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Granite city sunset: Uncommoning the energy transition

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Abstract
This article develops the concept of "uncommoning" as a critique of prevailing modes of energy transition in the Global North. It integrates insight from critical geography, anthropology, and decolonial studies that challenge assumptions of linear progress, inevitability, and commonality underpinning energy transition experiments and highlight the fraught temporalities involved. Informed by ethnographic data on the contentious implementation of an Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) in Aberdeen (Scotland), we demonstrate how residents, campaigners, and their allies interrogate the shared ground on which dominant narratives of energy transition are staked, revealing underlying relationalities of power, epistemic inequity, and socioeconomic disparities. The perspective of uncommoning does not propose simplistic alternatives but rather illuminates an emergent propositional politics that orients to modes of care, equity and justice.

Keywords
Energy transition, experiment, just transition, propositionality, Scotland, uncommoning

Introduction

On 29 July 2022, Climate Camp Scotland, an autonomous group organizing "against fossil fuels and for climate justice" (Climate Camp Scotland, n.d.), came to St. Fittick's Park in Aberdeen, the UK's long-standing oil and gas capital. Blue, khaki, yellow, red, and purple tents dotted the sprawling green space on the city's southern edge, wedged between the working-class neighbourhood of Torry, Aberdeen's brand-new south harbour expansion,

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an abandoned landfill site, and the East Tullos and Altens industrial estates. Just behind the trees, the recently opened waste-to-energy plant glistened in the sun. A few white marquees, equipped with wooden chairs, invited people to linger and join the conversation, though many simply sat on the grass outside enjoying the dry weather.

This was a multi-day event of non-violent direct action complete with workshops, vegan kitchen, and a march down to the petro-installations around Aberdeen harbour. People had gathered to protest inadequate global climate policy, and to discuss possibilities for "just transition" with trade unionists, workers, and residents. Activists from the more radical urban centres of Scotland, including Dundee and Glasgow, mingled with oil workers, and both came away with different perspectives on what the other might be like. One campaigner commented on the warm welcome they had received from locals (Beattie, 2022). It signalled a shift, she thought, in a city that had traditionally shown wholehearted support for the fossil-fuel industry.

Climate Camp Scotland came to St. Fittick's Park not (only) because of hydrocarbons, however, but because of the slated development of an ETZ in the area. Aberdeen City Council has proposed a section of St. Fittick's Park as an expendable "opportunity site", critical to the ETZ and to the £420 million south harbour expansion under construction since 2017. In a city that embodies the oil and gas industry like few others, such "green" developments appear to offer a much-needed economic lifeline. Conceived by a consortium of Aberdeen City Council, private-sector catalyst Opportunity North East (ONE), and Invest Aberdeen (an organization aimed at attracting investment to the city), the Aberdeen ETZ is hailed as a means of making energy transition land in place. Backed by major state funding and corporate investment, the project is claimed to generate an estimated 12,500 jobs and £400m in added value and to contribute to the so-called Scottish Cluster, one of six national energy hubs competing for funding as part of the UK's devolved renewables sector. As such, the ETZ becomes a measure of Aberdeen's capacity to sunset the hydrocarbon industry and maintain the city's status as energy capital in a post-carbon world.

However, as this opening vignette illustrates, the ETZ's political and temporal certitudes stand in tension with alternative claims about what a just energy transition should look like. Climate Camp Scotland was expressing solidarity with local campaigners who had tirelessly opposed the ETZ project which they took to be indicative of a harmful and unjust transition unfolding in Aberdeen. "Our camp forms part of a long-running community effort to defend this valuable green space," the Climate Camp Scotland website announced, "and in the face of this threat we will use our camp to envision people-powered, democratic solutions to the climate crisis" (Climate Camp Scotland, n.d.).

This article explores how those caught up in efforts to bring energy transition to specific locations have begun to challenge the "temporal and political limiting" (Valentine and Hassoun, 2019: 253) of their participation in the process. In Aberdeen, as elsewhere, residents, campaigners, and their allies have begun to interrogate the shared ground on which energy transition is staked as well as the political, infrastructural, and imaginative technologies deployed to achieve this. Their rejection of a process perceived to be skewed toward established corporate interests reflects not an attachment to a carbon-based way of life but what we call an uncommoning of transition futures. For Valentine and Hassoun (2019), the assumption of common futures and of commonality, more generally, constitutes a gesture of dominance ((post)colonial, state, capitalist, etc.) exercised through a multiplicity of epistemic, territorial, physical, aesthetic, and affective acts of injustice. Uncommoning, then, proceeds by querying assumptions of commonality, temporal continuity, and inevitability that underpin both infrastructural projects and scholarly narratives of

energy futurity.[1] A perspective of uncommoning, we argue, opens the analysis of energy transition in the Global North to Indigenous and decolonial scholarship which highlights, for example, how temporal experiences of volatility, disruption, non-continuity, and "colonial déjà vu" (Whyte, 2016) are obscured in dominant accounts of cause, effect, and remedial action in the context of climate emergency (Davis and Todd, 2017; Bridge et al., 2013; Krause, 2022). Uncommoning, in this sense, is not a cohesive political strategy. Neither is it reducible to a simple acknowledgement of plural energy transition pathways or timings (e.g., Bridge and Gailing, 2020; Sovacool, 2016). Rather, it underpins a "propositional politics" (Dányi et al., 2021) that orients to modes of care, equity and justice, and starts by asking from where, for whom, by what means, and with what effects transition futures are built.

Our discussion is informed by the results of an extended research project which explored how the logics and practices constitutive of the UK oil and gas sector are being disassembled and reassembled in response to diminishing production in the North Sea, climate change, and shifting energy and environmental policies. This broader research allowed us to appreciate the developments in Aberdeen in relation to debates about the region's future. Intermittent fieldwork in Aberdeen between August 2021 and September 2023 took us to relevant events, including public consultations, community assemblies, and protests. One of us (William Otchere-Darko) also attended monthly online meetings of the Friends of St. Fittick's Park (FOSFP), a group of community campaigners who have been a key party in problematizing the ETZ development and who were, for us, important research partners. Formed in October 2020, the group comprises a core of about 10 to 15 people who met through mutual acquaintances, volunteering in soup kitchens, neighbourhood committees, activist networks, and online forums. They brought their diverse expertise and passions to the group, from biochemistry to ecology, publishing, art, business, and political and environmental campaigning. Some are steeped in the ins-and-outs of planning law, while others track the protracted ETZ project, write letters, maintain a website and Facebook group, mobilize their contacts in local politics and media, or stage a presence wherever St. Fittick's Park is under political review.[2] Their aim to protect the park from encroachment articulates with a range of personal and collective desires. As academic researchers, we were not alone in taking St. Fittick's as a vehicle for projecting our own theories and hope (Miyazaki, 2004).

There is an extensive body of scholarly and non-scholarly work across the social sciences, engineering, activism and public culture on the shape and possibilities of energy transition. Some scholars, critical of the transition concept's assumed teleology, have suggested replacing it with other terms, such as "transformation" or "change", or focusing on specific modalities of being, including adaptation, resilience, and vulnerability (Child and Breyer, 2017). Over the past decade, however, the challenge that the transition poses to modern governance, the polarization of positions on climate change, the uncertain outlook for fossil-fuel workers, and questions about siting, ownership and participation in energy transition projects has transposed energo-technological change to the arena of politics and ethics (Delina and Sovacool, 2018). This has rendered even more relevant approaches which attend to the proliferation of actors and to subaltern voices, and which are sceptical of the power-driven assumptions behind key concepts. We locate our arguments within these debates.

In what follows, we do not ask what energy transition is or will be or whether a different concept might offer a better grasp on the diverse realities it connotes, but rather how this imaginary is mobilized, distrusted, contested, and partially undone. Our objective is twofold: First, we contend that research on energy transition needs to start by recognizing the historicity, situatedness, and provisionality of the concept (cf.Chakrabarty, 1992). Against a

totalizing account, we see energy transition as negotiated through practices, imaginative technologies, and material conditions in specific locales. Our analysis eschews a naïve empiricism while giving epistemological weight to our interlocutors' statements and observations. We offer Aberdeen less as a case study from which to draw comparative insight than as constitutive of an "object of study" (Trouillot, 2003: 122), which we describe as the uncommoning of energy transition. Second, we develop uncommoning in critical response to ongoing discussions—within and beyond the academy—about the potential of experimentation and the fragile prospect of a just transition. Putting into conversation critical scholarship in geography and anthropology, particularly Indigenous, decolonial and ethnographic critiques, leads us to emphasize the strained quality of the temporal movement that energy transition experiments entail and to highlight their inherent relationalities of power, violence, and inequity.

The article begins by positioning our argument *vis à vis* the widespread scholarly curiosity about the political possibilities and experimental potential associated with the contemporary energy transition. Growing discontent with actual transition experiments, we suggest, has given rise to a propositional politics that highlights the relationalities of power and the spatial and systemic inequities that undergird this process. This propositional politics is engendered by a variety of strategies of uncommoning, which we illustrate in the remaining sections of this paper drawing on ethnographic material on the contentious implementation of the Aberdeen ETZ.

From transition experiments to propositional politics

The twenty-first-century energy transition is often taken to connote a compulsion for change, which it has universalized as part of the contemporary human condition. As a process deemed both imminent and lifesaving, energy transition assumes a common point of departure, a shared hope, and directionality. It aims to halt, or even revert, global temperature rises resulting from the burning of fossil fuels and threatening to render the planet's ecological, financial, and social systems dysfunctional. Failure to achieve transition is widely seen to spell unprecedented global collapse. Social science scholarship suggests that the contemporary energy transition is not simply a technical matter of replacing one, fossil-fuel based energy system with another, renewable one. It requires nothing less than a substitution of society's lifeblood (Huber, 2013), a dismantling of petrocultures (Wilson et al., 2017), and an overhaul of carbon-based politico-economic structures (Christophers, 2020; Mitchell, 2011). It is thus widely considered a moment of risk and opportunity, of profound vulnerability, and of potential redemption and renewal in the face of impending planetary catastrophe.

This has added a granular concern with modes of experimentation to existing accounts of the material and temporal politics of energy (e.g., Barry, 2013; Boyer, 2014; Mitchell, 2011). For example, as Edwards and Bulkeley suggest "[e]xperimentation provides a disposition through which liberal government can navigate uncertainty and indeterminacy" (2018: 353). Experiments, in this view, are heterotopic sites that articulate energy pasts, presents, and futures in demonstrable and often obdurate enactments and infrastructural arrangements (Edwards and Bulkeley, 2018: 357). Maguire et al. (2021) similarly identify hitherto neglected potentialities generated by more-than-human experimental assemblages. In the face of climate emergency, energy transition experiments—from wind parks to solar rooftop installations—are seen to point to political possibilities beyond the moment of their making (Edwards and Bulkeley, 2018; Howe and Boyer, 2016: 232; Maguire et al., 2021).

There is a risk, however, or indeed a political intention of narrowing actually existing energy transition experiments to the attainment of unambiguous future goals. Variously glossed as decarbonization, net zero, climate neutrality, etc., this is seen to generate new economic opportunities while privileging and sustaining carbon-based power structures. Importantly, as Indigenous and decolonial scholars highlight, Anthropocenic narratives of imminent collapse eclipse racialized, classed, and gendered memories, knowledges, and experiences of anthropogenic environmental change resulting from colonialism, slavery, and the expansion of capitalism—an apocalypse that has already happened and is ongoing (Davis and Todd, 2017; Kauanui, 2016; Whyte, 2016). Instead, they have translated into a set of interconnected temporal and sociopolitical orders (Marquardt and Delina, 2021), from the 2015 Paris Agreement to national policy frameworks that pledge to reach "net zero" carbon emissions by determinate dates—2045 for Scotland, for example, and 2050 for the UK. These focus on sustaining and boosting capitalist relations while discounting their negative impact, for example, on people's ability to deal with climate breakdown and ecological change (Davis and Todd, 2017: 775; Whyte, 2016: 94). This is supported by a techno-political embrace of renewable energy sources, electrification, and decarbonization measures such as carbon sequestration, with the aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Energy transition and climate change experiments, such as the construction of renewable energy infrastructures and "green" industrial sites, have triggered a rescripting of both geosocial cartographies (Bridge et al., 2013) and liberal energy politics that, despite their purported newness, can appear to maintain the *status quo* (Edwards and Bulkeley, 2018).

Recent scholarship exposes the rise of green colonialism expressed in the ambivalent inclusion and systematic exclusion, particularly, of former fossil-fuel workers, Indigenous peoples, and marginalized groups from the redesign of socioenergetic imaginaries (Cabaña, 2023; Curley, 2018; Normann, 2021; Smith and Tidwell, 2016). Established forms of energo-power persist across the Global North and South despite ostensible transition efforts (Boyer, 2014; Curley, 2018; Hughes, 2021; Pinker, 2018). Whether through neoliberal governance structures that suppress community wind farm developments in Mexico or, as this article shows, through corporate and political webs of influence that stand to benefit from energy transition in Aberdeen, the renewables revolution threatens to bring not change but "more of the same" (Howe and Boyer, 2016: 232). Large-scale renewable energy installations or the extraction of so-called transition minerals may generate "green" sacrifice zones (Cabaña, 2023; Canelas and Carvalho, 2023) and, more generally, perpetuate systemic disparities by placing an increased burden on those already disproportionally affected by industrial developments (Ahmann, 2018; Andreucci and Zografos, 2022; Juskus, 2023). Dispossession and displacement, here, are associated not with the wreckage unleashed by climate change but rather the impacts of state-led transition action (Scott and Smith, 2017: 869).

In this light, activists' and scholars' demands for energy transition to be "just" recast a technical and political problem as, essentially, an ethical one. Popularized by US union activist in the 1970s in a struggle to integrate environmental and health concerns into discussions about labour rights, the concept of just transition now usually refers to protecting workers from the effects of sunsetting fossil-fuel industries in the face of climate emergency (Stevis et al., 2020). More broadly, it has been embraced across the political spectrum as a future desirable and features in both the Paris Agreement and the Scottish Climate Act. Debates in policy, legal, and social justice circles centre on an ever more fine-grained definition of the concept and its diverse distributive, procedural, and restorative aspects (Abram et al., 2022; Ciplet and Harrison, 2020; Delina and Sovacool, 2018; McCauley and Heffron, 2018; Newell and Mulvaney, 2013). By and large, this work posits the unwinding of fossil-fuel systems as a chance to reappraise the foundational assumptions and

acceptable costs on which change is built. As Healy and Barry (2017: 453, cit. in Santos Ayllón and Jenkins, 2023: 2) write, “a just transformation of the socio-energy system is also a decision to live in a different type of society, not simply a low-carbon version of the current one”.

Just transition has become a buzzword in Scottish national policy accompanying the “moral devaluation” (Furnaro, 2021) of the country’s important fossil-fuel sector. An estimated one-third of all UK oil and gas jobs are located in Scotland, with the vast majority in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (Merson, 2021; Shapovalova et al., 2023). Under the leadership of the Scottish National Party (SNP), promoting self-consciously progressive futurism and a commitment to civic nationalism (Manley, 2022), the focus has thus been on labour issues, specifically the fate of workers and dependent communities, and on not repeating historical experiences of abrupt and haphazard national industrial decline. Scottish First Minister Humza Yousaf’s statement in an interview ahead of the 2023 SNP conference—“We will not do to any worker in the north-east what Thatcher did to the mining communities right across Scotland”—summed up the sentiment (Bowie and Philip, 2023). A Just Transition Commission created in 2018 has been tasked with providing expertise and advising Scottish government on the matter; there is a Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition; and, in early 2023, the Scottish Government ran a consultation on a new draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan. The document couples the aim of “affordable clean energy” provision with securing jobs for an existing “multi-skilled energy workforce” (Scottish Government, 2023a). Since 2021, a £500 million Just Transition Fund has been committed over 10 years to support projects facilitating the region’s transition to net zero; over £75 million of this was awarded in the first two years (Scottish Government, 2023b). Both ETZ Ltd, the not-for-profit outfit behind the Aberdeen Energy Transition Zone, and some of the community action challenging the project have benefited from this funding.

In this context, the contentiousness of energy experiments is perhaps unsurprising. For Edwards and Bulkeley (2018: 365), it is a consequence of their intrinsic precarity. Such experiments navigate between a multiply-constrained present and indeterminate futures. This is generative of a specific heterotopia (Edwards and Bulkeley, 2018) or what, following Dányi et al., we term a propositional politics composed of a diversity of “new modes of thinking and relating to one another” (2021: 68, following Latour, 2000). Propositionality, they write, offers a more appropriate political modality in a context marked by “uncertainty over the future” (2021: 68)—one that allows for “failings and ambiguities” (2021: 92) and thus pushes the limits of conventional notions of experimentation. Propositional politics works not as pedagogy but affectively, practically, and epistemologically.

There is a risk, however, of letting “common” assumptions in through the back door of such theorizing and of misrecognizing dissent as readily capable of assimilation (cf. Simpson, 2007). The growing disquiet around energy transition experiments, we argue, is not a residual conflict to be resolved using conventional democratic tools (Mouffe, 2013). Rather, it calls into question the historically sedimented proximity between post-carbon transition experiments and established (fossil) power. State-led just transition projects, such as the planned ETZ, have been called out as examples of “*unjust* transition”, which reduces concern with social inclusion to narrow industrial imperatives. Projects of “green” recovery are seen to be wedded to imaginaries of necessary dispossession and (uneven) economic benefit, which reinforce, rather than mitigate, socioeconomic and spatial disparities.

Spurred by our interlocutors’ insights, we want to emphasize the strained quality of the temporal movement that energy experiments imply. Their efforts to uncommon energy

transition which we detail below—whether by challenging claims of inevitability and expertise, or by affirming other-than-economic values—and the more radical possibilities they articulate confirm that there is no "unmarked common theory, time, or ground through which to address contemporary matters of concern" (Valentine and Hassoun, 2019: 254). Propositional politics, as we understand it, does not presume limitless transformative potential but seeks to address the enduring legacy of structural and spatial inequalities at the heart of transition futures (cf. McNay, 2014). Instead of focusing on how energy transition experiments "hold together the incompatibility of the futures they perform and the present they inhabit" (Edwards and Bulkeley, 2018: 362), we thus draw attention to the uncommoning they entail. To locate this process, the following section examines the entwined Aberdonian preoccupation with energy transition and the city's contested petro-history.

"This is the time and Aberdeen is the place"

In Aberdeen, energy transition heralds both opportunity and crisis. "The challenge," as an interviewee from a Scottish economic development agency put it, "is to try and manage it as a transition rather than just hoping that it might happen." At issue is less *whether* the energy transition will happen than *where* it will happen and *how* to benefit from it. COP26, held in nearby Glasgow in 2021, stressed the urgency of action. It seemed to persuade even the most steadfast hydrocarbon backers that decarbonization of oil and gas production alongside a growth in renewables, now absorbed into a rebranded basket of "offshore energies", is a must. Aberdeen's bid, in early 2023, to become a "Green Freeport" was unsuccessful; nonetheless, posters at Offshore Europe, Aberdeen's celebrated biannual industry fair, later that year reinforced a shared narrative of a city "leading the global energy transition". As the ETZ Ltd website declares: "This is the time and Aberdeen is the place" (ETZ, n.d.).

This has been a recent shift, however. In an interview with The Sunday Times in 2015, the Aberdeen billionaire and philanthropist Sir Ian Wood warned Aberdeen was "sleepwalking" into the future (Bowditch, 2015). At once hegemon and sage, Wood's opinion on energy-related matters holds astonishing sway in the UK oil and gas industry, generally, and Aberdeen's city politics, in particular. The 2014 oil price slump generated significant layoffs and uncertainties in the North Sea hydrocarbon sector. Initial strategies to remedy this dire situation focused on strengthening oil and gas. For example, the Aberdeen City Region Deal (2016)—to which ONE, the private-sector catalyst chaired by Wood, was one of the co-signatories—included no mention of energy transition. Instead, it proposed the construction of a new Oil and Gas Technology Centre that, by 2021, had been renamed Net Zero Technology Centre. Energy transition was an afterthought, too, in the Aberdeen harbour expansion which now claims St. Fittick's Park as a hinterland essential to its renewables ambitions. From today's vantage, as industry insiders will admit, the delay in including renewables and energy transition technology in Aberdeen's urban development strategy is astounding. At a time of intensified international, inter-regional, and inter-urban competition around renewables and transition developments, it may even have harmed the local economy. Energy transition must happen at pace, city promoters will now say, to ensure Aberdeen's regional, national, and global competitiveness.

Despite the steady decline of North Sea hydrocarbon reserves, the 11 EU-funded wind turbines raising their heads just off Aberdeen's coast, and a significant hydrogen-powered bus fleet ("Europe's largest"), oil continues to be Aberdeen's lifeblood. Locally, this is a source of both apprehension and unconcealed pride. Aberdeen's notorious nightlife, historically catering to oil workers, has noticeably suffered from successive crises, including the 2014 oil price slump and, later, the Covid-19 pandemic. The deterioration of the once-

vibrant Union Street serves as a tangible manifestation of this downturn. Nevertheless, the corporate logos of BP, Shell, Harbour, Equinor, and many smaller oil and gas outfits and lesser-known supply chain companies continue to mark the famed granite cityscape. Numerous law firms in the city's plush West End cater to the industry's legal requirements. Major trade associations, including Offshore Energies UK, as well as the national industry regulator, the North Sea Transition Authority, have their main seats in Aberdeen. The petroleum industry's pervasive influence extends to academia and culture. Local universities regularly benefit from industry sponsorship and, in 2019, the city's art gallery underwent refurbishment thanks to BP's generous philanthropy. However, dangers, hardships, and sacrifices have not been forgotten. Set in a park on the city's western edge, the Piper Alpha Memorial commemorates the catastrophic offshore accident that claimed 167 lives in July 1988.

The recent Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (LDP), a spatial strategy for how land should be allocated to meet the city's development needs, invokes Aberdeen's "long history" of reinvention and its ability "to embrace [economic] opportunity when it arose" (Aberdeen City Council, 2023: 1.2.1), as a foundation for addressing the impending challenge of energy transition. This capacity for reinvention is exemplified by Aberdeen's overnight transformation, following the North Sea oil discovery in 1969, from an economically diverse city with fishing, agriculture, and other smaller industries into an offshore industry hub (Tiesdell and Allmendinger, 2004). At a time of UK-wide economic crisis, American oil and gas companies brought well-paid jobs for recent graduates, former fishermen, and trawler owners whose businesses suffered in the 1970s Cod Wars. Oil was seen as "an antidote to [Scottish] deindustrialization" (Gibbs, 2021: 60) and a means of countering British centralism, rectifying historical experiences of internal colonization. "It's Scotland's oil" was the slogan with which the SNP achieved political breakthroughs in the two 1974 general elections (Harvie, 1994).

Instead of realizing nationalist aspirations, however, oil and gas facilitated a distinct "carbon neoliberalism", protecting primarily the interests of capital (Brotherstone, 2012; Christophers, 2020).[3] Regarding Aberdeen, the historian Terry Brotherstone (2012: 79) speaks of "a Klondike atmosphere of hit-and-miss enterprise as Aberdeen's conservative gentility (and well-concealed poverty) faced boomtown frenzy and divisive social upheaval". A forensic assessment of oil's impact on the Northeast of Scotland, published in 1976 by the radical Aberdeen People's Press, condemned the council's ceding to corporate blackmail. The oil industry's arrival in the city, the authors wrote,

> ... triggered off a wave of speculation in land and property, starting down at the harbour and working its way through the city in office and hotel developments. [...] In planning terms it was altogether something of a massacre from which the city is unlikely to recover. (Aberdeen People's Press, 1976: 14)

Oil divided an already unequal city. Aberdeen's real estate market rapidly became tied to oil prices. Before the 2014 oil price slump, property prices were among the highest in the UK. Short-term lets and AirBnB for oil workers crowded out affordable housing, and thus nurses, doctors, and teachers unable to pay local rents. More recently, however, the city's prosperity has declined significantly. Oil-derived affluence remains unevenly concentrated in the West End and northern suburbs. Some of the Torry neighbourhoods, by contrast, have experienced the "slow violence" (Ahmann, 2018) of industrial, and often toxic, development. They are among the nation's most disadvantaged, as Adrian Crofton, a physician from Torry Medical Practice and a supporter of the FOSFP campaign, has been keen to

point out. On the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation map, the area south of Balnagask Road, with its aging apartment blocks that overlook St. Fittick's Park, figures in the deep red that designates the "most deprived 10%". Yet, the 2023 Aberdeen LDP mentioned above, includes a rezoning for industrial use (i.e., for an ETZ) of a large section of St Fittick's Park as well as nearby Doonies Farm, positing this move as indispensable to Aberdeen's post-carbon future. The reduction of access to public green space due to the ETZ development, Crofton and other Aberdonian medical practitioners now warn, will only exacerbate health disparities and further reduce local life expectancy (RDMG, 2022).

Thus, not everyone considers the legacy of bold entrepreneurship and change as positively as the LDP promoters do. Significantly, the prospect of energy transition has given rise to a "dialectical process of critical re-evaluation" (Argenti and Knight, 2015: 783)—an uncommoning—of semblances between historical rounds of change and sacrifice. For example, a short documentary made by filmmaker Ric Lander (2023) in collaboration with FOSFP identifies a different set of historical continuities. It zooms in on Shell's establishment, in the early 1970s, of an oil and gas supply base at Aberdeen harbour's Maitlands Quay where previously there had stood the fish processing factories of Old Torry, a centuries-old fishing community on the south bank of river Dee. The City Council's decision to permit Shell's construction was widely read as signalling the industry's intention to make Aberdeen its home and boost the economy. However, the film reveals, it demanded huge sacrifices from Torry residents—not unlike the proposed ETZ project today. Specifically, it overturned a "no-development" guarantee that had been given to the residents of Old Torry only a few years earlier. As Shell operations moved in, they not only knocked the characteristic smell of fish out of the area, but also upended Torry people's livelihoods. "They lost everything," comments a member of FOSFP in the campaign film.

Thus, while pundits invoke the urgency of the climate crisis and economic expedience to drive transition experiments, campaigners counter this effort at "commoning" by pointing to a legacy of dispossession that continues to manifest itself in the cityscape (cf. Davis and Todd, 2017; Whyte, 2016). Transition experiments work as "demonstrations" of investment opportunity and future efficacy "enact[ed]...in the present" (Edwards and Bulkeley, 2018: 353). They become placeholders for the profitable redeployment and mobilization of (petro) industrial capital, infrastructures, knowhow, and skills in the context of low carbon technologies. Specifically, the ETZ is claimed to help Aberdeen maintain its status as the "Energy Capital of Europe" and meet national net zero targets (Aberdeen City Council, 2020). However, such celebrations of a legacy of opportunistic change eclipse experiences of urban corrosion, inequality, and suffering highlighted by campaigners. They consider ETZ Ltd's aim to turn 250 ha of brownfield and greenfield site into "economic opportunity" as a landgrab with no benefit for residents. The following section expands on this uncommoning of the ETZ's objective, pace, and directionality, revealing this experiment to be both "creative and destructive" (Curley, 2018: 58).

Uncommon timelines

Our tour of the ETZ started at Greyhope Bay café. Sitting atop a rocky windswept peninsula, next to the nineteenth-century Torry Battery, the café offers views across Aberdeen harbour and the bay. One can spot dolphins, the comings and goings of offshore supply vessels and the ferry to Shetland, and, in the distance, the gently rotating wind turbines. Mark, one of ETZ Ltd's directors, was keen to show us how the ETZ was taking shape. Starting the tour at Greyhope Bay, he explained, revealed the project's connection to the neighbourhood of Torry and the harbour. On the drive up, Mark excitedly pointed out the

granite townhouses that line Victoria Road, Torry's main thoroughfare stretching all the way from River Dee to what is now the Nigg Bay Golf Club. They had been built, he said, with wealth generated from fisheries, shipping, and other industries. Previous acts of erasure (through oil) seemed almost absent from Mark's invocation of bygone prosperity (cf. Kauanui, 2016). When we later sat sipping our flat whites, he lamented that these historical connections had been almost completely forgotten. Most people, Mark claimed, did not recognize the ETZ's grounding in this legacy but would say "it's not for us, it's for them".

On the same tour, at Altens Industrial Estate further along the coastal path, we visited the ETZ's so-called wind campus, snappily entitled W-Zero 1. The building, once owned by Shell, had been fully repurposed, including original furniture and fittings. Business tenants were moving in, and butterflies had been released nearby to enhance the project's green credentials. The wrecked 1970s concrete yard next door, Mark said, would be reclad as a "skills hub" within a year, offering lessons in hydrogen fuel cell, wind turbine, and heat pump technology supported by Scottish Government Just Transition Funding and Shell UK (ETZ, 2023). Mark pointed to a group of young men in overalls passing us in the street. Those lads, he surmised, might soon benefit from such training, and become eligible for one of the many job opportunities the ETZ will create.

Campaigners, in Aberdeen as elsewhere, have queried the purported universality of energy transition benefits, notably by pushing back against assertions of the inevitability of such developments (Cabaña 2023; Jaramillo and Carmona, 2022). Much of our discussion had centred on the importance of connecting the ETZ to the south harbour expansion. This expansion, marketed as a "Marine Gateway", is envisioned as a non-tidal harbour of substantial depth to support future wind and hydrogen ventures off Aberdeen's coast. The interconnection of the two projects—the south harbour and the ETZ—is expected to safeguard supply chain enterprises by ensuring local participation in the emerging renewables sector, thus preserving potentially vulnerable jobs.

This narrative of natural evolution, echoed by Mark, is fraught with inconsistencies (cf. Kneas, 2018: 754). A "timeline" on FOSFP's website painstakingly unpicks the ETZ's political, financial, legal, and imaginative scaffolding, detailing how public statements, national budget readings, and funding allocations legitimized a "done deal" (FOSFP, n.d.). In brief, Aberdonian business tycoon, Sir Ian Wood, had declared the ETZ project as "shovel-ready" more than a year before the necessary rezoning had been officially sanctioned (Wood, 2022). Wood, who grew up in Torry before turning a family fisheries business into a flourishing global services conglomerate, has leveraged his influential position in Aberdeen's business and political spheres to champion the ETZ. Greenfield sites surrounding the expanding harbour were designated for economic development early on, without meaningful public consultation. Several prominent oil and gas industry figures promoted the ETZ, citing speculative investment potential estimates to bolster their claims. And ETZ Ltd, Mark's employer, secured £27 million in UK Government funding a month prior to its registration as a charity, which was subsequently matched by £26 million from the Scottish Government.

The timeline reveals a conjuring of commonality (Valentine and Hassoun, 2019) through a gathering of ideas and largely uncontested calculations typical of the informal business meetings where the concept of an ETZ for Aberdeen was initially conceived (cf. Mason and Stoilkova, 2012). However, rather than achieving a seamless integration of people and infrastructures into the transition experiment, campaigners contend it threatens to replicate historical patterns of uneven extractive development, prefigured by the early nineteenth century Highland Clearances and by North Sea oil extraction (Gibbs, 2021; Pinker, 2018)

and further embedded through twentieth-century oil developments. The assertion that "Aberdeen, in line with the rest of Britain, has always been owned by [only] a few people" (Aberdeen People's Press, 1976: 12), made by Aberdeen People's Press in the 1970s, continues to resonate. Their spiderweb graphic—depicting entrenched networks of corporate, governmental, financial, and media entities—has inspired contemporary activists 45 years later to map the overlaps in directorial appointments, leadership committees, and board memberships across Aberdeen's public and private institutions involved in the ETZ. At issue, here, is not the "extractivist orientation" (Howe and Boyer, 2016) of transnational investors but what campaigners refer to as "webs of influence" between corporate and public sector entities, partly shaped by relationships of patronage characteristic of UK urban governance in the post-2008 financial crisis era (O'Brien and Pike, 2019: 1464). Such deal-making is perceived to embed energy transition experiments further within existing fossil-capitalist dynamics.

This temporal politics is seen to suppress political agency and slow down democratic intervention (Scott and Smith, 2017), while accelerating new material configurations, often preceding official planning decisions. Campaigners have lamented the inadequacies of a planning process that appeared to disregard residents' concerns and resisted public scrutiny. Given the Scottish Government's substantial financial commitment to the ETZ, its oversight functions are viewed as largely performative. With the formal adoption of the LDP in June 2023, an FOSFP interlocutor noted that the ETZ plan had retroactively gained legitimacy and developed its own momentum. This process, prioritizing business exigencies, has let claims about the ETZ's contribution to a just transition ring hollow.

Park life

The enclosure of extractive sites, as Jaramillo and Carmona (2022) have shown, draws on a variety of spatiotemporal practices and devices. Their joint effect is one of territorial *and* temporal reordering and dispossession, also seen in the ETZ as an imaginative and literal "means to occupy space" (Fabian, 1983:146, cit. in Hecht, 2018: 116). It amounts to a commoning with epistemic as well as material qualities, tightly circumscribing what people *should* desire and what the future *ought* to bring, even before the first brick has been laid. A result is the exclusion of people, alternative uses, and claims to futurity, often ahead of the occupation of physical sites. However, if ETZ champions largely posit futurity as a matter of economic growth, campaigners and residents have presented a different perspective, emphasising forms and practices of habitability and care (cf. Lister, 2024).

In the spring of 2022, Gisa met with Alan, an FOSFP veteran, for a walk around St. Fittick's Park. Now retired, Alan had lived in Torry, in the house where his father had been born, for more than 30 years. A career in the merchant navy meant that he had spent much time away, indifferent to local goings-on. But recent developments, including the plans for the ETZ, had made him concerned. The walk took us down to Nigg Bay where the south harbour expansion was shaping up, displacing the formerly craggy beach. Despite it being a weekend, excavators roared. Storage for construction materials had spilt across the road into the park, edging close to the roofless ruins of St. Fittick's church whose foundations, legend has it, were established by an Irish monk in the seventh century. Some of Alan's ancestors were buried in the graveyard adjacent to the church, their names edged into the remaining tombstones from which the lettering was peeling off. People living in this area have been dumped on in so many ways, Alan remarked as we walked further into the park. First, there was the increased traffic that came with the Tullos and Altens industrial estates in the 1970s; then the (now disused) landfill across the train tracks south of the park. There

is the sewage treatment plant, which opened in 2001, whose pungent smells can carry right across Torry. More recently, residents lost their battle against the waste incinerator situated in uncomfortable proximity to the local primary school. That the incinerator, in addition to tackling a growing waste problem in the Scottish Northeast, would alleviate fuel poverty by turning waste into energy is widely considered a spurious claim.

These noxious developments signal the area's "permeability" (Roberts, 2017) to industrial pollution to which the park has offered a precarious balance. A playground and a skate park sit amidst grassland, wooded areas have been densified, and patches of wetland provide sanctuary for both humans and non-humans, including bird species, insects, and deer. The East Tullos burn, transformed through an award-winning initiative by environmental agencies and Aberdeen Council, now filters effluents from the nearby industrial estate en route to the sea. In a sense, St. Fittick's Park's biodiversity became apparent because of, and not despite, toxic contamination (cf. Bond, 2022). From migratory birds to reeds planted to improve a sustainable urban drainage system, it simultaneously indexes and alleviates harm inflicted on those who live and spend time there. As we chatted, Alan pointed out the ducks and wildfowl swimming on the water from which a university student was taking samples to count the less visible aquatic inhabitants. She had not heard about the threat coming from the ETZ but promised Alan to look up FOSFP's website to find out more.

Though critical of the area's disproportionate pollution, relative poverty, low health indicators, smell and noise, people feel the benefits of the park in their bodies and minds (cf. Roberts, 2017). This flies in the face of assertions—repeated, for example, by the Scottish government reporter in their assessment of outstanding objections to the LDP, prior to its approval—that unless economic investment goals were achieved, health and environmental indicators measuring the area's wellbeing would continue to lag. This assessment reiterates a common (energo-transition) logic that denies people their capacity for futurity if left to their own devices (Rifkin, 2017, in Valentine and Hassoun, 2019: 252). However, campaigners and residents have been loath to accept this official pathologization (Murphy, 2017; Roberts, 2017), even as they reference elevated levels of heavy particulate pollution, cases of cancer and cardiovascular disease, and chronic ill health, intimating individual and collective injury. They cite the many statements by statutory consultees in the ETZ planning process—including the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Nature Scotland, Historic Scotland, and Scottish Forestry—which emphasize the park's vital role as a buffer against industrial exposure. They thus resist writing the area off as a sacrifice zone whose attenuated chemical and biological constitution have (purportedly) left it in a state of permanent crisis (Juskus, 2023; Liboiron, 2021).

For Mbembe (2012: 13), "[t]he question of habitability is the question of the future par excellence". No doubt, the recent Covid-19 pandemic underscored the park's importance for Torry residents, especially those without access to garden space. People will come for play, to walk their dogs, or to find respite watching birds and other wildlife. Some, like Agata and Janice, pour their energy into cultivating vegetables, herbs, and flowers in the community garden next to the golf course, despite limited resources, health issues, and caring responsibilities. Some, including Alan and John, will pick litter on Saturday mornings, lest council lawnmowers shred left-behind paper scraps and plastic bottles to pieces and bury them deep in the soil. Others, like Charlotte, an artist and biogeochemist, have sought to mobilize allies in the fight against the ETZ with public talks about St. Fittick's Park's fragile ecology. In collaboration with arts practitioners, campaigners have created smartphone videos, songs, and greeting cards, and have elicited stories and photos from residents to draw out the diverse values, memories, and knowledges people have of the park. Their self-conscious

avowal of "conditions of possibility for thriving and becoming" (Langwick, 2018: 435) around St. Fittick's Park seeks to affirm its habitability as an intrinsic potential. By contrast, developments such as the ETZ are feared to exacerbate ruination. The solutions people propose start, not from the elusive promise of capital mobilization and future jobs, but from working with the quotidian practices of more-than-human care and renewal seen to enable life in the park today.

Assembling a just transition

"Save St. Fittick's Park = Just Transition" read one of the placards held up by members of FOSFP, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Climate Camp Scotland, and other activist allies, who gathered outside the Scottish Parliament on a wet and cold mid-January day. Forty-odd people had taken the fight to protect the park from Aberdeen to Edinburgh. With speeches, drumming, and chants of "Whose park?—Our park!", "Whose land?—Our land!", and "*Hauns affa Torry*" ("Hands off Torry"), the protestors sought to dissuade parliamentarians from approving the draft Aberdeen LDP and thus the contested rezoning of St Fittick's Park. Four months later, the same placards and banners were displayed at Aberdeen's south harbour to grace the visit of the recently appointed First Minister Humza Yousaf; and, again, in September 2023, at Aberdeen City Council in a last-ditch attempt to convince councillors to act against the presumption in favour of the ETZ development inscribed in the (by then published) LDP.

Such interventions constitute what Ahmann (2018) terms moral punctuations of political processes of planning and decision-making. They are part of a repertoire of "work[ing] time" (Ahmann, 2018: 146) by those exposed to harmful industrial and extractive projects (see also Kirsch, 2014; Weszkalnys, 2014). The protest outside the Scottish parliament is an example, as is the Climate Camp discussed at the start of this article, which also saw St. Fittick's Park's temporary elevation to a focal point of climate activism in the region. These are moments of exhortation, reminding city leaders of their obligation to protect biodiverse green space and to provide an adequate response to citizens' concerns. They demonstrate a place-based ethics of relationality that underpins people's struggles to uncommon the rapacious capitalization on largely speculative energy transition developments onshore, pronouncing it an unjust transition.

But local campaigns go further. Growing frustration with participatory processes has led some to search for alternatives to prevalent modes of recognition offered by developers and the state. For example, ETZ Ltd's five public consultations on a draft masterplan for the project have become occasions for dialogue and defiance. Stressing its status as a not-for-profit organization, ETZ Ltd presented these events as an effort to "work with" local communities. Over time, however, many who had offered critical commentary in speech and writing came to experience them as woefully ineffective. Instead of feeding the ETZ masterplanners material with which to further invalidate their concerns, some people opted for snubbing such anti-political staging of expertise, transparency, and inclusion (Barry, 2013). At one event held at a church in Torry, campaigners simply remained standing outside the designated consultation space. Their critique took the form of an unambiguous refusal (Simpson, 2007)—a refusal both to step into the secular temporality afforded by consultation procedures and to embody a subject position of citizen-resident whose participation has come to be considered essential to democratic planning (Abram and Weszkalnys, 2013).

To shift the grounds of engagement even more comprehensively, some people have sought to develop new strategies for participation. They draw, directly and indirectly,

on practices of deliberative democracy that have been employed, in the UK and elsewhere, in response to the failure of national governments to address the complex issues associated with climate crisis and energy transition (Willis et al., 2022). Building on their multiple affiliations with diverse activist organizations, some FOSFP members have started collaborating with Open Source, a collective that helps grassroots groups initiate community assembly processes (Herrett and Smith, 2021). Following a first event of this kind in September 2021, a second "Torry People's Assembly" took place in St. Fittick's Park in May 2023. It had been preceded by bi-weekly Saturday meetings held over several months, including multiple conversations between the organizers and Torry residents to develop a deeper understanding of local concerns ahead of the assembly, establish trust, and draw in new people from outside existing campaign groups. About 40–50 people turned up for two days of discussion on the area's future liveability.

With the LDP having received final approval in the previous week, however, participants kept returning to the issue of the ETZ, even though the aim had been to move beyond this development. An artist helped translate participants' inputs into short messages captured on post-it notes and in sketches put together as a colourful six-foot tall "tree" display of ideas. Another outcome was the Declaration of Torry, presenting a repudiation of the ETZ's vision of profit-driven development, a testimony of injustice, and a call for local self-determination. "This land is our land and no one else's. This land belongs to those who care for it," the declaration states.

Despite programmatic formulations of the Declaration of Torry, the people's assembly was not conceived in simple opposition to the perceived threat posed by the ETZ. It was also not about formulating a political programme substituting established democratic principles. Concerns about participation—some people had stayed outside the People's Assembly tent reluctant to be drawn into the discussion—and inclusivity remained. True to its original aim, however, the Assembly pursued an open-ended goal, "set[ting] in motion materials, affects, and processes" (Dányi et al., 2021: 68). It is about helping people "respect themselves", suggested Anne, for whom involvement in the people's assembly "just sort of came along" but has ended up a major preoccupation. Anne's own effort to give permanence to the assembly process through her involvement in the newly established Torry Community Council, for example, and regular "coffee moanings", has been motivated by this hope.

Querying the nods to equity and social inclusivity in Scottish just transition policy (Santos Ayllón and Jenkins, 2023), participants try to reclaim the concept from the powers that be. Their criticism exceeds official appraisals of the concept's use as a "fix-all term" that has not delivered results (Just Transition Commission, 2023). Rejecting a view of their vulnerability as mere "bad luck" (Whyte, 2016), campaigners and residents are actively building structures capable of supporting what they deem a truly just transition. For example, a nature classroom was opened in St. Fittick's Park in May 2024 to incite forms of mutual human/nonhuman care, for example, by providing space for educational events and a shelter for litter-picking volunteers in the winter. The project was awarded £19,500 from the Scottish Government's Just Transition Participatory Budgeting Fund, which supports grassroots projects selected through public vote. Another initiative, first floated at the second People's Assembly, envisions the retrofitting of housing across Torry to bring both local jobs and warmer homes in a bid to do right by residents. This adds to ongoing litter-picking and social walks that encourage a different knowing and imagining of St. Fittick's for people in Torry and Aberdeen. Taken together, these acts of care, repair and equity seek to suggest fresh answers to the questions of from where, for whom, by what means, and with what effects transition futures are built (Valentine and Hassoun, 2019).

Conclusions

This article has examined what we call an uncommoning of energy transition in the fraught context of unwinding from fossil-fuel systems in the Global North. In this moment of heightened concern with the energy transition's social and ethical implications, a perspective of uncommoning recognizes and makes visible "the dilemmas of commonality and continuism bound to metropolitan accounts of futurity" (Valentine and Hassoun, 2019: 255) imbricated in narratives of transition and experimentation. Drawing inspiration from Indigenous and decolonial scholarship enables us to articulate more sharply the expressions and effects of this strained temporal modality. It is not to claim "sameness", to elide difference or to deny Northern collusion in historical and continuing forms of exploitation and oppression, but an attempt to be attentive to differential forms of material, epistemic, and affective marginalization across the Global North. The conceptual toolkit and theoretical insight developed by the scholars cited in this article and many others, we suggest, give a better handle on the spaces of action Aberdeen campaigners and residents have sought to carve out alongside, or despite, "common" energy transition experiments. In this sense, uncommoning takes an important step towards provincializing the energy transition concept by revealing its historicity, narrowness, and provisionality (Chakrabarty, 1992).

Uncommoning acts (and we write) against time (cf. Ahmann, 2018), embodied in business cases and planning procedures, council hearings and consultations. Since we first submitted this article, the ETZ plans underwent a judicial review for their lawfulness. FOSFP had raised the review in April 2024, arguing that an equalities impact assessment would have been required before the City Council approved the policy decision to develop an ETZ in St. Fittick's Park (Govan Law Centre, 2024). Dismissed a few months later, the court decision appeared to rubber-stamp, once more, the park's "temporal enclosure" (Jaramillo and Carmona, 2022) as a transition experiment. The Court claimed that an impact assessment could only be done once the *specific* development plans were known. As result, residents and campaigners continue to act, as vehemently as they can, in an uncertain meantime created by the undisputed decision to rezone the park for industry use.

Instead of offering simplistic alternatives, uncommoning illuminates an emerging propositional politics comprised of a variety of practices and stances that query the common ground and linear certitudes on which transition experiments are built, drawing attention to the tenacious presence of (post)fossil capitalist structures (Howe and Boyer, 2016; Malm, 2016) and the lived experiences of inequality that underpin them. This propositional politics questions official authority, proceduralism and expertise; it counters demands for sacrifice with affirmations of habitability; it eschews the terms of engagement afforded by conventional participatory processes; and it orients to modes of care, equity and justice.

The controversy surrounding St. Fittick's Park tells of a wider interrogation of the shape and course energy transition might take. In this view, talk about energy transition, in the UK as elsewhere, has become a manner of rescuing petro-capital from its total devaluation (Furnaro, 2021), justified with the need to secure economic viability by preserving existing fossil-energy infrastructure and labour regimes. Government-industry agreements, such as the 2021 North Sea Transition Deal, have thrown a lifeline to the UK oil and gas industry by assigning it a central role in an energy transition imagined as consisting of technofixes rather than an imminent and complete phase-out of oil and gas production (see also Rajak, 2020). In this context, projects like the Aberdeen ETZ are presented as vital tools for meeting national net zero ambitions and successfully landing energy transition in place. As this article has shown, however, transition experiments of this kind, which measure futurity solely in terms of capital investment, infrastructures built, and jobs created, are

increasingly suspect. They overlook other, perhaps less "common", value(s) generated through situated practices of resilience, care, and renewal. Considering this lived complexity, routines of community consultation, which from the outset were premised on the expectation of ETZ development, have been seen to fall short (cf. Barry, 2013).

Uncommoning suggests not a blank rejection of dominant visions of transition but rather a loss of faith in the liberal politics and terms of engagement that sustain them, and the failure to think otherwise. It is a response to the persistent sense of being "dumped upon" whereby development processes are not relegated to the past but have become constitutive of enduring structures of being and feeling (Kauanui, 2016; Whyte, 2016). The damaged landscapes around Torry and St. Fittick's Park, to paraphrase Powell and Long (2023: 194), are the same landscapes that now engender a propositional politics centred on people's assemblies, retrofitting, and mutual care. Importantly, this propositional politics stands apart from the fractious debates that have arisen across various countries in the Global North, for example, around proposed fossil fuel taxation, carbon tariffs, phase-out of diesel fuel, and ultra-low emission zones, whose "uncommon" entailments veer decidedly to the political right (The Zetkin Collective, 2024). While those challenging the ETZ are distrustful of the epistemic dynamics through which transition futures are configured, the distinct forms of habitability they eke out amidst toxic pollution and green colonialism (Normann, 2021) are entwined with a deep recognition of the constraints and limitations of actual transition experiments. This resonates with the growing range of activist groups and movements operating locally, nationally, and internationally, who—against a backdrop of stalled global climate action, ongoing government support for fossil fuels, and lukewarm policies of "just transition", "green deals" and attempts to "build-back-better"—strive to offer alternative avenues for intervention.

As campaigners would attest, however, uncommoning does not denote a cohesive political strategy. The actions and practices this article described are only partially coordinated and, occasionally, at odds with each other. What links them is the desire to expose the economic inequities, disenfranchisement, and dispossession that, for some, has lingered since the Highland Clearances, was entrenched through fossil-fuel developments, and is now reproduced through contemporary energy transition experiments. An analysis of uncommoning does not establish grounds for the design of experimental forms that "serve both the logics of the present and the future" (Edwards and Bulkeley, 2018: 357) and bring reconciliation. At most, together with the campaigners around St. Fittick's Park, we are interested in sketching "the social [and environmental] conditions necessary for effective agency" (McNay, 2014: 17; see also Simpson, 2007; Whyte, 2016), cognisant of the irreducible contradictions and differences that underpin life around the park. The perspective from what is uncommon foregrounds such incommensurabilities less as obstacles to democratic solutionism than as energy transition's necessary foundation.

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Notes

1. A slightly different usage of "uncommoning" can be found in de la Cadena (2015).
2. In addition to this participatory research, we conducted over 40 semi-structured and ethnographic interviews with campaigners, businesspeople, city council representatives, and a variety of actors promoting Aberdeen's economic development, as well as local artists and other commentators. This was supplemented by a review of publicly available documents and reports as well as focused archival research. All names except those of public figures have been changed.
3. The exception is Shetland where the County Council was able to use its powers over the sea around the islands and their unique geographical positioning to negotiate access to oil and gas revenues and set up structures controlling oil-related development onshore (Harvie, 1994).

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