the oilsands (Thurton 2021), stating that

the six Canadian companies included in the divestment "failed to show they are transitioning out of oil sands production" and "do not have viable plans to adapt to the low carbon future" (New York City Comptroller 2021). In other words, expectations around the "social license to operate" (Demuijnk and Fasterling 2016) for extractive industries have increased significantly in the last decade.

This heightened scrutiny of the oil sands has been coupled with an acceleration in the *feasibility* of moving beyond a world powered by fossil fuels*:* the cost of low-carbon alternatives to fossil fuels has dropped rapidly. In December 2022, the International Energy Agency (IEA) forecasted that renewables will surpass coal as the largest source of electricity globally by 2027, while projecting declining shares of the energy mix for coal, natural gas, nuclear and oil (IEA 2022). Canada has also joined a chorus of over 120 countries proclaiming the goal of carbon neutrality or "net-zero" by 2050, pledging to lower emissions and balance out the remaining amount of greenhouse gases emitted with various forms of carbon offsetting (Government of Canada 2022). In 2021, the Canadian government announced a commitment to ending direct funding of fossil fuel extraction internationally (Government of Canada 2023). The global transition from a fossil fuel dominated energy system towards alternative energy futures appears to be underway.

However, despite increased attention to the urgency of climate change and rapid developments in the feasibility of large-scale renewable energy deployment, fossil fuel production continues to expand in Canada and beyond. By 2030, global fossil fuel production is set to be double what is required to align with the 1.5 celsius goal outlined in the Paris Agreement (United Nations Environment Programme 2023). Canada in particular is on track to reach an all-time high in oil production in 2024, leading the world as the fastest growing

producer of crude oil (Bakx 2023). An interdisciplinary bevy of scholarship has been responsive to this complex moment in Canadian history. In the following chapter, I explore three interrelated literatures that inform the study of corporate and government energy transition discourse: (a) the discursive shift on the part of fossil fuel companies from deploying arguments about climate denial to those about climate delay, (b) discourses on energy in Canada, and, (c) the intertwined relationship between the fossil fuel industry and the state in Alberta and Canada.

2.1 From Denial to Delay

Framing struggles have long characterized the fight to legitimize and delegitimize different forms of energy. A large body of literature has focused on identifying the discursive strategies of the fossil fuel industry in an effort to hold corporations accountable for their role in perpetuating misinformation around the causes of climate change. Many studies examining the discourse of the fossil fuel industry have rested on disproving the claims of oil and gas companies, demonstrating the inauthenticity of their commitment to climate action, and highlighting their contribution to spreading misinformation about the anthropogenic roots of climate change (Livesay 2002a; Livesay 2002b; Supran and Oreskes 2020; Li et al 2022). One of the most high-profile examples of this activity is Exxonmobil. Supran and Oreskes (2020) observed that from 1989-2014, Mobil and ExxonMobil Corporation used advertising in the New York Times to express doubt about the existence and seriousness of human-caused climate change. In her textual analyses of Exxonmobil's "advertorials" in the New York Times (2002a) and Shell's first "social report" (2002b), Livesay identifies the discursive struggles of fossil fuel companies over their own images. Her work illustrates the preferences of the oil and gas industry to adopt market-based framing as the primary lens through which to discuss environmental policy, and the convoluted, contradictory language of an industry on the precipice of threat. Fossil fuel

companies like Exxon funded internal climate research agendas as early as 1977, identifying the human-caused origins of climate change ten years before the issue became a pressing public concern that they would then work to undermine for decades to come (Hall 2015).

However, over the past decade, scholars across a range of disciplines have noted the shift by fossil fuel companies from outright climate denial, towards more subtle forms of climate delay. The literature on climate delay addresses forms of communication that may implicitly or explicitly accept the existence of anthropogenic climate change, but emphasizes the negative impacts of climate action and/or raise objections to the feasibility of climate mitigation (Broadbent et al 2016; Roper et al 2016; Lamb et al 2020). For example, Lamb et al (2020) offer twelve types of climate delay framing, grouped into four discourses: redirecting responsibility, pushing for non-transformative solutions, emphasizing the downsides of climate policy, and surrendering to climate change. Within this shift towards delay, deliberately misleading consumers by positively communicating about poor environmental performance — otherwise known as "greenwashing" — has become a particularly common corporate trend (de Freitas Netto 2020).

In this more nuanced landscape of delay, other works have moved to focus on how government and industry have framed specific technologies of energy production, such as hydraulic fracking (Scanlan 2017), petrochemical production (Tilsted 2022), and low-carbon energy (Haggett and Gutak-Campbell 2011; Genus 2015). Amidst the exploration of new avenues of energy production, researchers have noted that some conventional nonrenewable resources have been strategically positioned by both government and industry as requisite for a successful energy transition. This is best exemplified in the framing of gas as a "transition" or "bridge" fuel (Stephenson et al 2012; Chen 2020; Janzwood and Millar 2022).

There is very little research on how oil and gas companies engage via their public social media accounts (Si et al 2023, 2). The majority of examinations of energy transition discourse using Twitter data have focused on using computational methods to conduct sentiment analysis on large datasets of tweets from the public (Kim et al 2021; Zarrabeitia-Bilbao et al 2022; Lammers et al 2023). Si et al (2023) directly focus on corporate Twitter communications, using topic modeling to explore how four major oil companies communicate about renewable energy technologies on twitter from 2009 to 2021. Their research supports previous research on natural gas as a 'bridge' fuel, finding that while each company focuses on different 'green' technologies, all four consistently link renewable energy to natural gas. Looking beyond that power of big data, Twitter data presents a unique opportunity for small-n narrative analysis. Conducting close-reads of each tweet allows one to capture more nuanced discussions of energy transition that may be missed when solely relying on word-searching to build a corpus. Additionally, due to this unique constraint of the communication format (in 2021, Twitter still required users to adhere to a 280-character limit) each excerpt forces the speaker to condense their arguments into a concise package, leaving the characters and plot presented unambiguously to the reader.

2.2 Canadian Energy Discourses

There are an array of competing, evolving, and iterative narratives that inform discussions of energy futures in this country. Kutelava and Leifso (2020) argue that "Canadian oil is more than just a source of revenues and energy", it shapes every aspect of our political culture. The centrality that natural resources hold informs what Moffat et al (2019) describe as a "discursive gridlock" over the symbolic role that the Alberta oil sands play in Canadian politics and culture. Since the discovery of petroleum deposits in northern Alberta, both the oil industry and the Canadian government have operated with an awareness of optics, seeking to mould public

perceptions of oil by framing it as a sign of a stable, thriving nation (Gunster et al 2021a). Davidson and Gismondi (2011) trace this co-produced project, beginning with the earliest recorded photographs of Alberta's petroleum deposits. Then known as "the Athabasca tar sands", the photographs of the sands were taken in the late 1880s, twenty years before the province of Alberta had been officially founded (69). They argue that the photos captured by government geologists and travellers reinforced predominant settler narratives about Canada's Western frontier. These images and their corresponding reports portray the bituminous sands as both remote and miraculous, dangerous and untouched, historic and hard-won by a few brave men. It is through this industrial "government gaze" that 'nature' is transformed into 'resource', legitimizing the Canadian nation-building project as both heroic and successful to domestic and international audiences alike (ibid).

The first self-conscious acknowledgement of a need for rebranding from within the oil industry was made public in 1995, when the Alberta National Task Force on Oil Sands Strategy published a report entitled *The Oil Sands: A New Energy Vision for Canada,* recommending that Alberta bitumen needed to be more effectively branded and sold to Canadians (McCurdy 2018, 39). However action on this recommendation was not taken until in 2010, when CAPP launched its first ever national advertising campaign. McCurdy (2018) traces the evolving arc of CAPPs marketing strategy throughout the decade. From 2010 to 2012, 65% of their advertising was centred upon environmental messaging, featuring romantic, sublime imagery of Alberta with phrases like "Land Matters" superimposed on top, in reactive response to environmental campaigns centred upon the abject decay of tailing pond (40).

This campaign can be understood as a direct response to a "dirty oil" discourse, which portrays fossil fuel extraction as both literally and symbolically toxic. In the 1980s and 1990s,

the phrase “tar sands” was deployed in a neutral manner (Paskey and Williams, 2013). The first documented instance of the term being utilized in an intentionally derogatory way was in February 2008 with the publishing of *Canada’s Toxic Tar Sands: The Most Destructive Project on Earth* by Environmental Defence (ibid, vi; Berg 2008). Only two months later, in April of 2008, 1600 ducks were photographed dead in a Syncrude tailing pond, soaked in oil (CBC 2010). The now infamous image — which would go on to inspire cartoonist Kate Beaton’s bestselling graphic novel *Ducks* over a decade later — marked a turning point, whereby the oil sands became synonymous with a sense of toxicity and danger (Paskey and Williams 2013; Cavna 2022). In 2010, Andrew Nikiforuk’s *Tar Sands: Dirty Oil and the Future of the Continent* coined a new catchphrase for a mounting coalition of environmental activists and Indigenous nations resisting the infrastructure of fossil fuel production.

One way to understand this “dirty oil” discourse is as a response to what Kuteleva and Leifso (2020) describe as the “scientific oil” discourse, which they depict as a fetishization of the development of oil for the sake of scientific progress (7). Technological innovation has always been at the centre of how fossil fuel development has been portrayed by government in this country. For example, Davidson and MacKendrick (2004) identify a related “ecological modernization” discourse permeating Alberta’s integrated resource management policy in the early 2000s. They argue that ecological modernization reconciles “economic growth and environmental degradation through the internalization of environmental costs…particularly through a reliance on science and technology” (49). At the heart of the promise of technological progress is the prospect of profit. As previously discussed, the project of branding Canada’s resources has always been a dual pursuit of selling the sands domestically and abroad. Kuteleva and Leifso (2020) conduct an intertextual discourse analysis of a diverse range of texts

portraying oil in Canada from 2005 to 2018, including photographs, museum exhibits, and government documents. They find a predominant discourse of "Canada as an energy superpower" — Canadian oil is marketed as a uniquely reliable, profitable, and positive force in the world (3).

Closely related to this energy superpower discourse is the 'ethical oil' discourse, which promotes Canadian oil exports through imbuing Canadian oil with positive socio-ecological traits by virtue of being "made in Canada" (Kinder 2020, 167). The discourse is exemplified most clearly by Ezra Levant, founder of Rebel News and author of Ethical Oil (2010). The book, which later inspired a pro-oil advocacy organisation of the same name, broke from previous defences of the sands rooted in technological optimism or outright climate denial; instead, Levant argues that Canadian oil should be purchased over oil from other nations like Saudi Arabia, where engaging in commerce serves as an implicit endorsement of human rights violations, the suppression of LGBTQ+ citizens and women, and so on. Levant argues, not only that bituminous sands production is less environmentally damaging than other extractive projects, but that purchasing Canadian oil is a superior moral choice over supporting 'conflict oil' (234). Kuteleva and Leifso (2020) argue that the ethical oil discourse serves to uphold the broader discourse of Canada as an energy superpower, by setting Canadian oil apart from other international sellers (3). Laurie (2019) argues that while the explicit phrase 'ethical oil' may have gone out of fashion since the early 2010s, the broader framing device of highlighting the positive moral aspects of supporting Canadian oil and gas has survived long beyond Levant's text (169).

A key narrative thread running through the ethical oil discourse is the notion that oil exports are intertwined with Canadian national identity. This is the central assumption of petro-nationalist discourses, which "promote extractivism as a national good and position critics

as anti-Canadian and foreign to the body politics" (Gunster et al 2021b).Within this discourse, Barney (2017) identifies a "technological nationalism" in Canada, which mobilizes an affective attachment to ideals of sovereignty and independence to support the unrelenting build-out of pipeline infrastructure (87).

Closely related to petronationalism is the discourse of extractive populism, which promotes continuous extraction of natural resources for the purpose of profit as an act of protection for the people, by providing both material access to 'the good life' and a form of national security (Kojola 2019). Kojola adapts the term from Huber's more general concept of energy populism, whereby securing and continuously expanding the production of cheaply available energy is framed as standing up for ordinary people. In the Canadian context, Gunster et al (2021a) analyze social media activity of seven Canadian pro-oil online groups during 2016 and find a dominant discourse of extractive populism throughout their activity, centred around mobilizing 'ordinary Canadians' to advocate for their precious resource. Gunster et al (2021b) observe that while uniting around a national Canadian identity is the basis of petro-nationalist discourse, in extractive populist narratives 'Canada' often emerges as the villain of inter-regional energy fights.

Finally, turning back towards narratives resisting oil and gas development, contemporary anti-extraction resistance has expanded beyond a limited concern with harms against 'the environment' to a discourse of climate justice, which connects the climate crisis to ongoing settler colonial violations of Indigenous rights, and other social justice issues (Gobby and Gareau 2018). Neubauer and Gunster (2019) argue that resistance to the Northern Gateway pipeline was successful due to the successful mobilization of "broad-based regional discourse coalition of Indigenous organizations, settler Canadian communities, and environmental groups to articulate

diverse regional identity frames within a common storyline" (3-4). This storyline was focused on activating a local collective identity based on shared exposure to injustice. In an analysis of press releases, environmental impact assessments, and online discourse around the construction of the TMX pipeline, Castillo Jara and Bruns (2022) find that First Nations deployed three distinct "discourses of (in)justice" to resist the project: Indigenous self-determination, relationship conceptions of land, and gender violence (6). Mang-Benza et al (2021) identify an emergent discourse in Canada which portrays energy transition as a potential avenue for economic reconciliation. The authors draw a connection between the signing of the Paris agreement in 2015 and the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report, identifying a rise in the following years of a discourse which highlights the potential reconciliatory benefits to abandoning fossil fuel production.

2.3 State/Industry Connections

The scale of extraction in Canada is a collaborative project between the state and corporations, whereby multiple levels of government provide financial, regulatory, and rhetorical support to enable continued fossil fuel production, at the cost of mass ecological and human harm. An extensive, interdisciplinary body of literature has documented the tangled relationships between government and industry in natural resource dependent economies, as well as the distinctive negative impacts that dependency upon oil and gas can have on institutions of democracy (Ross 2015). However, Smandych and Kueneman (2010) specifically theorize the Canadian-Alberta tar sands as an example of "state-corporate environmental crime." They urge critics of oil and gas production to view inaction around climate change in Canada as a joint project of government and the oil industry (103). Following Kramer and Michalowski (2007), their argument recognizes that the scale of ecological and human harm caused by exploiting the Athabasca

sands are not the sole responsibility of the corporations directly conducting extraction, but rather collaborative acts of "commission" (facilitating harmful resource extraction) and "omission" (insufficient regulation of harmful activities) between energy corporations and multiple levels of government (Smandych and Kueneman 2010, 97).

In terms of exerting influence, the fossil fuel industry is very active in lobbying the Canadian government, far outpacing environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) — the groups most likely to lobby against resource extraction. A study by Graham et al (2020) found that ENGOs lobby the federal government at just 20% the rate of fossil fuel lobbyists: between 2011 and 2018, the fossil fuel industry logged 11,452 lobbying contracts, 6 contacts per day on average, versus ENGOs, which contributed 2,399 contracts during the same time period. These lobbying relationships tend to be concentrated in just a few large organizations. In a study of fossil fuel lobbying behaviour from 2008-2012, Cayley-Daoust (2012) found that, of the 35 organizations with lobbying contracts with the federal government, only 10 constitute 75% of lobbying contracts with the federal government. The fossil fuel sector tends to lobby Designated Public Office Holders (DPOHs), who hold continuous power within the government bureaucracy, rather than elected officials or party staffers who are subjected to shifts during election times (Graham et al 2020). As such, these relationships are long-term and deeply embedded in the structure of the state, protected from the tumult of election cycles.

Given the decentralized nature of Canadian energy policy, Smandych and Kueneman (2010) argue that "the Alberta government has been left to decide on its own how to put into place and enforce environmental regulations in the tar sands" (101). In this regulatory environment, the fossil fuel industry has outsized influence on politics in Alberta in comparison to other Canadian provinces. Davidson and Gismondi argue Alberta functions as a "prototypical

neoliberal petrostate" (2011, 10), given the province's dependency on the mining and oil and gas extraction industry for provincial employment and government revenues. From 2022 to 2023, for example, provincial oil and gas royalties and fees totalled $28.1 billion, accounting for 36.6% of the Alberta government's revenues (Fletcher 2023). This economic dependence upon the fossil fuel industry has had substantial political influence upon decisions made around climate and energy policy in Alberta, from direct lobbying (Meyer 2022) to fostering a political culture whereby premiers must publicly support the oil and gas industry to get elected (Viens 2022) to providing direct input on provincial climate plans (Blue et al 2018). Commenting upon this kind of influential access, Shrivastava and Stefanick (2015) argue that the political influence that the oil and gas industry has had on provincial politics in Alberta "constitutes a democratic deficit" in and of itself (5).

The state and industry have collaborated on blocking resistance to oil and gas development. This includes limiting public consultation efforts and other formal avenues to contest natural resource development, such as disallowing environmental organizations from contributing Statements of Concern on proposed energy extraction projects (Carter et al 2017, 67; Davidson et al 2018). However, the state-corporate alliance has also resulted in the outright criminalization of resistance to extractive infrastructure through institutions like the Royal Mounted Police's (RCMP) Community-Industry Response Group (C-IRG) unit, formed in 2017 by the B.C. RCMP in response to protests against the Trans Mountain Expansion pipeline and Coastal Gaslink Pipeline (Gobby and Everett 2020, 96) . While the RCMP portrays C-IRG's mandate as "facilitating the peaceful resolution of public disorder issues…through open communication and meaningful dialogue" (RCMP 2020), internal documents revealed through access to information request demonstrate that the RCMP formed C-IRG after observing

Canadian presence at anti-pipeline resistance led by the Standing Rock Sioux in North Dakota (Forester 2023a). Through the courts, the state has ordered injunctions requiring land defenders to stop obstructing fossil fuel production infrastructure (Gobby and Everett 2020, 103) and between April 2018 and July 2022, the B.C. RCMP spent $49.9 million on enforcing industry injunctions through C-IRG (Forester 2023b).

CHAPTER 3: Theoretical and Methodological Framework

3.1 Narrative Analysis

This project is grounded in the belief that words offer insight into broader systems of meaning-making and power. Talk has the power to both communicate and naturalize particular stories, creating problems and solutions; urgencies and roadblocks; heroes, victims, and villians. As a theoretical approach and methodology, discourse analysis takes these individual and collective interpretations of the world seriously by tracing "particular linguistic regularit[ies] that can be found in discussion or debates" (Hajer and Versteeg 2005, 175). Conducting discourse analysis has been a popular approach to studying climate and energy politics since the 1990s, as "framing" — the process of strategically highlighting a specific aspect of an issue to induce a particular interpretation of it — is a foundational challenge for those on all sides of environmental debates (Isoaho and Karhunmaa 2019, 931). In the diverse array of research areas within environmental policy, Leipold et al (2019) identify several 'older' discourses, including ecological modernization, participation, and sustainable development (450). Energy transition is highlighted in this taxonomy as new discourse, emerging from the early 2010s.

Within this discursive literature, narrative analytic approaches focus on the particular kinds of storylines that emerge through text/talk, providing a structure through which to identify particular actors and their relationships to each other as 'characters' in the narrative (Fløttum and Gjerstad 2017, 2). Narratives can be understood as "discursive packages" (Davidson and Gismondi 2011, 23) that include various elements of storytelling, allowing the actors that draw upon them to construct particular portrayals of reality. While there are many elements of a story, a focus on identifying the "drama triangle" (Karpman 1968) — the villain (problem causer), victim (those harmed), and hero (problem solver) archetypes — is recognized as the minimum

foundation of the Narrative Policy Framework (Jones et al 2014; Pierce et al 2014). Several studies have applied this drama triangle lens to the political landscape of the oil sands. For example, Davidson and Gismondi's (2011) offer a comprehensive analysis of the symbolic representation of Alberta's oil and gas industry from 1895-2010, tracing the depiction of corporations as victims of the federal government's ill-conceived policies, the Alberta government emerging as a local hero protecting the country by protecting oil and gas. Paskey and Williams (2013) conduct an in-depth analysis of how the sands are portrayed from the 1970s into the 2010s, identifying a shift in how the Alberta government is portrayed over this time, from a responsible developer of natural resources to an active promoter of the oil sands mission. Gunster and Saurette (2014) offer a complementary critical discourse analysis of news coverage of the sands in the *Calgary Herald* from 2010-2011, finding that the oil and gas industry is often portrayed as victims of an undue global environmental lobbying movement, with the government as its heroic defender.

The effects of this fight over narrative are not merely symbolic: they have material consequences that ripple across global politics. Leipold et al (2019) map the range of effects that discourse can have, including effects on knowledge*,* discourse formation, social mobilization, governance outcomes, the legitimacy and agency of particular groups, and policy outcomes and implementation (453). The trend of the most intensive carbon emitters and governments who sustain them infusing their 'talk' with the language of environmentalism perpetuates "discursive carbon lock-in" — a term offered by Buschmann and Oels (2019), building upon Unruh (2000), to describe how discourses that preserve the fossil hegemony become institutionalised and self-perpetuating. Moffatt et al (2019) confirm this risk while referring to the oil sands as a "rhetorical disaster zone" (251) due to the present-day impasse in public debate over the future

of the resource. In his examination of narratives about energy in the *Calgary Herald,* Chen (2019) explores this discursive space, describing an "ideological enclosure on alternatives to the oil sands" (268) that is constructed through the newspaper's storytelling. Virla et al (2021) identify that this narrative environment creates local "risk blindness" that stakeholders in the province hold about the future of oil and gas. They argue that dominant narratives in Alberta proclaim an indefinite supply and demand for the province's oil that misleads the public, leading to a disconnect between the local-global context that risks hindering Canada's decarbonization process (581). In this context, heroic narratives about the province meeting an indefinite global energy supply are not just hollow words: they have real consequences for how people orient their careers, investments, and political allegiances.

3.2 Conceptual Definitions

In undertaking energy transition as its focus, this project directly confronts the theoretical puzzle of determining what exactly 'counts' as transition-related discourse. Part of the challenge of deciding what texts should be included in a corpus on energy transition is rooted in the evolving usage of the phrase itself. As previously discussed, the dilution of the term from a focus on a phasing-out of fossil fuels and building renewable energy systems, to a more ambiguous vision of a lower-emissions future is rooted in a broader trend by fossil fuel companies from outright climate denial, towards more subtle forms of climate delay. Commenting upon the increasing overlap in language between climate activists and oil executives, Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, told New York Times reporters that the term energy transition has itself become a "floating signifier…a blank term that you can fill with your own preferred definition" (Gelles and Friedman 2022).

I adopt the perspective that research on energy transition discourse must broaden beyond focusing only on explicit statements regarding shifts towards lower carbon energy systems to also include discussions of the future of oil and gas. This perspective is informed by Kivimaa and Kern (2016)'s analytical framework for understanding sustainability transitions, which views transition policy mixes as two dimensional, composed of both "creation" and "destruction" policies. This framework responds to what the authors perceive as fixation in the literature on "niche innovations…or on facilitating the emergence of technological innovation systems" (205), which in turn neglects policy instruments that meaningfully destabilize fossil fuel regimes. Commenting on the over-focus on new innovations in conversations about energy transition, Geels (2014) agrees, stating that "discussions of low-carbon transition should not just focus on stimulating 'green' alternatives but also on preventing existing fossil fuel reserves from being burned…a strong focus on new innovations may serve to protect existing regimes by detracting attention from the fossil fuel burning problem" (26). Through this lens, tweets that proclaim a long future for Canadian natural gas are to be taken just as seriously as 'energy transition discourse' as ones that explicitly discuss investments in solar energy.

For example, fossil fuel companies are increasingly linking the future of oil and gas to meeting goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Such is the case in the following tweet from CAPP: "'The world needs oil and gas and it needs to decarbonize— we can do both'" (@OilGasCanada, May 17 2023). However, even more often, pro-oil government and industry bear down on the long future of oil and gas as a staple of the Canadian energy economy without explicitly situating it within the context of the energy transition debate. Another tweet from CAPP captures this sentiment: "Oil and gas investment in Canada is growing, creating jobs and prosperity for all Canadians" (@OilGasCanada, May 10, 2023). While this tweet does not

explicitly discuss a shift towards renewable energy, by emphasizing the continued growth of oil and gas, the organization implicitly suggests that a phase-out of fossil fuels is untenable and nonrenewable resource production will continue to flourish. Therefore, this tweet 'counts' as energy transition discourse. Discussions about the long future of oil and gas are intrinsically about energy transition, despite not explicitly using that term or others typically associated with it, like "decarbonization" or "emissions reductions."

A second area requiring conceptual clarity is the idea of 'renewable energy.' Defining what constitutes oil and gas production is theoretically unambiguous. However, figuring out how to define categories of energy production outside that line is fraught with conceptualizations of "good" and "bad" energy (Harjanne and Korhonen 2019). What is allowed within the label of sustainable, renewable, clean, or green? Renewable does not in itself mean sustainable or low-emissions; for example, biomass technology is technically a "renewable resource", however it releases more carbon dioxide per unit of energy than natural gas and coal (Speare-Cole 2021). In this paper, I follow Harjanne and Korhonen's (2019) approach, adopting the language of "low-carbon energy" to describe sources of energy that are mostly combustion-free. This categorization allows for nuances that other labels like clean, green, or renewable cannot capture, such as the differentiation between green hydrogen (hydrogen powered by wind or solar energy) and blue hydrogen (hydrogen powered by fossil fuels) (Yu et al 2021).

3.3 Case Selection

This project compares discourse from the UCP Twitter feed with Twitter content created by the CAPP, a consortium of 40 oil and gas producing companies founded in 1992. As the most active fossil fuel lobbying group in the country (Graham et al 2020; Cayley-Daoust 2012), CAPP represents hegemonic perspectives within Canada's oil and gas industry. In 2021, Alberta was

two years into a significant shift in power from the New Democratic Party (NDP) to the United Conservative Party (UCP). The social-democratic NDP was voted into power in May 2015 under the leadership of Rachel Notley, disrupting four consecutive decades of conservative power in the province. Elected in the midst of a nine-month decline in oil prices (Diamanti 2016, 188), the NDP's win represented a "seismic shift" (Barber 2015) in Alberta politics, and raised many questions about the future of the province's environmental policy. However, in 2019 the province voted the newly formed UCP into office, representing another break from provincial political history, which has tended to reward long blocks of time to political parties in power. "Scrap the carbon tax" (Gibson 2019) was a key promise of Kenney's successful campaign, reflecting public dissatisfaction with Notley's handling of energy policy during the NDP's short tenure (Clancy 2019). Under the leadership of Jason Kenney, the fight to preserve the reputation of Canadian oil and gas was made front and centre, exemplified by the launch of the $30 million Canadian Energy Centre initiative (also known as the Alberta Energy War Room) which sought to expose what the government perceived as a globally-spread misinformation campaign about the oil sands (Anderson 2019). Thus, 2021 represents a period during which key decisions over the future Alberta and Canada's energy systems were debated and implemented, making it well-suited for this project.

The first quarter of 2021 in particular was selected as a snapshot period to study transition-related narratives because this moment represents a particularly disruptive stage in Canadian climate and energy policy. The year began with the cancellation of the Keystone XL Pipeline (KXL), a significant destabilizing event after the Alberta government had invested $7.5 billion in the TC Energy project to support the pipeline's construction (Alberta 2021b). On his first day in office, January 20th 2021, President Biden revoked a crucial cross-border presidential

permit initially granted in March 2019 to construct and operate the contentious pipeline (Brady 2021). In Executive Order 13990 entitled *Executive Order on Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis,* the president stated that KXL "disserves the U.S. national interest" and was "not consistent with [his] Administration's economic and climate imperatives" (2021). The pipeline was forecasted to carry 830,000 barrels of crude oil from Alberta to U.S. refineries each day (Alberta 2021b).

The cancellation took place amidst the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, an already volatile period in the global energy economy. With commercial and industrial activity significantly restricted to prevent the spread of the virus, energy consumption — specifically, demand for oil — dropped around the world (Gharib et al 2021). In fact, in April of 2020 the price of oil briefly went negative for the first time in history: those seeking to sell a barrel of oil would have had to pay a buyer $30 to get the commodity off their hands, with global storage capacity almost completely full (Reed and Krauss 2021).

The first quarter of 2021 also saw an impactful climate-related decision in the courts, as Canada's Supreme Court ruled against Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario in favour of the federal government's carbon tax (Environment and Climate Change Canada 2021). On March 25th 2021, Chief Justice Richard Wagner determined that emissions qualify as "extraprovincial" and transcendent of border designations, therefore implying that the success of GHG pricing policy is dependent upon national cooperation (Tasker 2021). Just two days prior, CER announced that Alberta and Saskatchewan were the driving forces behind Canada's growth in renewable energy capacity expansion. Darren Christie, Chief Economist for CER, highlighted the narrative disconnect between the vast renewable capacity of the prairie provinces and their reputation as oil and gas giants: "When people think about the Prairies, many of them think

about fossil fuels. Interestingly, our projections show they are actually now leading the way in renewable energy growth, while national levels will slow in the next three years" (CER 2021).

At the same time, there were also signs of the oil and gas industry's enduring strength during this period. January 2021 marked the first year-over-year increase in crude oil production since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, indicating a shift towards economic normalcy (Statistics Canada 2021). Despite KXL's high profile cancellation, several massive pipeline projects continued to progress on schedule, including Enbridge's Line 3, the Trans Mountain expansion, and TC Energy's Coastal GasLink (Alberta 2021a). Oil prices would go on to hit their highest levels since 2015, producing a total gross revenue of $174 billion by the end of the year (Statistics Canada 2022). The first quarter of 2021 also marked the beginning of the second year of the Kenney's administration's Energy War Room initiative. In March of 2021, the initiative garnered global news coverage after Kenney took aim at a children's Netflix cartoon which depicted Bigfoot attempting to stop an fictional oil company from damaging a valley in Alaska (Lachaz 2021; Al Jazeera 2021; Cecco 2021). These contrasting events illustrate the particularly contentious state of energy politics at the beginning of 2021, as a potential return to the status quo clashed with a brewing shift towards a lower carbon future.

3.4 Methodology

I conducted an inductive, open coding process of UCP and CAPP Twitter data from the beginning of January 2021 to the end of March 2021, identifying specific characters, plots, and forms of energy in the texts and adding them to the codebook as they emerged (see Appendix A for the codebook). The dataset was created using NCapture to export each actor's Twitter feeds to NVivo before qualitatively assessing each individual tweet for relevancy. Once all relevant tweets had been coded, there were 234 tweets of relevancy in the CAPP dataset and only 4

relevant tweets in the UCP dataset. To build a balanced corpus with enough texts to compare from both actors, I turned to the Alberta Hansards database, coding each legislative transcript within the time period of January 2021 through March 2021, comprising a total of 13 sessions from February 25th 2021 to March 25th 2021.

I omitted texts without explicit narrative content, such as promotional tweets advertising events or interviews. Each excerpt that discussed energy/energy development was subjected to several layers of coding. I identified the actors discussed and coded them to either the victim, villain, or hero depending on how they were narrativized. This was not a binary process — in some instances, there were multiple victims, villains, or heroes; in some cases, there was only one or two figures. I then proceeded to identify the 'plot' of the excerpt, or the central motivational frame situating the narrative (Leipprand et al 2017). By beginning with just the categories of the drama triangle and inductively developing a cast of characters and motivations, I avoided imposing predetermined ideas about anticipated narratives onto the text corpus.

In addition to characters and plot, I sought to keep track of specific technologies discussed by industry and government. To capture this, I coded for explicit mentions of energy transition: moments in the texts that discussed the ramping up of low-carbon energy production or the winding down of oil and gas production. I also created separate codes for 'low-carbon energy' and 'other energy technology.' This open-ended alternate energy category was created in acknowledgement of technologies that do not fit neatly into the categories of fossil fuels or renewable energy, such as carbon capture utilization and storage (CCUS), and blue hydrogen. Finally, I created a root code of 'oil & gas' with subcodes of 'threatened' (identifying moments where oil and gas is portrayed as at risk, in decline, or unprofitable) and 'thriving'(identifying moments where oil and gas is portrayed as resilient, growing, or profitable). In total, I coded 429

references to the UCP corpus (34 in tweets, 395 in Hansards) and 1,561 references to the CAPP Twitter corpus.

CHAPTER 4: Findings

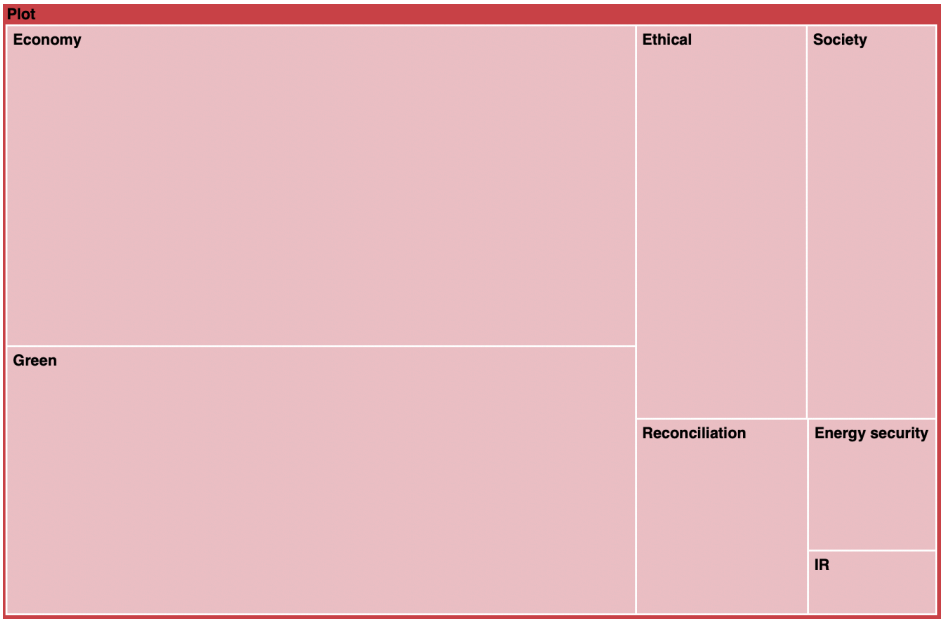
This chapter explores the findings of this comparative study of energy transition discourse and the narrative convergences and divergences of pro-oil government and industry in the Alberta context, finding high levels of narrative alignment between the two actors. First, I identify that industry and government both consistently articulate a 'green growth' discourse, deploying a neutral tone towards renewable energy as a supportive part of the long future for 'lower carbon' fossil fuels. Natural gas and CCUS are portrayed in a particularly favourable light as anchors of the future energy sector. Next, I discuss the positioning of the oil and gas industry as both a fragile victim and valiant hero, with the Alberta government serving a heroic role of defending the traditional energy sector at all costs. Finally, I explore the secondary victims in industry and government narratives: energy sector workers and Indigenous Peoples, both of whom are portrayed as being harmed by outsiders. Namely, a triad of foreign and adversarial governments, activists, and in the case of Alberta government discourse, the entertainment industry.

4.1 Greening Fossil Futures

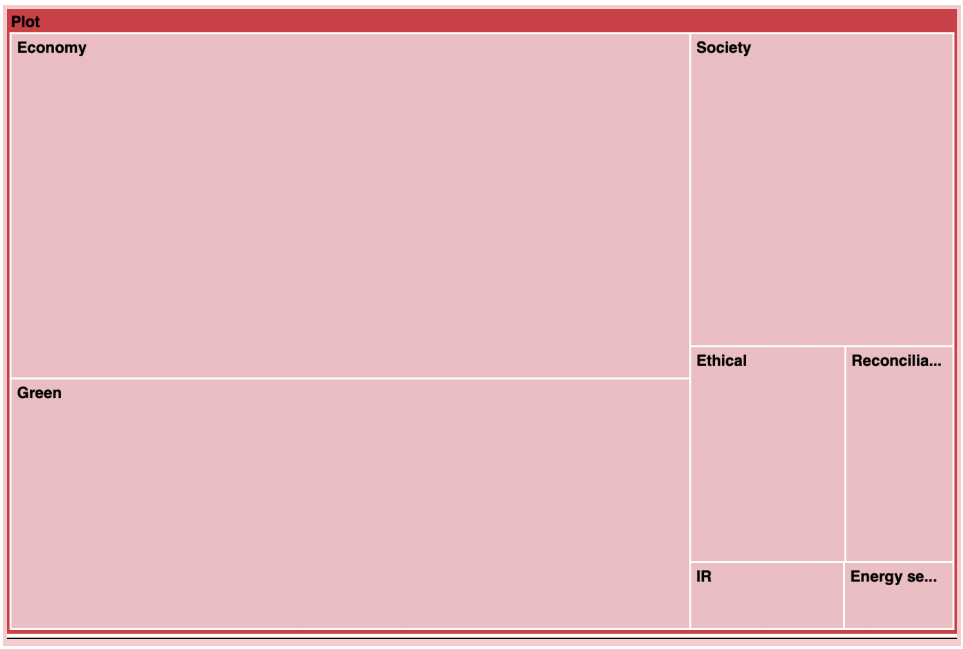
Industry and government rely upon the same motivating 'plotlines' in their discussions of energy. As is demonstrated in the coding hierarchy chart presented below in *Figures 1.1 and 1.2,* both actors consistently deploy 'green' and 'economy' frames when discussing energy, at nearly equal rates and often in tandem with each other. This 'green' framing was deployed in 20 cases by government and 66 cases by industry. Use of an 'economy' frame was invoked in 24 cases by government and 91 cases by industry. They articulate a discourse of 'green growth', which positions continued extraction of fossil fuels as both inevitable and necessary for the functioning of society, made compatible with meeting emissions reductions goals through technological innovation. This is best exemplified in the actors' vehement assertions of their commitment to

lowering greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) through technological innovation. For example, responding to a challenge from the NDP, Premier Jason Kenney states that "we do take the challenge of climate change very seriously, which is why we've created our technology innovation and emissions reduction program with a quarter of a billion dollar investment reducing technology last year" (Alberta 2021a, 4142). Commenting upon the Environmental, Social and Governance Standards upheld by the oil and gas industry, UCP MLA Jason Nixon remarks that "we continue to move forward on climate change hand in hand with our industry, innovating our way through the problem" (Alberta 2021a, 3966). The following CAPP tweet mirrors this sentiment, highlighting close collaboration between government and industry to lower emissions while continuing energy extraction: "CAPP will continue to work with government and other stakeholders to accelerate the adoption and deployment of technology to lower emissions and enable Canada to drive global action by exporting our resources and solutions to the world" (@OilGasCanada, Jan 28 2021).

Figure 1: Comparing Dominant Motivational Frames of Energy Narratives



1.1 Government



1.2 Industry

Low-carbon forms of energy are discussed infrequently by both actors. However, when these forms of energy are mentioned, they are referred to vaguely with an overall positive light, discussed as a beneficial addition to the dominant future of oil and gas production. This is most clear in the discussion of the KXL project. In both the Hansard debates and CAPP's tweets, KXL is discussed as a unique, innovative technological experiment: the first pipeline powered by renewable energy:

> "News: Keystone XL commits to become first pipeline to be fully powered by renewable energy." (@OilGasCanada, Jan 18 2021).

> "Keystone XL would actually reduce emissions. It would have reduced emissions because the alternative to moving this energy would be by the higher emitting and less secure rail transport, and even more so the pipeline would have been the first pipeline — the first pipeline ever — to have been fully powered by renewable energy sources. This means that Alberta, Canada, and the KXL pipeline would be and should be part of the U.S. solution in the U.S.-Canada energy transition." Minister of Energy, Sonya Savage (Alberta 2021a, 4237)

Government only explicitly mentions a specific low-carbon technology once, with an overall positive tone. While scolding the cancellation of KXL, MLA Travis Toews framed the industry as a heroic figure pushing through adversity to continue growing investments in both oil and gas and renewable energy: "In Alberta energy investments in oil and gas and renewables are forecast to increase, and projects are set to begin or resume construction this year, including Greengate's $500 million solar power project and BHE Canada's $200 million Rattlesnake Ridge wind project" (Alberta 2021a, 3924). CAPP similarly does not make direct references to specific types of renewable energy, only making explicit reference to low-carbon energy two other types beyond the discussion of KXL. Both of these mentions activate an 'energy mix' framing strategy, which focuses on highlighting renewable energy as one facet of Canada's oil and gas-dominated energy industry, as demonstrated in the following tweet: "From the hydroelectricity produced in provinces such as Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec, to the extraction of crude oil and natural gas in western Canada, our country has a diverse range of energy sources to draw on" (@OilGasCanada, Feb 26 2021).

Most of the texts do not directly use the words "energy transition" to describe the ramping up of low-carbon capacity and the winding down of fossil fuel production. This is unsurprising, given that the word 'transition' directly implies a significant change in how energy is generated, moving *from* something *towards* something else. Using 'transition' opens a discursive space for conceding to a world without any oil and gas production, or at the very least, less fossil fuels. More often, actors refer to a more ambiguous shift towards lower-emissions energy sources, particularly natural gas. This deployment of a "bridge fuel" discourse (Janzwood and Millar 2022) is illustrated in this passage from MLA Nate Horner, who is speaking in support of the Federal Private Member's Bill C-206, which aims to exempt natural gas and

propane used by agricultural producers from the federal carbon tax (Bill C-206 2021): "Many world leaders have pointed to Alberta's natural gas reserves as a global answer to help the world shift to cleaner fuels. We cannot price out our own people and industries from using our own clean energy." CAPP does not use the word 'transition' during the selected time period, instead mirroring this portrayal of natural gas as a bridge fuel to meet global energy demand while lowering global greenhouse gas emissions, as demonstrated in the following tweet: "Natural gas can help solve climate change, industry reminds policymakers" (@OilGasCanada, March 3 2021). This bridge fuel framing appears explicitly in at least 6 other cases.

As discussed, policymakers and industry both tend to avoid explicitly using the word "transition" in discussing the process of moving from one energy system to another, which is typically presented as unrealistic; however, there are a few notable explicit uses of the term. During a budgetary address in the first session of the year, UCP MLA Travis Toews rebukes the notion that an economic shift away from fossil fuels is necessary, stating that "many people talk about economic diversification… some suggest that diversifying the economy requires a transition from our traditional sectors such as energy…this is not this government's position" (Alberta 2021a, 3924). He then proceeds to portray the industry as the province's hero due to its "commitment to continuous improvement" (ibid). This passage represents the standard portrayal of transition as an unrealistic and undesirable goal. However, in one remarkable excerpt during a discussion of KXL, UCP MLA Nathan Neudorf invokes the term in an favourable light while offering a blatant premonition that the oil and gas industry is on the brink of destruction:

> "A note on energy transition. The president and his supporters have cited the urgent need to move away from oil and other energy products in favour of renewable sources of energy. Mr. Speaker, if we could realistically get to that goal tomorrow, I would do all I could to get there; however, that is not the reality we face. Transitioning to other energy sources takes time and lots of the current sources of energy that we have…I will bring these facts about Alberta's energy industry forward every chance I get. To quote the poet

> Dylan Thomas: 'Do not go gentle into that good night, Old age should burn and rave at the close of day; Rage, rage against the dying of the light.' Mr. Speaker, we will not go gently in the good night" (4324).

This is a rare acknowledgement that the oil and gas industry on the whole is at serious material risk, through an invocation of one of the most iconic poems about death in the Western literary canon. Much ink has been spilled on Dylan Thomas' most famous poem: "Do not go gentle" has been used as an allegory to understand everything from treatment resistant viruses (Boys and Elde 2022), the retirement timelines of Supreme Court Justices (Stolzenberg 2011), and workplace ageism (Glover and Branine 2001). Writing in the 2010 edition of *The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas,* poet Paul Muldoon comments that the piece "is read at two out of every three funerals" (as cited in Popova 2017). By quoting an iconic poem advocating for the ferocious resistance of death, Neudorf implicitly concedes that there is an inevitable end to the era of unabated extraction — an end that must be fiercely delayed no matter how imminent.

4.2 Industry as Victim and Hero

Across all of the texts, the oil and gas industry emerges as both an innovative hero upholding the Canadian economy, and a struggling victim of global turbulence and misinformation. The Alberta government positions itself as a noble defender of the industry, tying the fate of the province and the country to the continued prosperity of the energy industry. Figure 3 illustrates the coding hierarchy distribution for the role of hero, demonstrating that both actors foreground themselves as the primary heroes of the energy stories they tell. However, the government of Alberta also deploys the oil and gas industry as a heroic figure in equal proportion to itself, indicating that leaders of the UCP view government and industry as co-collaborators in leading the province and rescuing their secondary narrative victims, energy sector workers and

Indigenous peoples. This portrayal of industry as hero was deployed in 194 of 208 cases by industry, and 13 of 13 cases by government.

Figure 2: Comparing Narrative Figures: Hero

2.1 Government

2.2 Industry

Narratives of heroism tend to utilize a combination of green and economic framing, highlighting the economic contributions of the oil and gas industry to the Canadian economy, alongside the high Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards that industry adheres to. In one Hansard debate, MLA Travis Toews articulates this sentiment clearly: "Alberta's oil and gas sector has been a key factor in the continuous improvement of the standard of living of all Canadians, and it has provided a foundation for economic diversification in Alberta, innovation, providing wealth for further spurring technological investment, consumer spending, and benevolence" (Alberta 2021a, 3932). Another representative, MLA Nicholas Miliken representing Calgary-Currie, echoes this sentiment: "I want to talk about supporting our energy sector, especially given that we are a global leader in environmental, social, and governance standards, or ESG. Supporting our energy industry benefits us all, no matter who you are" (Alberta 2021a, 4086). Through these texts, UCP leaders continuously position themselves as noble defenders of the energy sector.

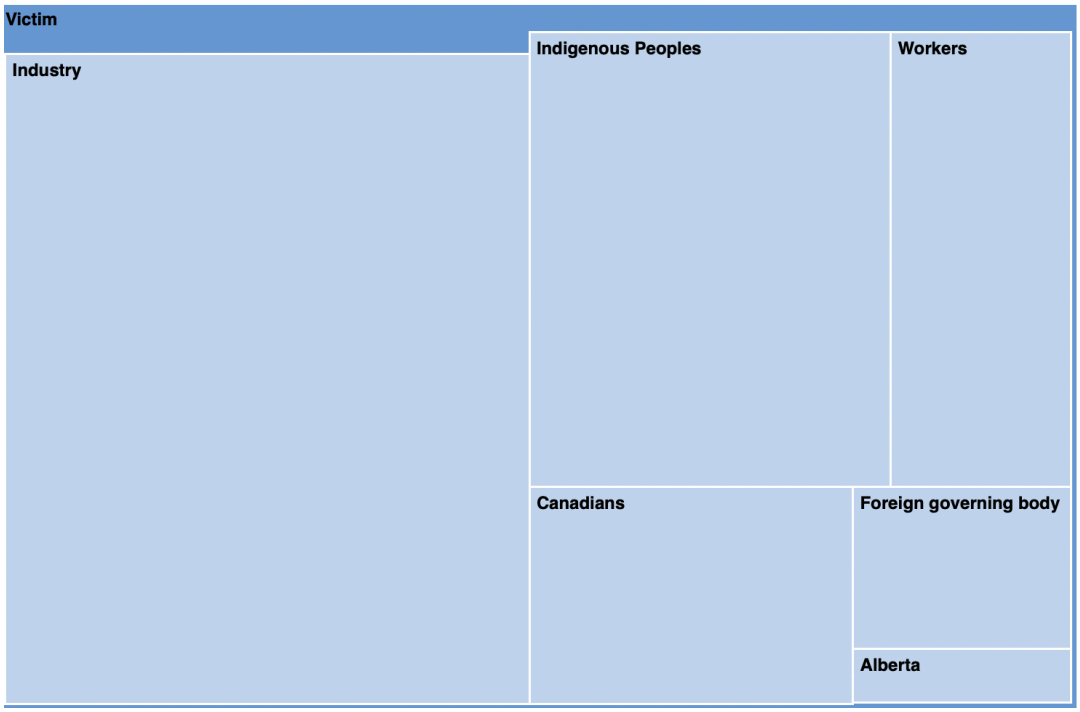
CAPP mirrors this narrative by frequently highlighting the high levels of investment in ESG initiatives coming out of industry. One such tweet reads: "Which sector spends the most on the environment? Oil and gas. Between 2006 and 2018 the oil and gas sector spent $28.1 billion on environmental protection; ALL other industries combined spent $39.6 billion (@OilGasCanada, Mar 12 2021)." Another reiterates this idea: "Oil and natural gas companies 'are investing about three times more than the average firm in climate change mitigation technology,' says Cohen, the L.E. Simmons Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School" (@OilGasCanada, Mar 4 2021).

Both actors portray industry as a primary victim in the story of energy in Alberta/Canada, as reflected in Figure 3. This portrayal of industry as victim was deployed in 29 of 61 cases by

industry, and 13 of 33 cases by government. Often, industry is portrayed as being subject to uncertain global economic forces, like the pandemic: "A year of misfortune: How the global pandemic has battered N.L.'s oil and gas industry" (@OilGasCanada, Mar 16 2021). MLA Peter Guthrie reiterates this: "Oil and gas companies have been hit hard by the triple crisis that our province is facing, namely the COVID-19 pandemic, a massive global recession, and the unprecedented collapse in energy prices" (Alberta 2021a, 4069). More often though, CAPP and the UCP point to outsiders such as foreign governments and environmental activists as threatening villain figures relentlessly attacking Canada's most important industry. These villain narratives will be explored further in the following section.

Figure 3: Comparing Narrative Figures: Victim

3.1 Government



3.2 Industry

Both actors strike a delicate balance between portraying the oil and gas sector as *thriving* (creating growing profits, employing workers, contributing to society, rising to the occasion of halting GHG emissions) and *threatened* (struggling with low prices, lacking infrastructure, being challenged by critics). As shown below in Figure 5, the Alberta government is more inclined to portray the oil and gas industry as under threat, and CAPP has a tendency to portray the industry as thriving. This aligns with both actors' other narrative framing tendencies, as the government is invested in portraying the industry as requiring heroic defense, which requires constructing a depiction of the sector as under threat of collapse. While CAPP also depicts itself as a victim of foreign attacks, the oil and gas industry remains the central heroic figure in its own story, which outweighs portrayals of threat.

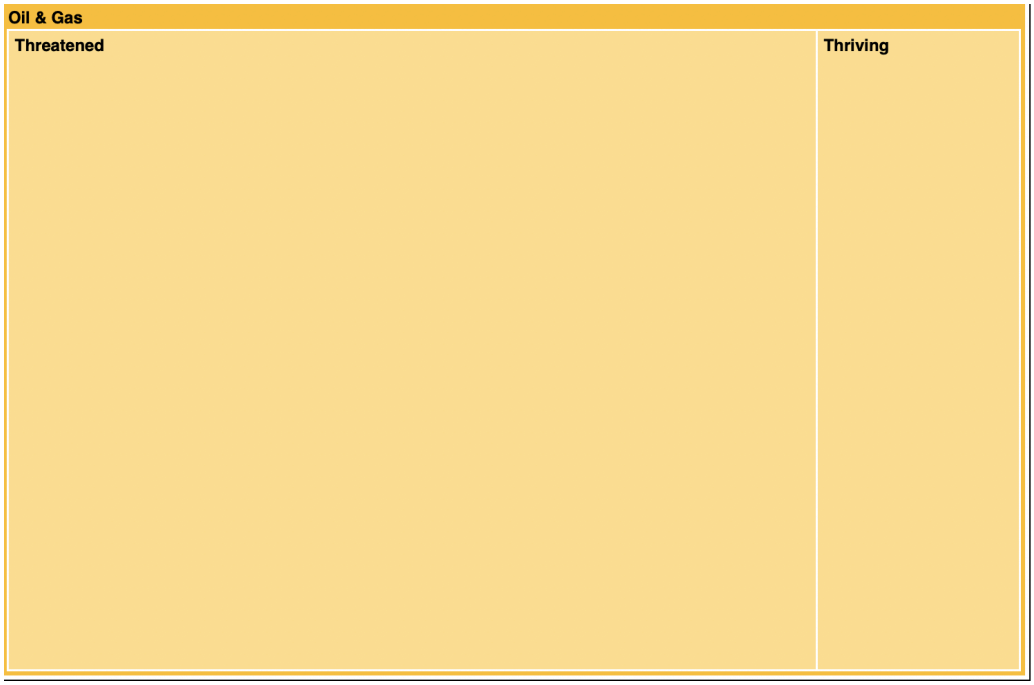
Beyond focusing on profits and royalties, industry and government work to legitimize the oil and gas sector as a foundational sector structuring modern life. While discussing the

cancellation of KXL, MLA Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk argued that attempts to halt pipeline construction are futile given the indispensability of oil and gas to daily life:

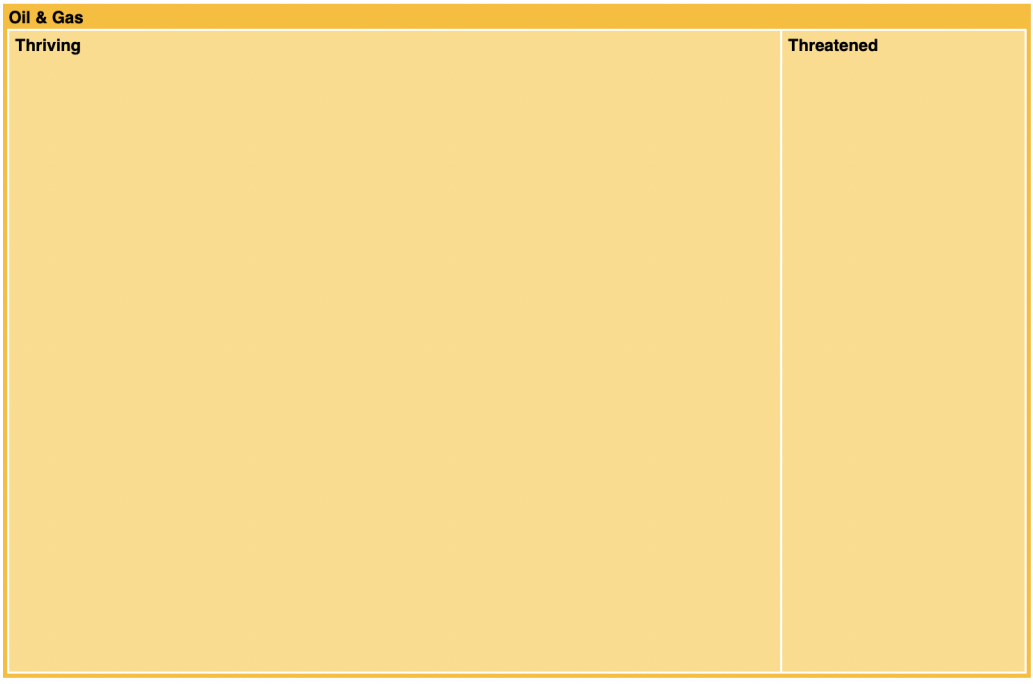
> "The reality is that oil and gas are not going to stop being used. Even if we'd like to be running our transportation and our electricity on renewable energy, the products to make renewable energy are still made with fossil fuels such as plastic, but as you can see from the renewable energy pipeline that Keystone XL was designed to be, we can live in a world with both renewable energy and fossil fuels (Alberta 2021a, 4241)

By highlighting the use of oil as the raw material or 'feedstock' for plastic products, Armstrong-Homeniuk carves a survival path for the fossil fuel industry, even in a scenario where low-carbon sources serve as the primary modes of energy production. CAPP undertakes a similar approach in a series called 'Petroleum in Real Life'. These tweets deploy a similar society-focused framing strategy, highlighting ways that oil and gas serve as the material backbone of everyday life. One straightforward tweet reads: "Made from oil and natural gas. Literally thousands of products you use and depend on are made or made better using petrochemicals: materials that come from oil and natural gas" (@OilGasCanada, March 22, 2021). However, the organization also highlights specific products made from petroleum that make a positive contribution to society, such as plexiglass, N-95 masks, and contact lenses. This focus on marketing the future of petroleum as a feedstock for manufacturing materials indicates a desire to both legitimize fossil fuels to those who may be skeptical of the future of nonrenewable energy production, and an effort to chart a sturdy path for oil products amidst an uncertain future.

Figure 4: Comparing Depictions of Oil & Gas Strength



4.1 Government



4.2 Industry

4.3 Foreign Villains, Transition Victims

As seen in Figure 5, both CAPP and UCP leaders portray foreign governing bodies, such as the U.S. government, Russia, and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) as their primary villains. Industry portrayed foreign governing bodies as the villain in 22 of 28 cases, whereas government portrayed this character as the villain in 15 of 41 cases. Given the prominence of the KXL cancellation during this time period, the Biden administration is a primary target in the text. During a discussion of provincial equity in KXL, Premier Jason Kenney comments that "the U.S. administration slapped this country in the face by vetoing that project. We're going to sue them under NAFTA" (Alberta 2021a, 3939). Other state-level American leaders like Governor Gretchan Whitmer are also villainized, as demonstrated in the following tweet from CAPP: "News: How Michigan's governor could play havoc with oil refineries in southern Ontario" (@OilGasCanada, March 17 2021).

Environmental activists are highlighted on occasion as villains by both actors, with industry invoking them in 4 cases and government referring to villainous activists in 7 cases. Individuals like Tzeporah Berman and groups like Extinction Rebellion are singled out by name in the Hansard debates for spreading anti-oil propaganda. CAPP did not describe any specific activists in their discussion of resistance to oil and gas, but referred vaguely to a "vocal minority" (Feb 11 2021) and "fringe anti-oil and gas groups" (Feb 9 2021) which risk damaging the country's collective prosperity. While CAPP avoided any critique of provincial-level parties, throughout the discussion of KXL, UCP leaders frequently sought to align the NDP with activists who fought the development of the pipeline framing them as outsiders to the interests of the oil and gas industry, and by proxy, the country:

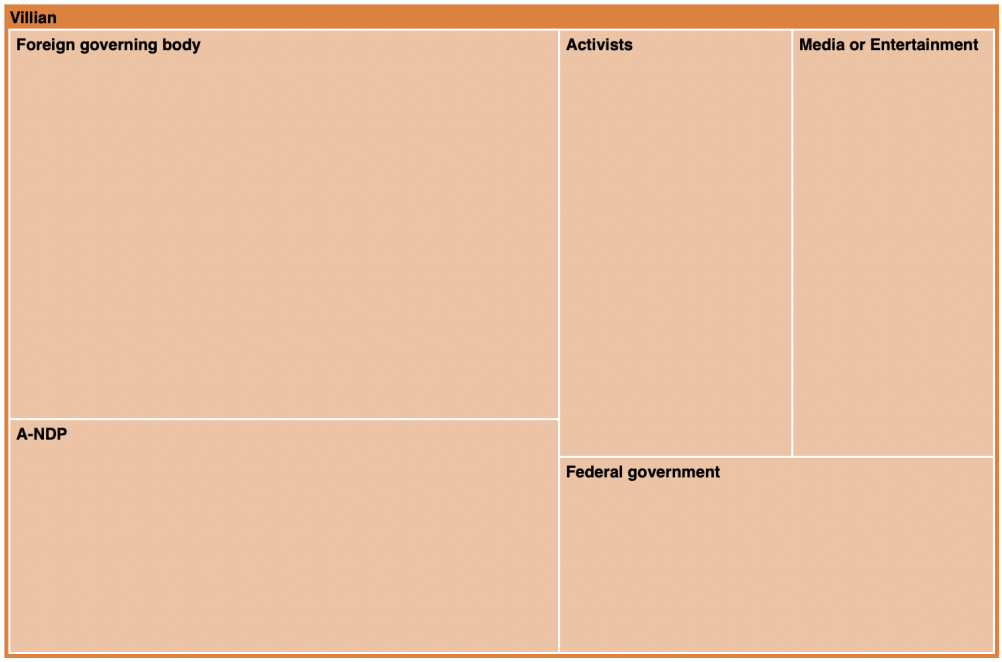
> "Mr. Speaker, we understand why the NDP is so angry about this, because they were always opposed to the Keystone XL pipeline. They actually sent MPs down to Ottawa, to Washington to fight against it under the previous administration. The leader of the NDP explicitly expressed her opposition to it just like her Finance critic attended protests against Northern Gateway" Premier Jason Kenney (Alberta 2021a, 3939).

Generally, CAPP portrays the federal government favourably, praising Prime Minister Trudeau's disapproval of KXL's cancellation and celebrating his administration's defence of Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline project. Their disapproval is only expressed in response to the debate over Bill C-15, a federal act which aims to align Canadian law with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNRIP) (Canada 2020). CAPP portrays this bill as a significant threat to the economic prosperity of Indigenous communities: "News: Ottawa's proposed Indigenous-rights bill threatens resource development. 'The energy sector has brought many benefits to us,' Buffalo said. 'We don't need any additional barriers that will impact or eliminate these benefits'" (@OilGasCanada, March 31 2021). However, the UCP is more consistently critical of the federal government: the federal carbon tax is a frequent policy centrepiece of disapproval throughout the Hansard debates, portrayed as unduly targeting farmers and the Alberta economy more broadly.

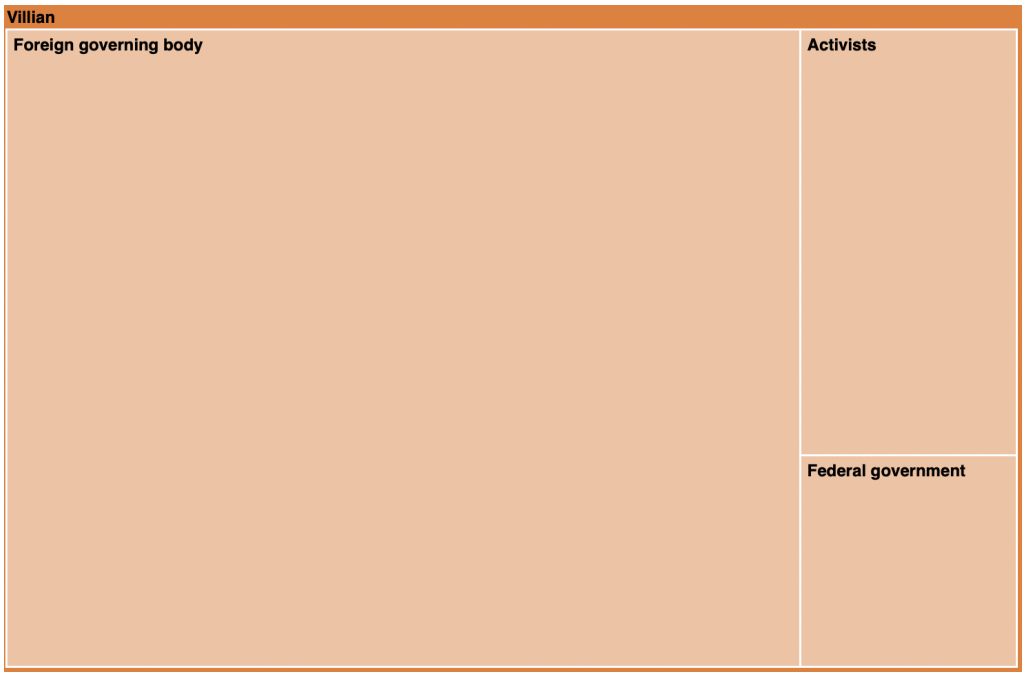
One other villain figure present in the UCP corpus but missing from CAPP's Twitter feed is the global media and entertainment industry, which is mentioned in 6 of 41 government villain cases. While CAPP makes allusions to widespread 'myths' about the oil and gas industry, the UCP narrows in on the source of this misinformation: foreign media and Hollywood. UCP leaders refer to celebrities as "using their profile to promote their political agendas" with incorrect information, portraying them as out of touch with reality (Alberta 2021a, 4201). Premier Kenney articulates this argument clearly while presenting an update on Canada's Energy Centre's activities in lieu of the controversy over Netflix's BigFoot Family production: "Here's a

Hollywood production production that depicts an oil company — by the way, oil companies are the largest industry in Alberta, the largest employer, the largest job creator, the largest contributor to our public treasury and our public services — as wanting to murder children to oppose environmental progress" (Alberta 2021a, 4051). This passage illustrates how any criticism of the oil and gas industry is portrayed as a direct attack on Alberta as a whole, rendering the fate of the industry as indivisible from the province.

Figure 5: Comparing Narrative Figures: Villain



5.1 Government



5.2 Industry

In addition to industry, oil and gas sector workers and Indigenous Peoples emerge as the secondary victims to foreign villains in the story of energy transition in Alberta and beyond. Invocation of Indigenous nations was present in 14 of 61 victimization cases by industry, and 4 of 33 cases by government. Three of the four relevant tweets in the UCP Twitter dataset invoked an Indigenous victimhood narrative surrounding the cancellation of KXL. In these tweets, the Biden administration emerges as the primary villain, with Indigenous communities losing millions in potential economic growth due to the cancellation of the pipeline project:

> "Why we're fighting for Keystone XL ⬇️'Devastating. That's how Indigenous leaders describe the news that president-elect Joe Biden intends to kill the Keystone XL pipeline expansion on his first day in office'" (@Alberta_UCP, January 19 2021).

> "A consortium of four Canadian First Nations, for instance, is out as much as $700 million in Keystone investments thanks to Biden's move. Thousands of members of at least four major U.S. trade unions will miss out on about three years of well-paid work" (@Alberta_UCP, January 21 2021).

> "'Any change, especially a big change like this, really affects our bands' ability to keep our people employed.' Indigenous business coalition leader says Keystone XL denial will hurt communities" (@Alberta_UCP, January 25 2021).

This narrative positioning was less common in the Hansard debates, but appears once in a Members' Statement delivered by MLA Todd Loewen on advocacy for Alberta's oil and gas industry. Commenting upon misinformation about energy globally, he highlights a trip taken by actor and activist Jane Fonda to Minnesota in protest of Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline, which runs from Alberta to Wisconsin: "She claimed that she was engaging in protest on behalf of indigenous people. Well, Mr. Speaker, Stephen Buffalo, president and CEO of the Indian Resource Council of Canada, has his own message to Ms Fonda: her protest is not on behalf of the Indigenous people of Alberta" (Alberta 2021a, 4201). A complimentary narrative is supported throughout CAPP's Twitter feed, which portrays Indigenous communities in Canada as subject to numerous barriers to unlocking the economic potential of oil and gas production, created by outsiders to the community:

> "Indigenous leaders step up but no applause from environmentalists. First Nations are fighting to determine their own futures. Why are environmental groups standing in the way?" (@OilGasCanada, Mar 2 2021)

> "Dale Swampy: UNDRIP will slow, not hasten Indigenous development We need our leaders and politicians to work on removing barriers to Indigenous economic development, not adding to them" (@OilGasCanada, Jan 11 2021)

> "Indigenous prosperity at a crossroad. New study outlines economic impacts on Indigenous peoples resulting from challenges in the energy sector" (@OilGasCanada, Jan 6 2021).

> "News: Ottawa's proposed Indigenous-rights bill threatens resource development "The energy sector has brought many benefits to us," Buffalo said. "We don't need any additional barriers that will impact or eliminate these benefits" (@OilGasCanada, Mar 31 2021).

Through this narrativization, an asymmetric relationship emerges, with government and industry as the providers of economic stability by way of granting resource development opportunities, and Indigenous communities as benefactors of this economic development. A similar relationship of dependency surfaces in the discussion of oil and gas workers and their communities, which are framed as highly vulnerable, such as in this tweet from CAPP: "Communities near oil and gas operations depend on the energy industry for jobs and economic opportunity. Kelly McTaggart of CAPP discusses how people in those areas are faring through COVID, and why there's hope for the future" (@OilGasCanada, January 29 2021). This framing of energy workers as victims was deployed in 7 of 61 victimization cases by industry, and 15 of 33 cases by government. During a discussion of the cancellation of KXL, MLA Leela Aheer added another layer of complexity into the narrative framing of workers as victims by speaking about the exceptional harm that cancelling KXL has caused to women, portraying the oil and gas industry as exceptionally beneficial to women workers:

> "When you look at the women who are in the sector…the incredible women welders that are coming out of this, that have transitionary jobs — and these are recession-proof jobs that continue on long past any particular sways in energy sectors or anything else…it's amazing to me that anybody ever, especially in this province, would have stood in the way of a pipeline, would have stood in the way of prosperity for women and men in this province. If you look at even the flexibility in the job schedules for women who are working — and many of these companies actually had daycare on-site to make sure that women's babes were taken care of. There were grade schools that were built as a result so that women could work in this sector" (Alberta 2021a, 4240).

Aheer goes on to hold her gaze on women affected by KXL, while invoking an energy security plotline to support her argument: "Let's talk about women outside of these borders. What about them…do those women not deserve to have access to cheap energy, to have lives and livelihoods at the same level, potentially that we could?" (4241). Turning back to the experiences

of women workers, Aheer deploys a call to action towards the NDP opposition: "I hope our friends across the way, who are now…trying to come up with a way to demonize the sector and the work that they do with women, will stand up in favour to fight back against the government now in the United States that is actually taking jobs away from women and girls" (ibid). While this gender-based argument was not a dominant discourse, UCP MLA Dale Nally would go on to echo Aheer's gendered-worker argument while disparaging the cancellation of KXL: "We know that right now COVID-19 has disproportionately affect women, and I tell you, those energy jobs that could've come from this would have benefited women directly" (Alberta 2021a, 4244).This sub-discourse serves to further entrench the hypothetical energy sector worker as the primary victim of winding down pipeline construction, as opposed to highlighting lost resource rents.

This focus on Indigenous Peoples, energy communities and workers, and women as the secondary victims of energy transition beyond the oil and gas industry itself mirrors the central characters within the Just Transition movement. In Canada and other states with economies currently structured around revenues generated from the extraction of hydrocarbons, discussion of the necessity of a 'just' transition away from nonrenewable resource production in the face of anthropogenic climate change has become a popular talking point in policy and activist spaces alike. The concept emerged in the 1980s from trade union organisers, initially proposing a policy objective to protect the livelihoods of workers in the energy sector amidst increasing awareness of the unsustainability of fossil fuels (McCauley and Heffron 2018). Sweeney and Treat describe this original framing strategy as the 'worker-focused' approach, contrasted with the 'societal shift approach' born of the 2000s, which seeks to establish a broader framework of social justice within the project of mitigating environmental harm, foregrounding the most vulnerable workers and the communities most affected by climate change in the transition to a more sustainable

energy system (2018). In this broader climate justice discourse, Smith and Patterson (2018) argue that workers and Indigenous communities constitute the central characters of the climate movement. “The ‘new protagonists’ of the climate justice movement are people from what are known as ‘frontline communities’ engaging in direct action and other forms of protest in response to climate change and the forces driving it,” (248) they write. “The ‘new Climate Justice Movement’ [now] include(s) actors previously invisible or marginalized in global debates” (253).

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

A sweeping scientific consensus holds that if climate catastrophe is to be avoided, the unabated production of fossil fuels must be abruptly suspended (van Asselt 2021). Despite widespread awareness of this reality, our world remains built upon extraction. As phrased by Stephanie Clifford (2011) writing for *The New York Times*, "oil oozes through your life" and with it come roads, clothes, suburban homes, food, warmth, and vinyl records. These circumstances are structural and we are all implicated in them, but fossil fuel corporations and the governments that bolster them through financial, regulatory, and rhetorical support bear an outsized burden to rapidly scale-down oil and gas production while drastically increasing the capacity of low-carbon energy systems.

This thesis has explored how government and industry engage the politics of this urgent shift. It finds that even in the case of the most pro-oil power players in Canadian politics, John Barry's view of the impending 'greening' of all political talk proves prescient. The UCP and CAPP both consistently articulate an argument which acknowledges the existence of a shift to other energy sources, while portraying a long future of oil and gas as the anchor of the energy sector. This is framed in equal proportion through the lens of 'green' talk *and* 'economy' talk, with technological innovation as the binding point between ramped-up fossil fuel production and lowering emissions. In this story, industry emerges as a victim under attack from foreign governing bodies and environmental activists, requiring defence by the Alberta government, as well as a valiant hero upholding society through energy production. Indigenous Peoples and energy sector workers (including those currently employed, and the hypothetical worker who is missing out on an opportunity) are secondary victims in this story. An asymmetric relationship is depicted in this narrative, whereby the material profits that CAPP and the government gains through transforming bitumen on First Nations' land into a *resource* is never acknowledged;

instead, CAPP in particular portrays itself as the benevolent granter of economic access to Indigenous Nations. A similar dynamic emerges with regards to energy sector workers, for whom employment in oil sands development is portrayed as the only access point to a 'good life' as opposed to an exchange of labour.

This study makes four key contributions. First, it builds upon the empirical literature on private and public energy transition communications, which are often kept distinct, making an explicit comparison in between governments with a vested interest in maintaining fossil fuel extraction (due to rents and political saliency) and companies with a vested interest in maintaining fossil fuel extraction (due to profits). Within the body of organizational research, it offers a small-n qualitative analysis of corporate communication using social media data, which has often been approached through the lens of computational methods and 'big data' studies.

Second, it offers a theoretical argument to follow Kivimaa and Kern (2016) in focusing on *both* 'creation' and 'destruction' in conversations on energy transition. In this study, discussions of low-carbon energy technologies or explicit use of the words 'transition' were less common than more subliminal discussions of the threatened or thriving state of the fossil fuel industry. An approach which only focused on searching for explicit discussions of renewables, for example, would have missed crucial information about how policymakers and corporations view the future of energy. Furthermore, the over-focus on the deployment of low-carbon energy technologies as the primary facet of energy transition is troubling, as decarbonization projects are not necessarily environmentally or socially harmless. Renewable energy projects have been shown to carry with them a "halo effect" with them, as people who value the protection of the environment tend to baseline assess 'green' projects as positive (Loaiza-Ramírez et al 2022). However, a systematic analysis of resistance to fossil fuel and low-carbon energy projects by

Temper et al (2020) found that in the global context, non-fossil fuel energy projects are often just as conflict-ridden as fossil fuel projects, disproportionately impacting the same vulnerable groups of Indigenous peoples and rural communities, often resulting in violent repression of protesters and land defenders. Thus, paying close attention to both the scaling-up of renewable energy technologies and the winding-down of fossil fuel production is crucial to discussion of energy transition discourse.

Third, it provides a contribution to the literature on energy discourses in Canada, verifying previous works such as Gunster and Saurette (2014), which found a tendency on the part of Canadian media to portray the oil and gas industry as a victim. It also adds to the burgeoning literature on natural gas as a 'bridge fuel': In their study of the interpretive politics of natural gas in Canada from 2016 to 2020, Janzwood and Millar (2022) found that CAPP did not engage in bridge fuel discourse within press releases, instead situating it firmly as a backbone of the Alberta economy or a "destination fuel" (6).This study builds on that research by identifying evidence that on Twitter, CAPP fluidly shifts from promoting natural gas as a stalwart of the Alberta economy to amplifying media that adopts both a "conventional" and a "global" bridge fuel frame.

Finally, this intervention adds to the literature on state/corporate connections in Canada, building upon previous research which has established various lobbying connections between provincial governments and the oil and gas industry (Blue et al 2018). It demonstrates that despite being a national organization in scope, CAPP favours nearly identical narrative arcs and framing strategies to the UCP leadership, indicating a need for further examinations of how CAPP influences energy policy within Alberta and vice versa.

Since 2021, the politics of energy transition in Alberta have only grown more fraught. In August 2023, the future of of renewables in Canada was thrust into the global spotlight with the announcement of a seven month moratorium on the development of new renewable energy projects in Alberta, halting approvals for all new "wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, and hydroelectric generators" that produce more than one megawatt of power (French 2023). In their official statement, the provincial government under the leadership of UCP Premier Danielle Smith announced that the pause of approvals was rooted in concerns raised by "farmers and other members of the public" (Alberta 2023a) over "responsible land use and the rapid pace of renewables development" (Alberta 2023b).

Returning to the words of Dylan Thomas, Tornel and Lunden (2021) note that the poet must be read within his political context, which was a moment coloured by notions of infinite progress: "In 1947, when Dylan Thomas wrote the poem, 'Do not go gentle into that good night', the idea of progress was rampant…to live in the fullest sense is presented as a narrative of both the limitations and capabilities of the human condition" (34). Today, ideas of limitless progress continue to colour what Timothy Mitchell (2009) describes as Canada's "peculiar orientation towards the future as a limitless horizon of growth" (422). However, while MLA Neudorf invokes Thomas in a plea to prolong fossil fuel production, the poem offers alternative interpretations: we must not 'go gentle' into a 2-degree warming future, resisting concessions to short-sighted profits and visions of unlimited growth at all costs.

Appendix A: Codebook

Code category	Code	Description
Narrative figure	Hero	"Actor(s) who plan to or fix, solve, assist, or seek to resolve past, current or future problem" (Crow and Berggren 2014, 270)
	Victim	"Actors(s) who suffers, is targeted, is affected by the problem and/or Villain" (Crow and Berggren 2014, 270).
	Villain	"Actor(s) who through action create, cause, contribute, instigate, exacerbate, or plan to contribute to the problem" (Crow and Berggren 2014, 270).
Characters	Activists	The excerpt mentions activists, environmentalists, people who attend rallies, or "fringe" groups.
	Alberta	The excerpt mentions Alberta, the Alberta government, or specific Alberta-based politicians.
	NDP	The excerpt directly mentions the Alberta New Democratic Party.
	Canada	The excerpt refers to Canada broadly, rather than a specific government or group of people.
	Canadians	The excerpt mentions "Canadians" explicitly.
	Farmers	The excerpt explicitly refers to agricultural workers.
	Federal government	The excerpt discusses the Canadian federal government, the Liberal Party, or a specific politician on the federal level.
	Foreign governing body	The excerpt discusses a foreign government or international governing body.
	Indigenous Peoples	The excerpt references Indigenous nations, Indigenous trade associations or business groups, Indigenous individuals, and Indigeneity in general.
	Industry	The excerpt refers to fossil fuel producers or the oil and gas sector at large.
	Media/Entertainment	The excerpt refers to the media production industry.
	Other provinces	The excerpt mentions provinces or provincial governments other than Alberta.

	Workers	The excerpt mentions people who work in energy production and their communities, unions, or gains/losses in the labour market.
Motivation	Economy	The dominant narrative in the excerpt highlights fiscal growth/decline, the labour market, and other economic markers.
	Energy security	The dominant narrative in the excerpt is driven by a desire to maintain reliable access to energy, either domestically or to meet international energy demand.
	Ethical	The dominant narrative in the excerpt is characterized by an emphasis on how the form of energy production or policy conforms to standards of moral rightness, or the lack therefore.
	Green	The dominant narrative in the excerpt focuses on the environment, whether it be conservation, greenhouse gas emissions, appreciating nature.
	International relations	The dominant narrative in the excerpt centres the relationships between different countries, whether fraught or cooperative.
	Reconciliation	The dominant narrative in the excerpt focuses on relationship building between Indigenous communities and industry/government.
	Society	The dominant narrative in the excerpt highlights the indispensability of the particular energy to everyday life, focusing on contribution to society.
Energy	Energy transition	Includes excerpts that explicitly discuss both/either 1) the ramping up of low-carbon energy production, or 2) the winding down of oil and gas production.
	Oil & Gas	Includes excerpts that discuss oil and gas production, with subcodes “threatened” (portrayed as at risk, in decline, or unprofitable) or “thriving” (portrayed as resilient, growing, or profitable).
	Low-carbon energy	Includes excerpts that discuss low-carbon energy systems in general or specific technologies like solar, wind, geothermal, hydro, wave, tidal, geothermal, and some forms of hydrogen (Harjanne and Korhonen 2019).
	Other energy technology	Includes excerpts that discuss energy production technology outside fossil fuel production or low-carbon energy, including CCUS, biomass, and

		some forms of hydrogen.

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