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# Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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Chair: Marilyn Gladu





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• (1530)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC)):** I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 17 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely by using the Zoom application.

I have a few comments for the benefit of members and witnesses.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. Those on Zoom will click on their microphone icon to activate their mic and mute their microphone when they're not speaking. You can select the appropriate channel, English, French, or the floor, which gives you both.

If you wish to speak, raise your hand. I'll give a reminder that all comments should be addressed through the chair. Thanks for your co-operation.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, September 15, 2025, the committee will resume its study of anti-feminist ideology.

Before we welcome our witnesses, I want to provide a trigger warning. We'll be discussing themes and experiences related to anti-feminist ideology. This may be triggering to viewers with similar experiences. If any participants feel distressed or need help, please advise the clerk. For all witnesses and members of Parliament, it is important to recognize that these are difficult conversations, so let's try to be compassionate.

I would like to welcome our witnesses.

[*Translation*]

Today, we welcome Léa Clermont-Dion, associate professor in the Department of Education at Concordia University.

[*English*]

We also have Jacqueline Neapole, executive director, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.

[*Translation*]

We will start with the opening statements, beginning with Ms. Clermont-Dion.

Ms. Clermont-Dion, you have five minutes.

**Léa Clermont-Dion (Associate Professor, Department of Education, Concordia University, as an individual):** Thank you very much.

Today, I want to talk to you about a phenomenon that is gaining alarming momentum, namely the rise of masculinist narratives online. When I talk about masculinist narratives, I am referring to anti-feminist counter-narratives, i.e., narratives that are opposed to feminism, but which are united by the idea that the crisis of masculinity is caused by feminists and women. These narratives also promote a patriarchal ideology and male dominance over women.

We are witnessing a narrative that is gaining momentum. I have been interested in these issues for about ten years. As a researcher, in particular, I completed my doctoral thesis on anti-feminist narratives in Quebec and on violence against women. This phenomenon is now very structured and is gaining momentum particularly among young people.

The purpose of my speech today is to raise your awareness of the impact of masculinist narratives on youth, violent narratives that have become common and that I did not see systematically in the media and digital ecosystem 10 years ago. These are statements like “women belong to men”, “women like being dominated”, “I’m not a rapist, but I like the idea of being able to do whatever I want with women”.

These comments and quotes exist, notably from Andrew Tate, a masculinist influencer followed by millions of people worldwide, whose videos were viewed, before his suspension, up to 11 billion times on TikTok. Andrew Tate and his masculinist associates reach young men and young women. It's known that, in the United Kingdom, 23% of boys aged 15 to 16 find Andrew Tate's comments to be positive, and that 56% of young fathers, men aged 25 to 34, also consider Andrew Tate's comments to be positive. It should be noted that Andrew Tate claimed, after the United States presidential elections, that it might be worthwhile to revoke the franchise for women because they had predominantly voted for Kamala Harris.

It's not a marginal phenomenon; it's a phenomenon that is becoming normalized. With the arrival of the Internet in the 2000s, and following the explosion of social networks, masculinist narratives were spread widely through algorithmic amplification, the normalization of hateful speech, unabashed misogynistic rhetoric and the lack of regulation of the tech giants. We can also see that Mark Zuckerberg, who is notably the owner of Meta, has allowed the spread of online hate.

In my documentary *Je vous salue salope*, his sister, Donna Zuckerberg, an expert on the far right, loudly proclaims that social media platforms, including Meta, have contributed to online misogyny. Digital platforms have thus become key channels for spreading propaganda and recruiting young people. An experimental study by Baker and Ging shows that 71% of young people who watch online videos end up, in just a few clicks, viewing toxic, masculinist discourse.

Being so exposed to masculinist narratives has an impact on young people's beliefs. Research conducted in Montreal high schools, such as that carried out by Diana Miconi, shows that 34% of students agree with at least one of the following statements: boys should control the people their girlfriends interact with; girls often say "no" just to avoid appearing easy. According to another study conducted by the UQAM research chair on sexist and sexual violence, led by Manon Bergeron, 75% of young people aged 15 to 25 believe myths that question the credibility of victims of sexual assault.

This trivialization of sexual violence is led notably by Andrew Tate and several masculinists who significantly contribute to this phenomenon. These narratives focus on several mechanisms: domination and control, hypermasculinity, rejection of emotions, victimization of men, dehumanization of women and amplification of violence. These effects are visible in our schools. Indeed, 76% of secondary school teachers express concern about this influence. As an associate professor at Concordia University and director of the "*On s'écoute*" campaign, I'm pleased to announce that we will be conducting a campaign in Quebec on the issue of masculinist narratives that trivialize sexual violence. We'll have an impact video, a teaching guide in hand and concrete tools to help young people.

These trends are no longer marginal. They're now structural. Our federal government must recognize the scale and severity of this phenomenon, which undermines not only equality and fundamental rights, but also, in its most radicalized forms, the very principles that support our democracy.

The most extreme masculinist narratives directly attack women's rights—

- (1535)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Clermont-Dion. Your time is up.

[*English*]

We go now to Ms. Neapole.

You have the floor for five minutes.

**Jacqueline Neapole (Executive Director, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women):** Thank you for inviting me to appear before the committee today to speak to anti-feminist ideology.

I'm Jackie Neapole, the executive director of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, CRIAW.

We are a national women's rights organization that for almost 50 years has been conducting research and analysis on women's economic and social position in Canada, with a goal of identifying solutions and actions for substantive equality.

I'd like to start by looking at how we at CRIAW view anti-feminist ideology, and then I will speak to some of our current research.

These days, the terms "feminism" and "anti-feminism" can be loaded, but it is very simple. A basic definition of feminism is that it is the advocacy and belief in full social, economic and political equality for all women. On the flip side, anti-feminism is the advocacy and belief that women should not have full social, economic and political equality.

Anti-feminist ideology is not new. What is new is that anti-feminist ideology seems to be gaining more traction and once again is becoming more mainstream.

CRIAW positions anti-feminist ideology within a broader regressive movement. Anti-feminism often relies on a picture of a romanticized, traditional past when life was supposedly simpler, but the reality is that regressive anti-feminist ideologies include ideas, messages and beliefs aimed at undoing gains made on women's rights and blocking further change needed for the full realization of equality. It's regressive in the sense of going backward.

Anti-feminism and regressive ideologies can vary in extremity. They can manifest themselves in complex ways, from sexist jokes to threats and violence. They can be focused on one area or issue and intersect along gender, race, sexual orientation and religion, for example.

In 2017, while we were conducting a pan-Canadian research project with women's groups, we heard that there was a noticeable uptick in anti-feminist backlash brewing, and the women's groups were increasingly experiencing harassment and hostility in their communities and online.

Since then, we have been looking deeper at this issue, and it has become clearer over the years that misogyny and normalization of anti-feminism is growing both globally and here as well.

Last year, CRIAW again conducted research across the country, expressly to find out how regressive anti-feminist movements were manifesting in different regions and how different feminist organizations were experiencing them.

Across the country, regressive anti-feminist ideologies are spreading insidiously and overtly. These ideologies can be supported by governments and institutions, by civil society organizations and by individuals. These regressive ideologies blame the current societal and economic problems we face today on women's rights and social justice, rather than on persistent structural inequality and injustice.

The regressive anti-feminists are finding new ways to connect with people on the ground in their communities and speak in a way that makes people feel that their needs or complaints are being heard or addressed. Regressive anti-feminist entities mobilize and grow their membership by appealing to those who feel disenfranchised, whether in reality or not. They also use social media, as we heard, and online platforms to organize and grow their membership, especially among the youth.

We have heard from many women's rights organizations that they've had to implement new security measures to protect their staff and that they were losing staff to burnout and exhaustion from dealing with constant anti-feminist threats over social media, by email and in person. They have had to conceal their office locations and remove contact information from their websites.

Feminist work has always been challenging, since it involves pushing up against strong power structures that are resistant to change. However, women's groups report that this work has been particularly difficult after years of chronic underfunding and demoralization as a result of what appears to be a growing acceptance of sexism and the idea that women's rights are expendable.

In a few days, we'll be remembering the victims of the Montreal massacre. The misogynistic gunman, motivated by anti-feminist ideology, specifically targeted 14 female engineering students, claiming that these women were taking away opportunities from men by studying in a gender-non-traditional field. I bring this up because this is what anti-feminist ideology is and what it can lead to.

There is increasingly a normalization of this ideology. If we continue to let this growth happen unfettered, there will be potentially devastating consequences to the fabric of our society and the values we hold as Canadians over many generations.

I have a few recommendations. I'll try to get to them in the 20 seconds or 10 seconds remaining.

- (1540)

We all have a role in reducing the vitriol and in stopping the proliferation of sexism and hateful, misogynistic ideas and groups. Upholding women's human rights should not be viewed as a partisan issue.

We need stronger social safety nets and investments in health care and education. Regressive anti-feminist movements grow their membership by targeting and blaming women and other marginalized communities for systemic issues. We know that the disparities in wealth continue to widen and are worsening, and this is acutely an issue with young Canadians. Investments to strengthen social protection and safety nets are needed now.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, but that's the end of your time. I'm sure we'll get the rest of both of your testimonies as we go into our rounds of questions.

Our first round starts with Ms. Cody for six minutes.

**Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Through you, I want to welcome our witnesses to our meeting. I greatly appreciate having this conversation.

My goal today is to make sure that this study leads to thoughtful, informed recommendations at the end.

Today my questions will be for Mrs. Clermont-Dion.

Can you tell me which parts of your research are based on hard evidence and which are more opinion-based? Also, where did you obtain your data?

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** Give me a second.

[*Translation*]

First, in Quebec, we have very little data on this issue. Mr. David Morin will testify later and point out that 20% of young Quebecers believe that feminism is an attempt to control the world, according to a survey conducted in collaboration with the firm Léger. These are the data we have in Quebec.

In fact, the data we have come largely from Australia and Great Britain. Very little data comes from Canada. Factually, the research we have comes from elsewhere. For example, what I told you earlier, that 76% of teachers did not feel comfortable, comes from a longitudinal study that was conducted in Australia.

As for the data I provided about the United Kingdom, it comes from several research reports that have been done. I may publish this data later, but it comes from the United Kingdom. I am working with Professor Jessica Ringrose from University College London, who is very interested in this issue. What we are realizing is that, in terms of data, the British government is investing heavily in understanding this phenomenon.

We have very little data to understand the influence of masculinist narratives on youth and perceptions. What we do know is based on data from other sources. Diana Miconi, who published the research report on masculinist discourse in Montreal, conducted a study that is nevertheless limited in scope, based on a sample of six secondary schools.

On the other hand, I told you that 75% of young people in Quebec had a negative perception of victims of sexual assault. This data comes from a survey of 1,000 respondents, which is quite a large sample for Quebec. However, in order to fully understand the influence of masculinist discourse on young people's perceptions, it is essential to invest in research. I also think we need to work on education—

• (1545)

[English]

**Connie Cody:** Can I interrupt? I have a lot of questions here and a short period of time.

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** Yes.

[Translation]

I'm sorry.

[English]

**Connie Cody:** Thank you.

I've been talking to a lot of young men and women, and they're quite shocked to see the divide increasing between the genders. How do you see empowering women while also keeping healthy masculinity to keep the balance?

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** It's true that there's a significant polarization right now between men and women and among young people. To address boys and avoid this polarization, the focus must be on positive role models. This must also be done through educational programs to facilitate the somewhat complicated dialogue between boys and girls about these issues.

Influencers have this ability to speak in a very convincing manner—

[English]

**Connie Cody:** Excuse me.

Can I ask who defines these positive models? Who is in the conversations about this?

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** This is done through educational work.

Do you want to know if there are people who are interested in this issue of positive role models?

[English]

**Connie Cody:** [Inaudible—Editor]

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** That's a good question. A positive role model in education is obviously arbitrary. So we need to reflect on this question.

In fact, I wouldn't be able to answer your question specifically.

[English]

**Connie Cody:** I've been getting a lot of questions. What I hear not only in my community but also especially from a lot of young men is that they're feeling a lot of pressure and stress on them with the conversations and the generalization. They're actually asking me if the intent is to completely wipe out masculinity from public spaces and discourses.

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** No. There is this context that you mention and which is accurate, meaning that there may be some discomfort on the part of teenagers with respect to this discussion. However,

we need to come back to the masculinist and anti-feminist narratives, which are the subject of the question.

Anti-feminist and masculinist narratives exploit this vulnerability, which is entirely acceptable and understandable, and then spread disinformation about extremely concerning issues. For example, it's said that gender-based violence does not exist, whereas, in fact, it unfortunately does.

So I understand the discomfort, but—

[English]

**Connie Cody:** I agree that there is gender-based violence overall, but I'm talking about the generalization of the conversations. Has there been any research on whether this type of messaging and narrative framing men as harmful might actually push more men towards being anti-feminist?

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** My colleague might be able to answer your question.

[English]

**Jacqueline Neapole:** I don't think we can blame women for pushing men to be anti-feminist.

**Connie Cody:** There's a lot of talk about women's rights, but do women's rights also include women's safe places? If you're talking about survivors—

**The Chair:** It's a great question, but you're at the end of your time. We'll have to wait for the answer on that one.

We'll go to Madam Ménard for six minutes.

[Translation]

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Hochelaga—Rosemont-East, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ladies, thank you very much for being here with us. Your contribution has already been very enlightening. Thank you for your opening remarks.

For a narrative or an ideology to amplify and take root, it needs fertile ground.

In your opinion, Ms. Neapole, what has allowed this ideology to resonate in recent years?

• (1550)

[English]

**Jacqueline Neapole:** I think a lot of complex issues have led to where we are today. While it may have blown up and we've seen it more obviously—it's come to the surface—it has been percolating underneath the surface for a while.

Some of it is that there's a growing disparity of wealth and people feeling like they're left behind. In terms of all these social services, we've done a lot of research on social infrastructure and the importance of including people meaningfully so that they can be engaged in society. When you don't have those social protections or safety nets in place, people start to be left behind. They start to point to individuals as the reason for their misfortune or for what they feel is their secondary status in life.

[Translation]

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard:** Thank you.

This exercise will be cruel. The answers will need to be short.

Ms. Clermont-Dion, I would be very curious to hear your perspective on this same question.

In your opinion, what constitutes fertile soil for the rise of this kind of ideology?

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** It's also the question of hate that interests us today, particularly hatred against women.

There's the fact that platforms allow the dissemination of hate speech without adequate oversight. This allows narratives to be heard and released.

This is a different issue from regulating hate speech, but there's also the fact that some platforms do not consider it important to protect human rights, and they allow these kinds of comments to be heard. This sends a message.

There's a political and social context that needs to be mentioned. The President of the United States operates through insults and a certain form of misogyny. He is there, he is present, he is heard, and he is not alone. I invite you once again to watch the documentary entitled *Je vous salue salope: la misogynie au temps du numérique*. In it, we see, for example, Laura Boldrini, the former president of the Italian Parliament, being attacked by masculinists, who launched a campaign of hatred and terror.

By allowing this hatred, we're telling people that they can also embrace this ideology.

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard:** At the last committee meeting, people mentioned a cornerstone to this phenomenon, and that was rejection. That is similar to what I'm hearing once again in your answers.

Do you consider this to be a possible cause? As a federal government, what can we do? What can we do, as a government body, to address an issue like rejection, which can obviously lead to divisions in society?

Ms. Neapole, I would like to hear your point of view.

[English]

**Jacqueline Neapole:** It's complicated, because I don't think it's just that. Those are the feelings—people are feeling that—but I think it's bigger than that. We need to go back to looking at what feminism is. It's for women's human rights. It's being okay with that and standing up for what is right and saying that. It's not being afraid to use the language that feminism is okay.

I think that is how we renormalize that, because we're seeing that it's exponentially growing. It's proliferating. It becomes a cesspool of the same things over and over again. It's kind of self-fulfilling. It's very important that we stand up for human rights and what's right. Women should have human rights.

[Translation]

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard:** Ms. Clermont-Dion, you said that we didn't have Canadian data to better study the phenomenon. Should the federal government have a role in data collection?

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** Yes. Organizations like yours are essential for further documenting the issue. There is some data, but it's not enough. There has been interest in the issue of anti-feminism for a long time, but it has never been so popular.

Moreover, we may not all agree here today on all the parameters of this issue, but we can agree on one thing: Education is essential, and no one wants to see women's rights take a step back. We want inclusive education that combats hatred and disinformation. To implement programs accessible to everyone, there must be investment in an education program that promotes the deconstruction of hate speech propagated by disinformation, including masculinist narratives, of course.

Of course, it's an area of provincial jurisdiction, but the federal government also has a role to play in all of this.

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard:** To come back to what you mentioned, if we don't pay attention to the issue of anti-feminist narratives, will our democracy be harmed?

• (1555)

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** Absolutely.

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard:** Ms. Neapole, what do you think?

**Jacqueline Neapole:** Yes.

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I thank the two witnesses for being here with us today.

Right now, we're witnessing a rise in violence against women and we're wondering how we got here. I believe that the issue we're discussing today, which is concerning, is at the root of the increase in these numbers.

Ms. Clermont-Dion, you've already appeared before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, notably to discuss the issues following the London assaults, as part of our study aimed at changing anti-feminist or masculinist behaviours in the world of sports. You had come to make some recommendations.

You were also supposed to come here, to the Hill, on March 8, 2023, with your colleague Guylaine Maroist, to talk about your documentary, *Je vous salue salope*. My colleague on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and I had invited you. We chose that theme for March 8, which is International Women's Day. Unfortunately, you were unable to come and Ms. Maroist was here alone.

If you had come to the Hill at that time to talk about your documentary, what message would you have wanted to convey?

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** At the launch of the film *Je vous salue salope*, I would have liked to say that it's important to understand that masculinist and anti-feminist narratives contribute to the trivialization of violence, but also to cyber-violence. Cyber-violence will affect all women who are visible in public spaces.

However, today, I'd like us to focus on female politicians, particularly women who want to speak up and exercise their democratic rights. When their freedom of expression is trampled or threatened by the violence of certain more radicalized masculinist actors, ultimately, it is we who are affected. It is our democracy that is undermined. I have said it before and I'll say it again. That's what I would have liked to say at the time, and that is what I am saying again today more than ever.

I just wrote an article for the Canadian Journal of Political Science on the issue of cyber-violence directed at female politicians. I feel it's important to continue questioning this issue and to see the link between cyber-violence and the most radical masculinist narratives.

**Andréanne Larouche:** This is the theme we chose on March 8, 2023, precisely to follow up on your requests and a petition you had launched. It's important to understand how cyber-violence and masculinist discourse discourage women from entering the public sphere, whether in politics or elsewhere.

You said that Quebec could do things, but that the elements related to the Criminal Code fell under federal jurisdiction. When we talk about regulating hate speech online and cyber-violence, that concerns the Criminal Code and therefore the federal government. The same applies to coercive control. That is to a degree the message we heard from the people who worked on the *Rebâtir la confiance*, or rebuilding trust, report concerning crimes against women, namely that matters related to the Criminal Code fall under federal jurisdiction.

During the last Parliament, Bill C-63 was tabled, which was a reflection on the regulation of such cyber-violence. Why would it be important to introduce another federal bill to regulate this?

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** Since we submitted that petition, which was signed by 30,000 people, I don't really know what has been done. We haven't made much progress on this issue. We must continue to question this, because it is a democratic right to freedom of speech.

When we talk about masculinist narratives, we're obviously not just talking about individuals who make statements prohibited by the Criminal Code. We should not make hasty generalizations, as Ms. Cody said. Nevertheless, it must be noted that there's still no protection or security for those who would like to speak out in the

public space. There are many public speakers who can attest to this, even in *Je vous salue salope*, like Laurence Gratton, who was an education student and was being cyber-bullied by someone who subscribes to radical masculinist rhetoric. Nothing has been done in the last 10 years. So, unfortunately, she is still living in insecurity 10 years later, and that is very alarming. We need to take this issue seriously, and I hope that today's discussion will be the beginning of something.

**Andréanne Larouche:** Unfortunately, Bill C-63 died on the Order Paper when the election was called, and we are still waiting to see how this issue will be brought back to the agenda. I might come back to it during my second round, as I would also like to talk about education.

You've provided training to young hockey players, among others, particularly with respect to their relationships with women. What do you take away from that experience, and what should we remember about education?

• (1600)

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** My experience with the players in the Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League changed my life, as I realized that dialogue was still possible with everyone. At the heart of the education project, that dialogue is essential, not to blame or stigmatize the boys, but just to try to move forward together and counter violence in general.

If I'm here today, it's for my son and my daughter. I hope to give them a positive future where men and women can be free. That's the foundation.

[English]

**The Chair:** Very good.

Witnesses, if there is additional data or commentary you want to provide to the clerk, the committee would be very happy to receive it.

We're going to begin our second round with Madam Vien for five minutes.

[Translation]

**Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Thank you for joining us this afternoon and for giving us your time.

Ms. Clermont-Dion, thank you for accepting our invitation. In the Conservative Party, we wanted to hear from you and allow the entire Standing Committee on the Status of Women to benefit from your insights. I'm with you and Quebec is with you too. You're a great friend to women.

Earlier, my colleague spoke about the generalization of men. We are also concerned about recognizing that we tried to raise our sons and husbands to respect women, and I think we have been fairly successful in the end. However, the current situation is serious. It shocks me to hear certain comments, whether on television or on various platforms. You say it's a phenomenon. Last week, I dared to call it as a national crisis. Is that too strong? Violence against women is on the rise. Domestic violence has increased by 39% and sexual assaults have increased by 76%. These are bad times for women.

Are we experiencing a national crisis?

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** First, I would like to thank the Conservative Party for inviting me to the House of Commons to speak on this issue. I appreciate your comment.

For my part, I always try to take a nuanced view, but at the same time, if you say so, I'll agree with you. Indeed, we may be experiencing a national crisis with respect to violence. I've been involved in this subject for 20 years and I've never seen such online misogyny. I've never seen such statements. I never thought I would see that in my lifetime. There may be a correlational link between the increase in violence and the misogyny that we're seeing. There's a concept called the continuum of violence, which starts with hatred and ends with action. Right now, it seems like everyone is realizing this.

**Dominique Vien:** It's incredible that there haven't been any breaches. At some point, it seems to me that people should think before writing a comment and ask themselves if it's too harsh. Parents are also involved, and you mentioned teachers. You say that 76% of them feel overwhelmed by the situation.

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** You're asking me for data, but honestly, as I said, it's happening so fast that we don't really have any data that explains this phenomenon. What we can see, however, is that even children are exposed to potentially hateful comments on social media, such as TikTok and YouTube. Debbie Ging's research demonstrates this, and I can send it to you later. At this time, we have no idea how quickly this phenomenon is evolving.

I watch my six-year-old navigate social media too, because we all have access to an electronic tablet, and it's concerning because we don't know how far it goes. We didn't talk about artificial intelligence, but know that 99% of photos created using digital deep-fakes are pornographic in nature and 98% target young girls. I don't necessarily draw a link between this and masculinist narratives, but it's an extremely concerning global context.

• (1605)

**Dominique Vien:** I'm sorry, but like my colleagues, I have a limited speaking time. It's our major frustration.

Earlier, you mentioned positive male figures. I expressed a hypothesis last week. When a boy is born, he's with his mother. Then, he goes to a child care centre, where he's with women, because there are no male educators. Then, he arrives in elementary school, where there are no male teachers. In high school, there are very few, and in college, it starts to be a bit more open to men.

Where are the significant male figures in the education continuum?

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** There's no doubt that there needs to be a diversification of role models from childhood. In Quebec, 96% of early childhood educators are women. So, indeed, positive role models are needed in institutions and elsewhere. I understand that Ms. Cody found the concept of positive role models a bit unusual, but it's about seeking a diversification of role models that's not focused on promoting violence. We want role models who are good allies for women, plain and simple. It's common sense.

Indeed, you raise a good point by saying that there aren't many role models.

**Dominique Vien:** My hypothesis might therefore deserve to be studied.

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, your time is up.

[English]

We will now go to Ms. Nathan for five minutes.

**Juanita Nathan (Pickering—Brooklin, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Dion, I'd like to build on Madam Vien's comments about boys not being exposed to male role models in our system, which has changed throughout so that they're more exposed to women, but who are perhaps turning to social media platforms where they're being influenced.

Can we talk a little bit about how the anti-feminist content circulating on social media is influencing young boys' understanding of relationships and gender roles and is shaping their own identity in the current context?

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** That's an interesting question. Influencers will use effective strategies. For example, there's the cult of the body. Obviously, adolescence is when identity is formed. Girls and boys are both growing and want to become attractive. It's completely normal, in the psychological and individual process. Many male influencers will therefore opt for the cult of physical fitness, sports, mixed martial arts, boxing, etc. It's effective because young men want to meet the dominant beauty standards, so they'll listen to the coach. That's one of the first elements.

Secondly, there's the issue of money. Andrew Tate, for example, has a school where young men are taught how to become wealthy. Obviously, no one wants to live in poverty and insecurity. So it's another argument that speaks to them.

Thirdly, there are intimate relationships. They are shown how to seduce girls, for example. Moreover, the pick-up artists' movement, where men are shown how to hit on girls, has played a significant role in the history of masculinist movements.

It's not all negative; it's more about the way it's done and the conclusions we reach afterward that are problematic. For example, when it comes to seduction, a lot of importance will be placed on the "body count", the number of sexual partners a young girl has had. If a girl has had sexual relations with more than five guys, they won't date her. It's also said that a woman's place should again be in the home, or that a man should control her. These are the kinds of things we hear across the manosphere. I say it's effective because it strikes a chord with teenagers in terms of identity building.

[English]

**Juanita Nathan:** That's very true. Thank you for that.

What strategies do you find more effective in supporting young men and promoting gender equality in these digital space settings? What would be your recommendation, mostly for younger men?

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** We need influencers who don't spread disinformation, positive influencers, i.e., those who don't seek to promote a goal of domination and oppression. It would be great to have young men who express themselves on social media and who are able to speak to young people, while addressing their questions about identity, which are completely normal at their age. That could work. We sometimes see influencers who manage to find this path. Of course, it's not just about education.

Moreover, with respect to positive role models, literature and education show how important it is to highlight this element rather than discussing toxic masculinity, a concept created by Terry Kupers in his prison practice, but which does not necessarily apply well to the reality of adolescents.

We must therefore adopt a positive approach. What could this young man do to prevent violence? How can he engage in a better, more equitable society? We need to take a different approach than punishment or blame.

By the way, I wrote a book for young men, entitled *Salut, ça va?*, which addresses this issue and discusses it openly.

• (1610)

[English]

**Juanita Nathan:** Thank you for that.

Ms. Neapole, how does federal funding help your organization and organizations in general support gender equity and address such challenges as online misogyny and anti-feminist attitudes? Do you have any recommendations? I know that you started giving recommendations before, but is there anything you want to add to that?

**Jacqueline Neapole:** Actually, one of my recommendations was that there needs to be more funding for national women's rights organizations working on systemic change in Canada. For a long time, the national women's rights organizations have not been funded at the levels they need to be in order to do the coordinated work that we need to do on these pressing issues. As we see, progress on women's rights is not fixed and permanent. Even the fact that we're having this conversation and there's a proliferation of anti-feminism happening speaks to that.

Women's rights and gender equality require continued commitment to ensure that generations of work and advancements are not wiped out. Short-term project funding to our organizations hasn't really strengthened our organizations working on these areas. It leads to a very disjointed advocacy that's not responsive to changing circumstances. Operational or core funding is a good way to ensure that we can be responsive to these things as they're happening rather than with short-term project funding.

**The Chair:** Marvellous.

[Translation]

Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Andréanne Larouche:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

We're looking for solutions. We're looking for recommendations that we can make to the federal government to address this problem. There's talk of funding and educational assistance. You both refer to it. We need research too. So, there's the role that Statistics Canada could play, for example, by gathering data. You mentioned that.

There's also talk of incorporating online hate speech into the Criminal Code, the cyber-violence you mentioned. So, what can be done about social media algorithms? How can we prevent a young man from quickly sliding into the manosphere and into misogynistic forums or communities like incels, for example?

Ms. Clermont-Dion, first of all, what would you have to say about that?

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** We need to better regulate disinformation. That way, we can tackle fertile ground that is not limited to the masculinist narrative. Ultimately, we are not infringing on freedom of expression either.

Disinformation has dangerous consequences for individual and collective development. I think it would be a lever to be used in conjunction with specific measures during negotiations with, for example, the digital giants. They must be forced to regulate disinformation. In any case, they have internal guidelines regulating narratives. Why would disinformation be accepted? We see all kinds of disinformation that could be removed from the platforms.

**Andréanne Larouche:** You also mentioned artificial intelligence. When legislating in this area, should we take into account the fact that artificial intelligence has a disproportionate impact on women with the use of deepfakes, for example?

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** It would actually be a very good argument to revisit the non-consensual distribution of porn through deepfakes. That's been demonstrated, studied, and so on.

For the rest, it's hard for me to assess the situation at the moment. We submitted a request to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to study the link between artificial intelligence and the victimization of girls and women. So we'll see. However, this issue needs to be addressed.

Once again, I'll be able to send the clerk the data on the issue of deepfakes and misogyny.

**Andréanne Larouche:** To conclude, what do you think about the issue of pornography and age? Should platforms be held more accountable for the age of people who consume pornography online?

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** Yes, but it's certain that, with deepfakes, someone's face is used to create pornography. Thus, with artificial intelligence, we're obviously victimizing women again.

• (1615)

[English]

**The Chair:** Very good.

Ms. Roberts, you have five minutes.

**Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you for the important work you do. I want to quote from our Constitution that women's human rights are the human rights that all women and girls are entitled to, including the rights to be free from violence and discrimination, to receive an education, to own property, to vote and to earn equal pay. One reason I'm bringing this up is that in both your comments, you mentioned education, which I think is an important aspect of changing the culture and the mindset of many individuals.

Maybe you can help answer some questions here. We had a witness here named Ms. Dhillon. She was in an arranged marriage. It was a cultural thing that happened. I'm going to read from her comment so that I don't get it wrong. She was abused by her husband many, many times. She didn't take action until he started abusing the children. We asked her what the point was:

I believe, once again, it was their pride, their shame. In fact, I speak regularly about something my father said that I hope no father ever says to his child. After my abuser came out of his three days in jail after his arrest, my father said to me, "Baby girl, please go back. Stay with him. I'll come and get you one day." I said, "When, Dad?" He said, "I'll come for your body."

My question for her was, why is this acceptable in this country? I visited an immigration centre in York region that helps individuals who come from these types of countries where the males are dominant. They are the boss, basically. They marry women, and then women become slaves. How do we in Canada educate them to ensure that those are not the laws of the land in this country? What information or advice would you give them?

**Jacqueline Neapole:** Well, I think it's men in this country too.

**Anna Roberts:** No, I agree.

**Jacqueline Neapole:** This is a problem, right?

**Anna Roberts:** I agree.

**Jacqueline Neapole:** I think it's a global issue. It's here. There's not one corner of the earth where women are not experiencing violence. I just want to make sure we're all on the same page. This is why we have feminist organizations working on systemic change. It's to change how we think about women and how women are treated. It's big. I think this is part of the challenge sometimes, that we view these things as being so big, but I think over time we can work on this. We can do lots of things to ensure that women don't face violence and that it's not normalized.

**Anna Roberts:** The reason I ask this is that I spoke with her privately afterwards. She did not want her male children to follow that path. She wanted to teach them that this is not the way we treat women.

What would you say to that, Madam Clermont-Dion?

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** I would say, in fact, that it's extremely difficult to deradicalize individuals who are that misogynistic. Misog-

yny has existed for a very long time. If we had the solutions to misogyny, we would be in a more equal world. So, frankly, I don't have a solution for you today. I need to reflect on this question.

Last week, I received an email from an individual in Montreal who told me he was proud that his seven daughters were submissive to men, that his wife was submissive to his authority, and that he was also happy to have taken his little girls out of school. In the name of his Christian religion, he wished for me to also submit to my husband. So, I'll tell you something, Mrs. Roberts: I didn't know what to say.

[English]

**Anna Roberts:** You both spoke about the budget, so I'll ask you both this question. In a context where Women and Gender Equality Canada faces budget cuts that could reach 78% within two years, what message do you wish to send to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and the Prime Minister to convince them to reverse these cuts?

• (1620)

**Jacqueline Neapole:** In the latest budget, it does look like they'll be sustaining a budget over a period of time and there won't be the same reductions that were forecasted originally in the departmental plan. I do think, though, that the commitment to women's rights and gender equality is a long-term commitment. It needs to be non-partisan. It has to be not just this government or the past government but a long-term project. It's something that should be committed to by all governments in power.

**The Chair:** That's the end of your time, Ms. Roberts.

Mr. Chen, you have five minutes.

**Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

My question is for either of the panellists.

How does anti-feminist ideology present itself in the dominant culture of Canadian society today?

**Jacqueline Neapole:** It presents itself in many different ways. I think that's the biggest challenge. It's insidious. It's small things sometimes. As I was saying in my opening, it can be sexist jokes. It can be what's blown off as, "Don't get so wound up about this." Then it can manifest itself larger into violent actions and threats. I'm sure many of the women MPs here have received threats too. This is becoming normalized. It's being experienced online, and there's very little recourse. There's a lack of accountability. We see it in many different ways.

It can also manifest itself in terms of economic austerity measures. You can see how funds are allocated in a budget and who benefits from that. You can see anti-feminism and anti-feminist ideology manifest itself that way also.

**Shaun Chen:** Would you suggest that the anti-feminist ideology in Canada is prevalent among particular groups or subgroups, or that it exists in all corners of society?

**Jacqueline Neapole:** I mean, I think sexism is widespread. This is why we continue to have to do the work we have to do. I do think, though, that increasingly from evidence and research there really is a resurgence in the younger demographic, and it is growing. I don't think any part of Canada is immune. As we see a normalization of these ideologies, that's the concern. It becomes so normalized that you don't even see it anymore. The bar is so low that you don't even see it as being anti-feminist anymore.

**Shaun Chen:** Thank you.

Budget 2025 includes an investment of \$660.5 million towards advancing women and gender equality. This is historic funding. Have you or your organizations received any federal funding, and what impact has it had?

**Jacqueline Neapole:** Yes, we rely heavily on Women and Gender Equality Canada as a funder for our work, as do most of the other national women's rights organizations. I do think the funding announcement has been great. It's been great to see that there's been a stabilization so that the base funding is higher than it has been in previous years, but I do think there can always be more. We need a sustained commitment that is bigger than that so that we can be more responsive. The problem with a lot of the funding, again, is that it's back to project-based funding, so the priorities are set. We apply to these pots of funding. It's very, very difficult to be responsive to the ongoing challenges or new emerging issues and have the capacity to tackle them in the way we need to.

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** I would add that, for our part, for about ten years, we have never been funded by the Government of Canada. Our funding comes from the Quebec Secrétariat à la condition féminine, but we have tried to secure additional funding.

[English]

**Shaun Chen:** Does Canada have sufficient data to understand the issue and to make the policy decisions it must make around anti-feminist ideology?

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** When it comes to young people, it is quite clear to me that there is a real lack of research data. More investment is needed to understand the influence of these narratives, which are spreading and changing very rapidly. We need to analyze their influence, as the United Kingdom has done. The U.K. is a leader in this field, particularly since the broadcast of the drama series *Adolescence*, which raised awareness of the issue. Greater awareness is needed in Canada to realize that understanding the phenomenon among young people is a priority. I would really like the government to consider this concern and make it a priority.

• (1625)

[English]

**Shaun Chen:** What does the U.K. do differently that you believe would be good for Canada to follow suit on?

[Translation]

**Léa Clermont-Dion:** The U.K. is investing heavily in research, but also in awareness campaigns. To give you a small example, the series *Adolescence* will be presented in schools in the United Kingdom. That's a major thing. It's a fictional series that really focuses on the effects of masculinism and Andrew Tate on young people. It's something I don't necessarily agree or disagree with, but I notice that this topic is becoming something essential for this government.

[English]

**The Chair:** That concludes our first panel today.

I want to thank the witnesses. We appreciate your insights. Again, if there's anything you'd like to send to the clerk as a follow-up, we'd appreciate that.

I will suspend while we get our second panel together.

• (1625) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1625)

**The Chair:** We're back now with our second panel.

[Translation]

Today, we welcome from the Université de Sherbrooke, Mr. David Morin, full professor, UNESCO chair in the prevention of violent radicalization and extremism.

Welcome, Professor Morin.

[English]

We also have Keeley Prockiwi, a Red Seal endorsed welder.

I was married to a Red Seal pipeline welder for years, so I know about the important and difficult work you do.

Welcome to both of you.

I will now give the floor to Professor Morin.

[Translation]

You have the floor for five minutes, Professor Morin.

**David Morin (Full Professor, UNESCO Chair in the Prevention of Violent Radicalization and Extremism, Université de Sherbrooke, as an individual):** Good afternoon. Thank you for your invitation. It's a pleasure to be able to speak with you.

I made some changes to my five-minute remarks because I heard the discussions with the previous group of witnesses. I would like to go back to two or three elements that seem important to me.

The first point, of course, is to remember that this narrative or debate on the issue of anti-feminism is not a debate about individual rights. We can discuss how each person wants to live their life. There has been much talk, for example, about traditionalist wives, among other things, but the debate is clearly on a collective level. It is therefore a narrative that seeks to revisit the rights and freedoms of women that have been acquired over the past few decades. That seems important to me. It also seems important to remember that anti-feminism is a struggle just like misogyny, masculinism, ultra-conservatism and certain elements of political and religious extremism. It's not new in the social space. That was my first important point.

The second point is to say that the LGBTQ+ issue has often been excluded from this conversation. The questioning of women's rights is also accompanied by the questioning of the rights of members of LGBTQ+ communities in the ecosystems we observe. Today, there's not much talk about this, but it's important to remember it. These are two targets that are subject to the same criticisms in this debate.

The third element—and it is obviously important to remember this—is that this debate on the anti-feminist narrative is not a debate between women and men. We need to have these conversations together. I note, unless I'm mistaken, Madam Chair, that there's only one man on the committee, which is not very balanced. It's important to involve men as allies, but also as feminists. I'm the father of an 18-year-old woman, so I clearly say that I adhere to feminist ideology, as long as we define it as promoting equality between men and women in our society.

Having said that, there's another key issue that has been widely discussed, and that is the issue of hate speech and online discourse. Incidentally, I should tell you that I participated as an expert in the federal government's committee on Bill C-63.

It's true today that platforms have become spaces where these anti-feminist and masculinist, but more generally hateful, narratives spread very quickly. It's not just about the alternative platforms where there are forums and chat rooms where people can express themselves in a hateful manner. Today, it's also the case on the most popular platforms. In recent years, there's been a decline on a number of platforms like X, TikTok and YouTube. I'm therefore one of those who believe that it is indeed very important today to better regulate digital social networks. This is important especially because we realize that now even online video games have become a source of hate speech. They have also become a way to recruit young men into anti-gender movements, more generally.

In terms of statistics, I have some good news and some not-so-good news for the committee. I'm providing you with the statistics from a 2025 survey conducted by the research chair of which I am one of the co-holders. It's a very large survey that involved more than 6,000 respondents.

We proposed the following statement: "Feminism is a strategy to control society." That's a conspiracy theory that we often hear.

In Canada, only 12.6% of people agree with that statement, which is quite good news. The bad news is that 30% of young an-

glophones aged 18 to 34 believe it's true. It's 13% among francophones.

We proposed another statement: "Equality between men and women has been achieved, so feminism has no reason to exist." Nearly 40% of young anglophone men aged 18 to 34 responded that this is true, compared to 13% for francophones. When we ask young women the question, we find that they are at opposite ends of the spectrum. The risk, of course, is that there will be increasing polarization between young men and young women during the formation of their personal and sexual identities, etc. This means that our young men are at risk of entering into intimate relationships that sometimes involve controlling behaviour, and so on.

I will conclude on one point. It's an important societal debate that can have an impact in the context of conjugal relationships.

● (1630)

However, it's also a debate or a narrative that kills. In Canada, extremism motivated by hatred of women has already killed. The Polytechnique attack was mentioned. We can also talk about the Yonge Street attack in Toronto in 2018, or the attack in the massage parlour in 2020.

Furthermore, we can also talk about the first time that charges of terrorist attacks related to incel ideology were filed internationally. I would like to note that, in 2011 in Norway, the Utøya killer said he acted because his mother had given him a feminist upbringing. In other words, he was blaming her.

I will briefly conclude by talking to you about the whole movement related to extreme violence.

● (1635)

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. That's the end of your time. We'll get to the rest of it during questions, for sure.

Now we'll go to Ms. Prockiw for five minutes.

**Keeley Prockiw (Red Seal Endorsed Welder, As an Individual):** First, I want to thank everyone for having me here today. My stories aren't as research-based as those of my counterparts but are more experience-based. As a queer woman in the trades, I'm really encouraged to be here right now and to help with the research project.

Throughout my time in the trades, I've witnessed and personally experienced the harmful effects of anti-feminist attitudes, ranging from sexual harassment and abuse to questioning of victims' credibility and the perpetuation of power imbalances. These behaviours not only undermine women's safety and dignity; they also reinforce barriers that prevent under-represented genders from thriving in the industry. We're working nationally to fill the aging trades population and working to encourage more under-represented genders to fill those gaps, but we are still unable to change the ideology to retain these folks in the trades. Addressing anti-feminism is essential to create workplaces where everyone is respected, supported and empowered to succeed.

I grew up in an abusive household, striving for my dad's attention, who only wanted me to be a boy. I played sports, thinking he wanted boys and that's what they do. I was in foster care, where as a girl I was sexualized and abused. Then I went into another abusive, controlling and degrading relationship with the father of my kids. My life has always been dominated by men trying to suppress me as a woman and as a queer.

Now I have a son and a daughter who both work in the trades. Although I've tried to prepare my daughter with the skills to keep her self-aware and safe, both on site and at camp, I'm still left wondering whether, at the end of the day, I've done enough to help her feel safe. I've taught my son that women and all genders are valued and safe, no matter where or what the interaction is, to give them both the same entitlement to financial security and psychological safety throughout their lives.

Today I'm proud to say that my workplace actively supports me and other women in the trades. This commitment to equity and inclusion is one of the reasons that I chose to work there and that I feel empowered to advocate for myself and others. Knowing that my organization values respect and safety gives me the confidence that change is possible and that I can change.

**The Chair:** Excellent. Thank you so much.

We will now start our first round of questions.

Madam Vien, you have six minutes.

[Translation]

**Dominique Vien:** Thank you very much, Ms. Prockiw. Do not apologize at all. You are more than welcome here, and your testimony will certainly be enlightening for us.

Mr. Morin, thank you as well for being with us. My first question will be directed to you.

Are we experiencing a national crisis?

You probably suspected that I was going to ask you this question, which I actually asked Ms. Clermont-Dion earlier.

I think we're experiencing a situation that resembles a national crisis. In that sense, as I said, it's a bad time for women, and everyone understood what I meant by that. So it seems to me that women are being mistreated. We're talking about sexual assault, domestic violence, anti-feminist rhetoric and masculinism. It never ends.

Are we experiencing a national crisis?

**David Morin:** As we've seen, the pandemic exacerbated domestic violence, particularly due to the closeness in relationships that resulted from the lockdown. Furthermore, extremist organizations tried to recruit people on social media.

The term "national crisis" is highly political and calls for extraordinary measures.

Instead of talking about a national crisis, I would say that it's a phenomenon that is still limited to a minority, but extremely concerning in view of the numbers I have given you on young men. We're becoming aware that there is currently a very strong polarization between young men and young women. Some of them don't understand couple relationships or intimate relationships in the same way. In this respect, if we don't take matters in hand now, without blaming or stigmatizing young men, as mentioned earlier, we may be setting ourselves up for what could become a major social crisis in terms of equality between men's and women's rights. On this point, I agree with you.

● (1640)

**Dominique Vien:** I spoke earlier to the first group of witnesses about the fact that, last week, I hypothesized that there's a kind of continuum, namely that, from the moment children enter day care until they enter CEGEP, they're surrounded a lot by women.

Women are very professional, women are exceptional in conveying values in education, and all that. I'm not questioning that. What bothers me about all this is that there are no men like there used to be about 30 or 40 years ago. Men taught in elementary schools; they were in high schools; however, they're no longer there.

Do you also support the idea that these prominent and positive male figures are so absent that young people turn to hateful and misogynistic comments from certain individuals on social media? I don't even want to name a person; I don't even want to promote them.

**David Morin:** I think it's a complex issue, because the primary male figure should be the father. I think that in many of these families, the father is still present, at least in principle. I think child psychology specialists would be in a better position to answer these questions, rather than me.

**Dominique Vien:** Yes, okay. I think that mothers have also done a pretty good job.

**David Morin:** Yes, absolutely.

**Dominique Vien:** There are several women my age here, around the table. We've tried to raise our sons by instilling in them that equality was not optional. We're all career women, we've evolved, we've exchanged ideas. Yet, we can't pinpoint what led us to this situation.

How is it possible for young people to not be able to detach themselves from that, by themselves, thinking that the narrative they're hearing on the platform doesn't make any sense? How can it not click?

**David Morin:** It does click. This is where I'm saying that we need to add some nuance to this conversation.

For example, I heard your exchanges earlier with my two colleagues who appeared before me. There were many points of entry into this masculinist narrative, which I would describe as more violent or less respectable. These are still reflections on certain questions: how does one become a man? How does one find their place in society? How does one succeed? How does one feel good in their body? And so on. In fact, these are quite positive topics of conversation. However, many young men who are asking these questions start to listen to personal development coaches, and little by little, they move from one coach to another, who has a much more radical message. Finally, that coach explains to the young man that, to get ahead, he needs to push down on the heads of women, his partner, his sister, sometimes his mother, and so on. I still have to say that the mother is often a highly respected figure in masculinist ecosystems. That's certainly part of it, the gateway, if you will.

Personally, I know many young men who agree with the first part of the narrative but do not agree with the second part, which is, in fact, the belittling, the dehumanization of women, and so on.

**Dominique Vien:** Yes. We're here to try to find solutions.

What do you advise us to do, as a federal government? How could teachers also provide their help? Ms. Clermont-Dion told us that 76% of teachers were overwhelmed by the situation in their classroom. How can we help these people, the parents and the teachers?

**David Morin:** We absolutely need to help teachers in schools. A number of teachers are still a bit overwhelmed by the events and have difficulty engaging in conversation with students or young people on these issues. Obviously, it's because either they're not always prepared, or they don't want to create conflicts of loyalty. That's important.

With respect to the first point, I think it should indeed be better documented. As has already been said, we shouldn't blame young men, we need to understand why they're more drawn to this today. We need to conduct a lot of surveys and interviews here; we really need to document this element better.

As for the second point, and I think we're coming back to it, we need to moderate harmful online content.

As I was saying earlier, I participated in the discussions on the famous Bill C-63. I remind you: One of the five harmful online contents in the bill was the sharing of intimate videos without consent, known as revenge pornography. This also obviously contributes to a relationship of control and power between men and women, since it's often young men who post photos of their former partners online.

We need to return to moderating harmful online content. Furthermore, I believe we really need to deploy a lot more resources for young men, especially for those who are violent. We should also

strengthen these areas, protect women and take action with violent young men as well.

• (1645)

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. That's the end of your time.

We'll go now to Madam Ménard.

[Translation]

I'm sorry. It's now Ms. Khalid's turn.

You have the floor for six minutes.

**Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I thank the witnesses for their participation in our committee today.

[English]

You know, I find it hilarious in a very sad way how we go about trying to find a million and one different excuses to say that these are the reasons men do what they do, and that these are the reasons we need to provide more resources. I don't see us tripping over ourselves to find resources for women who want to start their own businesses or who are fleeing violence and are looking for housing.

Anyhow, I'll start with you, sir.

What's the difference between being anti-women and anti-feminist in terms of ideology?

[Translation]

**David Morin:** They are two quite different things, but they end up coming together. For example, in a couple, a man can control or harass his partner psychologically without there necessarily being an underlying ideology. There can simply be a power dynamic.

Feminism—

[English]

**Iqra Khalid:** I'm sorry. If you don't mind, I'm just looking for the definition of what is anti-feminism and what is being anti-women. I know all the rhetoric around the different types and the examples of how it manifests, but I'm looking for the definition.

[Translation]

**David Morin:** In very simple terms, an anti-feminist is someone who is against equality between men and women and the social progress that has been made. This can manifest in different ways, for example through narratives claiming that women are responsible for the masculinity crisis, that they should return to the home and that their presence in the workforce ultimately destabilizes society because they're not taking care of children enough, among other things.

[English]

**Iqra Khalid:** Thank you.

Ms. Prockiw, would you like to add to that?

**Keeley Prockiw:** To be honest, I don't know the exact definitions and what differentiates the two. I just know that they're not equal, and it's not equal out there. It's more in a gender-dominated trade—all the trades—and in the gender-dominated skilled trades. It's something that needs to change, and it's not changing as fast as we think it is.

**Iqra Khalid:** I appreciate that.

You speak of change. We've gone through a number of different movements from the time when women were no longer seen as property and were given the right to vote. In today's day and age, we've had the whole #MeToo movement, and now, with the Epstein files, in many ways, I think we have a contestation against the old boys' club and the way power or the dissemination thereof is equalized within our communities and our society.

Is there something that you think we can do to make sure there is an equalization of power amongst all genders?

**Keeley Prockiw:** To be honest, on the #MeToo movement and the Epstein files, it's all fine and good for those people to speak up, but when you're working paycheque to paycheque to take care of your family, your kids or your parents and you're the primary caregiver, speaking up and having the ability to say, "Hey, me too," isn't an option. Financially, it's not an option.

What we're seeing at a boots-on-the-ground level is that things aren't changing. That old boys' club...

I can only speak to the trades. Yes, I'm in project coordination now, but speaking to my time in the trades and talking with my daughter in the trades, who works in the Alberta oil sands as well, it's not changing. That old boys' club is there, and what we need to start doing is educating at the elementary level that girls and boys and any gender can go into the trades, and that the skilled trades are an option. School, university education is an option for all kids and all people. Trades as well are an option. We need to be educating at an even younger age that those are there for the kids. It's the kids who need to find the passion to go into these trades.

• (1650)

**Iqra Khalid:** Thank you. I really appreciate that response.

Dr. Morin, did you have anything to add to that?

[*Translation*]

**David Morin:** No.

[*English*]

**Iqra Khalid:** Okay, I appreciate that.

The next question is with respect to the collection of data.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. I think there's a problem with the interpretation.

Can you hear me in English?

[*Translation*]

Can you hear me in French?

[*English*]

Okay, it's fixed.

Thanks.

**Iqra Khalid:** Earlier, a panellist talked about the lack of data in Canada with respect to anti-feminist ideology.

I realize that I don't have a lot of time left, but I'm wondering if you could send some written responses to what the implications are in Canada with the lack of data that's collected within Canada.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** That's an excellent suggestion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Andréanne Larouche:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Mr. Morin, first of all, I would like to thank you for coming to testify before the committee today.

We talked about the importance of having data on this issue and doing research, and Ms. Clermont-Dion said that it was lacking. You have an exceptional chair at the Université de Sherbrooke that allows for reflection on this matter. We had already met as part of a study by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on polarization and the rise of extremism. We were looking for the reasons behind this, and solutions.

Since you were interrupted, I would like to give you the opportunity to finish your conclusion.

**David Morin:** My conclusion boiled down to two fundamental elements.

First, I wanted to note that, for our part, we're obviously looking at this issue through the lens of violent extremism and therefore violent acts. There's an increase in violent acts. I have given you a few examples in the western world. There are also very interesting studies in the United States that establish a link between mass shootings and gender issues. They show that, in a number of cases, there's a fairly strong correlation between the two. These are interesting data, from the perspective of moving to violent acts.

Second, it's also important to take a step back from violent acts to have a conversation about the narratives that underlie them. The data I presented mainly shows that the issue does not necessarily affect society as a whole, but rather how young men and young women understand these issues today. Young men are in a more conservative or reactionary ecosystem in which a very different vision and a less egalitarian current prevail with respect to these issues. When I say "conservative", I'm obviously not talking about political conservatism.

Those are the points I wanted to reiterate. It's also important to revisit the issue of digital social networks to better understand it, and then to work on the education sector. It's relevant to do so, as we see that it's indeed young men who are engaging with these ecosystems.

**Andréanne Larouche:** According to the data you presented in your preliminary remarks, there are three important factors that we must take into account.

**David Morin:** Yes, absolutely. They are gender, sex and language. We need to look more closely at the reasons why young men are overrepresented among anglophones compared to francophones. This may be related to all sorts of other factors, so we need to look at them in detail. I won't make any assumptions without having worked on this file, but the issue of age and gender is indeed very important.

**Andréanne Larouche:** You published a work, in collaboration with your colleague Mr. Aoun, entitled *Le nouvel âge des extrêmes? Les démocraties occidentales, la radicalisation et l'extrémisme violent*. I won't ask you to summarize it, because it's 568 pages long. However, if you could come back to it to make a few recommendations, what would you suggest we take away from your work in relation to today's study on these anti-feminist movements?

• (1655)

**David Morin:** In effect, that work showed the increase of various forms of violent extremism in the western world. For a long time, there's been a lot of talk about jihadism, rightly so, as it has caused many victims in the western world and beyond. What the work clearly documents is how right-wing extremism has increased at the same time. Moreover, part of the anti-feminist narrative is rooted in right-wing extremism, but also in political and religious extremism. That's a very important point to highlight. We're looking at influencers who belong more to the radical right, but there are others who are in the politico-religious space. These are important figures.

Basically, that's what the work demonstrated, and it's quite well documented, as we were in about fifteen western countries with researchers from all those countries. This allowed us to understand that we're currently facing a form of violence or violent extremism that's multi-faceted, which the Government of Canada has acknowledged in recent years. That's the narrative background, if you will, of that work.

I will add one last element today. In your area of intervention, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has repeatedly sounded the alarm and issued press releases about a new form of violent extremism called nihilistic violent extremism. It's propagated by groups like The Com and 764, among others, which strongly fuel anti-women and anti-feminist arguments and are very concrete, as they manage to recruit young people and push them to commit acts of sexual violence, for example. So it's an important reality.

**Andréanne Larouche:** If I remember correctly, in the context of the study by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, we talked among other things about the racist movement and all the links that can be drawn between the different movements. We talked about how all these forms of extremism were connected. Are you coming back to that, ultimately?

**David Morin:** Yes, absolutely. Some exploit others, and they take advantage of one ecosystem to recruit in another. There are indeed links, and unfortunately, they often target the same people. The targets of most of these groups are women, racial minorities, people from LGBTQ+ communities, etc.

**Andréanne Larouche:** Okay. So, in short, we seem to be witnessing a kind of return of the battle of the sexes.

**David Morin:** Yes, it's true that the data indeed point in that direction, and young women are also part of it. According to our data, they're more radical when it comes to defending women's rights and freedoms. I have to tell you that when I ask my many students what social issues might lead them to find it legitimate to resort to violence, many women talk to me about a rollback of women's rights and freedoms. Obviously, it's a predominant issue. Furthermore, it's important to understand that, in this type of debate—

[English]

**The Chair:** Very good.

Now we're going to Ms. Cody for five minutes in our second round.

**Connie Cody:** Thank you, Mr. Morin and Mrs. Prockiw, for coming here tonight as witnesses.

It's an interesting topic, so I have a lot of questions. Hopefully, I can get through a few of them in this short time.

Mr. Morin, just here today at this session, I've heard a lot about a request for funding and sustained commitment from this government, but currently, this government has \$193 million going to 20 international projects for advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls globally. With the issue of domestic violence towards women described as a national crisis here, would you not feel that this money would be more useful in Canada?

[Translation]

**David Morin:** I believe that the two are complementary and that we can't give up when we see what's happening at this time on the international stage, particularly with the American government stepping back from international aid. This has extremely concrete effects on women's rights, on children's health, etc. It's part of Canada's traditions to also help internationally, especially because Canada is a multicultural country that welcomes many people from those countries.

I would be tempted to say that I understand the budgetary context in which we live today. We're going through a difficult economic period, but I feel that cutting from one to give to another doesn't seem like the best strategy to me.

• (1700)

[English]

**Connie Cody:** You also co-authored a report entitled "Constraints and opportunities in evaluating programs for prevention of violent extremism". In this report, it's stated that stakeholders have little evidence-based data and guidelines to rely on when designing, implementing and funding programs aimed at countering violent extremism.

With this in mind, I was wondering how programs are being introduced without full datasets or clear criteria. How do we measure whether interventions actually reduce anti-feminist attitudes or whether they create more resistance?

As you know, experts disagree, so how can we make recommendations here without clear criteria and definitions?

[*Translation*]

**David Morin:** That's an excellent question.

In recent years, the Government of Canada, particularly Public Safety Canada, has funded a number of initiatives focused on the evaluation of prevention programs. I must say that the UNESCO chair had five years of funding, which ended a year and a half ago, to produce data on the evaluation of programs for the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism. Using lists of indicators, we also produced short videos on how to better evaluate programs.

I will tell you that, indeed, many programs are increasingly funded by the federal government and are evaluated. In this case, we should obviously turn to Public Safety Canada and the Community Resilience Fund, as they fund initiatives that, in principle, are obviously evaluated. So, they would be better able to answer you about the programs they have specifically funded with respect to masculinist movements and, of course, online misogyny.

[*English*]

**Connie Cody:** The report also has the observation that there's a lack of "rigorously defined conceptual and empirical foundations" for most prevention of violent extremism programs. Is this because of the lack of a definition for anti-feminism and in fact the absence of Canadian identity, and does this confusion result in more disagreement and potential violence?

[*Translation*]

**David Morin:** Currently, we're concerned by the increase we're seeing in gender-based violence. In particular, look at the increase in hate crimes in Canada, which we haven't discussed yet. Compared to the statistics from the last few decades, today's data from Statistics Canada shows an increase in hate crimes based on ethnicity, race and gender. Indeed, Statistics Canada is now collecting data from police forces, so the situation is very well documented. An upward trend has really been noted over the past decade.

If we put this in the current context of online discourse and potential social and economic crises, we could indeed expect this violence to either increase or remain at a relatively high level. So I think this is very important.

Now, I was talking about the data we're lacking because, to date, the rise of anti-feminist movements has not been documented well enough. For example, the rise of jihadism is quite well known. We continue to enhance our understanding of far-right movements. However, as for the category—

[*English*]

**Connie Cody:** I'm sorry, but I'm running out of time, and I'd really like to ask Ms. Prockiw a question.

Ms. Prockiw, thank you for coming. You've achieved success in a field where women are still under-represented. What were the most meaningful supports or opportunities that helped you get there?

**Keeley Prockiw:** For myself, it goes to what Dr. Morin said. There are males who will advocate for you, but you just have to find them. That's what I did. I found the right person, the right male to advocate for me to move forward, align with me and support me. It was definitely a search to find the right person who was authentically about what I needed as well. It was not about putting me forward so that he could get kudos. It was about genuinely being there for me. I think that was the biggest thing that helped me gain so much success.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

Madam Ménard, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

My colleague asked an excellent question. I was going in the same direction, Ms. Prockiw.

According to your testimony, you were supported by a male colleague, and this clearly changed your trajectory.

Based on what you see today in traditionally male-dominated workplaces, what's the biggest practical difference that allows women to have a healthy career path there? What elements should be highlighted?

[*English*]

**Keeley Prockiw:** I think we're seeing more retention when we have those relationships set up and those male advocates in place not only just to advocate for those young women, girls and under-represented genders, but also to discourage the conversations that are negative or that are anti-feminist. It's those conversations.

When we have those strong men in place to advocate, we're seeing more retention, and we're seeing an increase in those girls continuing in the trades.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard:** The challenge or fragility that I can see in light of your testimony is that it relies on individuals. Do you believe that companies, through a corporate culture, have a role to play in this respect?

[*English*]

**Keeley Prockiw:** Working for the company I work for now, which is a very big multinational construction company, I'm seeing that there's definitely a disconnect between what people think is happening at the management level and what is actually happening at the boots-on-the-ground level. One of the things I advocate for is how to close that gap. I can tell you over and over until I'm blue in the face that what you think is happening down there is not what's happening down there. Unfortunately, that's where we need to make the changes.

One of my honest recommendations, which I constantly scream from rooftops, is that we need to be advocating in the schools. When these tradespeople are getting an education, they need to be getting additional education. It shouldn't only be trades, math and blueprint reading. We should also have courses on how to just be human and how to get that equity. Some of these kids aren't coming in with that.

As was said here, we're a multicultural nation, and with that come different upbringings for all genders, so we need to be educating at that level also. What is happening is that we're educating them and, yes, we're getting journeymen, journeymen and journey people out there, but we're not giving them the tools to continue to train apprentices. To retain them, we need to train them.

[*Translation*]

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard:** The word “education” should be retained, because we’ve heard it in all the testimonies. What I mean here is “acquisition of interpersonal skills”, ultimately.

Mr. Morin, you’re a specialist in radicalization. Let’s take a moment to focus on behaviour. At the previous committee meeting, we welcomed a very interesting expert, Mr. Jake Stika, to name just one, the executive director of Next Gen Men. During one of his remarks, he mentioned the iconic image of the hockey locker room. In that space, young men often have the rather violent experience of receiving information passively.

On social media, what we’re starting to realize is that engagement may be more active. Influencers on these networks are referred to by some as “agitators”, because users of these platforms are encouraged to comment, speak up and take action.

Does this have an impact on radicalization? Then, once out of cyberspace, what happens when you find yourself on the street after receiving this training?

**David Morin:** Regarding the image of the hockey locker room, I would like to ask where the hockey coaches were while this type of talk was allowed to spread in the locker room. The coach is a male figure, in principle a positive one. We cannot blame young people for messages that have gone unchallenged for decades. That’s the first point.

The second point is this: Indeed, today, with digital social networks, the game is very different, if I can use that expression. It’s clear that the key figures of the masculinist movements are now able to engage in conversation with young people. You know, the business model—that’s the problem with large platforms—is a conflicting and emotional model in which you always have to push your comments further to try to generate clicks, to make sure peo-

ple watch the entire video, to eventually get donations, etc. This indeed creates a space that is, moreover, similar to an echo chamber, where you’re just—

• (1710)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I'm so sorry. I feel like I'm always interrupting. Your information is wonderful, but the time is up.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Larouche, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Andréanne Larouche:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I thank our two witnesses once again for being here today. This is an extremely important study.

Mr. Morin, we’re looking for solutions to propose to the federal government with respect to the difficulties arising from this anti-feminist and misogynistic movement. You spoke about the importance of regulating cyber-violence and the work you did for the previous Bill C-63 as a consultant. My first question is as follows.

Should we return to that bill?

Furthermore, it was announced today that there would finally be an agreement to end the religious exception regarding hate speech, which is included in the Criminal Code. It will therefore no longer be possible to invoke the religious exception to say whatever one wants. We know that in some cases this can be problematic, even in relation to this anti-feminist movement. Is this another important solution?

I would also like you to come back to the importance of addressing cyber-violence.

**David Morin:** I agree on both points.

Obviously, with respect to Bill C-63, there were different types of content. Harmful online content was defined as hate speech, glorification of violence and glorification of terrorism. In these three cases, I think no one is against virtue. There was also child pornography and the sharing of intimate images without consent, but I’ll leave that aside.

As for the first three cases, it seems obvious to me. However, I don’t think we can add disinformation to that because it’s far too broad and there would be a lot of interpretation issues. I’m obviously aware of the importance of freedom of expression, but what that bill ultimately did was ask platforms to take responsibility for removing undesirable content themselves. It also created an ombud position to allow people who felt that their content had been removed unfairly to file a complaint. Afterward, the platforms obviously had to provide answers. There was also, of course, a commissioner.

No bill is perfect, make no mistake. However, I think it was a copy placed on the worktable that held up quite well. Obviously, I think the government added criminal offences which, in my opinion, somewhat sidetracked the debate. That said, I do think that some elements of that bill were very good.

As for the second question, I'm indeed in favour of there being no exceptions. We can't cite religious texts to threaten people with death.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Now we'll go to Ms. Roberts for five minutes.

**Anna Roberts:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to both witnesses.

I want to start with Ms. Prockiw.

First of all, I want to congratulate you. It's amazing to find someone getting into the trades. It's really important that women are represented in the trades.

You mentioned abusive relationships and the relationship you had.

My question will be for both of you, and it's a simple one.

Violence against women is up 76%. Do you think our laws are not strong enough to protect women in this country?

**Keeley Prockiw:** Personally, I don't think they are, having gone through my experiences. I don't think they are on either end, knowing males who have also gone through physically abusive relationships at the hands of females and have not been believed. We have repeat offenders. My ex-partner, who is my kids' dad, went on to abuse the next person he was with also. I think it's perpetuated, and I thank God every day that my son is not like that and that he's a better person. I don't think there's enough protection for women. We're seeing domestic violence increase all over the place.

**Anna Roberts:** Dr. Morin, I will pose the same question to you, please.

[*Translation*]

**David Morin:** Yes, I think we can improve our judicial framework, namely the punitive response. That said, I think it won't be the answer to everything, because there's also a lot of content—

**The Chair:** I apologize, but there seems to be an interpretation issue.

It has now been corrected. Thank you.

**David Morin:** I was saying that the security response, i.e., the judicial and police response, could indeed be improved. However, that does not solve the whole problem, because there is a lot of anti-feminist, masculinist content, etc., which does not reach the threshold of a criminal act.

In that sense, some hate speech can be addressed more or less effectively by the judicial system. I also think we don't want to be in a country where, at some point, we ultimately have such a punitive system that people can no longer express themselves.

I think these two aspects are very complementary. Consider the numbers I gave you earlier. I'm stepping outside the framework of

violence against women through violent behaviour. When I look at the narratives and the symbolic violence contained in them, I think a lot of work is also needed on prevention. I think both really need to be addressed together.

• (1715)

[*English*]

**Anna Roberts:** I'm sorry to interrupt, Dr. Morin, but I guess my concern is that we've just gone through a study of IPV, and the numbers speak for themselves.

Dr. Morin, your book mentions that anti-feminism is largely ignored in public debate and is poorly documented. Isn't it a failure of government policy to leave such a deadly threat in blind spots of research and public safety?

[*Translation*]

**David Morin:** Absolutely.

I have discussions with the federal government, particularly with Public Safety Canada. Violent extremism motivated by hatred of women is a topic that the government is increasingly interested in, particularly due to the two attacks that occurred in Toronto in 2018 and 2020. It seems that they raised awareness about this issue.

However, the problem with research is that it takes a lot of time to collect the data, study it, analyze it and so on. I think what's important is to better understand this phenomenon precisely before taking action and legislating. In these cases, we sometimes tend to take measures without necessarily having them properly evaluated afterward. I think that's the problem at the moment.

[*English*]

**Anna Roberts:** I'll go back to you, Ms. Prockiw.

Listening to your story really gives me encouragement for you and for the women who have gone through what you've gone through with the violence and with having to prove yourself in what we call—and you talked about the #MeToo movement—a men's world. You have really demonstrated to women that it can be done.

I have a funny story about my late husband; God rest his soul. There was a hole in the wall, and I asked him to fix it. He put a picture over it and figured I wouldn't see it, so it's nice to know there are women out there who can show men how to do things.

My question for you is this: If you had some encouraging words for women about not giving up, what would they be?

**Keeley Prockiw:** I do a lot more keynote speaking. The further I go in my career and the more successful I've become, I'm learning that my voice is the strongest asset I have to change what's going on out there.

One of the biggest things I always say is that you write your own story and you advocate for yourself. After abusive relationships and growing up the way I did, I was meek. I was timid and quiet. The relationship I had with my kids' dad was very oppressive. I couldn't work. I couldn't drive a car. I couldn't do anything.

Being able to advocate for myself was one of the biggest things. I write my own story. No one else is going to save me except me.

**Anna Roberts:** I want to thank you as well. You talk about your children and it gives me hope that your son is getting the direction he needs to respect men, to respect women and to respect individuals equally. What would—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Roberts. You're significantly over the time.

I will add a minute for the Liberals as well.

We'll go to Ms. Nathan for six minutes.

**Juanita Nathan:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you, this question is for Keeley.

As a survivor of domestic abuse, how do you see gender-based violence and workplace culture intersecting? What supports or protection would make the biggest difference for others in a similar situation?

I also want you to talk about things that may have come up when you were going through this and you were saying, "Oh, if this were here, it would be helpful for me", and about what services and what emotions you were going through. What would have been supportive for you?

What recommendations can you make to the government so that we could include certain things in law? For example, should there be any changes in the labour law? Is there anything the union could do? In your surroundings, could you think of things that are very helpful in those times?

• (1720)

**Keeley Prockiw:** As I said earlier, I believe there needs to be some personality education. Just because someone is a journey-person does not mean that they're capable of teaching people how to... Sometimes they're with these apprentices by themselves in remote places. I do know a personal story of a girl who was sexually abused in a work truck on a company site. When she tried to advocate for herself, the company believed her male counterpart. For me, first and foremost, it would have been believing her no matter what.

I know there are stories of girls who are making false claims, but the number who are not believed is astronomical compared to the number who have made false claims. On site, you find female apprentices often alone with male journey-persons. One of the things I taught my daughter was that just because they are your supervisor or your authority figure on site, they are not that person to you, and you do not put yourself in a situation. No job is worth that.

I am a huge believer that we do need to educate on more than just trades at trade schools. There needs to be an element there as well.

**Juanita Nathan:** Do you see a difference between the mainstream community and the minority communities in this context in terms of trades?

**Keeley Prockiw:** Yes, I do. There's still so much locker room talk, to use a vulgar kind of connotation there. There's so much locker room talk still happening. There's racism talk happening on the sites. Despite what companies think they're doing to clean it up, it's not happening. It's still there.

As a member of the LGBT community and a woman on site, I get it full blast from every which way. I can't even imagine if someone adds being a member of the BIPOC community to that. To be honest, just seeing it sometimes on the floor and not having the strength or the capacity to advocate for those people when they need it.... I don't know how we change it, but I know it needs to change.

**Juanita Nathan:** Thank you for your comments.

Mr. Morin, we see public figures increasingly frame equity, diversity and inclusion as an unfair or harmful rhetoric that positions gender equity initiatives as a threat, rather than a tool for levelling the playing field.

From your perspective, how does this narrative reflect the broader patterns of anti-feminist ideology? What are the real-world harms it creates for women and gender equity work in Canada, especially when some of the opposition parties have taken on dismantling DEI?

[*Translation*]

**David Morin:** Yes, you are indeed right to point that out, Ms. Nathan. There is, in general, a very strong reactionary wind against progressivism and gender identities, whether it be women or people from LGBTQ+ communities, etc. This is indisputable. Maybe it's a period in history that's like this at the moment. I wouldn't be able to interpret it. We will need to look at the cycle in a few years to see what will happen, but it's certainly omnipresent. Indeed, today there is a reaction to almost everything related to progressivism. The anti-woke narrative, for example, can be added to that, in our ecosystems. We can see that there are links between criticisms of these types of identity.

I would like to highlight one last point that you mentioned. You asked my colleague the question a bit earlier.

I would like to note something very important. For example, in Quebec, a labour law requires that universities address all issues related to sexual abuse. At my university, every two years, we receive training on sexual abuse. The purpose isn't to make anyone feel guilty, but to tell us that, if we witness sexual abuse, this is what we could or should do. As a manager, I'm supported at my university by human resources and labour relations if I'm informed of behaviour that is sometimes minor. If it's minor, we intervene kindly with directives aimed at stopping the behaviour, telling the person responsible for the inappropriate conduct that it's unacceptable. It can also be much more serious. Fortunately, I have yet to face situations where punitive sanctions actually had to be taken. So these measures do exist.

You were talking about federal labour law. We can make progress on this in an intelligent way, without panicking, by being ourselves as managers, students, teachers, researchers or profes-

sionals, and being supported by our organizations. I believe the witness who spoke just before me, Ms. Prockiw, provided very important testimony. We often need to be supported because we don't really know what to do. I think such support can really be effective and change everything.

• (1725)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Thank you to our witnesses. That concludes our panel for today. If you think of something that you wish for the committee to know, please send it to the clerk. We'd be happy to hear from you.

Thank you so much for your work and for your help with our study.

With that, I will adjourn the meeting.

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