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Denial is a pipeline in Canada: a feminist critical discourse analysis of Canadian far-right climate obstruction

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ABSTRACT

Climate denial and refusal remain central to the ontologies of far-right political projects in many of the countries most responsible for rising temperatures. This article demonstrates how misogyny facilitates the proliferation of obstructionist rhetoric. Specifically, the People's Party of Canada's (PPC) climate discourse is analyzed through a feminist lens anchored in Gramscian theorisations of hegemony and masculinity. I find that the PPC articulates a heavily masculinized and topically diverse form of obstruction, simultaneously enacting attributes and ideals of industrial/breadwinner, frontier, petro and (to a lesser extent) ecomodern masculinities. The broadness of the party's appeals and their affirmation of particularly fragile masculine archetypes are assessed to be deliberate discursive moves constituent of a broader strategy to secure power within the Canadian political landscape via dominant fossil fuel and patriarchal regimes. Ultimately, several strategies for subverting such a tenacious discourse are discussed, including a steadfast commitment to feminist ecological alternatives and an unwavering endorsement of multiculturalist ethics.

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Introduction

Ongoing enmeshed catastrophes of intensifying climate change and democratic backsliding in North America and Europe are in many ways an ultimate indictment of Western hegemonic masculinity. Socio-ecological breakdown of today (and tomorrow) bears an unequivocal patriarchal legacy, where pernicious masculinized embodiments of entitlement, domination, competitiveness, risk-taking, and aggression have long been privileged at the expense of feminized expressions of vulnerability, compassion, emotion, care, and sensitivity (Merchant, 1989; Pease et al., 2021). Surviving the (m)Anthropocene is therefore conditional on our collective emancipation from prevailing capitalist gendered paradigms, ones where patriarchal violence is sanctioned in both responses to and outcomes of such existential threats (Pulé & Hultman, 2021).

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Climate obstruction thus becomes a critical domain for feminist scrutiny. 'Obstruction' refers to the myriad of ways climate action is impeded and the status quo is materially and discursively reproduced: from outright denial of climate change's drivers and effects (also known as 'primary obstruction'), to hesitation, dismissal, or opposition to meaningful measures (e.g. Lamb et al.'s (2020) 'discourses of climate delay', or 'secondary obstruction'), or the ubiquitous norms, values, and everyday behaviors which strain our planetary boundaries ('tertiary obstruction') (Ekberg et al., 2022). Although devised, upheld, and enforced by a range of actors, obstruction is highly masculinized, with white conservative men spearheading its organization and mobilization (Oreskes & Conway, 2012) and dominating its constituency (Krange et al., 2019; Letourneau et al., 2023; McCright & Dunlap, 2011). It is especially visible across the contemporary far right (Ekberg et al., 2022; Malm, 2021), with climate change being increasingly integrated into their 'culture wars' waged against, among other progressive forces, the feminist movement (de Nadal, 2024).

This special issue contribution, although focused on far-right climate obstruction, will not endeavor to debunk obstructionist claims and misinformation. Many have assumed this task already (e.g. Cook, 2019; Lewandowsky et al., 2020). Instead, through a case study of the Canadian far-right *People's Party of Canada*, the strategic viability of obstruction in times of escalating warming will be explored. In other words, the *whys* and *hows* of far-right discursive climate denial and delay will be considered, rather than simply its *whos* (Hornsey et al., 2016). However, in light of its *whos* (white, conservative men), the misogynistic undertones of their obstruction will also be demystified.

Ultimately, this study shall investigate: (1) *In what ways does the People's Party of Canada enact patriarchal masculinities in their claims-making and framing of climate change, the environment, and fossil fuels?* and (2) *How do these patriarchal masculinities lend themselves to the success and functionality of their climate obstruction*? In keeping with the tradition of political ecology as both a 'hatchet' and a 'seed' for equitable sustainable futures (Robbins, 2012), I will also ask (3) *How can such a gendered obstructionist discourse be resisted?* Here, a non-essentialist approach to the nexus of gender and climate change is stressed, maintaining that differentiated environmental attitudes and experiences are not biologically determined but rather the product of patriarchal social conditioning. As a result, some men and masculinities can be viewed as "intertwined with environmentally destructive processes, while others support, or can support, moves towards dynamics that are healthier for humans and non-human nature" (Paulson & Boose, 2019, p. 1).

Contextualizing the People's Party of Canada

On September 14th 2018, former Conservative Member of Parliament Maxime Bernier announced the formation of the People's Party of Canada (henceforth PPC), a far-right populist alternative within Canada's parliamentary democracy. Until their inception, Canadian politics were widely considered impervious to the far right, due primarily to the country's ethnically diverse electorate (Besco & Tolley, 2018) and institutionalized commitment to multiculturalism (Ambrose & Mudde, 2015). However, despite being a ′marginal, poorly organized, and badly funded′political party (Turcotte et al., 2023, p. 92), the PPC earned 4.9% of the popular vote in the 2021 Canadian federal election (Elections Canada, 2023).

The PPC strives to '*put Canadians first*' and foster a nation that is '*united in [the] pursuit of common goals instead of being divided by identity politics*' (PPC, 2024a). Opposition to climate change science and adaptation/mitigation is a bedrock of PPC advocacy, alongside other tenets of far-right thought. They are currently, in fact, the only federal Canadian political party without a climate plan (Chung, 2021; The Narwhal, 2025), opting instead to platform pipeline expansion and oil and gas industry growth (PPC, 2024c). 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). Acute obstruction is thus pervasive, and concentrated, within far-right spaces in Canada, making the PPC a highly relevant object of study.

Theoretical groundings

Petro-hegemony and discursive lock-in

Gramscian theorizations of hegemony offer a compelling framework for making sense of the contemporary far right. Hegemonies can be understood as dominant social, cultural, political, or economic orders which gain ubiquity through the naturalization of ideology, where arbitrary mechanisms of hierarchisation and control are reduced to a matter of human nature and/or common sense (Bourdieu, 1977; Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 2007). Indeed, far-right entities commonly deploy conventional tactics of hegemonization to legitimize their stances (Pasieka, 2022) and advance their 'fascist creep' into mainstream politics and popular thought (Ross, 2017). Far-right worldviews and reactionary politics are oftentimes depicted as as 'self-evident', 'natural', 'just', and 'proper' by their proponents (Pasieka, 2022, p. 426), through for instance mottos like (in the case of the PPC) '*Common sense policies that put Canadians first*' (PPC, 2024b).

While positioning themselves as an alternative to the status quo, the far right consistently endorses one of the most powerful, resilient, and omnipresent hegemonies today: petro-hegemony (Malm, 2021). Fossil fuels are, in Canada and across the world, hyper-normalized through their deliberate cultural, economic, and political entrenchment within existing social infrastructure and daily lived realities (LeQuesne, 2019; Wilson et al., 2017). Petrocultures emerge under such conditions, where fossil fuels operate as determinants of collective 'values, practices, habits, beliefs, and feelings' (Petrocultures Research Group, 2015, p. 9), thus shaping nationhood, social behavior, and identity (Barney, 2017; Szeman, 2017). This is especially true of gender, where '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).

Despite their supposed inevitability, petro-hegemonies are not self-sustaining. Discourses are among the many ways that consent is secured for the perpetual prevalence (or 'lock-in') of fossil fuels regardless of their proven economic, environmental, and social risks (Unruh, 2000). Consequently, any meaningful green transition will require the disruption of patterns of language and communication which maintain petro-hegemonies (Buschmann & Oels, 2019), such as the climate obstruction promoted by far-right parties like the PPC.

Obstructionist masculinities

Masculinity is a relevant variable, among others, in understanding the tenacity of climate obstructionist discourse. An expanding typology of masculine configurations (or 'masculinities') at odds with climate imperatives and sharing a common obstructionist temperament seeks to consider this interplay.

Ecomodern masculinities

Ecomodern masculinities are widespread in climate politics today, championing neoliberal environmentalism by coupling technological dominance with virility (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014b). Although willing to recognize anthropogenic climate change, the climate emergency is designated as a temporary crisis surmountable through human ingenuity and masculinized apparatuses of science, technology, and rationality. Climate change is thus regarded as a market opportunity and a potential catalyst for growth, innovation, and jobs (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017; Davidson & Letourneau, 2022; Hultman, 2013). *Ecomodern masculinities* are dismissive of transformative change, favoring instead reformist solutions that safeguard the economic status-quo (Hultman & Pulé, 2018) consistent with secondary obstruction (Ekberg et al., 2022).

Industrial/breadwinner masculinities

Industrial/breadwinner masculinities are foremost conduits of primary climate obstruction. They espouse conventional denialist narratives, arguing for instance that climate change is a natural phenomenon and any evidence suggesting otherwise is ambiguous and ideologically-driven (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014a). An intrinsic devaluation of the environment and a presumption in humans as the rightful dominators of the natural world lay the groundwork for such beliefs (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017; Hultman, 2017). *Industrial/breadwinner masculinities* thus argue that climate action is futile (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014a; Hultman, 2017). They instead call for an uninhibited expansion of industrial modernization (Hultman & Pulé, 2019), an ambition fundamentally at odds with decarbonization.

Petro-masculinities

The demise of *industrial/breadwinner* positionalities is catalyzing increasingly reactionary, inflated manifestations of this once hegemonic constituency (Daggett, 2018; Lockwood, 2018). *Petro-masculinities* are one such variant. They exhibit apathy toward both people and the planet, opting for a complete withdrawal from the climate crisis (Daggett, 2018; Davidson & Letourneau, 2022). A hallmark of their compensatory repertoire is an escalation of fossil fuel production and consumption, and an exaggerated fetishization of oil and gas aesthetics (Daggett, 2018). They are commonly recognized in the authoritarian politics of the far right, who confirm their longing for a bygone era of uninhibited white, petro-patriarchal rule (Daggett, 2018; Nelson, 2020).

Frontier masculinities

Frontier masculinities assume a localized hegemony in the oil-rich landscapes of Western Canada (Davidson & Letourneau, 2022; Landry & Willey, 2023). Here, the natural world is imagined as a frontier to be explored that, although harsh and unpredictable,

symbolizes hope, opportunity, and prosperity (Miller, 2004; O'Shaughnessy, 2011). Masculine attributes like toughness, tenacity, autonomy, and bravery are lauded, reflected in mythologies of the gold rush and wild West eras (Letourneau et al., 2023; Wright, 2001). *Frontier masculinities* are deeply entrenched in the oil and gas sector, and thus show great aversion to climate advocacy (Letourneau et al., 2023).

Methodology

Feminist critical discourse analysis

A comprehensive deconstruction of the PPC's discursive climate obstruction was attained via feminist critical discourse analysis. Here, a discourse is not merely described, but carefully unraveled to expose its implicit commitment to legitimizing and reproducing injustice (Benoit, 2020; Van Dijk, 1995). A feminist orientation is particularly useful when striving to decipher a given discourse's role in upholding a patriarchal social order. It exposes the 'complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and power asymmetries get discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and contested in specific communities and discourse contexts' (Lazar, 2007, p. 150). A feminist critical discourse analysis thus assists in disrupting the perception of far-right climate obstruction as gender neutral, a necessary prerequisite to effectively subverting it.

Material

The PPC's account of climate change, the environment, and fossil fuels was captured through material disseminated via two public communication channels: videos posted on Rumble by the official PPC account (*@People's Party of Canada – OFFICIAL*) and 2-page policy-printouts available on their website (*peoplespartyofcanada.ca*). Videos and documents referencing, for instance, 'COP28', 'pipelines', or the 'carbon tax' were viewed or read to ensure relevance. If sufficient discursive engagement in climate obstruction was found, they were selected for coding.

Seven videos (v1-7) and three policy-printouts (d1-3) published between 2019 and 2023 were collected in January 2024 (see Table 1), ranging in thematic content and formality. Videos varied in length, topics, and tone, from shorter and targeted addresses by leader Maxime Bernier to lengthier campaign speeches or in-depth interviews with guests or fellow party members. Three policy-printouts were also analyzed, outlining the PPC's position on '*Pipelines*' (d3) and '*Global Warming and the Environment*' (d1). A two-pager on '*Immigration*' (d2) was also examined given its repeated cross reference in d1 and d3. In these short-form and accessible documents, 'issues' are problematized and solutions are proposed.

Analytical framework and coding scheme

Material was coded using the software MaxQDA (release 22.8.0). A deductive coding scheme of the four aforementioned obstructionist masculinities (*ecomodern, industrial/breadwinner, petro*, and *frontier*) was developed based on existing literature. These

Table 1. Collected material details.

Code	Title	Publication date	Length
[v1]	The Maxime Bernier Show: Dec 21. COP28, Victory Homes, Housing Crisis	21 December 2023	00:34:00
[v2]	Don't believe the climate alarmists	8 November 2021	00:01:42
[v3]	The Maxime Bernier Show – Ep. 27 Max talks about 'Planet of the Humans' with Pierre Desrochers	29 May 2020	00:29:48
[v4]	The Max Bernier Show Ep. 12 – Not an April Fool's joke: Trudeau's carbon tax goes up 50%	1 April 2020	00:02:18
[v5]	The Max Bernier Show Ep.2: Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs: reactionary fanatics paralyze our economy	14 February 2020	00:01:59
[v6]	PPC – Pipelines with Maxime Bernier	25 September 2019	00:02:21
[v7]	Lancement de la campagne nationale en Beauce | National Campaign Launch in Beauce	25 August 2019	01:08:08
[d1]	Global Warming & Environment: Rejecting Climate Alarmism and Focusing On Concrete Improvements	August 2023	2 pages
[d2]	Immigration: Reducing Overall Levels and Prioritizing Skilled Immigrants	August 2023	2 pages
[d3]	Pipelines: Allowing our Oil and Gas Industry to Grow	January 2023	2 pages

typologies acted as proxies for uncovering the gendered complexion of the PPC's obstructionist politics and showcasing how misogyny is deployed as an effective 'transmission mechanism' by the far right (Kaul & Buchanan, 2023, p. 308). Preliminary assessment confirmed that expressions of these subjectivities appeared in PPC public communication. Novel manifestations by the party were inductively coded to complement the initial deductive coding scheme. Codes were applied when a segment was deemed an enactment of one (or more) obstructionist masculinity. To ensure rigor and consistency, multiple rounds of coding were undertaken.

Results

Critical analysis of the chosen materials confirms that the PPC is an unwavering patron of Canada's fossil fuel industry and a staunch opponent to a green transition and climate justice. They impede climate action by harnessing several degrees of climate obstruction, simultaneously enacting various obstructionist masculinities. This gendered climate discourse is outlined below. PPC claims are exemplified through both direct quotes (*italicized*) and author paraphrasing.

Coalescing obstructionist masculinities

Amidst their discursive struggle with the climate crisis, the PPC articulates a derivative form of obstruction manifesting (to various extents) features of the outlined obstructionist masculinities (see Table 2). For one, an anthropocentric ecology is amplified throughout their discourse, where humanity is removed from its ecological context(s) and nature is valued exclusively as an everlasting source of economic capital. Such worldviews are shared between industrial/breadwinner, frontier, and ecomodern identities. Frontier and ecomodern attitudes also appear in brief moments of admiration for the Canadian outdoors and landscapes, especially pronounced when the environment is thought of in relation to Canadian nationhood ('*I, for most of my life, would have considered*

Table 2. Summarized findings. Key obstructionist narratives and their corresponding masculinities, as expressed by the PPC.

Obstructionist narratives	Obstructionist masculinities
Far-right ecology (human-nature relations)	
Romanticization of nature and the outdoors	Ecomodern; frontier
Nature and outdoors linked to Canadian national identity	Frontier
Natural resources valued for their economic provisions	Ecomodern; frontier; industrial/breadwinner
Nature and natural resources are limitless	Frontier
Humans are rightful and capable dominators of the natural world	Ecomodern; frontier; industrial/breadwinner
Indifference towards ecological breakdown	Petro-masculinity
Attitudes towards climate science and action	
Climate change is a natural phenomenon	Industrial/breadwinner
Industrialization has improved the state of the environment	Industrial/breadwinner
Climate science is flawed, inconsistent, and/or false	Industrial/breadwinner
Climate advocates are elitist and/or hypocritical	Industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
Climate advocates are ignorant, unintelligent, and/or naive	Industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
Climate advocated are radical, alarmist, reactionary, and/or fanatical	Industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
Indigenous climate resistance is illegitimate	Frontier; petro-masculinity
Climate crisis is fabricated to justify government overreach	Industrial/breadwinner
Climate advocacy is corrupt and influenced by vested interests	Industrial/breadwinner
Climate science is an ideology and/or propaganda aiming to indoctrinate and manipulate	Industrial/breadwinner
Rejection and/or scrutiny of climate science is a marginalized, discriminated position	Industrial/breadwinner
Climate action compromises national/local economies, livelihoods, and communities	Frontier; industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
Climate action jeopardizes Canadian peace, prosperity, unity, freedom, and way of life	Frontier; industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
Climate measures are futile and/or unrealistic	Industrial/breadwinner
Climate measures worsen everyday struggles of average Canadians	Industrial/breadwinner
Climate action delays resolution of more legitimate and/or urgent societal challenges	Industrial/breadwinner
Environmental mandate	
All federal climate policies and measures should be rescinded	Frontier; industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
Fossil fuel production, transportation, and consumption should be expedited	Frontier; industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
Economic growth and market deregulation should be facilitated	Ecomodern; industrial/breadwinner
Immigration and non-permanent residency should be significantly reduced	Petro-masculinity
Overpopulation drives environmental degradation	Petro-masculinity
Rationality, logic, practicality, common sense, and/or the rule of law should guide responses to climate change	Ecomodern; industrial/breadwinner
Federal government is not entitled to undertaking climate action on behalf of Canadians	Industrial/breadwinner; petro-masculinity
Green infrastructure requires the continued extraction of fossil fuels	Ecomodern; industrial/breadwinner
Canadian oil is among the most sustainable and ethically-sourced in the world	Frontier; industrial/breadwinner
Climate breakdown is inevitable, planet cannot be saved	Petro-masculinity

myself an environmentalist. I love getting out into the woods and enjoying that. I think it's an important part of Canadian culture' (v1)). This reverence is juxtaposed, however, by the party's uniquely petro-masculine apathy towards ecological breakdown, expressed for instance by leader Maxime Bernier when stating: '*Personally, if we have more or less CO_2, I don't mind. I don't care. […] we won't save the planet and we know that*' (v1).

The party also draws on recurrent obstructionist rhetoric of industrial/breadwinner, frontier, and petro-masculinities to soften the unequivocal threat of the climate

emergency, undermine its scientific basis, and sow distrust in post-carbon futures and climate advocates. The PPC leans especially into industrial/breadwinner sensibilities in their critique of government emissions reduction commitments/policies and the perceived ostracization of the 'skeptical' stance. By problematizing the economic and cultural risks of decarbonization (e.g. '*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, pre-industrial society.* (v5)'), Maxime Bernier and the PPC also validate the cardinal concerns of frontier and petro-masculine positionalities. Traces of an ecomodern recognition of climate science are noticeably absent from the analyzed material.

Nevertheless, the party presents an environmental mandate that is rife with masculine heterogeneity. The PPC remains strongly aligned with fossil fuel interests, thus exhibiting a highly petro-masculine disposition. Meanwhile, ideals of both industrial/breadwinner and ecomodern masculinities are also reflected through the party's appropriation of positivist principles of logic and reason ('*It's all common sense. […] If you want to fight [for] common sense, we must withdraw from the Paris Accord*" (v1)), coupled with their resolute endorsement of free market and growth paradigms. Frontier and petro-masculinities also appear in the PPC's vision for a '*freer*' (v6) and more '*prosperous*' (v6) Canada, in which dramatic reduction in immigration is framed as a viable and morally-legitimate environmental strategy ('*It is illogical for the government to pretend to care about CO_2 emissions and the environment while planning to bring in millions of immigrants, non-permanent residents and refugees to Canada over the coming years.'* (d1)). The party's climate obstructionism is thus laden with attributes of a range of patriarchal obstructionist masculinities, consolidating into a climate discourse that is as a result highly misogynistic.

Discussion

Success and functionality of PPC climate obstruction

The above findings suggest that the PPC proliferates a particular gendered iteration of climate obstruction seeking to improve their counter-hegemonic position within the Canadian political terrain by capitalizing off intersecting patriarchal and petro-hegemonies. They do so with persuasion by affirming increasingly fragile masculinities through a rhetoric which resists decarbonization from several argumentative angles.

Exploitation of vulnerable masculinities

Across its online public communication channels, the PPC articulates an attitude towards climate change and fossil fuels that is steeped in patriarchal phantasms (see Butler, 2024). Indeed, the Canadian far-right party deploys the ontologies, fantasies, and grievances of a range of obstructionist masculinities, thus adhering not to a singular, idealized, or hegemonic masculine subjectivity. This plurality enables the party to convey a discourse capable of resonating with a mosaic of masculine personas: their messaging can fasten proud breadwinners with staunch defenders of modern capitalist industrialization, with avid outdoorsmen, free market enthusiasts, patriotic Canadians, blue-collar oil and gas workers, rationalists, and many more masculinized profiles. In other words, the PPC's paralleled enactment of multiple obstructionist masculinities is highly unifying.

It is notable, however, that the party opts to predominantly recognize reactionary gendered identities that are increasingly drifting from hegemonic status, oftentimes referred to as 'fragile' or 'hyper' masculinities (DiMuccio & Knowles, 2020). Industrial/breadinner, frontier, and petro-masculinities – identities which repeatedly appear in the analyzed material – have been designated as such (Daggett, 2018; Davidson & Letourneau, 2022; Hultman & Pulé, 2019). Meanwhile, ecomodern masculinities (largely considered hegemonic in environmental politics today (Anshelm & Hultman, 2017)) find more scarce representation. This is, I hypothesize, a calculated discursive move: arousing insecure gendered identities can make for a constituency that is particularly emboldened, eager, and assiduous (Daggett, 2018). PPC climate obstruction is thus deliberately conceived to exploit the entrenchment of patriarchal masculinities within Canadian petrocultures. It is geared towards mobilizing a diverse and passionate coalition propelled by compounding gender and climate anxieties (see Daggett, 2018; Parenti, 2015), one which can be of service to the PPC in advancing their overarching political aspirations. 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' commonly found in far-right repertoires throughout the world (Kaul & Buchanan, 2023, p. 315; Vowles & Hultman, 2021).

Sophistication of discursive climate obstruction

Scrutiny of the party's public communication also reveals the degree of sophistication of the PPC's obstructionist discourse, an important feature for making sense of its effectiveness. Indeed, the PPC use numerous argumentative entry points spanning multiple degrees of obstruction to gain a sympathetic audience: the party vindicates contemporary economic anxieties and make populist and emotional appeals to government and bureaucratic distrust; they portray carbonization as a logical and commonsensical choice, and above all else a national imperative; they misrepresent, oversimplify, and cherry-pick the scientific basis of anthropogenic climate change all while offering their own dogmatic, supposedly factual commentary on socio-ecological change; they invoke interconnectedness and embodiment through carbon vitalism (Pasek, 2021); and they deploy fascist logics and dog whistles alongside their scare environmental appeals, a common pairing in far-right thought (Darwish, 2021; Forchtner, 2019).

This can make for an at-times convoluted and inconsistent obstructionist discourse. However, as is often the case with ideology, consistency here is not key (Hall, 1996). Maxime Bernier and the PPC are not seeking to formulate the most cohesive, nuanced set of narratives about climate change. Rather, they make use of multiple (sometimes contradicting) argumentative appeals to maximize the size and diversity of their base, mirroring their navigation of masculinity. Such discursive maneuvers can be interpreted as tactics within the party's broader 'war of positions' (Gramsci, 1971) to secure power in established fossil fuel and patriarchal hegemonies, and to advance their fascist creep (Ross, 2017) into mainstream Canadian political and cultural consciousness. Ultimately, in endeavoring to popularize their far-right politics, the PPC reinforces perpetual discursive (and, subsequently, institutional, technological, and behavioral (Buschmann & Oels, 2019; Seto et al., 2016)) lock-in to both carbon and patriarchal futures. Progressive forces must urgently resist this trend.

Resisting far-right climate obstruction

Transcending deconstruction is central to the praxis of feminist political ecology (Elmhirst, 2015). Tangible and inspiring alternative pathways must be devised alongside any critique of oppressive politics (Klein, 2017). Having scrutinized the PPC's climate discourse and situated it within its broader cultural hegemonies, possible trajectories for resistance will now be explored. Below, the prospect of an 'ecologisation' of masculinities is considered and its relevance for progressive forces aiming to disarm far-right obstruction is discussed. Although nourishing feminist ecological masculinities could be a compelling contribution to a robust feminist counter-discourse, supplemental strategizing is required to ensure that such subversive practices can effectively undermine the far right and other apparatuses of patriarchal petro-hegemonies (Manhire, 2024).

Feminist ecological masculinities

The gendered tone of PPC climate obstruction is a reminder that confronting the (m)Anthropocene (Pulé & Hultman, 2021) is not merely a matter of overcoming educational and technological deficits: it is also fundamentally related to power struggles, identity, and cultural change (Dankelman, 2002; Manhire, 2024; Wilson et al., 2017). Sustainable and just futures hinge upon, among other forms of liberation, dismantling capitalist patriarchy and radically shifting the ways in which masculinities are enacted and patriarchal power is exerted.

One suggested starting point is the cultivation of masculine subjectivities premised on the renouncement of patriarchal oppression of nature, others, and self. Hultman and Pulé (2018) offer one such alternative in the form of ecological masculinities. Although by and large marginalized among (Western) gender configurations today, ecological masculinities are a useful tool for weakening many pillars of far-right climate obstruction. Their proliferation can, for instance, reframe environmentalism and affinity toward nature beyond a surface level, personal philosophy towards progressive political action, ultimately disrupting the way in which some see their gendered selves represented in obstructionist storylines.

However, it is imperative that any pursuit of masculine ecologisation adopts an unrelenting feminist orientation (Filteau, 2016; Pease et al., 2021). Progressive climate politics are not inherently devoid of patriarchal disturbances, with misogyny eroding environmental spaces to this day (Chan & Curnow, 2017). Ecological masculinities must therefore commit to a profound engagement with 'embodied knowledge' (Hedenqvist et al., 2021) and feminist thought/modes of organization to form (and ultimately, act upon) a nuanced and intersectional patriarchal critique that problematizes gender codes and power relations that drive climate destruction (Connell, 1990; Pease et al., 2021).

Mobilizing a feminist, ecological counter-hegemony

Masculinity, as these results show, is a powerful lever for catalyzing and sustaining investment in obstructionist politics. Progressive forces can disrupt this juncture by affirming positive masculine representations through feminist ecological masculinities and strategically capitalizing off shared values and detected avenues for ecologisation. For instance, PPC climate discourse reveals that even within far-right spaces, embeddedness with nature can be an accepted way of performing masculinity, especially within the Canadian

context where the outdoors is heavily linked to national identity (Kloet, 2011; Richard, 2012). This cultural entrenchment is currently being exploited by the PPC and other far-right actors in Canada to convey nationalistic desires (Letourneau et al., 2023). Environmentalists must instead leverage it to channel men and masculinities towards feminist politics of care and climate justice.

In other words, progressive counter-hegemonic coalitions must reaffirm that care for the environment and others can be, or is, masculine; and that fossil violence, exploitation, and domination are neither a biological nor a social inevitability (see e.g. Hedenqvist et al., 2021). Feminist ecological masculinities should thus be enacted with resolution and accountability within progressive networks, where novel and creative ways of orienting men and masculinities (in far-right spaces and beyond) towards collective liberation and climate justice are sought out; where such groups can ultimately 'see themselves in the narrative futures we are building' (Letourneau et al., 2023, p. 692).

Discursive support for feminist ecological masculinities can also be strengthened through observing the versatility of far-right climate obstruction, especially its argumentative range. Deconstruction of the PPC's online public communication showcases the party's ease in portraying perceived inequalities as unjust, a compelling mobilizing strategy according to Laclau and Mouffe (2001). This tactic should be matched, but aimed towards progressive ends. For instance, the PPC argue that Canada's federal carbon pricing scheme (or '*tax*' (v1; v4; d1)) is a tool of the elite to oppress the Canadian working class ('*taxpayers*' (v3) or '*Canadian families that are struggling to make end's meet*' (v3)), a typical far-right retort to climate measures (Ekberg et al., 2022). Such populist appeals must be challenged by problematizing 'light green environmentalism' (Curry, 2011) and ecomodern reformist solutions which can produce such unequal outcomes, particularly for the working class. Alongside these critiques, more equitable and inspiring redistributive alternatives rooted in, for instance, degrowth principles (see Kongshøj, 2023) must be offered.

Finally, Laclau and Mouffe (2001) posit that resistance can gain popular support by anchoring struggle in existing hegemonic values and discourses. Multiculturalism could be one such anchor for progressives in Canada. Multiculturalism is a normative response to demographic diversity, a legal framework, and political philosophy enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It intends to 'systematically implement and accommodate diversity at various societal levels' and 'facilitate the equitable participation of all groups in a society' (Safdar et al., 2023, p. 2). As a legislative framework, it distinguishes Canada from other societies characterized by high levels of cultural diversity and is widely considered a cornerstone of Canadian identity (Brink, 2023; Safdar et al., 2023), thus commanding a hegemonic standing.

This is, in fact, one area where Maxime Bernier and the PPC position themselves as a counter-hegemony. The party staunchly opposes multiculturalism, advocating for its removal from the country's Charter of Rights and Freedoms and promising to eliminate all federal funding for its promotion in order to '*preserve Canadian values and culture*' (PPC, 2024c). However, multiculturalism has been regarded as Canada's antidote to far-right encroachment (Ambrose & Mudde, 2015). While the PPC appears to be challenging this hypothesis, progressive forces should make use of Canada's unique structural and demographic plurality to both undermine the PPC's climate obstructionist platform and amplify justice-centred feminist climate politics. Multiculturalist ethics should be

bolstered throughout progressive counter-discourses and embedded within Canadian feminist ecological masculinities to destabilize the Canadian far-right's gendered nationalism (Letourneau et al., 2023). Such a stance will be especially critical moving forward, both morally and strategically, as displacement due to accelerating anthropogenic climate change will likely activate authoritarian, nativist sentiments which find recognition in far-right parties (Daggett, 2018) like the PPC.

Limitations and future research

The current special issue contribution will now be closed by acknowledging some important limitations and discussing potential avenues for future research. Firstly, the chosen research approach is severely lacking in both intersectional and decolonial perspectives, common omissions across sustainability science scholarship (Hudson & Vodden, 2020; Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). Such critical epistemologies would have unquestionably deepened the analysis and provoked stronger reflections and recommendations, for instance by recognizing the dimension of race in the white, male, and conservative trinity of climate denial and refusal or by exploring decolonial implications of multiculturalist discourses(e.g. Brink, 2023). Stronger connections to previous feminist sustainability proposals (e.g. care economy (see Bauhardt, 2014; Raworth, 2017), post-growth living (Eversberg & Schmelzer, 2023; Soper, 2020), etc.) could also have also made for a valuable research direction.

Moreover, this work is premised on the belief that solidarity with organizations and individuals advocating for human rights and just futures must underlie all sustainability science knowledge production (Isgren et al., 2019) and is vital to the emancipatory agenda of political ecology (Allen et al., 2024; Rocheleau et al., 1996). Although this research attempts to meet this mandate, certain ideas were left underdeveloped. For instance, a provision of strategies enabling an ecological masculinities discourse to withstand co-optation by the far right, who themselves promote distorted renderings of care and environmentalism (Darwish, 2024), is missing. Moreover, supplementary support for those seeking to embrace feminist masculinities under patriarchal constraints and backlash is required. This could be, for example, offering support for overcoming 'masculinist disorientation' (Salleh, 1997) or the 'gender traitor effect' (Connell, 2005; Filteau, 2016). Future research must elaborate on and/or correct these blindspots.

Concluding remarks

As a foremost antagonist to sustainable futures, climate obstruction is exhibiting a remarkable degree of resilience thanks in part to the far right's renewed momentum within the global core. Here, a feminist reading of *how* and *why* obstructionist discourses continue to be championed by far-right parties like the PPC in Canada was provided. The empirical analysis ultimately suggests that confronting climate disinformation cannot be disconnected from intersecting struggles against pervasive, discursive misogyny.

Specifically, a feminist critical discourse analysis of PPC online public communication materials on the environment, climate change, and the Canadian oil and gas sector revealed that leader Maxime Bernier and his party espouse a form of obstruction that is loaded with patriarchal masculinities. Those of a fragile complexion were particularly

salient. This should be regarded as a strategic discursive maneuver within the PPC's expansive argumentative and rhetorical repertoire aimed towards activating a disaffected base: a calculated attempt by the PPC to exploit the ubiquity of patriarchal values and fossil capital within Canadian society in order fulfill their far-right ambitions under thus-far hostile, but evolving, political conditions in Canada.

Ecological masculinities with a strong feminist conviction were deemed a compelling alternative, one which could be leveraged as a response to the gender-affirming dimensions of PPC obstruction. Progressive counter-discourses could also be further fortified by heightening their topical heterogeneity and accentuating Canadian multiculturalism.

Although these insights were developed from a Canadian positionality for the Canadian context, far-right parties like the PPC exist and are consolidating power across the world. Thus, it is my aspiration that these findings will be serviceable to those seeking to resist their unique manifestation(s) of the misogynistic, fossilized far right. Much like feminist and climate struggles, confronting the far right transcends national boundaries 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 framework for all those suffering under the patriarchy – including men and masculine persons who may feel withdrawn from the feminist movement and find refuge in the far right and their destructive, dehumanizing ideologies. As articulated by Bell Hooks (2005, p. 118): 'Men need feminist thinking. It is the theory that supports their spiritual evolution and their shift away from the patriarchal model'. May these findings be a contribution to a strong, lasting, and inspiring feminist counter-discourse to patriarchal far-right climate obstruction.

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