



University  
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

**KEVIN McCARTNEY**

BA (Simon Fraser University, 2010)

**“Pricing Air to Starve the Fire:  
An Institutional Ethnography of Smart Prosperity”**

Department of Sociology

Monday, August 27, 2018  
10:00 A.M.  
Cornett Building  
Room A317

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. William Carroll, Department of Sociology, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)  
Dr. Karena Shaw, School of Environmental Studies, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

External Examiner:

Dr. James Rowe, School of Environmental Studies, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Brian Starzomski, School of Environmental Studies, UVic

## **Abstract**

Smart Prosperity (SP) brings together multi-sectoral business leaders, policy experts, unions and progressive NGO change makers to align Canada's civil society messaging on climate change action and policy. SP has recently found national relevance thanks to considerable policy uptake by Justin Trudeau's ruling federal Liberal party. Rooted in a neo-classical economic model of demand-management, SP positions themselves as the architects of an energy transition regime of consumer price signals. This study examines 118 of SP's academic and policy reports from 2008 to 2018 using an institutional ethnographic approach to textual analysis to consider the ideological and ontological consequences of SP's policy program for the tender geographies of communities in Canada. SP is found to contrive a terrain of energy possibilities that rests on administrative abstraction, economism and market fetishism, and which places the economic administrator at the heart of Canada's social and natural relations.