The impact of masculinist counter-framing on the work of meaning-making of violence against women

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Abstract

During the 2000s, masculinist anti-feminism wheeled out a huge tactical repertoire which forced the Quebec feminist movement to modify its practices, including its discourse around violence against women. Drawing on a dataset of more than 80 semi-directed interviews with feminists active against violence against women, this article mobilizes framing theory to better grasp the consequences of masculinism on the work of meaning-*making of the feminists interviewed. More specifically, it examines the masculinist counter-frames of symmetry of violence and women's violence, and their effects on how the problem of violence is identified, the solutions envisaged, and the deradicalization of feminist discourse. Finally, the article proposes a novel line of research on the disengagement effects of masculinist counter-frames. In doing so, this study contributes to the still small number of efforts to analyze the impact of counter-frames on social movement framing.*

Keywords: Feminism, antifeminism, counter-movement, framing, counter-framing, disengagement

During the 2000s, anti-feminist masculinism made itself known through a few high-profile actions – for example, an activist scaled the superstructure of a bridge between Montreal and its suburbs in 2005; an *SVP papa* activist perched on top of a crane in Nantes in 2013. Often associated with men's rights activists/movement or fathers' rights activists/movement, the term 'masculinism' is used more often in French. It refers both to activist organizations such as Fathers 4 Justice (fathers' rights movement) and organizations helping men in difficulty (men's rights movement) who share a common cause, such as fighting against feminism, which is supposed to have brought about a "crisis in masculinity." This form of anti-feminism relies on the more discreet involvement of a diverse range of actors, including researchers and social workers, growing out of support networks for separated fathers (Fillod-Chabaud, 2014). Masculinism has also been transformed into a justification for killing women. This is true of the Montreal massacre killer at the École polytechnique in December 1989[2] (Blais, 2014, 2015) and the so-called

[1] The author would like to thank Francis Dupuis-Déri, Marcos Ancelovici and Marco Giugni for reviewing this article.

[2] Marc Lépine openly expressed his hatred of feminists during the shoot-out as well as in his suicide letter.

'involuntary celibate' (*incel*) killer in Toronto in spring 2018[3] (Yang and Gillis, 2018). Thus organized as a counter-movement (Blais and Dupuis-Déri, 2011; Avanza, 2018; Roggeband, 2018), masculinism distinguishes itself in part from other trends which compose antifeminism by its insistence on the claim that men suffer because of women and feminists[4]. In other words, this form of antifeminism does not directly divine authority, in contrast to conservative and religious antifeminism which seeks to restrict abortion and counter sexual minority rights (Lamoureux 2006).

Masculinism also claims that men are victimized by campaigns against conjugal violence, they are even victims of women who spread false allegations and that women are just as violent as men. Consequently, mobilizations by the masculinist fringe of the anti-feminist counter-movement affect the work of meaning-making about violence against women. Grounded in part on framing theory (Benford and Snow, 2000; Snow and Byrd, 2007; Snow, Benford, McCammon, Hewitt and Fitzgerald, 2014), this article will examine this type of impact on the feminist movement in more detail. It will explain how masculinist counter-frames about the symmetry of violence and women's violence influence some aspects of feminist discourse on violence against women as well as activist engagement. After looking at masculinist influences on the identification of the problem of violence and the solutions envisaged, I will turn to an analysis of its deradicalizing effects on feminist discourse. Finally, I will propose that the disengagement effects of these counter-frames be examined to contribute to research on antifeminism, framing analysis and counter-movements.

Counter-movements, counter-framing and their impact

Studies on the anti-feminist counter-movement or anti-feminism as a reactionary force or as backlash focus on analysing anti-feminist discourse (Langevin, 2009; Jobin, 2015) and, to a lesser extent, anti-feminist attacks on feminists (Saint-Pierre, 2015), without systematically examining the impact of anti-feminist or specifically masculinist discourses on feminists from the perspective of those affected (Goulet, 2010). Masculinist discourses attacking feminist analyses of violence against women, including conjugal violence, are among those which have been studied. For example, Jocelyn Elise Crowley (2009) examines the discursive strategies used by American fathers' rights activists to counter feminist discourses on violence against women by claiming

[3] Armed with a van, Alex Minassian drove into a crowd, killing 8 women and two men and wounding around fifteen others. After his arrest, media highlighted a Facebook reference he had made to InCels (Involuntary Celibates) – who are openly anti-feminist in their discourse - before carrying out the attack. Also paying tribute to misogynist killer Elliot Rodger, he complained that no woman had ever agreed to have sex with him.

[4] The term "masculinist" has been polysemic since the end of the 19th century, both in English and French. It sometimes refers to sexism in English and most often to a form of anti-feminism in French. I am adopting the commonly accepted use in French since the 1990s. For more details, see Dupuis-Déri 2009.

that men are just as often or more often victims of violence as women are (see also DeKeseredy, 1999; Brodeur, 2003; Damant and Guay, 2005; Johnson, 2011; Brossard, 2015).

Moreover, the effects of counter-frames on social movements is given somewhat more attention by researchers specializing in framing analysis. Framing analysis already has a well-established reputation (Snow, Benford, McCammon, Hewitt and Fitzgerald 2014). Popularized with the culturalist turn in the American sociology of social movements at the beginning of the 1990s, framing analysis drew attention because it highlighted the importance of non-structural variables, such as agentivity and strategies, in analyzing the process of the emergence and development of protest (Goodwin and Jasper 1999; Staggenborg 2012). Interested in the significance that mobilized actors give to collective action, Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow (2000) explain that framing work consists of producing and defining ideas intended to mobilize or counter-mobilize (counter-frame). This process of cognitive and discursive construction of reality is thus one of both agentivity and conflict (Snow and Byrd 2007). More than 15 years later, Holly McCammon (2014: 31-35) examines the different applications of Benford and Snow's theory published in six top sociology journals between 2000 and 2011. In addition to the number of articles, which is significant, McCammon highlights that: 1) most studies mobilize a qualitative method; 2) the majority of datasets studied consist of material produced by members of social movements and newspapers (see e.g., Girgen 2008; Plaut 2012; Ketelaars, 2016); and 3) a fair number of researchers show the influence of political, cultural and economic factors on the process of framing.

On the latter point, studies looking at "frame alignment" examine the transformations of social movement discourse by emphasizing the influence of political, cultural and economic factors on the process of framing (McCammon, 2014: 31-35). My study additionally highlights the importance of taking into account the context in which the conflict between feminism and anti-feminism takes place, if only because this context can facilitate the impact of counter-frames on the feminist work of meaning-making. For example, Carine Mardorossian (2014) showed how the 11 September 2001 attack on the United States brought about a (re)signification of "good" victims (passive and emasculated after the attack). She went on to examine the "frame alignment" of support organizations for victims of sexual violence which abandoned the frame of "victim" in favour of "survivor" to emphasize their strength and courage (also see McCaffrey and Keys 2000 and Coe 2011 for an analysis of political factors and McCammon, 2012 for an analysis of cultural factors).

Some researchers also analyze conflictual interactions by placing greater emphasis on the construction and emergence of counter-frames (see e.g., Gallo-Cruz, 2012; Trumpy, 2015; Ayoub and Chetaille, 2017; Everett and Chaudhri, 2019). For example, Edward Carberry, Shahzad Ansari and Joyce Mantel (2010) show how the environmental movement, including Greenpeace, helped reframe the identity of two oil companies (BP and Shell) as "greener" while other researchers explore the tactical responses developed by movements to more

successfully oppose counter-frames. For their part, Mary C. Burke and Mary Bernstein (2014) show how queer discourse, marginalized in the LGBT movement in Vermont, was coopted by opponents of same-sex marriage, who appropriated queer critiques of the heterosexist nature of marriage for their cause.

Other studies more precisely question the impact of counter-movements on the framing of the movements they oppose. For this line of inquiry, researchers have developed a more interactionist approach to carefully analyze the effects of counter-framing on a movement and vice versa. We can observe this in Tina Fetner's (2008) study of the LGBT movement and religious conservatives in the United States. Fetner highlights the role of emotions and specifically anger in the framing of the LGBT movement, especially in reaction to charges of "pedophilia" from the conservative right, in the context of the American government's failure to take sufficient action against the AIDS epidemic. For her part, Anne Esacove (2004: 72) develops a "dialogical model of framing" to study how "frames and counter-frames evolve in relationship to each other and cannot be disentangled from each other. Rather the framing/counter-framing process is one in which the frame/counter-frame are jointly created and recreated by social movement actors through an iterative, dialogic process." (Also see Steinberg, 1998, 1999; Ayoub and Chetaille, 2017.) To summarize, each of these studies highlights, in its own way, the heuristic significance of perspectives which take into account the interactions between framing and counter-framing in the analysis of the development of collective protest.

Nevertheless, it is important to note (following Dennis Chong, James Druckman (2012), Mary Burke and Mary Bernstein (2014)) that there are still too few studies looking at "framing struggle" (Gamson, 1990). More specifically, the question of the impact of counter-frames on feminist movements merits more substantial investment. In other words, while some studies examine the interactions between movements and counter-movements (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996; McCaffrey and Keys, 2000; Rohlinger, 2002; Esacove, 2004; Fetner, 2008; Smith, 2008; Trumpy, 2015), these works largely fail to analyze the effects of counter-frames from the perspective of those who have to cope with them, in this case feminist activists and workers (Lavine, Cobb and Roussin 2017). As we shall see, my research reveals that anti-feminism is not only a factor in transforming the feminist movement, its counter-framing also contributes to a partial disengagement of activists.

In this way, one of the contributions of this article is its analysis of the discursive (words feminists no longer use), political (the capacity of the movement to convince people that women are the main victims of violence), and biographical (disengagement or moderation) effects of masculinist counter-frames. Moreover, the conclusions are not drawn from material produced by members of social movements or newspapers, but from semi-directed interviews which, as we shall see, allow the biographical effects to be more clearly identified.

Method and data

This discussion is part of a larger qualitative research project on the effects of masculinist strategies and tactics on Quebec feminists fighting male violence against women[5]. In the context of this project, I created a dataset of 87 semi-directed interviews with feminists volunteering or working in the women's movement, carried out between 2006 and 2015 across Quebec.

Data

The great majority of participants in the study were employees working to defend rights, offer support, listening and referrals to women in difficulty. A minority were involved in political or academic circles and were also specialists in violence against women. While they are not many, the latter bring a privileged perspective on the impact of masculinism on decision-makers, sometimes confirming the perceptions of frontline workers in feminist movement organizations. To maintain anonymity, I chose to use the terms "respondent", "participant" (in the study), "informant" and "feminist" interchangeably. At times, when I found it useful to my argument, I specify their positions - though without breaching the confidentiality agreement[6].

In sum, the majority of groups offer reception services, listening and referrals by phone, as well as individual and group meetings (Bilodeau, 1990). Many organizations, particularly shelters for abused women and the CALACS (centres for support and fighting against sexual assault) offer accompaniment to family, criminal and civil courts. The first shelters to open in the 1970s were inspired by "awareness groups"; it was a time when "women recognized that the violence they suffered from their partners constituted the norm rather than the exception, that it was not an individual problem but a social problem, and that, this being the case, it was important to act to end this brutal reality" (Côté,

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[5] Entitled *Masculinisme et violences contre les femmes : une analyse des effets du contremouvement antiféministe sur le mouvement féministe québécois (Masculinism and violence against women: an analysis of the effects of the anti-feminist counter-movement on the Quebec feminist movement)*. A study supported by the *Fonds de recherche du Québec Société et culture* (FRQSC), the *Réseau québécois en études féministes* (RéQEF), the *Syndicat des chargées de cours de l'UQAM* and the *Département de sociologie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal* (UQAM).

[6] Each participant was identified by an alphanumeric code. Three series of codes were created, each referring to a distinct dataset: ARR for respondents from ARIR (the Feminist Discourse and Intervention, an Inventory of Place study) followed by a digit (from 1 to 58); ATR for feminists from the Anti-feminist Attacks dataset, also followed by a digit (from 1 to 15); and RT for participants in my study, with a digit from 1 to 14. To complete the reference, each code is preceded by the number of the question (e.g. Q1 for question 1), which facilitates identification in the transcript and the questionnaire. Each dataset compiles interviews carried out with a flexible outline, open to the questions which arose during the meetings. I made some slight changes during the writing process out of a "desire for an aesthetic text" but primarily to "'protect' the image of the person interviewed" (Combessie 2007), without eliminating contemporary expressions, Quebecisms, or swear words because the latter reveal emotions felt during interviews.

2016: 7). Currently, the province of Quebec, with just over 8 million inhabitants, has more than 100 shelters spread over its entire territory, though with a greater proportion in Montreal and Montérégie (Rinfret-Raynor, Brodeur and Lesieux, 2010). Many of these have banded together into two networks: the *Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale* (coalition of shelters for women victims of conjugal violence, founded in 1979) and the *Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes* (federation of women's shelters, founded in 1987). The mandate of these two organizations is to promote and defend the rights of women victims of conjugal violence. These shelters provide emergency housing for abused women, and most take in their children as well. The shelters also contribute to prevention and awareness-raising, including developing activities for schools and participating in local and regional coordinating bodies of partners (police, youth protection, etc.) with stakes in violence prevention.

Like shelters, support for victims of sexual violence emerged from a new consciousness that violence against women was really a social and political problem rather than an individual experience (Robitaille and Tessier, 2010). Forty centres to support and to fight against sexual assault (Centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel, CALACS) are active in Quebec. Twenty-seven of these are members of the *Regroupement québécois des CALACS* (Quebec coalition of CALACS, RQCALACS) with a mandate to prevent and raise awareness about sexual assault (Bergeron, Girard, and the Regroupement québécois des CALACS, 2014).

While there are diverse and multiple divergences among workers at the shelters and in the CALACS, not to mention among feminists more generally, feminist knowledge about violence, both theoretical and practical, is largely rooted in radical feminism[7] (Jaspard, 2006). This finding is shared by Pauline Delage (2017) in France and in the United States (also see Dobash and Dobash, 1992), and is confirmed both by my observations and Quebec-based studies (Côté, 2016). From this perspective, violence against women is seen as a means of control of women by men in a patriarchal society and conjugal violence as serving to maintain male privilege. This analysis refers to the collective position of women in social relations; individually, women may show agentivity, even carry out acts of legitimate defence – what Maryse Jaspard (2005: 100) calls "reactive violence" - but use no (or little) violence as a "means of control" (Hanmer, 1977). In short, respondents from the three datasets shared the analytical posture of understanding violence as control or power over. The discussion does not concern the debates over the inclusion of gender minorities in the analysis of violence against women, which, as we know, is a matter of tension within the groups studied.

[7] The word 'radical' refers to an analysis that goes to the "root of the problem", contrary to so called 'reformist' feminism.

The first series of interviews was compiled in the context *Discours et intervention féministes, un inventaire des lieux* (Feminist Discourse and Intervention, an Inventory of Place), a study directed by Francine Descarries and Christine Corbeil under the *Alliance de recherche IREF/Relais-femmes sur le mouvement des femmes québécois* (ARIR). The great majority of semi-directed interviews were conducted with heads of umbrella organizations (federations and coalitions). They thus represent organizations working against violence and poverty and for women's health. They offer support services and trainings to organizations they represent and work on political issues by organizing demonstrations or putting pressure on officials for funding. The research team privileged the criterion of non-random *exemplarity* (Ruquoy, 1995) to build its sample in order to avoid becoming "scattered" (Kaufmann, 2008) in overly-broad material. Many feminists were thus chosen for the privileged position they hold in the movement as well as to represent diversity of place in the feminist movement.

The second dataset is composed of 15 semi-directed interviews carried out in 2010 in the context of *Les attaques antiféministes au Québec*[8] (Anti-feminist Attacks in Quebec) study. Like the previous study, recruitment relied on a sample of "instituted informants" to use Jean-Claude Combessie's term (2007: 18). Participants were questioned both about their personal experiences and their perception of the feminist movement in which they had evolved, using the approach commonly known as the "biographical method," in which the interviewee acts as an expert on her own movement (Pouliot, 1986). Consistent with the research method of the *Discours et intervention féministes, un inventaire des lieux* (Feminist Discourse and Intervention, an Inventory of Place) study, interviewees told us about other members of their group, enabling us to rapidly obtain a global portrait of situations affecting the community.

The 15 interviews in the first two datasets did not achieve a satisfying level of saturation. I therefore carried out 14 additional, semi-directed interviews with respondents from networks more specifically working against violence against women to explore this specific sector of the feminist movement community in more detail. In the hope of obtaining a more complete portrait of the impact on the violence sectors, I created a sample of feminists who work in the shelter network and in networks fighting sexual violence and supporting victims. I also interviewed a health sector staff member and bureaucrat, as well as a social service worker from the "family" sector, because her work brought her into contact with victims of conjugal violence. This third dataset thus constitutes the narrowest of the three overlapping datasets. However, it provided me with a better view of the entire range of tactics adopted to injure the feminist movement.

[8] Constituted under the direction of Francis Dupuis-Déri, in partnership with L'R des centres de femmes, under the aegis of the *Service aux collectivités de l'UQAM*. Francis Dupuis-Déri (ed. 2010). "Projet de recherche 'les attaques antiféministes au Québec'", *L'R des centres de femmes/Service aux collectivités*, UQAM: Montreal.

To collect the sample for this last dataset, I abandoned exemplarity in order to avoid over-representation by interviewing the same feminists and to promote a rotation of voices within the community. Instead, I drew on a voluntary sample from local organisations working directly with abused women throughout Quebec. The recruitment protocol consisted of emailing groups to get in touch with feminists. The "snowball" technique (Beaud, 2009) was grafted on to this protocol, as respondents referred me to others and the representative of an umbrella organization contacted member groups to make them aware of my invitation to participate in a study on the impact of anti-feminism[9]. Although racialized women participated in the study, my third dataset is definitely rather homogenous: the majority of informants are white (European origin), heterosexual and cis-gender and have an undergraduate or graduate university degree. This said, their profile corresponds to the majority of those working in the feminist movement, a fact which has led to a lot of critiques of the logics of inclusion and exclusion operating within the feminist movement (Ouali, 2015; Ricci, 2015). Overall, I have a particularly rich general dataset which allowed me to obtain a satisfying degree of saturation; that is, to arrive at that moment where "the last data collected teaches nothing or almost nothing" (Kaufmann, 2008: 31).

Qualitative analysis

To examine these three datasets, I made a temporal triangulation of the interviews carried out between 2006 and 2015 in such a way as to highlight the feminist work of meaning-making in relation to the tactical transformations of masculinism. Briefly, the interviews in the first dataset (2006) took place during the consolidation phase of masculinism (starting in 2005) corresponding to the growing visibility of activist groups using a tactic of spectacular direct action. During this period, masculinist activists succeeded in drawing media attention to the two counter-frames examined here: the symmetry of violence and female violence against men (Blais and Dupuis-Déri, 2011). The second dataset was compiled during the institutionalization phase (starting in 2010), marked by the professionalization of masculinist discourse, for example, with academic specialists on the "status of men" and case-workers for men. In other words, the 2005-2010 period was marked by the spread of counter-frames beyond masculinist activist organizations into the community sector and political institutions. As regards the terms collected, the impact of the counter-frames on feminist discourse is already palpable even while the feminist resistance was in full swing, notably through popular education about masculism (as discussed below). Finally, the third dataset (2013-2015) shows that the institutionalization of masculinism continued, notably because activists with revengeful attitudes began to adopt an air of respectability, even convincing feminists to work with them. This dataset thus confirms that the impacts of masculinism observed

[9] I can't name her, but I hope that, if she reads this note, she will know I am talking about her because I would like to sincerely thank her for her support.

during the second period is sustained, and provides an understanding of the phenomenon of partial disengagement. In general, these tactical transformations show the complexity of the interactions which clarify my understanding of the effects of antifeminism.

Borrowing from feminist epistemology a research method which *interprets*, rather than *validates*, the perceptions of study participants (Harding, 1987; Hartsock, 2003; Hill Collins, 2004), I show that masculinism produces diverse orders of effects on the feminist movement; notably, political (affecting the capacity of the movement to access financial and material resources), organizational (around the transformations of the tactical repertoire), and biographical (including the effects on activist engagement). I draw on this dataset to offer an analysis of the effect of masculinist counter-framing on the work of meaning-making about violence against women.

As mentioned above, the social movement framing perspective most often adopts a qualitative method of analysis of the contents of activist or media publications. For my part, I mobilized a research method relying on semi-directive interviews. This had the advantage of isolating the work of meaning-making consciously undertaken and duly named by study participants, independently of my interpretation. As we shall see below, I analyze the work of identifying counter-frames which are problematic to feminists, as well as the impact these counter-frames have on feminist work of meaning-making about violence, using a research method which might be less common but avoids the pitfalls of approaches which disregard the subjectivity of the activists interviewed.

I thus do not seek to establish overly narrow (and "objective") causal links between actions, or even a movement's demands and their effects (Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak and Giugni, 2003; Staggenborg, 2012), focusing instead on the effects of anti-feminism as perceived by feminists. In other words, although it is risky to establish causal links between masculinist counter-framing and specific impacts on the feminist movement, what can be said is that the mere perception of an "anti-feminist threat" is sufficient to provoke changes in feminist discourse. Simply said, if you are convinced that an extra-terrestrial invasion is imminent and dangerous, this perception of reality in itself is enough to change your behaviour, even if there is absolutely no evidence of such a threat. However, in this case, the existence of an anti-feminist movement is well documented by research and the task we have undertaken is to assess the effects of the perception of the threat of masculinism.

Likewise, there is broad agreement that an analysis of effects should primarily be concerned with the perception of these effects in order to understand reactions, especially in terms of shifts in tactics (Kurzman, 1996; Meyer, 2004; McAdam, 2005; Kriesi, 2009; Mathieu, 2010; Staggenborg, 2012). For example, one respondent said that she did not know the source of an anonymous death threat targeting her group, but as a "first reflex, said that it was probably an attack by a masculinist, anti-feminist group in the area" (Q4-RT10a). Although she did not know the real intention behind the attack, she still decided to

increase security measures against potential anti-feminist attacks. In short, it seems appropriate to privilege the interview as a research method to understand the effects of the counter-movement; not least because these effects can be assessed by studying the subjectivity of the actors concerned (Polletta, 1998; Meyer, 2006). Moreover, the interviews offer greater insight into feminists' relationship to political engagement and related affective dimensions than media coverage and activist documents do.

More specifically, the content analysis involved reformulating the perception of informants, as well as interpreting their experience (Paillé and Mucchielli, 2008). I first separated effects arising from environments external to the feminist movement (e.g. ties with political partners in the fight against different forms of violence) from those related to the community's internal dynamics (notably the impact on their analyses of forms of violence), to take into account the contexts of the statements. This first thematic classification enabled me to identify contextual factors which interact - even interlock - with the impact of the counter-movement. Specifically, neoliberal policies and funding cuts to feminist organizations interact with funding for support groups for violent men and the vocabulary feminists use to convince officials to prioritize their fight against violence towards women. In other words, the study shows that many women had to make "compromises" in their discourses (internal effect) to obtain the state funding necessary for the survival of their organizations. This took place in a context of public funding falling victim to the re-engineering and austerity policies of the Jean Charest liberal government, while in the view of feminists, masculinist lobbying undermined feminists' credibility with decision-makers (external effect).

Next, I carried out a transversal analysis; that is, I highlighted each category "cutting across" (Combessie, 2007: 65) the "internal effects" file and then the "external effects" file. This step allowed me to categorize information according to the type of impact (political, organizational, discursive and biographical) while distinguishing effects of external environment from internal movement dynamics for each type (e.g. internal political impact and external political impact. Furthermore, the work of categorizing is the first step in thematic analysis, namely, "the transposition [of the dataset] onto a certain number of themes representing the analyzed content in relation to the orientation of the research" (Paillé and Mucchiell, 2008: 162). Still on method, I next identified relevant themes without software. I nevertheless took care to retain minority statements (such as two respondents who believed that feminists should work with men in difficulty) for the sake of nuance and to highlight the complexity of feminist milieux and their internal divisions. I proceeded with an uninterrupted classification, noting and identifying "in the course of reading" (Paillé and Mucchiell, 2008: 166), then regrouping, and sometimes merging, to arrive at the four main categories listed above: 1) political (including capacity to fight violence); 2) discursive (including words that are no longer acceptable to talk about violence); 3) organizational (including security measures to protect themselves against antifeminist violence) and 4) biographical effects (such as disengagement). As mentioned above, I will generally focus on discursive effects

inspired by the work of Benford and Snow (2000) and then look at biographical effects by discussing disengagement. The framing analysis suggested by these writers is one of the most useful tools to highlight the dynamic nature of the conflict between the feminist movement and its anti-feminist counter-movement. In addition, their theory, aimed at identifying diagnostic and prognostic framing, enables us to pinpoint exactly what is at play in the work of signification of participants in the study.

The effects of counter-frames on feminist discourses about violence against women

Before addressing the transformations of the work of meaning-making about violence against women, I will look briefly at the work of counter-framing undertaken by the counter-movement; its efforts to "rebut, undermine or neutralize" (Benford and Snow, 2000: 626) the feminist frame of violence against women. As noted above, my data enabled me to identify two counter-frames which push feminists to express themselves within terms established by the masculinist part of the anti-feminist counter-movement: **symmetry of violence**; and **women's violence against men**.

Playing with the idea that equality between men and women has been achieved, masculinists maintain that we should be *equally* concerned about violence targeting women and men. In this way, masculinists promote the idea of "equality of violence" or symmetry of conjugal violence, reducing control (domination) of one over the other to a conflict (negotiation) between two partners (Prud'homme and Bilodeau 2005). For example, the work of psychologist and sexologist Yvon Dallaire (2002: 22, 28), well known in Quebec, Belgium, francophone Switzerland, and France, argues that there are naturally "two co-creators" and that "the two sexes equally initiate conjugal violence," and even that men are more heavily affected by violence than women (symmetry of violence as the first counter-frame). In the same breath, Dallaire addresses the issue of women's violence, which constitutes the second counter-frame identified by respondents. In brief, according to masculinists, female violence against men is under-estimated; in large part, this is because men do not dare denounce it. They say that it is also because the violence is more psychological than physical and thus more difficult to perceive. Finally, the issue of women's violence against men has become a taboo nurtured by feminists who fight male violence.

These two counter-frames are thought by study participants to be the most likely to resonate with established ideas, beliefs, and ideologies that are commonly held and broadly shared by the population (Chong and Druckman 2012; Trumpy 2015). In this light, a feminist offers a glimpse into the work of identifying counter-frames which force feminists to,

> "construct a discourse, how to say it, coherent but fact-based [...] the best way to do it is to publicly deconstruct those discourses which are not marginal [...] To

> give an example, say, "Look, women are going to ask for money from Status of Women Canada because they are going to steal $400,000 and then they say that there are violent men, it's their way of getting money" you don't respond to that. On the other hand, if publicly, systematically, you hear: "women are also violent. We know that women are also violent. Look at the statistics." At some point, you have to respond to that discourse. So, when I say that the anti-feminist discourse is organized in a coherent way, a coherent counter-discourse has to be constructed. Not just by saying "Ah! anti-feminists, they're a bunch of maniacs." (Q7-ATR-7).

The identification of the counter-frame of "women's violence," as in the example given by this informant, influences the work of constructing the interpretative schema of violence against women.

I chose to first examine the transformations of this interpretive schema using two of the three steps of Benford and Snow's (2000) process of framing because it seemed best-suited to render both the discursive conflict between masculinism and feminism and its effects on the feminist analysis of violence against women, as elucidated by study participants. That being said, I then take a step back from framing analysis to get a better understanding of the impact of masculinism on the radicalism of feminist discourse. Finally, I complete the analysis on the impact of counter-framing to document the consequences of the framing struggle on the engagement of feminists in an original way.

The victimization of women and the identification of men as perpetrators of violence

Faced with a struggle aimed at dismantling their frame, feminists adjust their diagnostic framing; that is, their identification of the problem (violence against women) or their adversaries (violent men[10]). An informant attests to the influence of the symmetry of violence counter-frame on how the problem is identified in the following terms:

> [there] is a distortion in the discourse and particularly about violence against women […] Yes, there are men who are victims of violence and, among these, [in] a few rare cases, the perpetrator is a woman, but does this problem necessitate a kind of shelter of the same kind as women who are victims of murder […] and these women, if we don't put them in a safe environment, they will die. I have seldom heard of the death of a man killed by his female partner (Q3-RT11).

Recalling that deadly partner violence primarily affects female partners or former female partners is thus part of a diagnostic reframing in response to

[10] That said, "consensus regarding the source of the problem does not follow automatically from agreement regarding the nature of the problem." (Benford and Snow 2010: 616). For this reason, the nature of the problem of male violence will not be discussed.

masculinist challenges to statistics about the victimization of women in contexts of conjugal violence. Informants reach this point having gained new perspectives through "developing background knowledge about risk assessment, we have also begun to introduce, in the discourse on conjugal violence [...] risk of assault [for women], risk of homicide, risk for women and for children. I think that this was a way of showing that not all was equal and that while it was all very well to have an anti-feminist discourse, women continued to pay for it with their lives" (Q10-RT5).

To convince people that women are the main victims of conjugal violence, feminists also chose to rely on statistics seen as more credible, sidelining research based on probability sampling: "perhaps around 30% of criminal acts are reported, but we are forced to fall back on [...] police statistics, even though we know very well that violence is under-reported, they are the only statistics showing us that women are more abused than men, because with Statistics Canada's methodology, things are even-steven" (Q10-RT5).

Feminists thus feel they are "forced to fall back on" on "public safety data" (Q5-ATR2); which is more difficult to challenge but underestimates the problem because many abused women never make a complaint, and numerous complaints are rejected by the police. According to the informants, the symmetry of violence counter-frame undermines the credibility of feminists because it benefits from the reputation of the institutions and researchers helping to promote it. In response, respondents resort to figures and definitions produced by recognized institutions, such as the United Nations (UN) (also see Ayoub and Chetaille 2017 for LGBTQI in the Polish context). Consequently, they engage in a conflict over statistics, started by the masculinists, both to prove the victimization of women and maintain their credibility with decision-makers and the public. Following this logic, a feminist explains, "we really based our statements on research, which maybe we didn't do before. [...] Because we may have thought that there was a certain level of information about the problem, but there isn't" (Q6-RT5). This approach is thus perceived as "a change in our ways of doing things, the fact that we have to show, all the time [...] what the reality is for women" (Q6-RT5), because, as Robert Benford and David Snow (2000: 619) remind us, the framing is more credible if the evidence put forward is plentiful and culturally acceptable.

For some, maintaining credibility not only involves the use of research data but also taking a distance from one's emotions[11], echoing Nancy Whittier (2001), who emphasizes that the movement against child abuse in the United States modulates its emotional norms according to the context. In the case of the feminists interviewed, a process of rationalization is at work, with feminists believing they are "less emotional in our arguments. Give less emotional responses. [...] Be more prepared [...] because we are women ... And that has often been our Achilles' heel" (Q10-ARR2800). In short, responding in a "more theoretical way" to anti-feminist attacks is part of the work of meaning-making

[11] See Groves and Whittiers in *Passionate Politics*.

to show "[that] we are capable of being articulate, we are capable of being strategic, we are capable of being strong" (Q7-ATR17).

Faced with the counter-frame of the symmetry of violence, the definition of the opponent - that is, violent men - in the diagnostic framing of male violence against women has also undergone transformation (for the case of anti-choice, pro-choice, see Trumpy 2015). Not only is the work of framing influenced by media discourse psychologizing violent men and their "distress" (Q10-RT10b), it is equally influenced by "the masculinist argument (and its position in Quebec) [which] has the potential of convincing part of the public that men are considered the enemies of the women's movement and that they suffer negative consequences from the transformations it has brought about" (Goulet 2010: 94). Following Émilie Goulet, I adopt the concepts of "enemy boundary creep" and "boundary-push back" developed by Jocelyn Elise Crowley (2009) to grasp this phenomenon. The latter enrich the counter-framing analysis by providing a good understanding of the interactive nature of the process of framing and counter-framing, as suggested in particular by the works of Esacove (2004), Mary Burke and Mary Bernstein (2014) examined above. That is, by arguing that feminists unjustly accuse all men of being violent (enemy boundary creep), anti-feminists aim to challenge the analysis of asymmetric violence, and even the identification of men as perpetrators of violence (boundary-push back). The "boundaries" of the definition of the opponent have shifted and feminists testify that they must be careful not to give the impression that they lack empathy for "suffering men" (Q11-ARR10; Q9-ATRb).

From my dataset of interviews, it seems feminists are unable or no longer able to ignore the reduction of feminism to an "anti-men" movement. To counter anti-feminist enemy border creep, an informant tells how she has to explain, in workshops she facilitates, that feminism "is good for both women and men" (Q13-RT7). In general, they say, "you have to walk on eggshells" (Q5-RT4) and constantly repeat that men are not excluded from feminist struggles (Q10-ARR8), that "men also" or "yes men" are victims of conjugal and sexual violence (Q11-ARR9; Q5-RT7). Boundary-push back thus affects the porousness of the boundary between "us feminists" and an ill-defined opponent[12]. Enemy boundary creep influences the diagnostic framing of feminists who often hasten to clarify that men in general are not opponents of feminism and that they can also belong to the category of "victim" (Q5-RT3), which was not the case "15 years ago" (Q7-RT10b).

Because men are now victims alongside women, the feminists interviewed testified that they had to modify the vocabulary used to speak about the problem of violence against women. As one respondent remarked, "before, when we spoke about 'violence against women', you didn't have someone automatically saying 'yes but men too'. Now, whether it is a training or media interview, I

[12]That said, anti-feminism contributes to this confusion but is not its sole cause. For years, observers have discussed the difficulty feminists have in naming one or more opponent. (Atkinson 1975)

know that if I say 'women victims' too often, I will be told, 'yeah, but there are male victims". So, I tend, for example, to use the term 'victim', rather than 'woman victim'" (Q5-RT4).

The feminist frame of violence against women is thus transformed so that the term "women" disappears from the discourse, giving way to "victims" without further precision or, in French, to a term equivalent to "individual" victims of sexual violence (Q5-RT8). It is noteworthy that no respondent specified that she had adopted the neutral term "victim" for the purpose of including the victimization of trans people; a fact which deserves to be analyzed in its own right. Another person who worked in the field also engaged in the work of (re-) making meaning, but in her case by deciding to:

> speak about male conjugal violence, to qualify this violence, in order to make up in some way for precisely the impact of symmetry, because well [...] the counter-discourse says that just as many, or even more, women are violent, we said, it's a way of naming the thing and then categorizing it. Between men and women, which suffer from or use violence? This was our objective, but it became a matter of changing what we called things, in all our communications (Q10-RT10b).

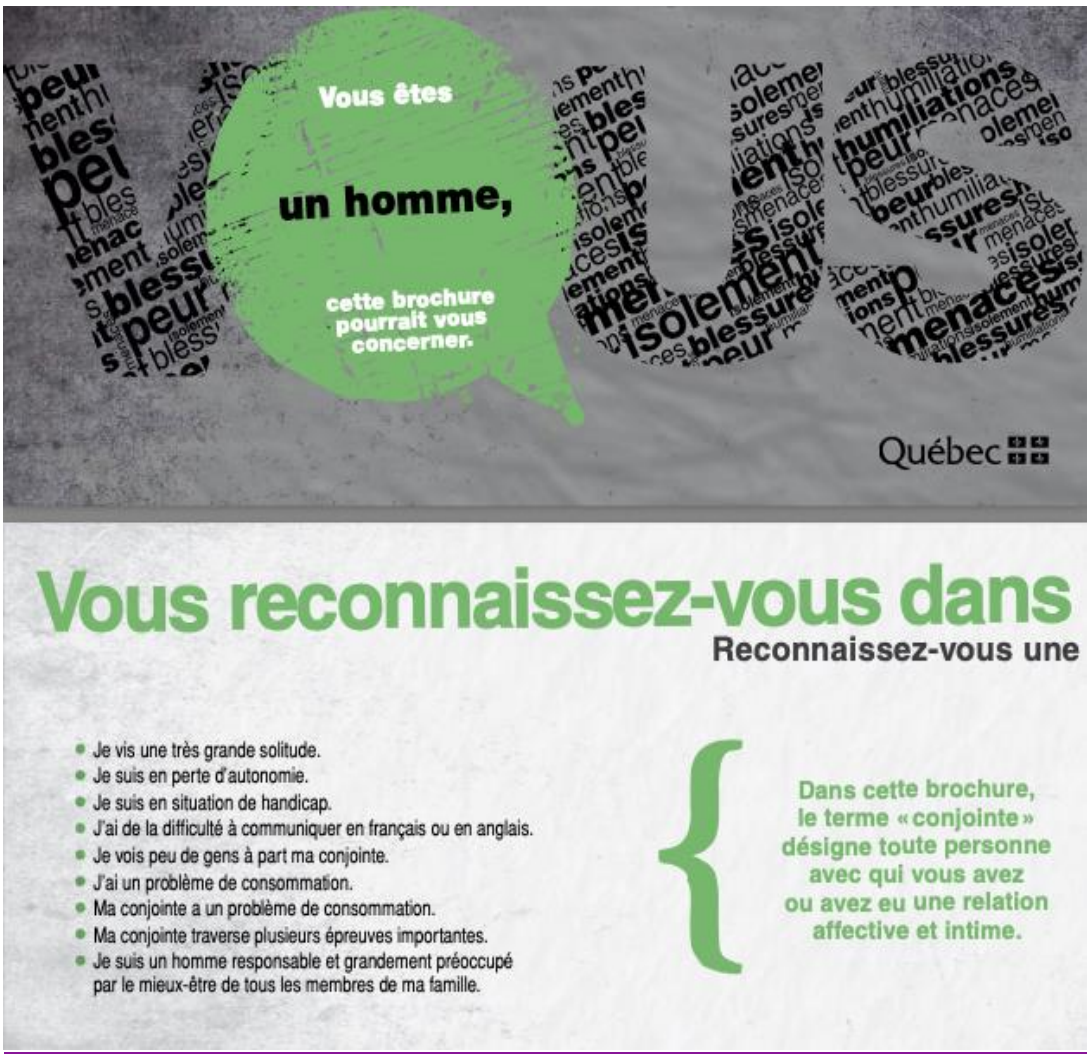
That said, this group's choice was more marginal in contrast to the attempt to silence the male specificity of violence against women. Thus, not only the definition of the opponent has transformed under the impact of the counter-frames of the symmetry of violence and women's violence, but also the identification of the problem (that is, male violence against women) in the diagnostic framing.

The counter-frame of the violence of women sometimes fuels debates over subjects viewed as taboo, namely women's violence. A minority of feminists interviewed believed that women's violence remained a contentious topic amongst feminists. But, to avoid abandoning the field to masculinist analyses of women's violence, some participants wanted to enter this field of research, long deemed untouchable, while still finding it difficult to do so because of: 1) the wariness of some feminists about broaching this issue; 2) the lack of feminist analysis on the topic; 3) the effects such analyses might have on privileged vocabulary; and 4) the fear that it would be used to lend credence to masculinist assumptions about the symmetry of violence in conjugal contexts.

What they fear from this type of undertaking can be illustrated by looking at brochures for "specific clientele," including male victims and gender minorities, produced by the Quebec government's *Secrétariat de la Condition féminine* (Status of Women Secretariat) and distributed by the *Table de concertation en violence conjugale de Montréal* (coordinating body on conjugal violence of Montreal)[13]. In these brochures (see image below), both the masculine and feminine are used for people who are violent against gender minorities, while

[13] Found at: http://www.tcvcm.ca/files/vous/HV-SCF-FR.pdf

only the feminine is used to designate the partner-perpetrator against men. The brochure on violence against men thus implies that men are only abused by women and not by other men.



(Screenshot, Jun 2th 2021)

In sum, the innovation produced in the diagnostic framing by the masculinist counter-frame of women's violence mainly consists of an opening on the part of feminists - embryonic and not a matter of consensus – to reflect on women's violence. This innovation does not, however, question the prognostic framing about the need to provide services to women.

Solutions to problems of violence against women

The conflictual dialogue also affects the prognostic framing of solutions to the problem of violence against women. However, the latter does not appear to be undergoing a major re-working of meaning. That is, feminists interviewed did not, in any way, question their services or the accompaniment of victims as priority, though partial, solutions to the problem of violence against women. The prognostic framing nevertheless appears to have been influenced by the introduction of men's victimization into the diagnostic framing of violence against women. Following this logic, feminists believe they must justify investing in and promoting women-only services as a solution to violence against women, which triggers adjustments in the prognostic framing. It is worth noting that study respondents did not refer to challenges to women-only resources for abused women in relation to the inclusion of non-binary people. The conflict was entirely about including the needs of cis-gender men, abused by a cis-gender woman in the context of a heterosexual couple, in feminist services.

In this way, a respondent complained of being forced to respond to criticisms about the exclusion of men from their services. When asked why her group does not take care of battered men, she reacts by saying,

> "Do you buy your pills [at a grocery store]?" So, they understand somehow that this isn't the right place and I'm not the one who's going to figure out their problems. If there are battered men, I'm not saying there aren't, but it doesn't belong here. At some point, we are forced to defend it this way and even, a little more often, a little more aggressively sometimes (Q&-RT2).

While justifying the relevance of services for women, feminists are called upon to position themselves on the relevance of "resources for men" (which aim at rehabilitating violent men), such as this activist, who notes, "in my discourse, you know, I say, 'yes, it's okay to have resources for men.' I am still softening things a little" (Q10-ATR18). During the 1990s and 2000s, some of these groups, for example, replaced the expression "oppressive men" with "men in difficulty" (Q12-RT14). Twenty years later, some of these groups are described by respondents as anti-feminist or masculinist. In the context of budget cuts, the inclusion of resources for violent men in the prognostic framing certainly does not allow feminists to modulate the importance officials give to organizations for violent men as a priority solution to violence, to the detriment of their own resources nor, explains a former bureaucrat (Q3-RT11), the resulting funding.

In short, feminists now take male victims or perpetrators into account in their analysis of solutions to problems of sexual and conjugal violence, whether intentionally or not (Q6-ARR1100). While upholding their mandate, the feminists interviewed responded to the prognostic counter-frame of the symmetry of violence (support male victims too) by insisting on the specificity

of their mandate or by evoking "resources for men" or "groups for violent partners"; generic terms which include masculinist organizations.

The deradicalization of feminist discourse

Moreover, feminist vocabulary sometimes seems to be prohibited from the work of meaning-making in general. To convince the greatest number possible, some feminists avoid using the word "feminist" to identify themselves, their approach, or perspective. My data also shows that some sense a deradicalization of feminist discourse. I will thus look at the perceptions of deradicalization of the discourse in general as a discursive (relating to the difficulty of naming the root of the problem; namely, patriarchy) and political (relating to the kind of social transformation implied by a radical analysis of the problem) effects of anti-feminism.

In fact, in contexts in which feminists fear the presence of anti-feminists, many speak about "diluting" (Q7-RT13) feminist discourse, "because if we do not dilute it, we are no longer listened to" one of them believes (Q5-RT7). For example, she no longer uses "the word *patriarchy* or *oppression*" (Q5-RT7) in her workshops. It appears that the perception feminists have of the public's position on feminist demands partly explains the deradicalization of their discourse. Alexa Trumpy (2015) observes a similar phenomenon among pro-choice activists in the United States who reject feminism altogether, because they believe that the public considers this label too radical and outmoded. In other words, perception of public beliefs, which masculinists help shape, influences the construction of the feminist identity and its boundaries. Consequently, the reasons for engaging in collective action seem to have "softened," to adopt the words of one respondent (Q5-ATR3). Another explains she is "fed up having the focus on me. So, for me, this kind of smothers the assertion of our organization's feminism, of me as a woman." (Q12-RT10a). The same is true for a feminist activist on the periphery of the big urban centres who believes that by adopting a "mainstreaming" approach, she can be more convincing about the relevance of her analysis (Q1-ATR14). Another informant believes that in remote areas, they "smooth out the discourse […] to please funders" (Q5-RT2). That said, some believe that muzzling one's feminism constitutes a "retreat of historic proportions" (Q5-ATR6b) whether or not it is done to protect oneself or to be heard.

The causes of deradicalization are, however, multiple and not limited to anti-feminism. Factors include the professionalization of feminist interventions, seen as the source of a "tendency to privilege a psychological and clinical approach to the issue of abused women, to the detriment of a social vision." (Prud'homme, 2010: 138). The "fear" of not being "able to respond" to their detractors is another explanatory factor of "deradicalization and even [of the] difficulty of calling oneself feminist as a shelter worker," believes a social service worker (Q7-RT8).

That said, according to informants, anti-feminism does contribute to the deradicalization of feminist discourse. One of them notes that radicalism is sometimes openly prohibited: "when I was invited to give a training, the woman on the phone told me, 'Don't be too radical' [...] Feminism is watered down or we are non-feminist; for me, that's a result of anti-feminism." (Q5-RT13). This informant agrees with the analysis of Canadian criminologist Molly Dragiewicz (2008: 137) when she argues that anti-feminist rhetoric, "not only fails to challenge feminist research and theorizing on violence, but also points to the centrality of the relationship between patriarchy and men's violence against women." In the same vein, Susan Marshall (1997) shows that the explicit rejection of radicalism was an effect of the counter-movement on women's suffrage in the United States. In the contemporary Quebec feminist movement, the removal of "part of the radical analysis" (Q10-ATR5) also seems to be a result of "pressure," sometimes coming from their own circles, particularly from colleagues. A social service worker nevertheless notes that,

> my discourse, I haven't yet decided to change it, though my colleagues want me to. But, over my dead body! [...] You know, that's their solution, to smooth out the discourse and muzzle it a bit. That's what they've decided to do. We don't always agree, we don't always give the same service, but anyway [...], I think that they kind of avoid the source of the problem. That they avoid naming it, how do we do that and why and what it is called to do that. That is, how can there be anti-feminists, how can this be (Q10-RT2).

This study participant also highlights that her colleagues do not all have the same awareness of the impact of anti-feminism on their circles, which makes them less vigilant. She also draws links between a loss of radicalism in discourse and the type of actions now prioritized in the struggle against sexual violence: "I noticed in my first 10 years, you know, we went to the wall, and our actions were more radical if you like, the day of action, it's well it's always the same small action, it's cute, it's nice, it's soft [...] that's the effect this has. I always have the impression that I have to keep my foot on the brakes" (Q5-RT2).

In sum, feminist discourse seems to be losing its radicalism; this impact is both discursive, in the way in which violence against women is discussed, and political, watering down the causes of violence against women.

Anti-feminism as grounds for feminist engagement

My dataset nevertheless shows that masculinism has an impact which could be described as running counter to strategies to undermine the feminist movement. This is a reawakening impact on what respondents generally refer to as "popular education", and what I have recategorized as "educational tactics". In brief, educational tactics essentially aim to inform women about their history and their rights. A respondent also included educational content "on our socialization, our victimization, to understand this whole system," because, in

her view, "if all women understood it, there would be no holding back." (Q13-RT1).

Among the diverse study and training initiatives or popular education workshops, some attempt to improve understanding of the phenomenon of anti-feminism and equip feminists to better counter anti-feminists. For example, the "quick response" guide *Paroles féministes, controns le ressac*! (Feminist Talk, Let's Counter the Backlash) produced in 2005 by the *Table de concertation de Laval en condition féminine* disseminate feminist discourse and educate women against masculinist discourse. For its part, the *Conseil du statut de la femme* (Quebec government's Council on the Status of Women) organized study and training days on masculinism, one informant recalls (Q6-ATR3). An informant (Q7-ARR2800) also gives the example of the 2006 publication of *Cassez la vague* (Break the Wave), a guide providing "a response to the so-called arguments about the symmetry of conjugal violence." Another recalls a training (Q12-ARR1300) outlining the masculinist backlash against shelters for women victims of conjugal violence.

These different examples of trainings highlight the fact that anti-feminism is now one of the bases for feminist engagement against violence against women. Since 2005, anti-feminism has been identified as an opponent; an opponent which is a motivation for feminist engagement and, more precisely, for collective action against violence against women. In other words, according to the observations of David Meyer, Suzanne Staggenborg (1996), Bert Useem, Mayer Zald (2009) and Kelsy Kretschmer (2014), even though conflicts between a movement and its counter-movement awaken internal divisions (notably over the inclusion of cis-gender men), in the case of the feminist movement, they can nevertheless still rally feminists against a common opponent.

As a structuring opponent of the feminist tactical repertoire, the inclusion of anti-feminism as grounds for engagement echoes the us/them frame of the American gay and lesbian movement identified by Tina Fetner (2001). A respondent notes that "in the framework [of the campaign] 12 days of action for the elimination of violence against women, […] one of the 14 ways of struggling against violence was to talk about anti-feminist discourses" (Q6-ATR19). Another feminist adds, "I was looking at everything that has been written lately. We always talk about anti-feminism. Whether it is in our memories, we always make them central to our interventions, our arguments" (Q6-ATR6b).

The effects of masculinism on feminist engagement

However, anti-feminism also leads to a more arms' length engagement. Moreover, it "can generate disengagement. We lose feminist activists with this exhaustion," a respondent believes (Q7-RT11). Others are "revolted" by having to "fight, having to defeat the same arguments all over again all the time," (Q14-RT1) meaning masculinist arguments about conjugal and sexual violence. While they are still working for the feminist movement, their convictions and their engagement in feminist struggles are apt to lose their force. To use sociologist

Bert Klandermans' term (2005: 96), this form of disengagement is explained by a conviction of "insufficient gratification" following a perception of lack of "means to achieve political or social change." A feminist echoes the words of the sociologist by arguing that, "the older ones [...] I have seen many of them fold their arms and just do their job, that's it. [...] Well, that's it. [...] discouragement, disengagement: 'Look, we are not going to change the world'. I have seen many go with the flow [...] and then limit opportunities for confrontation as much as possible" (Q10-RT8).

For feminists who "go with the flow," disengagement remains limited because it is kept in check by "routine action," that is, "forms of every day action" (McAdam, 2005: 71) which keep feminists working for the movement, but without much political enthusiasm. This process of taking a distance from one's convictions is consistent with the figure of the "distanced activist" (Ricci, Blais and Descarries, 2008: 8) whose engagement shows detachment; detachment allowing one to "find a better personal balance at the same time as articulating a vision of a more rational and composed world." Everything seems to indicate that, within such a dynamic, anti-feminism can lead to a "lack of desire to take action," a lack of "desire to get involved," regardless of the age of the activists, because "conjugal violence alone is already a lot. Adding all of these movements, adds even more" (Q14-RT4). This feeling of being overloaded caused by anti-feminism helps lower "expectations" (Q13 -ARR16) and undermines "hope for change" and even the feminist utopia, because "we forget to dream," one respondent believes (Q8-ATR4).

These symbolic (psychological and political distancing) and material (resignation, relocation and disengagement) displacements also refer to mobility experiences within the feminist movement itself. Representing the trajectory of the "ordinary leaver," as defined by Olivier Fillieule (2005: 20), a feminist recounts having left a feminist organization to join another, also feminist. In her words,

> there is this whole rise of masculinism but there is also the fact that groups, which were radical groups, are less strong about defending the discourse. [...] this change, for me it had already begun to happen in the shelters. So, I found that more and more difficult. I remember what I said was, "My god, it's already super difficult to fight with the outside. I can't deal with also doing, having this fight on the inside, so I think I no longer belong." (Q5-RT8).

Highlighting deradicalization as the first process caused by anti-feminism, this respondent offers a glimpse of the effects of anti-feminism on the "activist career" or on the "continuation of objective changes in positions and the associated series of subjective realignments" (Fillieule, 2009: 87). It can be added that those who "move" (Klandermans, 2005: 107) sometimes have difficulty finding work outside the feminist movement because of prejudices against feminism, to which the counter-movement contributes. In short, anti-feminism even affects the trajectory of feminists outside the feminist

community. In the words of one study participant, “when they saw me arrive with my CV [with the name of the feminist organization], I can tell you that you don’t pass just anywhere, just that, and I found myself in a workplace where lots of jokes were made” about her feminism (Q1-ATR6b). Even though anti-feminism is not the only cause of mockery, it nevertheless undermines the credibility of feminists in workplaces outside the movement, which seems to have made the search for a new job more difficult for this feminist.

Conclusion

In conclusion, an analysis of the interactions between framing and counter-framing sheds light on the dynamics between engagement and disengagement. As we have just seen, masculinist counter-framing is one of their tactics which leads to a form of disengagement, a “more distanced engagement”. However, this study also shows the mixed impact of masculinism; highlighting in an original way that a counter-movement, in the same period of time, can also stimulate a social movement. That said, it would be interesting to look at whether anti-feminism is more specifically at issue in cases where people are off-work because of depression.

On these contrasting effects of masculinism on feminist engagement, I would add that feminists are less likely to see how masculinism stimulates their engagement. At least that is what an investigation of anti-feminism in private life reveals (Blais and Chrétien, 2018). Beyond the examples of educational tactics discussed in this article (e.g., anti-feminist training), feminists deploy a multitude of resistance tactics against anti-feminist attacks, even in their intimate lives. In this regard, the self-defence guide, *Votre antiféminisme, nos répliques* (Your Antifeminism, Our Responses) presents 7 types of verbal responses and individual and collective maneuvers. We find not only reasoning and humour, as when a feminist wants to escape an unpleasant conversation by saying, "I'm going to go burn my bra, I'll get back to you in a moment" (quoted in Blais and Chrétien, 2018: 21), but also breaking away from family members and developing a chosen family, or defiance of gender norms, particularly by cutting one's hair, since masculinists come down hard on women with short hair. Finally, some feminists have come to physically retaliate against anti-feminists and also try to mobilize the women around them to better respond collectively to family members who maintain anti-feminist discourses.

Considering everything, it seems that the analysis of counter-frames merits special attention when examining the dynamics of (dis)engagement. Initiatives combining content analysis of activist production with semi-directed interviews, making it possible to place narratives within organizational practice and biographical trajectories, seem most promising. In addition to proposing new lines of research, this article has been an opportunity to highlight the value of taking framing/counter-framing conflict into account when analyzing transformations of social movements.

Finally, as an opponent of the feminist movement, masculinism must be taken seriously when trying to understand the discursive shifts in organizations working against violence. Alongside factors generally identified as the most likely to lead to changes in feminist organizations, such as professionalization (Delage, 2017; Côté, 2016), is the non-negligible factor of masculinism. Consequently, I hope that I have succeeded in drawing attention to the significance of this conflict, especially in terms of the effects of self-censorship and deradicalization, not to mention the time feminists pour into countering this structuring opponent of their tactical repertoire and work of meaning-making.

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