Chapter 6

Masculinist discourses on intimate partner violence

Antifeminist men defending white heterosexual male supremacy

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Introduction

In its more insidious forms, antifeminism organises against feminists who oppose violence against women. Sometimes antifeminists may take legal and political action to challenge measures designed to protect abused women (Dragiewicz, 2011). On other occasions, these activists directly attack feminists and their organisations on the Internet. Some encourage fathers to stop sending child support when they believe themselves to have been wronged in their separation from the mother of their children; masculinists moreover defend perpetrators (Brossard, 2015).

I have endeavoured to catalogue the political, organisational, discursive and biographical effects of this antifeminist attacks on feminists and, more specifically, on feminists providing support to abused women. For this, I carried out 87 semi-structured interviews between 2005 and 2013 with feminist activists in Quebec, Canada.[1] As pointed out by David S. Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg (1996), the birth of the antifeminist counter-movement is sometimes treated as the result of the 'success' of the feminist movement. In Quebec, it is obvious that the development of antifeminism is linked to achievements of the feminist movement such as the adoption of a policy on conjugal violence in the 1990s, and increases in funding for support for women victims of violence in the 2000s (Blais, 2018). Consequently, I have focused on debates around intimate partner violence, because the feminist movement in Quebec has succeeded in providing significant resources to support violence victims. But also, since many feminists argue that antiviolence activism has become the antifeminist target of choice since the beginning of the 2000s.

In the course of my research, I identified many antifeminist tactics, including death threats, disrupting events, lobbying and developing rhetorical devices to harm struggles against male violence. In this chapter, I focus specifically on the rhetorical devices, first investigating the profile and motives of antifeminist activists who deploy them. This approach allows me to situate this tactic within an antifeminist defence of gender, sexuality, class and race privilege. However, the political motives of antifeminists can hardly

be understood through an analysis of rhetorical devices alone. That is, an examination of the rhetorical tactic will essentially allow us to see that it defends men in general and fathers and perpetrators in particular; but it is not able to expose antifeminists' privileges in regards to sexuality, class and race. Yet, my research reveals that antifeminists promote a heterosexual, white and economically privileged masculinity. In the following, after defining the antifeminism in question here, I will discuss this intersectionality of privileges – if only because it is helpful to understand why these actors are mobilising rhetoric against feminists. I analyse publications (primarily books and websites) and the full interviews conducted by Patric Jean during the production of the documentary *La domination masculine* ('The male domination'; Jean, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d).[2]

Which antifeminism are we talking about?

To the feminist activists I have interviewed (identified by an alpha-numeric code to ensure their anonymity), antifeminism is composed of different currents, including masculinism, which regularly takes aim at women's shelters. The term 'masculinism' is polysemic (Dupuis-Déri, 2009); I use it here in its current French sense to denote the claim that women, as result of feminism, are now dominant in society. Often identified in English as men's rights activists, masculinists argue that men are now experiencing an identity crisis and a loss of their bearings because of feminists. To support the theory that men are suffering an identity crisis, masculinists analyse different social problems, such as school drop-out and male suicide rates (Dupuis-Déri, 2018). Men are supposedly also the victims of discrimination by feminists and the government of Quebec because prevention campaigns and the fight against partner violence denigrates men (for US context, see Crowley, 2009). Finally, masculinism recuperates feminist modes of organising and vocabulary, even from the radical feminism of the 1970s, including consciousness-raising groups and evacuating the term 'patriarchy' in favour of 'matriarchy' (Blais & Dupuis-Déri, 2015).

Masculinism, it should be noted, is often connected to groups of divorced or separated fathers (or fathers' rights groups). In this regard, studies of groups of divorced or separated fathers, in Quebec and elsewhere, show that the activists often are privileged men. They are disproportionately white, heterosexual men from the wealthy middle class, aged between 35 and 60, and usually with a high level of education (Béchard, 2005; Crowley, 2006; Fillod-Chabaud, 2016).

Defending cisgender, sexuality, class and race interests

As privileged men, antifeminists unite as a community not so much organisationally as by a political identity forged around interests linked to the *appropriation* of women's bodies and work. To start with, definitions

of antifeminism provided by my respondents shed light on the mechanics of the appropriation of women as theorised by Colette Guillaumin (1992) in her works on *sexage*, which builds on the Marxist idea that capitalism appropriates the labour power of workers. Briefly, *sexage* is primarily a power relationship; that is, 'the permanent seizure of power that is the appropriation of the class of women by the class of men' (p. 16). According to Guillaumin, the body is appropriated as a whole, which entails that the appropriation of women's work and bodies cannot be thought of separately. From the perspective of masculinists, feminism threatens men's right to freely appropriate women's work because:

> […] the feminist revolution in Quebec produced what we called at first the 'pink man', that is, that the man should share household work, he started doing the dishes, changing the diapers and taking care of the children […] The pink man is kind of like a feminised man […] It's gone way further now. I think we've got generations of [wimps], there's no more masculinity, no more testosterone.
>
> (Jean, 2009b)

In this commentary, a man who washes the dishes and changes diapers is no longer a *real* man; he is *feminised*. *Sexage* also serves as a reminder that violent men assert their 'right' to appropriate women's bodies and work in a different way, by explicitly using violence as a means of control (Ptacek, 1998), even as a means of appropriating women, in Guillaumin's terms. As we will see below, some of the masculinist rhetoric works in favour of men who want to use violence as a means of control. Finally, *sexage* has an ideational dimension, which Guillaumin calls the 'idea of nature' and which justifies the appropriation of women in the name of the 'difference' and complementarity of the sexes. This is an integral part of antifeminist discourses, as when Quebec psychologist Yvon Dallaire (2001, 2002) argues that intimate partner violence is not a matter of gender power, but as escalation in tension produced when the 'natural' and 'biological' behaviours of men and women are not respected. I draw on the theory of *sexage* to think about the masculinist challenge as a project ultimately aimed at the appropriation of women. It allows us to analyse gender relations without claiming that they are more important than other social inequalities. My research highlights that *sexage* intersects with sexuality, class and race.

The masculinists in this study are not only sexist, they are also homophobic and lesbophobic, and make the heterosexual couple the sole frame of reference. For instance, an activist from Fathers 4 Justice, Jean Julien, stated, 'it's women who give birth. [Yet], women are denaturalized […] and that leads to what? A mix of genders. This leads to […] more bisexuality, homosexuality' (Jean, 2009d). Janik Bastien Charlebois (2015) observes that, 'homosexual men disturb [masculinists] because they go against normative prescriptions for the sexes. Homophobia and sexism are [thus] tightly

linked' (p. 193). Masculinists in this way separate 'real' men from the other men. They also create hierarchies of women. There are those whose bodies men can appropriate (cis women) and the others, lesbians. According to the fathers' rights activist Jean-Claude Boucher, the latter have 'infiltrated' the feminist movement (Jean, 2009c). Consequently, lesbians pose a threat which he describes as follows, 'the gay movement and feminist movement are similar in that the basis of these two ideologies is a lie', especially since 'the heterosexual man […] is denigrated to benefit the gay lobby and the feminist lobby' (Jean, 2009c).

Masculinists seem just as concerned about preserving men's advantages in terms of class. At least this is what Boucher indirectly suggests when criticising feminists who denounce discrimination against women in hiring practices in certain employment sectors:

> [I]t's been 25 years that I have been on the side of employers who are bad-mouthed because they don't hire women. It's false. It's absolutely false. When I have a mandate to hire staff, I don't care if he is yellow, black, red, woman, man, or amputee; I don't care. Will he be profitable? That's the question. If I see that the woman is less profitable than the man, I hire the man.
>
> (Jean, 2009c)

In addition to defending a gendered division of labour, masculinists also spread racist prejudice, notably when they amalgamate immigrant women and racialised women. Racialised women constitute the Other who is not discussed except to say that immigrant women are manipulated by feminists when they enter the country (cf. Labarre, 2015). The arguments of André Ledoux (2009) illustrate this:

> [The] scale of the feminist movement in Quebec can only impress these women who come from Africa, Middle East, Latin America and elsewhere. […] The emancipation of Quebec women, entrenched in a sometimes questionable system of values, often stuns immigrant women and confronts them with their realities, often contrary to ours.
>
> (pp. 41–42)

For his part, Jean-Claude Boucher argues that 'when [immigrant women] enter the country, they are brainwashed with feminist ideology on the pretext of equality' (Jean, 2009c). Presented in this way, immigrant women form an 'essentialised' foreign community, necessarily non-feminist, who will become feminists not in reaction to male domination, but through indoctrination by white feminists inculcating in them these false ideas.

A similar process takes place within masculinist discourse about masculinity. For example, Guillaume Gory (2011) notes that Quebec psychologist

Guy Corneau establishes 'a break […] between the civilized West and the "original tribes"' (p. 109). More generally, the orientalism of some masculinists reflects Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's (1988) analysis of the representation of the violent 'barbarian' – most of the time Muslim. In sum, the masculinists render their appropriation of women's bodies and work invisible, at the same time emphasising, sometimes in caricatured fashion, the expressions of sexage of 'others'. The 'node' formed by the intersecting privileges of gender, sexuality, class and race is implicit in the words of Jean-Claude Boucher when he asserts that, 'feminist ideology and gay ideology are ideologies of death and disappearance of the race' (Jean, 2009c). According to one feminist interviewee, masculinists will:

> also target racialised women, women who wear the veil and lesbian women, because for them these women are anomalies of nature. Each time a woman presents a criterion for social exclusion, they take advantage of it and punish women who, in their view, should conform to the mould of the submissive woman.
>
> (Q4-RT11)

Given that masculinists believe that these gender – as well as sexuality, class and race – interests are threatened by feminists, how do they try to maintain them? They do it by developing a tactical repertoire against feminism, which they believe is the source of a crisis in heterosexual, economically privileged, white masculinity.

The rhetorical tactic and its devices

Although the intersectional dimension of the political motives presented above cannot be analysed in detail, masculinists' interests remain anchored in the rhetoric deployed. To start with, the rhetorical devices described here for the most part contradict the feminist paradigm of men's violence against women. The creation of new groups to help violent men, around 1995, seems to have been a key moment in the development of masculinist rhetoric:

> [T]hese groups of men […] did not speak about gendered violence. They spoke more about the partner violence; that is, that women were just as violent as men. We hadn't expected men to organise themselves in this way. We got comments from women who came to see us and talked to us about [the gender symmetry of violence discourse].
>
> (Q1-RT13)

That is, starting from the mid-1990s, feminists found themselves confronted with organisations that challenged the definition of gender violence as (1) an expression of the systemic inequality between women and men and as (2) a

form of control generally exercised by men over women. Onto these challenges to feminist paradigms was grafted the theory of the symmetry of intimate partner violence, which I address below.

Fathers' rights groups, which increased in number in the 2000s, also became interested in the question of violence against women and support for victims, essentially because this was tied to questions of separation and child custody, and consequently child support. In fact, of the 158 members of fathers' groups in the US interviewed by Jocelyn Elise Crowley (2009), 61% brought up partner violence even though there was no question about it. In addition, 25% of them stated that they opposed the 'movement' against violence against women. A woman victim of partner violence who is supported by feminists, they argued, is likely to leave the violent relationship and, if she is a mother, to negotiate child custody and child support at family court – these are all contentious issues for masculinists.

Rhetoric of inversion

The thesis of the gender symmetry of violence can perhaps be analysed as part of the rhetoric of inversion (DeKeseredy, 1999), which reverses relations of domination. For instance, Yvon Dallaire (2002) argues that there are 'two co-creators' and that 'the two sexes equally initiate conjugal violence', even that men are more affected by violence than women (pp. 22, 28). All while presuming equality, the rhetoric of inversion stretches the notion of 'equality' to other situations: the equality of men (like women) experiencing social inequalities (Williams & Williams, 1995), or equality of violence. In other words, this rhetoric conveys a simplified version of the concept of 'equality', which is used by antifeminists to 'legitimate their lobbying efforts on behalf of increasing the power and control available to fathers after divorce' (Bertoia & Drakich, 1993, p. 593).

The theory of the gender symmetry in partner violence is also promoted in intellectual circles. According to Rudolf Rausch (2005), the theory of the gender symmetry of violence was developed by the Family Violence Research Laboratory in New Hampshire academics, led by Murray Straus, who in 1973 picked up the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) survey tool, which was first developed in 1971 by the same research group (Straus, 1990). Briefly, the CTS is widely used to measure the prevalence of violence by researchers assuming a symmetry of violence in the conjugal context.

Following both the feminist activists interviewed and Walter DeKeseredy (2011), we can say that among the factors explaining the current popularity of the CTS are struggles by fathers' groups and other antifeminists, including researchers working to change the definitions of violence by presenting it as a bidirectional phenomenon. An analysis of Straus' writing also confirms that he is opposed, at least indirectly, to feminist discourse on partner violence. He explains that he developed the CTS to better measure family

conflicts. This instrument measures both 'reported aggression (actions committed) and reported victimisation (actions suffered)' (Damant & Guay, 2005, p. 128) by members of a nuclear-type family. Straus (1979) initially differentiates between 'conflict', 'conflict of interest' and 'violence', but while defining the first two, he says nothing about violence, ignoring the fundamental differences between these phenomena. In contrast, feminist theories about intimate partner violence distinguish violence and conflict, notably because 'the threat of violence does not come into play in a conflict and both partners retain the freedom to react', and also because, 'neither powerlessness nor fear of the other will paralyse or restrain this freedom to react' (Prud'homme & Bilodeau, 2005, p. 81).

To measure these different forms of 'conflict', Straus and his colleagues developed a second version of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) survey, which now included 'sexual coercion' and 'physical injury' behaviours (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy & Sugarma, 1996). In the first version, the 'violence scale' listed 14 acts of violence, including a question about whether one member of the couple had ever grabbed the other (Straus, 1990). Studies based on both the first and second versions of the CTS conclude that male and female partners play almost equal parts in intra-couple violence. For example, using CTS2, Straus and his colleagues assert that in terms of prevalence '49% of the men and 31% of the women reported having been a victim of physical assault by their partner' (Straus et al., 1996, p. 299).

Despite the modifications and Straus' (2005) recognition that violence against women is more severe and lethal than violence against men,[3] it is still the case that, with this tool, 'if someone is strangling me and I give a kick to try to get rid of him, it counts as much as a kick from the person who is strangling me', as a respondent pointed out (Q5-RT5). Thus, among the limits of the CTS identified by researchers my respondents, is its failure to consider the context in which violent acts are committed (Damant & Guay, 2005; Rausch, 2005; Romito, 2007). In other words, as the participant cited above emphasises, it is impossible to distinguish acts of assault from acts to defend oneself from the other partner.

Recourse to anecdotes

Recourse to anecdotes is another effective rhetorical technique to produce inversion; namely when men are victimised. The story of a single man having suffered the consequences of a tumultuous relationship is used, especially in the media, to support positions advanced by fathers' groups. Miranda Kaye and Julia Tolmie (1998) note that such anecdotes provoke emotional responses in the recipient which corresponds with the search for empathy to encourage adherence to a cause or argument. The person hearing the 'horror story' is expected to interpret it as revealing something generally true. Fathers' rights activists make particular use of this device to get

attention. This was clear, for example, in a disruptive protest organised by members of Fathers for Justice during a feminist workshop on the topic of masculinism, in Montreal on 8 March 2006. When asked to leave the room, they interrupted the presentation with complaints about injustices towards them by judges and their former spouses. Present at the event, I observed the empathetic reaction of a woman who – despite the violence of their protest – demanded that the facilitator to allow them to recount the stories of their tumultuous break ups (cf. Saint-Pierre, 2015).

Disinformation

Other rhetorical techniques are used long with anecdotes and the rhetoric of inverse victimisation, such as 'disinformation' and 'abusive simplification'. On disinformation, Emilie Saint-Pierre (2015, p. 272) states that, 'some masculinists justify their actions by denying and distorting reality through a process of removing responsibility/making overly responsible, blaming women and feminists as the cause of male suffering'. For example, an informant (Q1-ATR8) explained how masculinists use research about violence in lesbian relationships to assert that women are just as violent as men.

Violent men also appropriate masculinist rhetoric to justify their violence and exonerate themselves from it, or even to threaten their victims with legal action (Fillod-Chabaud, 2016). In such cases, shelter workers are forced to address these justifications when supporting women who have been subjected to such masculinist rhetoric. It is through abused women's narratives that feminists perceive the impact of masculinist rhetorical tactics on violent men and its repercussions on women who are victims of it (cf. Dragiewicz, 2011). Generally, the feminist activists that I have interviewed argue that violent men express antifeminist positions. One informant pointed out that, 'the discourse is increasingly adopted by this kind of guy who uses it in fact to say, "look, I'm not guilty, and you are all liars"' (Q3-RT8). Or, as another interviewee argued, 'antifeminism is also a way of exonerating oneself and saying that we are not the guilty ones, it's those others' (Q5-RT13), such as the alcoholic father, the dominating mother, or the wife who left the family. In this way, the arguments proposed by masculinist largely mirrors partner-violent men's accounts (cf. Dragiewicz, 2008).

My respondents also pointed out disinformation in other, supposedly scientific, discourses used by masculinists to harm women, children and the work of feminists. The controversial Parental Alienation Syndrome, developed by US psychologist Richard Gardner, and False Memory Syndrome (FMS), created primarily by US mathematician Peter Freyd, are two such examples. These two syndromes pervert reality ('disinform') by positing that childhood sexual abuse claims are erroneous. FMS refers to the fabrication of memories of events that never happened or modified memories of an event that really did happen. With the help of experts, Freyd and

his wife developed the FMS theory after their adult daughter accused him of sexually assaulting her when she was 13 years old (Noblitt & Perskin, 2000). Denying that he had sexually assaulted his daughter, even while admitting to have suffered three alcohol-related lapses of memory, Freyd was accompanied by experts who decided to believe his version and to accuse the daughter's therapist as causing these 'false memories'. FMS is not only a revisionist interpretation of the sexual abuse of children (Noblitt & Perskin, 2000); it also illustrates the masculinist rhetoric of inversion as well as the use of disinformation. The blame no longer rests with the perpetrator father, but with the victim, as it is argued that she constructed this story from false memories. At the intersection of sexism and ageism, FMS is also used in antifeminist discourse to undermine feminist struggles on violence against children.

For its part, Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS) particularly incites feminists. In fact, 87% of the shelters surveyed in Quebec by Simon Lapierre and Isabelle Côté (2016) were concerned about the influence of this theory on staff at youth centres, family court and other social workers. Why is PAS decried by feminists? Because its creator, Richard Gardner, responsibilises child victims and mothers for sexual assault. He argues that when a child speaks against one of the parents in a divorce, and especially when a mother supports her child's denunciation of the father's violence, the child is likely to suffer from PAS. Gardner (2002) argues that PAS can take the form of 'false allegations' of sexual assault, going so far as to say that 90% of children who claim they are victims of sexual assault are suffering from the syndrome. These false allegations are supposedly the mothers' revenge against the fathers. He even argues that,

> […] in sex-abuse cases *in the context of custody disputes* I am more likely to conclude that the wife's sex-abuse accusation is a false one, that the child was not sexually abused, and that the husband is innocent of the alleged crime.
>
> (Gardner, 2002, p. 107)

According to Joan Meier (2009, p. 236), Gardner argues that if a girl discloses her father's assault and the mother wants to avoid alienating the child she should respond, 'I don't believe you. I'm going to beat you for saying it. Don't you ever talk that way again about your father'.

To understand Gardner's theory, we must contextualise it with his opinions about women's sexuality and sexuality between adults and children, which he believes is beneficial for the human species (Gardner, 1991, 1996). This argument is based on his conception of paraphilias, that is, behaviours thought to be deviant in western societies, such as pedophilia, sadism, rape and zoophilia. For example, on the issue of sadism, he asserts that women may have pleasure in being beaten, tied up or targeted by obscene telephone

calls (Gardner, 1996). In fact, this is the price they are ready to pay, he argues, to attain the satisfaction of receiving sperm (Meier, 2009). Justifying sexual violence in this way, Gardner (1991) claims that 'excessive' reactions, such as the criminalisation of paraphilias in western countries, is due to Jewish. Similarly, the psychologist Hubert Van Gijseghem argues that pedophilia is a proper sexual orientation (Frenette, 2011) and critiques the impact of feminism on legislative changes around child custody as well as denounces the 'feminization of men' (Van Gijseghem, 2010). According to one of my respondents, these are 'hardcore bases' of antifeminist discourse because; by citing these syndromes, masculinists are indirectly defending the idea that fathers 'have the right to sexually assault their children' (Q13-RT6).

Rhetoric of rationality

Analysing the content of masculinist discourse, I observed three additional rhetorical devices. These are the 'rhetoric of rationality' (Williams & Williams, 1995), the 'chameleon', and the 'divide and conquer'. The rhetoric of rationality relies on the naturalisation of power relations, or the ideal face of the material relations of appropriation, in Guillaumin's (1992) terms. Nature becomes an authoritative argument for masculinists when using of an 'anthropomorphizing' discourse (Romito, 2006), which compares human relations to the behaviour of great apes (see Dallaire, 2001). In this discourse, notions of nature become associated with 'science' and 'knowledge', while feminists are 'well known for being passionate' (Romito, 2006, p. 142).

While not unique to masculinists, the rhetoric of rationality reproduces gender binaries between emotions (female) and reason (male), and between subjectivity (female) and objectivity (male). In other words, what Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (2008, p. 80) call 'the empire of abstract objectivism' proceeds from a division between 'statements integrated into a scientific system' and the passions. Thus, while portraying critique of parental alienation as 'ideological reactions', Van Gijseghem (2010) regularly makes use of the idea of nature as an authoritative argument to defend the thesis, claiming that it is based on 'well-known and rigorously documented' data, in opposition to the hostile reactions of an 'ideological nature and, thus, all the more emotional and acerbic' (pp. 89, 91). However, Gérard Lopez (2018) demonstrates the non-scientific nature of PAS, as it is essentially founded on 'polemical [articles], personal views, clinical descriptions of a small number of sample cases'. The work of André Ledoux (2009) provides another illustration of the rhetoric of rationality, notably when he argues that feminism is an ideology and that 'the evil of any ideology is that it distorts reality, because it only represents the beliefs or ideas of a social group with *no objective relation* to what can really happen' (pp. 31–32, my emphasis). The rhetoric of rationality at the same time camouflages the

subjectivity of cisgender, white and heterosexual men who develop these theories as well as their claims for recognition.

Chameleon and divide and conquer rhetorics

Chameleon rhetoric disguises its adherence to antifeminist discourse. It is nevertheless often identifiable by accounts such as, 'I am not an antifeminist, but…'. As a feminist interviewee remarked that the organisation *Tables de concertation en violence conjugale* ('Coalitions on partner violence'), through wich social workers, police and other specialists organise work against violence, 'it is not the kind of place [antifeminists] will necessarily really advertise themselves either. I think […] there is a very strategic side in [their way of arguing]' (Q6-RT3). Distancing themselves from certain kinds of antifeminism, without ever naming them, allows some masculinists to claim to develop a critical 'but not antifeminist' discourse; a discourse drawing on the crisis of masculinity which is not antifeminist. For example, André Ledoux (2009, p. 62) distances himself from 'bad' and, 'radical masculinism', which he characterises as antifeminist. This chameleon rhetoric makes it easier to be persuasive about feminist 'excesses' and more precisely a feminism deemed radical which has supposedly 'scarred men', many of whom 'are recovering with difficulty, and without shouting about it from the rooftops' (p. 62). Conversely, the chameleon adopts a 'good' masculinist posture, a 'sound masculinism' (p. 80), at the same time attempting a semantic re-appropriation of the term masculinism, generally associated with antifeminism.

As its name indicates, the divide and conquer rhetoric creates divisions among feminists in order to avoid identifying as or being identified as antifeminist (Mansbridge & Shames, 2008). This technique was well explained by one of my respondents, who observed that her activist group belongs to a sector of the feminist movement which seems to be more sheltered from antifeminist critiques as that the label 'radical' isn't applied to them (Q1-ATR12). The divide and conquer rhetoric thus splits the feminist movement by targeting the sector which takes action against violence against women, accusing it of being too influential. This said, sorting out good from bad feminists seems a fairly random exercise, varying from one masculinist group and activist to another; although the bad feminists always seem to be more numerous than the good ones (Dumont, 2010). On closer inspection, 'good' feminists are those who sometimes adopt aspects of antifeminist discourse, such as Elisabeth Badinter, a French philosopher who criticises feminist excesses (Gory, 2011). André Ledoux (2009) often refers to the Quebec intellectual Denise Bombardier and her book *The Failure of the Sexes* ('La déroute des sexes'), who explicitly attributes this disaster to feminist 'abuses'. 'Good' feminists are thus 'pod feminists' (Faludi's expression in Hammer, 2002), who use the feminist label in the media to make their antifeminist discourse more acceptable.

By dividing good and bad feminists, this rhetoric allows masculinists to present themselves as critics of a certain kind of feminism, rather than antifeminist. Finally, the divide and conquer rhetoric, just like the chameleon rhetoric, emerged in reaction to feminist rejoinders to masculinists, as one respondent explained:

> [B]ecause the feminist movement organises and defends itself. There were events, there were lists of names of women who were threatened and, you know, there were concrete actions taken against those threats […] So, it also made it that you couldn't attack the movement in the same way. I have the impression that 'divide and conquer' applies. They will divide and conquer, attack a little here, a little there […] I find that now [in 2010], the attacks are more targeted.
>
> (Q4-ATR8)

Witnessing the transformations in masculinist rhetorical devices, forced to adapt to feminist counter-attacks, this participant simultaneously highlighted the dynamic nature of the conflictual relationship.

Conclusion

Generally, the rhetorical tactic is mobilised by actors who inhabit advantageous positions in regards to gender, sexuality, class, race and age. In light of the masculinist discourses identified, I have suggested that the articulation of a theory of intersectional *sexage* sheds light on how masculinists advocate for a heterosexual, economically privileged and white masculinity which presupposes having women available to them (in the sense of property that can be used). To defend these interests, it is necessary to convince the public that the feminism blocking their interests is wrong. In other words, the rhetoric identified in my research contributes to harm those who work against intimate partner violence against women, including FMS and PAS theoretical rhetoric, which justify male violence against women and children. Similarly, Guillaumin (1992) stresses that to appropriate children, men must control the sexuality of women. However, this mean available to men to perpetrate *sexage* is likely to be taken away from them thanks to feminist struggles against sexual violence. Consequently, feminists have come to be seen as a threat by masculinists defending their right to appropriate women, as the significant resources deployed by masculinists to counteract feminist work to support victims of men's intimate partner and sexual violence bear witness. Just as masculinist attacks on feminist struggles against violence against women are inscribed in this dynamic of male appropriation, so 'for them, each time we come out with a plan to act against violence against women, it testifies to the credibility that the government gives to these issues', as one of my informants stated (Q4-ATR2). In this sense,

official recognition of violence against women and public funding for feminist groups in part explains the development of masculinism. To pursue this reflection further, it would be interesting to carry out new studies on masculinism and masculinists in order to understand what personally motivates their antifeminist activism.[4]

Notes

1 A study 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 antifeminist counter-movement on the Quebec feminist movement), 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 (SCCUQ) and the Département de sociologie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).
2 The documentary is a France/Quebec co-production. It examines the construction of hegemonic masculinity, particularly through the dynamics of heterosexual seduction and violence against women. It also looks at the issue of feminist resistance to male domination. It features several Quebec antifeminists who openly express their opinion of feminism because the producer, Patric Jean, infiltrated masculinist circles, passing himself off as one of them. The film was a big hit in Quebec and in France, and helped to make Quebec masculinism known outside Quebec.
3 I am grateful to Lucas Gottzén for drawing my attention to this discussion.
4 I want to thank Mary Foster for the translation and Francis Dupuis-Déri for his comments on a previous version of this chapter.

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