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Climate change and the representations of women: a Canadian and American newspaper analysis

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Inclusion and Diversity in Society,

Supervisor:

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Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

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Department of Social and Organizational Psychology

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Resumo

As alterações climáticas representam uma ameaça para todas/os, mas os seus impactos são mais sentidos pelas mulheres. Esta questão tem suscitado uma série de debates, incluindo sobre: as formas de resolver estas desigualdades os mecanismos que tornam as mulheres mais vulneráveis; e até ceticismo associado com relações de poder estruturais e masculinidades associadas. No entanto, este debate raramente tem sido explorado numa perspetiva sócio-psicológica e cultural, utilizando uma lente de género e interseccional para uma compreensão mais aprofundada. Com a ajuda da Teoria das Representações Sociais, a presente tese teve como objetivo fornecer essa perspetiva, analisando as representações existentes sobre as mulheres no que diz respeito às alterações climáticas em na imprensa escrita americana e canadiana. Recorrendo a uma análise temática reflexiva de conteúdo, os resultados sugerem que a maioria dos jornais não discute muito a questão, apresentando uma compreensão minimalista da mesma. Os resultados também sugerem que as mulheres são frequentemente representadas pelo seu papel social, uma representação estreitamente relacionada com a sua agência, e que as mulheres são predominantemente descritas como "vulneráveis", promovendo a propagação dos estereótipos existentes. Finalmente, um pequeno número de artigos discute os efeitos desproporcionais das alterações climáticas na interseccionalidade, uma constatação que permite o reconhecimento de importantes impactos psicossociais e da perpetuação das desigualdades de género. É necessária mais investigação para compreender o papel fundamental dos meios de comunicação social na construção e reforço das narrativas em torno do género e das alterações climáticas.

Palavras-chave: alterações climáticas, mulheres, representações, jornal

Códigos de Classificação da APA: 2970 Sexo e Papéis de Género, 4070 Questões e Atitudes Ambientais

Abstract

Climate change presents a threat for everyone but its impacts are and will be most felt by women. This knowledge has sparked a number of discussions, including the ways to alleviate this burden, the mechanisms that have rendered women more at risk and even a distinctive scepticism brought on by structural power relations and associated masculinities. The discussion however has rarely been explored with a social and cultural psychological perspective, using both a gender and intersectional lens for deeper comprehension. With the help of the Social Representation Theory, the present thesis aimed to provide such a perspective by analysing the existing media representations about women in regards to climate change in both American and Canadian newspapers. Using a content reflexive thematic analysis, findings suggest that the majority of newspapers skim the surface of the issue by rendering a minimalist understanding of it. Findings also suggest that women are often represented by their social role, a representation closely related to their perceived agency, and that women are predominantly described as 'vulnerable', allowing for the propagation of existing stereotypes. Finally, a small number of articles do discuss the disproportionate effects of climate change on intersectionality, a finding that underlies important psychosocial impacts and the perpetuation of associated inequalities. Further research is needed to understand the critical role of the media in constructing and reinforcing narratives surrounding gender equality and climate change.

Keywords: climate change, women, representations, newspaper

APA Classification Codes: 2970 Sex & Gender Roles, 4070 Environmental Issues & Attitudes

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Introduction

In 1992, some 1700 of the world's scientists issued a document entitled "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity" which began with: "Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course" (Kendall, 1992). Highlighting the stress, the atmosphere, water resources, oceans, soil, forests and living species were suffering, this document had the objective of bringing to awareness the irreparable damage humanity was inflicting on the planet and on itself. Areas for future action were underlined and a plea for help to people everywhere was issued. Around the same time, the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro was occurring where governments were invited to sign the Convention on Climate Change, a treaty with the goal of reducing global warming and helping cope with the consequences of climate change. The Summit's objective was to introduce a timetable and a plan of action for international action on environmental issues that would help guide international cooperation and development policy. World leaders were made to reflect on the interdependency of social, economic and environmental factors and their conjoint evolution (*Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development: Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, 1992). In 1995, COP1 (Conference of the Parties 1) took place in Berlin. There, parties agreed that the commitments underlined in the Convention were 'inadequate' for meeting the Convention objectives. Therefore, the first steps towards a greenhouse gas emissions reduction treaty, later to be called the Kyoto Protocol, were initiated (*Conference of the Parties: Berlin, 28 March - 7 April 1995, Provisional Agenda and Annotations, Including Suggestions for the Organization of Work*, 1995).

Now, 31 years later, the collision between the natural world and human beings is more disastrous than ever. Just in 2022, we saw the monsoon floods in Pakistan affecting 33 million people, drought and famine affecting 24 million people in the Horn of Africa (Shehzad, 2023, Bedasa & Bedemo, 2022). We saw Southern African countries, including Madagascar and Mozambique battered by tropical storm Ana, affecting around 150 000 people and record-breaking heat waves in Europe, including in Portugal, France and the United Kingdom (Otto et al., 2022, Ibebuchi & Abu, 2023). It is with the notion that events like these are becoming ubiquitous that countries met in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt from November 6th to November 18th 2022 for COP27. This, with a significant lack of progress on cutting emissions, led UN secretary-general António Guterres to conclude that humanity was on "a highway to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator" (Beasley, 2023). Nevertheless, closing trends emerged from these 13 days of discussion. First, a recognition that loss and damage should be funded

by richer countries was established after the issue was pushed by developing countries for decades. Second, with 636 lobbyists from the oil and gas industries registered at COP27, higher than previous years, it was made evident that fossil fuel interests would be difficult to ignore. New language allowing for loopholes and the persuading of African governments to invest in fossil fuels in the long-term are but elements of the ongoing lobbying and production of fossil fuels, that has also been pervading the green energy transition (Batel & Rudolph, 2021; Daggett, 2020). Third, the standards for net-zero climate targets were made clearer and stricter, with transparency at the forefront. The aim was to eliminate the practice of green-washing, a practice that allows companies to bypass net-zero recommendations by, often discursively, attempting to present their practices as green when they aren't (Parson & Ray, 2016). Next, while food and farming industries are important contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, they had never been mentioned in previous conferences. Being examined for the first time, members have launched the Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (FAST) initiative, an initiative led by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation to improve the process of transforming agriculture by 2030. Gender and women were also discussed during the two-week convention as parties reviewed the implementation of a gender action plan that was initially discussed in June 2022. The objectives of this review were to disseminate key findings regarding women and climate change, raising awareness regarding diversity in contribution, stressing the damage of non-inclusive climate action on gender equality and discussing pathways for gender-transformative climate action (*Gender Composition and Progress on Implementation: Report by the Secretariat*, 2022).

Indeed, only more recently have we seen a focus on the impact of climate change on gender equality as the issue is becoming institutionally recognised in forums and conferences like the Conference of the Parties. The issue of gender and climate change will be the focus of this thesis as we look over the different ways women are represented in newspapers in the context of climate change. To do so, we will first discuss the specific case of Canada and the US, followed by a review of existing literature.

Context: Climate change in the US and in Canada

Despite a growing frustration at the slow-pace of things, movements and initiatives are happening outside the COP initiative, an example being the US announcement of a new federal government requirement for major suppliers to publicly disclose GHG and climate related risk (IRA: Inflation Reduction Act). The hope is that this will encourage other governments to follow (Bistline et al., 2023). Indeed, the signature of the IRA of 2022 is one of the most significant climate legislations in the history of the US. Vowing to reduce carbon emissions, lower healthcare costs, funding the Internal Revenue Service, and improving taxpayer compliance, this act is a direct approach to clean energy transition and emerging clean technologies (*H.R.5376 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Inflation Reduction Act of 2022*, 2022). It is that more relevant when we investigate some of the highest per capita emissions of CO₂ and we find the US at 16.2 tonnes, next to Canada at 15.6 tonnes (Ritchie et al., 2020). It is true that the largest per capita CO₂ emitters are mass oil producing countries (Qatar, Trinidad and Tobago, Kuwait) but these countries have a relatively low population, resulting in overall lower annual emissions. When we do look at annual CO₂ emissions per region, Asia takes the upper hand (with China being its largest emitter by far), accounting for 53% of global emissions. However, Asia is home to 60% of the world's population which means that per capita emissions in Asia are slightly lower than the world average. North America is the second largest regional emitter and accounts for 18% of global emissions, with the US being its largest emitter. Finally, if we look at cumulative CO₂ emissions, a country's emissions over time (between 1751 and 2017), the United States has emitted more CO₂ than any other country. While Canada remains a smaller contributor compared to the USA, it has experienced an important relevant change in the past 100 years (Ritchie et al., 2020).

Pairing the knowledge that the US and Canada are important contributors to global CO₂ emissions with the fact that the US is a constitutional, democratic and cultural hyperpower allows for the assumption that any initiative, or lack thereof, that the US may implement in regards to the climate will have a direct or indirect impact transnationally (Corbo & Gagnon, 2021). Indeed, the sole idea that the legal and federal name of the country, *The United States of America*, is often substituted for a usurping and all englobing name, *America*, shows its territorial and imperial power. The extent of its influence is also displayed in the word 'americanisation', a concept created in the early 20th century to refer to the influence of

American culture and business on other countries outside the US, including models of production, of consumption and ways of life prevalent in the country (Barjot, 2003). Furthermore, the prominence of the English language in numerous fields of work, including academia, has ensured that countries like the US and the UK are able to dictate trends and hold significant influence (Altbach, 2007).

In Canada, the American influence is tangible. Canadians know that the US has a great influence on them, to the extent where it becomes difficult to distinguish the differences between Canadian and American institutions (Corbo & Gagnon, 2021). Furthermore, Canada and the US share many core values, including democracy, freedom and justice. Having also one of the largest trading relationships in the world, their alliance is one of the most impactful and successful in the world. Additionally, both the US and Canada are home to numerous indigenous, Black, Latinx, and Asian communities and it has been increasingly demonstrated that climate change disproportionately affects individuals in an intersectional way. Indeed, women, indigenous peoples, ethnic, social and sexual minorities are the most impacted by the effects of climate change (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2013). This is what we will turn to next.

Literature Review

Climate change, Gender and Intersectionality

What one can notice when looking at pictures of leaders at the Earth Summit, and most recently at COP27, is the lack of women in the ranks. Indeed, of the 110 leaders that attended COP27, only seven of them were women. This low number was also reflected in the negotiating teams where women led only 20% of national delegations (Wray et al., 2023). Moreover, as was highlighted previously and due to the same structural inequalities defining current neoliberal democracies, it is women, the poor, the disabled, the elder and/or indigenous that are most affected by climate change, and even more so if those positionalities intersect: these are the people bearing the consequences of climate change as they are those who rely most on our natural world or who are less able to find safety in case of a natural disaster (Araos et al., 2021). Indeed, in many low and middle-income countries (LMIC), while men find work outside of home, women are responsible for feeding their families, often leaving them in charge of small plots of land to grow crops. Women and girls can also be responsible for collecting firewood, an important source of energy that allows for cooking and heating (Njenga et al., 2021). This makes women thoroughly reliant on natural resources and weather conditions, as well as on the impacts of cooking and heating the home with polluting and health damaging fuels (Choudhuri & Desai, 2020). It is also important to note that individuals in situations of poverty face higher risks from the impacts of climate change and statistics show that the majority of the world's poor are women (Arora-Jonsson, 2011). Furthermore, women often have restricted access to education, employment and owning property, leaving them without a voice and a chance to better their conditions (Reshi & Sudha, 2023). As such, when climate change related catastrophes and extreme weather events happen, women are the most affected given the still disproportionate lack of material and other resources.

With existing literature adopting a gender lens on climate change, we are able to dive deeper into the different aspects that construct gender and their relation to climate change. Kaijser and Kronsell (2013) were some of the first researchers to examine climate change through the lens of intersectionality. They stated that this lens could pinpoint how power structures and inequalities are maintained but also, how they could be challenged. This text of critical thinking brings to light concepts like power relations, binaries, ecofeminism and decision-making. Regarding power relations, Kaijser and Kronsell write that they can be expressed in various ways such as “injustices in material conditions and normative expressions, within societal structures and institutions of various kinds, and lived, expressed,

and reproduced through social practices". As for binaries, the authors criticise the simplification of 'man-woman binaries', stressing that this reinforced categorisation is omitting how differences are socially constructed and context-specific, all the while excluding those who do not fit in these static categories. Regarding ecofeminism, Kaijser and Kronsell highlight the fact that both concepts (intersectionality and ecofeminism) emerged in parallel, with one pertinently contributing to the other. The main difference between the two movements however, is that ecofeminism includes non-human subjects (i.e., nature) in the analysis of power relations, an aspect the authors believe is relevant for intersectional research on climate change. Finally, the authors propose observing representations in decision-making to dive into intersections of power, as given with the example of women in climate policy settings where their numbers remain 'small'. All in all, the authors state that intersectionality can "highlight new linkages and positions that can facilitate alliances between voices that are usually marginalised in the dominant climate agenda".

In the same line of research, Djoudi et al. (2016) reviewed the way gender is framed in 41 papers on climate change adaptation through an intersectionality lens. In their review, the authors criticise the usage of the common dichotomy 'men vs. women', as well as the lack of analytical depth in existing power relations. They argue that these approaches, or lack thereof, help propagate the narrative of women as 'vulnerable beings' and 'climate victims'. Similarly, Stone et al. (2022) believe that a critical intersectional assessment of climate change impacts on existing power relations will allow for a more emancipated and inclusive direction towards climate adaptation. Furthermore, it is the existence of these power relations that reinforce a set of roles attributed to both men and women. According to Eagly's (1987) Social Role Theory, the gender division of labour in society has created existing gender stereotypes and their perpetuation, along with other mechanisms related to power relations. In western societies, because men find themselves in power positions more often than women, and women are more often assigned to nurturing positions, we associate agency with men and communion with women. Indeed, traditional social roles of women tend to fall along the lines of caregiver and nurturer, homemaker, helper and helping professions though it is important to note that roles may vary according to different cultural norms (Krainc, 2021). In developing countries, women have prominent roles in household management and caring for children, the sick and the elderly, as well as being responsible for essential tasks such as fetching firewood and water. Because they are also responsible for cooking and heating, women and girls suffer more from the effects of second-hand smoke and indoor air pollution (OECD, 2008).

In 2011, Arora-Jonsson investigated the then limited existing literature on gender and climate change. Her goal was to pinpoint the discourses treating women, the environment and development and examine the ways in which they were portrayed. Noticing there were many

assumptions concerning women's vulnerability and righteousness, her analysis led her to conclude that this focus is a distraction from the real issue at hand which is inequality within a decision-making context and that these attributions can lead to an increased sense of responsibility for women who often fail to see any rewards or benefits. Furthermore, a large proportion of the literature stresses the difference between the South and the poor vulnerable women and the North and the pro-environmental women. These statements simply reinforce North-South biases.

As such, several authors have argued that there is a great need for women to be represented in the decision-making process of climate action. If they are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis, their voices, opinions, perspectives, needs and desires should be at the forefront of the debate. Pearse (2017) conducted an extensive literature review approaching the issue of climate change through a gender analysis. Her takeaway message is that gender is an integral part of social transformations associated with climate change and that all research turning a blind-eye to gender is omitting an essential aspect of the discussion. Indeed, the author affirms that gender analysis helps us understand issues such as vulnerability and climate change impacts, adaptations in different contexts, responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, inequalities in climate governance, and knowledge and social action on climate change. In their study on women participation in decision-making in the context of forest management in Ethiopia, Kahsay et al. (2021) found that participation of women in executive committees is associated with greater forest benefits, and an improved (perceived and actual) condition of the forest. Concerned at the lack of women participation in decision-making as a whole, the authors suggest that policymakers focus on increasing women in formal leadership positions to contribute to sustainability and cooperation and a more equitable distribution of benefits. The authors do stress however that quotas may not be enough to enhance women decision-making and that cultural norms should be considered.

Agarwal (2010) addressed groups' gender composition within community forestry institutions in India and Nepal to see how this composition would affect women's participation. What Agarwal wanted to know is how much presence was needed for effectiveness. Her results provided her with a clear proportion, specifically that one-quarter to one-third of the decisional body should be comprised of women, but external factors, such as a woman's economic class or her level of literacy must also be considered.

Nevertheless, it is also important to acknowledge that a higher number of women in groups and leadership positions - or descriptive representation (Mackay, 2008) - does not necessarily entail that the voices, experiences and needs of all women and all intersectional identities are being considered, nor that more radical proposals that can actually contest gender norms and inequalities - or substantive representation - are being advanced (Mackay, 2008). In fact, and given that women are part of the same societies where structural gender inequalities exist, the

positions they occupy and how they occupy them may also contribute to maintaining the status quo by affirming more conservative versions of gender equality that are still very much attuned with patriarchal, colonial structures (Batel & Rudolph, 2021; Magnúsdóttir & Kronsell, 2014; Schwabenland et al., 2016). This has been shown by studies on women's performance of gender in traditionally male contexts in a way that fits and affirms those gender norms instead of undoing gender in a way that would contest those norms and related inequalities (Oliveira et al., 2010; Powell et al., 2009). Magnúsdóttir and Kronsell (2014) have also examined gender representation and climate policy-making in Scandinavia. Through an administrative and political lens, they found that an important number of women in climate policy-making does not necessarily lead to critical acts. The authors offer alternative explanations informed by feminist international relations theory, such as the understanding that masculine norms form the structure of climate institutions and that policy-makers will adapt their actions to this context.

In their research, Anshelm and Hultman (2014) also analysed the relations between masculinity and climate change. Their aim was to analyse climate scepticism within an elite minority group in Sweden through the lens of gender. With identities, historical structure and emotions at the forefront of their analysis, they found that climate sceptics in Sweden were very much intertwined with the concept of masculinity in industrial modernity. Coming from a background where industrial society highly benefited them, these elderly men claim to hold strong beliefs in a market society, great mistrust of government regulation and a sturdy belief in engineering and natural science rationality. What's more is that the individuals of this group hold influential positions in academia or large private companies, giving them the power to modify or alter the social representation of climate change within the population. Also, Daggett (2018) focused on the concept of petro-masculinity, an authoritarian movement in the West that embodies a combination of climate denial, racism and misogyny. The author suggests that petro-masculinity goes beyond the economic benefits of fossil fuel and actually embraces a type of identity (benefiting from and for white patriarchal rule) which threatens post-fossil fuel politics. The author shows that petro-masculinity is used as a violent reaction of resistance to gender and climate issues. Oudraat and Brown (2022), investigating the interlinkage between gender, climate change and security, speak of the realities (and dangers) of inadequate addresses of gender in security and climate policy communities. The latter, mostly comprised of men, often have a simplistic understanding of gender. They may use the words 'gender' and 'women' interchangeably, forgetting the LGBTQIA+ community and other intersectionalities, and may even conglomerate 'women' and 'children' (i.e., 'women and children'), projecting women as infantile and passive. Paired with the often strategic tokenization of women in select policy discussion, these trends in climate security discussion

do nothing to alleviate sources of gender inequalities that are pervasive: toxic masculinities, and the harmful patriarchies that frame social, economic, and political systems.

As such, the research just discussed highlights that this resistance to change regarding climate change and addressing gender inequalities, can often be diagnosed and is enacted in and by discourses and communication. Discourse and communication studies have precisely been analysing and identifying which types of rhetoric and discursive strategies and resources are normally used in given contexts to resist change or ensure stability (Batel & Castro, 2018; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996; Verkuyten, 2022). For instance, relevant to the present research, Castro and Batel (2008) have examined resistance to change and its discursive enactments regarding public participation in urban rehabilitation in Portugal. The authors show that the practitioners (architects, historians) that traditionally were the 'experts' and had the power to decide about urban rehabilitation issues, resisted new public participation norms in this domain to defend their interests and professional identities. However, and due to the normative weight of these norms, they often did it by incorporating in their discourses a minimalist version of public participation, in which they would not openly disagree with public participation, but would instead agree with it in a very minimalist way, emphasising that participation is important, but only if following specific rules dictated by the urban rehabilitation professionals. Similar to this approach are the discursive strategies of resistance, often used to resist new norms while avoiding their blatant violation (Castro & Batel, 2008; Mouro & Castro, 2012). Indeed, the 'Yes, but' discourse hints at resistance signalled by the 'yes', which ultimately softens and delays the contradicting aspect of the 'but' (Uzelgun et al., 2015). Contrastingly, the 'Yes, and' discourse implies not only an agreement with new norms, an acceptance signalled by the 'yes', but also a space to build on a reality that has been set, signalled by the 'and' (Kulhan, 2021).

As such, when considering how women are being represented in policies, institutions and discourses, it is also important to consider that it does not matter only if they are being represented at all, but also if they are being represented in a more descriptive or minimalist/conservative way, or in a more substantive/maximalist/transformational way.

Despite the diversity of the studies just discussed, two aspects were clear from the literature review that was conducted on climate change and women's representations. First, that barely no studies from social and cultural psychology have looked at this aspect. Exceptions go to Rafaely and Barnes (2020) who have looked into the case of Vanessa Nakate, a young Ugandan climate activist who was cropped out of a photograph depicting her and other young white activists. Utilising discursive psychology and conversation analysis, the authors highlight the methods by which Vanessa's activism is delegitimized in three media-based interactions. Following up on the same issue, Rafaely (2021) has also examined an interview between Vanessa Nakate and a South African news broadcaster. She demonstrated

the nuances behind an accusation of racism and how the management of stake inoculation (degree of personal investment) and facticity (production of an account that is grounded in external reality) can provide legitimacy to the accusation. One of the takeaway messages was the important role of the interviewer and his ability to be a co-collaborator in legitimising Nakate's accusation.

The second aspect that became clear with the conducted literature review was that even considering the broader field of social sciences and humanities, not many studies have focused specifically on examining the relation between gender representations and climate change in media discourses, despite the fact that the media are one of the most important actors in current societies in shaping people's ideas and practices about relevant social issues. This is what we will turn to next.

The Media

With the majority of people obtaining their news and general information from the media (newsprint, Internet, television, radio etc.), the way the latter frames a threat like climate change determines perceptions, responses and negotiations the public will hold regarding this particular issue. Indeed, framing is entirely at the discretion of those in leadership positions (Ford & King, 2015). However, the media is also a mirror of society as it reflects the discourses of current times. In-turn, discourses and perceptions of the public influence how decision and policy makers respond to threats and risks. This give-and-take relationship can determine who is given a voice within a current debate, to what extent this voice is represented and contrarily, who is silenced (Batel, 2020; Rafaely & Barnes, 2020).

In a report released in 2013 containing information from more than 70 countries, it was shown that 2.5 billion people read a newspaper in print regularly, with more than 500 million people reading newspapers both in print and digital form and 100 million more reading the digital version only (Chowdhury & Halder, 2016). These numbers demonstrate the reach newspapers have on the world's population, despite the growing influence of social media and its usage for information and current affairs.

In Canada, people get their news from a variety of sources, including online (60%), television (59%), newspapers (34%), and radio (26%), according to a survey conducted by the Canadian Journalism Foundation (2019). Furthermore, diversity remains a problem in Canada's news. Indigenous people, women, racialized people, and divergent opinions are underrepresented in Canada's news and Canadian newsrooms remain disproportionately white. Women of colour and Indigenous women, in particular, remain seriously underrepresented in the production of Canadian media (Golick & Daniels, 2019; Taylor & DeCillia, 2021).

In the US, 86% of people get their news from an online platform, 68% from the television, 50% from the radio and 32% from print publications (Shearer, 2021). Similarly to Canada, while the US has a very diverse population, many individuals do not feel seen nor represented in most mainstream media. For this reason, many opt for alternative forms of media or make it their duty to scan the full range of available media to find voices that represent them (Fiske & Hancock, 2016).

Regarding the media and climate change, Ford and King (2015) conducted a review of the coverage of climate change adaptation between 1993 and 2013 in influential North America newspapers. They found that coverage on adaptation increased after extreme events, such as hurricanes or floods and that Canadian newspapers were more likely to document adaptation compared to US newspapers. The authors also found a shift in approaches to adaptation with articles covering anticipatory adaptation, or the reduction of vulnerability/the enhancement of resilience, up until 2011 and a shift to reactive adaptation, or the response to extreme events, from 2011 and onwards. A distinction between 'soft' and 'hard' adaptations was made where 'soft' approaches include focusing on the underlying socio-economic determinants of vulnerability and 'hard' approaches involving technology based adaptations designed to reduce exposure to climate change impacts. According to the review, the majority of news articles discuss 'hard' adaptations which the authors argue is less effective than 'soft' adaptations as the latter "cost less, bring multiple co-benefits that can be realized over short time horizons, and can be readily altered if future climate evolves differently than projected, thereby entailing fewer risks". The words 'gender', 'women' and 'female' were not mentioned once in this article.

Still related to the representation of climate change in the media, Boykoff (2012) looked into US media coverage of COP16 in Cancún. The author considered four major American newspapers: the New York Times, USA Today, the Wall Street Journal, and the Washington Post, as well as specific broadcasting channels. The author considered all articles published one week before the commencement of the conference through one week after. His findings show that the majority of articles were published during the conference with publications fading out after its completion. A cue also seemed to be the placement of the article in the newspaper with front-page stories carrying more weight and attracting more attention than subsequent sections. Articles were predominantly covering the economic impacts and opportunities that climate change creates and the role that China plays in negotiations and green-technology development. Furthermore, external sources or guest speakers were limited in this media coverage of COP16. Indeed, 45% of speakers were transnational political actors whereas grassroots activists only comprised 2.4% of all sources. The words 'gender', 'women' and 'female' were not mentioned once in this article.

Concerning the coverage of climate change, Ebrahim (2021) writes that while the environment and its protection are often associated with women, journalism and environmental sciences are often associated with men. Because of this, we see a majority of male journalists covering climate change issues, which results in the omitting of certain voices due to a lack of accessibility and/or a lack of understanding.

Regarding the media and the representation of women, Armstrong (2013), author of the book *'Media disparity: a gender battleground'*, covered the many different ways the media reinforces, propagates and even initiates aspects of gender inequality. He found that most content analyses of the last twenty years show that women constitute only one-fourth of newspaper front-page news sources and that women are rarely seen as authority figures in other news media. Content analyses also show that when women do appear in news media, they are presented in stereotypical roles, often as victims of crime (particularly sex crimes) or as wives or mothers of important men. Black women are even less likely to be covered in the news and when they are, they are presented as crime perpetrators or victims of crime, sometimes even blamed for their own victimisation. Armstrong also investigated whether female journalists included more female sources and found that previous research was inconsistent but that there seemed to be no significant difference between men and women journalists, suggesting at the intricate structural, organisational and individual aspects of the patriarchal values. Within this framework, Shoemaker and Vos (2009) identified five levels of influence that shape the news, with four being relevant in this context: the individual level, the communication routines level, the organisational level and the social institutional level. The individual level suggests that the gender, ethnicity and role of a journalist affects how one does his or her job. The communication routines level relates to individual news workers adopting similar conventions, in place to make them more efficient. At the organisational level, we expect news content to reflect the goals and interests of those who run the organisation. Finally, the social institutional level hints at forces bigger than the news organisation, including the government, advertisers and news sources. Dedicating an entire chapter to the representation of women in a non-Western context, Armstrong found that in Uganda, the media gives little coverage of women's issues, which, he claims "reinforces the ideology that relegates women to a subordinate position". Finally, based on his previous research, Armstrong confirmed that even when a female source is included in an article, she often appears later in the story and rarely as the first source mentioned, which, according to Armstrong is "problematic because the initial source often sets the tone and helps frame the story in ways the sources mentioned later do not".

Focusing on advancements in agricultural technology, Bigham et al. (2019) looked into the impact of emphasising elements of source credibility (trustworthiness and expertise) and, more relevant to us, analysed whether the gender of a source affects perceptions of credibility.

In their article, the authors highlight an important message, which is that context is extremely relevant in the study of gender. For example, science is often seen as a predominantly male field, whereas the environment is often associated with women. This dichotomy makes this study in agricultural technology pertinent. What they found was that, for both female and male participants, female sources were viewed more favourably than male sources and were rated as more credible. This study used print articles as stimuli. The authors suggest that further research should be done using other forms of media.

Upon understanding the power of media discourses and communication, a media analysis seems critical for understanding how issues around climate change and gender inequalities are being represented and, through that, their potential psychosocial impacts. For this reason, the aim of the present study is to analyse the narratives and related representations about women in regards to climate change in both American and Canadian newspapers, all the while investigating the depth to which gender issues are treated, from a minimalist - or descriptive - to a maximalist - or substantive - approach, and finally to discuss the potential psychosocial impacts associated with such narratives. All newspaper articles will include COP27 as a focus and timeframe as its occurrence is representative of current discourses regarding climate action and solutions.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis is embedded in social and cultural psychology and will be done through the lens of Social Representation Theory (SRT). The latter is a “theory of social knowledge” (Moscovici, 1961) specifically concerned with how individuals, groups, and communities collectively make sense of socially relevant or problematic issues, ideas, and practices. Indeed, these systems of values, ideas and practices are both dynamic and malleable, making them susceptible to influence by those who have the agency and resources to proliferate one version of events over others (Moloney et al., 2014). SRT has been extensively used to examine and understand media representations of relevant social issues and how those might both reflect and impact public ideas and practices on those issues. Several studies have specifically focused on analysing media representations of climate change and related issues in different countries (e.g., Cabecinhas et al., 2008; Castro et al., 2012; Jaspal et al., 2014; Olausson, 2011).

These studies have shown that the way the media frames or represents climate change and related issues has a strong impact on how the public and stakeholders perceive climate change and which actions they deem appropriate to tackle it. Indeed, stories of who is responsible for climate change: citizens, governments or corporations; if climate change is presented as a natural or human-induced phenomenon; or if climate change is presented in a depoliticised way, as something consensual and about which there are no divergent views;

are all different ways of representing climate change that ultimately shape perceptions and behaviours of the audience.

However, almost none of these studies have considered analysing climate change and related representations through a gender and intersectional lens. For this study, SRT will be mostly used as an epistemological framework, given that we here consider that ways of talking about gender and climate change in the media are based on social representations of those issues, this is, and as discussed above, socially co-constructed meanings about those issues that are shaped by and in turn shape public views and discourses (Batel & Castro, 2018). This epistemological-theoretical point of departure also positions this research in relation to gender, defined as a social construct where roles, norms, values and expectations, are attributed to men and women in a given society, roles which can change over time, place, and life stage (Phillips, 2005). In this definition, we also include all individuals who identify as transgender, gender neutral, non-binary, gender-variant, two-spirit and all other gender identities that may not fit in the man-woman binary. Also, for the purpose of this study, we will be using Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) definition of intersectionality. She defined the latter as a lens to understand how aspects of an individual's social and political identities (e.g., gender, sex, caste, class, religion, disability, physical appearance, sexual orientation) when combined, create different and cumulative axes of systemic discrimination and privilege.

For the present study, we will therefore use SRT as a basis from which to explore how media discourses represent gender issues in relation to climate change in the US and Canada. Additionally, based on the conducted literature review from social and cultural psychology, the social sciences and the humanities amongst others, we focused specifically on examining if and how gender issues were presented (maximalist/substantive vs minimalist/descriptive perspectives); how women were represented (based on traditional stereotypes or contesting those); if intersectionality was considered and how; and if and which solutions to climate change were considered (and if including or not gender and intersectionality issues).

Method

Data Collection Procedure

Using the newspaper article as the unit of analysis and with the help of the software LexisNexis, articles published in newspapers in Canada one week before COP27 (30th of October 2022) to one week after COP27 (25th of November 2022) were initially collected with the search words: “climate change AND (gender OR wom*n)”. For the purpose of this study, ‘global warming’ was not included in the search words as the term ‘climate change’ was deemed a more encapsulating and accurate term. Furthermore, the UNFCCC (United Nations Climate Change Conferences), serving all Conference of the Parties (COP) have incorporated the term in their title, making it relevant to our research. After grouping duplicates with high similarity, we were left with 126 newspaper articles. However, after doing an overview of all articles, we came to the conclusion that the vast majority of them were not relevant to the topic at hand and that many were repetitions of previously written articles. For this reason, we decided to extend the time frame to 2 weeks before COP27 (18th of October 2022) to 2 weeks after COP27 (2nd of December 2022), leaving us with a total of 176 newspaper articles. However, we quickly realised that the further away from the focal point (COP27) we got, the less relevant and pertinent the articles were. This, in itself, was already relevant for the purpose of this study, as it shows that the relations between climate change and gender issues are not yet much explored by traditional media.

As such, we decided to modify the search words to explicitly include the temporal focal point and also to include newspapers in the USA. Indeed, we were now searching for “climate change AND (gender OR wom*n) AND COP27” without a specific time frame, in Canada and in the USA. This left us with 43 newspaper articles in Canada and 96 newspaper articles in the United States with a big proportion of articles coming from The New York Times. The corpus of data at this stage consisted of $n = 151$ articles.

However, some articles were repetitions of already existing articles. We decided to keep the article published in the more popular newspaper, therefore having a larger reach. When this information was unavailable, we would keep the article that was published first. If articles were published on the same date and their reach information was unavailable, we kept the article whose newspaper had the most Twitter followers, as Twitter is more effective than Facebook in terms of audience reach (Ju et al., 2013). After filtering out repetitions, the final corpus consists of $n = 113$ articles, 83 from the US and 30 from Canada.

Data analysis

The data was then analysed using a critical realist approach (Willis, 2022) and a reflexive content thematic analysis (CTA; Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019b; 2020). The methodological aspects of a critical realist approach are that natural and social phenomena and their impacts are real - such as gender inequalities and the psychosocial impacts -, but also an understanding that language does more than reflect the 'objective' world, it also constructs it, ultimately constructing our realities and how those phenomena are interpreted, explained and addressed (Willis, 2022). The methodological aspects of reflexive CTA are assuming that meaning and knowledge are situated and contextual which welcomes the researcher's subjectivity and emphasises the latter as a resource in the research process (Braun & Clarke, 2020). This approach offers a flexible approach to analysing qualitative data by generating themes, or patterns of shared meaning, with an eye to the broader social context and focus on the limits of material reality. We considered reflexive CTA the best approach for our present research purposes as it is a data-driven strategy that incorporates the 'top-down' deductive theoretical perspective that we examine here with the 'bottom-up' inductive experience of media analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2020).

The researcher's subjectivity makes for an active and dynamic resource throughout this thesis. As a Caucasian woman from Canada, the knowledge that the majority of Canadians (and Americans) live on borrowed land where First Nations communities are still unable to self-govern, provokes a personal sense of helplessness and frustration. Furthermore, by having the privilege of not facing immediate threat from climate change and by being constantly subjected to the media and its influence, this research is a reflexive mirror of this position, driven by a need for justice and understanding, and will be used as such.

The data analysis was done using NVivo 7.1 as a software that helps manage, interpret and visualise the newspaper articles both individually and systematically. With all 113 articles imported, the first step of the analysis, using the methodological procedures used by Castro et al. (2018), was to code each article based on structural categories. For every single article, the author's name was coded, along with the gender of the author. The length of the article was also coded, with a 'Short' article being 150 to 1000 words, a 'Medium' article of 1001 to 3000 words and a 'Long' article of 3001 to 9000 words. These categories were determined by pinpointing both the shortest and longest article and by calculating the mean of all 113 articles. The time frame was another important aspect of this categorisation. Every article published between the 6th of November 2022 and the 18th of November 2022 was coded 'During COP27'. Articles published before the 6th of November 2022 were coded 'Before COP27' and articles published after the 18th of November 2022 were coded 'After COP27'. Furthermore, the newspaper in which the article was published was coded, as well as the country in which

it was published. Under the 'American' category, newspapers where articles were found twice or more were explicitly coded, resulting in 10 American newspapers. Others were coded as 'Other'. Under the 'Canadian' category, a similar approach as the one for American newspapers was used where newspapers appearing twice and more were explicitly coded and others were coded as 'Other'. This resulted in 4 Canadian newspapers. To keep track of the topic, the incentive or the approach of each article, the section under which the article was published in the newspaper was coded. As with the newspapers, sections where articles appeared twice or more were explicitly coded, with remaining sections being categorised under 'Miscellaneous'. This resulted in a total of 12 sections.

Results

Using an inductive and deductive approach, with the help of reflections, the literature review and the theoretical framework, the reflexive content thematic analysis resulted in three main categories: 1. Mention of Women in regards to Climate Change; 2. Representation of Women; 3. Solutions and/or Approaches to Gender Inequality within Climate Change. Under the first main category ('Mention of Women in regards to Climate Change'), codes 1.1. 'No' and 1.2. 'Yes', can be found. Under code 1.2. 'Yes', an additional two categories can be found: 1.2.1. 'Minimalist' and 1.2.2. 'Maximalist'. Under the 'Minimalist' category, only articles where gender was briefly mentioned were included, as well as the articles that incorporated gender by including a female spokesperson. Under the 'Maximalist' category, we included articles where gender was explicitly discussed and where hints of the disproportionate impact of climate change on women were outlined. Under the second main category ('Representation of women'), four additional categories can be found: 2.1. Social Role; 2.2. Agency; 2.3. Descriptive Traits and 2.4. Intersectionality. Under 2.1. 'Social Role', all roles women were depicted to embody in the articles were coded. Social roles that appeared twice or more were coded, resulting in a total of 13 social roles. Remaining social roles were coded under 'Other'. Under 2.2. 'Agency', the codes 2.2.1. 'Passive Agency' and 2.2.2. 'Active Agency' can be found where women depicted to be unassertive were classified in the former and women depicted to be engaged were classified in the latter. Because agency is a reflection of consciousness and free-will and of the presence (or absence) of sense of control, we differentiated it from category 2.3. 'Descriptive Traits'. Indeed, under 2.3. 'Descriptive Traits', all adjectives that reflected a woman's perceived behaviour, feelings or thoughts were coded, resulting in 13 adjectives. Both agency and descriptive traits can reinforce each other, but they may also contradict one another. Finally, under 2.4. 'Intersectionality', the codes 2.4.1. 'Yes', and 2.4.2 'No', can be found where articles incorporating aspects of intersectionality were coded under 'Yes' and those without were coded under 'No'. Within the code 2.4.1 'Yes', we classified those instances where intersectionality was merely mentioned and/or when a spokesperson with intersecting identities was included under 2.4.1.1. 'Minimalist'. Still within the code 2.4.1. 'Yes', we classified those instances where the disproportionate impacts of climate change on intersecting identities were explicitly discussed under 2.4.1.2. 'Maximalist'. Finally, under the third main category ('Solutions and/or Approaches'), two additional categories can be found: 3.1. 'Yes, but'; 3.2. 'Yes, and'. Under the former, all articles describing potential solutions and/or approaches but outlining reasons why these solutions

would not be successful and/or appropriate in present times were classified. Under the latter, all articles describing potential solutions and/or approaches with clear descriptions of the next steps to take were classified.

Structural analysis

Authors

A total of 55 authors were coded. As for the author's gender, 43 articles were written by women, 33 were written by men, 7 were written by both men and women (multiple authors) and 30 articles had no authors explicitly credited.

Length

Having coded for the length of the articles, we found that the majority of newspaper articles were of medium length (between 1001 and 3000 words) with a total of 61 articles. A total of 45 articles were of short length, between 150 and 1000 words, and 7 articles were considered long, having between 3001 to 9500 words.

Articles with more words allow for more depth and higher accuracy on covered topics. However, most readers tend to lose focus and quit reading the longer the article is, something most newspapers want to avoid (Butler, 2023; Masini et al., 2017). Therefore, it is consistent that most articles are of medium length, followed by short articles to keep the reader's attention. Ultimately, this may result in a lack of depth on the topic and a more superficial (minimalist) understanding of the issue (Castro et al., 2018).

Time Frame

As for the time frame, we coded whether the articles had been written before the 6th of November 2022 (before COP27), between the 6th and 18th of November 2022 (during COP27) and after the 18th of November 2022 (after COP27). We found that the majority of newspaper articles, with a total of 45 articles, had been written during COP27. 39 articles were written after COP27 and 29 articles were written before COP27.

This is coherent as data collection focusing on an event will follow a normal distribution when it comes to the publication of articles (Boykoff, 2012). However, we do notice a relatively high number of articles being published after COP27, perhaps an indicator of the importance of topics discussed or the insufficiency of proposed solutions, sparking discussion and debate.

Newspaper

The majority of our articles ($n = 83$) came from American newspapers. The most popular was 'The New York Times', which published 22 of the 83 articles. 'USA Today' and 'USA Today Online' together published a total of 10 articles. 'ASEAN Tribune' published 5 articles, 'Los Angeles Times' published 3 articles and 'The Christian Science Monitor' also published 3 articles. 'Winston-Salem Journal (North Carolina)' published 2 articles, as did 'The Mercury News', 'The Catalyst: Colorado College' and the 'Honolulu Star - Advertiser'. The remaining 32 American articles were published by 32 different newspapers, all coded under 'Other'.

The remaining 30 articles were all published in Canadian newspapers. The most popular was 'Postmedia Breaking News', a media conglomerate, which published 6 of the 30 articles. 'The Toronto Star' published 3 articles while 'The Asian Pacific Post' published 2 articles, as did the 'Kingston Whig-Standard'. The remaining 17 Canadian articles were published by 17 different newspapers, all coded under 'Other'.

In terms of political discourse, the majority of these newspapers lean left, with others being more moderate. We notice a lack of right-leaning newspapers covering gender issues within climate change, hinting at the presence of petro-masculinities associated with right-wing parties where climate change and gender inequalities denial, wealth, high energy consumption and militarism are promoted (Anshelm & Hultman, 2014; Daggett, 2018).

Section

To keep track of our articles' approach, we coded the sections under which the articles were published. Of the 113 articles, 12 were published under 'Opinion', 11 were published under 'Section A', 'Main' or 'MN' (main news), 11 were published under 'News' and 10 were published under 'Briefing'. 9 articles were published under 'Climate', 4 were published under 'Features' and 4 were published under 'Environment'. 3 articles were published under 'World', 3 were published under 'Local News', 3 were published under 'Hawaii News', 3 were published under 'Business' and 2 were published under 'Lifestyle'. Finally, 16 had no specified section under which they were published and the remaining 22 articles were published under 22 different sections, all coded under 'Miscellaneous' (to avoid confusion with the section 'Other').

Boykoff (2012) has shown that the placement of an article will carry more weight and attract more attention if placed on the front of the newspaper. In our sample, a large number of articles were published under 'Main News' ('Section A', 'Main' or 'MN'), showing that many newspapers see these stories as worthy of attention and coverage.

Content reflexive thematic analysis

In the subsections below, we will present and discuss paradigmatic examples, extracts, of the main themes and subthemes identified through the content reflexive thematic analysis, in both a deductive and inductive way.

Mention of Women in regards to Climate Change

We found that of the 113 articles, 42 articles did not mention women in regards to climate change, coded 'No'. The remaining 71 articles did in fact mention women in regards to climate change, coded 'Yes'. Of those 71 articles, 50 mentioned women in a 'Minimalist' way, by either mentioning women in passing or by including a female spokesperson in the article. Of those 71 articles, 21 mentioned women in a 'Maximalist' way, by explicitly discussing the disproportionate impact of climate change on women. This is illustrated in the extracts below:

Minimalist

Extract 1

*"Nicola Sturgeon, **the first minister of Scotland**, which last year became the first country to offer money for loss and damage, pledged an additional \$5.7 million, bringing up Scotland's total pledge to \$7.7 million."*
(Somini Sengupta, quoted in NYT_USA_#1)

Extract 2

*"With the aim of reporting powerful human stories often overlooked by Somalia's male-dominated media - from the **personal impact of chronic drought and the local ravages of climate change**, to living with HIV and issues of addiction and **gender-based violence - the six women of Bilan** are expanding the practice of journalism in Somalia like never before."*
(Scott Peterson, quoted in CSM_USA_#1)

In Extract 1, the mention of gender is limited to a female spokesperson, Nicola Sturgeon, first minister of Scotland. While her mention is not to be bypassed, with her leadership role and active pledging for loss and damage being at the forefront of her depiction, gender issues related to the climate crisis are not tackled, making this approach to gender a descriptive/minimalist one. In Extract 2, we read of six Somali women altering the male-dominated field of journalism in Somalia by practising and reporting critical issues, such as personal impacts of climate change and gender-based violence. This extract circulates around

gender issues and more specifically, around a path towards gender equality. While gender issues in relation to climate change are not explicitly discussed, we notice how the male-dominated media overlooking the topic of personal impact of chronic drought and the ravages of climate change suggests a female-oriented story. Classifying this extract in the 'minimalist' approach to gender would be incorrect as we perceive some depth and understanding of what is left unsaid. However, to classify it in the 'maximalist' approach to gender would also be inaccurate as we fail to see an explicit statement regarding the disproportionate impacts of the ravages of climate change on women. From this analysis, we have considered this extract as fitting in between these two perspectives, and coded the associated subtheme as 'Intermediate' approach to gender. However, instances of this inductively identified subtheme were not very pervasive throughout the data, and therefore we did not consider it in the analyses performed within both the structural analysis and the matrix analysis.

Maximalist

Extract 3

*"Climate change is a "threat multiplier" and one of the most gendered issues of our time with **girls and young women in the Global South** facing disproportionate impacts such as the increased likelihood of early, child and forced marriage, and disruptions to education and employment."*

(Anjum Sultana and Tehsin Jaffer, quoted in MN_CA_#1)

Extract 4

*"[...] access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations. [...] WaterAid a - a non-governmental organization that has been working on water, sanitation and hygiene projects for more than four decades - co-hosted a virtual event that focused on the **nexus of gender, water and climate change** [...]. [...] the importance of hearing the voices of women and girls in policy discussions, the bridging of the gap between global climate discussions and locally led adaptation initiatives, and prioritizing WASH in global climate financing agreements. [...] **the most vulnerable people and countries, including women and girls experiencing daily impacts of changing climate.**"*

(Geoffrey Johnston, quoted in KWS_CA_#1)

Extract 3 offers a substantive and maximalist approach to gender issues within the climate crisis. Its explicit portrayal of climate change as being one of the most gendered issues of our times leaves no space for interpretation or doubt and uses a straightforwardness hinting at the

gravity of the issue. However, this extract does focus on a specific group of women, specifically younger women and girls living in the Global South. This more narrowed approach forces more attention to this particular group of women and their intersecting identities, an attention that is peaked when reading the explicit description of likely impacts on their lives. Extract 4 acknowledges and highlights the vulnerability and disproportionate impacts of climate change on women, making it a good example of a maximalist approach to gender issues. While focusing on a very specific aspect of the climate crisis, water sanitation and hygiene, gender issues remain extremely relevant, as is the need to include the voices of women and girls as we move forward towards adequate climate adaptations.

Representation of Women

Social Role

The second category relates to the 'Representation of Women' under which we created four additional categories, the first being 'Social Role'. Under 'Social Role', we coded the most recurring roles associated with women in the newspaper articles. With a total of 24 articles and a total of 36 mentions, 'leadership role' was the one most associated with women in the articles ("*Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados*", quoted in NYT_USA_#2). In second, with 12 articles and a total of 13 mentions, the role of 'activist' was repeatedly mentioned ("*26-year-old Ugandan activist Vanessa Nakate*", quoted in BW_USA_#1). The role of 'professionals' was mentioned in 9 articles for a total of 10 mentions overall ("*[...] about 70 percent of employed women across South Asia work in agriculture*", quoted in HC_USA_#1). The role of 'student' was mentioned in 7 articles but mentioned 16 times overall ("*Naomi, who is studying environmental studies*", quoted in CCC_USA_#1), whereas the role of 'teacher' was mentioned in 6 articles with a total of 7 mentions ("*Dr. Jen Pierce, a geoscience professor at Boise State University*", quoted in IS_USA_#1). In 6 articles, women were associated with roles of 'experts' (scientist, researcher etc.) and were mentioned as such a total of 7 times ("*Vikki Thompson, senior research associate at the School of Geographical Sciences*", quoted in PBN_CA_#1). Similarly, in 6 articles and mentioned 7 times, women were associated with the role of 'entrepreneur' ("*Mahwari Justice, run by two young women who connected on Facebook*", quoted in LAT_USA_#1). In 5 articles, mentioned a total of 5 times, women were associated with the role of 'family member' ("*His sister, Sanaa Seif, was in the conference campaigning for him to walk free*", quoted in LAT_USA_#2), and in 4 articles, mentioned 4 times, women were associated with the role of 'mother' ("*Seema's daughter*", quoted in CSM_USA_#2). Mentioned 8 times in 4 different articles, the role of 'domestic carer' was paired with women ("*All I can think is how many trips I will have to make to bring water needed for drinking and cooking for four children and three goats,*" added Munnī", quoted in

PBN_CA_#1). Mentioned 4 times in 4 different articles, women were paired with the role of 'advocate' ("“[a group of Indigenous women from various countries] were really advocating for women’s voices and for Mother Earth””, quoted in NS_CA_#1) and thrice in three different articles were they paired with 'climate envoy' ("Marshall Islands Climate Envoy Tia Stege", quoted in AT_USA_#1). Finally, mentioned twice in two articles, women were associated with the role of 'caregiver' ("leaving Seema, who offered only her first name, to care for her four grandchildren", quoted in CSM_USA_#2). In 11 articles for a total of 12 instances where women were associated with a social role only mentioned once, these were coded under 'Other' (participant, national correspondent, white house correspondent, delegate, Christian, environmentalist, hunter and gatherer, role model, observer, God’s subjects, member of legislative assembly). Finally, in 16 different articles, women were not associated with any role (i.e., N/A). How some of these roles are associated with women is illustrated in the extracts below:

Extract 5

*“India's scorching summer heat adds new risks this year to an energy-sapping challenge that **tribal** woman Munni Adhivasi has surmounted every day for two decades, by **trudging for miles to carry home water**.*

Munni, who said she feared dying in the heat, teared up as she railed against the government's failure to provide drinking water to more than 200 tribal families in her hamlet of Hinauti in northern Uttar Pradesh.

*"All I can think is how many trips I will have to make **to bring water needed for drinking and cooking for four children and three goats**," added Munni, who **carries home on her head all 30 liters (8 gallons) her family and livestock need each day**. But this year's summer, torrid even by Indian standards, with temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius in many areas early in the season, adds risks of dehydration and heat stroke to her woes.*

"This drill to collect water is the worst form of punishment inflicted upon us," said Munni, who did not know her exact age, but appeared to be in her 30s.

*She was among a group of women and children from four villages in the area who **draw water from their usual source**, a reservoir beside a quarry where many of their husbands find daily employment."*

(Tiffany Crawford, quoted in PBN_CA_#1)

Extract 6

*“The paper shows that extremes are getting hotter as temperatures rise with climate change, said Vikki Thompson, **senior research associate** at the School of Geographical Sciences and Cabot Institute for the Environment at the University of Bristol.”*

(Tiffany Crawford, quoted in PBN_CA_#1)

In Extract 5, Munni Adhivasi's role in domestic care is highlighted with depictions of her trudging for miles to carry home 30 litres of water, which is then used to hydrate and cook for her four children and three goats. The woman's fear of death from heat, dehydration and heat strokes hints at the hardships she experiences on a daily basis due to torrid temperatures and governmental inefficiency. Despite the detailed reality of Munni Adhivasi's life, the notion that these hardships affect women more than men are not explicitly detailed. However, with the sentence “she was among a group of women and children from four villages in the area who draw water from their usual source”, we understand that the task of water retrieval is a predominantly female task. While the disproportionate impacts of water insecurity on women are not explicitly described, we can infer from this extract that women may inevitably be more affected by torrid temperatures. From this deduction, and similar to Extract 2, we believe that Extract 5 should be categorised in between the ‘minimalist’ and ‘maximalist’ perspective. In Extract 6, the expertise of Vikki Thomson, a senior research associate, is highlighted. Her expertise on environmental and geographical matters is used as a source in this article which, according to Bigham et al. (2019), will seem more credible to readers. However, similarly to Extract 5, the disproportionate impacts of “extremes [getting] hotter” on women are not explicitly discussed, making this article a paradigmatic example of a minimalist approach to gender issues within climate change.

Agency

Under ‘Representation of Women’, a second category was used to decipher the ways women are represented in newspaper articles. For this category, we classified all instances where a woman's sense of control over a situation or an action was present or, on the contrary, when a woman's conscientious control seemed to be absent. For this reason, articles were either classified under ‘Active Agency’ or ‘Passive Agency’. We found that in 21 different articles, mentioned a total of 30 times, women were depicted as having ‘active agency’ (“*four women from the group Ultima Generazione (Last Generation) who shouted slogans against global warming and fossil fuels*”, quoted in PBN_CA_#2). Contrastingly, we found that in 12 different articles, mentioned a total of 12 times, women were depicted as having ‘passive agency’ (“*The Blue Pacific Finance Hub will particularly help women and communities by funding coastal adaptation*”, quoted in AT_USA_#1).

Extract 7

*How does the lack of access to safe water affect women in low-income countries? "It's commonly talked about that women are the **stewards of water**. They're the ones looking after household water supplies," the WaterAid staffer said. Although women are often portrayed as victims, she cited the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which states that women can be "**proactive, adaptation actors**" when it comes to climate change and WASH.*

It is important to "hear the voice of leadership" of women on the ground in developing countries regarding water infrastructure, the designing of programs and other WASH related issues, Truelove insisted.

*How does WaterAid incorporate the voices of local women in its work? "There is a lot of engagement of local partners, often working with local women's organizations," Truelove said. "When local water committees are formed, you really want to make sure that there's the **meaningful participation of women**, and there's not just a quota of women on the committee."*

(Geoffrey Johnston, quoted in KWS_CA_#1)

Extract 8

*Monday's conference included a Youth Climate Summit at the UH law school auditorium. Other events during Climate Week include **a discussion on Pacific island women** at the United Nation's climate change conference, known as COP27, and the 20th anniversary of the Hawaii energy policy forum.*

(Tori DeJournett, quoted in HS_USA_#1)

In Extract 7, women are depicted as 'proactive and adaptation actors' in the context of water sanitation and hygiene, although the spokesperson acknowledges that women are often portrayed as victims of climate change, their role as 'stewards of water', a role which involves a high level of responsibility, makes their involvement in adaptation relevant and necessary. This involvement is further developed in the extract when the spokesperson emphasises the importance of having the voices of local women heard. This passage reflects the narrative that not only are women capable of active agency, but that their meaningful participation and leadership are part of successful adaptations. Furthermore, the explicit mention of women being victims and agents of climate change is an example of a maximalist approach to gender issues. In Extract 8, while the reader can implicitly understand that Pacific island women are more at risk in the climate crisis, one can also infer that they are passive agents within this issue. Indeed, the preposition 'on' in 'a discussion on Pacific island women' indicates that

Pacific island women will be the topic of discussion but that they won't necessarily be part of the discussion. While there are no indications as to why this group of women is not involved in the discussion, their lack of participation and involvement portrays them as unassertive. Furthermore, with 'Pacific island women' being the only mention of gender within the article, the latter was categorised under a minimalist approach to gender.

Descriptive Traits

Thirdly, we examined the different descriptive traits used to describe women in our newspaper articles. These traits were often closely related to our previous category, 'Agency', where many descriptive traits came to reinforce the narrative of passivity and/or activity. In total, women were described using specific traits a total of 68 times in 36 different articles. A total of 13 different traits were coded with the most used being 'vulnerable' in 18 different articles for a total of 24 different mentions ("*the extreme vulnerability of women climate refugees*", quoted in HC_USA_#1). In second, we have the traits 'under-represented' and 'victim', both mentioned in 8 different articles, a total of 11 and 10 times, respectively ("*Women are under-represented as workers in traditional mining*", quoted in EJ_CA_#1, and "*women are often portrayed as victims*", quoted in KWS_CA_#1). The trait 'young' is used 6 times in 5 different articles ("*two young women*", quoted in LAT_USA_#1). Women are described as 'reproductive agents' 4 times in 4 different articles ("*8.2 million women of reproductive age*", quoted in LAT_USA_#1) and are described as 'empowered' 4 times in 4 different articles ("*women empowering each other in raising and selling chickens*", quoted in CT_USA_#1). Furthermore, women are described as 'desperate' twice in 2 different articles ("*Heat adds to despair of Indian women*", quoted in PBN_CA_#1). Finally, the next traits were only used once to describe women but were deemed important to mention: 'supportive', 'strong', 'responsible', 'knowledgeable' (mentioned twice in one article), 'fearful' and 'weak'.

With the traits 'vulnerable', 'under-represented' and 'victim' accounting for 45 of 68 mentions, we obtain a good understanding of the prevalent narrative surrounding women in the issue of climate change. This finding goes in line with other findings from existing literature (see Arora-Jonsson, 2011). Indeed, because the media represents women as being 'vulnerable' and 'victims' of climate change, this narrative surrounding women is propagated and reinforced. What is also reinforced is the stereotype of women as embodying traits of communion and passivity (warmth, care), rather than agency. The usage of the descriptive trait 'under-represented' hints at an understanding of gender issues proper to climate change. This acknowledgement has the potential to highlight the main issue in climate change adaptations and may lead to an increase (or a willingness to increase) in the number of women in negotiation settings.

Intersectionality

Finally, investigating the 'Representation of Women', we aimed to see if instances of intersectionality were incorporated in the talk of climate change. We found that intersectionality was mentioned in 36 different articles, for a total of 48 mentions. Similarly to 'Mention of Women in regards to Climate Change', we coded all mentions of intersectionality in the 'Minimalist' or 'Maximalist' approach, where a minimalist approach to intersectionality was defined as the inclusion of a spokesperson with intersecting identities and/or the descriptive mention of individuals with intersecting identities. Contrastingly, the maximalist approach to intersectionality was defined as the explicit discussion of disproportionate impacts on intersecting positionalities. In total, 26 articles discuss intersectionality in a minimalist way and 10 articles mention intersectionality in a maximalist way. This signifies that of the 71 articles that discuss women in regards to climate change, 35 of them do not discuss nor mention any aspects of intersectionality.

Minimalist

Extract 9

*“As an **African Indigenous woman**, I travelled from very far away, with many other Indigenous peoples that came from across the world. We came from a different climate, from hot weather to cold weather, expecting that we're going to have high ambitions after these more than two years of time for the negotiations.”*

(Kate Allen, quoted in TS_CA_#1)

Extract 10

*“Dr. Smith, who last year became **the first Black woman** to earn a doctorate in nuclear engineering from the University of Florida, works with nongovernmental organizations to help nuclear reactor companies get licences. “I'm passionate about nuclear for several reasons, including the fact that we're running out of time to solve this climate change issue.”*

(Jenny Gross, quoted in NYT_USA_#3)

In Extract 9, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, the president of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad, assumes her position of leadership as she criticises negotiators for their lack of achievement with the extra two years they were given due to the pandemic. She emphasises her background and her journey (an African Indigenous woman coming from far away) to stress the gravity of the crisis and the lengths she would go to make her voice heard. While Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim's intersecting identities are depicted (African Indigenous woman), the explicit mention of disproportionate impacts on intersecting positionalities is

absent, making this article a minimalist approach to intersectionality. In Extract 10, Dr. Smith is described as the first Black woman to graduate with a PhD in nuclear engineering from the University of Florida. While she does mention the issue of climate change as a motivator for her studies, there are no substantive mentions of the risk of climate change on intersecting identities and individuals, making this article a minimalist approach to intersectionality.

Maximalist

Extract 11

*“Those most at risk are people who already experience multiple and **intersecting forms of discrimination, including women and girls, racialized communities, people with disabilities and younger generations**. Indigenous peoples’ rights to life, lands, territories, food systems and informant consent are also under threat in the context of climate change.”*

(Ketty Nivyabandi, quoted in OC_CA_#1)

Extract 12

*“Harris spoke about her Bay Area roots, the Inflation Reduction Act and environmental justice -including how **women, low-income communities and communities of color** often bear the brunt of harmful policies.”*

(Anumita Kaur and Hayley Smith, quoted in LAT_USA_#3)

In Extract 11, the explicit usage of the phrase ‘intersecting forms of discrimination’ is an example of how intersectionality may be (should be) incorporated in a maximalist manner in the discussion of gender and climate change. Here, the author acknowledges that all of those who do not benefit from the patriarchal society and infrastructures currently in place (women, racialized communities, people with disabilities, young people, indigenous people) are vulnerable to the climate crisis. The inclusion of lands, territories, food systems and informant consent as also being under threat are indicators of the ecofeminist approach (and maximalist approach) the author has adopted within this debate. In Extract 12, Kamala Harris, vice president of the US, is paraphrased on her statement on environmental justice. While short in nature, this statement acknowledges that ‘women, low-income communities and communities of color’ are victims of harmful policies related to the climate, making this article maximalist in nature. The conjunction ‘and’ here acts as an inclusive word, implicitly arguing that individuals who embody all three identities are even more at risk of harmful policies.

Solutions, Approaches and Adaptations

We coded those instances where solutions were offered but deemed unrealisable at the moment: ‘Yes, but’, hinting at resistance signalled by the ‘yes’, which ultimately softens and delays the contradicting aspect of the ‘but’ (Castro & Batel, 2008; Uzelgun et al., 2015). Those instances where solutions were offered and ways to achieve them were pinpointed were coded under ‘Yes, and’, implying not only an agreement, an acceptance signalled by the ‘yes’, but also a space to build on a reality that has been set, signalled by the ‘and’ (Kulhan, 2021). We found that solutions were deemed unrealisable or unlikely in 11 articles for a total of 21 mentions (*“We can cut consumption immediately, but stabilizing growth takes times and will require ongoing global efforts to strengthen women’s rights, provide education to women, girls and families and ensure access to family planning resources and birth control”*, quoted in CJ_CA_#1). We found that solutions were deemed approachable in 16 articles for a total of 20 mentions (*“The solutions for achieving gender equity in the workplace, though, are not specific to the energy sector: Providing training and education opportunities for all genders to enter the energy sector, creating flexible and safe workplaces, and supporting intersectional gender-diverse leadership. Addressing barriers faced by women and gender-diverse people requires a co-ordinated approach between private industry, public governing bodies and educational institutions”*, quoted in EJ_CA_#1).

‘Yes, but’

Furthermore, certain themes arose from our Solutions and/or Approaches section. Within the ‘Yes, but’ category, as solutions are suggested, reasons why they may be unsuccessful are also stressed. We find that the most recurring justification lies within time, or the lack of time we possess. We also find that many solutions are not fathomable without inclusion, a justification given a number of times in our articles. The absence of adequate policies, aids and a general distrust of the government are also present. Finally, as solutions are suggested, many of these lack a realistic approach or simply, an in-depth understanding of barriers and obstacles (‘yes, but how?’, ‘yes, but who?’).

Extract 13

*“We can still defeat the fossil fuel industry. We can still create an inclusive, decolonized, democratic world. **But the clock is ticking**, and we need all hands on deck”*

(Jeanne Huff, quoted in BW_USA_#1)

In Extract 13, the approach to achieving climate justice seems to be the defeat of the fossil fuel industry, as well as the creation of an inclusive decolonized, democratic world. However, the spokesperson, Shiva Rajbhandari, doesn't seem to think this can be achieved as time is lacking and the participation of everyone is needed.

'Yes, and'

Within the 'Yes, and' category, we find many solutions focusing on the empowerment of women through leadership programs, trainings, education and apprenticeship. We also find solutions that promote representation in decision-making and even more so, representation of indigenous people. Furthermore, we find solutions axed on financial aid, investments and funds. We also encounter the promotion of technological aid and advancements for at-risk populations. Finally, we find one solution where the inclusion of young people's voices in the debate is considered the best approach.

Extract 14

"On the other hand, he says Alkhidmat has already developed a blueprint for a climate-resilient village, certain elements of which have been incorporated into their recent flood recovery projects.

*The new village Alkhidmat envisions would have 32 houses, all built on high ground, with reinforced construction materials and elevated flooring. Each village will have a **solar-powered water pump and purification system** - the pumps being a favorite feature for women, whose traditional job is to carry water, often long distances, for cooking and cleaning."*

(Howard LaFranchi, quoted in CSM_USA_#2)

In Extract 14, the solutions depicted are an example of 'hard' adaptations (see Ford & King, 2015). This focus on technological solutions allows for a concrete approach, one that is plausible and doable. The acknowledgement that some of these technologies will facilitate the lives of women makes this solution gender-focused and appropriate. Later in the article, we understand that the local community is very much involved in this reconstruction with *"students from the university's medical and nursing schools and nutrition majors [being] called on to help out in the initial emergency phase [and] students in architecture, engineering, and technology [joining] in to envision and develop climate-resistant housing, agriculture, roads, and water infrastructure"*. However, we fail to see the ways in which this approach will alleviate existing power gender relations on structural, organisational and individual levels as women remain uninvolved and patriarchal values remain unchallenged.

Matrix Coding Queries and Divulcation of Patterns

With the help of NVivo 7.1, using the 'Matrix Coding Query', we were able to discern and gain access to coding intersections between two sets of data. This allowed us to detect certain patterns.

We found that Canadian newspapers mentioned gender (minimalist or maximalist) in 76.67% of their articles whereas the US mentioned gender (minimalist or maximalist) 57.83% of the time. Canadian articles mentioned gender in a maximalist way in 30.43% of their articles mentioning gender, versus 29.17% for American articles. In short, both countries discuss the disproportionate impact climate change will have on women in about 1/3 of their articles mentioning gender.

For all articles mentioning gender, 39.44% were written by men and 36.62% by women, despite the fact that our sample contained more female writers. With 43 female authors (writing by themselves and not with fellow male writers), 53.49% mentioned gender in their articles. With 33 male authors, 75.76% of them mentioned gender in their articles. However, and most importantly, 30.43% of articles written by women wrote about gender in a maximalist way. In contrast, 20% of articles written by men wrote about gender in a maximalist way. These results suggest that women are more likely to discuss the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women than men.

Of all articles mentioning gender, 52.11% of them (36 of 71) mention intersectionality. Of those 36, 63.89% were published in American newspapers (23 of 36) and 36.11% of them were published in Canadian newspapers (13 of 36). However, we are working with a majority of American newspapers. Therefore, of all Canadian articles mentioning gender (n=23), 56.52% of them mention intersectionality (13 of 23). Of all the American articles mentioning gender (n=48), 47.92% of them mention intersectionality (23 of 48). However, as we investigated which country was more likely to mention intersectionality using a maximalist approach, we found that of the 13 Canadian newspapers mentioning intersectionality, 5 of them did so in a maximalist way (38.46%). Of the 23 American newspapers mentioning intersectionality, 5 of them did so in a maximalist way (21.74%).

While previous literature claims that both countries still fail to adequately represent minorities and intersecting identities, our results show that Canadian newspapers are slightly more likely to discuss the disproportionate impacts of climate change on intersecting identities than American newspapers.

Furthermore, we investigated the extent to which women were mentioned in association with a social role. We found that in the 71 articles that mention gender, 55 of them attach women to a specific social role, resulting in a total of 134 references, making it the most used way to represent women. The leadership role is the most assigned social role in all articles,

accounting for a total of 36 references in 24 different articles (26.87%). In terms of prominence, the leadership role is followed by activist, then, professional, student, teacher, expert, entrepreneur, family member, domestic carer, advocate, mother, climate envoy and caregiver. This seems to suggest that women are increasingly embodying and undertaking a variety of social roles, or so they are depicted in North American media. However, roles that depict women not as an individual but as relational (mothers, family members, domestic carer, caregiver) account for 19 of 134 references (14.18%), making this relational/supporting role the second most prominent in the representation of women.

Because mass media can either play a part in social change or in reproducing social structures, an idea or a practice, their portrayal of women can have important psychosocial impacts. Social roles are often linked to expectations of men and women and the way they should engage with the world based on their biological sex and the gender norms that are inputted on it. As was previously discussed, existing literature on the matter shows that in many Western societies, women tend to be associated with more traditional, nurturing roles, whereas men are often associated with roles of leadership. Interestingly, our results contradict these findings as they show that women were predominantly associated with leadership roles, rather than nurturing roles. This is important for representation, as narratives surrounding the 'traditional' woman can adapt to a more contemporary reality, all the while propagating the narrative that women in leadership positions are valuable, credible and necessary. However, in our data, women were also often attributed a relational role, one of communion (mother, family member, domestic care, caregiver). These associations remain a reflection of certain contexts and realities, with many women still partaking in nurturing roles in many societies around the world. As such, these representations remain necessary and relevant but one must be wary of pairing these roles with passivity, victimhood and lack of agency.

Finally, we looked at which country was more likely to include solutions and/or approaches to combat the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women. Of the 16 articles claiming 'Yes, and', 11 are American and 5 are Canadian. Of the 11 articles claiming 'Yes, but' 5 are American and 6 are Canadian. Therefore, of the 48 American articles that mention gender in regards to climate change, 16 of them also discuss solutions and/or approaches (33.33%). Of the 23 Canadian articles that mention gender in regards to climate change, 11 of them also discuss solutions and/or approaches (47.82%). These results go in line with previous findings claiming that Canadian newspapers are more likely to include adaptations in their articles compared to American newspapers (Ford & King, 2015).

Discussion

Exploratory work on gender and climate change from a social and cultural psychology perspective

From a personal perspective, this thesis started with the knowledge that the world's most vulnerable and marginalised groups will be experiencing the greatest impacts of the changing climate. With women representing the majority of the world's poor, being more dependent on natural resources, having less access to education and property and having predisposed social roles attributed to them, their vulnerability is rooted in several factors - social, cultural and economic - with significant psychosocial impacts in terms of a sense of self and agency, mental health and overall well-being.

With the goal of examining the relation between gender representations and climate change in media discourses, an avenue scarcely explored in previous literature in general and particularly with a social and cultural psychology lens, this thesis analysed the narratives about women in regard to climate change in both American and Canadian newspapers. While a great number of existing papers explored relevant narratives and representations around climate change with the help of a media analysis, rarely have they done so in the field of social and cultural psychology, with a gender and intersectional lens.

To make sense of the social relevance of gender issues within climate change as they are represented in newspapers, we used the Social Representation Theory (SRT) as an epistemological framework. Indeed, this theory is embedded in the understanding that socially relevant issues, ideas and practices are both dynamic and malleable as they can be influenced by different powerful stakeholders. Because the SRT is often used to examine and understand media representations, we thought its foundation would clarify how these representations might reflect and impact public conceptions and practices.

With the help of software LexisNexis and NVivo 7.1, we regrouped a total of 113 newspaper articles from Canada and the US where COP27 was the temporal focal point, and pinpointed pertinent and relevant extracts to ultimately create our categories for analysis. We first uncovered the structural components of the articles (authors, length, time frame, newspaper, section). Then, with the perception that the discussion of gender seemed to vary in depth, we classified articles under the 'Minimalist' or 'Maximalist' approach, where the former mentioned gender in a more descriptive way, and the latter did so in a more substantive

manner. Coming across the differing ways in which women were being represented, we classified these extracts using four different categories: social roles, agency, descriptive traits and intersectionality. Also encountering various descriptions of adaptations that will help us tackle the changing climate in a more gender equal way, we dissociated those approaches that were deemed realisable from those that listed obstacles and reasons why progress was hindered. Finally, we uncovered relevant patterns in our data by crossing different codes.

Implications behind the Results

From our 113 newspaper articles, 83 were from the US and 30 were from Canada. 43 of the authors were women, 33 were men, 7 were written by both men and women (multiple authors) and 30 had no credited author. While Ebrahim (2021) found that the majority of climate change coverage is done from a male perspective, our results are more in accordance with the findings from the Survey of US Journalists conducted in 2023. The survey shows that while men do seem to cover more topics than women, including politics, science and technology, economics, and environment and energy, the coverage of social issues and policies seem to be mostly covered by women (Tomasik & Gottfried, 2023). Indeed, our matrix analysis also showed us that women authors were more likely to offer a maximalist understanding of the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women than men. This could be in part due to women being themselves concerned with gender issues or to their increased facility to access a woman's perspective (Ebrahim, 2021). Concerning the length of our articles, our results show that almost half of the articles were of medium length, followed by shorter articles, and a few longer articles. The complexity of an issue like gender inequality in the context of climate change is one that requires a coverage with detailed descriptions, profound analysis and enlightened solutions. Short and medium length articles do not have the capacity to offer a substantive understanding of such an issue (Castro et al., 2018), resulting in a peripheral showcasing which ultimately downplays not only the gravity of the problem, but also the approaches that are required to alleviate it. As for the publication of the articles, the majority were published during COP27 (between the 6th and 18th of November 2022), followed by a high number also published after COP27 and fewer being published before COP27. This finding is logical and follows the expected pattern of articles surrounding an event. In terms of newspapers, most American articles were published by The New York Times and most Canadian articles were published by Postmedia Breaking News. We noticed that the majority of newspapers in our dataset had a more liberal political discourse, with others being more moderate. This apparent lack of right-leaning newspapers covering gender issues within climate change seems to reflect findings from previous research. Authors like Anshelm and Hultman (2014) and Daggett (2018) have exposed a specific conservative identity associated

with masculinity in industrial modernity, mistrust of government regulation, along with climate denial, racism and misogyny. The concern begins when findings show that these individuals often hold influential positions that could allow them to modify or alter the social representation of climate change within the population. Finally, we also kept track of the section in which the article was published. The majority were published under the sections 'Opinion', 'Main News' and 'Briefing' and studies have shown that the 'Main News' section includes stories covering key issues and that articles placed on the front of newspapers carry more weight and attract more attention (Boykoff, 2012).

Following the structural analysis, we examined if and how an article mentioned women in the context of climate change. We found that 71 articles did mention women in regard to climate change and 42 did not. These 42 articles that failed to examine gender issues within climate change carry underlying impacts. Underrepresentation, silencing, and even wilful ignorance, can become contributors to the violation of human rights, as the knowledge that food insecurity, compromised health, increased gender-based violence and overall lack of opportunities for women, are emphasised and highlighted during international conferences like COP27. By omitting the voices of women, measures and climate change adaptation actions are skewed, rendered less efficient as they fail to include the unique perspective, needs, knowledge and skills that women possess. Their absence ultimately results in a lack of meaningful participation, a decreased understanding of the differentiated impacts of climate change, a failure to ensure that climate funds will benefit marginalised and affected individuals and a significant disempowerment of women as the ideology that relegates women to a subordinate position is reinforced (Armstrong, 2013). However, concerning the 71 articles that did mention gender issues while covering climate change, the depth in which they did so underlines different psychosocial impacts.

Our analysis helped us uncover that 50 of the 71 articles mentioned gender in a minimalist way, whereas 21 did so in a maximalist way. The impact of a minimalist coverage of gender is reflected in a superficial recounting of a social issue that fails to demonstrate the deeply rooted mechanisms behind it and may only promote an incomplete adaptation process. Many articles did include a female spokesperson but this approach is also considered minimalist because it may be concluded that it is sufficient to include a few token women in the discussion (Oudraat & Brown, 2022). The implications of a minimalist coverage underlie a resistance to change, paired with a desire to avoid blatant refusal of expectations by agreeing with the movement in a minimalist and partial way (Castro & Batel, 2008). Because a minimalist approach is a tool for maintaining the status quo, its usage results in the stagnation of representations of women in both the media and the public sphere which ultimately allows for the perpetuation of gender inequality. On the other hand, a maximalist approach seen in 21 of our articles is linked with implications that are opposite to that of the minimalist approach.

Its usage gives an in-depth recounting of gender issues in climate change and this more complete and layered understanding of the issue permits a detailed demonstration of underlying mechanisms, an accurate and relevant analysis and a comprehensive introduction to adaptations and solutions. A maximalist coverage is more than an acknowledgement of change, it is also a tool used to advocate for social change.

After investigating the approach to gender adopted by the articles, we analysed the way the 71 articles represented women in a climate change context. We first began by pinpointing the different social roles that were attributed to women. We found that the most recurring social role used to describe women was the role of leadership, a representation that may help deplete the existing narrative and stereotype surrounding women and their role as nurturers and caregivers. However, we noted that the second most prominent social role associated with women was the supportive or relational role (family members, mothers, domestic carers and caregivers). This role is fitting with existing stereotypes and its emphasis may help in reinforcing this narrative (Krainc, 2021). However, omitting this social role would also contribute to silencing women that embody this position and the precarious risks they face as they continue to be dependent on their social circles and their environment, resulting in feelings of disempowerment. It is also important to note that the association of women to specific roles is context-specific. Arora-Jonsson's (2011) work showed that in the Global North, women were associated with pro-environmental behaviours and roles, whereas women in the Global South were associated with roles related to poverty and vulnerability. Treating both roles as independent from one another, much like treating the North and South as explicitly divergent, fails to acknowledge that the representations of power relations and gender inequality in the Global North feed into the representations in the Global South and vice versa.

After social roles, we examined agency and found that of the 71 articles, 21 did portray women as being active and 12 portrayed women as being passive. This means that 38 articles did not seek to represent women with any type of agency, which we argue fits closely with the notion of passivity as it relays women to a more subordinate role. For the remaining 33 articles, our results are not in full accordance with existing, stereotypical narratives where women are associated with passivity (Eagly, 1987). However, we did make connections between agency and social roles, where leadership was related to an active agency, and relational/supportive roles were more related to passive agency (Eagly, 1987). Concerning this issue is also the significant number of articles that refer to women by grouping them with children (i.e., "women and children"). This infantilizes women and treats them as powerless, reinforcing the notion of passivity when it comes to women (Oudraat & Brown, 2022), a notion that we believe negatively impacts the well-being of women as their sense of self, of control and of empowerment are tainted by norms of subservience. While it is important to discuss the impacts on both women and girls, it is misleading to limit women to this compartment.

Furthermore, we can infer that active agency is also a determinant of mental health as it is a core component of women's empowerment (Richardson et al., 2019). A similar logic allows us to claim that the representation of active agency contributes to an image of women as agents of change in the fight against climate change, a notion that would potentially transpire into social attitudes regarding empowered women and perhaps even into behaviours, as societies adapt to a non-traditional norm. The representation of women as empowered could therefore implicate a change in beliefs, attitudes and actions, and contribute to the overall wellbeing of women and a reduction of climate impacts.

After agency, we investigated descriptive traits. The traits most used to describe women were 'vulnerable', 'underrepresented' and 'victim'. 'Vulnerable' and 'victim' are in line with existing stereotypes surrounding women and we argue that the prominence of these representations in our articles propagates and reinforces this narrative surrounding women (Pearse, 2017). The danger behind reinforcing this stereotype is that we integrate the narrative of women being 'vulnerable' and 'victims' as the only truth, insisting on a universal vulnerability of women. This insistence results in an 'invisibility of gender' within debates as we assume we understand what the issue is. Indeed, this simplified version of the issue assumes that women's identities are 'fixed, centred and uniform' and fails to acknowledge the complex power dynamics within vulnerability, as well as the existence of gender and sexual diversity (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2013; Pearse, 2017). This is even more problematic as we realise that mental health is associated with economic independence, physical, sexual, and emotional safety and security (Srivastava, 2012). Women in 'vulnerable' situations often lack access to these types of security, which, on its own, negatively impacts their well-being and health, but if the trait is used as truth, we doom them into a fixed situation as we fail to ask why they are in this situation. We also deny them a level of agency as their vulnerability is perceived as a fixed state of passivity and helpless victimhood (Djoudi et al., 2016). Researchers argue however, that this narrative is necessary for politics and organisations, as women being portrayed as 'vulnerable victims' engenders receptivity, negotiations and funds (Arora-Jonsson, 2011; Djoudi et al., 2016). It seems that a balanced usage of these traits is necessary where it can be addressed that vulnerability is an aspect of the problem but that the issue lies in the mechanisms that cause this vulnerability in the first place.

Finally, we investigated whether articles acknowledged the increased risk certain individuals face due to their intersecting identities. To do so, we differentiated those articles that covered intersectionality in a minimalist way versus those that did so in a maximalist way. Of 71 articles, 26 discussed intersectionality in a minimalist way and 10 discussed it in a maximalist way, with Canadian newspapers being more likely to use a maximalist approach. 35 articles did not discuss any aspects of intersectionality. The negative impact of not adopting an intersectional lens in media coverage is reflected in the grouping of all women in a single

category, where women who are also marginalised due to their race, caste, economic status, religion, disability, sexual orientation etc., inevitably remain unnoticed, unheard and underrepresented in discussion settings and adaptation processes. Not only is this detrimental to their livelihood, it is also detrimental to their well-being as one's sense of worth is often associated with an access to opportunity and having one's voice heard. Oudraat and Brown (2022) offered a pertinent explanation as to why male-dominated policy establishments equate 'gender' with 'all women'. They argued that this allows more malign masculinities to ignore the fundamental sources of gender inequality, focusing instead on the vulnerability of all women and ultimately allowing them to ignore their role in environmental degradation. We suggest that a minimalist approach to intersectionality may ultimately result in the maintenance of the status quo where acknowledging an aspect of the issue is present but where a deeper understanding of it is lacking. On the other hand, a maximalist approach to intersectionality is prone to promoting well-being and a reinforced sense of self as women feel represented and heard and the stress associated with explaining one's personal predicaments is alleviated through representation.

The final part of our analysis regarding solutions, approaches and adaptations was critical as we understood that the way an issue is represented forms the basis for how it will be approached and ultimately solved. We differentiated between those 'yes, but' approaches and those 'yes, and' approaches. The majority of solutions described were of the 'yes, and' kind, with 16 articles proposing them, while the 'yes, but' kind were found in 11 articles. This means that 44 articles did not propose any solution, approach or adaptation. We believe that acknowledging an issue without presenting avenues for reparation or change allows for the maintenance of the status quo and the denial of any form of accountability. Concerning the 'yes, but' approach, the given reasons why an adaptation may be unsuccessful could be grouped in 4 categories: lack of time, absence of inclusion, lack of adequate policies, aids and a general distrust of the government and the lack of depth ('yes, but how?', 'yes, but who?'). As we consider the fact that the majority of security and climate policy communities are comprised of men, who often lack gender expertise or an awareness for gender policies, it comes as no surprise that many adaptations or solutions proposed fail to prioritise, integrate or even understand the gender dimensions within (Oudraat & Brown, 2022). Concerning the 'yes, and' approaches, we find solutions focusing on women empowerment, on representation, on financial and technological aid, and on the inclusion of young people. It is promising to see that most solutions reflect the 'soft', more efficient, adaptations brought forth by Ford and King (2015) as they focus on the underlying socio-economic determinants of vulnerability.

Because adaptations are based on the social representations of an issue, it is important for representations to be as balanced, substantive and cultural-specific as possible, avoiding

the shortcuts that reinforce stereotypes. Failure to do so can result in adaptations that simply play into existing patriarchal values. For example, putting more women in a context of decision-making does not necessarily result in a deconstructing of gender norms, as women may themselves decide to fit the traditional masculine mould (Oliveira et al., 2010; Powell et al., 2009). If we decide to give more responsibilities to women over their livelihood, without considering the reasons why these responsibilities may not be accessible to them, we may burden them with an increased amount of work with little associated benefits (Arora-Jonsson, 2011). Similarly, if we promote and impose active agency on women through immediate action and with no further understanding of context or without giving them the tools they may need to exercise their agency, we may cause severe distress and feelings of incapacity. All in all, if the media portrayed gender issues within climate change in a maximalist and intersectional way, by accentuating the active agency of women, all the while giving a nuanced description of women, adaptation processes could both aim to reduce gender inequality by challenging existing power gender relations and simultaneously help us adapt to climate change, a concept known as climate justice.

Limitations

One limitation of the present thesis is the approach to gender issues as being focused on women and the decision to bypass a more profound analysis on how men are represented. While a discourse analysis would be more appropriate for this topic, allowing for the uncovering of linguistic content and the sociolinguistic context that men use in newspaper articles, a reflexive approach to the position of men in this content thematic analysis may have resulted in a more profound and complete understanding of the relational aspects of gender. Furthermore, while the usage of software LexisNexis provided an efficient and easy way to collect our data, the software came with some disadvantages. We quickly realised that the most popular newspaper in Canada, The Globe and Mail, had no affiliation with the software, meaning its articles were not accessible. This may have skewed our analysis as The Globe and Mail reaches millions of Canadians weekly and has been known to endorse more conservative candidates than liberal candidates. We believe critical and relevant articles from newspapers in both Canada and the US could have passed under our radar if they were also not affiliated with LexisNexis. A more profound analysis could have been conducted to uncover relevant patterns between data sets. For example, whether male authors used female sources in their articles as much as women could have been examined. We could have also investigated whether men were more likely to offer technological approaches (hard adaptation) to alleviate climate change and gender issues than women. Finally, a glimpse into the North-South biases could have strengthened our analysis. Indeed, the notion that women

in the North are often associated with pro-environmental behaviours while women in the South are associated with poverty and vulnerability (Arora-Jonsson, 2011), could have been verified or contradicted.

Future Research and Applied Recommendations

This thesis lays the groundwork for understanding the importance of taking a social and cultural psychological perspective in the study of gender issues in climate change. We encourage researchers to adopt this perspective, all the while using a gender and intersectional lens for analysis. This thesis suggests that a deeper understanding of men authors and their contributions in representations of gender in a climate change context be explored. Furthermore, while this thesis focused on the media in the US and in Canada, we suggest that similar research be done in different parts of the world to analyse the ways in which representations may differ, for example in a country that is eligible for the loss and damage funds. Finally, we encourage future research to analyse narratives and related representations surrounding women in a climate change context through different mediatic mediums, such as social media, television, radio, podcasts, etc.

Concerning applied recommendations, we stress the importance for the media to cover gender issues in a climate change context using a maximalist approach. By this, we mean that men and women authors should strive to write long and detailed articles on the matter, bringing forth a maximalist understanding of the structural inequalities that shape mainstream representations of women that are detrimental to them and their intersecting identities in the context of climate change. If applicable, women should be described and associated with social roles in a nuanced and accountable way. They should aim to debunk the universality of womanhood by showing a critical understanding of underlying mechanisms behind vulnerability, gender inequality and power relations.

With the importance of a maximalist coverage, we stress the importance of highlighting women's active agencies, as these are linked to feelings of empowerment and overall well-being (Richardson et al., 2019). It is crucial for the media to contextualise this agency, by acknowledging the different social, economic and cultural backgrounds of women and to promote it in such a way that is adapted to women's situations. Similarly to the maximalist coverage, this emphasis on active agency starts with the media, where representations are disseminated, which eventually leads to a change in attitudes and beliefs and results in behavioural change and better outcomes.

Finally, due to the weight the media has on public beliefs, it is vital that they promote solutions and adaptations of the 'yes, and' type. These solutions should reflect a maximalist understanding of the issue and should be, for the most part, a reflection of 'soft' adaptations,

allowing for more depth and flexibility. They should include steps towards active agency and empowerment, both adapted to the context in which they are described. Ideally, they should focus on a specific area where climate change impacts women to avoid generalisation.

Conclusion

The work on climate change and gender has for the most part ignored the contributions that social and cultural psychology can provide to the understanding of structural inequalities and existing power relations, namely by exploring narratives and different levels of representations surrounding women in this context of climate change and by discussing the potential psychosocial impacts associated to them. With hopes of providing some insight on this issue, our results have given us a glimpse into the way the issue is portrayed in newspapers in the US and in Canada and our analysis has allowed us to pinpoint the associated psychosocial impacts, as well as the directions to take to ensure more positive impacts and a potential alleviation of structural inequalities. Finding that the majority of newspapers in the US and in Canada not only cover the issue of gender in climate change using a minimalist approach, but also bypass representing women with active agencies, reinforce detrimental stereotypes (e.g., communal, passive, vulnerable, victim) and lack discussing constructive and complete solutions to climate change, has given us an idea on how the public and larger institutions view the issue. The usage of a gender and intersectional lens has allowed us to emphasise the need for a maximalist coverage of gender and intersectionality in climate change, as well as a balanced and nuanced usage of traits to describe women, an emphasis on active agency and empowerment (even if adapted to context) and a promotion of solutions that are based on all these aspects of representation. We believe the social representations associated with this maximalist coverage will benefit individuals (i.e., women and their sense of self, sense of worth and overall well-being), communities and societies. Keeping in mind however that this thesis is a reflection of the way the issue is perceived in the US and in Canada, recommendations were written in hopes that newspapers in both countries could themselves be agents of change, as well as key actors in informing the public, and motivators for change in ideas, for norm alteration and for action. Furthermore, considering the significant influence that these countries have on the rest of the world, we hope this agency of change is reflected in other parts of the world as they adapt the coverage of gender issues in climate change to their context in hopes of alleviating gender inequality, debunking existing power relations and achieving climate justice.

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