

**SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION PERSISTENCE WITHIN PROGRESSIVE
ENVIRONMENTS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF MEDIATED
POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON THE FEMINIST PASSING OF JUSTIN TRUDEAU
DURING THE 2015 ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

**PERSISTANCE DE LA DISCRIMINATION SYSTÉMIQUE : UNE ANALYSE
CRITIQUE DES DISCOURS POLITIQUES MÉDIATISÉS DU *PASSAGE* DE JUSTIN
TRUDEAU COMME FÉMINISTE LORS DE LA CAMPAGNE ÉLECTORALE
FÉDÉRALE DE 2015**

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I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.

- Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892 – 1950)

Abstract

The 2015 Canadian election campaign was seen as a decisive moment for women's rights in Canada. In the decade preceding the elections, the country had been led by Stephen Harper, of the Conservative Party of Canada. Massive cuts in funding for women's organizations had been disastrous for the advancement of gender equality, a prime example being the shutdown of 12 of the 16 regional offices of Status of Women Canada. Hope for support of women's rights came with the Liberal Party Leader, Justin Trudeau, declaring himself as a staunch feminist. Now, almost a decade later, progress has been slow on many fronts; a breadth of reports, analysis and commentaries have come to question or attack Trudeau on his feminist claims. How is it possible that systemic discrimination has persisted under a government that ran a campaign based on inclusivity, equality, and fair representation? One way of answering this question is through understanding how the word *feminism* was utilized by the prime minister and interpreted by a sample of media actors during the 2015 federal election campaign.

Understanding that knowledge is situated and constructed via communicative practices, such as discourse, this thesis examines what feminism has been made to mean by three different actors: Prime Minister Trudeau, through his public speeches; traditional English newspapers, through their commentary on Trudeau's 2015 campaign; and, by feminist activists and organizations that covered the campaign through online publications. The thesis takes on a feminist standpoint and intersectional approach to critical discourse analysis and mobilizes the concept of passing to analyze these three different corpora. NVivo was used to support the analysis in two of three articles, and Voyant was added as a tool for the third article, written in French. The thesis reveals that Trudeau supports a neoliberal feminist stance, one that undermines a large part of feminist endeavours as it only serves to support colonialist, capitalist, and patriarchal goals, three of the strongest systems of power that oppress women, especially

women whose intersecting identities may make them vulnerable to different and accumulating forms of oppression.

Keywords: Feminism, Justin Trudeau, Critical Discourse Analysis, Passing, Media Discourse

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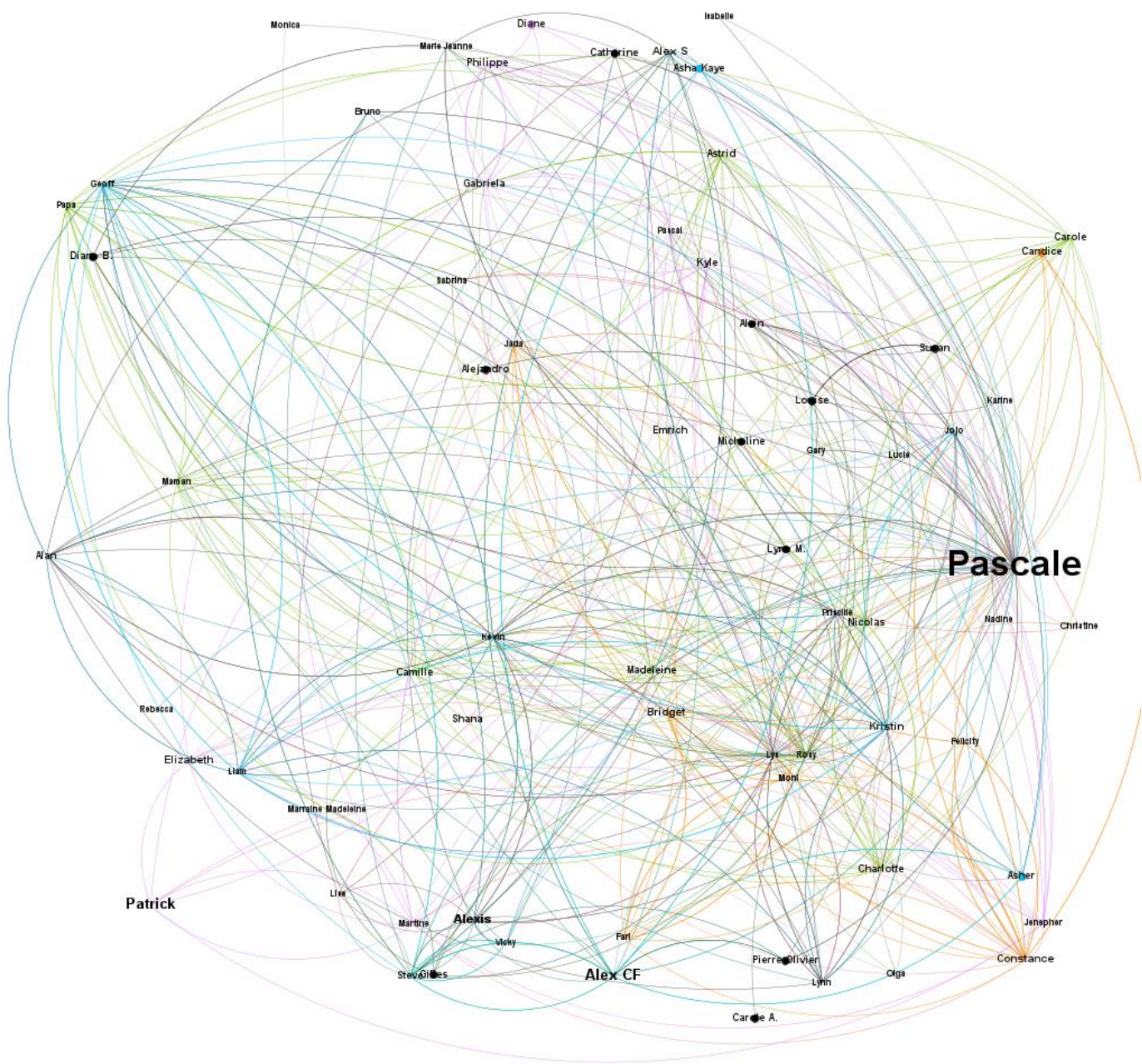
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A final thank you to my family. Camille, Madeleine; my anchors through everything. Know that you can achieve whatever you set your mind to, be whoever you want to be. Thank



Dedication

À Madeleine et Camille, mes merveilleuses, mes trésors, mes pour toujours mes amours.

Contribution of Authors

This is an article-based thesis, which consists of an introduction, three manuscripts in article form, a discussion that ties all manuscripts together, and a general conclusion. The introduction (Chapter 1) provides a general overview of the literature review, the theoretical framework, and the overall reasoning behind the choice of methods and corpus for the articles. This first chapter also covers an overview of the three manuscripts (Chapters 2 to 4), their objectives and main findings. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of these findings, while Chapter 6 provides suggestions for further research, limitations, and a concise conclusion to the thesis.

My third article, Chapter 4, is written in French both as a testament to the bilingual nature of the doctoral program and as an opportunity to reach a wider public with my research. It is also an homage to my francophone roots. I have provided a translation of the article in the Appendix.

I, Pascale Dangoisse, was responsible for the conceptualization, data curation, analyses, and writing of this thesis, and am the primary author of all manuscripts. For the first manuscript, I collaborated with Dr. Gabriela Perdomo; she is listed as my co-author. She assisted with the decision-making, coding, interpretation, analyses, and writing. The first article has already been published, the version in this thesis is the published one (in *Women's Studies in Communication*). The second article received a revised and resubmit verdict, the version here is the one which has been revised and resubmitted (in *Feminist Media Studies*). The last article, article 3, is under review with the *Le Champ numérique*.

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Preface

Standpoint feminism argues that women's experiences can be the starting point to examine society's structures and systems of oppression (Hartsock, 1998), this theory has guided me throughout my project. Standpoint feminism is crucial in determining where power relations lie and where biases can be found. It also aligns with situated knowledge that argues that all the knowledge we gain is related to how we have come to be, where we have come to know, and how we see and make sense of our world. I should thus preface this thesis with my own standpoint. I am a very privileged white woman. I have no physical challenges that have hindered me from moving around in society as I please (except, like all women, at night, or in public transit). I am highly educated. I have access to the news, to books, to podcasts, to other knowledgeable people who are generous with their teachings. I am a first-generation immigrant, from Caucasian francophone European descent. My immigration story, even if at times marked by some difficulties related to racism or cultural misunderstandings, was relatively eventless. Even though I have never truly and completely fitted in either European francophone, Quebec francophone or anglophone Canadian cultures, I have passed from one to the other almost seamlessly. I am queer, but I have had the privilege of easily passing as a cisgender heterosexual person. I am a mother of children who have not been challenged by major difficulties. I am an activist and have a voice that some people listen to sometimes. I have a space and a place to speak, discuss, learn, and grow, where I am allowed to make mistakes and start over. I have friends, a network of support, a network of love.

But I am also a person who has encountered incredible difficulties, some of which have helped me become the feminist I am today. I have hit glass ceilings. I am a single mother. I do not own property. I do not live near family. I have endured very difficult financial situations. I have survived bullying, harassment, physical, and psychological violence. I have overcome dire

mental states and difficult health conditions. I am a francophone in an anglophone world. And, as all of us here and now, I have survived a pandemic. My experiences have informed my research interests and my work deeply, and I fully recognize the contributions and bias they bring to this project.

Land Acknowledgment

My work was undertaken on the traditional, unceded and unsundered territory of the Omamìwìninì Anishnàbeg (Algonquin) people. I pay respect to the Algonquin people, who are the traditional guardians of this land. I acknowledge their longstanding relationship with this territory, which remains unceded. I pay respect to all Indigenous people in this region, from all nations across Canada, who call Ottawa home. I acknowledge the traditional knowledge keepers, both young and old, and honour their courageous leaders: past, present, and future. I know that land acknowledgements are only a tiny step towards reconciliation and that I must work together with all Indigenous people to decolonize my projects and to support Indigenous members, colleagues, and neighbours.

Chapter One – Introduction

In 2009, three years after Steven Harper's election as Prime Minister, Canada fell from the 7th to 25th place on the World Economic Forum's Gender Pay Gap Index (Beeby, 2015; Grant, 2015; Hyslop, 2015). In 2010, Prime Minister Harper, leader of the Conservative Party of Canada drastically cut the budget of Status of Women Canada, a government agency which, among other things, supported associations, projects, and activities aimed at protecting and defending women's rights. In just a few weeks, more than 20 national, provincial, community, research, shelter, and self-help organizations lost their sources of funding (PSAC, 2010), and several others suffered the same fate shortly afterwards—Status of Women Canada itself lost 12 of its 16 regional offices.

Equality between women and men and non-gender conforming people, has always been a part of election campaigns, from the earliest democratic instances in Canada when women were demanding the right to vote, to the debates surrounding abortion rights, to the speeches surrounding the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls. Without ever making it a focal point of their campaigns, politicians of the right, left, and centre have all participated in one way or another to promote their point of view on issues surrounding women's rights (Breda 2022). Research and activist mobilization have often focused on conservative policies and discourses – the right's negative impact on women's rights is well documented. The left's impact however isn't researched as much. It was against this backdrop in 2015 that Justin Trudeau, leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, tweeted: "I am a feminist. I'm proud to be a feminist. #upfordebate" (Trudeau, 2015). This thesis takes this statement, in 2015, by a privileged and powerful political figure as its starting point. We had a progressive, liberal, leader taking up feminist discourses. What impacts would this have on feminist discourse and

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action? This is how my thesis' overarching aim became to understand how systemic discrimination persists within progressive environments.

In 2015, I didn't know who to vote for. I only knew, like so many women, that I could not stand another year under Harper. I had been lucky enough to not suffer the brunt of his misogyny as an educated middle-class white woman; I wasn't within the cohort of woman most impacted by his vision and policies. But I was myself involved in feminist activism and I could understand how Harper's politics impacted so many lives. I knew how his actions were undermining years of hard work and progress for women. I was becoming afraid, seriously afraid, for the future of equal rights in this country. I didn't fully align with Trudeau's platform. I didn't particularly support Thomas Mulcair's New Democratic Party's policies either and his chances of winning a seat in my area were nil. There was also Elizabeth May running, as the leader of the Green Party, but the polls indicated her party would come in far behind all others in the elections. But I, *we*, needed Harper out. So I voted Liberal. I crossed my fingers, I couldn't sleep. I felt stuck, and only Trudeau's commitment to gender parity relieved some of my angst. It was short-lived. It was not long until holes started to appear in his feminist stance, the first hint of it being that the gender cabinet was indeed at parity between men and women, but the women had been given the less critical portfolios. The top positions had been reserved for men: Bill Morneau as head of Finance, Stéphane Dion for Foreign Affairs (now Global Affairs), Harjit Sajjan at National Defence, and Amarjeet Sohi at Infrastructure, with Indigenous women Jody Wilson-Raybould a notable exception as head of Justice.

In 2016, I underwent a medical abortion because of an ectopic pregnancy. That same year, Bill C225, which sought to criminalize injuring or causing the death of a preborn child while committing an offence, was being used by so-called pro-life activists to reopen a legislative debate on abortion rights in Canada (The Canadian Press, 2023). On January 21st of

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2017, there was an international call to protest the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States: the inaugural Women's March on Washington. In Ottawa, in Montreal, in Vancouver, in Toronto, in cities across Canada, a national upheaval of angry women showed their support for their American sisters. I supported it, of course, but I was confused. Where was the movement against oppression here, in Canada? Were we so well off? What about our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters? My career had stalled, I had hit a glass ceiling, giving me a concussion and started considering obtaining a *second* master's degree¹. I was feeling tired and discouraged by double shifts, by double standards, by ridiculous clothing policies at my daughter's school. Why were so many people talking, *still* talking, about Trudeau's hair, yet so angry with a president who wasn't ours? These are some of the questions that brought me to my academic journey. Since then, I have grown tremendously from the white, middle class working mom feminism that I ascribed to at the time and have been able to answer some of these questions through my research and further activism. For example, my Article 1 and 2 speak to the "white saviour" syndrome of privileged white people who have framed feminism within the frame of "saving" women who do not abide by their own values (i.e., save veiled Muslim women in foreign countries—which points to why we have a Feminist foreign policy, but not a feminist environmental policy, or feminist infrastructure policy or a feminist finance policy and points towards the erasure of violence towards women here at home). This helps explain why women would gather to march in support of their American sisters—in a view to "save" them from their blatantly misogynistic President Trump.

¹ Did I make you laugh? The concussion reference was added for comic relief.

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Thinking through all these questions, I concluded that what I was really trying to figure out was why Canada always came up as being such a progressive country, even more so under Trudeau, and yet systemic discrimination persisted. In some respects, women's rights even *regressed*. For example, in 2019, well into the Trudeau years, Canada was 61st in the international ranking of the percentage of women in parliament: it was 49th as of December 2015 (Interparliamentary Union, 2022). Scholarly research, understandably, has tended to focus on the negative impact that Conservative and right-leaning parties tend to have on women's rights. But should we not also be looking more closely at those running on claims of being progressive? Further, most scholarly work examines gender equality through the analysis of policy, but little academic work examines discursive practices—the most salient indicator of social identities, relationships, power, oppression (Wodak, 1997). As Dobrowsky (2020, p. 25) states, “Ideas, meanings, and discourses can also replicate structural forces as actors seize political opportunities and make political choices (...).”

Trudeau has now been in power for seven years, and critics towards his feminist policies and promises have accumulated (see for example: Bezanson, 2018; Broadhead & Howard, 2019; Canadian Foreign Policy Journal, 2019; Dangoisse & Perdomo, 2020; Dobrowolsky, 2020; Jeanette Ashe, 2020; Kingston, 2016; Krishnan, 2021; Laird, 2018; Lilley, 2019; MacDonald & Dobrowolsky, 2020; Macdonald & Ibrahim, 2019; Robinson, 2019; Rottenberg, 2018; Smith-Carrier & On, 2023a; Tiessen & Swan, 2018; Vucetic, 2017). Elections will be called on or before October 2025, and women's rights will surely come up again as a topic of debate for all parties. What can we learn from Trudeau's initial campaign from 2015, when his claims of being a feminist were most forceful? How can we better understand how his apparently progressive stance has either helped or hindered effective change towards gender equality in Canada? As political campaigns are fought via communication strategies, it made the most sense to examine

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various discursive practices to study Trudeau's claims to feminism from the time of his first successful campaign. Language is an act with consequence that does not only speak of knowledge but can limit knowledge; that does not only speak of violence but can be violence itself (Morrison, 1993). Language is the fabric of discourse, discourse, the fabric of society (Wodak, 1997; Gee, 2004). The more one holds power in society, the more one's discourse has the power to construct the meaning of words, ideas, policies, arguments, systems, and entire movements (Gee, 2004, Castells, 2013). Language and discourse are always political in a deep sense, as Gee (2004) argues. This thesis sets out to show how the power of language as it relates to Trudeau's feminist stance has helped shape what we understand for the word feminism in this country.

Scope

This thesis aims to understand how systemic discrimination persists within progressive environments. My thesis work aims to undertake this task via the lens of feminism, and most crucially, feminist standpoint theory that anchors inquiry to the lived experiences of the oppressed (Hartsock 2019). My own life experiences and *cheminement* are apparent throughout this project. For example, my professional experiences have pushed me to understand the impact of neoliberalism on women's career, my role as a working (and studying) mother has pushed me to understand why universal child care is still not an affordable and accessible reality for many mothers, my experience with abortion has pushed me to delve into the concepts of objectification, reproductive rights, bodily autonomy, it's link with discourses surrounding the male gaze, the white gaze and face coverings. Other people with different backgrounds and understanding may have chosen to focus on different types of discourses, methods, corpora, themes, as is true for any research project. There exist many types of feminisms, feminism here is defined broadly as a social movement which advocates for equality between men and women,

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and by extension, equality between all humans of all sexes and genders, regardless of the sex assigned at birth. Further, feminism here is meant to serve the goal of equality of the sexes and genders for its own sake – equality being the end goal (not profit as shall be discussed later). My project centres around Trudeau specifically and not the Liberal Party. This was decided principally for two reasons: first, Trudeau was central to the Liberal Party's image and represented the party everywhere he went. There was a great effort in the election campaign to brand Trudeau in a certain fashion, much more so than a focus on the Liberal Party itself (Durocher & Lalancette, 2022). Further, in a view to align my standpoint approach to research, it made more sense to centre around Trudeau's individual vision and values than that of the party's—Trudeau positioning himself as a feminist, it was natural to study his posture, rather than the party's.

The election campaign of 2015 was itself used as a case study as it was in this context that Trudeau first “came out” as a feminist. Again, in a view to align with a standpoint feminist approach, commentaries, opinions, and editorials of two dominant media, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post*, were studied for one article, and blog posts authored by feminists were examined in a third article. Specific policies' analysis or party's platforms were not studied, rather it was the way they were discussed or proposed that came up when looking at the three various discourses.

As discourses are negotiated within a complex, multi-channeled, media environment, it became evident to examine discourse from multiple angles, or rather, multiple “systems,” as an environment is composed of multiple systems of power, multiple voices and channels. Thus the choice of three discourses from three different places of power: Trudeau's discourses (political discourse power), the dominant media discourse (dominant media discourse's power) and

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alternative media discourse (power of marginalized voices). The aim was further broken down into three main objectives:

- 1) Determine the meaning of Trudeau's feminism.
- 2) Determine the dominant media's meaning of feminism and how this aligned with Trudeau's.
- 3) Determine the alternative media's meaning of feminism and how this aligned with Trudeau's.

These objectives led to the following research questions, broken down by article:

Article 1: Trudeau's Political Discourse

- How does the prime minister's self-declared feminist stance take shape in his public communications before Canadian and international audiences?
- Based on his official speeches, where can we situate the prime minister's self-described feminism with respect to current understandings of intersectional feminism?

Article 2: Dominant media Discourse

- How did commentaries, editorials and opinion authors of the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* engage with Trudeau's feminist discourse?
- How did this specific media discourse support or hinder Trudeau's passing as a feminist?

Article 3: Alternative media Discourse

Article 3 is written in French. Questions have been translated here by the author who is fluent in both languages and has a B.A. in translation studies:

- Comment les médias alternatifs féministes et de gauche en ligne ont-ils traité du discours féministe de la campagne électorale fédérale de 2015 ? (*How did feminist and left leaning online alternative media address feminist discourse in the 2015 federal election campaign?*)

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- Comment le discours des médias alternatifs féministes et de gauche en ligne a-t-il soutenu ou entravé le passage de Trudeau en tant que féministe durant la campagne électorale fédérale de 2015 ? (*How did online feminist and left leaning alternative media discourse support or hinder Trudeau's passing as a feminist during the 2015 federal election campaign?*)

Chapter 5 then examines the answers to these six questions to respond to the ultimate goal of the thesis: how and why does the women's movement continue to struggle within a progressive—a feminist—government?

Theoretical Framework and Methods

My theoretical framework is rooted in a social constructivist (Butler 1999; Locher and Prügl 2001) and a critical approach (Davies 1981; Gee 2004; hooks 2010), both of which are informed by a feminist epistemology of situated knowledge and standpoint. Within this framework, we understand gender (and all identities) as being constructed through social events, systems, relations, representations, or expectations. Power relations are an integral element of gender construction. Critical studies and social constructivist approach differ slightly in that the former addresses societal power structures and injustices, while the latter is more focused on the processes of meaning making. They do work hand in hand, however, as it is through the construction of meaning that the systems and structures of society come to be how they are. Consistent across all the works referenced for my thesis was an aim to discover how society comes to be how it is through the critical analysis of discursive powers. Discursive powers are present in discourse as they represent social entities and structures. The term “discourse” itself has been difficult to nail down to a precise one liner definition, as it may mean something entirely different to various researchers or fields. This thesis found that the definition offered by

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Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 260), who argue that discourse is a form of “social practice” to best support this research:

Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned—it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects—that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people.

Within this perspective, society is constructed, monitored, controlled, transformed through various discursive events, representations, practices, and actors (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2004; Wodak, 1997). To Fairclough and Wodak’s argument that discursive events shape discourses which also shape them, the feminist scholar Rentschler and Thrift, as well as Dever (2017; 2015) have a prime example. Indeed, in studying feminist discourse through archival work, they all conclude that feminist authors and activists are not only “doing” feminism, but they are also “making” feminism. That is to say that feminist authors and activists not only contribute to the debates, but they define them, shape them and produce them, which in turn redefines feminism itself: thus the feminist discourse here is clearly shaped by and shapes social events. This is made evident in Article 3, where, the feminist authors studied are doing feminism by being active

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militants online, they are also shaping the political discourse on women's rights by engaging in the debates, and their own arguments, or priorities of topics are being shaped by the state of the discourse.

The feminist epistemology contributes to this framework by emphasizing one's own positionality as vital to the meaning-making process, the doing and the making, of researchers and researched alike; knowledge itself can be derived from personal lived experiences which do indeed have material impact in social realities. Gender relations need to be thought of in relational terms between the different facets of identity and social structures, as they are not only structured hierarchically by male dominance (Breda, 2022; Crenshaw, 1989) but by other forms of discrimination as well². Indeed, while gender studies enable us to view women as a collective, it is crucial to recognize that this collective is inherently diverse and intersected by various forms of oppression. This is made evident in Article 1 and 2, where all women are grouped together as one same political identity, compared to Article 3, which covers a wide range of identities. Moreover, throughout history, feminist theories crafted by white scholars have frequently upheld the stereotype of a white, middle-class woman, consequently restricting our understanding of the multitude of oppressive experiences. Critical cultural studies, critical race theory, Black feminism, Indigenous feminism, and queer theories have all helped shape an intersectional approach to feminism. Through this multi-pronged theoretical and epistemological framework comes a methodology that analyzes discourse in relation to itself and to other discourses, to

² It is also important to note that by male dominance, we do not mean to say that *all men* fit into this category, but rather that certain men, do fit into a patriarchal, capitalist, white supremacist, colonial, identity which they uphold and impose on others. Also, male dominance can be embodied by female bodies or non-gender conforming bodies. I myself used to uphold many oppressive systems, and I surely still have work to do towards a fully non-oppressive behaviour, attitude and stance.

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social structures, and power relations. It is through this analysis that we can grasp the effects of the various powers of discourse on the construction of our realities.

One of these powers is neoliberalism. It is important to define it here as it is a recurrent theme in all three articles. This social and economic system, the Canadian version is born out of the Progressive Conservative Prime Ministers Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell era, removes many of the social responsibilities of governments onto the private sector or individual people (Dobrowolsky, 2020). Further, neoliberalism moves away from social liberalism, replacing it with “social economy”, resulting in discourses that promote social cohesion rather than equality (Dobrowolsky, 2020). Feminists have argued that neoliberalism’s promotion of free-market capitalism has exacerbated economic inequality by perpetuating hierarchical structures of power, a cornerstone of capitalist societies (Brown, 2015). This political and economic system has also further reduced social safety nets and stressed individual responsibility which can leave women in precarious situations.

Further, in studying feminist discourse within the sphere of political communication in a mediated environment, it was important to find a theoretical approach that comes from the disciplines of feminism and gender studies. Indeed, the study of politicians and media is often understood within a male centric profile using gender-biased practices and approaches (Harp & Bachmann, 2018). By grounding my analytical perspective in standpoint and intersectional feminism and by mobilizing the queer concept of passing, I responded to a necessity to look at mediated political discourse analysis from a non-, or somewhat less, biased approach. Passing has been defined by several scholars, but for the purpose of this thesis, we will follow this general definition of the concept, derived from a number of sources such as Goffman (1969, 1974), Squires and Brouwer (2002) and Dreisinger (2008): passing involves the management of one’s identity to gain access to a more privileged group. At its core, passing is about power

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relations and the imbalances of constructed privilege in society, the imbalance of power held by a “stigmatized” person to one who is “normal” (Goffman, 1974). It is by the very study of how one manages one’s identity that power relations can be revealed: by trying to hide or highlight certain aspects of oneself we make visible what constitutes a norm or a status to attain (one can think of how people of colour have tried to pass as white, or how women in the workplaces in the ’80s tried to pass as men by changing their dresses to padded shouldered pantsuits—in these cases the stigma is the ethnic background or the gender, and the position to attain is that of a white man). In our particular research, we do not try to understand whether or not the attained identity is the passer’s true identity (some people may pass as a necessity, or for fun, while others as they truly do feel out of place), but rather if the passing was successful, how and why. Passing was conceptualized by reading through past research on passing, to determine what techniques are used to pass—many categories exist, from behavioural changes, to accent changes, to physical displacement (Piper 1996). Within those categories, the ones that could most work within the scope of critical discourse analysis were kept. What became apparent was that people who try to pass often rely on allies, on people who will support their passing by either providing them with information, helping them modify their behaviour, or even present them as they want in the target group (for example, when a parent presents their child using the child’s preferred pronouns, it can help them transfer towards their gender group). This was assigned to the media systems—could they support or hinder passing in the same way as people did for others? Squires and Brouwer (2002) was the only study we found who conceptualized passing in the media, and my research, Article 2 and 3 more specifically, expand on this by integrating the “ally” concept to the research questions themselves. Works on pro-feminist men (Anderson, 2009; Casey and Watson, 2017; Holgren and Hearn, 2009; Kimmel, 1997; Larry, 1997; Messner, 2016; Watson and Casey, 2023) and how they ally themselves to the movement, how women come to accept

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them or not, were crucial to conceptualizing passing, in this case, the women held the power to accept or deny entry. Holmgren and Hearn's (2009) focus group of men passing as feminist clearly demonstrated this "power" to accept as women could use this to force a self-critical assessment of the men who tried to pass as allies. Finally, Mende's study of how feminism is talked about in the news supported the understanding of where the news media could have done a better job at representing the movement, and where the movement was well debated. In the end, you will see in Article 2 that the authors of the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* do support Trudeau's representation of feminism, while they do not represent the movement very well, while the bloggers of Article 3, do not support Trudeau's version of feminism, but do paint a good picture of what feminism is all about. Both media studied here are in effect at antipodes of each other.

As for the choice to mobilize critical discourse analysis as an approach to examining the corpus, it was chosen as it offered the best perspective to study power dynamics in discourse, and, as van Dijk (2015) argues, it also is in and of itself a social movement—linking well with the feminist movement and standpoint theory (emphasis in original) but also linking well with my own social activist endeavours:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such *dissident research*, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality. This is also why CDA may be characterized as a *social movement* of politically committed discourse analysts (p. 466).

As discussed earlier, discourse is a social event in and of itself, that is made through and by itself. Critical discourse studies these discursive social events, and further shapes the social event

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it studied—they become part of the social movement. The academic articles strive to do just that here and, as a fervent feminist militant myself, as well as an academic researcher, I thought it crucial to engage on more than one level with the feminist discourse. My public voice, which is a great power that I hold as a privileged educated white woman (and thus have the responsibility to share³), was instrumental in sharing the results of the articles, in engaging with current events, and in understanding the repercussions of the findings on the lived experiences of women, myself included. Through that work, I collaborated with other experts, to learn myself through the writing and research process. The articles, even if not peer reviewed within an academic framework, did, however, engage with feminist scholarly work, and make links with the academic work of this thesis. A sample of these articles are available as support material in the Appendix.

The choice for these three different, but related corpora came from wanting to better understand various structures of power and to minimize my own bias. I undertook to do something similar to triangulation by using three different corpora, that are all distinct in certain areas, but that all related in one way or another to each other. Further, there is no one media, but a complex media *system*, and there is not one feminist discourse but many. Incorporating three different discourses emanating from three different media channels allowed a better representation of the complex media systems and their interrelations. The analysis of blogs seemed particularly important as most research in feminist discourse cover mainstream, dominant, media channels and systems. Alternative media, including blogs, have emerged as powerful platforms for feminist voices, challenging mainstream narratives and contributing to

³ Yes, I did just cite Spider-man. Or the story of Damocles, depending on which stories you should affiliate with more...

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the development of feminist activism (Chadwick, 2017; Breda, 2022; Coulson, 2012; Tufekci, 2017; Weil, 2017). The #MeToo movement exemplifies how feminist bloggers have influenced mainstream media and shaped public discourse. Finally, the study of the blogosphere aligns with intersectional feminism, offering a platform for sharing diverse personal experiences.

Critical discourse analysis offers a number of different methods and tools to approach texts, our approach was interpretivist, as I was seeking meaning through engaging with the discourses, and as I viewed the coding as heuristic, such as is the view of Saldaña and Gee (2004; 2013). Framing approaches as examined by Cacciatore et al. (2016), Chong & Druckman (2007), Druckman (2001), Entman (1993), was initially contemplated, but it seemed too limiting in terms of concept, in terms of engaging with the material and seeing to derive meaning from the text or study power in discourse (Cacciatore et al., 2016; Entman, 1993). For the first corpus found in Article 1, which centres around Trudeau's political discourse, I leaned more heavily on an iterative critical discourse analysis method as instructed by the works of Saldaña(2013) and did not undertake to conceptualize passing itself but rather used it as an analytical tool. As I was undertaking a discourse analysis of Trudeau's passing as a feminist through the media, I started with incorporating his political voice (which may or may not be different from his own voice—but that is work for a different thesis entirely and not within the scope of this project), which is why I studied his political discourse (with my colleague Dr. Gabriela Perdomo Paez). I also could then use this understanding to see how he passed within the media discourse, as that is how Trudeau reaches most of his public, that is where the population receives but also takes part in the construction of meaning surrounding feminism. The official speeches and press conferences given to both an international and national audience, as published on the Liberal Party's website were compiled and studied for this corpus. This selection is crucial in representing an official record of Trudeau's discourse (Verkuyten & Nootgedagt, 2019). Further, with the advent of

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microtargeting and data driven messaging, a new era moving away from the "work of persuasion and the building of a national consensus toward what could be described as manipulative exercises in private persuasion" (Patten, 2015, p. 22), it becomes clear that investigating the narratives disseminated by the powerful is a crucial endeavor to push for transparency and accountability for our leaders. Moreover, even though microtargeting sounds like it would allow for negotiating discourses according to intersectional categories, this is not what microtargeting ends up doing. Indeed, by using data driven analysis, individuals are placed amongst larger and more digestible, flattened, and narrow, political identities. This type of political campaigning poses a threat to democracy. The focus of political parties and the media on simplistic and narrow ideas represents a departure from informing and involving voters at a deeper and more meaningful level to get to know the diversity of voters (Trimble, 2015).

For this section, my methodology was also inspired by quantitative content analysis research projects, as proposed by Lagacé et al. (2013) and Lalancette & Raynauld (2017), for example, as well as in methods of critical discourse analysis, such as described by Saldaña (2009), Fairclough (2003) and as used by Gulliver (2017), and Verkuyten & Nooitgedagt (2019). Work from pro-feminist men was also incorporated here to better understand how men ally themselves with the feminist movement (Anderson, 2009; Dikwal-Bot & Mendes, 2022; Holmgren & Hearn, 2009; Laird, 2018; Larry, 1997; Messner, 1998). The study of pro-feminist men is not extensive, especially when speaking to pro-feminist men of higher echelons of power, but this thesis provides some paths to close this gap.

Trudeau reaches most of his voting public through the media; it is through the mediatization of his discourse that the population receives and takes part in the construction and negotiation of meaning surrounding feminism. Keeping in mind that "the media" is not a monolithic system, that it involves complex structure and multiple actors, an effort was made to

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select corpora that could represent parts of the Canadian media system and that could also serve to show the power relations. The corpus selected to represent parts of the media system (Chadwick 2017) was divided in two, one corpus was meant to represent the voice of the dominant media—via two traditional English newspapers’ commentaries and editorials, the *Globe and Mail* (GM) and the *National Post* (NP) in Article 2, and the other represented a counter public (Fraser 2012; Naples 2013; Warner 2002) via the alternative media—represented by feminists and left leaning blogs, analyzed in Article 3. The *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* were selected in considering the historical beginnings of Canada’s women’s movement in Montreal and Toronto and its subsequent rooting in these cities. Further, these two newspapers are the most read English newspapers in Canada, covering local events but national ones as well (Brin, 2018). Moreover, the *Globe and Mail*, Canada’s foremost national newspaper, was selected for examination due to its prominence, political significance, and its role in shaping the agenda within the Canadian news media (Taras, 2008), and the *National Post*, more right leaning could have provided an interesting view of Trudeau’s feminist stance.

Incorporating marginalized media sources played a pivotal role in my thesis for several reasons. Firstly, it served as a means of incorporating and amplifying the voices of women who might otherwise be absent from my own understanding of feminism, given my privileged background. Secondly, the promotion of women’s voices in my research serves as a vital step in mitigating power imbalances that are inherent in the academic field, particularly between the researcher and the subjects of study. Additionally, as Harp and Bachmann (2018) argue, it is essential in feminist research to examine how women as citizens employ media to challenge prevailing gender norms, values (including misogyny), and societal expectations. This approach acknowledges that the media landscape is not solely shaped by a dominant hegemonic ideology and discourse; in other words, discourses do not flow in a one-sided manner. Scholarship must

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reflect the significance and influence of narratives from marginalized groups in shaping their identities and selfhood, as emphasized by Squires and Brouwer in 2002. Furthermore, the perspectives of Couldry and Hepp align with this viewpoint, as they perceive the contemporary mediated environment as a space where discourse and meaning are negotiated by and between various stakeholders, including producers, users, consumers, and communication channels.

To incorporate marginalized media sources into my research, I began by conducting a comprehensive review and search of the main webpages of the two most prominent Canadian women's associations and the two leading feminist magazines *Herizons* and *Feminist Current*. My objective was to identify any texts related to Justin Trudeau's tenure as prime minister, spanning from 2015 to 2019. Noting that there were a limited number of texts related to specific events due in part to the format of these blogs and magazines, which are typically published on a weekly or monthly basis rather than daily, an alternative corpus was selected. Moreover, in undertaking my first two articles, I focused on anglophone content, and I decided that it could be interesting, and pertinent to my intersectional approach, to add francophone content. Also, to be better able to work between the articles, it became apparent that studying only the campaign would make the most sense. I thus decided to examine the feminist blogosphere of 2015. Details on how the corpus was formed is detailed in Article 3.

The coding and analysis process adhered to the same initial framework and approach for all articles. For each article coding was either added, removed or restructured from the previous one to ensure a streamlined approach to the coding, but also to allow for flexibility and meaningful comparisons between the three discourses. Coding structures for each article is available in the Appendix.

Chapter Organization

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The thesis is organized into 6 chapters, with this introduction being the first chapter. Chapters 2 to 4 correspond each to one article. The first article centres around Trudeau's feminist discourse, it has since been published, and it is the published version that has been incorporated here. The third chapter (Article 2) focuses on the dominant media's discourse on the 2015 election campaign. It has been submitted to *Feminist Media Studies* in June. It received a "revise and resubmit" since then, the newest version was added here. The fourth chapter (Article 3) examines alternative media via feminist blogs and their take of the 2015 election campaign. It is also incorporated here as it was submitted to the *Revue canadienne de science politique* in September, the current status is "under review". A translation of this article is available in the Appendix. The articles are followed by a general discussion in chapter 5 that allows a comparison between all three and combines some of the main findings. The thesis ends with a last, sixth chapter, the conclusion which covers limitations, future research, and an overall review of the main findings.

Chapter Two – Article One

Dangoisse, P., & Perdomo, G. (2020). Gender Equality through a Neoliberal Lens: A Discourse Analysis of Justin Trudeau’s Official Speeches. *Women’s Studies in Communication*, 44, 419–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2020.1781315>

Abstract

Justin Trudeau, the current prime minister of Canada, says he is a feminist. His government has formulated a feminist foreign policy and has presented official budgets alluding to intersectional feminism. Through discourse analysis, we examine how Trudeau’s self description as a feminist manifest in his official speeches spanning from 2015 to 2018; we also situate his positioning in relation to contemporary literature on intersectional feminism. Our study illustrates what other scholars have identified as an increasingly difficult relationship between feminism and the dominant discourse of neoliberalism in political and policy circles. Our findings suggest that Prime Minister Trudeau’s understanding of feminism appears contained within and limited by a discourse of economic prosperity, which puts his positioning in line with a form of neoliberal feminism. We conclude that, in the analyzed speeches, the prime minister frames matters of gender equality primarily as a means to unleash women’s potential to contribute to economic prosperity, portraying them as an untapped resource.

Keywords: Discourse analysis; feminist men; intersectional feminism; neoliberal feminism; Justin Trudeau

Gender Equality through a Neoliberal Lens: A Discourse Analysis of Justin Trudeau's Official Speeches

Introduction

In 2015, for the first time in Canadian history a male head of government openly and insistently declared himself a feminist. That year, Justin Trudeau became the 23rd prime minister of Canada as head of the Liberal Party, securing a majority government. He was an outspoken advocate of women's issues throughout the campaign. In May 2014, he declared that all candidates wanting to run for the upcoming election would have to be unequivocally pro-choice (Mas, 2014). His campaign strategically courted women both as a voter group and as candidates to run for Liberal Party seats (Young, 2015), and the then-candidate described himself as a feminist on multiple occasions; weeks before the election, he stated on Twitter: "I am a feminist. I am proud to be a feminist" (Trudeau, 2015). Once in office, the prime minister appointed a gender-balanced cabinet, explaining his decision to reporters with a now-famous reply: "Because it's 2015" (Ditchburn, 2015). At that time, Trudeau appointed women to important cabinet positions, such as Jody Wilson-Raybould in the Justice Department, Jane Philpott in the Ministry of Health, and Chrystia Freeland in International Trade. He also delivered on a campaign promise to appoint a national inquiry to investigate the fate of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG), a task which the previous Conservative government had resisted undertaking for years. In 2017, the Trudeau government formulated what it called a feminist foreign policy, outlining Canada's commitment to approach its foreign policy decisions through an intersectional lens of gender equality and women's empowerment (Bezanson, 2018; Laird, 2018; Mason, 2019; Tiessen & Swan, 2018). In 2018, the government presented a "gender equality budget" that alludes to intersectionality in that it "recognizes that identities are complex" (Minister of Finance, 2018).

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Prime Minister Trudeau came to power at a historic moment, as women's issues have come to the forefront of the political discussion and have gained visibility in the public sphere, with movements such as #MeToo taking up significant space in public conversations. The Liberal Party victory in 2015 followed 10 years of Conservative Party rule, a tenure which several scholars have examined as having had a negative impact on the advancement of feminist agendas in Canada (Brodie, 2002; Collier, 2015; Coulter, 2009; Hamandi, 2015; Mann, 2016). The election of a self-proclaimed feminist political leader in 2015 was therefore met with optimism by those attuned to women's issues. No other male political leader who self-describes as a feminist has ever arrived at Canada's top public office; therefore, the full implications of Trudeau's stance are difficult to know. Yet it is undeniable that a Canadian prime minister holds a unique position of influence over public discourse on many matters. How Trudeau frames feminism, therefore, inevitably impacts public discourse around it, in Canada and arguably beyond.

In this article we use a feminist standpoint (Buikema et al., 2009; Hartsock, 1998; Larry, 1997; Naples, 2013) to conduct a discourse analysis of all of Trudeau's public speeches available at the time of study, spanning three years (November 2015 to May 2018), with two objectives in mind: first, to examine how the prime minister's self-declared feminist stance takes shape in his public communications before Canadian and international audiences; and second, to situate the prime minister's self-described feminism with respect to current understandings of intersectional feminism. Our findings suggest two main points: (1) that there is little to no articulation of a feminist discourse in the prime minister's official speeches and (2) that the prime minister's understanding of feminism is only loosely informed by contemporary discourses on intersectional feminism and rather largely informed by neoliberal ideology (Collier, 2015). Our findings and analysis are presented in our Findings and Discussion section. Our analysis focuses

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on situating Trudeau's feminist positioning vis-à-vis a growing body of research that is critical of the implications of addressing feminism from a neoliberal perspective; we conclude that this approach results in the prime minister viewing women as an economic resource.

There are no precedents for a Canadian male political leader openly declaring that he is a feminist. Generally, there is little academic research into feminist male politicians in North America (Anderson, 2009). Our research contributes to a growing body of work addressing the feminist policies of Trudeau's Liberal government (Bezanson, 2018; Broadhead & Howard, 2019; Laird, 2018; Macdonald & Ibrahim, 2019; Robinson, 2019; Tiessen & Swan, 2018; Vucetic, 2017). Our contribution lies primarily in assessing not the contents of the prime minister's policies but the way in which he communicates his feminism in his official speeches. Our research also responds to a need for scholars to engage in questioning how liberal and self-proclaimed "progressive" politicians approach feminism and feminist agendas, given that most studies to this day have focused on negative impacts of conservative politics and policies on feminism.

Literature Review

Feminism

The concept of intersectionality is perhaps one of the most important contributions in contemporary feminist theory to date. In fact, it has become the most cited theory in feminist studies: "To be feminist in this moment, one must be practising intersectionality" (Mason, 2019, p. 205). A term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality recognizes the limitations of using gender as the only analytical category to understand how women face discrimination. Instead, it invites us to examine how different experiences based on race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and ethnicity may affect the multiple ways in which women are systematically oppressed and overlooked in society. Intersectional feminism pays special

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attention to an individual's lived experiences and subjectivity as an essential element in understanding discrimination and barriers to equality (K. Crenshaw, 1989; Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004). Intersectionality also points to a need to address feminism demands from a structural point of view, as systems of discrimination are embedded in social structures. Further, intersectional feminism asks for a bottom-up approach to policy development and implementation. It also asks for a language that reflects the diversity of people by naming the specific groups of people that are oppressed—for example, through the 2014–2015 social media campaign #SayHerName, which called for naming individual women who had been victims of police brutality and whose stories had not been covered by the media, which had predominantly focused on male victims (Crenshaw & Bonis, 2005). An intersectional feminist approach to discrimination and identity is particularly important to the Canadian context with respect to race and ethnicity, as diversity and multiculturalism are an essential part of Canada's social and cultural fabric; one out of five people in Canada's population is foreign-born (Statistic Canada, 2011).

Political Discourse

Simply put, words have power (Austin, 1975; Boutet, 2016). Words communicated from a position of power, from political discourse at the highest levels of government, carry particular weight with regard to how citizens shape their own opinions on a wide array of issues. Political rhetoric at the highest levels of government may influence how citizens perceive not only that particular government but their society as a whole. As (Castells, 2013) argues, “The shaping of minds is a more decisive and lasting form of domination than the submission of bodies by intimidation or violence” (p. xix). What political leaders express rhetorically matters in terms of setting the tone in public discourse about particular topics, including feminism, as our social identities are built through our relations to and communications with others. Further, political

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texts and speech utterances crafted by the powerful can be considered as social events that act to legitimize or undermine experiences of oppression.

In political communication research, scholars have found that the way in which politicians frame issues and even population categories can have an impact on how receptive voters can become to certain ideas (Cacciatore et al., 2016; Chong & Druckman, 2007). In Canada, Dobrowolsky and Jenson (2004) have shown that the way in which governments frame gendered issues, such as childcare, can have a significantly negative impact on feminist demands for substantive equality. In their study about the politics of childcare in Canada, the authors found that, starting in the early 2000s, governmental policy discourses shifted the focus from childcare as a feminist demand—through which women would be able to access work opportunities, for example—toward a discourse centered on “investments” in children and their future as full-fledged citizens. In this regard, the framing of childcare as an investment in children, and not women or parents, erased the structural inequalities confronted by the women who fought for this care in the first place. A recent study by Gulliver (2017) also shows how political discourse can help shape understandings of who we are as a society. In his analysis of citizenship guides produced by the previous Conservative government (2006–2015) for new immigrants to Canada, Gulliver finds “discourses that represent Canada as a redeemer of immigrant others,” which, he argues, result in denying and downplaying “racism and the silencing of voices that speak with the experience of being racialized, being excluded, and being hurt by those exclusions” (p. 68).

If political discourse is powerful, how powerful is a statement by a male political leader about his being a feminist? Canada’s prime minister says he is a feminist. When Trudeau speaks about—and for—feminism, he does so from a place of power that is granted by his position as a head of government and reinforced by his gender, social status, race, and able-bodied status. In

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the particular case of Trudeau, his position of influence is reinforced by his celebrity status (Cormack & Lalancette, 2015; Lalancette et al., 2019). Thus, Trudeau speaks not only from a position of power but also from one of privilege. His power to shape people's views on feminism, within and perhaps even beyond Canada, is therefore a matter worth scrutinizing: For what the prime minister says about his feminism in his speeches and the specific language details through which he communicates—or omits—this position are inevitably tied to the larger discourse around the many forms of feminism (Gee, 2004).

Male Feminism

We have little scholarly knowledge about pro-feminist male politicians because few of them have expressed their stance openly and insistently. In general, our knowledge of how pro-feminist or feminist men have impacted the different feminist movements remains somewhat limited (Anderson, 2009). Some scholars discount outright the contribution that men could have made toward achieving feminist goals. Since the late 18th century, American men in particular have been present in the fight for women's equality, but some scholars argue that their involvement has not necessarily been essential: "In my view, during this period men neither made nor led feminism, nor was their participation integral to its successes" (M. Kimmel, 2015, p. 105). On the other hand, recent research into pro-feminist men has shown that while more men appear to be comfortable with calling themselves feminist or pro-feminist, this stance becomes problematic when it appears to be rooted in a casual understanding of gender equality. Messner (2016), who has done extensive research on the relationship between men and feminist movements in the United States, is critical of privileged men who speak about women's issues. He refers to them as self-styled "new men" who express support for women and men having equal rights in terms of choosing how to conduct their individual lives but who are ultimately oblivious to the structural challenges or deep-rooted systems of oppression that women face to

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achieve substantive equality; therefore, their stance has little effect in actually addressing feminist issues. Messner and other scholars have linked this form of male feminism to a superfluous “commonsense” approach to women’s issues, based on a simple conception of presumed gender equality at birth (Kimmel, 1997; Messner, 2016). The focus on a type of equality that privileges the idea of equal choice appears as an obvious right that women should be granted (by men, presumably). Therefore, men getting on board with it becomes a matter of simple common sense. This approach belies the complexities of structural inequalities that multiple feminist movements have raised as a concern, especially intersectional feminism and its focus on structural barriers erected against women of colour, immigrants, women of different sexual orientations and abilities, and so on. An apparently harmless understanding of women’s equality as a matter of common sense of the kind promoted by this type of pro-feminist men, therefore, may actually erode gains made by feminists to date (Kimmel, 1997; Messner, 2016). Ultimately, the commonsense view of feminism is no more than a superficial fantasy or “pretense of sameness” that is in fact rooted in an understanding of male as being the default superior gender, as Schacht and Ewing (1998) argue: “While verbalizing liberal or even feminist attitudes, young men still know they are the superior gender, destined for power and privilege” (pp. 6–7). In this superfluous approach to women’s equality, men are therefore reasserting their normal or default position of superiority.

Neoliberalism

The commonsense approach to feminism is closely linked to the rise of neoliberalism, as many scholars have identified it. Since the 1980s and 1990s, the rise of neoliberal ideas in Western democracies, including in Canada, has posed particular challenges to feminist demands (Collier, 2015; Coulter, 2009; Mann, 2016; McKenna, 2015). Neoliberalism’s market-driven approach to solving socioeconomic issues “entails a host of policies that figure and produce

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citizens as individual entrepreneurs and consumers whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for ‘self-care’” (Brown, 2006, p. 694). Rooted in the classical liberal idea that women and men are born as equal individuals, neoliberalism has taken individualism to an extreme that negates structural and collective efforts to solve social issues. In matters of governance, a neoliberal approach creates and promotes organizations based on criteria of productivity and profitability, in which discourses of governance focus on economics and on market laws that prevail over judicial principles (Brown, 2006). In neoliberal logic, anything that enhances “efficiency and adaptability” is desirable (Fairclough, 2003, p. 58).

Some scholars have identified that this neoliberal logic has permeated feminist ideas, resulting in the emergence of a form of neoliberal feminism that “subscribes to the logic of the marketplace and presumes individualization and responsabilization” (Shade, 2018, p. 37). Since the turn of this new century, the intrusion of neoliberalism into feminism has resulted in the birth of what Rottenberg (2014) has called “a new feminist subject” that is “individuated in the extreme” and “is feminist in the sense that she is distinctly aware of current inequalities between men and women”; but this new feminist subject largely ignores the structural conditions leading to inequalities because “she accepts full responsibility for her own well-being and self-care” (p. 420). This emerging form of neoliberal feminism seems to align with what Messner (2016) and others have called the “new man” form of male feminist solidarity or commonsense feminism, as both of these approaches focus on achieving individual freedom of choice as opposed to focusing on addressing structural barriers to inequality. In this sense, both neoliberal feminism and commonsense male feminism stand in contrast with contemporary understandings of intersectional feminism.

While some scholars recognize that a focus on the individual empowerment of women has had some success in addressing concerns such as domestic violence—by encouraging

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women to stand up to their oppressors, for example—the neoliberal logic has taken this form of personal empowerment to a point where women are now expected to be fully responsible for their well-being and their life outcomes, thus freeing governments and society at large from the responsibility to address the underlying causes of gender inequality (Rottenberg, 2014). For more than two decades now, this female-empowerment discourse derived from neoliberalism’s focus on the individual has permeated policy and communications at the government level in Canada and other developed nations. The “professional institutionalization of feminism,” or the inclusion of some feminist demands by government institutions, has resulted in feminism being both “everywhere and nowhere” (Messner, 2016, p. 10; see also Kaufman, 1994).

In emphasizing the individual’s freedom to choose his or her own destiny through empowerment, neoliberalism has exacerbated other differences. This fact becomes clear in McKenna’s (2015) study about Canada’s child care policies and their unintended consequences for equality. McKenna argues that “the question of who has the right to care, the right to choose, and the freedom to form a family” is not a matter of individual choice, as we are led to believe by the policy language, but rather that it is a privilege determined by class (p. 51). This issue is best illustrated by how wealthy, mostly White Canadian women benefit from a federal policy that encourages them to hire live in caregivers from the Philippines and the Caribbean. For McKenna (2015), “This exacerbates class, race, and gender inequalities in Canada by relying on indentured migrant labor to elevate some middle- and upper-class women to the roles of full (i.e., equal) citizens” (p. 51).

As women fight for more than economic recognition—for quality of life, respect, safety, and justice—the neoliberal approach to governance is incapable of fully supporting the kind of societal, intersectional solutions and perspective feminists have been hoping and fighting for over many decades (Collier, 2015). Worse even, neoliberalism poses a fatal threat to feminism as

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it risks eroding its core demands in favor of a “kinder-gentler” appeal for superficial gender equality (Messner, 2016, p. 16). Further, neoliberalism’s generalizing view that women are simply de facto equal individuals in society has the potential to erase the multiple experiences of women—not to mention trans women and nonbinary people—and the various forms of oppression they face by gender-neutralizing areas of policy with gendered implications (Collier, 2015) through language about different citizens in government and policy communications. For example, newly arrived female immigrants, able-bodied women, single mothers, women of colour, and so on, become *people*, *citizens*, *taxpayers*, and *new Canadians* in neoliberal discourse. Collier (2015) notes that the neoliberal impulse to “gender-neutralize very gendered areas of policy” eventually dampens the state’s “willingness to address criminal and legal equality issues of particular interest to women,” such as childcare or domestic violence (p. 22). Collier cautions that in washing out or eliminating the word women altogether from the conversation, and instead replacing the language with more generic terms such as *individuals* or *voters*, the state erases the importance of gender altogether, leading to “a discrediting of the women’s movement and unwillingness to see gender inside of policy circles” (p. 29). The neoliberal approach has challenged feminist demands by diminishing the state’s responsibility over poverty, gender equality, childcare, and other social issues, while empowering the private sector to take on such roles. Effectively, there has been a “neoliberalization of feminism” through the incorporation of women’s struggles into “contemporary commodity relations” (Prügl, 2017, pp. 32–33).

Yet contemporary research on feminist demands in Canada shows why certain topics cannot be degendered in policy discussions. The results of the Gender Justice for All survey conducted in 2015 by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (Denis & Boileau, 2015) clearly identify systemic issues affecting women specifically, such as violence

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against women, missing and murdered Aboriginal women, women's health and reproduction, childcare, and women in positions of power, among others.

The engulfing of feminism by neoliberal logic, or the rise of neoliberal feminism, is particularly troublesome in the context of policymaking and presents a threat to the kind of substantive progress that an intersectional approach could provide. As neoliberalism has taken deep roots in our society, economic criteria are being “applied in spheres of life that themselves are not of economic nature” (Sifaki, 2016, p. 216). Whereas a neoliberal feminist approach tends to erase the particularities of experience by favoring generic, top-down economic solutions to society's issues, intersectionality offers a bottom-up approach to policy drafting by looking at embodiment and real struggles against structural oppression. Moreover, it allows for minority groups to be fully recognized and appreciated for their particularities (Bezanson, 2018; K. Crenshaw, 1989; Monture, 2006).

While, arguably, the state adoption of feminist demands would suggest a positive gain of feminism in public life, when it is coupled with an ever-dominant neoliberal discourse it becomes a double-edged sword for the future of feminism. Under the neoliberal regime “the distinction between the social, the economic and the political is collapsing in what constitutes the marketization of the state, meaning that no longer does the state regulate the markets but instead subjects itself to their laws” (Sifaki, 2016, p. 112). Overall, the dominance of neoliberal thought in contemporary Western political approaches to governance poses as an even greater threat to feminism than any overt anti-feminist movement. Moreover, this is directly linked to how men are allowed to position themselves as pro-feminist without that having any effect on the well-being of women:

Postfeminism and neoliberalism create a context conducive to a “kinder-gentler”

moderate men's rights strategy that skirts analysis of structural inequalities in favor of a

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commonsense celebration of individual choice for women and men. This approach, if successful, will further erode feminist gains in public life, while affording already-privileged men a language through which they can position themselves not as atavistic backlashers, but as modern “new” men who are supportive of equal choices for women and men, unfettered by state policies. (Messner, 2016, p. 16)

Scholars have long detected the perhaps irreconcilable differences between neoliberalism and feminism, and some of them have identified how a neoliberal approach to feminism carries potentially grave consequences for underprivileged women in particular. The narrative of promoting women’s rights in so-called third world countries as “smart economics,” as is the case in foreign policy initiatives from organizations like the World Bank, results in a “vision of Third World women as untapped resources ... by arguing that women’s entrance into the market will address poverty because they are more altruistic, nurturing, and likely to channel the benefits of their labor to their families and communities” (Beck, 2017, p. 223). As Laird (2018) notes, these types of policy formulations send the signal that feminism as an ethical imperative is insufficient to incentivize work toward gender equality; therefore, an economic—that is, a more important—argument must be made. This sends “the confusing message that women should be working more and longer hours in order to support global growth,” which seems like a step backward in terms of female empowerment, not forward, by “urging women to take on more tasks for the greater good, as if their greatest ambition should be to join the workforce in droves” (p. 20). The idea that women are an untapped resource that must be exploited so that everyone’s prosperity may be fully achieved links back to what Sifaki (2016) calls “the anti-feminist character of neoliberal principles” through which “masculine domination is celebrated and normalized” (p. 116).

Method and Results

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Official speeches are an essential tool of communication between government leaders and different publics. Yet the language used in these texts is far more than a mere tool. These texts contain clues through which we are able to understand how political leaders conceptualize the citizenry, their own political agendas, and the culture in which they are situated. Language functions to enact social and cultural perspectives and identities (Gee, 2004). In the case of official speeches by political leaders, the texts are particularly powerful as they communicate not only an individual's vision but also the policy aspirations of the government. Discourse analysis recognizes that texts are the result of grammatical design and, therefore, express the speaker's perspective on reality (Gee, 2004). In this sense, it allows us to see how language enacts social and cultural perspectives, as well as how identities are both shaped and perceived by the author (Gee, 2004). In the context of a prime minister's utterances, specifically official speeches, this grammatical design carries the weight of language and political power combined.

We conducted a discourse analysis of Trudeau's public speeches, approaching them as a "grammatical perspective-taking process" (Gee, 2004, p. 2) that carries important implications for how beliefs and hopes are expressed and therefore may be received by different publics. We had two objectives in mind: to examine how the prime minister's stance as a feminist manifests in his official communications and to situate the prime minister's self-proclaimed feminism with respect to contemporary intersectional feminist theories. Our corpus includes every English-language speech given by the prime minister from the beginning of his tenure in November 2015 until May 31, 2018, when we began our analysis. In total, 34 speeches were downloaded from the prime minister's official Web site (pm.gc.ca) and uploaded into NVivo 12 for coding and analysis. To our knowledge, the Web site includes all of the speeches that the Prime Minister's Office considers official. We chose to examine the official speeches as they represent an unmediated material record of Trudeau's discourse that is official in nature and therefore

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sanctioned by both himself and his government (Verkuyten & Nooitgedagt, 2019). Appendix 1 provides a list of these speeches and the dates on which they were delivered.

Following (Saldaña, 2016) approach to coding as a heuristic, we conducted several rounds of coding, which allowed us to look for specific terms and to discover new information as we analyzed the speeches. The corpus was initially divided randomly, and each author coded half of the speeches independently. The coding was done sentence by sentence; references repeated within a paragraph were recorded only once. Subsequent rounds of coding involved the two authors reading all of the texts individually but coding together in the same room, actively discussing each coding decision. This collaborative process ensured coding consistency and supported the development of consensus on the meaning and relevance of each code. At the same time, it served as a way to check potential biases and omissions.

Before coding, we determined a series of terms and themes that could be considered as belonging in feminist discourse at large, alluding to gendered issues in general and to intersectional feminism in particular. As a departing point, in our first round of coding we looked for any words, expressions, or mentions that could directly or indirectly relate to the term *women* or *feminist*. After several rounds of coding we recorded mentions of the following as belonging to a feminist discourse in broad terms: *gender, women, female, equal, equality, inequality, inequalities, indigenous women, sisters, daughters, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and discrimination*. Our coding was then expanded to include a list of gendered topics based on the themes of the Gender Justice for All survey conducted in 2015 by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (Denis & Boileau, 2015). These topics included missing and murdered aboriginal women; women's health and reproductive health; education; childcare; poverty; women in positions of power; and violence against women (see Appendix 2).

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As intersectional feminism relates to a multiplicity of women's experiences, it encompasses a multiplicity of feminisms as well. We thus looked for any mentions of feminist demands belonging to the spectrum of feminist discourse included in the "waves"—that is, first wave, second wave, and third wave, as broadly defined in academic literature (Kroløkke & Scott Sørensen, 2006). For example, we sought utterances related to voting rights or political participation, which would be in line with first-wave feminism; access to childcare and domestic violence, which were characteristic demands of the second wave; or mentions to how the intersection of race, social class, and other factors disproportionately affect some women, in line with contemporary literature on intersectional feminism. In addition, we considered topics beyond the three waves, recognizing that feminism has an extensive and varied history and that different movements have focused on different demands. This understanding of intersectional feminism guided our coding and analysis. We also highlighted the use of certain terminology linked to contemporary understandings of intersectional feminism, such as *substantive equality*, *progressive*, *intersectional*, *systemic*, *oppression*, and *structural*. Finally, in this same vein we looked for references to a diversity of women in terms of class, gender affiliation, ableism, ethnicity, and social status, and for complex multilevel descriptions of experiences, solutions, or identities. Overall, we cast a wide net that would allow us to collect as many mentions as possible to matters affecting women both directly and indirectly. In subsequent readings, we recorded themes and categories which appeared to be salient in the speeches but which were not part of our initial codebook. It was here where the focus on the economy that dominates the speeches came to light.

In the following section we address our two main research questions: How does the prime minister's self-declared feminist stance takes shape in his public communications before Canadian and international audiences? And, based on his official speeches, where can we situate

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the prime minister's self-described feminism with respect to current understandings of intersectional feminism?

Findings and Discussion

Manifestations of Feminism in the Speeches

In the 34 speeches in the corpus, we looked for utterances that could be considered as belonging to a feminist discourse, in the broadest possible sense, by searching for any mentions to women and gendered issues, as previously defined. There are only a few utterances related to women and gendered issues across the speeches. There are a total of $n = 1/4$ 305 references to women, gendered issues, or feminist demands in the 34 speeches (in comparison, there are $n = 1/4$ 1,134 references to the economy). The economy was not a topic that we were looking for before our coding began; rather, it emerged organically as the most prominent theme in all of Trudeau's official speeches through our subsequent coding process. Coding by sentence, we recorded every direct mention of the economy (when two references appeared in one paragraph, only one was coded). For example, the following sentence was coded as *economy*: "We're determined to build an economy that works for everyone—not just the wealthiest 1%" (Speech 24). We also included in this category a number of terms and expressions that have economic connotations, such as *well-paying jobs*, *business community*, *investing*, *work*, *productivity*, and *prosperity*.

Furthermore, we established that none of the speeches addressed feminism, women's issues, or gendered topics as their primary or central topics. That is, no speech is occupied primarily or built around any topics or themes that could be considered as being specifically about women or gendered issues in a broad sense. Instead, the 34 speeches focus on six main topics, as detailed in Table 1. Notably, each of those topics is discussed within an economic narrative, as would perhaps be expected from most conventional political leaders in Western nations today. We identified the following topics by looking for the main arguments or points

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that the prime minister was trying to convey and made sure that both coders agreed on the central theme of each speech.

Table 1

Main Topics

Topic	Definition	#
Foreign Policy and Multilateral Organizations	Relating to projects, organizations, industries, policies, agreements, issues, and challenges that extend beyond Canadian borders. That relates to peace or war efforts, agreements, international organizations such as the United Nations, etc.	9
Social issues	Related to an issue that influences a number of individuals within the society, which arises from factors beyond an individual's control, and which is also the source of conflicting opinions on how to respond to the issue. For example: poverty, drug abuse, unemployment, etc.	6
Cultural matters	Related to the system of social behaviour and norms learned and accepted within members of a society. For example: beliefs, traditions, practices, customs, etc.	6
Trade, Economy and Infrastructure	That relate to economic and business partnerships, to investments, jobs, resources and the organizational structures that support trade and the economy.	5
Environment	That relates to the environment and climate change.	4
Indigenous Relations and reconciliation	That relates to Indigenous communities and people and how to restore federal relations with communities.	4

In total, there are n ¼ 1,134 references to the economy in 33 of the 34 speeches, whereas gendered topics are present in only 11 speeches. All but one of the speeches are organized around the general discourse of economic prosperity, whether the prime minister is addressing indigenous issues, foreign policy, or the environment. We find that most mentions to anything related to women's issues are engulfed in an economic narrative rather than standing as important issues on their own. The only speech where we found no reference to the economy is the prime minister's announcement of Canada's next governor general, Ms. Julie Payette

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(Speech 12). This is perhaps not significant per se; the majority of contemporary political rhetoric revolves around economic discourse. It is noteworthy here, however, because in our coding process we realized that the prime minister's feminist stance appears to be contained within and restricted to a discourse of economic prosperity.

To understand this framing of feminist issues within the economy, we can turn to the speeches that centre around foreign policy, trade, and peace and security. Under Trudeau, the Liberal government has claimed to pursue a feminist foreign policy (Broadhead & Howard, 2019; Canada, 2017; Tiessen & Swan, 2018). However, the speeches that focus primarily on foreign policy and trade do not speak to the multiple ways in which a feminist foreign policy may be developed or implemented. The numbers support this finding: In these speeches, the economy comes up 329 times, while topics concerning women are discussed 128 times. There is a persistently narrow focus on economic prosperity, as in the following excerpt: "We need women and girls to succeed because that's how we grow strong economies, and build stronger communities. That is why our government will be moving forward shortly with legislation to ensure equal pay for work of equal value" (Speech 11).

In a different speech, the prime minister refers to his government's efforts to address United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number five, which deals with gender equality, by extolling a focus on indigenous communities and such issues as gender-based violence; further along in this speech, however, the prime minister reasserts that his overarching view of women's rights goes first and foremost through an economic argument:

Our efforts also include a stronger focus—in Indigenous communities, across Canada, and around the world—on SDG #5: combating gender-based violence and giving women and girls equal opportunities to succeed... We need women and girls to succeed because that's how we grow stronger economies, and build stronger communities...

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Internationally, we have reaffirmed Canada's commitment to reducing poverty and inequality, putting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the heart of our development efforts. We took this approach because we know that when we empower women and girls, economic growth follows. (Speech 11)

These examples illustrate a common thread found in the prime minister's speeches: highlighting the importance of addressing gender inequality only to convert it into an argument in favor of economic prosperity. Here, the reference to women achieving equal pay for equal work—a legitimate feminist demand—is engulfed in the larger narrative of economic prosperity as the ultimate goal, in a way that minimizes the value of why women should receive equal treatment as men in the workforce. In this particular speech we perceive the prime minister's feminist stance, but this position is overshadowed by references to economic prosperity as the ultimate organizing principle and goal.

This dance between feminist views and the economic argument tends to happen in all of the speeches where any mention to gender equality or generally gendered issues are present (that is, in 11 of the 34 speeches). In an address before the French National Assembly, the Trudeau states, "Whether on the economy, employment or the environment, the conclusions the G7 members reach must contribute to the substantive equality of women and men." He goes on to stress that "[r]ecognizing that public policies do not have the same effects for women and men, we must review all solutions in terms of their impacts on women as well as on men" (Speech 4). Both of these statements could be considered a manifestation of the prime minister's feminist stance. The use of terminology like *substantive equality* and the recognition that policies may affect women and men differently are certainly aligned with contemporary understandings of intersectional feminism. A few sentences later, however, Trudeau moves on to prioritize this goal of substantive equality as an economic argument, once again undermining the strength of his

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own feminist focus: “The argument is simple: increasing the participation of women in the job market is critical to the growth of our economies. Especially since the average age in G7 countries is increasing and the workforce is shrinking” (Speech 4).

These examples show how the prime minister’s feminist stance sometimes becomes manifest in his speeches but is primarily articulated in economic terms, simply as “good business sense” (Laird, 2018). Even when genuine feminist issues are raised, such as the need to address gender-based violence or introducing legislation to achieve equal pay for equal work, the prime minister engulfs gendered issues in the larger narrative of seeking economic prosperity as the ultimate goal, thus undermining the value of feminist demands. We found that the dominance of the economic topic throughout the official speeches has a chilling effect on the rare instances where the prime minister’s feminist stance appears to manifest in the texts.

There are some exceptions. In two instances that are worth noting, the prime minister’s feminist stance becomes manifest in isolation of economic arguments. These examples are mentions of missing and murdered aboriginal women and LGBTQ2 rights, as the following set of excerpts illustrates:

And as we all know, a federal government-mandated independent inquiry has been launched into the national horror and continuing trauma of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. And let me tell you one thing: to put it bluntly, this issue has always been and will always be on my radar. We need to do more. But we have thousands of kids in new schools, we have 14 communities with clean water that didn’t have it before and have begun to get justice for sisters and daughters across the country.

All in our first year. (Speech 19)

In this speech excerpt, the prime minister’s feminist stance appears manifest in the way he raises the issue of a type of violence that is particular to indigenous women in Canada. This focus

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shows an understanding of the importance of highlighting the specificity of the experience suffered by this group of women as opposed to simply speaking about “gender violence” in much broader terms, for example. Such an understanding would be aligned with contemporary intersectional feminism, where the lived experiences of certain groups of women are highlighted as arising from unique circumstances and therefore not able to be addressed with generalizations. It also speaks, rightfully so, of the structural circumstances that allow this specific type of violence to occur in the first place.

In addition, we found two references to the LGBTQ2 community in these speeches that are worth highlighting as moments when Trudeau’s self-declared feminism appears to manifest, as illustrated in the examples that follow:

We want to be a partner and ally to LGBTQ2 Canadians in the years going forward.

There are still real struggles facing these communities, including for those who are intersex, queer people of colour, and others who suffer from intersectional discrimination.
(Speech 9)

Queer youth homelessness, inadequate support for folks who are intersex, disproportionate violence suffered by the trans community, discrimination in blood and organ donation, and the intersectional marginalization of queer people of colour—these are among the next frontiers of this [LGBTQ2] movement. (Speech 2)

In these speeches, both of which are primarily about LGBTQ2 issues, the prime minister addresses the unique challenges faced by members of the LGBTQ2 community, while also highlighting that within the community diverse individuals face different challenges. It is noteworthy that neither of these speeches reaches for an economic argument to justify the importance of raising these issues. The same is true for Speech 19, previously mentioned, where

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the focus is on reconciliation with indigenous peoples in Canada; there is no mention in that speech of the economy as a goal.

Absences

Just as sometimes the Trudeau's self-declared feminism appears manifest in his speeches, other times the absence of any reference to it appears to speak volumes. In our coding and analysis, we sought to make visible "where the subjective presence of the speaker adopts stances and attempts to position their audiences towards the text" (Gulliver, 2017, p. 74) in relation to feminism. We found little evidence that the prime minister was trying to articulate a feminist standpoint through his official speeches:

- The word gender is mentioned in only four speeches.
- Only eight speeches contain the words women or girls.
- Of the 42 references to women or girls, 25 are in one single speech (Speech 8)

Indeed, not speaking about certain topics, or minimizing them, can have an important effect on the actors who are being forced to the sidelines of a text via "strategies of exclusion," as Gulliver (2017, p. 9) suggests. It can also be an indicator of the speaker's standpoint toward these actors or issues. The exclusion and absence of women in some of the speeches, as well as the undermining of women's agency in others, presents a problematic picture of how the prime minister discusses women through certain figures of speech and grammatical turns. In the 34 speeches, we found that Trudeau tends to speak of women and men as two categories in a rigid gender dichotomy. This dichotomy is revealed in the way Trudeau positions his own voice within "us"—the men—while addressing the women as "them," on the other side. In this dynamic, women are often portrayed as a subordinate "them," sometimes in need of men's active power to improve their situation, as the following examples illustrate:

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Removing these barriers will take effort, leadership, and a willingness to change the nature of work as we know it. What does this mean? What can we do? How do we bring more women into the workforce, and more importantly, how do we keep them there? ... Anytime we're looking for a new hire, we should be identifying women candidates at a rate equal to men. (Speech 8)

All of us must also ensure that women and girls are given their rightful place.
(Speech 21)

Gentlemen, it's 2016, we need more women at this head table. (Speech 25)

The *us* and *them* narrative has the effect of the prime minister inhabiting his place of privilege as a male in a position of power who is able to do something for them, the women. Trudeau's many privileges of being a White, wealthy, able-bodied, heterosexual man are not acknowledged in his speeches. Rather, it seems he relishes the chance to address other men who are in similarly powerful positions, and therefore he can encourage them to take action on women's issues. In several cases he talks directly to these equally situated men—corporate leaders, world leaders, financially powerful men. Certainly, this could be interpreted as a strategy used by the prime minister to inspire and lead other men like him to sympathize and become comfortable with the notion of male feminism; yet this strategy—if it is one—can also act to exacerbate the old trope of the male savior, and the idea that only White, rich, powerful men hold the keys to society's problems, including women's issues, as women lack any agency or power to save themselves or ameliorate their own situations.

In a similar vein, we found that when women are mentioned in the speeches they tend to be cast as troubled, victimized, with little or no agency, and in need of saving with the exception of the few instances where individual women are extolled as role models. For example, the only time the term *mother* is referenced is in an adverse circumstance: the difficult financial situations

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in which single mothers often live (Speech 8). It is not in the many other positive ways mothers can be represented. Other examples follow:

If I hear a single mom who isn't getting the services she needs, I can't tell her not to worry because someone else is better off. She's the one with the problem. She's the one we need to help. (Speech 7)

Women do more part-time work, and more unpaid work, than men... Sexual harassment, for example—in business and in government—is a systemic problem and it is unacceptable... We see that there are a whole host of barriers facing women in the workplace. (Speech 8)

Women and men were abused by their superiors, and asked demeaning, probing questions about their sex lives. Some were sexually assaulted... And yet, these rights are still violated far too often. Women and girls are victims of physical and sexual violence. They are married off, often at a young age, without their consent. They cannot freely and safely access abortion. They are subjected to genital mutilation. (Speech 21)

It is important to note that while women are mostly portrayed in these negative situations in the speeches, these references do speak directly to existing women's issues which is precisely encouraged in feminist discourse. Yet it is also important to stress the absence of women in positive situations or exalted as role models in the speeches. Indeed, it is noteworthy that, overall, mentions of men outnumber those of women in the prime minister's speeches. When an individual is thanked for his or her performance, mentioned to illustrate a point, or extolled as a role model, women are mentioned in 14 speeches, compared to men who are mentioned in 18. There is a total of n ¼ 61 references to male individuals, compared to n ¼ 22 references to females—effectively, a three-to-one ratio.

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Further, when women are used as examples, it is almost always next to or after a male individual. For example, in Trudeau's 2017 Canada Day address (Speech 13), six individuals are recognized for their contribution to Canada's national history. First, two former male political leaders are mentioned: "thanks to the compromise and vision of people like John A. Macdonald and George-Etienne Carter." Then, two women are recognized, and their names accompany those of other men: "The valour of Francis Pegahmagabow. The courage of Viola Desmond. The leadership of Thérèse Casgrain. The tenacity of Terry Fox" (Speech 13). It is possible that the imbalance between the number of men and women being extolled as examples is due to a lack of women who have served in positions of leadership in the past, yet this is beside the point. The effect of this sum of examples remains negative for the standing of women in the prime minister's speeches. There is a sense that women, when taken as examples, cannot stand on their own, that even in discourse they need to be balanced, supported, and, in this case, even locked in by men.

Notably, throughout the speeches, women and men are primarily talked about as heteronormative subjects, again erasing diverse bodies and identities from the conversation. For example, Trudeau tends to talk about "[t]he empowerment of women and girls" (Speech 11) and about "[h]iring, promoting, and retaining more women not only boosts your bottom line... We should be identifying women candidates at a rate equal to men" (Speech 8). This binary approach to gender stands at odds with contemporary intersectional feminist discourse, which strives to recognize people across a gender spectrum. The prime minister veers away from the binary men/women framework on only two occasions, and those are when he is speaking specifically about LGBTQ2 issues:

Today, we finally talk about Canada's role in the systemic oppression, criminalization, and violence against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit

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communities... They brought rigid gender norms—norms that manifested in homophobia and transphobia. Norms that saw the near-destruction of Indigenous LGBTQ and two-spirit identities. People who were once revered for their identities found themselves shamed for who they were. They were rejected and left vulnerable to violence. (Speech 9)

This excerpt marks one of the only instances where the prime minister's self-declared feminism manifests in his speeches. Women and, more specifically, diverse types of women are mostly absent from the speeches, and when they are mentioned, they appear as having little or no agency. This loss of agency evokes the displacement of women as specific agents in agenda setting or policy drafting. This, accompanied by the fact that in the speeches women are talked about as a subordinate group that must patiently wait until men welcome them or allow them to work, to sit at the leaders' table, or to be productive, suggests that the speeches are much more permeated by the economically productive lens of neoliberalism than by the empowering discourse of feminism.

Neoliberal Feminism

Our second objective for our research was to see where we could situate Trudeau with respect to contemporary intersectional feminism. Based on our coding and analysis of the 34 speeches, we found that the prime minister's feminist stance does appear in some of his official communications, but it is persistently engulfed in a neoliberal standpoint. We argue that his understanding of feminism, as it manifests in these texts, often appears in line with an emerging form of neoliberal feminism that focuses on gender equality on the basis of equality of opportunity for women and men (Rottenberg, 2014). In this sense, Trudeau's feminism often appears distant from current understandings of intersectional feminism which favor a fight for substantive equality for a diversity of women that experience discrimination and oppression in

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different ways, and which attend to structural and systemic, rather than superficial, forms of discrimination.

Erasing the Particular

As discussed at length in the previous section, Trudeau's speeches seldom refer to women specifically. There is little or no reference to particular groups of women, with the exception of indigenous women in four speeches. Instead, we found use of terms such as *Canadians*, *people/everyone*, *middle class*, *families*, and *citizens* to dominate the language in the speeches. Trudeau refers to specific groups of people only some of the time. There are specific references to indigenous peoples in 20 speeches; indigenous women, in particular, are mentioned in four speeches; the LGBTQ2 community is mentioned specifically in two speeches. Table 2 shows the number of times and how the words *worker*, *Canadian*, and *citizen* are used in the speeches. In comparison, the term *mother* appears only once.

Table 2

Neoliberal Perspective

Term	Files	References
Worker(s)	13	45
Citizen (s)	14	55
Canadian (s)	31	201
Mother(s)	1	1

We link this use of generic language to a neoliberal standpoint that has knowingly permeated Canadian policy for more than two decades (Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004). When politicians rely on generic terms such as *Canadians*, *citizens*, *coworkers*, they effectively erase particularly vulnerable individuals from their policy approaches (Collier, 2015). The use of the term *workers* throughout the speeches is especially noteworthy. As the vast majority of the speeches address primarily a quest for economic prosperity, citizens of Canada and the globe tend to be talked about in economic terms as well. This results in the prevalent use of the term *workers* to refer to

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people. This term fits within the neoliberal conception of the productive citizen and stands at odds with intersectional feminism and contemporary work-related issues that women face today. Moreover, generic terms such as *workers* are not understood to be gender neutral at all; *workers* is overwhelmingly read as *male* because men have been the archetype of this word for well over a century, at least in industrialized nations (Criado Perez, 2019). Further, and particularly in the context of feminist studies, the term *workers* is much too general and misses the many obstacles that women face in the workforce, such as part-time and precarious employment, harassment, unequal pay for equal work, and the undervaluing of female predominant professions such as homemaker, nurse, caregiver, and teacher. Ultimately, the category *workers* implies the White male dominant view of work—that is, productive paid employment usually conducted for an organization outside of the home. This implication obliterates and devalues all of the productive and reproductive work that women do at home (Allen, 2011; Bezanson, 2006; Dalla Costa & James, 1972).

As seen in Table 2, the many ways in which we can talk about women’s productive and reproductive labor are absent in Trudeau’s speeches: *Workers* are the subject of discussion 45 times and tend to refer to male-dominated professions and productive work. This suggests that, for Trudeau, workers who are paid and who are productive *outside the home* make up the Canadian citizenry. They are not an intersectional group of individuals, and gender or other challenges to paid labor and equality do not play a role in discussions about labor-related issues.

Sometimes specific types of workers are mentioned in the speeches. They include Canadian workers in intellectual property and culture industries; company/business/corporation workers; forestry workers, aerospace workers, auto workers, pipefitters, aluminum workers, fishers, teachers, construction workers, lawyers, and police officers. The following examples illustrate how Trudeau conceptualizes the genderless “Canadian worker”:

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And we're investing in a range of training and employment programs for unemployed and underemployed Canadian workers, allowing them to upgrade their skills so they're ready for the modern workforce. (Speech 16)

Together, Canada and the U.S. negotiated trade agreements that have expanded opportunities for our businesses, created millions of good, well-paying jobs for our workers. (Speech 29)

That innovation brings with it new and exciting job prospects for Canadian workers.

(Speech 23) It means people in the oil patch are hurting, have been hurting for years, and we stand with them, just as we stand with forestry workers in B.C., aerospace workers in Quebec and auto workers in Ontario. (Speech 5)

It is worth noting that in some instances Trudeau's feminist stance seems to manifest with respect to the plight of workers. In the following example, he acknowledges that the presence of women in leadership positions is key to our society's needs, and not just our economic needs. He also seems to favor a bottom-up approach to create new policies related to work, as opposed to the top-heavy formulations that dominate his speeches. In this case, we could consider that Trudeau is more in line with a feminist point of view:

More women in leadership positions won't just grow our economy, create jobs, and strengthen our communities. It will also lead to innovation and change in the workplace innovation and change that workers so desperately need. And the only way we'll get there is by listening. If we listen to our workers and our citizens, we will create solutions that actually stick. (Speech 8)

The previous excerpt is a rare example of Trudeau seeming to address women's issues directly and specifically. On the topic of workers, which is present in several speeches, it is more

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common to see him use language that is generalizing and to a certain extent erasing of the specific ways in which work and labor may affect women.

Female workers in particular are sometimes mentioned in the speeches. We found that in these instances the mention of female workers tends to evoke mostly nondisabled, professional, upwardly mobile individuals who could contribute to the productive economy. This is evident in Trudeau's urging of business leaders at the World Economic Forum to hire more women because it makes good business sense:

So I'd like to focus on a fundamental shift that every leader in this room can act on immediately. One that I have made a central tenet of my leadership. One that is core to this year's Forum, thanks to the leadership of our seven extraordinary co-chairs. I'm talking about hiring, promoting, and retaining more women. (Speech 8)

The narrow image of the "working woman" seems aligned with liberal and neoliberal feminist ideas of female empowerment that focus on granting well-educated women opportunities to achieve their personal career goals. As valid as this may be, this image of the working, productive woman that appears to dominate Trudeau's speeches runs counter to a contemporary understanding of intersectional feminism, which strives to recognize that there is a diversity of women, including trans women, nonbinary people, disabled women, women of colour, and others, whose empowerment requires specific policy actions that cannot be based on a generic, middle-class—and probably White and able-bodied—idea of a working woman.

The use of generic language such as *middle class*, *citizen*, and *worker* is a form of erasing the particular and ignoring the different ways in which citizens may be understood by political leaders and policymakers. The prime minister engages in his speeches in a political culture that has sought to redesign "citizenship discourse and practice" (Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004, p. 155) to favor the idea that generic individuals hold the key to their own personal fulfillment.

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This type of neoliberal discourse has had negative consequences for women, especially women of colour and underprivileged women. Women have been either displaced from policy discussions—replaced with the more benign child-focused approach to child care, for example (Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004)—or rendered invisible, as they have been lumped into the generic *individual* or *taxpayer*. As the complexity of class relations, race, and gendered issues is actively avoided, the *individual* neutralizes the issues to take the central stage in neoliberal discourse, freeing the state from its responsibility to respond to social issues with targeted policy measures that address underlying structures of oppression (Collier, 2015). Moreover, this type of gender-neutral policymaking ultimately tends to favor men and make women invisible, something that Criado Perez (2019) found in her study of how we use scientific data—not just because most scientific studies are based on data from men, but also because people tend to think of men as an example of *human* or *individual*.

As discussed, many feminist scholars note that neoliberal ideology and discourse have had the effect of absorbing and diluting feminist agendas as they erase the specificity of gendered issues (Coulter, 2009; Messner, 2016; Prügl, 2017; Collier, 2015; Laird, 2018). Diluting *women* as a subject carries great risk. In her study about neoliberal politics in Ontario, Coulter (2009) finds that politicians and civil servants perpetuate neoliberal policies by approaching citizens as “de-gendered, classless neoliberal subjects” (p. 25), and therefore specific matters of social equality and poverty are rendered invisible in policy-building circles. Distinctive nouns that would identify specific groups of women, such as women of colour, low-income women, immigrant women, elderly women, or trans women (or a combination of these), are all regrouped into the more general *taxpayers* or *service users* in the neoliberal discourse. Erasing the word *women* from the conversation results in women-specific matters becoming diluted or nonexistent in policy initiatives (Collier, 2015).

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Economic Solutions to Social Problems

During our coding process we found that whenever Trudeau offers a potential solution to an issue in his speeches, the solution is more often than not an economic one. As a result, we created two codes: one for economic solutions and one for noneconomic solutions. We linked the former to the neoliberal ideology, as it is typical of neoliberalism to address societal and cultural issues by way of economic policy (Coulter, 2009; Monture, 2006; Prüg1, 2017). We assigned references to noneconomic solutions to a feminist discourse, as addressing societal or cultural issues from a feminist point of view tends to incorporate structural or grassroots perspectives to problem solving (Bezanson, 2006; Crenshaw, 1989; Monture, 2006).

In the $n=1,134$ references to the economy, economic solutions appear 150 times, in 20 of the 34 speeches. In contrast, there are 27 references to noneconomic solutions, in eight of the speeches. Throughout all of his speeches, Trudeau frames social, political, racial, and gendered issues as matters that can be absorbed and resolved through economic policies, as the following example shows:

In Kitchener, Ontario, a Hindu temple was vandalized—its windows smashed by rocks, while the congregation’s head preacher attended a vigil for those who died in the Paris attacks. A Muslim group in the Toronto area started a fundraiser to help repair the damage. Those are Canadian values. As important as these values are, they cannot exist in isolation. It’s essential that they are supported by economic policies that benefit Canadians. Canada’s economy depends on a strong and growing middle class. This has always been the case. (Speech 34)

It is important to note that the majority of noneconomic solutions Trudeau offers remain vague and are mentioned without a clear plan or timeline. Some of them are short sentences: “Let us choose science, public debate and progress” (Speech 4). Other examples speak in broad terms of

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what should be done but offer no specific policy actions: “We must implement prevention strategies. This includes creating a society where diversity is celebrated and where we maintain an ongoing dialogue with members of minority communities” (Speech 21). In this same speech we found examples of noneconomic solutions which have some substance and clarity to them and which are specifically about women’s issues. Incidentally, in this paragraph Trudeau offers the only articulation of his self-declared feminist stance that we found in all of the texts in the corpus.

All of us must also ensure that women and girls are given their rightful place. I am a feminist. And I am extremely proud of that. Women and girls have a key role to play in politics, in business, in conflict resolution and in peacekeeping. They must fully participate in society. And it is not just up to women to speak out, but we men need to as well. It is our fight, too... But for women to succeed, we must first ensure that their human rights are respected. The right to live without violence, the right to free choice in matters of their sexual and reproductive health, the right to equality, and the right to participate fully and completely in society. (Speech 21)

The remarks in this excerpt represent one of the only instances where feminist causes appear to be extolled as inherently valuable—that is, until Trudeau utters the following sentence: “Because when women and girls succeed, we all reap the benefits.” To say “we all reap the benefits” of women’s success appears to offer an incentive to the other group in the audience—the men—to work toward gender equality because there is something in it for them, too.

Overall, we found that the speeches adhere to a neoliberal standpoint that emphasizes economic solutions to society’s challenges. While this may not be entirely surprising in the context of a Liberal Party government in our time, it is important to confront this standpoint with the prime minister’s self-description as a feminist. Neoliberalism’s overreliance on economic

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prosperity as a solution to societal and cultural issues poses a serious challenge to feminism, as Prügl (2017) and others have noted. Framing gender equality as a matter of “smart economics” when formulating policy goals results in undermining the value of achieving substantive equality as a goal in and of itself to become simply “good business sense” for states—an additional tool in the toolbox to achieve the ultimate goal of economic prosperity. Using feminist demands as a tool to further ends, “rather than upholding feminist thought as an end in itself” (Laird, 2018, p. 21) is, to say the least, problematic for feminism.

This focus on economic-based solutions reinforces the argument that Trudeau’s understanding of feminism is informed primarily by a neoliberal standpoint, which brings him in line with neoliberalized feminism (Prügl, 2017) or simply neoliberal feminism (Rottenberg, 2014). This vision embraces the commonsense idea that men and women should be equal in that they should be free to choose their individual life paths toward success. The problem with this type of commonsense neoliberal feminism is that its focus on achieving individual freedom of choice—particularly economic choice implies permission to ignore structural barriers to inequality and collective solutions to societal imbalances: “Championing equality of opportunity ultimately has served to undercut substantive equality, thereby undermining women’s inclusion and access to full citizenship” (Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004, p. 174). In this sense, we found the type of feminism that is manifest in most of Trudeau’s speeches is at odds with contemporary understandings of intersectional feminism.

Women as Resource

As discussed, our analysis shows that, contrary to what one might expect from a self-proclaimed feminist, Trudeau’s speeches are for the most part void of references to feminism, women’s rights, or gendered issues in general. The few instances where women are talked about suggest an understanding of feminism as a form of common sense that celebrates personal

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choice, much in the “kinder-gentler” form that Messner (2016) describes as the trend of contemporary pro-feminist men: a superficial appeal to gender equality rooted in the quest for economic prosperity as part of the neoliberal ideology. This form of neoliberal feminism promotes the notion that gender equality is positively related to economic growth, which has ambiguous effects. While it is true that at least some women’s issues may take centre stage in policymaking, thus providing openings for feminist agendas to be included, the market remains the ultimate arbiter of social values and becomes a threat to deep, structural change.

Moreover, our findings suggest the presence of a perhaps more insidious viewpoint on the part of Trudeau. Throughout the speeches, we find several instances where women are treated as an untapped economic resource: Women are “valuable”; they are “a resource,” ripe for exploitation. In other words, women are but an unexplored source of economic value. The following excerpt from the Trudeau’s 2018 address at the World Economic Forum offers a strong example of this viewpoint:

I’m talking about hiring, promoting, and retaining more women. And not just because it’s the right thing to do, or the nice thing to do, but because it’s the smart thing to do. In Canada, like all over the world, much of the economic and labour force growth we’ve experienced over the last many decades is because of women entering into and changing the workforce. But there is still so much room for improvement, and such enormous benefit to be had. McKinsey estimates that narrowing the gender gap in Canada could add \$150 billion to our economy by 2026. Research tells us that organizations with women on their corporate boards and in key leadership positions perform better than those without. In fact, the Peterson Institute for International Economics found that increasing the share of women in leadership positions from 0% to 30% translates into a 15% boost to profitability. Recent estimates suggest that economic gender parity could

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add \$1.75 trillion to the United States' GDP. And in China? The GDP boost could be as much as \$2.5 trillion—that's bigger than the entire Canadian economy. Folks, hiring, promoting, and retaining more women not only boosts your bottom line, but will also lead to diversity of thinking, and next-level innovation and problem solving. Add women, and you'll build stronger companies, and stronger communities. (Speech 8)

This notion of promoting female empowerment via the argument that women are an untapped economic resource from which we all stand to benefit is already present in the language of some international organizations such as the World Bank (Beck, 2017; Laird, 2018). We found this idea at play throughout Trudeau's speeches. In the few cases when women are mentioned, they are cast as an opportunity and a tool to achieve economic goals and ideals. This is coupled with the fact that women in the speeches appear subdued and without agency, authority, and overall visibility. With a few notable exceptions in the case of indigenous women, Trudeau removes the specificity of women's experiences to be folded into the umbrella terms of *people*, *Canadians*, and *the middle class*. This is a step back in and for feminism. Seeing and promoting the notion of women as an untapped economic resource brings us back at least 100 years in the feminist movement's struggles for dignity and respect. It harks back to the Bread and Roses strikes and demonstrations of 1912 in the United States; and in the 1970s and 1990s, in Canada, when women asked that beyond equal pay they be afforded recognition, dignity, and respect (Rebick, 2005). Perhaps more troubling is the fact that it echoes the narratives of White supremacy and racial oppression that still persist to this day, where women of colour are seen primarily as economic resources to use and exploit.

Conclusion

Trudeau says he is a feminist. His government has formulated a feminist foreign policy and has presented official budgets alluding to intersectional (Bezanson, 2018; Minister of

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Finance, 2018; Tiessen & Swan, 2018). For a number of reasons, what Trudeau says about feminism carries weight. Since 2015 the prime minister—a White, cisgendered, able-bodied man—has taken up space at the top of the leadership of feminist agendas in Canada, eclipsing the voice of already-strong women and organizations and prominent Canadian feminist figures. As he has set the stage for his vision of equal and inclusive support and representation of women, there has been a general optimistic feeling that he is a true proponent and defender of women's rights.

Our research sought to see how Trudeau's self-proclaimed feminism would manifest in his official communications before diverse audiences. We also sought to situate his feminist discourse within contemporary feminist movements, taking intersectional feminism as a reference point—considering that intersectionality is the most widely accepted understanding of feminism today and that the prime minister himself has stated that his feminist approach is intersectional. Our findings suggest two main conclusions: First, that the prime minister's official speeches spanning three years show only a small number of references to feminism or to gendered issues in general. As expected from a neoliberal head of government, the speeches show a relentless focus on economic prosperity. As a self-proclaimed feminist, however, his speeches appear to lack a real formulation of feminist thought and policy.

Second, our analysis suggests that Trudeau's idea of feminism, as it manifests in his official speeches, appears to be entirely informed by his masculinist, neoliberal political economic worldview. We thus interpret that Trudeau's understanding of feminism aligns with a form of casual, commonsense, and neoliberal feminism, one which places great emphasis on productivity and on the power of individuals to achieve their own well-being and self-care (Fraser, 2013; Rottenberg, 2014; Shade, 2018). Furthermore, we conclude that this understanding

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results in Trudeau seeing women as a resource that must be tapped into for Canada to achieve full economic prosperity.

Trudeau's articulation of feminism, as seen through his official speeches, stands far from contemporary understandings of the feminist movements—and especially far from the concept of intersectionality. The speeches rarely elaborate a worldview that could be seen as being consistent with intersectional feminism. With the exception of indigenous women and especially several mentions of the specific case of missing and murdered aboriginal women, the prime minister approaches the category “woman” as a classless, raceless entity. Despite the fact that visible minorities among the working-age population (15 to 64 years) make up 22.3% of Canada's total population (Government of Canada, 2017a), and that more than 1.9 million women live on a low income (Howard, 2018), the Trudeau's speeches fail to mention how his policies would address the ways in which women are affected by a combination of structural challenges, such as racist and unjust economic policies, as an intersectional standpoint would. There is only one specific mention of trans women, women of colour, and women in poverty in the speeches, and little or no mention of how Trudeau's policies would deal with structural and systemic challenges affecting different women in different ways. Only in one case does Trudeau refer to gender equality in terms of “substantive equality” (Speech 4), a term derived from intersectional feminism which suggests a more holistic and contemporary understanding of equality. Trudeau's focus on women's equality throughout his speeches appears superfluous; it is based on a desire for women to be allowed (by men, presumably) to participate in the workforce, to receive equal pay for equal work, and to be free from male violence. We argue that this focus on a narrow understanding of women's equality results in Trudeau speaking about women as an economic resource, an untapped source of economic prosperity that must be utilized (again, presumably by men).

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Recent scholarly literature suggests an increasingly difficult relationship between neoliberalism and feminism. Neoliberal ideology constructs a particular type of system and citizen, one where the individual is no longer a unique citizen but a generic consumer and taxpayer, one whose main attributes and qualities are linked to productivity and entrepreneurship (Coulter, 2009; Prüggl, 2017). This ideology has carried over to create a form of neoliberal feminism which “subscribes to the logic of the marketplace and presumes individualization and responsabilization” (Shade, 2018, p. 37). What our study contributes to this literature is the illustration of the limits of the relationship between feminism and neoliberalism by situating Trudeau’s understanding of feminism within a form of neoliberalized feminism. Perhaps more significantly, however, our analysis shows just how difficult it is to articulate a feminist worldview within the confines of the neoliberal discourse, no matter how noble or genuine an individual’s intentions may be. In confronting Trudeau’s self-proclaimed feminist stance with a corpus of official texts sanctioned by his office, we realize that his feminism is contained within and restricted by the larger frame of neoliberal, masculinist discourse that has dominated domestic and global politics for well over three decades.

This has implications for feminist demands. Neoliberal feminism emphasizes gender equality insofar as it seeks to grant individuals the power to take full responsibility for their well-being and self-care. With its “commonsense” approach, this feminism addresses only superficial aspects of equality, which risks eroding significant gains made by feminist movements that have addressed the structural issues that impede women from achieving real, substantive equality, especially particular groups of women who face greater barriers due to race, class, ableism, and so on. These qualities of neoliberal feminism stand at odds with intersectional feminist viewpoints on citizenship and identity. Indeed, contemporary feminist theories identify and promote an understanding of women not as a homogenous group but one where intersectional

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identities coexist. Our study contributes another important finding in this respect, as it reveals just how insidious this form of neoliberal feminism can be in the fight for women's rights: The first Canadian prime minister ever to declare himself a feminist comes across in his official speeches as someone who sees the fight for gender equality primarily through the lens of women as an untapped economic resource. Our analysis illustrates in detail how in Trudeau's speeches the fight for gender equality appears to be worthwhile only when there is an economic reward to be gained from it. It shows how the language used to promote gender equality, when mentioned at all, is underpinned by the notion that women are undervalued not because their inherent worth has been overlooked by society but because we have somehow failed to realize their potential to contribute to our economic prosperity. Women and their rights, in other words, are positioned as an untapped economic resource.

Finally, intersectional feminism rethinks every sphere of our social realities, whether political, social, educational, or cultural. Recognizing the important differences among women and the many forms of oppression they may experience in different facets of their lives calls for an approach to solution building that does not rest solely on the "good business sense" promoted by neoliberalism. It also recognizes that equality does not simply mean granting equal opportunities for women to work, for example; it means ensuring that all women are treated equally by institutions, including the courts, the health care system, educational institutions, and so forth. As our study illustrates, as long as neoliberalism remains the dominant discourse of political leadership, even genuine attempts to bolster feminism and its movements, and any efforts to recognize women's full worth, will continue to prove fruitless.

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Chapter Three – Article Two

Passing as a Feminist: How the Globe and Mail and the National Post Engaged with Trudeau's feminist Discourse During the 2015 Election Campaign

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Abstract

During the 2015 election campaign, Justin Trudeau branded himself as a feminist. Taking a feminist standpoint and intersectional approach, I analyze how feminism was discussed in published editorials, letters to the editor, and comments, in the Globe and Mail and the National Post (n=66) between July and November 2015. Drawing on Gee (2004) and Wodak's (2001) definition of critical discourse analysis, the theory of passing according to Goffman (1974), past work on coverage of feminist issues by Mendes (2011), pro-feminist men studies by Holmgren and Hearn (2009) and Casey and Watson (2017), and a study from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (2015), this article examines how feminism was discussed in the coverage of Justin Trudeau's election campaign of 2015. It was found that the Prime Minister successfully passed as a feminist, because the channels studied here highlighted his stance and did not question his discourse. Further, the channels worked as a bridge between the Prime Minister's version of common sense feminism and the established neoliberal feminism of Canada. Ultimately, I find that Trudeau passed as a feminist because he spoke from the perspective of a patriarchal system (Canadian political system) supported by yet another one (traditional English Canadian media system).

Keywords: feminism, political discourse, media discourse, Justin Trudeau, passing

Introduction

“I am going to keep saying loud and clear that I am a feminist until it is met with a shrug.”

(Justin Trudeau, 2016)

The 2015 Canadian election campaign saw Justin Trudeau, a self-proclaimed feminist, rise to the position of Prime Minister. His election was an anticipated moment for Canadian women¹ after a decade of Conservative government led by Stephen Harper, which did little to advance their rights (Weldon 2019, 132). It was rare then, and still is today, to see a feminist discourse emanating from a man holding such a privileged position—Trudeau being the very symbol of privilege with such attributes as being white, abled of mind and body, heterosexual, and wealthy. How the media interacted with his feminist discourse is important to probe; political leaders do not create themselves in a void but cater to the mediatized environment to access the public.

We are now in the seventh years of Trudeau’s tenure and the advancement of women’s rights in Canada has exhibited limited progress. Studies and opinions by academics, militants, and citizens have increasingly questioned his feminist identity as it increasingly seems to align with neoliberal feminism (Bezanson 2018; Broadhead and Howard 2019; Canadian Foreign Policy Journal 2019; Dangoisse and Perdomo 2020; MacDonald and Dobrowolsky 2020; Smith-Carrier and On 2023; Tiessen and Swan 2018). Recently, the 2023 budget fell short on aligning with feminist goals (Yalnizyan 2023), with the much-touted words “equity, diversity and inclusivity” altogether missing from the plan, and a marked decrease in the feminist foreign policy budget by 15% (Blouin 2023). As commentary about Trudeau’s feminist policies and

¹ Women is used to speak to all persons who self-identify as women—regardless of their sexual orientation or sex assigned at birth.

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programs are increasingly revealing gaps in responding to women's demands, it becomes necessary to scrutinize how he passed as a feminist in 2015, when he first "came out" as a feminist. Here, it is through the study of the dominant media's role in the passing process that his feminist stance is studied.

In this study, I take on a feminist standpoint and intersectional critical discourse analysis approach² to examine letters, editorials, and commentaries from the *Globe and Mail* (GM), and the *National Post* (NP), two newspapers that live in the dominant and traditional media systems, during the 2015 election campaign to understand how they hindered or supported Trudeau's passing as a feminist. The analysis finds that the GM and NP supported Trudeau's passing as a feminist by highlighting his feminist discourse, without questioning it. The articles focused on feminist issues centred around violence committed in foreign nations and women in leadership roles, whereas topics pertaining to women's experiences in Canada or those put forth by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women in 2015, were near absent, discussed in simplistic terms, or altogether dismissed. The newspapers' discourses studied here aligned with a privileged feminist stance, in line with a neoliberal political agenda emanating from a privileged and famous person such as that of Justin Trudeau, which allowed for a seamless passing to take place.

Literature Review

Canadian Political and Media Context

Within the Canadian environment, women continue to endure an unjust and unequal treatment on multiple levels. In 2015 the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) conducted a study to examine, "what women think are important issues

² I write from a privileged position, as a queer, abled, white, educated, settler women.

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related to ‘Gender Justice for All’ and how various levels of government (...) can contribute to this objective.” (Denis and Boileau 2015, 1). It found that Violence Towards Women, Poverty, Women’s Health, Affordable Childcare, Women in Power, Access to Education, and Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women affected women’s lives predominantly. They also found that all these issues could be addressed by political actions and policies.

A noteworthy aspect of the Canadian feminist context is the presence of a particular form of white saviourism. Rooted in Canada’s colonial history, such as in the form of the residential school system, white saviourism is tied to white supremacy culture. It has hindered women’s equality by erasing marginalized voices and imposing a white worldview and culture onto those who do not fit the image of the ideal Western white Christian woman. It creates racial categories, with whiteness symbolizing success and desirability, and it contributes to structural barriers for racialized women.

Canada’s news media is sustained by patriarchal structures that produce media stories that are highly gendered and oriented towards a male-ordered paradigm of social and economic control (Ross & Byerly, 2004). Women are underrepresented in the leadership, the content creator, the subject, and expert roles (Byerly, 2011; Macharia, 2015), and this absence is even more evident for racialized women (Cukier, Jackson, and Gagnon 2019). In Canada, the powerful in politics are still mostly men. In 2023, women hold only 27% of legislative seats and Canada currently ranks 61st globally for women’s participation in politics (Interparliamentary Union, 2022).

Celebrity Politics and Identity Politics

Justin Trudeau was already famous before the 2015 elections, being the son of Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1968–1979; 1980–1984). The 2015 election, however, elevated him to super celebrity status. He was referred to as “the wizard of woke” (Boyes 2019)

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and the “selfie king” (Francis 2015). He was followed full-time by a photographer (Durocher 2015) and found a strong following on all social media platforms. His fame went beyond the political sphere, appearing in magazines such as *The Rolling Stones*, *Vogue* and *Chatelaine*, and had the likes of Emma Watson respond to his tweets (Ross 2015). The celebrity status of Trudeau, based on his good looks, progressive and positive attitude, “new” masculinity, and close to the people attitude was a central theme to the 2015 election campaign which also leaned heavily on celebrity politics, identity politics and specifically targeted women (Lalancette and Cormack 2020; Cormack and Lalancette 2015; Marland 2018).

Identity politics is the understanding that the experiences of one group is specific to that group, in effect, social movements organize around specific issues and identities (Bickford 1997). Identities themselves are (re)created and (re)enacted via discourse (Gee 2004). Discourses signal our relationship to others with political leaders, adapting their image, discourse and manners, to cater to specific voter segments created via identity politics. Identity politics has critics, however, (Bickford, 1997), largely because it refers to essentialist definitions of identities based on “oversimplified preconceptions and generalizations about members” (Allen 2011, 2) that emphasizes a culture of difference. Further, as noted by Dikwal-Bot and Mendes, (2022), when politicians have adopted feminist ideas, they have been mostly unsuccessful as they espouse a largely undefined, flattened representation of a mainstream, neoliberal, and reformist ideology.

Passing

Passing, in this article, constitutes an approach to identity politics that goes beyond an analysis of how voter segments have been fragmented by and for identity politics. It reveals how a particular issue and its actors have come to be seen, understood, and constructed. Passing can illuminate which power relations are at play and efforts to appeal to members who hold a

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specific political identity. Passing, coined by Goffman (1974), was initially employed to study how “stigmatized” people managed their “spoiled” identities to pass as “normal”; the most common example being Black people passing as white to access certain jobs, neighbourhoods or privileges reserved to white people. Here, passing is reversed; I examine the privileged passing into a stigmatized group—that of women. Key to the concept of passing is that power structures reveal themselves through the analysis of a passing itself. For Goffman, (1974, 3), discussing passing prefigures the robust intersectional approaches to come: “A language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed (...), the attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither creditable nor discreditable as a thing in itself.” It is through this central relational idea of difference and “being worth less than men,” that women have organized to form the feminist social movement.

Passing involves a *deep* management of one’s identity. Feminism is a worldview that transcends all contexts and issues, one cannot be a feminist in one context and then not in another; feminism is a conscious political choice, which becomes part of one’s identity (Watson and Casey 2023). Trudeau declared that he was a feminist on multiple public occasions, implicitly declaring it is part of who he is and how he views the world—thus the study of passing is appropriate for the study of Trudeau’s identity management as a feminist and the media’s take on his discourse.

Men and Feminism

Inauthenticity can have dire consequences for politicians and celebrities alike (Watson and Casey 2023). Similarly, individuals who pass may face challenges from the target group, potentially exposing them or compelling a tactical adjustment to enhance their chances of passing. In extreme cases, failed passing attempts can result in scandal, interrogation, legal proceedings, violence, or even murder (Squires and Brouwer 2002, 5). Those who engage in

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passing often seek allied support to aid in identity construction and in-group acceptance. The situation of a man passing as a feminist creates a particular exception to all other social structures, as in this context, the stigma is to be a *man*—a condition that has always been the status to *attain*. Holmgren and Hearn (2009) study various factors allowing men to pass authentically as feminists. They find that men can pass as feminists by accepting that they will receive more skepticism on behalf of women, by being more radical than other group members, by experiencing denial of access based on gender themselves, by distancing themselves from non-feminist, or by educating themselves extensively on the topic.

Kimmel and Messner (1997; 2016) suggests that pro-feminist men promote a common sense approach to women's rights which does not consider how structural and systemic inequalities work. Many feminist men do indeed speak vaguely of the matter, referring to grand general statements rather than advancing specific arguments or examples (Breda 2022; Watson and Casey 2023). Further, this approach advocates the view of a one-size-fits-all solution to women's issues; running contrary to standpoint and intersectional theory (Naples 2013). Finally, "common sense" feminism strips away the relevance of radical, and more revolutionary arguments against the status quo, further marginalizing women and their allies (Dikwal-Bot and Mendes 2022). A common-sense approach to feminism is also studied by Casey and Watson (2017, 2023) who see celebrity feminism being taken up by a growing number of high profile, wealthy, heterosexual, abled bodied, white men using this type of feminism to boost their profile and popularity. They also come to the conclusion that male celebrity feminists reap benefits from identifying as such, creating for themselves a type of "male feminist capital" which can be advantageous in terms of obtaining accolades, acclaim, attention, credibility, or career mobility (Watson and Casey 2023). Breda (2022) concludes with the same finding in her study of feminist

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blogs, where many feminist activists complain of male feminist who use these identities to garner women's attention romantically or sexually.

Holmgren and Hearn (2009) observe similar consequences in their analysis of pro-feminist men. They find that, even if some men do pass as feminists, “Men’s practices (re) producing gender inequality are heavily embedded in social, economic, and cultural relations—so that men’s dominant or complicit practices may often easily be equated with what is considered “normal, usual, or even the official way of doing things” (2009, p. 404), a view that is implicitly understood as such in Goffman’s categorization of “normal.” Speaking of men’s dominant practices as being *normal*, and speaking in a common-sense way about gender equality while diminishing women’s specific needs can have women internalizing that their struggles and needs are not worth questioning, worse yet, that any situation is their own individual problem—a discourse increasingly taken up by proponents of neoliberal feminism that promotes women’s empowerment, lean-in, and self-help programs (Banet-Weiser 2018; Dikwal-Bot and Mendes 2022; Gill 2016; Rottenberg 2014).

Feminism in the Media – Fragmentation and Acceptable Forms of Feminism

Mendes’ study on the movement during its most prominent years in the UK and US (1968–1982 and 2008) found that the coverage of women and second-wave feminism in the news “was fragmented and contradictory, not only between publications and nations but often within the same newspaper article itself” (Mendes 2011). Further, while feminism was supported in the news, the more “radical” positions were opposed. Efforts were made to de-legitimize drastic changes and reformist agendas—tensions were thus created between “acceptable” and “unacceptable” feminist views (Mendes, 2011, p. 20). Casey and Watson (2017, 2023) conclude with similar findings in their studies of celebrity male feminism which upholds “palatable” (i.e., acceptable) feminism that is “non-threatening” and which does not critique the status quo. These

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findings, according to Mendes, Casey and Watson, point towards a postfeminist era supporting (neo) liberal discourses of empowerment, individual (financial) success and responsibility, rather than social justice, equality and liberation (see also Rottenberg 2014). This particular feminist discourse, whether defined as palatable, acceptable, legitimate, or otherwise, has led to the erasing of women's understandings of discrimination, and a discourse of so-called individual empowerment that leaves women stranded while facing structural barriers. Casey and Waston (2023) and Mendes (2011) also find that male celebrity feminists overshadow the immense work women have put in to overcome barriers, such as obtaining the right to vote, to bodily autonomy or the right to receive a fair wage. It is crucial to honour the movement as it demonstrates its ongoing relevance and importance. Additionally, discussing the movement's history and various factions can contribute to developing diverse solutions for complex issues.

Methods

This research draws on standpoint and intersectional feminist theory (Hartsock 1998; Naples 2013; Crenshaw 1989). Intersectionality recognizes the specific dynamics that operate within and between micro, meso, and macro levels of lived experiences, from personal interactions to economic governmental institutions. Standpoint feminism takes at its foundation the lived experiences of women as it garners a specific knowledge on male dominance and how it operates. Further, these feminist theories contend well with passing, as they emphasize that experiences based on one's identity are instrumental in comprehending how one is excluded from or included in various social, cultural, or political groups.

Discourses shape social realities and construct identities, which is why it is so important to study how they maintain or challenge systems of power (Wodak and Meyer 2001; Wodak 1997). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) focuses on unveiling patterns of inequality found in discourses, which lends itself well to standpoint and intersectional theory. Its foundation

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lies in understanding language as a collective system of representation and meaning, shaped by systems of power and privilege (Gee 2004). CDA uncovers shared meaning-making and the impact of dominant constructions on complex social issues, such as women's rights, within discourses. CDA emphasizes challenging discourses that establish social norms and is also notable for its intersectional perspective, acknowledging various systems and layers of oppression within discursive practices. CDA's is a valuable tool for investigating the power dynamics between Trudeau's political discourse and that of the GM and NP on the subject of feminism. The CDA methods were developed here to answer the following questions: **How did the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* engage with Trudeau's feminist discourse?** and, **How did this specific media discourse support or hinder Trudeau's passing as a feminist?** This is undertaken to determine how and if Trudeau passed as a feminist and what the GM and NP's role was in the passing.

The editorial content of the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, the two most-read English, national, newspapers in Canada (Brin 2018) were gathered for this analysis. The GM and NP are competing newspapers; however, the NP does lean more on the conservative side than the GM who keeps a more centre position on most issues. The *Globe and Mail* is privately owned by the Woodbridge company, while the *National Post* is part of the Postmedia conglomerate which operates both in the US and Canada. The *Globe and Mail* was chosen because of its political importance and agenda-setting role within the Canadian news media (Taras 2008, 18). Moreover, while social media is worth studying, I chose the GM (n = 34) and NP (n=32) as "the influence and presence of traditional power structures," as can be found in traditional news channels, remain strong (McCurdy & Groshek, 2019, p. 78). Traditional media and dominant channels continue to feed the content creators of social media channels and remain a prevalent means of communicating news. Finally, commentaries, editorials, and opinion letters

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were chosen specifically as they are “not constrained by the norms of journalistic objectivity and offer space to develop and advance arguments” (DeCillia & McCurdy, 2016, p. 553).

In Factiva, the key words “Trudeau,” “Feminism,” “Women,” and “Gender,” as well as their stemmed versions, were used to search for content in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* between July 2015 and mid-November 2015 (which covers the non-official and official start of the 2015 election campaign) 216 articles were retrieved. Out of these, only the commentaries, editorials, and opinion letters were kept for analysis³. The documents were transferred to the software NVivo (version R1) for coding. The newspapers broke down their commentary section between editorials, letters to the editor and comments, however, in this analysis I do not differentiate between all types.

Table 1

Types of Articles by Newspaper

	National Post	Globe and Mail	
Editorials	16	3	19
Letters to the editor	14	9	23
Comments	2	22	24
Total	32	34	66

The concept of passing was used as the framework from which the coding structure was developed. Here, “codes” can be viewed as “themes,” “portions of data,” or “containers”; used to analytically process the categorizing of the information (words, sentences) found in the text.

Initial codes were created based on the literature review with Holmgren and Hearn (2009) providing techniques by which men can pass as feminists. The coding scheme was developed to

³ Authors’ gender was not considered; the patriarchy, as a socio-political, cultural and economic system, is upheld by male, female and non-binary bodies; identifying authors’ gender based solely on their name, was thus not seen as key to the analysis undertaken here.

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reflect those techniques (i.e.: codes were created for themes such as “author is self-critical,” “distances from non-feminists,” “accepts women’s separatism,” see Appendix for full coding scheme). Mendes’ (2011) thematic analysis was adapted by creating codes for all relevant themes from her study on feminism in the news. The seven key issues raised by CRIAW (Denis and Boileau 2015) were also used as codes, with each topic becoming one code. CRIAW, being the only national bilingual feminist organization in Canada dedicated to research, would have been the number one source of information about national women’s rights issues and solutions for reporters, politicians, activists, and Canadian women. A code was also created to capture which quotes and by whom were most often highlighted. Another code was created to capture the centrality of feminism within each article as either “primary,” “secondary” or “tertiary” (i.e.: an editorial may cover the parties’ line on health, pipelines and on women’s rights, with more space dedicated to the pipeline, this may thus be coded as “secondary”) (Lagacé, Laplante, and Nahon-Serfaty 2013). Following Saldana’s (2009) coding guide, an iterative process was also undertaken to consider any themes that transpired through the deep reading of texts. If a discursive practice or theme fit into the framework of passing, it was added to the coding structure and all texts were re-evaluated according to the added code.

Results and Discussion

How Did the GM and NP Engage with Trudeau’s Claims?

Highlighting Trudeau

The newspapers highlighted Trudeau’s claims in 25 documents out of 66 (38%). Trudeau was the sole leader and candidate directly quoted (n=9), and his claims were predominantly presented positively. His remark on achieving a gender-balanced cabinet, “Because it’s 2015,” was reiterated several times (n=5) in the analyzed corpus. The channels did not restrict Trudeau’s access to discuss women’s rights, and by quoting him, the authors ensured he had a voice.

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Finally, his positionality was not denied based on his gender. The media paid more attention to Trudeau's stance compared to other political leaders, despite Thomas Mulcair (leader of the New Democratic Party, a left-leaning party and main adversary of Trudeau's) and Elizabeth May (leader of the Green Party, an environmentalist party) campaigning with a more explicit and radical feminist agenda (Bridgman et al. 2021). The GM and NP's positive highlighting of Trudeau's stance is evident, for example:

Watching CBC's live coverage of the swearing-in ceremony, I had the distinct *déjà vu* feeling that Justin Trudeau could be our Kennedy and that Ottawa, with all the youth, diversity and equality of his new cabinet, might be our Camelot. (Priaro 2015) (GM)

In the current analysis, the celebration was focused on Trudeau's specific claims and position at the expense of the social movement and its leaders. By excessively highlighting Trudeau, the voices, achievements, courage, agency, and relevance of thousands of women were overshadowed. This discursive practice also diminished the perception of feminism being a significant and integral part of political debate. It is undeniable that through this highlighting of Justin Trudeau's feminism in these articles, his male celebrity status was heightened, in Watson and Casey's words thus allowing him to have "a platform from which he—as a man—can enlighten women on what constitutes feminist empowerment and how this connects with the relationship between language, discourse and power. (Watson and Casey 2023, 2737).

Underrepresented Issues and Voices

Only 66 articles in the two newspapers discussed women's rights, with a third (n=22) focusing primarily on the topic, while 34 mentioned it in passing. The term "feminist" itself was barely present, appearing in only 6 articles. Furthermore, the terms sexism, misogyny, racism, or systemic discrimination were not adequately defined, contextualized, or given significant attention by the authors. In using CRIAW's (2015) study, I find that half the articles spoke to the

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theme of Women in Power, with articles debating gender parity for cabinet positions. The second most mentioned topic was Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women (MMAW), with six articles, which in most cases only briefly mentioned the proposed inquiry. All in all, here were 10 lines dedicated to the topic of MMAW.

Table 2

Number of Articles by Topic

Total # of articles in channels	# of articles dealing with women's rights		CRIAW Issues	# of articles
216	66	Primary: 22	Women in Power	33
			Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women	6
		Secondary: 10	Violence Against Women	4
			Affordable Childcare	3
		Tertiary: 34	Health	2
			Poverty	2
			Access to Education	0
			Other	16

“Violence Towards Women” ranked third, mostly referring to violence in foreign (Muslim) countries. Violence towards women in Canada was mentioned once, using 4 words: “the treatment of women.” This is in line with white saviour feminism. References to violence towards women were in the context of foreign (Muslim) countries, or in the context of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women—women who are often othered by Canadian settlers. The women in those texts were spoken about in terms of “others” that needed rescuing by “us”—the privileged white Canadian nation. Such discourse exacerbates the othering of historically marginalized people by privileging patriarchal voices, worldviews, and priorities over that of women’s (Coen-Sanchez and Dangoisse 2022). For example:

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The nuclear deal threatens Israel. Send a message to those who support those who support Israel's enemies and support regimes that rape and torture women.

(Greenberg 2015) (NP)

Childcare was minimally covered, with two articles presenting complex arguments *against* universal childcare. The newspapers' coverage neglected covering key issues that have been discussed and covered in Canada since at least the 1967 Royal Commission on the Status of Canada (W. and G. E. Canada 2021a). The coverage analyzed portrayed an immaculate Canada, devoid of violence towards women, health concerns, and childcare challenges. The discourse implies that the only remaining issues pertaining to women's equality is female representation in leadership roles and violence towards women in *foreign* countries. Trudeau and the authors lacked expert knowledge on the main topics important to women in Canada. This suggests a lack of awareness, concern, or interest in women's issues, which is also in line with common sense and neoliberal feminism, and a white saviour viewpoint.

Flattened Identity

According to Goffman (1974), and Johnson (2016) it is through the imposition of normative expectations on people that entire groups of people come to be stigmatized. This analysis demonstrated the grouping of all women into one single, general, flattened, group. No divergent voices that could contradict this sanitized version of Canada painted by Trudeau and the GM and NP were given a platform, "no evidence to support claims of sexism or feminism" were found (Gulliver 2017, 72). The study's corpus was comprised of commentaries, which would have allowed for a diversity of voices to be read, but it lacked voices of feminists, women's movement organizers, women's rights advocates, or female federal candidates. The un/veiling debate, which was central to the unfolding of the election results (Bridgman et al. 2021; Feder 2018) was brought up 12 times without once giving a veiled woman a chance to

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speak to her experiences. The MMAW issue was mentioned without once acknowledging the presence of countless leaders in the field who could speak to that issue. This finding resonates with Casey and Watson's study on celebrity feminism representing only white, abled body, heterosexual, wealthy women and men in Australian mainstream media (2017). The absence of substantive and diverse coverage in the GM and NP further conveys the message that women's rights issues, including women that do not fit the neoliberal entrepreneurial ideal image of women, are not complex, and that they are not worth covering, questioning, or debating, ultimately undermining their importance and relevance to the political and media discourses. Gulliver states that "racism is often denied, and denials of racism are often the most salient indicators of racism" (2017, p. 71). The absence of the word sexism, the minimal, superficial use of feminism, combined with the absence of diverse voices and discussions about the topics point towards the same thing, a salient indicator of sexism in the articles examined here.

Contradictory, Vague, and Inaccurate Arguments

Opinions conflicted with each other and contained confused and contradictory arguments within the same articles; of note, the impossibility to categorize one third of the articles as either feminist (n=27) or not (n=9), with n=30 for an "unclear" stance. Douglas (1994, 222) states that 'the news media often focused on conflict between feminists and frequently cast debates among women as "catfights"—a tool used to depoliticize their views.' Mendes (2011, 158) found the same to be true in the 2008 US election coverage of Sarah Palin, as 'the genuine conflict over what feminism was (and) who could be called a feminist' came up in her study. The same held true here, with a representation of feminism that was unclear and inconsistent.

Trudeau received support without employing the expected techniques used by men passing as allies of the movement. Neither Trudeau's stance nor that of the media appeared strongly feminist. No author put forth their positionality towards gender equality, towards the

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media, or Trudeau. If Trudeau did self-criticize, this did not appear in the GM or the NP. They both provided him with more prominence than any other voice, despite his contributions not being particularly substantial, as attested by his 3-word soundbite “Because it’s 2015.” There were no indications that GM and NP were ambivalent due to their patriarchal nature, nor was there any humility when discussing the topic, as observed in the opinions expressed by GM and NP’s authors. The powerful and privileged media, along with the leader of the Liberal Party, defined the agenda and terms of the feminist discourse, suppressing alternative voices while highlighting Trudeau’s.

Engaging in the feminist debate, advancing complex arguments and discussing the matter with depth have a positive effect on feminism as it “reflects the diverse nature of the movement, its actors and their desired outcomes” (Mendes 2011, 61). It is also through political and media discourse that problems can be further dissected, debated, and negotiated, ultimately feeding the meaning-making process by which society makes sense of the world. The articles analyzed lacked a deep understanding of issues and focused on one single topic and worldview expressed in simplistic terms. The many ways in which gender parity could have been discussed were absent: only three articles delved into the matter with slightly more depth, offering counterarguments, and once, an intersectional approach, as in this case:

Slapping on a shiny “50-per-cent women!” sticker isn’t that ambitious. If what you want is fairness, stability and exciting new ideas, make sure that your diversity goals do more than help relatively successful women achieve a little bit more, a little bit faster. (Balkissoon, 2015) (GM)

Arguments about un/veiling were confusing, illustrated by the fact that Trudeau and Mulcair had essentially the same point of view, but Trudeau “won” the un/veiling debate, mainly by avoiding it altogether (Bridgman et al. 2021; Messamore 2016; Feder 2018). Interestingly, more was said

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about *how* both leaders handled the polemic instead of *what* it was all about. Gender equality was also misunderstood, as demonstrated in this quote:

Perhaps he should tell his new best friend (...) Wynne that only 31 per cent of teachers in Ontario are male. Then, he can turn to the federal civil service, of which only 45 per cent is male, down from 58 per cent in 1983. Or, is gender parity a one-way street with the Trudeau government? (Locke, 2015) (NP)

Basic tools that have been established to counter structural barriers continue to be opposed. One author declared that these debates are “boring and wrong” (Balkissoon 2015). In this case, gender parity is an illegitimate ask (Mendes, 2011), casting the women’s movement as being illegitimate altogether – reminiscent of the “unpalatable” feminism of Casey and Watson’s (2017) study.

Trudeau’s now famous quip “Because it’s 2015” (Ditchburn 2015) as a response to questions about his decision to establish a gender-equal cabinet was repeated multiple times, exemplifying Trudeau’s common sense approach to feminism. By flattening the topic of women’s representation into one soundbite, it erased its complexity. The common sense approach was taken up by some authors of the commentaries, as seen here:

In this day and age, I can’t believe the amount of controversy over the Trudeau cabinet’s gender equality achievement. Welcome to the 21st century! Get over it.
(Giannini, 2015) (GM)

However, women should not “get over it”; the lack of women running for a seat remains unrepresentative of the Canadian demographic. Systemic barriers and an increasingly violent backlash towards women in politics (Clermont-Dion and Maroist 2022) are just some of the barriers women face. The harassment women are confronted with, double standards, double binds, double shifts, glass ladders, or undervalued opinions are only a few of the many real

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situations that need to be addressed with more than a 3-word soundbite. The contradictory, fragmented, and simplified one-liners regarding the newspapers' support for Trudeau's passing as a feminist indicate that they endorsed his definition of feminism.

How Did the GM and NP Hinder or Support His Feminism?

No Challengers

In Trudeau's case, his position of power and privilege, which essentially represents the many forms of oppression, could have hindered his passing. However, as mentioned earlier, Trudeau did not face skepticism from the authors studied here, nor was he required to explain or showcase his knowledge. He did not have to take a more radical stance to pass as a feminist, and his perspective was highlighted. He was celebrated for his comments and action, even though they were vague, or set the bar low, and even though he transgressed feminist ideals on multiple occasions during the campaign (for example, when asked about the cause of men's violence toward women, Trudeau blamed "certain types of music." [Donato 2015]). Experts or activists that may have offered an alternative viewpoint, or counterarguments were not interviewed or cited, they were absent from the GM and NP commentary sections. Other more radical stance were also erased from the discourse studied here. This finding is consistent with a common sense feminism that does not place women's issues at the forefront but instead gives priority to an androcentric perspective. Here, Trudeau, the famous man feminist, was provided with more accolades, acclaim, attention and (unearned) credibility through the GM and NP's commentary (Watson and Casey 2023). And, by aligning with Trudeau's discourse, the media effectively supported his passing.

Alignment With Status Quo. The greatest challenge Trudeau received came from authors who found him *too* progressive. These cases (n=14) appeared primarily in the more conservative leaning newspaper the National Post (n=9). Instead of distancing themselves from

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non-feminist, in some instances, the authors aligned with or emphasized policies or arguments that contradicted the feminist movement. In the seven documents from GM and NP where Trudeau was deemed insufficiently progressive, the criticism was not extensively discussed.

Table 3

Article Positioning, by Newspaper

Code	# Globe and Mail	# National Post
Illegitimate ask	4	11
Legitimate ask	7	4
Too progressive	5	9
Not progressive enough	2	5
Support opponents of Trudeau	1	6
Unclear support for Trudeau's feminism	16	9
No does not support Trudeau's feminism	6	17
Yes supports Trudeau's feminism	12	6

This finding again aligns with Mendes' (2011) take on the media reproducing a softer type of feminism, and Watson and Casey's (2017, 2023) finding that male celebrity feminism and the media reproduced a "palatable" feminist discourse in which the status quo is not challenged. Common sense feminism avoids questioning the status quo and perpetuates a broken system. Trudeau's "progressive" position faced challenges from GM and NP, positioning him as a counterpoint to Harper's conservatism. This highlights a crucial observation: despite the seemingly available choice between conservatism and progressivism, it was essentially a choice between conservatism and maintaining the status quo. This might explain, in part, why women's equality did not substantially improve under a "progressive" government. Citizens, in effect, voted for the status quo. This finding raises questions about the prospects for women's rights. As divergent discourses and identities are co-opted within oppressive structures (such as GM and NP), the struggle for equality regresses (de Jong and Kimm 2017). Additionally, when

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hegemonic institutions assimilate radical movements, they gain control over the movement's agenda and identity, employing reformist rhetoric only when convenient (Trumpy 2008). This is evident in this analysis, where feminist discourse was convenient for garnering votes and readership – which is also in line with past studies which conclude that men passing as feminists, do so in a view to gain more privilege (Breda 2022; Casey and Watson 2017; Watson and Casey 2023).

Allied in Privilege

The power relations are clear here: a privileged patriarchal man in a position of power, appealed to a system that holds the same values as him. The media was an ally and a bridge: a bridge between Trudeau, the privileged man, and the closest voter group to him—privileged women. Women who spoke the same language, have the same privileges, have the same ambitions. The women who fight for women's rights, but within a specific framework of accessing privilege and power at the same level as men (Angela Y. Davis 1981). Indeed, it was not for Trudeau to *pass* as a feminist, but rather for feminists to *pass as men*.

What is more insidious is how political discourse and select media outlets defined the terms of feminist identity. Feminists have been “constructed through the workings of power to be certain kinds of subjects, members of certain groups” (Bickford, 1997, p. 116). The *Globe and Mail*, the *National Post*, and Trudeau's discourse on feminism catered to privileged women who already occupied higher positions in society, excluding the representation of a significant portion of the population—an issue that only an intersectional approach could address. The focus was solely on a type of feminism often referred to as white feminism, neoliberal feminism, or bourgeois feminism, as evidenced by the emphasis on women in positions of power (33 articles). Other forms of feminism were not discussed, aligning with Mendes' (2011) finding that only a specific type of feminism—one that did not challenge the status quo—was acceptable.

Conclusion

This study critically analyzed the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post*'s commentaries about Trudeau's feminist identity by using the concept of passing. This is relevant given the prevailing sentiment among Canadians that while the Prime Minister seemed to be initially dedicated to women's rights issues – as was attested by his commitment to form a gender-equal cabinet, other promises for gender reform have not fully materialized and Trudeau will surely seek a fourth mandate in 2025. The study was limited by the modest corpus size, the specific time frame, and the focus on two newspapers. However, the concept of passing was instrumental in revealing power dynamics. The study also demonstrates a potential for further research on passing in a context where political factions increasingly exploit voter groups via celebrity politics and identity politics.

The media supported Trudeau's passing by upholding his construction of the feminist identity. The media channels here worked as allies for Trudeau, a bridge to pass from a neoliberal political conception of feminism to cater to a neoliberal form of feminism that suppresses diverse voices, topics, and ideas. It also suppressed potential debates, radical approaches to gender equality, and did not challenge the status quo. This type of feminism ultimately harms women as instead of promoting an inclusive, intersectional, feminist identity based on women's lived experiences of oppression, it caters to the ideological motivations that warrants that being a privileged, capitalist man remains the status to attain, the norm to live by. Ultimately, the feminist movement was co-opted by neoliberal ideologies. The analysis reveals that there is still much work to be done in achieving gender equality, because it's 2023, and we must refuse to dismiss Trudeau's version of feminism with a shrug.

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Chapter Four – Article Three

Où est l’alliée féministe politique ? Une analyse critique du discours des médias alternatifs féministes sur l’élection canadienne de 2015

Sommaire

Cet article étudie le discours féministe alternatif en ligne, en anglais et en français, qui traite du discours féministe des chefs de parti à l’élection canadienne de 2015, et plus particulièrement celui de Justin Trudeau. Considérant que les relations de pouvoir sont construites et maintenues au moyen de différentes forces, telle celle du discours et des médias (Boutet 2016 ; Wodak 1997), l’auteur tente de démontrer par une analyse critique de discours que les blogueuses en ligne n’ont pas été dupées par les propos de Justin Trudeau, ni par le discours féministe néolibérale. Cependant, ne trouvant aucun candidat réellement féministe, elles se sont vues contraintes de choisir le moindre mal pour mettre fin au mandat de Stephen Harper, le chef du parti conservateur. Une cartographie de la blogosphère féministe est assemblée dans un premier temps, puis une analyse critique du discours est réalisée avec l’aide des outils Voyant et NVivo.

Introduction

« Tout sauf Harper », « Stop Harper », « À bat les conservateurs »... Par des blogues, des campagnes publicitaires, des associations d'activistes politiques, tout un chacun s'efforçait de mettre fin au règne conservateur durant la campagne électorale de 2015. Après 10 ans de compressions dans le secteur associatif et communautaire œuvrant pour les droits des femmes, les groupes féministes¹, et les femmes, avaient grand besoin d'un changement de cap politique, d'autant plus que plusieurs candidats se proposaient comme défenseur des droits des femmes : Justin Trudeau (Parti libéral du Canada), Thomas Mulcair (Nouveau Parti démocratique — NPD) et Elizabeth May (Parti vert du Canada). Trudeau se démarquait par rapport à ses adversaires, se faisant étiqueter comme le féministe de choix par les médias dominants (Paterson and Scala 2020; Durocher et Lalancette 2022; Francis 2015), au détriment de ses adversaires.

Les élections de 2015 ont été une première pour la cause des femmes, non seulement parce que Trudeau s'est proclamé ouvertement féministe, mais aussi parce que plusieurs sujets touchants plus explicitement les femmes ont fait les manchettes. La crise des réfugiées syriennes² et le port du niqab ont été deux enjeux polarisants, et dans les deux cas des problématiques qui touchent de façon bien évidente, même pour la population en générale, principalement les femmes³. De plus, la récalcitrance démontrée par Harper à la tenue d'une enquête nationale sur les femmes et filles autochtones assassinées et disparues (FFAAD) a été soulevée fréquemment

¹ Le terme « féministe » ou « femme » est utilisé pour désigner toute personne qui s'identifie comme femme, féministe ou encore comme allié.e ou co-conspirateur.trice du mouvement, indépendamment de son orientation sexuelle ou du sexe qui lui a été assigné à la naissance.

² Le féminin est utilisé afin d'alléger le texte et comprend le masculin lorsque le contexte l'indique.

³ Ici, il est évident que les sujets tels l'économie, l'environnement, les affaires étrangères, etc. touchent les femmes cependant, une faible proportion de la population générale semble encore aujourd'hui comprendre que tous les enjeux ont des incidences genrées. Le port du niqab est, quant à lui, un enjeu manifestement genré, peu importe le positionnement féministe ou non d'une électrice.

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dans les médias (Maclean's 2015 ; Jackson 2015 ; Ireland 2015). Et, première depuis 1984 lors d'une campagne électorale, il a été question des femmes lors d'un débat des chefs réservé exclusivement à cette question (Le Regroupement pour les droits des femmes 2015). Pour une fois, les femmes ont entendu les politiciens aborder un éventail de sujets qui leur tenaient à cœur : violences faites aux femmes, libertés d'expression et de religion, immigration.

Trudeau a gagné les élections de 2015, puis a été réélu en 2019 et 2021. Il se portera sûrement candidat aux élections prévues d'ici 2025 (Boulet-Gercourt, 2023). Cependant, depuis ses débuts en tant que fervent féministe, il a atténué quelque peu son discours, et les attaques—de la part des conservateurs et des progressistes—contre sa position féministe ont considérablement augmenté. Considérant le mécontentement généralisé envers le féminisme de Trudeau aujourd'hui (Lilley 2019; Bezanson 2018 ; Rottenberg 2018 ; MacDonald et Dobrowolsky 2020; Macdonald et Ibrahim 2019; Dobrowolsky, 2020; Ashe 2020; Broadhead et Howard 2019; Laird 2018 ; Canadian Foreign Policy Journal 2019; Dangoisse et Perdomo 2020; Robinson 2019 ; Smith-Carrier et On 2023; Tiessen et Swan 2018 ; Vucetic 2017), comment a-t-il pu *passer* en tant que féministe aux élections de 2015 ? Selon des études antérieures, le féminisme de Trudeau répondait possiblement aux attentes d'un féminisme néolibéral (Dangoisse et Perdomo 2020; MacDonald et Dobrowolsky 2020), Dangoisse à paraître). D'autres ont expliqué la situation par l'image politique charismatique de Trudeau (Hourmant, Lalancette, et Leroux 2022; Durocher et Lalancette 2022; Cormack et Lalancette 2015) ou encore d'autres par le système électoral canadien du scrutin majoritaire uninominal à un tour, qui favorise le vote stratégique (Daoust 2018; Eady et van der Linden 2015; Stephenson, Aldrich, et Blais 2018).

Toutes ces hypothèses sont utiles pour expliquer la montée fulgurante de Justin Trudeau en tant que leader politique, mais toutes se basent sur les médias dominants ou de masse. Elles se

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concentrent principalement, par ailleurs, sur l'analyse des politiques de Trudeau. Peu de chercheuses se penchent sur le discours des féministes elles-mêmes, qui se font entendre dans les médias alternatifs (Kailli, 2022). Préconisaient-elles aussi un féminisme néolibéral ? Ont-elles été charmées par Trudeau ? Ont-elles été contraintes de choisir le moindre mal en optant pour le Parti libéral ? Sonnaient-elles déjà l'alarme ? L'analyse critique d'un assemblage des discours des médias alternatifs féministes en ligne de 2015 démontre que le mouvement féministe en ligne était diversifié, intellectuel et actif. Les blogueuses étaient déterminées à combattre Harper, en attaquant et en questionnant ses positions et sa personne. Les données montrent aussi que ces féministes ne penchaient pas davantage pour les néodémocrates ou les libéraux, mais que craignant le retour au pouvoir de Harper, elles ont plébiscité Trudeau. L'analyse révèle que Trudeau n'est pas passé comme un féministe auprès de ces militantes, mais plutôt que le système électoral actuel défavorise la capacité des communautés marginalisées à se faire entendre et nuit à leur juste représentation.

Revue de littérature

Les études féministes et queers ont permis de comprendre que le genre se construit, et que dans le cadre de ce processus, il s'opère des rapports de pouvoirs qui sont structurés hiérarchiquement avec, pour soubassement, la domination masculine cisgenre. La pensée féministe noire, dérivée, par exemple, des travaux sur l'intersectionnalité de Crenshaw (1989) ou de la matrice de domination de Hill Collins, (2021), a fait ressortir que cette structure de pouvoir dépasse celle du genre, imbriquant les unes avec les autres les barrières qu'induisent le racisme, le colonialisme, le capacitisme ou encore l'âgisme. C'est par les savoirs situés, tels que définis par Naples ou Hartsock (2013 ; 1998) que les expériences vécues par les personnes marginalisées deviennent une source de savoir, et donc de pouvoir. C'est par l'entremise de ces savoirs situés que les relations de pouvoirs sont révélées au grand jour — et c'est en communiquant, ces

expériences entre militantes et alliées et en théorisant à ce sujet que le mouvement vient à trouver sa force collective.

Les discours, qu'ils soient médiatiques, politiques, personnels ou autres, ont un pouvoir indéniable sur la construction et la négociation de sens, la formation d'opinion, la création de points communs ou de désaccord (Wodak et Meyer 2001; Gee 2004; Couldry et Hepp 2013; Mendes 2011; Weldon 2019; Bourdieu 1989). En outre, il n'y a pas un média, mais un *système* médiatique complexe, et il n'y a pas un discours féministe, mais plusieurs. Il n'en est pas moins que la médiatisation des enjeux sociaux, politiques et économiques est encore sous le joug de la suprématie blanche, capitaliste et patriarcal (Macharia 2015 ; Breda 2022 ; Mendes 2011 ; Damian-Gaillard, Montañola et Saitta 2021 ; Kaili 2022 ; Boutet 2016), la cause des femmes n'y est pas présentée à sa juste valeur. La valeur des discours non dominants, issus de contre-public, ne peut être sous-estimée dans le développement d'un mouvement social comme celui du féminisme (Fraser 1990 ; Warner 2002). Ces discours contribuent de manière importante à la production et à la diffusion d'informations politiques variées, et ainsi à la négociation de sens.

L'apport des nouvelles technologies de l'information a eu un impact positif sur la création d'un contre-public visible et revendicateur ; il suffit de penser à l'utilisation de médias alternatifs (aussi appelé de marge, marginaux alternatifs, ou encore périphériques⁴), tels que les blogues (Giasson, Darisse, et Raynauld 2013). Aujourd'hui, les blogueuses occupent un espace médiatique parfois aussi puissant que celui des médias traditionnels (Chadwick 2017 ;

⁴ Nous avons opté pour l'interpellation « alternatif », car les voix marginalisées ne le sont pas du fait de leurs propres actions et volontés, mais le sont plutôt par la puissance des médias dits « traditionnels » qui dominent le marché de l'information. De plus, la notion que ces médias alternatifs sont en périphérie des médias dominants dévalue leur capacité de prendre place dans l'espace public, de modifier des débats politiques, et de porter certains sujets à l'agenda des grands médias dominants. Finalement, ce terme aide à mettre en évidence les systèmes de pouvoir existants dans la sphère médiatique.

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Breda 2022 ; Coulson 2012 ; Tufekci 2017 ; Weil 2017; Kaili 2022). Par exemple, la révolte collective suscitée par les campagnes #Moiaussi a mis au grand jour la culture du viol dans le domaine du show-business, jetant les phares sur l'existence d'un militantisme féministe organisé, fort, et international qui a su orienter l'agenda et le cadrage journalistique de plus d'un média dominant. Il est aujourd'hui apparent que les blogueuses féministes soient devenues des voix centrales du féminisme contemporain, comptant un lectorat fidèle et nombreux. Par conséquent les médias alternatifs deviennent une source cruciale d'information pour comprendre comment et où les stratégies discursives féministes opposent les systèmes de pouvoir des médias et de l'arène politique. Finalement, l'étude de la blogosphère s'inscrit bien dans le féminisme intersectionnel et des savoirs situés, car les blogues offrent un moyen de partager des expériences personnelles issues d'une communauté diversifiée (Coulson 2012 ; Breda 2022).

Une caractéristique du mouvement féministe contemporain est de s'allier avec des hommes, lesquels, historiquement, étaient tenus à l'écart de celui-ci. Les femmes ont longtemps revendiqué qu'il n'y avait pas de meilleures porte-paroles qu'elles pour défendre leurs droits. Récemment, par contre, le discours a quelque peu évolué, grâce entre autres à l'apport des théories queers au féminisme (Pagé 2017). Selon ces théories, l'humain ne naît ni homme ni femme : l'identité est construite en fonction des rôles attendus par la société patriarcale, capitaliste et suprémaciste blanche. Toute identité relève alors d'une performance (Butler 1999 ; Gee 2004) menant à l'atteinte des idéaux socioculturels et économiques d'une personne. Aujourd'hui, le féminisme reconnaît que les ennemis des femmes ne sont pas les hommes, mais bien le patriarcat, lequel peut être incarné autant par un homme, qu'une femme ou une personne non-binaire. Malgré ce rapprochement entre alliés et féministes, il n'en reste pas moins que les déclarations féministes de Trudeau ont suscité une attention médiatique généralisée, tant sur les réseaux alternatifs que dominants. Ce positionnement identitaire a été soutenu par des techniques

de *passage* pour que Trudeau, en tant qu'homme, ultra privilégié, soit accepté comme allié féministe.

Le passage a été largement étudié pour chercher à comprendre comment les individus gèrent à la fois leurs identités et les attentes sociétales pour s'intégrer dans des groupes non stigmatisés (Goffman, 1974), le cas le plus typique étant celui de la personne noire se faisant passer pour une personne blanche. Dans ce cas, la personne performe une identité, en utilisant diverses tactiques et stratégies, discursives et autres, pour être acceptée par un groupe donné. L'étude du passage porte essentiellement sur les relations de pouvoir et sur la manière dont l'identité doit être revue, modifiée ou transformée pour qu'une personne en arrive à une vie plus souhaitable, réservée à certains. Les dirigeants politiques emploient similairement diverses tactiques de gestion de l'identité, en lien avec des concepts tels que le passage, pour se faire accepter par différents groupes identitaires (Lalancette et Raynauld, 2017 ; Sclafani, 2017 ; Sorrentino et Augoustinos, 2016 ; Squires et Brouwer, 2002). L'optique de passage offre ainsi un angle novateur lorsqu'il s'agit d'examiner les identités politiques et leur interaction avec les systèmes médiatiques. De plus, le passage s'intègre parfaitement à l'approche féministe et à l'analyse critique du discours, car l'identité est vue comme une performance. Précisément, elle met au jour les relations de pouvoir entre les différentes intersections identitaires présentes dans le discours.

Plutôt que d'étudier la performance identitaire de Trudeau, le présent article explore l'acceptation ou le rejet de Trudeau par les militantes féministes. La relation entre Trudeau, en tant que « passeur », et le public joue un rôle crucial, car le passage dépend de la manière dont il est perçu et reçu. Dans les cas où le passage est refusé, le passeur peut se retrouver dans une situation de défi ou de confrontation, résultant entre autres dans une renégociation de l'identité (Goffman 1974; Squires et Brouwer 2002). On comprend d'ailleurs ici le potentiel de

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convergence avec les concepts de négociation de sens dans le système médiatique, politique et le (contre) public, de même qu'entre eux.

Jusqu'à présent, bien que le féminisme contemporain accepte de plus en plus les hommes alliés, la littérature sur les hommes pro-féministes, y compris Trudeau, est critiquée (Anderson, 2009 ; Dreisinger, 2008 ; Lawrence, 2010). Pour leur part, les militantes se plaignent que les hommes alliés manquent de substance et qu'ils utilisent le féminisme pour accéder aux femmes, ou accusent les dirigeants politiques d'exploiter le mouvement pour obtenir des votes (Breda 2022 ; Dikwal-Bot et Mendes 2022). Holmgren et Hearn (2009) ont étudié les interactions sociales qui permettent aux hommes de se faire passer pour des féministes. Ils ont constaté que les hommes peuvent réussir leur passage en acceptant un plus grand scepticisme de la part des femmes, en adoptant une position plus radicale qu'elles ou en subissant un refus fondé sur le sexe ou genre (par exemple, le refus de participer à une activité à cause de leur genre).

Des recherches (Dangoisse et Perdomo 2020) sur la popularité de Trudeau ont démontré que son approche féministe ne s'aligne pas avec les constats de Holmgren et Hearn (2009). En effet, le féminisme soutenu par Trudeau est celui favorisé par les femmes les plus susceptibles d'être touchées par son message et de voter en conséquence : blanches, cisgenres, chrétiennes, aptes, de classe moyenne (Canada 2018). C'est aussi ce qu'ont constaté Dikwal-Bot et Mendes (2022), qui voient dans les leaders masculins féministes, des défenseurs du féminisme néolibéral. Le féminisme néolibéral, lié aux élites blanches, cisgenres et éduquées du monde politique, culturel et économique a gagné du terrain grâce à des personnalités influentes, telles que Sheryl Sandberg et Ivanka Trump (Rottenberg 2014 ; Banet-Weiser, Gill, et Rottenberg 2020). Ce type de féminisme met l'accent sur l'autodiscipline des femmes afin de surmonter les obstacles, occultant ainsi les formes d'oppression structurelle et éliminant la responsabilité des instances décisionnelles de s'attaquer aux problèmes systémiques. Cette autodiscipline requiert

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d'une personne de se faire plus persistante, combative, assurée, individualiste — toutes des qualités qui sont typiquement demandées des leaders masculins (Mavin et Yusupova 2023). Ce féminisme préconise le succès financier individuel et la quête du pouvoir personnel, au détriment de la critique des structures de pouvoirs et de la transformation collective de la société. En outre, il contribue à l'oppression de populations entières puisqu'il favorise la montée des femmes à des postes de pouvoir capitalistes et patriarcaux, et ce sans les remettre en question (par exemple, la femme qui, s'appuyant sur des qualités dites masculines, devient PDG d'une entreprise canadienne qui opère des *sweat shops* en Inde n'aide en rien la cause et le combat des femmes). En bref, le féminisme néolibéral veut faire des femmes de bons leaders capitalistes, comme les hommes ; donc Trudeau aurait réussi son passage, non pas en devenant féministe lui-même, mais en demandant aux femmes de rejoindre *son* camp sous le couvert de l'alliée.

D'autres études se sont plutôt penchées sur la célébrité de Trudeau pour expliquer sa montée fulgurante au poste de premier ministre. Caractéristique intéressante de la montée des célébrités typique du 21^e siècle : elle n'est pas nécessairement rattachée aux exploits ou connaissances d'une personne, mais plutôt à sa *popularité* (Hourmant, Lalancette, et Leroux 2022). Une personne qui mise sur sa personnalité, son envie de rapprochement étroit avec la population, peut, par la mobilisation stratégique des médias, se façonner une certaine célébrité (Hourmant, Lalancette, et Leroux 2022). Trudeau aurait donc gagné les élections, non pas en raison de ses aptitudes politiques, mais grâce à sa capacité à charmer un public. Suivi à temps plein par un photographe (Durocher 2015), Trudeau a profité de tous les moyens de communication à sa disposition. Passant des entrevues dans *Vogue* et *Châtelaine* aux égoportraits quotidiens sur Instagram, Trudeau est devenu le roi du « branding » politique (Angelyn Francis 2015). D'ailleurs, les attaques principales des conservateurs de Harper ciblaient justement le « branding » de Trudeau, et non pas nécessairement ses arguments

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(Cormack et Lalancette 2015 ; Marland et Giasson 2015). Alors, si Trudeau a misé sur son « branding » plutôt que sur un contenu politique, il va sans dire qu’il en a été de même pour le passage de Trudeau, comme féministe, qui a misé sur des stratégies discursives bien réfléchies par une équipe de communication, et non du contenu substantif.

Le scrutin uninominal majoritaire à un tour encourage à la polarisation des différents camps et au vote stratégique, exemplifié par le schisme entre Trudeau et Harper. Le vote stratégique est défini comme un vote en faveur d’un candidat afin d’éviter qu’un autre candidat, moins désiré, ne l’emporte, notamment lorsque ce premier semble avoir moins de chance de gagner (Stephenson, Aldrich, et Blais 2018; Daoust 2018). Le vote stratégique était au cœur de la campagne électorale de 2015 (Marland et Giasson 2015). Des campagnes anti-Harper ont été diffusées par plus d’une organisation, et des sites comme « Vote Together » recommandaient des candidats pour défaire Harper. Lors des élections de 2015, 22,6 % des électeurs et électrices n’ont pas voté pour leur parti de préférence, et la plupart des désertions stratégiques ont été du camp des verts et des néodémocrates, vers les libéraux (Daoust 2018).

Méthodes

Une approche féministe qui reconnaît que le patriarcat, capitalisme et colonialisme, entre autres, s’exerce à travers diverses forces, y compris les discours, a guidé cet article. Cette analyse critique du discours s’inspire des travaux de Gee (2004), de Wodak (2001) et de Boutet (2016), qui soutiennent que l’étude du discours permet de mettre en évidence les différents systèmes de pouvoir et les formes d’oppression qu’ils engendrent. En se concentrant sur la contextualisation critique du discours et du passage, l’analyse permet de révéler ces mécanismes invisibles. Il faut noter par ailleurs que la création d’un corpus est marquée par des degrés d’incertitude, d’invisibilité, d’angles morts, créés par les structures de pouvoir intrinsèque à l’accessibilité à

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l'Internet, les algorithmes, et les biais des chercheuses⁵. Entreprendre une recherche archivistique est un processus médiatisant en soi. (Dever 2017 ; Rentschler et Thrift 2015 ; Wodak 1997 ; Gouda et coll. 2009).

Considérant que les droits des femmes ont été placés à l'avant-plan de la campagne électorale de 2015, avec Trudeau comme pôle central, les méthodes ont été développées pour répondre aux questions de recherche suivantes :

QR1 : Comment les médias alternatifs féministes et de gauche en ligne ont-ils traité du discours féministe de la campagne électorale fédérale de 2015 ?

QR2 : Comment le discours des médias alternatifs féministes et de gauche en ligne a-t-il soutenu ou entravé le passage de Trudeau en tant que féministe durant la campagne électorale fédérale de 2015 ?

La collecte d'articles durant l'été 2023 a été réalisée selon une approche inductive et exploratoire. Tout d'abord, la cartographie de la blogosphère politico-féministe du Canada de 2015 a été établie. Pour ce faire, les méthodes de Pagé (2017) et de Giasson et coll. (2013) ont été adaptés aux besoins de la présente recherche. Il a premièrement été décidé qu'un blogue consistait en un site dynamique, dont le contenu est mis à jour régulièrement, que ce contenu peut être partagé, et être commenté. Les termes sites et blogues sont utilisés de façon interchangeable dans le présent article. Une liste des blogues féministes les plus connus en anglais et en français a été dressée⁶, et des courriels ont été envoyés à des organismes et à des personnes œuvrant dans le domaine des droits des genres pour recenser les sites les plus

⁵ J'écris moi-même à partir d'une position privilégiée, en tant que femme queer, apte, blanche, éduquée et colonisatrice.

⁶ Pour cartographier la blogosphère féministe du Canada, l'autrice a tiré parti de son expérience, étant militante active dans le milieu féministe depuis 2018 dans la région d'Ottawa et Gatineau (capitale nationale du Canada, et ville bilingue).

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fréquentés par cette communauté. Il est devenu apparent que cette communauté se mobilise autant sur des sites féministes que sur des sites politiques de gauche, et les deux types ont donc été intégrés ici. Ensuite, toutes les redirections par hyperliens vers d'autres sites pertinents ont été répertoriées. Un site s'est avéré particulièrement utile : il liait vers un rapport recensant tous les blogues féministes anglophones actifs en 2012 (Coulson 2012). Près de 250 sites et blogues ont été répertoriés.

Pour chaque site, une recherche d'articles a été entreprise en utilisant les termes suivants, ainsi que leurs déclinaisons : Harper, Trudeau, élection, Niqab⁷. Pour les sites de gauche, les mots « femmes » et « féminisme » ont été ajoutés. Pour les sites dont les archives n'allaient pas aussi loin que 2015, le *Wayback Machine* (le site d'archivage web le plus vaste au monde [Hartelius 2020]) ou la fonction avancée de recherche Google ont été utilisés. Afin de ratisser large et de tenir compte du fait que les blogues ont des standards de publications plus ou moins en ligne avec l'échéancier de la période électorale (du 4 août, soit le déclenchement des élections, jusqu'au 19 octobre), tous les textes publiés entre juin 2015 et janvier 2016 ont été retenus aux fins de la présente analyse (seuls les textes publiés après coup qui relataient des activités ou prises de position *durant* la campagne ont été conservés). Les publications partagées entre les sites ou dans les deux langues n'ont été conservées qu'une seule fois. En tout 278 articles ont été assemblés (n=177 en anglais, et n=101 en français).

Malgré les efforts déployés pour assurer une diversité de perspectives, il demeure que le corpus représente un environnement privilégié : éduqué, cisgenre, blanc, chrétien, et apte. Cela n'est pas surprenant, les questions d'accessibilité, d'algorithmes et de partialité limitent encore

⁷ Le terme Niqab a été utilisé, car il est devenu emblématique de débats féministes (et autres) durant les élections de 2015 (Bridgman et coll. 2021 ; Messamore 2016 ; Feder 2018 ; Marland et Giasson 2015).

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l'accès à cette technologie aux communautés marginalisées (Hartelius 2020; Sinclair et Rockwell 2015; Fenton 2018). De plus, des questions de sécurité ont limité mon accès à certains blogues, les bloggeuses utilisant souvent des codes d'accès à leurs sites pour limiter les messages haineux ou diffamatoires de se retrouver sur leur blog. Ceci est particulièrement vrai pour les autrices de la communauté marginalisée par le racisme, le capacitisme, ou l'âgisme. En outre, il importe de noter que le présent corpus ne constitue pas une *archive* complète de l'environnement médiatique alternatif de 2015, mais plutôt un *assemblage* des pièces disponibles pour reconstituer une partie d'un tout (Elford 2018). Il n'en demeure pas moins que cet *assemblage* propose une alternative aux discours dominants de la campagne électorale 2015 et pourrait contenir des réponses aux questions de recherche présentées ici.

La totalité du corpus a été étudiée au moyen de Voyant (voyant-tools.org) pour relever les thèmes les plus fréquemment abordés par la blogosphère féministe canadienne et pour corroborer certains résultats repérés dans NVivo. Voyant est un outil approprié, car il est facile d'utilisation, très documenté (Miller 2018) permet rapidement d'analyser une très grande base de données, en français comme en anglais, et rend disponibles plusieurs types d'analyses et de visualisations (Sinclair et Rockwell 2015). Cette étape, divisée entre les textes en français et en anglais, a aussi permis de sélectionner un sous-corpus de 55 articles selon les plans de la diversité des thèmes, de la complexité ou de la singularité des arguments (35 en anglais, et 20 en français). Ce sous-corpus a servi à réaliser une analyse plus approfondie à l'aide de NVivo R1. À ce stade, les textes anglais et français ont été combinés. Le but n'était pas d'analyser les similitudes ou différences culturelles des deux communautés linguistiques, mais bel et bien de se concentrer sur l'expérience féministe au Canada, ainsi que de révéler l'unité du mouvement social féministe. La grille d'analyse utilisée à cette étape a été inspirée par les recherches de Dangoisse (à paraître), les théories de passage de Goffman (1974), les résultats des études sur la

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couverture médiatique du féminisme de Mendes (2011), la théorie d’alliée féministe de Holmgren et Hearn (2009), ainsi que par l’étude des blogues féministes de Breda (2022). Conformément à l’approche exploratoire et cyclique de Saldaña (2013) et Sinclair et Rockwell (2015), les 55 textes ont été lus, analysés et codés à maintes reprises afin de faire ressortir les similarités, régularités, fréquences, variations, tendances, structures des pratiques discursives des blogueuses. Dans le logiciel NVivo, aucune liste de mots vides (i.e., les, ces, que, elles, etc.) n’a été utilisée car portait sur des phrases complète et effectuée de façon manuelle. Dans le cas de Voyant, dans certain cas particulier une liste de mots vides a été utilisée pour étudier des corrélations de concepts et d’idées représentées par des termes précis, c’est le cas pour la figure 1 et 4. La liste de mots vides utilisée est celle fournie par les ingénieurs linguistes de Voyant, et modifié selon les besoins de l’étude. Tous les mots ont été conservé dans les cas, comme celui de l’analyse qui a donnée la figure 5, pour comprendre les liens entre certains termes ou concepts. L’analyse qui suit combine les résultats des analyses réalisées sur les deux plateformes, les deux ayant été étudiés en parallèle. Un thème ou un constat observé sur une plateforme pouvait alors être bonifié ou corroboré avec l’autre plateforme, donnant ainsi lieu à une analyse critique du discours plus solide et multidimensionnelle.

Discussion

Note sur la Cartographie de la Blogosphère Féministe de 2015

Pour comprendre le contexte textuel dans lequel l’analyse a été réalisée, il est nécessaire de faire un survol de la cartographie définie par nos méthodes. Deux cent trente-deux blogues faisant la promotion d’un message féministe ou pro-féministe ont été répertoriés au Canada, soit 146 (63 %) en anglais, 77 (33 %) en français, et 9 (4 %) bilingues. Ces blogues étaient parfois gérés par des organismes, des collectifs de femmes, ou des particuliers. Les sites gérés par plus d’une personne étaient plus susceptibles d’être archivés et de contenir plus d’une publication sur

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le thème des élections de 2015 — constat corroboré par l'analyse de Coulson (2012). Certains blogues de particuliers étaient de nature privée, c'est-à-dire qu'on ne pouvait y accéder sans invitation personnelle ou mot de passe. Cette pratique est typique des sites qui traitent de sujets sensibles, les autrices voulant se protéger des *trolls* et créer un espace sécuritaire et sans jugement. De plus, sur les sites développés par des collectifs, les autrices tendent à signer leur nom usuel plutôt que d'utiliser un pseudonyme, une pratique visant aussi à assurer la sécurité des blogueuses (Coulson 2012 ; Breda 2022).

De ces sites, 39 affichaient des articles archivés portant sur les élections de 2015. Il y avait peu de différences dans les publications entre les sites anglophones et francophones. Toutefois, les sites anglophones semblaient plus facilement accessibles et avaient plus de contenu archivé. En outre, les publications étaient plus fréquentes sur les blogues entretenus par des féministes individuelles anglophones que les francophones. Toutes les caractéristiques décrites ici pourraient être représentatives de la blogosphère de 2015, mais pourraient aussi être biaisées par la nature du travail avec des archives, qui n'offre accès qu'à une partie d'un tout (Elford 2018). Il n'en reste pas moins que les résultats ci-dessous demeurent pertinents et utiles pour comprendre les discussions sur le féminisme et l'élection de Trudeau en tant que progressiste et féministe.

Le Discours Féministe de la Campagne Électorale Fédérale de 2015

Le discours féministe des blogueuses était très varié, complet, et complexe. Vingt-neuf thèmes et plusieurs sous-thèmes ont été recensés dans le sous-corpus. La grande majorité des articles traitaient de plus d'un thème à la fois, et la grande majorité en traitait de façon complète. Le tableau ci-dessous fait état des thèmes abordés:

Tableau 1*Thèmes Féministes*

	<i>Thèmes féministes</i>	<i># d'articles⁸</i>	<i>Pourcentage</i>
1	Femmes et filles autochtones disparues et assassinées (FFADA) — Réconciliation	28	51 %
2	Violence contre les femmes	22	40 %
3	Santé	16	29 %
3.1	Avortement et contraception	10	
4	Niqab	16	29 %
4.1	Droits à l'autonomie et à l'intégrité corporelle	4	
4.2	Islamophobie	9	
4.3	Pratique culturelle barbare	2	
5	Place des femmes et féminisme en politique	16	29 %
6	Pauvreté, situations précaires	12	22 %
7	Frais de garde des enfants abordables	11	20 %
8	Égalité professionnelle, écart salarial	10	18 %
9	Travail du sexe	9	16 %
10	Femme et leadership	7	13 %
10.1	Parité des genres au cabinet	4	
11	Immigration	6	11 %
12	Environnement	6	11 %
13	Éducation	5	9 %
14	Politique étrangère	5	9 %
15	Logement	5	9 %
16	Droits des trans	5	9 %

⁸ Les chiffres pour le sous-corpus correspondent au nombre d'articles dans lequel le terme apparaît ; les chiffres pour le corpus principal présentent le nombre de fois que le terme apparaît dans l'ensemble du corpus.

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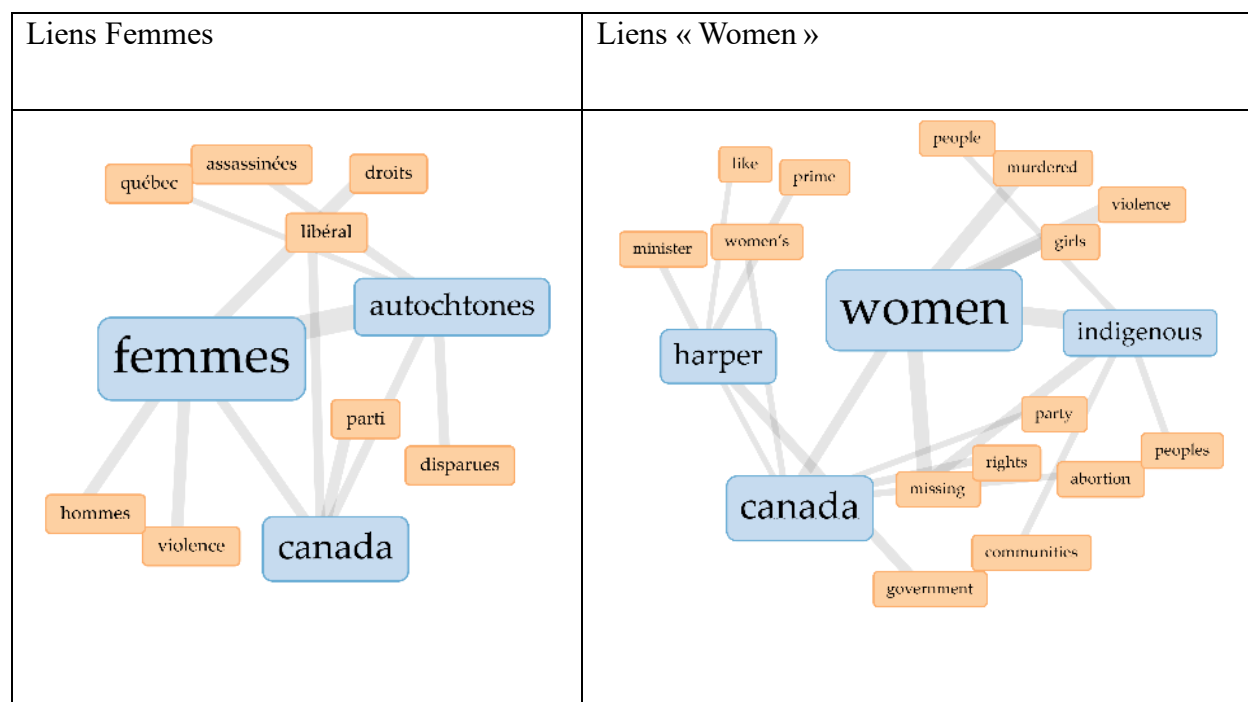
17	Objectification et sexualisation	4	7 %
18	Condition féminine — compressions	4	7 %
19	LGBTQ2AI+	3	5 %
20	Place des femmes dans les lieux publics	2	4 %
21	Défaillances du système judiciaire	1	2 %
22	Élections justes	1	2 %

Le thème des femmes et filles autochtones était particulièrement présent dans les textes du sous-corpus. Ce résultat est corroboré dans le corpus principal. Les cooccurrences des termes « femme » et « women » sont en premier lieu l'adjectif « autochtone » en français (n=283) et en anglais (n=246), suivi de près par les mots « droits », « rights » (n=50 ; n=288) et « violence » (FR : n=45; AN: n=189). À noter qu'ici le « femmes » inclus femme et « women » inclus sa forme au pluriel afin d'étudier le concept « femme » et non pas d'étudier linguistiquement le terme « femme » ou « femmes ». Il est aussi important de noter qu'un choix a été fait dans le nombre de liens étudiés : les concepts, idées ou termes qui n'apparaissent pas au moins 2 fois dans le corpus ont été éliminés pour cette analyse particulière, et une épuration des termes a été effectuée pour répondre aux questions de recherche et permettre une visualisation adéquate des résultats. Parmi les différents types d'oppressions contre les femmes, le racisme (n=15) et le colonialisme (n=4) sont les deux systèmes de pouvoir les plus souvent pointés du doigt par les blogueuses du sous-corpus, et ce avant le capitalisme (n=3). Par ailleurs, le terme « violence » est surtout utilisé en lien avec les violences faites aux femmes et aux filles autochtones, et en deuxième lieu avec la violence conjugale (n=20). En 2013, une multitude d'associations autochtones ont fait pression sur le gouvernement Harper en vue de la tenue d'une enquête sur les femmes autochtones disparues et assassinées ; ce dernier avait refusé, affirmant qu'il y avait eu suffisamment d'études sur la question (APTN National News 2014). Les demandes

concernant une enquête nationale ont été renouvelées en 2015 lors de la campagne électorale. Tous les partis sauf celui de Harper avaient accepté de tenir une enquête (qui a été lancée dès 2015 et s’est terminée en 2019 sous le gouvernement Trudeau). Considérant que la grande majorité des blogues répertoriés dans le cadre de la présente étude étaient gérés par des personnes non issues de communautés des Premières Nations, Inuit ou Métis, ce résultat est crucial. En effet, ce résultat pointe vers une unité dans le mouvement féministe et une reconnaissance des cumulations des différentes formes de discriminations systémiques envers certaines communautés.

Figure 1

Cooccurrences Femmes — Women



Le troisième thème le plus souvent abordé par les blogueuses est celui de la santé, plus particulièrement la santé reproductive. C’est sans doute parce que Trudeau avait déclaré qu’aucun des candidats pour le parti libéral ne pouvait s’opposer aux politiques visant la santé

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sexuelle et reproductive des femmes, contrairement à Harper, qui avaient non seulement des candidats très militants contre le droit à l'avortement et l'autonomie corporelle d'une femme, mais avait coupé la grande majorité du financement national et international pour les organismes soutenant le droit à l'avortement (MacDonald et Dobrowolsky 2020).

Dans la majorité des articles, plus d'un thème était non seulement défendus, mais des statistiques, des faits, des exemples et des arguments bien développés étaient présents. Le thème du niqab témoigne à lui seul de la complexité et de la rigueur des arguments présentés. Ce thème, qui a tant divisé la population, a été ici lié à trois sous-thèmes féministes : le droit à l'autonomie corporelle (c.-à-d. le droit de choisir comment se vêtir), l'islamophobie, et les « pratiques culturelles barbares » (si réélu, le parti conservateur s'était engagé à mettre en place une ligne téléphonique d'urgence pour signaler ce qu'il appelait alors des « pratiques culturelles barbares » [Barber 2015]). Le droit à l'autonomie corporelle était tout aussi pertinent dans l'analyse féministe du sujet diviseur du port du niqab aux cérémonies de citoyenneté. De plus, la principale pratique discursive des blogueuses était justement d'éduquer et d'informer les gens dans le cadre de leurs articles. Les positions défendues étaient soutenues par d'autres articles de blogues, des rapports scientifiques, des documents gouvernementaux, des articles de nouvelles, des citations provenant de politiciens et de plateformes politiques, des faits, des statistiques—soit tout un éventail de méthodes pour informer les lectrices sur les débats politiques féministes. En tout, 37 des 55 articles étudiés (67 %) offraient des informations factuelles, dignes de grands reportages de médias traditionnels : les féministes d'Internet étaient donc bien informées, et ne traitaient pas les sujets à la légère. Aucune d'entre elles n'a déclaré vouloir voter pour l'un ou l'autre des candidats uniquement en fonction de son image, et même les commentaires portant sur le charisme de Trudeau ont donné lieu à un débat sur l'objectification des corps, le discours médiatique des corps et les relations de pouvoir. Il faut se rappeler que Harper avait joué sur le

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charisme de Trudeau, arguant qu’il n’offrirait rien de plus que de « beaux cheveux », un topo repris dans les médias dominants à maintes reprises (Marland et Giasson 2015). On ne peut ici sous-estimer la portée de cette observation : le contre-public féministe s’est formé et a été formé par l’entremise de tous ces débats politiques (Rentschler et Thrift 2015 ; Dever 2017). Le partage d’information, la recherche à l’appui des arguments, la formation d’un discours collectif a été une force qui a permis aux féministes de s’informer, de se retrouver et de s’unir contre un système oppressant.

Les blogueuses féministes avaient un ton bien différent de celui des médias dominants : colère, déception, indignation, mépris, sarcasme et humour étaient présents dans les articles. Les blogueuses anglophones ont aussi eu recours à des surnoms pour désigner Harper, mais n’en ont donné aucun à Trudeau, Mulcair ou May. Aucun surnom n’est apparu dans les textes publiés en français. De plus, différence mineure entre les blogues de gauche et les blogues féministes : les féministes laissaient plus facilement libre cours à leurs émotions. De la colère, de la déception et de la frustration étaient exprimées dans 27 % des articles du sous-corpus. Les émotions n’ont pu être dégagées dans le corpus principal, car elles étaient représentées par des procédés discursifs que les langages informatiques ont encore de la difficulté à capturer : le ton des articles, le choix de police (caractères gras, majuscules, etc.) ou la ponctuation (par exemple, points d’exclamation pour la colère ou doubles guillemets pour le sarcasme) :

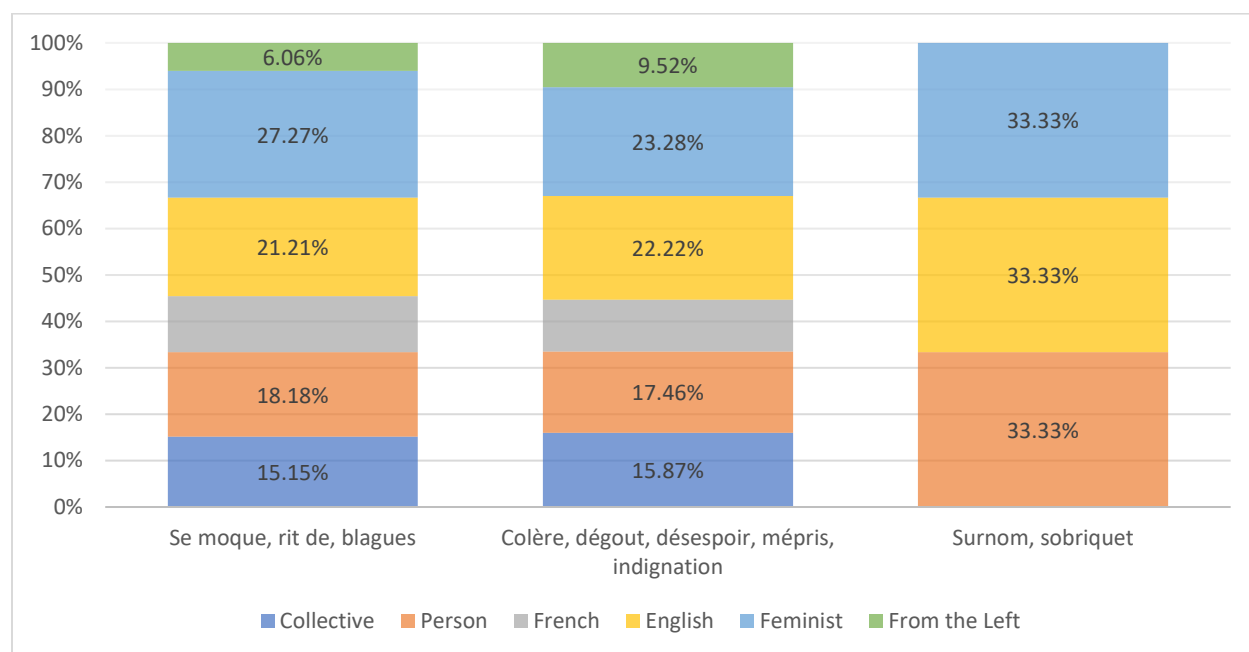
*The idea of using “feminism” to justify a ban on the volitional religious choices of certain women is a bit like invoking pacifism as a call to war. But then reason has never been the bigot’s strong suit.*⁹ (Kirbycairo 2015)

⁹ Traduction libre de l’auteurice : L’idée d’utiliser le « féminisme » pour justifier une interdiction des choix religieux de certaines femmes est un peu comme invoquer le pacifisme pour appeler à la guerre. Mais la raison n’a jamais été le point fort des bigots.

Et que dire de la situation des femmes autochtones ! Plus de mille femmes tuées ou disparues, mais monsieur Harper refuse de tenir une commission d'enquête sous prétexte que la plupart de ses crimes ont été résolus ! Mais le racisme l'a-t-il été lui ? (Matté Gagné 2015)

Figure 2

Pratiques Discursives par Type, Collectifs, Positionnement et Langue



La variété dans les thèmes et la complexité des arguments, ainsi que l'expression d'émotions personnelles mettent en évidence que le discours féministe en ligne s'accorde avec un discours féministe situé et intersectionnel. D'ailleurs, fait intéressant, les pronoms « je », « I », et « nous », « we » sont utilisés de façon presque égale entre les textes. Le « je » des expériences personnelles vécues, qui sont source de savoirs permettant d'expliquer, de comprendre et de rejoindre les expériences collectives, exemplifié par le « nous ». Le terme « intersectionnel » est utilisé plus d'une fois (n=9), et différentes formes d'oppressions sont nommées, expliquées et liées aux expériences décrites. En plus des termes « racisme », « colonialisme » et « capitalisme »

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mentionnés plus haut, les termes « hétérosexisme », « misogynie », « néolibéralisme », « patriarcat », « capacitisme », « transphobie », « âgisme » apparaissent dans le corpus principal et les sous-corpus. D’après ce résultat et ceux mentionnés précédemment, les blogueuses ne sont pas en accord avec un féminisme néolibéral tel que celui soutenu par Trudeau — d’ailleurs elles apportent plusieurs arguments contre ce type de féminisme.

Si le thème des femmes et du leadership ne vient qu’en dixième position, celui de la place des femmes et du féminisme en politique prend une place d’honneur au cinquième rang. Ce thème est soulevé dès qu’un sujet est débattu, mettant ainsi en relief le peu de place octroyé aux femmes, leurs situations et leurs droits, par exemple, dans le dossier de l’environnement. À maintes reprises est-il débattu que l’environnement touche principalement les femmes et qu’une solution consiste à investir plus dans le secteur des « soins », qui est dominé par les femmes et qui pollue tellement moins. Dans l’analyse de Dangoisse (à paraître), le thème des femmes en position de pouvoir et celui de la parité des genres au sein du cabinet figuraient au premier rang des valeurs des médias dominants et du discours politique de Trudeau : l’écart entre les deux mondes — celui du dominant et celui de la dominée — est bien évident.

Le Passage de Trudeau

L’analyse précédente démontre que les blogueuses de 2015 n’adoptaient pas un discours féministe qui était modulé sur le discours pro-féministe promu par Trudeau. Les blogueuses se concentraient sur les politiques proposées pour évaluer si elles soutenaient celles-ci, et n’ont pas souligné outre mesure les proclamations féministes de l’un ou l’autre des candidats. La fameuse proclamation « je suis un féministe » de Trudeau sur plusieurs plateformes et à l’occasion de plusieurs débats n’a été reprise que trois fois par des autrices dans le sous-corpus — autant de fois que pour Mulcair. Aucun argument qui aurait pu soutenir Trudeau comme étant un homme pro-féministe ou un allié n’a été explicitement présenté, et comme en témoigne si bien cette

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citation d'une blogueuse, qui voyait bien que les femmes en droit de voter n'étaient tout au plus qu'une ressource électorale à exploiter :

« Justin Trudeau Treats Female Voters Like Contestants on The Bachelor » (Bourgeault-Tassé 2015)

Ainsi, on constate que les féministes sont effectivement sceptiques envers Trudeau (Holmgren et Hearn 2009), d'ailleurs, certaines organisations ont fait part de leur méfiance, en accueillant avec réserve ce changement, comme en témoigne ces deux titres :

We (Tentatively) Heart: Canada's Feminist Prime Minister (Hallett 2015)¹⁰

Élections fédérales : L'APNQL félicite le nouveau premier ministre élu Justin Trudeau en lui rappelant ses engagements (Assemblée des Premières Nations du Québec et du Labrador 2015)

On note donc très peu de soutien envers Trudeau (même chose pour Mulcair et les autres candidats), et très peu d'attaques. En fait, la très grande majorité des arguments électoraux sont faits *contre* Harper (n=49). Ce dernier est aussi plus fréquemment attaqué (n=33) que questionné (n=10) sur ses politiques. On aurait pu s'attendre à relever des arguments à l'appui d'un ou l'autre candidat adversaire, mais non, aucun candidat ne se démarque vraiment des autres. Les blogueuses sont peut-être un peu plus indulgentes envers Trudeau, mais ne l'élèvent pas pour autant au rang de défenseur des droits des femmes. Mulcair est soutenu aussi souvent que Trudeau (n=11), mais on s'oppose à lui quelques fois de plus, entre autres parce que Mulcair avait initialement refusé de participer au débat des chefs sur la question des femmes (Mulcair: n=15 ; Trudeau : n=10). La carte thermique ci-dessous suggère que Harper se distingue comme

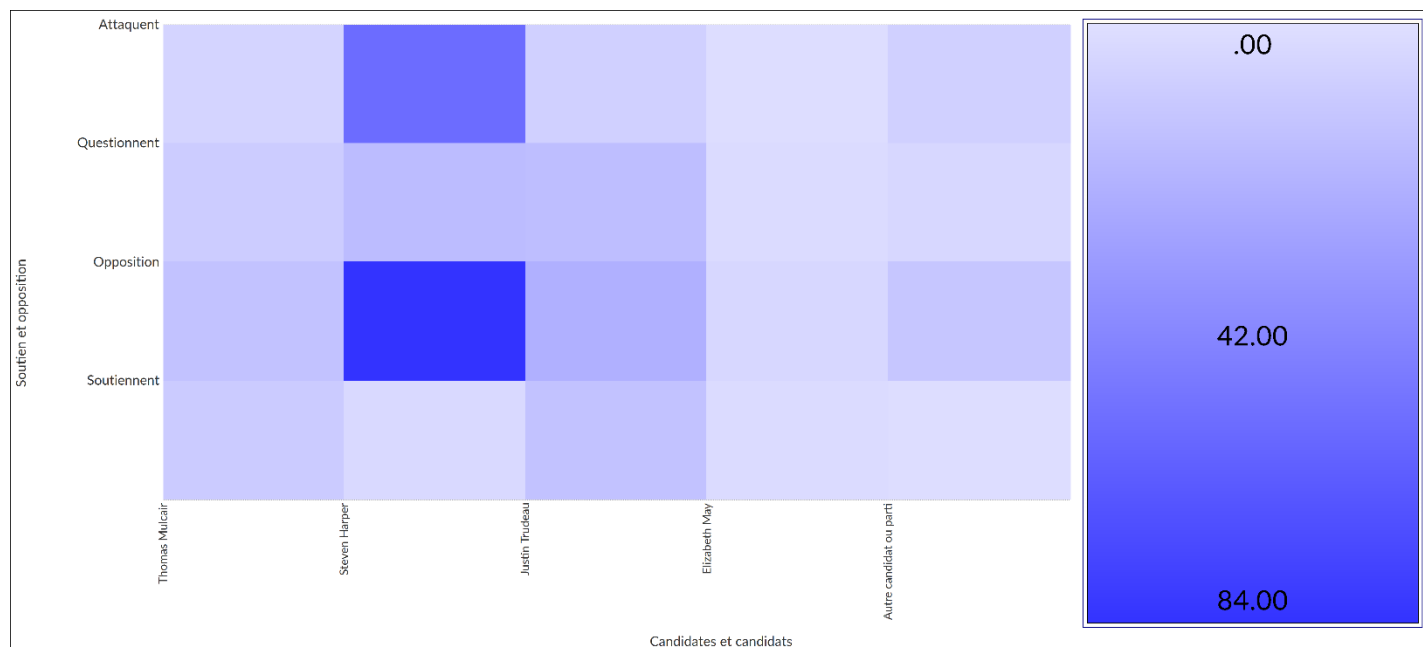
¹⁰ Traduction libre de l'autrice : Nous aimons (provisoirement) : le premier ministre féministe du Canada

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étant le principal sujet de discussion, mais elle révèle également un autre fait intéressant : aucun autre candidat ne s’est démarqué (au plus la couleur est foncée, au plus il y a eu de mentions)

Figure 3

Soutien et Opposition par Candidates



L’analyse avec Voyant révèle une situation similaire : les termes combinés, en français et en anglais, pour Harper et les conservateurs sont présents 993 fois, Mulcair et le NPD ; 660 fois, et en troisième place, Trudeau et les libéraux ; 526 fois (à noter que ces chiffres ne sont qu’une indication de l’importance relative de chacun, plutôt qu’un total précis, puisque des surnoms, comme « Stevil », sobriquets ou autres interpellations, du genre « Prime Minister To Be » ont parfois été utilisés). Autre résultat probant : le terme « féministe » et ses dérivés ne sont associés, dans aucune des deux langues, à l’un ou l’autre des candidats aux élections fédérales de 2015. Dans aucun des cas les chefs de partis ne sont associées à l’adjectif « féministes », que ce soit en faisant une recherche dans Voyant de corrélation des termes, de collocations ou de contexte. , ce qui soutient l’idée que les blogueuses féministes n’associaient pas le terme « féministe » avec un.e candidat.e.

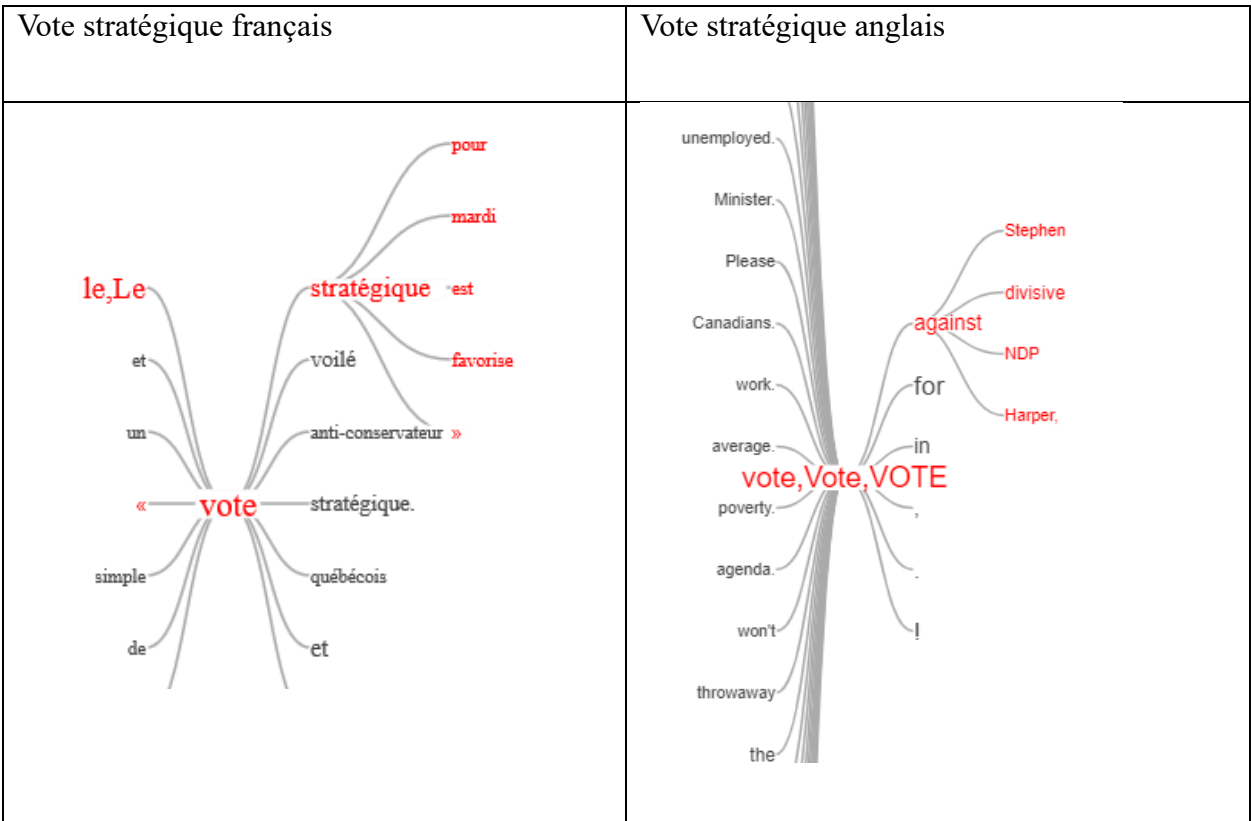
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Les données ici ne sont pas concluantes : Trudeau reçoit un peu plus de soutien que Mulcair, mais aucun des deux ne semble particulièrement plus féministe que l'autre. Une analyse plus poussée des thèmes démontre que Trudeau a pris position sur un plus grand nombre de thèmes féministes que son adversaire néodémocrate (13 thèmes pour Trudeau contre 9 pour Mulcair), mais que ses commentaires semblaient aussi plus vagues. Trudeau n'aurait donc pas plus passé en tant que féministe que Mulcair. Par contre, le « branding » de Trudeau, en tant que personnage souriant et optimiste, aurait peut-être joué dans la balance après tout. Il s'agirait de la plus grande différence entre les deux candidats. Les remarques vagues de Trudeau, son soutien stratégique à un grand éventail de thèmes a pu aussi aider à le faire passer. Trudeau a passé ici, car soit inaperçu ou perçu comme étant plus inoffensif.

En fait, le scrutin uninominal majoritaire a un tour a bel et bien été opportun pour l'élection de Trudeau (voir par exemple Cameron, 2015) en Le vote stratégique a été un thème dominant de la campagne électorale, et un bon nombre de guides par district ont été mis à la disposition des électeurs afin de les aider à choisir le candidat qui saurait défier Harper (Marland et Giasson 2015). Craignant de se retrouver de nouveau sous le joug des conservateurs, les femmes ont voté stratégiquement pour défaire Harper. L'analyse Voyant semble confirmer cette théorie, comme le démontrent le tableau ci-dessous. Ici, le terme « vote » a été étudié pour comprendre si les bloggeuses avaient fait un choix, et si oui lequel. Les collocations pour le terme « vote » sont « stratégique » et « anti-conservateur » / « against NDP » / « against Harper » et démontre

Figure 4

Le Vote Stratégique



En réalité, les blogueuses n’avaient aucun réel défenseur de leur droit. Le débat des chefs sur la question des femmes en est l’illustration parfaite : Mulcair avait tout d’abord décidé de ne pas s’y présenter ; Trudeau a expliqué que les violences contre les femmes pouvaient être attribuées à « certains genres de musique », et la position d’Elizabeth May sur le droit à l’autonomie corporelle reste encore à déterminer aujourd’hui. Vu cette situation, les femmes n’ont eu d’autre choix que de choisir le moindre mal – le chef qui ne semblait peut-être pas le plus érudit sur le sujet, mais qui semblait être de loin le plus enthousiaste à l’idée de défendre les droits des femmes : Trudeau. La force du mouvement collectif est alors ici interpellée, et un appel au vote stratégique est lancé. Nous ne pouvons pas déterminer ici l’impact réel de cet appel à l’action,

mais une chose est certaine, cet appel était fondé et mû par un mouvement uni, organisé, national, présent, et actif qui rappelle les autres révoltes collectives en ligne telle que #moiaussi.

Conclusion

La présente analyse est limitée par le manque de représentation autochtone et l'assemblage d'une collection restreinte d'articles de la blogosphère qui nuit à une représentation compétente de la blogosphère. De futures recherches pourraient mieux représenter les différentes communautés de femmes au Canada et pourraient aussi examiner plus en profondeur les différences sociopolitiques entre l'approche des Franco-canadiens, et celles des Anglo-canadiens, par exemple. Cependant, l'analyse apporte quelques conclusions importantes. Tout d'abord, l'analyse critique du discours des blogueuses canadiennes par rapport au discours féministe durant la campagne électorale révèle que le mouvement militant est ancré dans une approche située et intersectionnelle. Nous retrouvons une grande diversité de perspectives issues d'expériences vécues qui nourrissent le collectif du mouvement féministe : il n'y avait pas de « je » sans « nous ». Le discours féministe néolibéral qui coopte des instances politique actuelle n'a pas encore main mise sur le mouvement féministe militant en ligne en 2015. L'analyse met aussi en lumière un mouvement national, uni sur plusieurs fronts, et actif malgré toutes les compressions du gouvernement Harper. Des voix se sont fait entendre sur la blogosphère, des voix érudites, des voix aux savoirs profonds et des voix en colère contre le gouvernement conservateur de Harper. Nous pourrions y trouver l'expertise qui manque tant à l'appel ailleurs dans les médias et les discours politique.

Ces mêmes voix n'ont pas été dupes : parmi les blogueuses étudiées ici le discours néolibéral de Trudeau n'a pas fait de vagues comme dans les médias dominants (Dangoisse, à paraître). Le thème clé du néolibéralisme au féminin, c'est-à-dire des femmes au pouvoir, de l'économie, du « empowerment » (Dangoisse et Perdomo 2020; Rottenberg 2014; Baker et

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Kelan 2019; Mavin et Yusupova 2023; Prügl 2017), était loin derrière les thèmes de soutien pour les femmes et filles autochtones assassinées et disparues, celui de la violence faite aux femmes, de la santé, de l'autonomie corporelle et de la place des femmes dans le discours politique. Non, les femmes d'Internet n'ont pas été dupes, mais elles ont été forcées. Forcées de choisir entre un mal et un moindre mal. Effectivement, la présente étude met en lumière une forme de barrière structurale spécifique : celle du système électoral qui entrave la capacité des femmes, représentant 50 % de la population, à choisir des candidats et candidates qui les représentent réellement. Cette constatation souligne le fait que dans le système politique actuel, les électeurs choisissent la solution la moins pénible plutôt que la meilleure option — ce qui ne peut en aucun cas être une approche qui provoque les changements et transformations dont les Canadiennes rêvent depuis bien longtemps. Ici, pour les bloggeuses, Justin Trudeau est passé « par défaut », ni plus ni moins. Par ailleurs, l'analyse soutient clairement les résultats de l'analyse de Dangoisse (à paraître), qui illustre comment Justin Trudeau et les partisan.es du féminisme néolibéral, a coopté le mouvement féministe pour exploiter un groupe électoral — celui des femmes qui veulent atteindre le même statut que l'homme en situation d'opresseur. Justin Trudeau aura réussi à utiliser le mouvement social du féminisme à ses propres fins, sans avoir à entreprendre des changements significatifs dans les attitudes ou politiques par la suite (Breda 2022), rappelant les inquiétudes et le cynisme des femmes envers les hommes proféministes étudiés dans d'autres cas (Breda 2022 ; Dikwal-Bot et Men 2022 ; Holmgren et Hearn 2009 ; Anderson 2009 ; Laird 2018 ; Kessler et McKenna 2000).

Combinés à un système électoral imparfait, l'ère de Harper et le féminisme néolibéral de Trudeau ont entraîné des conséquences sur le mouvement féministe canadien. La hausse du taux de violence contre les femmes est un exemple parmi tant d'autres : en 2022, 184 femmes et filles ont été tuées par la violence, il s'agit d'une augmentation préoccupante par rapport aux 148

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femmes et filles tuées par la violence en 2019 (augmentation de 24 % depuis 2019), qui constitue l'augmentation la plus marquée depuis 2017 de 14 % entre 2020 et 2021 (Howard 2024) . . Il faut se demander si un mal a été remplacé par un autre, potentiellement plus insidieux, dans la quête pour l'égalité des genres au Canada. En revanche, une chose est certaine : le mouvement féministe en 2015 était fort, et uni. Il a su éduquer et soulever les femmes. Lors des élections de 2024-2025, espérons retrouver des candidates et des blogueuses en ligne qui continueront à lutter pour l'égalité.

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Chapter Five – General Discussion

Before the official start of the election campaign on August 4th 2015, nothing seemed to point towards an overtly and overly feminist Justin Trudeau by accounts of the Prime Minister's behaviour pre-campaign. These accounts that surfaced during his tenure rendered a picture of a privileged white male with no particular feminist mission: He was pictured in blackface surrounded by female colleagues (CBC News, 2019), which points to racist behavior; he took part in a hyper masculine boxing match with Senator Patrick Brazeau (Kassam, 2017); and allegedly groped a reporter (Tasker & Laventure, 2018), both of which point at toxic masculine behaviors. More importantly, Trudeau did not indicate that he understood how these actions challenged his feminist rhetoric. But in 2015 there was a campaign to be won, a well-oiled electoral machine to support Trudeau (Hourmant, Lalancette, and Leroux 2022; Durocher and Lalancette 2022; Cormack and Lalancette 2015; Patten, 2015), and a very dissatisfied voter group: women. Women are known to participate in elections at a higher rate than men since at least 2008 (Canada, 2021), and Liberal Party strategists must have seen an opportunity. The 2015 election campaign did see an unprecedented use of data analytics and microtargeting to maximise message dissemination, approval, and retention (Patten, 2015). Within that trend, Trudeau's campaign appeared to strategically cater to women in a calculating manner (S. Brown, 2018; Young, 2015), through photo-ops of Trudeau offering himself up for selfies with women in big and small towns across the country and well-planned quips such as "Canada's back" and "Because it's 2015". Trudeau's proposed policies also catered to women. He promised that, if elected, he would launch a national inquiry for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls; no Liberal candidate would be allowed to support legislation against abortion; universal childcare was discussed as a priority, so was an increased budget for Status of Women Canada, and a feminist foreign policy was proposed. While some of these promises were indeed

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implemented over the years, such as the MMIWG inquiry and the feminist foreign policy, the research provided here indicates how Trudeau's feminist stance would only go so far in supporting gender equality. In the end, the world that Trudeau has always known, one of privilege, settler colonialism, capitalism, and the patriarchy, was to be kept intact. He spoke from a place of privilege to a place of privilege—which enabled his passing—and ultimately betrayed the promise to bring about a true and substantial change to the status of women in the country. The three articles that make up this thesis speak in different ways about this: how a culture of systemic discrimination persists in the guise of an allegedly progressive government. When considered together, the articles paint a picture of how discourses emanating from the prime minister and the dominant media sample studied have allowed Trudeau's neoliberal stance to pass as feminism while in effect undermining the plight of many women in Canada. This concluding chapter covers the three main themes supporting this argument: that feminism is confined within a neoliberal framework as a prevalent perspective in Article 1 and 2, that the spectrum of women's voices have been erased from this neoliberal feminist discourse, as attested in Article 3, and that women, and most especially women who do not uphold neoliberal ideologies must stand on their own, with no true political ally to support and defend their cause (Article 3).

Neoliberalism: Women as a Resource

One of the most important findings of this research is that Trudeau's understanding of feminism is decidedly neoliberal, as shown in the results of our analysis from Article 1. This aligns with other scholarly work that have examined his policies (Bezanson, 2018; Dobrowolsky, 2020; Macdonald & Ibrahim, 2019; Tiessen & Swan, 2018). Rather than recognizing the systemic barriers that hinder women's advancement, as they are described at length in Article 3, there is a prevailing encouragement for women to break free from traditional gender roles by

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relying on their hard work and competitiveness. The failure to attain success—and here success is solely calculated by economic power, is then framed as an individual shortcoming. Structural barriers, such as boy's clubs or gender stereotypes are not seen as impeding women's rise to higher echelons of an organization. Following this logic, women who have not achieved the type of economic power they had set for themselves, attribute their experiences of inequalities solely to themselves. Barriers that limit women's economic success are not tackled within this mindset: double shifts, double standards, glass ceilings, boy's clubs, glass cliffs, all continue to burden women who work, very often, much more and harder than some of their male coworker, and still, obtain only \$0.82 to his full dollar (McInturff & Tulloch, 2014; Pay Equity Office, 2023; Canadian Women's Foundation, 2019; Drolet & Mardare Amini, 2023; Moyser & Burlock, 2018; Bresge, 2018). These persistent discrepancies in workloads—at work and at home, may explain in part the “exhaustion gap” that has become prevalent in all fields of work (Cox, 2021)—and which was exacerbated during the pandemic (King, 2022).

Neoliberalism also points to the ever-growing corporate influence in government affairs as neoliberalism's economic focus expands into all facets of governing and governance (Brown, 2004; Fenton, 2018). In Article 1, we found that *all* topics were discussed within an economic frame. This is a finding in and of itself—regardless of women's rights. People have disappeared from politics—workers, citizens, corporate entities, and businesses have become the main subjects and actors of political discourse. This rings some bells with the recent pandemic, and its devastating cost to businesses and the economy. We no longer speak of the death of human beings, but of dying businesses and lost earnings, now during the post-pandemic period, we speak of inflation, mortgage rates, supply-chain disruptions, the Bank of Canada's role, and the shortage of labour. This is not to say that discussing economic matters and debating about economic solutions are not important, it certainly is, but rather that not everything can be framed

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within an economic perspective for fear of leaving behind what we should, and could, be valuing more—human lives. Article 3 demonstrated this by sharing examples, arguments and solutions that were not always tied to the economy. The niqab story that made headlines in the 2015 election campaign is a prime example. The un/veiling of women has nothing to do with economics, but has everything to do with freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and bodily autonomy.

Another crucial findings of this research is that through the study of the corpora representing Trudeau's and the dominant media's discourse (Article 1 and 2), women appeared to become no more than untapped resources, resulting from this neoliberal understanding of feminism and women's experiences. This is problematic on several levels. First, it feeds into the objectification of women, in the sense that woman start to be seen and treated as an object, aresources to exploit—evocative of times where women were openly objectified and used for reproductive and productive purposes. This has repercussion into the spheres of the public and private—where workplace harassment and rape cultures are propagated and legitimized in the workplace cultures through boys' clubs, mansplaining, maninterrupting, manspreading, manologuing and so many other discriminating and humiliating behaviours that solidify the minimizing of women. On the private front, statistics are starting to show that, for the first time since 2014, there has been an *increase* in violence towards women (Howard, 2024), and that for the first time in decades, in the United States, women are facing increased risks to their health and safety (Srygley et al., 2023)... A note here is necessary in terms of intersectionality and neoliberalism: BIPOC women and non-gender conforming people, do indeed feel the brunt of this type of neoliberal discrimination, as they are the least well paid and most overworked class of citizens.

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Second, the internalization of the neoliberal ideology represents a much more profound and less visible form of exploitation as women who (unconsciously or not) uphold this ideology end up working on themselves continuously to increase their economic value—they end up internalizing that they are, indeed, a resource (Baker & Brewis, 2020; Mavin & Yusupova, 2023; Rottenberg, 2014). In Article 1 we argued that neoliberalism has usurped the feminist discourse and goal via the political discourse of Trudeau. This type of discourse propagates a message of “empowerment,” “financial success” and “girl boss,” exemplified by celebrities such as Beyoncé, Oprah, Taylor Swift, Ivanka Trump, Sheryl Sandberg. Women have internalized capitalist discourses, turning on themselves to increase their own value for the eyes of the capitalist, patriarchal society we live in (Mavin & Yusupova, 2023; McRobbie, 2015). Dobrowolsky and Rottenburg (2020; 2014) find the same to be true in their study of Trudeau-style equality and neoliberal feminism in which women’s identities are informed by cost-benefit calculus, and investments in their careers, or their family life, or themselves. Brown (2017, p. 33) concludes in her studies on neoliberalism that policies increasingly speak of investing in “human capital,” and “to ‘self invest’ in such a way as to attract investors”. In Article 2, this internalized neoliberal view is made evident with the enthusiastic and unabated support for Trudeau’s “progressive” stance which allows (by men...) for more women to be in positions of power via a gender equal cabinet. In Article 3 however, we clearly see that what the bloggers are calling for is definitely not more self-improvement and economic success, but the dismantling of toxic cultures or supporting women’s agency via the freedom to choose, for example. There is, ultimately, something quite ironic in the fact that it is through the exploiting of women as a voter group by promoting a discourse promoting gender equality, that Trudeau accessed *more* privilege.

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Absence and Erasure

To pass one needs to know the target group almost more so than the target group itself. You need to be recognized, as Gee stipulates about discourse, to be recognized as part of a group you have to “talk the talk” (Gee, 2004, pp. 2, 137). What Trudeau’s discourse, and the dominant media’s discourse, tended to show in Article 1 and 2, is that they knew nothing of women’s various burdens, be they racism, agism, colonialism, heterosexism, capacitisme or any other trial. Together, the political and media discourse studied here was “[like] statist language, censored and censoring. Ruthless in its policing duties, it has no desire or purpose other than maintaining the free range of its own narcotic narcissism, its own exclusivity and dominance” (Morrison, 1993). One frightening finding that becomes apparent from comparing the analysis of the political discourse from Article 1 and the discourse emanating from the commentaries in the dominant media represented via the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* as studied in Article 2 is how prevalent the neoliberal feminist discourse is. If the women Trudeau was appealing to as demonstrated in Article 1, actually did support his progressive stance, as shown in Article 2, this would mean that a great number of people in positions of power to shape minds, do uphold a neoliberal feminist stance. This in fact means that a greater number of *women* also espouse feminist goals framed by patriarchal and capitalist worldviews which will only serve to further marginalize people who have been oppressed by those same forms of power. It will further normalize that the status to attain is that of a *man*. Article 1 and 2 then clearly demonstrate how these two discourses have legitimized forms of oppression. This becomes quite problematic as when it comes to women’s rights, it is typically women who are the best placed to represent the movement, this becomes less certain. What will become of the movement, if the people who are the ones to speak to it, become nothing more than talking heads reinforcing dominant discourses? It seems, from this thesis project, that within our political and media systems,

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barriers keep piling up rather than being broken down—maybe even more insidiously than previously considered.

Discourse is always defined in relation to complicity or contestation with other discourses (Gee, 2004, p. 56, see also Goffman, 1974): the political and dominant media sample discourses studied here were clearly in complicity as both upheld neoliberal discourses on feminism, whereas the alternative media discourse contested this. The niqab issue as was discussed in the dominant sample and the alternative assemblage can attest to this. First off, as shown in Article 2, the Niqab issue in the dominant media was not prevalent compared to other topics, and further, it was often discussed negatively. Indeed, authors were mainly frustrated that the issue was discussed at all, as it pertained to “only two women” and had no incidence on any other topic. In contrast, as shown in Article 3, feminist bloggers saw in this topic an allusion to bodily autonomy, male domination, Islamophobia, and found it relevant within the context of a political debate on women’s issues. Another example of contestation lies in the coverage of Trudeau’s optimistic quip “Because it’s 2015” which was prevalent in the dominant media sample, as it was more relevant to the author’s neoliberal feminist aspiration of leadership and success. That quip barely made it to the alternative media discourse, and when it was, it was discussed with much more complexity than it was in the *Globe* and the *Post*. Further, the main topics discussed in all corpora differed: as mentioned earlier, the topic of women in leadership roles was prevalent, with the gender parity argument coming in as a front liner, in the political discourse (Article 1), and in the analysis of the GM and NP corpus (Article 2). On the other hand, in the alternative media (Article 3), the Up for Debate interview was a central organizing topic. It included the candidate’s various response to a call for a national Inquiry on the Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls—which itself was the most often cited theme, and it also included discussions such as candidates’ decision to participate or not and why, when and how other

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women's debates had been held in Canada (the last one had been in 1984!), what topics should be covered, who "won" or "lost" the debate, etc. Most notable of that discussion was the feminist take on Trudeau's comment that violence towards women can be attributed to "certain types of music." This statement was seen as being racist and a very weak response to a very pressing and complex matter.

Fairclough (2003) argues that discourse possesses the capacity to shape and alter the interpretation of reality as well as the behaviours and societal structures that arise from it. This was made evident by the way the commentaries in the dominant media interpreted Trudeau's discourse in 2015, as shown in Article 2: Women were effectively absent from the discourse, unless when discussed in terms of leadership roles. What does this say about Canada's social structures? That women's issues are irrelevant unless they can help more men attain more privilege.

A prime example of such neoliberal feminism is in the Canadian practice of middle-class to well-off families who hire immigrant women, from developing countries such as the Philippines, to take care of their children. The Canadian parent hires low wage women, who themselves must leave their own homes and children, so that Canadian women can work and make it in their careers. The immigrant women who come are often working in poor conditions, with little support or time off, and little chances of obtaining citizenship, health coverage, or vacation pay. They must renounce to seeing their own children or families, often, for many consecutive years. Instead of women (and men) pushing collectively, for the government or employers to provide affordable and ethical childcare, or flexible work arrangements to Canadian women, we have displaced the problem upon the shoulders of women who take it upon themselves to find solutions (Sarosi & Adeland, 2019; Wadehra, 2021). We have created more and deeper inequality within our borders and abroad. Further, in this case, Canadian women are

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allowed to succeed (economically) while the voices of the marginalized women, the care givers of their children, have no space or place to be heard. No one to represent their rights and support them in the goals for a better life. Another example that represents the erasure of women's work is the new pop feminist trend to "manifest" success (Zapata 2022). This trend is often used to hide the actual work involved in making it into the world. It eliminates the need to speak to barriers women face within the entrepreneurial field (for example, women have a more difficult time obtaining loans to start a business, and when they do, they obtain less than men – this is often referred to as the gender credit gap, see for example Halabisky et al., 2023). It supports women "magically" opening new businesses by simply "believing in it." This new pop trend brings us back to trends of the 50', when magical women, personified in TV characters such as Samantha in *Bewitched*, always carried a smile, had an immaculate home, clean children, and supper ready for her husband in the evening. Neoliberalism now asks of women to remain the "good wife" *and* work, to continue to take on their reproductive responsibilities, and to take on productive labour on top of it all.

No True Ally

Another important finding that combines research from the three articles is how it seems as though Trudeau's neoliberal feminism appears to have remained unchanged or, in other words, that it has not evolved over the years—at least not visibly so. Article 1 covers Trudeau's speeches over a lengthy time frame (almost three years) and includes a varied subject matter for a diverse audience. It is confounding that the analysis found no evidence of a possible evolution of Trudeau's so-called feminist identity. Under a standpoint feminist theory, and according to Messner's (2016) analysis of progressive feminist men, time and various situations may help in the critical self-reflection of one's role and privileged situation within a dominant, patriarchal, capitalist society—this also holds true for most feminists, as experiences and new knowledge can

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help women progress towards a more exhausting (sorry- here I meant exhaustive!) and deep understanding of how various forms of intersecting powers limit their own and others' capacity to live the life they need and want (and I say this from personal experience as well—I have greatly “evolved” as a feminist through this project). Several external opportunities unfolded over the course of Trudeau's mandate, such as the #timesup, #sayhername, and the #metoo movement, or the inaugural March on Washington to protest Trump in 2017. Closer to him was the event when he “elbowed” New Democratic M. P. Ruth Brosseau, or the resignation of MP Jody Wilson-Raybould and Jane Philpott, which both sprung debates on his feminist stance and women's positions in parliament. But none of the speeches hint to a critical self-reflection, a progression of his own standpoint, or the acknowledgement that gender was, or rather is, central to any political issue. In actuality, Trudeau has since seemed to move *away* from his feminist discourse. Indeed, he did not make feminism a central point of his past two campaigns, in 2018 the Liberal government rolled back its immigration policies that attempted to reunite families to the old model under Harper (Dobrowolsky, 2020), and he has altogether removed the words “intersectionality” from his 2023 budget, where it had previously been present.

In line with this is Ashe's (2020) study on the advancement of gender sensitivity in political institutions under Harper and Trudeau, in which she finds that even though a number of bills and recommendations have been proposed to increase gender sensitivity under the Trudeau government, the prime minister and his party have not acted on most of them. She states:

“Circling back to the overall assessment of Harper v. Trudeau: while Parliament is indeed more gender-sensitive under Trudeau this is largely due to his personal decision to appoint a sex-balanced cabinet, which both ignores the lack of substantive gender-sensitive changes elsewhere and does not bind future governments (...). The danger in

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claiming feminism and feminist victories is that it masks the reality that there has been little substantive change.” (p. 91)

Indeed, one of the dangers of Trudeau passing on a superficial understanding of feminism, gender representation, and women’s rights, is that no substantive change will be made or is even imagined. In article 2, I conclude that in choosing to vote for Trudeau, for what seemed like a progressive government, electors in Canada were in effect voting for the status quo. There was in fact no real choice for women, the alternative media’s analysis of Trudeau corroborated this finding, and the fact that feminism has slowly decreased in Trudeau’s discourse. This argument aligns with Mendes’ (2011) and Watson and Casey’s (2023) take on how only a certain type of feminism is acceptable in political and media discourse, one that does not transform or question the current hierarchical structure of society. However, what is really needed is indeed a radical transformation of society, if men, and now a growing number of women, uphold either a neoliberal feminism, or are comfortable in maintaining the status quo, women’s goal of reaching equality will be very difficult to reach. This resonates with the UN’s gender gap research that stipulated that if no serious, transformational solutions were brought to the table, the gender gap would take another 300 years to close (AFP, 2023; Subramaniam, 2023).

The political and media discourses in this corpus were interwoven in such a way as to erase non-neoliberal women and issues from view, and by creating a world in which only men are important and remain the norm, the status to attain. The hegemonic powers of masculine and capitalist domination, as researched by countless academics before me, are clear here (see for example Bourdieu, 2002; Butler, 1999; Dobrowolsky, 2020; Hall, 1980; Prügl, 2017) There was no true ally of women amongst the candidates for the electoral campaign of 2015—which is in line with past studies on pro-feminist men; a number of them make feminist claims to get closer to women so as to meet their own needs and goals (Anderson, 2009; Breda, 2022; Larry, 1997;

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Watson and Casey, 2023). Women remain the best placed to speak to women's issues—and even this statement may not hold true in all cases. Within this system, Trudeau was able to pass: he was a master chameleon. When addressing the crowds at various political and business functions, he appealed to their good business sense and need to “do the right thing” by positioning women's equality as a tool for profitability, where women's equality should be in and of itself the goal. The dominant media, which holds the same hegemonic ideals of economic success and the maintaining of patriarchal, white, norms and structures, acclaimed this discourse and supported it. Finally, within the alternative space Trudeau passed by simply not being Harper and posing as being more enthusiastic than Mulcair. Trudeau essentially passed as he was not questioned: the dominant media authors did not dig into his policies and arguments, and the alternative media authors had bigger fish to fry—stopping Harper.

Overall, a consideration of the three articles together suggests the existence of three main levels of systemic and structural powers that limit women's rise to full and real equality. First, a political discourse that frames equality within an economic perspective, manifest through women discussed as a resource to exploit for more profit (Article 1). Second, a media discourse that abides by that vision and protects the status quo (Article 2). And third, an electoral system that enables that system to perpetuate itself by further erasing the existence of women's voices (Article 3). Democracy relies on the active engagement of every citizen in various facets of representation, such as media, policy, and political representation—without this participation, there is a risk of reverting back to the dominance of privileged economic and political elites, reminiscent of pre-democratic eras and present era authoritative or oligarchic regimes (Crouch, 2019; Fenton, 2018) There is a Cree saying that advises, “When someone shares a story with you, you have an obligation to listen, to remember it, to learn from it; the more often a story is repeated to you, the more the obligation” (Reder, 2022, p. xiii). Women have been sharing their

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stories for decades, for centuries. At very particular times in history, when the voices were too loud to ignore and more advantageous to listen to, women were able to obtain some rights. Men and politicians have never, however, felt an actual obligation to listen, to act, and to learn for the simple sake of women being human beings, equal to men. This research demonstrates that there is no better time than now to do so. If in 2015 the women were angry at Harper for his blatant disregard for women's rights, what will the women say and do come the next election, when after close to 10 years, under a progressive government, they will have yet again been abandoned? Let us hope they will find a way to be heard.

Chapter Six – Conclusion

Discourse remains the most evident manifestation of social realities (Breda, 2022; Wodak, 1997). Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has publicly identified as a feminist, shaping both his political persona and national discourse on gender equality. The goal of this project was to understand how systemic discrimination persists under progressive environments. This thesis aimed to answer this overarching question by understanding Trudeau's feminism and how he passed using passing and critical discourse analysis of three distinct corpora. This revealed the state of Canadian feminism from Trudeau's feminist stance via a critical analysis of a selection of his discourse between 2015 and 2018, the role of the dominant media via the analysis of a sample of the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Posts* commentaries and editorials during the 2015 election campaign, and the feminist movement's discourse via blog posts in 2015. A total of 155 articles were manually coded (34 speeches in Article 1; 66 commentaries in Article 2; 55 blog posts in Article 3), and another 278 articles were coded automatically for Article 3, which makes for a total corpus comprised of 433 articles.

The first article scrutinized Trudeau's self-proclaimed feminism, highlighting its manifestation in official communications. Despite Trudeau's declarations, the analysis revealed a limited number of references to feminism and gendered issues in his speeches between 2015 and 2018. Rather than offering a comprehensive feminist understanding, his discourse primarily emphasized gender equality within an economic prosperity perspective, reflecting a neoliberal worldview which undermines the ultimate goal of feminism which is to achieve equality for its own sake. Trudeau's approach portrays women as an economic resource vital for Canada's economic success. Moreover, his speeches failed to acknowledge structural challenges faced by different groups of women, overlooking the intersectional nature of feminism.

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The second article delves into how *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* interact with Trudeau's feminist identity during the 2015 election campaign specifically. Employing the concept of passing, it explored how the media contributes to constructing and maintaining his feminist image. The media corpus is identified as a facilitator of Trudeau's passing as a feminist, aligning itself with patriarchal and capitalist political ideologies that have a difficult relationship with feminism as both these systems have been shown to harm women and other marginalized groups. This passing of Trudeau in the media coverage illustrated that Trudeau was catering to a very distinct group of women: the able-bodied, white, cisgender, Christian, educated, middle-class, liberal women who have been coopted into a neoliberal discourse of economic success and individual empowerment. This type of discourse, in which women are meant to be more like men, obscures diverse voices and ideologies, ultimately promoting a patriarchal form of neoliberal capitalism that undermines more inclusive feminist approaches and perpetuates systemic barriers to gender equality.

The third article focused on Canadian women bloggers' discourse during the election campaign of 2015. It underscored the significance of intersectionality and standpoint feminism within the Canadian feminist movement with diverse perspectives stemming from lived experiences. While neoliberal feminism has gained traction in political, media, and organizational discourse, this article highlights that it has not fully coopted the online feminist movement in 2015. Moreover, it emphasized the role of the electoral system in limiting the representation of women and the need for structural change to achieve gender equality.

The methods and subsequent analysis of three different corpora provided a multifaceted view of Trudeau's feminism. Despite his self-proclaimed feminist identity, Trudeau's official speeches reveal a neoliberal perspective that falls short of contemporary feminist ideals of equality for its own sake(Article 1). The media plays a role in upholding this image, reflecting a

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patriarchal capitalism that suppresses diverse feminist voices (Article 2). Meanwhile, online activism underscores the importance of intersectionality in the feminist movement (Article 3). These analyses prompt reflection on whether Trudeau's version of feminism, while successful in branding, truly advances gender equality or inadvertently reinforces existing power structures. My own personal experiences influenced my understanding of themes, politics and policies, and discourse. It also had an impact on, for example, choosing to mobilize critical discourse analysis as it is through discourse that I myself understand the world around me, it also pushed me to study alternative media, coming myself from an activist perspective, having been objectified and assaulted myself, understanding how discourse can uphold the objectification of women was essential to my work, and as a final example, having hit a professional glass ceiling, understanding why all my efforts had been in vain was particularly enlightening. A deeper understanding of cultural studies, identity politics, or electoral behaviour could strengthen my work. A larger corpus and perhaps more participatory research could have yielded a stronger understanding of the multifaceted understanding of women's rights. I recognize that the media is a complex and multilayered system, with several variable actors, the entirety of the media system could not be studied. The corpus size and the selection of a varied source of media outlets provided some insights nonetheless. I also wish I had sooner delved into Indigenous research methods and theories, scholars such as Reder (2022) would have strengthened my analysis and subsequent findings. Finally, one of the weaknesses of findings observed through the use of qualitative methods is that they are not generalizable to all of society or even a different corpus or time frame. Nevertheless, my coding schedule was instrumental in revealing systems of power and systemic discrimination in three distinct corpora. Further,, the conclusions are vital in understanding how systemic discrimination persists towards women in Canada. Dominant discourses uttered by the powerful political figures and their media supporters continue to

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marginalize people. These discourses hide their power in a false sense of security and continue to oppress by their superficial attempts at inclusivity and representation. They are dangerous in their ability to erase entire communities and people, in their ability to erase the need to transform, radically, our systems, and their ability to place the blame on everyone and everything else but themselves. There is no greater danger to gender equality than its usurpation by white supremacists, patriarchal, capitalist forms of control. In similar words as Toni Morrison in her 1993 Nobel Prize lecture, these discourses must be exposed for what they are, so that they can become forces for the better instead of forces of oppression.

This thesis contributes to a growing body of work that questions pro-feminist men, pro-feminist political leaders, Trudeau's and the Liberal Party's feminist vision, and by extension, liberal and neoliberal feminism (Bezanson, 2018; Broadhead & Howard, 2019; W. Brown, 2004; Dikwal-Bot & Mendes, 2022; Laird, 2018; MacDonald & Dobrowolsky, 2020; Macdonald & Ibrahim, 2019; Robinson, 2019; Schacht & Ewing, 1998; Schwartzman, 2006; Smith-Carrier & On, 2023; Tiessen & Swan, 2018; Vucetic, 2017). It does so through an in-depth analysis of how and where this vision was opposed or accepted. The findings clearly point to specific power dynamics and structural barriers. This research also contributes to standpoint feminism and intersectionality by promoting the need for a better understanding of lived experiences as crucial to understanding power relations and how intersecting forms of oppression interlock with each other, thus forming systematic barriers. The innovative use of the concept of passing for a critical discourse analysis enabled the study of power dynamics and it is my hope that I will continue to develop this concept and these methods. Another contribution that cannot be overlooked is the extensive research into building an assemblage of the Canadian feminist blogosphere of 2015. No other such work has been done, and work is underway to make this data publicly available to other scholars and activists alike. Finally, my thesis contributes to the field of critical discourse

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analysis: the power of language to erase or reveal, to create or destroy was central to my work. It is through how women and women's issues were discussed that they were in effect defined. It is through that discourse that white privileged men pose the greatest threat to gender equality: by erasing them and their goals entirely. Finally, this project has contributed to militant and activist work: I have incorporated the findings in a number of editorials, mass media publication, teachings, seminars, and into projects within the organizations I work for, from developing a Gender Based Analysis + training program for non-profit organization and municipalities with AGIR Outaouais, to developing an educational program for elementary school children through movies and discussions.

As Canada moves forward, it is crucial that the feminist movement remains strong and united, and that it continues to advocate for meaningful change in pursuit of true gender equality beyond mere political branding. Gender and intersecting identities have been at the centre of politics in the past decade (MacDonald & Dobrowolsky, 2020) and this trend is not about to disappear into thin air. There is yet hope that the 2025 election campaign plays out differently if women's online anger sees them act through political action offline as well, if dominant media outlets offer space for the counter-public to voice their opinions and question politicians' shiny new ideas, and if politician act with courage and substance. In any case, when asked if feminism is still useful today, I would have no other choice than to answer that it is, that we know of the barriers, that we do not approve of them and that we are not resigned.

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Appendix

Appendix One. Trudeau Speeches, November 2015 to May 2018 (Article One)

Assigned number	Title	Location	Date
Speech 1	Remarks by the Prime Minister of Canada on steel and aluminum tariffs imposed by the United States	Ottawa, Ontario	May 31, 2018
Speech 2	PM speaking notes for EGALE Leadership Award	Ottawa, Ontario	May 24, 2018
Speech 3	PM speaking notes for NYU Commencement Address	New York City, New York	May 16, 2018
Speech 4	Prime Minister's Speech to the French National Assembly	Paris, France	April 17, 2018
Speech 5	Prime Minister's statement on the Trans Mountain Pipeline project	Ottawa, Ontario	April 15, 2018
Speech 6	Remarks by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on the Recognition and Implementation of Rights Framework	Ottawa, Ontario	February 14, 2018
Speech 7	Speech by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Center for Public Affairs	Simi Valley, California	February 9, 2018
Speech 8	Prime Minister keynote speech at the World Economic Forum 2018	Davos, Switzerland	January 23, 2018
Speech 9	Remarks by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to apologize to LGBTQ2 Canadians	Ottawa, Ontario	November 28, 2017
Speech 10	Remarks by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to apologize on behalf of the Government of Canada to former students of the Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools Happy Valley	Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador	November 24, 2017
Speech 11	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Address to the 72th Session of the United Nations General Assembly	New York, New York	September 21, 2017
Speech 12	Remarks by the Prime Minister to announce Canada's next Governor General, Ms. Julie Payette	Ottawa, Ontario	July 13, 2017
Speech 13	Canada Day address by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Parliament Hill	Ottawa, Ontario	July 1, 2017

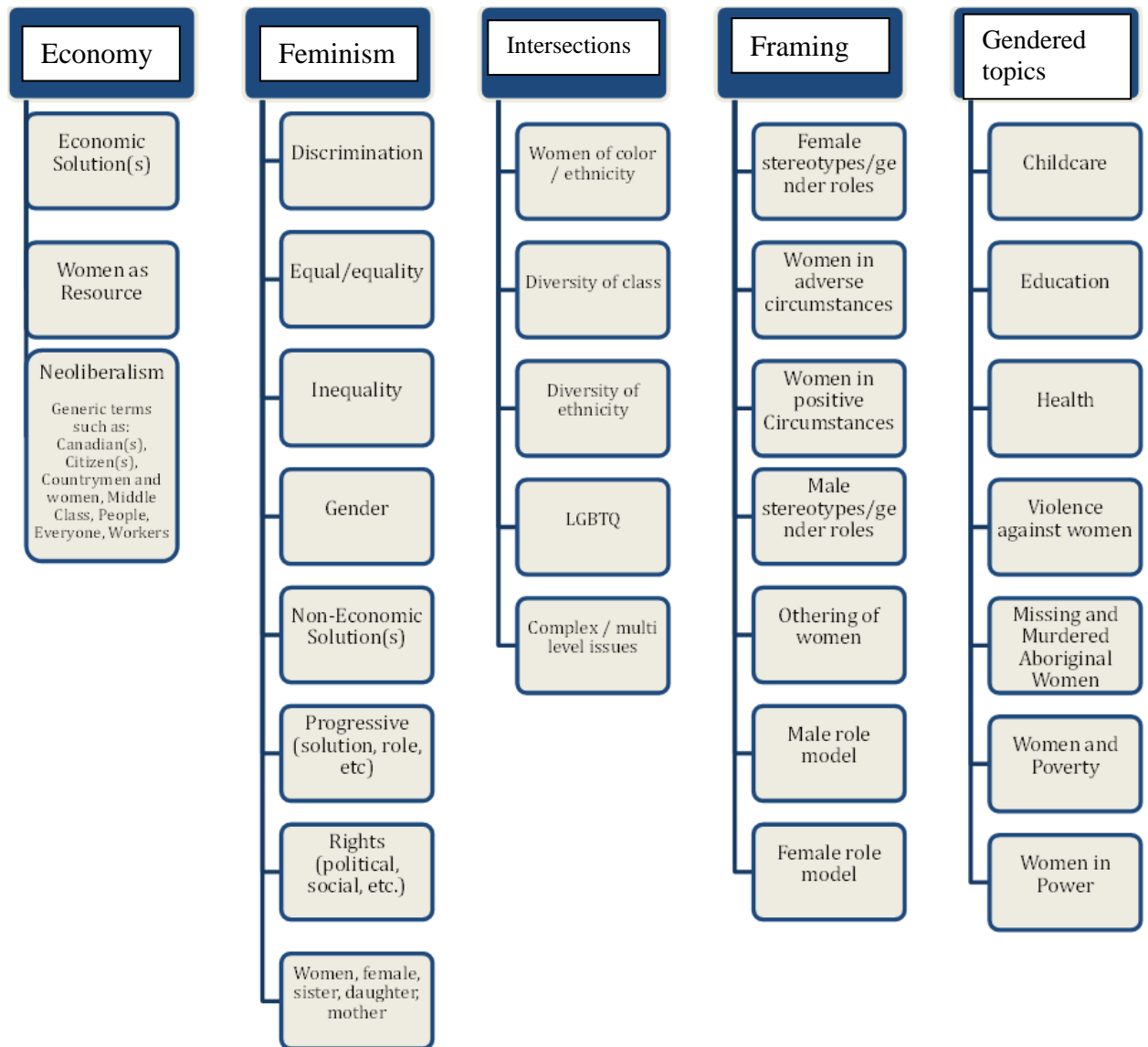
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Speech 14	Address by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge	Vimy Ridge, France	April 9, 2017
Speech 15	PM speaking notes for the annual international gathering of energy industry leaders	Houston, Texas	March 9, 2017
Speech 16	Address by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for the St. Matthew's Day Banquet in Hamburg, Germany	Hamburg, Germany	February 17, 2017
Speech 17	Address by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to the European Parliament	Strasbourg, France	February 16, 2017
Speech 18	The Prime Minister's House statement on the terrorist attack in Quebec	Ottawa, Ontario	January 30, 2017
Speech 19	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Speech to the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly	Gatineau, Quebec	December 6, 2016
Speech 20	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Pipeline Announcement	Ottawa, Ontario	November 29, 2016
Speech 21	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Opening Keynote Speech at the Summit Antananarivo	Madagascar	November 27, 2016
Speech 22	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announces the Oceans Protection Plan	Vancouver, British Columbia	November 7, 2016
Speech 23	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivers a speech on pricing carbon pollution Ottawa, Ontario	Ottawa, Ontario	October 3, 2016
Speech 24	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Address to the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly	New York, New York	September 20, 2016
Speech 25	Prime Minister's Remarks to the Canada China Business Council during Official Visit to China	Shanghai, China	September 1, 2016
Speech 26	Komagata Maru apology in the House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario	Ottawa, Ontario	May 18, 2016
Speech 27	Opening Ceremony for the Signing Ceremony of the Paris Agreement New York,	New York, United States of America	April 22, 2016
Speech 28	iVote event at the University of Ottawa	Ottawa, Ontario	April 19, 2016
Speech 29	The Prime Minister's remarks at State dinner; Official visit to the United States	Washington, D.C., United States of America	March 10, 2016

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Speech 30	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: New Approach to Address the Ongoing Crises in Iraq and Syria and the Impact on the Surrounding Region Ottawa, Ontario	Ottawa, Ontario	February 8, 2016
Speech 31	The Canadian Opportunity	Davos, Switzerland	January 20, 2016
Speech 32	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivers a speech to the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly	Gatineau, Quebec	December 8, 2015
Speech 33	Canada's National Statement at COP21	Paris, France	November 30, 2015
Speech 34	Diversity is Canada's Strength	London, United Kingdom	November 26, 2015

Appendix Two. Coding Schedule Trudeau's discourse (Article One)



Appendix Three. Coding Schedule Commentaries (Article Two)*Notes:*

- Many codes were developed through an iterative process even if not always mentioned here.
- Many codes that were initially in the coding scheme are not represented here as noting was coded and/or they were not used in the analysis above.
- Many arguments, points, statements, etc. can have been coded to more than one code.

Name	Description	Files	References
1. CRIAW Feminist theme	Denis, A., & Boileau, K. (2015). <i>Gender Justice for All!</i> . Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW).	66	99
1.1 First Nation, Métis, Inuit Women	Added to differentiate from specificity of MMAW	12	21
1.2 Affordable Child Care	From CRIAW (2015) report	3	4
1.3 Education	From CRIAW (2015) report	0	0
1.4 Health	From CRIAW (2015) report	2	2
1.5 Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women	From CRIAW (2015) report	6	13
1.6 Other	If topic/theme does not fit in one created from CRIAW (2015) report	16	16
1.7 Poverty	From CRIAW (2015) report	2	2
1.8 Violence Against Women	From CRIAW (2015) report	4	4
1.9 Women in Power, leadership	From CRIAW (2015) report	33	37
Is support for Feminism captured	Discursive practice are used to indicate support or lack thereof	66	93
1.10 Engages in Feminist debate, theory or practice	Argument, example, or passage indicates that the author wants to engage, or is engaging in the debate (provides arguments, examples, quotes, diverse opinions, etc.).	17	19

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Name	Description	Files	References
2. No - does not support feminism	Argument, example, or passage indicates that the author does not support feminist views or demands.	9	9
2.1.1 Illegitimate ask	<p>This is a code derived from Douglas (1994), Mendes (2011):</p> <p>Focuses on internal conflict of movement (catfights).</p> <p>Focuses on fringe or extremist views or tactics.</p> <p>De-contextualizing events or issue</p> <p>Feminism is thing of the past</p> <p>Feminism as an individual belief (i.e. not universal nature of women's oppression)</p> <p>Distorted Information lesbians, man-haters, aggressive deviants and unfeminine women who were out of touch with what most (middle-class, white) women wanted.</p> <p>Feminism has been turned into a "dirty word"—a euphemism</p>	15	16
3. Support is Unclear	Argument, example, or passage is fragmented, contradictory, unclear or divided.	30	34
4. Yes - supports feminism	Argument, example, or passage supports feminist claims by doing the following:	27	29
4.1 Accepts Women's separatism	<p>From Holmgren and Hearn (2009):</p> <p>Argument, example, or passage understands the specific struggles women face and the need to separate their experiences from men's.</p> <p>Understands why women would want to be a distinct identity/political group</p> <p>Understand why some women would prefer to "separate" from men and/or men's groups.</p>	0	0
4.2 Complex arguments presented	From Mendes (2011), complex arguments counter a hegemonic	11	12

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Name	Description	Files	References
	discourse and better represent the movement.		
4.3 Confesses inadequacy	From Holmgren and Hearn (2009)	0	0
4.4 Defines feminism	Mendes (2011)	1	1
4.5 Distances from non-feminist authors, experts, topics, arguments	Holmgren and Hearn (2009)	2	2
4.6 Emphasize injustice	From Gamson (1992), this is similar, but different from “accepting separatism”, it is not as radical, but remains an important tool to understand feminist claims.	0	0
4.7 Is self-critical	Holmgren and Hearn (2009)	0	0
4.7 Legitimate ask	From Gamson (1992), Holmgren and Hearn (2009), and Mendes (2011) Implied that movement remains necessary. Recognition of and opposition to men’s institutionalized privilege Recognizes “cost” to masculinity. Recognizes difference or inequalities between and among men Discussed in political terms	11	12
4.8 Social movement highlighted	Mendes (2011) Examples: pickets, marchers, symbol of the social movement activity, icons of feminist movement, successes and failures of movement, goals, etc.	2	2
5. Support for Trudeau is captured	Which discursive practice is used to indicate support or lack thereof	66	138
5.1 Common sense Feminism	Argument, example, or passage fits within framework of Common sense Feminism	2	2

APPENDIX

Name	Description	Files	References
5.2 No - Does not Support Trudeau's feminism	Argument, example, or passage indicates that the author does not support Trudeau's feminist views or demands.	23	25
5.2.1 Questions, counters, attacks Trudeau's feminism	Argument, example, or passage indicates lack of support via the questioning or attacking of Trudeau's claims. This can be both a positive or negative opposition.	20	24
5.2.2 not feminist enough	The questioning can come from Trudeau not being feminist enough (i.e. gender parity is only half the battle).	7	9
5.2.3 too feminist	The questioning can come from Trudeau being too feminist (gender parity is not a legitimate ask)	14	14
5.3 Don't understand gender parity	This code was created to reveal how often gender parity was misunderstood, or that arguments within one same article seemed contradictory or fragmented in regard to the topic of gender parity.	10	12
5.4 Supports opponents of Trudeau	Lack of support can be demonstrated by supporting an opponent of Trudeau's (Conservatives, NDP, etc.).	7	9
5.5 Unclear support for Trudeau's feminism	Argument, example, or passage is fragmented, contradictory, unclear or divided regarding Trudeau's feminist claims.	25	27
6. Yes - Supports Trudeau's feminism	Argument, example, or passage clearly supports Trudeau's feminist claims.	18	19
6.1 Attacks opponents of Trudeau	Support can be demonstrated by attacking opposing leaders and parties	13	20
6.2 Highlights Trudeau's feminism	Support can be demonstrated by highlighting, placing an argument, policy, quote, front and centre	25	53

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Name	Description	Files	References
6.3 Questions own and others credibility regarding feminism	From Holmgren and Hearn (2009) Support for feminism can come from a critical take on positionality.	2	2
7. Focus	Main focus of article—on top of, or in combination with CRIAW themes. These were created through the iterative process of reading the articles.	66	186
7.1 Gender Balanced Cabinet	Gender balanced cabinet, women in cabinet, parity, Trudeau’s “Because it’s 2015”	31	60
7.2 Middle-East, Islam, Muslims	Arguments, statements, details revolve around the topic of treatment of women living in the Middle East, Muslim women, and/or veiled women	18	32
7.2.1 Niqab	The niqab “debate” was a wedge issue of the 2015 election campaigns (Bridgman et al., 2021), code to capture how it was debated within the context of women’s rights.	12	16
7.2.2 Syrian refugees	Sub-topic that didn’t fit into the niqab issue but that was relevant to the topic.	2	3
7.3 Other	Other topic arose that could not necessarily could be grouped.	8	11
7.4 Election strategies	Opinions on what leader could have done, should do, how campaign is going, etc.	8	11
8. Tertiary, Secondary, Primary topic	How important is topic of feminism, women’s rights in the article, how much space is given to topic?	66	68
8.1 Feminism is primary	Primary topic of article, takes up the only/most space	22	23
8.2 Feminism is secondary	Secondary topic of article, takes up some space, comes after other topics	10	11
8.3 Feminism is tertiary	Tertiary topic of article, takes up little space, mentioned in passing	34	34

APPENDIX

Name	Description	Files	References
9. Quote	Quote by political leaders in article		
9.1 Other political leader quote	Quote by any political leaders other than Trudeau	0	0
9.2 Trudeau quote	Quote by Trudeau in article	9	11
10. Good quote	Used to highlight a passage that illustrates an argument from my article	9	10

Appendix Four. Blogues du Sous-Corpus Médias Alternatifs (Article Trois)

Nom du médias	Langue	site web	nombre	Feminis
Alternatives	Bilingual	https://www.alternativesjour	4	De gauche
Canadian Feminist Beaver	EN	https://ellebeaver.wordpress	17	féministe
Je suis féministes	FR	https://jesuisfeministe.com/	3	féministe
Dammit Janet	EN	http://scathinglywrongrightw	19	féministe
Feminist Christian Socialist	EN	http://feministchristian.blogs	3	féministe
Hey look another feminist blog / that feminist killjoy	EN	https://thatfeministkilljoy.tun	61	féministe
Hook and Eye	EN	https://hookandeye.ca/about	1	féministe
kirbycairo: From Politics to Poetry	EN	http://kirbycairo.blogspot.co	4	de gauche
Pushed left	EN	http://pushedleft.blogspot.co	1	de gauche
Sisyphé	FR	https://www.sisyphé.org	2	féministe
The Cailleach: Another Blogging Ginger	EN	http://thecailleach.blogspot.c	3	de gauche
À bâbord	FR	https://www.ababord.org	3	De gauche
Briarpatch magazine blog	En	https://briarpatchmagazine.c	5	de gauche
Canadian Dimension	En	https://canadiandimension.co	6	De gauche
Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition	FR	https://cdeacf.ca/	11	De gauche
Feminist Alliance for Interantional Action	Bilingual	https://fafia-afai.org/	6	féministe
Feminist Current	EN	https://www.feministcurrent	10	féministe
Fugues	Bilingual	https://www.fugues.com/qui	3	féministe
Gazettes des femmes (Conseil du statut de la femme (CSF))	FR	https://gazettedesfemmes.ca	3	féministe
Guts	EN	https://gutsmagazine.ca/	2	féministe
Herizons	EN	https://www.herizons.ca	8	féministe
Institute for women's Policy Research	EN	https://iwpr.org/	1	féministe
L'Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques (IRIS)	FR	https://iris-recherche.qc.ca	1	féministe
la Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ)	FR	https://www.ffq.qc.ca/fr/	1	féministe
La Riposte Socialiste	FR	https://marxiste.qc.ca/	4	de gauche
Ms Feminist	EN	https://www.msmagazine.co	4	féministe
Nouveaux Cahiers du Socialisme	FR	https://www.cahiersdusociali	2	de gauche
Presse-toi à gauche	FR	https://www.pressegauche.o	53	de gauche
Rabble	EN	https://www.rabble.ca	7	de gauche
Ricochet	Bilingual	https://ricochet.media/fr	8	de gauche
Shameless Magazine	EN	https://www.shamlessmag.co	7	féministe
TWCA : Toronto Women's City Alliance	EN	http://www.twca.ca/	4	féministe
Urbania	FR	https://urbania.ca/societe/fe	3	de gauche
WAM	EN	https://www.womenactionm	1	féministe

Appendix Five. Coding Schedule–Alternative Media (Article Three)

Nom	Articles	Références
Candidats ou parti	44	130
Tous ou Presque tous les candidat.es ou parti	17	21
Autre candidat ou parti	9	16
Elizabeth May	5	8
Parti Vert	5	6
Harper	22	46
Conservateur	22	41
Gouvernement / le Canada	5	6
Premier Ministre	5	6
Thomas Mulcair	11	21
Nouveau Parti Démocratique / NPD	15	22
Trudeau	11	18
Parti Libéral	13	22
Féministe (mot et dérivé)	13	43
Thème Feministe	55	464
Garde des enfants abordable	11	13
Défaillances du système judiciaire	1	1
Droits en général (mot et dérivé)	36	80
Éducation	5	5
Égalité en général (mot et dérivé)	27	67
Égalité professionnelle, pay gap	10	16
Élections justes	1	1
Politique étrangère	5	7
Santé	16	23
Avortement et contraception	10	12
Logement	5	5
Immigration	6	6
Approach intersectionnelle	9	10
Justice en général (mot et dérivé)	14	18
LGBTQ2AI+	3	3
MMI femmes et filles autochtones disparues et assassinées (FFADA) – Réconciliation – Droits, égalité, sécurité des autochtones	27	43
Niqab	12	19
Pratique culturelle barbare	2	2
Droits à l'autonomie et à l'intégrité corporelle	4	6
Islamophobie	9	10

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Objectification et sexualization	4	4
Oppressions	3	6
Capitalisme	2	2
Colonialisme	4	8
Misogynie	8	9
Neoliberalisme	2	4
Patriarcat	4	8
Racisme	15	29
Place des femmes dans lieux publics	2	2
Place des femmes et féminisme en journalisme	0	0
Place des femmes et féminisme en politique	16	35
Pauvreté, situations précaires	12	17
Travail du sexe	9	14
Sexismes	7	8
Condition féminine - coupure	3	4
L'environnement	6	6
Droits des trans	5	5
Violence contre les femmes	21	35
Femme et leadership	7	10
Parité des genres au cabinet	4	4
Opposition	0	0
Attaque	34	132
Surnoms, moqueries	8	18
Colère, dégoût, mépris	12	18
Offre des contre-arguments	26	41
Demande de ne pas voter pour...	5	7
Misandrie Ironique	1	1
Questions	32	66
Soutien	0	0
Cite	6	8
Citation intéressante	4	4
Vote stratégique	3	3
Femme(s)	50	181

Appendix Six. Knowledge Mobilization: Feminist Post-Coronavirus Recovery

Perdomo, G., & Dangoisse, P. (2020, September 21). Will Chrystia Freeland lead a feminist post-coronavirus recovery? *The Conversation*. <http://theconversation.com/will-chrystia-freeland-lead-a-feminist-post-coronavirus-recovery-145912>

Will Chrystia Freeland lead a feminist post-coronavirus recovery?

With Chrystia Freeland now holding the reins of the ministry of finance and Canada's post-pandemic recovery plan, it's time to ask whether the first woman — and feminist — to lead the portfolio will push for significant advances for gender equality.

Freeland was appointed finance minister in August 2020 after Bill Morneau's swift departure, marking the first time in Canadian history that a woman has landed the job. The daughter of a feminist activist from northern Alberta, Freeland is also an avowed feminist herself—and so is her boss, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

In her past role as foreign affairs and international trade minister, Freeland supported feminist policies like Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. She has now envisioned a “green and equitable” recovery to a crisis that has disproportionately affected women, signalling that she might push for advances to gender equality.

But there are reasons to be skeptical.

Trudeau's feminism questioned

Freeland will be working closely with Trudeau, whose own feminist credentials are increasingly under scrutiny. During his first campaign as Liberal leader, Trudeau touted his feminism

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proudly—remember “Because it’s 2015”?—only to bury the topic during his bid for re-election last year. That may have been due to the departures of star cabinet ministers Jody Wilson-Raybould and Jane Philpott, which sparked a conversation about Trudeau’s feminism.

Several times, it has been noted that the prime minister’s use of progressive language does not reflect his government’s actions.

We recently published a study based on an analysis of three years of official speeches by the prime minister and found that Trudeau rarely spoke from a feminist standpoint: gender equality and mentions of women’s rights were largely contained and limited by the discourse of economic prosperity.

Overall, we found that Trudeau’s understanding of feminism appears to align with “neoliberal feminism,” a form of feminism that focuses primarily on women’s economic empowerment as a means to achieve gender equality.

Neoliberalism is mostly marked by trade liberalization, deregulation and privatization of government services. It emphasizes economic prosperity as the ultimate measure of success, treating individuals as taxpayers or service users, rather than citizens.

Our paper highlights at least three ways in which neoliberal feminism is problematic. These may be relevant in questioning Freeland’s own feminist stance.

Structural barriers ignored

First, neoliberal feminism is based on the notion that individual empowerment is the highest form of citizenship. And so neoliberal feminists propose that as long as women have the same access to economic empowerment as men, they should be able to achieve full equality.

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This view allows society to ignore the need to address deep structural barriers to substantive equality such as discrimination on the basis of race, ability, nationality and so on.

Second, the idea that women are best emancipated through economic empowerment tends to speak only to a certain group of them: The famous book Lean In, by Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg, might have been well-received by privileged women and those climbing corporate ladders across the globe, but women in lower socio-economic ranks simply don't have access to this type of individualist pursuit of success.

What's more, no amount of leaning in would help most women of colour, transgendered persons, undocumented migrants or so many others overcome the very real barriers that they face in the workplace.

Finally, the type of casual approach that accompanies neoliberal feminism tends to gender-neutralize issues that are very much about gender, such as child care. Overall, gender-neutralization works in much the same way as colour-blindness has worked when addressing questions of race and justice (in other words, not well).

Neoliberalism has turned childcare into a question of children's rights and success while ignoring its importance for women. Another example of gender-neutralization is violence against Indigenous women and girls. To Trudeau's credit, our study did find that he tends to address this issue head on.

Studies have found that if women-specific issues are not tackled as such, then women become invisible in policymaking. There is no question that the Trudeau government has made efforts to bring a feminist lens to various files. The prime minister's commitment to appointing women to

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important positions has had a positive effect; major policies have taken feminism into account, particularly in foreign affairs.

But Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, which both Trudeau and Freeland support, uses feminism as a conduit for economic ends rather than considering gender equality an end on its own.

This type of framework is gaining strength. Championed by global organizations like the World Bank, it proposes that women's empowerment makes "good business sense" for countries. The problem is that, in this view, women end up as little more than a resource in the toolbox for economic prosperity. Our study confirms this point.

How, and how often, Freeland will apply her view of feminism in her new role remains to be seen. As the finance minister of a G7 nation, Freeland has entered a club of political leaders whose entire world view has been shaped by neoliberalism.

But if she wants a truly equitable recovery, Freeland will have to find a way out of this neoliberal straitjacket.

Appendix Seven. Knowledge Mobilisation 2:2021 Budget

Dangoisse, P., & Perdomo, G. (2021, avril). Féministe, le nouveau budget Freeland ? Pas vraiment !

La Conversation. <http://theconversation.com/feministe-le-nouveau-budget-freeland-pas-vraiment-159663>

Féministe, le nouveau budget Freeland ? Pas vraiment !

Justin Trudeau a clamé haut et fort son attachement aux idéaux féministes. La ministre des Finances, Chrystia Freeland, première femme à occuper ce poste au Canada, exprime son féminisme ouvertement, et même à travers ses vêtements, arborant à la veille du dernier budget un t-shirt au slogan explicite.

En tant que chercheuses féministes en communication, nous avons donc espoir de voir un budget aligné avec ces valeurs. Cependant, le Budget 2021 nous laisse sur notre faim.

Fille d'une militante féministe du nord de l'Alberta, Mme Freeland avait promis une reprise « verte et équitable » pour se remettre d'une crise qui a affecté les femmes de manière disproportionnée. La conciliation entre le travail et les soins aux enfants a été difficile et la réponse de Chrystia Freeland a été de proposer un programme national de service de garde à la petite enfance. L'idée n'est pas nouvelle : en fait, les féministes font cette demande depuis les années 1960, et plusieurs gouvernements l'ont proposée par le passé.

À cet égard, le programme national de service de garde est le bienvenu. Par contre, la façon dont il est présenté suggère une compréhension problématique du féminisme : à qui est-il vraiment destiné ? Ou, plus précisément, quel est son objectif ultime ?

Le féminisme de Trudeau est surtout économique

Chrystia Freeland a travaillé en collaboration avec Justin Trudeau, dont les références féministes sont de plus en plus remises en question. Nous avons analysé trois années de discours officiels du premier ministre et avons constaté qu'il parlait rarement d'un point de vue féministe : l'égalité des sexes et les mentions des droits des femmes étaient largement contenues et limitées par le discours sur la prospérité économique.

Justin Trudeau adhère à un type de « féminisme néolibéral » qui se concentre principalement sur l'autonomisation économique des femmes comme moyen principal d'atteindre l'égalité des sexes. Le néolibéralisme est surtout marqué par la libéralisation du commerce, la déréglementation et la privatisation des services gouvernementaux. Il met l'accent sur la prospérité économique comme mesure ultime du succès.

Ce féminisme néolibéral peut devenir très problématique. Voici pourquoi.

Des obstacles structureaux ignorés

Dans la logique du féminisme néolibéral, les femmes ont le même accès à l'émancipation économique que les hommes et elles devraient donc être en mesure d'atteindre l'égalité grâce à leur volonté propre. Ceci permet à la société d'ignorer de profonds obstacles structureaux, tels que la discrimination fondée sur le sexe, la race, les capacités, la nationalité, etc.

Un système de service de garde abordable aidera plus de femmes à retourner sur le marché du travail, certes, mais il ne remet pas en question le fait que les soins aux enfants restent, obstinément, la principale responsabilité des femmes dans la plupart des familles. Au Québec, où le gouvernement subventionne les services de garde, un grand nombre de femmes sont encore gravement touchées par la pandémie. On estime que 68 % des emplois qui ont été perdus l'ont

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été par des femmes, dont les secteurs d'activités (hôtellerie, restauration, services, etc.) ont été plus durement frappés. Les fermetures des écoles et des services de garde les ont aussi davantage pénalisées.

L'autonomisation économique

Lorsque l'accent est mis sur l'émancipation des femmes uniquement par des moyens économiques, cela tend à ne parler qu'à un certain nombre d'entre elles : par exemple, le célèbre essai Lean In, de Sheryl Sandberg, directrice des opérations chez Facebook, a été bien accueilli par les femmes privilégiées et celles qui gravissent les échelons des entreprises dans le monde entier ; mais les femmes qui font face à des obstacles structureaux, dont les plus pauvres, les racisées, celles issues de la communauté LGBTQ2+, les sans-papiers, et même celles de la classe moyenne, n'ont pas les mêmes choix.

« Une politique économique intelligente »

Dans les discours officiels de Justin Trudeau, les femmes sont considérées comme des ressources inexploitées, un outil dont nous devons libérer le potentiel au profit d'une économie prospère.

Chrystia Freeland dit de son budget, « Ce n'est pas seulement une bonne politique féministe, c'est aussi une politique économique intelligente ». Cet accent sur la prospérité soulève la même question que d'autres politiques élaborées par le duo Trudeau/Freeland : quel est leur but ultime ? La politique canadienne d'aide internationale féministe, par exemple, utilise le féminisme comme un moyen d'atteindre des objectifs économiques plutôt que de considérer l'égalité des sexes comme une fin en soi.

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Défendue par des organisations comme la Banque mondiale, cette politique propose que l'autonomisation des femmes soit une « bonne affaire » pour les pays. Dans cette optique, les femmes ne sont guère plus qu'une ressource dans la boîte à outils de la prospérité économique.

De la même manière, le Budget 2021 donne priorité à la prospérité économique en tant que principal catalyseur de l'équité entre les sexes. Cela risque de devenir un fardeau supplémentaire pour les femmes au lieu d'agir comme un outil de libération. Les femmes deviennent des ressources, « minées » jusqu'à leur point de rupture. Cette année, nous avons vu des femmes épuisées, dont les infirmières, les caissières, les professeuses ; nous avons vu des employées de soutien surmenées — souvent des femmes immigrantes — notamment celles qui travaillent dans les centres de soins de longue durée, souvent dans des conditions précaires.

Un pas dans la bonne direction

Une véritable reprise économique nécessite un réinvestissement de fonds publics, mais aussi des mesures pour s'attaquer aux inégalités systémiques qui ont contribué à la marginalisation de certaines populations.

À cet égard, le Budget 2021 fait des pas dans la bonne direction. Mais il y manque une vision globale féministe qui animerait l'ensemble du budget, et pas seulement les sections distinctes sur les travailleuses, les femmes autochtones, les femmes noires, ou la communauté LGBTQ+.

Un vrai budget « vert et équitable » aurait été un budget féministe, car on ne peut pas aborder l'un sans l'autre. Nous savons que les changements climatiques affectent les femmes de manière disproportionnée, en particulier les femmes autochtones et les femmes les plus pauvres.

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Les politiques qui visent à protéger l'environnement, qui s'opposent à l'exploitation de nos ressources naturelles, doivent comprendre une vision féministe. Non pas parce que ça fait une « bonne affaire », mais parce que le but ultime c'est la justice elle-même.

Appendix Eight. Knowledge Mobilisation: The Women's Movement Must Evolve

Coen-Sanchez, K., & Dangoisse, P. (2022, October 12). The Canadian women's movement primarily serves white women and must evolve. *The Conversation*. <http://theconversation.com/the-canadian-womens-movement-primarily-serves-white-women-and-must-evolve-190897>

The article was also slightly modified and translated for a francophone audience, it can be found here:

Coen-Sanchez, K., & Dangoisse, P. (2022, November 24). Le mouvement canadien des femmes doit évoluer. *Le Devoir*, Idées.

Note: This article won the 2022 Communication Department Knowledge Mobilization Award

The Canadian women's movement primarily serves white women and must evolve

In 2017, [thousands of women](#) gathered in Washington, D.C., in protest of Donald Trump's inauguration as president of the United States.

The protest took place across multiple cities in the U.S. Trump's presidency exposed a polarized nation, divided by an election that raised unsettling questions about out-of-touch elites and barriers to women's ambitions.

Trump expressed [misogynistic views](#) during the presidential campaign, with slurs about Megyn Kelly, Carly Fiorina and Hillary Clinton. These public remarks reaffirmed the patriarchal political power structures in North America that are often manifested through acts of dominance and privilege more broadly in society.

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American race scholar [Patricia Hills Collins](#) argues that the power of nationalism likely contributes to sexist and racist thinking. Understanding the intersecting roles of politics, race and gender highlights some of the mechanisms at work in political systems.

The massive anti-Trump demonstrations drew support from [women in Canada](#), who held their own protests in solidarity. Canadian women [did so again more recently](#), showing support for women south of the border over the U.S. Supreme Court's overturn of Roe v. Wade.

History of the women's movement

During the [abolition and anti-slavery movement](#), images of white women were used to represent all women, even though the fight for women's rights was not a single, unified struggle.

Angela Davis, an American political activist, scholar and author, [has argued that racialized and working-class women were excluded from rights movements led by white women](#).

She noted that the evolving 19th-century ideology of femininity portrayed white women as the saviours fighting for all women's issues while racialized women were practically anomalies. Racism and sexism were tied to the unique predicaments of racialized people. Ultimately, white feminists were perpetrating the exact same oppression on Black and racialized women that they were fighting against.

The [Canadian women's movement](#), and the [representation of womanhood in Canada](#), is no exception.

It is defined by the social class of able-bodied, educated, white, Christian, Anglo-Saxon women. This results in an unrealistic portrayal of women's various lived experiences and struggles,

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contributing to a focus on issues that are reflective of their own common lived experience as white women.

In Canada, as in many other colonial nations, [feminists historically](#) wanted a piece of the political and economic power men had. They wanted a place within the existing system, whereas the struggle of women of other intersecting identities involved fighting the oppressor.

Focus isn't inclusive

The dominance of white women in the Canadian women's movement is obvious when examining the issues it prioritizes. It's been largely silent, for example, on Canadian issues such as [forced sterilization](#) for [Black and Indigenous women](#).

There have been no mass protests by the mainstream women's movement to demand pay equity in Canada, or for the unmarked graves found at residential schools.

There's been no national advocacy to stop increasing violence against women, [a scourge that was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). There have been no massive, Canada-wide demonstrations to support BIPOC communities in their fight against systematic barriers.

When [Justin Trudeau, a self-described feminist](#), won the federal election in 2015, it seemed a new political era for women was beginning. Or so we thought.

Since then, academics [and the media](#) have called out the Liberals, saying their talk on women's rights hasn't been matched with action.

What does this tell us about Canadian feminism? White saviour feminism isn't helping women locally or abroad.

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Canadians habitually call out other foreign nations' mistreatment of women, but [rarely shift their lens to address the existing oppression of Canadian women](#), from murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls to pay equity or [sexist cultures within our national sports](#).

Canadian feminists should obviously support their sisters around the world. But they still have a long way to go before they can start prescribing solutions, especially if they do so via white saviourism and dismissiveness about the priorities of racialized women.

Colonial past

White saviourism has its roots in Canada's colonial past—[the residential school system was regarded as a way to “save” Indigenous children](#), after all.

But white saviourism is also part of white male supremacy culture. It's hindered women's equality by erasing and silencing the voices of the marginalized and by isolating those who don't fit the image of the liberal, white, able-bodied, educated woman.

Just as colonialism created different racial categories among citizens, white saviourism has done the same thing. Whiteness is a symbol of success and a desirable identity in terms of everyday economic and cultural practices.

There are an array of structural barriers against women within the cultural, political and social system itself.

That includes various [empowerment debates that blame individual women for not succeeding](#) and victimizing veiled women without admitting how white culture itself is [fixated on the male gaze](#), and sexualization and objectification that fuels [rape culture](#).

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Here and abroad, Canada could work towards recognizing systemic discrimination while encouraging and supporting other women in foreign countries [to rise up in the manner they choose](#).

A feminist agenda seems only to be the focus of Canadian government departments like [Global Affairs](#), the first ministry to apply an overtly feminist foreign policy. We do not see the same approach at [Canadian Heritage](#) or social or agricultural departments and agencies.

Transnational and global feminism

By focusing on issues that cater to privileged white people, more complex issues are erased and forgotten, including systemic issues in [women's health](#), police brutality towards racialized women, poverty and access to services.

Alternatively, a [transnational feminist perspective](#) would fight for women's rights and gender equality across national boundaries and work in collaboration with women from other countries.

The diverse experiences of women around the world have an impact on [gendered relationships everywhere](#). Transnational feminism would take into account issues of gender, language, imperialism, colonialism, economics, human rights, race and nationalism. It requires analyzing the experiences within and across multiple regions, and their interdependencies.

If we don't take a transnational feminist approach, we risk continuing a colonial culture that requires white saviourism practices. That means we're actively, albeit unknowingly, participating in reproducing systemic barriers for women in Canada and around the world.

Appendix Nine. Knowledge Mobilisation: 2021 Budget

Dangoisse, P. (2023, August 26). Quelle guerre des sexes ? *Le Devoir*.

<https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/idees/796898/parite-quelle-guerre-des-sexes>

This article also has a shorter version, in English, in the *National Post*:

Delvaux, M., Dangoisse, P., & Dupuis-Déri, F. (2023, June 15). Counterpoint: No, women have not won the so-called war between the sexes. *National Post*, NP comment.

Quelle guerre des sexes?

Les discours masculinistes prônant une sorte de « guerre des sexes » sont à la hausse ; les Andrew Tate [et autres Jean-Claude Rochefort de ce monde](#) affirment avec vigueur que les hommes perdent face aux femmes à cause du mouvement féministe. Ce genre de discours peut se révéler très dangereux physiquement et psychologiquement pour les femmes et les personnes non binaires. Cette idéologie vient aussi nourrir les groupes extrémistes tels que les incels, et se retrouve même parfois dans notre vie quotidienne.

Effectivement, la tension homme-femme se retrouve même dans le film *Barbie* : on y retrouve des mondes « féminin » et « masculin » en opposition complète, et la fin ne propose aucune solution pour un monde combinant les deux sexes (et multiples genres) de façon égalitaire. Dans les cas les plus extrêmes des discours sexistes, des hommes ne voient aucune autre issue que de commettre des actes violents envers les femmes, [l'attaque de Waterloo](#) étant le plus récent de ses événements. Voici donc quelques pistes argumentatives pour « s'armer » contre ce genre de discours.

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Les promoteurs du masculinisme toxique affirment que les femmes prennent de plus en plus de place dans la société (pour ne pas dire trop de place). Cependant, dans les faits, ce sont encore les hommes qui sont le plus souvent chefs d'État, chefs de partis politiques, p.-d.g. d'entreprises privées, directeurs de conseils d'administration, propriétaires et diffuseurs de médias, directeurs d'école et doyens d'universités. Les hommes continuent de diriger et de détenir le pouvoir politique, économique, éducatif et médiatique.

Cela s'explique, en partie, par le fait que les femmes continuent à porter un double fardeau. Elles assument encore [près du double des tâches ménagères](#) par rapport aux hommes. Les femmes ont une vie rendue difficile par la [double charge](#), oui, mais aussi par la [double contrainte](#), les plafonds de verre, les falaises de verre, [l'objectification](#), et j'en passe.

Les hommes qui déclarent qu'il y a une guerre des sexes utilisent souvent l'argument sur les salaires et les revenus qui ont augmenté pour les femmes et baissé pour les hommes. Cet argument est souvent lié aux statistiques qui montrent que [les femmes obtiennent plus de diplômes](#). L'attitude ambitieuse (ou superficielle selon les dires de certains) des femmes impliquerait alors qu'elles veuillent des hommes tout aussi ambitieux, éduqués, compétitifs, professionnels.

Cet argument est intéressant, car les [sentiments acrimonieux](#) qui peuvent résulter de l'inégalité des revenus ou de l'éducation dans un couple proviennent généralement des hommes, et non l'inverse. En effet, ce sont les hommes qui, en général, ne supportent pas qu'une femme gagne plus qu'eux — comme le démontre, ironiquement, le discours masculiniste, qui aimerait bien voir des femmes moins ambitieuses et plus souvent à la maison —, comme le montre le mouvement montant des *tradwives*.

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Le masculin l'emporte souvent

Pour ce qui est du niveau « élevé » de diplomation des femmes (qui n'est même pas encore à parité avec les hommes dans la majorité des secteurs !), cela peut s'expliquer en termes simples, sans avoir recours à une « guerre des sexes ». Par nos enseignements sociétaux et culturels, nous avons appris aux filles à s'asseoir gentiment, à se taire et à bien travailler à l'école, que le monde extérieur est effrayant et difficile, tandis que nous avons dit aux garçons que les « vrais » hommes jouent avec des camions, jouent à la police et qu'ils doivent gagner de l'argent rapidement pour subvenir aux besoins de leur famille.

Cela explique bien mieux pourquoi les femmes étudient plus longtemps et mieux, tandis que les garçons, pour devenir des hommes, quittent l'école pour aller travailler avec de vrais camions sur des chantiers de construction, avec de vraies armes comme agent de police, et pourquoi ils décrochent de l'école plus tôt pour gagner de l'argent afin de remplir le rôle de pourvoyeur qu'on leur enseigne d'être. Cependant, nous avons tort de penser que le système scolaire est conçu pour les filles. [Les garçons bénéficient toujours de la plus grande attention](#) de la part des enseignantes et des enseignants.

Dans le cursus scolaire, c'est le masculin qui l'emporte : [les garçons et les hommes sont valorisés dans les apprentissages](#), les enfants apprennent bien vite que tous les leaders, héros et génies ont été, et seront toujours, des hommes (cela peut aussi expliquer pourquoi les filles « choisissent » d'être enseignantes ou infirmières, plutôt que docteurs ou directrices...). En fait, quand on analyse le système de l'éducation, on comprend que des problèmes existent pour toutes et tous, on essaie de faire cadrer les enfants dans un moule bien défini. Garçons, filles et tous

APPENDIX

genres peuvent s’y sentir mal à l’aise, ou pas à leur place, mais [les filles auront plus appris à faire avec que les garçons](#).

Sur la même lignée, ironiquement, les femmes obtiennent aujourd’hui plus de diplômes que la dernière génération de femmes, mais gagnent toujours moins que les hommes ! Quelle étrange façon de gagner une guerre ! Au Canada, en 2021, [les femmes gagnaient 132,65 \\$ de moins par semaine de 35 heures que les hommes](#). Cela représente 6896,24 \$ par année, et sur une carrière de 30 ans, cela représente 206 887,50 \$. Pourquoi blâmer les femmes pour la baisse des salaires ou le chômage des hommes ? Il vaudrait mieux blâmer la mauvaise gestion économique de la pandémie, les idéologies politiques contre les syndicats (dont le [nombre d’adhérents a fortement diminué sous les conservateurs](#)), l’industrialisation et le manque de formation pour la transition de la main-d’oeuvre.

Un féminisme qui a le dos large

Un autre argument avancé est que la guerre entraînera un avenir non coopératif. Mais n’est-ce pas aux hommes que l’on apprend encore aujourd’hui à être des « loups solitaires », des « *self-made-men* », des chefs de meute, à ne compter que sur eux-mêmes ? Alors qu’on enseigne aux femmes tout le contraire ? Qu’elles doivent se regrouper, créer des réseaux et prendre soin les unes des autres ? Encore une fois, dans cet argument, on voit l’erreur de logique : personne ne « gagne » dans cette bataille.

Le taux de suicide plus élevé chez les hommes est souvent utilisé pour démontrer que les hommes souffrent, et plus que les femmes. Cependant, [le taux de tentatives de suicide](#) est relativement égal pour les hommes que pour les femmes dans les pays les plus progressistes. Il est plus élevé pour les hommes dans les pays les moins progressistes. Les hommes utilisent des

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moyens plus violents et des méthodes plus efficaces pour se suicider, comme l'utilisation d'armes à feu. Et, dans près d'un tiers des cas au Canada, ils tuent leur partenaire au préalable.

Les femmes essaient tout autant que les hommes de s'enlever la vie, avec des couteaux et des pilules, et échouent.

Un autre argument antiféministe est celui que ce mouvement nuit à la vie de famille et à la procréation. Qu'en est-il de l'absence d'accès aux services de garde d'enfants ? À des soins de santé décents pour les femmes ? Il y a une crise des places dans les garderies, une crise du système de santé et une crise du logement. Nous ne sommes pas non plus très performants sur le plan économique, et je ne parlerai pas du lien entre la crise climatique et la baisse des taux de fécondité. Il est impossible de blâmer les femmes et le féminisme pour toutes ces crises.

Finalement, les défenseurs de discours masculinistes affirment que les femmes ne laissent pas les pères se charger de la garde des enfants. C'est exactement ce que veut le féminisme : le partage des responsabilités au sein du foyer. Qui s'est battu pour la garde partagée des enfants, le congé parental et les allocations familiales ? Les femmes. Tous les pères bénéficient d'un congé parental de 35 semaines au Canada. Seuls 46 % des pères profitent du congé parental, et pour une période plus courte (cinq semaines).

Pourquoi ? Parce qu'il n'est pas viril d'être père au foyer. Il n'est pas rentable d'être un père au foyer. Il n'est pas productif d'être un père au foyer. Le congé parental est là pour que les hommes le prennent. Qu'ils le prennent ! Qu'ils rendent cool et viril le fait d'être à la maison avec un enfant, autant pour les hommes et que pour les femmes.

Le paradis féministe, que les Andrew Tate de ce monde clament haut et fort être en train de détruire notre société, est loin de ce qu'il préconise. Le paradis féministe est un endroit où les

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personnes de tous les genres, hommes, femmes, non binaires vivent en harmonie les unes avec les autres. Il n'y est pas question de guerre, de batailles, de vengeance, de suprématie ou de prise de pouvoir. Le mouvement féministe n'a pas fait de victimes et n'est pas en voie d'en faire. Les mouvements masculinistes, en revanche, semblent faire exactement cela : réclamer des vies dans une guerre qu'ils ont inventée.

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Appendix Ten. Voyant Stopword List (English)

!	1992	2012	33
\$	1993	2013	34
%	1994	2014	35
&	1995	2015	36
,	1996	2016	37
-	1997	2017	38
.	1998	2018	39
0	1999	2019	4
1	2	2020	40
10	20	21	41
100	2000	22	42
11	2001	23	43
12	2002	24	44
13	2003	25	45
14	2004	26	46
15	2005	27	47
16	2006	28	48
17	2007	29	49
18	2008	3	5
19	2009	30	50
1990	2010	31	51
1991	2011	32	52

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53	74	96	after
54	75	97	afterwards
55	76	98	again
56	77	99	against
57	78	:	all
58	8	;	almost
59	80	<	alone
6	81	>	along
60	82	@	already
61	83	\(also
62	84	\)	although
63	85	*	always
64	86	\+	am
65	87	\?	among
66	88	\[amongst
67	89	\]	amongst
68	9	\^	amount
69	90	\{	an
7	91	\}	and
70	92	a	another
71	93	about	ant
72	94	above	any
73	95	across	anyhow

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anyone	bet	do	everything
anything	between	does	everywhere
anyway	both	doesn't	except
anywhere	bottom	don't	f
apie	bus	done	few
ar	but	down	fifteen
arba	buvo	due	fify
are	by	during	fill
around	būti	dél	find
as	būtų	e	fire
at	c	each	first
aš	call	eg	five
b	can	eight	for
back	cannot	either	former
be	cant	eleven	formerly
because	co	else	forty
been	con	elsewhere	found
before	could	enough	four
beforehand	couldnt	etc	from
bei	d	even	front
being	de	ever	full
beside	did	every	further
besides	didn't	everyone	g

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gali	however	jei	jums
get	hundred	ji	jumyse
give	i	jie	juo
go	ie	jiedu	juodu
h	if	jiedvi	juodviese
had	iki	jiedviem	juos
has	in	jiedviese	juose
hasnt	inc	jiems	jus
have	indeed	jis	ją
he	into	jo	jį
hence	ir	jodviem	jūs
her	is	jog	jūsų
here	it	joje	jų
hereafter	its	jomis	jųdviejų
hereby	itself	joms	k
herein	iš	jos	kad
hereupon	j	jose	kai
hers	ja	judu	kaip
herself	jai	judvi	kas
him	jais	judviejų	keep
himself	jam	judviem	kiek
his	jame	judviese	kol
how	jas	jumis	kur

APPENDIX

kurie	metu	n	of
kuris	might	name	off
ką	mill	namely	often
l	mine	nei	on
last	more	neither	once
latter	moreover	nes	one
latterly	most	net	only
least	mostly	never	onto
less	move	nevertheless	or
ltd	much	next	other
m	mudu	nine	others
made	mudvi	no	otherwise
man	mudviejū	nobody	our
mane	mudviem	none	ours
manimi	mudviese	noone	ourselves
mano	mumis	nor	out
many	mums	nors	over
manyje	mumyse	not	own
manęs	mus	nothing	p
may	must	now	part
me	my	nowhere	pat
meanwhile	myself	nuo	per
mes	mūsų	o	perhaps

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please	several	tas	these
po	she	tau	they
prie	should	tave	thing
prieš	since	tavimi	third
put	six	tavyje	this
q	sixty	tavęs	those
r	so	tačiau	thou
rather	some	ten	though
re	somehow	than	three
s	someone	that	through
same	something	the	throughout
sau	sometime	thee	thru
save	sometimes	their	thus
savimi	somewhere	them	thy
savo	still	themselves	to
savyje	su	then	todėl
savęs	such	thence	together
see	system	there	too
seem	t	thereafter	toward
seemed	tada	thereby	towards
seeming	tai	therefore	tu
seems	taip	therein	tuo
serious	take	thereupon	twelve

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twenty	was	wherever	would
two	we	whether	x
u	well	which	y
un	were	while	yet
under	what	whither	you
until	whatever	who	your
up	when	whoever	yours
upon	whence	whole	yourself
us	whenever	whom	yourselves
už	where	whose	yra
v	whereafter	why	z
very	whereas	will	
via	whereby	with	ı
visi	wherein	within	
w	whereupon	without	

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Appendix Eleven. Voyant Stopword List (French)

Ap.	aucune	auxdites	bé
Apr.	audit	auxdits	c
GHz	auprès	auxquelles	c'
MHz	auquel	auxquels	c'est
USD	aura	avaient	c'était
a	aurai	avais	car
afin	auraient	avait	ce
ah	aurais	avant	ceci
ai	aurait	avec	cela
aie	auras	avez	celle
aient	aurez	aviez	celle-ci
aies	auriez	avons	celle-là
ait	aurions	avons	celles
alors	aurons	ayant	celles-ci
après	auront	ayez	celles-là
as	aussi	ayons	celui
attendu	autour	b	celui-ci
au	autre	bah	celui-là
au-delà	autres	banco	celà
au-devant	autrui	ben	cent
aucun	aux	bien	cents

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cependant	cinquante-et-un	desdits	durant
certain	cinquante-huit	desquelles	dès
certaine	cinquante-neuf	desquels	déjà
certaines	cinquante-quatre	deux	e
certains	cinquante-sept	devant	eh
ces	cinquante-six	devers	elle
cet	cinquante-trois	dg	elles
cette	cl	différentes	en
ceux	cm	différents	en-dehors
ceux-ci	cm ²	divers	encore
ceux-là	comme	diverses	enfin
cf.	contre	dix	entre
cg	d	dix-huit	envers
cgr	d'	dix-neuf	es
chacun	d'après	dix-sept	est
chacune	d'un	dl	et
chaque	d'une	dm	eu
chez	dans	donc	eue
ci	de	dont	eues
cinq	depuis	douze	eah
cinquante	derrière	du	eurent
cinquante-cinq	des	dudit	eus
cinquante-deux	desdites	duquel	eusse

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eussent	eûtes	fusse	fûtes
eusses	f	fussent	g
eussiez	fait	fusses	gr
eussions	fi	fussiez	h
eut	flac	fussions	ha
eux	fors	fut	
eûmes	furent	fûmes	
eût	fus	fût	
han	i	jusque	les
hein	ici	k	lesquelles
hem	il	kg	lesquels
heu	ils	km	leur
hg	j	km ²	leurs
hl	j'	l	lez
hm	j'ai	l'	lors
hm ³	j'avais	l'autre	lorsqu'
holà	j'étais	l'on	lorsque
hop	jamais	l'un	lui
hormis	je	l'une	lès
hors	jusqu'	la	m
huit	jusqu'au	laquelle	m'
hum	jusqu'aux	le	ma
hé	jusqu'à	lequel	maint

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mainte	millions	mêmes	nous
maintes	ml	n	nul
maints	mm	n'avait	nulle
mais	mm ²	n'y	n°
malgré	moi	ne	néanmoins
me	moins	neuf	o
mes	mon	ni	octante
mg	moyennant	non	oh
mgr	mt	nonante	on
mil	m ²	nonobstant	ont
mille	m ³	nos	onze
milliards	même	notre	
or	passé	pourvu	qu'on
ou	pendant	près	quand
outré	personne	puisque'	quant
où	peu	puisque	quarante
p	plus	q	quarante-cinq
par	plus_d'un	qu	quarante-deux
par-delà	plus_d'une	qu'	quarante-et-un
parbleu	plusieurs	qu'elle	quarante-huit
parce	pour	qu'elles	quarante-neuf
parmi	pourquoi	qu'il	quarante-quatre
pas	pourtant	qu'ils	quarante-sept

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quarante-six	quatre-vingt-cinq	quatre-vingt-dix-	quatre-vingt-
quarante-trois	quatre-vingt-deux	neuf	douze
quatorze	quatre-vingt-dix	quatre-vingt-dix-	quatre-vingt-huit
quatre	quatre-vingt-dix-	sept	
quatre-vingt	huit		
quatre-vingt-neuf	quelle	revoilà	serez
quatre-vingt-onze	quelles	rien	seriez
quatre-vingt-	quelqu'	s	serions
quatorze	quelqu'un	s'	serons
quatre-vingt-	quelqu'une	sa	seront
quatre	quelque	sans	ses
quatre-vingt-	quelques	sauf	si
quinze	quelques-unes	se	sinon
quatre-vingt-seize	quelques-uns	seize	six
quatre-vingt-sept	quels	selon	soi
quatre-vingt-six	qui	sept	soient
quatre-vingt-treize	quiconque	septante	sois
quatre-vingt-trois	quinze	sera	soit
quatre-vingt-un	quoi	serai	soixante
quatre-vingt-une	quoiqu'	seraient	soixante-cinq
quatre-vingts	quoique	serais	soixante-deux
que	r	serait	soixante-dix
quel	revoici	seras	soixante-dix-huit

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soixante-dix-neuf	sommes	tel	trente-deux
soixante-dix-sept	son	telle	trente-et-un
soixante-douze	sont	telles	trente-huit
soixante-et-onze	sous	tels	trente-neuf
soixante-et-un	soyez	tes	trente-quatre
soixante-et-une	soyons	toi	trente-sept
soixante-huit	suis	ton	trente-six
soixante-neuf	suite	toujours	trente-trois
soixante-quatorze	sur	tous	trois
soixante-quatre	sus	tout	très
soixante-quinze	t	toute	tu
soixante-seize	t'	toutefois	u
soixante-sept	ta	toutes	un
soixante-six	tacatac	treize	une
soixante-treize	tandis	trente	
soixante-trois	te	trente-cinq	
unes			
uns			
v			
vers			
via			
vingt			
vingt-cinq			

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vingt-deux

vingt-huit

vingt-neuf

vingt-quatre

vingt-sept

vingt-six

vingt-trois

vis-à-vis

voici

voilà

vos

votre

vous

w

x

y

z

zéro

à

ç'

ça

ès

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APPENDIX

étais

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Appendix 11: Stopword List (French)

soixante-cinq

soixante-deux

soixante-dix

soixante-dix-huit

soixante-dix-neuf

soixante-dix-sept

soixante-douze

soixante-et-onze

soixante-et-un

soixante-et-une

soixante-huit

soixante-neuf

soixante-quatorze

soixante-quatre

soixante-quinze

soixante-seize

soixante-sept

soixante-six

soixante-treize

soixante-trois

sommes

son