



REGIME OF
OBSTRUCTION

HOW CORPORATE POWER
BLOCKS ENERGY DEMOCRACY

EDITED BY
WILLIAM K. CARROLL

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William K. Carroll

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Back in the autumn of 2013, when we first conceived of the project behind this book, we envisaged building a “community of practice” that would include academics, policy analysts, movement activists, community-based researchers, and community leaders. Within an integrated program of social science research, we would expose the undue power and influence of the fossil fuel industry in Canada while developing feasible alternatives to the continued hegemony of corporate capital in and around the energy sector. But, of equal import, our community of

practice would mobilize that critical knowledge via a wide array of platforms reaching a wide array of publics—concerned citizens, social and ecological activists, First Nations, policy networks, and, of course, professional social scientists. And, although the authors featured in this volume have all made crucial contributions to the CMP, the creative efforts of many others in our community of practice—which by now numbers over a hundred members—have also enhanced the chapters of this book, in many ways.

This volume addresses all the groups mentioned above, but it leans toward the last one: social scientists and students of social science. The chapters in the book highlight research conducted during the first three years of the project, from 2015 to 2018.

The University of Victoria, my academic home since 1981, has served as host of the Corporate Mapping Project. I am grateful to administrative staff in my home department, Sociology, for the many ways in which they have provided support for the project and this book in particular. Big thanks to Zoe Lu, Aileen Chong, Carole Rains, and Ann Hamilton. Their efforts have been complemented by those of two successive department chairs, Sean Hier and Steve Garlick, and by senior administrators, in particular Peter Keller and Catherine Krull, successive deans of the Faculty of Social Sciences; Valerie Kuehne, Vice-President Academic; and David Castle and Lisa Kalynchuk, successive Vice-Presidents Research.

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As I write these acknowledgements, the world has plunged into a deep public health crisis, revealing the injustices and irrationalities of neoliberal capitalism. This crisis is a foretaste of what awaits us if business-as-usual continues for much longer. The climate emergency is also a massive public health crisis, although its impacts are less acute. Coastal inundation, inland desertification, flooding, superstorms, heat waves, and other forms of extreme weather will have public health effects far more severe than a disease that runs its brutal course. The COVID-19 pandemic only intensifies the need to transition from a fossil-fueled way of life organized under the thumb of corporate power to a socially just and ecologically healthy future. I hope that this volume will be of value in clarifying the nature of the problem before us, and its possible solution.

**REGIME OF
OBSTRUCTION**

Introduction*

The intensifying development of western Canada's fossil fuel resources has far-reaching implications for our economic and ecological well-being, for the trajectory of global climate change, and for recognition of the rights and title of Indigenous peoples. Large corporations play a central role in managing fossil fuel resources, yet the industry's internal organization and its evolving relationships to other sectors of society are not well understood, nor are they easily visible to scholars, students, and citizens. Drawing on a varied array of empirical research in and around Canada's carbon-extractive sector, this volume integrates new knowledge of the modalities of corporate control within an overarching perspective that problematizes and dissects the concentrated power of fossil capital.

Our goal is to probe the multifaceted ways in which the organization of corporate power blocks a transition from fossil capitalism to energy democracy. By *fossil capitalism* we mean a form of capitalism "predicated on the growing consumption of fossil fuels, and therefore generating a sustained growth in emissions of carbon dioxide" (Malm 2016, 11). When we speak of *energy democracy*, we have in mind a double shift of power, from the energy of fossil fuels to the power of renewables (decarbonization) and from social power concentrated in a corporate oligarchy to public, democratic control of economic decisions (democratization). Corporate control of the production of energy—most of it currently in the form of fossil fuels—and the reach of corporate power into other social fields pose the

greatest obstacles to addressing the ecological and economic challenges that humanity faces today.

In Canada and globally, such a transition is technically feasible, particularly as new energy-storage technologies are refined. Yet the organization of economic power, concretized in large corporations and extending into political and cultural life in complex, multifaceted ways, presents a set of blockages. To move toward a just transition to energy democracy, we need to understand how these blockages function as a *regime of obstruction*, rooted in the political economy of fossil capitalism and expressed through a panoply of hegemonic practices that reach into civil and political society and into Indigenous communities whose land claims and world views challenge state-mandated property rights. This book maps the relations and contours of the regime of obstruction as it operates in contemporary Canada.

Fossil Capital and the Climate Emergency

According to leading climate scientist James Hansen, “Global warming has reached a level such that we can ascribe with a high degree of confidence a cause and effect relationship between the greenhouse effect and observed warming. It is already happening now.” Hansen’s definitive diagnosis was not made last week, or last year. He offered it in June 1988, before a US Senate committee (see Shabecoff 1988). In the three ensuing decades, global warming has become a climate emergency. Rapidly rising carbon emissions from the burning of fossil fuels have enhanced the greenhouse effect, leading directly to increased temperatures and melting polar ice caps. The knock-on effects include sea-level rise, extreme weather (droughts, heat waves, hurricanes, floods, and cyclones), ocean acidification, losses in biodiversity, and the spread of diseases

once confined to the tropics (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2007, 8–9). Certain of these impacts create feedback effects, further amplifying climate change. For instance, the loss of ice caps reduces the planet's reflective capacity, trapping more heat; rising temperatures near the poles thaw permafrost, releasing methane, a greenhouse gas (GHG) estimated to be eighty-six times more potent a warming agent over a 20-year period than carbon dioxide; droughts and heat waves fuel wildfires that release CO₂ while decreasing forests' capacities to absorb carbon; and ocean acidification compromises the marine food chain, reducing the ocean's capacity to absorb carbon from the atmosphere.¹

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) remains in the atmosphere for decades after it is emitted. These amplifying mechanisms would therefore drive global warming for some time even if humanity were to choose a path of rapid decarbonization, through renewable energy and overall reductions in energy use. Yet carbon emissions continue to rise—by 2.0 percent globally in 2018, a year when even emissions from coal, the dirtiest fossil fuel, increased by 1.4 percent.² Thanks to the feedback effects mentioned above, increasing emissions are pushing the Earth system toward multiple tipping points, beyond which catastrophic climate change becomes unavoidable (Steffen et al. 2018). The implications for human lives are dire. We already glimpse them in crop failures and famine, in deaths from heat waves, wildfires, and extreme storms, in growing numbers of climate refugees, and in increasing rates of suicide (Burke et al. 2018; Miller 2018).

If climate science has isolated the primary cause of global warming in human-induced GHG emissions, Richard Heede (2013) has identified the leading social forces behind those emissions. Ninety corporations (including petro-state organizations) have been responsible for the lion's share of GHG

emissions since the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, the global ascent of capitalism as the dominant way of life has been fuelled by carbon energy, which enables capital to accumulate on an extended scale but releases CO₂ on the same scale, leading inevitably to climate crisis (Malm 2016).

Capital has always boosted its profitability by appropriating what Jason Moore (2015) memorably christened “Cheap Nature,” including the buried sunshine of fossil fuels, which concentrate enormous quantities of energy. For capital, he argues, nature has been both “tap” and “sink.” From cod and beaver pelts in early colonial Canada to oil and gas in post-World War II Alberta, business has *tapped* nature’s bounty. At the same time, nature has been a *sink*, absorbing waste. As long as capital claimed only a small part of the planet, these ecologically destructive tendencies had only local impacts: a ravaged forest here, a polluted river there. But since the closing decades of the twentieth century, with full-fledged globalization and the closing of resource frontiers, the sink has overflowed with GHGs and other pollutants, and the tap has started to run dry—not only in declining agricultural productivity gains (portending the end of “cheap food”) but in depletion of high-grade oil. The latter provokes recourse to “extreme oil”—tar sands, fracked oil and gas, deepwater drilling—carrying greater emissions and ecological risk (Pineault 2018). What Allan Schnaiberg (1980) called the “treadmill of production” spins out of control.

Fossil capital has been deeply implicated in the political and cultural forms of corporate capitalism. Timothy Mitchell (2011, 18) notes ironically that from the 1870s on, the age of democratization coincided with the age of empire: “the rise of coal produced democracy at some sites and colonial domination at others.” Within the core of the world system, coal mining brought workers together at a key point in the commodity chain, enhancing their power and enabling the working class in the

Global North to demand concessions that led to “carbon democracy.” In the Global South, however, colonial domination became further consolidated with the twentieth-century transition from coal to oil, as seven oil majors came to control supply, engendering “a geopolitics of domination in which the US figured prominently” (Williams 2018, 237).

In an astute case study of the United States as epicentre of carbon democracy, Matthew Huber (2013) explores how, after World War II, fossil capital’s hegemony was cemented in the rise of suburbanized consumerism. Through the acquisition of cars, single detached houses, and appliances, certain segments of the working class were “energized, afforded enormous power over machines, space, and everyday life in navigating the practices of reproduction” (159). Within this assemblage, the individual comes to experience automobility as empowering and liberating and the single detached house as a domain of personal sovereignty. The long-range result has been to constrain politics within narrow limits “focused on the family, private property, and anticollectivist sentiments” (79)—the stock-in-trade of neoliberalism. Even if the American Dream is a hoax, however, it continues to carry heavy affective and ideological ballast and poses a great barrier, psychoculturally, to movements for climate justice. Nor is the dream uniquely American. In Canada, automobility and suburbanization have also underwritten popular allegiances to fossil capitalism, although arguably a social-democratic political current, grounded in a more robust labour movement, has to some extent tempered the tendency toward atomized individualism.

Canada as Climate Laggard

Although Canada has long been a producer and exporter of fossil fuels, under the Conservative federal government of Stephen

Harper (2006–15) the country was propelled, according to Harper himself, into the ranks of “energy superpower” (Taber 2006). This was accomplished in part through extremely low royalty rates and a host of state subsidies to the oil and gas industry: Canada’s subsidies are the highest per capita among the G7 countries (McSheffrey 2018). With the exception of a few Middle East petro-states and two small Caribbean countries, Canada also has the dubious honour of producing the highest per capita level of carbon emissions in the world (Janssens-Maenhout et al. 2017). It has been a regular recipient of the Climate Action Network’s satirical Fossil of the Day awards, earning a “Fossil of the Year” award at the UN Climate Change Conference in 2009, before garnering a “Lifetime Unachievement” Fossil award in 2013.

In an apparent reversal of this trend (and having just formed a majority government), at the opening of the December 2015 UN Climate Change Conference in Paris Justin Trudeau vowed that “Canada will take on a new leadership role internationally” and declared, “Canada is back, my good friends. We are here to help.” Yet the actual policy framework barely shifted at all. By March 2017, Trudeau was reassuring top fossil capitalists assembled in Texas that “no country would find 173 billion barrels of oil in the ground and just leave them there.”³ A year later, Canada’s federal government announced that it would purchase Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain Pipeline, contentiously slated to be twinned by a new pipeline that would triple capacity to pump bitumen to Burnaby, British Columbia. Meanwhile, in November 2016, the federal government released its Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. But as earth scientist David Hughes (2018, 159) points out, the government’s own projections under the plan will see an overall decrease in emissions of only 0.7 percent from 2005 levels by

2030 (with oil and gas emissions increasing by 46.5 percent). Hughes concludes that oil and gas resources

are non-renewable and finite, and production of oil and gas is the largest source of Canadian emissions, yet current policy is to extract them as fast as possible and sell them at rock-bottom prices with diminishing returns for the Canadian economy. This compromises emissions-reduction commitments and imposes long-term risks for Canadian energy security. (165)

Indeed, a climate action plan that mandates major new oil and gas pipelines, which can only serve to massively expand emissions, is fundamentally incoherent.

Apparent reversals of Canada's climate-laggard record at the provincial level are equally dubious. Alberta's vaunted "cap" on tar sands production, initiated by an NDP government in 2016, called for a 47.5 percent *increase* from 2014 levels before the cap would be reached (Hussey 2017). But, three year later, even this cap was swiftly removed, along with all the rest of the province's recently enacted climate legislation, by the newly elected United Conservative Party government of Premier Jason Kenney. Such a shift—from bad to worse on the climate action front—simply repeats what has been happening in Ontario, as a Conservative government, elected in June 2018, eliminates virtually all of the modest climate action reforms introduced in 2016 by the Liberal government of Kathleen Wynne. In fact, incoherent as it is, the Trudeau government's national climate plan may be unravelling, as climate-laggard provinces—notably Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Alberta—refuse to play ball, evidently preferring legal action to climate action.

The Corporate Mapping Project as Public Sociology and Action Research

Canada thus presents the interesting case of a climate laggard and, in some respects, a First World petro-state (Adkin 2016).

Although actual jobs in the fossil-capital sector account for a tiny fraction of the national workforce, and although state revenues from that sector have plunged in recent years to negligible levels (Hughes 2018, 164), political and corporate leadership is solidly behind a slightly modified version of “business as usual,” with carbon extraction continuing to increase (even as other measures partly mitigate ever-growing emissions). But the case of Canada is of more than academic interest. The urgency of the situation, globally, demands not only scholarly understanding but effective action. As the authors of a recent study of climate change conclude, if we are to avoid the “Hothouse Earth” scenario of runaway climate change, “a deep transformation based on a fundamental reorientation of human values, equity, behavior, institutions, economies, and technologies is required” (Steffen et al. 2018, 7).

This book features research findings from the first three years (2015–18) of a seven-year SSHRC-funded partnership that I co-direct with Shannon Daub, associate director of the British Columbia office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA). “Mapping the Power of the Carbon-Extractive Corporate Resource Sector”—also known as the Corporate Mapping Project (CMP)—involves six western Canadian universities and several civil society organizations, including the CCPA, the Parkland Institute, Unifor, and the Public Accountability Initiative. The partnership is founded in a shared commitment to advancing reliable knowledge that supports citizen action and transparent public policy toward a just transition away from fossil capitalism.

As researchers with the CMP, contributors to this volume see *corporate power* as a key factor in the chasm between climate science and climate action. The CMP is a case study of the forces that shape Canada’s climate policy, one that partners social scientists with progressive policy researchers, journalists, and activist movements (including environmentalism, labour, and

Indigenous leadership). Our approach is centred on a family of techniques that map the organization of power, socially, economically, politically, and culturally. These include analyses of the social networks through which power and influence flow; the commodity chains along which carbon extraction, transport, processing, and consumption occur; and the discursive structures that frame issues and narratives in the struggle to persuade publics, governments, and communities as to the desirability or inevitability of fossil capitalism as a way of life. But the project's scope extends to counter-power, as popular resistance to the regime of obstruction reveals how corporate power operates while also pointing toward alternatives.

As a community-university partnership, the CMP combines social science research with popular education and democratic advocacy in a continuing program of public sociology and action research. As public sociology, the CMP brings sociology and kindred disciplines into conversation with communities and movements about the obstacles that corporate power and fossil capital pose to ecological well-being, economic justice, and democracy. As action research, the CMP helps to build a transdisciplinary community of practice capable of monitoring and challenging corporate power and influence on an ongoing basis. Our efforts have involved:

- exposing and problematizing corporate power in its various modalities, to various publics
- providing evidence-based ammunition to allies in social justice, Indigenous, and ecological movements, to bolster their counter-power
- offering policy analyses that propose feasible alternatives for a just transition from fossil capitalism—evoked in such projects as climate justice and energy democracy.

As action research, the CMP puts at the centre of its mission the production of critical knowledge that can inform effective political practice. In mapping the carbon-extractive sector's organization, its political and cultural reach, and the resistance to its power, we offer a relational analysis attuned to both political-economic and discursive structures and practices. At the core of the analysis is the idea that corporate power is wielded through a number of distinct *modalities*.

Modalities of Corporate Power

In *Organizing the 1%: How Corporate Power Works*, J. P. Sapinski and I argue that contemporary corporate power is at once economic and hegemonic, manifesting itself not merely as an economic force grounded in accumulation but also as a political and cultural force. As [figure I.1](#) shows, this power stretches across the capitalist economy, the state, and civil society, expressing itself in various modalities within three overlapping spheres (see [figure I.1](#)).

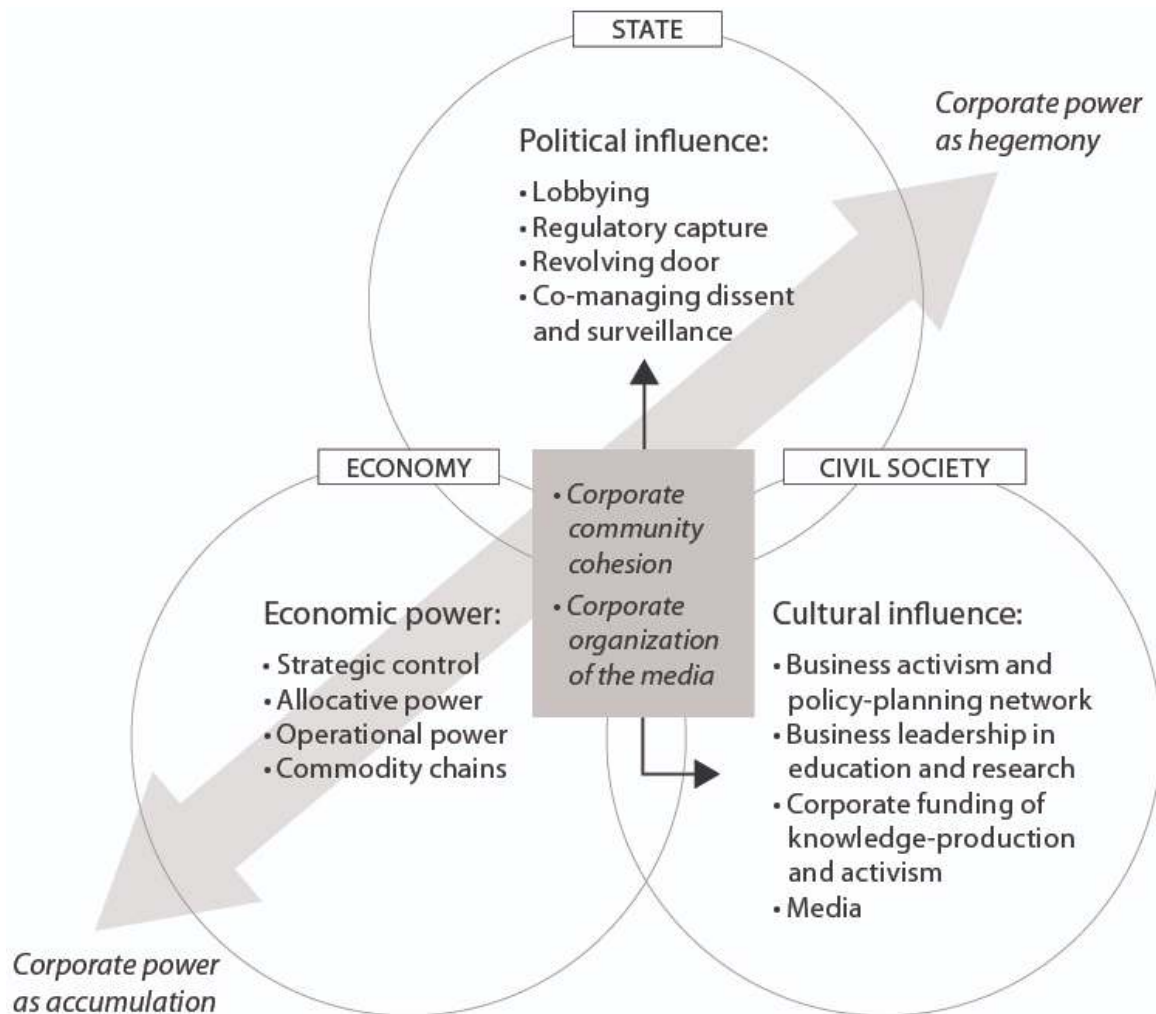


Figure I.1 Modalities of corporate power. *Source:* Carroll and Sapinski (2018, 101).

In its economic aspect, corporate power is coterminous with the entire process of capital accumulation, from the labour entailed in extraction, manufacturing, and transport through to marketing and finance. The popular imagery of “free” markets obscures the cardinal reality that capitalism is an economic system in which a dominant class of business owners and top executives appropriates the wealth created by a subordinate class of wage and salary earners. The economic surplus that labour generates in production forms the basis for profit, interest, and rent and for the ultra-high salaries of CEOs (some of

whom earn in excess of \$10 million annually).⁴ Capital's competitive dynamic means that each firm, including large corporations, must grow or eventually die, as other enterprises overtake it. Thus, most of the surplus that capital appropriates from labour is reinvested, giving capitalists power not only within current economic practices but also over the future. As capital accumulates, giant corporations and massive pools of capital concentrate power in the capitalist class's top tier—those who own and/or control large corporations. The economic power of corporate capital is reflected in the economic dependence of workers, communities, and states on corporate investments to generate jobs and government revenue.

As [figure I.1](#) suggests, there are several distinct modalities of economic power. *Operational* power is the power of management, flowing through a chain of command in which the scope of decision making is narrowed as we move from top management to shop floor. Operational power is also wielded along commodity chains, from resource extraction through processes of transport, processing, manufacturing, and distribution. *Strategic* power, the power to set business strategies for the company, involves control of the corporation itself, often by acquiring the largest bloc of shares. This power is lodged in the board of directors but rooted in the nondemocratic character of corporate capital. Corporate directors are annually “elected” but by shareholders only. The majority of those with a stake in the enterprise—workers, communities, consumers—are thus disenfranchised. Moreover, elections are typically based not on one vote per person but on one vote per corporate share owned, thereby enabling large shareholders to wield strategic control, as Jouke Huijzer and I show in [chapter 4](#). Finally, *allocative* power stems from the control of credit, the money-capital on which large corporations depend. This power, which accrues to financial institutions of all sorts (banks, life insurers,

asset managers, hedge funds), is crucial in expanding or retooling operations, launching takeover bids, or coping with cash squeezes during crises (see Carroll and Sapinski 2018, 39-40).

Figure I.1 also depicts the *hegemonic* face of corporate power, as it extends into the political and cultural fields of state and civil society. Hegemony can be defined as rule with the consent of the ruled; hence, hegemonic power refers to how that consent is secured, organized, and maintained, from the visceral level of everyday life up to the top tiers of state institutions. Although capitalists themselves dominate in accumulation, within political and civil society corporate power is exercised by capital's *organic intellectuals*, "deputies" or members of the capitalist class who are entrusted with the activity of "organising the general system of relationships external to ... business itself" (Gramsci 1971, 6). As Giuseppe Vacca (1982) has noted, such intellectuals are "organic" in a double sense. On one hand, they are "organizers" of an advanced capitalist way of life, providing leadership within the core institutions of capitalist society. On the other hand, their efforts are functionally (organically) predicated on the dominance of capital in human affairs and serve to reproduce that dominance. The agency of corporate capitalists as "business leaders" and "business activists" promoting the virtues of one or another aspect of corporate capitalism is an important expression of the organic relationship between the business of capital accumulation and wider world of politics and cultural life. However, most organic intellectuals are not major shareholders or high-level executives but well-placed and highly skilled professionals whose agency legitimates and facilitates the corporate system, through their involvement in areas such as public relations and media, policy formation, lobbying, higher education, accounting, and corporate law (Carroll and Shaw 2001).

Such experts can also be found on the directorates of leading corporations, where they function in an advisory capacity and often help to integrate the corporate elite by serving on multiple boards. Indeed, as I show in [chapter 5](#), a dense network of interlocking directorates among Canada's leading fossil-capital companies pulls together capitalists and organic intellectuals as an elite within the wider Canadian corporate community (and the even wider transnational capitalist class). Within this elite, power is centralized, as top capitalists and their advisors interact frequently, maintaining a sense of solidarity and common purpose even as they compete over the division of spoils appropriated from labour and nature. The corporate community's *cohesiveness* is an important modality of hegemony, as it enables corporate capital to reach a consensus on long-term goals and vision and, on that basis, to speak politically with a single voice and thus to lead.

Complementing elite integration is the *reach* of corporate power into the public sphere, effectively seeking to dominate the institutions, agendas, policies, discourses, and values that add up to an entire way of life. Doris Fuchs and Markus Lederer (2007, 4) have distinguished three forms of such power. Grounded in the vast resources that corporations control, *instrumental* power involves investing those resources in order to exercise influence in the political process, as in lobbying and campaign or party finance activities. *Structural* power, grounded in capitalists' control of investment, is the power to set the agenda and make the rules, with the threat of possible capital withdrawal keeping some options (such as rapid decarbonization that would threaten immediate profits) off the table. Finally, business wields *discursive* power, shaping norms, values, and beliefs through image campaigns that trumpet corporate social responsibility and "corporate citizenship," as well as through the wider promotion of consumer and entertainment culture, the

wellspring of popular desires and concerns. These forms often operate in conjunction. For instance, in August 2018, Canada's federal government, after what was described as extensive "consultation" with industry (a veiled reference to instrumental power), announced that it was walking back its plan for a national carbon tax. Environment minister Catherine McKenna explained, "We don't want to drive industry out of our country" (an acknowledgement of structural power) (quoted in Rabson 2018). In this volume, we focus on the instrumental and discursive forms, although capital's structural power is always in the background.

As illustrated in [figure 1.1](#), corporate reach is a many splendoured thing. Vis-à-vis civil society, it includes, among other things:

- business leadership exercised by corporate elites as they govern business councils, industry groups, policy-planning organizations, and institutions of higher education and research
- selective allocation of funds to business-friendly think tanks, advocacy groups, political parties, etc.
- public relations (PR) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives
- the framing of news and other media content to privilege business interests (who as advertisers selectively fund that content)
- the corporate organization of communications media, whose goal of profit maximization trumps the public interest.

Corporate funding of organizations and activities in civil society is itself an expression of allocative power reaching into and colonizing the public sphere. Funds accumulated as capital are selectively directed, often through private foundations, to

initiatives aligned with corporate business, including policy-planning groups, political parties, lobbies and industry groups, universities and research centres, community organizations, and “astroturf” advocacy groups such as Canada’s Energy Citizens. Corporate power reaches into the state via such relations and practices as

- intensive and sustained lobbying (in the five years ending in early 2016, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers lobbied the federal government on nearly a daily basis)
- regulatory capture (for example, Canada’s National Energy Board rubber-stamped industry proposals for years, leading an investigative panel to observe in 2017 that “Canadians have serious concerns that the NEB has been ‘captured’ by the oil and gas industry, with many Board members who come from the industry that the NEB regulates, and who—at the very least appear to—have an innate bias toward that industry” [McCarthy 2017])
- revolving doors, through which business leaders become political leaders and vice versa.

A final aspect of corporate reach into political society aligns corporations with the repressive arm of the state, as co-managers of dissent and surveillance. Although it is business as usual to govern with popular consent, when hegemony fails—when dissent becomes well organized and potentially effective—the state turns to more repressive strategies of social control.

In the realm of fossil capital, this began to happen under the Harper regime, as coalitions of Indigenous, environmental, and social justice activists rose up in opposition to proposed pipelines such as Northern Gateway and Keystone XL (both first proposed in the mid-2000s). In response, the state mobilized its security agencies in order to protect “critical infrastructure,” working in collaboration with fossil fuel corporations (Crosby and Monaghan

2018). In 2014, in its *Action Plan for Critical Infrastructure*, Public Safety Canada recommended that “private sector stakeholders” be granted special security clearance “to enable increased sharing of sensitive information” (Public Safety Canada 2014, 6). Then came Bill C-51, introduced by the Harper government in January 2015 (and passed six months later). Otherwise known as the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015, the bill included “interference with critical infrastructure” in its definition of activities that undermine the country’s security. That “critical infrastructure” included pipelines and other oil and gas industry facilities was clear from a January 2014 RCMP report, “Critical Infrastructure Intelligence Assessment: Criminal Threats to the Petroleum Industry,” in which “violent anti-petroleum extremists” were essentially tagged as terrorists (Linnitt 2015). Although the Trudeau government’s Bill C-59, introduced in June 2017 (and passed two years later), softened the language of Bill C-51, it continues to target “significant or widespread interference with critical infrastructure” as a threat to national security and to allow authorities to detain or arrest someone if they have reasonable grounds to believe that doing so “is necessary to” prevent the occurrence of terrorist activity.⁵

These various modalities can be placed within an even wider framework that recognizes that power implies resistance (Barbalet 1985). Resistance can take different forms, including

- shop-floor struggles of workers against the lash of management
- protests, boycotts, and blockades at key junctures along commodity chains
- shareholder activism and divestment campaigns, which engage the power of investors
- calls for the private allocative power of finance to be brought under public control

- critiques of the concentration of power within old boys' clubs and among corporate elites
- demands to remove big money from politics and to end the institutional corruption that infects practices of business lobbying
- media activism pushing to democratize public communication while fostering community-based media
- counterhegemonic projects to transform our way of life—as in the 2015 Leap Manifesto, which proposes to shift from fossil capitalism to energy democracy.⁶

Although the Corporate Mapping Project has focused on domination, issues of resistance (and even transformation) are never far below the surface of our investigations, and they figure prominently in this collection's third part.

Structure of the Book

In the chapters that follow, we show how these modalities of corporate power in and around Canada's fossil-capital sector comprise a regime of obstruction. The analysis is presented in three parts:

- "The Organization of Fossil Capital," through networks and commodity chains in which a few large corporations dominate the scene
- "The Struggle for Hearts and Minds," as corporate power reaches into political and civil society and into Indigenous communities, via various instrumental and discursive relations
- "Resistance and Beyond," as counter-power builds, opening space for transformative policies and practices that can move toward energy democracy.