

## The Duality of Man

*An exploration of masculine identities as both drivers and disruptors of far-right climate denialism in Canada*

*Janice Swan*

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Janice Swan

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Master's Programme in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science

Submitted May 13, 2024

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## **Abstract**

The climate is in a state of emergency. Anthropogenic climate change is destroying social and environmental systems across the world (albeit, unevenly) and jeopardizing the safety and humanity of present and future generations. Nevertheless, climate denialism persists as a rhetoric and belief, particularly within the burgeoning far-right political projects in countries most responsible for rising temperatures. The current study endeavours to unearth why this may be the case, and how it could potentially be explained by another facet of far-right ideology: misogyny. To do so, I critically analyze the People's Party of Canada's climate discourse through a political ecology lens anchored in Gramscian theories of hegemony and feminist conceptualisations of masculinities. Ultimately, I find that the PPC articulate a heavily masculinized and topically diverse form of denial, assessed to be a part of a broader strategy to secure power within Canadian politics via established dominant fossil fuel and patriarchal paradigms. I suggest several strategies that could contribute to the effective resistance of such a complex discourse, including the elevation of ecological masculine identities and an unwavering endorsement of multiculturalist ethics.

**Keywords:** fossil fuel hegemony; climate skepticism; feminist critical discourse analysis; masculinities; political ecologies of the far right; sustainability science

**Word count:** 11,939 words

## Acknowledgements

This thesis was written during an ongoing genocide.

As of 8:59:59 am (CEST) on the morning of May 13th, 2024, 35,469 Palestinians have been murdered by the state of Israel in Gaza, including over 14,500 children. 78,614 have been injured, and at least 10,000 are currently missing.<sup>1</sup>

Every university in Gaza has been destroyed.

Lund University remains silent and therefore complicit.

We join students across the world who are collectively amplifying the Palestinian struggle. We condemn the ongoing violence perpetrated by the state of Israel against Palestinian health, freedom, safety, culture, and academia.

We demand that Lund University openly recognizes these atrocities and cuts all ties with the state of Israel. Additionally, it must terminate all cooperation with the weapons industry so as to ensure that Lund University will never again contribute to such violence and war crimes.<sup>2</sup>

We urge every reader to speak up for human rights and international law and against this genocide.

FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA  
PALESTINE WILL BE FREE

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<sup>1</sup> See Al Jazeera *Israel-Gaza war in maps and charts: Live tracker*: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker/>

<sup>2</sup> Demands in alignment with *Lund Students for Palestine*. See: <https://linktr.ee/lundstudentsforpalestine>

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## Acronyms

CPC	Conservative Party of Canada
FPE	Feminist Political Ecology
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
GHGe	Greenhouse gas emissions
GPC	Green Party of Canada
NDP	New Democratic Party of Canada
NRCan	Natural Resources Canada
PEFR	Political Ecologies of the Far Right
PPC	People's Party of Canada

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## Introduction

The depletion, and ultimate recovery, of Earth's ozone layer is oftentimes invoked to inspire hope for action on climate change. Once an environmental issue becomes 'personal' and 'perceptible', and its scientific basis is firmly established, unprecedented mobilisation becomes possible, if not inevitable, despite resistance from industry (Segal, 2022; Walker, 2022). However, certain responses to the climate emergency are thus far breaking from this logic. Climate change is already "widespread, rapid, and intensifying" (IPCC, 2021). Its historically uneven anthropogenic causes and its risks for future social and environmental systems are unequivocal within the scientific community (IPCC, 2022a, 2023). Yet, many remain skeptical, or in outright denial, of its existence and/or human contributions (Boulianne & Belland, 2022; Gounaridis & Newell, 2024).

Given the destructive material manifestations of the climate crisis and its continuous scientific verification, climate denialism could seem increasingly obsolete. However, in lieu of progressively fading away in tandem with rising temperatures, this perspective appears to be evolving – and so in the highest emitting parts of the world, where action is most critical (Hultman & Pulé, 2019). Considering this paradox, climate change denialism must be understood within its broader social, political, and ideological contexts. Endorsement of this skepticism is strongly linked with right-wing political affiliation and attitudes (Lockwood, 2018; Stanley et al., 2017, 2019), with white conservative men being its primary proponents (Krange et al., 2019; McCright & Dunlap, 2011a). Indeed, the far right has become an especially accommodating space for such a thought, as climate denialism is a core tenant of their politics and activism (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017).

One such vessel is the People's Party of Canada (PPC), the nation's expression of the growing contemporary international far right resurgence (see Worth, 2019). Although not a country known for having a strong tradition of climate skepticism, denialism is highly ideologically-driven in Canada – even more so than in the United States (Boulianne & Belland, 2022). Indeed, approximately 66% of PPC supporters are either 'not too concerned' or 'not concerned at all' about climate change, as compared to 18% of the rest of the population (Lum, 2022). The PPC is, in fact, the only Canadian political party without a climate plan (Chung, 2021), instead opting to platform pipeline expansion and oil and gas industry growth (PPC, 2023b). Thus, climate denialism is highly pervasive, and concentrated, within far-right arenas in Canada, as it is across the world.

My research, although focused on climate skepticism, will not endeavour to debunk denialist misinformation. Many have assumed this task already (see Skeptical Science, 2024). Instead, I aim to

uncover why this remains a position upheld by the PPC and accommodated by a not-so insignificant portion of the Canadian population, despite climate change's ongoing repercussions – expressed for instance in Canada's record-breaking 2023 wildfire season (NRCan, 2023). In other words, I am interested in the functionality and effectiveness of the PPC's denialist discourse: its *whys* and *hows*, rather than its *whos* (Hornsey et al., 2016).

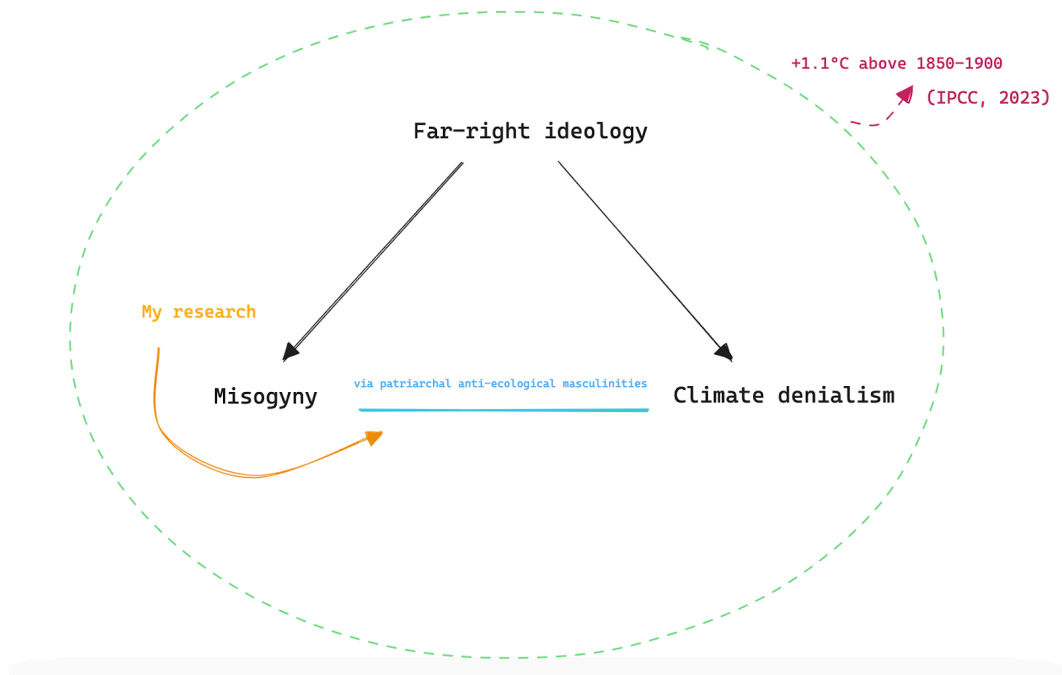
However, in light of the *whos*, i.e. white, conservative men (Krange et al., 2019; McCright & Dunlap, 2011a), I speculate that explanations to such queries will relate to another pillar of far-right ideology: misogyny. Like climate denialism, anti-feminist and misogynistic dispositions are highly correlated with and entrenched in far-right politics, with the former (misogyny) being regarded as a 'gateway' to the latter (far-right ideology) (Huber et al., 2023; Kaul & Buchanan, 2023). The far right's glorification of patriarchal masculinities<sup>1</sup> is one way that this connection is facilitated (Phelan et al., 2023).

Thus, previous research has established connections between the far right and 1) misogyny and 2) climate denialism, thus suggesting a potential interplay between patriarchal beliefs and climate skepticism within far-right thought. Misogyny, therefore, appears to be a missing variable in the ideology-environmentalism association that can be of service to understanding the purpose and persuasiveness of the PPC's climate denialist discourse (Kaul & Buchanan, 2023). This gap is where I initiate my research (see Figure 1). I hypothesize that climate denialism is communicated misogynistically, therefore acting as a source of identity confirmation which enables the PPC to reach a disaffected group and advance their position as a party. This would help to explain the ongoing ubiquity of climate denialist discourses in far-right milieus even as the world surpasses 1.1°C of warming (IPCC, 2023).

Therefore, I will undertake a feminist critical discourse analysis of the PPC's climate communication in order to determine if (RQ<sub>(1,2)</sub>), how (RQ<sub>(1,2)</sub>), and why (RQ<sub>(3)</sub>) a gendered denialist stance is championed by this far-right party and supported by its base. Patriarchal anti-ecological masculinities will act as a proxy for the location of misogyny within this discourse. My analysis will be also informed by theories of cultural hegemony, petro-hegemony/petroculture, and discursive lock-in, and situated within a broader political ecology framework. Deconstructing this discourse will also expose potential avenues for progressive counter-movements to successfully resist misogynistic far-right climate denialism in

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. masculinities which are misogynistic, meaning that they subjugate and devalue that which is considered 'feminine' (Kaul & Buchanan, 2023, p. 308), a peculiarity not inherent to all masculine subjectivities (see hooks, 2005, p. 35).



**Figure 1. Research visual.** Location of my research within the far-right ideology, climate denialism, and misogyny nexus (Kaul & Buchanan, 2023), itself embedded within an increasingly warm world. Temperature data from IPCC *AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023* (IPCC, 2023).

Canada, which I seek to identify (RQ<sub>(4)</sub>). Thus, my research endeavours to answer the following questions:

**RQ<sub>(1)</sub>:** What core arguments, narratives, and ideas make up the PPC’s climate denialist discourse?

**RQ<sub>(2)</sub>:** In what ways does the PPC enact patriarchal, anti-ecological masculinities in such a discourse?

**RQ<sub>(3)</sub>:** What does this tell us about the success and functionality of their denialism?

**RQ<sub>(4)</sub>:** How can these insights inform a successful environmental counter-discourse?

### Implications for Sustainability

Underlying this research is the normative claim that the PPC’s climate discourse aims to deny humanity of a safe, just, and sustainable future and is therefore highly problematic and deserving of resistance. ‘Sustainability’ has an array of conceptualisations: steering my research is the understanding of ‘sustainable futures’ as one where Canadian society and culture have moved beyond the capitalist growth imperative, where our economy is “[...] stationary, in a harmonious relationship with nature,

and decisions are collectively made and wealth is equitably shared in order to prosper without growth” (Parrique, 2022, p. 105). Degrowth scholarship itself deals with questions of gendered subjectivities and (un)sustainable masculinities (see Eversberg & Schmelzer, 2023; Khanna, 2021). However, although a highly relevant and interesting body of work, the current paper will invoke a degrowth perspective exclusively as a reference point for my overarching ecological and social critique of PPC’s denialism.

Nevertheless, in aiming to foster a transition towards a post-growth society, my study makes a meaningful contribution to the field of sustainability science. In fact, it reflects a principal duality of this field: I aim to both deconstruct *and* displace far-right denialism, thus drawing on critical and problem-solving approaches (Jerneck et al., 2011; Lang et al., 2012). These approaches will be informed primarily by theories and concepts from the fields of gender studies and sociology, thus providing a compelling ontological and epistemological plurality that defies the routine privileging of knowledge from the natural, medical, and engineering sciences in academic sustainability ventures (Jerneck et al., 2011; Kronsell & Kaijser, 2014). Namely, my research hopes to amplify (gender) identity as a key variable for formulating effective and timely sustainability goals, pathways, and strategies (Jerneck et al., 2011).

As a sustainability scientist, I above all hope that my findings and analysis will be accessible and of value to individuals and groups beyond the academic realm interested in social/political/environmental change. This body of knowledge could, for instance, inform choices of tactics, framings, and strategic alliance-building for social movements (Isgren et al., 2019) and perhaps even spur future transdisciplinary collaboration (see Lang et al., 2012).

## **Chapter 1. Background**

### **1.1 Canada, oil, and climate change**

Canada has long been inconsistent in its environmental leadership and climate action (Maciunas and de Lassus Saint-Genies, 2018; Smith, 2008). This standard has firmly been sustained by current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Liberal Government, whose climate change approach has been described as “both self-defeating and immoral”<sup>2</sup> (MacNeil, 2021, p. 1). Nevertheless, under his

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<sup>2</sup> Emblematic of this variability was Trudeau’s purchasing of the Trans Mountain pipeline, a deal finalized less than 24 hours after his government declared a national climate emergency (see The Narwhal, 2024).

leadership, Canada has committed to reaching a 40-45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (GHGe) below 2005 levels by 2030, in accordance with the Paris Agreement (Government of Canada, 2021). Current policies and action, however, are deemed ‘highly insufficient’ and would result in a trajectory of between 3 and 4°C of warming by the end of the century (Climate Action Tracker, 2022). In fact, Canada is the only G7 country where emissions have risen since signing the Paris Agreement (Austen & Flavelle, 2021). In 2022, 37.1 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e were emitted by the country – a 2.1% increase from the previous year, and only 6.3% below 2005 levels (440 Megatonnes, 2023).

Oil and gas accounted for nearly three quarters of this increase (440 Megatonnes, 2023), a sector the Canadian government is choosing to develop despite imperatives for decarbonisation (Linnitt, 2016). The country has located, in total, 171 billion barrels of oil, with the Western province of Alberta being home to the third largest proven oil reserve in the world (NRCan, 2016).<sup>3</sup> The significance of fossil fuels in Canada, both real and imagined, cannot be overstated: indeed, “[...] such infrastructure has been idealized not only as instrumental to the Canadian economy but, moreover, as materializing the Canadian nation” (Barney, 2017, p. 79).<sup>4</sup>

## **1.2 Canadian political landscape**

Oil and gas extraction is supported by most Canadian political parties (see Thomson, 2019), including the PPC. Founded in September 2018, the party positions itself as a populist right-wing alternative within the Canadian parliamentary democracy, although it is more commonly referred to as a radical right-wing populist and/or far-right party (Budd, 2021; Pannett, 2021; Tubb, 2019). Until the formation of the PPC, Canadian politics were widely considered impervious to xenophobic and anti-humanist far-right ideologies that were infiltrating governments across the world, namely in the United States with the election of former President Donald Trump in 2016. This is due, it has been argued, to unique factors such as Canada’s institutionalized commitment to multiculturalism (Ambrose & Mudde, 2015) and the importance of immigrant and minority votes in the country’s single member plurality (SMP) electoral system (Besco & Tolley, 2018).

The PPC is testing this resilience. Despite being a “marginal, poorly organized, and badly funded” federal political party (Turcotte et al., 2023, p. 92), the PPC earned 5% of the popular vote in the 2021

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<sup>3</sup> In 2019, Canada produced approximately 4.7 million barrels every day (Canada Energy Regulator, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> The extraction of oil and gas is oftentimes portrayed by an array of actors as a national imperative and vital to the Canadian economy (e.g. NRCan, 2016). These framings are, however, highly contested (Barney, 2017).

federal election (Elections Canada, 2023).<sup>5</sup> This surge has primarily been attributed to the PPC's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, namely their opposition to public health measures (Medeiros & Gravelle, 2023). Nevertheless, the party is still without electoral representation in parliament, failing to capture a seat in either election since their inception (Elections Canada, 2019, 2023). Currently, they are polling at approximately 2.3% nationally (338Canada, 2024).

The PPC is led by Maxime Bernier, a former member of the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC). In 2018, Bernier left the CPC after narrowly losing its leadership race, citing the centre-right party's intellectual and moral corruption (PPC, 2018). Soon after, he announced the formation of the PPC (PPC, 2024a), a party striving to "put Canadians first" and foster a country that is "united in pursuit of common goals instead of being divided by identity politics" (PPC 2024a).

Among other things, the PPC pledge to restrict immigration from 500,000 to 150,000 newcomers per year; abolish the Canadian Multiculturalism Act; end all federal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies and funding; repeal the Canada Health Act; withdraw Canada's participation in global institutions like the United Nations; and redefine 'hate speech' in the Canadian Criminal Code (PPC, 2024b, 2024a).

In addition, the PPC targets 'radical gender ideology' in their platform, endeavouring to "protect women and children from harm" (PPC, 2023c). The party also adopts a strong anti-climate and pro-pipeline mandate, as will be revealed throughout the current research. All in all, the PPC strive to undermine progressive forces and speak to bigoted anxieties in Canada.<sup>6</sup> They can therefore be viewed as a Canadian derivative of the transnational far-right movement, seeking to disrupt a political landscape that has thus far been reluctant to accommodate such a politic.

## **Chapter 2. Research approach and frameworks**

### **2.1 Research approach**

#### **2.1.1 Political ecology**

The current study is guided by a research framework consolidating multiple strands of political ecology. Such a foundation enables both the content and the functionality of PPC discourse on the climate

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<sup>5</sup> An increase from 1.6% secured in the previous election held in 2019, and over double the share of votes for the Green Party of Canada (Elections Canada, 2019, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> An opening previous CPC politicians and governments have fostered, but never fully seized (Budd, 2021).

emergency to be politicized, and so from numerous angles. Anchoring my research within the field of political ecology thus also empowers me to challenge the false ‘objectivity’ and ‘neutrality’ which underpin PPC rhetoric on climate change and decarbonisation. It also supports a vital premise of my study: that denialist discourses do not exist in a political vacuum but are rather deeply embedded within what feminist author bell hooks calls the interlocking “systems of domination of white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (hooks, 2015, p. 118; Robbins, 2012).

Political ecology’s embrace of normativity has also motivated my research design, where I seek to combine critical deconstruction of patriarchal climate skepticism with the exploration and elevation of ecologically-sound and just alternatives and discourses. I welcome this challenge and hope that my findings will constitute both a ‘hatchet’ and a ‘seed’ in the pursuit of socio-ecological futures – a requisite of all progressive endeavours and a central ambition shared across the domains of political ecology and sustainability science (Jerneck et al., 2011; Klein, 2017; Robbins, 2012, p. 20).

### ***2.1.2 Feminist political ecology***

A political ecology approach grounded in feminist thought and practice is imperative for locating patriarchal power dynamics in the PPC’s anti-ecological accounts. Feminist political ecology (FPE) is predicated on the assumption that there are “real, not imagined, gender differences in experience, responsibility for, and interests in ‘nature’ and environments” (Rocheleau et al., 1996, p. 3). It aims to detect patriarchal power and gender struggle in discourses surrounding the environment and environmental change (Elmhirst, 2015). Indeed, in alignment with the conceptualisation of gender as a performance which emphasizes fluidity and ‘becoming’ (Butler, 2006), FPE asserts that “gender itself is re-inscribed in and through practices, policies, and responses associated with changing environments” (Elmhirst, 2015, p. 523). FPE therefore inspires my investigation of gender in the PPC’s discursive struggle with climate change and facilitates the recognition of misogyny within their environmental rhetoric.

### ***2.1.3 Political ecologies of the far right***

Political ecology has also been a vital arena for assessing how the far right is disrupting environmental politics. It has catalyzed an increasingly nuanced awareness of their understandings and interactions with the natural world, and thus by extension their contention with environmental predicaments like climate change. I therefore situate my research within this subfield and draw much inspiration and insight from its contributors.

Here, the far right is understood not as a monolithic, uniform entity. It is rather an ‘umbrella term’ encompassing a multifaceted political force endorsing “specific values such as authoritarianism, ethno-nationalism, traditional norms, homogeneity, anti-intellectualism and physical violence, usually overlapping with misogyny and the acceptance and aggressive promotion of racialized, gendered (status quo) hierarchies, belying a steadfast resistance to any ideals of human equality” (Allen et al., 2024, p. 6). As previously discussed, the PPC is one vehicle for such a politic, situated within a growing global wave.

Although at times demonstrating a reverence for nature and the environment, denial of anthropogenic climate change is a recurring feature of their political thought (see Anshelm & Hultman, 2014b; Hultman et al., 2019; McCright & Dunlap, 2011b). This paradox has received substantial empirical inquiry, yet remains “[...] unfortunately, anything but exhausted” (Allen et al., 2024, p. 8). I join efforts to deepen our comprehension of this dimension of the far right’s political ecologies by spotlighting the discursive role of gender and patriarchal masculinities in buttressing their denial, which will only continue to evolve in tandem with intensifying planetary changes. Doing so (all while also exploring avenues for resistance) will, I hope, contribute to this subfield’s ultimate intention of undermining the far right and its anti-humanist, chauvinistic agenda (Allen et al., 2024).

All in all, political ecology – with its emphasis on politicization, deconstruction, and resistance – is the lens through which I will explore the patriarchal nature of the PPC’s climate denialism and ponder alternatives. Insights from its strands focusing on gender and the far right will be especially vital. Below are the theories which further inform my empirical inquiry and the interpretation of my collected data.

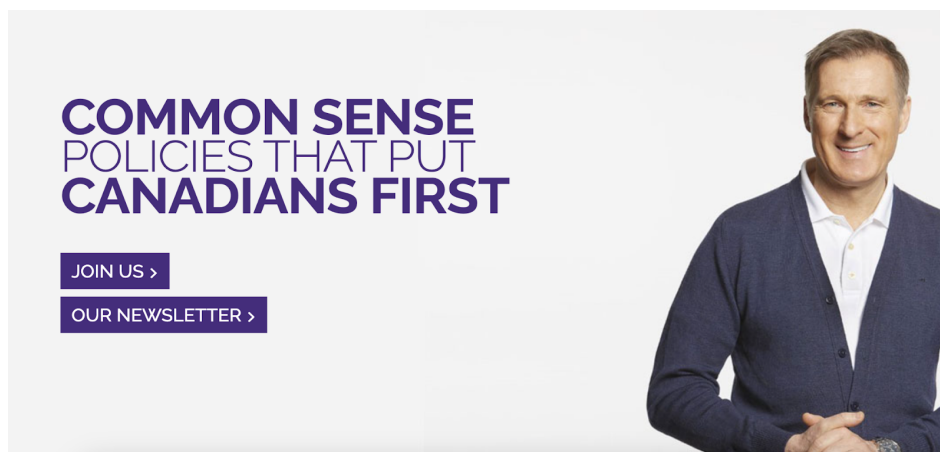
## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

### **2.2.1 Cultural hegemony**

Theorisations of cultural hegemony, developed from Marxist theorist and revolutionary Antonio Gramsci’s analyses of fascism and communism, are paramount for examining the contemporary far right (Pasioka, 2022). Cultural hegemony characterizes the process through which the ruling class ascends to and consolidates its power by securing consensual domination over its subjects (Femia, 1981; Martin, 2023). It is a form of rule characteristic of modern states hinging on active consent complemented by, rather than reliant upon, coercion: a war of *positions*, rather than a war of *maneuver* (Gramsci, 1971; Martin, 2023). A ‘hegemony’ thus refers to a naturalized societal/cultural order, mobilized via ideology veiled as ‘common sense’ to sanction the dominance of the ruling class (Gramsci, 1971; Martin, 2023).



The far right is no stranger to such a tactic. They often depict their ontologies and reactionary politics as ‘self-evident’, ‘natural’, ‘just’, and ‘proper’ (Crehan, 2016; Pasieka, 2022, p. 426).<sup>7</sup> In fact, “*Common sense policies that put Canadians first*” is the current motto of the PPC (see Image 1). Although most far-right parties (including the PPC) remain on the cultural and political fringes (see Chapter 1.2), they are often staunch defenders of select established hegemonies. Naturalizing ideology is thus both deployed in support of these existing dominant forces, and as a part of their broader ‘war of positions’ aimed at infiltrating and manipulating mainstream politics and popular thought (Hatakka et al., 2017), a phenomenon also known as the ‘fascist creep’ (Ross, 2017).



**Image 1. PPC and Common Sense.** Homepage of the official People’s Party of Canada website (peoplespartyofcanada.ca). Image taken in April 2024. Pictured (right) is Maxime Bernier, leader of the PPC.

Cultural hegemony and related theories are valuable for scrutinizing powerful structures and ideologies, and for understanding how far-right parties like the PPC navigate and distort ‘normalcy’ for their own political ends. They also inform how these strategies can be disrupted, and problematic hegemonies undermined. According to Mouffe and Laclau (2014), counter-hegemonic discourses can be propagated through the effective framing of inequality (‘subordination’) as fundamentally unjust (‘oppression’). This antagonism must, according to them, resonate with and engage a plurality of actors – which they argue can be facilitated by connecting grievances with a broader, established hegemonic discourse (e.g. democratic principles of ‘liberty’ and ‘equality’). Presenting viable, positive alternatives and social imaginaries is also paramount. The suggestions set out in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (2014) are thus critical to shaping effective progressive challenges to PPC denialism – and the fossil fuel industry more broadly.

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<sup>7</sup> A deliberate framing crafted by the far-right thinkers since the 1980s (Mondon, 2015).

### **2.2.2 Petro-hegemony and petrocultures**

Petro-hegemony<sup>8</sup> is arguably one of the most powerful, resilient, and ubiquitous hegemonies in present times. It is also one that is driving anthropogenic climate change and socio-ecological destruction, obstructing climate action and justice, and is a societal order that is (and has historically been) vehemently supported by far-right political parties across the globe (Malm & The Zetkin Collective, 2021).

Here, theoretical conceptualisations of cultural hegemony are invoked to appreciate the extent of “the fossil fuel industry’s influence on dominant cultural and political beliefs, values, and meanings” (Kraushaar-Friesen & Busch, 2020, p. 2). Petro-hegemony is secured through the unification of consent, compliance, and coercion, and endeavours to ensure the perpetual dominance of fossil fuels and their related social, political, and economic apparatuses (LeQuesne, 2019, p. 2). My research is especially interested in the axes of consent and compliance, secured via the cultural entrenchment and naturalization of fossil fuels in existing social infrastructures and daily lived realities – a phenomenon manifesting in what is known as ‘petrocultures’ (Wilson et al., 2017).

Petrocultures, although differentiated in their expression across time and space, as well as situatedness within fossil capitalism (Szeman, 2017), are pervasive across Canadian and North American societies. Although in its early stages of conceptual development (Macdonald, 2013), petrocultures seeks to encapsulate the notion that post-industrial societies have not only been materially and physically shaped by oil: fossil fuels have become determinants of the abstract and the immaterial, and now play a pivotal role in shaping collective “values, practices, habits, beliefs, and feelings” (Petrocultures Research Group, 2015, p. 9; Szeman, 2017; Wilson et al., 2017). This is especially relevant from a feminist standpoint, since “it is arguably not possible to operate – or to constitute subjectivity and gender identity – outside of the petroculture frame of reference, as impossible as it is to live in a material way outside of it” (Devereux, 2017, p. 181).

Thus, the concept of petrocultures underscores that culture, identity, and the system of patriarchy do not exist in isolation from the broader petro-hegemonic circumstances they are located within. They are thus subject to change and manipulation to meet the impetuses of the fossil fuel industry. I strive to uncover how the PPC is doing just so, namely through the discursive leveraging of patriarchal masculinities. Moreover, in arguing that decarbonisation is not merely a matter of technological

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<sup>8</sup> Or ‘fossil fuel hegemony’. The two will be used interchangeably in the current text.

advancements and public policy, the concept advocates for cultural and social transformations (Devereux, 2017; Petrocultures Research Group, 2015). Petro-hegemony and petrocultures thus enable me to approach masculinities as both a tool for the perpetuation of fossil fuel dominance, and as a device for its potential demise.

### **2.2.3 Discursive lock-in**

One of the many ways that petrocultures and petro-hegemonies are upheld, despite overwhelming evidence regarding the direct contribution of fossil fuels to climate change and the increasing availability of alternative green technologies, is through language and communication. This is the central claim of discursive lock-in, a theory contending that discourses play an integral role in facilitating a path-dependency towards fossil fuels despite their economic, environmental, and social risks (Unruh, 2000). Discourse here is understood to be a “coherent story about the world where power is exercised by narrowing the variety of interpretations possible [...] where the existence of conflicting perspectives or interests is typically disguised” (Fairclough, 2003; Hajdu & Fischer, 2017, p. 5). Through acts of self-governing and self-discipline (Foucault, 1979), individuals internalize and reproduce discourses favouring oil and gas in their everyday lives and, as a result, perpetuate our carbon fixation and lock-ins of the infrastructural, institutional, and behavioural sort (Buschmann & Oels, 2019).

Discursive lock-in calls for discourses constituting and sustaining petro-hegemonies to be scrutinized and, ultimately, displaced (Buschmann & Oels, 2019; Seto et al., 2016). Climate denialism and skepticism, spearheaded by far-right parties like the PPC, can be one such target. Discursive lock-in therefore confirms the value in investigating (denialist) discourses, the central object of study of the current research. It also motivates my inquiry of counter-discourses, ones which can produce lock-ins towards just, sustainable, and safe post-growth futures.

## **2.3 Feminist conceptual framework**

### **2.3.1 Masculinities**

Masculinities are a critical variable in understanding climate skepticism given men’s overrepresentation as holders and conduits of far-right denialist views (McCright & Dunlap, 2011a). They represent sets of “culturally defined attributes and practices that come to be associated with and expected of men, often as a means of differentiating them from women” (Davidson & Letourneau, 2022, p. 91–92; Messerschmidt, 2018). Masculinities are always plural, implying that there is more than one socially-sanctioned way of performing manhood (Hultman & Pulé, 2018). They are conditioned and ever-changing through everyday practices, interactions, and language (Butler, 2006;

Connell, 2021a) and are temporally and spatially situated (Davidson & Letourneau, 2022; Hultman & Pulé, 2018; Vowles & Hultman, 2021).

I have located four masculinities embodying both patriarchal and (varying degrees of) denialist or anti-environmentalist attitudes to form the basis of my gender analysis of PPC climate communication: ecomodern, industrial/breadwinner, petro, and frontier masculinities. They were selected given their relevance to the Canadian context, and the depth of their typologies. Although other anti-feminist and anti-ecological masculinities certainly exist, these four were used as proxies to consider how the PPC is leveraging misogyny to promote their denialist views and navigate petro-hegemonies. A brief overview of each positionality is provided below.

### ***Ecomodern masculinities***

Ecomodern masculinities are the reigning hegemonic masculinities<sup>9</sup> in climate politics today (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014). They are visible in politicians such as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and find popular representation in figures like Tesla CEO Elon Musk (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017; Hultman, 2013). The ecomodern person views nature as alive yet external to humans and extends towards it a degree of care and responsibility, albeit limited: their compassion for the environment is ultimately enacted through models of domination and control, and masculinized apparatuses of science, technology, and rationality (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017; Davidson & Letourneau, 2022; Hultman, 2013).

They possess an extensive knowledge of environmental challenges and climate science, and will support certain climate ambitions (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017). However, antithetical to the fundamentals of climate science (e.g. IPCC, 2022b), the climate emergency is designated as a temporary, marginal challenge to humanity. It is instead a market opportunity that can catalyze growth, enterprise, innovations, and jobs (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017). Ecomodern persons therefore dismiss transformative system change, instead seeking out reformist solutions for the preservation of the economic status-quo: technological advancements, geoengineering, market-based solutions, green industrialisation, and economic growth are all presented as possible antidotes to the climate crisis (Hultman & Pulé, 2018).

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<sup>9</sup> Implying that they are collectively perceived to be 'normal' or 'natural' ways of enacting manhood (Connell, 2021).

### ***Industrial/breadwinner masculinities***

This typology captures the expressions and experiences of both the owners ('industrial') and the operators ('breadwinners') of the means of production within industrial productivity (Vowles & Hultman, 2021). They adhere to a highly anthropocentric worldview, where nature is inanimate, disconnected from mankind, and reduced to its instrumental and economic worth. Humans, on the other hand, are regarded as its rightful dominator and entitled to its provisions (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017; Hultman, 2017a).

Industrial/breadwinners are leading advocates of climate denialism. Climate change is framed as a natural phenomenon, where both its effects and its anthropogenic causes lack scientific consensus (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014a). Those advancing these ideas, they argue, are alarmist, corrupt, out of touch, or agents of specific political agendas. Facts and figures regarding the climate are thus believed to be heavily distorted by vested interests and must therefore be rejected or approached with heavy skepticism. This, they believe, is a highly marginalized and suppressed stance (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014a, 2017; Hultman & Pulé, 2019).

To them, climate action is not only futile, but exacerbating pressing issues of both global and local scale, such as malnutrition or cost-of-living crises (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014a; Hultman, 2017a). Only through the continued expansion of industrial modernisation, limiting of state intervention, and the embrace of neoclassical economic/engineering principles and Enlightenment values can these more legitimate predicaments be addressed, and the demise of industrialisation halted (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014a; Hultman & Pulé, 2019).

### ***Petro-masculinities***

Industrial/breadwinner masculinities are an increasingly challenging identity to embody, given the growing obligations for a green transition. This is catalyzing reactionary and more extreme varieties of this gendered configuration (Daggett, 2018; Lockwood, 2018). Petro-masculinities are one such variant. They represent an inflated, exaggerated, and distorted version of this traditional anti-ecological masculinity, thus giving them a more hypermasculine complexion (Daggett, 2018, p. 33).

Petro-masculinities are devoted to "a set of related beliefs, emotions, and behaviors that are based in and manifest as a combination of racism, misogyny, and climate change denial and that are particularly prevalent among white politically conservative males in the present-day United States" (Nelson, 2020, p. 2). These gendered dispositions show a deep indifference towards people and the planet (Davidson & Letourneau, 2022) and are at times even withdrawn from efforts at denying the climate crisis.

Instead, they opt to ignore the climate emergency and actively refuse to act upon any of its imperatives. They articulate a deep nostalgia for a bygone, white patriarchal order built upon fossil fuels, a world order increasingly threatened by progressive politics and climate, queer, feminist, decolonial, etc. struggles. To them, the decline of this fossilized society, or more broadly the weakening of the West and the loss of the 'American dream' (or other nationalistic imaginaries), are of much greater significance and urgency than rising temperatures (Daggett, 2018). Such beliefs are depicted in the politics of authoritarian personalities like Donald Trump and other staunch fossil fuel allies across the far right (Daggett, 2018).

Petro-masculinities contend with these grievances by eschewing climate action in any form and doubling-down on patriarchal petrocultures through exaggerated consumption of fossil fuels, masculinist empowerment, glorification of fossil fuel aesthetics, reinforcement of traditional gender norms, and accelerated investment in fossil fuel production and livelihoods (Daggett, 2018). However, fulfilling this longing today requires exerting oftentimes violent and authoritarian means. Petro-masculinities thus find themselves in a natural alignment with far-right appeals to Western empowerment, white nationalism, and bigotry, with the othering of devalued opponents (feminists, climate refugees from the global South, environmental activists, queer folks, etc.) being central to their compensatory repertoire (Daggett, 2018).

### ***Frontier masculinities***

Frontier masculinities are a particularly relevant typology for the current study, given their connection to the oil-rich landscapes of Western Canada. Indeed, they are broadly embraced within Albertan tar-sand communities where they assume a localized hegemony (Davidson & Letourneau, 2022; Landry & Willey, 2023). To them, the natural world is a frontier to be explored that, although harsh and unpredictable, symbolizes hope, opportunity, and prosperity (Miller, 2004; O'Shaughnessy, 2011). They therefore simultaneously admire *and* fear nature, all while perceiving it through a highly extractivist mentality (Landry & Willey, 2023).

These masculine positionalities are deeply entrenched within the fossil fuel industry, and oftentimes advocate on its behalf. They repeat mythologies of the gold rush and 'wild West' eras (Letourneau et al., 2023; Wright, 2001) and challenge climate science and policies, which they deem to be existential threats to this sector. Like their industrial/breadwinner and petro-masculine counterparts, frontier masculinities also participate in the deliberate antagonism of proponents of climate action, whom they portray as hypocrites, lacking intellect, inferior, and undeserving of protection (Letourneau et al., 2023). Frontier attitudes instead call for the unimpeded extraction of oil and gas, and the privileging

of attributes like toughness, tenacity, autonomy, competitiveness, and bravery – traits embodied by their highly revered ‘lone male/cowboy’ protagonist (Landry & Willey, 2023; Letourneau et al., 2023; Miller, 2004). They also show support for gendered division of labour and the subordination of women, who they deem ‘unfit’ for the frontier (Hogan & Pursell, 2008; Landry & Willey, 2023). The tolerance of racism, homophobia, misogyny, and other forms of bigotry is oftentimes also sanctioned in oil fields, ‘man camps’, and other male-dominated spaces associated with the frontier, which they then extend to broader society (Letourneau et al., 2023).

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Onto-epistemology**

My research adheres to a critical realist onto-epistemology, a highly suitable philosophy of science for knowledge production of the climate emergency and the formulation of transformational alternatives (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2023; Isaksen, 2012). Critical realism both challenges and consolidates philosophical perspectives from the natural and social sciences, and “proposes a way of combining a modified naturalism with a recognition of the necessity of interpretive understanding of meaning in social life” (Sayer, 2008, p. 9). It thus enables me to be critical of the PPC’s rejection of climate science, all while acknowledging that our comprehension of climate breakdown is incomplete, fallible, and evolving and that language, discourse, and culture do shape environmental outcomes and understandings (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2023).

The normative approach I adopt throughout this research, in which I seek to generate a body of practical information on gendered far-right climate denialism applicable for those seeking to resist it, is also legitimized by the emancipatory orientation this meta-theory (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 2023; Isaksen, 2012). It also authorizes my interdisciplinary inquiry into identity as mechanism driving climate change, as well as my chosen method of feminist critical discourse analysis described below (Isaksen, 2012; Sayer, 2008).

### **3.2 Methods**

#### ***3.2.1 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis***

The PPC’s complicity in and maneuvering of Canada’s petro-hegemony was investigated and challenged through a feminist critical discourse analysis. Discourse analyses showcase the linguistic constitution of social reality by interlinking texts, discourses, and the broader context they emerge

within (Lindekilde, 2014). Although they can be driven by purely observational, descriptive, and explanatory methodological aims (i.e. RQ<sub>(1)</sub>), they can also be used to navigate the power-laden dynamics of knowledge production and the ideologies embedded within, and sustained by, observed text(s) (RQ<sub>(2,3,4)</sub>) (Benoit, 2020; Van Dijk, 1995). A critical discourse analysis, therefore, “studies discourse and its functions in society and the way society, especially forms of inequality, are expressed, represented, legitimated, or reproduced in text or talk” (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 24)

A feminist critical discourse analysis adds the additional dimension of gender in understanding the relation between power, ideologies, and discourses (Lazar, 2007). It aims to unveil the gendered assumptions and power relations which both overtly and subtly underlie popular discourses by drawing upon critical feminist theories and practices (Lazar, 2007, 2014). Given its expanding analytical focus on masculinities and its praxis geared towards the transformation of structures of gendered oppression (Lazar, 2007), it also aligns with both the theoretical grounds of my research as well as my overarching (feminist) political ecology approach. A feminist critical discourse analysis will thus showcase that PPC climate rhetoric is far from gender neutral. It will allow me to describe the discourse, discern its hidden gendered biases, understand its usefulness and success, and ultimately challenge it.

### ***Material***

My research will focus on discourse expressed via text and speech. Data was extracted from two PPC public communication channels: their official Rumble<sup>10</sup> page and their official website (peoplespartyofcanada.ca). The aim was to examine the PPC’s discourse on the climate crisis: thus, videos and documents were chosen based on their mention of the climate change, the environment, or fossil fuels. For instance, videos or documents referencing ‘COP28’, ‘pipelines’, or the ‘carbon tax’ were read/viewed to ensure their relevance to the current research. If sufficient discursive engagement with themes related to climate change or (de)carbonisation was found, they were selected for coding.

In total, eight videos and three documents were analyzed, published between 2019 and 2023 (see Table 1). Videos varied in length and content, from shorter and targeted addresses by leader Maxime Bernier to longer, more in-depth interviews with experts or fellow party members. A recording of the Party’s 2019 federal election campaign launch event was also selected. Moreover, three two-page

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<sup>10</sup> Rumble is a Toronto-based online video platform, a Canadian alternative to YouTube.



platform documents were analyzed, specifying the PPC’s positions and policies regarding ‘Pipelines’ and ‘Global Warming and the Environment’. The latter made numerous references to their policy document on ‘Immigration’, which was therefore also examined. This mixed-materials approach facilitated the engagement with both written and oral registers of discourse and allowed for a scrutinizing of material ranging in length and formality.

**Table 1. Materials Information.** Overview of date, length (pages or minutes), speaker(s), source, and language of selected materials. Ordered based on material type and date of publication (descending). French content coded in its original language. Video code assigned for reference in Chapter 4. See Appendix B for example of a chosen material. All material is available to the public.

Video code	Material title	Publication date	Length	Speaker(s)	Source	Language
<b>Rumble videos</b>						
v1	The Maxime Bernier Show: Dec 21. COP28, Victory Homes, Housing Crisis	December 2023	34:00 [10:31 of relevant material]	Maxime Bernier Daniel Tyrie <sup>11</sup>	People’s Party of Canada Official Rumble channel	English
v2	Don’t believe the climate alarmists	November 2021	1:42	Maxime Bernier	People’s Party of Canada Official Rumble channel	English
v3	The Maxime Bernier Show – Ep. 27 Max talks about “Planet of the Humans with Pierre Desrochers	May 2020	29:48	Maxime Bernier Pierre Desrochers <sup>12</sup>	People’s Party of Canada Official Rumble channel	English
v4	The Max Bernier Show Ep. 12 - Not an April Fool’s joke: Trudeau’s carbon tax goes up 50%	April 2020	2:18	Maxime Bernier	People’s Party of Canada Official Rumble channel	English
v5	The Max Bernier Show Ep.2: Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs: reactionary fanatics paralyze our economy	February 2020	1:59	Maxime Bernier	People’s Party of Canada Official Rumble channel	English
v6	PPC - Pipelines with Maxime Bernier	September 2019	2:21	Maxime Bernier	People’s Party of Canada Official Rumble channel	English
v7	Lancement de la campagne nationale en Beauce   National Campaign Launch in Beauce	August 2019	1:08:08 [11:30 of relevant material]	Maxime Bernier	People’s Party of Canada Official Rumble channel	English and French
<b>Platform documents</b>						
d1	Global Warming & Environment: Rejecting Climate Alarmism and Focusing On Concrete Improvements	August 2023	2 pages	-	People’s Party of Canada Official Website	English

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Tyrie is Executive Director of the PPC.

<sup>12</sup> Pierre Desrocher is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment at the University of Toronto Mississauga.

d2	Immigration: Reducing Overall Levels and Prioritizing Skilled Immigrants	August 2023	2 pages	-	People's Party of Canada Official Website	English
d3	Pipelines: Allowing our Oil and Gas Industry to Grow	January 2023	2 pages	-	People's Party of Canada Official Website	English

***Analytical framework and coding scheme***

These materials were coded using the software MaxQDA. A deductive coding scheme was developed characterizing the four masculinities (ecomodern, industrial/breadwinner, petro, and frontier) outlined in Chapter 2.3.1. Initial assessment confirmed that these masculinities appeared in PPC public communication. Novel manifestations located in the material were inductively coded to complement the initial deductive coding framework. Codes were applied when a frame/narrative/position was deemed an enactment of one (or more) masculinity. To ensure rigour and consistency, multiple rounds of coding were undertaken. See Appendix A for the complete coding framework.

**3.2 Ethical considerations and positionality**

Transparency regarding one’s positionality is an essential constituent of critical feminist praxis (Jackson et al., 2024). Indicating my social location through an intersectional lens, thus situating the knowledge I am engaging with and producing, helps to lay bare “the relationships to power in which all claims to knowledge are embedded” (Crenshaw, 1989; Haraway, 1988; Jackson et al., 2024, p. 6). This is essential to conducting socially-just research, especially within sustainability science (Jackson et al., 2024; Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014).

I therefore acknowledge my positionality as a white, able-bodied woman born into a working-class family residing in Canada’s francophone province of Québec, on unceded and stolen land of the Anishinaabe Algonquin peoples<sup>13</sup>. Spending most of my life in Canada has given me a strong familiarity with the Canadian context and insight into the inner workings of our petrocultures, and their patriarchal repercussions. I also had the unique experience of living and working in the capital city of Ottawa during the 2022 Freedom Convoy, a three-week far-right demonstration against the Trudeau Government and Covid-19 measures (see Gillies et al., 2023). These circumstances have both motivated and informed the current research. It is my ambition that this thesis will be an act of resistance towards the rise of anti-humanist far-right politics in Canada and the detrimental effects of

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<sup>13</sup> A helpful tool for locating and recognizing indigenous land across the world: <https://native-land.ca/>.

petro-patriarchal orders which continue to harm men, women, non-binary folks, and all living species and spaces that surround them.

## Chapter 4. Results

The following section will outline the core narratives, ideas, and arguments that make up the PPC's climate discourse in the analyzed material, presented based on how the party frames nature, the perceived problem(s) associated or competing with the climate crisis, and their proposed solutions. I therefore aim to be as descriptive as possible. Their assertions are explained and exemplified through direct quotes (*italicized*), as well as through my own paraphrasing of their statements. An analysis of the gendered character of this discourse, specifically the identification of enactments of anti-ecological masculinities, will be provided in a subsequent section.

### 4.1 Framing of nature

Perceptions of nature and the environment are intrinsic to all discourses on climate change. The PPC's climate denialism must therefore be understood in the broader context of how they frame the natural world and, crucially, (hu)man's relationship to it. My research finds that the PPC articulates numerous conceptualisations of the environment. On the one hand, the party showcases an affinity and appreciation towards nature, especially when it is thought of in relation to Canadian culture and national identity. For instance, one party executive states during an interview with leader Maxime Bernier: *"I, for most of my life, would have considered myself an environmentalist. I love getting out into the woods and enjoying that. I think it's an important part of Canadian culture"* (v1).

However, more routinely expressed throughout PPC public communication is a more extractive attitude that portrays the environment and natural resources predominantly as commodities valued for their instrumentality and economic provisions for humanity. This often manifests in their repeated affirmation of the country's status as the holder of the third largest oil reserve in the world: *"Our oil reserves have actually increased in the last 10 years, they've increased in the last 20 years. We've consumed a lot of 'non-renewable' resources, but if you look at the amount of resources that are now recoverable economically, it keeps expanding"* (v3). Here, nature's limitlessness is amplified.

This economic angle is complemented by the party's embrace of the superiority of mankind, implied in their belief in humans as the rightful and ultimate stewards of the natural world. Humans are distinguished from all other species in the animal kingdom, namely for their capacity to create resources – or what one guest on a PPC feature calls humanity's ability to *"have our environmental*

*cake and eat it too” (v3) This perspective culminates into an unfettered faith in human creativity and ingenuity, even in the face of biophysical limitations: “Yes, we live on a finite planet – but physical stuff is only one thing. What matters is what human creativity, the human ability to trade and specialize in what we do best, has been able to create from our planet. [...] Ultimately, our capacity to create energy, to create resources instantly protects us from whatever climate change or nature may throw at us” (v3). This steadfast confidence in man’s ability to control and manage the natural world at times even manifests as indifference towards climate breakdown, as embodied by leader Maxime Bernier when stating: “Personally, if we have more or less CO<sub>2</sub>, I don’t mind. I don’t care” (v1).*

#### **4.2 Framing of the problem(s)**

Informed by their particular rendering of nature, the PPC rejects the designation of climate change as a major societal issue, let alone one worthy of confronting. To do so, they engage in a form of denialism predicated first and foremost on the normalisation and naturalisation of climate change, and the refutation of its causes being related to human activities. According to them, there is no ‘climate emergency’: *“Climate change is real. It is an undisputed fact that the climate has always changed and continues to change. But it is not the end of the world” (v2). They allege that many indicators of environmental health have actually improved since the onset of industrialisation thanks to higher GHGe: “In fact, CO<sub>2</sub> is beneficial for agriculture and there has recently been a measurable ‘greening’ of the world in part thanks to higher levels. Despite what global warming propaganda claims, CO<sub>2</sub> is not a pollutant. It is an essential ingredient for life on Earth and needed for plant growth” (d1).*

Along with highlighting these perks of a ‘naturally’ changing climate, PPC’s far-right rhetoric endeavours to falsify climate science and create suspicion of its consensus and rigour. The PPC alleges that:

*Climate change alarmism is based on flawed models that have consistently failed at correctly predicting the future. None of the cataclysmic predictions that have been made about the climate since the 1970s have come true. No new ice age. No steady warming in direct relation with increases in CO<sub>2</sub> levels. No disappearance of polar ice caps. No exceptional rise in ocean levels. No abnormal increase in catastrophic weather events. No widespread crop failure and famine. (d1)*

Uncertainty is further illustrated by their framing of the scientific basis of anthropogenic climate change as inconsistent, with the PPC seeking to exploit perceived methodological or technical

weaknesses such as climate science's evolving terminology (e.g. 'global warming' versus 'climate change').

Moreover, the PPC also subverts climate science by denouncing the character of those advocating on behalf of this evidence base, primarily depicting them as hypocritical elites. One party member states: *"Last week was the COP28 conference, which is the world's biggest climate change conference. 200 country representatives from 200 countries around the world come together and virtue-signal about how they're going to save the planet coming by jets. Yeah, exactly. They all fly in on their private jets to lecture us on not using our cars to get to work"* (v1). On occasion, they also infantilize individuals and groups calling for decarbonisation, framing these opponents as young, naive, and unintelligent: *"Carbon is literally not pollution, right? Like, it is plant food. It's an essential part of the carbon cycle, which we all learned about in grade 9 biology. They don't know how vaccines work. They don't know the carbon cycle. Gotta send everyone back to school"* (v1). Climate scientists and activists are also frequently referred to as *'eco-radicals', 'alarmists', 'reactionaries', and 'fanatics'*. This is especially prevalent when fossil fuel resistance is practiced by members of marginalized groups. For instance, in expressing opposition to protests against the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline across unceded Wet'suwet'en territory in British Columbia, a major episode of Canadian indigenous climate resistance, leader Maxime Bernier refers to traditional indigenous governance as a *"reactionary way to govern a community and a society like we had centuries ago. We cannot give it political legitimacy"* (v5).

The PPC also questions the underlying motives of climate advocates. According to them, climate change is a *'fabricated'* crisis leveraged to sanction government intervention and *'draconian'* measures: *"They're using that [the climate emergency] to scare people, and these kinds of conferences [COP28] are there to scare people. If you don't do anything, that will be the end of the world. You must act. But they want to do that to control us. They're using fear like they did with COVID-19"* (v1). Evidence and action in favour of decarbonisation is thus framed as highly corrupted and tainted by vested interests. This is apparent, for instance, in the PPC repeatedly referring to climate science as an *'ideology'* and *'propaganda'* seeking to *'indoctrinate'* and *'manipulate'* the population, especially the youth: *"They even manipulate school children, getting them to pressure their parents and to demonstrate in the streets"* (d1).

Supplementing these *ad hominem* attacks, the PPC presents climate denialism as a marginalized, discriminated position. They claim that their skepticism is antagonized by climate activists and scientists who *"publicly ridicule and harass anyone who expresses doubt"*, even though *"many renowned scientists continue to challenge this theory [anthropogenic climate change]"* (d1). Indeed,

their discursive dissent is motivated by a courageous moral imperative to speak the truth, and draw attention to more legitimate and pressing issues, namely the demise of the Albertan oil industry.

Climate action, rather than climate change itself, is thus problematized by the PPC: *“The conflict has always been between all of Canada and a number of radical green activists who want to bring us back to a premodern, preindustrial society. They want to shut down our energy sector, they want our economy to collapse because they think that’s what will save the planet”* (v5). Climate regulations are faulted for weakening the Canadian and Albertan economies through foregone revenues, employment losses, and increased dependency on foreign markets. In one policy document, the PPC states that *“Alberta’s economy suffered a major setback for several years, with tens of thousands of jobs disappearing in the oil patch and many more in local communities that depend on this industry”* (d3). The party also cautions that Canadian prosperity, peace, freedom, and unity could be at stake: *“The oil and gas industry has been for decades a major source of employment, government revenues, and economic well-being for all of Canada. It should be allowed to grow, export its products, and bring prosperity to our country”* (d3). The preservation of a fossilized energy sector, according to the PPC, is thus ultimately a matter of protecting *“our way of life”* (v1).

Finally, the PPC expresses resentment towards climate efforts for interfering with the resolution of other vital societal matters. The Covid-19 pandemic, the economic recession, ‘development’ of the global South, and political correctness are cited as challenges that our resources should be mobilized towards in lieu of the climate emergency, or that require fossil fuel energy and technology to tackle. The PPC also argues that climate measures are too costly – especially when invested abroad – and exacerbate concrete, everyday, material struggles of average Canadians. For instance, while contesting Canada’s federal carbon pricing scheme, leader Maxime Bernier states: *“He [Justin Trudeau] will now go forward with an unnecessary tax increase, which will only make things more difficult for all these Canadian families that are already struggling to make ends meet”* (v3).

### **4.3 Framing of the solutions**

The PPC’s discourse on climate change ultimately aims to disrupt any and all challenges to the Canadian oil industry. They endeavour to do so via three overarching propositions:

1. Expediate the construction of pipelines and accelerate fossil fuel production and consumption.
2. Foster an undisturbed free market and promote economic growth.

3. Reform Canadian immigration laws so as to *“accept the right kind and the right number of immigrants and non-permanent residents”* (d2).

The party defends these proposals through a range of justifications.

For one, the PPC substantiates their calls for the continued extraction of the Albertan tar sands by questioning the validity of climate measures, even incremental adaptation. Emissions targets are trivialized or deemed *‘unrealistic’*, and proposed interventions are argued to be, ultimately, futile: *“What’s even worse is that the [carbon] tax won’t have any impact on Canada’s emissions and on the world’s climate. It is a totally useless tax”* (v4). In defense of stimulating the free market and the profit motive, one PPC guest argues: *“The solution to get rid of the market system, to get rid of the profit motive, has been tried before and it doesn’t work. It makes things worse”* (v3).

The party thus implores that environmental challenges be addressed through rationality and logic, and for principles like the *‘rule of law’* and *‘common sense’* to prevail: *“It’s all common sense. [...] If you want to fight [for] common sense, we must withdraw from the Paris Accord”* (v1). *‘Practical solutions’* are required, which according to the PPC includes abolishing all subsidies for green technologies, ending Canada’s federal carbon pricing scheme, scaling down immigration, withdrawing from all climate treaties, and *“sign[ing] and approv[ing] pipelines projects using a streamline process and also reassert[ing] federal jurisdiction over pipelines construction by invoking section 92(10) of our Constitution. That allows the federal government to approve pipelines anywhere in this country”* (d3).

The PPC also at times sanctions their approach to climate change by arguing that the federal government is not entitled to addressing this apparent crisis on behalf of Canadians: *“They want us to [...] change our behavior and they want us to, you know, listen to the government. “The government knows better than us”. No, the government doesn’t know better than us”* (v1). On other occasions, inaction is justified through a resignation to the potential catastrophic realities of climate change: *“We don’t want to change or diminish our emissions. It’s not important for us and we won’t save the planet and we know that”* (v1).

Alternatively, the PPC turns to a commitment to making *“Canada’s air, water, and soil cleaner”* (d1) to substantiate their recommendations, framing fossil fuels and nativism as *the* sustainable choices. Indeed, the party accentuates that the proliferation of green infrastructure like windmills and solar panels remains reliant on fossil fuels. Moreover, *“our plan is to facilitate the construction of pipelines to transport oil and gas because if it is not transported by pipelines, it will be by rail – or through a much more dangerous method, for both the environment and humans”* (v6). Canadian oil, they argue, is among the greenest and most ethical in the world, thus positioning domestic extraction as a

principled act: “If this oil doesn’t come from Alberta and Saskatchewan, it will come from elsewhere, mostly countries with poor environmental or human rights standards such as Russia, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela” (d3).

Environmental concerns are also cited in PPC public communication to reinforce their stance on immigration. In one policy document, the party proclaims:

*It is illogical for the government to pretend to care about CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the environment while planning to bring in millions of immigrants, non-permanent residents and refugees to Canada over the coming years. These people from countries that are poorer than Canada will use more energy, consume more stuff, and need more space for houses built in sprawling cities on land previously used for agriculture or left in a natural state. (d1)*

Thus, a PPC government vows to “end mass immigration policies [...] so as to mitigate the impact on the environment of a growing population” (d1). These core ideas, narratives, and arguments which form the PPC’s climate denialist discourse are summarized in Table 2 (below).

## **Chapter 5. Discussion**

The above discourse confirms that the PPC is an unwavering proponent of Canada’s fossil fuel industry and thus stands in stark opposition to decarbonisation efforts. They practice this resistance by drawing upon classic denialist tropes and arguments, transcending several patriarchal anti-ecological masculinities. These strategies will be discussed below, emphasizing their effectiveness and functionality in the PPC’s broader navigation of petro-patriarchal hegemonies.

### **5.1 Coalescing masculinities in climate denialism**

These findings indicate that throughout the PPC’s discursive struggle with the climate crisis, the party performs (to varying extents) features of all the aforementioned anti-ecological masculinities. For instance, the PPC amplifies an anthropocentric environmental ethic which stresses a hierarchical human/nature dichotomy, justifies extractivism and domination, and portrays the environment as limitless and of value solely as an economic asset to mankind (see Table 2). This perspective is shared by industrial/breadwinner, frontier, and ecomodern identities. The PPC also adopts frontier and ecomodern attitudes in celebrating and revering nature, all while expressing a uniquely petro-masculine apathy towards the environment and ecological breakdown.



**Table 2. Summarized Findings.** Overarching claims and features of the PPC’s discourse and their corresponding anti-ecological masculinities located in the analyzed material, broken down by sections of Chapter 4.

Discursive claims	Patriarchal anti-ecological masculinities
<b>Nature framing</b>	
Affinity towards nature	Ecomodern; frontier
Instrumental/economic value of nature	Ecomodern; frontier; industrial/breadwinner
Nature as limitless	Frontier
Human/nature dichotomy; humans as rightful dominators	Ecomodern; frontier Industrial/breadwinner
Indifference towards nature	Petro-masculinity
<b>Problem(s) framing</b>	
Climate science is incorrect, inconsistent, lacking in scientific rigour, reactionary, alarmist	Frontier; industrial/breadwinner
Climate action/advocates as elitist	Industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
Climate advocates as young, naive, unintelligent	Frontier; industrial/breadwinner
Climate science is false, inconsistent, politically-motivated	Frontier; industrial/breadwinner
Climate emergency fabricated to justify government intervention	Industrial/breadwinner
Climate skeptics oppressed and silenced	Industrial/breadwinner
Climate action bad for economy/livelihoods	Frontier
Climate action compromises Canadian prosperity, peace, freedom, unity, and way of life	Petro-masculinity
Political correctness/progressive politics need to be curbed	Frontier; petro-masculinity
Global South needs to be ‘developed’	Industrial/breadwinner
Material struggles of everyday Canadians take precedence	Industrial/breadwinner
<b>Solutions framing</b>	
Rationality/logic/common sense needed	Ecomodern; industrial/breadwinner
Enforcement of rule of law	Petro-masculinity
Free market/profit motive	Ecomodern; industrial/breadwinner
Streamline development of oil and gas sectors	Frontier; industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
End climate subsidies, treaties, carbon tax, etc.	Frontier; industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
Government not entitled to action on climate change	Industrial/breadwinner
Climate doomism	Petro-masculinity
Fossil fuels necessary for ‘green’ tech	Ecomodern
Xenophobia, nationalism, racism, othering	Frontier; petro-masculinity

The party also draws on common rhetorical tactics of industrial/breadwinner and frontier masculinities to express skepticism of the scientific basis of anthropocentric climate change, climate action, and climate advocates. The PPC leans especially into industrial/breadwinner positionalities when critiquing government intervention and the ostracization of the denialist stance. Moreover, in problematizing the demise of the Albertan oil industry, Maxime Bernier and the PPC confirm the cardinal concerns of industrial/breadwinner, frontier, and petro-masculine configurations. Indeed, they integrate a frontier validation of the economic risks of decarbonisation with a petro-masculine conviction in fossil fuels as an anchor for peace, prosperity, and freedom across the country. An ecomodern recognition of climate science is noticeably absent from this area of the PPC's climate discourse.

Nevertheless, a similar heterogeneity is visible in the PPC's policy platform on fossil fuels and the environment. For one, their endorsement of values of rationality and logic and their steadfast allegiance to economic growth reflects ideals of both industrial/breadwinner and ecomodern masculinities. Meanwhile, the PPC's uncompromising allegiance to pipelines and fossil fuels, at times justified by a distorted form of climate doomism, is highly petro-masculine (although investment in the oil and gas sector, in general, is also an ambition of its industrial/breadwinner and frontier counterparts). Frontier and petro-masculinities also manifest in the colonialist, nationalistic, xenophobic, and overall bigoted complexion of the PPC's vision for a 'freer' and more 'prosperous' Canada. The party's engagement in climate denialism is thus laden with an array of attributes from the located patriarchal anti-ecological masculinities, consolidating into a climate discourse that is as a result highly misogynistic.

## **5.2 Success and functionality of PPC discourse**

A central aim of feminist critical discourse analysis, as discussed in Chapter 3.2.1, is the discernment of the underlying motives of a given discourse and the unveiling of its gendered nature and implications (Lazar, 2007; Van Dijk, 1995). I suggest that the PPC proliferates this particular iteration of climate skepticism seeking to improve their own counter-hegemonic position within the Canadian political terrain by capitalizing off openings in the intersecting patriarchal and petro-hegemonies. They do so with persuasion by affirming increasingly fragile masculinities in a rhetoric which resists decarbonisation from several argumentative angles.

### ***5.2.1 Affirmation of fragile masculinities***

According to my analysis, the PPC articulates a diversely masculinized story about climate change and fossil fuels. Indeed, throughout their public communication, the far-right party deploys the ontologies,

beliefs, and grievances of a range of patriarchal anti-ecological masculinities, thus adhering not to one singular, idealized, or hegemonic masculine configuration. This plurality enables the party to formulate a discourse capable of resonating with a diverse set of masculinized persons: their discourse can fasten those who pride themselves on being breadwinners with staunch defenders of modern industrialisation, with avid outdoorsmen, proponents of the free market, Canadian ‘patriots’, oil rig workers, individuals who value principles of logic and reason, and many more masculinized constituencies. In other words, the PPC’s enactment of multiple anti-ecological masculinities throughout its climate denialism is highly unifying.

It is notable, however, that the party opts to leverage masculinities which are increasingly reactionary and drifting further from hegemonic status, oftentimes referred to as ‘fragile’ or ‘hyper’ masculinities (Daggett, 2018; DiMuccio & Knowles, 2020). Industrial/breadwinner, frontier, and petro-masculinities – identities which continuously appear in PPC communication – have been bestowed such a designation (Daggett, 2018; Hultman & Pulé, 2019; Letourneau et al., 2023). Meanwhile, ecomodern masculinities (considered hegemonic in environmental politics today (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014)) find more scarce representation. This is, I hypothesize, an intentional discursive move: arousing gender identities which feel threatened can make for a coalition that is particularly emboldened, eager, and assiduous (Daggett, 2018). PPC climate discourse is thus constructed to exploit the entrenchment of masculinities in Canada’s petrocultures and is aimed towards mobilizing a diverse and passionate movement driven by gender and climate anxieties to advance their overarching political agenda. Misogyny, therefore, is a political strategy for the PPC: it is a lever to garner and sustain support, “a transmission link between different types of threats” consistent across far-right repertoires throughout the world (Kaul & Buchanan, 2023, p. 315).

### ***5.2.2 Sophistication of discursive denialism***

My feminist critical discourse analysis also reveals the degree of sophistication of the PPC’s discursive confrontation with the climate emergency, an important insight for understanding its effectiveness and functionality. Indeed, the PPC invokes a range of argumentative entry points to support and legitimize their stances: the party addresses economic anxieties and makes populist and emotional appeals to government mistrust; they argue that carbonisation is a national imperative, and a logical,

rational, and ‘commonsensical’ choice<sup>14</sup>; they misrepresent, oversimplify, and ‘cherry-pick’<sup>15</sup> the evidence base of anthropogenic climate change all while presenting their own dogmatic, ‘factual’ accounts; and they deploy xenophobic, anti-indigenous, and nationalistic dog-whistles alongside environmental appeals, a common pairing within far-right milieus (Forchtner, 2019).

These are but a few examples of the mosaic of rhetorical techniques used in PPC’s public communication, making for an at times convoluted and inconsistent discourse. However, as is often the case with ideology, consistency here is *not* key (Hall, 1996). The PPC, I argue, is not attempting to formulate the most cohesive, logically-sound discourse. Rather, they engage with a highly diversified range of arguments, sentiments, and appeals aiming to capture the largest and broadest base as possible, mirroring their navigation of anti-ecological masculinities. Thus, the PPC’s maneuvering of gender identity and ideology can be understood as tactics in the party’s broader ‘war of positions’ to gain power in established fossil fuel and patriarchal hegemonies and to advance their ‘fascist creep’ into the mainstream Canadian political and cultural consciousness. Ultimately, in endeavouring to normalize their far-right politics, the PPC also reinforces perpetual lock-in to both carbon and patriarchal structures. Progressive movements must urgently resist this cycle.

### **5.3 Building an ecological counter-hegemony**

Canadian journalist, activist, and author Naomi Klein reminds us that:

With unleashed white supremacy and misogyny, with the world teetering on the edge of ecological collapse, with the very last vestiges of the public sphere set to be devoured by capital, it’s clear that we need to do more than draw a line in the sand and say “no more.” Yes, we need to do that and we need to chart a credible and inspiring path to a different future. (Klein, 2017, p. 146)

Indeed, transcending deconstruction is a central ambition of both FPE (Elmhirst, 2015) and PEFR (Allen et al., 2024), approaches to sustainability research which guide the current study. Tangible and inspiring alternative pathways must also be devised. Having scrutinized the PPC’s climate discourse and discussed its patriarchal nature and its functionality within broader cultural hegemonies, I will now

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Common sense’ being a recurring theme in PPC politics and an important instrument for advancing hegemonization, as discussed in Chapter 2.2.1.

<sup>15</sup> Misrepresentation, oversimplification, and ‘cherry-picking’ are highly common scientific denial strategies, not exclusive to climate science. See Holmes & Richardson (2020).

explore one of many such possible trajectories that can help foster a sustainable post-growth future where right-wing patriarchal climate denialism is largely a thing of the past.

Below, I will consider the prospect of an ‘ecologisation’ of masculinities and discuss its utility for progressive environmental forces in mobilizing against both far-right politics and the patriarchal petro-hegemonies they are nested within. This section is thus informed by a vital takeaway of my feminist discourse analysis of PPC climate denialism: advancing a bold, leftist countermovement in the wake of climate change and its intersecting social and political crises necessitates the active subversion of the structures of patriarchy (see Kaul & Buchanan, 2023). Nourishing ecological masculinities, I argue, could be the starting point for such an endeavour, but will require supplementary strategizing to ensure it is part of a counter-movement capable of taking on patriarchal, fossil fuel, and far-right interests simultaneously.

### ***5.3.1 Ecological masculinities***

Ecological masculinities are a proposed alternative to industrial/breadwinner, ecomodern, and other patriarchal masculinities which have set humanity along an alarming trajectory of irreversible climate change and socio-ecological breakdown. They are, by and large, marginalized within Western masculine configurations today, and their empirical study remains limited (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017; Hultman, 2017a).

Ecological masculinities seek to ‘ecologize’ the behaviours and practices commonly associated with men as a means to incorporate masculinized persons into the struggle for social and environmental justice. They necessitate paralleled ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ transformations, alterations which are “both interactive/political and contemplative/personal” (Hultman & Pulé, 2018, p. 224). In other words, ecologisation implies change on both individualized levels in men and other masculine positionalities, as well as broader alterations to the ways in which masculinities are defined and negotiated.

As a typology, ecological masculinities perceive humans and nature as wholly integrated, emphasizing cohabitation, reciprocity, and interconnectedness (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017; Hultman, 2017b). They confirm anthropogenic climate change, its scientific basis, and its existential urgency all while “acknowledging the costs of male domination and marking the currently unmarked implications of malestream masculinities” (Pulé, 2019, p. 485). They are invested in transformative rather than incremental change, including the abandonment of capitalism and the growth imperative, the end to extractivism and imperialism, and the localisation of economies. Engagement in climate activism is highly valued, as is feminized traits of care, sharing, and empathy (Hultman & Pulé, 2018).

Ecological masculinities are vital for challenging patriarchal petro-hegemonies *and* stifling the rise of the far right. Their proliferation can, for instance, strengthen the convictions of positionalities already eager to mobilize against oppressive forces, or nuance the views of those who feel an affinity to nature but who are disconnected from environmentalism and the climate movement. These types of shifts could ultimately further marginalize patriarchal anti-ecological masculinities, therefore obstructing the way some see themselves (and their gender identities) represented in denialist rhetoric.

### **5.3.2 Mobilizing an alternative**

My empirical research of the misogynistic underpinnings of the PPC's discursive maneuvering of Canada's petrocultures affirms that confronting the climate crisis cannot be disconnected from struggles against the rise of the far right and pervasive, institutionalized misogyny. In this section, I explore how leftist environmental movements, or progressive political parties such as the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Green Party of Canada (GPC), can successfully mobilize a counter-hegemonic movement that simultaneously challenges fossil fuel and patriarchal hegemonies all while weathering the PPC's steady encroachment into the social and political fabric of Canadian society. To do so, I integrate insights from the above analysis of the persuasiveness of the PPC's climate discourse with elements of the 'socialist strategy' devised by Mouffe and Laclau (2014, see Chapter 2.2.1).

Gender, as my results show, is a powerful lever for catalyzing and maintaining investment in environmental politics. However, as it stands, men remain overwhelmingly drawn towards Canada's anti-climate right-wing parties (EKOS Politics, 2020) and less invested in pro-environmental action and behaviours overall (Brough et al., 2016; Paulson & Boose, 2019). It is imperative that progressive movements endeavour to reverse this course. They must reinforce positive male ecological representations and reaffirm the link between compassion and action for the climate, and manhood. The PPC's discourse demonstrates that even in far-right spaces, affinity to the natural world can be a fundamental feature of masculinity – especially within the Canadian context, where 'the outdoors' is heavily entrenched in national identity (Richard, 2012). The PPC harnesses this connection to promote their xenophobic platform on immigration (see Chapter 4.3). Environmental advocates, I argue, must instead harness this condition to advance climate action and justice.

In other words, they must confirm that care for the environment and others can be, or is, masculine – and that the fossil violence, exploitation and domination, anthropocentrism, and other harmful behaviours and attitudes represented in patriarchal anti-ecological masculinities is not a biological or social inevitability. Ecological masculinities should therefore be normalized *within* and *via* leftist

counter-movements: they must be enacted with determination and resolution within progressive spaces and discourses, enabling their proliferation throughout society as the movement grows.

Discourses supporting this counter-hegemonic front and the normalisation of ecological masculinities can also be strengthened by drawing on lessons from the PPC's framing of grievances. Analysis of their public communication shows their ease in portraying a plurality of perceived inequalities as unjust, a compelling mobilizing strategy according to Mouffe and Laclau (2014). Progressive forces should replicate this approach, but crucially in the spirit of social justice and liberation rather than conservatism and ultra-nationalism. For instance, the PPC designates the Trudeau Government's carbon 'tax' as a tool of the ruling class (or the *'elite'*) to oppress the Canadian working class (*'taxpayers'* or *'Canadian families that are already struggling to make ends meet'*). The NDP, the GPC, and/or civil society actors must also confront this economic appeal by, perhaps, problematizing market-based mechanisms and presenting more equitable redistribution strategies rooted in, for instance, degrowth principles (see Kongshøj, 2023). Progressive mobilisation should thus strive to match the argumentative range of the PPC's climate discourse (e.g. economic, emotional, populist, etc. appeals), but heavily reframed.

Finally, Laclau and Mouffe (2014) argue that resistance movements can gain popular support by anchoring their struggle to an existing hegemonic discourse. I argue that multiculturalism could be such a discourse for progressives in Canada. Multiculturalism is a legal framework and political philosophy enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms since 1988. It aims to safeguard and enhance cultural diversity and ensure that all Canadians, regardless of cultural background, are "equal before and under the law and have the right to the equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination" (Canadian Department of Justice, 2024). It is widely considered a cornerstone of Canadian identity (see Government of Canada, 2015), therefore commanding a hegemonic standing.

This is, in fact, one area where Maxime Bernier and the PPC situate themselves as a counter-hegemony: the party staunchly opposes multiculturalism, and advocate for its removal from the country's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and implore the elimination of all federal funding for its promotion in order to "preserve Canadian values and culture" (PPC, 2023a). However, as discussed in Chapter 1.2, multiculturalism is heralded as Canada's antidote to far-right disturbances and their xenophobic, anti-immigration rhetoric (Ambrose & Mudde, 2015). While the PPC is seemingly exploring the limits of this 'immunity', counter-hegemonic forces should make use of cultural plurality as an asset to both undermine the PPC's climate denialist platform and amplify justice-centred climate politics. Multiculturalist attitudes and ethics should thus be embraced and elevated throughout leftist

counter-discourses and be embedded within Canadian ecological masculinities. Such a stance will be especially paramount moving forward, as displacement due to accelerating anthropogenic climate change (from, namely, the global South) will likely activate authoritarian, nativist tendencies which find recognition in far-right parties like the PPC (Daggett, 2018).

#### **5.4 Limitations and future research**

I will now close this section by acknowledging some important limitations of my study and discuss potential avenues for future research. Subjectivity, although not necessarily an impediment to objectivity (see Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1992), underlies the collection, coding, and analysis of my data and is therefore noteworthy. Although my particular positionality (Chapter 3.3) was in many ways advantageous and pivotal for the production of this knowledge, it is certainly not the only standpoint that matters. My findings would thus be greatly enriched by additional situated perspectives of those with different experiences of racial, class, gender, colonial, etc. hierarchies.

Furthermore, my research approach is lacking in both an intersectional and a decolonial frame of reference, common omissions across sustainability science scholarship (Hudson & Vodden, 2020; Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). Such epistemological perspectives would have deepened my analysis and elevated its impact, for instance by recognizing the axis of race in the ‘white, male, conservative’ trinity of climate denialism (McCright & Dunlap, 2011a) or by exploring the implications of multiculturalism discourses for decolonisation and ‘reconciliation’ (e.g. Brink, 2023).

Finally, as previously noted, solidarity with social movements and activists advancing sustainability transitions and climate justice is an imperative of all sustainability science research (Isgren et al., 2019) and vital to the emancipatory agendas of both FPE (Rocheleau et al., 1996) and PEFR (Allen et al., 2024). Although my research attempted to align with this principle, certain nuances were left underdeveloped. For instance, a provision of strategies enabling an ecological masculinities-grounded discourse to withstand co-optation (or a ‘creep’ (Ross, 2017)) by the far right, who promote their own distorted interpretations of care and environmentalism (Darwish, 2021), is missing. Moreover, supplementary support for men and others in embracing feminist masculinities under patriarchal constraints is required. This could be, for example, assisting them in overcoming ‘masculinist disorientation’ (Salleh, 1997) or reactionary responses such as the ‘gender traitor effect’ (Connell, 2021; Hultman & Pulé, 2018). Future research must elaborate and correct these blind spots.



## Concluding remarks

All in all, this work represents an effort to contribute to the transformative agenda of sustainability science by confronting one of the most overt and predominant antagonists to a decarbonised, postgrowth future: far-right climate denialism. Specifically, I sought to explain why skepticism remains a favourable and persuasive tactic for politically far-right parties like the PPC to adopt despite the overwhelming, publicly-supported consensus on anthropogenic climate change coupled with its intensifying social and environmental ramifications both in Canada and abroad.

Gender identity and misogyny, I assumed, were important factors in this interplay, a hypothesis that was ultimately confirmed through my analysis. Specifically, by performing a feminist critical discourse analysis of a range of PPC public material engaging with matters related to the environment, climate change, and the Canadian oil and gas sector, I found that the PPC posture a plurality of anti-ecological masculinities in their climate denialism. Those of a fragile complexion were especially prevalent. This, I argue, is a strategic discursive move enabling the party to activate a diverse and motivated base – one which they reinforce with an expansive repertoire of argumentative techniques and rhetorical devices. Ultimately, my theoretical foundation rooted in Gramscian thinking enabled me to interpret this gendered climate discourse as a calculated attempt by the PPC to exploit both fossil fuel and patriarchal hegemonies in order to advance their far-right politics in a thus-far hostile, but evolving, political context in Canada.

To fulfil the ‘problem-driven; solutions-oriented’ directions of both sustainability science (Jerneck et al., 2011) and political ecology (Robbins, 2012), I then translated this discursive deconstruction into strategy. Namely, based on insights gained from unpacking the effectiveness and functionality of the PPC’s climate denialism, I suggested ecological masculinities as a tool for progressive movements seeking to undermine the tripartite threat of the fossil fuel industry (and its allies), the patriarchy, and the far right – thus replicating the gender identity-confirming facet of PPC rhetoric. Such a coalition could be further strengthened by a discourse which is similarly heterogeneous in its topical range to the far-right party’s articulations (but diametrically opposed in terms of intention and ethics), one which promotes with conviction Canadian multiculturalism: a moral principle and a demographic fact which appears to be paramount for fending off far-right perturbations, an asset that Canadian leftist movements cannot flounder.

Although these insights were developed from a Canadian positionality for the Canadian context, far-right parties like the PPC exist across the world. Thus, it is my aspiration that these findings will be serviceable to others elsewhere seeking to resist their specific manifestation(s) of the misogynistic,

fossil-fuel affiliated far right. Like the fights against climate change and the patriarchy, the fight against the far right is a global one and must therefore be rooted in international solidarity (Allen et al., 2024). Moreover, I hope these reflections invoke a reignited faith in feminist thinking as a core emancipatory paradigm for all those suffering under the patriarchy – namely, for men and masculine persons who may feel withdrawn from the feminist movement and find refuge in the far right and their destructive, dehumanizing climate denialism (and broader ideology). As articulated by bell hooks (2005, p. 90):

What the world needs now is liberated men [...], men who are “empathetic and strong, autonomous and connected, responsible to self, to family and friends, to society, and capable of understanding how those responsibilities are, ultimately, inseparable”. Men need feminist thinking. It is the theory that supports their spiritual evolution and their shift away from the patriarchal model.

May this thesis therefore be a contribution to a strong, nuanced, and inspiring feminist counter-discourse to patriarchal far-right climate denialism.

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# Appendices

**Appendix A.** Finalized coding framework. Screenshots of Google Sheet used to track/update coding framework.

Novel (inductive) codes	
Excluded	
Ecomodern masculinities	
Nature framing	Nature is alive, in need of care <i>(limited) moments of compassion for the environment</i> Nature as separate, out there Nature can be dominated via human practices Anthropocentrism <i>human economic interests &gt; environmental care</i>
Problem framing	In-depth knowledge of climate crisis Climate change as a temporary crisis phenomenon <i>Not a system crisis, only marginal dysfunctions</i> <i>Will be solved soon</i> Climate change as a market opportunity <i>Economic lever for growth, enterprises, jobs, innovation</i>
Solution(s) framing	Revision/reform, not complete overhaul <i>Revise capitalism's economic and technical structures, but not complete overhaul</i> <i>Ensure "business as usual"/status quo</i> <i>Dismissal of transformative/system/hegemonic shifts</i> Market/neoliberal solutions <i>Economic growth</i> <i>Carbon markets</i> <i>Competition</i> <i>Green jobs</i>

	<i>Eco-friendly consumption</i> <i>Decoupling/win-win outcomes possible</i> <i>Green Keynesianism</i> Technological fixes/more 'green' industrialisation <i>Green' extractivism</i> <i>End of pipe technologies (carbon capture, carbon sequestration, geoengineering)</i> <i>Eco-friendly innovation</i> Embrace of Enlightenment values <i>Rationality, knowledge, progress</i>
Industrial masculinities	
Nature framing	Nature is dead, scary <i>Mechanical metaphors used to describe nature</i> Nature as separate, out there <i>Human/nature dichotomy (we are separate)</i> Nature can be dominated via male practices <i>Nature needs to be 'tamed'</i> <i>Nature needs to be 'dominated'</i> Nature values as a resource for human extraction/commodification <i>Instrumental/economic value of nature for humans</i> Anthropocentrism <i>(hu)mans as natural dominator</i> Faith in human creativity and ingenuity Have always managed to adapt to environmental challenges <i>Embrace and celebrate superiority of man</i> Creators of resources Not like other animals
Problem framing	Climate denialism/skepticism <i>Climate change is natural, normal</i>

				Climate change not existential threat	
				Climate emergency not real/fabricated	
				Climate/environment doing better now	
				Climate always changing	
				Climate change enabled life	
				Climate change is good	
				CO2 not pollutant, it is plant food	
			<i>Climate research is false</i>		
				Climate research inconsistent	
				None of predictions have come true	
				Based on flawed science	
			<i>Lack of scientific consensus</i>		
			<i>Climate research is alarmist</i>		
				Climate research is reactionary	
				Climate alarmists are lying	
				Environmental deaths are actually decreasing	
			<i>Climate research/activism is corrupt</i>		
			<i>Climate science and politics no longer distinguishable</i>		
				Climate science is an ideology	
				Climate science is propaganda	
				Manipulation of the youth	
			<i>Climate scientists/people as out of touch, elite, fancy people</i>		
			<i>Climate action the agenda of the 'politically correct', 'woke' left</i>		
				To justify draconian measures	
			<b>Suppression of those who question climate science</b>		
				<i>Describe self as marginalized, banned, oppressed dissidents</i>	
				<i>Environmentalists under a religious fervour (or other faith-based rhetoric)</i>	
				<i>Reference to authority/titles of those who deny/question climate science</i>	
				<i>Moral duty to speak up for the 'truth'</i>	
			<b>Other things to worry about</b>		

				<b>Recession/COVID</b>	
				<i>Demise of industrialisation (and lifestyle attached to it)</i>	
				Climate activists want return of premodern/preindustrial society	
				<i>Appeal to world welfare (climate efforts undermine efforts to combat malnutrition, AIDS, etc.)</i>	
				global South need to develop	
				<i>Conflict between concrete, short term, everyday problems and long term, abstracts, and global issues</i>	
				Ideology placed above pragmatism	
				Climate measures cost regular Canadians	
				Need 'practical' solutions	
				Too much focus on carbon emissions	
		<b>Solution(s) framing</b>			
			<b>Expansions of industrial modernisation</b>		
				<i>Large scale energy technologies (hydropower, nuclear power plants, fossil fuel tech)</i>	
				<i>Modernisation as cause of environmental problems, but also solution</i>	
				Fossil fuels needed to build green tech	
				Canada climate requires dependence on oil	
				Pipelines/oil/gas good for environment	
				<i>Engineering will derive wealth creation for mankind</i>	
				<i>Opposition to climate action/green transition</i>	
				Green tech/solutions ineffective/not sustainable	
				Climate action is expensive	
				Emissions targets unrealistic/trivial	
			<b>Market/neoliberal solutions</b>		
				<b>Free market</b>	
				<i>Economic growth</i>	
				<i>Skepticism/opposition to government regulation/intervention</i>	
				Government does not know better than us	
				Must 'allow' oil industry to grow	
				Climate action not federal government's responsibility	



		<b>Industrial men as saviours</b>				
			<i>Appeal to well-being of future generations, the poor, endangered species</i>			
			<i>Holders of knowledge/expertise/tools for working class/developing nations, etc.</i>			
		<b>Embrace of Enlightenment values</b>				
			<i>Common sense</i>			
			<i>Rationality/instrumentality</i>			
			<i>Binaries</i>			
			<i>Economics/engineering</i>			
		<b>Petromasculinities</b>				
	<b>Nature framing</b>					
		<b>Ambivalence towards nature/the environment</b>				
			<i>Don't care if there is more or less CO2</i>			
	<b>Problem framing</b>					
		<b>Climate refusal</b>				
			<i>Nihilism</i>			
			<i>Not denying, actively refusing to act on it</i>			
			<i>Climate anxiety as a weakness</i>			
		<b>Petro-nostalgia</b>				
			<i>Reference to ovelties and freedoms provided by fossil fuels</i>			
			<i>Only proven way to lift people out of poverty</i>			
			<i>Oil crucial to our prosperity/peace/freedom/unity</i>			
			<i>Longing for American dream (White patriarchal order)</i>			
			<i>Climate action destroying our 'way of life'</i>			
		<b>West has become 'weak'</b>				
			<i>Liberal, western hypocrisy</i>			
		<b>Progressive politics has gone too far</b>				
			<i>(White) men only ones who matter</i>			
			<i>Queer/women's rights</i>			
			<i>Political correctness</i>			
	<b>Solution framing</b>					

		<b>Rigidity</b>				
			<i>Don't adapt, defend petro-hegemony</i>			
			<i>Withdraw from Paris Agreement/international accords</i>			
			<i>End carbon tax/carbon pricing</i>			
			<i>Abolish subsidies</i>			
			<i>Adapt only to 'natural' climate change</i>			
		<b>Fossil violence</b>				
			<i>Exaggerated fossil fuel consumption (e.g. rolling coal)</i>			
			<i>Accelerated investment in fossil production</i>			
			<i>Streamline pipeline construction/projects</i>			
			<i>Enhance federal government's jurisdiction over pipelines</i>			
			<i>Respond to growing global demand for oil</i>			
			<i>Glorification of fossil aesthetics</i>			
			<i>Invest in fossilized jobs</i>			
		<b>Masculinist empowerment</b>				
			<i>Men as breadwinners</i>			
			<i>Nuclear family</i>			
			<i>Heteronormativity</i>			
			<i>Reinforcement of gender binaries</i>			
		<b>Authoritarianism</b>				
			<i>Make west 'strong', hard', 'self-sufficient' again</i>			
			<i>Uphold rule of law</i>			
			<i>White nationalism, xenophobia</i>			
			<i>Canadian oil cleanest/most ethical</i>			
			<i>Focus on Canada/Canada first</i>			
			<i>End mass immigration</i>			
			<i>Immigrants bad for the environment</i>			
			<i>Overpopulation is the issue</i>			
			<i>Overpopulation not the issue?</i>			
			<i>Othering (global South, Members of state, POC, feminists, ecojustice warriors)</i>			

				Spending too much money abroad		
<b>Frontier masculinity</b>						
	<b>Nature framing</b>					
		<b>Nature as a frontier</b>				
				<i>To be discovered</i>		
				<i>A symbol of hope</i>		
				<i>Physically harsh and unpredictable</i>		
		<b>Appreciation and affinity towards nature</b>				
				<i>Important part of Canadian culture</i>		
		<b>Nature to be dominated and extracted</b>				
				<i>Production centric mentality</i>		
				Canada third largest oil reserve		
	<b>Problem framing</b>					
		<b>Refutation of climate science</b>				
				<i>Climate advocates as hypocrites</i>		
				Virtue signaling		
				Private jets/flyers/other sustainable practices		
				<i>Climate advocates/the 'left' are weak, inferior, feminized, undeserving of protection</i>		
				<i>Climate advocates as unintelligent</i>		
				<i>Climate advocates infantilized (young, naive)</i>		
		<b>Demise of oil industry</b>				
				<i>Oil workers/industry presented as victims</i>		
				Climate regulations hurt local/albertan/canadian economy		
				Employment losses		
				<i>Liberals', 'socialists', 'communists', the 'woke culture' to blame</i>		
				Globalists		
				"Minority" activists		
				Radical environmentalists		
				<i>Foreign entities (environmental groups, Saudi Arabia) to blame</i>		
				American left-wing		

				Rockefeller Brothers/Tides Foundation		
	<b>Solution(s) framing</b>					
		<b>Nostalgia for 'Wild West' and gold rush era</b>				
		<b>Natural resource extraction</b>				
		<b>Embodiment of 'cowboy'/'lone male' hero</b>				
				<i>Toughness, tenacity, individualism, emotional self-reliance, personal isolation</i>		
				<i>Independence, self-sufficiency, autonomy</i>		
				<i>Self-interest, competitiveness, power</i>		
				<i>Bravery, risk taking</i>		
				<i>Rejection of weakness</i>		
				<i>Self-proclaimed 'protectors' of the weak</i>		
		<b>Traditional gendered division of labour</b>				
				<i>Creation/protection of male spaces</i>		
				<i>Women 'unfit', excluded from oil industry</i>		
				<i>Devaluation of feminized care work</i>		
				<i>Valorisation of fatherhood</i>		
				<i>Institutionalisation of problematic behaviour</i>		
		<b>Sanctioning of bigotry/intolerance</b>				
				Colonialism/anti-indigenous		
				Racism		
				Misogyny		
				Homophobia		
				Nationalism		
				Trumpist rhetoric		
				Conspiracy theories		
		<b>Enlightenment values</b>				
				Rationality/knowledge		

**Appendix B.** Example of collected material. PPC's 'Pipelines' 2-page policy document (d3). Remainder of material can be found in corresponding zip-file or on the official PPC website and Rumble page.



## PIPELINES

### Allowing our Oil and Gas Industry to Grow

#### Issue

Under the influence of radical environmental activists and American left-wing foundations, the Trudeau government has done everything it can to stifle the growth of Canada's oil industry by preventing it from transporting and selling its products.

With Bill C-48, the Liberals imposed a ban on oil tanker traffic on the north coast of British Columbia, which brought the cancellation of the Northern Gateway and Eagle Spirit pipeline projects. After years of legal uncertainty, investors pulled out of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and sold it to the federal government for \$4.5 billion.

Unrealistic environmental requirements from the National Energy Board also killed the Energy East pipeline. Bill C-69 makes the process of building pipelines and other major energy projects so complex and difficult that it could prevent any new investment. Among other things, that bill requires projects to be analyzed based on "the intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors." Almost all natural gas transportation and export projects proposed in recent years have been abandoned.

Finally, the Biden administration cancelled the Keystone XL pipeline project and the Michigan Governor has been trying to shut down the crucially important Line 5 that carries oil and natural gas liquids from Western Canada to Ontario and Quebec.

Because of these constraints, capital investments in the oil and gas industry collapsed.

Our overdependence on the American market for exports also costs the Canadians economy billions of dollars in foregone revenues every year. Alberta's economy suffered a major setback for several years, with tens of thousands of jobs disappearing in the oil patch and many more in local communities that depend on this industry.

#### Facts

Researcher Vivian Krause has spent years documenting a well-organized campaign to landlock Canada's oil, funded by American foundations such as the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Tides Foundation. Almost all the groups involved in various types of campaigns and court cases against pipeline construction received money from them.

Despite the emergence of alternative sources of energy, global demand for oil is expected to keep rising for several decades. Canada has the third-largest oil reserves in the world and is well placed to answer this demand.

If this oil doesn't come from Alberta and Saskatchewan, it will come from elsewhere, mostly countries with poor environmental or human rights standards such as Russia, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. And if it is not transported by pipelines, it will be transported by rail, a much more dangerous method for both the environment and humans, as we saw with the Lac-Mégantic tragedy.

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## Our Plan

The oil and gas industry has been for decades a major source of employment, government revenues, and economic well-being for all of Canada. It should be allowed to grow, export its products, and bring prosperity to our country.



### A People's Party government will:

- Counter anti-oil and anti-pipeline propaganda from radical environmentalists and foreign foundations.
- Repeal Bill C-48.
- Repeal Bill C-69.
- Approve pipelines projects using a streamlined process.
- Find a private buyer for Trans Mountain.
- Reassert federal jurisdiction over pipelines construction by invoking section 92(10) of our Constitution if necessary, whereby Parliament can declare any project to be for the general advantage of Canada.
- Work with industry and with our American partners to revive cancelled projects and keep Line 5 in operation.

*(Updated January 2023)*

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**Appendix C.** Example of coded material. Screenshots from MaxQDA coding software. Image taken May 2024 following the completion of coding.

