

Global Environmental politics

Fossil fuel divestment movement

- A way to publicize and show solidarity with local communities trying to resist extraction of fossil fuels in their areas
- Effort to stigmatize the industry, “strip them of their social license” , as with previous action against tobacco companies, sweatshops, arms manufacturers, etc.
- Erosion of social license increases pressure on politicians to legally limit emissions
- Efforts to get divested money reinvested in low carbon energy and community projects
- Yet, Questions remain...

Can protest movements change anything?

- Yes, but not always nor are they always the best way to deal with some problems
- Three levels to the question;
 - Personal change
 - Policy impact
 - Broader social transformation

Personal change

- Protest movements often radically change participants
- Powerful individuals can have a greater impact on change

Policy change

- Most such protest movements probably fail to achieve their goals, in whole or in part (tobacco, arms, porn, all still around making money)
- Divestment seems to have little impact on stock value
- Activists do not necessarily believe divestment alone will stop use of fossil fuels

Broader social transformation

- Such popular movements have driven nearly all major social transformations in human history - rise of mass religions, end of slavery, expanding the voting franchise, democratization, civil rights, equal rights for women, end of colonialism, LGBTQT rights, etc.

“ The stone age did not end because we ran out of stones”

- Sheikh Zaki Yamani

Meaning: We gained more knowledge, found out a more convenient way of using/doing things

Major successes of environmental movements since the 1970s

- Earth day
- Rights to clean air and water

- Animal preservation

“Social movements change values and transform things once seen as a legitimate in to illegitimate violations of social norms”

- globalization leads to greater awareness