CRITICAL APPROACHES TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND CIVIC ACTION

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CRITICAL APPROACHES TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND CIVIC ACTION

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Editorial: Critical Approaches to Climate Change and Civic Action

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INTRODUCTION

There is wide recognition that the dangers of climate change require urgent, large scale, and systemic changes (IPCC, 2018). There is also a growing awareness that these changes are not simply a question of carbon emissions and regulatory policies, but of democracy and societal transformation (e.g., Klein, 2014; Rasbash, 2019). In challenging the priority of the economic, regulatory, and technological solutions of an emissions paradigm, a diverse range of actors are centring questions of power, exclusion, and justice to recast climate change communication around the needs of societal transformation. The contemporary climate change movement is thus broader, more diverse, and more inventive than contemporary scholarship often suggests, reconfiguring climate action and climate communication as mutually interdependent.

The epistemological, conceptual and analytical challenges that result from taking the diversity of these actions seriously is worth critical attention and study. Responding to these challenges, the Research Topic on *Critical Approaches to Climate Change and Civic Action* focuses on the communicative dimensions of contemporary forms of climate action. By viewing the meanings of climate change as defined in communication practices, we center the role of communication in imagining, shaping, facilitating, contesting and enacting collective action on climate change. In doing so, we situate communication as constitutive of the epistemological, discursive and material conditions necessary for creating societal transformations at a systemic level. While the field of climate change communication has moved beyond its ad hoc origins and is now informed by a wide array of disciplines, including psychology, political science, and neuroscience, the constitutive aspect of communication is often minimized or elided in this work. A constitutive approach to communication, as Ballentyne (2016) reminds us, is distinguished by its attention to the co-production of discourse (or communication practices) and reality, and by an understanding of climate change as both physically and socially produced. It also encourages critical approaches to communication that are more open, inclusive, and responsive to the emplaced and embodied knowledges that animate the climate change movement.

Our approach to this Research Topic has several features that follow from recognizing the constitutive element of communication. The articles engage in theoretical, empirical and critical reflection by situating communicative practices as constitutive of the relationships that make up our worlds. Articles in this collection are also critical in their attention to the questions of power and marginalization that invariably shape our understanding of climate change. "Critical," in this respect, does not mean sceptical or cynical toward climate science, but indicates an anti-essentialist engagement with the assumptions, norms, and inequalities in the systems of power that shape our collective futures. Questions of identity, meaning, interpretation, action, power, and human/more-than-human relations are brought into the political foreground. Finally, the articles are inventive in allowing our concepts and epistemologies to be unsettled by events, and in resituating climate change communication with respect to wider visions and imaginaries of societal

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transformation. In this editorial piece, besides introducing the articles that are part of this Research Topic, we take the opportunity to discuss the nature and traits of critical communication research and how it can uniquely contribute to understanding civic action and societal transformation.

WHY CRITICAL RESEARCH ON CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION AND CIVIC ACTION IS NEEDED

A large part of the research on climate change produced within the social sciences has been strikingly *a-social*, i.e., focused on the individual rather than on social-level issues. Individual perceptions and actions—or what Shove (2010) termed the ABC model (Attitudes, Behaviour, and Choice)—have been at the core of most studies. People tend to be construed as consumers whose preferences, once modelled and typified, may be influenced through "nudging" or social marketing strategies (Carvalho and Peterson, 2012). Politics, in this approach, is often understood as associative of individuals and organized by a desire for consensus (Mouffe, 2018). Climate change communication is thus inscribed into neoliberal forms of government.

In communication-related areas, such research has frequently pointed at the potential for persuasion of the individual *via* appropriately "framed" messages. This is a top-down–or expert-to-lay-people–way of rationalizing and disciplining communicative practice. Type "communication" and "climate change" in a web search and you are very likely to find numerous references to "effective communication." The term "effectiveness" tends to be associated with an instrumental view of communication, whereby communication is conceived as a tool to a certain effect. In a linear fashion, words (or other codes of communication) tend to be viewed as vehicles for (pre-defined) meanings and successful communication as being about producing a specific relationship and outcome. In this perspective, climate change is seen as a problem that can be "solved" (Climate Xchange, 2021) and a "communication failure" is seen a large part of that problem. Such transmissional and mechanistic conceptions of communication overlook crucial aspects of meaning-making processes, such as socio-cultural contexts (and physical ones), relational dynamics, and power-related issues. This strand of research is often carried out within a (post-)positivist paradigm. It aims at identifying generalizable regularities in individuals' views or practices and works under the assumption that the aggregation of individual traits can lead to understanding what happens in societies.

The perspective adopted in this special Research Topic differs from those described above in multiple ways. Rather than an individual process, engagement with climate change is viewed as tied to social and material interactions, whereby meanings are shaped and challenged collectively. In addition, rather than positioning people as consumers (of products and ideas) and spectators (of politics), we are interested in anti-essentialist understandings of their agency as citizens in civic places. We posit that people's understandings of climate change, as well as of their positionality and potential agency in relation to climate change, are *constituted* in communication. Likewise, civic action is largely *performed* through communication practices.

Civic and political identities and subjectivities are discursively constituted (Foucault, 2002).[1] Within this approach, citizenship is not seen as a formal status or reified category related to state and nationality; it is a condition of possibility for addressing collective matters politically via civic action. It is often in civic spaces that one's place in the political world comes to be perceived and performed. "Civic action can be defined as a form of citizenship practice consisting in mainly collective initiatives aimed at implementing rights, taking care of common goods or empowering citizens." (Moro, 2010, p. 145) Along these lines, we look at forms of civic involvement with- and intervention in debate and decision-making related to policies, institutional practices, and other processes relevant to societies–in this case, climate change-related matters.

Importantly, civic action is where struggles over the accepted forms of political change often take place, a space of agonism that mediates informal and institutional politics. Hajer et al. (2015) warned us to beware of "cockpit-ism," the assumption–often built into academic studies and political processes–that transition to sustainability can be managed top-down or from a policy standpoint. Critically, a number of scholars have highlighted the unruly and complex nature of social change (Shove and Walker, 2007; Smith and Stirling, 2010; Stirling, 2014; Escobar, 2020). The last few years have seen significant growth in initiatives led by civic groups with the aim of reconfiguring how climate change is addressed. In a context marked by lack of trust in politics and in spite of widespread practices of disinformation promoting suspicion (of others, of institutions, of journalism, etc), fear and individualism, a multiplicity of civic collective actions have been set off.[2] These groups and their modes of intervention in public spaces have a significant potential for influencing how climate change is understood and how future societies are reimagined. Taken collectively, the challenge they pose to received ideas of political change and societal transformation is well worth the attention of climate change researchers.

Civic action on climate change has emerged in diverse locations, on a variety of scales, and has been led by different types of actors, from "legacy" non-governmental organizations, such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, to internet-platform projects, such as 350.org or Avaaz, to place-based protectors of water and land, such as the Standing Rock resistance and the Inuit Petition on the "right to be cold." These groups use diverse means and tactics, including declarations of climate emergency, demonstrations, sit-ins, climate camps, pipeline protests, land

[1]There are also of course a myriad of material practices that influence people's subjectivity and political agency; but the meanings assigned to those depend on communication practices (Carpentier, 2017; Goodman et al., 2020). This approach hence calls for critical analyses of how everyday climate cultures and material practices are articulated through communication.

[2]Individual actions, movements and/or groups engaged in disinformation, deliberate distortion of scientific knowledge, gratuitous defamation and/or discrimination obviously cannot be seen as "civic."

occupations, and social media. In the last few years, the youth movement for climate change has gained extraordinary prominence *via* school strikes and demonstrations and a strong online presence, especially after the constraints associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Representing the diversity of civic action on climate change, the articles in this Research Topic include studies of civic action by Indigenous peoples and groups (Neubauer and Gunster; Tam et al.; Castro-Sotomayor), the Fridays for Future movement (Marquardt), spontaneous social movements (Kaijser and Lövbrand), coalitions between non-governmental organisations and various social groups (Fernandes-Jesus and Gomes; Love-Nichols; Neubauer and Gunster; Bsumek et al.); and more-than-human forms of agency (Schutten and Shaffer).

The sections that follow discuss how an anti-essentialist and constitutive approach to critical research addresses key ideas in climate change communication, including action, consensus, meaning, story, place, power, and possibility.

UNSETTLING CONSENSUS AND HEGEMONY IN CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

For a number of years, there has been a lot of talk around the world on the need for "action" on climate change. The term "action" often appears to be self-explanatory and consensual. Yet, its meanings can differ widely. As Hulme (2015, p. 900) notes:

> "The goals of 'action' on climate change might (. . .) be, *inter alia*, to limit global warming to two degrees, to deliver creation care, to design a planetary thermostat, to transform civilisation or to safeguard economic growth - or indeed to secure fair growth, zero growth or de-growth. All of these goals have *prima facie* credibility since they emerge from different readings of what climate change is about, inspired by different cosmologies and ethical or political values."

Specifically what action is being referred to, whom (and whose benefit) it is for, who it is led by, and what principles and assumptions underpin it are examples of key questions that ought to be posed; yet, most proposals for- and decisions in the name of—climate change "action" obscure those matters. Seemingly consensual framings result from processes of discursive naturalization and institutionalization and may have important consequences. Several scholars (e.g., Rothe, 2011; Swyngedouw, 2010, 2013) have spoken of a post-political condition in climate change. Policies are often made by economic and scientific technocrats rather than through a democratic decision-making process without alternatives or implications being made visible and confronted. Options and choices on a matter so vital to societies' futures appear confined to what is "thinkable" or "possible" within the free market techno-managerial approach that is dominant worldwide (Raso and Neubauer, 2016; Escobar, 2020). One of the goals of this Research Topic is to challenge the dominant political intelligibility on climate change and foreground other modes of agency and other forms of "climate action," thus showing that what appears natural and inevitable is not so. In contrast with linear models of communication and (post)positivist research, critical social scholarship does not just seek demonstrably "effective" formulas to influence people to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change and climate policies are considered not just as a matter of carbon maths (more or less carbon dioxide-equivalent concentration in the atmosphere) but more widely in terms of social distribution of risks/costs and benefits, in terms of justice and ethics (e.g., what impacts may a massive dam in the Amazon have for Indigenous communities that depend on the forest?), and *via* a deeper ecological thinking (e.g., to what extent may a monoculture plantation of trees sink carbon but decrease biodiversity?). 'The political', as explained below, is brought to the fore of social analysis.

The notions of "post-political" and "(de)politicization" have not always been well understood. In the US context, in particular, multiple voices have pointed to "politicization" of climate change as a problem. Pepermans and Maeseele (2016) offer a clear analysis of the different senses in which that word has been used; a brief contextualization and clarification of our understandings of those terms may be helpful here too. The concept of "post-political" draws on scholarship by Laclau (1996), Mouffe (2006), Rancière (2006) and others who have discussed the contingent (historically constructed) nature of existing forms of society and democracy. It is important to distinguish "politics," which refers to institutions and formal processes of political life, from "the political," which refers to a mode of representing democratic politics that recognises power and dissensus and opens up space to (radically) different ways of thinking society. In this context, "politicization" is linked to agonism, i.e., acceptance of the conflict and fractures that always occur in societies, and of the legitimacy (and indeed the desirability) of foregrounding them. In contrast, as Kenis (2018, p. 4) put it:

> "a discourse can be said to be post-political when it (1) misrecognises the constructed and therefore contingent nature of the social, (2) conceals that each such construction entails certain exclusions and therefore generates conflicts or antagonisms, and (3) obfuscates that the construction of the social inevitably entails acts of power."

These issues are at the core of critical research. In a Gramscian fashion, it can be argued that suppressing (or making invisible) the socially constructed nature of institutions, of norms and indeed of most of the physical worlds that we inhabit aids dominant powers to be accepted (at least tacitly). The social and cultural processes whereby a social order is viewed as natural or inevitable are key to such cultural hegemony and ought to be at the core of social scholarship. Critical communication research unsettles hegemonies. It looks beyond dominant and seemingly unquestionable views to illuminate alternative possibilities.

Numerous civic groups have challenged technocratic, depoliticising, and neoliberal discourses to illustrate that there is no single option but multiple possibilities that are seeking wider articulation. Some groups reclaim structural changes in property

and decision-making in energy systems, leading a wave of "energy democracy" that brings together community groups, environmental organizations, and workers unions (Energy Democracy, 2021). Others are connecting climate change to questions of human security to address forced migration and refugee crises (Climate and Migration Coalition, 2021; Climate Refugees, 2021). Still others emphasize prefigurative politics to provoke experimental forms of change, while Indigenous approaches to climate change often re-centre decolonial politics (Whyte, 2018; Escobar, 2019; Indigenous Climate Action, 2021; Indigenous Environmental Network, 2021). Although some civil society organizations pursue the dominant approach to ecological modernization, system-level alternatives have been developed, including degrowth, "buen vivir" (inspired in Indigenous movements from Central and South America), ecosocialism, ecofeminism, and climate justice. Why would we speak of "post-politics" despite these developments? Kenis (2018, p. 1) notes that "multiple voices on climate change do not equal politicisation." Indeed, if they are not acknowledged, made visible and recognised in their political status as "equals," those social agents and their proposals will "not exist" or "matter" symbolically and politically. Critical research can both expose the processes whereby they are obscured and contribute to their cultural and political recognition. That is a central goal for this Research Topic.

Critical research rests on ontological, epistemological and axiological principles that impact the ways in which social realities are conceived and studied (perspectives, types of data, methodologies, etc). Rather than separating a research object from the social and material contexts where it is situated, critical research often presumes a relational ontology that looks into interactions. In Fairclough's words, "critique" is "essentially making visible the interconnectedness of things" (1995: 36), a position that Escobar (2019) reminds us is characteristic of grassroots communities and knowledges informed by ecological struggles. This is different from research based on experiments and most survey studies, for instance, where it is assumed that individual behaviours or perceptions can be isolated from the particular and socially contingent sites where they emerge. Methodologically, critical social research often adopts interpretive approaches, involving listening to social subjects and understanding their viewpoints and experiences. Ethno-methodological approaches may be employed as they are sensitive to context and contingency. Rather than using tools such as a questionnaire with close-ended questions, which constrains answers and pre-conditions findings, critical research often looks at texts, images, or other materials that have been previously/naturally produced to emphasize the context-specific and conjunctural nature of meaning, story, place, as well as to bring reflexivity, power, and possibility to the fore.

Kaijser and Lövbrand's article in this Research Topic exemplifies an interpretive approach and inductive analysis. It focuses on stories written by a number of people who participated in an initiative titled Run for Your Life, which aimed to highlight citizens' views on climate change in anticipation of COP-25. Instead of using pre-formulated analytical categories that would "reduce"the data to given pre-defined topics or matters of concern, their inductive examination accounts for a rich diversity of meanings, as experienced/constructed by those that participated in this "climate performance":

> "the collection of climate stories offers a powerful account of worry, sorrow, hope, connectivity, solidarity, and agency in face of climate change. They contain testimonies of changing weather patterns, loss of cultural traditions, protest against fossil fuel extraction, frustration with the lack of political action, and solidarity with the vulnerable across space, time, and species boundaries." (p. 8)

Power and identity are important aspects of critical research both in the outlook towards social realities and toward the researcher's own engagement with them. For instance, in this collection several articles draw on interview material and are careful to consider the implications of that kind of research relation. Tam et al. describe how Indigenous communities in the Arctic were interviewed in avoidance of researcher hegemony. They employed a thoroughly interpretive approach in their study of Inuit views on climate change that was sensitive to "community ownership of their own narrative and the way they are portrayed". (p. 3)

Critical researchers' reflexivity is well illustrated in the following excerpt from Castro-Sotomayor's article, which focuses upon the Indigenous organisation Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB), located at the border between Ecuador and Colombia (p. 4):

> "I tried to position myself primarily as "researcher" and "student" (. . .), and then as "Mestizo." However, giving emphasis to these identities was no guarantee for those identifications to be the salient ones in my interactions with Awá elites, neither they prevented Awá from ascribing me identities that exceeded my introductory avowed identities. Further, as part of an academic institution, to Awá people I was always-already an "external actor" associated to "economic interests of capitalist nature" FCAE, 2017, p. 25)."

Critical research on climate change and civic action may involve rethinking dominant research lenses in multiple ways. For example, whereas Castro-Sotomayor adopts a decolonial perspective, Kaijser and Lövbrand (p. 8) engage in a critique of the classical notion of ecological citizenship. "In contrast to the universal citizenship ideals traditionally invoked in green political theory," they argue, "the forms of agency articulated in [the] stories [written by participants in Run for Your Life] transcend the modern dualisms of mind/body, reason/emotion, men/women, public/private, and culture/nature." A "corporeal approach" to citizenship allows them to recognize "the diverse forms of attachments that individuals have to social and material worlds" and how ecological agency is "grounded in the participants' every-day efforts to imagine and live with a changing climate."

Love-Nichols makes a similar point in articulating an embodied understanding of political subjectivities to the coalitional politics of the climate change movement. In studying a politically conservative group in the United States, the Conservation Hawks, the regional and embodied engagements of hunter identities and their powerful political networks are foregrounded in a coalitional rather than polarizing form of climate activism.

> "The nascent climate change movement builds from this context, using effective rhetorical strategies from other conservation movements by sportsmen and women. Climate change activists, for instance, draw on this collective identity to create new political subject positionings."(p. 9).

A reinterpretation of the dominant ideology of anthropocentrism in the context of zoos as conservation sites is undertaken by Schutten and Shaffer, who argue for an imaginative rearticulation of captive zoo animals as agents of change. Utilising auto-ethnographic techniques of embodied listening, the authors place critical attention on the corporeal responses of listening to captive animals–through visits to an animal park in the United States—and "our" complicity in their captivity. They argue that captive animals should be recognised as a "rhetorical community," comprising the institution of the zoo, "other-than-human animals, visitors, staff, the exhibits, and the interactions that happen between and within these elements" (p. 2). Focusing upon captive animals as a rhetorical community, "shifts critical rhetoric by deconstructing an anthroponormative (Seegert, 2014) discourse that prioritizes human meaning-making. Creaturely rhetoric accounts for the communicative/rhetorical acts of more-than-humans, which may function beyond human sensemaking." (p. 2).

Creaturely rhetoric disrupts human/more-than-human hierarchies to firmly place the ecological consequences of human activities onto humans. Problematising human behaviour through embodied listening to more-than-humans also repositions animals as civic agents who have been displaced and relocated. Schutten and Shaffer argue that understanding animals as civic agents–stakeholders within climate action—requires us to take responsibility for animal displacement as a consequence of human induced climate change and to foreground more-than-human perspectives.

Enhancing attention to story and place in its geographical and cultural dimensions is one important way of considering contextual factors in critical research on climate change. Indeed, whilst talk on climate change has been widely associated with the "global" (scale, space, system. . .), Escobar (2019: n/p) has challenged globalist theories of social change and societal transformation to advocate for "a different way of understanding the relation between place, locality, and direct democracy." Instead of 'downscaling' global knowledge, Escobar revisits the way localism and globalism are often articulated to suggest that "'[r]adiating out' horizontalism, rather than scaling-up, may organize a new view of social change," and affirms the anti-essentialist insight that our ideas of place, locality, and region are not pregiven or self-evident, but "an emergent result of enactments of new politics of the real and the possible." Although in different ways, contributors in this Research Topic bring specific places to the fore in their analyses of climate civic action, including border regions between Ecuador and Colombia (Castro-Sotomayor), western Canada and Canada's Nunavut Territory (Neubauer and Gunster; Tam et al.), Northern Europe (Kaijser and Lövbrand), rural western US (Love-Nichols), Algarve, Portugal (Fernandes-Jesus and Gomes), and a US zoo (Schutten and Shaffer).

UNDERSTANDING CONSTRAINT AND POSSIBILITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION

Fuchs (2010) maintains that critical communications studies are about "how communication is embedded into relations of domination," as well as about "finding alternative conditions of society and communication that are non-dominative" and with "the struggles for establishing such alternatives." (n/p) (cf. Craig, 1999). An explicit commitment to the analysis of power and its social functioning is indeed a distinct characteristic of critical communication research. Multiple research traditions underpin this, including the Frankfurt School, Foucauldian social theory, post-development and (post-)Marxist thought. The common element running through those types of analysis is a concern with how the (re)production of inequality is tied to certain communication practices. Power—in its multiple facets—is intricately connected with the generation of anthropogenic climate change, as well as with neoliberal policies to address it. It is no surprise then that questions of power cut across all the contributions to this collection. At the same time, Escobar's (2020, p. xii) call to open ourselves to "how the active critical stance by movement activists summons us, personally and collectively, into a politics and ethics of interdependence and care" is present in several of these articles.

Tam et al. argue in their article that "the dominant scientific and civic view of climate change, its effects, its solutions, and its victims are influenced strongly by a Western or Global North sensibility, and the perspectives of distant others such as Indigenous, poor, developing or Global South communities are under-represented." (p. 4). Kyle Whyte (2017, 2018) has also illustrated the persistence of such colonial thinking in our ideas of climate change and politics. Engaging with Inuit people's understandings of climate change, Tam et al. discuss how meanings that become dominant around the world about a particular space often do not originate in the discourse of the peoples that inhabit it, and that best know and understand it, but elsewhere; their article illustrates the need to accept the epistemologies and ontologies of peoples that have long inhabited places and to support actions toward Indigenous resurgence.

Several works in this Research Topic turn the research spotlight to some of the least visible social groups and communities. That is, per se, a key aspect of academic positioning in the politics of climate change communication.

Castro-Sotomayor looks at Gran Familia Awá Binacional, a transboundary Indigenous organization, and linguistic alienation from debates on climate change. He defines "at-the-margin organizations," like this one, "as those that (1) are not located in urban spaces; (2) have limited access to technology; and, (3) use non-dominant languages as a central element of their collective identity and struggle" (p. 2) Indigenous views are important to the article by Neubauer and Gunster, who focus on how First Nations–in alliance with various NGOs–fought a projected gas pipeline in Western Canada.

The article by Fernandes-Jesus and Gomes looks at the struggles of regional and national grassroot movements in Portugal in alliance with environmental NGOs against fossil fuel extraction projects. Through in-depth interviews with highly engaged activists, they found that political agency was gained through intentional strategies and communication tactics that connected with institutional power, legal procedures and popular mobilisation. Building bridges with multiple players enabled collective movement building. Such "power to act'," the authors suggest, should be a key communication strategy for collective movement building and climate action.

Bsumek et al. examine the discourse of Bill McKibben, a famous U.S. strategist for climate change politics, whose work straddles the intersections of populist appeal, strategic action, and policy efficacy. In their analysis, Bsumek et al. use McKibben's speeches to reflect critically on the conception of strategy and power that inhere in US centered discourses of climate change communication to develop a conception of "strategic gesture" that troubles the usual dichotomies in strategic communication (symbolic/material; public/policy; strategic/impossible). In this respect, ideas of strategic climate change communication are resituated and assessed with respect to more imaginative and complex notions of social transformation strategy.

Marquardt examines student mobilizations and discourses. Whereas so much is at stake for them, young people are often delegitimated as voices in debates and decisions on climate change. Perhaps the most radical–and just–viewpoint, in this sense, is the one that puts more-than-human species at the center of the analysis, as Schutten and Shaffer's article does. Similarly, Castro-Sotomayor's article points to the more-than-human worlds that are suppressed in dominant discourses on climate change.

There is no question that civic action is structurally constrained by exclusionary discourses and that their analysis is a pressing concern, especially given the white supremacist and extreme right forms of populist politics. Bsumek et al., Marquardt, and Neubauer and Gunster, all point to a constrained populism that is emergent in a variety of sites, including Bill McKibben's speeches, the youth movement's reliance on technocratic conceptions of science, and the "ecological populist" story of pipeline politics in North America. These analyses recognize that communication practices often produce the conditions, possibilities, and obstacles to social change, while hinting at an alternative form of populist appeal. Meanings are constantly produced in communication practices, and thereby given (shared) understandings of reality that are either reproduced or challenged and possibly modified. Neubauer and Gunster clearly illustrate the flux of meaning when they show how opponents of a projected pipeline in Canada's West Coast turned around the idea of foreign connections and support that others tried to associate with them, and ultimately were successful in halting that project.

Besides representations of the (desired) world, the production of social relations and identities is also dependent on communication practices. In Neubauer and Gunster's case, political frontiers internal and external to the anti-pipeline movement were constructed and reconstructed as time went by, opening up spaces for transformative collaboration. A similar sense of possibility is afforded by Marquardt's engagement with the youth movement for climate change. He discusses some of the difficulties and tensions that develop when 'science driven' arguments are used to situate demands for societal transformation. While elevating youth voices to challenge assumptions about who should determine the future of climate change action, the school strikes amplified the tension between reconciling desires to prioritize science, technology, and political neutrality and the political challenges that are necessary for wider social change.

Communication practices can perturb meanings that appear fixed. As Kaijser and Lövbrand note in their piece, art activism, for instance, can "perform counter-politics by disrupting dominant narratives, de-normalizing attachments to fossil fuels and advancing an enlarged and transformed sense of self and the world" (p. 8). A constitutive reading of communication means that language/discursive practice is the producer of both (symbolic) constraint and the realm of possibility. Critical research is, in Foucauldian terms, about the problematization of thought. It may involve opening up the "black box" of pre-determined political options, looking beyond the manifest and beyond the existing, even beyond the imagined, and inquire into possibilities that were previously unseen.

CONCLUSION

In this Research Topic, we forward a critical approach to climate change that makes the concepts and categories of thinking more responsive to the diverse demands for societal transformation that are shaping our collective futures. We draw inspiration from Hausendorf and Bora (2006) to see citizenship as realized in communication and amenable to research on communication: "Focussing on citizen participation as communication, we propose a concept that allows for and simultaneously requires an empirical reconstruction of citizenship conceptualized as a *communicative achievement*." (p, 23; our emphasis). In encouraging a constitutive approach, our concepts and methods are understood not as reflections or mirrors of reality with special access to the truth, but as engaged with projects of societal transformation, a potential often foreclosed by reified notions of power, politics, and policy.

In reflecting critically on our conceptions of climate change communication, we seek to enlarge the range of knowledge, experiences, and embodied places that should matter in our work. Joosse et al. (2020, p. 768) have rightly pointed that it is

crucial to discuss "from what position we are critical (of what and what is our role?), engaged (for and with whom?) and change oriented (what and whose imagined futures do we aim to support?)". As many before us have pointed out, research is always value-laden. Nonetheless, values can be grounded by empirically sustained and comprehensive analyses of social change and what (may) result(s) from it. Our defense of politicising discourses–and politicising discursive research–builds upon decades of empirical research on climate change communication that has shown the symbolic reinforcement of techno-managerial neoliberal discourses in media (e.g., Menzo and Padfield, 2016) and other public spaces, confining climate change action to the parameters of the capitalist project of the Green Economy, which has been clearly inadequate to respond to the challenges faced by current societies (Newell and Peterson, 2010; Methmann et al., 2013; Kenis and Lievens, 2015; Escobar, 2020). The "politics of transformations" (Meadowcroft, 2009) that are needed to address climate change necessarily implicates particular worldviews and ideological stances, as well as differential power resources of various social actors. Such transformations are likely to have re-distributional consequences (Patterson et al., 2017). Arguably, then, the social sustainability (Whitton et al., 2016) of those changes requires open debates, plural access and inclusive participation with respect for equity, fairness and justice (in its multiple dimensions) aided by a critical awareness of the historical exclusions and neoliberal erosions that shape the places where values are enacted.

Critical communication research has been key to making visible how oppression, discrimination and domination are inextricably intertwined with uses of language (verbal, visual and/or others). Articles in this collection take those kinds of constraints either as the core or the backdrop of their analyses of civic action on climate change. Some (Castro-Sotomayor, Tam et al.) explicitly show how prevailing views and policies on climate change have largely excluded numerous discourses and voices from debates. Many also show how social groups struggling against dominant views use language to contest the claims of those in power and to promote alternative views and alternative visions of sustainable futures (Fernandes-Jesus and Gomes; Neubauer and Gunster; Schutten and Shaffer). New discourses (even if simple "gestures") can counter the "sense of inevitability" (Bsumek et al., p. 7) that often blinds us to radically different possibilities.

Our reflexive and (self-)critical approach sharpens the responsibility of acknowledging limitations and exclusions in our own work. The articles in this Research Topic offer important contributions but do not yet represent a wide enough engagement with the problems, cultures and places that are relevant to the field, including the important work found in Black studies and Indigenous resurgence movements. Hopefully, there is more to come.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

AC wrote extensive parts of the editorial. CR wrote multiple paragraphs and made extensive revisions to the initial drafts. JD added more writing and revised the text.

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Emplacing Climate Change: Civic Action at the Margins

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In this paper, I use my work with the Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB), an indigenous transboundary organization located at the border between Ecuador and Colombia, to redirect attention to ways organizations at-the-margins perform civic action. I understand at-the-margin organizations as those that (1) are not located in urban spaces; (2) have limited access to technology; and, (3) use non-dominant languages as a central element of their collective identity and struggle. Due to the increasing urban bio- and geo-graphy of the world, it seems that the literature on civic action has taken an expected shift in focus to reserve the attribution of civic action to movements taking place in cities; further, the influence attributed to technology in fostering collective action appears to divert attention away from organizations or movements whose practices are not dependent on, started from, and enhanced by technological innovations. I use Lichterman and Eliasoph (2014) definition of civic action—a kind of coordination that entails actions and relationships rather than beliefs, values, or a predefined social sector—to argue that as a communication practice and historicist inquiry (Briziarelli and Martínez-Guillem, 2016), translation is an epistemological device used by at-the-margin organizations to create spaces for civic action via the constant process of disturbing the language and rethinking the meaning embedded in hegemonic global environmental discourses such as climate change. I illustrate how members of the GFAB emplace the meaning of climate change, which I argue, is a rhetorical move that suggests a phenomenological place-based conceptualization of climate change that could function as both, a decolonial strategy and a pragmatic environmental communication that constitutes spaces for civic action to thrive.

Keywords: emplacing, climate change, translation, civic action, territoriality, environmental communication, Awá

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INTRODUCTION

"We need to speak the language of the donors," a friend of mine always says when we are crafting a new environmental project proposal. In environment-related projects, what "speaking the language of the donors" usually means is using terms such as "sustainable development" to frame top-down initiatives brought by facilitators often funded by agencies of international aid. One of the debates within the NGO community has to do with the lack of time and space for conducting previous consultation to the communities about their needs, which could inform a stronger collaboration to advance and improve communities' living conditions. Recently, institutions and organizations have incorporated climate change as the new term that must be referred to as the broader framework of any environmental projects. These concepts—development, sustainability, and climate change—shape these initiatives, but the formulation of these concepts is not the dilemma. What is problematic, though, is the uncritical use of these terms based on assumptions

seen as translatable across contexts and whose meanings are unequivocal regardless of specific situations and languages. Like other terms, however, environmental concepts are the product of competing paradigms that have become dominant in a field of specialized knowledge and structures of governance in regard to our ecological condition.

Climate change is not only a scientific issue, but also a social, political, cultural, and ecological phenomenon that exceeds the individual responsibility as it requires a collective effort to face not only the impacts but also the causes of the unprecedented ecological disruptions that are shaping human life (Priest, 2016). Increasingly, scholarship is focusing on place-based understandings of climate change (Cox, 2010; Groulx et al., 2014; Devine-Wright et al., 2015; Döring and Ratter, 2017). Moreover, scholars are turning to traditional ecological knowledge (TEK[1]) to postulate not only solutions to the effects of climate change but also ways of understanding the concept itself (Figeroa, 2011; Cochrane, 2014). Building and sustaining a group with particular skills to address what its members deem as a common goal compel efforts to generate or take advantage of a momentum that potentially turns individuals' will into engaged collective action.

In this paper, I aim to redirect attention to ways organizations at-the-margins perform civic action. The increasing urban bio- and geo-graphy of the world seems to have shaped the literature on civic action. Analyses have taken an expected shift in focus to reserve the attribution of civic action to dynamics happening in cities; further, the increasing influence scholars attribute to technology in fostering collective action appears to divert attention away from organizations or movements whose practices are not necessarily dependent on, started from, and enhanced by technological innovations. The shift and diversion may solidify the configuration of a "center of action" at the expense of creating a "marginal space of action," which is either undermined or just falls out of the radar of an urban- and technology-based understanding of civic action. I use Lichterman and Eliasoph (2014) definition of civic action—"a kind of coordination" (p. 802) that entails "actions and relationships rather than beliefs, values, or a predefined social sector" (p. 809)—to argue for conceiving translation as an epistemological device with the potential of fostering the constitution of spaces for civic action to thrive. By disturbing the predominant language of science and rethinking the assumptions embedded in hegemonic global environmental discourses such as climate change, the performance of translation enshrines the power to carve out what Santos (2011) refers to as a "new social grammar" particularly strategic for at-the-margin organizations. I understand *at-the-margin organizations* as those that (1) are not located in urban spaces; (2) have limited access to technology; and (3) use non-dominant languages as a central element of their collective identity and action. I focus on the third point and use translation as communication practice and historicist inquiry (Briziarelli and Martínez-Guillem, 2016) to critically approach climate change as a global environmental discourse that reproduces Western assumptions that may limit our understanding of our ecological disrupted condition.

Based on my work with the Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB), an indigenous transboundary organization located at the border between Ecuador and Colombia, I investigate ways organizations perform civic action at-the-margins. In the following sections, I present the methods I use to conduct this study and emphasize the intricacies of performing in-depth interviews with bilingual speakers as well as the intersubjective space engendered by the act of translation. Then, I very briefly describe the current situation of Awá communities and present territoriality as environmental communication. Territoriality is the framework within which Awá emplace climate change, that is, the discursive and symbolic communication purveyed through Awa's "public statements, visual imagery, and embodied forms of activism that emphasize the physical, lived world of earthly existence, and the numinous experience many persons gain from substantive connections to nature" (Gorsevski, 2012, p. 293–294). After outlining some of the key assumptions that make of climate change a global environmental discourse, I delve into the construction of the meaning of climate change in relation to Awá's territory, *katza su,* to illustrate how members of the GFAB emplace climate change by constructing its meaning from the embodied experiences Awá live within the places they dwell. Emplacing climate change is a rhetorical move that suggests a phenomenological place-based conceptualization of climate change that complements, while questioning, its space-based conceptualization featured in and supported by Western scientific definitions of climate change (Taddei, 2012)—. Finally, translation engages with the ostensible universal meaning of global environmental discourses and elucidates the ambiguities of hegemonic concepts. By looking at how members of the GFAB understand the global environmental discourse of climate change, I argue that translation is an unavoidable mechanism among communities of non-dominant languages that potentially helps to coordinate action toward decolonizing participatory processes and spaces of environmental decision- and policy-making, both currently framed by the global environmental discourse of climate change.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH AT THE MARGINS

In this study I look at the politics of nature embedded in environmental globalization. Informed by a decolonial option (Mignolo and Escobar, 2010), I used a critical and interpretive

[1]Indigenous people understand Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) as "the process of *participating (a verb)* fully and responsibly in such relationships [between knowledge, people, and all Creation (the 'natural' worlds as well as the spiritual)], rather than specifically as the knowledge gained from such experiences. For aboriginal people, TEK is not about understating relationships; it *is* the relationship with Creation… Equally fundamental from an aboriginal perspective is that TEK is *inseparable from the people who hold it*… This means that, at its most fundamental level, one cannot ever really 'acquire' or 'learn' TEK without having undergone experiences originally involved in doing so. This being the case, the only way for TEK to be utilized in environmental management is to involve the people, the TEK holders…Once separated from its original holders, TEK loses much of its original value and meaning" (McGregor, 2008, pp. 145–146. In Figeroa, 2011, p. 238). Anishanbe scholar, Deborah McGregor, developed this definition of TEK, which also can be considered an exercise in translation.

qualitative approach to investigate how the global environmental discourse of climate change circulate among the Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB), one of few transboundary Indigenous organizations located at the border between Ecuador and Colombia.[2] Out of the four organizations conforming the GFAB, I collaborated with the Federación de Centro Awá del Ecuador (FCAE) and Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá (UNIPA) from Colombia,[3] whose communities are located at the binational border. This border zone remains a militarized "hot spot" despite the recent peace agreement signed by the Colombian government with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-FARC in November 2017, and the peace negotiations initiated at the beginning of 2018 with the National Liberations Army-ELN. These circumstances demanded special ethical sensitivities as Awá people are considered a "vulnerable population" by both the Colombian and Ecuadorian governments. Therefore, I obtained special IRB approval to conduct this research.[4] All participants provided written informed consent for the publication of their identifiable data (names, position, and organization). Participants filled out an information sheet in which confidentiality options regarding names and organizational affiliation were given. Participants decided not to select a pseudonym, and all stated that their names and affiliation could be used for publication. I decided to offer these options based on my previous experiences working with similar communities in which their members used spaces of public participation as a platform to denounce governments' negligence and sometimes NGOs' initiatives. Besides, apart from the specific information about the translation process, the criticisms to political entities and the description of groups or institutions affecting Awá territories have been made public via Awá organizations' community-based reports and diagnoses (CAMAWARI et al., 2012; FCAE et al., 2016). As one interviewee professed off record, "everything is transparent, no?" Accordingly, in presenting my findings, I use interviewees' real names and positions within their organizations.

I conducted in-depth interviews in Spanish to bilingual—Spanish and Awapit[5]—Awá community leaders who fell into the category of elite. I define elite as a person who has significant influence in the organizations and whose source of authority is not necessarily only political or economic, but also cultural or traditional. This distinction is vital but also problematic among Awá people insofar as Awá's organizational history shows a separation between the traditional authority (e.g., the elder) and the "formal" authority (e.g., president of the organization) (Pineda, 2011). For instance, elders speak Awapit, and therefore, Awá communities and their organizations position them as those who hold and keep Awá stories and traditional practices. However, this cultural status does not always translate into positions of power within the organizational structures, as elders usually lack formal education, most of them do not speak Spanish, and live deep into the territory, making their contact with non-Awá communities very limited (CAMAWARI et al., 2012). Accordingly, during my fieldwork, I used a snowball sample starting from the president of each organization who was located in the urban centers—Ibarra in Ecuador, and Pasto in Colombia—. They introduced or directed me to other members in several places of their territories.

The fieldwork took place during the month of April 2017. Originally, I scheduled twelve interviews, distributed equally among the four organizations forming the GFAB. Unfortunately, an ecological disaster made impossible to conduct these interviews. Approximately 2 weeks before my field trip, I read in the news that a terrible flood had devastated the city of Mocoa, capital of the department of Putumayo, Colombia. The Colombian Awá organizations, Association of Indigenous Councils of the Awá People of the Putumayo (ACIPAP) and Main Council Awá of Ricaurte (CAMAWARI), are located around this geographical area. I contacted Rider Paí, president of UNIPA, to know about the situation of these Awá communities. His reply was one of despair and concern as he described the extreme dire situation of the disaster zone[6] Needless to say, I could not go to Mocoa to conduct the interviews. By the time I am writing this section, the conditions in Mocoa are harsh and inhabitants of the zone are still in need of assistance. Assuming that the flooding is directly connected to an abrupt change in the ecology of the place, this event makes me wonder, to what extent climate disruption is affecting research, specifically environmentally related research, in locations that are impacted by and are vulnerable to the effects of ecological unbalance. In the end, I conducted seven in-depth interviews ranging from 45 min to 1 h and 45 min. According to McCracken (1988), the number of participants is not the issue at hand in interviewing research techniques; what is important is that the interviews allow the research-practitioner to reach exhaustion.

Exhaustion, here, is a recurrent linguistic reference present in all or the majority of the interviews. In conducting this study, I was interested also in investigating the translation of development and sustainability. All the interviewees, whether bilingual or not, were able to identify the Awapit words used to

[2]Other Indigenous people with binational organizations are Cofán and Éperas (SENPLADES and DNP, 2014).

[3]The other two organizations are: Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Pueblo Awá del Putumayo (ACIPAP), and Cabildo Mayor Awá de Ricaurte (CAMAWARI) both located in Mocoa, Colombian territory.

[4]The research was approved by the Ethics Committee of The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board.

[5]Awapit (Awá: people; Pit: mouth) is Awá's Native language. In the *Awapit Pinkih Kammu Gramática Pedagógica del* Awapit issued by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (2009) reads: "Like many of the ancestral languages of America, [Awapit] is an agglutinating type, which means that it constructs its expressions and meanings by adding morphemes to a root. This characteristic makes Awapit very different from languages such as Spanish, which are more analytical in nature. The differences between these families of languages are not only formal, but respond to completely different logical schemes of thought, which come from worldviews related to specific social realities, differentiated from European cultures and languages by an enormous distance in time and space[.] This language, especially in its older speakers, still retains practically intact the characteristics of primary orality. Consequently, when we write texts that do not literally reproduce the oral discourse, we are transforming their normal models of expression to adapt them to the needs of schooling and literacy" (p. 11–12). (Translation by the author).

[6]These are two of several news articles about the flooding in Mocoa: 1. http://www.elpais.com.co/colombia/factores-que-causaron-la-gigantesca-inundacion-en-mocoa.html; 2. https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/avalancha-en-mocoa-una-de-las-peores-tragedias-de-2017-articulo-730617

translate development and sustainability—*wat mɨlna*[7]—but there are not one or two Awapit words used to translate the Western notion of climate change. Instead, in translating climate change, five out of seven interviewees compounded several Awapit words. The implications of the absence of concise terms to translate climate change go beyond the linguistic realm; this non-existence could be read as showing the narrowness of the dominant discourse of climate change to understand a phenomenon that, in Awá's interpretations of climate change, encompasses ethical ontologies (e.g., respect). The reappearance of similar Awapit terms in each interview was revealing, though, not only because the recurrence was evidence of saturation, but more importantly due to the web of meanings that the identification of these terms illustrated.

Interviewers' Ecocultural Engagements

I approached Awá organizations as sites of contestation, conflicts, and multiple interests, as well as sites of resistance, creativity, and hope. The interviews are the main discursive data of this study, and as such, I took them as "pieces of interactions in their own right" (Nikander, 2012, p. 398). Furthermore, interviewing is not only a "tool" to gather data, it is also a "site for the production of meaning" as interviews elicit social actors' ways of language-use in stories, accounts, or explanations (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002, p. 14). Interview texts help to understand social actors' unique experiences, knowledges, worldviews, and cosmovisions. As interviewers, therefore, researchers cannot tell (not with absolute certainty at least) who is speaking, and whose voice has been recorded because interviewees' responses are "informed by voices of other subjectivities" (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002, p. 24). Accordingly, my interaction with Awá people cannot be reduced to the "evaluation of meaning and truth to a simple identification of the speaker's location" (Alcoff, 1991, p. 17). This means that while the organizational position held by the interviewees is important for understanding some of their statements, "multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations" inform their interpretations (McCall, 2005, p. 1771). Therefore, when analyzing the data, I considered this methodological uncertainty emerging from the multiple voices that possibly manifested during the interviews.

In translating interviewees' voices, researchers should assume insurmountable blind spots springing from the knowledges that are in competition to fix meaning. Hence, to translate entails the evocation of different histories and experiences that collide and bend, turning translation into one of many ways to make-meaning in intersubjective encounters that are both cultural and ecological. A critical appraisal of the intercultural relations between interviewee and interviewer renders interviews as a political relational process of negotiation of multiple cultural identities (Dunbar et al., 2002; Fontana, 2002). At the beginning of the interview, for instance, I tried to position myself primarily as "researcher" and "student" (this research was part of my doctorate dissertation), and then as "Mestizo." However, giving emphasis to these identities was no guarantee for those identifications to be the salient ones in my interactions with Awá elites, neither they prevented Awá from ascribing me identities that exceeded my introductory avowed identities. Further, as part of an academic institution, to Awá people I was always-already an "external actor" associated to "economic interests of capitalist nature" (FCAE, 2017, p. 25). Therefore, I was compelled to revisit some of the questions of my interview guide to incorporate key terms that emerged from my initial interactions. For instance, after the third interview, I replaced the Spanish word "Mestizo" with the equivalent Awapit word *wisha*, since interviewees used this term to refer to members of peasant neighboring communities or non-Indigenous organizations. I started using the word *wisha* as an avowed identity during the interviews because I was positioned as such in several moments during the interview's dialectical process. An example of the reinterpretation of the questions is: "How would you explain the Awá notion of climate change to a *wisha* like me?" This dialectical performative move was an attempt to recognize myself as "a proper object of narration" (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002, p. 10), as well as to reflect about how the self and the social are weaved in a web of knowledge systems, paradigms, and vocabularies we employ to make meaning (Collier, 2014).

Formations of identity should not be understood only within economic, social or political systems, but also within material and ecological systems (Castro-Sotomayor, 2020). The reciprocal constitutive effects between text and context demands both describing and understanding the dialectics between everyday practices and political/cultural projects within—and in inextricable relation to—ecological conditions (Code, 2006). Therefore, the ecologies that influenced these encounters also are fundamental to my interpretation of the texts supporting this study. The movement across national borders and different geographical spaces complicated my engagements with the sites I visited during my fieldwork. Transporting my body from the New Mexican high-desert, to the Pasto highlands in the Colombian Andean mountains, to the cloud forest in Lita, Predio El Verde, in the Ecuadorian Tropical Andes, and back, involved an *ecological translation* that influenced my positionality in relation to both the interviewees and the ecology of the places where I conducted the interviews. For instance, surrounded by the cloud forest and overwhelmed by an enveloping rain, I caught myself ascribing a "romantic gaze" over the mountain, the heart of Awá's territory. Hence, I risked "sanctifying nature as sublime"—that is, seeing "Nature [as] the reflection of [my] own unexamined longings and desires" (Cronon, in Takach, 2013, p. 220). The transformative potential of critical qualitative research lies in being evocative, reflexive, embodied, partial and partisan, and material (Pelias, 2011). Becoming aware of this corporeal ecological translation allowed me to keep the ecology political, as well as my communication critical, and also to realize the task I have imposed to myself as a male Ecuadorian Mestizo whose native language is Spanish and knew very few words of Awapit.

Analyzing In-depth Interviews With Emphasis on Translation

I conducted the interviews in Spanish to bilingual speakers (Awapit, Spanish), but I wrote the analysis in English. This double

[7]Phonetic note: the ɬ/ɨ signals a nasal sound in the pronunciation of the vowel.

bilingualism—Awapit-Spanish and Spanish-English—shaped the way in which I approached the interview texts. First, bilingual participants spoke Spanish using a grammar structure different from the one I learned during my formal education in Ecuador. Thus, while the transcription is literal, I sometimes needed to add or subtract specific words to form a grammatically structured sentence to clarify some of the interviewees' statements. I consider these grammatical arrangements the first stage in the process of interpretation of the interviewees' (re)definitions of climate change. Second, the linguistic level is more prominent in the translation from Spanish to English, which also presented challenges because the process of translation may have altered the meaning of some statements. Fairclough (1992) avows that the use of translated data is one source of difficulty for textual analysis. He states, "discourse analysis papers should reproduce and analyse textual samples in the *original language, despite the added difficulty for the readers*" (p. 196; emphasis added). Although I agree with his statement, to ease the reading of the analysis, I decided only to present the English translation of the quotes used to present this study[8].

Translation here is not limited to a reproduction of meaning across different languages nor it is narrowed to the linguistic structure of the languages involved in the translation from Awapit to Spanish (e.g., wantus kamta wamapas to cambio climático) and from Spanish to English (e.g., cambio climático to climate change). Nor was I focused on the ethnophysical nomenclature[9] of places used by Awá people to describe and interpret their territory. Although linguistic and interpretive cues of the process of translation are implicit, I considered them to be too limiting to adequately explore and unravel the works of colonialism in its discursive forms. Accordingly, in line with some scholars who have called attention to monolingualism and how it entails for differential coalitional politics and the construction of alternative frames for activism (e.g., de Onís, 2015), I approach the normative aspect of language from both a functional and political point of view. Thus, I conceive language as "a mechanism of disciplinization and oppression of linguistic communities/groups/classes over others, but also an essential aspect of social organization that coordinates, organizes, and can even, to a certain extent, emancipate" (Briziarelli and Martínez-Guillem, 2016, p. 49). Therefore, similarly to Briziarelli and Martínez-Guillem (2016), I understand translation as (1) an historicist inquiry of sociopolitical, economic, and environmental structures; and (2) as a communication practice that has the potential to motivate subaltern political strategies and techniques. As a non-dominant language, the use of Awapit in the translation of global environmental discourses entails an epistemological and ontological challenge. Epistemologically, Awá's construction-via-translation of the meanings of climate change evokes histories of colonization, acculturation, and knowledge oppression that exceed the human realm as discourses, perceptions, and practices includes the more-than-human realm. Regarding ontology, translations performed by Awá organization members elucidate the formation of ecological subjectivities and environmental identities that mediate Awá's "humanature alignments[10]" as identity is not only formed by human/human relations but also by human/more-than-human relationships (Milstein, 2011).

By looking at the communication practice of translation performed by the GFAB, I attempt to understand how the discourse of climate change (re)produces ideological systems of meaning that sustain or question larger structures of economic, social, and political power configuring global environmental governance. I approach Awá's translation of climate change as a way to illustrate how at-the-margins organizations work through the ideological forces of modernity and the structures of environmental governance to create alternatives meanings/discourses aligned or not to their Indigenous cosmovision and ecocultural identities. To do so, first is imperative to identify the discursive field within which Awá organizations fix the meanings of climate change while simultaneously open possibilities for change via a resignification that challenges the closure implicit in the use of this concept. We need to understand, therefore, Awá's territoriality.

UNDERSTANDING TRANSLATION WITHIN AWÁ'S TERRITORIALITY

The history of *Inkal Awá,* gente de la montaña/people of the mountain, is the history of their territory *katza su* (casa grande/big house). Awá's narrations register the disappearance, shifts, and reconstitutions of the boundaries of their ancestral territories as manifestations of colonization, displacement, evictions, invasions, recoveries, and legalizations (CAMAWARI, 2002; CAMAWARI et al., 2012; FCAE et al., 2016). The power of remembering engenders possibilities of creating an evocative aura that isolates moments from our existence in the present; albeit momentarily, this isolation may enliven emotions of ecologies that instill in us deep and meaningful connections to particular places (Milstein et al., 2011; Carbaugh and Cerulli, 2013). Yet, environments also are interested spaces and places and a material manifestation of histories of resistance, colonization, and drastic transformations. The ecologies and environments in which Awá interact along with Mestizos and Afro communities are no different.

Inkal Awá's history is a reprehensible testimony to injustice, inequality, and exclusion, which are perverse patterns throughout the history of Indigenous and other minorities populations around colonized regions. The displacement across

[8]I can provide the Spanish version of these quotes under request.

[9]An ethnophysical nomenclature includes "verbal renderings of landscapes, water, plants, animals, and bodies" and its practices of "place-naming, verbal depictions of place, 'spatial deixis' or the expressive references (e.g., through "here" and "that" and pointing) to immediate physical circumstances" (Carbaugh and Cerulli, 2013, p. 11).

[10]Regarding the use of humanature, Milstein (2011) states: "I use the compound terms humanature and ecoculture throughout my writing as a way to reflexively engage human and nature, ecology and culture, in integral conversation in research as they are in life. These symbolic moves are turns away from binary constructs and notions of 'the environment' and turns toward lexical reciprocal intertwining. These moves are in league with Haraway's (2008) use of 'naturecultures' to encompass nature and culture as inter-related historical and contemporary entities." (p. 21, note 1)

national borders, as well as the intra-displacement, mark Awá's history. To Awá people, forced displacements—first, after the Spanish arrival (XVI century); then, as a corollary of Colombia's Thousand Days' War (1899–1902); finally, as the ongoing effect of the internal Civil War in Colombia that started in the early 1950s—were and continued to be life-or-death survival decisions, in particular for Awá communities on the Colombian side. In addition, the contemporary confinement and intra-displacement, that is, Awá communities who lived deep into the forest are unable to dwell due to minefields surrounding their lands or forced to move toward the boundaries of their own territory and closer to roads or urban centers (CAMAWARI, 2002), are the most recent crude manifestations of an internal conflict that has disbanded Awá population. This situation has led the Colombian government to consider these Indigenous people in the path to physical and cultural extinction (Chernela, 2001; CAMAWARI et al., 2012).

The site, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state, "is not a given formation; rather it is constituted through the researcher's interpretative practices" (p. 16, note 10). In the worlds into which I translate myself—the Ecuadorian Mestizo world, the educated abroad world, the urban world, the Spanish-speaking and Anglophone worlds, and other worlds in which I fragmentarily exist—I have not experienced the intense injustices Awá people have lived as racialized others, ethnic minorities, and casualties of a war that is not theirs. Neither the immediate ecologies on which I depend have been shattered by the extraction of natural resources nor I have experienced the effects of ecological disruption in-my-backyard[11]. This is my environmental privilege[12] that allows me to think from a healthy ecology about the sickness of another. This privilege adds up to the others I navigated in my interactions with Awá elites within the transboundary site where this research took place and that informs my interpretation of processes of translation Awá performed within their disturbed territories.

To understand Awá processes of translation, I use an analytical concept from the Global South, territoriality. This concept helps situating and analyzing how Indigenous communities translate environmental global discourses—a set of statements that produces symbolic and material conditions of human and non-human existence within institutional structures that constitute and are constituted by systems of knowledge and social practices that often times are anthropocentric and colonializing (Peet et al., 2011; Scott and Dingo, 2012)—. As environmental communication, territoriality is pragmatic and constitutive. In its pragmatic mode, territoriality helps to illuminate ways indigenous organizations articulate sacred, lineage, and land relationships to their cosmological principles. The constitutive power of territoriality lies on the fact that territory not only frames the way organizations translate global discourses but also creates the order of discourse in which these translations are plausible. In its pragmatic and constitutive modes, territoriality illuminates how body, territory, and nationality intertwine and mutually influence each other sometimes configuring sui generis relationships, which may engender ways of resisting external logics by reframing and reworking them in communal and dialogical spaces (Castro-Sotomayor, 2018)—such as the Awapit terms used to signify climate change, as I illustrate later—. Here, I use part of my work with Awá people and focus on the discourse of climate change to show how within territoriality translation elucidates the epistemological ruptures away from Western ways of living, thinking, and feeling climate change.

Within territoriality, the more-than-human world becomes explicit in the enunciation of the territory as an actor whose presence and living existence must be considered to understand communities' political praxis. For instance, in correspondence to their cosmovision, Awá understand "territory and nature as autonomous, living and active subjects of the decisions that affect them" (CAMAWARI et al., 2012, p. 113). As such, territory is the political interlocutor of Awá people in their interactions with the state, NGOs, neighboring populations, and other institutions. The agentic character attributed to the more-than-human world reaffirms how fundamental territory is to the operationalization of territoriality (Castro-Sotomayor, 2018). A closer look at the dynamics implicated in Awá organizations' ways of exerting political and symbolic control of the territory katza su, highlights the possibility and the need for broadening conceptualizations of climate change by revisiting certain scientific posture that may affect working with communities on the ground about climate change issues. Before showing how territoriality problematizes while furthering Western global environmental discourses, I highlight some assumptions about the global environmental discourse of climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE AS GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE

The global character of contemporary environmental discourses such as development, sustainability, and climate change, parallels the configuration of a global environmental governance—"the process of formulating and contesting images and designs, and implementing procedures and practices that shape the access, control, and use of natural resources among different actors" (de Castro et al., 2016, p. 6)—whose structures and organizations prominently respond to neoliberal economic logics that shape the current historical moment labeled globalization (Mitchell, 2003; Arrifin, 2007). Within the institutional structure of environmental governance, the socialization of climate change seems to reproduce a top-down dynamic of knowledge dissemination (in a cybernetic fashion). In the same way as with other overarching concepts, such as development and

[11] Environmental justice groups who work toward making visible the intersection of race and environmental hazards initiated the idea of not-in-my-backyard (NIMB). In challenging environmental racism, NIMB's first meaning stands for a place-based way of denouncing the environmental and health risks of industrial pollution (Vanderheiden, 2016).

[12] Environmental privilege "is embodied in the fact that some groups can access spaces and resources, which are protected from the kinds of ecological harm that other groups are forced to contend with every day.… If environmental racism and injustice are abundant and we can readily observe them around the world, then surely the same can be said for environmental privilege. We cannot have one without the other; they are two sides of the same coin" (Park and Pellow, 2011, p. 4).

sustainability, the deployment of an hegemonic/scientific notion of climate change reveals how expertise can be "exercised as a rhetorical device and affect interpretations of what could and should be done on behalf of extrahuman nature" (Bernacchi and Peterson, 2016, p. 76–77). A critical approach understands global governance as a hegemonic discourse that articulates means of production, social group identities within specific geographic locations, multi-layered spatial and temporal scales, and different fields of force implicated in the reproduction of histories, geographies, ideologies, and discourses (Peet et al., 2011). Discourse is a regime that encapsulates "the heterogeneous assemblage of techniques, mechanism, and knowledges aimed at 'conducting people's conduct,' as well as 'to shape the field of possible actions of others'"(Foucault, quoted by Lövbrand and Stripple, 2014, p. 112). As meta-narratives, global environmental discourses reveal neocolonial dynamics insofar as they construct nature as Other, facilitating the positioning of nature as a singular strategic asset, investment, and/or entity of management (Scott and Dingo, 2012).

As a discourse, climate change is relatively new[13] in the environmental vernacular, but it is currently circulating within the structures of global environmental governance and shaping the politics of the Earth. Climate change, in tandem with development and sustainability, index the common environmental problems of the world. While contested deliberations have tainted climate change definitions, the global status of these ideas results from an assumed universality of the tenets that support them. Moreover, diverse groups privilege discourses that circulate seemingly uncontested in different institutional instances of the global environmental structures.[14] The discourses' applicability across multiple localities functions as proof of a kind of perspective that favors the global over other scales of analysis (Escobar, 2001). This emphasis taps into transnational networks to generate an agreement on the global nature of environmental destruction, which usually fails to recognize and reconcile the differentiated environmental responsibility members of the international system have (Anshelm and Hultman, 2015). However, at the core of the debate, and often unquestioned, remains a value system that reproduces a kind of human hubris that complicates, even shuns, the possibilities of thinking otherwise.

As global environmental discourse, climate change enables epistemic domination and the silencing of local voices. Paradoxically, this creates the conditions to foster the "reactivations of relational ontologies and the redefinition of political autonomy" (Escobar, 2012, p. xxv). The global, a.k.a., international character of the discussion on climate change, evolves in tandem with a scientific jargon that seems to alienate populations on the ground, where climate disruptions are experienced firsthand. The politics of nature deploys climate change as a discursive formation, and to understand it, we need to look at the sort of subjectivities and practices produced at the intersection of neoliberal capitalism and unequal transnational relations informed by colonial histories. The furthering of new ways to understand global discourses, whether environmental, political, economic, or cultural, must focus on investigating peoples' local responses to the modern processes fostered by these global discourses. In terms of civic action, translation is one of the forms of resistance that "disarticulates subaltern discourses not through direct confrontation or physical action, but through the reorganization of the symbolic environment in which the acts of resistance will be interpreted and understood" (Taddei, 2012, p. 78). The processes of translation performed by representatives of Awá organizations shed light on the treacherous circulation of global environmental discourses among at-the-margin organizations, but also a focus on translation illuminates the works of the discourse of climate change as part of the hegemonic project of modernity that frames the politics of nature.

In what follows, I investigate how the Gran Familia Awá Binacional (GFAB) translates the global environmental discourse of climate change at the level of the communities with which this organization works. I demonstrate ways Awá's translation of climate change emplaces this concept; thus, constructing a phenomenological place-based meaning of climate change that relocates power by recognizing and embracing Awá's traditional ecological knowledge as a legitimate source of climate knowledge.

CLIMATE CHANGE EMPLACED: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION OF A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE

Climate change is a conceptual novelty in Awá's environmental language. According to Olindo Cantincus, former president of Federación de Centros Awá del Ecuador (FCAE), the first time the term "landed in" the Ecuadorian Awá communities was in 2009 when the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) organized workshops to socialize the concept of climate change among Awá leaders. Since then, different institutions and organizations have arrived to Awá communities with climate change projects to map the risks at the level of their territories, or to implement adaptation, mitigation, and resilience actions[15]. Beyond the

[13] On June 23, 1988, in Washington D.C., in front of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, James E. Hansen, Chief Scientist NASA Godard Institute for Space Studies, coined the term "global warming." During the administration of George W. Bush, however, Frank Luntz pushed the term "climate change" to win the political debate on the environment. Climate change, Luntz stated, "is less frightening than global warming." According to Lakoff (2010), climate change "had a nice connotation—more swaying palm trees and less flooded out coastal cities. 'Change' left out any human cause of the change. Climate just changed. No one to blame" (p. 71).

[14] Drawing on risk society and post-colonial theory, Anshelm and Hultman (2015) identify four competing discourses present at the UN Conference on Climate Change held in Copenhagen in December 2009 (COP15): industrial fatalist, green Keynesianism, eco-socialist, and climate skepticism. The main difference among these discourses is their position on the extent to which capitalism is or not the main contributing factor to the environmental crises we are experiencing nowadays and how radical are their proposed solutions.

[15] Among these organizations are World Wildlife Fund-Colombia, Fundación Altrópico, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID), and World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Awá have also received support from Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

semantic interpretation, as a discursive practice, translation elucidates the epistemological and ethical dilemmas embedded in the politics of scale featuring space/place and local/global dialectics (e.g., Escobar, 2001). The Awá's processes of making the meaning of climate change bring in a global perspective that is absent, or it is not explicit, in translating development and sustainability. In performing the translation of development and sustainability, for instance, Awá refer to war, drug trafficking, and the extractivist activities piercing their territories, building the interpretations of these terms in direct relation with, and hence, circumscribed by their physical situation and transformation of katza su. When Awá translate climate change, however, a global perspective becomes explicit:

> With respect to climate change, especially within what we can call the global context, there is a total change. The last 5 years, the climate has changed a lot because the soil is warmer, the temperature is stronger[.] There are seasons when it rains very strong and there are seasons when the water dries too fast. Then, it is seen that the climate change is totally changing the world[.] Because it is not only in Ecuador but everywhere else; climate change is seen in terms of climate change within the global context. (Florencio Cantincus, FCAE President)

Florencio's attempt to construe the concept of climate change enunciates the "global context" that is "seen" by an erased subject that experiences climate change "in Ecuador and everywhere." The change in the phantasmagoric global space is elusive while the local place manifests through warmer soils, stronger rains, higher temperatures, and extended droughts as "the water dries too fast." Florencio's translation exemplifies the oscillation of the meaning of climate change between place and space.

A *space-based* meaning of climate change builds its claims upon a detached definition deployed via the "perplexing genre" of scientific discourse (Taddei, 2012, p. 79) in which Awá's territory becomes a "zone" or "region" on which climate change affectations can be traced and registered in colorful maps and well-crafted models. This spatial view is legitimate and useful, but the problem is that this perspective presents itself as self-sufficient and relies on a (perceived) detached representation of what is happening on the ground, which might explain Olindo's discontent with how climate change is addressed in meetings with NGOs:

> I can name lots of NGOs that are [talking about climate change]. So, I said <<Do you have territory? How are you going to say [to Awá], "you have to cultivate in this way and keep it that way?" You do not have territory! Those who have territory are the [Indigenous peoples and nationalities and Afro-descendant peoples].>>

This event also features the hierarchical understanding of scale[16], which risks rendering the local as secondary in the search for strategies to face environmental global problems. Olindo's interpellation—"Do you have territory!"—locates Awá territory, katza su, as the locus of enunciation of Awá understanding of climate change. In Leff (2004) words, within katza su, "geography becomes verb" (p. 125); thus, for climate change to be understood it has to be emplaced.

A *place-based* meaning of climate change, or emplaced climate change, derives from a phenomenological appraisal of the effects of climate disruption on people's places and bodies, as well as on their ecocultural practices that nurture their relations-in-place (Milstein et al., 2011). To illustrate climate change emplacement, I focus on dwelling as an ecocultural practice that revives and recreates Awá's territoriality encompassing places, bodies, and human and non-human people[17]. To Olindo, Awá recreate

> orality and history, through walking the ecological paths, and the jungle; all we have around our territory is life, as we have life; trees are life, trees are people; plants are people, leaves are people; and everything that exists in the ecosystem is life, it has life. And that is why we have to take care of it; we have to protect it.

Dwelling weaves reminiscences. But in translation something always becomes precarious. The strict translation of "caminar/walk" to describe Awá's roundabouts in their territories is misleading. For instance, the word "dwelling" is a more accurate description of what Awá's "walking" accomplishes in terms of their ecocultural communication. Dwelling is "thinking through places" (Carbaugh and Cerulli, 2013, p. 6), and as an ecocultural practice, it nurtures and awakes Awá's communicative senses that entangle the individual's mind and body with the territory[18]. Dwelling is an essential element in the rituals Awá elders—mayores/men and mayoras/women—perform to maintain the equilibrium of katza su. According to Rider Paí, Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá (UNIPA) President, "the elders are those who manage *time*[19]." Elders are owners of an ecocultural science that allows them to understand the territory through their relations to the medicinal plants; they

[16]Scale is one of the four analytic tendencies in spatiality theory — the other three are territory, place, and network (Williams, 2016).

[17]The Awapit word Awá means people/gente; however, this definition encompasses human and nonhuman entities, as in Olindo's account.

[18]Cepek (2011) account on the Cofán people in the Ecuadorian Amazonia exemplifies the subtle but meaningful distinction between dwellers and walkers. He noticed that the same individual would dwell *or* walk the territory depending on the kind of role s/he would perform. Individuals were dwellers of the place when performing ecocultural practices such as hunting, fishing, or cropping, which help Cofán to reproduce a sense of community as the result of those activities are enjoyed and shared by every member of the community. On the contrary, individuals walk the space when performing their role of "monitors" collecting data for a conservation project. The discourse of conservation mediates Cofán's subjectivity in relation to the territory and, thus, as denizens of the space of conservation they walk instead of dwelling the territory.

[19]Another element that is lost in translation stems from the nuances in the term climate change itself. In English, for instance, "weather" and "climate" are two semantically different words that describe two distinct phenomena (although this distinction is also problematic in the English language, see Priest, 2016). In Spanish, however, this distinction does not exist. The word "climate" translates to "clima." Clima in Spanish has two connotations, one related to weather patterns in long periods of time, as in climate change; the other connotation of "clima" is simply weather. Hence, the Spanish "clima" encapsulates these connotations and, in the process, blurs the distinction between weather and climate. Moreover, colloquially, weather also translates to "tiempo," and the Spanish word "tiempo" is also "time" as in time-space relationship. It is within this realm of signification that Rider's assertion, "The elders are those who manage time," must be understood.

also tune in with the spirits of the mountain who communicate to them the changes in their ecologies (Bisbicús et al., 2010). Unfortunately, Awá elders have not been able to balance the territory as they cannot dwell it.

> We have a traditional meeting here, traditional festivities where the grandparents will be able to harmonize [the territory]. And that's why we're wrong. We're not well because they [the grandparents] are not harmonizing the territory. Previously, all traditional doctors harmonized what is produced [in the territory.] [They harmonized] all produce and therefore nothing was lacking. (Florencio)

Despite Awá's diagnosis and analysis reports of the geopolitical context in which their communities are located, sometimes structural factors are backgrounded giving way to a framing that risks discredit traditional Indigenous knowledges by rendering Awá themselves—"the grandparents are not harmonizing the territory"—as those to blame for the changes occurring in the territory. Non-climate related factors affect the time/climate of katza su and are influential in the phenomenological construction of climate change insofar as they alter and hinder Awá's possibilities of dwelling to reconstitute their sacred and lineage relationships to their territories. Eduardo Cantincus, UNIPA Economic and Production Counselor, answered and responded: "What change has there been? There has been a change due to conflicts, violence, all of these [illegal] actors, antipersonnel mines; there have been death, all that." Therefore, to understand the changes that have occurred in and continue to impact the territory in relation to climate, Rider Paí asserts:

> We must do it through the research of the elders. They are the ones who have the final word in what is the factor of that problem [of climate change] that has been taking place [in the territory].

The incorporation of Awá's ecocultural knowledge about climate change rejoins body and place to explain its causes, and above all, to help in the understanding of the affectations attributed to climate change.

Awá's understanding of climate change, then, is articulated to or thought of in territorial terms. An emplaced climate change reveals a different world from where Awá make sense of global environmental discourses. In translating climate change, a phenomenological understanding of this global phenomenon emerges and reveals perspectival positions—"views from different worlds, rather than perspectives about the same world" (De la Cadena, 2015, p. 110)—which demand paying attention to the competing ways of knowing and valuing the more-than-human world. Communicating climate change, therefore, entails translation—a way into peoples' ecocultural imaginaries, identities, inter-generational knowledge, ecological practices, and nature-based memories and stories—whose locus of enunciation is territory. Emplaced conceptualizations of climate change potentially carve out spaces for civic action in environmental participatory processes, as I show in the next section.

CIVIC ACTION AT THE MARGINS: DISTURBING LANGUAGE AND RETHINKING MEANING

The kind of coordination that civic action is and requires must attend to translation as a constitutive part of environmental participatory processes in which ecocultural identities are negotiated, environmental ideologies are implicated, and ecological practices are legitimized. If the goal of environmental participatory processes is to co-create spaces to foster democratic dialogue and deliberation, conflict resolution, and interspecies understanding, practitioners must address the geopolitics of language entangled with the pragmatism that these spaces of decision- and policy-making require. Translation is an always-already contested communication practice and a historicist inquiry that brings in the geopolitics informing the univocal use of scientific language and (re)directs attention to the politics of scale at play in the production and legitimation of Western scientific knowledge (WSK) over Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) (Figeroa, 2011; Maldonado et al., 2016). As environmental communication, translation could be used as a subaltern political strategy to confront the power/knowledge intricacies deployed in communicating climate change regarding questions of relocation of knowledge and power, perplexing discourses and linguistic alienation, and the more-than-human realm.

Relocating Climate Knowledge and Power

Awá people's translation of climate change is a matter of the geopolitics of environmental knowledge. Emplaced climate change is intimately connected to the identification and recognition of an alternative, but complementary, source of knowledge from which Awá define climate change. To Filiberto Pascal, Director of the Bilingual Intercultural Community Education Center (FCAE), the elders are those who

> have realized that time has changed a lot. For example, the lack of rain, the arrival of summer; they have realized that. They have said that climate change is for those reasons or sometimes they do not know, but it is not because they do not know, because they know [what climate change is].

Olindo Cantincus, in a more assertive form, puts knowledge about climate change in historical and economic perspectives, but always builds its meaning in relation to katza su's well-being:

> I think that we do understand climate change... or [Indigenous] peoples and nationalities they knew that. Because they already knew. That is why they did not want to… they do not want [companies] to destroy their katza su. That is why [the elders] did not want large companies to enter and cut the wood. They already knew that climate change was going to come about [if we were to do that].

The previous examples are representative of how power and knowledge are deployed in communicating climate change. As Priest (2016) suggests, "climate communicators should give

thought of which leaders might be influential with particular groups" (p. 8). In the case of Awá communities, elders appear to be one essential source of knowledge and leadership; yet, despite their knowledge, elders are leaders who are losing their power of influence as disbelief on traditional knowledge is growing among younger Awá generations. As Eduardo sadly affirms,

> young people did not take advantage of the elders [who] have already taken the wisdom and carried it and they already have it. If we do not believe in the elders' spiritual knowledge, [this knowledge] has already been lost. [The young Awá] have not been able to discover this knowledge.

The intergenerational disconnects are contributing to accelerate processes of acculturation—the "inappropriate approach to Western culture that terminates vital elements of [Awá] culture" (FCAE et al., 2016, p. 15)—. Here, culture is not a fixed, ahistorical, and apolitical concept that technically confines culture to material (e.g., art, food), behavioral (e.g., values, traditions), and functional (e.g., knowledge for problem-solving) manifestations (Telleria, 2015). Rather, culture is a term that evokes unbalanced power relations that often maintain unjust and oppressive social hierarchies and privileges (Halualani and Nakayama, 2010) that may "terminate" the uniqueness of Awá ways of being. In regard to climate change, the use and privilege of scientific language in understanding this global phenomenon furthers other gestures of exclusion and disempowerment pervading climate change communication.

Perplexing Discourses and Linguistic Alienation

A global or universal science is at the same time situated knowledge. Insisting on the situatedness of individual and collective efforts performed and enacted in-places has the potential to scale down climate change discussions and debates. One way is by challenging the perplexity of scientific language and "the ontological authority that derives from the scientific method" (Taddei, 2012, p. 80). Interviewees pointed out that one of the difficulties in communicating climate change comes from an (over)emphasis on what Awá perceived as technical jargon:

> Olindo: As far as I have tried, and as I say, what technical words I have seen [being used], Awá people are not understanding what climate change is.
> Me: Do you consider climate change a technical word?
> Olindo: Yes, I do. Because they also talk about the ozone cape. If you go with this technical term, the Awá people are going to understand different. [But] if I tell them, "Look brother, it's going to rain less," he is going to understand different than if I say ozone cape. For them [ozone cape] does not work. If I tell them "the river is going to dry," maybe they will understand better.

This statement is not a critique of the science behind climate change—in fact, Indigenous cosmovisions and climate science support each other in their beliefs and claims regarding the current environmental crisis (e.g., Eisenstadt and West, 2017)—. Neither is the reference to climate change technical character a refusal or incapacity to learn how the science behind climate change works. Olindo's description denounces a linguistic alienation that both aggravates the uneven power relations in which public-expert relationships are embedded and reifies the authority of the experts' scientific knowledge and specialized language (Bernacchi and Peterson, 2016). Under these premises, participatory processes of climate change decision- and policy-making should be cautious about demanding non-scientific participants to make the effort to be informed or to have at least knowledge of the basic science behind climate change (e.g., Kinsella, 2004). This posture risks advocating for a unidirectional effort because it may not demand from scientists the same effort to be informed and get the basic knowledge about the communities with whom they are trying to communicate.

Linguistic alienation complicates even further the participation dilemma that pervades these processes and that assumes participation as "intrinsically a good thing" (Sprain et al., 2012, p. 84). This assertion resonates with a corporate way of efficiency and an administrative rationality to attain agreement and cooperation (Dukes, 2004; Ångman, 2013) and privileges technical-functionalist approaches of communication over more constitutive ones (Graham, 2004). Participation is never neutral insofar as the way participation is defined (and who defines it) establishes who participates and whose solutions are most likely to be operationalized. Although fostering access, respectfulness, and worthiness of the voices engaged in the process can counter the lack of legitimacy fraught by a managerial kind of participation (Senecah, 2004), this endeavor to inclusion is more difficult to achieve if in addition to a narrow notion of participation those who participate are alienated linguistically from the conversations happening around climate change. In the Awá case, the foreignness of scientific terms not only alienates participants linguistically—"For them ozone cape does not work"—but also, maybe inadvertently, the emphasis and use of scientific jargon positions Awá as less competent to deal with climate change—"Awá people are going to understand different"—. This perceived lack of understanding of the specialized language about climate change may explain a dangerous self-deprecation avowed by some interviewees. The linguistic alienation denounced by Awá interviewees is a call for interrogating the premises of participation supporting the design of participatory processes to communicate climate change, in particular when working with populations of non-dominant language.

The Non-human in the Construction of Meaning

Translation amplifies epistemological and ontological realms by, on the one hand, directly interrogating the predominant languages used to communicate climate change and, on the other hand, positioning the territory as the locus of enunciation. For instance, some translations of climate change to Awapit, such as *anñia kanachi sukas maizhtɨt*, "it is not like in past times, the territory has changed" (Eduardo), or *su an iparɨmtu wantus,* "global warming" (Filiberto), mainly refer to physical/geographical changes experienced by Awá communities across their territory—flooding, droughts, or excessive rain—.

But also, and more relevant to comprehend Awá's translation of the term, climate change encompasses *anñia kanachi sukas maizhtɨt minmukas maishtɨt*, "changes in nature and changes in our thought" (Olindo). Focusing on translation brings to the fore that emplacing climate change into Awá's territoriality demands to dialectically integrate the physical transformations of the territory to ways of thinking, knowing, and valuing the world.

> I was once talking to some of the elders of the Awá people [about climate change]… because they already knew that more sickness was coming and that is why they said, <<we have to take care of the forest.>> (Olindo)

Awá emplaced notion of climate change encompasses some of the symptoms of a broader cosmological unbalance that "sickens" land and rivers and is created by humans' disrespect to the territory and the human and non-human beings living in it. According to Awá's cosmology, a core principle guiding Awá's lifeways is respect. Respect has a prescriptive character as disrespect has life-or-death consequences for the spiritual and bodily dwellers of the territory because, as Eduardo warns,

> if we do not respect nature, punishment comes, that is, drought; drought comes[.] That's why we cannot play with nature, we cannot play.

Awá's relationships with the mountain and the spirits, actants, and beings that exist in the katza su must be respectful. Contrary to the Western perspective that renders territory as solely landscape or inanimate stage for human actions, Indigenous territories are infused by the agency of the non-human. Within the human and more-than-human cosmo-environment of katza su, territory is an active participant in the construction of Awá's ecocultural identities, knowledges, and practices, which defy anthropocentrism.

Translation elucidates the anthropocentric inclination of climate change communication. By translating climate change into non-dominant languages, the absence of non-human actors' voices in environmental participatory processes becomes explicit. Anthropocentrism contributes to deepening the lack of multivocality, particularly in processes in which environmental communication models for participation privilege human-centered interpretations of environmental conflicts, collaboration, and benefits (Callister, 2013; Peterson et al., 2016). Awá's phenomenological understanding of climate change challenges anthropocentrism by situating humans within a larger web of humans and more-than-human relationality governed by the principle of respect.

CLOSING REMARKS: SCALING-DOWN CLIMATE CHANGE

Research is a political act to generate knowledge to enhance "utopian politics of possibility that addresses social injustice and imagines a radical democracy that is not yet" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. xiii). As such, this investigation sought to understand the complexity of the Awá situation in order to offer ways to unpack discursive conditions that may support injustice, deepen inequality, and perpetuate exclusion. Accordingly, by exploring Awá organizations' translation of climate change, I attempted to understand how global environmental discourses inform Awá's relationships with their territories, situated knowledges and meanings, and ecocultural identities, and offer some signposts to the design of less anthropocentric and more inclusive models of environmental communication.

The possibility and need of epistemological and ontological amplitude in the definition of climate change comes to the fore with translation. Translation, as communication practice and historicist inquiry, is one discursive entry point to the complex assemblage of market driven economic ideologies, political arrangement among state and non-state actors, colonial histories, and epistemic borders. As an epistemological device, translation relocates power insofar as it raises questions about whose knowledge is legitimized in our understanding of climate change. The invocation of a phenomenological knowledge in the place-based construction of meaning emplaces the global environmental discourse of climate change. By emplacing, Awá open possibilities to express and exert their *dis-sensus,* "to feel or sense differently" (Micarelli, 2015). To emplace, then, entails challenging the exclusionary deployment of specialized jargon that appears to unmoor the meaning of climate change from place, which possibly undermines Awá people's grounded/lived experiences of the effects of climate disruption.

Linguistic alienation aggravates this detachment and risks to reduce the level of actual participation by privileging a "scientific" over "non-scientific" language and knowledge. By entering the discursive complexity of climate change via interrogating Awá processes of translation of this global environmental discourse, I posed the need for (1) a more political understanding of culture; (2) a less functionalistic comprehension of communication; and (3) an ecocultural approach to participation that acknowledges and exposes the anthropocentrism permeating the discourses, ideologies, and subjectivities implicated in spaces of public participation in environmental decision- and policy-making. I am aware of that agency and potential for civic action created during translation can possibly be minimized for the people or organizations at-the-margins if, for example, their language is translated with minimal ecocultural awareness into the dominant language (Spanish or English) for Western audiences and back into terms such as "cambio climático/climate change." This reverse translation may result in losing the place, identity, and understanding carved out in at-the-margin communities' initial translation. This scenario is easy to foresee as the normalization of environmental vernacular contributes to the anthropocentric inertia usually pervading environmental deliberations, to which translation cannot tackle alone. Hence, translation is one of several communication practices that can alter this inertia through rhetorical inventions (Pezzullo, 2001), alternative metaphors (Milstein, 2016), or reshaping participants' sense-of-place (Druschke, 2013). A focus on translation is another way to reveal that the effectiveness of communication practices is not limited to the instrumental capacity of facilitating interaction. On the contrary, communication has the potential to challenge, disrupt, and reshape our culturally informed assumptions of the

(natural) world. Therefore, as an environmental communication practice toward civic action, translation should be directed to denounce, question, and resist the ideological representations of the global environmental crisis that obscure the anthropogenic causes of climate disruption; and thus, to present alternative paths to regenerative futures.

It could be that by now the alien feeling surrounding the idea of climate change had diminished to the majority of Awá communities. However, it was evident that the lack of attention to how climate change is understood by Awá people complicated collaborations. According to Rider Paí, "NGOs come from the outside and land [the idea of climate change] here, but in the Indigenous context is not the same." The perceived foreignness and detachment of climate change—and development and sustainability for that matter—suggest a trembling rapprochement between Awá organizations and communities and their possible national and international partners, as Olindo's account illustrated via his interpellation to NGOs about not having a territory of their own. Thus, the collaboration among Awá organizations and external institutions converges into the territory and is conditioned to a more encompassing understanding of climate change. Translation as civic action is a powerful environmental communication practice that helps disturbing language, rethinking meaning, and interrogating and finding new ways of coordination among diverse, antagonists, and not only human actors. Therefore, as civic action, translation has the potential to carve out identity, relationships, place, and agency toward advancing *nurturing radical inclusion models* based on a replenished communication that positions the more-than-human world at the center of individual and collective environmental practices and actions.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The datasets analyzed for this study was gathered and created by the author and respond to IRB condition of information access.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Institutional Research Board-IRB Office at the University of New Mexico with written informed consent from all subjects. All subjects gave written informed consent in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. The protocol was approved by the IRB Committee.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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Run for Your Life: Embodied Environmental Story-Telling and Citizenship on the Road to Paris

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In December 2015 the United Nations held its Twenty-First climate change conference (COP21) in Paris. While political leaders convened to negotiate a new climate treaty, a diverse landscape of social movements, grassroots organizations, activists and artists assembled to mobilize public support for climate justice. In this paper we draw attention to one example of such non-traditional climate mobilization: *Run for Your Life*, organized by the Swedish theater company Riksteatern. Framed as a "climate performance," this initiative enrolled thousands of people to run distances in a relay race for climate justice, starting in Arctic Sweden and arriving in Paris on the first day of COP21. Public events were organized along the way, and the entire race was video recorded and broadcasted online. When signing up, runners were asked to submit their own climate story. Drawing on this archive of personal stories, we examine how Run for Your Life mobilized citizen engagement for climate justice. By paying attention to the multiple ways in which climate change is storied into people's lives, we seek to understand why citizens decide to take climate action and which subject positions are available to them in the broader environmental drama. While the scripting of climate change as a planetary emergency perpetuated by global injustices serves an important function in the politics of climate change, we argue that it is in situated stories of environmental connection that climate change gains personal meaning. Here, kinship and solidarity are articulated, opening up for progressive social change.

Keywords: climate change, climate justice, citizenship, COP21, grassroots mobilization, activism, story-telling

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INTRODUCTION

Snow is falling through dimmed winter light. A young woman walks toward the viewer. Her clothes are typical to the indigenous Sámi tradition[1]. Close to the camera she stops briefly, holding out her hand covered in a thickly knitted woolen mitten to show a small stone, gray and softly rounded. In a voice-over she speaks first in Sámi, then in English. "Take a stone in your hand," she says, "and close your fist around it until it starts to beat, live, speak and move"; a quote from a poem by the Sámi poet Nils-Aslak Valkeapää. Her gaze is intense as she tells the viewer about herself and her struggle, as an artist, activist, mother, companion and human being, to defend Sámi culture and Mother Earth against the threat of climate change. As her walk continues, she is joined by more people, some of them dressed in Sámi clothing and jojking[2] in their indigenous language. An accompanying text

[1]The Sámi traditionally live in northern Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia, in an area referred to as *Sápmi* in the indigenous language.

[2]A jojk is a traditional form of song in Sámi culture. Rather than telling about something, the performance of a jojk is intended to evoke a person, an animal, or a place.

tells us that the name of the young woman is Jenni Laiti, and that the place is Kiruna, northern Sweden, 4,500 kilometers from Paris (see **Figure 1**).

This video clip, dated 10 November 2015, shows the first steps of *Run for Your Life*, a relay race organized by the Swedish theater company Riksteatern and labeled as a "climate performance." During 20 days, thousands of people participated by running or engaging in events along the way to the 21st UN Climate Conference (COP21) in Paris, passing on the stone that was originally picked up from the Arctic Ocean. On 30 November a group of runners reached the goal: the conference hall Le Bourget in Paris where COP21 was held. The stone was passed on to Milan Loeak, activist and COP delegate from the Marshall Islands, who brought it inside to the negotiation rooms. Most of the race was live streamed on the campaign's YouTube channel. As runners signed up for the race, they were encouraged to submit a personal story conveying their motivations to run. A selection of these stories was recorded and broadcasted online, along with the video images of the runners.

FIGURE 1 | Jenni Laiti and other participants at the start of run for Your Life. Photo: Alexander Linder. Copyright: Sveriges Radio. Reprinted with permission. Original source: Sveriges Radio webpage, https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=98&artikel=6298188.

In this paper we examine Run for Your Life (hereafter RFYL) as a political event that combined elements of art and activism to mobilize citizen engagement with climate change through personal stories, physical movement and suggestive mass communication. This "artivist" intervention (Aladro-Vico et al., 2018) was situated in a growing climate art scene that has played with affective and participatory strategies to activate the viewer's environmental awareness by way of embodied sensory experience (Davis and Turpin, 2015; Hornby, 2017; Motion, 2019). By placing the participating subjects' active interventions at the center of the work's meaning, RFYL turned into an experimental site where multiple expressions of climate concern and subjectivity were brought to the fore. As such, we argue, it provides an interesting public scene for scholars interested in environmental story-telling and citizenship. Our study draws on two interviews with organizers prior to and after the relay race, as well as a close study of the event's campaign material and a thematic analysis of the collected individual climate stories, further outlined below. In an effort to extend the study in an ethnographic direction, we also participated ourselves in the race and carried the stone several kilometers across the Swedish cities of Linköping and Lund. Through our engagements with RFYL we explored different aspects of the action, from the very physical and time-specific event of bodies running and sweating, to the online streaming which happened in real time but also featured afterwards as recorded video clips on YouTube.

The paper is organized as follows. First, we revisit the scholarship on environmental citizenship and ask what notions of green agency and subjectivity it rests upon and projects. In particular, we engage with feminist and post-Marxist interrogations into the situated and embodied dimensions of environmental activism. This literature asks how environmental subjectivities are shaped by the physical, social, and cultural environments that we inhabit, and what forms of political agency these attachments engender. Against this backdrop, we analyze how RFYL was staged as a climate performance in the months prior to the UN climate conference in Paris and what political narratives and subjectivities that informed its dramaturgical script. As a second step we trace how this script multiplied and changed through the creative process and active involvement of the aspiring runners. By working through the embodied meanings and experiences of the participants, RFYL generated a rich online archive of personal climate stories in which local attachments and sensibilities become entangled with global solidarities and concerns. In the final section we reflect upon the political potential of these stories told on the way to Paris. We note that the staging of climate change as a planetary emergency fueled by global injustices serves an important dramaturgical function in the global politics of climate change. Climate art can help to complicate and multiply this story through immersive encounters with the social and physical world. After all, we argue, it is through the situated stories and lived experiences of a changing climate that progressive social change is most likely to take meaning and form.

SITUATING THE DISCOURSE ON ECOLOGICAL CITIZENSHIP

After years of alarming media reports about melting ice sheets and extreme weather events, climate change is today established as a major public concern. According to recent studies, climate change tops the list of greatest societal worries among Swedish citizens (SOM-institutet, 2016, 2018). Unusual heat and severe forest fires in the country in the summer of 2018 attracted media attention and public alarm. Nonetheless, for many Swedes—as in other places in the Global North—climate change remains a distant and abstract threat. Informed by scientific projections of global mean temperature trends, climate change is often depicted as a spatially unbounded problem that is insensitive to place and context. Climate change is everywhere and nowhere, hence not easily synchronized with "the mundane rhythms of lived lives and the specificities of human experience" (Jasanoff, 2010, p. 238). How, then, can concerned publics make sense of climate change and translate their worries into environmental action?

As outlined by Heise (2008), modern environmentalism derives its energy from a combination of local attachments to particular places and more cosmopolitan forms of solidarity and community. In environmentalist thought, the local has for long offered the ground for individual and communal identity and represented an important site of connection to nature that modern society has undone (Heise, 2008, p. 9). These efforts to recuperate a "sense of place" have, however, evolved in parallel to a "sense of planet" and global interconnectedness. The 1968 Apollo pictures of the Earth from space are often referred to as the foundation of Western environmental awareness and an icon of the Earth as a single, organic whole (Höhler, 2008). The image of the "Blue Marble" traveling across space was quickly appropriated by the environmental movement and informed the rise of transnational environmental organizations such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (Heise, 2008). Jasanoff (2010, p. 241) reminds us that the shifting scale of environmentalism from the local to the global does not automatically entail a loss of meaning or caring. Notions of belonging, solidarity, and responsibility can indeed develop on a planetary scale. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 is a moment in history when new environmental movements formed around global-scale problems such as climate change (Jasanoff, 2010). More recently we have seen the rise of the climate justice movement that draws energy from the global imagining of climate change to foster solidarity and responsibility across spatial and temporal scales (Hadden, 2015).

However, the figure of the "global environment" does not sit comfortably with traditional conceptions of community and polity, and therefore calls for new allegiances and affinities across cultures and places. How to cultivate such cosmopolitan bonds and attachments has been subject to intense debates in green political scholarship. The *ecological citizen* is a political subject that is often invoked in these debates (Dobson, 2003; Dobson and Bell, 2006). While the citizenship ideals drawn upon in environmental discourse vary, they often converge around a notion of competent and active political agents ready to do their bit in the collective enterprise of achieving sustainability (Barry, 2006). Acting on behalf of an imagined planetary community, the ecological citizen is regularly called upon to transcend short-term private interests in the pursuit of the common ecological good. The political task of this ecological agent is to actively participate in public deliberation on questions of common purpose and to ensure a just distribution of ecological space by making responsible consumer choices, recycle household waste, conserve energy and develop sustainable travel, and dietary patterns (Bradley, 2009; Paterson and Stripple, 2010; Hobson, 2013). Being a good ecological citizen, suggests Dobson (2003, p. 118–120), thus entails taking responsibility for one's own ecological footprint and causal role in the environmental injustices produced by an increasingly globalized economy.

While the ecological citizen discourse seeks to resolve the tension between the cosmopolitan imagination of modern environmentalism and "the lived immediacies of the local" (Heise, 2008, p. 42), it has been criticized on several grounds. To many feminist scholars, ecological citizenship comes across as a masculine concept rooted in Western ideals of human autonomy, self-determination and rationality (MacGregor, 2006). The subjects empowered by this discourse are primarily enlightened agents who are "positioned to understand or imagine, and potentially engage in, a very particular green 'good life'" (Gabrielson and Parady, 2010, p. 377). Being recognized as a good ecological citizen is thus a matter of privilege, as it depends on the individual's ability to participate in public discourse and make informed consumer and lifestyle choices. People who lack the economic means, knowledge and time required to commit themselves to "the good green life" are excluded from the privilege of citizen pursuits (MacGregor, 2006). The ecological citizenship discourse has also been criticized for privatizing environmental responsibility and hereby overlooking the asymmetrical dependency relations that underpin affluent life in advanced liberal societies (Kenis, 2016). For instance, a Swedish study shows how green lifestyle ideals are modeled on a particular kind of white, middle class subject who is ready to recycle waste and buy organic products, while neglecting other, and potentially more resource intensive, aspects of private life such as transportation patterns and size of housing (Bradley, 2009). By placing the onus on the self-regulating and self-determining individual, the ecological citizenship discourse thus runs the risk of leaving the unfair division of environmental labor and burdens unquestioned (MacGregor, 2006).

In critical response, feminist and post-Marxist scholars have advanced alternative conceptions of citizenship that seek to multiply and politicize the forms of environmental subjectivity and agency available in the quest for sustainability. One such example is Gabrielson's and Parady's (2010) notion of "corporeal citizenship." Rather than making citizenship instrumental to an idealized conception of the good green life, a corporeal approach recognizes the diverse forms of attachments that individuals have to social and material worlds. Here, ecological citizenship is not staged as an enlightened epistemic privilege. Instead it emerges from individuals' socioecological situatedness in intersectional relations based on, for instance, gender, class, age, race, and nationality. Noting that human subjectivity and agency always is embodied and embedded, corporeal citizenship invites recognition of the different articulations of "greenness" that may emerge in particular material and discursive settings (Gabrielson and Parady, 2010). By drawing attention to the body as a site of environmental connection and harm, this situated account of citizenship enters into conversation with studies of environmental justice.

Since the environmental justice movement took form in the United States in the early 1980s, political ecologists have demonstrated how individuals become activated and mobilized in face of threats to their local environments. When protesting against dumping of toxic waste or the appropriation of indigenous lands, justice activists draw on their embodied and lived experiences of environmental harm to open up spaces of green subjectivity (see Tsing, 1999; Agrawal, 2005; Escobar, 2008; Kaijser, 2014). These spaces are diverse and shift across contexts and over time, as people mobilize whatever resources and motivations they can access at the moment. In contrast to the universal citizenship ideals that dominate

green political thinking, work in this field situates green subjectivity and agency in relation to intersectional politics of vulnerability and difference. When grounded in lived experiences of environmental connection and harm, articulations of ecological citizenship multiply and give room for a diversity of "green" perspectives, identifications and forms of agency (Machin, 2013).

In the following we draw upon this "situated"[3] understanding of ecological citizenship to interrogate the forms of green agency and subjectivity that were imagined and performed as part of RFYL. Staged as an embodied form of grassroots activism, RFYL encouraged participants to articulate stories of climate change that were situated in particular places and entangled with local environments. However, grounded in the political struggle for climate justice, the dramaturgical script also invited the involved runners to extend beyond their situated experiences and concerns, and respond to the call for global solidarity and justice. The action thus provided a site of connection, linking the participants' own lives with global matters.

FIGURE 2 | Picture from the campaign material of Run For Your Life. Design and copyright: Maria Glansén. Reprinted with permission. Original source: Run for Your Life webpage.

STAGING RUN FOR YOUR LIFE: MOBILIZING THE GRASSROOTS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

> *Thousands of people, Thousands of kilometers, Thousands of reasons to run.*
> *We will not end here*
> *Take a stone in your hand and listen*
> *Remember*
> *We are not fighting for nature*
> *We are nature defending itself*
> (RFYL webpage)[4].

At the top of the "about" section of the official RFYL web page is a quote by Henry Red Cloud, a renewable energy entrepreneur (see **Figure 2**), politician and member of the Native American Lakota tribe: "There are times when we must accept small steps forward – and there are other times when you need to run like a buffalo. Now is the time to run" (RFYL web page)[4]. In the RFYL campaign, Red Cloud's words are given as an impetus to set thousands of bodies in motion toward Paris. The idea to run for the global climate was first developed in 2014 by Troja Scenkonst, an independent stage art collective based in Stockholm, inspired by Naomi Klein's book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Troja seeks to "treat current politics on an existential and emotional level"[5]. The concept of a relay race was first tested in a sports arena and later presented to the Swedish touring theater company Riksteatern. In spring 2015 Riksteatern decided to take on the project[6].

Neither Troja nor Riksteatern had any previous experience of a project like RFYL. A call for participation was disseminated via social media and during the summer months of 2015 the organizing team visited cities along the path of the race to recruit aspiring participants. The team encouraged people from all social and cultural backgrounds to join the race and also invited people with physical disabilities to participate in ways that worked for them, e.g. walking or in a wheelchair. In places where recruitment proved difficult, the organizers contacted local communities, from environmental organizations to schools and sports clubs, in order to raise interest. The race successfully took off from the Swedish city of Kiruna on 10 November 2015, and the stone first carried by Jenni Laiti continued southwards, changing many hands during the 20 days that followed. Local groups organized various kinds of public events – from concerts and movie screenings to manifestations – in the cities and villages along the way. There was significant media attention, especially around participating celebrities, and the live streaming attracted many online followers.

After the race had started, much of the organizational work was done *ad hoc*, as unexpected needs arose. Practical matters, including the logistics around the many runners and the technical equipment for streaming, took a lot of time, especially when the race reached the European continent[6,7]. The tragic terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November, and the declared state of emergency that followed, posed challenges as RFYL advanced southwards. The organizers decided to partly change route and, for the sake of safety, not drive or run during night time. According to the original plan, the relay race would culminate in the Global Climate March in Paris on 29 November. When the march was banned as an effect of the declared state of emergency, the grand finale was instead transformed into a solemn walk up to the negotiation site, involving poetry and singing by indigenous artists, before the stone was handed over to the activist and delegate who brought it into the conference venue (RFYL webpage 2015[4]; Höijer, 2017).

[3]Following Haraway's work on "situated knowledges" (Haraway, 1998).
[4]Run for your Life webpage. Available online at: www2.runforyourlife.nu
[5]Troja Scenkost webpage. Available online at: www.trojascenkonst.se
[6]Interview (2016). 2016-05-30. Interview with one one member of RFYL's artistic team, Stockholm.
[7]Interview (2015). 2015-12-02. Interview with three three members of the RFYL core team, Paris.

RFYL was labeled a "climate performance" and described by the organizers as an explicitly artistic intervention. However, informed by the global quest for climate justice, RFYL also aligned itself with a transnational network of activists campaigning for a just climate deal in Paris. The climate justice movement is known for its resistance to mainstream climate policy discourse and practice (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2016). Ever since the 2009 UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen, a broad network of social groups and grassroots organizations have used the term climate justice to foreground the unequal relations of power and problems of social exclusion resulting from neoliberal and capitalist responses to climate change (Chatterton et al., 2013). Rather than accepting the dominant staging of climate change as a global threat that can be resolved by technical fixes and market solutions, climate justice activists have insisted that rich countries in the global North "keep fossils in the ground" and do their fair shares in the transition to sustainable and equitable economies. The slogan "System Change, Not Climate Change" has turned into the leitmotif of this international grassroots movement and its efforts to link climate change to the broader politics of global justice (Hadden, 2015).

Due to the terrorist attack and the declared state of emergency, the streets of Paris were not the main space of climate justice activism during COP21. Instead a diverse landscape of social movements, grassroots organizations and artists assembled in cultural institutions and exhibition halls around Paris to mobilize public support for an ambitious and just climate agreement. One hub for artistic reflections during COP21 was the art festival ArtCop with more than 550 cultural events, but artistic expressions were also a more general element of climate activism and protest throughout the city. Thus, while RFYL was a pioneering project with regard to its form and artistic ambition, it was situated in a context of transnational climate activism and a burgeoning climate art scene. Informed by the narrative of climate justice, the artistic team sought an expression that would insert radical energy to climate policy discourse and mobilize the grassroots for long-term system change[6]. However, as the project depended on thousands of individual runners, it took on multiple meanings along the way, not least expressed in the personal stories submitted by the participants.

MAKING CLIMATE CHANGE INTIMATE: THE ARCHIVE OF PERSONAL STORIES

When signing up for RFYL, participants were asked to submit a personal story declaring their motivation to run, prompted to start with the sentence "I run for…" On the basis of these stories the project's artistic team selected the runners that would feature on the RFYL webpage[4]. When time and technology permitted, the stories were recorded and broadcasted online along with the video of the runners in real time. Some were also chosen to be recorded beforehand and used as online campaign material for the relay race. A member of the artistic team describes the selection process as subjective, favoring diversity as well as politically and morally invested contributions. Stories containing advertisements were rejected, and the team actively looked for narratives that channeled activist energies, structural critique, and local protest[6].

Due to lack of time on behalf of the organizers, there is no full record of all the submitted stories. Our analysis therefore rests upon the around 1,000 available submissions, of which some were eventually selected by the artistic team for the webpage and online broadcasting. The stories are from a few sentences to a page long, and all bear witness of personal engagement and climate concern. A great majority are written by Swedish participants, while a smaller number are written by mainly Danish, German, Dutch and French participants who ran along the European stretch of the relay. The personal stories were explored through thematic analysis (see Guest et al., 2011; Bryman, 2016). As a first step, we read through all the submissions to get an overall picture of their contents and then made a second reading to identify codes for further analysis in an inductive process. These codes were then used for color-coding the entire material. Through this coding process, a number of themes related to green subjectivity and agency emerged from the stories; *Urgency*, *Hope or despair in face of COP21*, *Loss and change*, *Children and future generations*, *Climate justice and solidarity*, and *The embodied act of running*. These were themes that arose frequently, or that were especially emphasized by authors. In the following, we explore individual contributions to RFYL according to these themes. We have selected quotes from the stories that illustrate these themes. All quotes that were originally written in Swedish have been translated to English by the authors.

Urgency

"For me, the action of running itself is simple; it has to do with being in a hurry. You have to get sweaty to get something done," said a member of RFYL's artistic team when asked about what it means for her to run for the climate[7]. This sense of urgency informed the campaign material of RFYL and is recurring in many participants' individual stories. Numerous runners express despair in face of the lack of political action on climate change and concern about the losses that may follow. Many participating runners play with the image of speedy physical movement as a metaphor for the political urgency that the world is facing: "I run for life, I hurry all that I can, because I know that it is urgent," and "I want to run because I want the development to go fast. I want to run because I am in a hurry toward a bright future." Another contributor takes the running metaphor further and states that "we use more resources today than what the Earth can handle. And we continue to pump carbon dioxides into the atmosphere. We behave like long-distance runners who think they can run like a hundred-meter runner."

Hope or Despair in Face of COP 21

Several participants connect the sense of urgency to the importance of making progress in the UN climate negotiations in Paris. One story is rhetorically addressing decision-makers: "Dear politicians. It is for real now. And actually quite urgent. Please, dare to be brave and believe in a better future with sustainable

solutions. Paris is our shared opportunity." In a similar tone, another participant writes: "There is still some time to change the direction of development, but it needs to happen within the next few years. Therefore it is so important that the politicians in Paris agree on adequate reductions of emissions." While these and other stories reflect hope and belief in the UN-led negotiation procedure, others, are more skeptical: "It is just talk and talk and talk, meet and meet and meet, but nothing really sticks and makes any difference. That's enough. I run! For the climate, life and the future." Several contributors doubt the political will of world leaders and efficacy of political institutions: "We face the most important challenge for humanity. There is a strong desire among the people to succeed and the opportunities to achieve necessary change have never been greater. But those in power, both political and economic, have other plans. COP21 means perhaps their last chance to show that the current system is not too inflexible to deal with climate change." Others call for more participatory and decentralized forms of climate governance: "I want to run because I do not believe in COP. I do not think this is an issue that can be resolved at the top level. I believe that it is the local level that has to step in and show the way. Therefore, I want to run."

Loss and Change

Many participants dwell upon their own first-hand and situated experiences of a changing climate: the extinction and migration of species, the risks of flooding by ocean waters and rivers, threats to local cultural practices such as reindeer herding. Some participants describe concrete threats to particular places, like this story from a lignite mining area in Germany: "My home town would be situated immediately next to the edge of the mine. We are supposed to live a "life near the pit": with the multiple stresses for the people who live here, with noise pollution, radioactive emissions, pollution with particle matter and other toxins." Another story concerns the threat of flooding: "In 25 years my home here in Gothenburg is expected to be under water. Whatever solutions they come up with to decrease the water flows of the river Göta Älv, none of them will help in the long run." A participant from Sápmi writes: "Climate change directly affects the conditions for the reindeers to survive. A changed climate with warmer winters, more precipitation and more extreme weather will mean big problems for reindeer herding in the future." Another contribution concerns the loss of a particular glacier: "I once wandered toward a glacier in the mountains west of Abisko[8]. According to the map we were rapidly approaching the edge of the glacier, but in reality it was still far to go. The map was a couple of decades old, in that time the glacier stretched far – now the ice had lost the grip against the warmer world caused by humans."

Other stories evoke a more general sense of loss. Changing seasons is frequently mentioned. One participant writes: "I am worried that we will lose our seasons, that summer, autumn, winter and spring will all lose their charm and become some kind of monotonous "in between" where we never get to experience the distinctiveness of different seasons'. Snow is repeatedly brought up as an icon of loss: "It is so trivial. It is either white, or it is not. But what does it mean when it is not white anymore?," and "Besides running for the Earth, our borrowed residency and joint responsibility, I'm running for the snow. I love snow and winter sports. The silence that follows the first snowfall. How the sun makes the crystals sparkle. The rustling under the skis early mornings. How surroundings suddenly have a completely different look under the flakes. This I run for. For this I want to preserve for us and future generations. The snow, I really do not want to see disappear". Many stories link snow to personal memories and cultural traditions, as in these two accounts: "I grew up in The Netherlands. As a child I loved to play in the snow, to make snowmen and to ice skate. But over the years the snow and ice became less and when I was a teenager there were winters without a single snowflake," and "When I celebrated Christmas for the third consecutive year without snow, I realized that something very fundamental was wrong."

In these stories, climate and weather are often given existential meaning and linked to lived experiences of "being in the world." Contributors place the local, threatened climate in a longer history of ancestors and belonging: "I have always had a great interest in nature. Being in the woods, picking berries and skiing, tracking animals and walking in the mountains is my way of connecting with our world. These activities put me in a historical context to generations of ancestors and thus provide roots and a sounding board for my own existence." These stories of belonging are often extended to future generations, which brings us to the next theme.

Children and Future Generations

A common concern brought up by the runners is what kind of environments future generations will inherit from us. Many contributors express feelings of responsibility, like in this quote: "I am 53 years old and want to be able to look my future great-grandchildren in the eye. We have only one Earth. We have borrowed it and we will return it." Another participant exclaims: "What kind of world are we leaving behind us! We owe it to our children to solve this." Parenthood as an inducement for taking action is a common theme, as in these two stories: "Having kids was the tipping point for me. It is imperative that we do all we can to reverse the effects of global warming so that future generations can call Earth home," and "1.5 years ago my daughter was born, and then I realized that I have a responsibility. A responsibility to protect our environment so that my daughter and her future children will get to enjoy the environment as much as I do." Several contributors extend their parental responsibility to all children. For instance, one runner writes: "I run for the baby in my belly. I think of all the children of the world. All future generations. I think about my son and my unborn child who is just now growing in my belly." In other stories, participants speak about their efforts to influence their children to take responsibility for the climate: "I want to contribute to a better world whenever I can. I want my children to see that you can do this in many different ways."

Concerns for future generations are frequently tied to notions of tradition and belonging, and the threat a changed climate poses to particular places: "Since I had children, I have realized that a

[8] Abisko is the name of a village and a national park in northern Sweden.

large part of the reality I have taken for granted while growing up—and that has been self-evident for thousands of years—is subject to change and loss. What will my children drink when the glaciers have melted and the rivers dried? What will be left of the taiga when the temperature rises? How dark will not winter be when the snow disappears from our subarctic latitudes? I want to run for my children's right to enjoy the nature and culture that are so typical of the subarctic landscape." Another contributor writes: "Each fall I go hunting with my great-uncles. They tell of the land, the animals and our family as if they were reading a book as we move into the forest. Their knowledge goes back all the hundreds of years we have lived right there. My dream is to teach my grandchildren what they teach me. But the environment is changing so rapidly now that I'm afraid that my traditional Sámi knowledge may not be valid anymore when I am 90 years old like them, and much of what I am is lost and ruined because of the ruthless exploitation of nature going on."

Climate Justice and Solidarity

In the RFYL online material the event is described as a "relay race across Northern Europe to promote climate justice and a sustainable future" (RFYL website)[4]. The narrative of climate justice is frequently repeated in the individual stories. Here, reference is often made to global injustices and developing countries being most affected by climate change while causing the least emissions. Many of the stories on this theme refer to news reports or describe personal encounters with affected and vulnerable societies. Several contributors contrast their experiences from other places with the privileged situation in Sweden, and place responsibility for solidarity and action on citizens and decision-makers in the West. Here are two examples: "I have traveled with work and visited developing countries in rural areas, including in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Indonesia. If we do not make radical changes the people I have met who live in fishing villages might completely lose their homes and their land when the sea level rises and the icebergs melt," and: "I am from the UK and have Indian roots having also lived in Delhi before moving to Sweden. I have witnessed grinding poverty in Indian cities where unsustainable development has had a huge toll on people's lives. This contrasts sharply with life in Sweden but many of the causes of climate change are here. I run for climate justice and to show that we all in the West and East are responsible for taking action." Another contribution reads: "I see the terrible fact that the industrialized Western world does not take its responsibility to mitigate/curb emissions and the climate change that follows from them, which largely affects poor countries and also means that they are prevented from achieving the same prosperity that we have. Deeply unequal!" In the following story the contributor's love for a particular place is connected with the impacts of climate change in other parts of the world: "Kolmården is one of Sweden's most beautiful forest areas, and Bråviken is the largest bay in the country. Here I grew up and here I have cultivated my love for nature. When I was at the Climate Summit in Copenhagen in 2009 and heard representatives from different island groups in the Caribbean talk about how climate change affects them, I understood the seriousness."

Also intersectional aspects of climate injustice are brought up in the stories in relation to gender, ethnicity, age and non-human species. Some contributions identify women as a particularly vulnerable group: "It is the poorest who will suffer most from a warmer world, and often the most vulnerable are women. Efforts toward equality is a prerequisite for environmental politics, in the long run the entire patriarchal world order needs to be questioned." Indigenous people and their cultures are also pointed out as being particularly threatened by climate change. Several of the contributions are from indigenous Sámi people who are concerned about their possibilities to continue traditional reindeer herding. Threats to animals and plants are sometimes mentioned as another dimension of injustice. One contributor writes: "To me, the main victims are the animals who are completely innocent of causing climate change." Polar bears recur frequently as victims of climate change, like in this story: "I run for the polar bears. Fantastic, beautiful animals. [. . .] I get so sad when I see pictures of starving bears fighting for their survival on the little ice that is left." Some participants refer to their running as an act of solidarity with humans and non-humans who are already negatively affected by climate change.

The Embodied Act of Running

Many participants were attracted to the physical and bodily dimension of RFYL. For them, physical movement in nature evokes a sense of environmental connection and draws direct attention to looming changes: "The rain in your face, the wind in the trees, wheat fields swaying in the wind. Just me, my breath, my steps and nature. Never am I so aware of nature as with my running clothes on. It is freedom, but it is also scary. Frightening because the rain, the wind and the fields will change unless we are willing to sacrifice something." Another runner writes: "I run wherever I go and I often describe places based on how they are to run in; the terrain, the views, unexpected encounters, the weather, the smells. The descriptions are endless, as many as the places, but I have never needed to refrain from running because it has not been possible. I do not want to have to write... "you can hardly breathe," or "the boardwalk is under water." I want my children and other people to be able to run there and wherever they want—tomorrow or in 20 years."

The sense of environmental connection and self-care invoked by physical activity is in some contributions extended to a responsibility for the planet as a whole. As one participant writes: "Why don't we see the link between the wellbeing of Earth and our own personal health? [. . .] I want to take care of the Earth like I am taking care of myself. Therefore, I want to run." Another contributor reflects: "I have realized how connected the environment is with our bodies and health. I believe that sports is not only a way to improve your body and performances but also a way to bring yourself closer to some lost values and to the environment." Some contributors see their participation in RFYL as a way of handling climate anxiety and demonstrating their commitment to positive change: "Running is one of my hobbies, this time not only for fun or for my health, but just to bring my little stone for the

health of the whole planet and of the people living on it." Another runner writes: "If my running can contribute to the on-going climate disaster getting more attention and if it in some way can contribute to a better climate agreement in Paris, the benefit of running becomes not only my own." Thus, for many participants, the embodied act of running is symbolically connected to a collective movement for a stable climate.

TOWARD SITUATED CLIMATE STORY-TELLING AND CITIZENSHIP

The Twenty-First UN Climate Conference in Paris was a critical moment in the history of global climate politics. Held in the hottest year since records began, and in the shadow of diplomatic failure at the Copenhagen summit 6 years earlier, the conference was charged with the urgent political task of keeping global mean warming well below 2 degrees Celsius (Christoff, 2016). While political leaders and diplomats were spending long hours in the conference hall Le Bourget to craft a new treaty text, activists, and artists from different parts of the world joined forces to mobilize public support for safe and just climate futures. Despite the ban on protest following the terrorist attacks on 13 November, COP21 formed a veritable center of gravitation that inspired citizen groups and social networks to experiment with new forms of climate activism and mobilization. *Run for Your Life* is one of the many initiatives that made use of this political momentum to explore the intersection of climate art and activism. By setting bodies in physical motion toward Paris, and recording the stories told along the way, RFYL sought to activate citizens in the quest for climate justice and hereby bring the politics of climate change down to earth.

The political effects of this art performance are of course difficult to establish. Art activism can perform counter-politics by disrupting dominant narratives, de-normalizing attachments to fossil fuels and advancing an enlarged and transformed sense of self and the world (Motion, 2019). However, interventions of this sort are always temporal, open-ended and risky. The final result is the sum of the meanings proposed by the artists and those generated among participating publics (Aladro-Vico et al., 2018). As outlined above, RFYL was set in motion by the civilizational wake-up call found in Naomi Klein's best-seller *The Changes Everything: Climate vs. Capitalism* (Klein, 2014). Informed by the grand narrative of the eco-socialist left, the dramaturgical script sought to enroll citizens in the global quest for climate justice. However, when working their way through the submitted climate stories, the artistic directors struggled to find the radical political energy they were looking for. The individual stories contained more individual guilt and loss, than social mobilization and critique[6]. Indeed, one by one, the stories are not very spectacular or striking. Yet, grouped together, the narratives bear witness of a subtle political movement in the making. While situated in different geographical and social settings, the collection of climate stories offers a powerful account of worry, sorrow, hope, connectivity, solidarity, and agency in face of climate change. They contain testimonies of changing weather patterns, loss of cultural traditions, protest against fossil fuel extraction, frustration with the lack of political action, and solidarity with the vulnerable across space, time, and species boundaries. The messages conveyed are multiple and unruly, but the stories add on to each other and together make up a strong mobilizing force and call to action.

Similarly, the video clips of participants running alone on dark icy roads, often through miles and miles of forest, are suggestive when presented alongside each other. The exchange of the Arctic stone along the 4,500 km from Kiruna to Paris linked runners, both physically and symbolically, in chains of solidarity and kinship. To us, the climate story-telling and activism found on the road to Paris provides rich examples of ecological citizenship. The participating runners express concern and responsibility for the future of places, people and species, and share a commitment to the collective enterprise of achieving sustainability. However, in contrast to the universal citizenship ideals traditionally invoked in green political theory, the forms of agency articulated in these stories transcend the modern dualisms of mind/body, reason/emotion, men/women, public/private, and culture/nature. Citizen virtues are not primarily claimed through active participation in public life, reasoned debate, or informed consumer and lifestyle choices. In line with corporeal accounts of citizenship (Gabrielson and Parady, 2010) ecological agency is here instead grounded in the participants' every-day efforts to imagine and live with a changing climate. Climate change is not framed as a distant and abstract threat, but experienced and embodied in close connection and solidarity with familiar and distant environments. Complex atmospheric processes and aggregate temperature trends take shape and gain meaning in the particular—the snow that does not fall, the flooding river, the coal mine that slowly ingests the land. In these accounts, nature is not the "other" that humans can detach themselves from: on the contrary, nature, or environment, is recognized as the prerequisite for human existence, and inseparable from human cultures, societies, and lives.

In a rapidly warming world, efforts to define and locate ecological citizenship may seem like an academic distraction, especially so when grounded in a temporary art performance. In this paper, however, we argue the opposite. In order to tackle the profound challenges posed by a climate change, we need to look for stories that, in the words of Gibson et al. (2015, p. ii), reach beyond abstractions, enact connectivity, and move us to concern and action. The narrative of climate justice takes an important step in that direction by recognizing the uneven and unequal exposure of human bodies to climate risks, and the diversity of experience and agency that may follow. We argue that initiatives such as RFYL can give substance and strength to the political struggle for climate justice. While mostly situated in Northern Europe—which is generally a privileged region in terms of income, access to resources and climate impacts—the collection of climate stories analyzed here contains grief and mourning for what is being lost, but also enacts new political sensibilities and reparative

possibilities. Together, the stories give account of the multiplicity of green imaginations, subjectivities and forms of political agency that we will need to mobilize in response to a climate changed world.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The datasets generated for this study are available on request to the corresponding author.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors contributed equally to the data collection and the writing of the paper.

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CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS
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Tails From Captive Classes: Interspecies Civic Action at the Contemporary Zoo

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In this case study we rearticulate the contemporary zoo to recognize the agency of captive classes. Contemporary zoos catalog the consequences of humans' ecological choices. We reject the dominant ideologies used to justify captivity (e.g., human safety, rescue, and conservation), in favor of framing zoo'd animals as refugees *forced into* captivity due to human development and climate change. Through the permeability of zoo exhibit boundaries we analyze resistance from captive, free-living animals, and elemental nature (e.g., water), arguing for a strategic anthropomorphism that privileges intuition as a form of civic action that includes all entities. Moreover, we urge a shift toward a re-imagined model that implicates humans in the plight of the animals kept within zoo walls. This essay provides suggestions for an alternative zoo experience that responds to the resistive communication of more-than-humans.

Keywords: internatural communication, climate change, zoo, alternative symbolics, extinction, captive classes, captivity, climate refugee

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> "In the end, we will conserve only what we love.
> We will love only what we understand.
> We will understand only what we are taught."—Baba Dioum (Communicating Forest Values, 2011).

The sound of electric wires clicks rhythmically in the background as guests pass by the moat separating human visitor from captive bear. The human visitor moves on to view the neighboring exhibit and the bear stays within the confines of its artificial space. This bear's day is metered by the clicks of electric barriers reminding all who can hear it of what might happen should the moat be crossed. Zoo exhibit barriers like moats, fences, and glass walls create a "material-symbolic gulf" that maintain "human-animal and culture-nature binaries" (Milstein, 2013, p. 177). Scholars across disciplines have examined the hegemonic implications of the zoo as an institution (Clayton and Myers, 2009; Milstein, 2009, 2013; van Dooren, 2016), exploring both the rhetorical and material implications on either side of the exhibit barrier. In many cases extant research attempts to transgress the human-animal binary through a "natural rhetoric" that claims rhetoric as a universal biological function of all creatures (Davis, 2011, p. 89). Within these critiques of zoo structures, the resistive behavior of animals is interpreted through systems of human rhetoric. Indeed, this "natural rhetoric" remains anthroponormative, as it "naturalizes the human as a given center and thus privileges the human center both through discourse, as well as through material conditions" (Seegert, 2014, p. 79). In contrast, Burford and Schutten (2017) critiqued *Blackfish*'s portrayal of captive orcas, arguing that the orcas' resistive behavior (e.g., ignoring performance cues, threatening trainers lives etc.) is an example of agency rather than sickness. They write, "In acknowledging an alternative symbolic, we should listen and respond to the orca's clear communication, rather than try to explain it away as "hysterical" psychosis or an exceptional, out-of-the-ordinary event" (p. 7). Indeed, relying on human language to explain more-than-human behavior limits creaturely

rhetoric (Davis, 2011) by defining what counts as a "'normal' encounter between animals and humans" (Seegert, 2014, p. 76). This anthroponormative way of being draws attention to our perceived human need to make contact with captive others and is then propped up as a justification for zoo'd (Milstein, 2013) realities[1]. In contrast, following Davis (2011), creaturely rhetoric is only possible when we open ourselves up to corporeal responsiveness.

In this essay we rearticulate the zoo to recognize the agency of the creatures who co-habitate within zoo barriers. We urge a shift toward a re-imagined model that implicates humans in the plight of the animals kept within zoo walls. We use the term *other-than-human* strategically to "referenc[e] beings forced into subordination or discussing humans exercising power over animals" (Burford and Schutten, 2017, p. 2) and *zoo* to refer to any type of institution where other-than-humans are caged for human entertainment, conservation, research, and rescue. Furthermore, we ultimately prefer the term "more-than-human" (Abram, 1996) because it inverts the hierarchy that is currently maintained by contemporary zoos. Contemporary zoos are quick to herald themselves as conservation sites (Beardsworth and Bryman, 2001; Hancocks, 2001; Clayton and Myers, 2009), but the language used in these institutions maintains the separation of humans and other-than-humans by justifying what we term "captive classes." Identifying these more-than-humans as a "captive class" is useful in linking them to the injustices of captivity and climate change and begins a shift toward seeing these entities as a class. More-than-humans face a significant barrier to justice because they are not offered an equal say in decision-making. Naming zoo'd beings as a captive class engages the creation of solidarity with free-living more-than-humans. "Indeed, the rational universalizablity of claims to rights and justice proves essential to the task of giving public justification to policy decisions concerning vulnerable members of the shared political community" (von Essen and Allen, 2017, p. 641). Identifying zoo'd animals as a class increases their potential to be seen as an equal stakeholder because their identity intersects with all forms of oppression—a necessary step toward civic action that includes more-than-humans as citizens. Thus, we suggest, zoos are in effect spaces that are cataloging the consequences of the choices we are making as a human species. Humans are language-using beings, but must socially construct a different reality at the zoo if we are to change our relationship with all more-than-human entities, both captive and free-living[2].

Our goal to envision what a different zoo reality might look like led us on a journey to an animal park in the United States, which we give the pseudonym of Wild Wilderness Adventure (WWA). WWA is split into two sections: the drive-through exhibits and walk-through exhibits. Guests can drive through the constructed natural habitat of captive classes, including junior, and full-grown black bears, burros, bison, elk, deer, and wolves. In the walk-through portion guests can see bear cubs and other smaller captive other-than-human animals such as otters, beavers, foxes, bobcats, and javelina. We visited approximately ten times over a 6 month period and took field notes. During our visits we informally talked with park staff, observed visitor interaction with species exhibits, audio recorded, and attended public programs that highlighted species. Review of WWA's website and promotional material reveals nothing about their mission statement, position, or claims about their views related to conservation and captivity. Our interactions with staff provided our only way to showcase the voices and policies of WWA.

Following the framework of rhetorical field methods (Middleton et al., 2011), we take the position that captive classes represent a rhetorical community. Indeed, Wild Wilderness Adventure as an institution, including other-than-human animals, visitors, staff, the exhibits, and the interactions that happen between and within these elements, constitutes a site for the production of meanings, identities, and social relationships. Such a recognition shifts critical rhetoric by deconstructing an anthroponormative (Seegert, 2014) discourse that prioritizes human meaning-making. Creaturely rhetoric accounts for the communicative/rhetorical acts of more-than-humans, which may function beyond human sense-making. Thus, the first step to explore creaturly rhetoric at WWA is to establish "who counts as a rhetorical community worth studying, and what counts as a form of rhetorical action worthy of scrutiny" (Middleton et al., 2011, p. 389).

Rhetorical field methods have several critical commitments[3]. The methodology provides "a lens for accounting for the corporeal and aesthetic dimensions of rhetoric that [critical rhetoric] is beginning to interrogate" (Middleton et al., 2011, p. 389). This methodology adopts practices from ethnography and performance studies to locate marginalized communities—in this case, captive classes—and engage in the potential for reimagining power structures (Middleton et al.). This epistemology drives this case study by engaging with the human zoo visitor's corporeal influence (Despret, 2013) and recognizing the agency of captive more-than-human animals to engage in creaturely rhetoric (Davis, 2011).

Prioritizing our corporeality, being in our bodies, and listening to and valuing instinct is integral to solving many environmental crises. Following Munday (2013), "as environmental problems loom larger, healing the divide between humans and other animals is an important aspect of addressing our alienation from nature" (p. 209). Because human alienation from nature has been persistent since the Industrial Revolution, it is understandably difficult to reverse. Identifying alternative discourses that see all entities as having intrinsic worth allows us to use Burford and Schutten (2017) framework for "applying complicity, implication, and coherence, [which] could be seen as a guide for environmentalists as they work to incorporate

[1] We follow Milstein (2013), who coined the term zoo'd, to illustrate "the discursive work of pointing to an active process in which humans are the implicit agent" of displacement and control.

[2] We chose to use the phrase free-living vs. wild. The word wild maintains the nature/culture binary by separating humans and more-than-humans on the basis of civilized culture. Free-living illustrates and important linguistic shift in reminding humans the power-over nature over that they exercise. Moreover, it emphasizes the reality that there is no "natural" or "wild" space left untouched by humans. We also use free-growing instead of natural in some places.

[3] For a complete description of the critical commitments of rhetorical field methods see the full article by Middleton et al. (2011).

internatural communication into understandings of captivity and sustainability practices" (p. 10). With this in mind, we seek to rearticulate zoological institutions and implicate zoo visitors in the processes of captivity shifting them toward a coherence paradigm.

This essay pushes the boundaries of extant conceptualizations of zoos by rejecting the dominant ideologies used to justify captivity (e.g., human safety, rescue, and conservation). We argue that captive classes within zoos represent an important rhetorical community who deserve to be recognized as stakeholders in our responses to climate change, hoping to shift humans' relationship with zoo'd beings from power-over to power-with (Warren, 2000). In what follows, we examine how zoos physically and ideologically construct barriers that separate humans from more-than-humans. Next, we rearticulate zoo'd animals as refugees, highlighting their forced captivity due to human encroachment on their territory and climate change. We explore the permeability of zoo exhibit boundaries by discussing how captive more-than-humans express resistance and how elemental nature (e.g., water) re-organizes or disrupts exhibits. Finally, we provide suggestions for alternative zoo experiences that take seriously the resistive communication of more-than-humans.

MAKING CONTACT WITH THE OTHER

The last few decades have seen unprecedented global species loss; by 2020 over two-thirds of wild species will be extinct primarily due to climate change (Carrington, 2016). Berger (1980) writes that zoos originally emerged as animals disappeared from daily life. Industrialization and urbanization made interactions with free-living animals rare, making zoos key to negotiating contemporary human-animal relations. Clayton and Myers (2009) explain, "zoos represent one of the principal ways in which a wide variety of people encounter nature" (p. 108). Although zoos are intended to change visitors' minds about endangered species, zoo visitors have not shown significant changes in their behavior or knowledge concerning conservation issues (Clayton and Myers, 2009; Phippen, 2016). In fact, representation in zoos can actually detract from public knowledge about the dangers of species loss (DeLuca and Slawter-Volkening, 2009; Milstein, 2013; Carrington, 2016). Thus, the discourse of conservation and emphasis on species recovery echoes (Berger, 1980) argument that "in zoos [animals] constitute the living monument to their own disappearance" (Berger, p. 26).

At the same time, the zoological gaze reduces the human visitor to the role of an observer whose corporeal influence is erased in the interaction. We argue this dynamic allows the human visitor to ignore their complicity in zoo'd realities. Despret (2013) explains that in scientific observation, authors typically refer to their own body as a "presence," which, "while referring to the body, actually conceals it. It conceals what the actual and concrete "presence" is for the animals: the space the so-called observer's body occupies" (Despret, 2013, p. 52). Because "the zoo animal is always captive to the human subjective gaze" (Milstein, 2009, p. 32), a subject position that privileges the visual, it is ultimately impossible for human visitors to engage in truly empathetic relationships with more-than-human species. Decentering the visual in zoo visitors' experiences could highlight the exploitative realities of these captive classes. For example, when visiting WWA we drove through exhibits where predators like the Tundra Wolves, Artic wolves, and Black Bears are contained; visitors are required to roll up car windows and lock doors. The action of shutting the window creates a barrier to all senses except the visual in a space where the predator/prey hierarchy could have been inverted. On one occasion, we forgot to roll up our windows in the wolf area. One of us was taking a picture when the sound of a running Tundra wolf about seven feet away became audible. We noted the rush of not having a barrier. The sense of hearing the breathing of the wolf and their digging in the snow changed our interaction. In that moment, our senses made us aware of our vulnerability. Barriers are used to maintain "the appropriate place for wildness" (Seegert, 2014, p. 87) empowering the zoological gaze.

Acknowledging that captive more-than-human animals can experience human presence in a reciprocal, sensual way destabilizes the hierarchical relationships between human zoo visitors and captive more-than-human animals (Despret, 2013; Seegert, 2014). This reciprocity no longer allows for the Western philosophical tendency to consider human consciousness, and ultimately human existence, as fundamentally unique and separate from more-than-human nature (Abram, 1996). Abram demonstrates the normalization of human superiority and this ideology's use "to justify the increasing manipulation and exploitation of non-human nature by, and for, (civilized) humankind" (Abram, 1996, p. 77). He points out that the prioritization of human uniqueness encourages one to forget their relationship with the larger, more-than-human life-world. Abram argues that the cause of exploitation is a direct result of the hierarchy where humans are at the top "by virtue of our incorporeal intellect, above and apart from all other 'merely corporeal,' entities" (Abram, 1996, p. 48). Abram continues to argue that human intellect is a product of their connection to other more-than-human entities. Humans have thus developed social constructions that ignore those connections and are explicit in the construction of zoo exhibits. For example, returning to our use of more-than-human vs. other-than-human, we understand the later relates to non-human and thus is a dominant term used by the oppressor. On the other hand, more-than-human is an effort to subvert that relationship rearticulating the status of more-than-human as greater than human. The zoo is an opportune site to challenge scholarly understandings of captivity by expanding our perceptions through alternative symbolics and/or alternative listening practices (Schutten and Rogers, 2011; Burford and Schutten, 2017).

Some environmental scholarship engages in alternative symbolic and listening practices, striving to bridge the gap between human and more-than-human nature (Carbaugh, 1999; Salvador and Clarke, 2011; Schutten and Rogers, 2011; Plec, 2013; Peeples and Depoe, 2014). The fear of speaking for or anthropomorphizing nature leaves us one step short of completing this bridge. Even the framing of our queries relies on categories that separate. For example, in *Voice and Environmental Communication*, the editors list examples

of scholarship that focus on the voices of environmental advocates, listing people like Louis Gibbs, John Muir, and Rachel Carson. Missing from this list are more-than-human "internatural activists" (Burford and Schutten, 2017) like the orca Tilikum. One reason captive classes are often ignored is because meaning-making does not include sense-making capabilities like intuition, embodied response, and emotion, which are all examples of non-reasoned discourse. Because reason is valued over intuition, our intuitive knowing is questioned. Intuition and embodied knowing is what allows us to comprehend resistive communication from zoo'd animals. The fear of anthropomorphism is creating a paralysis that diminishes, erases, and disempowers voices from the natural world. Following Eide (2016), "strategic essentialism may thus be seen as a political strategy whereby differences (within a group) are temporarily downplayed and unity assumed for the sake of achieving political goals" (p. 2). In this way we argue for a strategic anthropomorphism that privileges intuition as an alternative form of civic action to include all entities.

Therefore, the present essay stakes an intervention in human participation in an environmental ethnic that acknowledges human transcorporeal experience with more-than-humans at the zoo (see also Alaimo, 2009; Milstein and Kroløkke, 2012). This environmental ethic would illustrate the gravity of climate change, human disconnect from the natural world, and species loss, among other environmental crises.

ZOO'D ANIMALS AS REFUGEES

Zoo institutions obtain animals through processes that maintain the hierarchy of human power-over (Warren, 2000) captive animals[4]. WWA obtains their captive other-than-human animals through rescue and captive breeding programs. Engaging alternative symbolics, we rearticulate these more-than-human refugees to expose the hierarchy of humans over captive classes and to implicate humans in the consequences of climate change. As such, the refugee metaphor is an extension of terms like *slave* or *prisoner* that have been used to illustrate the exploitative and oppressive conditions of zoo'd captive classes (Milstein, 2013; Burford and Schutten, 2017). Furthermore, prison metaphors rely on the idea of punishment as central to the animals' captivity while the term refugee requires us to reject the ideology of rescue. Thus, we submit refugee highlights the displacement and victimization of more-than-human animals as a result of human violence against the planet, creating a pathway to critique captive breeding and rescue in their current forms.

Early historical accounts illustrate that zoos developed out of private menageries as monarchies desired collections of animal species in order to indicate status (Hancocks, 2001). As zoology became an academic discipline, the function of zoos transformed from status to scientific classification (Hancocks, 2001). By the 1900's, "the zoo as a site for the exercise of naked power over animals, and as a location for the indulgence of an unashamedly recreational gaze upon its captive inmates, becomes less and less appealing, and more difficult to justify" (Beardsworth and Bryman, 2001, p. 89).

It was not until the advent of the contemporary environmental movement in the United States that conservation became a part of zoo design (Hancocks, 2001). Indeed, as ecology issues entered public discourse, zoos started considering conservation as an important, and central aspect of their institutions. Conservation rhetoric allows the justification of captivity for a variety of reasons, including breeding programs (Clayton and Myers, 2009). Prioritizing conservation at zoos required a shift in the display of captives. No longer was the sterile scientific cataloging of animals appropriate, but rather the zoo now had to make at least some attempt to reconstruct the "wild" habitat of the animal (Hancocks, 2001).

WWA makes attempts at minimizing human implication in imprisonment of other-than-humans by designing the exhibits to match the nature of the area. They take advantage of the natural environment by creating its exhibits in and around a free-growing forest, giving a significant illusion to guests that the animal captives are somehow more free than in a typical zoo'd reality. On the surface, a conservation narrative and the changing of exhibits should have created a more reciprocal relationship between human animal and more-than-humans. And yet, conservation narratives in zoos have not gone far enough to change behaviors or ideologies concerning the hierarchy between humans and more-than-humans. This is because implication is not clear for the zoo visitor. Rather, the zoo remains an institution of power-over other-than-human. The term refugee disrupts the idea that a zoo'd animal acts as a representation of its free-living counterpart (Berger, 1980) by highlighting the displacement of the captive animal. It is no longer free, but a shell of its former self living the life of a refugee. WWA advertises their park as a "wild encounter" furthering the illusion that guests are driving through "untamed wilderness." How might human visitors feel differently if they were taking a tour of a more-than-human refugee camp? Implication asks us to consider our role in the lives of more-than-humans in order to move toward a coherent paradigm that sees every entity as having intrinsic worth (Plec, 2013).

Who Are the Refugees?

Every zoo'd animal is a victim of displacement and relocation. Whether they were acquired by rescue or captive breeding, they no longer have access to their species' natural habitat. Like human refugees, they are housed and cared for by another who typically has access to more resources. The United Nations defines a refugee as a person "forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence" (UNHCR, 2019). Humans have persecuted other-than-humans by territory encroachment and climate change environmental degradation, caused violence via torture, and have actively been at war with the natural world. Therefore, we argue that many free-living animals are refugees suffering because of human caused ecological destruction. Some wildlife management programs persecute other-than-humans via displacement by human development and anti-ecological practices. These management programs feed institutions of

[4]We use the term power-over in the same manner Ecofeminist Karen Warren does. See her book Ecofeminist Philosophies.

captivity like zoos and aquariums, which is problematic because it situates humans in a position of power-over zoo'd animals.

This is especially true when humans capture apex predators. Zoos often obtain apex predators like bears who are considered a threat to human safety. In 2015, a grizzly bear named Blaze killed a hiker in Yellowstone National Park. Blaze was murdered, and her two cubs became refugees of Yellowstone's wildlife management program at the Toledo Zoo. Blaze's murder and her cubs' displacement was justified because she created a cache of food with the human body vs. attacking to protect her cubs. Yellowstone National Park's superintendent Dan Wenk explained the park's decision, saying "our decision takes into account the facts of the case, the goals of the bear management program, and the long term viability of the grizzly bear population as a whole, rather than an individual bear" (Bekoff, 2015). Bekoff (2015) writes, "In other words, Blaze wasn't free to be the grizzly who she was, and individuals [bears] don't really matter to the Yellowstone bear management program." This example prioritizes human safety and the human management of the grizzly population over the individual bear. Even in sectioned off "wild" spaces (e.g., national parks), human life is valued above other-than human life despite the human colonization of other species' land. The moment a human animal becomes prey, the other-than-human animal will be removed for the slightest infraction (see Schutten, 2008). Wildlife management policies allow for zoos to acquire new refugees in the service of human safety or development. In a coherence paradigm protection does not equal power-over. Thus, vulnerability should be part of the return to seeing humans as a part of wild nature rather than a justification for captivity. This means humans have to change their relationship to apex predators. If a human is killed by a more-than-human, we should grieve that loss and see it as the vulnerability and consequence of being a part of nature.

Like Blaze's cubs, half of the refugees at WWA were "rescued" and half were from other zoos/parks around the country. WWA also has a raptor show that illustrates various subject positions related to prey. During our fieldwork, we watched the raptor show, which is put on by a conservation group dedicated to the rescue and conservation of birds of prey. Walking into the arena, we see two cages with ravens to our left. At the end of the show, the crowd gathers around the cages to watch these conditioned ravens take monetary donations into their beaks, hailing carnival per formatives. We continue into the performance space to find our seats. There are wooden benches cut from tree skeletons[5] and metal bleachers forming three aisles, directing your gaze toward a main stage. At the back of each aisle is a perch for the performers. Throughout the show, large, and small birds fly back and forth, sometimes even touching the tips of audience members' heads with their wings. The owls and falcons create gusts of wind and demonstrate the powerful display of their speed which stimulate the audience's sense of hearing. The host tells us that the birds use the heads of the audience members to know how high they should fly. The backdrop of the arena is densely forested trees with free-living ravens observing and cawing from above.

During the raptor show they ask for a volunteer from the audience and assign them the role of field mouse to demonstrate the hunting abilities of an owl. The volunteer for the organization running the show asks the audience to, through the power of their imagination, see themselves as field mice on a very, very, dark, and cloudy night. The audience laughs, and the host warns that they should not be so quick to join the fun. The audience is roleplaying as part of the same mouse family who has come out to forage and frolic in the middle of the night to avoid the daytime predators. The host gives the audience member a squeaker, and they are supposed to "sound the alarm" when the owl approaches. Complicating this task, the host takes away the sense of sight from the audience member by blindfolding them. The host tells the audience to imagine they are being hunted by one of the largest owl species in the world. The owl silently flies by the audience volunteer, landing behind them. The human volunteer fails to warn the audience members, illustrating the weakness of the senses of human hearing, and the superiority of silent night fliers. This section of the raptor show is significant because it places human visitors in the subject position of being prey. However, asking the audience to role-play as field mice (an animal typically considered to be prey) obscures the power of the performance by not threatening humans' hierarchical power-over other-than-human animals. Role-playing a prey species means that humans are not threatened in the interaction. At no point is their sense of mastery destabilized despite the blindfold as an attempt to dull the senses. This example, which is supposed to educate humans on an ecological standpoint, instead maintains the idea of prey as other.

During the rest of the show, different owls, and falcons are introduced to the audience. The host explains the birds' abilities and behaviors, and shares some bird acquisition stories. For example, a feed store received a shipment of hay and three baby barn owls were found in the shipment. We were told that it was too late to return the owl babies to their home. The organization raised them and released two of them, but the third had imprinted on humans and as the host described, "she decided to stay here and she's going to be a great representative of her species and show everyone how beautiful and talented she is." This raptor show utilizes the displacement of these birds for educational, performative purposes, reducing their existence to the forced role of "ambassador" (Milstein, 2011) embodying the zoological gaze. Historically, the role of ambassador potentially had positive impacts on the ways in which humans understood certain species (Milstein, 2011). However, this role is structurally problematic because it erases the agency of the captive class. This is the reality for rescued zoo'd animals like the barn owl- they must perform as a representation of their free-living counterparts (Berger, 1980) because of their displacement from their natural habitats or die/disappear.

The act of rescuing other-than-human animals, whether they are orphaned or considered a nuisance, maintains human superiority. This happens by removing the inevitability of humans being prey when pitted against apex predators or

[5]In this example WWA uses trees as benches for their raptor show. We use words like "tree skeleton" to highlight an effort to shift our thinking and understanding toward how we view free-living nature as resource. By using this language we are attempting to shift human consciousness implicating us in the pervasiveness of violence against the planet.

appealing to an ethic of care, normalizing the captivity of other animals equating capture, protection, and control with husbandry. Zoo'd animals only exist because of their use value for humans, whether that use is for education, survival of the human species' habitat, or entertainment. Identifying them as refugees implicates humans more completely by making them a part of displacing more-than-human creatures.

Captive Breeding and Climate Change

Wild Wilderness Adventure's newest climate change refugees are two jaguars who were purchased and traded from other zoos in the United States. According to Panthera, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of wild cats, "jaguars have been eradicated from forty percent of their historic range" due to three major threats: human development for agricultural lands, direct hunting by humans, and overhunting of the jaguar's natural prey forcing them to prey on domestic animals further inflaming human-jaguar conflicts (Panthera, 2018). This tangled web of displacement is the reason we find jaguars as a new attraction at WWA. In WWA's newest exhibit, we learn about Namu and Kasatka (pseudonyms) who were siblings purchased from a zoo in the southern United States and brought to WWA. Kasatka was traded with a jaguar from another zoo in the region, Morgan, so WWA would have a breeding pair. Morgan was brought to WWA because her genes are a "good match" with Namu's. The WWA staff "textures the discourse" (Milstein, 2013, p. 170) about this relationship between the jaguars using terms like "husband" and "girlfriend," placing compulsory heterosexuality narratives onto the forced breeding of other-than-human animals.

More than simply new acquisitions, these jaguars are the impetus for a new exhibit and section of WWA. The majority of the exhibits at WWA are themed to match the natural environment or a mountain town, combining a frontier narrative with an indigenous cliff-dwelling red rock environment. Although the jaguar is not native to WWA's region, the exhibit theming creates an illusion that the jaguar might exist in the area outside the walls of its containment. It is concerning, from an educational standpoint to normalize the presence of the jaguar outside of its natural habitat and region. We argue that every zoo is culpable in this way when they imprison more-than-humans not indigenous to the zoo's specific geographic region.

When we first walked up to the jaguar exhibit at WWA, we could not find the jaguar. We turned the corner to the backside of the exhibit to see if we could find them, and were shocked by the streaky glass. The streaks began at eye level and went to the bottom of the glass. We assumed the streaks came from visitors pressing their hands and faces against the glass to find the jaguar. When one of the people we travelled to WWA with pointed out that the streaks were on the inside of the glass, our stomachs sank, and the air left our lungs. We looked closer and recognized paw prints being dragged down the glass all across the exhibit barrier. This realization shocked us out of our judgment of the park's cleanliness and into an embodied response, highlighting the jaguar's creaturely rhetoric. This realization of the jaguar's "banging on the divide" (Milstein, 2013) forced us to reconsider the presence of this being in this artificial environment. Reading the jaguar's paw marks on the glass divide as creaturely rhetoric empowers the extra-discursive.

This experience with Namu caused us to question breeding and captivity, so we sought out a staff member. The staff member explained how WWA, like most zoos, performs genetic testing ahead of transfer to make sure the jaguars are compatible breeders. The genetic testing is necessary because if the jaguars were ever to be released, inbreeding would limit their ability to survive in the wild. The staff member explained that WWA does not plan to participate in a reintroduction program because they do not have the resources to properly prepare the jaguars to be released to the wild. They stated, "That's not going to happen in our lifetime. These cats are going to stay captive cats." In combing through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' database of breeding programs, we learn that most reintroduction programs are based at a zoo site. At this point we were questioning all zoo'd captive breeding if there is no plan for release. WWA justifies their practice, saying they are trying to keep jaguars from being "wiped off the planet." The position of WWA is that it is better to have a captive population of jaguars than no population. Following this logic, captivity is needed because of climate change displacement issues, but we argue that human consequence is erased by current captivity justifications. Collecting endangered species through captive breeding programs lessens the consequences of human habitat and climate destroyers by positioning humans as savior.

Discussing zoos' endangered species as among the first climate refugees is one such form of a coherence paradigm that moves past complicity and implication. Zoos are places where we can draw attention to the fact that the natural world is being impacted in significant ways by humans. Rather than using captive breeding as a temporary solution, the wounds left by species loss should be exposed, always remembered, and reimagined.

YOU CAN'T KEEP "NATURE" OUT

Currently zoos attempt to contain nature by caging more-than-human animals and controlling how they interact with human visitors. We experienced several interactions at WWA challenging the idea of control. Like the jaguar scratching symbols on glass walls, many animals at WWA engaged us, using creaturely rhetoric that contradicts captivity narratives. In reflecting on the story of our reaction to the jaguar's scratches, we discuss this example of creaturely rhetoric as an image event (DeLuca, 1999). DeLuca's discussion of image politics focuses mostly on environmental activism and media exposure, which does not necessarily apply to this analysis. However, we are mostly interested in DeLuca's description of an image event as the visual becoming a form of radical confrontation. This description is important because image events "challenge a number of tenets of traditional rhetorical theory and criticism, starting with the notion that rhetoric ideally is 'reasoned discourse'" (DeLuca, 1999, p. 14). "Reasoned discourse" can easily be translated into "human discourse" with its prioritization of language and human symbolic meaning. Zoo discourse is reasoned discourse that it is used to control our perception of captive animals. Instead,

prioritizing animal behavior as non-reasoned discourse expands ideas related to "alternative symbolics" (Schutten and Rogers, 2011). Schutten and Rogers (2011) argue for a transhuman green theory of communication, "one that actively includes the natural as part of the communication process, deconstructs the symbolic (ideational)/material dualism, and fosters a sense of the interconnection between culture and nature, human and other-than-human" (p. 279). This alternative symbolic would inevitably be a non-reasoned, imperfect, alternative form of listening, and communication that counters hegemonic forms of discourse.

As a staff member at WWA described, captivity dulls a creature's wild instincts. In this way, all the tourist sees is an example of a zoo'd creature stripped of their wild-ness. Moreover, the human visitor is complicit in watching these behaviors and is not self-reflexive about their visit to the zoo (Clayton and Myers, 2009). The captives' behavior often does not mirror the typical behavior of the free-living members of their species. For example, many animals at WWA pace along the edges of their exhibits. Zoos explain the difference between captive and free-living animal behavior, filtering the captive's creaturely rhetoric to fit the zoo's narrative that normalizes captivity (Berger, 1980; Milstein, 2013). For example, at WWA, animal pacing is explained as a search for a mate, a pre-hibernation behavior, or an otherwise normal, healthy behavior. This behavior should instead be engaged as communication from the captive and used to co-create meaning (Burford and Schutten, 2017); we should recognize that pacing potentially illustrates the zoo'd animals' distress (Clayton and Myers, 2009). Captive classes' assimilation into captivity (or failure to do so) should not be ignored simply because they do not perform like their free-living counterparts. In this section, we explore ways refugees at WWA as well as the natural environment potentially enact a radically confrontational resistive rhetoric at WWA.

Alternative Listening and Captive Classes

The first example we would like to discuss involves a bear cub. One day in early spring when snow was still on the ground, we visited WWA. We have just finished a conversation with a staff member, who explained WWA's breeding practices. The conversation leaves us feeling optimistic about their captive breeding program. We will learn more about these practices and programs later, but at the moment our only frame of reference is what we had learned in the conversation. We stroll over toward the bear cub cage, which we knew housed two related bear cubs. When we arrive, we cannot see anything in the exhibit. Then we hear a cry. We look around trying to find the source. We see one cub crying an extremely guttural, fearful, tragic cry in the moat of the exhibit. There are marks in the moat, creating a deep memory of his pacing path in the snow. We tear up. Where is the other cub? Our intuition, what humans might view as maternal instincts, supersedes WWA's explanations of captivity and we want to help the cub. He climbs out of the moat to the top of the exhibit and we think he might stop crying, maybe that was the problem, but he continues to cry. We stay for about 30 min and as we begin to leave, the cub walks to the edge of the exhibit to look directly at us. Even though we do not know what is going on for sure, we cannot help feeling guilty for leaving and stay a bit longer to try to console this little one. We are broken by this experience. Hearing this cry snaps us out of the positive feelings we were having prior to bearing witness to this cub. The sensory understanding we have, whether this bear being was sad, confused, lost, or bored, is profound and takes over other rational arguments we could have made about captivity. When we pay attention to, or actually listen and validate our intuition, it becomes difficult not to hear the message from the captive. When we ponder the alternative meanings of this experience it is clear that this crying challenges the messages that were given to us by the staff members at WWA.

And yet, the power of transcorporeal experiences in zoos comes from more than just empathy with more-than-human captive classes. The next event we experienced filled in an absent referent (Adams, 2003), referring back to the captive's free-living behaviors and reminding us of the reality of human control in captivity. On our first visit to WWA, we witnessed a dead body in the full-grown bear exhibit. The body was being eaten by a large full-grown bear who was tearing off its flesh. As we drove closer, we could make out the hind legs and lower torso of a herd animal. We learn from a staff member that the local Fish and Game department donates the carcasses of prey animals, such as cows, deer, and elk. These carcasses are fed to the Black Bears, who are omnivorous. The Black Bears will predate on the carcasses over several days. This helps facilitate visitors focusing on bodily processes as central to the aesthetic of the grotesque (Stallybrass and White, 1986). In this example, the grotesque functions to jar the visitor out of a zoo'd reality and into a more wild-feeling experience. Even if this is an intentional result orchestrated by WWA to maintain the illusion of a natural habitat, we did feel that this grotesque act functioned as a rhetorical appeal. There is a significant difference between feeding flesh to a captive bear and leaving a carcass in the exhibit for the bears to predate. The carcass functions as a rhetorical image that forced us to think. The eating of flesh from a carcass brings predator/prey relationships into a conversation that is often hidden in zoos but not at WWA. To WWA's credit, this experience highlighted the caged reality for us because we knew the bear was given this body to eat vs. acquiring it on their own.

Alternative Listening and Place

We have just taken a brief look into behavioral experiences exhibited both by bears and ourselves. In order to more fully comprehend the creaturely rhetoric of the refugees we had to enact a different sense of place as a part of our listening. Carbaugh (1999) in his well-known article discussing listening and the Blackfeet reminds the reader that

> Place itself, therefore, can enter rather dramatically as a special kind of contextual concern in cultural and communication studies… At least for some people, places can (and do) "speak," if only we—citizens and scholars alike—take the time to "listen" accordingly (p. 252).

As scholars engaged in the project of participatory epistemology (Middleton et al., 2011) trying to listen in ways that identify

alternative symbolics, we turn now to our observations about the natural world and WWA.

We did not enter WWA as a place looking for how "nature" communicated. Admittedly we were focused on captive classes in zoo'd alternative realities. But as we continued our fieldwork trips it was clear, that free-living nature cannot be controlled by the boundaries of captivity. We argue that these boundary-crossing moments are radical resistive communication. In this section, we expand our claim about creaturely rhetoric and captive classes to include how the natural world communicates within the fixed spaces of WWA. The examples we will discuss are free-living creatures in a symbiotic relationship with the refugees at WWA (ravens and a mountain lion) and elemental nature (water).

On one visit to WWA, we noticed a large flock of ravens as we were driving through the full-grown bear section. There were at least fifty ravens waiting for a chance at a carcass that had been left for the captive bears. "A flock of ravens can consume eighty pounds or more of meat from a carcass in a single day" (Munday, 2013, p. 211), so it seems the ravens had developed a symbiotic relationship with WWA and the bears as a food source. We discussed how these ravens had the power to leave WWA and wondered if this impacted the emotional state of the captives. This was especially noticeable during the raptor show, as free-living ravens looked on at other raptors and their own kind encaged. The fact that some more-than-humans can leave and some cannot is an entry point for visitors to make a connection of consciousness reminding them of their power-over. This is complicated even more at WWA because the drive-through exhibit gives human animals the illusion of being *in situ*. Humans are caged-with some animals, but their car acts as a barrier and also an escape. The ravens are in a similar position; when they land inside the enclosure they are caged-with but can fly away at any time. WWA's attempt to change the zoo experience via driving is lost, because the ravens remind us that the captive classes have nowhere to go. They are still caged, illustrating the permeability of the boundary for some animals and not others.

The permeability of the boundaries in zoo exhibits leaves captive classes vulnerable. In 2016, a free-living mountain lion entered WWA after operational hours and killed a captive sheep. Local newspapers reported that the sheep's body was found the next day outside of its enclosure. WWA's outdoor enclosures are protected by a tall perimeter fence, which according to the USDA's Animal Care Blue Book 2013, "must be enclosed by a perimeter fence that is of sufficient height to keep animals and unauthorized persons out" (p. 136). Despite the construction of WWA's exhibits and its compliance with the governmental standards, the mountain lion was able to jump over the perimeter fence and remove a captive sheep from its exhibit. The mountain lion's hunting reminds us that predator/prey relationships exist, no matter how WWA's fences separate the captives from each other, human visitors, and the outside environment.

There was one natural element, water, which would not be separated or kept out of exhibits during our fieldwork at WWA. WWA has ∼20 American Bison roaming a large portion of their park. By early spring, a portion of their grazing and walking land, roughly the size of five football fields, was completely covered in water thus preventing them from utilizing 75 percent of their exhibit. Bison are migratory animals; they are denied access to their natural behaviors in the confines of their exhibit. The water encroached on their already limited space, forcing the bison to dwell in an even smaller space. The water drives the herd closer to visitors, which likely increases visitor experiences (because the herd is pushed closer to the road). Even if WWA can capitalize on the presence of water, it cannot control it. The American Bison, visitor, and organization are subject to the will of the elements. Water dominating the zoo's space highlights the absurdity of human control of "nature." Breaches like the water in the American Bison exhibit reveal cracks in the kinship bonds that zoo institutions claim they have.

Often referring to the captives as "family members" this care ethic quietly departs when the human animal is threatened. Beyond restricting access to the captives' natural behaviors, captive animals are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. For example, with the increasing severity of natural disasters due to climate change, many zoos do not have comprehensive evacuation plans for their captive classes. Typical emergency plans are to reinforce the cages and hope for the best, because evacuation is seen as too stressful for the animals (Nett, 2017). Even if staff members stay on to care for the captives, they are still left in danger of being killed by the elements. In 2017, Lolita, the oldest captive orca not born in captivity, was left in her concrete cell at Miami Seaquarium to fend for herself during Hurricane Irma. The Seaquarium claimed that her exhibit had been reinforced to the best of their ability. In addition to the concern of dangerous debris collapsing into her swimming area, there were also concerns about her tank water being contaminated by ocean water from the hurricane, problems with the filtration system, and the length of time it would take the humans she is dependent on to get to her after the storm. This example illustrates how an ethic of care often justifies human superiority and captivity. Reading a category four or five hurricane as resistive rhetoric forces us to stand in our weakness and the consequences of climate change. This example reminds us that we are vulnerable to nature's power as well as begging the question of whether or not humans should be allowed to display captive classes, claiming to solve for climate change, and species loss, if they are ultimately seen as expendable in a moment of climate crisis.

SENSORY CONNECTIONS, REIMAGINING THE ZOO, AND CIVIC ACTION

Thus, far in our essay we have rearticulated captive classes as refugees and read their communication as a form of resistance to the zoo's prioritization of human safety, rescue, and conservation. We recognize that our analysis participates in identification processes that can contribute to systems of power-over. However, we use this anthropomorphism strategically to center the agency and subject positions of the more-than-human captive classes at WWA. The confrontational creaturely rhetoric we observed is a call to action for humans to radically reimagine the zoo. Whether we look at the captive classes themselves, the free-living more-than-humans who cross exhibit boundaries, or natural elements

that illustrate human powerlessness to control nature, we argue that these are all forms of revolt, resistive communication, and protest that should lead communities to civic action. Our critique of WWA highlights how zoo institutions are built to elicit a specific response from human visitors, which does not advantage an embodied response to the realities of captivity. Instead, our goal is to reimagine zoos as spaces to engage in creaturely rhetoric, following Davis (2011) who argues that the ability to persuade "is due not to any creature's specific genetic makeup but to corporality more generally, to the *exposedness* of corporeal existence" (p. 89). Corporeality is not linked to any particular species. Rather, what makes symbols persuasive is the ability to affect some sort of embodied experience between those in relation. Zoo discourse and construction is a manifestation of the forces that Abram (1996) explains cut us off from embodied interaction with more-than-human animals.

Milstein (2013) argues that scholars who look at "humanimal" relations work to raise awareness about the ways communication can transform relations. Our analysis has explored/engaged the ways in which captive classes resist zoo'd realities and how their creaturely rhetoric could be understood by human visitors as the impetus for civic action. Following Milstein's (2009), "the zoo will likely always involve some element of looking. However, if looking is power, that power can also be transformed to a non-dominating, non-objectifying power dedicated to witnessing interdependence and rehabilitating reciprocity" (p. 45–46). To conclude our essay we parallel Milstein (2009) non-zoo prototypes (e.g., wildlife rehab centers and internet live-streaming) by offering two ways to re-imagine organizations that house more-than-human refugees: sense exploration and signage/stories. Finally, we discuss the potential for zoos to shift consciousness.

In line with Abram (1996), we contend that a major draw to zoos and aquariums is in our conviviality with more-than-humans. For humans, employing strategic anthropomorphism helps connect humans to more-than-humans. Furthermore, an alternative zoo experience could connect humans to a part of ourselves that is denied by relying only on rational discourse and traditional symbolic meaning. For example, the WWA's jaguar exhibit is small, isolates the jaguar, and naturalizes the jaguar in an unfamiliar habitat in an inappropriate climate. Imagine if WWA constructed an experience of a free-living jaguar rather than subjecting a living being to captivity. Perhaps you entered a dark room, were standing with a crowd and a 7D projection began to play. In this exhibit it is a full moon night, allowing some sight. However, the human visitor would have to mainly rely on their hearing to locate the jaguar, who often hunts at night. They would be able to hear the other prey and feel the humidity of the Amazonian rainforest as misters spray the visitor. The use of 7D projections could allow WWA visitors to feel the anticipation of being hunted by a jaguar. Not only are you witnessing the sights of the natural habitat of this being but you hear their breathing on a tree limb above you and you smell the moist surroundings, the damp earth, the local vegetation, and other animals. Theme parks across the globe are well on their way to developing technology that makes this type of exhibit distinctly possible, potentially removing display as a contingency for humans to care for more-than-human animals. Further, imagine if most zoos only kept animals who were regional, injured by human activities (e.g., Winter the dolphin who cannot live freely due to needing a prosthetic fin), animals who were legitimately only held until they rehabilitated and then were released, and exhibits like the one just described.

Another way to tell a more complete narrative of the animals' life-worlds currently held captive in these institutions is to change signage. Typical zoo signs block sensory functions with explanations that filter animal behavior in a way that maintains hegemonic notions of care. Signage is also used to maintain the hierarchical relationship between humans and captive classes. For example, in WWA's "kindergarten bear" exhibit- an anthropocentric term used by WWA to describe bears transitioning between cub and full-grown bear exhibits- there was a sign that read something like "If you see us in the moat, or a tree, we're not stuck." Recall our earlier example of the bear in the moat crying. We argue that this signage negates intuitive, emotive, embodied feelings, and works to direct our experience back to the zoo's "slave-master narrative" (Milstein, 2013, p. 178).

Imagine if the signage at these new zoos told a different story. Rather than explaining the behavior, the signs could tell the stories of the captives' acquisition. Many of those stories, like that of the barn owl mentioned earlier, are as a result of human action. Telling these stories would highlight the involuntary capture and incarceration of these creatures implicating human caused climate change and other habitat displacement and invasion. These signs could implicate humans using the language of the grotesque by explicitly describing the violent nature of humans' relationship with the natural world, which has caused environmental crises like climate change. In the example of the barn owl, WWA could have questioned the mass human harvest of hay that displaced the rescued barn owl. We suggest working with trained environmental climate change experts that act as advocates for beings housed in zoos and aquariums.

Ultimately, we argue that humans must be implicated in the loss of species due to human action so we can move toward a coherence paradigm (Plec, 2013) in our relationship with the more-than-human world. This shift can never fully happen as long as zoos and aquariums are regarded as beacons of conservation. The prioritization of conservation in zoos reflects the dominant social order of anthropocentrism (Oravec, 1984), keeping zoo'd animals as other-than-human. Instead, we call for a paradigm that values intuitive reasoning as valid sense making and embraces alternative symbolics that invert power-over hierarchies (e.g., shifting to more-than-human). Changes like these this would create opportunities for the alternative potential of zoo institutions. Recognizing resistance and rejecting the ideology of rescue positions environmental communication scholars to engage with messages sent by captive classes, subverting an anthropocentric ethic of care.

The final suggestion we offer is to stop the process of conservation in zoo institutions and instead let the narrative of species extinction play out. Theoretically, the most effective way to show the consequences of human-caused climate change would be to not intervene in species extinction. Rather than advocate for ignoring the massacre of

more-than-human creatures, we argue that we should reframe the zoo to change our relationship with more-than-human animals and how we take responsibility for their displacement. In short, this would entail letting endangered species die rather than holding them captive to be displayed. This does not mean we would forgo conservation of species; rather, zoos and aquariums would no longer have this as a reason to justify captivity. We realize this may be an unpopular option. However, witnessing the consequences of our actions is one of the most forceful ways to move humans to shift the current paradigm into an environmentally sustainable ideology. Adopting an environmentally sustainable ideology does not necessarily prioritize safety and/or security for humans or more-than-human animals. In fact, in order for this ideology to materialize humans have to recognize that our survival does not matter more than more-than-human animals. In this way, agentic reality for all beings takes priority over anthropocentricism.

As mentioned earlier, a WWA staff member explained to us it was better to have jaguars held captive than to have them wiped off the planet. We disagree. Simply because an animal is kept alive as a refugee does not assume that human behavior is shifting. In this way, more-than-human animal populations are still in danger. As Couldry (2010), "voice is undermined when societies became organized on the basis that individual, collective and distributed voice need not be taken into account, because a higher value or rationality trumps them" (p. 10). Climate change cannot be a justification for captivity because it obscures the voices of captive classes as well as human implication in their captivity.

It does not escape us that many of the staff at zoo institutions love the animals they care for dearly. We are arguing that sadly we might have to love them enough to let them go in order to save a greater number of species. This logic relies on the premise that feeling the consequences of our actions will lead to human behavioral changes. We need to understand human complicity and implication in causing species extinction in order to stop this destructive pattern and move into a coherent paradigm where every societal decision takes into consideration the consequences for all living entities. We also need to validate alternative symbolics communicated to us by internatural activists and captive classes. In reimaging zoo institutions we must be led by the voices of captive classes toward inclusive "extra-human" (Peterson et al., 2007) decision making in civic engagement. We are asking zoos to recognize that this type of civic engagement "demands close attention, rigorous observation, and embodied presence" (Salvador and Clarke, 2011, p. 251). Our reframing of the zoo should lead to civic action creating a world where the captive classes in zoos are not bearing the burden of climate change at the expense of their freedom.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Both authors researched, wrote, revised, and came up with the intellectual content for this essay equally.

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Strategic Gestures in Bill McKibben's Climate Change Rhetoric

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Although Bill McKibben is widely recognized as one of the leading strategists of the US climate change movement, several observers identify significant limitations to his approach to climate advocacy and politics. These criticisms are based on his reliance upon "symbolic gestures," such as campaigns to promote fossil fuel divestment and stop fossil fuel infrastructure construction. In this essay we reconsider McKibben's work, drawing specifically on his speeches given in the US from 2013 to 2016 in support of the fossil fuel divestment campaign and campaigns attempting to block the construction of fossil fuel infrastructure, in order to show how McKibben's strategic orientation is grounded in a politics of gesture. His speeches provide a model for how to reconceive gestures and assemble them for political ends, and expand a sometimes narrow focus on policy mechanisms. Beyond the case of McKibben our analysis contributes the concept of *strategic gestures* to identify and theorize social movement interventions that have significant symbolic and material consequences.

Keywords: articulation, climate change, rhetoric of inevitability, social movements, strategic gestures

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INTRODUCTION

In 2006, author Bill McKibben found himself at "the end of my relatively quiet life as mostly a writer and the start of a hectic stint being mostly an activist" (McKibben, 2016a). McKibben had been speaking and writing about climate change since his 1989 publication of *The End of Nature*, one of the most influential books on climate change for a general audience. Despite growing scientific evidence and warnings about the climate crisis, there had been minimal political action and only modest grassroots activism on the issue, and McKibben was frustrated. "I wanted to do something. But there was no real climate movement to join" (McKibben, 2016a).

So McKibben set out to launch just such a movement. Starting with a march across his home state of Vermont, McKibben played a central role in a series of efforts to generate a large-scale, influential climate movement. In 2007, he and other organizers coordinated "Step It Up," a set of climate events in over 1,400 communities in the US, intended as a call for Congressional action to reduce carbon emissions 80% by 2050. This network of activists subsequently formed 350.org, a 501(c)3 group in the US that connects and mobilizes climate activists around the world. Since then, McKibben has been a prominent voice in opposing the Keystone XL pipeline, fostering fossil fuel divestment campaigns, and orchestrating the 2014 and 2017 People's Climate Marches. His 2012 *Rolling Stone* article (McKibben, 2012), "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math," received over 14,000 online comments and was reproduced or hyperlinked thousands of times, "making it one of the most widely circulated online articles in *Rolling Stone's* history" (Nisbet, 2013, p. 47). The essay was a galvanizing rhetorical moment in the climate movement. As journalist Mark Hertsgaard (2014) put it, McKibben's efforts pushed "the threat of climate change into the

mainstream American political agenda." Communication scholar Matthew Nisbet acknowledges that McKibben is "arguably the most prominent climate change activist in the United States" (Nisbet, 2013, p. 41).

Although McKibben refers to himself as an "unlikely activist" (McKibben, 2013a) and resists the label of a movement leader, many observers claim that "he comes up with many of the big ideas about what to do, functioning as a—if not the—major strategist of the US climate change movement" (Bronstein, 2014). Shortly after the 2014 Peoples Climate March, McKibben stepped down as executive director of 350.org, explaining that doing so would leave him "more energy and opportunity for figuring out strategies and organizing campaigns" (Goldenberg, 2014)[1]. In turn, much of the scholarly analysis of McKibben focuses on the strategic dimensions and limitations of his work. For example, a multi-site study of the Step It Up (2007) events provides varying assessments of the efficacy of messages circulating across those sites (Endres et al., 2008, 2009). J. Robert Cox criticizes McKibben's approach to climate politics as failing to account for the strategic "considerations of effect" that can enable a movement to "contribute to a sustained influence" at the scale necessary to address a problem as significant as climate change (Cox, 2009, 2010).

Similarly, Nisbet, while acknowledging McKibben's influence, argues that his utopian rhetoric may appeal to the environmental base but has been unable to generate broad support or advance a viable political agenda. McKibben is more style than substance, argues Nisbet; his symbolic actions and political gestures, such as protests and non-violent civil disobedience, do not translate into "a pragmatic set of [policy] choices designed to effectively and realistically address the problem of climate change" (Nisbet, 2013, p. 3).

While noting merit in these critiques, we take a different approach to McKibben's work in order to propose an alternative mode of thinking about the strategic dimensions of climate activism and advocacy. Based on an analysis of McKibben's speeches, we offer the notion of *strategic gestures* as a concept to identify and theorize a rhetorical assemblage of movements, actions, and performances that have significant symbolic and material consequences. Whereas some critics use the label of gesture, or "gesture politics," to dismiss particular interventions as empty, ineffectual, or "merely" symbolic, we contend that McKibben's speeches provide a model for how to reconceive gestures and assemble them strategically for political ends. In other words, we argue that McKibben's strategic orientation is productively considered in terms of a "politics of gesture." Our analysis identifies four rhetorical actions that contribute to the strategic potential of gestures: promoting articulation and solidarity, interrupting dominant discourses, enacting alternative futures, and applying leverage at sites of decision making. In turn, the concept of strategic gestures provides scholars and activists alike with new insights into the relationship between rhetoric and social change.

In the subsequent analysis of McKibben's speeches, first we discuss McKibben's role as a strategist and speaker. Then we reconsider criticisms of McKibben made on strategic grounds. As noted above, both Cox and Nisbet argue that McKibben's strategies are inadequate to produce substantive change. In doing so, we review the concerns of those critics before developing our own interpretation of "the strategic" in McKibben's public address. In the third section we define and develop the concept of strategic gestures demonstrating how they can be utilized to build social movements and solidarity, interrupt dominant discourses, enact alternative futures, and apply leverage at local sites of decision making in order to produce wider systemic effects. In the fourth section we discuss practical implications of our analysis of strategic gestures focusing on their potential to produce social change. Finally, we conclude with some theoretical implications for scholars of environmental communication and social movement rhetoric. Ultimately, we present the concept of strategic gestures in order to account for and theorize how disparate acts of resistance and rhetorical interventions can be made to act in concert to produce social change and transform complex systems.

BILL MCKIBBEN, STRATEGIST, AND SPEAKER

Given McKibben's prominence, it is not surprising that scholars in environmental communication and related disciplines have closely analyzed his work (Eckersley, 2005; Luke, 2005; Yearley, 2006; Cox, 2009; White, 2011; Merrill, 2012; Mitra, 2013; Nisbet, 2013; Ytterstad, 2015). However, most scholars have concentrated on his writing or his organizations rather than his speeches. Perhaps this is because McKibben's speeches and speaking style may not seem that notable. He began his 2015 Lannan Keynote Address at Georgetown University by confessing, "And what in some ways I would still most like to be doing. . . is thinking about things and writing them down." He also drew attention to his lack of presentational polish by noting, "I may stumble a bit here and there" (McKibben, 2015a)[2]. He frequently makes such apologies, adopting humility to disarm and build trust with audiences, and his speeches contain incomplete thoughts, digressions, and apparent contradictions.

However, McKibben's oratory is significant for environmental communication in spite of its seeming lack of artistry. First, compared to his written works, which seek a general readership and rely upon familiar forms of environmental apocalyptic narrative and romanticism, McKibben's speeches are primarily addressed to those who already identify with the climate movement. Rather than minimize this type of rhetoric as simply "preaching to the choir," we take it seriously as a means of promoting the "mobilization capacity" of the climate movement (Brulle, 2010). When McKibben speaks to activists, he seems to understand that in order to be moved to further action, his audiences need to see how local actions will contribute to the larger goal of "solving" climate change.

[1] McKibben remains on the board of directors of 350.org.

[2] We have attempted to maintain McKibben's speaking style by including the stops, starts and changes in thought direction, as they also reflect his extemporaneous delivery and reflective nature in presentation.

Second, this audience-related constraint in the rhetorical situation leads McKibben to foreground his strategic thinking in his speeches. Whereas, his writings tend to focus on framing climate science for general audiences, his speeches provide a context and template for how climate activists might connect the local and the global, and the personal and the political, in ways that attract followers and advance the movement. Movement strategy is especially salient in the speeches we draw upon for our analysis: analyzing 11 publicly available speeches given by McKibben between 2013 and 2016, with particular attention given to his keynote address for the 2015 Lannan Symposium at Georgetown University. Several of these speeches were part of McKibben's 2012–2013 "Do the Math" tour, which sought to mobilize audiences around fossil fuel divestment and the keeping carbon in the ground campaign.

Third, these speeches reflect a moment in which the US climate movement was at a strategic crossroads. Hopes for strong climate action during the Obama administration were dashed by a weak agreement at the 2009 Conference of Parties meeting in Copenhagen and the failure of cap and trade legislation in 2010. However, in the years following, the climate movement also found reasons to be hopeful. In 2014, the rollout of the Clean Power Plan and the significant turnout for the People's Climate March suggested that public awareness was growing and policy action was not far behind. Also, President Obama vetoed legislation that would have forced construction of the Keystone XL pipeline to proceed, eventually denying the permit for its construction in 2016[3]. Thus, McKibben's speeches occur at a critical strategic moment for the US movement, and they can be interpreted as efforts to narrate the movement's successes and chart a path forward. Our findings may have even greater significance in the current period with its heightened political infighting, the US's exodus from global climate agreements, and the backsliding of federal environmental policy, making the need for strategic gestures even more pressing. At the end of this paper, we reflect on what McKibben's work, and our conceptualization of strategic gestures, might mean in the age of Trump.

Because of the compelling environmental rhetorical situation described above, especially the characteristics and motivations of the particular audiences, we chose to focus on McKibben's US speeches for this analysis. That noted, McKibben's work writ large is global and international in content and reach. His presentations reference environmental disputes and climate "wins" from around the globe. The *Fossil Free: Divestment* website shows activity from religious organizations, NGOs and governments from every continent other than Antarctica. Among those who divest are "some of the world largest pension funds and insurers, dozens of world-class universities, the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, the country of Ireland, major capital cities, as well as philanthropic foundations, health associations and world- renowned cultural institution" (Hazan et al.). Equally, the website for 350.org shows it having organizations that exist across the map (https://350.org). As is frequently noted by McKibben, each site has its own environmental issues, its own barriers, and its own points of leverage, varying the opportunities for strategic gestures by location.

[3]This decision was reversed by newly elected President Trump in early 2017. The campaign to stop and delay this pipeline continues as of this writing.

CLIMATE ADVOCACY AND THE QUESTION OF THE STRATEGIC

Cox advances his notion of "the strategic" as a heuristic for rhetorical invention in two essays that directly analyze McKibben and the Step It Up campaign (Cox, 2009, 2010). While that campaign appeared to generate interest among far-flung audiences around a consistent message, newly mobilized audiences were not organized to apply political pressure in support of the campaign's goals. Cox (2010) diagnoses the problem with this approach in terms of a faulty belief about how democratic political change takes place—in other words, a problem of strategy:

> The implicit, strategic assumption seemed to be that, with news (and images) of enthusiastic and inspiring citizens sounding an alarm, more people would become informed and would—consistent with a democratic polity—rise up and demand that elected officials take necessary steps to protect our life-sustaining planet. (p. 127)

Cox's criticism lies less with the framing of Step It Up's messages or its awareness-raising efforts than with the failure to steer those efforts toward a consequential, systemic impact. This failure to align communication practices with opportunities to transform systems of power is at the heart of Cox's interest in "the strategic." In his words, the notion of the strategic attempts to "account for *communicative effects*—how the application of a certain force, and the citizen mobilizations aligned with this, enable or initiate a process of events that influence larger effects within a system of power" (Cox, 2010, p. 131).

Nisbet shares Cox's interest in seeing more concrete political effects, but his major criticism lies with McKibben's alleged lack of *pragmatism*. He develops this argument in an in-depth white paper, tellingly titled "Nature's Prophet," which surveys McKibben's influence as a "Journalist, Public Intellectual, and Activist" since *The End of Nature* (Nisbet, 2013). Nisbet's central argument is that, "As a public intellectual, Bill McKibben has failed to offer pragmatic and achievable policy ideas;" throughout the paper, he consistently positions McKibben as having "little tolerance for political pragmatism" and clinging to the utopian values of deep ecology "rather than a pragmatic set of choices designed to both effectively manage the problem and to align a diversity of political interests in support of compromise" (Nisbet, 2013, p. 50–54). McKibben's moralistic rhetoric, his desire for small-scale agrarianism, his opposition to certain technologies, and his focus on symbolic acts of protest are marshaled by Nisbet as evidence of the narrow appeal of McKibben's activism. Furthermore, Nisbet argues that when faced with the failure of conventional policy proposals, McKibben refuses to adjust his strategy. "The response…from McKibben and other environmentalists has been to double-down in their commitment to their policy paradigm, attributing failure

to the political prowess of conservatives and industry, and to a corresponding lack of grassroots pressure and moral outrage" (Nisbet, 2013, p. 50).

Nisbet's focus on pragmatism and Cox's focus on system transformation represent different approaches and assumptions with respect to what might make an intervention "strategic." Nisbet's concerns emerge from a policy orientation rather than the social movement/pressure group perspective of Cox. Nisbet's (2014) critiques also represent an ecomodernist commitment to technological solutions to climate challenges, whereas Cox (2009) is more concerned with transforming the "complex whole" of economic, political, and ideological systems toward a low-carbon society. Likewise, while Cox (2010) is motivated by the need for "changes on the scale and timetable that climate and other system crises require" (p. 125), Nisbet (2013) favors incremental policy reforms; in his view, "breaking down the wicked nature of climate change into smaller, interconnected problems, achieving progress on these smaller challenges becomes more likely" (p. 51).

These differences illuminate some of the considerations and political visions that might inform strategic thinking in climate activism and environmental advocacy more generally. Cox and Nisbet's criticisms surface several key issues for strategizing about political and social change: what breadth and depth of social solidarity is needed to leverage change? To what degree should advocates challenge, or align with, dominant discourses, values, and interests? How do they craft a vision of the future that is both appealing and achievable? And where are the optimal sites for altering systems of power? Such questions are at the heart of strategic thinking about social change.

McKibben's speeches provide a distinctive set of answers to these questions. His take on the strategic is less dismissive of the role of so-called "symbolic" politics than Nisbet's, and his turn toward divestment arguably reflects greater attention to contingent openings in systems of power than was displayed in the Step it Up campaign, which Cox took issue with. Cox's focus is on leverage in economic and energy systems, perhaps at the expense of attention to the ideological and political systems that may also contribute to social and policy change. Strategic gestures, as deployed by McKibben, articulate how economic, political, and ideological systems can be leveraged in concert with each other to produce change. His approach is captured well by Engler and Engler (2013), who argue that "if they are to spark mass movement, campaigns must be built with symbolic as well as instrumental considerations in mind; they must achieve outcomes that perpetuate further movement-building, even if they do not immediately advance a given policy goal" (online). McKibben's enactment of this principle is a significant instance of this move in social movement strategizing. We argue that it can be productively theorized as a politics of gesture that is orchestrated rhetorically through the assemblage of strategic gestures.

STRATEGIC GESTURES

The concept of gesture has traditionally been considered an adjunct to speech and associated with the canon of delivery in the study of rhetoric. However, some rhetoricians are rethinking gestures as part of a broader interest in body rhetoric and its inventional possibilities. Scholars such as Debra Hawhee and Cory Holding recuperate theories that explain how gestures give shape to speech and facilitate connections between bodies, rather than functioning as mere ornaments to rational discourse. Hawhee's (2006) reading of Sir Richard Paget, for example, identifies the mimetic and contagion-like character of gesture that not only moves a body to speech, but also facilitates communion with others. "The ability for those movements to 'catch on' across bodies helped him account for the spread and resulting 'staying power' of language. Put still more simply, speech gestures are communicative because they are both communicable and communal" (p. 335). Likewise, Holding (2015) re-reads John Bulwer's famed gesture manuals as what could be called a body-positive theory of invention, suggesting that contemporary rhetoricians can use Bulwer to "offer a theory of how gestures communicate, attitudinize, and forge pathways to listening, mutual acknowledgment, and identification" (p. 416).

The generative role of gestures heightens their significance as means for conserving or resisting established relations of power. Hariman (1992), for example, illustrates how the courtly style relied on the "displacement of speech by gesture" as a form of "social control that makes the decorous body the sign of order" (p. 160). Conversely, Olson and Goodnight (1994) use the social controversy over fur to identify "gestures that widen and animate the non-discursive production of argument" as oppositional rhetorical strategies (p. 252). In their view, "non-discursive arguments work—in the new, 'free' space of reassociation—to redefine and realign the boundaries of private and public space" (p. 252). More broadly, Phaedra Pezzullo calls attention to the importance of bodies and non-linguistic acts as components of cultural performances that critically interrupt dominant discourses and contribute to "the rhetorical force of counterpublics" (Pezzullo, 2003, p. 361).

These perspectives on the inventional and oppositional possibilities of gesture complicate any easy dismissal of gestures and their relevance to politics and social movements. Cambridge Dictionary[4] (online) defines "gesture politics" as "any action by a person or organization done for political reasons and intended to attract attention but having little real effect." Similarly, Christopher Caldwell (2005) notes, "The expression 'gesture politics' generally describes the substitution of symbols and empty promises for policy." In contrast, other critical and cultural theorists position gesture as an important concept for theorizing power and resistance in ways consistent with Pezzullo's perspective. Lindsay Reckson (2014) explains that "cultural studies scholars have understood gesture as both *communicative* and *performative*; gestures can express semantic content, but they can also enact (and reenact) cultural histories, identities, and commitments." Scholars of performance and performativity, she adds, formulate gestures as "movements that produce, reproduce, and potentially interrupt embodied structures of power" (online). Building on this definition of

[4]Cambridge Dictionary, "Gesture politics." Available online at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/gesture-politics

gesture, we advance the notion of strategic gestures as *a rhetorical assemblage of movements, actions, and performances that are intended to generate effects larger than a sum of individual or particular acts in systems of power*. This approach to gestures embraces not an empty "gesture politics," but a politics of gesture that takes seriously the political possibilities of certain kinds of gestures.

This conception of strategic gestures emphasizes the rhetorical processes through which gestures *become* strategic. Importantly, our plural description suggests that gestures are not necessarily strategic in isolation. Gestures become strategic when they are made to complement and amplify each other to effect systemic change. Because economic, political and ideological systems function in concert with each other to produce, in Cox's (2009) words "a complex whole articulated in dominance and resistant to change," transforming systems necessitates multiple gestures designed to leverage change across the whole (p. 399). Such gestures might include traditional symbolic interventions such as speeches, image events, and protests, and they might include material interventions such as the installation of renewable energy, the use of electric cars, and the divestment of institutional funds from fossil fuel industries. Each of these actions may be perceived as little more than a symbolic gesture, but when assembled together they can function as strategic gestures to produce social movement and systemic change.

The rhetorical actions accomplished through gestures provide another means for considering how gestures become strategic. Our analysis of McKibben's speeches identifies four types of rhetorical action that contribute to the strategic potential of gestures. First, strategic gestures can *facilitate articulation*, linking different and dispersed groups, causes, and issues to generate social solidarity (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Greene, 1998; DeLuca, 1999; Stormer, 2004; Peeples, 2011). As Brian Massumi (2015) puts it, "The gesture is a call to attunement. It is an invitation to mutual inclusion in a collective movement" (p. 105–106). Second, strategic gestures can *interrupt dominant discourses* (Pezzullo, 2001) and "usher into the public realm aspects of life that are hidden away, habitually ignored, or routinely disconnected from public appearance" (Olson and Goodnight, 1994, p. 252). Third, strategic gestures can *enact and display alternative futures*. Massumi (2015) identifies how gestures are both affective, "felt as directly as they are thought," and speculative, as they "convoke potential and carry alternatives" (p. 207). Strategic gestures capitalize on this to display new modes of being and action as possible and desirable. Fourth, strategic gestures can *apply leverage* at sites of decision making to alter systems of power relations. Even as the performative and affective power of gestures may signal cultural change, Cox's notion of the strategic helps us consider how gestures produced at the right time in the right place can leverage systemic change.

ASSEMBLING GESTURES IN MCKIBBEN'S SPEECHES

McKibben's speeches lean heavily on the scenic construction, first articulated in "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math," of a melodramatic climate "battle." In that piece, McKibben squarely positions the fossil fuel industry as "Public Enemy #1" in a battle over the public interest. His Lannan keynote surveys the scene of climate politics as "maybe the most important pitched battle in human history" (McKibben, 2015a). The battle is urgent; there is no time for gradualist, market-driven, evolutionary social change. Instead, he argues, "We get, if we get anything, the difficult change that is won by winning power. And for that power to be won, we need a set of weapons that work to our advantage. We can't win it with money, because they have more of it than we do. They have more than anybody" (McKibben, 2015a). Because the "other side" has more money "and hence controls more political leverage," the battle must be fought using non-traditional political means (McKibben, 2015a).

This scenic construction opens a space for McKibben to talk about the kinds of interventions that we are calling "strategic gestures." Because traditional avenues for enacting policy change are closed, McKibben (2015a) makes a case for the creative use of symbolic actions. "Our weapons," he argues, "have to be the other ones. Passion, spirit, creativity, um, um, our bodies.... The role of the imagination in these fights." There are two important aspects of McKibben's discussion of symbolic weapons that inform our theorizing of strategic gestures.

First, McKibben (2015a) constitutes the battle as a contest of momentum in which each side attempts to demonstrate what will be inevitable: "It's a particular kind of fight... It's a battle for momentum. A battle for winning the sense of what's inevitable or not. What's the world going to look like. And that battle is, well—that's everything." Here McKibben lays bare how the climate "battle" is a contest for ideological hegemony, for commonsense understandings not about what the future *should* look like, but about what it *will* look like. McKibben's battle lines resonate with Massumi's (2015) observation that, "capitalism hardly bothers to assert its rationality any more, contending itself with creating the affective 'fact' of its inevitability" (p. 111). McKibben's symbolic weapons, then, are utilized both to challenge the affective "fact" of a fossil fuel economy and call an alternative future into being.

Second, the contest for the cultural commonsense about the future is fought with a series of gestures over an extended period of time. In his Lannan speech, for example, argues:

> In a fight like that—and here's maybe the crucial word for me for this talk—in a fight like that, each gesture becomes essential. There's a kind of, um, fight of gestures, of images that are brought forward, and, and, and each time a gesture is made, each time—well, each time there's a new solar roof top, that's the kind of easy and obvious one—but each time there's a divested college, or even a strong, beautiful movement for it on a college, um, um, that sense of what's going to happen begins to shift McKibben (2015a).

In other words, each gesture in the fight for momentum contributes to a larger goal. Social change is produced not in one fell swoop, but over an extended period of time. As such, gestures should not be viewed in a vacuum, but as part and parcel of an extended effort to build solidarity, enact a vision of a low-carbon future, and effect systemic change.

Articulating Solidarity

In almost every speech, McKibben registers a litany of successes related to climate change: acts of individuals and groups, government policies, or technological advances. During a speech in Brooklyn, before the 2016 Climate Talks in Paris, McKibben rallies:

> No kidding, no kidding, this is powerful! I mean, look, that one mine that Charlie was talking about. A year ago we were pretty sure it was going to get built, and if it had been, it would have, just that one valley, put 5% of the carbon in the atmosphere necessary to take us past two degrees. One mine. If they have stopped it, same thing all over the world. It's not as if any of us started this movement. Local people, often indigenous people, in defending their land against intrusion for many years. More and more, more and more [clapping]—more and more, they've been winning. Look, in India, fishermen, farmers in the village of Sompeta. They waged a 5-year battle to keep this giant coal mine from destroying their town. Now, they won. They won at the cost of three activists being killed along the way, but they won. South Africa, intense pressure in the last months from local activists persuaded [a] big company, GDF Suez, to pull support for the new coal plant at Thabametsi. We're starting to win.
>
> (McKibben, 2015c)

In other speeches, McKibben includes the Galilee Basin in Australia (McKibben, 2015b), Copenhagen and the Tar Sands in Canada (McKibben, 2015d), rooftop solar panels (McKibben, 2013b), the trial of the Delta 5, and the Lummi Nation and kayaktivists (McKibben, 2016b), among many other acts of resistance.

Discussing climate change movement strategies, but also providing insight into his rhetorical tendencies, he states: "There is no one answer to climate change. There is no silver bullet. There may be enough silver buckshot if we gather it all up" (McKibben, 2013b). By gathering the buckshot, McKibben is not only providing a sense of momentum; he is also articulating and building solidarity and affiliation with the climate cause.

Massumi's description of gesture as a call to attunement resonates with the concept of articulation as it has been developed in communication scholarship. In particular, it is similar to DeLuca's (1999) turn to articulation to interpret the enacted resistance of environmental activism. Articulation is typically understood as a linking of disparate elements that modifies their meaning. This linkage produces "chains of equivalence," where those elements are constituted as signs of some larger phenomenon and evidence of domination; "each link in the chain remains distinct, but they operate together, in concert…around an agenda of equivalence" (Purcell, 2009, p. 159). From this perspective, articulation and chains of equivalence explain how social movements coordinate diverse struggles against hegemonic relations of power.

Although articulation is often associated with the linkage of demands into chains of equivalence, McKibben's rhetoric suggests that chains of equivalence also can be built by linking gestures. Two chains of equivalence are especially significant in McKibben's articulation of climate-related gestures. First, he links seemingly individualistic acts of consumption with collective political activity[5]. For example, in the quote from the Lannan speech above, McKibben compares the gesture of a new solar rooftop to that of a divested college or "even a strong, beautiful movement for [divestment]." In doing so, McKibben not only interpellates individual consumers as part of a collective political struggle, "the fossil fuel resistance," but also calls attention to the political struggles that are necessary to enable such consumer choices. For example, when accused of not doing enough to support renewable energy policies by a questioner at Columbia University, McKibben folds that work into the "silver buckshot" analogy: "And the part you're talking about [creating policy] is an important part, and a part that people are deeply engaged in all throughout the country that I know of, certainly, every place I go" (McKibben, 2013b).

Second, McKibben articulates gestures to help his audience understand that although each gesture has a unique context, together they represent a global movement constituted in solidarity. For example, in the Lannan speech (McKibben, 2015a), he describes the Cowboy/Indian alliance, an action in which ranchers, farmers, and tribal communities joined together in Washington, DC, to protest the Keystone XL Pipeline. He encourages his audience to "[t]hink of the power of that gesture with the sort of two of the great romantic, um, um, forces in American history, no longer in opposition but together" (McKibben, 2015a). He also links divestment campaigns at Harvard, Stanford, the University of the Marshall Islands, and Swarthmore, the 2014 People's Climate March, the blockade of the world's largest coal port in New Castle, Australia, and Pope Francis' "soon-to-be-released" encyclical on the environment as akin to a "series of gestures with which his papacy has, um, unfolded. Kneeling down to kiss the feet of prisoners... Out amongst the poorest, um, much as he can be" (McKibben, 2015a). Here he calls upon his audience to see this "series of gestures" as "helping people re-discover some sense of solidarity with the rest of the world." He describes organizing senior citizens to engage in civil disobedience to stop the Keystone XL pipeline, and provides the following illustration of an individual act from that event: "And on the last day there was a guy arrested with a sign around his neck that said, 'World War II vet, handle with care'" (McKibben, 2015a).

McKibben's articulation of gestures creates a chain of equivalence across a wide geographic and demographic terrain, constituting solidarity amongst diverse activists around the world. Such a perspective resonates with Robert Asen's (2017) discussion of "the prospects for resistance to a neoliberal public through the coordinated action of networked locals" (p. 3). From "Cowboys" and "Indians" to Harvard and the Pacific Islands, McKibben links locals and their gestures in a chain of equivalence, describing the fossil fuel resistance as "spreading

[5]In other texts McKibben dismisses individualistic gestures such as installing solar panels or driving a "plug in car" as individualistic gestures incapable of solving the climate crisis. However, he also notes that most people who do those things are also involved in the climate movement. Ultimately, he consistently argues that collective action is the only way to address the climate crisis: "What can I do?" is the wrong question, he argues. Instead, one should ask: "What can we do?" See for example: https://www.ecowatch.com/bill-mckibben-climate-change-2041759425.html

in every direction around the world, almost as sprawling and protean in its form as the fossil fuel industry itself" (McKibben, 2015a). Although McKibben articulates diverse gestures as comprising the fossil fuel resistance, he does not deny the uniqueness of each gesture. They remain distinct, but the gestures operate together, constituting a movement based on "open-source organizing" in dispersed locales. As McKibben explains with regard to the divestment movement, "everybody knows, in their own place, how best to do it" (McKibben, 2015a), (see also Sprain et al., 2009).

Each gesture may be vulnerable to critics' claims of it being fanciful, utopian, idealistic, individualist, self-serving or irrational. But McKibben does not leave them as isolated acts to be evaluated in their singularity. He piles up gestures to direct audience attention toward a new future, one that is not dictated by fossil fuel companies, but by the goal-driven actions of diverse organizations and individuals.

Interrupting Inevitability, Enacting a New Future

Critical theorists have long noted that bodily gestures do more than provide semiotic content; they are also the site or "citations" of culture, discipline, and power on the body. From Walter Benjamin's (1968) analysis of Brecht's epic theater to Judith Butler's (1990) explication of performative bodies, theorists have established the power of gestures to interrupt the commonplace. "Interrupting gestures," Benjamin argues, "alienate" audiences from the existing "conditions of life" (p. 150). Similarly, Massumi (2015) contends that "resistance is of the nature of a *gesture*" (p. 105). In McKibben's rhetoric, gestures are capable of puncturing the illusion of a preordained future underwritten by fossil fuels. For McKibben, the carbon economy is not simply a brute fact of infrastructure, but rather a relentlessly rhetorical effort to shape public perception of the way things are and always will be, an ideology—a set of beliefs that naturalize a particular set of market and social relations:

> The battle, in the end, in this case, is for control of the zeitgeist, for control of how we think about the world, okay? Our sense of what is going to happen. And the other side understands that exquisitely. It's why the fossil fuel industry spends all their time trying to promote the inevitability of continuing down the current path.
>
> (McKibben, 2015a)

McKibben uses gestures to challenge that sense of inevitability. He interprets actions that run counter to the business-as-usual path as gestures that confound this commonsense. "Each time a gesture is made…*that sense of what's going to happen begins to shift*" (McKibben, 2015a; emphasis added). Multiple gestures build on one another to create a sense of movement and momentum that belies the fossil fuel industry's rhetoric of certitude. McKibben continues, "There's an almost mathematical sense of, of, of, gestures piling up on one side or the other, giving strength to one side or the other" (McKibben, 2015a).

McKibben's use of gesture is consistent with Massumi's emphasis on gesture as enactment. When he claims that resistance is gestured into existence and functions as immanent critique, he is suggesting that the exemplary power of gestures enacts alternative modes of engaging the world and invites others to participate, paradoxically altering the course of inevitability. For example, McKibben interprets the Rockefeller family's decision to divest from fossil fuels on the eve of the first People's Climate March as unique, but also as exemplary, as symbolic of an imminent cultural shift:

> But just think about what that means. That the first great fossil fuel fortune had now recognized that the moment had come to switch, and the power of that was palpable. Um, it was the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel age that day, between that huge march and that announcement, and the question only is how quickly, how quickly we will make that end come, and whether it will come in time[6].
>
> (McKibben, 2015d)

This "palpable" switch resonates with Massumi's (2015) reference to C.S. Peirce's notion of "abduction," or, "thought that is still couched in bodily feeling" to explain the exemplary power of gesture (p. 9–10). Massumi argues gestures of resistance "are thought in the immediacy of enactment," which elicit affective response in conjunction with thought (p. 207). This way of considering gestures is consistent with the affective, contagion-like approach that Hawhee interprets in Paget, a theory that "figures speech as a bodily, mimetic, even affective art, thereby imagining bodily feeling, gesture, and posture as unconsciously contagious and iterable movements" (Hawhee, 2006, p. 336).

This affective quality of gestures, as communicable thinking-feelings in the process of becoming, means that gestures of resistance do not exactly make arguments for an alternative future; rather, they enact different ways of relating and orienting to the world, and thus gesture toward an alternative future. In envisioning a new future for the planet, McKibben differentiates between the vision put forth by the fossil fuel industry and the one that must be called forth by climate activists. "Their job is to make the status quo seem inevitable; our job is to the make the future, the change seem inevitable, and possible, and to get there. Creativity is the absolute most important thing in this fight" (McKibben, 2015a). In turn, McKibben emphasizes that "proper gestures, good gestures" are "beautiful, artistic moments" that enable "you to see behind them powerful truths" (McKibben, 2015a). For example, with respect to renewable energy, his alternative future integrates the material realities of innovation and engineering with romantic notions of beauty:

> The engineers allow us to imagine; if the scientists tell us that we need a fossil freeze, the engineers allow us to imagine a solar farm, and also wind power and the other things that come quickly with it. But to imagine a solar farm, to imagine in the process of doing that, not just a world that might be able to keep from going over, but, but also a world that might work in many ways much more beautifully than the one we live on now.
>
> (McKibben, 2015a)

Part of the beauty of this future is that it is more equitable, as power shifts from fossil fuels which divert wealth into the hands

[6]This speech was given in Paris on the eve of the Paris Climate Accords meeting. We include it because its audience incudes members of the US.

of a few, to a system of energy that rebalances power because of the diffusion of the sun and the wind:

> That's the beginning of a different kind of world. So there is real possibility here. A glimmer of possibility. The fortifying thing, given that glimmer, is to see how little we are doing given that maybe an ember is the right, um, message, is the right image, to see how little we are doing to, to blow it into life, to make it spark, to make it spread, to make it blaze, to make it blow up into something big enough to light the world.
>
> (McKibben, 2015a)

This vision may be fodder for criticisms such as Nisbet's—that McKibben relies too heavily on symbolic acts of resistance and romantic and utopian visions of the future. However, these criticisms fail to consider two things. First, that a utopian impulse plays an important role in social movement rhetoric enabling both a reconstructive vision and a reconstructive praxis. In this regard a utopian impulse includes both "critique of existing conditions and a vision of a reconstructed program for a new society" (Dan Chodorkoff, 1983, see also Jameson, 1981). This reconstructive vision need not be limited to literary and philosophical blueprints; when it takes the form of a social movement, it can function as a praxis for concrete social change. Gestures for McKibben, then, function as both immanent critique and indexes of an unfolding inevitable social change, and as a vision for what that change can bring. Second, critiques of McKibben's utopian impulse fail to consider the "pragmatic capacities" of gestures to leverage systems to "achieve tangible effects" (Foust, 2017, p. 65).

Leveraging Systems

According to Mohan Dutta (2011), "the performance of social change is fundamentally directed at articulating change through the disruption of structures" (p. 212). Strategic gestures can enable such articulations. To the extent that gestures are composed with an eye toward vulnerabilities and opportunities within systems of power, they can leverage systemic change. From this perspective, gestures become increasingly strategic as they locate sites for applying leverage to alter a system.

In his speeches and during question and answer periods, McKibben justifies several "symbolic" climate actions by arguing that such gestures are also material interventions intended to alter economic systems or apply political pressure. When one audience member asks him to explain how symbolic gestures are going to create "real" material change, McKibben (2015a) dismantles that distinction: "So let's look at Keystone as an example. It is a symbol, but it's only an effective symbol because it is real, okay?" As a result of the delays created by the campaigns to stop the pipelines, "They're already falling into huge difficulty; the expansion plans to triple and quadruple the draw in the tar sands" is "not gonna happen" (McKibben, 2015a). Similarly, when addressing Seattle "kayaktivists" who banded together to blockade fossil fuel infrastructure from leaving port, McKibben (2016b) refers to related efforts in nearby communities as taking advantage of "choke points by which we can stick a cork in the fossil fuel bottle. … If they don't, can't build the port at Cherry Point, and they can't build the port at Longview, then they're not gonna mine the coal in Montana and Wyoming. It's gonna stay underground, alright?"

McKibben's "choke points" discussion mirrors Cox's analysis of the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign, in which he describes the strategic in terms of applying leverage at local sites of decision in order to alter systems of power. For Cox (2010), this requires that a campaign create "strategic alignment of mobilization and its mode of influence or leverage that can enable wider outcomes or effects" (p. 128). These effects do more than disrupt structures and systems; they literally alter them. Project delays and denied permits are not only symbolic victories, which open space for articulation as Dutta suggests; they also have material, economic effects by producing signals in financial markets to shift investment to renewable energy. Such shifts can reduce the power of the fossil fuel industry and enable more alterations to the built environment that can further influence perceptions of inevitability.

Gestures also provide activists with opportunities to articulate policy agendas and apply leverage in transformed arenas of political discourse. Explaining how the divestment movement successfully influences public discourse, McKibben (2016b) avers: "And now it's not, you know, me in *Rolling Stone*. Now it's the head of the IMF, the head of the World Bank. It was the head of the Bank of England talking to the world's insurance industry" about the fact that they are "overexposed to what are going to be stranded assets from a carbon bubble." Strategic gestures can intervene in systems of power by altering the symbolic field and reaching new audiences. McKibben identifies this function of gestures with respect to divestment. "If we can continue this divestment fight, we can call it symbolic if you want, but its huge effect has been to make it far more difficult for people to raise capital to do what they're gonna do" (McKibben, 2015a). Here McKibben effectively dissolves the symbolic/material distinction by positioning divestment as a gesture that has both symbolic and material effects.

In this way, gestures contribute to a strategy for social change that aligns with time-honored functionalist approaches to social movement organization and resource mobilization (Simons, 1970): a strategy designed to bring the other side to the bargaining table. For example, McKibben explains how the piling up of gestures can create conditions that are amenable to policy changes:

> We're going to have to impose that [carbon] tax in all the ways we can by making it difficult for business as usual to go on. And when we break their power some, then we'll get some kind of carbon tax, you know. They'll start to sue for peace, and we'll see what happens, but in the meantime that's our job. Their job is to make the status quo seem inevitable, our job is to make the future, the change seem inevitable, and possible and to get there.
>
> (McKibben, 2015a)

Gestures can be strategic, then, to the extent that they integrate efforts at ideological transformation with opportunistic intervention in political and economic systems. In McKibben's (2015a) words, "You want to pick things that have real outcome, and that'll also produce this change in the sense of inevitability,

and the zeitgeist, because, you know, control of the zeitgeist is an important asset. It's, you know, in some ways the most important asset."

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

To this point we have argued that strategic gestures can have multiple rhetorical effects. But do such gestures "work?" Under what conditions might strategic gestures be more likely to achieve the kinds of effects that McKibben describes? Some observers have already posed such questions in relation to McKibben's work, specifically with respect to divestment. As Schneider et al. (2016) have argued, "The rhetorical power of divestment, therefore, lies in the movement's ability to change the terms of public discourse about fossil fuel production and incite more discourse about climate change from new and potentially powerful rhetorical audiences" (Schneider et al., p. 122). This argument is bolstered by Schifeling and Hoffman's (2017) research which demonstrates that McKibben and 350.org's divestment campaign "expanded the spectrum of the climate change debate and shifted its central focus" via a "radical flank effect," whereby radical issues enter into a polarized and seemingly intractable debate to disrupt the field of discourse enabling "previously marginalized liberal policy ideas such as a carbon tax and carbon budget to gain greater traction in the debate" (p. 16).

However, our explanation of strategic gestures suggests a more complex account and a more mixed evaluation of the apparent "success" of the divestment campaign. On one hand, divestment activism may have disrupted the prevailing common sense on climate change, reconfigured relationships between activists and financial firms and investors, and created discursive space for discussing a carbon tax. McKibben (2016c) himself understands gestures as creating that space, and he sees such a tax as a necessary but not sufficient gesture toward an alternative future. At the same time, these productive interventions in "the zeitgeist" do not necessarily ensure policy victories, and the jury is still out as to whether the campaign will achieve the same success as other divestment campaigns, such as those around tobacco and South African apartheid.

More broadly, it is worth considering how an assemblage of strategic gestures might influence climate politics under a radically different US presidential administration. Regulatory rollbacks, the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, and the gutting of agencies focused on climate change all interrupt McKibben's buoyant rhetoric of inevitability. This elevates a potential tension between the *locus of inevitability* that is so central to McKibben's rhetoric, and the *locus of the irreparable* that is one of Cox's significant contributions to the study of environmental communication (Cox, 1982). For instance, it would be easy for activists today to despair of the rapid dismantling of climate research and Obama-era climate regulations under President Trump's administration, question McKibben's utopian invocations of inevitability, and embrace apocalyptic rhetoric that urges audiences to take extraordinary measures to forestall loss. The latter could be persuasive for McKibben's choir and the 21% of US residents who occupy the "Alarmed" category in Yale's Six Americas research as of March 2018—the largest proportion in the history of that survey (Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, 2018). The blithe dismissal of the climate challenge by the Trump administration creates a situation that is ripe for appeals to the irreparable.

Alternatively, despairing activists could resign themselves to the inevitably of climate change, or conclude that the only options available are litigation and procedural maneuvers to forestall and limit the damage until circumstances change. Yet McKibben's rhetoric of inevitability may offer an alternative whose time has come. Like apocalyptic rhetorics that warn of imminent disaster, McKibben's invocations of inevitability "are not to be taken literally. Their aim is not to predict the future but to change it" (Killingsworth and Palmer, 1996, p. 41). From this perspective, setbacks and reversals do not disprove McKibben's rhetoric of inevitability. Rather, they heighten the paradox that inevitability is contingent; the future is dependent on human action. Like any social movement, "Which future ultimately comes about … will depend on the 'people' and their collective actions" (Stewart et al., 2007, p. 55). Indeed, shortly after the 2016 election McKibben (2017) reiterated his call for a battle for control of the zeitgeist. "In the end," he argued, "the real fight is not over a pipeline or a windmill or even a carbon tax. The real fight—all real fights—are over the zeitgeist. They're about who controls the vision of the future."

Strategic gestures are central to this vision in at least two key ways. First, strategic gestures can pinpoint crucial sites of leverage where systems can be turned against themselves or steered in a more favorable direction. The climate movement recognized the limits of Federal action well before the 2016 election and directed public pressure on states and cities, in addition to targeting fossil fuel investments and infrastructure. In February of 2018 McKibben, once again assembling disparate elements of the climate movement, articulated a Fossil Free US campaign. Its three elements included: 1. Joining the Sierra Club's "Ready for 100" campaign to work at the state and local level; 2. Continuing to block the development of fossil fuel infrastructure; and 3. Cutting off the money that fuels the industry through divestment and lawsuits (McKibben, 2018).

The Sierra Club's "Ready for 100" campaign provides a useful case study of the relevance of strategic gestures in a political landscape altered by the Trump presidency. The campaign persuades local and state governments to pledge to transition to 100% renewable energy by a particular date (usually 2035 or 2050). Similar campaigns have targeted businesses and organizations such as universities. While these pledges have been criticized as little more than symbolic gestures, with one critic referring to them as "misleading and silly" (McConnell, 2017, see also Fisher, 2015; Roberts, 2017), they are nonetheless strategic gestures with the capacity to alter economic, political, and ideological systems. Local governments as sites of decision making are strategic sites for the application of leverage. Commitments to use renewable energy produce more demand for it, which sends market signals and alters the economic system. Further, each pledge is a victory for the climate movement, producing momentum and movement toward an inevitable future and a new zeitgeist. In this regard, strategic gestures like these are like bodily gestures that "catch-on." They are both communicable and communal. This momentum of

victories is further amplified by market changes—literally the increasing presence of renewable energy infrastructure is both evidence of an ongoing transition and productive of the felt experience of "change in the air."

This gestural momentum enables rhetors, like Van Horn (2018) the Sierra Club's "Ready for 100" campaign director, to invoke the *locus of the inevitable*. To do so, she both assembles a piling up of gestures, "From big cities like Atlanta and San Diego to small towns like Abita Springs, LA and Hanover N.H., cities are switching to 100 percent clean energy," and articulates solidarity across difference "More than 150 mayors, Democrats and Republicans, have also pledged to power their cities with renewable energy." To this she adds that "more than 100 companies have also pledged to source 100 percent of their energy from renewables, including Apple, General Motors, Walmart, and Johnson & Johnson." These tropes of momentum and solidarity enable Van Horn to situate her audience as already living in the time of transition. As she constructs it, the only contingency is whether it will be a fair and just transition: "As the transition away from dirty fuels continues to take shape across the country, it's up to all of us to determine what a true clean energy economy looks like, who benefits from it, and how we will get there in a way that empowers everyone in our communities."

The second reason that strategic gestures are central to building an alternative future is that they connect these pragmatic interventions to visions of the future grounded in new relationships and identities, which are needed to alter the political conditions that can make other kinds of interventions possible. The initial response of critics like Nisbet (2013) to McKibben's climate change rhetoric was that it was polarizing and would not appeal to mainstream audiences. This, it was argued, would all but destroy the possibility for bipartisanship and legislative compromise. Whether or not such compromise was possible is debatable (Nisbet, 2018; Roberts, 2019; Taylor, 2019)[7]. Yet, by 2019, Nisbet himself declared that the battle for public opinion on climate change was over, "The decades-long struggle by scientists and environmentalists to build broad-based support for cutting greenhouse emissions is finally over. Science has won" (Nisbet, 2019). Nonetheless, he warned that the ambitious and potentially-polarizing rhetoric of McKibben and Green New Deal advocates Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Ed Markey would once again prevent bipartisan legislative action. This is because "galvanized public opinion is not sufficient. History suggests that shifts in polling and the rise of mass movements are at best only able to create windows of opportunity for policy change to happen," and these windows must be navigated carefully (Nisbet, 2019). Thus, Nisbet once again counseled "a pivot toward policy pragmatism" (Nisbet, 2019).

[7]Nisbet provides many examples of the kinds of compromise he believed were possible, such as policies that would have sparked greater innovation in renewables, carbon capture and sequestration technologies, and nuclear power. Many of these did become policy during the Obama and Trump Administrations, such as Tax Credits for renewable energy. Whether larger initiatives could have been cobbled together is questionable. Even if they would have been possible, they would have required compromise from climate activists on core values, which is akin to demanding that climate deniers simply change their stance.

But what is "pragmatism?" McKibben's approach to movement building and climate change rhetoric certainly deserves much of the credit for the dramatic shift in public opinion and the reorganization of the discursive field of climate change politics. This is a field in which cap and trade policy proposals of the Waxman-Markey variety and Tax and Dividend proposals long championed by the Citizen's Climate Lobby and the Climate Leadership Council now appear to sit squarely in the middle between a Green New Deal on the left and a variety of proposals offered from the right such as Rep. Matt Gaetz's "Green Real Deal" and Sen. Lamar Alexander's call for a "New Manhattan Project for Clean Energy" (Waldman and Matthews, 2019). The extent to which these changes will be enough to get the fossil fuel industry to "sue for peace," as McKibben puts it, is uncertain. Nonetheless, they serve as evidence that McKibben's approach to climate change rhetoric and the use of strategic gestures are not without merit.

Politics and policy are different but equally important. Critics like Nisbet tend to focus on policy pragmatism in a relatively narrow purview, which focuses on the field of politics as it is: adapting policy and rhetorical invention to circumstances as they find them. In contrast, activists like McKibben are searching for ways to rearrange and reconstitute the context of politics in which policy negotiation can take place. As political scientist Skocpol (2013) writes in her diagnosis of the failure of cap and trade legislation in 2010:

> Climate change warriors will have to look beyond elite maneuvers and find ways to address the values and interests of tens of millions of U.S. citizens. To counter fierce political opposition, reformers will have to build organizational networks across the country, and they will need to orchestrate sustained political efforts that stretch far beyond friendly Congressional offices, comfy board rooms, and posh retreats. Compromises with amenable business interests will still be necessary. But insider politics cannot carry the day on its own, apart from a broader movement pressing politicians for change. (p. 11)

From this perspective, strategic gestures can be seen as a vital means for movement activists and policy entrepreneurs to coordinate efforts to increase public pressure for climate action. It is necessary in order to create the conditions in which different kinds of policy compromises can be pursued and better deals can be made. McKibben and other climate activists need to address the values and interests of ordinary citizens and be prepared to make deals when the windows of opportunity open; but at the same time, policy reformers will need to give greater credence to the necessary role that grassroots mobilization plays in achieving their goals.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Our conception of strategic gestures weds existing accounts of the communicative, performative, and affective aspects of symbolic action with considerations of "the strategic" as outlined by Cox in order to advance a theory of social change that is greater than the sum of its parts: symbolic acts of resistance

complementing and amplifying systemic interventions, and those interventions leading to new types of symbolic action that promote solidarity and offer new visions of the future. In this way, strategic gestures can engage the "complex whole" of economic, political, and ideological systems that need to be transformed in order to effectively address climate change. This theorization of strategic gestures extends several scholarly conversations in environmental communication and rhetorical studies more generally.

First, this analysis extends and complicates Cox's attempts to revive "the strategic" as a central consideration in social movement rhetoric. His approach enables critics and activists to think about the purpose of social movement rhetoric as something more than producing a "message that cannot be ignored (Cox, 2009, p. 409–410)." However, it also tends to characterize communication as the sending of signals in a network of relations. This downplays the ways that rhetoric can transform perception and opinion, and the effects these can have on the transformation of complex systems. Our analysis of strategic gestures acknowledges the fact that complex systems are irreducible—that economic, political, and ideological systems are inextricably bound together—and thus that transformation of those systems requires rhetorical interventions that have symbolic and ideological force in addition to their capacity to send signals within economic systems. To be clear, not every gesture described by McKibben qualifies as a "strategic" intervention; divestment campaigns and efforts to block pipelines certainly do, while others, like driving an electric car, may only become strategic to the extent that they get articulated to larger patterns of symbolic and material change. The concept of strategic gestures enables this distinction and illuminates how gestures can promote social transformation, not just resistance.

Second, the concept of strategic gestures broadens the domain of symbolic actions in several ways. On one level, our analysis points to the gestural as a significant category of symbolic action beyond the verbal/visual binary that has been central to the emergence of visual rhetoric as an area of inquiry[8]. This expansion becomes important as environmental communication scholarship moves beyond image-focused analyses of hyper-mediated environments to new materialist approaches that consider how the built and mediated environments commingle. In other words, critical attention need not be limited to events and acts of resistance that are tailored to media logics (image events, spectacle) or which produce meaning though drama (protest, confrontation). Critical attention can also focus on material aspects of daily lived experience, such as transformations in the built environment. The ever-increasing presence of solar panels and wind power, for example, enact change and provide a reconstituted vision of the future. In addition, strategic gestures invite critics to focus attention on the variety of ways in which gestures build one upon another to produce meanings, affects *and* effects. Strategic gestures do more than represent an argument, an ideal, or an idea; they also display, transform, and provide opportunities for further articulation.

Third, strategic gestures can be a productive mode for enabling networked publics and generating counterpublicity. As Asen (2017) indicates, "Beyond deliberation, people may employ various forms of rhetoric and communication to recognize mutual standing and facilitate coordinated action. Perhaps through creativity born of struggle, counterpublicity may lend itself to discursive innovation" (p. 5). Strategic gestures can be considered a discursive innovation that is oriented not toward deliberation, but toward articulation and mobilization of loosely networked local publics. McKibben's notion of open-source organizing reflects this orientation toward networked publics, as does Klein's (2014) notion of "Blockadia" as "a roving transnational conflict zone that is cropping up with increasing frequency and intensity wherever extractive projects are attempting to dig and drill" (p. 294). To the extent that strategic gestures intervene locally and resonate globally, they open possibilities for new forms of solidarity. This echoes Asen's claims that, "Drawing on the mobility, flexibility, and generativity of interactions in a network, a resurgent critical publicity may emerge through new and reconfigured sites of engagement and human relationships" (p. 13).

Fourth, our analysis shows how a politics of gesture can clarify what is meant by "impure politics." Referencing Lawrence Grossberg, Pezzullo (2011) explains that because there is no "pure political choice outside the systems we wish to challenge," there is a need for "contingent and pragmatic practices of social change" (p. 127). Pezzullo's work reminds us to account for the contingent relationships between symbolic and material change, and to pay attention to the constitutive and mobilizing value of symbolic targets and their contribution to the application of leverage at local sites of decision-making. Organizing to stop a pipeline such as Keystone XL is not "merely" symbolic. It provides a movement with opportunities for organizing and getting more people involved in a movement; it can provide activists with opportunities to challenge perceptions of inevitability and gesture toward an alternative future; and it can function as an intervention that can upend economic and political relations of power.

From this perspective, differences over pure and impure politics appear to hinge on differing ideas about what counts as a "pragmatic" practice of social change. Nisbet's criticism of McKibben, for example, seems to position the latter as a purist who takes "no compromise," "line-in-the-sand" stances on issues, tends to "double-down" on his approach in the face of setbacks, and has "little tolerance for political pragmatism" (Nisbet, 2013, p. 50, 52). But from a broader viewpoint, McKibben's attention to gestures is an eminently practical maneuver to transform the discursive field and open up new sites of leverage in the face of recalcitrance and half-measures at the federal level, whereas for Nisbet, pragmatism appears to mean environmentalists compromising with Republicans and moderate Democrats to pass incremental policy reforms. Our theorization of strategic gestures underscores how the limited notion of pragmatism

[8]For example, in a recent essay with Brunner, DeLuca continues to characterize the symbolic universe within a word/image problematic: "Even if images are always in the world of words, still, the force of images may transgress the limits of textual representation and interpretation. The capacity to transgress textual representations points to the event quality of images. Images are not subsumable to language because the two are fundamentally distinct" (Brunner and DeLuca, 2016, p. 294).

presumed by critics such as Nisbet entails a rather cramped politics, one that conflates politics with policy and is blind to how rhetoric functions as a pragmatic art.

CONCLUSION

With this essay, we have intended to help environmental communication scholars and advocates observe the "messy environmental, economic, moral, ethical, political, and symbolic dynamics" of strategic gestures and how they communicate "much more than what might be immediately apparent" (Pezzullo, 2011, p. 140). McKibben's turn toward gestures as a crucial component of climate activism reminds us that neither rhetoric nor social movements are concerned solely with what is actual. The province of both is the realm of the possible, of moving people from their current situation to that which is yet to be (Poulakos, 1983). Strategic gestures may ground themselves in the actual, yet their potency lies in how they display and produce for their audiences a world in the process of becoming otherwise.

DATA AVAILABILITY

All datasets analyzed for this study are included in the manuscript and/or the supplementary material.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Each author contributed substantially to the ideas and text of this paper. The authors order indicates our assessment of the relative contribution of each author.

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Enemies at the Gateway: Regional Populist Discourse and the Fight Against Oil Pipelines on Canada's West Coast

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This paper analyzes discursive storylines of opponents of Northern Gateway—a proposed pipeline and tanker project designed to link Alberta oil sands producers to international markets via Canada's West Coast. It explores how regional concerns about Northern Gateway helped galvanize a movement led by regional First Nations, environmentalists, and settler communities, all of whom opposed Gateway as a means to protect regional ecosystems—and the local communities dependent on them—from "extra-regional" Gateway-backing elites. By articulating arguments against Northern Gateway with salient collective action frames concerning ecological sustainability, regional identity, Indigenous sovereignty, social justice, and democratic agency, this anti-Gateway "discourse coalition" helped contribute to the project's ultimate collapse in 2016. In this paper, we critically engage with Ernesto Laclau's theorization of Populism to analyse this movement as a form of "regional ecological populism," explaining how a shift in spatial framing from the national to the regional enabled a particular populist narrative to emerge. Furthermore, we relate Laclau's framework to Martin Hajer's concept of discursive "storylines" and William Gamson's analysis of "collective action frames" to provide a grounded analysis of how coalitions articulate populist *storylines* designed to mobilize diverse movement constituents. To do so we conduct a frame analysis of communications materials produced by several prominent First Nations and environmental organizations publicly mobilizing against Northern Gateway, tracing how these groups articulated a common *regional ecological populist* storyline. Finally, we end with some thoughts about the possibilities and challenges for scaling up regional ecological populism in Canada.

Keywords: populism, pipelines, discourse coalitions, climate change, framing, Canada

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, defenders of Canada's oil and gas industry have turned to nationalist and conservative populist storylines to frame development as a boon to Canadian workers and taxpayers, while denigrating environmentalist opponents as foreign-backed elites (Neubauer, 2019). The apotheosis of this tactic came in 2012, when the Federal government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper rushed to the defense of the controversial Northern Gateway pipeline and tanker

project, a proposal designed to reach new export markets by linking Alberta oil sands producers to the port of Kitimat, British Columbia on Canada's West Coast (2). Faced with an anti-Gateway movement of regionally-based First Nations, environmental groups, and local communities, the Harper government denounced environmental groups testifying at Gateway's federal project review as "foreign funded radicals" and liberal elites hijacking the review process and harming working Canadian families (Oliver, 2012).

This dramatic episode helped galvanize a nascent movement oriented around the protection of regional ecosystems—and the communities dependent on them—from an alliance of "extra-regional" Gateway-backing elites. Interestingly, this movement reproduced key components of the inside-outside national-populist "storyline" (Hajer, 1993, p. 47) pioneered by industry defenders (Gunster and Saurette, 2014; Neubauer, 2019), albeit with a very different spatial framing (Gunster and Neubauer, 2018). By articulating arguments against Northern Gateway with salient collective action frames (Gamson, 1992, p. 7; Taylor, 2000, p. 511–517) concerning ecological sustainability, regional identity, Indigenous sovereignty, social justice, and democratic agency, this anti-Gateway "discourse coalition" (Hajer, 1993, p. 45) sparked a powerful social movement, ultimately contributing to the project's collapse in 2016.

To analyse the anti-Gateway movement, we engage with Laclau's (1977; 2007) theorization of Populism, relating his framework to Hajer's (1993, p. 43) concept of discursive "storylines" and Gamson's (1992, p. 7) work on "collective action frames." In doing so, we explore two core research questions. First, how did a shift in spatial framing from the national to the regional enable different interpretations of the project to emerge? Second, how did opponents combine regional spatial frames with collective action frames to articulate a *regional ecological populist* storyline that encouraged diverse social actors to make common cause against an externalized enemy?

We begin with an examination of the conditions which enabled the emergence of this political movement. We follow this with a frame analysis of communications materials produced by several prominent First Nations and environmental organizations mobilizing against Northern Gateway between 2010 and 2015. Finally, we conclude with some thoughts about the possibilities and challenges for scaling up regional ecological populism in Canada.

CANADIAN EXTRACTIVISM, POPULIST ARTICULATION, AND NORTHERN GATEWAY

Widely regarded as a seminal theorist of populism (Kaltwasser and Taggart, 2017), Ernesto Laclau identifies the agonistic dichotomy of "the people" vs. "the power-bloc" as the foundation of populist politics. Such dichotomies have no fixed, transhistorical meaning, but emerge through a process of discursive articulation through which different actors come to understand themselves as sharing a common enemy. According to Laclau (2007), this "populist reason" rests upon three interconnected elements:

1. The capacity of distinct social actors with unfulfilled social demands—grievances which dominant social institutions seem unable to address—to discursively link those demands into "an equivalential chain" (p. 77). The lack of any "abstract common feature underlying all social grievances" *a priori* requires that the "equivalential chain… be expressed through the cathexis of a singular element" (p. 96). This may involve the articulation of a single overarching demand as a kind of master/empty signifier which establishes the other demands as equivalential to each other in the signifying chain.
2. The construction of a popular identity (i.e., "the people") out of heterogeneous aggrieved actors who make common cause by reference to the "unfulfilled" nature of their particular demands (p. 86). It is only if these actors "perceive that their neighbours have other, equally unsatisfied demands" that an "equivalential relation is established between them" (p. 73). By allowing for "a set of particular identities or interests… to regroup themselves as equivalential" to each other (p. 19), this process sponsors "the construction of a popular identity" (p. 77).
3. The symbolic establishment "of an internal frontier dividing society into two camps" (p. 77), distinguishing an aggrieved people from those actors and institutions unwilling or unable to satisfy their demands. For Laclau, this inability/refusal to meet social demands is crucial in the construction of popular identities, since the heterogeneity of social life means the aggrieved actors have no *a priori* appeal to ontological unity. It is only through their common "confrontation with" an unresponsive "oligarchic power" that they come to experience their interests as "analogous with each other" (p. 19). This power generally includes actors positioned as economic, political, or cultural elites, though it may also include those framed as "outsiders" or "others."

The history of conservative populism in Canada suggests that Laclau's "internal frontier" can be understood along both *socioeconomic* and *spatial-geographic* lines. In recent decades defenders of Canada's fossil fuel industry have attacked their opponents as elite ideologues exaggerating the environmental costs of extractivist development to line their pockets and fulfill their radical agenda, betraying workers and taxpayers dependent on the industry (Gunster and Saurette, 2014, Neubauer, 2019, p. 13–15). This discourse has often been mapped onto the terrain of national identity. Industry and its allies in government, civil society, and media have consistently deployed "patterns of emphasis (on jobs and government revenues) and omission (of corporate profits and low royalty rates)" to perform "a kind of 'symbolic nationalization' of the industry" (Gunster and Saurette, 2014, p. 345). In doing so, extractivist development becomes articulated "almost exclusively as a kind of collective national enterprise to serve the public good," with its critics framed as outside the nation.

One particularly salient example was the Federal government's strident defense of Enbridge's Northern Gateway project, a proposal to link Alberta's tar sands via pipeline to the port of Kitimat on British Columbia's North Coast, after which it would be shipped to East Asian refineries via supertanker (Neubauer, 2019, p. 6). By the time public hearings for Gateway's federal review were initiated in 2012, the proposal had generated significant opposition from Indigenous organizations, environmental groups, and local communities based in British Columbia—the province through which much of the project would be routed. Notably, project defenders responded by framing the project as a vital "nation building" project (Barney, 2017) under attack by foreign funded enemies of Canada (Neubauer, 2019, p. 13–15).

In an infamous public letter published in January 2012, Natural Resources Minister Oliver (2012) explained how Canada needed "to diversify our markets in order to create jobs and economic growth for *Canadians across this country*" to "ensure the financial security of *Canadians and their families*" (emphasis added). Drawing on research by blogger Vivian Krause highlighting the funding some Gateway opponents had received from American foundations (Krause, 2012), the letter attacked organizations testifying at the project's review hearings as "*foreign funded radicals*" (emphasis added). Paid by "*foreign special interest groups*" and American "*jet setting celebrities*" to "hijack" the nation's regulatory apparatus, these groups were described as pursuing "their radical agenda" no matter "the cost to *Canadian families* in lost jobs and economic growth" (emphasis added). This narrative was recirculated and endorsed in the columns of conservative newspaper columnists, commentary of conservative think tank scholars, and the blogs of industry-supporting advocacy groups (Neubauer, 2019, p. 13–15). The result was a powerful national populist storyline: Canadian environmentalists opposed to new pipelines were not concerned citizens with legitimate grievances, but radical elites, foreign invaders, and enemies of the Canadian people.

ANTI-GATEWAY DISCOURSE COALITIONS AND REGIONAL POPULIST STORYLINES

The contemporary structure of the industry necessitates this type of "symbolic nationalization" if the sector is to retain public support (Neubauer, 2019, p. 11–13). Since the oil sands' neoliberal restructuring and expansion in the 1990s, high corporate compensation rates, generous royalty and taxation regimes, and low employment intensity have conspired to establish an extraordinarily profitable industry that nevertheless provides a relatively weak source of job creation, worker income, and state revenue per dollar of investment (Pratt, 2007, p. 54; Boychuk, 2010; Campanella, 2012; Fast, 2014, p. 36–53; Barney, 2017, p. 4, 7, 30–34).

Yet there is nothing about populism that necessitates its articulation with a national space or conservative worldview. Here, we analyse the anti-Gateway movement's collective action frames and narrative storylines as a means to operationalize Laclau's approach for the study of social movement communications. We explore how the fight against Northern Gateway led to the articulation of an ecological populist storyline oriented around regional places and identities, ecological sustainability, Indigenous sovereignty, local democracy, and social justice. We also examine how place mediated this storyline *as a frame*.

We believe an analysis of frames offers a grounded, granular means of studying populist discourse that is broadly compatible with Laclau's overall approach. We believe this mode of analysis builds on Laclau's theorization of populist reason as the discursive articulation of popular demands into an equivalential chain. In particular, we connect the *negative* dimension of populist reason highlighted by Laclau—in which demands are symbolically linked through their shared refusal—to an analysis of the *affirmative* discursive affinities (Hajer, 1993) between similar demands which also facilitate their equivalential articulation.

Frames can be understood as the component pieces of larger discourses—the various metaphors, imageries and cognitive heuristics actors use to understand themselves and their relation to the larger world (Taylor, 2000, p. 511–517). Different frames allow subjects to come to different interpretations of the social world by emphasizing particular aspects of phenomena while downplaying others (Hajer, 1993, p. 45). By framing unwanted social or ecological phenomena in particular ways, actors give them "a specific meaning," answering "politically essential questions such as 'Who is responsible?' and 'what should be done?'" (Hajer, 1993, p. 44).

It should be noted that some strands of frame analysis (Lakoff, 2010) have been criticized (Brulle, 2010) for—among other things—positing a static conception of discourse which sees frames as relatively fixed or pregiven. This poses difficulties for studying the emergent and contingent nature of social movement discourse, problematizing any operationalization of Laclau's poststructural approach to analyzing populism. However, we draw on approaches to framing—extensively developed by Taylor (2000), Hajer (1993), and Gunster and Neubauer (2018)—that see social movement frames as fundamentally contingent and contested. In this approach, the meanings of different frameworks emerge from the discursive activity of concrete movement actors and the evolving political, historical, and cultural context within which discourse takes shape.

According to Hajer, for instance, the framing of political conflict is both conducted by and constitutive of "discourse coalitions," decentralized yet allied groups of actors aligned around a common discourse (Hajer, 1993, p. 45). Hajer defines discourse as "a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities" (1993, p. 44). Together, coalition actors work to articulate separate yet *discursively affinitive* frames into an overarching storyline around which they can organize politically, providing a framework for collective action by articulating plausible causes of and potential solutions to a given problem (p. 47).

When coalitions are shut out from policy-making institutions, coalition actors must mobilize broad-based social movements

that can generate the necessary political capital to impose their storyline on the policy field. To achieve this, organizers may seek to "reframe" different phenomena to increase the resonance of their storylines with potential movement participants (Taylor, 2000, p. 511–517). As Dorceta Taylor notes, this often involves frame "bridging," or the symbolic grafting of "two ideologically compatible but structurally separate frames that refer to the same issue" (p. 512). We argue that by bridging arguments against Northern Gateway with a regional spatial frame—rather than the national one favored by industry proponents—the anti-Gateway coalition generated contrasting interpretations of the project's distribution of costs and benefits, the equity of that distribution, and corresponding accounts of the "people" and the "elites."

This spatial bridging was articulated with the anti-Gateway coalition's "collective action frames," which Snow and Benford (in Gamson, 1992) describe as "action oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate social movement actions and campaigns" (p. 7). Gamson (1992, p. 7) notes that social movement actors seek to mobilize constituents through their deployment of collective action frames related to injustice, agency, and identity. *Injustice* frames are critical in establishing any antagonistic politics, as they assign blame for social ills to "motivated human actors" responsible for "harm or suffering" (Gamson, 1992, p. 7). *Identity* frames motivate political responses to these injustices by nominating collective actors seen as most aggrieved by them, positioning a collective "we" against an offending "they." *Agency* frames provide "some sense of collective efficacy," implying the aforementioned "we" can alter "conditions or policies through collective action."

Articulated together, these frames enable actors to constitute collective *identities*, identify *injustices* committed against those identities, and amplify perceptions of *agency* on the part of movement actors in overcoming these injustices (Gamson, 1992, p. 7). Correspondingly, the anti-Gateway discourse coalition leveraged opponents' connections to local place to articulate a *regional populist storyline* in which representatives of various *regional identities* (British Columbians, First Nations, environmentalists, etc.) exercised their democratic *agency* by opposing *injustices* imposed by Gateway-supporting elites from outside the region. In many respects, this process was analogous to Laclau's description of populist reason, in which the articulation of an equivalential chain of unfulfilled demands enables the establishment of an internal frontier between aggrieved "popular" actors and the elites which refuse to meet their demands.

The movement identities constructed by anti-pipeline movements in Canada have emerged from political alliances between First Nations and various settler activists and communities. Within the context of ongoing regimes of settler colonial governance and territorial dispossession, such alliances are rather politically contingent. Yet this contingency resonates with Laclau's (2007) approach to populist reason, in which coalitions of heterogeneous actors come to see themselves "as analogous with each other" not through any *a priori* ontic unity, but through their mutual "confrontation with oligarchic power" (p. 19). This perception of shared political identity occurs as a particular demand emerges as an empty signifier through which other demands become equivalential; the broader the coalition, the emptier the signifier necessary to anchor the equivalential chain (p. 97). We argue that the rejection of Gateway became just such a signifier, standing in for various demands appealing to different actors within the movement.

In his recent work Laclau (2007) envisions popular identities as emerging from a mutually recognized *lack* or *absence*, namely, the inability of the oligarchy to meet different actors' demands. While this logic partially explains the coherence of the anti-Gateway coalition, an analysis of coalition storylines—and the frames constituting them—reveals the importance of more *affirmative* aspects in knitting together diverse actors into a shared popular identity. As Hajer (1993) notes, discourse coalitions create storylines out of separate discursive strands by leveraging their "discursive affinities": the "similar way[s]" unique frames have of "conceptualizing the world" (p. 47). In the case of Gateway, such affinities were grounded in the interdependencies between people and place. The anti-Gateway coalition invoked these affinities to build a populist storyline in which oligarchic actors from *outside the region* posed an existential threat to the *local space/places* that different regional actors depended upon for their livelihoods, identity, and community.

In our study, the focus on place helps ground the equivalential chains of populist reason in a particular materiality; namely, collective interdependencies with specific places. The places in which we live—and the ecologies which underpin them—are not merely discursive frames, but also the material basis for our economic systems of production, political jurisdictions, physical dwellings, built communities, and sociocultural identities. The mediation of populist storylines by different spatial frames thereby enables different interpretations of the world and our relation to it which, while discursively constructed, are grounded in a materiality as solid as the earth beneath our feet. In the case of Gateway, understanding the material interdependencies between different actors and particular places is crucial to understanding how these actors came to see their demands as equivalential to each other.

Local Place-Based Identity and Ecological Risk

By mediating claims about the Gateway project via a national space, the national popular storyline of pipeline proponents symbolically sutured the interests of oil sands firms and investors to the "average Canadian worker" or "taxpayer" (Neubauer, 2019, p. 11–13). Yet when it comes to tar sands extraction and transportation, the most salient spatial frames are often *local*. Accordingly, Gateway's opponents emphasized movement frames which articulated the project as a threat to *regional* identities.

The carbon-intensive nature of the oil sands development (Nikiforuk, 2010, p. 127–145) has drawn the ire of the global climate movement (Davidson and Gismondi, 2011, p. 111–141). Yet this development also generates severe *local risks*, as the extraction, transportation, and refining of bitumen—a toxic, sludge-like substance—has traditionally produced significant air,

water and land pollution (Nikiforuk, 2010, p. 60–111; Davidson and Gismondi, 2011, p. 111–141). Local ecological and health impacts have often been disastrous, especially in communities located downstream from extraction sites or tailing ponds (Nikiforuk, 2010, p. 60–111; Davidson and Gismondi, 2011, p. 111–141; Preston, 2013, p. 43–47).

In the case of Northern Gateway these local impacts were particularly worrisome, and many regional actors recoiled at the devastating ecological, economic, and health effects of a potential pipeline leak or tanker spill (Hoberg, 2013, p. 380–382). Pipeline leaks were a serious concern for a project proposed to cross over a thousand rivers and streams, including some of the world's most productive remaining salmon habitats (Stendie, 2013, p. 2). Gateway also would have brought as many as 300 supertankers a year through the remote port of Kitimat (Nikiforuk, 2010, p. 123)—an unprecedented level of traffic on BC's difficult to navigate North Coast—while passing through rich marine ecosystems (Panofsky, 2011). In return for accepting these risks, the province would gain a relatively small number of short-term construction jobs and a handful of permanent positions in pipeline maintenance. And because Canadian provinces cannot claim royalties on resources transported through their jurisdiction, BC would gain few long-term tax revenues. All of this primed regional identities of local actors and communities dependent on healthy local ecosystems for both their cultural identities and much of their economic activity, whether the province's large-scale fisheries or its booming ecotourism sector (Lee, 2012).

The relationship between local place, ecological risk, and identity was especially salient for many First Nation communities located along the project route. The pipeline "would [have crossed] the traditional territories of at least 60 different First Nation communities, and would potentially impact the lands of many others, the vast majority of whom [had] not completed a modern land claims agreement" (Panofsky, 2011, p. 22–23). As Davidson and Gismondi note (Davidson and Gismondi, 2011), Indigenous communities located near resource extraction projects often face unique environmental and health risks, as they are often heavily reliant "on the services provided by their local watershed for food and livelihood provision" (p. 183). Just as importantly, relationships to traditional territories are constitutive of the modes of social organization and cultural identities of many First Nation communities, and are intimately connected to contemporary anti-colonial struggles. As political scientist Coulthard (2014) explains:

> Indigenous anticolonialism, including Indigenous anticapitalism, is best understood as a struggle primarily inspired by and oriented around the question of land—a struggle not only for land in the material sense, but also deeply informed by what the land as system of reciprocal relations and obligations can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in non-dominating and non-exploitative terms… I call this place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice grounded normativity, by which I mean the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and non-human others over time (p. 13).

Regional Injustice and Ecological Populism

The risk to local places threatened regional identities predicated on their economic, cultural, and political interdependence with those same places, increasing their salience relative to the national identities primed by Gateway's proponents. This allowed a broad-based regional discourse coalition of Indigenous organizations, settler Canadian communities, and environmental groups to articulate diverse regional identity frames within a common storyline. More than the simple *presence* of local risks, it was their *unjust distribution* that motivated these actors. While proponents claimed that Northern Gateway would produce significant economic benefits for BC, opponents countered that most immediate economic gains would accrue to Enbridge and project investors (Lee, 2012, p. 10–15; Neubauer, 2019). Similarly, the expanded upstream bitumen production Gateway was designed to facilitate would primarily generate long-term benefits for Albertan and international companies active in the oil sands and the banks which financed them. And the increased provincial tax revenue generated by the project would mostly accrue to Alberta.

A second set of injustices were related to the perceived democratic unaccountability of the federal government and its environmental review process. Much of this stemmed from widespread public perception of industry capture. In the years following their initial election victory in 2006, many critics had come to see the Conservative government as a puppet of Alberta's oil industry, given their ties to industry lobbyists; budget cuts to ecological research; legislative inaction on climate change; gag orders on government climate and environmental scientists; and the use of public monies for expensive pro-oil sands public relations campaigns (Cayley-Daoust and Girard, 2012; Nikiforuk, 2013; Turner, 2013, p. 136–189; Gutstein, 2014).

Regional critics had similar concerns about the project review process. Traditionally, federal legislation mandated that major energy project proposals receive approval from two regulatory bodies—the National Energy Board (NEB) and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) (Van Hinte et al., 2007, p. 127). Yet in 2009 the federal government authorized the NEB to carry out a single "Joint Review Panel" (JRP) for the project, with community hearings to be held throughout Alberta and BC starting in January 2012 (Gunster and Neubauer, 2018, p. 717). As the NEB was industry-funded and largely staffed by corporate insiders, environmentalists doubted its ability to conduct an impartial review. These fears seemed legitimated by the announcement that the JRP would largely exclude upstream and downstream climate change impacts from its consideration. Local actors were also angry at the panel's lack of regional representation, as well as "an agreement between the Federal and B.C. governments in which the latter waived its right to conduct an independent provincial project assessment" (p. 717–718).

Concerns about procedural fairness were turbocharged in January 2012, when the federal government publicly attacked

environmental organizations participating in the JRP of being "foreign funded radicals," using funding from US charitable foundations to "hijack" the review process and sabotage Canadian working families (Oliver, 2012). This national populist storyline was explicitly used by the Conservatives to publicly legitimize two new pieces of federal legislation—C-38 and C-45—which critics alleged were designed to gut Canada's environmental regulation and project assessment regime (Hoberg, 2013, p. 375; Nikiforuk, 2013; Coulthard, 2014, p. 151–180). Together the two bills removed a host of environmental safeguards for various aquatic and land based ecosystems; steeply curtailed public involvement in future reviews; and shifted authority for final project approval from the NEB to the Gateway-supporting cabinet, rendering widespread public involvement in the review process legally irrelevant (Neubauer, 2019, p. 14).

These injustice frames were particularly relevant for Northern Gateway's Indigenous opponents. The grounded normativity described by Coulthard, in which modes of social organization of numerous Indigenous peoples are informed by deep reciprocal relations with their traditional territories, gains political salience in the context of a national colonial project and resource economy both dependent on the continuous appropriation, governance, and exploitation of those territories (Coulthard, 2014, p. 1–24, 51–78). As such, Corntassel and Bryce (2011) argue, "[b]eing Indigenous today means engaging in a struggle to reclaim and regenerate one's relational, place-based existence" (p. 152). Yet unlike in most of Canada, where "treaties were signed in which Aboriginal people 'ceded and surrendered' their traditional territories," most of British Columbia was seized without the signing of nation-to-nation treaties (Panofsky, 2011, p. 98). As a result courts have awarded many BC First Nations heightened legal standing concerning rights and title, with rulings affirming that Indigenous communities' precolonial territorial sovereignty remains unextinguished in large swaths of the province (Coulthard, 2014, p. 1–24).

As such, explains Hoberg (2013), various First Nations opposed Gateway both due to the potential "impact of spills on culturally and economically important resources" and as a means "to force attention to their broader demands for rights and title" (p. 376). The proposed route ran through large swaths of unceded territory, and the JRP had no jurisdiction to make decisions regarding Indigenous title (Panofsky, 2011, p. 28). Furthermore, many Indigenous opponents accused the JRP process of violating their rights under section 35 of the Constitution, which mandates that First Nation communities be appropriately consulted and accommodated concerning development projects which may affect their Aboriginal or treaty rights. In their view, negotiations over Gateway should have proceeded on a nation to nation basis between Ottawa and affected Nations, instead of Indigenous communities participating in the JRP as merely another interest group (p. 77). Some communities refused to participate in the JRP process entirely, while others that did engage nevertheless condemned it as illegitimate.

These concerns were amplified by the federal government's passage of Bill C-45 in 2012. By facilitating the leasing out of reserve lands with minimal community input, weakening environmental regulations, and narrowing the scope of projects requiring federal reviews, the legislation was widely perceived as a stealth attack on Indigenous rights and title and the capacity of First Nations to enforce environmental safeguards on their own lands (Coulthard, 2014, p. 151–180). This perceived injustice became a decisive factor in launching the 2012 "Idle No More" movement, a Canada-wide series of protests against the colonial state which made the repeal of C-45 one of its central demands.

According to Laclau (2007, p. 65–172), popular identities emerge through the establishment of an equivalential chain of demands, uniting heterogeneous social actors against the forces perceived as responsible for their disparate grievances. This "equivalential chain" is often "expressed through the cathexis of a singular element," precisely because the radical heterogeneity of social life means that populist discourse cannot simply discover "an abstract common feature underlying all social grievances" (96). Rather, it occurs via "a performative operation constituting the [equivalential] chain as such."

The Gateway project and its perceived injustices provided just such a "singular element," through which actors could articulate a chain of equivalential demands related to Indigenous sovereignty; protection of coastal ecosystems, economies and cultures; climate change; industry capture of the state apparatus; and regional democratic accountability. Such common cause did not emerge out of an *a priori* unified regional identity—an unlikely development given long-standing tensions between settler and Indigenous communities generated by the Canadian colonial project. Rather, a shared identity emerged out of a *regional ecological populist* storyline emphasizing diverse regional actors' shared dependence upon the ecological integrity of local places. Local spaces and places came to embody the "privileged signifiers… which condense in themselves the signification of a whole antagonistic camp" (Laclau, 2007, p. 86).

If identities, cultures and economies dependent on the integrity of regional ecologies enabled the construction of a regional popular discourse, how did movement actors come to articulate an "internal frontier" dividing themselves from their enemies? Through the construction of a shared storyline in which regional popular forces were engaged in a democratic struggle against a cabal of *hostile extra-regional elites*—Albertan and international oil companies; the Albertan and federal governments; Chinese investors; international finance capital; Bay Street banks and investment firms, etc.—imposing Gateway on the region. Interestingly, this inside-outside narrative replicated the populist foreign invader storyline deployed by project supporters. Yet the mediation of this narrative through a regional-local rather than national spatial frame enabled the populist storyline to be recast with a different set of actors in the roles of hero and villain.

Regional Agency and Ecological Popular

Successful framing strategies for grassroots movements must leverage political opportunities that enhance movement participation and growth (Gamson, 1992, p. 6: Taylor, 2000, p. 520). As Taylor (2000) explains, "Activists have to be keenly aware of what resources… are available to them

and how to use these resources to initiate and maintain movement activities" (p. 519).

How did the anti-Gateway coalition bring together different yet complementary resources, while taking advantage of political opportunities? Regional environmental groups such as Sierra Club BC and Dogwood Initiative, for instance, had significant financial resources, numerous supporters, and connections to large multinational ENGOs. First Nations organizations such as the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the Yinka Dene Alliance, and Coastal First Nations had access to an energized movement of activists, many of whom had mobilized in the Idle No More movement in 2012.

Indigenous communities also possessed legal claims to territorial sovereignty on unceded territory. "In March 2010," explains Hoberg, "the Coastal First Nations, an alliance of First Nations on BC's North and Central coasts"—including Wuikinuxv, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xaixais, Nuxalk, Gitga'at, Metlakatla, Old Massett, Skidegate, and Council of the Haida Nation—issued a declaration "'that oil tankers carrying crude oil from the Alberta Tar Sands will not be allowed to transit our lands and waters"' (p. 381). In December of that same year, "the Yinka Dene Alliance, a coalition of six First Nations in the Fraser River watershed"—including the Nadleh Whut'en, Nak'azdli, Takla Lake, Saik'uz, Wet'suwet'en, and Tl'azt'en—issued the Save the Fraser Declaration, which was later signed by more than 60 other First Nations." The Declaration's rejection of Northern Gateway was unequivocal:

> "in upholding our ancestral laws, Title, Rights and responsibilities, we declare: We will not allow the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, or similar Tar Sands projects, to cross our lands, territories and watersheds, or the ocean migration routes of Fraser River Salmon" (cited in Panofsky, 2011, p. 23).

If the federal regulatory apparatus was widely perceived as insulated from regional democratic pressures, how did the anti-Gateway coalition cultivate a sense of efficacy in potential movement constituents? They framed participation in public consultation less as a means of influencing a regulatory decision, and more as a strategic means of undermining the symbolic legitimacy of the regulator to approve the project.

Anti-Gateway organizations and activists seized upon numerous opportunities to influence the state. These activities served a parallel function of framing project opponents as the legitimate representatives of regional democratic publics, explicitly contrasted with the unaccountable Joint Review Panel (JRP) process. Environmental groups mobilized supporters to sign up to the hearings in unprecedented numbers, forcing the panel to extend hearings by over a year and ensuring that the vast majority of public testimony opposed project approval (Neubauer, 2019, p. 7). In doing so, they simultaneously demonstrated the lack of regional support for Gateway while pre-emptively delegitimizing the JRP's eventual approval of the project.

Opponents held well-attended demonstrations, organized community information sessions, circulated petitions, and commissioned regional polls demonstrating majority opposition to increased tanker traffic (Hoberg, 2013, p. 380–382). They also organized extensive provincial and federal electoral outreach campaigns, recognizing that widespread regional opposition to Gateway provided opposition parties with a valuable wedge issue against the more extractivist-oriented governing parties (Neubauer, 2017). Perhaps the most notable example was an April 2014 municipal referendum held in Kitimat, BC, the terminus of the proposed pipeline (Gunster and Neubauer, 2018, p. 721). In a remarkable feat of grassroots organizing, opponents ultimately persuaded 58% of Kitimat voters to reject the project, "despite Enbridge's significant advertising and public relations expenditures in the small port town" (Gunster and Neubauer, 2018, p. 721).

Regional ENGOs and Indigenous organizations also created multiple opportunities for collaboration in ways which legitimated their claims to regional popular representativeness while undermining the symbolic authority of the JRP and project proponents. Dogwood and Sierra often publicized the activities of both CFN and YDA, regularly releasing blog posts and press releases documenting new signatories to the Save the Fraser Declaration (Neubauer, 2017). Representatives of both organizations signed the Fraser Declaration Solidarity Accord, a petition issued by YDA leadership as a means to publicize Indigenous opponents' broad public support.

Finally, several Indigenous communities launched legal challenges to the JRP's conditional approval of the project in 2013 on the grounds that the panel had not sufficiently consulted affected communities (West Coast Environmental Law, 2015). By bringing communities into the consultation process well after the panel's scoping phase, they argued the federal government had offered them a superficial level of input that did not meet its constitutionally mandated duty to consult and accommodate. Notably, in 2014 multiple ENGOs co-launched the Pull Together campaign, a program that raised "funds for First Nations legally challenging Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway pipeline" (History, n.d.).

THE ANTI-GATEWAY MOVEMENT AND REGIONAL ECOLOGICAL POPULIST DISCOURSE

In the remainder of this paper, we explore how Gateway's opponents articulated arguments against the project with a regional spatial frame to establish a regional ecological populist storyline. We conduct a frame analysis of communication materials produced by four prominent organizations campaigning against the pipeline between 2011 and 2015. Two prominent First Nations organizations—CFN and the YDA—and ENGO's—Sierra Club BC (SCBC) and Dogwood Initiative (DI)—opposing Gateway were selected for analysis. A sample of 245 texts produced by these organizations between 2011 and 2015 was collected from organization websites and the Canadian Newsstream database. These included blog posts, press releases, issue backgrounders, op-eds, and research reports (see **Table 1**). Materials were analyzed with NVIVO 11, a qualitative analysis software suite.

TABLE 1 | Communications materials produced by sample organizations between 2011 and 2015.

	Backgrounder	Blog Post	Op-eds	Press Release	Reports	Total
CFN	2	9	0	13	1	25
Dogwood	3	101	2	31	0	137
Sierra Club BC	13	30	5	17	0	65
YDA	0	0	1	17	0	18
Total	**18**	**140**	**8**	**78**	**1**	**245**

A frame analysis was conducted, with a focus on using Gamson's (1992) collective action frames to operationalize Laclau's theory of populist reason. Laclau's emphasis on the discursive constitution of popular identities led us to analyse which particular collective *identities*—including regional, Indigenous, Canadian, and socioeconomic—were framed as protagonists in opponent storylines, noting when different actors were described as allied in opposition to the project. Various *injustice* frames were identified as a means to examine the articulation of popular demands within an equivalential chain. These included under attack; unfair distribution of risk and benefit; violation of sovereignty; government corruption/industry capture; and imposition of environmental or economic risk frames. We also noted which actors were framed as elite enemies responsible for the offending injustices, which—when positioned against the collective identity frames—allowed us to trace the establishment of an "internal frontier" separating "popular forces" from the "power bloc." *Agency* frames were included to better understand how opponents mobilized constituents by championing their ability to defeat these elite enemies. Finally, we took note of how popular identities, injustices, and elite enemies were framed spatially; i.e., whether they were bridged with regional, local, national, or global spatial frames.

These frames were generated from multiple sources. Some were identified from a literature review of previous studies of environmental communications and energy politics (Gunster and Saurette, 2014; Neubauer, 2019); Indigenous reconciliation and decolonial politics (Coulthard, 2014); political ecology of the Canadian oil sands and contemporary pipeline projects, and related environmental and economic risks (Nikiforuk, 2010; Davidson and Gismondi, 2011; Lee, 2012; Fast, 2014); and populist politics (Hall, 1988; Laclau, 2007; Frank, 2012). Further frames were identified through a preliminary scoping of a small subsample of the collected communication materials. Finally, frames were added on an emergent basis throughout the coding process.

In what follows we draw on our findings to explore how these groups leveraged these frames to symbolically construct a "regional popular" movement *identity* composed of First Nations, regional communities, British Columbians, and environmental activists exercising political *agency* to address *injustices* imposed by extra-regional Gateway-supporting elites. In doing so, we foreground the role of regional spatial frames in mediating the articulation of what we call a *regional ecological populist storyline*.

Articulating Local Ecological Risk With Regional Identities

In their communications materials, opponents constructed movement identities around a chain of equivalential demands, many of which concerned the economic and ecological risks associated with a pipeline leak or tanker spill. As Laclau's framework suggests, such demands could be treated as equivalential due to their mutually unmet nature. However, there were also discursive affinities linking these demands in a more affirmative fashion: their common reference to threatened regional ecosystems and the diverse communities which depended on them. These threatened local ecosystems were explicitly framed as the basis for the well-being of local residents, establishing the rationale for shared movement identities.

Notably, all four organizations consistently prioritized local risks from a bitumen spill as compared to broader global risks like climate change, while highlighting the common interests of different regional actors vulnerable to those risks. CFN frequently argued that Northern Gateway generated unacceptable economic risks, linking unique regional ecosystems with local economies and identities. In an August 2012 press release (CFN, 2012, August 2), the organization decried the threats increased tanker traffic posed to the Great Bear Rainforest, a federally protected conservation area home to Indigenous and settler communities dependent on healthy marine ecosystems, whether for daily substance or long-term employment:

> The Great Bear is… one of the only places on our planet where intact coastal temperate rainforest, large wild rivers, and healthy cold-water seas come together….The forests, rivers, and seas represent daily food and a way of life for coastal communities and First Nations. The immense natural capital of this region sustains a diverse economy representing tens of thousands of long-term Canadian jobs, valued at billions of dollars annually.

CFN president Art Sterritt made similar arguments in a March 2012 report documenting the potential impact of increased tanker traffic on BC's North Coast. Sterritt claimed that "All the work we are doing to create a sustainable economy would be wiped out by an oil spill," which "would devastate fishing, tourism, and traditional subsistence harvesting, which are the backbones of the economy in the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii" (CFN, 2012, March).

The ENGOs made similar claims. One January 2012 SCBC post referred to a recent report "published by the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Pembina Institute and Living Oceans Society" (Sierra Club BC, 2012, January 23). Sierra explained how:

> The report details the dangers of bitumen transportation and the risks of spills to the environment and the economy in a region that depends on healthy fisheries, lands, and waters. At risk from an oil spill would be the approximately $250 million annually

from commercial fishing, $550 million annually from recreational fishing, and hundreds of millions from nature tourism.

The Internal Frontier of the Regional Popular: Project Backers as Extra-Regional Elites

The articulation of an equivalential chain of demands was facilitated not just by the existence of shared risks, but recognition of their unfair distribution. Opponents' injustice frames explicitly attacked project-supporters as a cabal of powerful elites willing to impose harm on regional actors in the name of profit. The refusal of these elites to meet popular demands of different regional actors—for ecosystem protection, the safeguarding of local economies and industries, respect for regional autonomy, Indigenous sovereignty etc.—became the basis of a movement identity rooted in those actors' collective confrontation with a common oligarchic power. However, demands were also linked through their mutual reference to the importance of local places and the different actors that depended on or had claim to them in specific ways. As such, the bridging of these demands with regional spatial frames allowed opponents to establish an internal frontier dividing legitimate regional popular forces from "foreign" elites invading the region from the outside.

Dogwood especially favored this narrative, often contrasting the elite aggressors with the democratic agency of regional publics whose members were collectively dependent on healthy local ecosystems. In one online backgrounder, the group explained how:

> Some of the most powerful oil companies in the world are pushing to bring more and more crude oil tankers to B.C.'s coast. They would jeopardize the livelihoods of tens of thousands of British Columbians and the stability of the Great Bear Rainforest and southern Gulf Islands ecosystems in the name of profit. We can hold them back and keep our oceans and rivers healthy and livelihoods secure, but it's going to take size and diversity. That's where you come in (Dogwood Initiative, n.d.).

CFN similarly decried the inequitable distribution of risk and benefit, highlighting potential harms absorbed by Indigenous and settler actors. In a June 2012 press release (CFN, 2012, June 20) responding to the "third Alberta oil pipeline spill in [a single] month," CFN president Art Sterritt argued that "Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway is a dangerous, short-sighted project that would make oil companies rich and leaves in its wake oil spills, environmental destruction and long-term economic damage to local communities." A March 2012 report issued by CFN outlining the risks from a tanker or pipeline spill made similar claims:

> The Enbridge Gateway project imposes an unnecessary and high risk to Coastal First Nations and other British Columbians. Despite the safety measures proposed by Enbridge, there is a high likelihood of a major oil spill and the impact of a spill would be devastating to the environment and the economy.… Enbridge expects Coastal First Nations and British Columbians to take all the risks of the project while almost all the benefits accrue to the oil and gas industry and Alberta (CFN, 2012, March).

The illegitimacy of extra-regional elites was often overtly contrasted with the popular legitimacy of opponents, who were described as broadly representative of the region's Indigenous peoples, settler communities, local workers and businesses, and environmentalists—all united in defense of "our coast." At times, this storyline was deployed as an ironic foil for Gateway supporters' own "foreign elites" narrative. Consider, for example, a 2011 press release from Dogwood critiquing commentary by Vancouver blogger Vivian Krause, whose research on US foundations funding BC-based anti-Gateway groups later inspired the federal government's "foreign funded radicals" storyline:

> In the face of mounting pressure from the largest pipeline company in Canada, an undisclosed consortium of international oil companies funding Enbridge's Northern Gateway project, and a pro-oil sands, pro-Northern Gateway federal government…, we have helped build a broad grassroots movement of working families, First Nations governments, businesses, chambers of commerce, municipal governments, tourism operators and fishermen willing to take action to prevent oil tankers from threatening our coast. ….
>
> None of the conspiracy theorists acknowledge that the fight to protect our coast from the threat of a catastrophic oil spill is a quintessential David vs. Goliath struggle—foreign-funded oil interests like Enbridge are outspending environmental groups working on this issue at least one hundred to one (Horter, 2011, August 16).

YDA deployed a similar storyline in response to the government's "foreign funded radicals" rhetoric in January 2012. In a press release, Nadleh Whut'en Chief Larry Nooski contrasted the alliance of extra-regional elites with the grassroots actions of Indigenous communities and their environmentalist allies:

> First Nations are… offended at the suggestion by the Prime Minister, Minister Oliver, and petro-lobbyists that foreign money is interfering in the process, Chief Nooski added, saying: "First Nations people are so opposed to this pipeline that we're pulling money out of our own pockets and community members are doing everything that we can so that our voices are heard. We are also proud of the wide-ranging support we've received from our neighbours across the north, and from environmental groups" (YDA, 2012, January 11).

Coastal First Nations articulated a similar internal frontier, contrasting the illegitimacy of the expensive public relations campaigns of wealthy Albertan corporations and Toronto-based ad firms with their movements' own regional democratic legitimacy:

> Enbridge's multi-million dollar ad campaign is an act of desperation to try to sell a project that clearly doesn't have the support of First Nations or British Columbians, says Coastal First Nations executive director Art Sterritt…

> Sterritt says that's why his organization has been reaching out to British Columbians across BC where they work and live. "It's unfortunate that Enbridge has chosen to hire a high-priced Toronto ad firm to try to tell us what we should think instead of doing the hard work of dealing with people on their doorsteps" (CFN, 2012, May 30).

At times this foreign invasion storyline was articulated with references to Indigenous peoples' experiences at the hands of Canadian colonialism and the exploitation of Indigenous territory by resource capital. One September 2012 CFN blog post issued by the Heiltsuk Nation strongly condemned Enbridge's behavior throughout the JRP hearings:

> The history of the Heiltsuk is filled with broken promises from various companies that have come into our territory and reaped the benefits of exploiting resources on which we have always relied upon… [leaving] our territory and our community with deep economic and environmental scars. There is little doubt that Enbridge would also fall into that category. Enbridge has clearly shown that it isn't a good corporate citizen – it's dishonest…, incompetent…, and a bully (characterizing opponents as revolutionaries, radicals) (CFN, 2012, September 20).

Regional Identities and Democratic Agency: Dismissing an Industry Captured Process

Opponent storylines explicitly linked demands concerning unacceptable risks to local ecosystems, industries and communities with related demands concerning regional democracy, regulatory capture by industry, and Indigenous sovereignty. Again, regional spatial frames provided a discursive affinity which facilitated the equivalential linking of these demands, as concerns about local places became articulated with anger over the violation of regional democratic authority and Indigenous sovereignty over those same places. This strengthened the internal frontier between the politically legitimate local actors forced to absorb risk and the extra-regional elites imposing those risks without consent.

Once opponents had established that frontier, they could undermine the symbolic authority of what they claimed was an industry-captured federal review, contrasting the illegitimacy of the regulatory regime with their own regional democratic legitimacy. This framing underpinned assurances of their political agency: the anti-Gateway coalition would win precisely because they were legitimate representatives of regional democratic publics and sovereign territories, while their enemies were illegitimate extra-regional interlopers.

Both Indigenous organizations in the sample contrasted the illegitimacy of an industry captured federal government with the legitimacy of their own claims to territorial sovereignty and regional solidarity with both Indigenous communities and settler British Columbians. YDA—which had issued the Save the Fraser Declaration, and whose members had refused to take part in the JRP—issued a December 2011 press release celebrating additional signatories to the declaration from regional Indigenous communities:

> First Nations, whose unceded territory encompasses the entire coastline of British Columbia, have formed a united front, banning all exports of tar sands crude oil through their territories....These First Nations form an unbroken wall of opposition from the U.S. border to the Arctic Ocean …. "The government can talk all it wants about pushing tar sands oil pipelines and tankers through BC. There is no way our Nations will allow it," says Chief Art Adolph representing the St'át'imc Nation. "If they're serious about respecting our rights, the government of Canada must stop pushing the oil companies' line that this is in the public interest… (YDA, December 1, 2011).

The following year, a YDA press release had strong words for the Harper government following Minister Oliver's foreign funded radicals remarks, linking concerns about community safety, an industry captured regulatory system, and violations of Indigenous sovereignty:

> "The fix is in with this government. How can any Canadian trust that the Enbridge review process will be conducted fairly and independently with Harper breathing down the review panel's neck?" said Chief Larry Nooski of Nadleh Whut'en First Nation, a member of the Yinka Dene Alliance. "It is ludicrous for the federal minister to parrot tar sands lobbyists by directly attacking our communities that have decided the Enbridge project is too dangerous, and against our laws," said Nooski. "We're not foreign—these are our lands."

Chief Nooski went on to discuss the strength and political efficacy of the alliance between regional First Nations and settler British Columbians:

> We have made a decision, in our Save the Fraser Declaration, to ban these pipelines and tankers. Tens of thousands of British Columbians have signed petitions specifically supporting our decision. The Enbridge project has unified us and we are not going to stop until we win this together.

At other times, the JRP's regional unaccountability was unfavorably contrasted with the democratic ethos of grassroots activism, as in a 2010 blog post by Dogwood's Swanson (2010, August 30) announcing an upcoming Vancouver rally:

> Our current Federal Government supports Enbridge's oil pipeline and tanker project, and has given decision-making authority to a review panel comprised of three non-British Columbians. This rally will help send the message that the majority of people in this province have made up our mind; and that our answer is no.

In framing the review process as an industry captured sham, opponents were well-positioned to dismiss the symbolic authority of the JRP when it did eventually approve Northern Gateway in December 2013. A press release issued immediately after the JRP's announcement argued that its "recommendation … [was] unsurprising given such a flawed process." Sierra

Club's Caitlyn Vernon explicitly framed the JRP's decision as an attack on regional actors whose concerns about health, economic well-being, and ecological sustainability were all undermined by Gateway's approval, arguing that it was "inconceivable how the panel could sit through months of heartfelt, scientific and economic testimony and fail to understand how the Enbridge proposal would negatively impact jobs, families and the salmon and clean drinking water we all depend on" (Sierra Club BC, 2013, December 19).

Opponents often contrasted the supposed illegitimacy of the JRP ruling with the legal and moral authority of Indigenous title. YDA made this point forcefully in a press release that highlighted the efficacy of the Indigenous-led movement while articulating a common popular front with settler British Columbians similarly dependent on the health of local ecosystems. The release quoted "Chief Martin Louie of the Nadleh Whut'en First Nation," who stated that:

> It's no surprise that a flawed process has led to a flawed recommendation. This project will never be built. The Yinka Dene Alliance has clearly refused permission for Enbridge's pipelines to cut through our lands and waters, and the federal and provincial governments must accept that this project cannot go ahead…Our position is clearly stated in the Save the Fraser Declaration, which bans Enbridge's Northern Gateway pipelines from our territories. Nothing is changed by the JRP's pronouncement. Enbridge is not from this place, does not understand our laws and customs, and will profit by damaging our environment now and into the future… We have put ourselves in the frontline for all British Columbians and together we are fighting for our homes, our future and our children's future (YDA, 2013, December 19).

Opponents often referred to regional public opinion polls as a means to undermine the legitimacy of the JRP ruling. Not only did a majority of those polled continue to oppose the project following the ruling, but:

> When asked whether they trust the review process, 51 per cent of British Columbians say they distrust the process, while only 32 per cent trust it… "These polling results bring home why the Enbridge tanker and pipeline proposal is going nowhere fast—despite the JRP recommendation," said Jessica Clogg of the West Coast Environmental Law Association. "Residents of B.C. continue to withhold [permission] for the project, while multiple First Nations lawsuits threaten to derail it and the government of B.C. [has] formally opposed the Enbridge project" (Dogwood Initiative, 2014, February 5).

Opponents contrasted the democratic illegitimacy of the project's extra-regional elite backers with the results of local elections and referendums. Following the April 2014 referendum in Kitimat, in which 58% of voting residents in the proposed pipeline terminus rejected the project 4 months after the JRP had approved it, Dogwood's Kai Nagata issued a blog post entitled "Let BC Vote." In it, Nagata advocated for the initiation of a province-wide direct ballot initiative on the grounds that the Kitimat referendum had proven that the anti-Gateway movement represented the will of British Columbians. Nagata argued that the referendum was a "battle between David and Goliath" in which "David [had] won," and celebrated the ability of local residents and grassroots activists to defeat Enbridge, the powerful energy company from outside the region:

> For weeks, a small troop of local volunteers… were knocking on doors and asking neighbors about their hopes and dreams for Kitimat. The group had $200 in the bank—just enough for some leaflets and handmade signs. Meanwhile, jets were flying in Enbridge executives from Calgary. As the company's paid canvassers fanned out across town, a relentless barrage of slick advertisements commanded residents to vote "YES" to a crude oil export terminal on their doorstep... In the end, the people in B.C. with the most to gain from Northern Gateway said "no thanks"… (Nagata, 2014, April 12).

Unsurprisingly, when federal cabinet issued Gateway's final approval in June 2014, opponents were quick to dismiss both the symbolic authority and practical efficacy of the government's decision. One Sierra Club BC (2014) press release denounced Cabinet approval as affirmation that "the Federal government is much more interested in representing the interests of oil corporations than the interests of ordinary British Columbians." Nevertheless, the government's announcement "changes nothing":

> The federal government has set itself on a collision course with the wall of opposition to the Enbridge pipeline and tankers project. British Columbians from all walks of life—including B.C.'s municipalities, First Nations, unions, businesses, and the provincial government—who care deeply about the communities and the province in which they live, have said no to Enbridge in no uncertain terms …. (Sierra Club BC, 2014, June).

CONCLUSION

Today, the Northern Gateway project is dead. In the 2015 federal election, the Conservatives were defeated by Justin Trudeau's Federal Liberals, whose party made significant electoral inroads in BC (Hume et al., 2015, October 19). Trudeau had campaigned to roll back the Harper government's strident extractivist agenda, promising to implement improved resource project reviews, develop a meaningful federal response to climate change, and pursue reconciliation with First Nations (Hume, 2016, January 13). A few months later, the Supreme Court sided with Gateway's Indigenous opponents, overturning the JRP ruling on the grounds that affected communities had been insufficiently consulted (Do, 2015, June 29). Shortly after, the new government formally rejected Gateway, whose resurrection would have required the initiation of another lengthy federal review process to ensure that the government had fulfilled its constitutional responsibility to consult and accommodate First Nations (Tasker, 2016, November 29). Though the rejection of Gateway by the courts was likely the proximate cause of the Liberal government's ultimate "rejection" of the project, one should not underestimate the underlying influence of the anti-Gateway coalition. After all, initiating another project review would have undermined Trudeau's newly won electoral support in BC, while inviting the negative press that would come with publicly battling a powerful,

organized and highly motivated regional social movement, many of whose members had just voted for him.

The ultimate demise of a project that had been strongly supported by many of the most powerful elites in the country indicates the importance of discourses related to ecological interdependence with particular places in the political framing of environmental politics. By articulating the Gateway project with a regional spatial frame, opponents were able to rearticulate popular understandings of the project's distribution of risk and benefit. From being the boon to the national interest described by its supporters, Gateway was transformed into a sinister conspiracy of extra-regional elites attacking the region and overriding its democratic sovereignty.

In our study, analyzing the concrete communications strategies of discourse coalitions emphasizes how activists use collective action frames to generate populist storylines designed to mobilize diverse movement constituents around a shared objective. In particular, our findings demonstrate how a focus on local places and spaces provided discursive affinities between different actors' demands. These affinities allowed Gateway to emerge as an empty signifier through which concerns about ecological sustainability, economic well-being, Indigenous sovereignty, democratic accountability, and social justice could be articulated into a common equivalential chain. This contributed to the emergence of a diverse and robust movement of First Nations, environmentalists, local settler communities and regional governments. Following Laclau, these actors came to construct a contingent popular identity based upon their mutual confrontation with extra-regional elites threatening their local economies, cultures, and communities.

As political theorists like Mouffe (2018) and public intellectuals like (Frank, 2018) argue, there is both historical precedence and theoretical justification for contemporary left populisms to challenge the ongoing rise of Right Populism not just in Canada but around the globe. Similarly, our study indicates that populism is not rhetorical terrain which must inevitably be ceded to the nationalist right when it comes to environmental and energy politics. That Gateway opponents were able to replicate yet reframe the same populist invasion narrative developed by Gateway's proponents gestures toward the malleability of populist tropes, and the potential for activists to articulate a counter-hegemonic populist politics. However, building on this potential may require acknowledging the limitations of Northern Gateway's regional ecological popular opposition.

First, one should not overstate the strength of the politically contingent alliances made between the project's First Nation and settler opponents. On the one hand, shared recognition of mutual interdependences with local places enabled heterogeneous regional actors to unite in opposition to extra-regional elites. This is not to imply that the place-based identities motivating settler opponents were of a kind with the deep and long-standing reciprocal relations between Indigenous peoples and their traditional territories that scholars like Coulthard (2014) describe. Yet there was clearly a discursive affinity between this normativity and the connections to regional place motivating settler opponents which enabled the emergence of a shared populist storyline.

However, the connections to place motivating settler opponents are, at least in part, rooted in the same settler colonial political economy which contemporary decolonial politics seek to transcend. As such, appeals to regional democratic sovereignty and economic well-being motivating local settler communities were often embedded in the very systems of property relations, territorial expropriation, and settler colonial governance at the heart of much contemporary discontent amongst Indigenous peoples. If settler communities and environmentalists are to grow their alliance with some Indigenous communities into a broader counterhegemonic challenge to Canadian extractivism, they will have to seriously consider how to constitute a meaningful politics of Indigenous reconciliation that goes beyond short-term alliances against specific projects.

Yet taking this path could complicate attempts to overcome a second limitation of the anti-Gateway movement. While an overwhelming focus on the regional and local enabled the articulation of particular populist narratives, it foreclosed others. Notably, said regional focus largely overshadowed broader discussions of the oil sands' contribution to climate change, the broadly inequitable structure of Canada's oil and gas industry, and the need for the Canadian state to coordinate a rapid post-carbon transition. While such concerns were certainly discussed—at times with great force—overall they played second fiddle to those oriented around regional well-being. This approach helped motivate diverse regional actors to fight against a particular local project that threatened local identities, ecologies and economies. But it did not provide a compelling platform for launching a broader conversation with Canadians outside of British Columbia about the need for a rapid course reversal in the country's drive to dramatically increase fossil fuel production. At some point, anti-extractivist activists will need to mobilize for meaningful federal policy to transition off fossil fuels, whether by phasing out oil sands production, funding renewable energy, or making massive investments in public transportation and green infrastructure. And it is difficult to see how any of this would be politically achievable without engaging with—and transforming—the Canadian state.

Contemporary political realities point in this direction. Today national support for tar sands expansion remains high, and in some ways the Liberals have emerged as industry's new best friend. As of writing, Trudeau has "approved several contentious bitumen transport and export market diversification projects, including the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain" Expansion project in BC (Neubauer, 2019, p. 17). Recently his government has even gone so far as to nationalize that project with $4.5 billion of public money, buying it from Kinder Morgan—a Texas oil company—just as it was looking to abandon the project in the face of continuing regional opposition in British Columbia (Chase et al., 2018). Liberals have also welcomed the Trump administration's approval of the Keystone XL project meant to connect Alberta bitumen with refineries in the Gulf. If completed, these projects will likely lead to major expansions in upstream bitumen production, potentially undermining attempts to lower national greenhouse gas emissions (Clarke et al., 2013). They have also further strained relations with Indigenous communities, some of which have opposed Kinder Morgan on grounds similar to those which motivated the anti-Gateway opposition.

In advocating for these projects, the Trudeau Liberals and other industry defenders in the media and civil society have doubled down on their claims that expanded oil and gas production is an essential precursor to maintaining national prosperity and serving the national interest. According to recent polls, a majority of Canadians across the country believe these claims (Bricker, 2018). Meanwhile, national emissions continue to grow at an alarming pace.

All this demonstrates the need for a serious Federal politics that can challenge that of extractivism's many supporters. In some respects, this should be easy. By design, the contemporary structure of Canada's oil and gas industry disproportionately benefits political and economic elites at the expense of ordinary workers and taxpayers (Neubauer, 2019). Yet establishing a national ecological popular politics will certainly complicate any attempt by settler environmentalists to strengthen their nascent alliance with Indigenous communities, as any simplistic attempt to wave the flag or draw upon Canada's colonial heritage runs the risk of alienating the latter. This calls into question how and if any emergent Canadian identity can be articulated with a meaningful political vision of what a left-progressive, ecologically sustainable, and socially just Canada reconciled with Indigenous peoples could be. And that involves not just a new discursive storyline, but a policy blueprint for a fundamentally transformed political economy. That's a high bar to reach. But it is one Canada's anti-extractivist movement may need to consider if it is to have any hope of reversing the catastrophic course their country currently finds itself on.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated for this study are available on request to the corresponding author.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

RN conceived of and designed the study, collected, coded and analyzed materials, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. RN and SG developed analytical and theoretical framework and edited the manuscript. SG wrote sections of the manuscript.

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"Tied to the Land": Climate Change Activism Among U.S. Hunters and Fishers

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This paper investigates climate change activism among sportsmen and sportswomen, or hunters and fishers—a politically conservative group with historically deep roots to environmental conservation. Recently members of this community have created an NGO that focuses solely on climate change action—Conservation Hawks—and several other long-standing organizations have begun to include climate communication and activism within their mission. This article draws on fieldwork conducted throughout the rural western U.S., including ethnographic interviews with sportsmen/sportswomen, participant observation in hunter education courses and conservation events, and publicly-available media produced by hunting-oriented conservation organizations. Using an ethnographic and discourse analytic approach, I find that three primary discursive practices are particularly important within hunting and fishing community—a performed closeness to wildlife and wild places, a privileging of experiential and embodied epistemologies, and a valorization of the past wilderness. In both interviews and sportsmen-oriented media, these discourses can be drawn on when creating doubt and climate skepticism. Increasingly, however, activist groups use the same rhetorical strategies to promote climate change action. I argue that such shared discursive practices can thus mobilize collective identities, challenge political polarization, and create new political subjectivities around climate change in the rural western United States. I also argue that these discursive practices shape the actions portrayed as reasonable responses to the climate crisis within this community. This analysis thus illuminates climate activism within an understudied group, showing the depth of the civic movement on climate change. It also specifically highlights the importance of shared discursive practices to both climate skepticism and climate activism among one politically-conservative group in the United States, rural white hunters, and fishers.

Keywords: climate change activism, hunting, fishing, conservation, discursive practices

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INTRODUCTION

As the impacts of a warming climate are increasingly felt around the world, a number of social movements have arisen to address the urgent need for action. Scholars of the environmental social sciences have thus become more and more interested in describing environmental social movements and civic action on several levels: their demographics (Tindall et al., 2003), the framing and other rhetorical strategies used (Alkon et al., 2013; Levy and Zint, 2013), the cognitive and

affective precursors of activism (Roser-Renouf et al., 2014; Bamberg et al., 2015), and their efficacy (Han and Barnett-Loro, 2018). This research on climate change activism, however, has often focused on large movements, or those receiving the most media attention (Cox and Schwarze, 2015; Doyle et al., 2017). The urgency of the climate crisis, however, has led to climate change activism and social movements arising in many more contexts than those that are well-studied, and this article aims to analyze one such movement, that emerging among rural hunters and fishers in the United States. This paper thus endeavors to broaden our understanding of the civic movement for climate change action by examining community-based climate change activism among a historically politically-conservative community—sportsmen and women in the western United States.

Sportsmen and women in the U.S. are a community of people who view hunting and fishing activities as a central part of their identity. In addition, sportsmen portray a strong affiliation to firearms, a connection to the outdoors, an interest in conservation, and—although a small but growing number are not white men—an orientation to rural white masculinity. Due in part to links between rurality, gun culture, and conservative political ideology in the United States, sportsmen and women have primarily been associated with politically-conservative parties and policies (National Wildlife Foundation, 2012). They have also, however, long held themselves to be dedicated conservationists, and in fact there are a number of sportsmen-run and -funded non-governmental organizations that complete conservation-related projects throughout the United States. The affiliation of environmentalism and left-wing political ideology in the United States has caused sportsmen and women to feel distanced from the goals of the larger environmental movement, however, and many contemporary hunters and fishers view environmentalists as misguided, lacking a true understanding of the environment they are trying to protect. Climate change skepticism has also been widespread within this community, which is largely comprised of older white men. According to a U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife's 2011 survey, over 90% of those who purchased hunting licenses in that year were men, and 96% were white. The prevalence of climate skepticism within the community is also exacerbated by the polarized perception of the climate crisis in the United States by partisan affiliation (Dunlap et al., 2016).

Recently, however, there has been a growing social movement among hunters and fishers for climate change action. Members of the hunting and fishing community have created an NGO that focuses solely on combatting climate change, called Conservation Hawks, and several other long-standing organizations have begun to include climate communication and activism within their missions. This article analyzes the emergent climate action movement within the hunting and fishing community from an ethnographic and discourse analytic framework. These methods allow for the analysis of micro- and macro-levels of linguistic structure and can illuminate how identities are created and negotiated through the discourses surrounding hunting and fishing (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Fairclough, 2013). Not only are hunters and fishers a large and historically-active group in conservation activities (Altherr and Reiger, 1995), but their ties to both political conservatism and environmental conservation demonstrate the importance of community-level analyses of conservation discourses and activism, which can be overlooked in broader approaches.

Furthermore, hunters and fishers in the United States have a long history of impacting U.S. conservation and are very engaged in the contemporary dialogues around the management of wildlife and wild lands (Reiger, 1975). Sportsmen are a politically-important group in the western, less-populated states, and have shown, through collective action, that they can impact public policy debates, such as the one surrounding the federal ownership and management of lands within the U.S. (Randall, 2019). This community therefore illustrates the potential of climate change activism which arises out of other movements through the mobilization of shared identities. By examining the discursive practices of an emerging climate change movement within an already politically-active community, such as hunters and fishers, this paper endeavors to show the potential for communication practices to be a "site for performing engagement" with climate change politics (Carvalho et al., 2017), which can also set the stage for further understanding how the historical context of collective action, in this community, can "translate opinion and action into political power," as called for by Han and Barnett-Loro (2018, p. 2).

The paper proceeds as follows. I first briefly review the scholarship on identity and environmental practices and ideologies, describe the conservation movement within the hunting and fishing community, and explain the ethnographic context and the process of data collection and analysis taken in this study. I then analyze the mobilization of three discursive practices fundamental to the hunting and fishing community—the portrayal of closeness and connection with the more-than-human world; the privileging of embodied and experiential knowledge; and the prioritization of the wilderness past—within discourses of climate skepticism and climate action. I next discuss the potential for such discursive practices to create new political subjectivities through the mobilization of the shared hunting and fishing identity and discuss what that means for the climate change solutions pursued by hunters and fishers. I find that these shared practices form the basis of both discourses of climate skepticism as well as climate activism within this politically-conservative group. In addition, I argue that the use of such shared discursive practices within this community illustrates the potential of these practices to mobilize collective identities, challenge political polarization, and create new political subjectivities around climate change in the rural western United States.

IDENTITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES AND IDEOLOGIES

Much scholarship has examined the relationship of individual identities to environmental beliefs or actions (Sparks and Shepherd, 1992; Sparks et al., 1995; Whitmarsh and O'Neill, 2010; Carfora et al., 2017)—finding that social identity is quite

important to these beliefs and actions in a general sense, as well as to those specifically around climate change (Unsworth and Fielding, 2014). In the United States, for instance, researchers have shown that women tend to care about climate change more than men (McCright, 2010), that white men tend to be the least concerned (McCright and Dunlap, 2011), that partisan identification has a large impact (Davidson and Haan, 2012). In addition, scholars have shown that some identification categories—such as the labels "environmentalist" or "activist"—can be important to engagement with climate change politics (Roser-Renouf et al., 2014; Brick and Lai, 2018). With the exception of work on environmentalist and activist identities, however, most research in this area investigates social identity through macro-level demographic classifications, such as age, gender, ethnic or racial identity, political affiliation, and so on, rather than the identity categories that are most meaningful to communities themselves (McCright and Dunlap, 2011; Goebbert et al., 2012; Swim et al., 2018). This type of research can obscure the considerable variation in environmental ideologies and practices that exists within broad demographic categories (Howe et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2018). Furthermore, this research is also limited by assuming "conservation" as a shared concept across communities of practice, even though the meaning of "conservation" has been shown to vary widely across cultures and communities and even within academic work on the topic (Mace, 2014; Colloff et al., 2017). In addition, while much of this research implicitly involves the role of language in the reproduction and transmission of environmental ideologies, few studies explicitly analyze language use beyond thematic or content analysis. Finally, much of this research focuses on individual-level behaviors, and primarily those having to do with consumption and lifestyle, rather than the "political fabric of climate change" (Carvalho et al., 2017), which civic movements endeavor to affect. As scholars of environmental communication examine social movements, scholars have pointed out the need to go beyond the typical analysis of individual actors to understand the formation of collective power within these movements (Han and Barnett-Loro, 2018).

Meanwhile, linguists have long recognized language and communication to be constitutive of identities and social action, but have only just begun to examine collective action contexts (Bonilla and Rosa, 2015) and environmental beliefs and actions (Stibbe, 2014). This article builds on that emerging scholarship by examining the relationship between discursive practices, identity, and environmental activism from an ethnographic and discourse analytic lens, focusing on sportsmen and women, a group which complicates typical macro-level approaches to the relationship of identity and environmental practices. The majority of hunters and fishers, for instance, are older white men who are politically conservative. These identity categories, at the macro-level, have been shown to be less concerned about climate change (McCright and Dunlap, 2011), and less likely to participate in pro-environmental behaviors (Dietz et al., 2002). Sportsmen and women, however, express strong support for environmental conservation—something they portray as fundamental to the hunting and fishing identity—and see themselves as the original conservationists in the United States. They also engage in pro-environmental behaviors, primarily through donating to conservation groups and participating in volunteer activities with those groups. The hunting and fishing community thus challenges traditional macro-level approaches to identity and environmental ideologies and practices, showing the need to examine the discursive practices of local groups within broader research on environmental social movements. Furthermore, sportsman climate activists use a number of rhetorical strategies to explicitly challenge the polarization of climate change views within the hunting and fishing community. An analysis of the discursive practices of climate activists within this politically-conservative group can add to understandings of ways in which political polarization can be disrupted (Lucas and Warman, 2018) and new political subjectivities can be created around climate change action in the rural western United States.

SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN IN THE U.S

As a community, hunters and fishers have a long history of participating in collective action for the conservation of wildlife and wild lands. In fact, the current version of the "sportsman" identity arose near the end of the nineteenth century primarily as a "hunter/naturalist"—someone who was both a student of nature as well as a hunter and/or fisher (Altherr and Reiger, 1995). At that time, the United States was experiencing extreme losses in wildlife numbers. Of the earlier 60 million American bison, for example, only a few hundred remained (Jones, 2015). The hunter/naturalist persona thus, from its earliest instantiation, included a strong focus on understanding wildlife and advocating for their conservation, which coincided with and reinforced early efforts to conserve these wildlife populations. Theodore Roosevelt, for example, said "All hunters should be nature lovers. It is to be hoped that the days of more wasteful, boastful slaughter are past and that from now on the hunter will stand foremost in working for the preservation and perpetuation of wild life" (Jones, 2015, p. 278). A number of ideals emerged from these early conservation efforts, contemporarily referred to as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, and are still used by governmental regulatory agencies as well as citizen conservation groups (Altherr, 1978; Geist et al., 2001; Organ et al., 2012). These principles banned the sale of game meat and prioritized management for the maintenance of healthy wildlife populations. Hunter/naturalists of the time also took several other actions in order to promote the conservation of wildlife, which included lobbying for the creation of national parks and promoting the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937—a law imposing an 11% tax on firearms and other hunting equipment. These efforts have been quite effective, according to members of the community, providing funding for state Divisions of Fish and Wildlife and some federal lands administrations, among other things, and leading to a significant recovery in wildlife populations. The Pittman-Robertson Act has been amended several times, but still remains in effect, generating hundreds of millions of dollars a year that supporters say allow for substantial habitat preservation and other conservation efforts (United States Department of the Interior, 2018).

Hunter/naturalists of the early twentieth century drew on and valorized indigenous knowledge, but the constructed identity of the sportsman was a fundamentally white and

middle-class identity. Indigenous hunters were thus not seen as hunter/naturalists (Vibert, 1996; Jones, 2015), and native American subsistence hunters were portrayed as being overly "savage," a representation that was aligned with racist ideologies of the time. Upper middle-class hunters positioned themselves as ethical hunters—"true" sportsmen—and in opposition to those they represented as insufficiently moral: market hunters, subsistence hunters, and wanton adventurers. Through this contrast, hunter/naturalists portrayed themselves as the true champions of wildlife conservation, justifying policies changing hunting access throughout the nation, including the removal of lands from Native American control for wildlife conservation purposes (Reiger, 1975; Dray, 2018).

Contemporary hunters and anglers in the United States, sometimes called sportsmen (a term which is often used to refer to both men and women, and less commonly used in the feminine form, "sportswomen"), are a group of people for whom hunting and fishing forms a large part of their identity. Although overall numbers of hunters in the U.S. have declined since 1980 (Larson et al., 2014), which is a concern for many within the community, there were 11.5 million people who participated in hunting activities in the United States in 2016 (United States Fish Wildlife Service, 2016), and 35.8 million people who fished. In order to get a hunting license in the United States, applicants must first pass a hunter education course, which is administered on a state level but is semi-standardized across states. The courses are generally instructed by volunteers from the community, and the curriculum was developed collaboratively between the National Rifle Association (NRA) and state wildlife management institutions. In addition to the education process, the group is unified through media outlets, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community events. Overall, the hunting and angling community tends to be politically conservative (National Wildlife Foundation, 2012), stemming in part from an affiliation with rural areas as well as a strong orientation to firearm access and ties to the NRA. At the recent Hunting and Conservation Expos in Salt Lake City, Utah, for instance, many keynote speakers had been, or continued to be, a part of Donald Trump's presidential administration, such as Ryan Zinke in 2017 and Donald Trump Jr. in 2018. In 2019 Donald Trump Jr. also spoke along with the Republican governor of Utah. Several other organizations, such as Ted Nugent's Hunter Nation and the NRA, also work to strengthen the links between the hunting identity and right-wing political ideologies. Despite associations of mainstream environmentalism with the political left wing, however, hunters and anglers strongly assert their commitment to conservation and their legacy of positive impacts on wildlife communities. In addition, recently several organizations within the community have opposed certain aspects of the U.S. Republican party's policy platform, such as challenging the initiative to transfer ownership of federally-held public lands to state or private ownership.

The community has also given birth to an emerging movement for climate change action. In 2009, a number of hunting- and fishing-oriented NGOs created a report called "Beyond Season's End" for dissemination to congress as well as the public. This report detailed the current and predicted effects of climate change on wildlife species and hunting and fishing opportunities and described suggested plans for both mitigation and adaptation. Since that report, many longstanding groups with extensive memberships, such as Ducks Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Trout Unlimited, the Wild Sheep Foundation, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and so on, have begun to focus more on climate change. Their efforts include communication—creating media, educating hunters, lobbying politicians, and urging their members to speak to their elected officials—opposition to new oil and gas leases on public lands, and adaptation measures, such as fire prevention, wetland creation/restoration, and drought protection. Moreover, the NGO Conservation Hawks was founded in 2011 by a Montana-based hunter and fisher named Todd Tanner. Conservation Hawks pursues the exclusive goal of mobilizing sportsmen to urge action on climate change, has conducted workshops around the mountain west, especially in Montana, and has created extensive media which communicates the risks of climate change to hunters, including a documentary that recently premiered on the Outdoor Channel.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This article draws on fieldwork I conducted throughout the rural western U.S. From 2015 through 2019 I conducted semi-structured ethnographic interviews with 42 hunters, a method which involved conversational interviews that took place in naturalistic settings and ranged from informal exchanges to formally-arranged audio-recorded dialogues (Byram et al., 1996). In addition, I carried out participant observation in hunter education courses, a youth pheasant hunt, and conservation events and fundraising activities. Of the hunters who participated in this study, the majority were men (32 of 42), white (40 of 42), and over 50 years old (22 of 42), a demographic breakdown which is typical of the broader hunting community: the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife's 2011 survey found that over 90% of those who purchased hunting licenses in 2011 were men, and 96% were white. Participants were largely recruited either through their participation in hunting mentorship groups or via the snowball sampling method. The hunting mentorship NGO through which I recruited many of my participants, the First Hunt Foundation, maintains publicly-available lists of active volunteers who are willing to serve as mentors. After receiving permission from the NGO's director, I contacted volunteers to ask if they would be willing to be interviewed. During interviews, I also asked if participants knew others who would be interested in participating. While many of the younger hunters who participated in my interviews were more formally-educated than the older generation—having completed undergraduate or advanced degrees in natural sciences—almost all affiliated with the term *sportsman*, and most were active members of hunting-oriented NGOs. After collecting over 60 h of audio and video recordings of interviews and hunting activities, several research assistants and I coded all of the interviews and field notes for organizing themes. We first created an index of the recordings,

a time-stamped outline of each interview which covered content as well as salient linguistic resources. From this outline, we then used a process of open-coding to collect the themes that emerged inductively during data collection and the activity of indexing interviews and reflecting on field notes. During this process, we identified several key recurring ideas. The list of key codes ultimately included: perceived anti-hunter sentiment/lack of understanding from non-hunters; indigeneity; gender; rurality vs. urbanity; the importance of conservation; hunting ethics; age and generation, distance/closeness to nature, nostalgia for the past wilderness; authentic hunter identity; relationships to food; relationships to the environment/wildlife/landscape; and the importance of embodied experience. From this list of codes, I selected the key themes for the analysis presented here, focusing specifically on sections of the interviews that dealt with climate change. I then conducted a more focused analysis around the three themes that emerged as most important during these discussions: closeness to nature, embodied experience, and nostalgia for the wilderness past. I selected crucial segments in which these themes emerged for transcription and close discourse analysis. I then analyzed these segments with the following research questions in mind: (1) how is the sportsman identity constructed and mobilized through its discursive practices? and (2) how are these discursive practices mobilized in the context of climate skepticism as well as climate action?

While ethnographic interviews illuminated the discursive foundations of the sportsman identity, within the discussions of climate change, participants provided mostly illustrations of climate denial discourses. The majority of my interviewees, like many older rural, white men (Dunlap et al., 2016), were still skeptical of anthropogenic climate change. Among the sportsmen who were concerned about the issue—many of those under 40 years old, for instance—several recommended that I look at a few NGOs which have been focusing at least part of their efforts on climate change recently and which function as the center of climate change activism within the hunting and fishing community. To that end, I collected publicly-available media produced about climate change by the recommended organizations—the conservation-related NGOs Conservation Hawks, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, and Ducks Unlimited. My research assistants and I conducted a similar coding process for this media data, focusing especially on themes that had already emerged as relevant during ethnographic interviews.

Conservation Hawks was founded in 2011 by a Montana sportsman with the exclusive goal of communicating climate science to other hunters and fishers. As part of this mission, the organization holds workshops, creates media, and urges community engagement with politicians around the topic of climate change. The second organization, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, has existed since 2000 and works on a number of conservation issues of concern to the hunting and fishing community, such as the protection of public lands, hunting access on federal lands, the protection of wildlife species, and recently, climate change mitigation and adaptation. To those ends, TRCP is primarily a lobbying institution, working with members of congress to represent the interests of sportsmen and women. Backcountry Hunters and Anglers and Ducks Unlimited, in contrast, are both membership organizations that work to protect wildlife and their habitats, both at the policy level and the local, material level. All of these NGOs use several social media platforms as well as producing media and distributing it through other formats, such as YouTube or print magazines.

In order to conduct an analysis of the climate change activist discourses produced by these organizations, I collected climate change-focused media from the NGOs' websites and social media, especially Instagram accounts, as Instagram is the most popular platform for hunting personalities and brands. All materials collected for analysis were publicly-available, but I obtained consent for any media that would be reproduced. Social media interactions, because they allow for responses to the content, proved to be an especially rich site in which to observe interactions surrounding climate change activism and the ways in which community members take stances about the issue. I then analyzed these communications as well as the responses to that media (when available), focusing on the discursive strategies which had previously emerged as salient within the ethnographic interviews.

Across both interviews and media, I take a discourse analytic approach to analyzing the constitution of the sportsman identity—seeing each act of communication as a form of stance-taking that reinforces and reinscribes identities (Du Bois, 2007). This framework holds identities to be dynamic and created from below, rather than simply imposed from above (cf. Kahan et al., 2012), and it draws heavily on critical discourse analytic understandings of how subjects position themselves with respect to social and political issues through their communication practices (Fairclough, 1990).

My analysis is also informed by my previous experiences with the hunting and fishing community. I grew up as part of a family that occasionally participated in hunting activities and in a rural area where hunting is very common. I have never hunted myself, but as a researcher who identifies as a part of a rural community, and in some ways affiliated with sportsmen and women, I aim to create an analysis which is a respectful representation of climate change activism within the hunting and fishing community, while, at the same time, calling attention to potentially problematic discourses and practices. To that end, throughout the research planning and analysis process, I discussed the findings and interpretations with both participants and other hunters and fishers. I also intend for my findings to be shared with members of the community as well as academic audiences.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE HUNTING/FISHING IDENTITY

The discursive foundations of the sportsman identity have been discussed at length elsewhere (Herman, 2014; Love-Nichols, 2020), but for the purposes of this article, it is important to note that that the sportsman identity is closely related to other white, rural, "country" identities (Johnstone, 1999; Herman, 2014), but is distinguished discursively in three main ways. The first

foundation of the sportsman identity is the ideology that hunters and fishers have a strong connection to the outdoor world—in contrast with others living in a modern world—because of the activities of hunting and fishing, which allow them to still be a part of the "outdoors." Building from this, the second ideology constituting the sportsman ideology is the importance of experiential and embodied knowledge, rather than "removed" scientific ways of knowing. Lastly, the hunting and fishing community is constructed through a valorization of the wilderness past within environmental communications.

COMMUNICATING CLIMATE SKEPTICISM

These discursive foundations are drawn on in both climate change skepticism and the emerging climate change movement within the hunting and angling community. The next few examples will illustrate how these constitutive discursive practices are mobilized in the context of climate skeptic discourses, which are historically common among rural, politically-conservative communities (Dunlap et al., 2016). The ideology of hunters' closeness to nature, for instance, is often drawn on in opposition to environmentalists, who were described by interviewees as people who meant well but were misled due to their lack of true connection with the outdoor world. An illustration of the mobilization of this ideology within climate change discourses occurs in the first example, in which a commenter expresses their doubt that humans could be causing the effects of climate change because they are a "part of nature" rather than above it. This comment was posted on January 19, 2019, in response to an Instagram post by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (**Figure 1**, discussed in detail later on), which encouraged climate change action by hunters. In the original post, the TRCP argues that climate change is "altering migration patterns and mating seasons, stressing native species, and lengthening wildfire seasons," and urges hunters to not ignore the problem but to be "part of the conversation addressing the issue." In response, the commenter, jd13756, expresses that those who believe in anthropogenic climate change must consider themselves "above" and "not part of nature," a view which they consider ludicrous.

> *jd13756: Comon bro?! That's really all I can say. So complex. Only humans can be so arrogant to think they are above and not part of nature and as a result are the cause of "climate change".*
> *(comment on TRCP Instagram post Jan 19, 2018)*

This comment showcases a common trend among mainstream climate change skeptical discourses, which is to portray humans as incapable of causing changes to global climate patterns. While this ideology is often found in discourses outside the hunting community, the commenter here specifically links their view to the ideology that humans are a "part of nature" and that to think otherwise would be "arrogant," thus challenging climate scientists' demarcation rhetoric (Taylor, 1991).

Similarly, many sportsmen also drew on the second discursive foundation of the hunting identity—privileging experiential epistemologies—when expressing skepticism about anthropogenic climate change in both ethnographic interviews with me as well as opposition to climate change activism on social media. For example, in one interview, when asked about whether hunters consider climate change to be a problem, an older hunter in western Washington answered in the following way:

> *What do you call climate change in your world. Global warming, yeah the earth is tipping*[1]*. Read back if you study any type of earth*

[1]This portrayal could be attributable to a misunderstanding of geomagnetic reversal—the phenomenon in which the earth's magnetic field reverses (Banerjee, 2001), as it is not a climate denial discourse that I have previously encountered.

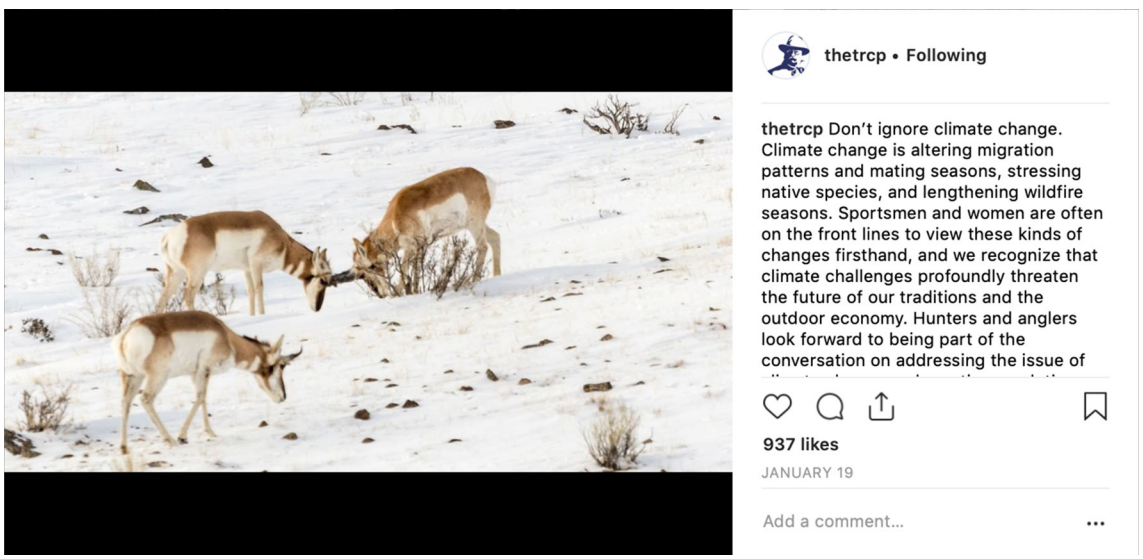

FIGURE 1 | Instagram post by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (https://www.instagram.com/p/Bs08_QXDPIb/; used with permission).

> *history, it's happened like four times, the earth has flipped over. Everything that was warm is cold. Everything that's cold is warm. (Interviewer: So it's like some sort of, like a natural cycle?) It's a natural cycle. You know. We can study it. We can predict it. We can blame somebody. We can't stop it. There's nothing you can do but bitch about it. I'm aware of that because I fish. I salmon fish. I'm aware that the fish are coming in later and later every year. The first are later, because the silvers should be in by now. They're not here yet.*

In his response, this interviewee, who described himself as very politically conservative, portrays climate change as an event which has occurred before and that is attributable, in his opinion, to the earth having "flipped over." The hunter does observe changes in fish behavior, and further seems to suggest that he has experienced changes in temperatures by saying "global warming, yeah the earth is tipping." Although the explanations he gives for these observations can be perceived as farfetched, he draws primarily on his own experiences as the foundation for his beliefs, saying "I'm aware of that because I fish." He agrees with my clarification that he's attributing climate change to "some sort of, like a natural cycle" and produces an understanding of climate change as not created by human activity, as taking place on a very long timescale, and as, at least at the moment, primarily impacting salmon and salmon fishers. The hunter's construction of climate change also positions himself, and by extension, other hunters and fishers, as closest to, and most knowledgeable about, a changing climate. He contrasts what climate change means in "your world"—the urban, presumably politically-liberal world of a university—with his world, which he portrays as closest to the salmon. What he knows about climate change, he says, is due to his contact with fish, and from this perspective, he understands that humanity does not have the power to impact "natural cycles" such as climate change. He draws a parallel between what "we" can do: "study it," "predict it," "blame somebody;" contrasting that with what we cannot do: "stop it." He then shifts into the generic second person to discuss what "you" can do, which is "bitch about it."

Likewise, the commenter in the next excerpt, who is also responding in opposition to the above-mentioned Instagram post by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (**Figure 1**), draws on embodied and firsthand experience to dispute the renewability of wind power, saying that they "see wind turbines … every day" and they are "not 100% renewable."

> *geojohn.hutch: I see the wind turbines in my backyard every day and they surely are not 100% renewable. The problem is that gigantic footprint where wind farms exist will NEVER be the same. I'd rather see the co2 rise in ppm (PPM!) within the atmosphere before I see our land go to waste so California can buy expensive electricity and stay in deficit and never change the carbon cycle anyways.*
>
> *(comment on TRCP Instagram post Jan 1,9, 2018)*

While in this case the commenter may be interpreting the term "renewable" differently than in the scientific definition, potentially understanding it to mean something like "having no impact," they do it by drawing on their own close embodied experience of seeing wind turbines in their backyard every day. By emphasizing that they personally experience the wind turbines every day, they reinforce their claim to understanding whether or not such structures are "100% renewable." Similarly to the earlier interviewee, this commenter also portrays humans as unable to affect the global climate, saying that California can spend as much money as they want but will "never change the carbon cycle anyways." The commenter also contrasts harms they can experience visually, like "our land go[ing] to waste," with harms that are less available to embodied experience, such as carbon dioxide concentrations rising. They highlight the difficulty of experiencing carbon dioxide increases by first writing "ppm" in lower case, then repeating it in parenthesis in all caps with an exclamation point "(PPM!)" to suggest that it is ridiculous to be concerned about a substance that is measured in parts per million.

Finally, many interviewees and social media commenters also used the third discursive foundation of the hunting identity, a past-focused lens, in their responses to my question about whether they were concerned about climate change. One interviewee, for instance, said the following:

> *Well, I don't disagree that the environment's changing. I mean, the climate's changing. But don't forget in 1900, what was that a hundred and twenty years ago, Niagara Falls froze solid. You've got pictures on the internet, of people standing, on the ice at the bottom of Niagara Falls. In 1900 … So.. You know in a hundred and twenty years we-.. we haven't seen it freeze again, but it's been pretty cold in the winters around here.*

In this response, the interviewee calls back to an event in 1900, portrayed as extraordinary, to suggest that the climate has been changing over a longer time than climate change activists suggest. He begins by agreeing that the environment is indeed changing, though he sets up his opposition to anthropogenic climate change by specifying that he does not disagree with only that part of my question. He then emphasizes a freezing event in 1900 which has not been repeated, pointing out that in the next 120 years Niagara Falls has not frozen again, as evidence that the observed changes in the environment are actually a part of some natural cycle which has been ongoing. An appeal to past events was a common climate skeptic discourse among my interviewees, functioning within one of the most prevalent climate denial discourses throughout the United States—the argument that climate change is a "natural cycle," rather than a problem caused (and presumably solvable) by humans.

Past-focused discourses also often occur through appeals to heroic past hunters. Online commenters, for instance, draw on this type of nostalgia to construct their critiques of climate change concern. For example, in another reply to the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership's Instagram post (**Figure 1**), one commenter draws on the historical figure of Theodore Roosevelt to express skepticism about the phenomenon they describe.

> ***rockymtnoutfitters***: 💪*really trcp... TR would slap you with with some sense right now*🇺🇸
>
> *(comment on TRCP Instagram post Jan 19, 2018)*

In this case, the commenter, rockymtnoutfitters, expresses familiarity with Roosevelt by shortening the name to "TR" and arguing that Roosevelt would disagree strongly with the activist sentiments of the post. Roosevelt is a highly regarded figure in the hunting and fishing community, as seen in the invocation of his name and image by NGOs such as the Theodore Roosevelt Partnership, and he is often portrayed as the first true "sportsman" and the original conservationist. The commenter in this post specifically draws on the figure of Roosevelt in connection with the name of the posting organization, challenging the NGO's invocation of Roosevelt in their name and suggesting that Roosevelt would not, in fact, agree with their actions.

Nostalgia has long been identified as a discursive practice that is particularly effective at mobilizing ideas of shared identity (Boym, 2007), and it has been previously shown to be a prevalent rhetorical strategy in rural U.S. conservative communities (Rich, 2016). In other contexts, however, scholars have identified nostalgia as a powerful and common discursive practice for both progressive and conservative causes (Boym, 2007). As Tannock (1995) points out, "Nostalgic narratives may embody any number of different visions, values, and ideals. And, as a cultural resource or strategy, nostalgia may be put to use in a variety of ways" (p. 454). Within linguistic anthropology, the mobilization of a time-space unit is often analyzed through the lens of the chronotope (Bakhtin, 1981), which illustrates that conceptions of time, space, and figures of personhood are never truly separable. As Boym (2007) recognizes, the yearning for a time or place is often about much more than just a place or a time in the narrow sense: "nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory" (p. 9). In this community, the nostalgic framing of climate change works to tie the sportsman identity to a less modern, less urban time, which is then mobilized both for anti- and pro-environmental stances (as seen in the next the next section).

COMMUNICATING CLIMATE CHANGE CONCERN

In the previous section, I illustrated how the three discursive foundations of the sportsman identity—a constructed closeness to wildlife and wild places, a privileging of experiential and embodied epistemologies, and an idealization of the past wilderness—are mobilized in the service of the denial of anthropogenic climate change among hunters and fishers in the western United States. The same discursive practices illustrated above, however, are also mobilized within the nascent climate action movement to urge engagement on the part of hunters and anglers. The next section shows the use of a performed closeness to nature, valorization of experiential epistemologies, and an orientation toward the rural past within the climate change messages created by hunting conservation NGOs.

Sportsmen's perceived closeness to the natural world, for instance, as well as a nostalgic lens, can be seen in a climate change PSA created by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.[2] This video was created in 2012 as part of the "Beyond Season's End" initiative (detailed above) and explains several changes that climate change will cause to wild life and lands in the western United States. It also argues that carbon emissions must be reduced and urges sportsmen to contact their elected officials. The video begins with a view of the moon from space. Sounds of ducks quacking can be heard and then a recording of Neil Armstrong saying, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Then, in a voice reminiscent Walter Cronkite-style news anchors, the narrator begins to discuss climate change-related facts. The text suggests repeatedly that sportsmen are best-positioned to see the effects of climate change, because, according to the video, they are the ones "who are most often out on the land," and are "often some of the first to notice the effects that our changing climate is having on hunting and fishing opportunities."

Similarly, in the much-disputed Instagram post in **Figure 1**, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership implores hunters not to ignore climate change. The post provides several reasons why hunters, specifically, should care about climate change's effects, and then argues that hunters and anglers should be "a part of the conversation on addressing the issue."

Instagram post by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership[3] (used with permission).

The photo in the post depicts several pronghorns on a snowy field, and the accompanying text argues that hunters and fishers should not ignore climate change. It emphasizes the close relationship between sportsmen and women, by saying that "sportsmen and women are often on the front lines to view these kinds of changes firsthand," and contends that hunter and fishers' close relationship to nature is precisely why they should not ignore climate change, since they, and the "future of [their] traditions" will be profoundly affected.

Relatedly, hunter climate activists also draw on their embodied and participatory knowledge in climate change media aimed at other members of the community. In a short video created by the NGO Conservation Hawks, for instance, several hunters sit around a fire and reminisce about experiences they have had in better times.[4] In the film, the actors emphasize their personal experience both prior to what they see as the effects of climate change, and after, when the effects they mention—fires, storms, and dying forests—have made it impossible for them to continue to hunt in the same places that they used to. The PSA exclusively privileges participatory and embodied epistemologies; it does not mention any climate science whatsoever. If viewers go to the organization's website, they will find some links to scientific studies, but the majority of the NGO's site focuses on highlighting sportsmen's personal experiences with the effects of a changing climate. In an interview, the director of Conservation Hawks also recognizes the privileging of participatory epistemologies as an effective rhetorical strategy, but states that he hopes sportsmen

[2] "Climate Change in the West: Beyond Season's End." Available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYx_ncjJV0U.

[3] https://www.instagram.com/p/Bs08_QXDPIb/

[4] "Conservation Hawks: End of the Season." Available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXrf7v6c6Dw.

will begin to see that their knowledge aligns with that generated by scientific epistemologies. He says, "I think it helps that people are hearing from their peers. When other hunters and other anglers are saying, "hey—you know what, we are seeing this. It jogs perfectly with the science. It's exactly what the scientists are telling us" (O'Brien, 2015).

Lastly, the media produced by hunter climate change activists also situates itself largely in the rural past, instilling sadness for this lost bygone time, rather than fear for an apocalyptic future, like much other climate change media (Killingsworth and Palmer, 2012). For example, both of the previous media examples construct their concern for climate change through a nostalgia for past wildernesses. In the Conservation Hawks video, this occurs through the reminiscence about past hunting experiences, which draw heavily on a positively-evaluated remembered rural past. One man, for instance, reminisces, "Remember when we chased that monster whitetail up Bear Creek?" and another responds, "Man, those were the days." During the first portion of the video, when the three men are recalling past hunting experiences, the conversation is punctuated with laughter and smiles. Halfway through, however, the tone of the conversation changes, with one man saying, "Before the droughts moved in." The next several lines involve the men taking turns sadly describing a negatively evaluated present in which "the beetles ate the forest" and "everything burned," there are numerous "crazy damn storms," and they no longer have anywhere to hunt. By contrasting the positive nostalgia with the hunters' gloom about the present wilderness, the Conservation Hawks video portrays a modern world in which climate change has harmed the wilderness—a chronotope in which the hunters do not fit. The video implies that the hunters' natural context, the time and space in which they belong, is the past they previously described, one in which they were able to fully embody their identity, and which has been taken from them by the ravages of a changing climate.

In the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership PSA, the valorization of the past wilderness emerges through the idealization of the western United States when the "first explorers laid eyes on it." The narrator intones, "when you think of Montana's Yellowstone River, the longest free-flowing stream in the lower forty-eight, you imagine cool, pristine waters with trout hiding behind colorful rocks. And when the explorer John Colter first laid eyes on the region, in 1807, that is what it must have looked like." The text then contrasts this positively-evaluated rural past with the negatively-evaluated present in which "dryer and warmer weather patterns are having much of an effect across the Rockies. In Oregon, we find that fire, a natural force which is often friendly to nature, has taken on a new meaning, and it's not a good one." Furthermore, in the Instagram post seen in **Figure 1**, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership constructs a fear for the future through an orientation to past activities, arguing that "climate challenges profoundly threaten the future of our traditions."

Commenters on social media also participate in this rhetorical practice, drawing on the past, especially figures from the past, in their discussions of climate change. This is especially evident in the following comment (reprinted from above, with response included) and the response to it, a discussion which took place in response to the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership's well-discussed Instagram post from **Figure 1**.

> ***rockymtnoutfitters:*** 💪*really trcp... TR would slap you with with some sense right now*🇺🇸
>
> ***kirbylinck:*** *I think Teddy would agree.*
> *(comment on TRCP Instagram post Jan 19, 2018)*

Here both participants draw on Theodore Roosevelt, positioning the historical conservationist in alignment with their own viewpoints in their debate of this call for action on climate change. In their challenge to the first commenter's skepticism, the second commenter, kirbylinck, also constructs a great familiarity with Roosevelt through the use of the single name, "Teddy." Kirbylinck then argues that Roosevelt would agree that hunters should take action on climate change, situating their stance as continuing past hunters' long history of wildlife protection and conservation action.

Through the use of the shared discursive practices illustrated in this section—emphasizing the closeness of hunters and fishers to nature, privileging embodied and experiential epistemologies, and creating a past-focused lens—hunters within the emergent movement for climate action draw on their shared identity to construct climate change as an urgent problem of critical importance to hunters and fishers, not just urban environmentalists. These practices can also function to disrupt the polarization of climate change stances within politically-conservative groups, which will be discussed in the next section.

NEW POLITICAL SUBJECT POSITIONINGS

The previous section illustrated the discursive mobilization of their collective identity by sportsmen and hunting institutions in order to express both climate skepticism and to encourage climate action. Hunters and fishers are overwhelmingly white (Herman, 2014), largely conservative (National Wildlife Foundation, 2012), and mostly male (United States Fish Wildlife Service, 2016), all populations that have been shown to be particularly resistant to the acceptance of anthropogenic climate change (McCright and Dunlap, 2011). An emerging climate change movement within this community, however, shows the importance of analyzing community-level identities for understanding environmental action and climate change social movements. Furthermore, this mobilization of the hunter identity for climate action is taking place within a community that already wields a great deal of political power (Randall, 2019) and has an existing political network with a long-term record of effectively lobbying for policies on wildlife management, land use regulations, and firearm ownership. The nascent climate change movement builds from this context, using effective rhetorical strategies from other conservation movements by sportsmen and women. Climate change activists, for instance, draw on this collective identity to create new political subject positionings. In some cases, activists explicitly attempt to depolarize the debate around climate change and other environmental issues within this community, urging sportsmen to engage directly

with politicians about the issues, rather than accept the policy positions of elected officials due to their partisan affiliation. This rhetorical strategy has previously been used widely, and effectively, in the support of federally-controlled public lands. The following quote, for instance, is from an article written during the 2018 midterm elections in the United States. In it, the writer for the hunting media website *The MeatEater* sets the stage for urging readers to vote for politicians who support federally-owned and -managed public lands, whichever party they may belong to.

> *If those of us who love to hunt and fish were to build the perfect politician, you would think it would be a fairly straightforward exercise. We all need access, healthy ecosystems, plentiful wildlife, and the right to bear arms, rods, and bows. We need to protect our traditions while also letting the non-hunters in on what we do outside. (O'Brien, 2018)*

Similarly, during the 2018 midterm elections, another popular hunting figure, Randy Newberg, conducted an interview on his podcast with the Democratic senator from Montana, Jon Tester.[5] In the introduction to this interview, he urges his listeners to be more invested in policy and to put less importance on political affiliation—to "get rid of the R, get rid of the D." He highlights his membership in the collective hunting and fishing identity—saying "I come from the party of hunting, fishing, and public access"—to encourage his listeners to complicate the partisan polarization common in the United States.

> *I want people to understand maybe a little insight about how things work back there, about how important it is to be involved in policy, and also the fact that, no matter who the candidate, is they work for you, and you can hold them accountable. They might disregard you, and it's more important to make sure that the candidate understands what is your priority, how important these issues are to you, and get rid of the R, get rid of the D, get rid of the whatever. I'm so tired of that, you guys have heard me go on and on about that, that I come from the party of hunting, fishing, and public access. That's the only way I approach it.*

This strategy, the mobilization of a collective hunting and fishing identity in order to complicate partisan issues, has already shown success in influencing the public policy surrounding federal lands in the western United States. For example, in 2017 a representative from Utah, Jason Chaffetz, had to withdraw a bill that would have transferred millions of acres of federal land to state ownership after public outcry, much of it from the hunting and fishing community (Gentile, 2017). In addition to supporting the federal ownership and management of public lands, these campaigns set the stage for climate activism as they also often oppose oil and gas leases on that land (Williams, 2019).

In some cases, the creation of new subject positionings has moved from media and institutional discourses into the in-person conversations. One of my interviewees, for example, mentioned his admiration for Steven Rinella, a hunting media figure who often partners with TRCP and uses similar rhetorical strategies to Ben O'Brien and Randy Newberg. The interviewee then echoed their anti-polarizing discourses, saying about climate change, "I can't stand agendas either way to be honest. Like I don't like that it's politicized. I don't think it should be. Science should never be politicized, ever … So it's very sad to me that the perception of climate change or whatnot, is a political motivation and not an objective thought."[6]

Optimistically, the use of such complicating discourses by both media figures and individual members of the community illustrates the potential of shared discursive practices to mobilize collective identities and complicate the deliberate polarization of climate change views by right-wing conservative rhetoric. In fact, such discursive strategies do seem to be having an effect, even among some of the climate-skeptical older hunters I spoke to. For example, one interviewee began their response with common climate skeptic discourses, arguing that although the climate is changing (which they know because of their experience hunting elk), these changes are part of a natural cycle that is unrelated to human activities. After about 20 s of expressing their ideas, however, they began to consider the possibility that human-created carbon emissions have been having an impact on the climate:

> *But it's the natural course of events over thousands of years, things have done. You know the ice came in and then it went back. And now it's coming in, and now it's going back again. So, uh… Granted there's a lot of cars on the road, I thought about that yesterday coming back from [redacted]. It was bumper to bumper for nineteen miles. And that's just on a two-lane highway over here. I-5 and all those—. I mean you think about the number of automobiles that are on the road every day twenty-four hours a day. 46. There's a lot of … stuff, lot of stuff. So … how much impact we are having, I don't know.*

After this period, the interviewee relieved the tension by saying "I'll be dead in 20 years so it don't matter [laughter]. I hope not but maybe," and then pivoted back to their experiential knowledge as a hunter, saying, "So I can testify that there's changes, because of the way the elk season's rutting takes place." This interviewee's consideration of the effect of human activity on global climate is, while a departure from their earlier stance, also rooted in their direct experience of observing large numbers of cars creating greenhouse gases, a hopeful indication that such discursive strategies may lead to positive outcomes, even among older, extremely conservative white men.

The association of political conservatism, rural white identity, and opposition to environmental movements and regulations within the United States has been created through a great deal of discursive work on the part of right-wing movements and organizations such as the National Rifle Association. These semiotic links have functioned to increase polarization around the issue of climate change and to create the perception that advocacy for climate change mitigation is a stance taken by urban, politically-liberal people. By reinforcing their collective

[5]Randy Newberg's Hunt Talk Radio EP 096: Hunting Advocacy & Politics with US Senator Jon Tester (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuEkfSfQcPo).

[6]Here the interviewee uses the term *politicized* synonymously with *polarized* to discuss the association of climate change with one political party (as it is often used in non-academic U.S. discourse), rather than in the sense more commonly used in environmental communication literature (Pepermans and Maeseele, 2016).

identity through the use of shared discursive practices, however, hunting climate change activists within the nascent social movement are challenging this constructed polarization and building on their previous successes in the area of public lands to mobilize sportsmen and women to engage with their local and national politicians, educate other members of the community, and undertake mitigation projects to protect wildlife and wild lands from the worst effects of a changing climate.

CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSES

It is important to note that while the mobilization of this collective identity through shared discursive practices has promising implications for climate action in the rural western United States, it can also constrain the solutions that are considered the most reasonable responses to the climate crisis. In this community, for instance, many NGOs already have projects underway to address some effects of a warming planet. The solutions these organizations pursue, however, are shaped by the community's discursive practices. In accordance with the emphasis on closeness with the more-than-human world and a distrust of "removed" environmental science, for instance, the solutions suggested by this community can tend to prioritize adaptation and local policies over mitigation at the level of the nation. Ducks Unlimited, for instance, anticipates rising sea levels which will threaten duck habitat along the coasts. In response, they are purchasing and preserving land slightly inland of the coast, with the expectation that this space can become new wetland once the original habitat is submerged. Other NGOs have undertaken projects installing water features in the desert, to help animals such as big-horned sheep survive prolonged droughts or have participated in fire prevention efforts or habitat restoration after fires occur.

Wildlife Management Institute The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (2009), along with nine other hunting- and fishing-focused institutions, created the aforementioned report called "Beyond Season's End." This booklet detailed the threats of climate change to wildlife and wild lands and focused on the benefits of protecting these resources from the anticipated effects of a changing climate. The report also provided detailed project plans and cost estimates for adaptation proposals. According to this report, tackling the climate crisis entails:

> *"Reducing the loss of wildlife and wildlife habitat resulting from climate change will require these agencies to adopt new strategies that: 1) assist wildlife through actions such as acquiring land for migratory corridors, restoring habitats and assessing the vulnerability and monitoring the condition of wildlife populations; 2) develop landscape-level conservation approaches, particularly those that are habitat-based; 3) partner with parties across jurisdictional boundaries to encourage consistent management practices and achieve landscape-level conservation objectives; 4) engage in efforts such as biological carbon sequestration projects and carbon emission reduction programs to mitigate the consequences of climate change" (p. 11).*

The goals laid out in this report are organized by the category of fish or wildlife they are meant to protect. For fish, the goals include to: "Erect livestock exclusion fencing, Develop off-stream watering facilities; Restore riparian plant communities, Prioritize removal of culverts and other barriers to fish movement" (p. 44), as well as to "Dredge lakes and streams, construct fish barriers, stabilize shorelines, construct settling ponds" (p. 60), and "Install oxygen diffusers in lakes and impoundments" (p. 64). For big game, the proposed projects include a commission that: "Communicates information on wildlife corridors and crucial habitat" and "Uses incentives to encourage landowners to appropriately manage habitats and wildlife corridors on private lands" (p. 83). Finally, for upland birds, the aims are to, among other things: "Develop, research and evaluate test sites to identify biofuel plant mixes that provide quality pheasant habitat" and, "Develop, research and evaluate wildlife-friendly carbon sequestration practices, including species mix, management and harvest tactics and measurement of carbon storage" (p. 93).

In line with the discursive strategies illustrated in this community, the projects listed in "Beyond Season's End" focus primarily on adaptation, and adaptation specifically for game species. The exceptions to this include incorporating mitigation projects into adaptation goals, such as the proposed projects which improve rangeland to sequester carbon and identify biofuel plant mixes that are also good habitat for pheasants. Furthermore, aligned with the discursive construction of the ideal natural world as part of the past, the most plausible climate change solutions are often presented as a return to this past, and modern, technocratic efforts, such as expanding renewable energy, are not commonly portrayed as desirable responses to the climate crisis. These proposals also tend to place less importance on policy solutions at the national level, especially those that target climate change mitigation. This effect is reinforced by the discursive positioning of climate change as mired within a polarized political context. Within this communicative context, very few NGOs urge their members to vote as part of the solution to the climate crisis. The report does, however, include some letters sent on behalf of the hunting community to the United States Senate as a whole, rather than individual senators. This approach further challenges the political polarization of climate change, but also has the effect of restricting the policy solutions presented as possible and desirable to those potentially palatable to both parties.

Together, the actions taken and proposed by these hunting NGOs demonstrate the potential of the mobilization of the hunting identity through shared discursive practices for catalyzing collective action for climate change adaptation. The adaptation projects proposed in "Beyond Season's End" would undoubtedly be quite beneficial to game species and their habitat. The proposed projects, however, also demonstrate that the mobilization of this shared identity can also constrain the climate crisis solutions that are most salient and plausible for members of this community, highlighting some possible actions, and backgrounding others.

CONCLUSION

This article has investigated the emerging movement for climate change activism among sportsmen and sportswomen, or hunters

and fishers—a politically conservative group with historically deep roots to environmental conservation. This nascent social movement is important, since not only are sportsmen and women a historically-active group in conservation policy, but, in addition, their ties to both political conservatism and environmental conservation illustrate the importance of community-level analyses of conservation discourses and activism, which can be overlooked in broader approaches. The article drew on fieldwork conducted throughout the rural western U.S., including ethnographic interviews with sportsmen/sportswomen, participant observation in hunter education courses, and data from publicly-available media about climate change produced by hunting conservation groups. Using an ethnographic and discourse-analytic approach, I found that hunters and fishers use three main discursive practices to express both climate skepticism and climate change activism—a constructed closeness to wildlife and wild places, a privileging of experiential and embodied epistemologies, and a valorization of the past wilderness.

Recognizing the importance of the discursive practices illustrated in this article for performing climate skepticism and climate activism within the hunting and fishing community can broaden scholarly understandings of the interaction of environmental communications and identities within politically-conservative groups in the United States. This article has demonstrated the importance of analyzing these discursive practices, showing that not only are they integral to constructing and performing identities, setting the stage for the nascent climate change activism movement within the hunting and fishing community, they also shape perceptions of reasonable and plausible solutions to environmental crises.

By examining the discursive practices of an emerging climate change movement—a movement taking place within a community that already has collective power, and in many ways, is accustomed to exercising it—this paper also showed the potential for communication practices to be a site for challenging the polarization of climate change stances within the United States and mobilizing engagement with climate politics. It also highlighted the importance of these practices for harnessing the power of existing politically-active communities, such as sportsmen and women in the United States, and set the stage for further understanding how community-specific climate change movements, such as the one analyzed here, can arise through the mobilization of shared discursive practices and identities.

This analysis thus illuminated climate activism within an understudied group, highlighting the depth of the civic movement on climate change. It specifically showed the importance of shared discursive practices to both climate skepticism and climate activism among rural white hunters and fishers, as well as the way NGOs mobilize a collective identity for successful activism within the politically-conservative community. For scholars, this study also highlighted resources which enable climate change activism across the political spectrum, a task which becomes increasingly more important as the potentially catastrophic effects of climate change draw nearer.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated for this study are available on request to the corresponding author.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by University of California, Santa Barbara Human Subjects Committee (Institutional Review Board). The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

JL-N completed the design and implementation of the research, the analysis of the results, and the writing of the manuscript.

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Multiple Players, Different Tactics, a Shared Goal: Building Bridges and Political Agency While Fighting Against Oil and Gas Drilling

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Several individuals, groups, and organizations have been fighting against oil and natural gas drilling in Portuguese territory. The mobilizations intensified in 2015 in Algarve, and since then 13 concession agreements for oil and gas exploitation, extraction, and production have been canceled. Two concessions for gas drilling remain in Leiria, and this is where the movement is presently more active. Inspired by literature on the role of players and tactics in social movements, as well as on the meanings of agency, we examined how individuals, groups, and organizations contested and demanded the cancellation of the existing concession agreements. We conducted 12 in-depth interviews with highly engaged activists. Based on a thematic analysis, we identified six major themes, named as: "multiple players, a shared goal"; "building bridges with multiple players and tactics"; "links to institutional power"; "the route to the court"; "paths to popular mobilization"; and "movement building and power to act." Overall, we identified three broad sets of tactics used by the movement, which shows the diversity of players involved in the struggles against oil and gas in Portugal. The first tactic relates to the social movement organizations' efforts to connect with institutional power, either by seeking to pressure local political leaders or by using public consultations, petitions, and other means for expressing their voices. The second tactic refers to the movement's engagement with legal procedures, and the third relates to the movement's efforts to promote popular mobilization. In terms of actions, the movement engaged in protests and public demonstrations, public consultations, public campaigns with celebrities, leaflet distributions, political pressuring of leaders, awareness campaigns in schools and streets, legal actions, among other approaches. All participants described the movement as successful in achieving its shared goal "to cancel oil and gas concessions" and attributed such a success to the movement's ability to combine different strategies and tactics. The movement is also perceived as a setting for building political agency. We discuss the role of the movement in building bridges between multiple players/tactics and in constructing political agency, by focusing on the implications for collective action in environmental and climate issues.

Keywords: environmental movement, oil, natural gas, players, tactics, agency, Portugal

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INTRODUCTION

During the past few years, the environmental and climate movement in Portugal has experienced significant changes. With the emergence and intensification of protests against lithium extraction mega projects, the plans for constructing a second airport in Lisbon, the dredging works in the river Sado, and the struggles against oil and gas drilling, just to name a few, the environmental movement seems to be occupying "new spatial and symbolic spaces" (Temper et al., 2015, p. 256). Such spaces are examples of environmental conflicts, as they involve mobilizations by local communities and social movements, against particular economic activities, infrastructure construction, or waste disposal/pollutions (Temper et al., 2015; Scheidel et al., 2018).

Considering the energy sector, a detailed mapping of the environmental conflicts in Portugal during the past four decades identified 20 environmental conflicts, most of them just in the last few years (Fernandes and Fernandes, 2019). In particular, the movement against oil and gas extraction in Portuguese territory (MAOG) assumed significant visibility, media coverage, and intensity (EjAltas, 2016; Caitana et al., 2019).

Oil companies's interest in Portugal dates back to 1938, when the first oil concession was attributed (Gomes and Batista, 2018). Over the years, several other contracts were signed between the Portuguese government and diverse oil companies and consortiums (e.g., ENI, GALP, Partex, Australis, Repsol), but there has been no significant extraction of oil and gas in the country. The oil and gas industries in Portugal are essentially dominated by large companies who primarily import oil and gas products from other countries. Since 2007, with the execution of 175 offshore drillings, of which 117 gave supporting evidence for the presence of oil and gas, oil companies' interest grew significantly (Gomes and Batista, 2018). A few years ago, when the 15 concessions for onshore and offshore oil and gas extraction became publicly know, citizens started protesting against the concessions affecting the Algarve region (Matos, 2017; Caitana et al., 2019). The movement has been reaching its goals, as 13 of the 15 existing concessions were canceled. Currently, the struggle is focused on the two remaining gas concessions affecting the region of Leiria.

Conflicts over natural resource extraction, such as crude oil and natural gas, are spaces typically occupied by the environmental movement (EjAtlas, 2020), with the majority of environmental conflicts located in the resource extraction phase (Martinez-Alier et al., 2016). Often the actors that most regularly mobilize against such projects are local groups, and worldwide there has been an increase in localized forms of environmental activism (e.g., Savage et al., 2009; Martinez-Alier et al., 2016; Willow, 2014). With the growing use of fracking, a drilling technique associated with several environmental risks and impacts, including soil, air and water pollution, as well as higher seismic activity (e.g., Meng, 2017), many different countries and localities began to stand up against both oil and gas drilling and the practice of hydraulic fracturing (Steger and Milicevic, 2014). Yet, localized environmental movements often converge different types of collective identities (Mihaylov, 2019), and people engaged in environmental conflicts may not even identify themselves as environmentalists (Willow, 2014). Considering that a social movement is a broad network of individuals and organizations engaged in collective action and seeking to mobilize regular citizens for sustained action (Rootes, 1999, 2007; Amenta et al., 2010), it is then crucial to understand how such networks emerge, develop and remain stable over time. Previous studies have shown that these networks may be more or less formal, structured, or continuous (Diani, 1992; Saunders, 2007; Van Dyke and Amos, 2017). Nevertheless, we know very little about how local and protester actors interact with other social and political players within the space of the social movement (Jasper and Duyvendak, 2015). Such a research gap can be explained by the lack of interlink between studies on public participation, social movements, and institutional political participation (e.g., Baumgarten and Amelung, 2017).

Moreover, local groups fighting against oil and gas extraction are often highly connected with national and international branches of the environmental/climate movement, aggregating not only grassroots movements, but also Non-Governmental Organizations (hereafter NGOs) (De Moor, 2018) and even other political players such as local branches of governmental players (Verhoeven and Duyvendak, 2017). An interpretative and interactionist approach has been proposed to understand the complex interaction between different players and their arenas (Jasper, 2004, 2015; Jabola-Carolus et al., 2018). Players can be individuals (simple players) or groups of individuals, ranging from informal groups to formal organizations (compound players), who engage "in strategic action with some goal in mind" (Jasper, 2015, p. 10). Each player may have different goals, meanings and feelings (Jasper, 2004, 2015). Arenas, instead, are the settings where the decisions are made (Jasper, 2015, p. 18), which can be less formal or informal (e.g., law courts, media, public opinion, political parties, corporations). Recognizing the difference between players and arenas allows us to acknowledge the role of structure in players' actions without reducing them to institutional structures (Jabola-Carolus et al., 2018). Therefore, a player-arena approach acknowledges that groups and individuals participating in social movements have agency and can make their own choices (Jasper, 2004). The decision to be part of an alliance, for example, can be considered as a strategic choice, leading organizations to act in multiple arenas (Jasper, 2004; Jabola-Carolus et al., 2018), and in cooperation with "powerful allies" (e.g., politicians, celebrities, corporations). In turn, alliances with powerful players often contribute to moderate or discourage radical demands and tactics (Jasper, 2004; Jabola-Carolus et al., 2018). In addition, particularly in the climate and environmental movement, it is quite common to have alliances between grassroots groups (local and informal organizations) and NGOs (formally organized under non-profit charters), although these players trend to distrust each other (De Moor, 2018). Simultaneously, the existence of top-down platforms of compound players may also restrain the participation of individual and ordinary players (Cox, 2019).

Overall, previous studies suggest that the type of actors involved in a specific social movement may influence the type of

strategies and tactics used to achieve the movement's own goals (Jasper, 2004; Jabola-Carolus et al., 2018). Nevertheless, there is a lack of studies focusing on the relationship between the players and the strategies and the tactics used by the movement (Jasper, 2004; Smithey, 2009). By strategies we mean the intentional decisions taken by the movement, with the hope of achieving its goals and demands (Smithey, 2009). Thus, strategies are related to the method and set of tactics used to achieve a specific demand or goal (e.g., to end oil extraction). Tactics, in turn, involve the "collective actions publicly deployed, whether in-person or via audio, visual, or written media, in service of a sustained campaign of claims making" (Larson, 2013, p. 866). Examples of common tactics are boycotts, strikes, riots, sit-ins, occupations, marches, and demonstrations. The decision about which tactics are the best to achieve the movement's goals is also related to the paths considered most successful by the movement itself, i.e., its "theory of change" (Hestres, 2015; Hestres and Hopke, 2019). Some may agree that the path to reach their goals is through elite persuasion, whereas others may believe that what is necessary is grassroot mobilization and/or movement building (Hestres and Hopke, 2019). In this regard, it seems that if we want to understand the reasons why certain tactics are being used and others are not, we would have to consider how the movement's players perceive agency and influence. Scholars have shown that the decision to be involved in activism is influenced by whether people feel they can make a difference (van Stekenburg et al., 2016). Thus, perceived political agency can be a powerful impetus to action or inaction, depending on how people perceive their ability to influence change and which forms are perceived as most influential (Kenis and Mathijs, 2012). Complementarily, Campbell (2009) proposes to look at agency in two ways: as the power that individuals possess that enables them to engage in action; and as the power individuals have to act as agents independently of structural constrains. Therefore, the power to act collectively or to choose a path of inaction (Brennan and Israel, 2008; Mikulewicz, 2018), is related with ideational elements of power (Carstensen and Schmidt, 2016), and the decision of which tactics are more effective may also be related to activists' views and meanings of political agency.

An increasing number of scholars have been arguing for the need to look at the role of political agency and collective forms of climate and environmental engagement (Arora-Jonsson, 2011; O'Brien, 2015; Carvalho et al., 2017; Walshe and Stancioff, 2018). Conversely, despite scholars' increased interest in the impacts and political influence of social movements (Amenta et al., 2010), the meanings of political agency and the relationship between political agency and the movement's strategies and tactics have been largely overlooked. Hence, understanding environmental activism requires that we consider not only the relationship between different type of players (Van Dyke and Amos, 2017), but also their perceptions of agency and influence (Jasper, 2004, 2015). The emergence, development and success of the MAOG, led us to question the movement's dynamics, tactics, and meanings of agency and influence. Specifically, we asked: Who were the players involved and how did they interact? Which main arenas were occupied? What were the main tactics implemented by the players? What meanings of agency and influence do participants have? We sought to answer those questions based on the voices and perspectives of 12 activists who are/were highly involved in MAOG. Despite a few descriptive studies focusing on the movement against oil and gas drilling in Portugal (Matos, 2017; Caitana et al., 2019), to our knowledge there are no studies based on the voices of the movement's players. By examining the activists' views, experiences and meanings, we expect to contribute to the understanding of how the movement organized, mobilized and evolved, as well as which meanings of agency and influence were the most salient in the activists' discourses.

METHODS

We conducted 12 in-depth, semi-structured interviews between January and May 2019. This technique was selected to "bring human agency to the center of the movement analysis" (Blee, 2013, p. 96), and to understand the movement's strategies and tactics from the players' perspective. The age of the participants was between 28 and 72 years old. The sample was composed of seven men and five women. All but two had a university degree. At the time of the study, 10 participants were living in Lisbon and two in Algarve. Of these, eight were born and/or have lived for many years in the localities affected by the concessions. Snowball sampling was used as the sampling method. The first participant was actively engaged in national and local groups and it was a personal contact of the first author. The first author was briefly engaged with the movement between 2015 and 2016. Since then, she has been following the movement and occasionally participating in some of its activities. The second author did not have any previous connection with the movement and was the one who conducted all the interviews. We explicitly asked participants to recruit other participants who were actively involved in the movement against oil and gas in Portugal, both in Algarve and/or Leiria. Participants were members of different groups and organizations (see **Table S1**), with different goals and place of action (local, national). Most participants were actively involved in more than one group. Some groups can be best described as a platform of individuals and organizations. The list of groups details the most significant and active groups involved in the fights against oil and natural gas in Portugal, but it is not representative of all the groups and organizations involved in the movement. The names (participants and groups) used in this article are fictitious in order to ensure anonymity and confidentially. Additionally, all personal details (e.g., age and profession) were intentionally omitted. The average interview duration was 87 min. The interviews were conducted in public locations, participants' private homes, or at a university campus. All interviews were audio taped and the participants gave their verbal consent. A script composed of a set of questions was developed to guide the conversation between the participants and the interviewer, but all interviews were quite flexible. Interview topics included questions related to (1) personal engagement and group participation within the movement; (2) emergence and development of the movement/group; (3) the movement's modes of organization; (4) forms of action and communication between the different organizations involved; (5) views on the

environmental problems. We transcribed all interviews and conducted a thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Clarke and Braun (2013). We coded each transcript using the NVivo software package and the initial codes were then examined and merged into broader themes outlined below. This software was used as a tool to support the organization and management of the data, as the analysis was entirely conducted by the researchers. The process of data analysis began with open coding and was then followed by selective coding guided by our research questions. Interview excerpts were translated from Portuguese into English after data analysis. We started by translating the text literally, word-by-word. Then, small adaptations, in terms of grammatical and syntactical structures, were made to improve readability.

FINDINGS

The analysis presented in this paper focuses on six interlinked themes that emerged from the data. In the first theme, "multiple players, a shared goal," we describe the emergence and development of the movement, and the type of players involved. In the second theme, "building bridges with multiple players and tactics," we examined how different players and tactics converged in the movement. In the third theme, we focused on the "links to institutional power" to explore the movement's relationship with powerful actors, and institutional processes of public participation. Then, in the fourth theme, "the route to the court," we examined the movement's engagement with legal action. In the fifth theme, we move onto the "paths to popular mobilization," to explore the mobilizing tactics used by the movement. Finally, in the sixth theme, "movement building and power to act," we examined participants' meanings of influence and agency.

Multiple Players, a Shared Goal

According to our participants, it seems that people started becoming aware of the existence of concession agreements for the exploitation of oil and gas during events that "date back to around 2011, 2012" (Madalena). Mobilizations then began in the southern region of the country, namely in Algarve. These coincided with the date when two new concessions were attributed to oil companies by the Portuguese government, a fact which received some local media coverage (Jornal Algarve, 2012). Based on the participants' accounts, civic actions at that time included the dissemination of a letter written by a local politician with several arguments against oil exploitation in Algarve; a few press releases by NGOs arguing against such concessions; and the creation of a grassroot group that would fight to keep the region free of oil. These and other chronological events related to the initial stages of the movement have been described elsewhere (Caitana et al., 2019). However, according to the participants in our study, organized, continuous, and coordinated action started in 2015, namely with the creation of a "platform" against oil and gas drilling in Algarve. This platform included individuals, several national, and local environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), local grassroots community-based initiatives (e.g., Transition Initiative), and national grassroots groups. While some of these groups were created with the main purpose of fighting against oil and gas drilling in particular regions of the country, others were well-established groups and NGOs working on different environmental issues (e.g., marine life; birds, and biodiversity loss; climate change). Pedro, one of the interviewees, who has been actively involved in several local and national groups during the last decade, explained:

> Not all groups focus exclusively on the issue of fossil fuels, you have to keep that in mind. If a group, for example, like Group-Q, they are involved in a very varied range of issues. Group-U was formed, ok, mostly with that goal, ok, it's the "Algarve free from oil" and that was the issue. For example, now Group-Y has been very involved in this issue, but it looks at the problem in a much wider way (Pedro).

Pedro's perspective was shared by other participants (e.g., Rute, Paulo), and supports previous arguments that social movements are rarely cohesive players (Saunders, 2008; Jasper, 2019). Participants' discourses also suggest that, as in other contexts (e.g., Van Dyke and Amos, 2017; Grosse, 2019), social ties and previous networks of activists (mostly informal), had a key role in building the movement. As explained by Alice, one of the founders of Group-U:

> Because Group-U was created from a range of, precisely, of regional associations that were already used to collaborating (...) and there was nothing at the time [2015], but ok, we had [gatherings], we would meet now and then to handle this and other things, right? We ended up realizing, and began to see, that we didn't have [access to] the contracts, we had nothing. But deep down there was a purpose, we thought of making a platform, that initially involved, actually, these [regional] associations or movements (Alice).

Over time, other groups and organizations joined the platform, including large national NGOs, grassroots groups, initiatives, and movements. Simultaneously, the creation of new groups was always encouraged "small groups of people for brainstorming, for dissemination in the [affected] places" (Paulo). These "points of local resistance" were in "places affected by the concessions for oil and gas drilling" (Rute). From a wider perspective, the movement can be described as having two major focuses and episodes of mobilization. First, the movement focused on the imminent drilling affecting the country's south (namely in Algarve). With the cancellation of the concessions in Algarve territory, the mobilizations in Leiria intensified. The link between these two places can be described as dynamic and continuous. According to most participants, some of the groups and campaigns which were created to oppose the concessions in Algarve disappeared when these concessions were canceled (in 2018). Some argued that this was the time to rest: "we are worn out, and tired, and fed up, and now we want to be at rest (...) resting, so that if 1 day there is an alarm, we go" (Madalena). For others, "this struggle is not over" (Pedro), and they are focusing their actions toward the cancellation of the two remaining concessions in Leiria.

In total, at least five activists who were engaged in the fight against the Algarve concessions are also involved in the mobilizations in Leiria, either by participating or organizing protests, organizing information sessions and participating in meetings with politicians and other powerful actors. Five participants, namely from NGOs, are less engaged with the current mobilizations in Leiria, but were very active in campaigning against the concessions in Algarve. The two participants who were residing in Algarve were not involved in the mobilizations in Leiria. Additionally, one participant had joined the movement only a few months ago, and therefore had not been engaged in the mobilizations in Algarve. The link between both places of mobilization was perceived as an advantage. First, because it allowed participants to learn from previous actions and tactics, and second because public acceptance of the movement is now greater, according to the participants "(...) but we, we were able to get this great visibility, as the local and the media, or even from the politicians because Algarve prepared it for us, the Algarve suffered much more than us" (Ivone). Regardless of their current engagement, all participants supported the goal "to cancel all the oil and gas concessions in Portugal" and tend to see the mobilizations as part of the same movement. Furthermore, many participants argued that one feature of this movement was precisely its ability to mobilize different players in different locations, despite the fact that mobilizations tend to be perceived as stronger in Algarve and currently in Bajouca (a small village in Leiria): "There was always a less strong movement, because the people that were more active and more interested were the population from the south [of the country]" (Paulo). During the interviews, many participants used terms such as: "local community," "local population," or "local citizen" to differentiate between the "typical activist" and the local actors and communities. This distinction was made even by those participants who were born and/or had lived in the affected communities.

> No, I think that, clearly, the people who initially take up this cause, at first are only the usual activists, because, for example, the movement in the center region, 80% of the people more involved are already in other environmental causes, at the national level. Regarding the Bajouca, which is an extremely active village, meaning, people already have, like "they are interfering with something," as the drill site is right on the village "interfering with the village, no way!," there, so we already knew (Ivone).

Ivone's excerpt is a clear example of the distinction made between activists and local members, but it also exemplifies the movement's ability to mobilize beyond the typical "activist." This feature was mentioned by several other participants: "Yes, yes, I think so, I think you can affirm that with conviction. At Bajouca, for example, the actions of the population have involved very diverse people, with very diverse qualifications and levels of education" (Carlos).

Additionally, the movement was also able to engage with powerful allies such as celebrities (e.g., who were the face of a particular campaign), academics and scientists (e.g., guest speakers in debates, information sessions, and meetings; signatories of public campaigns such as "clean future") and local politicians and political parties (who publicly supported the positions of the movement). Previous studies have found evidence for the role of powerful allies in successfully engaging and mobilizing the public (e.g., Hein and Chaudhri, 2019). These alliances were considered by several participants as a key factor in the movement's success:

> If they [in Leiria] have the local power [on their side], I think the largest part of the work is already done, because it's very different when you have the chairperson of the parish or of the municipal councils saying it (Diana).

In summary, the movement was able to mobilize individuals and local and national groups, NGOs, grassroots initiatives, municipal governmental and political actors, left political parties, celebrities, local tourism companies, and so forth. As in other contexts (e.g., Grosse, 2019), informal social ties were particularly important in establishing such networks. Despite the diversity of the players involved, they were able to cooperate toward a common goal: "to cancel the concession agreements for oil and gas exploitation in Portugal." The success in mobilizing institutional and economic allies was particularly evident at the local and regional levels, but the movement also encountered strong resistance from national entities and the oil companies involved (Consortium ENI/GALP; Australis-Portugal). These oppositional forces included the Nacional Entity for the Energy Sector (previously the National Authority for the Fuel Market), the Minister of the Environment and Climate Action, the Minister of the Sea, and the central government itself. For example, the current prime minister clearly supported the extraction of oil and gas in Portugal by arguing that "we cannot, naturally, neither comprise the existing contracts, or risk to not take advantage of the existing geological resources which can be used by the country, without sacrificing other values" (Sul Informação, 2016).

Importantly, the concessions were signed between the national government and the oil companies without the consultation of local communities and, according to several participants, the local branches of government were not consulted or informed either. Besides, as reported by the national press (Sábado, 2018), several politicians, who were part of past and current governments, have been accused of influence peddling, involving the oil and gas concessions in Algarve.

Building Bridges Between Players and Tactics

Regarding the mobilizations in Algarve, SMOs used the movement mainly as a source of support for their actions and activities: "I think it's very spontaneous and very much about mutual support, I mean, it's interesting that we, Group-R, did many events, several activities, demonstrations, and dynamics" (Madalena). According to most participants, the individual actors also assumed certain roles and functions spontaneously. Rui and Rute perceived themselves as having a wider role in the environmental movement, by facilitating national campaigns and protests, and making sure that the

MAOG included global climate change in the movement's demands. Pedro and Diana defined their role as helpers, available to do what was necessary, from organizing information to facilitating participation in petitions and public consultations to attend meetings with allies and opposing forces. Joana, Olga and also Diana characterized their roles as peripherical, establishing bridges between organizations and campaigns. Ivone, Carlos, Miguel and Pedro had a central role, by initiating and developing the mobilizations in Leiria, and by organizing local and national actions addressing the two remaining concessions. In Algarve, Alice and Madalena, had a key role as local organizers and mobilizers. Together with Alice, Paulo also assumed the role of dealing with external communication (e.g., press) and he was considered by the other participants as having a central role in certain key actions (e.g., legal action). Paulo and Pedro seemed to have also assumed a kind of expert role, as they were both involved in collecting and organizing scientific material, which was then used for the movement's actions and campaigns. Finally, Alice was perceived as a leader and a bridge builder by most participants, establishing, and ensuring the communication between the individual and collective players involved in the MAOG.

The movement used several tools to facilitate communication between the organizations involved, such as: face to face meetings, online meetings, phone calls, and mailing lists. According to several participants, these tools were mainly used to share events and actions, asking for others support and collaboration. The collaboration between the participants was often sporadic "people joined a specific project and we work together, it is more like that" (Rui). This approach was explained by the participants as a consequence of the lack of a common strategy "It's more because they don't see the things like we do, therefore, it becomes difficult to do big things together" (Rute). Nevertheless, several participants stressed that the movement has been successful, precisely because it has been able to build bridges between individuals and organizations that did not share the same goals and strategic approach. As explained below:

> In more concrete terms, for example, something that Group-U did, which I think was key in this movement, was to create points, no longer between isolated people, but between the movements themselves. For example, Group-Y has an approach which is completely, how should I say it, is completely radical or opposed in relation to Group-L or many similar organizations and yet both are inside the Group-U umbrella (Pedro).

Several participants addressed the potential of a network of organizations that support each other in their own actions and events "each one has its importance; each one acts differently" (Diana). In the participants' views, the movement has been able to gather together different people and groups, with diverse and complementary skills and resources. For example, several NGOs contributed with their influence networks, facilitating contact with powerful actors (e.g., deputies, politicians). In turn, local groups already had links with the local community, which facilitated the mobilizations "there are other groups very good at organizing protests and mobilizing local people" (Pedro). The mutual support and cooperation between the groups was referred by several participants as a key factor in explaining the movement's successes. Group-U was described as a "bridge builder," with a key role in promoting the interaction between different players: "The Group-U was able to gather the attention, because we're many, we worked in a way that we're building something" (Paulo).

Some of the tactics used in Algarve are currently being used in Leiria and local groups are working together with national organizations and groups. The movement is presently trying to establish new bridges with new groups and citizens and intensifying the focus against gas extraction in Portugal. At the time of the interviews, a large event was being organized with the aim of creating links between people, groups and movements, i.e., to "be a network" as mentioned by Carlos. The event took place in one of the affected villages in Leiria and was organized by national groups in coordination with local groups and citizens. In turn, participants representing national grassroots groups that focus their action on the global impacts of climate change, stressed several times that the movement needed to develop a common strategy:

> We made several attempts to unite people, in fact, the National Meeting arose as meeting, not as a conference, a meeting, to bring various movements together so we could strategize together (…) to make a strategy [a line of action] to do something together (Rute).

As suggested by some participants, the barriers and difficulties of elaborating a joint plan of action might be related to the lack of a common collective identity. The forms of protest people in social movements choose are influenced by their collective identities (Polletta and Jasper, 2001), and social movements are often spaces where multiple identities converge (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Participants' distinctions between "activists and local community," as well as between "NGOs and grassroots movements," and "local population and the movement" support this argument. Furthermore, some participants expressed belonging to several different groups (e.g., Pedro, Miguel, Paulo, Madalena) and differentiate these groups and organizations by their strategic choices. For example, participants who identify themselves as belonging to Group Y, often mentioned terms such as civil disobedience and direct action. Participants who belong to Group Z and Group T, often mentioned lobbying and public awareness.

The diversity of actors involved and their scope of action may have led to a lack of shared ideology and collective identity, a feature of the climate movement, which has been previously identified in the Italian movement (Bertuzzi, 2019) and the global climate movement (De Moor, 2018). This is particularly the case if we consider collective identity in terms of strategic choice and consider that collective identities in social movements "tend to reflect what we believe, what we are comfortable with, what we like, who we are" (Polletta and Jasper, 2001, p. 284). On the one hand, it seems that the movement has been very successful in building bridges between different players. However, the lack of a shared collective identity may have limited the movement's

ability to build a continuous and established network, able to survive over time and across regions. This may explain why several groups are still investing in building bridges between groups and organizations. On the other hand, the multiplicity of actors engaged seems to be related to a diversified repertory of action, that may not have been possible without the combination of different types of citizens, organizations, and initiatives. In this regard, when we asked participants about the type of strategies and the tactics used by the movement, several argued that there was not a single strategy or tactic, it was a combination of multiple tactics:

> I don't think there was one priority over another, I think that we tried everything, for which there were human resources to do so. Like, an action was started in court, all the public consultations were participated, that civil mobilization. I think that in these things, in these struggles, the more combat fronts you can have, the better, the question is if you have people to create them (…) the main strategies, I think they were 2 or 3, political pressure, mobilizing civil society, the population, and then the legal action, meaning, there were these 3, all 3 were able to be worked, which was very good (Joana).

Joana's view of the potential of combining these three different strategies was shared with several other participants. Based on the participants' discourses, it seems that the movement focused on three different arenas: political/institutional; streets/popular; and courts. Groups chose the actions they could/want to be involved in, according to their own resources and availability: "Our group understood that at the legal level we didn't have any power, as power, we didn't have anyone, we didn't have a lawyer, there were few Portuguese people involved..." (Madalena). Moreover, the combination of different tactics was also perceived as key "for reaching different publics" (Rui). In the following sections, we examine the three types of tactics used by the movement: links to institutional power; the route to the court; and paths to popular mobilizing.

Links to Institutional Power

Participants argued that having the public support of local political leaders and political parties is an effective way to ban oil and gas extraction activities in Portugal: "if they [SMOs] have the local power, like, I think that half the work is done, because it's very different when you have the chairperson of the parish council or the municipal council saying it" (Joana). In Algarve, the movement was able to mobilize diverse actors and got the support of local municipalities, politicians, deputies, and political parties. This was perceived as an important factor leading to the cancellation of 13 concessions.

> Exactly, yes, we also were very persisting, right? Talking with the city council, talking with mayors, talking with parish councils, and an important part was (...) it [the movement] wasn't only something of the environmentalists. When the message was passed it wasn't only of those environmentalists that are always criticizing everything that comes up, [protecting] birds and whatnot. When the idea passed that it [the movement] was us, it was the tourism associations, it was the population in general, it was the mayors, it was the Tourism of Portugal, it was the tourism region of Algarve, it was all these entities, that normally don't get along. You have the tourism entity and organizations always colliding with NGOs, they are always colliding (Paulo).

The experience in Algarve was crucial and used as an example for the mobilizations in Leiria: "The goal is to make a network with the local organizations and municipalities, much like Algarve did, which is to create relationships, because the municipalities in Algarve are against it, right? (…) the people themselves mobilized to add pressure" (Ivone). At the time of data collection, activists were trying to influence local politicians in Leiria and asking them to take a public position against the exploitation of gas in their territory. Very recently, the mayor of Leiria used the local press to write to the central government demanding the cancellation of the concessions in that region of the country (Jornal de Leiria, 2019). Many tactics were used to get the public support of the political elite, including protests at the local level, participation in municipal assemblies, meetings with political leaders, and a strong presence in the local press (e.g., press releases after all actions). Participants also mentioned a campaign organized by 18 organizations during the 2017 Portuguese local elections. Under this campaign for "Fossil Free Municipalities," candidates in regions affected by oil and gas concessions were contacted and asked to state their position on oil and gas extraction in Portugal. This type of political pressure was used to push and force into the spotlight a local and national political agenda aiming to keep the country free of oil and gas.

> Placing the issue in the public agenda in a way that even the most conservative parties feel some pressure to speak themselves about it. That's what happened with the oil drills [In Algarve] as well, often there was so much pressure that they had to, really, there were proposals for the parliament, and each one of them had to make it very clear what they position about it were (Rute).

In this regard, there were several signs of governmental activism in the Portuguese movement against oil and gas drilling. Governmental activism is a phenomenon in which "politicians, civil servants and governmental players engage with citizens, SMOs/NGOs and sometimes businesses in contentious claim-making to alter or redress policies proposed by other governmental players" (Verhoeven and Duyvendak, 2017, p. 565). This was particularly the case in Algarve, with the involvement of the "inter-municipality community of Algarve" and members of the tourism sector in several actions against the extraction of oil and gas in Algarve.

Additionally, the participants mentioned other actions involving links with institutional political power, including a petition against the development of oil and gas extraction in Algarve which had more than 7,000 signatures. Conversely, the majority of the participants mentioned their massive participation in the public consultations around the concessions in Algarve and also in Leiria. Participants disseminated word of the public consultation and encouraged people to participate, sharing relevant information in order to facilitate said participation.

> Alentejo and Aljezur took a long time to wake up, a long, long time to wake up, when they woke up we already had 42 thousand signatures, which were the ones taken to public consultation that lead all of this to crumble, and we did that work for them at the time (Madalena).

The link between public participation processes and social movements is often ignored in the literature of institutional and public participation, as highlighted by previous scholars (Baumgarten and Amelung, 2017; Bhattacharya and Jairath, 2017; Verhoeven and Duyvendak, 2017). Our analysis suggests that the activists were also key actors in participating and organizing forums for citizen engagement with public participation (e.g., making the relevant information available in online platforms, preparing texts to use in the public consultation or letters to be sent to politicians, etc.).

The Route to the Court

On June 31, 2016, a public consultation was launched concerning the issuance of an oil prospection and research permit at one of the concessions signed in 2007 (Participa, 2016). Despite the massive participation that recommended against the authorization, the license was granted by the responsible entity (Directorate General of Natural Resources) on January 2017, valid until January 2019. Confronted with imminent drilling, the SMOs decided to try the judicial path:

> And after, later, appeared, because of it, the judicial path, obviously, it had to appear, it had to appear because it became clear that was the way to go, because we had subject matter to go, because it could all be legal, morally wrong but legal, it wasn't, fortunately it wasn't all legal. But yes, that was the concern, ending the immediate threat, right away, in principle it was done. Now the next area of action, next concern, is to guarantee that there wouldn't be no more concessions (Diana).

Thus, the SMOs decided to initiate a protective order, questioning the procedures and the legality of the license and requesting the suspension of the permission. The judicial process was formally initiated and "represented by three NGOs" (Paulo), yet it was always assumed as a joint action by the coalition of organizations belonging to Group-U, as explained by Paulo, Alice and Olga. Furthermore, as mentioned by several participants, the case for a protective order was built on a set of illegalities which included the lack of information on the potential effects of the planned activities (during the public consultation phase); and the violation of a procedure that should have taken place before the emission of the administrative authorization to initiate the drilling.

Although the consortium ENI/GALP joined forces with the Portuguese Ministry of the Sea (e.g., an appeal action), the consortium ultimately renounced the concessions contracts. The renouncement came after more than 1 year since the start of the legal proceedings, and only after the court decision. The victory in the court "was decisive for, at least for that drilling not happening and the oil companies giving up, and for the Portuguese state losing some credibility" (Paulo). From the perspective of several participants, it was the judicial action that led to the cancellation of the drillings in Algarve "it was a legal action, a protective order in the courts, which made the project be canceled" (Pedro). This was perceived as a victory for the movement by a majority of participants, including those not directly involved in the legal action (e.g., Ivone, Carlos, Olga).

> Yes, yes, because we can see, eventually, that there are 2 ways, maybe more, but there are at least 2 ways to end the contracts, which is the judicial, through popular actions, and the other is the popular pressure itself, and also parish council pressure that might arise. Eventually, there are political decisions, there are political decisions that can end the contracts (Carlos).

Carlos' reference to the case of the concessions yet to be canceled in Leiria, suggests that the victory in Algarve influenced the views of the participants currently engaged in the Leiria mobilizations. As previously argued in the literature, it is expected that the movement's actions are influenced by previous movements' successes (Van Dyke and Amos, 2017).

Importantly, participants contested other things besides the illegalities in the licenses and concessions in their regions. Indeed, several interviewees mentioned their concerns about the decree/law n° 109/94, which regulates all oil and gas extraction activities in Portugal and opens the door to new concession agreements. For some participants, the movement should focus on changing the environmental law "(…) to ensure that there are no more concessions attributed, and to change that decree-law of the devil, the 109/94" (Diana). This decree-law (109/94, April 26) establishes the juridical regime for oil prospection, drilling, development and production activities in Portugal (Gomes and Batista, 2018) and has been highly contested by social movements.

The occupation of the court arena was made despite it being considered a "big risk" (Paulo). It required scientific skills (scientific arguments, for example, as explained by Alice), time, and money (e.g., for paying the tribunal costs and hiring a lawyer, as explained by Paulo, Pedro and Alice). These and other aspects were mentioned by Rute, who also contested the long-term effects of the movement's alleged victory and the strategic choices of some organizations:

> I would say that the protective order, maybe, they thought about it like a strategy, they saw the problem, they saw where they were and thought that legal action was enough to resolve the problem, ok, I would say so, it can be qualified as a strategy. I don't think it's a strategy that, meaning, judicial decisions most of the time are on the side of the companies, when you're able to have a judicial decision, involving companies, lots of lawyers, and very well-payed, to be on the side of the population and not on the side of the companies, we will never know why, because we can't put society into a test tube and isolate variables. But the fact that you have a public opinion being formed in a certain way, at the time, having protests, having things in the parliament, having actions, having more mobilization makes it so that (…) If you stop the mobilizations, you'll go to second instance and second instance will agree with the company (Rute).

Besides Rute, similar concerns were raised by other participants, namely by those participants who described themselves as belonging to grassroots groups. However, most of them prefer to see the judicial path as complementary to the other strategies. This was explained by Alice, who insisted on the idea that the movement should enter into different arenas, such as "political" (including local and national government), judicial, and economic and combine multiple tactics to educate, raise awareness, and mobilize the population.

Paths to Popular Mobilization

Concerning the mobilization tactics used by the SMOs, nearly all the participants mentioned that their organizations actively organized actions to disseminate information, either regarding climate change, or the impacts of oil and gas drilling and exploitation. As expressed by Diana, this was the primary purpose of some organizations "without a doubt the first goal of the platform [was] to inform" (Diana). To that end, the groups have been organizing information sessions in schools (oriented toward children and young people) and parish councils, leafleting in coffees shops, streets and at public events, human chain (people joined their hands to form a human chain) in Algarve beaches, debates and public meetings, and so forth.

Some participants described the Portuguese people as misinformed about the risks of oil and gas exploitation, especially regarding the impacts of natural gas: "and more so the gas is called natural, which it is a fallacy, but people think gas is 'natural,' that it is not risky" (Ivone). For some participants, part of the movement's role is to educate the population "to take information to people, and one type of information that is not just a slogan, but also, substantiated information" (Alice). This required that activists themselves be familiar with climate science, so they could "inform and give facts" (Diana) and be able to argue with those who are negationists and/or skeptical.

> It's also important, when I spoke of informing a while ago, it's informing the population, but also our own information, let's say, the scientific background, because this situation implies that we have, actually, strong arguments, and strong arguments come to us from science (...). I think that in this case we did the mobilization through information, ok. The initial problem was people not knowing (...) and from there on, from the moment when people were informed, people refused petroleum, in Algarve people refused petroleum (Alice).

The views on the role of a social movement as a mean to inform and educate the population suggested that these participants see social change as highly dependent on the level of knowledge and information people have access to. Not all participants agreed that information is enough to get people to act. For example, a few participants criticized the groups who mainly focus on public awareness, arguing that "what motivates people is not access to information, what motives people is to see things happen, so they feel inspired" (Rute). Conversely, Rui added that their group's goal is "mobilization, mass mobilization, therefore, to create a large and wider movement of civil disobedience" (Rui). In order to get there, they believe their group's actions should be oriented toward training future activists: "We organize climate activism training, to prepare activists, and that happens, at least twice per year. By principle our focus is not raising awareness in the general population" (Rui). As suggested by Hestres and Hopke (2019), spaces to train, educate, mentor, and prepare individuals to be effective movement agents (e.g., activism training;) can be named as "schools of social movements" and are often proposed by social movements.

Additionally, public demonstrations were mentioned by all participants as part of their mobilizing tactics. Several national and local marches and protests were organized during the last few years, and our participants were actively engaged: "But since 2014, that yes, we were able to mobilize more and more people and have already set the agenda, at these marches (...) we were able to put it into the agenda of the media and politicians" (Joana). Apart from protests, marches and demonstrations, some participants also mentioned a few occupations of public space. Additionally, several participants referred to direct action (such as blockades) and civil disobedience as acceptable tactics.

> They [grassroot groups] believe a lot that, for example, it's important to have direct action. What is meant by direct action is street demonstrations, it's eventually civil disobedience actions, so it's a much more physical and more active participation. Group-U also sees that point of view, but the administrative side was much more debated, meaning, we need to have access to documents, they pressured the state secretaries, the ministers to meet with them to explain what is happening, etc. Ok, and for me, both strategies are complementary, and also others [strategies] we might have (Pedro).

Overall, we identified some differences in terms of the approaches followed by the organizations. First, it seems that local organizations were more oriented toward public awareness actions, aiming to inform, and educate the population. National grassroots groups' discourses suggested a higher focus on building spaces for training future activists, and the use of tactics such as civil disobedience and direct action. Finally, both NGOs and grassroot groups tend to see public demonstrations as necessary and part of the mobilizing strategy, and all participants mentioned having participated in marches, protests, and demonstrations. Regarding the mobilization tactics, although the SMOs involved may not always agree on the type of tactics used, there was a general agreement on the movement's ability to reach its goal by combining multiple tactics. Several tactics were used as a tool for popular mobilization, including public awareness campaigns, training for activists, protests, marches, and demonstrations. Participants seem to all agree on the need to base their arguments and actions on scientific arguments as a way of legitimizing the movement's actions. Nevertheless, although opting for diverse approaches, the different tactics mentioned by the participants seemed to be based on the idea that the "other" needs to be educated, informed or trained, and afterwards then they will also engage in environmental collective action.

Movement Building and "Power to Act"

The different types of mobilization tactics used by the movement also raised questions regarding how the participants view the movement's influence in terms of the ability to achieve its shared goal, but also beyond that specific goal. The majority of the participants described the movement's approach as "super-efficient" and "well-succeeded." For some participants, this has been the "first big environmental movement" in Portugal (e.g., Paulo, Joana, Diana):

> The environmental movement today has very little to do with the 90's environmental movement, when I started (...). And, therefore, in 2014 it's was created, then, this group of people, which will work in the next years, which are connected to some entities and which can mobilize, through different means, can mobilize. We even had an increase in citizen participation in marches for the climate (...). For real, for real, it's since 2014, afterwards the rest are [smaller] demonstrations (Joana).

Joana's excerpt also shows how the MAOG was also able to contribute to other actions within the environmental movement, feeding other mobilizations, and protests. In this regard, several participants emphasized that "oil and gas extraction in Portugal" is only a small part of a bigger problem: "we are mobilizing against other things; I mean the climate (...) our intention is to create a sufficiently large group of people to contest all the politics" (Rui) and achieve "a broad social transformation, I mean, above all [we want] to pressure toward an energy transition" (Rute). As such, participants suggested that building the movement by bringing organizations together and mobilizing the masses should be considered a significant achievement of the movement (De Moor, 2018). All participants agreed that the environmental and the climate movement in Portugal grew significantly during the last few years: "Yes, because I think that it might serve as a link between several people, movements, also to create other things, other actions, let's say" (Carlos). The movement's extension was mentioned in terms of regions, but also in terms of causes and the movement's goals: "In my opinion, there are new movements in Algarve, concerning specific causes. Recently, one was created regarding the white lagoons, it turned up now because of a construction they want to do on the costal cliffs" (Paulo).

Complementarily, several participants see the movement's influence in terms of building political agency "now, we're in a setting where people understood that they, by themselves can do and write something" (Pedro). Participants see the movement as a creator of people's engagement with climate and environmental issues, spaces that go beyond private forms of action "such as recycling," as well as beyond classical forms of environmentalism.

> It became more concrete because it's like this, we told everybody this "Ok, you're an environment sympathizer, you're also afraid of climate change, then look, here is something that you can get involved in, something real, a real threat, "I'm not talking about ice melting with the polar bear and whatever, I'm saying, here you can do it." Therefore, I think that we gave that to people, to the people who had climate change in their imagination, in the thing of "damn, this is really bad for us, what do I do? Ok, I already recycle, but what do I do, what do I do?" we say "Look, it's here, here you can do something" and those who felt that need to act before others, but couldn't, found the perfect place there (Diana).

Diana's excerpt also shows the importance attributed by the participants to collective action in climate and environmental issues. Rute, in the same line of argument, argued that the idea of individual environmental action (e.g., namely linked to consumption) has been highly disseminated in society by companies and states as a way to avoid solving the climate crisis. She argued that they know that "individual choices, even from people highly committed, who follow [them] strictly, are not going to solve the problem. Mostly, they will not threaten the status quo, they will not threaten anything that is being done by the big companies." The perceived success of the movement is then seen as the ability to influence others to join the movement and to express their own grievances (Mathieu, 2019), through collective action. Simultaneously, for several participants, it is crucial to build political agency, and the movement seems to have been able to do so by bringing hope and inspiration to other people, as explained by Joana and Paulo:

> And I think it created this network, I think it created hope, like, it's really important. If you think that you won't get anything, it's not worth it, [it] inspired, I think it inspired a lot of people, really, I think it inspired the rest of the country, I think it inspired the center (Joana).

> Ah yes, in that sense, yes, we felt differences, people are much more, in Algarve I felt the difference, it seems to me there was a click in many people, even people which I don't know, that it (...) is possible to do something, any person can do it, or rather, in this regard any might be [saying] too much (...) (Paulo).

In accordance with these views, Ivone argued that "by building this model of activism and citizenship, that is simpler and sharper than creating formal organizations, we expected to inspire other people, and for other environmental causes." In her view, "waiting for the government or associations to solve our problems" was not a viable solution, and it is important to create paths and channels so "citizens have a voice and are able to have an impact" (Ivone).

The quotes presented above suggest that participants tend to see the movement's influence in relation to its ability to promote and develop political agency, namely the dimension associated with the sense of "power to act" (Campbell, 2009). This was very present in the discourses of some participants: "(...) ok, it's always like this, like the (...), it's the same thing, we go there and stop things, it's not we making a mass so that someone will stop the mine, we will stop the mine, we go, right?" (Rui). In summary, the movement sees its political influence as going beyond the achievement of its initial goals, scope and context of action. Specifically, the movement's success is being related to its ability to mobilize others by developing their political agency to act collectively.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze the Portuguese movement against oil and gas drilling considering three main dimensions: players, tactics, and agency. We specifically explored who were the players involved, what were the main tactics used, and what meanings of agency and influence were expressed by participants. The analysis presented was mainly based on the discourses of activists followed a player-arena approach (Jasper, 2004, 2015; Jabola-Carolus et al., 2018) and focused on political agency (Campbell, 2009; Amenta et al., 2010).

Our empirical analysis suggests that the MAOG has been able to mobilize different players, including local and national groups, NGOs, grassroots groups, local governmental and political actors, political parties, celebrities, tourism companies, and other local companies. Importantly, the movement was able to mobilize players which are (or are considered to be) outside of the protest arena, such as local transition initiatives (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2017), economic companies and local governmental players (Verhoeven and Duyvendak, 2017).

Moreover, our analysis suggests that the MAOG organized as a platform for collaboration in specific tactics and actions but avoided building a common and broad strategy for the movement. From the perspective of the participants, such an organization was key for the movement's achievements and has led to a combination of tactics (protests, awareness campaigns, petitions, public consultations) in multiple arenas (streets, schools, political parties, courts, etc.). Some groups argued that movement building and grassroot organization are the way to achieve social transformation, while others seemed to stress the role of political pressure by powerful allies. As argued by Hestres (2015), social transformation requires the combination of different tactics, strategies and theories of change. In the MAOG we identified three wide sets of tactics used by the movement, which shows the diversity of collective identities involved in the struggle against oil and gas in Portugal. The first relates to links with institutional political power; the second refers to the court arena; and the third to actions for popular mobilization. These were the set of tactics highlighted by the activists in our study, however, it is possible that other tactics were used by the movement. Complementary press analysis exploring how the media represented the movement, as well an analysis of websites of all the collective players involved in the movement, could tell us more about their strategies, tactics and actions. In turn, future studies should also collect observational data, so we can better understand the process of decision making within SMOs.

A feature of this movement was the importance attributed to politicians, deputies, and local governmental organizations joining protest and resistance against the concessions. In this aspect, MAOG seemed to be an interesting case for understanding governmental activism (Verhoeven and Duyvendak, 2017), and showed that powerful actors can be key allies for social movements. Nevertheless, the successful alliance between the MAOG and governmental and corporation players, may have been facilitated by the type of players involved and the territory affected by the concessions. The individuals within the movement were highly educated, members of NGOs and probably had ties with arenas of political influence. Moreover, Algarve is a region highly dependent on tourism, both international and domestic, and this sector is of great importance to the Portuguese economy (Bento, 2016). This may explain why economic groups and local political leaders took a clear position against oil and gas drilling in their region. The groups who are now fighting to cancel the two remaining contracts in Leiria (a rural, non-touristic area), may face other barriers, despite the support of local political players (e.g., parish mayor). Powerful alliances and judicial action may be effective tactics, but they may also be highly dependent on the resources the movement already has or can attain. Future research should look into the barriers and constrains faced by marginalized, rural and poor communities in establishing such alliances and attempting legal action.

The formation of coalitions is a strategy often used by social movements (Jasper, 2004; De Moor, 2018; Jabola-Carolus et al., 2018) and participants discourses suggested that this was key in justifying the urgency, extension and local relevance of the movement's demands. Therefore, it seems, that for the Portuguese movement against oil and gas, this strategy has been quite successful in building the environmental movement's legitimacy (Hein and Chaudhri, 2019). From a theoretical point of view, our study supports previous theoretical claims that the state may be best seen as composed of multiple governmental players (Duyvendak and Jasper, 2015; Verhoeven and Duyvendak, 2017) and that we need to look at social movements as arenas of multiple and diverse players (Jasper, 2019). Social movements can be a site for collaboration between different kind of players, including governmental actors. However, it is important to ensure that the coalition is inclusive enough to gather multiple identities (Della Porta and Diani, 2006), especially considering collective identity in terms of strategic choices (Polletta and Jasper, 2001). In our view, the MAOG exemplifies how social movements can build a coalition, ensuring that groups maintain their collective identities. The existing signs of tension between the players, which were associated by the participants with a lack of shared strategy and perspective, suggests that this was not done without effort or tensions between players. These tensions could be more rigorously explored in a larger sample than used in this study. Our sampling approach lead us to a set of participants highly engaged with the MAOG, but unrepresentative of the views of local community members either in Algarve or Leiria. Additionally, by focusing our analysis solely on the views of a reduced number of participants who were highly involved, we did not examine if and how such bridges may have constrained the involvement of ordinary citizens (Cox, 2019). Future studies should look into the dynamics of interaction between different players, for example between grassroots groups and political parties, through ethnographic approaches, and from the perspective of community members. Furthermore, in our study, we considered the struggles against oil and gas natural as part of the same movement, what we named MAOG. At the time of data collection, both places of action (Algarve and Leiria) and topics (oil and natural gas) were still linked. As such, the snowballing sampling approach lead us to a sample of activists

engaged in both contexts, who shared the goal to cancel all oil and natural gas concessions. Meanwhile, during the last year, the struggle against natural gas has assumed its own dynamics and specificities, with new coalitions and campaigns. Future studies should look at how environmental struggles remain connected over time, and what influence do specific struggles have in building a wider environmental movement.

Conversely, our analysis suggests that the movement's success is viewed in relation to its ability to promote movement building (Grosse, 2019), and to be a space and vehicle for building citizens' political agency. Specifically, in this context, political agency is perceived as the power to act (Campbell, 2009), which is viewed as of equal importance to the ability to achieve political influence (Amenta et al., 2010). As argued by Han and Barnett-Loro (2018), to build the political will necessary to address climate crisis will involve building the collective power necessary to shift power dynamics. It seems that movements such as the MAOG may help in transforming the way people engage with environmental issues. Following other scholars (Carvalho and Peterson, 2012; Pepermans and Maeseele, 2016), we argue that building political agency through collective action is an important step for building the collective power necessary for social transformation. What remains to be seen, however, is whether movements' struggles, such as the one reported in this study, can establish change over time (Jabola-Carolus et al., 2018), and contribute to the level of political engagement necessary for dealing with current and future climate challenges. Additional research should look at social movements from a longitudinal perspective, by addressing the changes within participants' movements and the external political influence of the movements.

Our pattern of findings lends support to the importance of placing political agency as a key dimension in social movements research (Jasper, 2004; Jabola-Carolus et al., 2018) and for the relevance of distinguishing types of agency (Campbell, 2009). To give centrality to agency implies not only acknowledging that groups and individuals can choose different strategies or tactics (Jasper, 2004), but also that social movements' successes may be important sites for building a sense of "power to act." This is especially relevant because previous literature has shown that the belief that nothing can be done to solve climate change (i.e., "fatalistic doubt") may be a demotivator of collective action (Smith and Leiserowitz, 2014; Marlon et al., 2019). Building political agency seems to be relevant and valued by the activists, but further research should examine if similar meanings are also relevant for non-activists. Although more research is needed, emphasizing political agency as the "power to act" may be a promising route to communicate and mobilize people to participate in environmental movements. Ultimately, our study shows that struggles against oil and gas drilling constitute an important site for building bridges and political agency, which may be key dimensions for promoting political engagement with climate change.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets presented in this article are not publicly available due to their containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants. Requests to access the datasets should be directed to the corresponding author at maria.jesus@iscte-iul.pt.

ETHICS STATEMENT

All the participants provided their informed consent. They agreed to audio recorded interviews and for their quotes to be used for publication. The verbatim quotes presented in this manuscript were anonymized so participants could not be identified.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MF-J and RG conceived, designed and contributed to the theoretical framework of the study, and contributed to the analyses of the interviews. RG collected data and transcribed the material. MF-J wrote the first draft of the manuscript.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2020.00033/full#supplementary-material

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Fridays for Future's Disruptive Potential: An Inconvenient Youth Between Moderate and Radical Ideas

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In December 2015, political leaders celebrated the Paris Agreement as a milestone in the global fight against climate change. Three years later, Greta Thunberg's school strike outside the Swedish parliament inspired thousands of students around the world to protest against their political leaders' inability to adequately respond to climate change. Envisioning livable climate futures for generations to come, the emerging "Fridays for Future" (FFF) movement urges governments to take more radical action on climate change. While FFF has sparked discussions about climate change around the world, the movement's effects on broader societal change remain unclear. We, therefore, explore how FFF has triggered debates beyond the necessity to tackle climate change and offer a framework to reflect upon the broader socio-political implications of the school strikes. We illustrate the contestation between different ideas of social life and political order encapsulated within and attached to FFF by analyzing the movement's self-understanding and the media discourse around these protests in Germany. Although the German government portrays the country as a pioneer in moving an industry-based economy toward decarbonization, the school strikes have quickly emerged and stabilized. We explore if and how the FFF protestors express not only the need for climate action but also call for deeper societal transformation. To do so, our study draws upon a discourse analysis based on news articles, official documents, and speeches, complemented by qualitative interviews with youth representatives and experts involved in the movement to identify competing imaginaries and themes of contestation. We study the tensions between competing student-led visions of the future through the lens of sociotechnical imaginaries, which allows us to illuminate and juxtapose moderate and radical approaches. In conclusion, current school protests are not only about climate action but reflect more fundamental political struggles about competing visions of a future society in times of climate change. Yet, the protestors' strong focus on science-driven politics risks to overshadow these broader societal debates, potentially stabilizing the techno-centric, apolitical and market-driven rationale behind climate action.

Keywords: climate change, global governance, social movement, youth, Fridays for Future, sociotechnical imaginaries, Germany

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INTRODUCTION

> We need to wake up / We need to wise up
> We need to open our eyes / And do it now, now, now!
> We need to build a better future / And we need to start right now.
> *A song at a Fridays for Future rally to the melody of "Bella Ciao" (FFF_rally_1)*[1]

In September 2018, 15-year-old Greta Thunberg initiated a school strike outside the Swedish parliament in defiance of an adult world that has failed to take the mounting climate crisis seriously. In less than a year, Greta Thunberg's protest has inspired a global movement of youth climate activism. Under the label, *Fridays for Future* (FFF), children and youth across the world went on the streets to put pressure on political leaders and demand action against climate change and hereby secure livable and save climate futures for generations to come. Thousands of protestors gathered every Friday, even millions protested at globally coordinated events, bringing climate change at the forefront of the political agenda, most notably during the European Parliament election in May 2019 and the Global Climate Action Summit in New York in September 2019. Climate change made its comeback as the key topic in public debates thanks to a highly diverse group that political decision-makers have long portrayed as apolitical or neglected altogether: children and youth.

Although FFF has sparked debates about the urgency of tackling climate change, the movement's broader societal and political implications are yet to be seen. We, therefore, explore FFF's disruptive potential, defined here as the movement's ability to trigger more fundamental debates about social, economic, and political change beyond the field of climate change. Are we witnessing a new social movement that stands up against the adult world, blaming ruling elites not only for their failed climate politics but also for refusing well-established norms, values, rules, and institutions? If and to what extent can FFF challenge established politics and foster macro-societal change? In other words: How and to what extend does FFF link its demands for climate action to broader societal change?

Social movements can generate substantial forces to push for change and demand reforms by putting pressure on existing industries and foster social experiments (Hess, 2010). In envisioning and practicing "alternative pathways," social movements can create laboratories of innovation and spur tests of alternative technologies and social practices. Fisher (2019), for example, argues that FFF fosters not only debates about climate change, but also increases civic participation and thus supports democracy at large.

Frustration over inadequate climate action and a slow response to climate change has motivated hundreds of thousands of young people around the world to protest for climate action. Activists demand the implementation of the Paris Agreement, but also link their claims to more radical changes in society, challenging established power relations and demanding behavioral change. Calls for implementing climate-friendly technologies merge with strategies of resistance against a fossil fuel-based society. Such a movement is not only confronted with critical debates, but also characterized by internal tensions, conflicts, and ambiguities. While activists like Greta Thunberg are committed to living according to their high principles—promoting a more sustainable lifestyle and reluctant to fly—others were harshly criticized for the dilemma between an unsustainable way of life and their political demands (Wunderlich, 2019). Ideological divides about questions of identity, radicality, and representation accompany these tensions within the movement. This article explores these debates by shedding light on FFF's self-understanding and its public perception in Germany, where FFF has emerged as a powerful youth movement, orchestrated by scientists, parents, environmental organizations, and other actors. They all join forces to challenge the status quo of the climate mitigation pathway propagated by the German government, but with different motifs and conflicting visions of the future.

We investigate the competing ideas of social and political order attached to the movement's claims by mobilizing the concept of sociotechnical imaginaries (Jasanoff, 2015). While activists imagine a carbon-free future in line with, but also in opposition to a dominant growth- and technology-centered narrative, the concept of sociotechnical imaginaries allows us to discuss if and how potential alternatives to the mainstream notion of climate action enter and potentially disrupt the political discourse. Based on the assumption that citizens and communities outside and beyond centers of power can produce and perform new sociotechnical imaginaries and prefigure desirable alternative climate futures (Kim, 2015), we discuss the emergence of these alternative narratives and their potential socio-political implications.

Germany often portrays itself as a global climate leader and a pioneer in decarbonizing its industry-based economy (Jänicke, 2016). Yet, school protests quickly gained traction and have stabilized across the country, accompanied by intensive public debates. To shed light on FFF's broader implications, we thus analyze not only how the movement portrays itself, but also how the media discourse evolves around it. Drawing upon a document analysis based on news articles, official documents, and speeches, we explore the narratives employed by the FFF protestors who express not only the need for climate action but also call for broader societal change. We complement this analysis with qualitative interviews with adult representatives and experts involved in the movement. Asking how FFF disrupts established narratives around climate politics, we argue that FFF largely fails to challenge a techno-centric, apolitical, and market-driven understanding of climate action—at least in public debates. At the same time, the conflicts between competing voices both within the movement and within the media debate demonstrate that these protests are not only about climate action but also reflect more fundamental political struggles about competing visions of a future society. We propose an analytical framework to engage with the broader sociopolitical meaning of FFF and offer a typology that distinguishes between moderate and radical approaches in the FFF movement.

[1]The list of rallies attended and interviews conducted can be found in **Annex 1**.

Setting the stage for this investigation, Section Non-state Actors in Climate Politics situates this study in the broader field of non-state actor involvement in climate politics. We then outline the analytical framework for this study in Section Analyzing Contested Visions of the Future: Emerging Imaginaries, largely based on the concept of sociotechnical imaginaries. Data collection and assessment methods are presented in Section Methodology, followed by the empirical analysis of the FFF movement and its perception in German media in Section A Movement in the Making. Section Emerging Imaginaries: Moderate vs. Radical Approach discusses the struggle between moderate vs. more radical approaches in the FFF movement before we draw our conclusions in Section Conclusion. While policy-makers tend to imagine climate mitigation efforts in terms of technological advancements, efficiency, and more sustainable lifestyles, we explore how youth activists possess the capacity to perform counter-narratives and critical discontent to such a dominant imaginary.

NON-STATE ACTORS IN CLIMATE POLITICS

Tackling the "wicked problem" (Frame, 2008) of climate change requires action by a variety of actors at multiple levels. Not surprisingly, the Paris Agreement calls for joint efforts by states and non-state actors alike to cut global greenhouse gas emissions (UNFCCC, 2015). This multifaceted relation between the global climate change regime and the role of sub- and non-state actors stands at the core of research that has surged over the last decades (Okereke et al., 2009; Kuyper et al., 2018). Non-state actors do not only undertake research, present their positions, monitor state commitments, act as critical watchdogs during negotiations, and communicate to international and domestic publics and thus shape international environmental cooperation (Raustiala, 1997, p. 724). They also "challenge the limitations of the traditional state-centric system" (Princen and Finger, 1994, p. 217) as critical and independent outside voices.

This study addresses three prevalent shortcomings of the field: (1) Empirically, youth has received relatively little attention compared to other non- and sub-state actors such as businesses, cities, or environmental NGOs. (2) On a more conceptual level, issues of resistance and radical confrontation have rarely been addressed in post-Paris climate governance literature that has focused on collaborative approaches and modes of inclusion in a hybrid climate regime (Hale, 2016; Kuyper et al., 2018). (3) Questions of de-politicization are rarely raised in this context.

(1) Transnational actors, corporations, non-governmental organizations, and city networks are at the heart of climate governance literature that deals with and goes beyond the state-centric climate regime. Rather than approaching the state as the only actor responsible for addressing transboundary environmental problems, scholars have developed a rich body of literature about the critical roles played by a range of non-state actors in making, implementing, and enforcing climate action (Bäckstrand et al., 2017). During the past decade, a rich body of work has documented the widespread non-state experimentation with climate action that now occurs below, above and beyond the institutions of the state (Hoffmann, 2011; Bulkeley et al., 2014). By extending the understanding of climate politics beyond the state system, work in this field has offered "a more nuanced sense of spatial hierarchy, where multiple sites of climate politics nest within one another" (Stripple and Bulkeley, 2011, p. 6). Yet, academic contributions dealing with the particular role of youth in climate politics are still rare. Existing accounts discuss how children shape climate change debates (Tanner, 2010) or contribute to international climate negotiations (Darrach, 2011; Thew, 2018). They often explore the governance functions of non-state actors typically discussed in climate governance research (Lövbrand and Stripple, 2011, p. 27).

(2) Non-state actors have become a more and more integral part of the global climate change regime, contributing to its formalized governance architecture. They shape the negotiation and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements through vertical interactions between jurisdictional levels as well as cutting across territorial boundaries and the divisions between public and private authority. Not surprisingly, there are various attempts to conceptualize non-state action and operationalize their different roles (Nasiritousi, 2016; Nasiritousi et al., 2016) or influence (Betsill and Corell, 2014; Betsill, 2015). Environmental governance scholars have also developed multiple analytical perspectives to account for the complex interrelations between the "multiple sites of climate politics" (Stripple and Bulkeley, 2011, p. 6), including multi-level environmental governance (Wälti, 2010), polycentric governance (Jordan et al., 2018), networked governance (Tosun and Schoenefeld, 2017), or fragmented climate governance (Zelli, 2011). At the same time, the tensions between inside and outside voices in international climate negotiations (Betzold, 2013; Hadden, 2015) are less pronounced. While the Paris Agreement is largely framed as an opportunity for all stakeholders to contribute to global climate action (Hale, 2016), others criticize the text as a form of dangerous incrementalism (Allan, 2019) with a strong belief in technological advancement and eco-modernist reforms. Scholars have linked these tensions between conservative and progressive approaches to competing beliefs, ideologies, and discourses in global environmentalism (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2006; Dryzek and Stevenson, 2011).

(3) This observation speaks to the post-political critique of collaborative environmentalism (Swyngedouw, 2010; Machin, 2013; Blühorn and Deflorian, 2019) which describes a situation in which the political "is increasingly colonized by technocratic mechanisms and consensual procedures that operate within an unquestioned framework of representative democracy, free market economics, and cosmopolitan liberalism" (Wilson and Swyngedouw, 2015), rather than being a space of contestation and agonism. Environmental concerns are framed as bipartisan, apolitical issues "beyond politics" (Doherty and Doyle, 2013) or as "simply "a reality" that has to be dealt with. While climate governance has witnessed a process of de-politicization based on ideas of (scientific) consensus, universalism, and rationalism, a few authors also define climate politics by political antagonisms, which is often not recognized (Chatterton et al., 2012). More broadly speaking, current non-state actor literature leaves out

the articulation of political alternatives to neo-liberal hegemonic order and calls for radical democratization, eliminating "the possibility of an agonistic struggle between different projects of society which is the very condition for the exercise of popular sovereignty" (Mouffe, 2018).

Exploring FFF's disruptive potential means to discuss the movement's ability to re-politicize climate politics by reviving antagonism and a dispute over competing ideas of a livable society. Does FFF mark a revival of the political in a field that has sparked debates about depoliticization and the post-political (Swyngedouw, 2011)? And if so, what politics and visions of the future are imagined by the young protestors?

ANALYZING CONTESTED VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: EMERGING IMAGINARIES

Establishing and sustaining a certain ideal of an alternative climate future drives social protest that shapes climate-related discourses and action (Hanna et al., 2016a,b). We employ the conceptual framework of sociotechnical imaginaries to analyze the tensions between competing student-led visions of the future in the German FFF movement. The concept helps us to draw the lines between the explicit and outspoken future visions related to climate change to often more implicit issues of knowledge production, ideas of social order, and power struggles related to envisioned climate futures. A better understanding of envisioning processes and the imaginary power of a youth movement also looks at the underlying causes for social impacts such as behavioral change, social cohesion, and capacity building (Gubbins, 2010). Equity, social justice, and human rights impacts (Esteves et al., 2017) are equally part of an imagined climate future.

While social movements can be defined as mainly informal, pluralistic, and politically driven networks engaged in societal concerns based on "shared collective identities" (Diani, 1992), such a claim has yet to be substantiated for FFF. The movement arguably aims to organize in large numbers to wield political power (Alinsky, 1971; Sharp, 1973) and intends to foster broader social and political change. Yet, to create counter-institutions or projects, social movements need to engage in collective experimentation and the construction of new norms that prefigure an ideal society or a sociotechnical imaginary, e.g., through the establishment of transition towns (Hardt, 2013). "Experimentation, the circulation of political perspectives, the production of new norms and conduct, material consolidation, and diffusion" (Yates, 2015, p. 2) are essential components in building these future-oriented alternatives.

Social movements are driven by large and diverse sets of motivations such as personal frustration toward existing conditions, economic interests, or a strong belief in particular values. A key motivator for social movements in general, and FFF activists in particular, is their high confidence in a future that is different from the established routines and the business-as-usual scenario. These envisioned futures can be perceived as threats to existing, dominant power relations and incumbent interests. "The pursuit of utopian goals" (Buechler, 2000, p. 207) is essential in outlining an alternative to the status quo and the creation of alternatives through prefigurative activism means to reject existing hierarchies and refuse centralized power structures that (re)produce power imbalances (Boggs, 1978).

The concept of sociotechnical imaginaries connects the imagination of desirable visions of the future with ideas about the role of technology and innovations in society, the legitimacy of science and knowledge claims, and the production of power and social order (Jasanoff, 2015). Being "collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed," sociotechnical imaginaries are "animated by shared understandings of forms of social life and social order attainable through, and supportive of, advances in science and technology" (Jasanoff, 2015, p. 4). Sociotechnical imaginaries are temporally situated and culturally particular but are not limited to the scale of nation-states (Jasanoff, 2015); indeed, they can also be propagated by corporations and organized groups, including communities and social movements (Kim, 2015).

Climate politics and decarbonization represents a field where visions of the future are intrinsically linked to different means of science, technology, politics, and societal change. Various imaginaries can co-exist, either in a tense or productive relationship and thus may support or compete with a dominant societal imaginary. These imaginaries gain "traction through blatant exercises of power or sustained acts of coalition building" (Sand and Schneider, 2017, p. 22), e.g., through campaigns by social movements. Imaginaries not only encode what is attainable, but also envision how life ought (or ought not) to be, and so express shared understandings of good and bad. The concept also links the present with the past and the future in conceptualizing the interrelationships between power, society, and technology. Such a co-productionist perspective (Jasanoff, 2004) can also be found in a prefigurative strategy of social movements that involves the two practices "of confrontation with existing political structures and that of developing alternatives" (Maeckelbergh, 2011, para.15).

Imaginaries are not neutral, but highly political constructs—highlighting certain aspects while leaving out or erasing others. They hold the potential to coordinate actions across techno-epistemic networks, foster development pathways, and can include or exclude certain actors in the decision-making process (Jasanoff, 2007). They are defined in the context of this work as desirable visions of a future society where proposed policies and technological innovations related to climate action and decarbonization are intrinsically linked to competing ideas of social and political order.

Kim (2015) has developed seven analytical categories to juxtapose dominant imaginaries vs. critical discontent for the context of nuclear imaginaries in South Korea. These categories are (1) future vision and planning, (2) societal needs, (3) risks and threats, (4) the state, (5) people and citizens, (6) the market, economy and development, and (7) science and technology. These analytical categories express the broader dimensions of social and political order to which demands by social movements relate. They guide a movement's identity and echo in public debates—either explicitly or implicitly. **Table 1** summarizes

TABLE 1 | Analytical dimensions and guiding questions related to sociotechnical imaginaries.

Analytical dimension	Core questions
Future vision and planning	What kind of desirable future society is imagined, and how should it be reached?
Societal needs	What are the pressing societal needs and issues that should be prioritized?
Risks and threats	What are the dominant risks and existential threats for society?
The state	What role of the state is imagined?
People and citizens	What is the role of the people in a desirable vision of the future?
The market, economy, and development	What is the role of the market and development priorities in achieving a desirable future, and how should the economy look like?
Science and technology	What role has science and technology in an imagined, desirable future?

the seven dimensions, together with guiding questions for the analysis.

Sociotechnical imaginaries relate to the underlying motivations and the explicit justifications for social movements to demand change. The concept allows us to investigate how societal groups contest a dominant socio-technical system, imagine an ideal future society and act out a vision of a better community in contrast to existing climate politics and plans to tackle climate change in the future. Although the notion of alternative visions overlaps with "other types of political activity" (Yates, 2015, p. 2), such as countercultures, utopianism or idealistic groupings, the concept of imaginaries is particularly helpful to investigate the underlying visions of society that motivates and guides activists, supporters, and opponents of FFF alike.

Taking into account the characteristics of a young, diverse, and quickly developing movement, we can mobilize the concept of imaginaries to explore the disruptive nature of the FFF movement to established climate politics. Yet, FFF poses a few challenges that need to be considered here. (1) FFF represents a global movement that cannot be fully understood through a national case study alone. The movements' claims and actions shape and are shaped by action in other national contexts. (2) The movement's bipartisan attitude and its strong emphasis on science-guided politics make political struggles and differences less pronounced than in explicitly political contexts. (3) Finally, the imaginaries discussed here should be considered as imaginaries in the making or emerging imaginaries, fragile and not yet fully established or institutionalized. They might quickly change over time or even collapse. Yet, identifying moderate and radical claims articulated by and associated with FFF helps us to reflect upon the movement's potential socio-political implications.

Recognizing FFF's diversity in terms of claims and subject positions, we simplify our analysis here by distinguishing between two idealized types of emerging imaginaries: While a *moderate* imaginary aims for reforms within the existing system based on a cooperative approach that is guided by science, techno-optimism and ecological modernization, a *radical* imaginary entails more disruptive forms of systematic change in confrontation with established norms and institutions. Although this research does not identify stable imaginaries, we can point at their emergence by outlining the struggle between these two ideal types within the FFF movement. The framework thus allows for a critical reflection about the heterogenous movement's radicality by making conflicts and tensions visible.

METHODOLOGY

This work sheds light on a growing social movement's self-understanding and its perception in the public sphere. The qualitative research design that is based on media articles as well as public speeches, interviews and FFF position papers. Additional interviews with adult representatives and experts involved in FFF helped to highlight debates and tensions within the movement[2]. While the explorative research design helps to capture the movement's diversity, identify internal struggles and picture its perception in public, the analysis does not provide a comprehensive overview on the movement's goals and strategies. However, the juxtaposition of moderate vs. more radical imaginaries offers an entry point for discussing FFF's potential socio-political implications.

Germany serves as a case study where FFF has quickly emerged and stabilized over a short period of time. Despite being the biggest greenhouse gas emitter in the EU, Germany is committed to tackling climate change, aiming to reduce its emissions by 80% until 2050. FFF representatives have become public figures and the movement has shaped political debates throughout 2019 from carbon taxes over flight-shaming to cities declaring a state of climate emergency. FFF also triggered debates about the role of youth in society or civil rights in a democratic system. A diverse media landscape allows exploring contrasting visions and competing narratives attached to FFF in conservative, liberal and left-leaning media outlets.

Data gathering followed an explorative approach, but was guided by the seven dimensions of sociotechnical imaginaries outlined above. The three consecutive steps are reflected in the presentation of results: (1) We first identified three prevalent tensions and conflicts within the FFF movement: the movement's political claims, its organizational strategy, and issues of leadership and representation. (2) Drawing our attention to the media debate, we investigated how these issues of contestation were discussed in three different media outlets. (3) We develop and discuss a typology of moderate vs. radical emerging imaginaries related to FFF based on the analytical framework presented above. **Annexes 1–3** summarize the aim, process, material, and analytical categories related to these steps

[2]For the interviews, we have obtained written informed consent from all interview partners. All interviewees were above the age of 21 and complemented this analysis. Since this analysis is based on publicly available information (media articles, public statements etc.) as well as insights from adult experts (interviews) an ethical review process was not required for this study.

together with codes from the coding process and examples from the material.

To explore the self-portrait of the movement, we analyzed selected public statements, FFF position papers, and interviews published in news outlets. We also joined three rallies as participant observers in Berlin and conducted six interviews (between 30 and 60 min in length) with German youth representatives and experts from environmental NGOs above the age of 21 during the 50th UNFCCC subsidiary bodies meeting in Bonn in June 2019. Questions revolved around policy goals, visions, motivations, and the students' drivers for protest. A list of material is included in the codebook excerpts provided in **Annexes 1**–**3**.

For the media debate, we concentrated on four different media outlets that are both nationally relevant and represent the political spectrum from conservative over liberal to left-alternative (Hanke, 2011; Hintereder, 2012). These outlets are *Der Spiegel*, *Die Welt*, *Die Tageszeitung taz*, and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Material from both their print and online versions is included. With the help of Lexis Nexis® and a manual search in the outlets' archives, we derived a total of 2,857 articles mentioning "Fridays for Future" for the period between January 1st, 2019 and October 31st, 2019. We then reduced the number of relevant matches to 635 by excluding all matches with <500 words to focus on more in-depth reflections. We further reduced this number to 178 by manually selecting key articles that deal with FFF at their core. **Figure 1** provides an overview of the number of articles considered relevant for this analysis.

Following the methods suggested by Jasanoff (2015), we systematically mined our qualitative material for insights into the framings and justifications behind climate action outlined by and related to FFF. Since the use of language represents an important medium in the construction of imaginaries, we carefully investigated the choice of words, both spoken and published, and linked it to the proponents' (alternative) visions of a desirable future. A codebook helped us to go through the data-driven, yet theory-oriented process. The codes and examples from the material can be found in **Annexes 1**–**3**. Similar to DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2011), the codebook consists of the following components: the overarching category (core themes), the code groups, the code labels, examples from the material, and the sources where it appears.

From this codebook, we identified and extracted recurrent discursive elements to highlight how different storylines of alternative imaginaries are emerging that stand in contrast to the dominant imaginaries of decarbonization.

A MOVEMENT IN THE MAKING

In September 2019, Germany's federal government presented the country's first-ever comprehensive climate change legislation right before the global climate action summit took place in New York. The law marked the outcome of an intense internal and public debate about Germany's climate commitments and measures to comply with the climate targets for 2030. The climate package consisted of a major framework (*Climate Action Law*) and a policy program of measures and instruments (*Climate Action Programme 2030*), that was finally approved by the Germany federal parliament (*Bundestag*) and the council of state governments (*Bundesrat*) in November and December 2019. These measures were taken to ensure that Germany fulfills its commitment to the Paris Agreement and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 55 percent by 2030 compared to 1990 levels

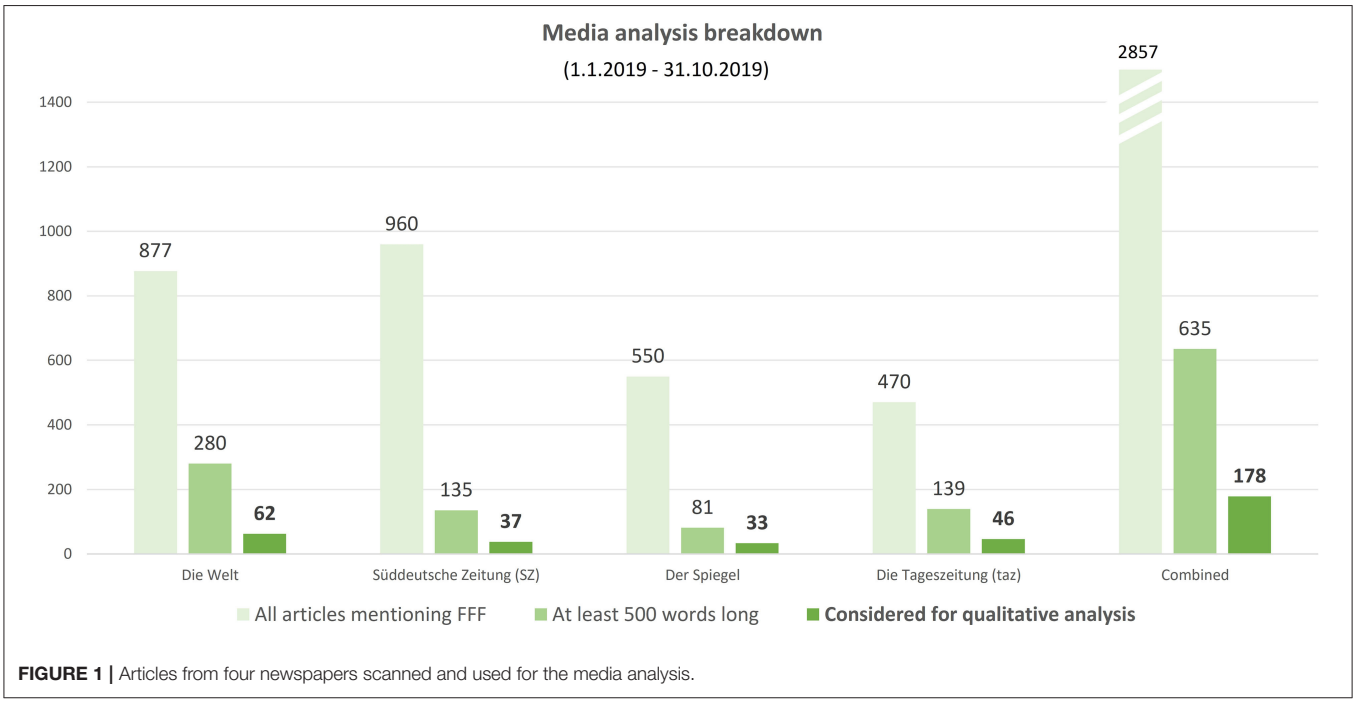

FIGURE 1 | Articles from four newspapers scanned and used for the media analysis.

(Bundesregierung, 2019). The formulation of the law and its passage have become a reference point for the FFF movement. FFF had pushed the German government to develop a strong climate law before September 2019 and quickly criticized the reached compromise as unsatisfying and insufficient to tackle the global climate crisis (Kreutzfeldt and Pötter, 2019).

In 2019, FFF has shaped public debates on climate change throughout the year, and the school protests were often portrayed as a powerful protest movement, pushing for more ambitious climate action. FFF became a synonym for civil society's demand for more ambitious climate change commitments. However, such a unifying perspective blurred the lines between the movement's different voices and overshadowed FFF's internal debates about the movement's strategy, its political claims, and issues of identity and representation. The launch of a shared website, the development of a corporate identity, and the establishment of selected spokespersons who dominated the debates underlined the impression of a unified "potential mass movement" (Koos and Naumann, 2019). Yet, these observations do not give justice to the heterogeneity of a movement that is united in its opposition toward the government's climate legislation, but also articulates contested claims and competing visions of the future. Instead of portraying FFF as a static and bipartisan movement that calls for science to guide climate politics, we explore the conflicts, tensions and issues of contestation around the movement and its perception. Such an analysis reveals the movement's fundamental struggles over FFF's overall strategy, its political claims and questions of identity and representation.

Self-Portrait of Fridays for Future

Only a few months after Greta Thunberg initiated her school strike in front of the Swedish Parliament, the German FFF movement gained momentum in early 2019. While the first regional groups formed all across Germany already in late 2018, they gained nationwide traction after launching a dedicated webpage and centralized social media channels since January 2019. On February 15th, more than 30000 students went on strike all over the country, organized by more than 150 regional groups (FFF Germany, 2019c)[3]. During the global protest event on March 15th, ∼300,000 people joined the strikes in Germany. While the school strikers used simple modes of communication, such as WhatsApp or Twitter, to coordinate their activities and gain public attention, a few representatives such as Luisa Neubauer became the voice and face of a movement in public talk shows, during high-level political events and for interviews in leading national newspapers (Kögel, 2019) and broadcasters (Phoenix, 2019).

A few weeks later, a group of FFF activists presented a position paper with their demands for climate protection (FFF Germany, 2019e) to push politicians toward more ambitious climate action. In a related press conference held in Berlin's Museum of Natural History in front of a gigantic Brachiosaurus skeleton, FFF spokesperson Sebastian Grieme explained that an immediate shut-down of one-fourth of all coal power plants in Germany would be "doable" and the complete phase-out should be realized by 2030 instead of 2038 (FFF Germany, 2019d; Lang, 2019). The statement stands for a pragmatic approach of the movement that aims to achieve climate targets without radical social and political disruption.

During the first half of 2019, various self-organized events, rallies, and workshops were held, often in collaboration with established environmental organizations like Greenpeace or environmental movements such as *Ende Gelände*. These joint events brought together activists from different parts of Germany and Europe. In June 2019, around 40,000 protesters from 15 countries rallied in Aachen near one of Germany's largest lignite mine, demanding bold action to combat climate change (DW, 2019). During the movement's regular rallies on Fridays, a variety of slogans characterized the diversity of the movement. While slogans such as "there is no OR between nature and economy" underline this reformist understanding that is based on technological innovations and ideas of ecological modernization (FFF_rally_1), others demanded "system change, not climate change" through large-scale societal transformations or the abolishment of the capitalist system (FFF_rally_2).

In a wave of solidarity, a variety of groups such as *parents for future*, *architects for future*, *artists for future*, and *entrepreneurs for future* articulated their support for the growing youth movement. Under the label *scientists for future,* a large group of scholars backed FFF, called their concerns and demands "justified" and based on "robust scientific evidence," adding a call to expand renewable energy, implement energy savings measures and move toward more sustainable consumption patterns (Hagedorn et al., 2019, p. 80). Besides, labor unions expressed their recognition at FFF rallies. For example, Henrik Peitsch (education and science workers' union) stated his hope that the protests should trigger debates about a "transformation of society" that goes beyond incremental change and reforms (Peitsch, 2019). According to a poll from June 2019, more than half of the respondents believed that the movement will eventually lead to "measurable political consequences" of any kind (ZDF, 2019).

Through its self-characterization as a politically neutral, "bipartisan movement" of like-minded climate activists in solidarity with everyone who supports the group's demands (FFF Germany, 2019e), FFF Germany aims to embrace as many different voices as possible. Leading figures of the movement such as Neubauer and Reimers (2019) are unified by a strong belief in science and evidence-based climate politics, and they often refuse to take strong political positions. Instead, politicians are in general not accepted as speakers during their rallies and media portrays the movement or even more generally "the youth protesting on the streets" as a widely homogenous movement with little internal conflicts or political debates (Rucht, 2019). Despite these impressions of a coherent, unified movement, a closer look at FFF Germany's internal debates reveals emerging tensions and frictions around the group's (1) *political claims*, (2) *its organizational strategy*, and issues of (3) *leadership and representation*.

(1) *Political claims: moderate reforms vs. systemic change.* Climate science, the IPCC, and the Paris Agreement are framed as a common ground for action in strong alliance with the scientific community. For example, FFF activists have formulated their

[3]The number of regional groups increased to more than 600 by September 2019.

demands to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement in close collaboration with climate scientists (Ronzheimer, 2019). The group's claims refer to scientific bodies like the IPCC or the German Environment Agency (UBA), and highlight concepts such as planetary boundaries or environmental tipping points (FFF Germany, 2019e). Their central demands for Germany include carbon neutrality by 2035, a coal phase-out by 2030 and 100% renewable energy supply by 2035. A carbon tax should be introduced with a price of 180 € per ton of CO_2. Achieving these targets requires ambitious political reforms, but does not question the current political or economic system (Neubauer and Reimers, 2019).

At the same time, individual protestors and FFF subgroups criticize the key demands formulated by FFF as techno-centric and not radical enough to induce "real" or "systemic" change (Konicz, 2019). They argue that instead of negotiating the year for phasing out coal, more fundamental questions related to globalization or the future of the economic system should be at the forefront of debate (Interview_1). These activists consider themselves as radical and much more confrontational voices in society who speak out claims that "no one else dares to say" (Anonymous, 2019b). Negotiations with politicians about technical details are seen as forms of distraction that limit the range of thinkable alternatives (INTERVIEW _3). As one consequence, FFF activists initiated the platform *Change for Future* as an anti-capitalist movement within FFF. They reject the capitalistic system as well as ecological reforms within the current system, which they perceive as an obstacle to more fundamental and systematic changes in society (Konicz, 2019). Pledging for a fundamental realignment in society to cope with the challenges of climate change, they strive for not less than a "democratization of the entire society [because] many of us have long realized that capitalism is the problem." They want to bring the question of systemic change to the forefront of the public debate to show "that a different world is possible" (Konicz, 2019).

(2) *Organizational strategy: professional organization vs. grassroots movement.* Another tension that characterizes the self-understanding of the movement emerges from the conflict between a professionally organized group and a grassroots based movement. The development of a comprehensive catalog of demands, the establishment of a spokes-council and the use of a central website hint at the emergence of an increasingly professional and streamlined movement (Interview_5). While former environmental activists such as Gerhard Wallmeyer (Greenpeace) call for an even stronger institutionalization and the establishment of "crystal-clear organizational structures" (Bruhns, 2019), anonymous activists push back and criticize the lack of transparency and basic democracy in the former grassroots movement (Anonymous, 2019a).

From early on, FFF was driven and represented by students who were often already involved in the German Green Party's youth organization or environmental organizations like Greenpeace, BUNDjugend or NABU. For example, Luisa Neubauer, the "face of Fridays for Future in Germany" (Süß, 2019) is a member of the Green Party. These leading figures are thus already embedded into existing highly professional and well-connected networks. Manuals and recommendations for organizing regional groups, centrally provided material for protests and media correspondence, and even merchandising material like an official bracelet are characteristic for tendencies in the movement to give it a coherent (corporate) identity (FFF Germany, 2019b). While activities are strategically branded with the FFF label (FFF Germany, 2019b), a number of student activists have formulated their concerns with the increased levels of professionalism. Particularly during the first nationwide FFF congress in August, where thousands of activists discussed the future of the movement, protestors raised their frustration over the professionalization of FFF (Schirmer, 2019) that started as a grassroots movement, but quickly "came of age" (Chase, 2019).

(3) *Leadership and representation: top-down leadership vs. bottom-up diversity.* While strong ties to established environmental organizations, scientists, and even the Green Party are considered beneficiary for a large part of students, others refuse the degree of centralization related to a higher degree of professionalism which stands in contrast to a loosely organized grassroots movement (Interview_2). Along these lines, questions of representation, decision-making capacity, and legitimacy are of utter importance for the German FFF movement that is mainly represented by a few spokespersons such as Luisa Neubauer, Sebastian Grieme, Jakob Blasel, or Maximilan Reimers.

Various activists publicly criticize the dominance of a few leading activists like Luisa Neubauer and her formerly carbon-intensive lifestyle in public debates (Hipp and Ismar, 2019). Open and partly anonymous letters from activists criticize non-transparency, knowledge hierarchies, and a lack of direct democratic decision making (Anonymous, 2019a; Schirmer, 2019). These critical voices point at the dilemma between the movements' aim for a better future and its internal hierarchies and power dynamics. These tensions triggered debates about legitimate representation and decision-making processes. Who speaks for a movement that has neither a clear legal status nor established decision-making structures? While FFF school strikers in local groups like Cologne demanded flat hierarchies, democratic decision making and broad forms of representation during FFF Germany's first summer congress in Dortmund, others justified the need for key figures to coordinate action, take opportunities and represent the movement in public debates (Schirmer, 2019). As a compromise, leading activists like Luisa Neubauer agreed to forward media requests to local groups and limit her own presence in public debates (Süß, 2019).

Media Discourse Around Fridays for Future

German media coverage about FFF was constantly high throughout 2019 with spikes around the mass protests in March, May and September. While most early articles were rather descriptive and focused on the number of protestors or the struggle of school officials to react to the protests (Meidinger, 2019), others provided more personal insights into the movement through observations, portraits and interviews (Quecke, 2019a). FFF has become a synonym for climate activism and a point of reference for almost any climate-related topic, and so has the movement arguably been excessively used as an opener or keyword for a broad range of debates ranging from electric

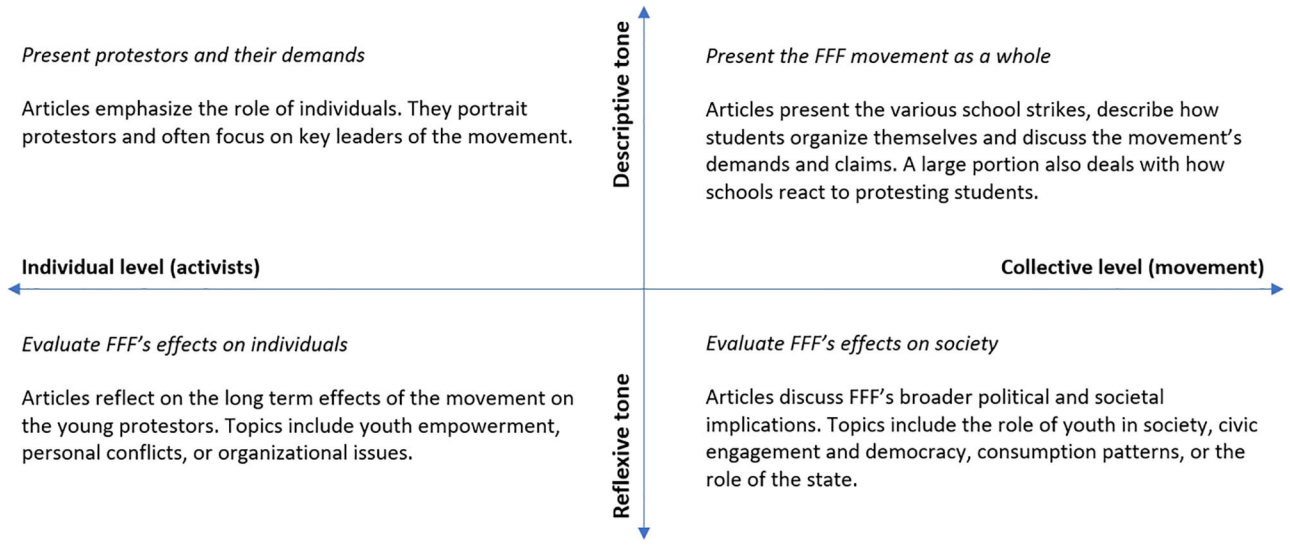

FIGURE 2 | FFF news coverage divided into individual/collective and descriptive/reflexive articles.

vehicles (Bellberg, 2019) over flight shaming (Hecking, 2019b) to the limits of growth (Unfried, 2019a).

Based on our total sample of 635 newspaper articles,[4] we can distinguish the articles' focus along two general axes: (1) Their scope ranges from individual protestors to the movement as a whole, and (2) they are either more descriptive in nature or provide a more analytical, evaluative tone. Such a differentiation leads to four different categories of articles: At the individual level, articles either describe and portray young individuals who are part of the movement (Sonheimer, 2019) or evaluate how the movement shapes children and youth in terms of empowerment, conflict management, and organizational issues (Bruhns et al., 2019). At a more collective level, articles either present the school strikes, protestors and the schools' reactions (Gehm, 2019) or they discuss FFF's broader effects on society (Unfried, 2019a). **Figure 2** provides an overview on this differentiation.

FFF has brought back climate change to the forefront of public debates and triggered widespread discussions about climate action. While advocates of a stronger climate change agenda supported the movement, opponents aimed to delegitimize it (Gehm, 2019)—most importantly when the movement's claims where discussed in the context of societal change. For the following analysis, we concentrate on the 178 articles with a more reflexive and evaluative tone and a focus on the collective, societal level. In line with the three issues of contestation discussed above, we will shed light on debates about the movement's (1) *organizational strategy*, (2) its *political claims,* and the (3) *questions about leadership and representation.*

(1) *Organizational strategy: Topical protest vs. political mass-movement*: Especially early debates about FFF revolved around the conflict between the students' duty to go to school and their right to protest (George, 2019). While conservatives highlighted the students' responsibility to attend school hours and suggested to protest after school or during weekends (Meidinger, 2019), others celebrated the protests as a form of public engagement and youth empowerment, which should be encouraged (Pötter, 2019). Commentators showed understanding for the students' frustration and concerns, and described the climate protests as morally absolutely "justified" (Klein, 2019). In contrast, Baden-Wuertemberg's prime minister Winfried Kretschmann (Green Party), portrayed the protests as "civil disobedience that cannot proceed forever" (Laeber, 2019). School principals generally sympathized with the movement's intention but also announced punishments for students who regularly join the protests during school hours (Wetzel, 2019). Especially in southern and western Germany, school principals fined students for their absence from school but later withdrew the fines after public protest.

Beyond these controversies about the legitimate form of school strikes, FFF also triggered debates about stronger youth involvement in climate politics (FFF Germany, 2019e), and revived discussions about democratic participation. Among others, ideas to decrease the minimum voting age to 16 were discussed in the context of FFF (Welzer, 2019). Activist Jakob Blasel called FFF a "lived lesson in democracy" that cannot be taught at school (Sadik, 2019). In contrast, critical voices such as Hüther (2019), head of the German Economic Institute, called for an end of the protests and urged the students to "change politics democratically" by getting politically involved in parties and parliaments instead.

(2) *Political claims: reformist approach vs. transformative ideal.* FFF sparked debates about concrete climate policy reforms (Lang, 2019)—often linked plans and initiatives developed by the Federal Government's "climate cabinet." Public debates about topics like the coal-phase-out were linked to or reflected through

[4]Articles mentioning "Fridays for Future" and published between January 1st and October 31st in *Die Welt*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Der Spiegel*, and *Die Tageszeitung taz* which are more than 500 words long.

FFF voices and protests (Bauchmüller, 2019). Even conservative politicians like Bavaria's prime minister Markus Söder applauded the movement and suggested an earlier coal phase-out (Schlüter and Müller, 2019). At the same time, FFF generated an increased interest in general environmental concerns due to overconsumption such as plastic waste (Gehm, 2019) or air traffic (Gehm, 2019). The mayor of Konstanz admitted that it was the regional FFF group's pressure, which triggered the town's decision to declare a state of climate emergency (ZEIT, 2019).

A few commentators and intellectuals attached their ideas of broader societal change, anti-capitalism, or fundamental criticism of the political system to the movement (Leick, 2019). Grassmann (2019), for example, linked the movement to the fight against industries and lobby groups which neglect a deep transformation of the economic system. Moral arguments for an alternative idea of social life based on sufficiency were used to convince people of behavioral change, e.g., in areas like transport, electricity consumption, or traveling (Unfried, 2019b). While these arguments were interpreted as part of a "massive political and cultural change" (Grießhammer, 2019), they have largely failed to foster a "dispute over moral politics" (Kliche, 2019) and values beyond the use of plastic bags, flight shame or car ownership. Despite these attempts to interpret FFF as a "cultural change" (Krüger, 2019), the largest part of the debate involved the role of instruments and mechanisms to reduce carbon emissions. Broadly discussed topics included taxes on kerosene (Wetzel, 2019c), enhancement of public transport (Preuß, 2019), or the coal phase-out (Wetzel, 2019a).

(3) *Representation: Pragmatic leadership vs. confrontational movement.* According to FFF's official demands (FFF Germany, 2019e), political reforms, economic incentives and technological advancement are needed to fulfill the Paris Agreement and achieve its 1.5°C target. Leading figures and spokespersons of the FFF movement like Luisa Neubauer or Jakob Blasel promote such an ecomodernist narrative, and dominate media debates with questions of feasibility, technical concerns, and the implementation of specific policy measures. Activists like Mayer (2019) spoke at businesses like Volkswagen to criticize the corporation's intentions to tackle climate change as "not enough" instead of refusing the automotive industry altogether. Along these lines, Luisa Neubauer takes a pragmatic tone in an interview when she demands a quicker reduction in coal consumption to fulfill Germany's 2020 climate commitments (Kögel, 2019). Rather than outlining a broader political program with fundamental societal change, FFF spokespersons describe FFF as a pragmatic, consensus-oriented, and "one of the most conservative" (Neubauer and Reimers, 2019) movement one can imagine.

Activists criticize that news coverage "reduces the movement to single individuals" (Mathwig, 2019) like Luisa Neubauer who are not fully representative of a broader and often more radical movement. This accounts not only for the movement's modes of protest which should not be understood as a conservative or conformist approach to raise awareness in compliance with existing rules, but as a form of civil disobedience that should be taken seriously (Mathwig, 2019). Other activists criticize the media's focus on feasible reforms, economic incentives, and arguments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions "within the system" (Meyen, 2019) instead of more radical debates about fundamental systemic questions such as capitalism or basic democracy.

These debates about the movement's organizational strategy, political claims, and issues of leadership and representation were accompanied by a discussion about the legitimacy of knowledge claims and expertise. The leader of Germany's liberal Free Democratic Party, Christian Lindner, became iconic for a tweet where he dismissed the school protests by saying that climate politics should be dealt with by professionals, calling FFF demonstrators as well-intentioned but naïve (Müller, 2019). These children, he argued, would not understand the technological and economic constraints upon environmentalism (Tagesspiegel, 2019). In reaction to these attacks, the initiative *scientists for future* was established as a platform to back the school movement based on "secured scientific knowledge" (Munzinger and Schlüter, 2019). While supporters from early on embraced FFF for their brave demands and active engagement, opponents such as conservatives or the Liberal Party adjusted their relation to the movement—first ignoring or downplaying FFF, then attacking the students for protesting during school hours, and later embracing and acknowledging the movement in its most general way, shifting the political agenda and the public discourse to "reasonable" and "manageable" political demands in compliance with established norms and the status quo of existing institutions to weaken, silence, or delegitimize more confrontational voices (Wetzel, 2019b). These competing narratives and different aspects attached to FFF illustrate the battleground for competing emerging imaginaries of social life and political order attached to climate action.

EMERGING IMAGINARIES: MODERATE VS. RADICAL APPROACH

FFF has arguably received substantial attention in public debates. A number of politicians, commentators and environmentalists alike have celebrated FFF as an important trigger not only for more effective climate politics (Böcking, 2019) but also for broader political and societal change (Unfried, 2019a). For example, Fisher (2019) argues that no matter how effective the youth movement will be in fostering stricter climate regulations, "this growing movement will have substantial and important consequences around the world as it facilitates more active participants in democracy" (Fisher, 2019, p. 430). While such claims can hardly be substantiated given FFF's short lifetime, we should at least examine if and to what extent demands for broader political and societal change like democratization, social justice or anti-capitalism are intertwined with calls for climate action.

Urging the government to prioritize climate change as a political concern, and demanding concrete policy action instead of bold societal change represents the lowest common denominator for the movement's political demands (FFF Germany, 2019e). Yet, the public debates around FFF, as well as the tensions within the movement presented above, provide a vivid example of competing narratives around the

role of politics in FFF. Bringing these debates to the forefront shows a fragmented and not yet consolidated movement that is characterized by ideological divides and tensions between moderate demands and more radical claims. While media articles portrait *extinction rebellion* as FFF's more "radical sister" (Fahrion, 2019), several school strikers refuse such a label as they consider themselves radical in opposition to mainstream climate politics, aiming to achieve broader societal change (Konicz, 2019).

FFF has fostered not only debates about Germany's coal phase-out or the price of carbon (Duhm, 2019), but also brought topics on the political agenda that have received little attention before, including debates about flight shaming or local governments' decisions to declare a state of climate emergency (ZEIT, 2019). Although it is too early to conceptualize these narratives and positions as full-fledged, comprehensive, institutionalized imaginaries, they can illustrate the emergence and collapse of conflicting norms and worldviews in the movement. We therefore outline how these potential "alternative imaginaries in the making" (Marquardt and Delina, 2019) emerge from an ongoing debate among FFF activists and in the public sphere. Distinguishing between a moderate and a radical approach, we offer a typology to structure the various approaches offered by and attached to the FFF movement. To guide our reflection, we draw upon the seven dimensions related to imaginaries introduced above: (1) *future vision and planning*, (2) *societal needs*, (3) *risks and threats*, (4) *the state*, (5) *people and citizens*, (6) *the market, economy and development*, and (7) *science and technology*.

Future Vision and Planning

As a global movement, FFF mobilizes the idea of an uncertain future as a key driver for the protests—a livable future that is jeopardized due to older generations' inaction (Barfuss, 2019). Current political inaction is linked to dystopian visions of the future that is massively affected by climate change (Backes et al., 2019). To prevent life-threatening effects of climate change, FFF demands to phase out coal by 2030, reach 100% renewable energy supply by 2035, introduce a carbon tax of 180€ per ton and become carbon neutral by 2035 (Duhm, 2019). These technical debates are largely detached from the protestors' everyday action and motivation for a society without waste, more sustainable consumption, less carbon-intensive mobility, ideas of sufficiency, and degrowth (Schafflik, 2019). Established norms and narratives of a secure future such as the survival of key industries and jobs seem insufficient for children who feel threatened about celebrating their 50th birthday at all (Hein and Lichtblau, 2019). In contrast to a dystopian vision of a society that fails to react to global warming, the movement envisions a world that acknowledges the urgency of climate change and immediately takes action to tackle the climate crisis and guarantee a livable future on earth (Tomsic, 2019). While such a future vision can entail modes of radical behavioral (e.g., in terms of mobility) and societal (e.g., in terms of the capitalist system) change (Konicz, 2019), it can also follow a more techno optimistic rationale in line with the government's plan to reach the country's climate goals with the help of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and technocentric reforms.

Societal Needs

Along these lines, prioritized societal needs such as economic growth, job creation, and global competitiveness are seen as compatible with a more ambitious climate action agenda by leading FFF figures such as Neubauer and Reimers (2019). Although tackling climate change should become the primary and most urgent target for society, such a "climate emergency" should work in conjunction with economic wealth and prosperity (Schwär, 2019). Such a narrative reflects the rationale behind the government's decision to phase-out coal by 2038. According to Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel, it is the policymakers' task to protect the environment, but also secure jobs in the automotive industry and avoid new social problems which can only be achieved in the transport sector through a "radical shift toward electric mobility" (Mestermann, 2019). In contrast, FFF activists question these ecomodernist priorities in society: They argue that a healthy environment becomes more desirable than solid jobs (Hecking and Klovert, 2019). Bridging both societal needs, Heisterhagen (2019) envisions an ecological industrial politics that brings together "technological, economic, ecological and social progress."

Risks and Threats

While commentators argue that FFF's "neither radical nor totalitarian" claims require Germany and the world to fulfill the Paris Agreement and "keep their promise" (Stöcker, 2019), others paint dystopian visions of Germany's future if these demands by the "children of the apocalypse" (Backes et al., 2019) should be implemented. Commentators argue that a complete coal phase-out would make a "mega blackout" similar to experiences from Latin American countries more likely in Europe (Wetzel, 2019a). While trade unions agree that climate action is needed, they also warn against the juxtaposition of climate action against wealth and job creation. A climate-neutral Germany in 2035 would threaten Germany's industry and wealth (Reiche, 2019). Against this narrative, FFF subgroups such as *Change for Future* argue that the distribution of wealth and production measures is the actual threat not only for the climate, but for societies at large (Konicz, 2019).

The State

Although FFF protestors blame recent and current government officials for their inactivity in light of the looming climate crisis, leaders of the movement underline the importance of the state to tackle climate change and express "a craving for state guidelines" (Breyton, 2019) when it comes to climate change, while at the same time, practicing civil disobedience through the school strikes. FFF protestors envision an active regulatory state that guides society toward a carbon-neutral future. They call for the implementation of stricter climate policies, carbon taxes, and incentives for environmentally friendly transportation enforced by the state (FFF Germany, 2019e). Journalists see a "paradigm shift in protest culture," where a call for more regulation and powerful state authorities substitutes the call

for freedom, as witnessed during the student protests in 1968 (Janker, 2019). While large parts of the debate concentrate on individual rights and responsibilities related to consumerism (flights, private cars, plastic bags etc.) which should be limited by state-driven regulations guided by science (Bellberg, 2019), others frame FFF as an opportunity to fight for the future of the earth, but also rethink and question the future of the political system at large (Scholz, 2019). These more radical ideas of direct and democracy were expressed by youth representatives and experts during the interviews but rarely entered the public discourse (Interview_4, Interview_5).

People and Citizens

FFF has blamed the older generations' unsustainable mobility schemes, consumption patterns, and lifestyles as the main causes for anthropogenic climate change (Gorris et al., 2019). Tackling climate change thus becomes everyone's personal responsibility and obligation. For example, non-governmental organizations and churches frame the protests as a call for reflecting our lifestyle and take action to change our consumption patterns (Witte, 2019). At the same time, the movement also fosters a debate about the role of the people in a democratic society at large. Authors highlighted the importance of basic democratic rights such as freedom of expression or freedom of assembly as critical for the movement's success (Anzlinger, 2019). Others used the school strikes and the children's active political involvement to argue for children's voting rights (Klingenstein, 2019; Klovert, 2019).

The Market, Economy, and Development

Despite their criticism toward the fossil fuel industry, leading figures of the FFF movement have signaled a general confidence in market forces and open competition to meet the climate targets. Yet, a shift toward sustainable businesses requires incentives and supportive policy mechanisms for affected companies and industries (Kögel, 2019). Green growth and ecological modernization are seen as viable solutions to sustain a market-based economy while at the same time, protect the environment. FFF representatives prominently attack big energy companies (Reuters, 2019), the automotive industry (Hägler and Slavik, 2019), and other incumbents by urging them "to do more" for a transition toward more climate-friendly solutions (Thunberg et al., 2019). In contrast, FFF's summer congress in Dortmund promoted workshops about degrowth, economic reflexivity, and post development models, outlining alternatives to the current economic system (Quecke, 2019b). Groups like *Change for Future* critically engage with the capitalistic system and portray the market as a destructive force that needs to be guided by strong environmental regulations (Leick, 2019). However, alternative models such as post-development or degrowth are rarely articulated by the protestors or attached to the movement in media. In contrast, media debates concentrate on questions of feasibility, costs, and economic benefits (Hecking, 2019a). Networks such as *Entrepreneurs for Future* see the need for green businesses such as solar rooftop installations which experienced an increased demand due to the school protests (Böcking, 2019).

Science and Technology

FFF has established strong ties to the scientific community, with both FFF and climate scientists backing up and encouraging each other (Brech, 2019). In response to early criticism toward a movement that was portrayed as a group of unprofessional laypersons and naïve students at best (Olbrisch, 2019), *Scientists for Future* was established to substantiate the students' claims, bringing scientific experts and professionals into the debate (Hagedorn et al., 2019). Framing climate science as the primary guidance for political decisions related to climate change, FFF argues that any political program, initiative, or incentive should be assessed by an independent scientific review (FFF Germany, 2019e). During the protests, students show banners with claims such as "every disaster movie start with the government ignoring a scientist" (FFF_rally_1) or "listen to science" (FFF_rally_3). Šana Strahinjić, an FFF activist, urged politicians to "please start listening to science" (FFF Germany, 2019a) in a press statement. This argument caters to the dominant narrative that grants expertise to scientists, policymakers, and businesses that need to deal with the effects of climate change. However, an interviewed youth representative highlights the importance of knowledge claims by affected people, youth and other marginalized groups as critical discontent to the science-driven discourse (Interview_2). Science and green technologies are perceived as cornerstones of societal progress and solution to current problems (technocentrism), but not as a means to an end, which is transforming society at large. Linking the protests to questions of justice, power dynamics, representation, and marginalization could "help give some depth to #FridaysForFuture's message" (Evensen, 2019, p.429).

Two Emerging Imaginaries

Although FFF provides a strong counter-narrative to youth as a passive object that needs to be protected by the adults and should not engage in the policy-making process (2010), the movement's broader societal and political implications are yet to be seen. Alternative ideas of social life and political order are discussed but remain almost invisible in the selected nationwide newspapers. Leading FFF figures like Luisa Neubauer push for more ambitious climate action and an immediate implementation of the Paris Agreement. Yet, her claims as well as FFF's official demands support not only a science- and technology-driven narrative, but also prioritize "doable" (Graw, 2019) solutions within existing social, political and economic systems over disruptive alternatives. Smaller subgroups, individual activists, and interviewed youth representatives articulate alternative visions of the future and perceive their fight for climate action as a struggle for transforming broader social norms and ideals of a good life. In their vision, FFF should not only be a point of reference for debates about flight shaming and waste reduction but also foster a shift of basic social norms and practices such as capitalism, basic democracy, or sufficiency. Yet, these radical perspectives struggle to make their voice heard against the dominant moderate claims.

Table 2 summarizes the juxtaposition of moderate and radical approaches related to the FFF movement. Although such a

TABLE 2 | Two competing emerging imaginaries: moderate vs. a radical approach.

Dimension	Core question	Moderate approach	Radical approach
Future vision and planning	What kind of desirable future society is imagined, and how should it be reached?	Future visions are rooted in a techno-optimistic rational with an emphasis on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and technological advancements. Incremental change in all societal sectors is needed to address climate change.	A radical transformation of the society is required to tackle climate change. Instead of technological advancement, behavioral and systemic change is envisioned, often linked to anti-capitalist ideas.
Societal needs	What are the pressing societal needs and issues that should be prioritized?	The need to tackle climate change is intrinsically linked to the need for economic welfare. Economic progress, wealth creation, and securing jobs should go hand in hand with climate protection and industrial transformation.	Climate emergency substitutes wealth, job creation, and economic growth as the primary societal need, substituting the dominance of economic welfare.
Risks and threats	What are the dominant risks and existential threats for society?	Ambitious climate action needs to avoid an economic collapse. Germany's economic competitiveness and generated wealth need to be protected.	Economic risks are subordinate to the climate crisis as the biggest and most existential threat to society.
The state	What role of the state is imagined?	Protestors envision an active regulatory state that guides society toward decarbonization, based on scientific knowledge. The state is the primary actor to enforce climate regulation.	The climate strikes open up an opportunity to rethink the future of the political system and the state, and promote ideas of radical democracy and people's participation.
People and citizens	What is the role of the people in a desirable vision of the future?	Individuals are responsible to tackle climate change through changed consumption patterns, adapted lifestyles, and voluntary action.	People need to make use of their political power and get politically involved to achieve systematic rather than individual change.
The market, economy, and development	What is the role of the market and development priorities in achieving a desirable future, and how should the economy look like?	Climate protection requires a shift toward green growth through market-based mechanisms and ecological modernization.	Protestors criticize a growth-oriented capitalist development model and discuss alternatives such as post-development or degrowth to combat climate change.
Science and technology	What role has science and technology in an imagined, desirable future?	Climate science is considered neutral and remains unchallenged and should become the guiding framework to assess all climate-related policies and decisions.	Scientific knowledge-making is intertwined with politics and power dynamics. The movement needs to become more political to acknowledge marginalized and underrepresented groups.

dichotomy does not give justice to FFF's diversity, it helps illuminating the conflicts and tensions within the movement.

Although contrasting a moderate with a radical imaginary remains incomprehensive, it captures the tensions and struggles between a strong focus on technologies, economic development, job creation, wealth, global leadership on the one hand, and ideas of systemic revolution, radical democratization, and anti-materialism on the other hand. While the moderate approach is characteristic for official statements given by leading FFF figures, the radical approach is less prominent in public debates. This analysis, therefore, opens up the debate about the political positions, ideas of social order, and visions of the future expressed through and attached to the movement and its claims.

CONCLUSION

Although effects of FFF on climate discourses and policymaking have been widely acknowledged (Pfahler, 2019), we still know relatively little about the movement's broader societal implications. With this work, we provide a first overview on the competing motifs, rationales and narratives not only within the German FFF movement, but also in media debates. Guided by the concept of sociotechnical imaginaries, we were able to outline the tensions between a moderate and a more radical imaginary that are emerging in the context of FFF. These conflicting imaginaries speak to earlier environmental politics research about contested transformation pathways (Linnér and Wibeck, 2019) and competing climate discourses (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2019).

Despite attempts from Marxist-Leninist groups to take over FFF for their political goals and attempts from the right to sabotage the school strikes, the movement articulates a strong aim for political neutrality across ideological boundaries (Bruhns et al., 2019). According to Emcke (2019), FFF's "inclusive and rational" nature is probably the school strikers' biggest strength. Yet, we have laid out the tensions and ideological divides within the movement and in media debates with fundamentally different or even opposing visions of a future society. Commentators, politicians and a broad range of social actors link their political claims and agendas to a movement that struggles to maneuver between ecological reforms and radical anti-capitalism.

FFF exemplifies the struggle to re-politicize climate action by reviving antagonism and a dispute over competing ideas of a livable society. Moderate vs. more radical approaches speak to different visions of a future society imagined by the young movement. On the one hand, leading FFF figures and the dominant media perception favor a reasonable, doable, science-driven and technology-focused discoursein line with a green economy narrative (Kenis and Lievens, 2017), not challenging the capitalist system. On the other hand, individuals and a few FFF subgroups point at the political and social struggles at the heart of their action. They demand transformative change

and problematize the way established institutions handle climate change. Yet, these voices play a marginal role in public debates.

These insights are not enough to fully understand FFF's disruptive nature and its potential to challenge mainstream notions of climate change. However, they lay the ground for future research in this field. Mobilizing the concept of sociotechnical imaginaries enables us to explore the meanings attached to political demands and their broader implications for social order, power relations, science & technology. It allows us to systematically engage with the co-production of social order and the visions of the future attached to political programs and initiatives toward decarbonization. A closer look at modes and strategies to politicize and de-politicize the FFF movement is desperately needed to shed light on the political programs behind FFF's call for climate action and evaluate the "post-political condition" (Swyngedouw, 2011). The work by Pepermans and Maeseele (2016) on the politization of climate change and their argument for a critical debate perspective to foster transformative change is an important conceptual point of departure. It seems particularly fruitful to investigate not only how FFF expresses ideas of societal and political change, but also how opponents can strategically absorb, integrate, assimilate, or colonize FFF's political demands and visions by modes of simplification, marginalization, or rendering radical elements of social change invisible.

FFF has brought climate change back to the forefront of the political agenda. The school strikers sparked debates about individual duties, businesses' responsibilities, and the importance of the state to tackle climate change. Yet, they largely failed to challenge the mainstream techno-optimistic, ecomodernist, and science-driven rationale behind climate action. While FFF's openness and bipartisanship has led to the youth movement's unprecedented growth, it offers little contestation to established climate change measures. Despite the group's focus on an effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and its translation into ambitious climate legislation, more critical protestors and subgroups envision a radically different future through power shifts, forms of democratization and social justice which goes far beyond a de-politicized understanding of climate change. Exploring these forms of fundamental contestation is needed to shed light on FFF's broader political and societal effects.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated for this study are available on request to the corresponding author.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

JM designed and implemented this research, conducted the analysis, and wrote the manuscript.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

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PERSPECTIVE
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Climate Change Totems and Discursive Hegemony Over the Arctic

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The Arctic and its animals figure prominently as icons of climate change in Western imaginaries. Persuasive storytelling centred on compelling animal icons, like the polar bear, is a powerful strategy to frame environmental challenges, mobilizing collective global efforts to resist environmental degradation and species endangerment. The power of the polar bear in Western climate imagery is in part derived from the perceived "environmental sacredness" of the animal that has gained a totem-like status. In dominant "global" discourses, this connotation often works to the detriment of Indigenous peoples, for whom animals signify complex socio-ecological relations and cultural histories. This Perspective article offers a reflexive analysis on the symbolic power of the polar bear totem and the discursive exclusion of Indigenous peoples, informed by attendance during 2015–2017 at annual global climate change negotiations and research during 2016–2018 in Canada's Nunavut Territory. The polar bear's totem-like status in Western imaginaries exposes three discursive tensions that infuse climate change perception, activism, representation and Indigenous citizenship. The first tension concerns the global climate crisis, and its perceived threat to ecologically significant or sacred species, contrasted with locally lived realities. The second tension concerns a perceived sacred Arctic that is global, pristine, fragile and "contemplated," but simultaneously local, hazardous, sustaining and lived. The third tension concerns Indigenization, distorted under a global climate gaze that reimagines the role of Indigenous peoples. Current discursive hegemony over the Arctic serves to place Indigenous peoples in stasis and restricts the space for Arctic Indigenous engagement and voice.

Keywords: climate change, totems, animals, sacred, Indigenous, representation, Arctic, discursive hegemony

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INTRODUCTION

At Norway's *Arctic Ocean Tipping Points* side event at the 23rd Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2017, the lone Inuk panelist and then-chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) lamented that polar bears and seals are presented as Arctic icons, noting humans also inhabit the region but are often forgotten. She declared that her people hunt and eat polar bears, challenging its iconic status in mainstream climate change communication as a venerated species not to be touched. The ICC chair said Inuit want a voice in global climate change governance, and they want development. Later, a European Green Party politician warned the Inuk she would come to regret development, as had other Arctic dwellers she had met. "These are *your people*," she said, in a totalizing and homogenizing discursive move. There are over 40 different ethnic groups in the Arctic (Arctic Centre University of Lapland, 2020).

Their brief exchange contains several threads that weave through this article: Arctic animal as totems of climate change; the undermining and exclusion of Arctic Indigenous voice and priorities; and Western othering and paternalism. Together, they raise questions about discursive hegemony over the Arctic within global climate change governance or, in other words, the power to influence or determine the popular idea of the Arctic.

Climate change is of huge significance to the ICC's 180,000 members (Inuit Circumpolar Council, 2020). Polar bears and seals are threatened by climate change, but they are harvested infrequently, whereas food staples like caribou, muskox and Arctic char are important in everyday life. Inuit draw their history, culture, identity – as well as food and economic production – from their environments. For them, climate change is one among many postcolonial challenges such as poverty, low education, underdevelopment and social dysfunction (Arriagada, 2016; Oudshoorn, 2018; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2019).

The first author, a Canadian development geographer, conducted three research seasons in western Nunavut during 2016–2018 for her study of climate change communication. Nunavut, Canada's youngest territory, was established in 1999 through the largest land claims settlement in Canada (Rice, 2016), creating a self-governing territory with Inuit comprising around 85% of its population of 39,000 (Government of Nunavut, 2020). She attended three COP meetings during 2015–2017 as a member of the International Environmental Communication Association. She identified a disconnect between the global icon of the polar bear (Slocum, 2004) and local lived experience of an animal of cultural, spiritual and practical significance. Such a disconnect inspired the reflexive analysis presented here, which draws both on literature and empirical observations.

The question posed in this article is: Who controls the idea of the Arctic? This question is designed to provoke deeper considerations of the disparate, vying claims to a powerful Arctic imaginary, where the Arctic becomes a site of contestation for legitimacy and moral standing in global climate change governance. What are the implications of non-Indigenous people using symbols like the polar bear to speak about climate change when Indigenous people—the people who live in the Arctic and have lived there for centuries—do not think about them in this way?[1]

In popular representations around the world, the polar bear evokes physical prowess and environmental fragility. In Western countries – and around most of the world – the polar bear on (disappearing) ice has been transformed into a powerful symbol of anthropogenic climate change: a visual icon, or emblem, of the sacredness of nature (Slocum, 2004; Doyle, 2007). To the extent that its images are a powerful representation of something to be treasured, respected and admired (from afar), the polar bear has acquired a symbolic value akin to a totem. However, this totem-like status is linked to three discursive tensions that infuse climate change perception, activism, representation and Indigenous citizenship. The first tension concerns the global climate crisis and its perceived threat to ecologically significant or sacred species, which contrasts with locally lived realities. The second tension concerns the sacralization of Arctic space as global, pristine, fragile and "contemplated"; such space is simultaneously local, hazardous, sustaining and lived. The third tension concerns Indigenization, distorted under a global climate gaze that reimagines the role of Indigenous peoples among sacred species and spaces; in effect, "sacred" Arctic totems are conscripted into a discursive environmental politics that reproduces Indigenous exclusion.

FIGURE 1 | Polar bear army in front of Unbearable (Galschiot, 2015), shared under CC BY-SA 4.0.

CHALLENGING WESTERN HEGEMONIC METHODOLOGIES AND PERSPECTIVES

The *Unbearable* sculpture of a life-size polar bear hanging harpooned on an oil pipeline, a collaboration between the World Wildlife Fund and Danish sculptor Jens Galschiøt, was first unveiled during COP 21 in Paris (2015) to much publicity and acclaim. Imagery such as *Unbearable* and its Polar Bear Army (primarily Westerners dressed as polar bears) (**Figure 1**), and National Geographic's Starving Polar Bear video of 2018, are prominent in international media. In western Nunavut, polar bears are significant but not a regular focus of discussion; respondents would discuss polar bears if asked by a researcher, tourist or southerner (a person from south of the Arctic). However, local respondents do routinely talk about their animals, hunting and being "on the Land," focused on locally available country foods such as caribou and muskox and summer fishing for Arctic char.

This Perspective article does not arise from polar bear-focused research; it emerges from a climate communication study that required the first author's attendance at three COPs during 2015–2017, three field seasons comprising four months in the

[1]We thank reviewer 2 for posing this question (which we adapted slightly).

communities of Cambridge Bay and Kugluktuk in the western Kitikmeot region of Nunavut, during 2016–2018, and over 60 semi-structured interviews conducted by the first author and two graduate students: Suzanne Chew (second author) and Rebecca Segal. Grounded in community immersion and observation, time in the field was focused on building relationships with community members and local groups, and participating in public events and group activities. Interviews focused on participants' connection to place and grounding in the local environment, understandings of climate change, perceptions of climate change communication, and experiences in participatory decision-making on natural resources management and policy, such as through public consultations held in the region. Interviews were conducted at a time and place of the participant's choosing. Researchers adopted a conversational approach and active listening; this sought to encourage participants to lead the interview, toward exploring more deeply their areas of specific interest, within the interview themes.

The two first authors were mindful to observe, listen, participate and establish respectful relationships with local people before seeking interviews. They followed a grounded theory methodology wherein the researcher eschews preconceived notions of, in this case, local lives and lived experience, and uses inductive reasoning to analyse data and determine which data are significant (Charmaz, 2016). This approach heeds Indigenous complaints about the hegemony of Western research and seeks research results that are relevant and useful to Indigenous respondents (Louis, 2007; Kovach, 2009); research should not be driven by outsiders. This is central to ownership within participatory and Indigenous research methodologies that emphasize responsibility, accountability and influence over decision-making; it suggests community ownership of their own narrative and the way they are portrayed (Lachapelle, 2008; Castleden et al., 2012; Handberg, 2018; Mackay et al., 2019).

This naturalistic methodology allows the research significance to emerge from its particular social context (Denzin, 1971; Beuving and de Vries, 2015); by this logic, researchers did not introduce the polar bear into interviews. They resisted the urge to dictate its importance and "plant" the animal in respondents' thoughts, which would produce a conversation led by outsider priorities, betraying Indigenous ownership. Guided by critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 2003), they later juxtaposed the polar bear's absence from local conversation against its iconic position in global climate change discourse. As noted by critical discourse analysts, silence and absence are often as telling as words. In this case, silence and absence serve as eloquent indications of lesser relevance, or importance, of the polar bear in local discursive narratives of climate change.

Below, we question the validity of the polar bear, as imagined in global climate change discourses, as a totem detached from lived and cultural realities, and discuss three tensions in such discourses: the global misrepresentations of locally lived realities; the troubled sacralization of Arctic space, and Indigenization, distorted under a global climate gaze.

GLOBAL MISREPRESENTATIONS OF LOCALLY LIVED REALITIES

The polar bear is particularly vulnerable to climate change. Dependent on sea ice as their resting, walking, and seal-stalking grounds, polar bears and other marine mammals are "ecosystem sentinels." Some of the world's 19 polar bear populations show signs of emaciation and reproductive failure, while others appear healthy (Moore and Reeves, 2018). Inuit maintain that polar bear populations in Canada are generally healthy, and hunting restrictions have disrupted population management, leading to more frequent and fatal bear encounters with humans (Greer, 2018). In support of the Inuit position, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI), the legal representative of the Inuit in Nunavut in matters of treaty rights and negotiation, commissioned a polar bear image with the slogan "We're OK! Naammaktugut!" which, for a time, adorned bumper stickers, web pages and government-issued USB memory sticks across Nunavut (Dawson, 2012).

So, *for whom* is the polar bear a totem of climate change? If global imaginaries of the Arctic fail to capture its local realities, then how are Indigenous peoples affected by global misrepresentations of their everyday experience?

This issue is particularly problematic given the colonial histories of Arctic Indigenous peoples, whose lives and realities have, time and again, been redefined and reimagined for them, often to prejudicial and detrimental impact. For example, the trading ban on seal products due to lobbying by environmental groups against Atlantic sealers, led to the decimation of seal hunting as a viable livelihood for many Indigenous peoples, including the Inuit, pushing many into even greater hardship and poverty (Arnaquq-Baril, 2016; Farquhar, 2020). Discursive exclusion of the Indigenous voice in global narratives, as seen here, where Indigenous peoples were largely excluded from discussions on seal hunting (Farquhar, 2020), is not a theoretical concern – it has practical and devastating economic and cultural consequence. Greenpeace, alone among the environmental groups involved, has since formally apologized to the Inuit for its role in causing harm against them (Kerr, 2014). Colonization and persistent colonial approaches have brought untold harms upon Indigenous peoples; it is only relatively recently that some have been able to reclaim voice from the legacy of self-censorship, fear, and trauma (Watt-Cloutier, 2016; Barton, 2020; Pemik, 2020). In this brave new world of truth and reconciliation, decolonization necessitates that narratives are mindfully contextualized and constructed, particularly where, as Kovach (2009), (p. 75) says of Canada, "the non-Indigenous majority are adept at forgetting this country's colonial history." In the field of climate change, such mindfulness in the name of intersectionality and solidarity with Indigenous self-determination, is all the more critical given the inequitable climate impacts on Arctic Indigenous peoples (Richter-Menge et al., 2016).

Around the world, the public identifies the iconic polar bear with climate change, but its image provokes cynicism, too (Chapman et al., 2016). Still, it frames the Arctic for discursive and visual consumption, as an environment facing very real

climatic change but also a place of fragile beauty worthy of protection (see Doyle, 2007; O'Neill and Smith, 2014; Born, 2019). Humans are rare in this imagined landscape of sea and ice. As King (2005) identifies and criticizes, the oceans as a global concern reflect an ontology of a "contemplated" ocean that is human-free and should be appreciated from afar, and in which certain fishers or other wildlife extractors – such as Inuit hunters - may be perceived as transgressing on the "natural" boundary between humans and the environment.

Similar to the polar bear status in the global climate imaginary, climate change reporting is overwhelmingly concerned with the priorities of Western democracies (Manzo and Padfield, 2016; Biermann and Möller, 2019). Western bias is reproduced in climate change science: for instance, 45% of all countries—all from the developing world—have never had authors contributing in processes of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (Biermann and Möller, 2019). Arguably, the dominant scientific and civic view of climate change, its effects, its solutions, and its victims are influenced strongly by a Western or Global North sensibility, and the perspectives of distant others such as Indigenous, poor, developing or Global South communities are under-represented.

While science explains a species' attributes, our emotional attachments lend animals their discursive power. Scientific fact alone is often not enough to sway people, who are influenced by their identity groups, social affiliations and interpersonal communication networks (*see* Bliuc et al., 2015; Leombruni, 2015). The affective and emotional power of a good story can be more persuasive than informational accounts (Morris et al., 2019). Thus, polar bears are anthropomorphized and reimagined as ambassadors of a threatened Arctic ecosystem and icons of climate change (Born, 2019). The polar bear makes a compelling global story and has functioned as one of the dominant climate change frames (Manzo and Padfield, 2016), although it is of practical irrelevance to much of the world. The one-dimensional polar bear icon that inhabits the global climate change discourse does not capture the complexity of the polar bear totem that has spiritual and practical significance to people who live in the Arctic.

TROUBLED SACRALIZATION

Global climate change evokes environment as special, endangered, and deserving of protection – all features of sacred spaces. Sacred species and sites are often found together, with many sacred sites serving as protected areas of biodiversity, or rare or threatened species (Pungetti et al., 2012). Sacred natural sites are also markers of ethnic identity, their local guardian peoples increasingly vulnerable to stronger political and economic forces (Oviedo and Jeanrenaud, 2007). Concepts of a sacred Earth permeate human belief systems (*see* Gottlieb, 2004). Human-nature interactions are diverse. Some gaze on nature by supporting zoos. Others honour nature as climate change activists.

Still others experience nature by living it. This evokes traditional ecological knowledge, Indigenous knowledge or *sacred ecology* (Berkes, 2012). Indigenous peoples, through their intimacy with their landscape, its flora and fauna, develop place-specific knowledge that guides their resource management regimes, their spiritual connections with their environment, and their relationships. Their interactions with animals are reverent (as objects of worship) and practical (as objects to be harvested). For Indigenous circumpolar peoples, the Arctic is at once local, hazardous, sustaining, and lived. In Canada, for example, polar bears are legally harvested by Inuit as food; their hides are used for clothing, bedding, or auctions, and bones for carving. As a sign of respect, the whole animal is used. Trophy hunts provide employment income for diverse Inuit workers, recirculating money in local, largely subsistence, economies (Tyrrell and Clark, 2014; Wong and Murphy, 2016). Inuit spirituality, sacredness and pragmatic adaptation are inseparable. Unlike with the iconic polar bear, which must be protected from harm, there is no inconsistency between hunting the sacred and worshipping it (*see* Bali and Kofinas, 2014; Tobias and Richmond, 2014; Pearce et al., 2015; Sakakibara, 2017). Indigenous circumpolar peoples have a long tradition of bear ceremonialism, which dictates that rituals of reciprocity and respect are enacted after a bear is harvested (Eloka, 2020; *see* also; Clark and Slocombe, 2009).

The polar bear is depicted as beset by threats in global discourses. This was reflected in March 2013, when the U.S. and Russia jointly proposed to up-list polar bears to Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The proposal failed, but it generated a media frenzy around the global trade in polar bear parts. Stories tended to be emotive, featuring anthropomorphized cubs, and evoked a narrative of polar bear extinction that erased "the realities of managed polar bear hunting as part of an Inuit mixed subsistence economy" (Tyrrell and Clark, 2014, p. 368). Now, a dominant framing within global climate change discourse is that the polar bear is in crisis, and by extension, the Arctic. This framing is problematic in that Inuit are invisibilized, their voices and stories absent. Unwittingly, climate change activists contemplating a global Arctic with benign polar bears are wrestling for discursive control with Indigenous circumpolar peoples who live viscerally with a local Arctic. As put by Inuit activist and former politician Sheila Watt-Cloutier (2016), (p. 226): "All too often, those who are out to save the world are all too ready to sacrifice Inuit and our way of life."

INDIGENIZATION, DISTORTED UNDER A GLOBAL CLIMATE GAZE

Indigenous peoples lack sufficient opportunity to engage politically, despite their political rights being enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Unlike developing countries, the voices of Arctic communities are fragmented across countries, and are mediated by their respective national platforms. They cannot speak for themselves at intergovernmental COP meetings, or directly appeal to the Green Climate Fund. Their minority voices are mediated through rich, industrialized countries representing diverse

citizens. Colonial legacies situate circumpolar peoples as observers watching others debate climate change governance and expensive technological fixes that may force further sociopolitical adaptations upon them, such as displacement (Belfer et al., 2017). Bjørst (2012) says the Western world is fixated upon the Inuit hunter as a suffering agent pursuing a subsistence livelihood, untainted by bigger questions about development. She recounts how Greenlanders invited to the COP15 parallel event Klimaforum09, held in Copenhagen in December 2009, stepped outside their assigned role when they scaled up from talking about the local climate regime to development and economic independence of Greenland. Today, the presence of Indigenous delegates at recent COP meetings signify greater participation, but it is suspect. Cochran et al. (2013), (p. 557) asserts that "Northern Indigenous Peoples have had limited participation in climate-change science due to limited access, power imbalances, and differences in worldview."

With this invisibilization of Indigenous peoples, global climate change governance shares much in common with the discourse of development, itself an imperialist, interventionist saviour ideology. Both are motivated by an urge to change something perceived to be wrong, and both assume an intervention is needed (Milton, 1999). The poor are seen as needing others' help; they seldom engage as active agents (Enns et al., 2014). The representation of Indigenous peoples in mass media as victims of climate change or intermediaries of spirituality compounds these discourses; they may bestow their wisdom and knowledge and inspire society to act, but seldom are they portrayed as political agents (Roosvall and Tegelberg, 2013). Contrary to their representation as victims, Arctic Indigenous peoples have diverse responses to climate change including despair, dark humour, resignation, determined hope, disbelief, and disinterest, which Bravo (2009), (p. 256) argues "are better understood in relation to emerging notions of citizenship than to climate change crisis narratives. The latter, like development narratives, are often used to license the intervention of experts in debates about resource management and conservation."

DISCUSSION: DISCURSIVE HEGEMONY AND LACK OF VOICE

Inuit warnings of climate change predate global concern over climate change by the better part of a century. Few people listened. Now, Western discursive domination over the Arctic frames it as contemplated, sacred space, with sacred bears. The polar bear totem is a hegemonic frame, a construction of Western ingenuity that pins Indigenous circumpolar peoples in a particular role, from a particular time, in a particular Arctic space. This kind of climate crisis narrative keeps the Indigenous in stasis, limiting the possibility of legitimate citizenship and political agency.

The reimagined polar bear totem reinforces a climate crisis narrative in which Arctic peoples are reduced to passive subjects rather than agents of change. Discursive hegemony over the Arctic implicates climate "saviours," who risk trapping Arctic Indigenous peoples in a future not of their making, with worrying implications for climate change perception, activism, representation and, as Bravo (2009) says, citizenship. Carvalho et al. (2017), (p. 124) "call for an analytical shift by focusing on how citizens may (or not) engage with the political fabric of climate change (rather than just with individual-level behavior related to consumption and lifestyle)." This resonates with Inuit priorities: they are willing to adapt to gain a voice in global climate change governance. In the fieldwork conducted for this study, many expressed the strong sentiment and conviction that "this is our time." Adaptation is fundamental to the Inuit worldview, physically to a changing Arctic and politically to an evolving global climate change governance regime.

Indigenous actors tread on the stage of global climate change governance, but their role remains largely symbolic. At COP meetings, Indigenous delegates are identifiable by acting Indigenous and wearing Indigenous gear in a manner legible to Western others. Climate change narratives of Indigeneity will be shaped by an unbalanced struggle over words, images, and ideas. At side events on displacement, loss and damage, delegates disown the climate refugee label and offer "climate-induced migration" in its place, intent on reclaiming the language of victimhood. Given the Inuit position on the health of polar bear populations and their dissatisfaction with the reimagined polar bear totem, their active participation in remaking the meanings of Arctic space is necessary.

Global climate change governance involves questions about public engagement, citizenship, culture, place-making, and justice. The polar bear represents a Western concept of sacredness, empowered with biological facts. It presents an Arctic that is incomplete, absent of the Indigenous voices whose local expertise might craft a more legitimate totem of a climatically and politically changing Arctic. Knowledge production around climate change and climate engineering is dominated by research institutions in North America and Europe (Biermann and Möller, 2019); the international development agenda largely excludes Indigenous voices (Enns et al., 2014); and Western "ecological piety" is too narrow to embrace the diverse and complementary values that underpin Indigenous interactions with the natural world.

CONCLUSION

The reimagined polar bear totem cannot capture Arctic peoples' reality. Rather, it captures the perceived reality of an imagined Arctic free of people. It is a Western construction of a sacred species in a sacred space, moored in biological uniqueness and fragility. The polar bear's totem status exposes three discursive tensions that infuse climate change perception, activism, representation and Indigenous citizenship. First, global climate crisis and its perceived threat to ecologically significant or sacred species in contrast with local realities. Second, global, contemplated, sacred space vying with local, visceral, lived space. Third, Indigenization, distorted under a global climate gaze that

imagines an Arctic untouched by modernity and development, weakening the voice of Indigenous circumpolar peoples in global climate governance. Discursive appropriation of the Arctic helps mobilize efforts to combat climate change, but the legitimate discursive "owners" are distant. Thus, Indigenous voices are mediated via climate change "saviours" and the governments of the eight Arctic countries. The marginalization of Indigenous perspectives and priorities regarding Indigenous lands within global climate change governance and narratives risks undermining Indigenous self-determination, and perpetuating paternalism and colonial relations. Ultimately, the polar bear totem raises troubling questions over Indigenous representation, citizenship and power to construct the future of the Arctic.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board, University of Calgary. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

C-LT was the main contributor to this article. She was responsible for fieldwork and most of the writing. SC carried out some of the research interviews and field observations. SC, AC, and JD carried out revisions of the first version of the article.

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