

Major Industries

What you need to know

- Oil and gas and mining remains the largest sector in terms of GDP but accounts for a small and declining share of employment.
- Meanwhile, other sectors have not proven able to pick up the slack: most either saw jobs losses or only modest gains since 2014.
- The only sectors to see sizable jobs gains are those most closely tied to the public sector—health, education, and public administration, as well as tech (described later in Tech & Innovation).

Reason for optimism

Resource industries have transformed to compete in a lower-priced global market while service-related industries show growing importance in Alberta's economy.

Cause for concern

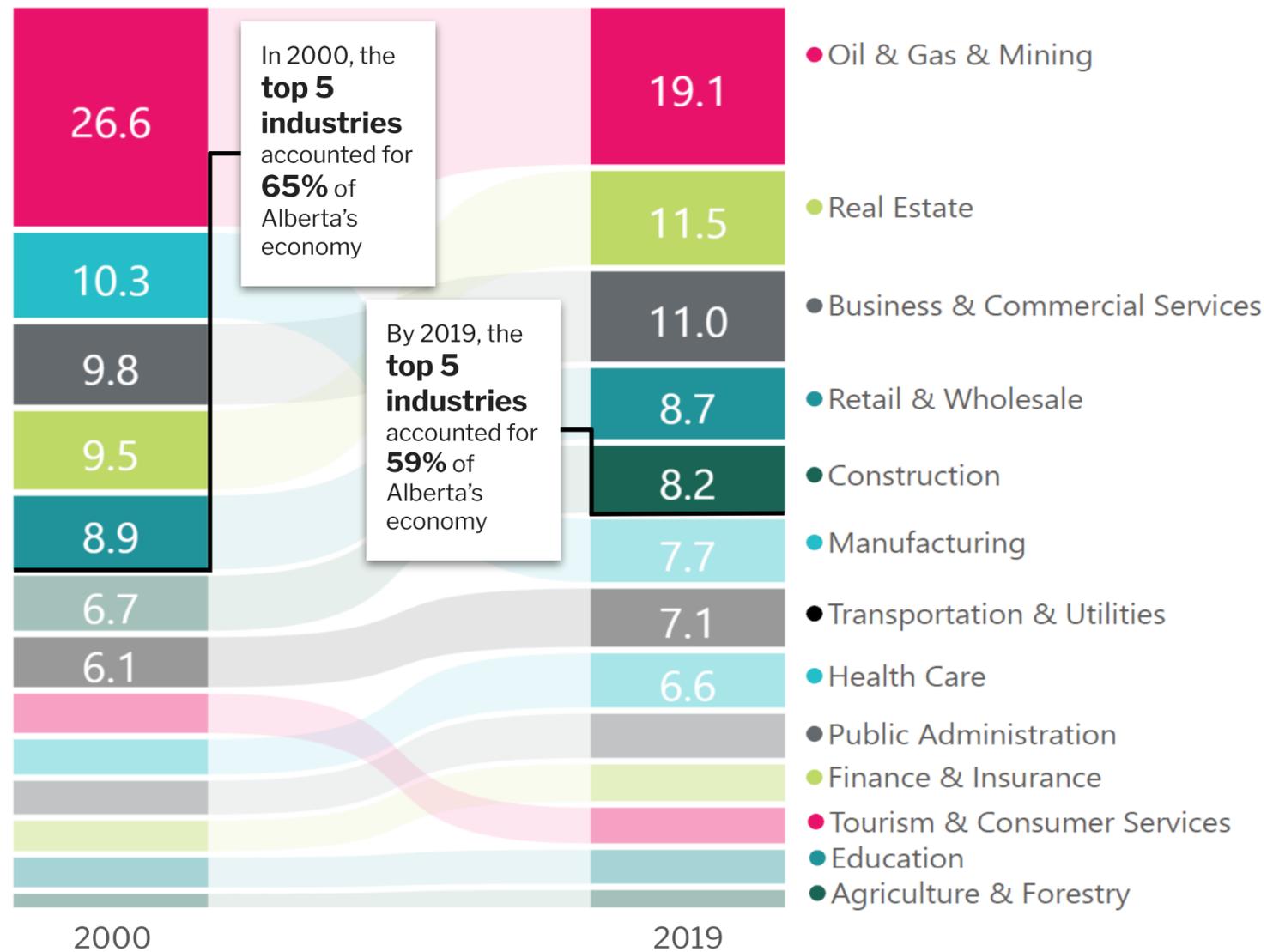
While job opportunities have decreased in the oil and gas sector, they have not grown enough in other sectors to make up the difference.



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Alberta's GDP by industry, 2000-2019



- Alberta's economy has grown more diversified since 2000, shifting from goods to services, and away from the dominance of a single industry.
- Though oil and gas remains the largest sector, accounting for 19% of GDP in 2019, its relative contribution has decreased.
- Likewise, Alberta's other key goods producing industry, manufacturing, has also declined in importance.
- Real estate is now Alberta's second largest industry, followed closely by business & commercial services and retail. All three are now more important to the Alberta economy than manufacturing.*

*The tech sector is not shown separately simply because "tech" spans across industries as they are shown here. See: Tech & Innovation section for more information on the tech sector and the digital economy.

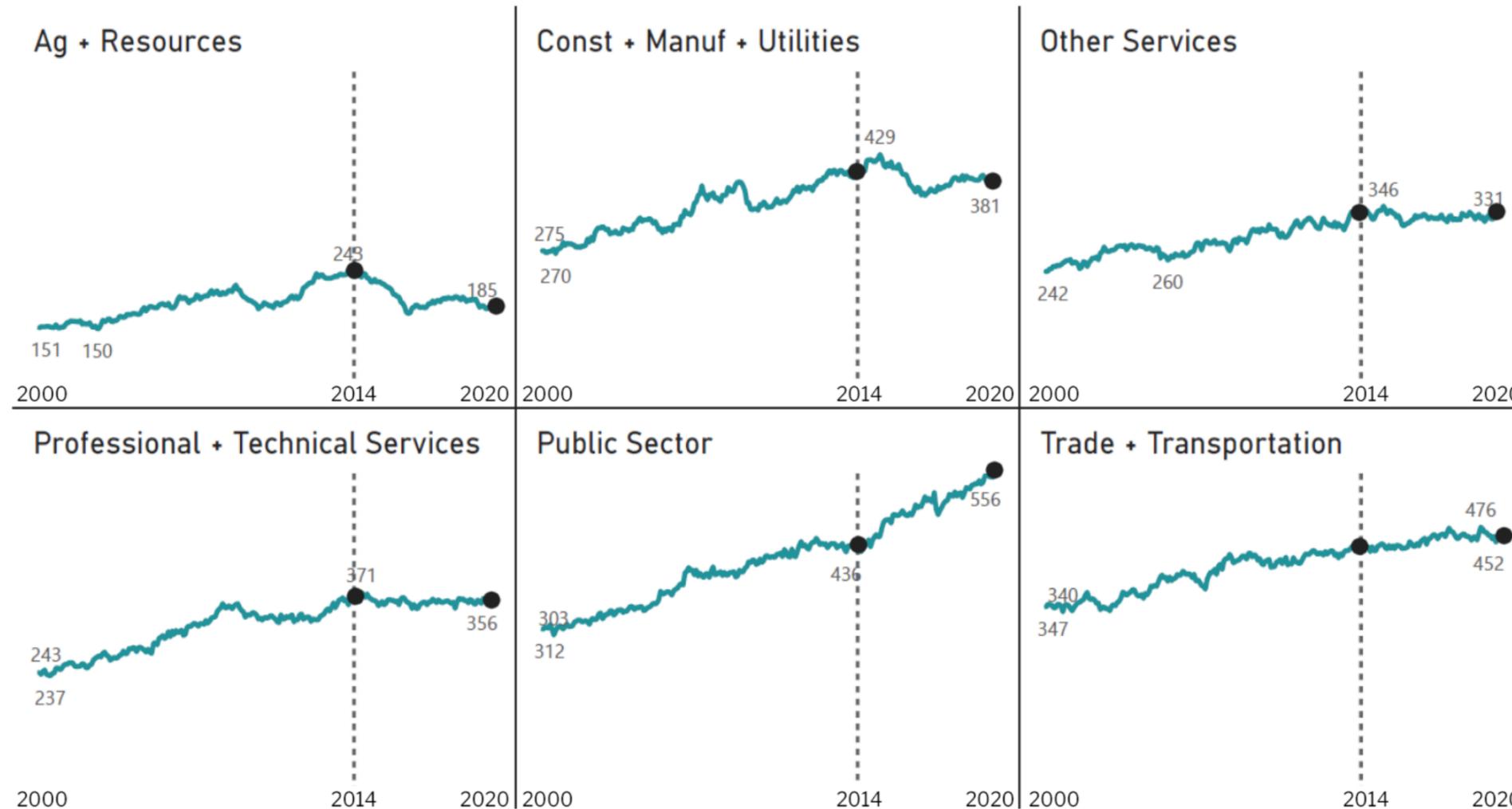
Source: Statistics Canada; industry groupings align with methodology of the Government of Alberta.



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Alberta employment by major industry, Jan 2000 to Jan 2020



- Employment in natural resources never fully recovered following the 2014 oil price collapse.
- Since then, automation and cost containment measures have taken place to keep the industry lean to compete in a global market of lower prices.
- Meanwhile, other sectors have not been able to pick up the slack: most either saw jobs losses along with energy or small gains.
- The only sectors to see sizable gains are industries most closely tied to the public sector—health, education, and public administration.

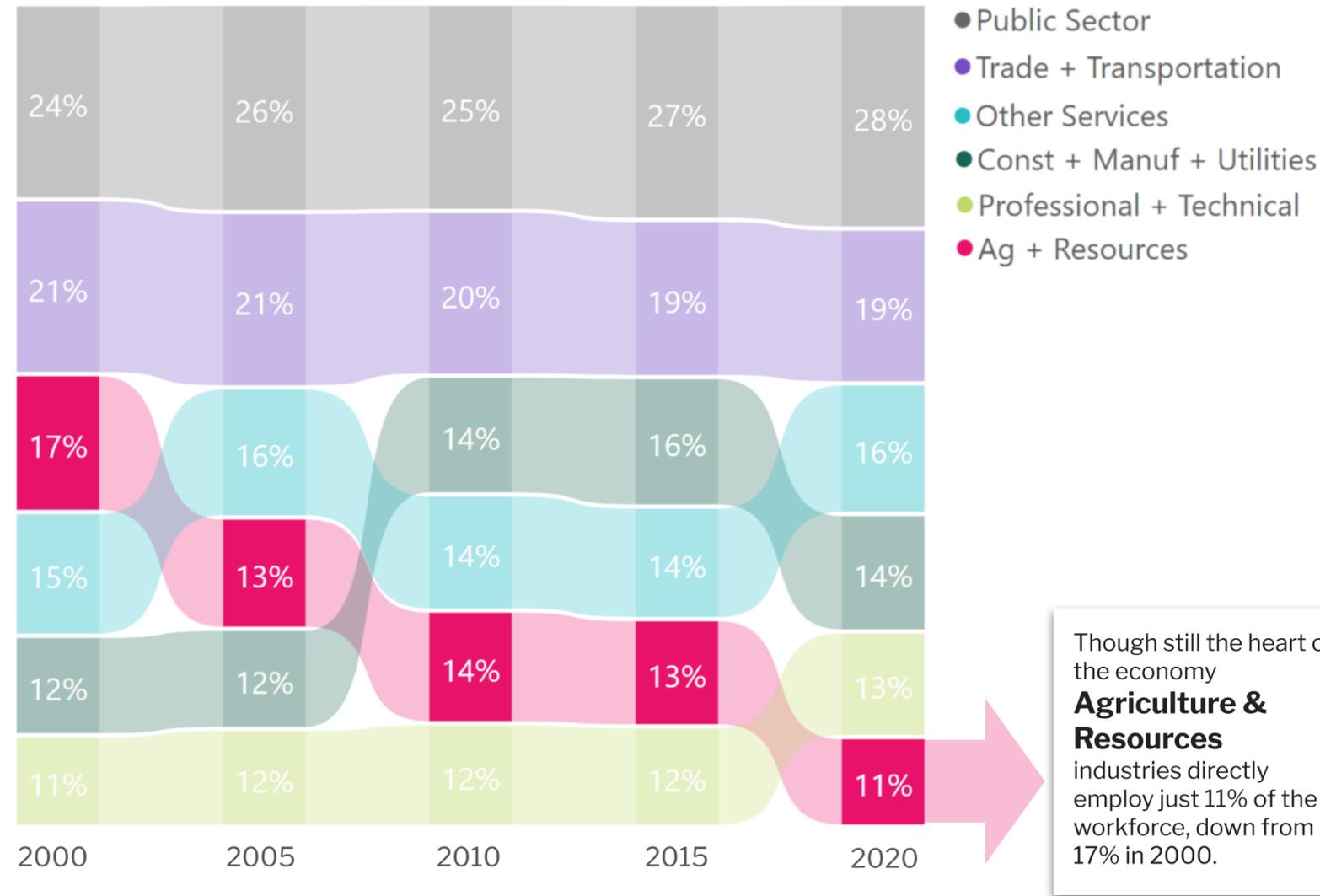
Source: Statistics Canada, monthly total employment (000) through January 2020, seasonally adjusted



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Alberta's employment by industry group, Jan 2000 to Jan 2020



- As a share of the workforce, the industries most closely tied to the public sector (incl. health and education) are the largest and a growing share of Alberta's total employment.
- As of 2000, it employed 24% of the workforce. As of January of 2020, just before the pandemic, that number was up to 28%.
- This is not unique to Alberta and may in part reflect an ageing population as well as the relative decline in other industries.
- Meanwhile, natural resources have seen the largest decrease. Of the industry groups identified, it was the 3rd top employer in 2000, accounting for 17% of the workforce. Now, that number is down to just 11%.

Source: Statistics Canada, seasonally adjusted

