

National Strategies for Divest Concordia

Group Research Project By:

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Abstract

The initial objective of our research project was to create a national campus divestment solidarity network to strengthen and provide support for Divest Concordia and other Canadian divestment campaigns. In the course of our research we reconsidered our objectives when we discovered the Facebook group titled “Campus Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaigns in Canada”. Our revised research objectives were:

1. Learn about the activity, usefulness, and potential for existing and future Canadian campus divest solidarity networks
2. Learn common challenges, best practices and strategies
3. Create resources for Divest Concordia and for the national divestment community

To these ends we surveyed Canadian university divestment campaigns and conducted an interview with an American divestment network/support organization (Divest Ed). Topics covered included general information on fossil fuel divestment campaigns and divest movement, common tactics, challenges, and best practices. Upon the completion of our research process we used our findings to create a map of divestment campaigns in Canada and a zine entitled “Invest in Divest”. The purpose of the map and zine is to add to the foundation of the existing cross-Canada divestment network and provide the resources to help begin new and existing divestment campaigns, especially Divest Concordia. We found that there is a strong consensus that a nationwide divestment network would ameliorate campus divestment groups, however there are still some questions remaining on how to keep people engaged in these networks as they tend to become semi-static entities. We attempted to contribute two methods to stimulate engagement by creating both the map and zine. Additionally, we chose these two forms believing that they are conducive to achieving longevity and accessibility of our research.

Introduction

The “National Strategies for Divest Concordia” research project came out of a 400-level geography course entitled “Geographies of Justice” instructed by Kevin Gould. The primary objective of this course was to generate research to benefit a local organization striving for social justice. Professor Gould pre-selected and organized the course around working in solidarity with and support of Divest Concordia.

Divest Concordia (DC) is a campus organization at Concordia University in Montreal Quebec formed by the student body that puts pressure on the university to cease investing and remove existing investments from the fossil fuel industry. The university divestment movement is part of a larger global divestment movement that operates on a very simple logic: “if it’s wrong to wreck the climate, it’s wrong to profit off that wreckage” (Mckibben, 2013). The term “divestment” means exactly the opposite of investment (Chen, 2018). The goal of university divestment movements is to remove investments affiliated with the fossil fuel industry from their institution’s stocks, bonds and funds (Howard, 2015). Ultimately, in achieving this goal, the impact and message sent is that society at large is revoking the fossil fuel industry’s financial and moral license to function in a business as usual manner (Howard, 2015).

University campuses have become a front line in climate action. The first student lead divestment movement began at Swarthmore College in 2010 (Rowe et al, 2016). Since 2010, the movement has gained substantial global traction, it is estimated that roughly 635 campus-based fossil fuel divestment campaigns exist in North America (McGray & Turcotte-Summers, 2017). The divestment movement is developing through unique student initiatives (organizations and specific escalation tactics) and traditional activism (student politics, petitions, media etc). However, in Canada, the University of Laval is the only institution to have committed to and completed full divestment (McGray & Turcotte-Summers, 2017).

Divest Concordia is a student-led movement that began in 2013 (Hutchins, 2019). The campaign functions through public engagement and policy lobbying. Emily Carson-Apstein, the primary organizer at DC, explained the demands that they have given to the university, which include:

- (1) Freeze all current investments in the fossil fuel industry (and related ones).

- (2) Divest from the top 200 fossil fuel companies over a three-year time span.
- (3) Adopt socially and environmentally friendly investment policies in the university's mandate.
- (4) Have a proper student representation on the committees responsible for these policies.
- (5) Public endorsement of divestment by Concordia and encourage other universities to divest from fossil fuels.

In 2014, Concordia responded with a “half measure” to divert activists from divestment and issues surrounding investment in the fossil fuel industry. Concordia formed a \$5 million-dollar Sustainable Investment Fund (SRI) which is separate from the endowment fund and continues to support the fossil fuel industry (McGray, Turcotte-Summers, 2017). In 2016, Concordia's Student Union (CSU) adopted Divest Concordia as their annual campaign which incorporated public education and engagement with administration (Hutchins, 2019). This concerted support bolstered the movement. Presently, DC is in a phase of private negotiations, and there is less emphasis and resources going into public education (Hutchins, 2019). Divest Concordia's current position inspired our group to increase its visibility and strength through a national solidarity network and inform the student body about both, Divest Concordia and divestment in general.

Methods

The purpose of this research was to inquire into the status and usefulness of national campus divest group solidarity networks in Canada. We began with research on the level and nature of activity in any existing solidarity networks. We then sought to collect information on individual experiences and divestment group's histories and compile them conveniently. The results of our research were intended to create resources for Divest Concordia that can be utilized to inspire new members and used as a jumping off point to generate new strategies and benefit the national campus divest group community by contributing to a national solidarity network.

Our research project could be considered PAR (participatory action research) adjacent. Our team members had various levels of previous familiarity and activity with DC, from very well-informed and semi-active to this being the first involvement with the group. However, during the course of this project we were in close consultation with one of the most active

current DC organizers, Emily Carson-Apstein. This ongoing conversation and participation in some DC group meetings allowed us to check-in to see if our research objectives were aligning with DC's goals and what might be considered helpful to the campaign at this point in time. We note that it may be considered "adjacent" because even if we did not consult and work to benefit DC the research we undertook would still have been able to have been completed independently, however working in the manner we did, we were able to stick to PAR and DC ethos.

We invited individuals who have experience with or represent their local campus divestment group to complete an online survey. The survey was comprised of eleven questions concerning what we judged to be potentially useful, but presently absent, information for the Canadian divestment movement. Questions addressed; best practices, challenges, and strategies, interactions with administration, as well as existing solidarity alliances (see appendix for full list of questions). We asked if a national network could help revitalize momentum, what would be the ideal platform, and what function they envisioned a network serving.

To find and contact divestment groups, we divided the work amongst our research team members, allocating each member one or two provinces in which to find divestment groups. While each member had their own method of finding groups in their assigned provinces, we generally started by looking up universities in the given province online, then searching Facebook, Google, or their student group's website to see if any divestment campaigns existed. Another useful tool for finding divestment groups was "The State of Fossil Fuel Divestment in Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions" document made by the Sustainability and Education Policy Network which provided a list of schools with divestment campaigns across Canada. While this resource was very helpful it did not list the names of each group, provide a method of contact, nor state their activity status. There are often commonalities in the divest group names, such as "divest" or "fossil fuel free", however there were many unique names that further obscured them to simple search engine inquiries.

Once we tracked down divestment groups, we contacted them through Facebook, email or their group's websites. Oftentimes we combined two or more methods of communication, but in every case, sent information on our project and the link to the survey. Given unpredictability of time it may take to receive replies to emails or receive back completed surveys and the small window in which to conduct this research (half of a semester), we set up a thorough tracking

system to help all team members keep up-to-date. A collaborative google document (see appendix) held information on who we contacted, followed-up with, and from whom we received responses.

We contacted twenty divestment groups across Canada over several weeks and received a total of six responses to our survey. While this was not as many as we were hoping for, it was still enough to provide insight into how our work could be useful to the divestment movement. Furthermore, several other groups had expressed interest in our work and in completing the survey, however they did not take the time to do so. We received responses from universities in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia.

Beyond our literature review, survey, and direct involvement with DC, we were directed to a US-based divestment organization called Divest Ed through one of our research team members (see Research Diary in the appendix for more). Divest Ed provides a platform for training and strategy sharing to improve and broaden campus divestment campaigns. Their goal is to make each movement sustainable (i.e. persistent) and to help divest groups effectively challenge university power structures. Finding Divest Ed was a promising development as it reflected that there was a useful form of a national network that students currently benefit from. We were directed towards Alyssa Lee, the Director of Campus Programs at Divest Ed. Our group and Alyssa decided that an online video-interview (Q&A) would benefit our vision of the global divestment movement and our project as a whole. Our interview with Alyssa provided us with key information that had resonances with our other findings.

Findings

Survey

The surveys provided an understanding of the current state of networking that exists between divestment campaigns. To begin, all respondents, except for one, had stated that their familiarity of other divestment movements across Canada was relatively low or limited, implying connectivity and joint action amongst Canadian university groups does not regularly occur. One respondent who said they felt quite aware of other divestment movements stated, “I have a relatively high familiarity as I have been doing research on the Canadian university fossil fuel divestment movement” (University 2). But beyond those that are doing research similar to ours,

simply knowing where other university divestment movements are happening is not something many people tend to be aware of. Regarding each group's current support networks, respondents noted that support for their divestment groups include small local environmental groups, other campus groups, 350.org, and the Facebook group "Campus Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaigns in Canada" (CFFDCC). Once we discovered the existence of the CFFDCC, our initial research goal of creating a national divestment network changed. We did notice that the activity of this page is quite sporadic and does not have any easy or centralized way to find information on creating or improving divestment campaigns, this is why we later chose to create an interactive map and zine. Even with the Facebook group, all respondents, except for one, gave a concrete "yes" to the need of a national divestment network. The reply which was not a definite "yes" stated, regarding the need of a national divestment network "Somewhat, every school operates differently with different laws regarding fiduciary duty. That being said it would be nice to have a resource to communicate with other groups and share tactics" (University 4). Thus, the that unique respondent that felt there is "somewhat" a need for a national network still stated a national solidarity network may be beneficial.

Furthermore, respondents provided insights for how the national network would promote and serve their movement. Each group gave detailed responses, such as "increase pressure on the federal and provincial governments to take meaningful action on climate, pressing for a Green New Deal, lending support and trainings for each other's groups, fostering more public support for divestment" (University 2) and "regular online meetings with updates on strategies/tactics being employed by different groups would be incredibly helpful, especially for newer groups" (University 1). Overall, divestment groups foresee a national network having the ability to build momentum, assist with strategizing, and promote collaborative action. All groups, except for one, stated they would participate in this network if it existed. The respondent that expressed some doubt about a network stated, "I would participate it if was not overly time consuming and served a clear purpose" (University 4). Rather than being explicitly uninterested in participating in a network, it appears they were simply hesitant of engaging in any network that did not have clear objectives and methods to efficiently and effectively operate.

The survey responses provided us with tried and tested tactics which the different divestment groups have benefited from which allowed us to create a chapter of "best practices"

in our zine. These successful tactics include; on campus camp-outs and protest, opening talks with administration to establish a working relationship, calling alumni to withhold from donations until divestment occurs, sending “breakup with fossil fuel” cards to administration on Valentine’s Day, having faculty departments sign divestment petitions, student petitions, showing student support for divestment through referendums, raising a divestment banner on the ceiling of the administration building, and creating an endowment refund campaign. These approaches have brought profound benefits to divestment groups. For example, the group that staged an on-campus camp-out, said the camp-out “earned us speaking time at the BOG, which resulted in a third-party fund search to see what green investments we could make if they divested (University 2). This group was able to see the effects on campus energy plans, the impact being: “the Board has changed one of its fund managers and is creating a climate and energy action plan” (University 6). Comprehensively, we found that a mix of confrontational and non-confrontational methods seem to be the most impactful in terms of pushing university administration towards full divestment from fossil fuels.

Aside from successes, we were also able to learn more about the challenges faced by divestment campaigns across the country. None of the groups surveyed have seen achieved full divestment at their university and the majority of the pushback against divestment is from administration. Challenges posed to divestment groups by university administration, often coming in the form of financial excuses, include; divesting contradictory to needs to maximize return from investment and maximizing returns argued as necessary for scholarships, pensions, and a wide array of fiduciary duties. University 2 was able to get their administration to commit to the UN Principles for Socially Responsible Investing, but administration used this as a means to say divestment activists should be “satisfied”. To add to the conflicting gestures, their interim president publicly denounced divestment and the campus divestment group after the university’s commitment to the UN principles. Other common university pushback came in the claim that financial decisions are outsourced to third party financial managers, for example, a foundation board, therefore, administration is not directly involved in investment decisions. The group with this experience also stated, “we learned that the foundation board has been pressured by influential donors not to divest” (University 5). University administrations were also reported to have not allowed for new petitions on divestment until seven years has passed since the previous one and sought to distance from administrative distance from the issue of divestment citing that

they must not take “political sides”. Overall, responses from university administrations seem to fall into the following categories; a) divestment being contrary to “needs”/desires to maximize investment returns, b) universities must be neutral on political issues, or c) divestment activists should be satisfied with the other forms of responsible investing, or at best a vague notion that the university is eventually planning to divest. The other most dominant challenge faced by university divestment groups is losing members in the roughly four-year cycle of university. This is not complex issue, but a serious and systematic one – thus, in our zine we provide ideas on recruitment and outreach.

Using recent literature on divest campaigns we were able to compile suitable rebuttals to administrations’ common responses to calls for divestment. We included some these rebuttals in an easy to consume format in our zine. In terms of countering the financial argument made by administration:

“the effects of climate change continue in severity, and society understands the need of abandoning high carbon emitting industries, fossil fuels will become devalued assets with little market demand. The current valuation of fossil fuel companies includes reserves that are unburnable if we are to avoid triggering catastrophic climate change. It is inevitable that legislation will be passed to keep these fossil fuels in the group, leading to the fossil fuel industry losing trillions of dollars” (Rowe et al, 2016).

The political neutrality response can be addressed with: “whether administrations will state it or not, endowments are a political tool. There is no neutrality in investing, especially when universities clearly take sides by owning shares in companies that threaten the rights of future generations. “Rational” and “neutral” investment decisions should not be based off how much financial return they will yield” (Rowe et al, 2016).

Administrations stating that divestment activist should be satisfied with other forms of responsible investing, can be met with pressure on that fact that: “universities have historically been, and continue to be, institutions that promote social equity. Investing in fossil fuel industries, which produce immense social inequalities, such as the creation of “sacrifice zones”, opposes the nature of the university as an institution that teaches and acts upon factors that end inequalities” (Richardson, 2019). We believe having these rebuttals to administrations’ refusal to engage in divestment and divestment conversations is a powerful tool to further the divestment

movement at universities, but furthermore, as a tool to educate and energize those new to the movement. This allows activists to be one step ahead of administration as they can prepare for common responses.

Key Interview

Through conducting a semi-structured interview with Alyssa Lee from Divest Ed, we were provided with considerations for forming an ideal global divestment network. Alyssa noted that such a network would require a budget for a paid full-time staff. This recommendation was helpful considering the high turnover rates of student-lead campaigns, the turnover is typically due to members graduating. This would ensure that the institutional memory of a given campus campaign will not be lost. It has been highlighted that university divestment campaigns sometimes run into problems when graduating students are required to pass on knowledge to new members (Hutchins, 2019). A paid staff would ensure that this memory is preserved and properly passed along.

Alyssa spoke about the various forms of connections that are made through Divest Ed. Firstly, she explained that to revive fossil fuel movements she connects the students to other groups and campuses. Divest Ed offers students to join a Fellowship Program which runs for about a year (spring, summer, fall). This creates a student cohort at multiple schools and they commit to a year of close training and mentorship with the Divest Ed team. She explained that around 20 individuals are currently enrolled in this program. Those who don't participate in the fellowship are encouraged to join the open webinars that DE conducts twice a month. The webinars used to be run on a platform whereby DE were in charge and were the speakers, however, they re-strategized and now the webinars are a space for students to converse. This space for students to share their "wins" and "losses" decentralizes Divest Ed's role and more resembles a truly democratic and fluid network. DE also runs an online Slack page to connect and create a space for questions and further connecting students and their divestment campaigns. These times and venues for connections gives a sense of empowerment to students and creates a more regular connection between campuses. This direct connection and hearing from other students involved in separate divest campaigns encourages knowledge sharing, meaningful online and offline participation, and helps create energy for the movement in the broader terms.

Alyssa highlighted that connections between campus fossil fuel divestment campaigns are a way to think of fossil fuel divestment on a greater scale rather than through a single campaign.

Alyssa noted that students tend to react positively to the divestment movement when it is framed as a revolution. She utilized the terms “fighting” and “winning”. This reference was particularly interesting in relation to the work of Mangat et al., who argue that the creation of the divestment “war narrative” becomes a powerful mobilizing force where there are clear winners and losers (2018). The war narrative acts as an energizing force for student activists worldwide as they share a common enemy (Mangat et al, 2018).

Alyssa helped our team visualize how an ideal network would operate in terms of revival and ongoing support of the fossil fuel divestment campaigns. From the interview our team also came out with ideas on how to activate passive allies (see zine). This was directed to individuals who wish to help Divest Concordia (and other campaigns) reach their goals but are unaware of where (and how) to start. DE also provided relevant information for Divest Concordia to make the movement more welcoming and accessible. Alyssa included that one-on-one meetings can be a useful tool when inviting new members into a movement. This allows the movement to have a point of contact and ensures newcomers feel welcome and connected. She also mentioned that during meetings it is useful to create “break-off groups” whereby new individuals will be paired together, thus slowly building a strong network of individuals. Ultimately, Alyssa’s positive attitude and vast expertise on student-lead divest groups helped point us in the right direction for our zine in terms of topics and content to include.

The Map and Zine

We decided that our research required a convenient and accessible location for our various findings in order to meet our original objectives of aiding the divestment movement. Rather than simply attempting to answer a research question and let it sit in a minimally disseminated paper that is also too long for the average person to be casually enticed to read. We concluded that a map is a form that draws people in and informs with relative ease. A map is a highly visible symbol of the national divestment movement for both introducing and encouraging students to the movement, as well as to make universities and society at large aware of the size and persistence of the movement. Additionally, an interactive map is a suitable tool to add to the basis of existing solidarity networks as inherent in its form it connects discrete entities.

Being a part of a relatively small campus group can at times feel like lonely fight in a mammoth endeavor of challenging the status quo of administrators and investors. Between universities, the administrative, financial, and political structure may vary, creating a unique set of challenges for each campaign. While groups may often feel suppressed and administrations try to make them feel powerless, we have found (in relevant literature, media, and in the course of this study) an enormous amount of common ground. The zine is an accessible and inviting form to package findings and general information that we believe is key to get into the hands of people new to the movement. With both the map and zine were seeking forms that are conducive to achieving longevity and accessibility of our research.

The Map

Once we found out that there was already an existing platform for a fossil fuel divestment network on Facebook, we were forced to reimagine the objectives of our project; this is when we decided to create a visual network in the form of an online, interactive map. The map seemed like a useful and viable alternative to us for three main reasons. For one, it was something that had the potential to be lasting and sustainable. We had the continuity of our project in mind from the beginning and were committed to creating something that could live beyond the boundaries of the course. The map lives on an open sourced platform called “u-map”, making it free of cost and it is able to be edited and distributed by anyone. It is currently in the process of being added to the Sustainable Concordia and Divest Concordia websites, and will be distributed in our Zine. Secondly, we wanted to create something that would empower present and future student activists. The map provides a visual representation of the power behind the fossil fuel divestment movement, and we hope that this will be empowering for students organizing for fossil fuel divestment in Canada. In small universities, it is easy for administration to dismiss a divestment campaign as a small group of radical students with little influence or power. We hope that our map can be used by divestment groups to legitimize their campaigns and to show that this is a national movement with the power and potential to incite change on university campuses across the country. Lastly, as student activists ourselves, we recognize that it is easy for a university to feel like an island, and to forget that there are hundreds of students fighting for similar issues across the country. We hope that our map (in combination with our zine) will play a small role in breaking down these barriers and facilitating intercampus collaboration and solidarity.

Our map is available at the following link:

bit.ly/divestmap

The Zine

After reflecting on our research and findings, we decided that the most effective way to utilize this information would be to create a zine. Our zine, “Invest in Divest” was designed to act as a tool in which the information we accumulated over the course of the semester could be used to help start new divestment campaigns or improve existing ones. The findings from our survey demonstrated that there was a desire to have some form of network through which to connect and strengthen divestment groups across Canada. As previously mentioned, the Facebook group, “Campus Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaigns in Canada” showed that this network already exists on social media platforms. Despite its utility as a means to post articles and contact other active members, its sporadic activity and lack of centralized information presented ways in which it could be improved. While Divest Ed’s well-structured website acted as an ideal example of how a national network could be established across Canada, we unfortunately did not have the time or resources to create such a platform. As such, we determined that an online and in-print zine would be a good way to fill in the information gaps we saw in the “Campus Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaigns in Canada” page, as well as act as a tool to leverage the information we have collected in our research. Our research also showed there are many universities across Canada who do not yet have divestment campaigns, thus there is a lot of potential for this zine to be put to use. This zine was also designed to enhance the information that is available on the divestment network online map. While the map serves as a means to find divestment campaigns and their contact information, the zine provides information on how to mobilize this resource. Together, they act as a network for communication as well as information sharing. With the longevity of the project in mind, we designed the map and zine to help prevent the loss of institutional memory that occurs through the four-year cycling of students in university divestment movements. We hope that in creating an accessible and comprehensible container for this information, the activities of present and future divestment campaigns will be fortified.

Our zine is available at the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mbeHsKG34CVcPBj9rWEN76meBbEqysuQ/view?usp=sharing>

Conclusion

Currently, the most active Canadian divestment solidarity networks is the Facebook group CFFDC, however the activity is sporadic. There is no agenda, nor is there staff to mediate activities and discussions. Our interview and survey responses demonstrate the positive impact that networks can have, additionally, we found a strong consensus that a nation-wide divestment network would ameliorate individual campus divestment movements. However, there are still some questions remaining on how to keep activists engaged in these networks as they tend to become semi-static entities. This is in part due to high student turnover rates, but also due to the aforementioned lack in structure.

Our map is an open-sourced platform which will continue to track new campus divestment campaigns. It will soon be available alongside the zine on the Sustainable Concordia and Divest Concordia websites. We hope that it will create new avenues through for current networks to expand and ultimately help to support divestment on a nation-wide scale.

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Appendix

1. Group Research Diary
2. Individual Narratives: Crucial Moments of Research and Reflections
3. Survey Questions
4. Groups Contacted

1. Group Research Diary

Beginnings

In the spirit of our course “Geographies of Justice” that was working in solidarity with and in support of the campus organization Divest Concordia (DC), our group members and research project came together through an apt shared interest: the collective power of solidarity networks. We sought to engage in participatory action research (PAR) with DC that would also benefit the national divestment movement. Our initial idea was to start a national campus divestment network on an online platform. It was imagined to be a venue for collective power to constructively take shape (sharing ideas, supporting each other, and organizing to take action in collective solidarity) to directly benefit DC as well as campus divestment groups across Canada. While campus divestment campaigns have specific financial goals, it is primarily a social movement, and we gravitated towards the “network” as a tool of social mobilization. Our attraction to networks for connecting these discrete bodies of knowledge, power, and collective energy was at the forefront in beginning this project. We hoped that by establishing an active network it would be somewhat self-sufficient in its continued existence once our project came to an end.

Phase I

After some initial research and asking around we discovered the Facebook group “Campus Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaigns in Canada” (CFFDC), which initiated the most significant revision of our research questions/objectives. A week after asking to join the closed CFFDC Facebook group we were accepted by the groups administrators and began to explore the history

of activity, the nature of connections there was fairly broad and semi-active, but it was clear that even though there were only 490 members of the group there was representation from many schools and that this was the central online hub for Canadian campus divestment groups. We realized that our idea to set up network needed to be reconsidered, as this semi-active network already existed. Based on our evaluation of the Facebook group and the timeline of our research we decided that the most realizable and potentially beneficial aims we could have were to utilize the existing network and create something new that could be added to the national divestment community. We also wished to utilize the social capital inherent in the network by gathering diverse information and bring it directly to DC and for other interested divestment groups.

Phase II

Our initial research objectives were to create a national divestment group solidarity network that would begin linking groups into constructive relationships, but based on our preliminary research we shifted to the three objectives listed in the methods section: i) evaluating existing networks, ii) surveying groups, and iii) using this information to make an zine/handbook and creating an interactive map to provide a highly accessible and visible resource for the Canadian university divestment movement. Once we had decided on this route and received a few survey responses, we were well on our way to reaching our objectives. The readings throughout the semester were a de facto literature review of the university divestment context, this set us up well to then narrow our focus specifically on how divestment plays out with the aid of inter-group communication.

Ethan had a connection to Divest Ed through personal relationships which was a gateway to a key interview with the Director of Campus Programs at Divest Ed, Alyssa Lee. This was a moment when interconnectedness and PAR within a social movement demonstrated the usefulness of connections outside of one's own university campus campaign. Thus, this was not only a finding within our study, but our own experience. While this type of interconnectivity is easily taken for granted in the internet age, to avoid overlooking it we'd like to point out how critical it is for how social movements progress.

From this point onward, the research trajectory was more straightforward, thus the remaining major details of the research process are covered in the methods section. Before this point we were still working out both the ultimate objectives, as well as the methods to accomplish them.

Lastly, what has not been covered above or in the methods section is well represented below in our individual research diaries.

2. Individual Narratives: Crucial Moments of Research and Reflection

Jane

What excited me most about this project was the opportunity to participate in research that would help support Divest Concordia's activities beyond just the span of the semester. At the beginning of our research, it was interesting to see how many divestment groups across Canada have either become inactive or simply decided not to respond to our repeated attempts at communication. At first I was surprised and a little disheartened by this lack of activity but I soon came to realize that this was valuable information for our research; it shows how much potential there is across Canada to start new Divest movements or improve on existing ones. As such, these gaps became clear starting points through which our zine emerged. Going off of these findings, we designed it as a tool to help fill such gaps. Having made zines for several other projects, I really enjoyed the process that goes into creating one, and the final result it produces. What I found most challenging about creating this zine in particular was finding a way to present the information in a manner that was clear and easy to understand without watering-down the actual content itself. I played around with several different layouts but eventually stuck with one that was more minimal in graphics and colors so that the information could be understood without too much background noise. Overall, I enjoyed laying out the zine as it was exciting to see all the research we had done over the semester come together in a coherent and useful way. I hope that it will prove to be useful for both Divest Concordia's activities, as well as other divestment campaigns across Canada. I think that our team collaborated really well together, and I am happy with the work we have produced.

Matthew

I was very enthused by the idea of working on a national solidarity network for divest campaigns, because in recent years I've come to understand, through literature and lived experience, the power of formal and informal institutions and networks for social transformation. A simple but far-reaching national network seemed like a missing and necessary piece for supporting individual divest campaigns, especially as any small group challenging powerful

stakeholders can feel daunted as well as require diverse range of tactics. Rather than going it alone on a trial and error basis it made sense to me that divest groups may benefit from knowledge sharing. Aside from this interest, my position as someone soon graduating, thus who will not likely not being participating in the continuing Divest Concordia campaign, I was hoping to work on a project with a somewhat broad scope. However, not having ever been an active member of DC nor sticking around long to follow-through over the next year, I felt quite hesitant in taking my place in this specific project. One had to be very careful to not be overly presumptuous in our intentions, as I was someone who was not previously involved with DC it felt rather out of place to then suddenly claim to help lead the way and create momentum for the campaign. Especially because, while we would be taking on significant amount of research there was no guarantee that the final outcome would have any immediate or future impact. However, this sentiment and approach had to be balanced by the fact that in undertaking participatory action research it is an active choice to implicate and embody oneself in the movement. In the end, given the trajectory and outcome of this project, I believe that individually and as a group we did better than the (sometimes) scorned journalist who lands in a crisis zone for five days to write a story to tell the world and then moves on. Instead, I believe, we chose objectives that were appropriate and suitable for our deadline and positioning within Divest Concordia and the broader campus divestment movement.

Maya

I faced a few barriers when creating the map. Mainly, it was difficult to decide which groups were “active” enough to be included, and which should be left out of the project for the sake of clarity and accuracy. Ultimately, I decided to include any group that displayed activity on their website or Facebook page in the last 24 months, and groups that hadn’t been active in recent months but had completed “successful” divestment campaigns (i.e L’Université Laval). In addition to this, we were faced with a significant roadblock during the creation of the map when it came to light that the first platform we chose, “Zeemaps”, was not open sourced and would begin charging a fee after 100 users had viewed the map. I decided it was crucial, for the reasons of long-term access, to find a new platform and transfer all of the information from the first one, which took a significant amount of time. Despite these challenges, we are satisfied with the end result and looking forward to seeing how it is ultimately put to use!

Michelle

The video chat with Alyssa Lee was conducted by Ethan and I. this addition to our project was extremely useful and insightful. Alyssa's personal experience with university divestment campaigns represented internal struggles to the movement which complemented her work with Divest Ed and other students struggles. I felt that this information would not have been accessible through literature and having someone's personal experience presented to me was very impactful. She was extremely knowledgeable and approachable, which allowed for a relatively informal conversation about divestment and various practices. Her passion and knowledge energized me for our project. Alyssa's insights helped us understand and consolidate various forms information through relaxed conversation and thoughtful banter. This information created a clear vision from a reputable source. The interview showed us how a divestment network functions in terms of their methods and considerations. It was a really positive experience and made me feel somewhat "energized" for our project and the possibilities of divestment in general. It was interesting to reflect on the change in my attitude during one conversation with Alyssa. It became quite evident why students value her as a resource for their divestment campaigns and why networks are key to divestment mobilization.

Later on in the project, I found myself going through the list of universities we surveyed it was quite shocking to see that only six groups replied to the survey. I think that at the beginning we believed that more people would actually participate but it was a good reality check to see what kind of involvement people will actually have or how much time you should give someone to complete a task. Our group members did our best to be productive, even sending follow up emails to different groups. We concluded that perhaps students were too busy, not interested or that some contact information is outdated and no longer used.

Ethan

Our group achieving the Sustainability Research Award furthered my desire of ensuring Divest Concordia can benefit long-term from our research project. I very much think that the solidarity network we are creating has the potential to strengthen the mission of Divest Concordia, leading to divestment at Concordia. Getting the award made me feel a stronger urge to create outcomes from our research that are impactful to Concordia. Maya creating the interactive map, allowing us to physically see where divestment movements are occurring, has made the project "come to

life” a bit more in my mind. The map has given me a structure to see how our research will manifest itself into a physical form, open to the public. Seeing our project come to life with the map and zine, is truly a great feeling. With the zine, I can see how Divest Concordia can follow the outlined best practices. I can also see how any university, with or without an active divestment movement, can use the insight from our zine to further, or begin, a divestment movement. Having the interactive map will definitely make future networking amongst divestment groups much easier. I am proud of our work, as I believe we brought benefit to the university divestment movement in Canada.

3. Survey Questions

- University/group, name and contact info.
- What kind of support networks do you have access to currently, if any (at the university, local, provincial level)?
- What is your level of familiarity with other divestment movements at universities across Canada?
- Do you see a need for a national fossil fuel divestment network?
- What purpose do you see it serving?
- What platform do you see it existing on?
- Would you participate in this national network if it existed?
- Write a brief description of your groups past and current successes, challenges, strategies and tactics. (What has been the biggest challenge faced by your group so far? How have you tried to overcome it? What tactic has brought you the most success?)
- What responses has your university administration given, if any, in regards to your movement for divestment?
- Do you feel comfortable having this information shared in the form of an online publication or zine? (We will keep your group’s name and school affiliation confidential.)

4. Groups Contacted

Your name	Group Name	Contact info of group/person	Contacted (Y/N) - include date contacted	Response (Y/N)	Notes	Name	Region
Maya	Divest UWinnepeg	Facebook group	3.4.19	N		Maya	Sask and Manitoba, and territories?
Maya	Divest Manitoba (University of Manitoba)	Facebook group	3.4.19	N		Michelle	Ontario
Ethan	Divest Dal	Facebook group	3.11.19	Y!		Matthew	Quebec
Michelle	Fossil Free Guelph	Email, Facebook group	3/5/2019	N		Jane	BC and Alberta
Michelle	Divest Ryerson	Email, Facebook group	3/5/2019	N		Ethan	PEI, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia.
Michelle	Divest Carleton	Email, Facebook group	3/5/2019	N			
Michelle	University of Toronto	D email	3/5/2019	Y!	They are interested emailed a woman named Julia who is keen!!		
Jane	Divest UVic	Facebook group	3/6/19	Y			
Jane	SFU 350	Facebook group and email	3/6/19	N			
Jane	UBC 350	Email	3/6/19	N			
Ethan	Fossil Free UNB	Email	3/15/19	N			
Michelle	Sustainable Trent	email / facebook	3.11.19	N			
Ethan	Divest MTA	Facebook group					
Michelle	University of Windsor	https://www.facebook.com/uwindivest/ads/					
Michelle	University of Waterloo	On their website	3.17.19	Y			
Michelle	Queen's Backing Action	On their website	3.17.19	Y			
Matthew	McGill	facebook			said they would do it- I followed up once		
	Laval	facebook			said they would look at it - I followed up once		
	U de M	facebook		Y	They did the survey		
	Laval-former leader	facebook			no response		