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Abstract: At present, there is a rich and extensive body of literature that concerns itself with the climate-related policies of successive Canadian governments. A vast majority of these works rely heavily on a single determinant—societal, governmental, or external—to account for said policies. In borrowing from and adding to this scholarship, this paper demonstrates how all three determinants have interacted with one another in unique and important ways in order to inform Canadian climate policy thus far. In analyzing nearly four decades worth of major climate-related decisions made by the Canadian government, this paper is organized sequentially, into four chronological phases, each of which focuses primarily upon the given governing party. In concluding its evaluation, this paper presents two normative policy recommendations to enhance Canada's climate agenda: increased investment in green technology and purposive, thoughtful consultation with Indigenous peoples.

Climate change is arguably the most urgent and action-compelling issue facing this generation; it cuts across party affiliation, socio-economic status, and geography, rendering human development incredibly vulnerable. Since 2008, the Canadian government, primarily at the federal level, has attempted to address and thereby mitigate the effects of climate change both at home and abroad. This paper will examine major decisions made by the Canadian government with respect to climate policy and further deal with the various considerations and motivations behind these decisions. In doing so, this paper borrows from, and adds to existing schools of thought within popular scholarship in order to propose the following argument: the Canadian government has made several meaningful attempts to address climate change, yet tangible results remain ultimately low insofar as progress has been hindered by a number of societal, governmental, and external determinants, of which include, but are not limited to public opinion; internal and external governmental pressures; interest groups; and party preferences. Despite a general consensus among Canadians that addressing climate change is a pressing and substantial objective, these determinants, which vary in size and salience, have continued to dominate the government's decision-making process. For the purpose of clarity, this paper is organized into chronological phases in order to highlight the primary decision(s) and determinants that gave rise to Canadian climate policy during a given period of time. In its final stages, this paper discusses two normative recommendations—increased investment in green technology and meaningful consultation with Indigenous peoples—which may aid in what has been a tenuous fight against climate change by the Canadian government for over two decades.

The Four Competing Schools of Thought

The scholarship on Canadian climate policy is rich, well debated, and certainly likely to grow in size and significance as climate change becomes an increasingly topical and politicized issue. This paper has surveyed the relevant literature, both recent and historical, and has synthesized it into four schools of thought, accordingly. The first school argues that the Canadian government's commitment to addressing climate change has been heavily dependent on public sentiment. As such, the government has become increasingly dedicated to mitigating the effects of climate change in the last ten or so years, during which Canadians have expressed a heightened awareness of and interest in the issue.[1] A second school argues that the Canadian government, despite recognizing a nation-wide desire among Canadians to address and ameliorate the effects of climate change, has largely ceded ground on the issue in favour of the business community.[2] As Canada is heavily reliant on the production and exportation of its natural resources, primarily oil, the government has crafted policies that appeal to, and in fact, favour job security and economic prosperity over the environment. The third school relies heavily on governmental determinants in order to account for what they have described as Canada's lethargy towards climate change during the near decade long reign of the Conservative party, led by Stephen Harper. With the advent of Justin Trudeau's Liberal majority government in 2015, this school argues that meaningful advancements with respect to climate change have been in effect over the last four years.[3] The

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[1] Erik Lachapelle, Christopher P. Borick, and Barry Rabe, "Public Attitudes Toward Climate Science and Climate Policy in Federal Systems: Canada and the United States Compared," *Review of Policy Research* 29, no. 3 (2012), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-1338.2012.00563.x.

[2] Asha McKercher and Leah Sarson, "Dollars and Sense? The Harper Government, Economic Diplomacy, and Canadian Foreign Policy," *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 71, no. 3 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702016662794.

[3] Normal Hillmer and Phillippe Lagassé. *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

fourth and final school of thought is that which has been developed by Indigenous scholars and knowledge keepers. Indigenous peoples have been highly critical of the government's climate change policies, or as they argue, the lack thereof, both past and present.[4] This school of thought is closely related to, and has deeply informed the normative prescriptions offered in the conclusion of this paper.

The Puzzles

While this scholarship is enormously important and has sincerely informed this paper, it leaves the inquisitive reader unsatisfied, given that each school focuses on a single, rigid determinant in order to account for the decision or policy at hand. As such, the analysis is often overly narrow and does not capture the myriad of intersecting, overlapping considerations that have informed policy-making in the context of climate change. Given these constraints, existing schools of thought cannot adequately explain why, despite a clear expression by Canadians that mitigating climate change is a top priority of theirs, the Canadian government has been unsuccessful in making tangible progress on the issue. In an effort to offer an explanation to this question, this paper argues that societal, governmental, and external pressures, in conjunction with one another have, albeit to different extents, prompted the Canadian government to prioritize other interests—particularly those related to the economy—ahead of the environment.

[4] John Newton, C.D. James Paci, and Aynslie Ogden, "Canada: Integrating Indigenous Perspectives with Government Policy," *Migration of Natural Hazards and Disasters: International Perspectives* 10, no. 3 (2005), https://doi.org/10.1007/s11027-005-0060-9.

What Did the Canadian Government Do and Why?

Phase One: A Prelude – Chrétien and the Kyoto Protocol

The first major decision regarding climate change policy in Canada concerns Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's announcement at the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa that Canada would ratify the Kyoto Protocol—an international treaty that commits its signatories to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—the following spring. Canada's commitment to emissions reduction was as follows: 6% below 1990 baselines by the 2008-2012 commitment period.[5] While the commitment was in line with that of the United States', many scholars have criticized it as being largely aspirational, optical, and fundamentally unattainable by any conceivable standards.[6] As will soon become evident, such criticisms were heavily utilized by the conservative government in the early 2000s in order to justify less restrictive, and non-emissions focused climate policies.

Chrétien's Ideals and the Structure of the Canadian Federal Government

The existing schools often limit an explanation of Canada's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol to a single determinant alone. Instead, this paper argues that both Chrétien's character and governmental determinants, particularly the structure of the federal government, proved to be complementary determinants in the decision to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. While some scholars have cited Chrétien's personal dedication to the issue as the primary factor,[7] such as former

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[5] Kathryn Harrison, "The Road Not Taken: Climate Change Policy in Canada and the United States," *Global Environmental Politics* 7, no. 4 (2007): 92, http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F59802644%3Faccountid%3D14771.

[6] Silvia Maciunas and Géraud De Lassus Saint-Geniès, "The Evolution of Canada's International and Domestic Climate Policy:" *Reflections on Canada's Past, Present and Future in International Law/Réflexions Sur Le Passé, Le Présent Et L'avenir Du Canada En Droit International*, April 2018, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2n7q7t.26.

[7] Jeffrey Simpson, Mark Jaccard, and Nic Rivers, *Hot Air: Meeting Canada's Climate Change Policy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2008), 67.

Minister of the Environment David Anderson who argued that Chrétien "genuinely believed [Kyoto] was the right thing to do,"[8] other scholars have rebuked this argument by demonstrating that former United States (US) President Bill Clinton himself was also in favour of ratification and even so was unsuccessful in delivering it.[9] In making these respective claims, both groups have overlooked the fact that while Chrétien was not alone among leaders who supported the Kyoto Protocol[10], he was in a particularly advantageous position to follow through on his commitments.[11] Particularly, for example, while there existed some division among Chrétien's Cabinet as to whether ratification of the Kyoto Protocol was in Canada's best interests, given the nature of parliamentary government, Chrétien's majority in the House of Commons afforded him a great deal of flexibility.[12] Specifically, his ability to persuade the House, coupled with strong party discipline and alliance, ensured that the aforementioned divisions did not materialize in Chrétien's caucus.

The Business Community and Relations with the United States

Despite the overall salience of these determinants, one must give nod to other relevant factors at play—that is the interests of the business community and pressures from external governments—which influenced, though arguably to a lesser extent, Chrétien's decision. While these groups were ultimately unsuccessful in overriding Canada's decision to ratify the protocol, Chrétien did cede ground to them by proposing an implementation of the protocol that relied on

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[8] Kathryn Harrison and Lisa McIntosh Sundstrom, *Global Commons, Domestic Decisions: the Comparative Politics of Climate Change* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 192.

[9] Harrison, "The Road Not Taken," 96.

[10] There are currently 192 Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The United States, namely, is not among these countries, having dropped out in 2001.

[11] Harrison, "The Road Not Taken," 96-97.

[12] David J. Blair, "The Framing of International Competitiveness in Canada's Climate Change Policy: Trade-Off or Synergy?," *Climate Policy* 17, no. 6 (2016): 772, https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2016.1197094.

government spending and not regulation.[13] One may also consider the effect of American President George W. Bush's announcement in March 2001 that the US would *not* move to ratify Kyoto. Given the general consensus among both populations that the protocol was in the country's best interests, as well as the deeply intertwined nature of the Canadian and US economy—advanced under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—, it came as a surprise to the international community that despite America's formal rejection of the agreement, Canada would move forward with ratification.[14] As such, Canada's normative commitment to ameliorating the effects of climate change was duly exemplified by its decision to prioritize the protection of the global commons over their usual parallelism with US climate policies.

Phase Two: The Beginning of a Tenure – Harper and the Conservative Party

Stephen Harper's Conservatives arrived on the scene in February 2006 with a minority government, following a brief interlude by Paul Martin's Liberals, the latter of whose policies did little to disrupt the Kyoto Protocol[15] and closely resembled his Liberal predecessors. In the Conservative Party's 2006 campaign platform, Harper promised to address climate change "in concert with the major industrial nations of the world."[16] For the Conservatives, the first place to effect meaningful change involved revisiting the Kyoto Protocol. The Conservatives were quick to denounce the agreement by appealing to existing concerns regarding job stability and economic competitiveness, with Harper himself describing it as a "socialist scheme"[17] on behalf of

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[13] Harrison and Sundstrom, *Global Commons, Domestic Decisions*, 169.

[14] Harrison, "The Road Not Taken," 92.

[15] Rodney White, *Climate Change in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010), 85.

[16] John J. Kirton, "Consequences of the 2008 US Elections for America's Climate Change Policy, Canada, and the World," *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 64, no. 1 (2009): 154, www.jstor.org/stable/40204460.

[17] Alexander Panetta, "Harper Letter Decries Kyoto as 'Socialist Scheme'," The Globe and Mail, April 25, 2018, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/harper-letter-decries-kyoto-as-socialist-scheme/article25582298/.

impoverished nations to deprive wealthy countries of growth and prosperity. "There are no Canadian winners under the Kyoto Accord,"[18] decried a 2002 fundraising letter sent by Harper to members of his (now defunct) Canadian Alliance party. Given this history, it was unsurprising that shortly thereafter, former Minister of Environment, the now-prominent Rona Ambrose, publicly stated that it was simply "impossible"[19] for Canada to attain its existing Kyoto targets and thus it would be necessary to abandon them altogether. The government was keenly aware of the popularity of the agreement among Canadians and was therefore careful to reiterate the notion that while it respected the protocol and its intentions, new, more attainable targets were needed. Despite these assurances, as early as 2006, Canadian negotiators were told to reject any continuation of the Kyoto Protocol and with respect to the second compliance cycle, to withhold support for any rigid reductions.[20] By denouncing the Kyoto Protocol and subsequently cutting government funding on a number of existing climate change programs, including The One Tonne Challenge—a program to reduce GHG emissions—the Conservative Party made clear that Canadians could and should expect a sharp departure from previous Liberal policy.

In place of a deeply weakened Kyoto Protocol and axed Liberal programs, the Conservatives introduced their new "Made-in-Canada" plan in October 2006. The initiative proposed consultations on regulations for Canada's automobile industry with the intention that emissions in this sector would be completely eradicated by 2025.[21] In 2007, the Harper government took a sharp turn from the course and announced plans to increase government spending on public transportation, climate change research, and fossil fuel alternatives.[22] As such,

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[18] See note 17.
[19] Blair, "The Framing of International Competitiveness," 772.
[20] Maciunas and de Lassus Saint-Genièrs, "From Divergence to Consistency."
[21] Harrison, "The Road Not Taken," 110.
[22] Harrison and Sundstrom, *Global Commons, Domestic Decisions*, 185.

the government also adjusted its initial target for 2025, stating that it would begin cutting emissions "as early as 2010."[23] This shift was marked by John Baird's, Harper's second Minister of the Environment, announcement of "Turning the Corner," a climate plan that resembled earlier Liberal policies and specifically called for "an absolute reduction of 150 megatonnes by 2020."[24] In line with this trend towards increased action, the advent of the Obama administration in 2008 motivated Harper to advocate for a bilateral accord with the US, stating that collaboration on climate change and energy was fundamental for Canada-US relations.[25] By late 2008, it seemed as if stringent, tangible reductions and bilateral cooperation were finally on the horizon for Canada.

Climate Skeptics And an Alliance With the Business Community

The Conservative Party's reasoning for said decisions can be attributed to a number of determinants, some of which were more prominent than others. First, Harper was an economist by trade, and more specifically, one from Calgary, a city well-endowed with and heavily dependent on fossil fuels. As such, his views on climate change need to be contextualized through a largely economically-oriented framework. Scholars have suggested that this predisposition was furthered by his own skepticism on the issue, as Harper vocalized his belief in the need to "monitor the science"[26] before asserting the definitive extent of climate change. This paper takes these claims one step further by arguing that this individual determinant was bolstered by Harper's alliance with the business community, who were in consensus that Kyoto posed a threat to the Canadian economy, which is heavily dependent on its oil and resource industries to maintain a healthy

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[23] See note 21.

[24] Canada's New Government Announces Mandatory Industrial Targets to Tackle Climate Change and Reduce Air Pollution," Government of Canada, April 26, 2007, https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2007/04/canada-new-government-announces-mandatory-industrial-targets-tackle-climate-change-reduce-air-pollution.html.

[25] Kirton, "Consequences of the 2008 US Elections," 159.

[26] Simpson, Jaccard, and Rivers, *Hot Air*, 92.

profit. This reasoning also lends itself to Harper's desire to work in coordination with the Obama administration in order to maximize economic benefits for both countries, and in doing so, protect Alberta's oil exports to the US by preventing the offshoring of Canadian firms. Close collaboration with the US would further ensure that NAFTA protected against American import restrictions on Canadian oil.[27] Given that achieving Canada's emissions targets would require strict regulation of these industries, Harper made the aforementioned decisions with due consideration for the Canadian economy. Given the resonance that this reasoning had with Harper's individual views, it was a matter of time before the Kyoto Protocol, which the Conservatives believed was fundamentally incompatible with the interests of a healthy economy, would be dismantled.

A Surge in Public Opinion

The government attributed the shift in its climate agenda, particularly from 2007 onwards, to "long-term economic benefits,"[28] including increased energy efficiency, higher competition, and job creation. Despite these explanations, it is more likely that the change in trajectory reflects a mobilization by the government in response to a change in attitude towards climate change among the Canadian electorate. In January 2007, a national survey conducted by the Strategic Counsel indicated that 26% of Canadians cited climate change as the most pressing issue facing Canada, compared to just a meagre 4% in the year prior.[29] After failing to anticipate a surge in public interest in climate change since late 2006, the Conservative Party found itself confronted by other federal parties that together, united against the Conservative's "Made-in-Canada" plan.

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[27] Kirton, "Consequences of the 2008 US Elections," 160.
[28] Blair, "The Framing of International Competitiveness," 773.
[29] Harrison and Sundstrom, *Global Commons, Domestic Decisions*, 173.

These external pressures, both societal and governmental in nature, prompted the Conservatives to circumvent any possible overture of their second minority government and thus engage in a greater number of more substantive climate related endeavours, as outlined above.[30]

Phase Three: Withdrawing From Kyoto – What Now?

In December 2009, at the 15th session of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), delegates, including Canada, committed to reducing their GHG emissions. Under the Conservative Party, Canada agreed to the following target: reduce GHG emissions to 17% below 2005 levels—a target that mirrored that made by the US and essentially endorsed an extension of the Kyoto Protocol. In May 2011, the Conservative party emerged from the polls victorious with their third—now majority—government. With this security in place, the Conservative government acted rather passively on the climate change issues. In the aftermath of Copenhagen,[31] Harper largely dropped climate change as a priority,[32] claiming that the issue was the responsibility of the UNFCCC, and not the federal government, nor the Group of Eight (G8). Despite the decision to participate in the Copenhagen Accord, in December 2011, the federal government announced that it would invoke its legal right to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol, as made permissible by article 27 of the agreement. Harper argued that modest, realistic targets were the best and only possible way to mitigate climate change, and as such, withdrawal was necessary. Despite being united on

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[30] See note 28.

[31] The 15th session of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, between December 7 and 18, 2009.

[32] John J. Kirton and Ella Kokotis, *The Global Governance of Climate Change: G7, G20, and UN Leadership* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015) 240, https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.4324/9781315557625.

domestic and international fronts, Harper's policies earned the Conservative Party a reputation for being a climate change "laggard,"[33] a legacy which remains very much intact today.

An Inevitable Decision

Canada's decision to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol likely comes as no surprise to those familiar with Harper's routine denunciation of voluntary compliance. The determinants behind this decision were largely based on the Harper's government's understanding of Canada's national interests. In announcing Canada's formal withdrawal, former Minister of the Environment, Peter Kent, cited the targeted nature of Kyoto, arguing that it only represented, and therefore held accountable, 30% of the world's GHG emitters. In this regard, Harper argued, reminiscently true to his original account of the accord, that the Kyoto Protocol unfairly punished wealthy nations such as Canada, while allowing countries with a large emissions footprint, notably China and India to continue business as usual.[34] The government cited further, logistical reasons as to its decision, including that the targets were simply unrealistic, superficial, and most prominently, that they would hurt Canadians and their economy. Kent infamously went as far as to suggest that meeting Canada's Kyoto commitments would require removing all "vehicle(s) of every kind from Canadian roads or closing down the entire farming and agricultural sector and cutting heat to every home, office, hospital, factory and building in Canada."[35] Despite the explicit exaggeration apparent in his remarks, Kent's denunciation quite fittingly captured the deep,

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[33] Maciunas and de Lassus Saint-Genièrs, "From Divergence to Consistency."

[34] "Canada Exits Kyoto Protocol." *Global Refining & Fuels Report* 16, no. 1(2012): 11, http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1528549508%3Faccountid%3D14771.

[35] "Kyoto and Out," The Economist, December 17, 2011, https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2011/12/17/kyoto-and-out.

long-standing reservations that the Conservative Party had towards the Kyoto Protocol since it took power in Ottawa.

Phase Four: A New Hope

After ten years in office, voters decided, among other concerns, that Harper's attitude towards the environment was intolerably out of line with public opinion.[36] Thus, 2015 marked the end of Harper's tenure as Prime Minister and saw in its place a strong Liberal majority government, led by a young and keen Justin Trudeau. The change in Ottawa brought with it the potential for meaningful change insofar as Trudeau's electoral platform was full of progressive policy promises. Most notably, such endeavours have included: carbon pricing, appropriate regulatory insight, and increased investments in clean technology—among further indications that the Liberal government would work to remediate the Conservative's "cynical and reactionary"[37] outlook on climate change. In sum, the Liberals described their climate change policy as "working together with Indigenous peoples and the public to find ways to encourage clean economic growth, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and prepare for the impacts of climate change."[38] Moreover, while the Conservatives struggled to balance economic interests with environmental concerns, Trudeau and his newly appointed Minister of Environment, Catherine McKenna, assured Canadians that the two could and should, in fact, be reconciled.

Trudeau's first opportunity to actualize these promises occurred later that year at the 21st session of the COP (COP21) in Paris. Less than thirty days after his ascendance, Trudeau

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[36] "Canada's Prime Minister Secures a Deal for a National Carbon Price," The Economist, December 15, 2016, https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2016/12/15/canadas-prime-minister-secures-a-deal-for-a-national-carbon-price.

[37] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy*, 104.

[38] Jason Maclean, "Will We Ever Have Paris? Canada's Climate Change Policy and Federalism 3.0," *Alberta Law Review* 55, no. 4 (2018): 26. https://doi.org/10.29173/alr2481.

concluded his week of European summitry with the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris, declaring that "Canada is back…[and] here to help."[39] As such, Trudeau took the opportunity to announce that his government would implement policies that contribute to a low-carbon economy—including carbon pricing and investing in clean technology and renewable energy.[40] In accordance with the goals of COP21, Trudeau took a constructive, proactive role in the development of the Paris Agreement, a major comprehensive document that outlined emission reductions for all signatories.[41] Unlike Harper, Trudeau extended his opposition, as well as all provincial leaders, an invitation to Paris, signifying what looked like a shift to non-partisanship in the fight against climate change.[42] At the conference, delegates agreed on the following target: "to contain the rise in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels…[and] to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees."[43] In October 2016, Canada ratified the Paris Agreement and submitted its contribution to reducing GHG emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. Despite pleas that Canada can and should do more, Trudeau adopted this target from his Conservative predecessor, who established it in the lead-up to COP21.

Since its contributions in Paris, the federal government has continued to further its climate related aspirations, particularly via multilateral institutions. Beginning at the signing agreement for COP21 in New York in April of 2016, Trudeau, a member of the newly created Carbon Pricing Panel (CPP) agreed to "a global target of expanding carbon pricing to cover 25% of global emissions by 2020, double the current level, and to achieve 50% coverage within the next

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[39] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy*, 20.
[40] Blair, "The Framing of International Competitiveness," 775.
[41] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy*, 20.
[42] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy*, 36.
[43] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy,* 90.

decade."[44] In a highly successful state visit to Washington in the same year, Obama and Trudeau agreed to outline measures focused on: reducing the use of methane and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), setting emission regulations on vehicles, and offsetting carbon emissions from the aviation industry.[45] Later that same year, Trudeau hosted the North American Leaders Summit, at which discussions on climate change and energy were a priority. At the summit, the leaders agreed on a number of commitments, all of which were oriented towards transitioning to a low-carbon economy.[46]

At home, Trudeau crafted a climate plan in 2016 in conjunction with all provinces, excluding Saskatchewan and Manitoba.[47] The plan required all provinces to set a price on carbon by 2018, starting at $10 a tonne and rising $10 every year thereafter until 2022 when the plan would be revised.[48] In April of 2019, as per their 2016 climate plan, the federal government's carbon tax levy came into force, applying to Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick—all of whom rejected the option to adopt their own carbon pricing systems.[49] As of January 2020, the levy was also applied to Alberta, which recently axed its carbon tax. Furthermore, the federal government has approved the buying of the Trans Mountain pipeline for $4.5 billion and is currently defending its expansion plan which would increase its transportation

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[44] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy,* 107.

[45] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy,* 107-108.

[46] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy,* 109.

[47] "Justin Trudeau is Trapped Between Eco-Warriors and Gas-Guzzlers," The Economist, June 8, 2012, https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2019/06/08/justin-trudeau-is-trapped-between-eco-warriors-and-gas-guzzlers.

[48] "Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Delivers a Speech on Pricing Carbon Pollution," Prime Minister of Canada, October 3, 2016, https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2016/10/03/prime-minister-justin-trudeau-delivers-speech-pricing-carbon-pollution.

[49] "Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Climate Change," The Narwhal, October 3, 2019, https://thenarwhal.ca/topics/justin-trudeau-climate-change-canada/.

capacity from 300,000 to 890,000 barrels of oil per day.[50] The pipeline has attracted enormous attention as it presents a great obstacle to achieving Canada's Paris commitments and has resulted in backlash from Indigenous communities, environmentalists, and those who have stood by them in solidarity.

Integration Between the Economy and the Environment

The Harper government made it explicit that climate policy would take a backseat to economic prosperity and job security. One of the most crucial driving forces behind Liberal climate change policy has been to disrupt this assertion and instead, insist on the fundamental compatibility of and reconciliation between the two interests. However, behind this insistence lay an important motivation: to restore Canada's role as a leader in "the race to create new, high-tech clean jobs."[51] This vision has deeply guided and thus informed the commitments outlined above, in addition to other endeavours such as trade promotion and improving relations with China.[52] While the Liberal government has married its commitments to the theory of climate-economy integration, future initiatives and partnerships are likely to test the strength of this theory. For example, with the advent of the Trump administration and its abdication from the Paris Agreement—among, of course, other climate-related endeavours—the US is pursuing nationalist policy measures that include increased tariffs and taxes on Canadian goods. In turn, such policies have a punitive effect on the Canadian economy, rendering it less competitive overall. Whether the federal government can continue to balance environmental interests with economic growth is uncertain, though the approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline, among others, may prove telling.

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[50] See note 49.

[51] "A New Plan for Canada's Environment and Economy," Liberal Party of Canada, 2015, https://www.liberal.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/A-new-plan-for-Canadas-environment-and-economy.pdf.

[52] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy*, 114.

Triumphing Trump

This paper has argued that Canada, particularly under the recent Liberal government, has made meaningful strides in addressing climate change. However, it also makes a point to suggest that such achievements have been both informed and constrained by external determinants. For example, prior to the Trump presidency, Prime Minister Trudeau shared a similar approach to climate policy, both conceptually and literally, with respect to concrete measures, to that of the US. With the advent of the Trump administration not long after his own, Trudeau no longer enjoyed the level of climate and energy integration that Canada once did.[53] In fact, the current attitude of President Trump towards climate change has largely been one of passivity, indifference, and skepticism and diverges greatly from Trudeau's internationalist approach. While Canada and the US continue to work together, albeit begrudgingly, the two countries have yet to substantively collaborate with one another on the issue of climate change.[54] Despite less than ideal conditions for integration, the Trudeau government has not explicitly redacted any of its initial commitments on account of these constraints. It would be presumptuous and narrow-minded to assume that should the political administration in the US be different, the progress made by Canada with respect to climate change would be as well. No less, however, current bilateral relations between the two countries have certainly complicated Canada's history of supporting and coordinating its policy endeavours with those of the US.

[53] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy,* 108-109.
[54] Hillmer and Lagassé, *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy,* 110.

What Can Canada Do Differently?

Green Technology

The final portion of this paper turns its attention towards two brief normative policy prescriptions that may better aid Canada in addressing and thereby mitigating the effects of climate change: (1) investing in high-tech, clean energy and (2) increasing consultations with Indigenous peoples. Firstly, if Canada wants to make meaningful strides in mitigating climate change, it is more likely to find success in doing so by adopting measures to promote green technology. Emissions reduction targets, as demonstrated by the Kyoto Protocol and Canada's current trajectory in meeting its Paris commitments, have proven to be unrealistic and unattainable. While one should not praise the lethargic climate policies of the Conservative Party, Prime Minister Harper was arguably correct about voluntary emission targets: they are largely aspirational. As one is afforded the advantages of retrospect, it is increasingly clear that such methods do not successfully compel large emitters, in either wealthy or developing nations, to reduce their emissions. Even if efforts are made to introduce long-term, practical, and realistic emission targets that would be worthwhile, they are only likely to succeed if there exists suitable technology in order to support them.[55] Thus, rather than pursuing emissions reductions commitments one after the other, Canada would be better off investing heavily in highly efficient, clean, and sustainable technologies that will support a transition to a low-carbon economy.

Greater Consultation with Indigenous Peoples

Second, as with all of today's topical issues, though particularly with respect to climate change, a continuation of business as usual—that is, policy-making absent of Indigenous

[55] Isabel Galiana, Jeremy Leonard, and Christopher Green, "A Technology-Led Climate Change Policy for Canada," July 23, 2012, https://irpp.org/research-studies/a-technology-led-climate-change-policy-for-canada/.

peoples—is superficial at best. If the Canadian government is as intent on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and mitigating climate change as it has stated, it must realize the deep interconnectedness of these two issues. Consultation with Indigenous peoples has been notoriously and sorely lacking from the federal government's climate change agenda and the affiliated decisions which have been outlined above. Consequently, the need for Indigenous voices is greater than ever.

Indigenous peoples conceptualize and respond to the effects of climate change in ways that differ from standard, settler knowledge. Particularly, Indigenous peoples have a profoundly unique conception of their relationship to the Earth—inclusive of its land, oceans, and resources—and regard such relationships to be a guiding and powerful consideration in their day-to-day lives. In this regard, as Indigenous ways of life are closely connected to the natural universe, they also rely on the passing of traditional knowledge. As such, this valuable, otherwise unobtainable knowledge has the power to substantiate, contextualize, and help inform existing findings and understandings of climate change, as well as to foster new and effective ways of confronting such change.

It is pertinent to the conversations that are yet to come that Canadians and their government recognize the ways in which Indigenous peoples (in part), given their deep connectedness with the natural universe, have and continue to disproportionately experience the adverse impacts of climate change. While an acknowledgement of this fact is necessary, it alone is not sufficient. Rather, the Canadian government must actively and continually work alongside Indigenous peoples in such a manner that appropriately recognizes their agency as both sovereign individuals and valuable knowledge keepers. Notably, Canada has engaged in meaningful

intergovernmental forum to promote the livelihood of Indigenous peoples, for example, through the Arctic Council.[56] Indeed, such participation demonstrates an outward commitment to the concerns of Indigenous peoples. At present, however, particularly as the effects of climate change only continue to make themselves more pronounced, it is incumbent on the Canadian government to further leverage its powerful institutional capacities in order to *support*, rather than dictate, the needs of Indigenous people.

Conclusion

Scientific evidence and research has made it undeniably clear that climate change in the Anthropocene[57] is a product of human activity. Whether addressing climate change will be this generation's seminal contribution to the future has yet to be determined and remains largely dependent on the various actions taken and initiatives pursued by the federal government. As such, this paper has demonstrated the ways in which the Canadian government, particularly since its ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2002, has attempted to mitigate the effects of climate change both at home and abroad. Given the deeply complex and vexed nature of these issues, the undertaking of concrete actions by the last four federal governments have yielded progress that can be characterized as arduously slow. As this paper has made clear, despite the consensus among Canadians that climate change is an urgent and substantial issue in need of attention, a number of determinants—societal, governmental, and external—have complicated the government's ability to address the issue with full force and efficacy.

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[56] The Arctic Council, formally established in 1996, is an intergovernmental forum made up of eight states including Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States. As taken from the Arctic Council website, the council seeks to "[promote] cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues."

[57] The "Anthropocene" refers to the current geological era, during which human activity has had a dominant impact on the planet, inclusive of its climate and ecosystems.

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