



# Updating Hegemonic Femininity: A Feminist Critical and Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis of the British Broadsheet Press

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## Abstract

### *Updating Hegemonic Femininity: A Feminist Critical and Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis of the British Broadsheet Press*

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Although research on hegemonic femininity has certainly increased since Connell's (1987, p.302) argument that women lack the social power to have hierarchical relationships among themselves, such research has yet to comprehensively model this hierarchy and explain how it is institutionalised. Moreover, how hegemonic femininity is updated in order to appeal to a society that is increasingly conscious of calls for women's equality has yet to be explored. This thesis aims to fill these gaps in the literature by providing a coherent and comprehensive model for hegemonic femininity. Moreover, applying postfeminist theory, I explain how hegemonic femininity can be updated for contemporary society by appropriating aspects of an individualised feminism in order to give the impression of gender equality, whilst maintaining patriarchy.

This model is applied to investigate how representations of hegemonic femininity may be used to further certain political agendas – specifically, that of the far-right. In the UK today, the Conservative government has been moving increasingly to the right, producing ever stricter law and order policies and targeting immigrants, refugees and other already marginalised communities, such as the transgender community. Using populist tactics, the Conservatives make increasing attacks on these communities in order to justify their unjust policies, but they also increasingly make claims to feminism. This apparent paradox between far-right, conservative politics and feminism, which has typically been associated with progressive politics, can be explained through an understanding of how neoliberal capitalist culture has appropriated and transformed feminism for its own ends.

By studying representations of both hegemonic and marginalised femininities in the UK's broadsheet newspapers, this thesis exposes the subtle and unsubtle ways that hierarchal femininities can be manipulated by news media in order to maintain hegemony. Studying a dataset of 1,263 broadsheet news articles, that has been quantified to track topical and gendered discursive patterns, I identify three key topics and social actors that have dominated the British news cycle's representations of femininity from 2020-2021. These are the leadership of Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon; the Sarah Everard case; and the moral panic over transgender femininity.

Applying a hybrid feminist critical and feminist poststructuralist discourse analytic approach, news articles on these topics from across the broadsheet press were qualitatively analysed. I find that hegemonic femininity is updated in the reporting on these topics by both the conservative and progressive newspapers. By appropriating a neoliberal and capitalist (post)feminism, issues of gender inequality in the UK are hidden in the broadsheets in favour of the individualisation of women's experiences, which enables the maintenance of the capitalist hierarchies that are crucial to the power of the British press itself.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1. Hegemonic Femininity: An Intersectional Model for Understanding Patriarchy

My interest in hegemonic femininity and the institutional power relationships that exist among women began during the tumultuous year of 2016, which saw the UK vote to leave the EU (known as ‘Brexit’) – leading former Prime Minister David Cameron to resign, and Theresa May to replace him as the UK’s second woman Prime Minister. In the same year, Donald Trump became the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the USA. These events led me to ask myself why it is that the right-wing Conservative Party (or ‘Tories’) have been the only party in the UK to provide us with women Prime Ministers – Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May and, most recently (though only briefly), Liz Truss. I found myself wondering why women in the USA voted for the Republicans and for Trump – the man who famously referred to ‘grabbing’ women ‘by the pussy’ (Manheim, 2020). How could women align themselves to politics that advocate for cuts to public services primarily used by women – such as women’s refuges, health services and childcare? How could they align themselves to politicians who objectified and denigrated them? In short, what is in it for women to vote for the far-right, and how has the far-right re-established itself in a society where feminism is in the public consciousness like never before?

During the final year of my undergraduate English degree, I studied two modules in tandem that helped me to conceptualise these issues: ‘Language and Gender’ and ‘Women Writers’. In ‘Language and Gender’, I was exposed to the work of researchers in feminist critical discourse analysis. I came across a study on the representation of femininity in advertising (Lazar, 2014) that introduced me to the concept of postfeminism – the neoliberal individualisation of feminism which gives the impression that women have already achieved equality, and can demonstrate their feminist “empowerment” through consumerism. During the ‘Women Writers’ module, I was introduced to the concept of intersectional feminism and began to better understand my own privilege – though I have certainly been discriminated against because of my gender, my middle-class background and the fact that I look more white than I do Latinx mean that I have not had this compounded with race and class discrimination. Through studying the two modules together, I realised that by combining them – by using the study of language to understand how gender is constructed in society, and applying intersectional feminism to understand why some women may have more access

to privilege than others – I could understand why the capitalist and individualistic ideology of the political right might appeal to certain women.

The concept of culturally dominant (‘hegemonic’) femininity enabled me to take this further during my research Masters. The notion that there are multiple femininities, which are hierarchically arranged, with the expression most aligned to the patriarchal status quo being given privilege, was the central tenet of my Masters dissertation and is expanded on in the present study. Here, I define patriarchy as the social organisation of a society that gives men *as a group* economic, cultural, political and social choices that women and other marginalised genders (transgender, nonbinary and gender nonconforming people) *as groups* do not have. As will be shown throughout this thesis, I do not see these groups as homogenous, or sharing a ‘common lot’, but rather conceive of patriarchal power as scaled in relation to one’s proximity to ideals of gender-conformity (i.e. domination for men and subordination for women). These ideals are patriarchal, but also heteronormative, white supremacist, ableist and capitalist, and those women who embody hegemonic femininity through proximity to these ideals are given access to (limited) power in patriarchal society (c.f. hooks, 2000a, p.5).

However, in my reading around hegemonic femininity (Budgeon, 2014; Schippers, 2007; Schnurr, Zayts and Hopkins, 2016), I did not find any work that had comprehensively modelled the hierarchical organisation which produces both hegemonic and marginalised femininities. The model described in this thesis aims to fill this gap and is built on the shoulders of feminists who have paved the way for an intersectional feminist movement, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989; 1991), Adrienne Rich (1980), Angela Davis (1982), bell hooks (2000a; 2000b) and Audre Lorde (1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1996d; 1996e). It combines such contributions with theories of interactional identity formation (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005) and postfeminist analyses (Gill, 2007; 2016; 2017) to illustrate the processes of dominance and subordination that are produced *within* femininity. Consequently, drawing on existing literature, this thesis provides a model for the institutionalised power relationships that exist among women. Its originality lies in the combination of intersectional feminism and discourse studies, which render it applicable beyond language and gender scholarship, and beyond academia itself. I aim to apply this model to show how the shift to the far-right in the UK takes advantage of such hierarchies in order to appeal to women, and how it can use postfeminist linguistic strategies to achieve support.

## 1.2. Femininity and the News

The media has long been the subject of feminist inquiry, in works by Robert Goldman (1992), Patricia Hill Collins (2002), Michelle Lazar (2014), Angela McRobbie (2004; 2009), Adrienne Rich (1980), and Jane Ussher (1997). Therefore, it felt natural to me to look for the (re)production of hegemonic femininity by studying media representations of women. The media is a powerful and influential institution with mass audiences, meaning that its representations of women have the power to disseminate ideals of femininity that influence social practice (Fairclough, 1995; 2013; Rich, 1980; Ussher, 1997). However, when it comes to the political representation of women, such as that which is found in the news media, research tends to be restricted to the representation of women politicians (Baxter, 2018; Cameron and Shaw, 2016; Childs, 2008; Higgins and McKay, 2016; McKay, 2020; O'Neill, Savigny and Cann, 2016; Shaw, 2020), or to specific issues, such as transphobia (Zottola, 2021). Moreover, though there has been increasing interest in language, populism and the far-right in recent years (Kramersch, 2020; McIntosh and Mendoza-Denton, 2020; Wodak, 2021; Zappettini, 2021), there has been little relation of this directly to representations of femininity and feminism.

This research aims to fill these gaps by analysing representations of femininities in the British news media. By not restricting this study to “women” as a binary and stable category (c.f. Butler, 1990), the aim is to capture how mainstream news media orients towards hegemonic femininity – how it uplifts or marginalises certain women, and through what topics and people representations of femininity arise. By focusing on representations of feminised people, this study includes transgender, nonbinary and gender nonconforming (GNC) identities which may be subordinated for a perceived failure to embody binary understandings of femininity. This way, both dominance and marginalisation can be captured, and the plurality of gender experience is acknowledged. The news is the most overtly politicised media form, reporting, as it does, on the political debates and issues that shape both national and international politics. By examining representations of femininities in news media, without restricting my analysis to certain topics prior to data collection (i.e. women politicians), I aim to capture the relationship of hegemonic femininity to politics more broadly – both the politics of the nation, and of individual newspapers that may present themselves as more or less right or left-wing, as “conservative” or “progressive” through a range of news topics and events. Through this, the question of, not just why, but *how* right-wing politics appeals to women can be addressed.

### 1.3. Scope and Methodology

The scope of this research is two-fold – including both a quantitative assessment of representations of femininity in the British broadsheet news cycle and, at its core, a qualitative discourse analysis of such representations. The quantitative aspect of this research identifies the patterns to be taken up qualitatively and, hence, acts as a gateway for qualitative analysis.

British national newspapers are typically divided into two “camps”: the tabloids and the broadsheets. The tabloids are traditionally associated with a working-class readership, and are seen to be more entertainment-focused, more biased and “low-brow” (Richardson, 2007; Temple, 2008; Zottola, 2021, pp.56-57). The broadsheets, on the other hand, appeal to middle to upper-class readerships, have a more political and economic focus, and tend to be viewed as “high-brow” (*ibid.*). Critical linguistic research on British newspapers typically focuses on the tabloids or a mix of tabloids and broadsheets (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013; Baxter, 2018; Bednarek, 2006; Childs, 2008; Clark, 1998; Fowler, 1991; Richardson, 2007; Temple, 2008; van Dijk, 1991; Zottola, 2021). This study’s focus on the broadsheets alone is motivated by their emphasis on political events and journalistic “integrity”. Broadsheets position themselves as the elite of the print news media and as the guardians of so-called “good”, reliable journalism. This provides them with a legitimacy and authority that places them in a powerful position to disseminate hegemonic discourse because the discourse that they (re)produce is likely to be taken up as a “common sense” way of seeing the world. The broadsheets’ ability to influence gendered social practice and public discourse is, therefore, significant.

Using the online database, Nexis, broadsheet news articles that include representations of femininities were collected to produce a dataset of articles from 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 until 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The topics and social actors that dominated this dataset, as well as any significant marginalisation, were then quantified. This provided insight into what women and which issues of femininity were seen as newsworthy and, therefore, revealed many of the gender values of the broadsheets. Within such topics, the gendered discourses that were dominant in representing femininity were also identified so that attitudes and values that shape sociocultural understandings of femininity could be gauged. This guided the subsequent qualitative analysis, which provides in-depth insight into these attitudes and relates them to the social, political and cultural climate of the UK today, applying feminist critical discourse analysis (henceforth, FCDA). The bulk of the present

thesis is thus made up of a detailed discourse analysis of broadsheet representations of femininity, using the quantitative data as an entry point to identify the gendered patterns.

#### **1.4. Research Aims and Questions**

The aim of this research is to investigate whether broadsheet news articles update, maintain, or undermine hegemonic femininity in order to further or impede certain political agendas.

This aim is addressed through the following research questions:

- (1) Which women/nonbinary/GNC people or issues related to femininity are dominant in the broadsheet news cycle, and which are marginalised?
- (2) What types or expressions of femininity are positively evaluated and what types are negatively evaluated?
- (3) How does this representation relate to the political agendas of each broadsheet?

The third research question, in particular, requires drawing comparisons between the broadsheets with different political alignments. Hence, throughout the analysis, comparisons between newspapers will be made in order to identify both convergences and divergences in the representation of femininity that can be related to the shift to the right in British politics today.

#### **1.5. Thesis Overview and Outline**

This chapter has provided a general introduction to this thesis. [Chapter Two](#) will provide a comprehensive model for hegemonic femininity that can be applied by other feminists and scholars. It will first outline Gramsci's (Hoare and Nowell-Smith, 1971) theory of 'cultural hegemony', which is applied to gender through Connell's (1987) concept of hegemonic masculinity. This forms the theoretical backdrop for the concept of hegemonic *femininity* – in which this thesis is grounded. Hegemonic femininity will be defined and explained using Schippers' (2007) definition. The processes involved in producing hegemonic femininity will then be expanded on through the concept of interactional identity formation (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). The processes of dominance and marginalisation will then be presented through the lens of intersectional feminist theory, examining hegemonic femininity's relationship to heterosexuality and trans-exclusion, race, ableism and capitalism. The use of postfeminism as a means to update hegemonic femininity for contemporary audiences is then proposed.

[Chapter Three](#) situates this research within the theoretical and methodological framework of FCDA. First of all, two central tenets of FCDA – the concepts of 'discourse'

and ‘power’ – are defined. Then the critical methodological perspective of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is outlined, as it forms the backbone of FCDA. Next, Lazar’s (2007, p.145) model for feminist CDA is described as a form of ‘analytical activism’ that embraces and furthers feminist strategies for resistance and change. The limitations of FCDA are addressed in this study through its supplementation with Baxter’s (2003; 2008; 2010) feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis (henceforth, FPDA). Together, I present FCDA and FPDA as a hybrid methodological framework in which the qualitative analysis that makes up the bulk of this thesis is situated.

In [Chapter Four](#), I explain my methods of data collection and selection that produced the dataset analysed in this thesis. I describe how I used Nexis to find relevant news articles and outline the process of organising the dataset into topics/social actors and gendered discourse. I then give an overview of the quantitative results, showing which topics and social actors dominated the news cycle and which gendered discourses were most pervasive. These patterns were used to guide the qualitative analysis. Finally, I address the limitations of this methodology. Chapter Four thereby offers a detailed breakdown of the data and methods used to collect and categorise broadsheet news articles for discourse analysis.

Chapters Five to Eight make up the FCDA/FPDA analysis of the key findings identified in Chapter Four. Chapters Five and Six analyse the dominant discursive representations of Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, whose campaigning for Scottish independence from the UK and criticism of the Tory government provided insight into the ideological underpinnings of the broadsheet newspapers. Articles on Sturgeon were the most dominant in the dataset, and I identified two dominant gendered discursive framings of her leadership: the Strong Woman Leader ([Chapter Five](#)) and the Iron Maiden ([Chapter Six](#)). [Chapter Seven](#) analyses a case that was particularly dominant in the reporting of sexual violence during the data collection period: the tragic abduction, rape and murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Metropolitan police officer in March 2021. This chapter analyses how this case was represented through the discourse labelled ‘women are victims.’ [Chapter Eight](#) explores the two dominant discourses produced in representations of a significant marginalisation identified in the dataset: transgender identity, specifically transgender femininity. These discourses are labelled ‘trans rights are dangerous’ and ‘trans rights are under threat.’

Finally, [Chapter Nine](#) summarises the key findings of the qualitative analysis, identifying similarities and differences in the broadsheet's representations of femininity. It outlines some of the key contributions to feminist theory and language and gender research provided through this study, and addresses some of its limitations. Lastly, I make suggestions for further research and recommendations for the future of both feminism and journalism in the UK.



## **Chapter 2: Hegemonic Femininity, Intersectional Feminism and Postfeminism**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to outline the theory that forms the foundation for the present study. This theory is a key contribution to the field of language and gender, and to feminist thought more broadly. It draws on a range of feminist literature to create a model for hegemonic femininity that explains both dominance and marginalisation, and is designed to be applicable across disciplines and, potentially, beyond academia.

This chapter will first present Connell's (1987; 1995) influential theory of hegemonic masculinity, which provides the jumping-off point from which to explore the concept of a relational hegemonic femininity. The theory of hegemonic femininity will be expounded on through the application of Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) framework for interactional identity formation, which is used to demonstrate the processes at work in the production of dominant and subordinate gender identities. Intersectional feminist theory is then brought in to explain precisely *how* the institutional power relationships within femininity, which produce hegemonic femininity, are negotiated. Note that much of this theory is taken from the feminist second-wave. The second-wave was the catalyst for a more intersectional feminism and many of the debates of this period remain relevant today, including the critique of the exclusionary practices of mainstream feminism. Finally, the ability of hegemonic femininity to adapt to cultural shifts through the appropriation of (certain) feminist tropes is examined, focusing on how the individualisation of feminism has enabled its exploitation through the concept of postfeminism. By presenting a comprehensive theory of hegemonic femininity, that exposes the power relationships amongst women and within feminism, this chapter fills a gap in language and gender research and extends current concepts.

### **2.2. Hegemonic Masculinity**

Before discussing the concept of hegemonic masculinity that forms the foundation for the concept of hegemonic femininity, it is critical to further define the term 'hegemony' itself. The concept of 'cultural hegemony' was first proposed by the Marxist Antonio Gramsci (Hoare and Nowell-Smith, 1971) to explain the continued dominance of capitalism (see also Lears, 1985 and Montiel McCann, 2021). In the early twentieth century, with Marxist ideology an established economic and social concept, many communists were perplexed by

continued acceptance of capitalist social organisation and the lack of communist revolutionary fervour from the working-classes. Gramsci's theory of hegemony argues that the maintenance of capitalism has become persuasive, as opposed to coercive (Hoare and Nowell-Smith, 1971, p.156; Lears, 1985). In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci (Hoare and Nowell-Smith, 1971) proposes the theory that capitalist dominance is maintained culturally, through a process of naturalisation through which capitalism is represented as a "common sense" way of organising the world. Gramsci argues that education is vital to encouraging the heterogeneous masses into accepting this perception of capitalism – as the ruling classes have control over education, and other institutions such as government, they are able to disseminate their capitalist worldview to the lower classes. In short, the working masses are culturally indoctrinated into conceiving of capitalism as the only workable mode for social organisation. This means that they are more likely to accept their subordination as they believe that capitalism is the "natural" order of things and, therefore, ultimately unchallengeable. In other words, Gramsci (*ibid.*) argued that the maintenance of class oppression is achieved through the 'consent' of the oppressed themselves (Lears, 1985, p.569). Consequently, power is *cultural*, as well as political and economic (*ibid.*, p.572).

R.W. Connell (1987) was the first to apply the concept of hegemony to gender, through the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity'. Connell (*ibid.*, p.300) defines hegemonic masculinity as 'the maintenance of practices that institutionalise men's dominance over women', and certain other masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity can be interpreted, therefore, as the materialisation in gender practice of patriarchal ideology, insofar as it legitimises social practice which enacts male group dominance and expects female group subordination. Connell's concept has since been a driving force behind research concerned with the deconstruction of masculinity and the patriarchal status quo because of the argument that hegemonic masculinity depends on power relations *amongst* men, as well as between the presumed "separate" categories of women and men. For example, one of Connell's (1987; 1995, p.78) main arguments is that hegemonic masculinity is closely connected to heterosexuality, and this has been supported through research conducted by Benwell (2003). Benwell's critical discourse analytic study concluded that men's magazines perpetuate and nurture dominant cultural ideals of masculinity. In images featuring a male model, Benwell noted that the model was consistently positioned in confrontational and aggressive stances, which she argued was a manifestation of anxiety over the 'undifferentiated male gaze' (*ibid.*, pp.156-161). Benwell suggested that this representation diminished the possibility of men

being viewed as an object of homoerotic desire from the male audience. This indicates that the language and visual symbols within the magazine were actively manipulated to convey discourses of heterosexual masculinity which distanced representations from ‘contamination’ by homosexuality.

This reveals the dominance of the heterosexual ideal in discourses of masculinity, and the role of language in reproducing it, which is further corroborated in another critical discourse analysis of a Greek men’s magazine *Nitro* (Kosetzi and Polyzou, 2009). In this study, ‘the male sexual drive’ discourse, which takes for granted that ‘men will do anything for (always heterosexual) sex’, was a recurring theme. This feeds directly into a broader ‘gender differences’ discourse, which supports the gender binary by representing men and women as innately different to one another in ways that are complementary to each other (see also Serano, 2016). This presupposition of heterosexuality supports both Benwell and Connell because heterosexuality in *Nitro* was so naturalised that any other sexuality was necessarily ‘marked’ and marginalised. Both of the above magazine studies demonstrate that media is active in its representations of masculinity and strives to broadcast a heterosexual “norm”. This (re)produces power relations among men through the erasure and “othering” of homosexuality, demonstrating that hegemonic masculinity relates to power relations both between and within genders. Men who are attracted to other men are perceived to be tainted with femininity through the presupposition of the gender difference discourse, which presupposes that attraction to men is a natural female trait that complements men’s own “natural” attraction to women. Men with “feminine” traits are therefore depicted as lacking masculinity (Barthel, 1992; Connell, 1995). The exclusion of representations of homosexual masculinity implies that gay men are not really men at all and reproduces the “common sense” discourse of gender difference which itself reproduces the gender binary that works to normalise patriarchy. Hence, gender dominance is not just a matter of gender identity, but also of sexuality.

Yet, it is important to note that stereotypically “feminine” practices are found in mainstream representations of masculinity, such as the use of beauty products. Benwell (2003) explains that the rise in the 1990s of ‘New Lad’ culture was a direct response to the 1980s ‘New Man’, who embraced his “feminine” side in ways such as showing concern over his appearance and an interest in fashion. The ‘New Lad’ countered this by reasserting features of traditional masculinity (e.g. through a reassertion of the ‘heterosexual drive’). Yet, it could not reject outright the ‘New Man’, whose image was profitable for the (capitalist)

beauty industry and popular with feminists, who had ridiculed traditional representations of masculinity for celebrating male domination. To avoid attack from the increasingly significant feminist movement, assertions of hegemonic masculinity (such as heterosexual prowess) were combined with tolerance for more feminist-friendly discourse. Hence, traditional masculinity was combined with the more feminised masculinity of the 'New Man'.

Another example of the negotiation of feminist influence in the construction of hegemonic masculinity is found in a series of narrative interviews conducted by Murgia and Poggio (2009). In this study, men who had requested paternity leave in Italy reported being the subject of ridicule from their male managers. Murgia and Poggio argued that this resulted from the supposed femininity associated with childcare. The masculinity of employees was called into question through their perceived contamination by femininity, which reduced their identity value in the eyes of their superiors. This negative attitude demonstrates the policing of masculinity – certain individuals gain hegemony by bringing under scrutiny the practices of others, and so position their own gendered social practice as the norm and others' as deviant. The managers orientated their employees towards a feminine identity which marked their actions and reproduced heteronormative ideas about "correct", or authentic, masculinity. The male employees were implicitly encouraged towards traditional and essentialist enactments of masculinity and gender difference (which deem childcare outside of the male realm) through the implication that this would increase their value in the eyes of those who hold material power over them. Once again, the subordination of certain masculinities is motivated by a perceived contamination by femininity. In this instance, the desire to nurture and care for a child subordinates these men in the eyes of their employers because it challenges the model for binary gender that dictates that this desire is a feminine one and that femininity and masculinity must be inherently oppositional.

Yet, it is both useful and profitable to encourage men to foster a concern about their appearance, just as it is pragmatic for a manager to obey the law when it comes to paternity leave. So, both practices are taken up, but in ways that do not undermine existing dominant attitudes regarding masculinity. Advertisements for male "grooming" products are careful not to represent the male models as sexually available for male audiences and changes in Italian law which encourage active fatherhood are tolerated, but not embraced. Consequently, patriarchal ideology (embodied through hegemonic masculinity) is 'recuperated' through the accommodation of certain counter-hegemonic forces, like feminism (Hanke, 1992, p.197). By

including *elements* of feminist critique (Gill, 2016, p.620), such feminist praise for the more emotionally-sensitive ‘New Man’, the feminist agenda as a whole can be discarded and it becomes possible to give the impression of change, which reduces resistance to the hegemonic construction and permits the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy to continue under the radar.

### **2.3. Hegemonic Femininity**

The studies discussed above demonstrate the subordinate status of femininity in Western society, as men perceived to be enacting femininity are themselves subordinated to those embodying an idealised masculinity. However, Connell’s original theory has been criticised because of its neglect of femininity. Connell (1987, p.302) originally stated that ‘the concentration of social power in the hands of men leaves women with limited scope to construct institutionalised power relationships with other women.’ In other words, women have no agency over their own relationships to one another. Implicit in this is the presumption that *all* women *always* lack power, which is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, this presumes that gender is the only influencing factor on power dynamics – neglecting the roles of race, sexuality, ability, class and ethnicity, which are all power systems salient in Western society and which all impact on and interact with gender identity. Secondly, it implies that women do not try to resist their subordination. This neglects women’s roles in social and political liberation movements, such as feminism, the LGBTQ+ movement or black civil rights movements. Additionally, this original aspect of Connell’s theory begs the question: what do women do when they are together away from men? If (as is widely accepted within critical linguistics) in every linguistic act there is a performance and negotiation of discourse and identity, surely women must experience power relations as they perform identity amongst themselves (Baxter, 2018; Butler, 1990; Coates, 1998; Fairclough, 1995; Foucault, 1979; van Dijk, 2005).

This neglect of femininity in Connell’s model has led to a lack of research into the power dynamics that influence the practice of femininity. In her radical philosophising of gender as performance, Judith Butler (1990, p.2) argued that the term ‘woman’ can no longer be understood in stable terms because there is so little agreement about what constitutes a woman. Though it may be questioned whether there was ever a time in which the term ‘woman’ represented a fixed entity, Butler raises a crucial point: women are not a homogenous group of inverted male identity, a mere negative to a masculine positive. To talk about gender, particularly to talk about patriarchy, such reductionist conceptions must be

abandoned (Schippers, 2007). It is inconceivable to think that the only active participants in the patriarchal organisation of Western society are men, because this neglects the men who lack power as well as the women who have power. Ussher (1997, p.441) argues that ‘fantasies of femininity are aimed at and consumed by women and girls in fairy tales, romance fiction, teen movies, adverts’ and so on. As hegemonic masculinity is fed to male audiences as a ‘script’ of acceptable ways for men to behave, the same is done to women to indoctrinate them into their subordinate role. As with any fantasy, the participants can either play along or deviate from the script. Consequently, by studying this ‘script’, theorists can uncover and deconstruct the ‘institutionalised power relationships’ at work among women.

Connell did later acknowledge the shortcomings of their original theory and called for future work to ‘refocus’ on femininity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Schippers (2007, p.95) subsequently provided the following definition for hegemonic femininity, taken up for this research: ‘the characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and *complementary* relationship to hegemonic masculinity, and so *guarantee the dominance of men and the subordination of women*’ (emphasis mine, c.f. Montiel McCann, 2021). Here, Schippers makes clear that a certain type of femininity gains hegemony through complicity to the ideals on which hegemonic masculinity is based – which are patriarchal. Thus, the women who are afforded power in society are those who do work to uphold patriarchy – i.e. those who stick to their patriarchal script. This is where the notion of complementarity is critical. Just as Gramsci’s concept of hegemony argues that the working-class must ‘consent’ to their subordination for capitalism to remain dominant, so too must women ‘consent’ to their own subordination. The ‘gender difference’ discourse mentioned earlier imbues the belief that women’s role is different to men’s role and is naturalised through the gender binary. Thus, women are given power over their realm, distinct and separate from men’s realm. Women are encouraged to compete against each other for the limited amount of power distributed to them by the patriarchal system – leaving some women subordinated, not just to men, but to other women.

The terms and processes involved in these relationships will be discussed shortly, but here a brief example of the ways in which femininity can be monitored amongst women is presented. Connell (1995, p.78) argued that hegemonic masculinity stems from a ‘successful claim to authority’. This ‘authority’ is the power to police the actions of others – to change their behaviour through the discursive positioning of them as subordinate or other. For instance, Guendouzi (2001) noted that, in conversations amongst communities of practice of

women and girls, there was significant engagement in ‘bitching’. Participants mobilised discourses of comparative competition to assess and undermine the social capital of their absent peers. Guendouzi suggests that this provided a way for the women and girls to demonstrate their own worthiness of social capital. This indicates that participants believed that they had the authority to pass judgement on others. Guendouzi consequently reveals the active policing of behaviour among women and girls. Consequently, it is clear that power relations do exist amongst women and that femininity, like masculinity, is organised in a hierarchical way, but in a way that does not undermine the overall dominance of men.

#### **2.4. Hegemony, Identity and Assemblage**

The processes by which power relations among women are reified (made to seem concrete or real) can be understood through the application of Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) concept of interactional identity formation. Bucholtz and Hall’s definition of identity refers to the social positioning of the self and other. Essentially, participants in interaction discursively produce their own and each other’s identity by orientating towards/away from macro-level demographic categories, local cultural positions, and interactionally specific stances and roles. Thus, hegemonic gender roles gain their status through their relation to other gendered identities in interaction, as well as by relating to wider socio-political categorisations. This can be seen with hegemonic femininity – which gains power through its complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity.

Bucholtz and Hall (*ibid.*, pp.599-602) outline a set of indexical processes which create semiotic links between linguistic forms (in text and talk) and social meanings, contributing to the production of a coherent identity. They are as follows: 1) ‘adequation’ – referring to the similarities between what is being signified (in text or talk) and other groups/individuals. For example, the representation of heterosexual men across men’s magazines reflects the process of adequation by representing heterosexual masculinity as reflective of masculinity on the whole – i.e. of all men. The counterpart to this is ‘differentiation’, referring to the representation of identity as different, or other. For instance, the absence of representations of homosexual masculinity marks gay men as different from the (heterosexual) norm and thus removes them from power through marginalisation. It is not that gay/bisexual men do not exist, but that the dominance of the representation of straight men creates the illusion that the existence of gay men is an anomaly. 2) refers to ‘authentication’, defined as the processes by which speakers make claims to realness. For instance, in Kosetzi and Polyzou’s (2009) study of *Nitro*, they found a recurring subdiscourse centring on the identity construction of ‘real

men’, which framed certain characteristics as authentically male. ‘Denaturalisation’ is the reverse process, by which identity is viewed as false. For example, femininity practices in men were ridiculed in *Nitro* through their representation as unnatural. Finally, 3) refers to ‘authorisation’ – the affirmation of an identity by the social structures of institutionalised power and ideology, and ‘illegitimation’ – the dismissal of identities by institutional power structures. These structures refer to any system which establishes hierarchical modes of practice (e.g. the law-maker and the citizens who must obey the law; the reporter who holds the information and the audience who receive it; those in government and ordinary citizens). These processes and terms will be applied throughout this study to explain the social and cultural formation of hegemonic and subordinated femininities.

However, whilst moving forward with Bucholtz and Hall’s theory, it is crucial to examine the notion of ‘identity’ itself. The term ‘identity’, like the term ‘woman’, takes for granted a stable, singular orientation to a specific category. Such categorisations are often demographic and therefore defined by institutionalised systems of power, such as by governments through census-taking. These categories are consequently at risk of being inferred as mutually exclusive – arguments can be formed that you cannot be both Muslim and British, or black and Jewish, or macho and gay. The influential second-wave feminist Audre Lorde (1996d, p.168) encapsulated these issues when she said: ‘I find I am constantly being encouraged to pluck [...] one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole.’ Lorde laments that, in order to be understandable to others, she must place herself into a rigid, and ultimately restrictive, category. Similarly, the late queer Latinx artist González Torrez said, ‘we – the “other” – have to accomplish ritual, exotic performances to satisfy the needs of the majority’ (quoted in Esteban Muñoz, 1999, p.166). Both González Torrez and Lorde share identities that were marginalised by the culture in which they lived – they were people of colour, queer and anti-establishment. González Torrez describes the process of categorisation, ridiculed by Lorde, as one that is used by the dominant class to regulate and sanitise subversive identities (i.e. those which would otherwise undermine hegemony).

Yet, identity is consciously and unconsciously shifted according to context and audience, meaning that the concept of a fixed identity is problematic. These issues have led theorist Jasbir Puar (2007, p.211) to argue that we should break away from identity politics and instead employ the term ‘assemblage’ to acknowledge the ‘dispersed but mutually implicated and messy networks that make up an effective conglomeration that recognizes



other contingencies of belonging.’ That is to say, an ‘assemblage’ represents the many shifting ways that we may relate to various demographic categories, cultural positions, stances and roles. Audre Lorde, for example, was a self-proclaimed black feminist lesbian poet – refusing to be restricted to only one mode of being or one battle for validation. In the use of ‘assemblage’, the idea of ‘performance’ is taken up and that of the ‘meaningful whole’ abandoned. Puar argues that identity politics demand knowing and naming the self which is, in fact, never stable. It assumes components, such as age, race, class, gender and so on, are separable analytics that can be disassembled (*ibid.*, p.212). Yet, as we can see in the quotes from Lorde and González Torrez, this involves the sacrifice of some other part of oneself and can reproduce unequal power structures by limiting what “self” is authorised in social interaction (Räthzel, 1997). Indeed, the notion of stable identity itself feeds into cultural hegemony by applying categorisations whose boundaries are defined by the powerful and (dis)empowered through institutionalisation – i.e. authorisation or illegitimation. Consequently, the term ‘assemblage’ better describes the multiplicity of our orientations, and can better illustrate the inconsistencies and contradictions in our understanding of gender. However, the term ‘identity’ will still be used throughout this thesis when referring to the categorisation of people according to pre-defined categories.

## **2.5. Intersectionality: The Categorisation of Assemblage**

This paper takes up Puar’s concept of assemblage whilst maintaining that intersectionality is a valid mode of cultural analysis. The distinction between an ‘assemblage’ and ‘identity’ as referred to in intersectional theory is consequently important to define. An ‘assemblage’ refers to the sense of *self* and how it is variously *performed* at the level of the individual. ‘Identity’ is the process of *categorisation* by institutional structures in any given society (e.g. the UK government which categorises the British population according to ethnicity, gender and marital status). ‘Intersectionality’ refers to the dependability of externally-defined categories (i.e. identities) on each other for meaning. The theory of ‘intersectionality’, first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989; 1991), is defined in this study as the theorisation of overlapping systems of oppression, with social categorisations all contributing to the upholding of one another. Thus, gender is inseparable from race, sexuality, ability and class, necessitating that the study of one includes the others. The term ‘intersectionality’ is therefore a good signifier of the ways that categories are mobilised by power structures to manipulate and regulate assemblages. If ‘assemblage’ refers to the complex blending of our many co-existing (and often contradictory) modes of belonging, then ‘intersectionality’ remains valid

in that it enables the critical examination of the external, institutionalised power structures which impose 'identity' (as singular, knowable, isolatable) onto us. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) make clear that our performed selves are shaped by external bodies – we stylize our performances in interactions in part according to demographic categories and definitions, and in part according to what has been deemed culturally acceptable. 'Identity', in this sense, remains a valid term insofar as it refers to the demographic – the clinical categorisation of population, which is removed from the internal workings of the self. In other words, 'identity' is the attempt to place order onto chaos – to simplify the complex and personal and make it political. Intersectional theory studies this political mapping of assemblage – the process by which demographics of ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, and so on, are imposed onto a person so that they may be indoctrinated into their social role (Räthzel, 1997).

In what follows, the different ways of imposing gender identity onto an assemblage are explored through the analysis of systems of compulsory heterosexuality, trans-exclusion, white supremacy, ableism and class. Through this, the "logic" behind the concept of hierarchical femininity can be exposed in a way that is understandable to the reader, whilst acknowledging that the process of categorising and labelling cannot reflect individual assemblage.

### **2.5.1. Compulsory Heterosexuality (Rich, 1980)**

The second-wave feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s was the catalyst for intersectional theory as those left on the margins of the movement exposed its reproduction of unequal power systems. These criticisms of the second-wave mainstream feminist movement expose that institutionalised power relationships do exist among women. The women's liberation movement that took off in the early 1960s was criticised in the following decades for its exclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) women (Bunch, 1997, p.422). In 1970, the group 'Radicalesbians' published an open letter ridiculing the women's movement for going to 'great lengths to avoid discussion and confrontation with issues of lesbianism' (published in Blasius and Phelan, 1997, p.398). The derogation of lesbianism – whether through the rejection of lesbian issues as feminist issues, or through the ridicule of the sexual practices of many queer women – is demonstrative of the marginalisation of the queer community that pervaded society on the whole.

In her influential essay, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', Adrienne Rich (1980) became one of the leading voices criticising the denaturalisation of

lesbianism in society. Rich argued that the 'bias of compulsory heterosexuality renders the lesbian existence invisible, deviant [and] abhorrent' (*ibid.*, p.632). She defined compulsory heterosexuality as the 'institution of heterosexuality [which] is a beachhead for male dominance' (Rich, 1980, p.633). Rich connected the patriarchal dominance of men to heterosexuality, and thereby implied that women's own heteronormative behaviour was directly linked to the maintenance of their own subordination. 'Heteronormativity' refers to the authentication of heterosexuality in society, where it is taken for granted as the norm. Women were represented throughout popular culture at this time as existing purely for the male heterosexual gaze (Berger, 1972). Such representations censured lesbian sexuality by presupposing that women must always value themselves according to their desirability to men. This reproduced the 'gender difference' discourse, which maintained that there were separate spheres for women and men which centred on the nuclear family – where men are active (c.f. the 'male sexual drive' discourse identified in Kosetzi and Polyzou's [2009] study) and women passive, where the husband goes out to work and the wife stays home to care for the children. Even feminists who criticised the notion of separate spheres, like Simone de Beauvoir (1949/1997) and Betty Friedan (1963/2010), marginalised the lesbian existence by casting it as either reactionary and circumstantial, or outright repugnant. In fact, the statement from the Radicalesbians quoted above was directed at the policies of the National Organisation for Women (NOW), headed by Friedan. Both Beauvoir and Friedan failed to see that the cult of domesticity that they railed against – the restriction of women to the domestic sphere – was also a product of compulsory heterosexuality. The neglect of the 'lesbian existence' in the mainstream feminist second-wave was thus reproductive of patriarchal social structure. As with hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity played a crucial role in the socialisation of women into hegemonic gender roles defined and constrained by the gender binary. This demonstrates the pervasiveness of hegemonic femininity by showing that it even extended into counterhegemonic movements, like feminism.

Furthermore, studies in language, gender and sexuality demonstrate how LGBTQ+ erasure continues to have an impact on constructions of femininity. An ethnographic study by Eckert (1996) on schoolgirls in junior high showed that heterosexuality is positioned as a means towards social acceptance – the popular girls in school were those who had had boyfriends. Eckert labelled this phenomenon the 'heterosexual marketplace', through which children learn how to negotiate identity in a way that will gain them social capital.

Heterosexuality is described by Eckert as a social imperative, drawing on Rich's theorisation of compulsory heterosexuality, which transitions boys and girls into a heterosexual social order and brings them into 'mutual and conscious engagement with gender differentiation' (*ibid.*, p.184). Eckert shows that heterosexuality is directly linked to the patriarchal concept of the gender binary as it is the vehicle which drives gender difference, naturalising the belief that women and men are innately different to one another in ways that complement each other. Thus, hegemonic masculinity and femininity come into being, with the girls who orient towards heterosexual femininity being rewarded with popularity and power over the girls who fail to embody such behaviour (Montiel McCann, 2021).

More recently, Saraceno and Tambling (2013) conducted a quantitative image analysis of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, categorising images according to physical touch and comparing the degrees of intimacy among same-gender and mixed-gender groups. They found a consistent and significant bias towards representing intimate touch among mixed-gender groups, suggesting that heterosexuality is hegemonic in magazines and homosexuality is subordinated through lack of representation. Hence, the erasure of lesbian existence criticised by Rich remains valid today. The fact that in school, work and in the media, lesbian and gay identity is erased shows the prevalence of the heterosexual ideal throughout our lives. Lesbianism is rarely represented as an option, meaning that when it is represented it remains marked or othered. It remains that the dominant, naturalised (through 'authentication'), 'adequated' version of femininity is heterosexual. Women gain hegemony through their complementary relationship to men and this is encouraged throughout their lives through the system of compulsory heterosexuality, which itself works to naturalise binary (cis)gender.

### **2.5.2. Trans-Exclusion, 'Effemimania' (Serano, 2016) and Moral Panics**

In light of the above, the exclusion of LGBTQ+ women from both society on the whole and the women's movement must be expanded on further, with emphasis on the marginalisation of transgender women ('trans women' for shorthand). Trans women are women who are assigned a male sex at birth, but who align more with femaleness in their assemblage. 'Cisgender' (or 'cis') refers to people who are not transgender, whose gender identity aligns with the sex that they were assigned at birth based on their reproductive organs, and who 'have only ever experienced their subconscious and physical [gender] as being aligned' (Aultman, 2014; Serano, 2016, p.12). Cisgender identity is naturalised through the gender binary itself – the concepts on "women" and "men" as inherently separate, immutable

categories that are aligned to sex, and through which certain characteristics are attached, is unmarked and normalised in Western society (Aultman, 2014, p.61; Lennon and Mistler, 2014). Hence, cisgender women hold a dominant position over transgender women and men, and nonbinary trans people.

Trans-exclusionary radical feminists (or ‘TERFs’, as they are popularly referred to) demonstrate how feminism can be taken up in a univocal and didactic way in itself to reify hierarchies among women, in which cisgender women are privileged. Sheila Jeffreys is one TERF who has launched a vicious attack aimed at the trans community, arguing that trans identity is motivated by ‘a despised homosexual sex’ (Jeffreys, 1996, pp.81-82). In other words, Jeffreys believes that the primary reason for transitioning gender is latent homophobia – ‘a terror surrounding feelings of love for members of the same sex’ (Lorde, 1996b, p.99). She suggests that trans women transition because they are unable to accept the stigma attached to being a gay man and so they take the drastic step to socially and/or medically transition to a female gender in order to have the privilege instilled in heterosexuality. The problem with such arguments is that trans people are often those most discriminated against in society and so it is hard to believe that one would transition in order to benefit from a more hegemonic identity (Faye, 2021; James, Herman, Rankin, Kiesling, Mottet and Anafi, 2016; Montiel McCann, 2022; Murchison, Agēnor, Reisner and Watson, 2019; Powell, Scott and Henry, 2020; Serano, 2016; 2021c). For example, a recent study found that 41 percent of trans people in the UK had experienced a hate crime or incident within the past year, one quarter had experienced homelessness and 28 percent faced domestic abuse from a partner (Bachmann and Gooch, 2018). The assumption that trans people who choose to transition in order to obtain privilege is therefore extremely dubious and also neglects the existence of lesbian trans women and gay trans men – which Jeffreys fails to acknowledge. Indeed, Jeffreys’ critique is rooted in the mapping of gender onto biological sex. Jeffreys clearly believes that the only people who can claim to be “women” are those with vaginas, ovaries and appropriate levels of oestrogen and she therefore reproduces the very same essentialist gender binary that she claims to abhor. Wilton (1996, p.130) points out that TERFs, such as Jeffreys, ‘have developed a particular form of determinism whereby gender is seen as originating in [...] sexual [in the erotic sense] regimes of subordination’

Trans-exclusion is, consequently, reproductive of hegemonic femininity as it actively subordinates the needs of certain women to the needs of superior or more ‘authentic’ women, reproducing the hegemony of the gender binary where gender is tied to biological sex (genitalia, gonads and hormones). Not only does this neglect the existence of intersex people, but it also reproduces dominant concepts of femininity that maintain its subordination (Fiennes, 2019, p.15). In Julia Serano’s (2016) *Whipping Girl*, she coins the term ‘transmisogyny’ to refer to the misogyny (the derision of femininity) that trans women face. Serano (*ibid.*, p.15) states: ‘in a male-centred hierarchy [...] where it is assumed that masculinity is superior to femininity, there is no greater perceived threat than trans women, who despite being born male and inheriting male privilege “choose” to be female instead.’ Serano highlights, not only how deviation from hegemonic femininity and masculinity is marked and subordinated in society, but how trans women in particular face misogynistic subordination for their perceived failure to embrace hegemonic masculinity. Likewise, their transness cannot fulfil the ideals of hegemonic femininity either because, through the very act of transitioning, they have rejected their complementary and oppositional role. The presumed dominance of masculinity is contrasted to the presumed passivity and docility of femininity, and gender difference discourse dictates that to “crossover” is unnatural (as exemplified by Kosetzi and Polyzou’s 2009 study). Trans identity fails to conform to the hegemonic gender binary, which is authenticated through hegemonic femininity and masculinity that reify ‘oppositional sexism’: the belief that women and men are inherently separate, opposing categories that possess unique and non-overlapping attributes and characteristics’ (Connell, 1987; Schippers, 2007; Serano, 2016, p.13).

In particular, Serano (2016) shows how trans women’s treatment by society, including the media, exposes the denigration of femininity in society, where it is assumed to be contrived, frivolous and manipulative (Litosseliti, 2002, p.133) – for instance, the use of beauty products by women is denigrated for being deceptive, whilst male “grooming” products are not seen as deceptive but as part of the maintenance of one’s natural features. Similarly, though women can adopt normatively masculine gender practices (such as wearing trousers), the male adoption of normatively feminine gender practices (such as wearing dresses) is highly policed, exposing femininity’s subordination to masculinity overall. Trans women are, consequently, perceived as *hyperfeminine* – i.e. even more artificial and manipulative than cisgender women because of their presupposed innate masculinity that is being “hidden”. Serano (2016, p.133) labels the preoccupation with trans femininity in the

media and medical establishments as ‘effemimania’, arguing that the desiring for femininity that some trans women are perceived to have is pathologized due to ‘traditional sexism’ that holds up maleness and masculinity as superior. Trans femininity is thus denaturalised and othered in society because of its disruption of both oppositional and traditional sexism, whilst trans identity itself is subordinated due to its disruption of oppositional sexism.

Issues of trans exclusion and representation are particularly pertinent at the time of writing, as trans rights are attacked and undermined on a global scale (Baker, 2021; Lewis, 2019; Serano, 2021). Political discourse in the UK has been especially preoccupied with trans rights as a “culture wars” issue, with the British press largely responsible for setting this tone through the platforming of TERF perspectives (Baker, 2021; Lewis, 2019; Montiel McCann, 2022). The marginalisation of trans people in the UK has been enabled by the production of a ‘moral panic’ by the British news media. Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009, p.35) argue that moral panics involve ‘the behaviours of some of the members of a society’ being perceived as ‘wounding’ the society at large, justifying moves to ‘control the behaviour, punish the perpetrators, and repair the [alleged] damage’. Goode and Ben-Yehuda (*ibid.*, pp.37-41) outline five elements that create a moral panic: ‘concern’ over the behaviour of the targeted group (i.e. trans women); ‘hostility’ toward that group; a ‘consensus’ in the society as a whole, or certain aspects of that society, that the “threat” is real; ‘disproportion’ in that the size or scale of the supposed threat is exaggerated; and, finally, ‘volatility’ – meaning that moral panics erupt fairly suddenly, usually taking away attention from other socio-political issues.

An example of how the moral panic surrounding trans rights has been used to further marginalise trans people in the UK can be found in the debate surrounding the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) (Hines, 2010). The GRA is an act that is supposedly designed to authorise transgender identity by allowing people to legally change their gender (i.e. on birth certificates, passports and the like). In fact, the GRA enshrines into the gender recognition process hegemonic gender practices that reproduce oppositional sexism. Through the GRA, a transgender person must submit their case to be reviewed by a Gender Recognition Panel made up of legal and medical professionals, including psychologists. The individual must have a diagnosis of ‘gender dysphoria’ from a medical or psychiatric “expert” on this so-called mental illness (*ibid.*). Hence, enshrined into the institutional process of identification are pathologizing discourses that actually denaturalise, “other” and subordinate trans identity to cisgender identity. Plus, the “two-year rule” dictates that transgender practice must

conform to hegemonic binary expectations, as anyone who wants to have their gender legally recognised must prove that they have “lived” (i.e. performed) as their gender for two years, meaning that hegemonic expressions which dictate that femininity involves artificiality (wearing makeup and heels, for instance) are reproduced. This reveals how binary gender and oppositional sexism are authorised and authenticated in the UK, whilst trans, GNC and nonbinary identities are denaturalised, differentiated and illegitimated. Recent promises to reform the GRA to address these issues were attacked in the British press and have since been scrapped by Tory governments in favour of doubling down on anti-trans political rhetoric (Gendered Intelligence, 2019).

Due to the identification of ‘effemimania’ and ‘transmisogyny’ by Serano (2016; 2017) as particularly revealing of the subordination of femininity in society, and the pervasiveness of transphobia in the UK in particular, trans women’s representation in the news media will be examined closely throughout the present study as a particularly subjugated femininity that is ridiculed both by men and amongst women, as evidenced by the vigorous determination for trans-exclusion from TERFs.

### **2.5.3. White Supremacy and White Feminism**

In this section, another contribution to hierarchical femininity will be discussed – distance from whiteness. In Western society, where racism is embedded in social and political structures, it is inevitable that proximity to whiteness gives a huge advantage to individuals negotiating their public ‘identity’ (Räthzel, 1997; van Dijk, 1991). To return to Audre Lorde for definitions, racism is the ‘belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others, and thereby the right to dominance’ (Lorde, 1996b, p.99). In the case of Western society (specifically the UK and the USA), the supposed ‘inherently superior’ race is the white, Anglo-European race (Hill Collins, 2002; Fowler, 1991; Lethabo King, 2019; Lugones, 2010; Räthzel, 1997; van Dijk, 1991). White supremacy thus refers to the hegemony of the white identity, or the privileging of whiteness (Lethabo King, 2019).

Once more, by referring back to the second-wave feminist movement, and the dominance of the white perspective within the women’s liberation movement, a holistic understanding of how race relates to gender (in particular, to femininity) can be gained. Angela Davis (1982, p.6) argued that the ‘contributions of women of colour are ignored, distorted and misunderstood’ within the feminist movement. The women’s movement of the second-wave had thus far been defined by Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963/2010) and



its challenge to the cult of domesticity. However, the oppression that Friedan was prevailing against was framed by her as an oppression affecting all women, whilst ‘women’ were defined through her exclusively middle-class, heterosexual, white-American lens. bell hooks (2000a, p.16) explains the latent racial privilege of Friedan’s viewpoint, arguing that ‘white women may be victimized by sexism, but racism enables them to act as the exploiters and oppressors of black people’. In the presentation of the ‘feminine mystique’ – the ideal of womanhood that embodied the cult of domesticity – Friedan neglected to realise the privilege concealed in such issues. For not every woman was able to stay at home in the idealised domestic role. In fact, many women were the breadwinners for their family, and many earned their living through work as domestic cleaners or nannies in other (white) people’s homes (Hill Collins, 2002; 2005; hooks, 2000a; Lorde, 1996b; 1996d). To these women, the ideal of domesticity was an economic impossibility.

In Patricia Hill Collins’ (2002, p.76) discussion of the role of ‘controlling images’ in the subjugation of women, she suggests that the cult of domesticity was an image embedded in the institutional dominance of whiteness, which cast white femininity as pure, pious and submissive. Though certainly limiting to women who were encouraged into such categories as a means to regulate their behaviour, such images were also key to the creation of a deviant femininity that is highly racialised. Controlling images of black and Latinx women were contrasted against the dominant white stereotype – being heavily sexualised, objectified and, consequently, dehumanised (Espín, 1992; Hill Collins, 2002). The housewife was a white image, key to maintaining the oppression of white women at this time by containing them to a separate sphere from the male public realm, but also key to permitting their hegemony. This construction of womanhood was produced as the ideal because it complemented hegemonic masculinity, which indicates that patriarchy itself is white supremacist (hooks, 2000a). Women who could conform to the domestic image were granted subjectivity and limited power through adequation and authentication. To rail against this image on the grounds of gender oppression, and yet ignore its racist implications, is to fight only part of a battle with an aim of gaining emancipation for white women only. This marginalisation of women of colour by white women remains visible in wider society and within feminism today. Media representations of women continue to be steeped in stereotypes (Baxter, 2018; Xue and Ellzey, 2009), but the most represented stereotype continues to be white. Even when women of colour are represented, it is often through racialised controlling images that emphasise a deviance from the ideal of hegemonic (i.e. white) femininity, and such images impact how

women of colour are perceived and treated in society. Hence, the women's liberation movement actually reproduced several of the characteristics of hegemonic femininity by excluding women of colour from its ranks and thereby denying them the right to fight for their own freedom from sexist power structures.

Such images impact how we gender ourselves and how we gender others. In a study interviewing second-generation Asian-American women, Pyke and Johnson (2003) found that participants felt that their American peers viewed them as hyper-feminine – a stereotype often directed at Asian women (Yamada, 2015). In turn, the participants viewed American-born women as having more equality, power and independence compared to Asian women. Pyke and Johnson (2003) concluded that participants displayed the tendency to construct two cultural worlds as monolithic opposites. The mainstream-American was perceived to be gender-equal, with the ethnic-Asian perceived as gender-oppressive – demonstrating that the power dynamics within gender are framed through a narrative of race. Schnurr, Zayts and Hopkins (2016), in a study on trailing spouses in Hong Kong, also found evidence of the racialized privileging of white Western women. The women in their study had given up their own careers to follow their husbands to Hong Kong for their work – which can be seen as placing them in a stereotypically feminine position of passivity, docility and domesticity (Litosseliti, 2002, p.133). Yet, the participants resisted such framings and attempted to reclaim agency. One method of doing so was to resist or distance themselves from the label *tai tai* – a woman who lives off of her wealthy husband's money. Participants' resistance to this framing appears to draw on a strict dichotomisation between Hong Kong culture and their own Western culture. This suggests that the participants viewed themselves as above subordination by virtue of their Westernness, which they clearly perceived to grant them gender-equality by default (reflecting views shared by participants in Pyke and Johnson's study). Thus, Asian women are viewed as being more docile and passive than American women, enabling the expatriates to characterise themselves as more powerful by framing their narrative as one of choice. Participants in this study projected the subordination and passivity associated with the housewife role onto Asian women and therefore re-positioned it as an Asian characteristic. This in turn freed them from association with powerless positions – hence, their “empowerment” comes, not from resistance to patriarchal dominance through their husband's role as breadwinner, but through the subordination of other women.

The stereotypes above of Asian femininity as hyperfeminine work to infantilise Asian women by presupposing that they are hyper-docile, failing to embody hegemonic femininity

by taking its passivity to the extreme. It also reveals how institutionalised power relationships exist *among* women, as some women use their whiteness to claim a more gender-equal (i.e. powerful) identity, paradoxically subordinating other women in the process. On the other hand, black women have traditionally had to battle the stereotype of being masculinised. Controlling images that function to justify oppression have represented black women as mules since slavery – as able to carry heavier burdens than their white counterparts and as being somehow more resistant to both emotional and physical pain (Hill Collins, 2002). Harris-Perry (2015, p.31) notes that the myth of the “Strong Black Woman” creates specific expectations for black women’s behaviour and functions to justify and perpetuate inequalities through the presupposition that black women need or want less “help”. She goes on to explain how the myth of black women as hypersexualised has historically worked to justify and excuse male sexual violence against black women under the harmful argument that they are somehow “asking for it” (*ibid.*, p.58). For white women, on the other hand, their vulnerability and presupposed innocence has historically been used to subordinate black men through myths of the black male rapist. As Lorde (1996d, p.166) states, ‘white women have the pitfall of being seduced into joining the oppressor under the pretence of sharing power.’ White women gain hegemony by complementing hegemonic masculinity, which is also white. Thus, they mobilise this shared characteristic to gain power, which enables them to subordinate women *and* men of colour.

#### **2.5.4. Ableism and the Body**

Controlling images, such as the ones described above, are a good avenue into explaining the hierarchical nature of femininity. Through the process of elimination, it can be seen relatively easily which social groups are subordinate and which are hegemonic. Above, it has been shown that LGBTQ+ women are both erased and misrepresented in representations of femininity, and women of colour are either erased or placed into racialised stereotypes. Another crucial absence in representation is the disabled woman. Issues of ability are connected to issues of gender because some of the central debates of modern and contemporary feminism are centred on body image and the impossible standards constructed by the media that restrict women’s role and stigmatise variations from the pre-conceived “norm” (Garland-Thomson, 2008, p.17). For instance, white-washed beauty standards – such as long, straight hair, light skin, white-western facial features – are completely unattainable unless you are white, or spend a lot of money on the things that you can change to make you appear whiter (Hill Collins, 2002; Espín, 1992). Similarly, disabled people often cannot

change the fact that they are disabled – they may be born with a disability or develop one later in life – and are thereby marked because the dominant/hegemonic image is of able-bodied, physically fit women (McRobbie, 2009). However, the failure to address disability within the feminist second-wave and beyond has not seen the same level of criticism as the failure to include women of colour, for instance. This demonstrates the extent of disability erasure in society, as the issue struggles to gain traction even within counterhegemonic areas of society.

Though Bê (2020, p.423) points out that the movement for disability justice was active contemporaneously with the feminist second-wave, with the social model of disability developed in the 1970s, there was little collaboration between movements and disabled women were often excluded from feminist debate. The controlling images criticised by the second-wave consistently displayed women as passive – they were there to be looked at and acted on, but never to act themselves (Berger, 1972, pp.53-55). This is a construction compounded by narratives of compulsory heterosexuality – implied in female passivity is complementary male activity in both the sex act and social role. Such idealised images of women encouraged them to accept their subordination and are therefore oppressive. Geller (1992) argues that disabled people share in this stereotype of women by being cast as passive and submissive. In fact, Garland-Thomson (2008, pp.19-20) argues that femaleness and disability have been conflated in Western culture as defective departures from the standard male/able body and mind. Disabled women are hence doubly passivated – they are viewed as inherently subordinate as women and as disabled people. This results in a process of infantilization whereby the disabled body is essentially unsexed (Wilkerson, 2008). The disabled assemblage is seen as fundamentally unerotic because dominant understandings of eroticism rest on discourses of able bodies – the sexually attractive female is young, fertile, thin, toned and mobile (Geller, 1992; McRobbie, 2009; Munter, 1992). Consequently, disabled bodies are overlooked in the construction of gender because the gender binary is tied to notions of sex-based (in the biological sense) gender difference, which in turn rests on heteronormative discourses of sex (in the erotic sense). In other words, constructions of gender identity are inextricable from sexuality which, in dominant Western culture, is built around physicality: what the body does and how it is attractive to others. This is especially true for women (Berger, 1972; Hill Collins, 2002). Disabled women are consequently subordinated to hegemonic femininity because they are perceived as unable to fulfil their complementary gender role due to this infantilization.

In addition, as there has been a medicalisation of disability, there too has been a medicalisation of gender and femininity. For instance, the medicalisation of childbirth, the enforced surgical assignment of sex onto intersex babies, or, as Audre Lorde (1996a) details in her ‘Cancer Journals’, the pressure for those who have had a mastectomy to have reconstructive surgery or use prosthetics to normatively perform femininity through the presence of breasts (Garland-Thomson, 2008, pp.21-26). Such instances show how the institution of medicine is used to encourage conformity to hegemonic gender, erasing or “fixing” those bodies that do not meet the ideologies of gender, sex and ability. Indeed, many of the oppressions faced by disabled people are those that the feminist movement has long been aware of and has critiqued – such as the enforced sterilisation of (primarily) poor women of colour. Yet, the experiences of disabled mothers and birthing people has been neglected (Malacrida, 2020, p.486). Women and nonbinary people with disabilities too have their rights to bear children heavily scrutinised and often denied due to their perceived inability to fulfil the feminine ideal of the nurturing mother who takes on all of the childcare (Garland-Thomson, 2008; Malacrida, 2020; Wilkerson, 2008). Donaldson (2008), in their reimagining of the classic piece of feminist literary criticism *The Madwoman in the Attic* (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979), also highlights how hysteria has long been identified as a feminine weakness of mind that polices, through othering, female excess – whether of sexuality, emotion, or rebellion. Linking such controlling images to lived experiences of those with mental illness, Donaldson demonstrates how both are policed in society – mental illness is pathologized and subordinated and is, in turn, used to subordinate women who do not conform to gendered expectations (as shown in the pathologizing of transgender identity: [2.5.2.](#)). The notion of “excess” is particularly used to denigrate black and Latinx femininities through controlling images of hypersexuality. People with both physical and intellectual disabilities are often infantilised and denied agency, which is mirrored in the above research that shows how Asian femininity is seen as hyper-passive and disempowered (Wilkerson, 2008, p.196). Disability thus adds another layer of oppression onto gender that renders disabled women as fundamentally othered from the hegemonic feminine standard.

Despite these clear parallels between ableist stereotypes and sexist ones, the disabled body is often overlooked in feminist resistance as critiques over the sexualisation of women’s bodies often neglect to examine the inherently ableist implications of such representations (Bê, 2020; Garland-Thomson, 2008; Malacrida, 2020). As explained in the previous paragraph, being doubly passivated means that disabled women are cast as lacking the

maturity necessary to be sexually available and are accordingly unsexed in both senses of the word. Even contemporary images of women, which take feminism as a cultural reference point, erase the disabled female body (McRobbie, 2009, p.12). As Yamada (2015) argues, referring to the stereotyping of Asian femininity, the hyper-passive image extended to certain women permits the misconception that such women are not concerned with politics and thus need not be included in the debate. This in turn works to justify their exclusion. The infantilization of the disabled body/mind is thus used to erase disabled people from political movements. In fact, Geller (1992, p.166) argues that feminism often broadcasts its own controlling image of autonomy and independence that is problematic when we consider the ‘very realistic need for help that disabled and aging women need.’ This controlling image is operative of a myth that powerful women are physically able. Disabled women are consequently neglected by both mainstream culture and feminism because they do not conform to dominant images of women as either sexually available or powerfully independent.

#### **2.5.5. Capitalism and Class**

The reification of oppression in society – how women, GNC and non-binary people, members of the LGBTQ+ community, people of colour and disabled people are rendered powerless – is an economic matter. For example, it can be safely concluded that women are oppressed in Western society by looking at the gender pay gap. For instance, female lecturers in British universities are paid on average fifteen percent less than their male counterparts (Grady, 2019). On the other hand, the progress of the feminist movement since the early twentieth century can be traced in economic terms. Previously, through laws of inheritance, women were made destitute and relied on their fathers or husbands for financial support. Today, women are in the workplace at levels never seen before and it is very common for women to have successful careers. Yet, there remains a gender pay gap, workplace harassment (leading to the contemporary ‘Me Too’ movement), and a glass ceiling, indicating that women are still an oppressed group.

Now, looking in a similar way towards the general economic status of people of colour, the oppression of this group is also clearly visible. Beginning with the slave trade, it is easy to see the economic oppression of an entire black population at this time in the USA and in British and other European colonies – slaves were used for forced labour, fundamentally boosting the economic power of white colonialists and the white population more broadly. Fast forwarding to the contemporary UK, Reni Eddo-Lodge demonstrates the continued

economic oppression of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities. Referring to the 2011 census, Eddo-Lodge (2018, p.176) demonstrates that black people, and especially black women, are more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts in the UK. Eddo-Lodge's *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* (*ibid.*) has been ground-breaking in its focus on racism in a British context, when racism is often framed in the popular narrative through a North American lens. Eddo-Lodge proposes that class has always been crucial to the way Britons see themselves, but explains that our current image of the working-class is purposefully outdated. The image of the working-class as predominantly white and male, typically invoking the image of a male labourer and apparent in sociolinguistic work on nonstandard speech (e.g. Trudgill, 1974), is from an age that is demographically very different to the UK of today. However, it remains a useful tool for right-wing political parties to mobilise the 'divide and conquer' rise to power (Lorde, 1996e). In the 2019 election, the landslide victory for the increasingly far-right Conservative party was largely attributed to the mobilisation of a heavily racialised narrative, framed by Brexit (Baxter, 2018, p.150; Zappettini, 2021). By reproducing the narrative that the economically oppressed in the UK are white men, right-wing politicians can hide their classist agendas under the guise of helping out the white working-class underdog and stoking racial tensions through a constructed narrative that identifies immigrants and people of colour as responsible for the subordination of white working-class people, rather than capitalism (Wodak, 2021).

In fact, despite what this controlling image would have one believe, the working-class in the UK is an ethnically diverse group. Tracing the spread of gentrification under Tory rule (which involves privatisation and the reduction in affordable housing in favour of "luxury" new builds aimed at the middle-classes), Eddo-Lodge explains that it is predominantly BAME Britons who suffer. If the image of the working-class was updated to be more accurate, Eddo-Lodge (2018, p.201) suggests that women of colour would be placed in the mainstream of the political debate. This would be counter-productive for the socio-political agenda of Tory Britain, however, which must erase women of colour from the narrative to avoid coming under fire for its sexist and racist policies, such as austerity. Since 2010, austerity has seen cuts to domestic and sexual violence services of nearly £7million, including the closing of women's shelters (Faye, 2021, p.54). This places vulnerable women in ever more dangerous situations, often forcing victims of domestic violence to remain with their abusers due to economic necessity (Olufemi, 2020, pp.25-28). Thus, controlling class images represent a process of adequation which constructs a narrative of the UK as a white

country, perpetuating the hegemony of white women by virtue of their race, and foregrounding an image of the working-class as white male, hiding the class oppression of women of colour and further marginalising people of colour.

Additionally, economic status is linked to the institution of heterosexuality – itself dependent on the institution of gender for meaning (Rich, 1980). Once again this can be shown by looking back to women's previous dependence on men for economic security, where marriage was the main route available to women for financial stability (de Beauvoir, 1949/1997; Friedan, 1963/2010; Rich, 1980, p.654). Today, though women are increasingly financially independent, compulsory heterosexuality is still prevalent in images associated with class. The controlling image of the white working-class man described by Eddo-Lodge is an image grounded in heteronormativity – the man is the breadwinner, and his economic struggles thus a source of embarrassment as he fails to fulfil his role as the supporter of his family. It is through this narrative, which foregrounds the suffering of the nuclear family, that the white working-class man is represented as deserving of sympathy because of his obligation to financially care for his family. Compare this to the controlling class images outlined by Hill Collins (2002), such as that of the black single mother. In this stereotype, racialised connotations of laziness background the suffering of the family and foreground the actions of the woman, who is perceived to be taking advantage of the system to claim benefits and avoid work, thereby justifying a lack of sympathy and the lack of resources available for such women, and contributing to the heteronormative myth that single parent families are ineffective or indicative of some sort of failure (*ibid.*, pp.76-88).

Moreover, Kevin Floyd (2009, p.209), in his queering of Marxism, identifies gentrification as detrimental to queer communities. Floyd argues that queer people often create ghettoised safe spaces, both physically and socially apart from the oppressive 'heteronorm'. According to Floyd, these spaces are increasingly the targets of gentrification. He argues that this leads to the 'spatial dispersal of queer people' in a way that 'neutralises collective practice and privatises collectivity out of existence' (*ibid.*). Thus, once again, the 'divide and conquer' routine is clear. By displacing and separating marginalised communities through gentrification, there is a reduced chance of highly organised, collective resistance. Gentrification and austerity also further marginalise disabled women who may be unable to work, as their benefits are slashed and adequate, affordable housing is reduced. The middle-class focus of Friedan's feminism can too be seen as the gentrification of the women's movement as resources are directed to a feminism that works for the liberation of middle-



class white women through access to high-ranking, corporate (i.e. capitalist) careers. hooks (2000a, p.89) explains: ‘the women’s movement does not hold up working-class women as examples of power because their power and strength are not synonymous with economic power.’ This reveals how feminism itself, when grounded in hegemonic femininity as the definition of “woman” (Butler, 1990, p.2), can itself become appropriated to further capitalist power systems through the notion that gender equality lies in access to individual power and wealth. Accordingly, the potential disruptive power of counter-cultural movements is drastically undermined by the pervasiveness of class, which works for the exclusion of minority groups and reifies the hegemony of white, heterosexual and non-disabled people who have access to the most resources.

## **2.6. The Adaptability of Hegemonic Femininity**

In the final section of this chapter, Demetriou’s (2001) argument that hegemonic masculinity appropriates aspects of counter-culture in order to maintain dominance and detract subversion will be explored in relation to hegemonic *femininity*. It is argued that mass media, as a neoliberal capitalist institution, is the primary vehicle for the appropriation of feminism into the mainstream (Fairclough, 1995; McRobbie, 2009). Firstly, how the modern feminist critique of popular and hegemonic images of women has affected media representation will be assessed. Then, the late modern absorption of this critique and the subsequent re-branding of feminism (labelled ‘postfeminism’) is explored to establish the context for the present research.

### **2.6.1. Modern Feminism and the Media**

The second-wave feminist movement did motivate cultural shifts that led to the general departure from the sort of representation critiqued by Friedan, which placed women in the limited role of the private, or domestic, sphere. For example, Goldman (1992) argued that the feminist critique of such controlling images did bring about change in the representation of women in adverts. Yet, Goldman clarified that such shifts were present only at the surface level of representation, and did not apply to a shift in the material values of advertising companies – producing a phenomenon that he labelled ‘commodity feminism’. Goldman (*ibid.*, p.130) suggested that advertising techniques had begun to incorporate the ‘cultural power of feminism’, while ‘domesticating’ its criticism of mass media. ‘Commodity feminism’ is, therefore, the ‘splicing together’ of characteristics associated with feminism – such as empowerment and independence – with the capitalist consumer narrative of

femininity (i.e. the emphasis on appearance), effectively reducing feminism to an ‘iconography of things’ (Goldman, 1992, p.131).

It is important to pause here and acknowledge what is implicit in Goldman’s argument – that femininity lends itself to commodification, or a ‘consumer narrative’. As hegemonic femininity must remain complementary to hegemonic masculinity, and discourses such as the ‘male sexual drive’, it takes for granted that a woman’s appearance is the most valuable aspect of her ‘self’ (Berger, 1972, p.46; Montiel McCann, 2021; Serano, 2016, pp.60-63). Thus, the fashion and beauty industries make astonishing amounts of money by targeting women and girls (McRobbie, 2009, pp.54-90). Note that this indicates that patriarchy is indeed dependent on capitalism for the reification of its ideology in everyday life. Accordingly, to commodify feminism is to place it within, rather than against, the patriarchal narrative of hegemonic femininity. This is exemplified in a study by Lazar (2014) on jewellery adverts directed at women. Lazar found recurring themes of independence and agency in such adverts, including slogans declaring ‘I always have a CHOICE’ (*ibid.*, p.222). Lexis like ‘choice’ foreground characteristics valued by feminism, such as autonomy and agency. Yet, Lazar (2014, p.206) problematized such phrasing for indexing feminism in a way that contained its ‘radical political critique’. Feminist lexical signifiers are mobilised to index not politics, but jewellery, and thus feminism continues to be reduced to an ‘iconography of things.’ The adverts studied by Lazar establish a narrative of feminism in which female empowerment and the transformative goal of feminism is achieved through purchasing power. Though there is a shift away from the construction of femininity as dependent on men towards a femininity which foregrounds women’s desire for independence, hegemonic values are merely disguised as feminist. The only difference is that now women are told that their consumption is an expression of their own autonomy and empowerment, rather than an effort to make themselves appealing to men in the pursuit of the heteronormative goal of marriage (McRobbie, 2009; Montiel McCann, 2021). Feminism is consequently depoliticised as ‘a collective movement for social change’ and re-presented as ‘an individual lifestyle choice based on endless consumption’ (Lazar, 2014, p.222). Through a shift in indexicality, the semantic field of feminism has been relocated to a less subversive meaning so that women can feel that their position has changed without acknowledging the inequalities that they still face (Montiel McCann, 2021).

### **2.6.2. Postfeminism: The New Hegemonic Femininity?**

It is this commodification and individualisation of feminism by the media that has produced what has been labelled ‘postfeminism’. Furlong and Cartmel (2007, pp.2-3) explain that late modernity has led to a socioeconomic change in society which has weakened collectivist traditions and intensified the individualist values shown in Goldman’s and Lazar’s studies. This phenomenon gives the impression of greater equality, without any real substance (*ibid.*, p.9). The ‘socioeconomic change’ mentioned by Furlong and Cartmel is ‘neoliberalism’, which involves the de-regulation and extension of free market principles into all aspects of social life (Gill and Kanai, 2018, p.320), and this is the driving force behind the phenomenon of ‘postfeminism’. Litosseliti, Gill and Favaro (2019, p.2) note that postfeminism is a contested term, but themselves advocate for the understanding of it as a sensibility where feminism is ‘taken into account’, whilst simultaneously being undermined. In line with this, postfeminism is defined by McRobbie (2004, p.255) as ‘the active process by which second-wave feminist gains have become undermined, which draws on feminism in a way that suggests that equality has already been achieved.’ Implicit in the adverts described by Lazar is that there is no need for activist feminism as all women already have the (purchasing) power to buy jewellery and reach the state of independence and autonomy that the adverts promise. Hence, postfeminism gives the illusion that we already live in a feminist society and thereby undermines any feminist critique of that society.

Popular representations of femininity increasingly embrace a neoliberal sensibility that focuses on the celebration of lifestyle and consumption choices whilst also drawing on aspects of second-wave feminist discourse, such as female empowerment (Budgeon, 2011, p.281; Gill, 2016, p.623). Gill (2007) argues that a ‘postfeminist sensibility’ involves an entanglement of both pro- and anti-feminist themes. As second-wave feminist gains (such as the mass entry of women into the workforce) are taken for granted, they are simultaneously undermined through their reconceptualization as matters of individual success rather than collective actions. Feminism is made popular and attractive by moving away from the pessimistic imagery of the second-wave feminist “killjoy” or “man-hating” feminist (Budgeon, 2011; Gill, 2016, p.618), and the shift towards and optimistic celebration of all things feminine. However, this actually enables the maintenance of current power systems as women are encouraged to find their ‘empowerment’, not through radical social change, but through consumption and individual, corporate success which can be achieved through heightened self-surveillance. Writing ten years later, Gill (2017, p.609) argues that both

neoliberalism and postfeminism have tightened their hold on contemporary culture, ‘becoming virtually hegemonic’. This is crucial in terms of understanding postfeminism as a means of *updating*, rather than merely maintaining, hegemonic femininity. By celebrating a certain *kind* of corporate, neoliberal “feminism”, in which feminism is conceived of as women’s individual success (Budgeon, 2011, p.287; Gill, 2016, p.623), postfeminist discourse is able to reinforce characteristics of hegemonic femininity, such as consumerism and the emphasis on difference from (and complementarity to) hegemonic masculinity, whilst appearing to embrace feminist discourse. Gill (2016, p.613) reveals that, though feminism may appear more visible now than ever before, current visibilities in popular culture are uneven – with activist, grassroots and anti-capitalist feminism backgrounded in the media in favour of the representation of feminism on an individualised basis. This creates the illusion that the structural gains of the second-wave have been unproblematically achieved and that women’s current issues and concerns therefore lie within themselves (Gill and Orghad, 2017), rather than in the structuring of society. Criticisms of the feminist second-wave, as explained in the sections above, which encourage a more intersectional movement, can then be superficially factored into postfeminist representations of femininity (i.e. through diverse representation), but left devoid of their radical socio-political critique, thereby updating hegemonic femininity by re-presenting its characteristics (i.e. consumerism, concern over appearance, and the desire for heteronormative relationships) as individual *choices* rather than the result of patriarchal socialisation.

This process of “neoliberalisation” of a counter-hegemonic movement to relocate it *within* (rather than against) hegemony is not, however, restricted to feminism. For example, Puar (2007) puts forward a convincing theory of ‘homonationalism’ – where white, cis, gay men are assimilated into the mainstream patriarchal and heteronormative culture of the USA and the UK (e.g. through rights to marriage) to give the impression that these countries are liberal and equal societies. This hides the ‘spatial dispersion’ mentioned by Floyd, and the many other oppressions still faced by the LGBTQ+ community, and allows the USA and UK to adopt a moralistic position which can then justify their imperialist actions in places like the Middle East. It enables countries like the UK to assume moral superiority over other cultures, reinforcing and updating their racial superiority and justifying their right to dominance. Hence, the individualisation of late modernity enables the appropriation of *counterhegemonic* movements, including feminism, to update hegemony in order to undermine criticism of, and challenges to, the status quo. Farris (2017) presents the concept of ‘femonationalism’ as an

example of how feminism can be used to maintain white, Western dominance. Femonationalism represents Western nations as enjoying “gender-equality” and embracing feminism, which is then used to justify the subordination of non-Western nations and non-white people, for instance by presupposing that all Muslim women are oppressed by “backwards”, patriarchal Muslim men. Consequently, white-Western neo-colonial ventures, such as the war in Afghanistan, can be justified as “liberating” missions designed to “save” Muslim women (*ibid.*, Frisk and Gillette, 2019; Hancock, 2015). The women in Schnurr, Zayts and Hopkins’ (2016) study positioned themselves within such a femonationalist narrative by presupposing their independence from their husbands by virtue of their Westernness, presuming that Eastern culture is inherently gender-oppressive and thereby inferior. Such ethnocentric binaries are justified through the discourse of feminism as indicative of a liberal (and so morally superior) culture.

Just as hegemonic masculinity has been updated to include aspects of feminism, hegemonic femininity has been updated to include (post)feminist rhetoric. By transforming feminism away from a collective political movement, and into the individual successes of individual women, feminism can be appropriated into white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, giving the illusion that the privileges available to white, heterosexual, cisgender, non-disabled and materially-privileged women are available to *all* women (Montiel McCann, 2021). As social life operates increasingly at the level of consumption in late modernity, women and other oppressed groups are re-socialised into a ‘consumption norm which neutralises radical action’ (Floyd, 2009, p.51). Through neoliberal capitalist discourse, women who are unhappy with the way that the system treats them are made to feel that they can buy the empowerment and agency that they seek – thereby being manipulated into feeding, and even revering, the very system that oppresses them. As with the homonormative, alliances are fractioned away in favour of the reproduction of class and racial norms (Puar, 2007, p.31). For the postfeminist, unity with other women is lost as allegiance is sought with the mainstream – such as the allegiance to whiteness implicit in the actions of the women in Schnurr, Zayts and Hopkins’ (2016) study, or to capitalism through emphasis on entry into high level corporate careers. This allows for claims of progress at the same time as inequality is perpetuated. As McRobbie (2009, p.73) argues, the ‘postfeminist masquerade’ substitutes feminist solidarity for the ‘landscape of self-improvement’, undoing feminism by placing emphasis on constant, repeated and relentless self-monitoring filtered through consumerist discourse that is, in

reality, little different from the male-led monitoring of femininity railed against by second-wave feminists.

## **2.7. Summary: The Intersectional Model of Hegemonic Femininity**

Judith Butler (1990, p.4) states in *Gender Trouble* that ‘feminist criticism ought also to understand how the category “woman”, the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought.’ In the above chapter, the production of the identity “woman” has been laid out to demonstrate the many nuances and restrictions that shape it. This chapter has shown how controlling images of womanhood, which reduce and objectify women, also create a standard of femininity (i.e. hegemonic femininity) that must be met in order to be authenticated and authorised in society. Indeed, the ‘category “woman”’ may be understood as interchangeable with the term ‘hegemonic femininity’, as hegemonic femininity represents the mainstream production of the female gender role in a way that naturalises one fixed identity and marginalises other assemblages. It is this process of marginalisation that Butler implies the feminist movement is at risk of reproducing in its own conceptualisation of womanhood. Butler’s point, as I interpret it, is that, insofar as feminism seeks power through current structures and meanings, it can never be truly emancipatory.

This chapter has taken the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987; 1995) as a framework that can explain the production of “woman” as a complementary category that is dependent on patriarchal structures – ‘hegemonic femininity’. Expanding on this through the application of Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) model of interactional identity formation, a detailed framework for hegemonic femininity has been developed which recognises identity as the product of society constituted through the categorisation of assemblage by dominant social structures. Hegemonic femininity is, therefore, the expression of femininity that is adequated, authenticated and authorised. Moreover, the discursively-produced power relationships which shape our interactions and constitute subordinated and marginalised femininities were further explained as the process of differentiation, denaturalisation, illegitimation and through the application of intersectional theory. It has been shown that women and nonbinary people of colour, LGBTQ+ women and nonbinary people, disabled women and nonbinary people, and working-class women and nonbinary people are subordinated to a white, heteronormative, cisgender, non-disabled and materially privileged femininity that is hegemonic. Characteristics that complement hegemonic masculinity – like attractiveness to the male gaze, the desire for a monogamous heterosexual

(or at least heteronormative) relationship, passivity, consumption and the performance of femininity in hair, fashion and beauty choices – are privileged. Yet, by providing the illusion that social mobility can be purchased, that social inequality can be overcome through individual “graft” and self-improvement, neoliberal capitalism provides a distraction from politically engaged and collective struggles by offering an image of the Western capitalist model as structurally gender-equal, thus putting the onus on individuals to do self-work in order to overcome obstacles. Hence, women of colour, LGBTQ+ women, disabled and otherwise subordinated women can gain some levels of privilege providing that they do not challenge this complementarity to hegemonic masculinity (read: white supremacist capitalist patriarchy). Thus, subversion, otherness and assemblage are regulated, and hegemonic femininity is updated to incorporate elements of feminist rhetoric, but directed towards the ‘technology of the self’ that is at the centre of the neoliberal sensibility (Budgeon, 2011; Gill, 2016; Gill and Orghad, 2017).

The forthcoming data analysis and discussion aims to deconstruct representations of the category “woman” in broadsheet news articles so that previously taken for granted assumptions can be understood as products of discourse that may undermine or uphold feminist values according to the particular values of news media outlets. The above model of hegemonic femininity, that considers marginalisation and subordination, is operationalised in the following analysis through the application of Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) framework, which will be applied to investigate whether the broadsheet press update, maintain or undermine the hegemony of white, heteronormative, cis, non-disabled and capitalist femininity. In the next chapter, the theoretical and methodological framework for this analysis will be discussed so that the reader may follow the subsequent study and, I hope, engage in critical readings of their own.

# **Chapter 3: The British News Media and Far-Right Populism: A Feminist Critical and Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Approach**

## **3.1. Introduction**

The current chapter is divided into three sections. Firstly, I discuss the news media in the British context. This section explores the news media as a capitalist institution which holds significant social power and influence in British society, helping to shape public political debate. In the second section, I will relate the political influence of news media to the current political climate in the UK, and globally, in which the far-right has increasing influence. Exploring issues of fake news and far-right populism, I will explain how the landscape of mainstream news media has shifted in recent years, increasingly accommodating sensationalist reporting in order to compete against online news in an increasingly polarised political landscape.

In the final section, I will establish the theoretical and methodological framework for this research: feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA), supplemented by feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis (FPDA). I will first give an in-depth definition of ‘discourse’ and its relationship to power. Next, as FCDA is a type of critical discourse analysis (CDA), I will introduce CDA as a critical perspective and outline some key concepts of the approach: transitivity, intertextuality, and interdiscursivity. I will then move on to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of FCDA as a theoretical and methodological perspective. I explain how I counter the limitations of FCDA by supplementing it with FPDA to create a hybrid methodology that can capture the intertextual, interdiscursive and complex nuances of femininities and their representation in news media. Finally, I outline some of the analytical tools that I apply to aid the FCDA/FPDA analysis of newspaper articles: Baxter’s (2018) Feminist Agenda Spectrum and van Leeuwen’s (1996) model for the representation of social actors. In this chapter as a whole, British news media will be presented as a site of urgent research interest, and the mode of research will be justified as the most fitting method for investigating hegemonic femininity in the current political climate.



## 3.2. The British News Environment

### 3.2.1. The News

News media is of particular interest because of its political power – the news, whether televised, online, or in newspapers, is largely viewed as, and represents itself as, a public service designed to keep the public informed on important events of interest to society. It is thus perceived as a reflector of the world in which we live. However, what is reported in news media is not a mere reflection of reality, but is artificially produced according to a set of criteria which is guided by ideas and beliefs that maintain capitalist dominance (Fowler, 1991, p.1; Richardson, 2007, pp.86-93; Temple, 2008). News is not the product of the inherent importance of news events, nor is it the work of a single journalist, but rather it is the product of institutional, organisational and professional practices (Bednarek, 2006; Cotter, 2015, p.425; Fairclough, 1995; Fowler, 1991; Richardson, 2007).

Bednarek (2006, pp.16-17) informs us that news is produced according to ‘news values’: a set of institutionally produced criteria for the production of a ‘news event’ that classifies occurrences as news worthy according to measures of proximity and recency, but also according to the superlative nature of an event – i.e. its ability to fulfil stereotypes and the level of unambiguity that would enable the reproduction of culturally dominant discourse. In turn, journalists depend on a pool of official and otherwise authorised sources to provide and corroborate their news stories (*ibid.*; Fairclough, 1995, p.49; Richardson, 2007, p.91). Such sources include politicians, the police, scientific experts, scholars and so on. Hence, news is shaped by the elements in society that are already powerful (Litosseliti, 2002; Richardson, 2007, p.88). Consequently, news reproduces much of the language, and discourse, of elite and hegemonic institutions whose interest is in maintaining the status quo (Fowler 1991, pp.21-24; Richardson, 2007). Therefore, the news acts as a policing force in our society, dictating the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable social practice by representing certain events as ‘newsworthy’, erasing others, and placing those who deviate from the status quo under scrutiny (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). The power of news is subtle – it does not assert that it represents *a* version of reality that the public should buy into, it persuades us that it represents *the* reality that we must accept, or ‘consent’ to, as the “common sense” interpretation of the world (Hoare and Nowell-Smith, 1971; Kramsch, 2020).

The discourses that news (re)produces, then, are often also powerful precisely because they form part of a narrative that is represented as fact. Indeed, according to van Dijk (1991) and Fowler (1991), the aim of news is to generate consensus, or ‘socially-engineered group solidarity’ (Fowler, 1991, p.40). News media is consequently a powerful tool for the dissemination of discourse that helps to shape political debate in a society and maintain hegemonic systems of power. The news sets the political agenda by selecting and dictating to large audiences the topics and events that they should be aware of and concerned with. It can therefore influence how we vote, what issues are seen as significant in a society, what issues are ignored, and how we interact with our neighbours and fellow citizens (Bednarek, 2006; Fowler, 1991; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009; Temple, 2008). The ways in which news polices femininity – how it marginalises or privileges certain gender practices – can thus be taken as a key indicator of where hegemonic interests lie, as well as how they may have changed or adapted according to changes in news values over time. It also provides insight into the attitudes towards femininity and feminism that help to shape British society today.

### **3.2.2. British Newspapers**

Though Temple (2008, p.58) notes that there has been a steady decline in newspaper readership since the 1960s, newspapers still have a significant role in shaping political discourse and debate in the UK, and continue to be a source of political news stories and commentary for TV news. Though the rise of social media in the past decade or so has seen the print newspaper industry descend into further decline, newspapers have largely kept their position as the more in-depth producers of political discourse which can then be fed into the social media environment (*ibid.*) – for example, through newspapers’ own social media and web pages, and through increased circulation of articles via social media sharing (Chadwick, Vaccari and O’Loughlin, 2018; Waisbord, 2018). Hence, newspapers remain a key ‘strategic arena’ through which the struggle for political power takes place, and politicians and political commentators continue to use newspapers to disseminate their views by giving interviews, writing opinion pieces and providing information and statements to reporters (Temple 2008, p.132). Newspapers thus give insight into the relationship between certain issues, such as femininity, and politics, revealing the authorisation or illegitimation of certain identities, or meaningful challenges to the status quo.

The monopolization of the British press by just a few millionaires/billionaires is thus hugely significant. For example, media mogul Rupert Murdoch and his News Corporation media empire is largely held responsible for the right-wing bias of the British press (Temple,

2008; Richardson, 2007). The influence of one white man over so much of the British news environment highlights the capitalist interests of the news media as a business institution with a clear stake in maintaining the capitalist status quo to enable the continuation of profit, under the guise of a public service (Bednarek, 2006, p.13; Fairclough, 1995; Fowler, 1991; Richardson, 2007, p.77; Temple, 2008; Zottola, 2021, p.55). Indeed, Temple (2008, p.202) states that the British press is ‘one of the most partisan in the world’, biased towards the political right and conservatism in order to protect its own capitalist interests. Newspapers are, therefore, businesses that are designed to make profit, and so they must appeal to their readers as *consumers* (Richardson, 2007, p.77). Hence, journalists are not mere transcribers of events, but interpreters, as well as *entertainers* – in order to compete in the capitalist marketplace, newspapers must attract consumers and, so, news must be interesting and entertaining (Bednarek, 2006). The constructions of femininity (re)produced in newspapers can, therefore, reveal to us how gender may be used in order to further political agendas and appeal to particular audiences.

Though it is important not to overstate the power of newspapers over society, and to acknowledge that audiences are agentive and heterogeneous, it is my view that the British press clearly does wage some power in British society (Temple, 2008). Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009, p.89) argue that media ‘visualize’ deviance and publicise outrage that ignites moral panics which then have the potential to influence policy. The British press has been found to have influenced elections (Fairclough, 1995) and the Brexit referendum (Zappettini, 2021), and studies have shown that it is misogynistic (Baxter, 2018; Childs, 2008; Clark, 1998; Coates, 1998), institutionally racist (Baker et al, 2013; van Dijk, 1991) and anti-Semitic (Stoegner and Wodak, 2016). Fairclough (1995) offers an example of the power of news media in the UK by referring to the rise of New Labour in the 1990s. He notes that Tony Blair was elected to the Labour leadership only after most of the British press had effectively decided on him for the role (*ibid.*, p.1). In a more contemporary scenario, the opposite event occurred in the case of Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour. The press villainized Corbyn and constantly attacked his socialist beliefs, providing sensationalised and often false information in a manner reminiscent of Cold War paranoia over the “Red Scare” (Whittle, 2021). This arguably led to a moral panic surrounding “Corbynism” that caused Labour’s catastrophic election defeat in December 2019 (Deacon, Goode, Smith, Wring, Downey and Vaccari, 2019). Such cases demonstrate the selective and interpretive nature of the news, and reveal the values that may motivate the press to support or challenge a political leader, public

figure or particular issue. Indeed, the above studies demonstrate how such values align with hegemonic institutions of white supremacy and patriarchy. Clearly, the British news media has power to influence the knowledge, beliefs, and social actions of people, as well as shaping ‘government[s] [and] parties’ (Fairclough 1995, p.1). The British press, therefore, is a key site for understanding the manufacturing of consent to maintain capitalist patriarchal hegemony.

### 3.2.2.1. *The British broadsheets*

As mentioned in the Introduction (p.4), the UK’s national broadsheets are typically divided into the tabloids and the broadsheets. The tabloids are cheaper, more entertainment-focused newspapers whereas the broadsheets are more expensive and tend to focus on political and economic news more than entertainment (Temple, 2008; Zottola, 2021). Gender and language research on tabloid newspapers has found that reporting on sexual violence tends to avoid placing agency and, by extension, blame on male perpetrators and even shows sympathy towards the male perpetrators of intimate partner violence (Clark, 1998). Further research shows that sexist tropes are used to trivialise the presence of women in politics (Childs, 2008; O’Neill et al, 2016). However, the broadsheet press’ representations of femininity in news articles on such topics has not been thoroughly investigated, arguably contributing to the normalisation of sexist tropes in the broadsheet press. Hence, the scope of this study is focused on broadsheet representations of femininities with the aim of highlighting the constructivist nature of the news in these newspapers as well. The broadsheets included in this study are: *The Guardian* and its Sunday edition *The Observer*; *The Telegraph* and *The Times* (both published daily and in Sunday editions); and *The Independent* and the *I* (both published by *Independent Print Ltd*). *The Financial Times* is also a British broadsheet, but it is not included in the analysis because it is a specialist economist newspaper, whilst the other broadsheets are more general and so present an image of the news context in the UK beyond economic interests.

Each studied broadsheet is aligned with certain values and, consequently, is typically seen to fall on one side of the political divide. *The Guardian/Observer* is considered liberal and left-leaning, favouring “progressive” outlooks, investigative journalism and a focus on diversity (Baxter, 2018; Temple, 2008, p.69; van Dijk, 1991, p.9; Whittle, 2021). It does, however, lean towards centre-left because – as with all broadsheets – it has a predominantly middle-class and middle-aged readership and it does not consistently support the left-wing

political party in the UK, Labour, in elections (Richardson, 2007, p.80; Temple, 2008, pp.68-93). *The Independent* and the *I* are published by the same company, with the *I* being the shorter, sister newspaper to *The Independent*, aimed at a younger demographic. *The Independent* was previously labelled as conservative by van Dijk (1991, p.9), but is currently more aligned with the liberal, centre-politics, along with the *I* (Whittle, 2021). Though *The Independent* is now run entirely through its website and is no longer in print, it was included in the data analysis because it was a broadsheet print newspaper and its online content supports this style of journalism. As newspapers struggle financially against both the cheaper tabloids and online news websites it is not surprising that traditional broadsheets may well move to become exclusively online (Waisbord, 2018). Moreover, *The Independent* represents the “middle-ground” of the traditional print news media, being explicitly politically unaligned. Its inclusion ensures that the scale of political allegiance in the British news media is represented (Temple, 2008). *The Telegraph* and *The Times* have long been associated with conservatism and right-wing politics, both supporting the Tory government in the 2019 election and previous elections (Baxter, 2018; Fowler, 1991; Tavassoli, Alireza and White, 2018; Temple, 2008; van Dijk, 1991; Whittle, 2021). The varied political alignment of the included broadsheets provides the best possible representation of the British broadsheet newspaper environment.

Though newspaper readership has been declining for decades (Temple, 2008; Waisbord, 2018), these national broadsheets still have significant circulation, even in print. According to the *Press Gazette*'s explanation of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) figures (Tobitt and Majid, 2022), *The Guardian* had a circulation of 10,134 per day in the month of July 2021. Its Sunday paper, *The Observer*, enjoyed a circulation of 136,656 each Sunday of the same month. *The Independent*'s sister paper, the *I*, had a monthly circulation of 138,782 in November 2022 (*ibid.*). The ABC did not look at the circulation of *The Independent*, because it is not circulated in print. However, according to Statista (Watson, 2022), *The Independent* had a monthly reach of 28.1 million individuals from April 2019 to March 2020. Undoubtedly, this level of readership is due to it being published online and being accessible to readers for free. *The Press Gazette* cites ABC figures for March 2020 being 317,817 for *The Daily Telegraph* and 248,288 for *The Sunday Telegraph*. *The Sunday Times* had a circulation of 647,622 in March 2020, according to the ABC and over 365,880 readers a month of its daily edition (Tobitt and Majid, 2022). However, it should be noted that it is becoming increasingly hard to measure the circulation of the national newspapers in

the UK since the ABC announced that it would no longer publish figures automatically, leading *The Times* and *The Telegraph* to exclude their figures from publication in February 2021, with *The Guardian/Observer* following suit in September 2021. According to the BBC (2020a), this is the direct result of publishers' concerns over the 'negative narrative of decline'. Moreover, the rise of 'multi-platform' newspapers has seen all of the included newspapers develop their online platforms in response to the decline in print sales. It is therefore even harder to measure the reach of each newspaper as they will have a mix of regular print readers and those who may read several articles a month online, from one or several papers, without necessarily feeling any commitment to a specific publication.

Indeed, this fragmentation of newspaper audiences (Richardson, 2007), which has only increased in recent years as people turn to various web and social media news sources (Chadwick et al, 2018; Waisbord, 2018), has led to the argument that traditional news (on TV and in newspapers) has engaged in a process of 'tabloidization'. This refers to the increased focus on entertainment-focused stories and sensationalised articles. As broadsheets try to address the decline in readership, they increasingly market their own websites and social media pages and arguably engage in the tabloidization of the news that they report in order to compete against other news sources (Zappettini, 2021). What was of interest to me in this study was less the influence of the broadsheets in terms of circulation and more their influence in terms of establishing, maintaining or changing the public political discourse and whether they have become more prone to news sharing practices that are sensationalist and populist.

### **3.3. Fake News, Populism and Political Language**

#### **3.3.1. Fake News**

Since 2016, so-called "fake news" scandals have come to radically change the public's engagement with the news landscape (Chadwick et al, 2018; Waisbord, 2018). Fake news encompasses mis- and disinformation. Chadwick et al (2018, p.4257) define misinformation as '*unintentional* behaviour that *inadvertently* misleads', whilst disinformation is defined as '*intentional* behaviour that *purposely* misleads' (emphasis mine). Both the 2016 Brexit referendum in the UK and the US election later in the same year were rocked by accusations of fake news. For instance, the Brexit campaign in the UK was found to have spread disinformation through a now infamous slogan printed on the side of a bus that (falsely) declared that leaving the EU would 'necessarily free up £350 million a week for the NHS'

(Cassidy, 2020, p.56). Fake news has largely been associated with fringe media, or with Trump and his followers, where it is wielded as a weapon against any journalism that they deem unacceptable. Yet, cases such as the bus slogan scandal demonstrate how it can be used in mainstream politics to further political agendas through sensationalist claims and, therefore, has an impact on the news landscape as a whole and, indeed, on the politics of a nation (Sierra and Shrikant, 2020, p.205; Waisbord, 2018).

However, it is also important to note that, though 2016 saw the phenomenon of fake news enter into the mainstream public awareness (due to the cases of disinformation described above), campaigns of mis/disinformation have long been waged in news media and by politicians. For example, Temple (2008, p.133) makes a point of noting the use of “spin” by Blair’s New Labour government, and its use of disinformation regarding weapons of mass destruction supposedly held by Iraq to justify the UK entering into the hugely unpopular Iraq war. In George Orwell’s (1946/2003) famous essay on ‘Political Language’, he argues that political language is used to deceive the public into supporting inhumane and unjust actions, such as during the Second World War. This highlights one of the main uses for disinformation – to persuade a public into consenting to the will of the powerful by exaggerating, inflating, or distorting reality and visualising deviance to concentrate public outrage away from one target (i.e. Tory austerity measures that have seen the systemic defunding of the NHS) and onto another (i.e. the EU [Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009, p.23]). Political language may be viewed as a subtle, or coded, form of disinformation, designed to obscure the true aims and impacts of government policies or party manifestos in order to generate public support for domination.

Though political language and “spin” have existed for as long as politics, McIntosh and Mendoza-Denton (2020, p.7) argue that the rise of the internet and other digital technologies has upended professional and mainstream media reporting and created an environment in which fake news can thrive. The extraordinary rise of social media means that people’s existing political opinions are often stoked rather than challenged, as algorithms feed us the news that we want to see (Chadwick et al, 2018). A recent example, which occurred during my data collection, is the ‘Stop the Steal’ narrative in the USA, which alleges that the 2020 election was subject to mass voter fraud and that the victory was stolen from the incumbent president Trump by the Democrat Joe Biden. The spread of disinformation about the election, including on social media, led to an attempted coup on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021, in which a largely armed mob, stoked up by Trump himself, descended on the

Capitol in Washington as senators were certifying the electoral votes. This demonstrates the very real threat to society of fake news. The mainstream media must respond to both this threat and the increased expectation from audiences that they will receive news that feeds into their chosen narratives.

Though the Enlightenment discourse of universal truth is itself grounded in the reproduction of white European dominance, the “alternative” truths of fake news do not challenge this dominance, but instead offer *extreme*-hegemonic alternative truths. “Alternative facts”, such as that the 2020 US election was stolen, or that the EU is taking money from the NHS, seek to persuade the public to consent to social inequality through the construction of a social reality in which hegemonic institutions (i.e. white supremacy) are represented as threatened by a hostile “other” (i.e. immigration). Newspapers are thus no longer competing against just each other for audiences, but against the internet that feeds audiences the news that they want to see (Chadwick et al, 2018; Richardson, 2007, pp.78-79). Furthermore, as newspapers opt for multi-platform news (with websites and social media pages), the boundaries of news and entertainment become increasingly blurred as news articles take the format of less traditional news (such as blog posts). Broadsheets must therefore balance their reputation for reliable journalism with their own market interests – news must capture the attention of audiences, and the production of news that stokes up the previously held beliefs of readers sells (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009, pp.88-90).

### **3.3.2. Populism and the Far-right**

Whether through outright disinformation, “spin”, or sensationalism, the ‘symbolic power’ of political language has long been noted (Orwell, 1946/2003). Kramsch (2020, p.22) defines ‘symbolic power’ as the power to ‘manipulate the meanings of signs and impose them on others’. In recent years, a surge in far-right politics across Europe has seen the effective mobilisation of symbolic power through populist tactics that are used by right-wing politicians and commentators to justify nationalistic, racist, homophobic, transphobic and misogynistic policy and rhetoric (Wodak, 2021; Zappettini, 2021). Populism is not a coherent ideology, but rather a strategy or phenomenon which is intricately tied to symbolic power – using language to construct and impose a version of reality onto fractured publics in which a constructed “in-group” is threatened by a hostile “out-group” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009; Zappettini, 2021). Populism is therefore also appealing to newspapers as, presented through a populist and sensationalist lens, news can attract more attention. Wodak (2021, pp.31-33) argues that right-wing populism can be characterised according to three central aspects: the



notion of ‘the people’, the notion of a ‘heartland’ nation universally opposed to or antagonistic towards “others” (“out-groups” such as elites, migrants, minorities) and a ‘distancing dynamic’ that creates an “us versus them” frame to distance ‘the people’ from these “others” (c.f. Zappettini, 2021). Hence, populism manipulates signs by co-opting the voice of ‘the people’ in order to drive certain agendas, such as nationalism – using language to manufacture consent for increasingly extreme policies and politics.

Recently, the political right in the UK – including newspapers – have mobilised populist tactics to generate support. Zappettini (2021) has found that populism was mobilised by British tabloids in order drive support for Brexit through antagonistic representations of the British ‘people’ *versus* the corrupt EU elite, which perpetuated the pro-Leave narrative of the threatened nation state (c.f. Anderson, 2006). When it comes to politicians, Trump (in)famously uses populist tactics to both appeal to his base and attract far-reaching attention. Janet McIntosh (2020) argues that Trump’s language is less about describing reality than about manipulating it. In fact, none of Trump’s language is designed to inform his base, but rather it appeals to their emotions (another key feature of populist discourse), reinforcing racist and sexist stereotypes that they want to hear, that they want to be permitted to believe (Kramsch 2020, p.27). Trump’s indirect speech acts, veiled performatives, and rambling asides function to disguise and deny his true intentions (Kramsch, 2020; Slotta, 2020). Similar tactics have been mobilised by Prime Minister of the UK at the time of data collection for this research, Boris Johnson, whose (in)famous bumbling speech style worked to disguise increasingly far-right Tory agendas. The use of ‘calculated ambivalence’ (Wodak, 2021) by both of these politicians, in which one utterance carries two or more contradictory meanings that are oriented towards at least two different audiences, works to appeal to fractured electorates (Hodges, 2020, p.137; Kramsch, 2020; Wodak 2021, p.35). By being ambiguous in their speech, politicians like Johnson and Trump can invoke several possible interpretations, meaning that they can deny accusations of racism or bigotry by claiming that such an interpretation of their utterance is wrong. For example, Hodges (2020) analyses one such instance of calculated ambivalence by Trump, when he was addressing the violence that occurred at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, USA, in which a car driven by a white supremacist drove into a crowd of counter-protestors, killing one. Hodges examines Trump’s statement that was ostensibly condemning hatred, bigotry and violence, but that went on to state that this occurred ‘on many sides.’ Hodges (*ibid.*, p.141) argues that this qualification undermined Trump’s condemnation of the white supremacists by creating an

equivalency between them and the anti-racist protestors. Yet, because Trump did explicitly condemn bigotry, he was able to deny that he sympathised with the white supremacists. Such tactics allow politicians to stoke up racial tensions whilst denying accusations of bigotry – permitting people to hold white supremacist beliefs whilst also providing them with a way to avoid accusations of racism through denial.

Orwell (1946/2003, p.375) argued that political language is designed to ‘make lies sound truthful and murder respectable.’ The use of populist tactics by the far-right, such as those outlined above, function to make false narratives (i.e. of a threatened white population) ‘sound truthful’ and social inequality ‘respectable’ or, at least, reasonable and acceptable. This works to maintain and reassert hegemonic power, such as that of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, by manufacturing an “us versus them” narrative in which such systems are represented as under threat from a demonised “other” that must be (re)subordinated and marginalised. Such tactics are increasingly used by news media to capture the attention of fractured audiences. Consequently, the study of how the news media represents femininities provides valuable insight into how femininity and the far-right may be reconciled in a society in which women do hold significant political and electoral power and a greater feminist awareness that may otherwise see them withhold support from far-right politics.

### **3.4. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: A Critical Perspective**

#### **3.4.1. Discourse and Power**

Now that the site for this study, the British broadsheet press, has been explained, it is critical to define the term ‘discourse’ as it forms the backbone of the approaches applied and drawn on in this thesis. ‘Discourse’ itself is a complex term and concept (Baker, 2006, p.3; Richardson, 2007, p.21; Sunderland, 2004, p.6). Definitions range from conceiving of discourse in the formal sense – i.e. as ‘language above the sentence’ (Ehrlich and Romaniuk, 2014). This thesis, however, adopts the functional conceptualisation of discourse that can be broadly understood as ‘language in use’ (Richardson, 2007, p.21) or a ‘way of seeing the world’ (Litosseliti, 2002, p.130; Sunderland, 2004, p.6). All functional definitions of discourse have in common the notion of language as a *social act*, operating within a socio-cultural context that it both shapes and is shaped by (Baxter, 2010; Fairclough, 1995; 2003; Foucault, 1979; 2002; Richardson, 2007, p.26). When we talk about discourse, then, we are not just talking about language as a method of communication, but language as a method through which we shape, or constitute, social reality. However, there is a distinction between

what Fairclough (2013, p.252) labels small ‘d’ and big ‘D’ discourse. This distinction arises from the varying ‘levels of abstraction’, or generality, in the usage of the term (Fairclough, 2003, p.26). Small ‘d’ discourse, according to Fairclough (2003, p.26; 2013, p.252), refers to the local communicative acts that make up language in use, and is used as a ‘count noun’ (a ‘discourse’ or ‘discourses’). In this usage, the term refers to specific representations of the social world, realised through language (*ibid.*). There may be several representations of the world that work together in a text, producing a layering of discourses. Big ‘D’ discourse, on the other hand, is characterised on a more global scale, as shaping, validating and maintaining reality, encompassing language and other types of semiosis as elements of social life (Fairclough, 2003, p.26, p.124). In this usage, discourse is an ‘abstract noun’. This thesis is concerned both with discourses, the varying, often conflicting, ways that femininity is represented in broadsheet news articles, and Discourse, in the sense that these gendered discourses are related to British society as a whole, as shaping, updating, or undermining certain political agendas that influence social practice. The two-way, or dialectical, relationship between language as reflecting the world and the world reflecting/being shaped by language is understood as producing gendered power structures that (re)produce or challenge gender inequality and is a key element for explaining why functionalist discourse approaches to language necessitate the analysis of both text and context, of both language and society. Discourse, as it is used in this study, is consequently understood as the way that we use language to build an interpretive frame. It is through this “frame” (or frames) that we see and understand the (social/cultural/political) world and through which we position ourselves to be seen and understood.

If some discourses are more powerful than others, that means that discourse is key to the (re)production of power in society, with more powerful discourses being more influential over social practice. Discourse brings power into being through naturalisation – producing what Kramsch (2020) defines as ‘symbolic power’, or what Gramsci (Hoare and Nowell-Smith, 1971) would argue was cultural hegemony. Discourse helps to make power seem natural (‘authentication’ – Bucholtz and Hall, 2005), helping to establish it as the status quo. For instance, if a majority of people buy into the interpretive frame, or discourse, of the gender binary, people are more likely to see patriarchal gender relations as natural, and so unchangeable, and therefore they are likely to accept and ‘consent’ to them as inherently unchallengeable. This, according to Gramsci, is how power is waged without coercion or force, but through persuasion.

To explain this further, ‘power’ must also be defined and understood (Ehrlich and Romaniuk, 2014, p.460). To do this, I draw heavily on Teun van Dijk’s model of power. Van Dijk (1991, p.202) defines ‘power’ as the ‘freedom to do as one wishes’, usually implying control over the wishes of others in order to achieve one’s own wishes. Clearly, if someone has power, they could ensure that their chosen discourse (i.e. pro-Brexit discourse) was proliferated in society (i.e. by news media) so that more people were exposed to them and likely to accept them. However, power is also dependent on discourse – how it is justified and maintained depends on convincingly reproducing discourses about the perils of the EU and the benefits of leaving (i.e. that Brexit would mean more funding for the NHS). *Social* power, according to van Dijk (*ibid.*, p.85), is the ‘control exercised by one group/organisation (or its members) over the actions and minds of (members of) other groups, thereby limiting the freedom of action of others or influencing their knowledge, attitudes and ideologies.’ So, if we take the British press as a powerful institution, it exercises control over audiences by spreading or reinforcing discourses that are likely to influence the public’s ideologies and attitudes, i.e. towards Brexit. In [Chapter One](#) (p.2), I offered a definition for patriarchy as the power of men *as a group* over women and minority genders *as groups*. Not every individual man exercises power over every individual woman (as shown in [Chapter Two](#)), but the social group defined as ‘men’ exercises social power over the social group defined as ‘women’.

Earlier in this section, I equated symbolic power to hegemony. I will make this connection, and the role of discourse in it, clearer now. The concept of cultural hegemony proposed by Gramsci (Hoare and Nowell-Smith, 1971) involves the manufacturing of consent for capitalist power relations, where the dominance of capitalists over the proletariat is maintained through the indoctrination of society into believing that such a relationship is inevitable and necessary. Symbolic power is the power to impose meaning onto others, and therefore produces hegemony (Kramsch, 2020, p.22). Van Dijk (1991) states that ‘dominance’ itself is a form of ‘social power abuse’ in which control over others is exercised in one’s own interests. In other words, cultural hegemony and symbolic power are concepts that encapsulate the creation and long-term maintenance of social dominance through the proliferation of discourse *in the interests of the powerful*. Hegemonic discourses, such as of gender difference, use language (i.e. she/he pronoun use in English, as well as indirect indexes) to impose onto society the belief that there are only two genders, which we all fall into, and that certain behaviours are intrinsic to each gender. The more this discourse is taken up, the more naturalised it becomes, and the more powerful, until it becomes hegemonic and

unquestioned. This social power is often institutionalised – enshrined into law and policy – to allow for more effective control which, in turn, enables ‘routine power reproduction’ that maintains dominance (van Dijk, 1996, p.85). For instance, anti-trans discourse has become increasingly prevalent and powerful in contemporary society. This is largely because of a backlash against the increased visibility of trans people, which is perceived to be a threat to the hegemony of gender difference discourse, undermining the unspoken rule that trans and GNC people must hide their identities (*Disclosure*, 2020). Hence, we have seen anti-trans sentiment re-asserted into law in the UK through the refusal to update the Gender Recognition Act, which functions to re-assert the subordination of transgender identity to cisgender identity and, therefore, enables the power reproduction of gender difference and patriarchy (Gendered Intelligence 2019; Hines 2010). Discourse and power are inextricable from one another (Richardson, 2007, p.31), and it is precisely the complex relationship between them both that necessitates the analysis of discourse in order to understand how hegemonic femininity may be updated or undermined in British society.

### **3.4.2. Critical Discourse Analysis: A Critical Perspective**

Due to the interpretive and contextual nature of discourse, critical discourse analysis (CDA) presents itself as a critical perspective, rather than an objective methodology (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2005). This approach is crucial for examining the complex relationship between language and power, particularly for political language. As shown above, power and discourse share a dialectical relationship in which they both feed into the other. Discourse enables power to operate in a subtle and often implicit way, manufacturing consent by creating a narrative for reality where power relations are naturalised which, if taken up/accepted, leads to hegemony or ‘symbolic power’ (Hoare and Nowell-Smith, 1971; Kramsch, 2020). Those who already hold power in society, e.g. the very rich, will be able to use this power to disseminate discourse that is beneficial to the reproduction of this very power, for instance, by owning media corporations that can dispense, to mass audiences, your way of seeing the world. Hence, to understand power, we must investigate discourse production.

CDA is a critical linguistic approach that aims to link linguistic analysis to social analysis, or link text to context (Fairclough, 1995; Richardson, 2007). CDA as a perspective is relevant to this study because of its concern with social power. In particular, CDA aims to expose structures of dominance (Ehrlich and Romaniuk, 2014; Fairclough, 1995; Richardson, 2007; van Dijk, 2005). The ‘critical’ element of CDA refers to the deconstructionist approach

that, according to Barros (2021, p.1), aims to denaturalise, and thereby destabilise, dominance. Applying a CDA approach, the researcher examines a text for features (such as stress, word order, syntax, modality) that produce patterns which create discourse which, in turn, is related to and shapes the context (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). For example, the textual backgrounding of the groom in wedding advertisements led Sunderland (2004) to label the ‘wedding as the biggest day of a woman’s life’ discourse. This discourse was related to the patriarchal capitalist context in which the wedding industry uses (and perpetuates) gendered stereotypes about women and their supposed natural desire for marriage to make huge amounts of money. Fowler (1991, p.15) argues that critical approaches to language bring the ‘system into crisis by uncovering its workings and effects through an analysis of discourse(s)’. CDA is therefore unambiguous in its ‘emancipatory’ political stance (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). CDA’s critical perspective allows for open-ended interpretations of language that refuse to take power for granted. As both language and gender are dynamic and open, so should be the approach used to study it (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p.279).

Some of the key tenets of CDA, which are focused on in any CDA approach, are described below.

#### 3.4.2.1. *Transitivity*

Transitivity is defined by Richardson (2007, p.54) as the representation of the relationship(s) between participants, or social actors, and the roles that they play in the processes described. Transitivity is thus concerned with how actions are represented, what kinds of actions are represented, who does them, and to whom they are done (*ibid.*). Consequently, social actors can be represented as passive or active in a text. This links in to van Leeuwen’s (1996) model for the representation of social actors, which is adopted in this research as an analytical tool to aid FCDA in micro-analysing news texts for transitivity. This model is described in more detail later in this chapter (3.4.5.2.). Transitivity has important implications for the representation of femininities. For example, the representation of women as passive has been linked to the maintenance of heteronormative patriarchy through the connotations that men are active and women provide a complementary passive role that naturalises their subordination in society (Berger, 1972; Litosseliti, 2002, p.133; Rich, 1980; Saraceno and Tambling, 2013).

### 3.4.2.2. *Intertextuality and interdiscursivity*

CDA is also concerned with interdiscursivity, which refers to the presence of one or more discourses within another discourse. For instance, in the ‘wedding as the biggest day of a woman’s life’ discourse identified by Sunderland (2004, pp.33-35), there were other gendered discourses that were reproduced, such as a ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ discourse and a ‘fantasy discourse’. These discourses worked together to produce the ‘wedding as the biggest day of a woman’s life discourse’ – it was presupposed in the text that weddings are for heterosexual couples by naming a bride and groom (compulsory heterosexuality discourse) and the advert fed into the image of a fairy tale wedding that appealed to the cultural script of femininity that dictates that specifically the *bride* dreams of a fairy tale wedding (fantasy discourse). Interdiscursivity can, consequently, reveal the intersections at play in gendering. Discourses of compulsory heterosexuality, biological determinism, white supremacy and so on may work in tandem with gender discourses to marginalise certain women.

Intertextuality is where one text bears traces of preceding texts and therefore reinforces historical presuppositions (Baxter, 2010, p.128). This can result in interdiscursivity as discourses produced from one text are transferred into another text. Richardson (2007, p.100) argues that intertextuality is central to CDA because all texts exist in relation to other texts – in other words, because texts are not produced in isolation, they bear the traces of other texts. Richardson (*ibid.*, pp.101-104) also puts forward the case that ‘internal intertextuality’ is especially important in the analysis of newspaper texts. As newspapers report on the actions of others, they depend on quotation and ‘speech representation’. Speech representation (SR) is defined by Lampropoulou (2014, p.470) as the ‘transfer of words from an anterior spatiotemporal context to a posterior one.’ SR in newspaper reporting can be incorporated, according to Richardson (2007, pp.101-104), in a variety of ways. For instance, through direct quotation, ‘strategic quotation’ (in which only part of the reported words is reproduced, embedded into the reporters own words), indirect quotation (where the reported words are summarised, but not in the original language used) and ‘transformed indirect quotation’ (similar to indirect quotation, but where the reporting verbs, such as said or told, are also removed in favour of transitive action or mental state verbs).

### 3.4.3. **Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis**

The type of CDA taken up for this study is feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA), proposed by Michelle Lazar (2005). Like all forms of CDA, FCDA is a critical perspective,

but that which focuses specifically on gender as an ‘omni-relevant’ category that shapes our identities, relationships and interactions (*ibid.*, p.5). The task of FCDA is to determine how power and dominance are discursively produced or resisted through textual representations of *gendered* social practices (Lazar, 2005, pp.10-11; 2007). Hence, FCDA shares the emancipatory aim of CDA, but with an explicit direction towards freedom from patriarchal dominance – that is, the control exercised by men as a socially constructed group over the minds, practices and beliefs of women and minority genders as a group(s), that works in the interests of men and against the interests of women and minority genders. FCDA is adopted for this research because gender is understood here as a discursive act that arises as a social category through the repeated performance of certain acts and practices that are seen as expressions of gender identity as it is demographically, culturally and socially understood and assigned (Butler, 1990; Wodak, 2008). These acts – such as what you wear, what you talk about, and the attitudes that you express as you talk – are thereby both products and producers of discourse related to gender. As we carry out these practices, they both produce our gender identity and contribute towards cultural understandings of gender, which are then fed back into our own practice and the process starts again.

The objective of FCDA is to discern when and how gendered discourses come into play in our social practice, meaning that the relevance of gender to interaction must be carefully explained and justified. Wodak (2008, p.193) argues that FCDA may otherwise be at risk of foregrounding gender when other issues of power are actually more relevant – for instance, race. This can be difficult as issues of gender and power have become ‘increasingly complex and subtle’ in modern society (Lazar, 2007). For instance, Baxter (2018, p.2) argues that the press is aware that the equal treatment of women is now enshrined in law. Hence, it is in the press’ interest to suppress *blatant* gendered bias against women and, instead, the reproduction of women’s subordinate position must be achieved through coded language which seeks to naturalise it (Kramsch, 2020; McIntosh, 2020; Wodak, 2021). However, this is also a reason to conduct FCDA investigations. As the power systems that operate behind gendered discourse become increasingly obscured, naturalised and persuasive, FCDA promotes deconstruction as a way to expose such systems, which may otherwise go unchecked (Kramsch, 2020; van Dijk, 1991, p.85). Indeed, Lazar (2005, p.6; 2007, p.145) proposed FCDA as ‘analytical activism’ and ‘praxis-oriented research’, which aims to emancipate people from patriarchal power structures by creating a critical awareness that aids the development of feminist strategies for resistance and change. Essentially, FCDA as a



method aims to improve our society by exposing the modes and methods that both construct and justify the gender inequality that shapes it. It is applied in this research as the method best suited to deconstructing representations of hegemonic femininity and relating them to the socio-cultural, political context. The process of identifying and naming gendered discourses in newspaper texts is explained in the next chapter ([4.3.2.](#)).

#### **3.4.4. Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis**

However, a drawback of CDA approaches is that they often neglect to examine non-dominant discourse due to the focus on dominance (Baxter, 2003; 2008; 2010). Consequently, it has been argued that (F)CDA fails to offer constructive accounts for alternative forms of social organisation, and thus falls short of its aim for emancipation (Fowler, 1991, p.16). In other words, the focus of CDA on deconstructing social dominance neglects to offer an alternative organisation for society and so fails to emancipate those most marginalised because modes of resistance are backgrounded. Moreover, FCDA's ideological feminist motivation means that it is at risk of merely reproducing power imbalances in favour of female dominance, or potentially reproducing the binary construct of gender by homogenising the female experience in its attempt to create feminist solidarity.

What distinguishes feminist poststructuralism from mainstream feminism is the de-centring of the rational, which takes subjectivity and consciousness to be a social product of language itself (Weedon, 1997, p.40). The application of FCDA alone, with its ideological motivation, may be at risk of examining gender as a fixed category, even as it aims to examine it as a discursive act, and thus may end up perpetuating the hegemony of the gender binary (Baxter, 2003; 2008; Wodak, 2008). By combining FCDA with feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis (FPDA), proposed by Judith Baxter (2003; 2008; 2010), the diversity within gender is acknowledged and the subjectivity of mainstream feminism itself is deconstructed. This is because the essence of poststructuralism lies in the questioning of all orders of knowledge. FPDA does not deny the complexity, plurality and ambiguity of our lived experiences of gender (Baxter, 2008; 2010; 2018). Like FCDA, it takes a feminist approach to analysing how speakers negotiate their identities, relationships and positions through 'competing, yet interwoven, discourses' (Baxter, 2003, p.1). Similarly, it takes gender differentiation to be one of the dominant discourses at play in identity construction and negotiation, in relationship with other factors discussed in Chapter Two. However, FPDA makes central to its analysis the problematization of the notion that there is one "true" reality or fixed identity, and therefore embraces the notion of assemblage (Baxter, 2003; Foucault,

1979; Fowler, 1991). This is better suited to the current research aims because it opposes the essentialist concept of gender as binary, which can often be reproduced in feminist discourse – for example, by framing women as always powerless and men as always powerful. FPDA allows for the study of femininity as multiple, with some women holding power to marginalise and subordinate other women, and even men. Through this, FPDA can more effectively amplify marginalised voices and fulfil FCDA’s aim of empowering marginalised identities (Baxter, 2003; 2008). The refusal of FPDA to constitute gender in binary terms is reflected in this research through the emphasis on transgender femininity ([Chapter Eight](#)).

Furthermore, the poststructuralist core of FPDA is more reflective of Foucault’s original assessment of discourse (Foucault, 2002). By questioning Enlightenment ways of thinking and researching (i.e. questioning “objectivity”), FPDA provides an effective balancer for researcher bias. By drawing attention to the constructed nature of research itself, FPDA encourages the audience/reader/participants to critically engage with the research at every level. Poststructuralist theory sees the ‘will to truth’ that is espoused by ideologically-motivated research as producing a ‘grand narrative’ that naturalises the researcher’s perspective, arguably reproducing, rather than challenging, hegemonic discourse that is salient in the academe, and subordinating other ways of thinking (Baxter, 2003; 2008; 2010). According to Baxter (2018, p.149), the active undermining of dominant readings of FPDA, and its questioning of knowledge production in all forms (including academic research) advances it beyond ‘simple critique’. Therefore, though both FCDA and FPDA are modes of deconstruction, Baxter (*ibid.*) argues that FPDA is better able to deconstruct the power relationship at work between researcher and researched and offer alternative practices that challenge the patriarchal social order. In FPDA research, the researcher takes steps to supplant their own reading with alternative interpretations from a variety of sources and voices, meaning that the reader/audience is not presented with one unchallenged perspective (Baxter, 2003, p.64). Hence, it offers alternative readings that reconstruct social reality away from hegemonic discourse (*ibid.*). FPDA draws attention to the constructed nature of research itself and enables a radical self-reflexivity which challenges the fundamentalism of Western Enlightenment discourse that states that there is only one epistemic tradition from which we achieve “truth”.

### 3.4.5. A Hybrid Methodological Approach

This research mobilises FCDA as its main approach, supplemented by FPDA. Baxter (2008, p.243) herself argues that FPDA is not a rival to CDA, but can be supplementary to it. The advantage of combining approaches is that it enables the development of research that recognises the interplay between multiple voices and experiences of womanhood and femininities. By having multiple perspectives interwoven within the very fabric of the research design, there is a better chance of capturing the multiplicity of femininity in the results than if just pure FCDA or FPDA were used.

FCDA and FPDA work well together as there are obvious theoretical connections and parallels, namely a feminist objective to deconstruct gendered discourses in order to expose patriarchal systems of power (*ibid.*, p.245). Moreover, both are discourse analytic methods – taking discourse as social practice that constitutes and shapes gender identity, seeing gender as a performative act that is also shaped by context. Hence, both methods aim to bridge that gap between text and context, or to meet micro-analysis with macro (social/political/cultural) analysis through a feminist lens. Furthermore, FCDA has a self-reflexive focus that acknowledges the heterogeneity of the female experience and is thus open and receptive to the questioning and poststructuralist nature of FPDA (Wodak, 2008). The poststructuralism of FPDA works to both complement and challenge other methods (Baxter, 2008). Hence, the potential researcher bias of FCDA as an ideologically-driven approach can be countered through multiple readings that provide a constant questioning of the research(er) assumptions. Both together enable the expansion of our essentialist concepts of gender that allows for non-binary, GNC and transgender identity to be explored as marginalised genders in the same way that cis women have been viewed as marginalised by gender. Therefore, the ideological aspect of FCDA that risks reproducing binaries is under constant surveillance through FPDA.

Yet, there are crucial points where FCDA and FPDA diverge, which requires that I take a stance. Whilst FCDA, as CDA in general, is perhaps most defined by its emancipatory aim, and therefore its strong political and ideological stance, FPDA focuses instead on a ‘transformative quest’ and, arguably, is more concerned with small ‘d’ discourse (Baxter, 2008, p.247). That is, FPDA has its ultimate aim in small-scale, localised, bottom-up social transformations. According to Baxter (*ibid.*), this allows it to be more effective at actually causing change as it focuses on circumstances in which subjects have the agency to change their conditions. FCDA, however, has a political aim that Baxter suggests may be too abstract to have concrete results other than in producing a ‘grand narrative’ that may also then

become a new dogma or power system in itself (Baxter, 2003, p.248). However, it is my concern that the ‘transformative quest’ of FPDA limits it to small-scale studies that are in danger of neglecting the wider social, cultural and political context. This is problematic as it is possible that FPDA could then be reinterpreted as applicable only to individual agents, and could therefore be reproductive of an individualistic feminism that undermines collective action.

On the other hand, the ‘radical political critique’ of FCDA deliberately raises a feminist consciousness to enable feminist strategies for resistance (hooks, 2000b; Lazar, 2007, p.145). In the current political climate, feminist progress is increasingly under threat. The rise of neoliberal feminism, postfeminism and the continued power of the media institution, as well as a global rise in far-right politics, means that gender-based rights are increasingly undermined and re-presented. In the USA, Poland, the UK, Brazil and Hungary (to name a few) there has been a rollback on transgender rights, assaults on access to abortion, and the implementation of policies that cut funding for women’s shelters and crisis aid. It is my belief that the ‘analytical activism’ of FCDA, which tackles large, hegemonic institutions (such as the media), is not only timely, but necessary. By exposing the inner-workings of such institutions, FCDA can empower people on a local level to challenge the status quo and organise on a mass, even global, scale – i.e. through media boycotts. In the UK, creating a critical awareness of the power exchange between media and government can empower those most marginalised by government policies (i.e. people of colour, the working class, disabled people, the LGBTQ+ community, and women) to come together, utilising and spreading knowledge of those ‘inner-workings’ to bring about a societal reckoning with white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. It can strengthen the feminist movement on the whole by emphasising the multiplicity and intersectionality within gender which encourages allyship across social movements, unifying them against one oppressor without homogenising their experiences. Moreover, Baxter’s concern over the potential ‘will to power’ of ideological analyses like FCDA is countered by FCDA’s explicit acknowledgement of its own aims and, in this study, through the adoption of FPDA insights that undermine dominant readings and foreground the subjectivity of research (Weedon, 1997, p.8). It is therefore my belief that the combination of FCDA and FPDA produces a method that effectively deconstructs power differentials between and within genders, as well as between research(er) and audience.

However, the process of applying this hybrid FCDA/FPDA approach to the present study came with several challenges. It had been my original plan to conduct a series of

interviews with people whose gender identity or experiences were implicated in the dominant news topics that were identified in data analysis. For instance, I had planned to share my data and conduct an interview with a black female MP in order to get their perspective of the representation of women politicians in the broadsheets and the relevance of racism to such representations. I had planned to do the same with a Scottish trans rights organisation in order to include marginalised voices and avoid perpetuating erasures identified in my analysis (i.e. of trans voices). These interviews would have been incorporated into my own data analysis and any differences in the interpretation of articles would also have been represented in order to capture the multiplicity that is so central to FPDA, offering insights from those who have had lived experiences with the marginalisations that I have discussed, but have not experienced myself. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions and busy schedules, these interviews never took place. On the other hand, I was more successful in incorporating FPDA's emphasis on self-reflexivity into this study. Yet, this process was emotionally and mentally challenging as it required me to take a step back from my own ego and be prepared to, not just acknowledge my own biases and mistakes, but to represent these within the thesis itself. This is demonstrated best in [Chapter Seven](#), where I explore the process of initially misinterpreting my data on sexual violence. In this case, my initial analysis was radically challenged by an article that I read by another academic and woman of colour (Day, 2021). Though the temptation to edit my analysis to cover my own mistake was certainly there, along with the desire to preserve my academic "authority", I decided that such re-evaluations were necessary to acknowledge. Demonstrating open-mindedness to the interpretations of others with different professional and personal experiences to oneself, and the process of self-reflection and realisation that takes place in analysis, challenges the conventions of academic research and writing and, therefore, goes some way to undermining the power hierarchies and privilege that come with an academic standing, which mirror those that I have been critiquing (such as the marginalisation of the voices of women of colour). In this, the contradictions, pluralities and dialogues that exist within feminism are not only theoretically discussed, but actively represented. Though challenging to the researcher's ego, I believe that the self-reflexivity exemplified in this thesis (in particular, in [Chapter 7](#)) offers a radical new methodology that addresses some of the limitations of FCDA by practicing, rather than merely theorising on, collaborative, intersectional feminism.

Below, I outline two key analytical models, adapted from FPDA and CDA studies for the purposes of this research: The Feminist Agenda Spectrum and the representation of social

actors. These will be applied to aid the micro-analysis of news articles, alongside the CDA emphasis on transitivity, interdiscursivity and intertextuality described earlier (3.4.2.1. and 3.4.2.2.).

3.4.5.1. *The Feminist Agenda Spectrum (Baxter, 2018)*

In Baxter’s (2018) FPDA study of the representation of women leaders in newspapers, articles were qualitatively analysed for features that constructed a dominant gendered discourse, and this process was aided by applying the Feminist Agenda Spectrum (FAS). The FAS, designed by Baxter, is used to rate news articles as either pro-feminist, gender-neutral or anti-feminist. The FAS is applied in this study to assess each article in this dataset for its stance regarding feminism, relating this to their representation of femininity.

For further clarity, I have reproduced below a table adapted from Baxter (2018, p.147), which I used to guide my categorisation of articles according to the FAS (Table 1). In Baxter’s original table, she also included image analysis. However, as the database used for the present study (Nexis) does not give access to newspaper images (Baker, 2006, p.31), I have removed this section from Baxter’s table.

<b>Anti-feminist texts</b>	<b>Gender-neutral texts</b>	<b>Pro-feminist texts</b>
Use of Kanter’s stereotypes via caricature of limited range of features	Residual use of Kanter’s stereotypes through ‘leakage’ of gendered assumptions	No evidence of Kanter’s stereotypes; Familiar feminist narrative stereotypes: victim, villain, hero(ine), role model
The directly reported comments of the leader (her ‘voice’) are framed and mediated by the journalist	Some space given to the voice of the subject; balanced by journalistic commentary	Considerable space for the voice of the leader unmediated by the journalist, or supportively framed
Negative, evaluative lexis to describe the leader	Balance of negative and positive lexis to describe the leader	Generally positive, evaluative lexis to describe the leader conveying courtesy, respect, admiration
Mocking or negative journalistic comments to ridicule the extremity or	Limited if any journalistic questioning about feminism	Direct journalistic questioning about feminist issues

absurdity of leader's feminist views		
Leader's directly reported comments on feminism or feminist issues given limited space, or quoted in order to mock them	Limited if any comments reported on leader's views towards feminist issues such as quotas, childcare, work-life balance etc.	Espousal of feminist principles and/or issues by the leader, journalist, other voices
Limited contextual detail given about the leader's rise to success; simplistic individualisation and personalisation of the leader	Facts, figures and contextual detail about the leader's profession/institution; career progress; leader placed in non-gendered context	Some facts, figures and contextual detail about the leader's profession/institution; leader's successes may be individualised or placed in a patriarchal context

Table 1: 'Discourse and semiotic features identifying positions on the feminist agenda spectrum', adapted from Baxter (2018, p.147).

For her study, Baxter applied Kanter's (1993) model for 'role traps'. Kanter (1993; Baxter, 2018, p.24) argued that women who reach senior positions are often tokenised to counter criticism of a lack of gender diversity. However, because such women still pose a threat to hegemonic patriarchal order, they are forced into gendered stereotypes, or 'role traps', that work to undermine their power. Baxter's position was, as shown in Table 1, that any reproduction of role traps in newspapers therefore indexed an anti-feminist stance. [Chapter Six](#) explores this issue in my own dataset through the analysis of the 'Iron Maiden' discourse, named after one of Kanter's role traps.

Moreover, Baxter (2018), argues that the researcher applying the FAS should always seek to offer alternative readings. For example, an article that is marked as 'pro-feminist' may subtly reproduce certain gendered stereotypes that reinforce essentialist presuppositions about women and men. Similarly, an apparently 'anti-feminist' article may contain contradictions in which some feminist-positive elements can be pulled out. Furthermore, Baxter argues that 'gender-neutral' texts are never truly gender-neutral; the performance of neutrality may actually be rooted in a feminist aim to normalise female leadership, or it may be used to suppress the challenges women in leadership face and, hence, to suppress feminist critique. In my own analysis, I also aim to offer alternative readings that problematise the notion that there could be a single interpretation by interrogating my own assumptions,

assessing various possible interpretations of quantitative patterns (in [Chapter Seven](#), in particular), and examining both pro- and anti-feminist stance-taking across all newspapers for contradictions.

Of course, any attempt to measure an ideological stance is never without issues as it misses many of the nuances and contradictions that are held in any ideological orientation, especially regarding such a heterogeneous ideology as feminism. One issue that consistently arose in the process of categorisation in my dataset regarded the articles that took a clear anti-trans stance, but used trans-exclusionary feminism in order to justify this discrimination. As per the concepts discussed in Chapter Two ([2.5.2.](#)), pertaining to TERF ideology, I categorised these articles as anti-feminist because I believe that they are manipulating a “feminism” that is grounded in hegemonic femininity and that does not promote the equality of all women in order to justify gender-based discrimination. This, to me, is clearly an anti-feminist act motivated by the desire to divide the gender-oppressed in order to prevent any serious challenge to patriarchy. Thus, categorising according to the FAS involves a process of interpretation that goes to show that feminism itself is a variable and contested territory.

#### 3.4.5.2. *The Representation of Social Actors (van Leeuwen, 1996)*

Newspaper texts were also micro-analysed through the application of van Leeuwen’s (1996) model for the representation of social actors. Van Leeuwen argues that the representations of social actors in a text (i.e. the people being represented in a news article and their relationship to one another, or transitivity) can be used to suit the purposes of the text and how it wishes its readers to relate to the social actors (*ibid.*, p.38). Below, I briefly describe some of the features named by van Leeuwen that I investigated in my FCDA/FPDA analysis of newspaper texts.

##### 3.4.5.2.1. Foregrounding and backgrounding

Van Leeuwen (1996, p.39) states that when actions are included in a text, but their actors are excluded, this leaves a ‘trace’. He breaks this exclusion down into two categories: backgrounding and suppression. Backgrounding is where social actors may not be represented in a text in relation to a given action, but are mentioned elsewhere in the text, meaning that we can infer with ‘reasonable certainty’ who the actor is (*ibid.*). Suppression, on the other hand, is a more radical exclusion. When social actors are suppressed in a text, there



is no reference to them anywhere. On the other hand, foregrounding occurs where the social actor is named and related to the reported social action.

We can therefore safely assume that news articles that employ backgrounding or suppression attempt to erase a social actor, or at least marginalise them within a text. This could be either to disassociate them from a harmful social action (and, thereby, ensure that they avoid criticism or accountability), or it could be to associate them directly with an activity or event – either to give them positive credit for it, or to associate them with some harm. Hence, in line with CDA, the context – both of the surrounding text and the wider social context – must be related to these features in order to understand how they are being used.

#### 3.4.5.2.2. Activation and passivation

Activation, according to van Leeuwen (1996, p.43), occurs when social actors are represented as active, dynamic forces in a text, for instance, in representations of women as responsible for their own sexual assault through actions such as drinking or clothing choices (see [Chapter 7](#)). Whereas passivation is when social actors are represented as undergoing the reported activity. For example, the representation of women as passive in the sex act (i.e. as not seeking sex or sexual pleasure for themselves). The action represented as done *to* a social actor can either render them a negative or positive beneficiary – meaning that they either positively or negatively benefit from it. When the social actor is activated, however, the third party that their actions affect can become a negative or positive beneficiary. Hence, activation is not always connected to a positive representation as a gendered social actor may be represented as a hostile or threatening agent. Hence, activation and passivation can help us to analyse transitivity in a text.

#### 3.4.5.2.3. Individualisation and assimilation

Another key feature examined in news articles was individualisation and assimilation. Van Leeuwen (*ibid.*, p.48) states that individualisation is where a social actor is referred to as an individual. Assimilation, however, is where the social actor is referred to as part of a group. These features can be connected to the processes of distinction and adequation identified by Bucholtz and Hall (2005). For instance, individualisation can render a social actor as different from the group and assimilation can render them as the same, or aligned with, a group. However, individualisation can also be used positively. For example, if a woman leader is

assimilated into the group “all women”, this can produce a negative representation through the implication that all women are the same. If, however, she is individualised, she can be positively represented as being the individual best qualified for the job. Distinction in the form of “othering”, contrastingly, is where a social actor is distinguished from an *in*-group, i.e. they are cast out and represented as a threat to the in-group (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009). Consequently, context is incredibly important to dissect whether the features put forward in van Leeuwen’s model (and, indeed, Baxter’s) constitute positive or negative representations. Combining the principles of FCDA and FPDA, including transitivity, intertextuality, interdiscursivity, Baxter’s FAS, and van Leeuwen’s model, the key discourses identified through the quantitative organisation of the dataset can be explored in-depth, and the use of linguistic features and strategies across the broadsheet press can be directly linked to attitudes towards (hegemonic) femininity.

### **3.5. Summary**

This chapter has outlined the theoretical and methodological perspective of the present research. I have situated the present study in the analysis of British broadsheet newspapers, first of all justifying this choice by demonstrating the hegemonic nature of news media itself, and specifically of the British broadsheet press. I then identified the British broadsheet news media as an urgent site for gender research by relating it to the broader ‘fake news’ crisis and the global rise of the far-right. The issue of how femininity is oriented to and represented in such a climate was identified as an area that can expose how far-right populism may appropriate feminism in order to appeal to women. After establishing the necessity for research on British broadsheet news media, I presented the theoretical and methodological framework for its analysis. Initially, I explained the relevance of CDA to research on discourse and social power, terms that have been discussed in detail, and then specified the feminist nature of the present research by applying FCDA as the mode of analysis. I then adapted FCDA by supplementing it with FPDA in order to better capture the multiple and hierarchical nature of femininities that were described in Chapter Two. The hybrid FCDA/FPDA approach presented in this chapter is well suited to studies on gender and news media, as gender itself is discursively and multiply (re)produced, and the news media is one such avenue of production.

The objective of my research is open-ended; I aim to expose the increasingly subtle ways that patriarchal power is both constructed and abused, and challenge the concept of singular, knowable femininity. In light of this, my approach is also open-ended in the sense

that it is open to debate and contestation. By employing a discourse approach, the very fabric of this research is based upon the constructivism of social reality, which includes the role of research and the researcher itself in not only critiquing, but shaping reality. By stating the interpretive nature of this research explicitly, I do not view myself as endangering my research integrity. I am acutely aware that to present my own perspective as the only possible answer to issues of gender, power and politics would be in danger of reproducing the same power imbalances that are produced through the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy that I aim to call into question. I consider my own transparency, in declaring my feminist stance and the interpretive nature of my research, to be a method of combatting the practice of Western hegemony that is reproduced through claims to a somehow neutral knowledge (Bacchi 2018; Foucault 1972; 1979; Poovey 1998). By being transparent, I am merely being open about what is often left hidden in all research – all research, whether done in a lab or a library, is an *interpretation* of data made according to our own perspectives.

The next chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of the dataset analysed through this hybrid methodology, explaining the process of data collection and selection, the methods used to organise the dataset into topics and discourses, and providing the quantitative results which guide the FCDA/FPDA analysis.

## **Chapter 4: Data, Methods and Quantitative Results**

### **4.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I provide an overview of my methods of data collection and analysis that led me to identify topics and discourses which I quantified in order to narrow down my qualitative analysis, namely the FCDA/FPDA framework outlined in the previous chapter. This chapter explains methodological decisions, as well as analytical decisions that allowed me to navigate and organise my data to guide the FCDA/FPDA investigation.

Firstly, I outline and explain the processes of data collection and selection used to produce a dataset that was reflective of the broadsheet news cycle's representations of femininity over an extended period of time (forty weeks, from September 2020 until July 2021). I explain how I used the online database Nexis to collect news articles with a consistent representation of femininity. Then, I describe the process of categorising the dataset produced from this data collection according to topic or social actor (i.e. the woman or nonbinary/GNC person that the article is about). I also outline my method for identifying and naming gender discourses. Following this, I provide the quantitative results that emerged from data collection – that is, what topics/social actors had the most articles written about them, how they were ranked according to Baxter's (2018) Feminist Agenda Spectrum, and what gendered discourses were numerically dominant in such articles. This allowed me to identify patterns in the broadsheet press' orientation towards feminism and make comparisons between newspapers' topical and discursive representations of femininity. The identified patterns of dominance and marginalisation provided the gateway for FCDA/FPDA, which makes up the bulk of this study, from Chapters Five to Eight. By following the broadsheet news cycle for an extended period of time, I was able to produce a large dataset through which I could track topical and discursive patterns relating to femininity. Through this, I could direct my qualitative analysis to articles on the topics and issues associated with femininity that are dominant in the UK today.

### **4.2. Data Collection and Selection**

In this section, I will explain the process of data collection and selection for this study. Firstly, I will explain what newspapers I collected data from and why I used Nexis to collect my data ([4.2.1.](#)). I will also explain the rationale behind data collection, or the 'brief' that determined how I searched for news articles representing femininity using Nexis' searchable

interface (Baker, 2006, p.31). In section [4.2.2.](#), I will explain the criteria that were used to determine the search terms which were used to search for news articles. I will discuss the pilot study process that led me to the final search string, which is then provided in full, and explain the process of manual selection that accompanied the Nexis search. Finally, in section [4.2.3.](#), I will provide an overview of the dataset as a whole, before explaining how it was broken down and organised in the following section ([4.3.](#)).

#### **4.2.1. The Rationale**

The first issue to be addressed in the process of data collection was where newspaper articles would be collected from. As previously mentioned in ([3.2.2.1.](#), pp.43-45), the British national broadsheets included in this analysis are: *The Guardian* and its Sunday edition *The Observer*; *The Telegraph* and *The Times* (both published daily and in Sunday editions); and *The Independent* and the *I*. The online database Nexis was used to collect news articles from these newspapers. The Nexis database is an archive of news and business sources, including UK regional and national newspapers (LexisNexis, no date). The database is searchable through a Power Search bar brings up articles which contain specific words or phrases, and can be restricted to certain publications, such as those listed above (Baker, 2006, p.31). Additionally, newspaper articles are uploaded almost immediately after they are published. Furthermore, Nexis allows you to restrict your search to news articles. This study does not examine opinion pieces because its focus on the power of *news* to reproduce hegemony due to its uptake as objective and factual information (see the previous chapter). This made Nexis ideal for this research as it meant that I could follow the broadsheet news cycle “live” (or as close to live as possible), meaning that I could analyse the most contemporary news articles on femininity possible.

Using Nexis Power Search, words can be searched for together, through the connective ‘AND’, to ensure that only data with all words in the string of search terms is looked for, or the connective ‘OR’ can be used to search for data that includes either of the words in the search string. Moreover, the search can be narrowed by the number of words in an article (pulling up only the articles that have more or less than a certain number of words) and by excluding irrelevant terms, through the connective ‘AND NOT’ followed by the term that you want to be excluded from the results. Nexis can also search for morphological variations of search terms, through the use of an asterisk (\*), which stands in for a letter in the search term that may have other variables (Zottola, 2021, p.30). For example, the term ‘woman’ refers to a woman, singular, whilst ‘women’ refers to the plural. Hence, by

searching for ‘wom\*n’, Nexis Power Search brings up articles that include the term ‘woman’ or ‘women’. The use of an exclamation mark (!) at the end of a search term also pulls up data that includes the term as it is or with a suffix, meaning that singular and plural variations of the same term are searched for – for example, ‘girl!’ would bring up articles with the term ‘girl’ in them and also the plural ‘girls’. Through such tools, I was able to design my search string to maximise both recall and precision – limiting the number of articles that I had to search through and ensuring that the articles that were coming up were relevant to my study’s concern with femininity (see Baker, 2006; 2014; Baker, Gabrielatos, Khosravini, Krzyżanowski, McEnery and Wodak, 2008; Bednarek, 2006; Efe and Ozer, 2015; Zottola, 2021 for CDA studies that use similar databases).

The research questions (1.4., p.5) established the rationale, or ‘brief’, for the Nexis search string that was to be used. I was looking for broadsheet news articles which report on a subject who holds a feminised gender identity, or report on an issue directly associated with femininity. This, in itself, was a significant challenge. The feminist poststructuralist methodological approach discussed in 3.4.4. (pp.56-57) dictates that gender should be seen as fluid, plural and complex and, therefore, a researcher should avoid presupposing a narrow categorisation that flattens the differences *between* women (Baxter, 2018, pp.15-16). Hence, the process of data collection through Nexis had to encapsulate an intersectional and poststructuralist understanding of plural femininities that avoids reproducing binary understandings of ‘womanhood’. This meant that the process of selecting terms for a search string was complex as I did not want to reduce femininity to terms that reflect a hegemonic understanding of gender. As I am interested in both hegemonic and marginalised femininities, news articles centring GNC and nonbinary people, as well as cisgender and transgender women, needed to be collected for analysis. On the other hand, a news article where the main subject is a cisgender or transgender *man* was not relevant to the scope of this research. What was necessary in my results was that there was consistent representation and characterising of feminised gendered subjects throughout the articles found, so that I could safely conclude that there was a construction of *femininity* in the text. This is why, though trans men are undoubtedly marginalised because of their gender identity, there was not a focus on trans maleness. Moreover, as I am concerned with how representations and constructions of femininity may be used to further certain political agendas, I wanted to ensure that my search string also pivoted towards articles that had a political news focus. Thus, I went through a

lengthy pilot study process to ensure that my search string was encapsulating as many variabilities of femininity as possible.

The research conducted following the pilot studies saw articles being collected from September 2020 until July 2021. The reasons for this timeline are both practical and methodological. I wanted to capture the news cycle “live” – analysing articles almost as soon as they were published (see below) – so that I could track the issues and representations of femininity most contemporaneous to us and, therefore, draw conclusions about the state of the British press *today*. Had I decided to draw my dataset from already published articles, the relevancy of my conclusions to British society today could be undermined. I also wanted to track the British broadsheet press and its representations of femininity over a significant period of time. This was so that I could be sure that the patterns I was identifying were truly representative of the broadsheet press. I had in fact originally planned to collect data for a year, but ended up stopping my data collection at nine months. By the four-month mark, discursive and topical patterns had already begun to emerge in the data and I could already reliably predict the recurring topics and discourses within and between each newspaper. I continued collecting for months afterwards in order to offer the best possible defence against any criticism that my assessment of the dominant gendered patterns of the broadsheets was selective or ideologically motivated. The topics and discourses discussed in Chapters Five to Seven emerged from the broadsheets themselves, and were not pre-selected by myself (Chapter Eight, on trans representation, is the exception to this as, as explained in [2.5.2.](#), trans femininity was identified as a particularly marginalised femininity that required further investigation). By the time I had got to nine months of data collection, I already had over 1,200 articles. This quantity allows me to reliably identify and comment on patterns of (or lack of) representation. Additionally, at this stage I felt that if I continued data collection I would have too much data to manually code – a lengthy process which I explain in detail below ([4.2.3.](#)). In the next section, I detail the process of establishing the Nexis search string criteria.

#### **4.2.2. The Search Criteria**

Over a period of nine months prior to data collection, I conducted several pilot studies with Nexis, through which I tested out different search terms, word orders and term frequencies in order to find a search string that pulled up articles with a consistent focus on femininity. My aim was to find a string that would enable me to search broadsheet news articles on a week-by-week basis, so that I could track the news cycle live. Consequently, the objective of these

trials was to find the best possible search terms that were going to bring up results relevant to my research and reflective of the news environment in the UK at the time of research, whilst also being of a manageable number (Baker, 2006; 2014; Baker et al, 2008; Efe and Ozer, 2015; Zottola, 2021). From October 2019, I began to trial Nexis, limiting my search to the chosen newspapers and starting out with only a few search terms limited to the headline and first two paragraphs ('hlead') of the text, such as 'wom\*n AND Brexit OR Trump'. This would pull up articles from the past week where the term 'woman' and its variations (i.e. women) appeared *with* the term 'Brexit', *or* with the term 'Trump', in the headline and first two paragraphs of the article. The reason for choosing the latter two terms was that I am concerned with gendered discourse in political language. I wanted my data to reveal how representations of femininity could be mobilised as part of a wider political agenda that could crudely be cast as "progressive" or "conservative". In my first trials, I came up with huge amounts of data that I went through manually to find the articles that fit my brief. Looking closely at these articles, I highlighted the gendered terms and added the ones that showed up across all relevant articles to my search string.

After two more trials with these gendered terms, I realised that this was skewing my results to articles about gender itself, rather than about a gendered subject. I consequently went back to manually searching through 600-700 articles for ones fitting the brief, that is news articles focusing on a woman or feminised social actor or topic associated with women and femininity. I found that those focusing on a person typically mention the speech of the subject as a way to report on the news story (even if the subject is not quoted, their speech is represented). I then started to count the words that came in between 'she' and reporting verbs and phrases framing their speech, like 'said', noting all the typical variations of the reporting verb (i.e. 'told', 'claimed', 'argued' and so on). The average difference was seven words. This vastly improved the precision of the results that I was pulling up, but I then realised that using only female pronouns would miss articles about GNC and nonbinary subjects who use gender-neutral pronouns. So, I made the decision to search for female pronouns (she/her) and gender-neutral pronouns (they/them) within seven words ('W/7') of a reporting verb, so that I did not risk missing an already marginalised identity. Even though this increased the number of irrelevant articles (with groups, corporations, political parties being identified as 'they'), I decided that it was more important that I did not miss an article about a GNC or nonbinary subject. Furthermore, I added in terms found across relevant articles that helped to keep my topic to politics, adding a long string of political terms such as 'minister', 'conservative',



‘politics’, separated by ‘OR’, meaning that only one of the political terms had to be found with one of the gendered terms. This ensured that I was pulling up both gendered and political articles, but not skewing my results towards issues of Brexit and Trump only. I also limited my search to articles over 500 words so that I would have a good chunk of text to analyse for multiple discourses and alternative readings.

After further trials, I noted that I was missing some news stories about nonbinary and GNC subjects. To address this, I decided to search Nexis for a well-known news story about the singer Sam Smith, who came out as nonbinary in 2018. By searching ‘Sam’ AND ‘Smith’ AND ‘nonbinary’ (with variations like ‘non-binary’ and ‘non binary’) in the year of 2018, I pulled up articles about their coming out for terms that identified them as nonbinary. As a result of this analysis, I added the following terms to my search string: ‘nonbinary’, ‘non-binary’, ‘non binary’, ‘genderqueer’ and ‘pronoun!’. Moreover, though the Nexis search excluded terms gendered as masculine, ‘transgender’ was a key search term. This was so that I could capture articles on transgender subjects because, referring back to Chapter Two (2.5.2.), the trans community was identified as the most marginalised gender community in our society. Consequently, I wanted to capture the attitudes being (re)produced in the British broadsheets regarding trans femininity (Serano, 2016). Though this increased the risk of pulling up articles about trans masculinity, such articles were in fact rare in the results. This could be because of the pathological preoccupation with trans womanhood identified by Serano (*ibid.*), or because the other terms in the search string maintained a focus on femininity. Either way, any articles that came up that were about trans men were manually excluded from the dataset.

Eventually, through seven separate trials, I found the below (lengthy) search string that was designed to bring up political news articles that centred a woman/nonbinary/GNC person or issue associated with femininity:

```
hlead (wom*n! OR female! OR girl! OR non-binary OR nonbinary OR “non binary” OR
genderqueer OR pronoun! OR transgender! OR sister! OR daughter! OR mother! OR m*m)
AND (she OR her OR they OR their!) W/7 (said OR say! OR told OR tell! OR claim! OR
explain! OR add! OR argue! OR disclose! OR respond! OR state!) W/P (trump OR brexit OR
election! OR crim! OR law! OR government! OR politic! OR minister! OR parliament OR
president! OR state OR organisation! OR conservative! OR labour OR republic! OR
democrat! OR convict! OR office! OR leader!) W/P (sex! OR gender! OR femin! OR identi!
OR misgender! OR equal! OR lady! OR "Ms" OR "Miss" OR "Mrs") AND NOT summary
```

AND NOT "world news in brief" AND NOT "live updates" AND NOT "live global updates"  
AND NOT "latest updates" AND NOT "as it happened" AND NOT "live numbers and  
statistics") and length >= 500

Note that the last few search terms exclude live news updates through the connective ‘AND NOT’. This is because, during my pilot studies, I found that such articles (found on the broadsheets’ web pages) provide bullet-pointed updates that do not provide enough data to analyse in terms of consistent representations of femininity. Furthermore, such updates are subject to be added to frequently as the news story develops, and by different journalists, making it hard to capture the news story in full.

After this pilot study period, I began data collection with the above search string. For a period of forty weeks, from 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 until 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021, I used this search string on Nexis Power Search to find for relevant articles, restricted to the broadsheets named above and the date range of the previous week, using the same search terms each week. This gave me data from the broadsheets spanning from 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 until 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021. I ran the search every Monday, restricting the timeline from the previous Monday until the Monday that I was searching on. This method meant that there was an overlap of one day each week. For example, the first week of analysis set the timeline to search for articles from 28<sup>th</sup> September-5<sup>th</sup> October 2020, and the next week searched for articles from 5<sup>th</sup> October until the day the search was ran, 12<sup>th</sup> October, and so on. This meant that any articles published on the Monday after I ran my search in the morning were still captured. This search pulled up an average of 200-250 articles a week, which was manageable for me to manually go through and exclude any irrelevant articles. Search term analysis is not fool proof, articles were bound to come up that had the terms in them but that were not relevant at all – such as those where a woman/nonbinary person has a minor role (for example, they are named in the headline, but only mentioned in the first few lines of the article), or reports that were not news articles (i.e. were in the ‘lifestyle’ section of a newspaper). The very nature of the brief, in its desire not to restrict femininity to a single definition, meant that there was an increased risk of irrelevant articles coming up, such as where ‘they’ referred to an organisation, not a person. This is where manual selection was necessary. However, though there remained an element of personal selection, this was limited to dismissing articles with a focus that was not consistently on femininity. In addition, to ensure that my search string was as accurate as possible at capturing the news cycle, I kept a close eye on the national news in general, watching it every day (on both BBC and Channel 4) in case there was a relevant topic that I

was missing. Through this, I could be sure that my results were reflective of the news cycle at the time.

This process of running the Nexis search and then manually excluding those articles that did not fulfil the brief gave me an average of 88 articles a week. These articles were downloaded and organised each week according to the main topic or social actor (e.g. all articles about a woman politician were placed into one folder, all articles about abortion were placed into another and so on). Those topics or people that reoccurred in the news that week, with three or more articles, were taken as dominant in the news cycle. Articles on a topic or person that only appeared once or twice in the week were taken as insignificant in the news cycle – meaning that they were not seen as newsworthy enough to justify extensive coverage. This meant that the dataset was further filtered according to the dominance of the topic or social actor in the news cycle each week, providing an understanding of how femininity was represented in key news events/stories, and also keeping my data to manageable numbers. However, as per the theoretical and methodological frameworks outlined in [Chapter Two](#) and [Chapter Three](#), articles about a marginalised social actor or topic (i.e. about a trans woman, a nonbinary or GNC person, about women/nonbinary people of colour, non-heterosexual women/nonbinary people, disabled women/nonbinary people, and working-class women/nonbinary people) were always included, even when these only appeared in one or two articles. This was to ensure that my own analysis was not perpetuating the marginalisation of these gender identities through erasure, and so that I could analyse marginalisation as well as dominance. Below, I explain this process in more detail as I outline the dataset as a whole.

### 4.2.3. Dataset Overview

In total, 3,977 articles were collected over the forty weeks of data collection. However, of these, only 1,263 make up the final dataset. These are the articles that reflect the dominant topics/social actors and key marginalisations for each week of data collection, as explained above. The number of articles from each newspaper in this dataset are shown in Table 2, below (the initial ‘I’ stands for *The Independent/I*, ‘GO’ for *The Guardian/Observer*; ‘TE’ for *The Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph*, and ‘TI’ for *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* and these abbreviations will be used in all future tables):

Newspaper	Number of articles
<i>I</i>	619

<i>GO</i>	186
<i>TE</i>	267
<i>TI</i>	191
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1263</b>

Table 2: Number of articles in the final dataset by newspaper.

Table 2 shows that *The Independent/I* have far more articles in this dataset than the other broadsheets. I attribute this to the fact that *The Independent* is published solely online and, therefore, is not restricted in how many articles it can publish in a week in the same way that the print broadsheets are. The above dataset was again categorised according to the dominant topics/social actors that had emerged over the *entire* data collection period (see Appendices 1-4 for a breakdown of the articles included in the dataset from each newspaper). In other words, the topics/social actors that had the most articles published about them in the dataset were taken as dominant and reflective of the key issues that are associated with femininity in the broadsheet news cycle as a whole. In addition, special attention was also paid to the representation of trans femininity as a particularly marginalised gender identity. This process is explained in the next section.

### 4.3. Identifying Topics, Social Actors and Gendered Discourses

In this section, I explain in greater detail the process of organising the above dataset. In [4.3.1.](#), I describe the process of categorising articles according to topic/social actor. In [4.3.2.](#), I outline the process of identifying and naming discourses. This lays the ground work for the description of the quantitative results in [4.4.](#), which provided the groundwork for identifying the dominant topics/social actors in the dataset as well as the gendered discourses associated with these topics/actors.

#### 4.3.1. Topics and Social Actors

The decision to start with the dominant topics, rather than the discourses, was made to give the reader an insight into the news cycle itself – offering some context for the gendered discourses that emerge through the reporting of such topics. Appendix 5 shows all of the various topics and social actors identified throughout the dataset, from politicians to issues of hate crime and legal cases. Indeed, a topic or key social actor is often identifiable from the headline of an article as it describes what, and who, the article is about.

The dominant topics/social actors (that had three or more articles in that week) were “soft” analysed. “Soft” analysis involved the categorisation of these articles into a particular discourse (explained below) and categorisation according to the FAS ([3.4.5.1.](#), Table 1, p.61).

The topic and discourse, as well as the journalist(s) who wrote the article, were entered into Excel spreadsheets for each newspaper (see Appendices 1-4). This allowed me to quantify certain patterns in each broadsheet, such as their rankings on the FAS, how much each newspaper reported on a particular topic, the representation of marginalised identities in each newspaper, and the dominant discourses in each newspaper. Thus, I could make comparisons between the left-leaning *Independent*/*I* and *Guardian*, and the right-wing *Times* and *Telegraph*. This allowed me to identify the topics and social actors with the most articles throughout the data collection period and, therefore, identify what issues and people femininity was most associated with in the broadsheet press. This was then used to guide the FCDA/FPDA investigation that makes up Chapters Five to Eight.

#### **4.3.2. Discourse Naming**

In this section, I explain the process that I adopted in order to name discourses (the dominant gendered discourses analysed in this study are then described in section [4.4.3.](#)). The process of identifying, and then naming, discourses is more complex than just summarising what or who an article was about. As described in Chapter Three ([3.4.1.](#)), ‘discourse’ can be broadly understood as an interpretive frame. Following Lazar (2005; 2007) and Wodak (2008), FCDA specifically analyses *gendered* discourse. Gendered discourse can be understood as a way of seeing gender, or seeing the world in a gendered way. Thus, once a topic was identified, the gender(ed) subject was identifiable and a gendered discourse could be identified. For example, in articles on Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, her position as a woman politician is gendered, in articles on sexual violence, reports focused on a female victim. Once a gender(ed) subject was identified, the question became: how important is gender in the text? This was applied pragmatically, referring to Baxter (2018). In her study of British newspapers, Baxter argued that all articles involving women in politics were gendered because the presence of women in politics remains a gendered issue – both in terms of representation and treatment (*ibid.*, Higgins and McKay, 2016; McKay, 2020; O’Neill et al, 2016). I applied the same logic – making the addition that articles about cis and trans women, non-binary and GNC people, existing in the public-political space of ‘the news’ are typically making a statement about gendered power relations, even if that is to normalise a female or GNC presence. This is because a feminine, and especially trans female/GNC/nonbinary, person in politics or public roles (particularly in senior roles) is still marked. Moreover, the reporting on issues such as sexual violence or so-called “trans issues” involves making assumptions about gendered power relationships. So, as long as one of these identities was

the focus of a new article, I could be sure that the text (re)produced a gendered discourse. However, the dominance of this discourse in the text also had to be considered, as other, non-gendered, discourse could be more important. Hence, one aspect of “soft” analysis was to see if any gender stereotypes were drawn on (explicitly or implicitly), dismissed or updated as indicators of gendered discourse and assessing how consistent this was across the text as whole.

Following Sunderland (2004), in order to exist, discourse must be socially recognisable to at least some people. Hence, we can often gauge a discourse from the terms used in speech or text. Sunderland (*ibid.*, p.28) argues that by finding ‘linguistic traces’ in a text we can identify a discourse. Linguistic traces encompass both the terms used and those features described by Baxter (2018), van Leeuwen (1996), Richardson (2007) explained in [3.4](#) and can help us see, not just the topic of a text, but the attitude towards that topic that produce a discourse. For instance, if the term ‘climate change’ was found near to terms such as ‘crisis’ and ‘rising carbon emissions’ in a news article, we would be able to see that the text was describing environmental concerns and, therefore, was reproducing an environmental discourse – which Sunderland (2004) labels a ‘descriptive’ discourse. Consequently, after running my Nexis search and selecting the relevant articles, I examined the news articles about the dominant topics for that week (and any marginalised representation) for traces of a ‘descriptive’ discourse. I then narrowed this down by focusing on linguistic traces that indexed attitudes towards this broader discourse. So, if an article is about a woman politician, like Sturgeon, then a descriptive gendered discourse could be ‘women leaders’ or ‘female leadership’ because Sturgeon is a woman politician holding the most senior role in Scotland. Then, I would ask: ‘what is the stance that this article takes towards this issue/person, based on the linguistic traces?’ This could be positive or negative and depends on how the topic or social actor is represented – Sunderland (*ibid.*, p.47) labels this ‘interpretive’ discourse. For instance, some articles could be very critical of Sturgeon’s leadership whilst some could be full of praise, and linguistic traces index the basis of such attitudes – i.e. the rationale used to justify the critique or praise (Litosseliti, 2002). This process would lead me to identify the gendered discourse of the text – the interpretive frame being built through the language that was representing gender to the reader in a certain way. My aim in discourse naming was to come up with clear and succinct names, no longer than a phrase or sentence, that straightforwardly describe the way that the text interprets and asks the reader to interpret the gendered topic, e.g. ‘trans rights are dangerous’, ‘women are

victims' (Sunderland, 2004, pp.27-48). Discourses were also be named according to the representation of the social actor as a type that itself encompasses a set of attitudes towards a woman, e.g. 'The Strong Woman Leader' and 'The Iron Maiden'.

As previously discussed, discourses exist alongside other discourses through interdiscursivity ([3.4.2.2.](#), p.54). For example, in Kosetzi and Polyzou's (2009) study, they found that the 'male sexual drive' discourse fed into the dominant 'gender difference' discourse of the magazine text. A gendered discourse may therefore appear in a news article (indeed, as Baxter [2018] argues, they inevitably appear in articles about women existing in the political arena), but may not be the overarching, dominant discourse of the text. This means that the traces of this gendered discourse are not consistent throughout the text, and that traces of another discourse are consistently found in the text instead. In this study, I assess only *dominant* gendered discourses of the news articles that make up my dataset. That is, those gendered discourses that have many, consistent linguistic traces in a text. During the "soft" analysis of articles on the dominant (and marginalised) topics/social actors, I also identified the gendered discourses. This meant that, at the end of the data collection period, I could identify the gendered discourses that that dominated the representation of key issues of femininity in the broadsheet press. This meant that I could make conclusions, not just on what issues of femininity were deemed newsworthy, but also what the pervasive attitudes towards such issues were. The results from this process of quantification are discussed below.

#### **4.4. Quantitative Results**

In this section, I first explain the quantitative patterns that identify the key topics/social actors in the dataset ([4.4.1.](#)). I then break these topics/social actors down further, showing the number of articles about each key topic/social actor over the period of data collection: Nicola Sturgeon ([4.4.1.1.](#)), Sarah Everard ([4.4.1.2.](#)) and trans representation ([4.4.1.3.](#)), as well as the quantitative results for representations of other marginalised gender identities: women of colour ([4.4.1.4.](#)) and queer, disabled and working-class women ([4.4.1.4.](#)). I move on to provide the FAS rankings for the articles on each of the key topics/social actors, across each broadsheet newspaper ([4.4.2.](#)). Finally, in [4.4.3.](#), I discuss the dominant gendered discourses that emerge from the quantitative results, which acts as the gateway for the qualitative analysis in the following chapters.

#### 4.4.1. Key Topics and Social Actors

From this process of categorisation, certain topics and people were shown to be far more dominant in the news cycle than others, and some newspapers produced more articles on certain topics/social actors than others. These are shown in Table 3, below (and all of the identified topics and social actors in the dataset can be found in Appendix 5):

<b>Topic</b>	<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>GO</i></b>	<b><i>TE</i></b>	<b><i>TI</i></b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Nicola Sturgeon	44	17	155	76	<b>292</b>
Marjorie Taylor Greene	47	1	1	0	<b>49</b>
Priti Patel	26	5	6	9	<b>46</b>
Kamala Harris	31	6	4	4	<b>45</b>
Sexual Violence	81	46	18	22	<b>167</b>
Trans representation	33	18	9	32	<b>92</b>

*Table 3: Dominant topics, divided by newspaper.*

Table 3 shows the ‘key’ people and topics in the dataset – those that were either quantitatively dominant (had the most articles in the dataset) or were focused on to highlight marginalisation (trans representation). As can be seen, the Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, is by far the most represented woman politician (indeed, she is the most represented social actor in the dataset overall). I have included the next most represented women politicians in the dataset in Table 3 to highlight the dominance of Sturgeon. The next most represented woman politician is the US Republican Congresswoman, Marjorie Taylor Greene. However, note that articles on her are almost entirely produced by *The Independent/I*, showing that she is not dominant *across* the broadsheet news cycle. After Taylor Greene, the most represented women politicians are British Conservative, and Home Secretary at the time of data collection, Priti Patel, and the US Vice President, Kamala Harris. However, the gap between the number of articles on these latter three women politicians and those on Sturgeon is large – there are 292 articles on Sturgeon, making up 23 percent of the entire dataset, compared to just 49 on Taylor Greene, 46 on Patel and 45 on Harris. Hence, the discourse analysis in the following chapters is applied to articles on Sturgeon as the dominant woman politician reported on across the broadsheet press.

The fifth row in Table 3 shows that sexual violence was also a dominant topic, with 162 articles, making up 13.2 percent of articles in the dataset. Within this topic area, however, one case dominated – the tragic abduction and murder of Sarah Everard in March



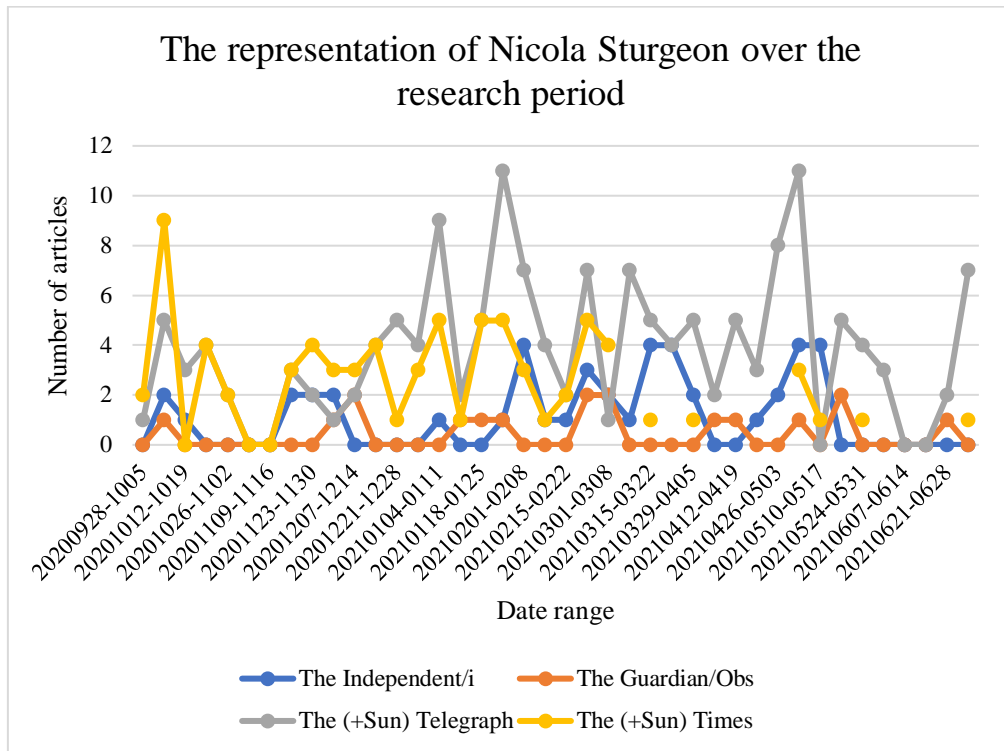
2021. 57 articles in the dataset are about this case, which makes up 34.1 percent of the articles on sexual violence. Thus, FCDA/FPDA is applied to the reporting on this case so that direct comparisons can be made between the broadsheet newspapers' representations of sexual violence. Finally, the last row in Table 3 shows that trans representation made up 92 articles in the dataset. This topic was emphasised throughout data collection due to the theoretical and methodological framework that aims to highlight marginalisation. Following Lazar's (2005; 2007) and Baxter's (2003; 2008; 2010) approaches, the inclusion of such articles amounts to the amplification of marginalised voices and produces much-needed data on the representation and perception of transgender identity in contemporary reporting by the British broadsheets. The analysis of the representation of trans femininity in the broadsheet press can significantly aid the understanding of hegemonic femininity by providing insight into how *marginalisation*, as well as dominance, is achieved and justified. Below, I further discuss the quantitative results for the three topics/social actors that will be analysed through FCDA/FPDA.

#### 4.4.1.1. *Nicola Sturgeon*

The news was particularly focused on Sturgeon during this period (late 2020 until mid-2021). For comparison, the former First Minister of Northern Ireland (also a woman), Arlene Foster, received nowhere near the coverage that Sturgeon did, with just seven articles in the dataset (Appendix 5). There are several reasons that can explain this. For example, Sturgeon's leadership style and desire for Scottish independence from the UK saw her directly challenge Boris Johnson's (the UK Prime Minister at the time of data collection) power in ways that Foster did not. The COVID-19 pandemic also saw Sturgeon becoming increasingly present in the news. Her defiance against Johnson and the British government's more lenient approach to the pandemic inevitably brought up topics of Scottish independence – especially in the build up to the May 2021 regional elections, which saw Sturgeon and her pro-independence Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) emerge victorious on a manifesto that promised a second independence referendum (colloquially referred to as 'indyref2'). Additionally, in this period, Sturgeon was under inquiry for a possible breach of the ministerial code regarding her handling of sexual harassment allegations made against her predecessor and mentor, former First Minister Alex Salmond. This scandal centred around whether Sturgeon had blurred the lines between her role as First Minister and her role as leader of the SNP (of which Salmond was still a member at the time) and whether, through this, she had misled the Scottish

Parliament at Holyrood about which capacity she had met Salmond in and when she had met him before the allegations were made public.

Graph 1, below, shows the number of articles produced about Sturgeon from each newspaper, throughout the data collection period:



Graph 1: The number of news articles about Nicola Sturgeon in each newspaper, throughout the data collection period.

Graph 1 (and Table 3, p.79) clearly shows that the right-wing newspapers (*The Telegraph* and *The Times*) consistently produce more articles about Sturgeon than the left-leaning newspapers (*The Independent/I* and *The Guardian/Observer*). Moreover, the dips in coverage can be explained by other news events which detracted attention away from Sturgeon (as opposed to a lack of consistency in reporting on her). The first gap in coverage (from 2-16 November 2020) can be explained by the US election, which took place on 3 November 2020 and, given the unprecedented refusal by Trump to concede, continued to dominate the news into the weeks afterwards. A second significant drop in coverage occurs from the week 1-8 March 2021 – the week that Sarah Everard went missing. When comparing this to Graph 2 (below, p.83), we can see that the dip here is matched by a spike in articles about the Everard case. The most telling drop in reporting on Sturgeon from all newspapers, but most notably *The Telegraph*, comes around 10-17 May 2021. The election on the 6<sup>th</sup> May saw Sturgeon’s party, the SNP, win another term in power in Scotland. At first *The Telegraph* and *The Times* attempted to undermine the victory, but then coverage on Sturgeon dropped significantly.

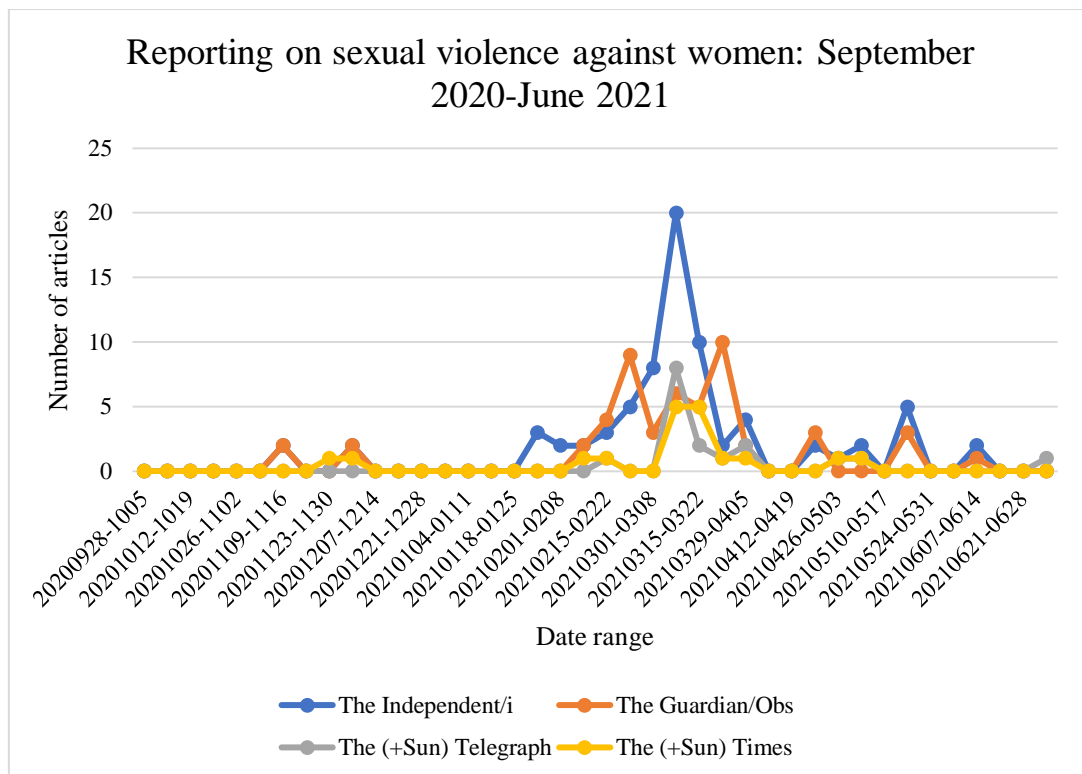
This pattern suggests that the right-wing newspapers were leading a campaign against Sturgeon that was meant to cast doubt on her leadership before a crucial election. The high coverage of the pre-election week was only matched in the week of 25 January-2 February 2021 – at the height of the Salmond inquiry. The final peak at the end of the chart, from *The Telegraph*, can also be explained as this was the period (towards the end of June 2021) where COVID-19 restrictions were being lifted, and where Sturgeon once again deviated from Johnson’s total easing of all restrictions by keeping a mask mandate in place (making it a law that people wear masks in public spaces to prevent the spread of COVID-19). *The Telegraph* was always critical of Sturgeon’s deviations from Johnson, so it is fitting that they would increase their coverage again at this time.

Consequently, this thesis will focus on the discursive representation of Sturgeon as the most dominant woman in the broadsheets during this time. This will provide insight into how the broadsheets represent a powerful woman politician, whose power poses a threat to the union of the UK itself.

#### 4.4.1.2. *Sexual violence*

Another dominant topic in this dataset is sexual violence. This topic encompasses reports of sexual harassment, rape, trafficking, domestic violence and individual cases reported on by the broadsheets. Table 3 (p.79) shows that *The Independent/I* and *The Guardian/Observer* produce far more articles on sexual violence than the right-wing *The Telegraph* and *The Times*, with *The Guardian/Observer* producing the most articles on this topic relative to the number of articles it has in the dataset.

However, one case in particular – the tragic kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard – dominated reporting on this topic across all newspapers. The graph below (Graph 2) shows the number of articles published in each newspaper about cases of sexual violence during the timeline of data collection:



Graph 2: The number of articles about sexual violence in each newspaper, throughout the data collection period.

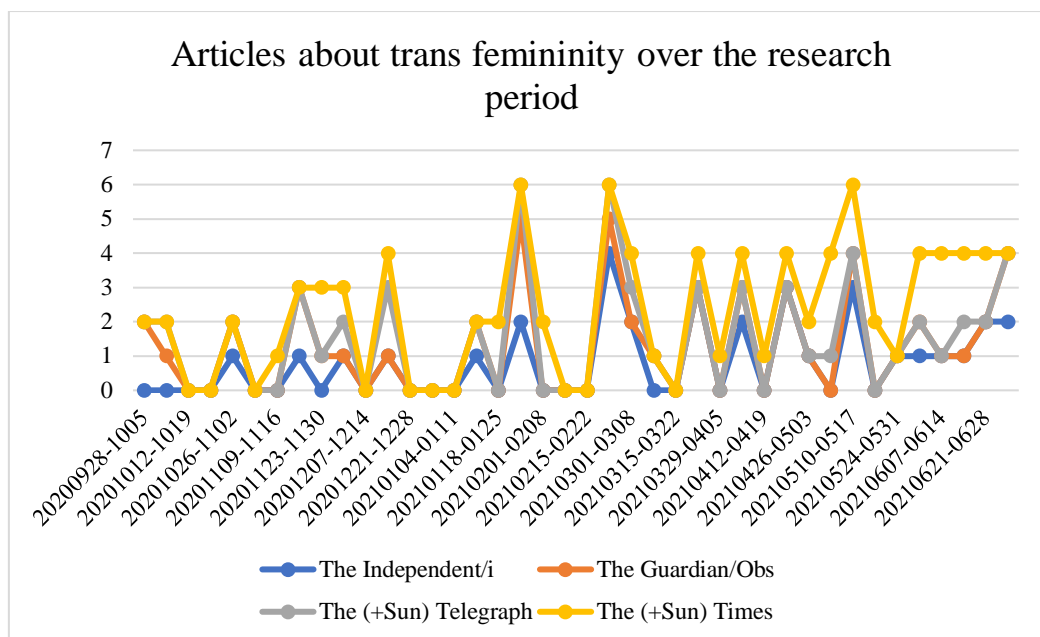
As can be seen, all newspapers had no or very low levels of reporting about sexual violence, not reaching above five articles a week until the week beginning 1 March 2021 – the week that Everard went missing. This begs the question, was the Everard case a one-off blip in a society that generally treats women well and keeps them safe, thus warranting such media attention? Or, does this reflect some bias in the press to cover only certain cases of sexual violence extensively? Unfortunately, it does not take long to dismiss the former question. According to a report on the effective decriminalisation of rape in the UK, 85,000 women are raped in the country every year, and 90 percent of those victims know the perpetrator beforehand (Centre for Women’s Justice, End Violence Against Women Coalition, Imkaan and Rape Crisis England & Wales, 2020). Moreover, one newspaper does report comparatively more on cases of sexual violence than the others: *The Guardian*. We see two small spikes coming from this paper before the Everard case, showing that other cases did occur. This first spike (around 9-11 November 2020) came from reports about a culture of chauvinism and sexual harassment in the Australian Parliament. The second spike (around 30 November 2020-14 January 2021) occurred when a report was released on trafficking into the UK during COVID-19. The small spikes (mainly from *The Guardian/Observer* and *Independent/I*, with a couple of articles each from *The Telegraph* and *The Times*) around the end of January/beginning of February 2021 occurred because of the sentencing of a man

found guilty of sexually assaulting and murdering university student Libby Squire in January 2019, as well as allegations from Brittany Higgins that she was raped by a colleague in Australian government offices. Yet, it was only the Everard case that saw extensive reporting from *all* newspapers. Indeed, there is virtually no reporting on cases of sexual violence from the right-wing newspapers until this case. Hence, the reporting of this case in particular will be the focus of the discourse analysis.

#### 4.4.1.3. *Trans representation*

Crucially, though I was looking for dominant patterns in the broadsheets, focusing on dominant news topics and their associated gendered discourses, I chose to analyse and include articles which focus on trans femininity and trans “issues”, even when they were not part of the dominant topics for each week of data collection. It was my hypothesis that trans femininity has become a moral panic in the UK and that the British press Establishment plays a significant role in its production (Baker, 2021; Faye, 2021; Lewis, 2019; Serano, 2016; Zottola, 2021). It was thus appropriate for me to include such articles in my dataset when they did appear in the news cycle so that I could quantify and assess this. News articles about trans identity and rights make up over seven percent of the dataset overall. Yet, the trans population of the UK is less than one percent (Government Equalities Office, 2018). This demonstrates a significant *over*representation of trans identity in the broadsheets that suggests a preoccupation with trans femininity that must be further investigated.

Graph 3, below, shows the number of articles about trans femininity during the data collection period:



Graph 3: The number of articles about trans femininity in each newspaper, throughout the data collection period.

As can be seen from the graph above, articles on trans femininity do not exceed seven a week, and there are weeks when there are no articles on the topic. However, Graph 3 also shows that *The Times* reports on this topic far more frequently than the other newspapers. This indicates a preoccupation with trans femininity in this newspaper. In section 4.4.3.3., below, it is also shown that *The Times* (re)produces overwhelmingly anti-trans discourse in such articles. The quantitative results consequently suggest that *The Times* is engaged in a campaign against trans women that requires further investigation.

In the next section, I address and explain the quantitative data that I have on other marginalised gender identities (i.e. non-white, non-heterosexual, disabled, and working-class femininity), which were identified in Chapter Two, but are not analysed qualitatively.

#### 4.4.1.4. Women of colour

As for the overall representation of women of colour across all newspapers in this dataset (which are categorised as articles that have a woman of colour as the *main* subject), Table 4 shows the stratification:

Newspaper	Number of articles with a WOC subject	% of all articles
<i>I</i>	210	33.9
<i>GO</i>	61	32.78
<i>TE</i>	34	13.11

<i>TI</i>	39	30.89
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Table 4: The number of articles with a woman of colour as the main subject in the dataset, by newspaper.

As we can see from the data above, all articles (except for those published by *The Telegraph*) have a similar representation of women of colour, all being approximately one third of all articles. This taken on its own would appear to show an overrepresentation of women of colour compared to the population, which could be taken to indicate ‘post-racial’ progress. Indeed, this high number of articles with a woman of colour as the subject is reflective of a landscape in which more women of colour have entered into the public domain, in areas such as politics. For instance, Priti Patel and Kamala Harris are both women of colour who were reported on often (refer back to Table 3, p.79). However, *The Telegraph* has significantly less representation of women of colour in this dataset. This could suggest that this newspaper is erasing women of colour in a bid to maintain hegemony (van Dijk, 1991). Moreover, more representation does not necessarily equal *good* representation and can actually reveal a ‘hysterical obsession’ that works to further mark such identities (K. Baker, 2021).

Furthermore, when it comes to discourse, there is only one discourse that marks non-white female identity: the ‘Black Women’s Lives Matter’ (or ‘BWLM’) discourse, named for the textual association of the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement with the gendered aspect of police violence against black people, that often erases the violence done to black women (African American Policy Forum, no date). Moreover, this discourse is only identified in *The Independent/I* and *The Guardian/Observer* (see Appendices 1 and 2). On the other hand, there are several discourses that mark trans identity (see Table 8, p.94). This suggests that the racialisation of gender in the broadsheet press is subtle, occurring within other discourses. Therefore, in Chapter Five, the discursive representation of Kamala Harris – the first black woman Vice President of the USA – will be compared to that of Sturgeon to investigate the similarities and differences between the representations of two women leaders, one of whom is further marginalised due to her race (5.3.).

#### 4.4.1.5. *Queer, disabled and working-class representation*

Sexuality is rarely addressed explicitly in the articles in this dataset and, when it is, it is more often under the umbrella of ‘LGBTQ+’ (or ‘Pride’) rather than on an individualised basis (Darwin, 2020). The only time this ‘umbrella’ is separated out to deal with a specific group is in the reporting on the trans community. The table below (Table 5) shows the stratification of articles about queer people/issues (excluding trans people) across all newspapers:

Newspaper	LGBTQ+	Pride	Stonewall	Gay MPs	Marriage equality	IVF treatment for lesbian women	Total
<i>I</i>	6	1	0	0	1	1	9
<i>GO</i>	6	0	0	1	1	0	8
<i>TE</i>	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
<i>TI</i>	0	1	2	3	1	0	6

Table 5: Articles on non-heterosexual feminine identities in the dataset, divided by newspaper.

Table 5 shows considerable underrepresentation of non-heterosexual femininity. *The Guardian/Observer* articles on this topic represent just 4.3 percent of their articles in the dataset and this percentage declines for the *Independent/I*, at just 1.29 percent. There are only two articles from *The Telegraph* (0.75 percent of their articles in the dataset) that foreground non-heterosexual women/issues – once again showing this newspaper’s particular lack of representation of marginalised identities. Finally, *The Times* representation is just 2.06 percent of the overall number of articles that they have in this dataset.

What’s more, half of the articles in this dataset about gay MPs are about the Scottish MP, Joanna Cherry – who is a vocal TERF and is represented in articles in order to platform her transphobic position. Additionally, the articles about Stonewall – the main LGBTQ+ rights organisation in the UK – are hostile towards the group, accusing them of being at the forefront of an aggressive “trans lobby”. This attack on Stonewall by the right-wing press is significant because it once again reveals the peculiar acceptability for anti-trans discrimination in the UK and indicates that this may be used as a gateway to encourage discrimination towards other marginalised groups within the LGBTQ+ community by undermining the work of a key LGBTQ+ organisation (Montiel McCann, 2022). Additionally, issues of sexuality hardly ever show up even within articles about other topics. This could be reflective of the society that we live in – the lack of openly “out” MPs, for instance. Yet, I hypothesise that the erasure of homosexuality in my data is due to the intense focus on trans identity which is, of course, also represented under the ‘LGBTQ+’ umbrella (Darwin, 2020). My research indicates that the trans community is targeted in order to isolate it from the rest of the LGBTQ+ community and to harbour divisions within a largely progressive movement that could otherwise pose a threat to hegemony (see [Chapter Eight](#)).

Lastly, there is a similar underrepresentation of disabled and working-class women in this dataset, despite the fact that COVID-19 dominated the news cycle during data collection



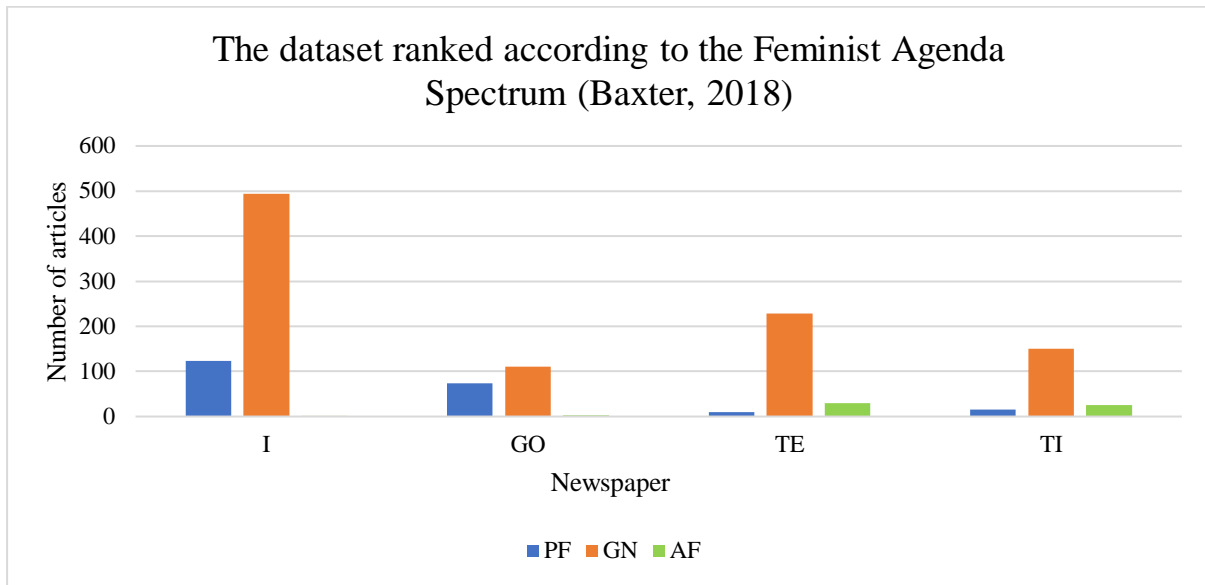
and key among the public health concerns of this pandemic have been the risk that it presents to disabled people, as well as the fact that COVID-19 itself can lead to disability (for example, long-COVID). Moreover, the measures taken to control the spread of the virus – namely global lockdowns which saw businesses having to close for extended periods – have exasperated poverty. Thus, one may expect issues of disability and poverty to be reflected in the dataset as an increasing number of women grapple with both. Yet, there are no explicit references to disability in my dataset – bar one article from *The Guardian* on ‘women’s wellbeing’ during the pandemic (Appendix 2). However, this article deals with mental health in a way that has become synonymous with capitalist emphasis on ‘self-care’, as opposed to framing mental health through a disability lens (Montiel McCann, 2021).

Similarly, there are just four articles in the dataset that report on a study about working(-class) mums and the impact of COVID-19, and *The Independent* also includes an article about Zimbabwean women truck drivers that can be categorised as reporting on working-class women’s lives (see Appendices 1-4). This lack of reporting on working-class women is perhaps unsurprising for the broadsheets, whose readers are largely *not* working-class. However, it is also reflective of the research scope. For instance, issues of disability and poverty during the pandemic were likely discussed more frequently in the broadsheets, but not in a way that reported on how they affect women, GNC and nonbinary people – explaining why they did not appear in my Nexis search. Yet, this does show that the broadsheets – including the supposedly progressive newspapers – are yet to engage with intersectionality as they are not recognising the gendered aspects of disability and poverty. By now, intersectionality has entered into mainstream public discourse and is likely to at least be on the radar of the educated people who read the broadsheet newspapers. The absence of an intersectional framing of society in these newspapers could therefore indicate a desire for the maintenance of hegemony. By only dealing with marginalisation in compartmentalised ways, newspapers can give the impression of challenging inequality whilst obscuring the fact that systems of dominance are interdependent on each other. However, the absence of data on disabled and working-class femininity means that these hypotheses cannot be effectively tested.

As there was a lack of non-heterosexual, working-class and disabled femininity representation in the dataset, these issues are not qualitatively analysed through the FCDA/FPDA framework that makes up the following chapters.

#### 4.4.2. The Feminist Agenda Spectrum in this dataset

This section briefly explains the categorisation of articles in the dataset according to Baxter’s FAS (3.4.5.1., pp.59-61). All 1,263 articles in the dataset were ranked according to the FAS, and the categorisations for each article within each newspaper can be found in Appendices 1 to 4. Below, Graph 4 shows how many pro-feminist (PF), gender-neutral (GN), and anti-feminist (AF) articles were published by each broadsheet overall:



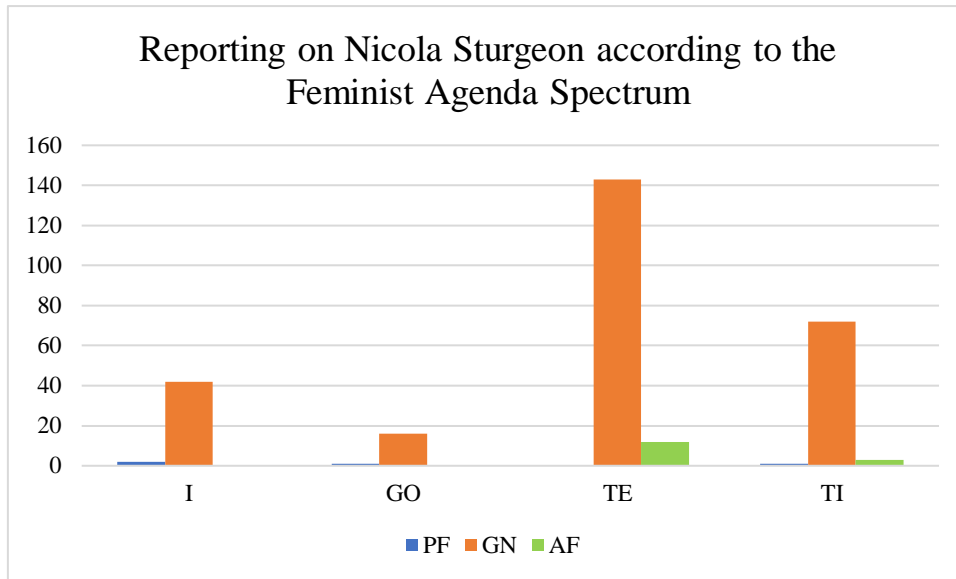
Graph 4: The FAS rankings in the dataset, divided by newspaper.

Graph 4 shows that *The Independent/I* and *The Guardian/Observer* produced the most pro-feminist articles. However, *The Guardian/Observer* produces the most pro-feminist articles relative to the number of articles it has in the dataset overall, with 39.2 percent of *The Guardian/Observer*'s articles in this dataset categorised as pro-feminist. Hence, the left-leaning or “progressive” newspapers are found to produce the most pro-feminist articles. On the other hand, the right-wing newspapers, *The Telegraph* and *The Times*, have more anti-feminist than pro-feminist articles in the dataset. However, it is important to note that *The Independent/I* and *The Guardian/Observer* do also have anti-feminist articles (though just one and two, respectively). It is also significant that all newspapers do include pro-feminist articles – *The Telegraph* and *The Times* have 29 and 26 pro-feminist articles, respectively. This indicates that feminism has had an impact on the news reporting of the broadsheet press, being reproduced in all newspapers. However, feminism can also be appropriated to achieve other ends, as shown in Chapter Two. Hence, discourse analysis is necessary to truly understand how these newspapers are orienting towards feminism. In the next sections, I provide the quantitative data of the FAS rankings for each of the dominant topics/social

actors that have been identified here: Sturgeon, Everard, and trans representation. I will turn to these FAS rankings in the subsequent four discourse analysis chapters to analyse their relationship to the dominant gendered discourses identified in the next section (4.4.3.).

#### 4.4.2.1. *The FAS rankings for articles about Nicola Sturgeon*

The graph below (Graph 5) shows the FAS categorisations for the broadsheet news articles about Nicola Sturgeon:

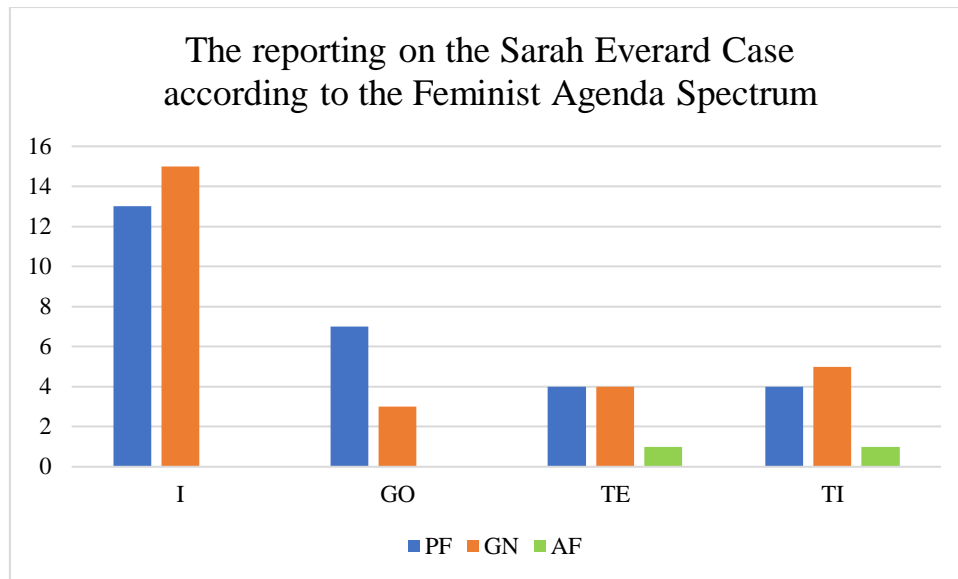


Graph 5: The FAS ratings for articles about Nicola Sturgeon, divided by newspaper.

This shows that the majority of articles on Sturgeon are categorised as gender-neutral. However, as Baxter (2018) argues, gender-neutral stances often hide gendered orientations. Moreover, *The Telegraph* and *The Times*, the two right-wing newspapers that produce the most articles about Sturgeon, also include several anti-feminist articles in their reporting on her. Consequently, the discourse analysis in Chapters Five and Six will provide qualitative insight into how these newspapers and news articles orient towards feminism when representing Sturgeon’s leadership.

#### 4.4.2.2. *The FAS rankings for articles about the Everard case*

The graph below (Graph 6) shows the FAS categorisation in articles about the Sarah Everard case:

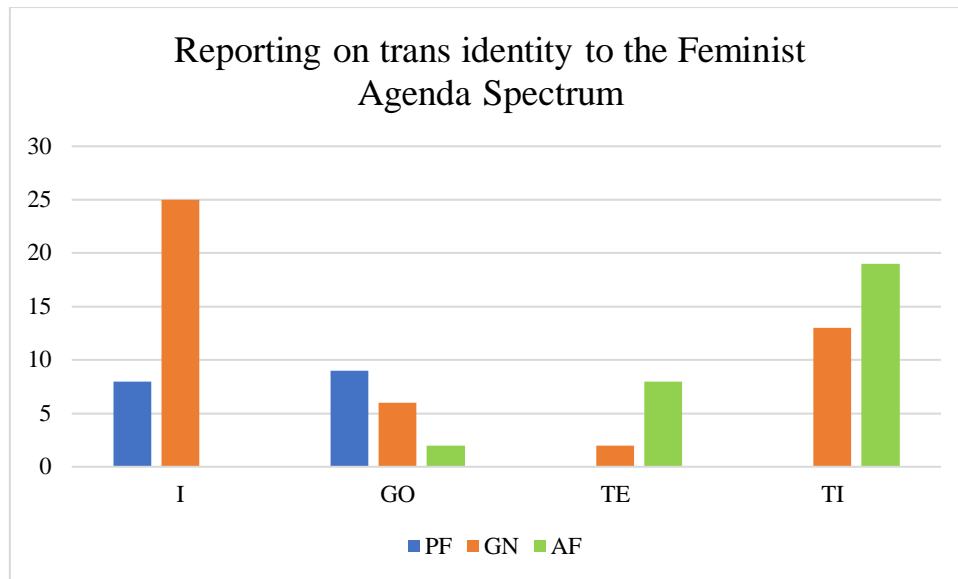


Graph 6: The FAS ratings for articles about the Everard case, divided by newspaper.

Graph 6 shows that there are high numbers of pro-feminist articles on the Everard case in *all* newspapers. Indeed, *The Guardian/Observer* includes more pro-feminist articles than gender-neutral about this case, and *The Telegraph* includes the same number of pro-feminist articles as gender-neutral articles. This is a significant development as it shows that, when reporting on this individual case of sexual violence, articles related the case to feminist critique and issues. However, it should also be noted that *The Telegraph* and *The Times* do also produce one anti-feminist article each about the case. Once again, the discursive analysis in Chapter Seven will qualitatively explore both pro- and anti-feminist articles on this case, as well as gender-neutral articles, to investigate the influence of feminism on reporting, how it was reproduced and why, and whether this truly marks a significant shift by the British press towards a more feminist understanding of gendered issues such as sexual violence.

#### 4.4.2.3. *The FAS rankings for articles about trans identity*

Finally, Graph 7 shows the categorisation of articles about trans identity according to the FAS – keeping in mind the stipulation made in Chapter Three (3.4.5.1.) that I interpret anti-trans stances as anti-feminist:



Graph 7: The FAS ratings for articles about trans identity, divided by newspaper.

The graph above shows anti-feminist stances are taken in articles on trans identity by all broadsheets, with the exception of *The Independent/I*. *The Telegraph* and *The Times*, moreover, produce more anti-feminist than gender-neutral articles about trans identity, and no pro-feminist articles. On the other hand, *The Guardian* does produce more pro-feminist articles on trans identity, though this reveals inconsistency in their representation of trans femininity as they also include anti-feminist articles. Indeed, due to the complex relationship of feminism to trans identity in the British press, FCDA/FPDA is necessary in order to decode these stances and better understand how the broadsheet newspapers use feminism to justify trans exclusion, and how trans rights are oriented towards women's rights more broadly.

#### 4.4.3. Key Gendered Discourses

In this section, I will briefly break down the dominant gendered discourse(s) for each identified dominant topic/social actor (4.4.1.). These discourses are then analysed through FCDA/FPDA in Chapters Five to Eight.

##### 4.4.3.1. Nicola Sturgeon

As explained above, Sturgeon was by far the most dominant woman in the dataset. Table 6, below, shows the main discourses (i.e. those with the most articles) that were identified in the reporting on Sturgeon:

Discourse	<i>I</i>	<i>GO</i>	<i>TE</i>	<i>TI</i>	TOTAL
-----------	----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-------

The embattled politician	4	5	36	18	<b>63</b>
Strong woman leader (SWL)	14	6	7	11	<b>38</b>
The Iron Maiden	0	0	24	7	<b>31</b>
The deviant woman	1	1	14	9	<b>25</b>
The defiant woman	10	1	2	6	<b>19</b>

Table 6: Dominant discourses in articles about Nicola Sturgeon.

As can be seen above, the most dominant discourse (re)produced in the reports about Sturgeon was one that I have named ‘the embattled politician’. This discourse represented Sturgeon on the defensive, receiving criticism from one or more people/areas of society. However, this discourse was excluded from the discourse analysis. This is because I did not deem it to be gendered (Sunderland, 2004). Looking back through my data, I found that this discourse was also reproduced in articles about Johnson during the pandemic. This discourse represented the subject as a politician facing criticism, and femininity did not show up in the same way as the other discourses. According to Lazar (2007), FCDA should only analyse *gendered* discourses, i.e. discourses where gender is dominant – otherwise, there is a danger of overstating the relevance of gender when, in fact, other issues are at play (Wodak, 2008, pp.193-195). Hence, I focused my qualitative analysis on the two most frequently occurring gendered discourses: The Strong Woman Leader (henceforth, D1) and the Iron Maiden (D2). These discourses were still pervasive in articles on Sturgeon, making up between ten and thirteen percent of articles about her, *and* they were clearly gendered in that they either positively (D1) or negatively (D2) represent Sturgeon as a powerful woman leader through gender stereotypes. [Chapter Five](#) will analyse the (re)production of D1 in articles about Sturgeon, and [Chapter Six](#) will analyse D2.

#### 4.4.3.2. Sarah Everard

Table 7, below, shows the discourses that showed up in articles about the Sarah Everard case:

<b>Discourse</b>	<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>GO</i></b>	<b><i>TE</i></b>	<b><i>TI</i></b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Women are victims	16	5	6	5	<b>33</b>
The defiant woman	6	1	2	3	<b>12</b>

The misogynist establishment	3	3	0	1	<b>7</b>
The embattled politician	1	0	0	1	<b>2</b>
The incompetent politician	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Male chauvinist pigs	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Weak woman leader	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>

*Table 7: Dominant discourses in articles about Sarah Everard.*

As can be seen, by far the most dominant discourse in this topic was the ‘women are victims’ discourse (henceforth, D3), making up over 57 percent of articles about Everard. Therefore, when analysing the representation of the Everard case, the analysis in [Chapter Seven](#) will focus on the (re)production of the ‘women are victims’ discourse.

#### 4.4.3.3. *Trans representation*

Table 8 shows the discourses (re)produced in articles by the broadsheets in this dataset on trans identity:

<b>Discourse</b>	<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>GO</i></b>	<b><i>TE</i></b>	<b><i>TI</i></b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Trans rights are dangerous	1	2	6	22	<b>31</b>
Trans rights are under threat	7	7	0	0	<b>14</b>
Trans people are victims	6	0	0	2	<b>8</b>
Crybabies and snowflakes		0	1	1	<b>2</b>
Trans women are not “real” women	1	1	1	3	<b>6</b>
Trans people are people too	1	3	0	0	<b>4</b>
Trans rights are human rights	5	3	0	0	<b>8</b>
Trans women are women	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>

*Table 8: Dominant discourses in articles about trans identity.*

The most dominant discourse in articles about trans identity is the anti-trans discourse ‘trans rights are dangerous’ (henceforth, TD1), which makes up over 34 percent of articles on this topic. This is followed by a more sympathetic discourse, ‘trans rights are under threat’ (henceforth, TD2), but this accounts for far fewer articles – just 15.5 percent. This demonstrates that the most dominant discursive representation of trans identity in the British broadsheets is anti-trans. Therefore, [Chapter Eight](#) will apply the FCDA/FPDA framework to

analyse the articles that (re)produced the ‘trans rights are dangerous’ discourse, in order to expose how anti-trans discrimination is authorised in the British press. Moreover, TD2 will also be analysed in this chapter, in order to identify how the more sympathetic articles represent trans identity and whether this indicates a genuine challenge to hegemonic femininity and transphobia that can provide an example for future journalism.

#### **4.5. Limitations**

Before concluding this chapter, I would like to address some of the limitations of the data collection and selection methods described above. First of all, as noted, the use of a Nexis search string is not fool proof. By the very nature of deciding on specific terms that denote gender (i.e. mother, daughter, Ms, Mrs, Miss and so on), there is an element of privileging these gender roles and their associations with femininity. Moreover, the search terms used to ensure that there was a political focus within the articles could also skew the data towards a particular understanding of politics or aspect of society that is not reflective of British society and culture as a whole. However, the lengthy pilot study process discussed in [4.2.2.](#) was used in order to identify key terms that were reflective of news articles that represent femininity and, therefore, originated from the broadsheet news cycle itself rather than my own bias. Though this does counter any criticism that these terms were motivated by my own bias, an issue with this is that my dataset could therefore only be reflective of the *typical* representations of femininities produced by the broadsheets, potentially missing marginalised femininities.

Such limitations are both countered and compounded by the fact that by drawing upon a poststructuralist approach, I paid particular attention to transgender femininity and nonbinary and GNC gender identity. Other marginalised femininities, such as disabled femininity, were not featured in the search string in the same way. Hence, certain marginalised femininities may be privileged in the dataset over others, explaining the lack of data on disabled and working-class femininity. Finally, I acknowledge that there was an element of self-selection in the data collection as not all articles that showed up in the Nexis search were analysed. Those that I interpreted as irrelevant, such as those with a minimal focus on a feminised subject, were excluded. Hence, the replicability of this method is reduced by this process of interpretation. I do, however, maintain that some process of interpretation and selection is inevitable in any research (Poovey, 1998). Moreover, I believe that my rigorous pilot study process, as well as my familiarity with the news cycle (achieved through keeping up to date with the major news channels), meant that the final dataset is



reflective of the British news landscape and its representation of femininity during this period.

#### **4.6. Summary**

This chapter has explained the data collection process for this study in detail. It has presented both the rationale behind the process and the search criteria used to collect and select that data through Nexis. The dataset that resulted from this search was then outlined. The process of organising and categorising the large dataset of 1,263 articles was also explained, with the methods of identifying topics and then naming gender discourses described. This provided quantitative results that demonstrated both the dominant topics and social actors in the dataset, as well as key marginalisations, which then justified the focus on three key topics/social actors: Nicola Sturgeon, Sarah Everard (sexual violence), and trans representation. The absence of data on certain marginalised gender identities was also acknowledged and explicated. The quantitative results also revealed the dominant gender discourses for each of the three key topics/social actors, which will shape the following four chapters: ‘The Strong Woman Leader’ ([Chapter Five](#)), ‘The Iron Maiden’ ([Chapter Six](#)) – both related to Sturgeon – ‘women are victims’ ([Chapter Seven](#)) – related to the Everard case – ‘trans rights are dangerous’ and ‘trans rights are under threat’ ([Chapter Eight](#)) – both related to trans representation. Finally, the limitations of this process of data collection and selection were also acknowledged. The next chapters will explain and describe each discourse through the linguistic traces that (re)produce it, determining the attitudes of the broadsheets towards some of the key topics of femininity that dominate the news cycle today.

## Chapter 5: The Strong Woman Leader

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the reproduction of the ‘Strong Woman Leader’ (D1) discourse in this dataset. Focusing on its reproduction in articles on Nicola Sturgeon, I will examine the use of two key features – speech representation (SR) and contextual information – that are highlighted in Baxter’s (2018) Feminist Agenda Spectrum as key to the production of a pro-feminist stance (refer back to pp.61-63 for an outline of the FAS). Baxter argues that pro-feminist articles tend to ‘leave considerable space for the voice of the [woman] leader unmediated by the journalist or supportively framed’ and include contextual detail about the leader’s successes (*ibid.*, p.147). These features will be examined according to reports on two of the key topics that dominated coverage on Sturgeon during the data collection period: the COVID-19 pandemic and Scottish independence. The analysis of Sturgeon’s representation as a Strong Woman Leader (SWL) will then be compared to that of Kamala Harris, the Vice President of the USA. Focusing on the reports of her election victory in November 2020, I will examine the use of SR and contextual information to represent Harris as a SWL, paying attention to the racialisation of her gendered representation and comparing this to representations of Sturgeon.

D1 is dominant in 107 articles in the dataset – making it a pervasive gendered discourse compared to other discourses identified. Articles in which this discourse was dominant positively represent women in leadership positions in government and politics, as opposed to corporations. This is indicative of the political focus of the broadsheets. Through D1, women politicians are represented as competent, determined, self-assured and popular amongst their represented followers (such as the electorate or people within a particular political party). In short, they are represented as strong leaders. The gender of the woman leader is not necessarily represented as a ‘strength’ in and of itself, but the woman leader’s ability to combine masculinity and femininity to navigate the (traditionally “masculine”) world of politics is key to her positive evaluation as strong. That this discourse is more dominant than the anti-feminist Iron Maiden discourse ([Chapter Six](#)) could indicate feminist progress, suggesting that the broadsheets are, on the whole, more likely to reproduce positive gendered discourse regarding female leadership than negative.

Table 9 shows the number of articles reproducing D1 for each about Nicola Sturgeon and Kamala Harris:

<b>Woman politician</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>GO</b>	<b>TE</b>	<b>TI</b>	<b>Total</b>
Nicola Sturgeon	14	6	7	11	<b>38</b>
Kamala Harris	17	5	2	2	<b>26</b>

Table 9: The number of D1 articles about Nicola Sturgeon and Kamala Harris in the dataset.

The table above shows that 38 of the articles about Sturgeon foreground D1, making up over 35 percent of D1 articles overall. When we place this into the context of the total number of articles per newspaper, however, there are clear divisions. *The Telegraph* produce just seven articles about Sturgeon that foreground D1, out of 155 about her overall (just 4.5 percent). *The Times* produce eleven D1 articles about Sturgeon, out of 77 about her overall (14.3 percent). On the other hand, six out of the seventeen articles written about Sturgeon by *The Guardian/Observer* foreground D1 (46 percent of them). As for *The Independent/I*, fourteen articles out of 44 articles on Sturgeon reproduce D1 (31.8 percent). This indicates that the left-leaning newspapers are more likely to positively represent the left-leaning Sturgeon in their news coverage of her compared to the right-wing broadsheets.

Yet, in articles about Kamala Harris we do not see such a stark division relative to the number of articles about Harris from each newspaper overall. Though Harris is not the most dominant woman politician in the dataset (see [4.4.](#), Table 3, p.79), she is dominant within D1, with 26 articles, making up just under a quarter of D1 articles. All newspapers reported on Harris during the election period of November 2020, when she was elected as the first woman Vice President of the USA, and this is where D1 articles about her appear. This suggests a positive representation of Harris' victory across the broadsheets, despite Harris' left-leaning politics (she is a Democrat). In the next sections, I analyse text from articles across the broadsheets that produce D1 articles on Sturgeon and Harris, and relate this to the broader socio-political context of both women's leadership in order to make conclusions about why Harris is more positively represented than Sturgeon.

## 5.2. Nicola Sturgeon

Nicola Sturgeon, as the First Minister of Scotland, is one of the most prominent female politicians of the contemporary British political climate (Cameron and Shaw, 2016; Higgins and McKay, 2016; McKay, 2020; Shaw, 2020). Famous for her pro-EU and pro-Scottish independence stance, and outspoken opposition to the current Tory government, Sturgeon is a liberal, left-leaning politician. Still, even the right-wing broadsheets do occasionally represent her as a SWL – typically during the early stages of the pandemic, when Sturgeon's approval

ratings were high across the UK, often exceeding those of the Tory Prime Minister at the time, Boris Johnson (McDonnell, 2020; Webster, 2020; Wells, 2020).

It is largely through speech representation (Lampropoulou, 2014) of Sturgeon herself that articles (re)produce D1. Applying Baxter’s (2018, p.147) FAS, articles that contain more passages of speech representation (SR) from a woman leader, unmediated by the voice of the journalist, are more likely to take a pro-feminist stance and, consequently, are more likely to (re)produce the positive representation necessary for the (re)production of D1. Moreover, contextual information is used to positively frame Sturgeon’s represented speech and to offer justification for her represented actions. As Baxter (*ibid.*) states: pro-feminist articles include ‘facts, figures and contextual detail about the leader’s profession/institution’. In this case, the inclusion of facts, figures and other contextual detail works to justify Sturgeon’s decisions and thus represent such decisions as constitutive of successful, or ‘strong’, leadership. Using examples from the dataset, I analyse how these linguistic strategies (re)produce D1 to represent Sturgeon as a SWL.

### 5.2.1. Speech Representation

D1 articles about Sturgeon are made up of, on average, 40 percent SR from Sturgeon herself. Table 10, below, shows the distribution of Sturgeon’s SR across the broadsheets in D1 articles. Following Semino and Short’s (2004) revised model for speech presentation in writing, Sturgeon’s SR is also broken down into categories. These are: the narrative representation of voice (NV), in which the narrator (in this case, the journalist) frames the voice entirely, representing a person’s speech with no direct quotation (*ibid.*, p.69). According to Baxter (2018, p.147), this kind of heavily mediated SR typically indicates an anti-feminist stance towards women leaders. Secondly, forms of indirect speech (IS), where what is said is reported, but is heavily framed by the journalist – e.g. by not using the represented speaker’s actual words but paraphrasing them (in my analysis, this also includes cases of one-word or one-phrase quotations that are embedded into the journalist’s own report and, hence, into their narrative). Finally, forms of direct speech (DS), in which the represented speaker’s directly quoted words are reported. The overall percentage of SR of Sturgeon in D1 articles from each newspaper is shown in the table below, as well as the breakdown of this SR into the above categories:

	<b>I</b>	<b>GO</b>	<b>TI</b>	<b>TE</b>
<b>% SR overall</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>39.2</b>	<b>38.58</b>	<b>33.44</b>

<b>% NV</b>	8.85	14.5	14.8	14.3
<b>% IS</b>	18.2	8.6	6.4	6.7
<b>% DS</b>	23.3	16	17.3	12.4

Table 10: Speech representation distribution in D1 articles about Nicola Sturgeon, by newspaper.

Table 10 shows that *The Independent* has the highest percentage of SR of Sturgeon, and *The Telegraph* has the lowest, but all D1 articles about Sturgeon include a high percentage of representation of her speech (all over 33 percent). Moreover, Table 10 shows that direct speech is the category of SR most common in D1 articles about Sturgeon – with the exception of *The Telegraph*, which is more likely to frame Sturgeon’s speech. The foregrounding of Sturgeon’s own represented voice, unmediated by the journalist, enables articles to emphasise her self-professed ideological principles and justifications for her actions, explaining why articles with high percentages of direct SR of Sturgeon (re)produce D1.

Below, I analyse how SR is used to reproduce D1 in the reporting on Sturgeon’s leadership during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Scottish independence debate in the build up to May 2021 regional elections.

#### 5.2.1.1. *Sturgeon and COVID-19*

Reporting on Sturgeon during the winter of 2020/ 21 – in the midst of UK’s “second-wave” of the COVID-19 pandemic – produced the most D1 articles about her from the right-wing broadsheets, perhaps because the unprecedented nature of the pandemic meant that her leadership was highly visible and less politicised compared to issues such as Scottish independence. In the following paragraphs, I will pay special attention to how Sturgeon’s COVID-19 announcements (often announcing restrictions to the daily lives of the Scottish public in response to rises in infections) are represented in articles to demonstrate strong leadership through alignment with ‘the people’ (Kramsch, 2020; Zappettini, 2021).

Direct speech representation of Sturgeon in news articles offers justification for restrictions and showcases her ability to mobilise different registers in order to motivate the public to follow the rules. The examples below show how her voice is given considerable space in D1 articles:

- (1) ‘The First Minister said: "I’m well aware that the measures I have outlined today are disruptive to many businesses’

[...]

"We're not requiring people to stay inside all day as we were earlier in the year.

Schools will stay open, learning will continue in our universities and colleges, shops will continue to trade, businesses like manufacturing and construction will continue.

"And these new restrictions are intended to last for 16 days, they are intended to be short, sharp action to arrest a worrying increase in infection." *Independent*, 7<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2020.

(2) 'She added: "I don't think we should underestimate that - it is a real achievement that young people have been able to have that normal school experience for the last number of weeks that they lost out on for much of this year." *Independent*, 16<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2020.

(3) 'Ms Sturgeon said: "We do want to allow people, and it will be within limits unfortunately, to see people that right now they are not able to see because of the very strict ban on household mixing [...] it is better to treat people like grown-ups and say, ok, here is perhaps a bit of leeway which as long as we behave responsibly within, allows us to have some time with loved ones at Christmas." *Times*, 19<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020.

In (1), we see an example of how SR is used to emphasise Sturgeon's frank political speech style. The phrase 'well aware' demonstrates Sturgeon's insight into the public's feelings, with the intensifier 'well' emphasising her professed awareness and, therefore, her alignment with the public that she addresses. In (2), Sturgeon is quoted praising the public for their 'real achievement' in enduring various lockdowns. The intensifier 'real' emphasises the level of Sturgeon's praise of the public, positively evaluating their return to aspects of "normality" and, thus, positively evaluating her government's own strategies which have enabled this. Similarly, Sturgeon is quoted using the simple intensifier 'very' (3) to show her understanding of the public's perception of COVID-19 restrictions as rigid and uncompromising (a 'very strict ban'). In the same example, the phrase 'We do want' shows the desire of Sturgeon's government to allow some family contact over the Christmas period. Here, 'do' intensifies the desire of the government to ease restrictions. This mitigates what Sturgeon goes on to say – that some restrictions will remain. All of these intensifiers suggest a spontaneous, high involvement style that works to show Sturgeon's insight into the public's feelings about her actions and, consequently, show her to be a leader attuned to 'the people'. By including direct speech from Sturgeon, news articles represent her actions during this time in the way that she wishes them to be perceived – as consciously and directly engaging with

the public and clearly communicating her decisions from a perspective of understanding and insight. Thus, her leadership is authenticated – her power is represented as non-threatening and she is represented as a direct and honest communicator, in contrast to stereotypes of traditional (male) politicians (Orwell, 1946/2003; Shaw, 2020).

Moreover, throughout D1 articles, SR shows how Sturgeon uses pronouns to align herself with the Scottish public. In examples 4 and 5, below, the collective pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’ refer to Sturgeon and the Scottish public together (as with example 2, above):

(4) "We must not lose sight of what you have achieved during this first half-term," she said.

"It is down to your efforts and your ability to adapt in extremely difficult circumstances that schools have been able to return.' *Independent*, 16<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2020.

(5) "These decisions will help us limit the impact of the virus, including in loss of life, as we steer a path through the next few months, towards the brighter times that are now within sight, as vaccines and better treatments become available." *Independent*, 17<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020.

These collective pronouns function to call the public into action with Sturgeon, representing them as a collective unit that must work together to overcome difficulties. Referring to (4), the quote from Sturgeon switches to the second-person pronoun ‘you’ to directly address the public: ‘your efforts and your ability to adapt’. This switch ensures that she gives her audience credit for their endurance during the pandemic, and therefore includes them as active agents rather than passive listeners. Sturgeon highlights the positives in what is, by all accounts, a dire political and public health situation, boosting the public’s morale by taking a “we’re all in this together” approach, positively characterising the public’s acceptance of restrictions as showing dedication and resilience.

Similarly, in (5), SR shows Sturgeon using the collective pronoun ‘we’ in the journey metaphor ‘as we steer a path through the tough times to come.’ This constructs an imagined community of the Scottish public, *including* Sturgeon, navigating their way to better times ahead (Anderson, 2006). The journey metaphor conceptualises the hardships of COVID-19 as something that does have an end and can be endured (Kövecses, 2017; Musolff, 2016; 2017). Sturgeon uses pronouns to show her leadership by attributing decision-making to her and/or her government, but also to represent herself as part of the public, mitigating any negative reaction to restrictions through the concepts of community and national, collective struggle.

This invokes a wartime mentality that encourages publics to accept difficulties through the notion of shared responsibility and suffering, but also of shared support, perseverance and determination. By including this direct SR, *The Independent* uncritically reproduces Sturgeon's motivational sentiment – reflecting the responsibility of the news during this time to help to governments communicate extraordinary intervention into daily life.

This wartime mood is reflective of Sturgeon's ability to mobilise a more traditional political register, drawing on methods used by politicians throughout history to motivate the public during times of conflict and constraint (Cameron and Shaw, 2016; Higgins and McKay, 2020; Musolff, 2016; Shaw, 2020). Referring back to (1), the verb 'will' is repeated in the SR of Sturgeon as she lists the areas of life that will *not* be locked down. This repetition of a high modality verb reassures the audience that the announced restrictions are not a return to full lockdown. The quote includes the phrase 'short, sharp action' – a neat soundbite to summarise the government's approach. The nominalisation 'action' is predicated by two adverbs that are almost onomatopoeic, reflecting the brevity of the restrictions as well as their presumed effectiveness – with the adjective 'sharp' connoting targeted (i.e. pointed) and fast movement. Sturgeon is thus given the space to represent herself/her government as active and in control, meaning that her ability to shift between a frank and honest conversational speech style and a traditional political style is foregrounded.

SR of Sturgeon also produces "we're all in it together" frame that draw on more traditional political rhetoric, as show in example (6), below:

- (6) "We know our prospects for the rest of the year will be better if we get off to a safe start so let's stick with it, and keep looking after each other." *Times*, 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2020.

In this SR, Sturgeon uses the verb 'sticking' to describe the need to continue obeying restrictions, connoting endurance and resilience – positive characteristics to have during a war or pandemic. Sturgeon also reassures her public that she is in 'it' with them through collective pronouns and the abbreviated verb 'let's'. As stated by Candelas de la Ossa (2016, p.373), this sets up the presupposition of togetherness through the construction of a shared experience between Sturgeon and her implied audience (the Scottish public). This represents Sturgeon as a part of the Scottish imagined community, rather than above it due to her leadership status. The rhetorical speech style allows Sturgeon to re-frame her announcement as one where the public share in the experience and responsibility with her, as opposed to Sturgeon imposing her will onto them. Again, the inclusion of such SR allows Sturgeon to



represent *herself* as a strong leader during trying times and shows how news articles during this time were part of an effort to encourage public compliance to government guidelines.

Yet, though able to mobilise this more traditional political register, Sturgeon's represented frank speech style also distinguishes her from the traditional politician (Cameron and Shaw, 2016). Throughout these articles, SR of Sturgeon is used to represent her informing the public in clear, direct language. Referring back to (3), Sturgeon is even quoted explicitly stating that her strategy is to 'treat people like grown-ups', showing respect for the public (as opposed to the condescension that would be implied in treating them like children) and faith in their capacity to understand information. In this SR, Sturgeon emulates a hypothetical speech exchange with the Scottish public as she states: 'it is better to treat people like grown-ups and say, ok, here is perhaps a bit of leeway.' The use of the term 'ok' indicates a conversational style, as does the deictic phrase 'here' and the use of uncertain phrases like 'perhaps'. Such phrasing expresses the perspective of a hypothetical abstract speaker with whom the public can easily identify. Through this imagined conversation, Sturgeon represents the public as interlocutors in the decision to give people 'a bit of leeway' to meet at Christmas. Thus, her present listeners (who are the same public as her imagined listeners) are framed as actively engaged in the process of governance. Once again, rather than elevating herself through her leader role, Sturgeon uses her speeches to align with the public through identification with this abstract speaker. This does not just construct the image of herself as an approachable strong woman leader, but is also a strategic way to make the public feel empowered in a situation in which they are largely passivated. This ensures that she can maintain support during a tumultuous time through the production of an imagined community of a unified Scotland, both under her protection and of which she is a part. This SR, therefore, allows reports to represent her as a steady, responsible and authentic leader which encourages trust from readers regarding the extraordinary measures being taken by governments in response to the pandemic.

Sturgeon's represented self-styling as a frank and honest leader is even more clear in the SR included in the following extracts from *The Telegraph*, where she is represented offering self-commentary on her own speech style:

- (7) "I am being very open with people that if we want to keep this targeted, proportionate approach, travel restrictions are a key part of that."

[...]

"It sounds harsh, it sounds blunt, but given what we face right now I feel it's important for me to be blunt and straight with people." 21<sup>st</sup> Nov. 2020.

(8) 'She continued: "I think it is also important for all of us to be candid, given what we don't yet know about the impact of the vaccine on transmission." 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb. 2021.

In (7), Sturgeon is given the space to represent herself as unashamedly honest. Direct SR shows her use of adjectives to describe her own style, stating that what she says may sound 'harsh' and 'blunt'. This shows Sturgeon's awareness of her more stereotypically "masculine" speech style and how it could be negatively evaluated – the adjectives 'harsh' and 'blunt' have negative connotations of severity and unfairness. But it also implies that these characteristics are not part of her essential identity (she only *sounds* this way, she is not *actually* harsh or blunt). This acknowledgement of how the audience may perceive her speech is itself used by Sturgeon as evidence of her alignment with the public that she addresses. Her self-awareness and willingness to discuss the reasons behind her speech style, talking about her feelings and acknowledging that this is part of her political strategy (8), includes the audience in her leadership role. The inclusion of such speech makes her a more relatable leader as the Scottish public that she addresses, and the readers of *The Telegraph*, are made to feel that they have privileged insight into her decision-making process. Indeed, Sturgeon's reputation as an 'open' and 'candid' politician is a self-styled contrast to stereotypes of the upper-class English male political leader (McKay, 2020; Shaw, 2020). Sturgeon's honesty approach functions to distinguish her from the political status quo and, consequently, authenticates her as "one of us" (i.e. the people) as opposed to "one of *them*" (i.e. the political elite). That such SR is included in *The Telegraph* (which is usually highly critical of Sturgeon – see [Chapter Six](#)) demonstrates, once again, how the exceptional circumstances of COVID-19 necessitate frequent and clear communication from leaders to the public, often through the channel of news outlets such as newspapers.

As well as distinguishing her style from the distrusted political elite, Sturgeon's represented speeches are also opportunities for reporters to highlight her values. Sturgeon mentions 'young people' and education ('schools', 'learning') several times in D1 articles (refer back to examples 1, 2 and 4). This demonstrates that, for her, the education of young people is a priority. That *The Independent* foregrounds these values through SR suggests that it, too, shares such values. Sturgeon is also represented mentioning the value of life in various ways. In (5), SR emphasises the importance of preventing 'loss of life', highlighting her

moral values. Hence, Sturgeon frames her actions during this time through the representation of herself as a caring leader, concerned with the health and wellbeing of the public.

Likewise, Sturgeon's value of science and medicine are also foregrounded though SR in example (9):

- (9) "Every time we stop someone, especially someone who is older or more vulnerable, becoming infected, we give them the chance of living into the era [...] when better therapies, vaccines and treatments will be available." *Times*, 17 Nov. 2020.

As well as demonstrating her commitment to protecting the vulnerable (and thus displaying her humanity), Sturgeon is represented as making decisions based on faith in modern medicine (above) and science (below):

- (10) 'Ms Sturgeon said: "What that means is over the course of next week we will be assessing the up-to-date data and assessing whether all of the country would go into a certain level of the new framework..." *Times*, 21<sup>st</sup> Oct. 2020.

In (10), also from *The Times*, SR emphasises that Sturgeon's policies are determined according to assessments of 'up-to-date data.' The verb 'assessing' suggests that her team (indicated through the collective pronoun 'we') is presently engaging in rigorous scientific examination – indeed, in the case of the pandemic, the government team is also made up of chief scientific and medical advisers. Thus, Sturgeon represents her government as working with science and medicine and being guided by evidence and facts in her communications with the public. In the current political climate, this is a political statement – a commitment to epistemological truth in an increasingly 'post-truth' society (Chadwick et al, 2018).

This combination of empathy and nurturing (stereotypically feminine characteristics), shown in speeches in which Sturgeon emphasises her desire to save lives and protect the vulnerable, with hard data and science (typically male fields), and a direct speech style, reflects Sturgeon's ability to blend the masculine and feminine in her leadership. Historically, Sturgeon's positive representation in the press has rested on her ability to do both and, consequently, avoid the 'double-bind' that women politicians find themselves in – being denigrated as Iron Maidens if they are perceived to be too masculine (see the [next chapter](#)), or as unfit for the demands of the job if they are perceived as being too "soft" and feminine (McKay, 2020; O'Neill et al, 2016). The use of SR of Sturgeon in D1 reports about her handling of the pandemic positively represents her as a SWL because it foregrounds her own

self-styling as a trustworthy, competent and nurturing leader who is aligned to ‘the people’. However, this could largely be a situational (and, thus, temporary) representation – reflecting the need for news articles about the pandemic to reproduce more faithfully the speeches of national leaders, as opposed to placing them within a journalistic narrative, in order to reliably inform readers of frequently changing laws and guidelines.

### 5.2.1.2. *Scottish independence*

So far, newspapers across the political spectrum have represented Sturgeon as a SWL by quoting her extensively in reports on her implementation of COVID-19 public health measures in Scotland. Yet, when it comes to articles on the SNP and Sturgeon’s fight for Scottish independence in the build up to May 2021 elections, the right-wing newspapers noticeably decrease the number of D1 articles about Sturgeon that they produce (*The Times* produces one D1 article about Sturgeon regarding her election victory, and *The Telegraph* produces three). This indicates that the representation of Sturgeon as a SWL in the right-wing broadsheets was, in fact, due to her high visibility in the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic, as opposed to her values and leadership more broadly. Indeed, both *The Times* and *Telegraph* did ridicule many of the pandemic-related decisions that Sturgeon made which diverged from Johnson’s Tory line, as well as her stance on independence (see the [next chapter](#)).

Below are extracts from articles published by the left-leaning broadsheets about the possibility of a second Scottish independence referendum if the SNP are re-elected (which they were on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021), which show representation of the ‘oracle effect’ (Kramsch, 2020, p.55):

- (11) "The people of Scotland have the right to choose their future. Let's now focus all our efforts on making sure we bring about that better country they and future generations deserve." *Independent*, 28<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020.
- (12) "The SNP believes that it should be people in Scotland - no matter where they come from - and not Boris Johnson or any Westminster government, who must have the right to decide the sort of country we should become after the pandemic." *Independent*, 30<sup>th</sup> Apr. 2021.
- (13) ‘Reiterating her certainty that Westminster could not stand in the way of a pro-independence majority at Holyrood, she said: "After this election, if there is a simple, democratic majority in the Scottish parliament for an independence referendum, there

will be no democratic, electoral or moral justification whatsoever for Boris Johnson or anyone else to block the right of people in Scotland to decide their own future."

*Guardian*, 15<sup>th</sup> Apr. 2021.

- (14) "If the Tories make such as an attempt it will demonstrate conclusively that the UK is not a partnership of equals and that - astonishingly - Westminster no longer sees the UK as a voluntary union of nations. That in itself would be a most powerful argument for Scotland becoming an independent country." *Guardian*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Kramersch (*ibid.*) defines the oracle effect as when a speaker represents themselves as speaking for, or in lieu of, 'the people'. In these instances of direct SR, Sturgeon is represented as speaking for the 'people of Scotland', presupposing access to their wishes and rights. Sturgeon is able to do this because she constructs an imagined community of a unified Scottish public through the notion of a 'heartland' nation, whose people and culture is homogenous and distinct from the rest of the UK, and who can thus share one voice – hers (Anderson, 2006; Wodak, 2021, p.21). This alignment to her electorate, in which she represents herself as the spokesperson for *their* wishes, further authenticates Sturgeon's leadership as she shows her engagement with the Scottish people and, hence, represents her actions as acting for and on behalf of them, not her own desire for power.

In the context of left-wing politics, this call to nationalist feeling through populist tactics of alignment to 'the people' as a homogenous entity is not grounded in racist or xenophobic discourse, but rather in discourses of transnationality and decolonisation (Lugones, 2010; Wodak, 2021, pp.36-37). Sturgeon represents the people that she speaks on behalf of as belonging to the nation of Scotland and thus constructs an asymmetrical categorical pair of 'Scottish' *versus* 'English'. This contrast allows for 'judgemental contrastive work and the moral assessment' of the English as the historic colonisers of Scotland (Sokalska-Bennett, 2017, p.18). This binary is vital to the independence debate and discourses of Scottish nationalism as it distinguishes the government at Westminster as separate culturally, socially and politically from the Scottish people and, consequently, as having no moral grounds to govern Scotland (Breitenbach, Brown, and Meyers, 1998). Sturgeon continually negatively represents the 'Westminster government' (12, 13, 14), 'Boris Johnson' (12, 13) and 'the Tories' (12, 14), thus implicitly positively representing the opposing category of the 'people of Scotland' (11), including herself. The forces representing England are represented as wanting to 'block' (11) and 'stand in the way' (11, 13) of 'the right' (11) of the Scottish public to independence. These verb phrases connote antagonism,

implying that Westminster is a dominating force and the (subordinated) Scots the negative beneficiaries of their domination (Zappettini, 2021). An “us versus them” frame is thus constructed in which Westminster and English rule is constructed as the hostile out-group and the unified Scottish as the in-group.

Sturgeon’s represented arguments above are, essentially, that to refuse Scotland an independence referendum would be an assault on ‘the right’ of the people to determine their own sovereignty. This argument is made by her through interdiscursive links with both anti-colonial discourse *and* Western Enlightenment discourse, in which the West is considered to be the pillar of democracy (Hancock, 2015), as well as populist discourse in which she embodies the “will of the people” against the Establishment elite of the Tory government (Zappettini, 2021, p.279). Through this seemingly paradoxical combination, Sturgeon aims to catch out the Tory Westminster government – they subscribe to the notion of Western liberal democracy, and yet deny democracy to the Scots, who, in voting for the SNP, are voting for a pro-independence party. Throughout all of the above quotes, there is high modality, with verbs such as ‘must’ (12), ‘should’ (12), and ‘will’ (13) determining that the British government has an *obligation* to allow an independence referendum. Verbs phrases like ‘could not’ (13) frame independence as an inalienable right that Westminster is morally obliged to fulfil. Indeed, terms such as ‘right’ (11, 12), ‘equality’ (14), ‘democracy’ (13) and ‘moral’ (13) all function to reproduce a discourse of human rights which Sturgeon suggests Johnson denies to the Scots. In her speech, Sturgeon draws on anti-colonial discourse that represents the Scottish people as subordinated to the English imperial force. In the face of this, she represents herself as the strong, unwavering and moral leader. In short, she firmly situates herself in the moral high ground over the English by representing herself as the voice of the (subjugated) Scottish nation (Litosseliti, 2002). Hence, though *The Guardian* and *Independent* are not necessarily pro-independence, the inclusion of such SR enables these left-leaning broadsheets to negatively evaluate the right-wing Tories and positively represent Sturgeon as a leader based on her opposition to them. Her representation as a SWL functions, therefore, to undermine Johnson’s leadership on moral grounds that are profoundly ideological and, consequently, are made via the voice of Sturgeon so that these broadsheets can maintain the journalistic “objectivity” required of the “quality” newspapers.

### **5.2.2. Contextual Information**

Contextual information (i.e. background information on the circumstances in which the leader is acting in), is key to positively or negatively representing a woman leader in

newspaper articles (Baxter, 2018, p.147). In D1 articles on Sturgeon, context is used to materialise, explain and justify her actions and thereby positively represent her leadership. Below, I demonstrate how this strategy is mobilised through reports on Sturgeon's leadership regarding the pandemic and in the build up to May 2021 elections.

#### 5.2.2.1. *Sturgeon and COVID-19*

In the case of the pandemic, details about the effects of COVID-19 on the public were key to rationalising Sturgeon's actions. The following examples offer important information:

- (15) 'She made the appeal as she announced nine more deaths of coronavirus patients have been recorded in the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of fatalities to 2,594.' *Independent*, 16 Oct. 2020.
- (16) 'The first minister set out the timeline for the decisions as she announced that 15 coronavirus deaths and 1,456 positive cases had been recorded in Scotland in the past 24 hours' *Times*, 21<sup>st</sup> Oct. 2020.
- (17) 'The First Minister said the New Year's Day total of 2,539 cases was "worryingly high again" and warned Scots against first footing.' *Telegraph*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan. 2021.

The examples above demonstrate how articles narratively frame Sturgeon's speech when it comes to announcing COVID-19 restrictions. In (15) and (16), the restrictions announced by Sturgeon are placed in the context of the COVID-19 death toll. With deaths and cases in their thousands, Sturgeon's decisions are justified through the inclusion of the facts that her decisions are based on. As Lampropoulou (2018) states, the use of statistics in news articles provides measurable evidence for the size and scale of the represented event, adding a tone of noteworthiness that, here, contextualises the speech acts made by Sturgeon which impose restrictions onto the lives of the public. In (17), similar facts and statistics – this time only about the number of cases – are included, along with indirect SR that highlights Sturgeon's humanisation of such figures through emotive adverbs like 'worryingly'. Her warning against 'first footing' (a Scottish tradition where it is viewed as good luck for the first person to set foot in your home in the New Year to be a dark-haired male) is thus contextualised and, at the same time, Sturgeon is represented as compassionate.

Statistics are generally viewed by the public as reliable because they offer concrete data and are thus seen as unproblematically factual because they are supposedly untainted by human emotion and subjectivity. Hence, the inclusion of statistics validates and authorises

Sturgeon's actions in D1 articles about COVID-19 by materialising the scale of the pandemic for the audience(s) and giving insight into the facts that have shaped her leadership during this time. Sturgeon is represented as a humane leader, making tough decisions in order to prevent the suffering of her 'people' – a suffering that is materialised through statistics.

#### 5.2.2.2. *May 2021 elections*

In the case of the May 2021 elections, contextual information places Sturgeon in a strong political position by including opinion polls with favourable ratings and figures that show a high number of votes for her party. These details represent Sturgeon as a SWL because they demonstrate public support for her leadership, hence democratically authorising her position:

(18) 'A poll by YouGov reveals Ms Sturgeon's popularity exceeds that of Boris Johnson in England as well as Scotland.

In YouGov polling taken at the height of the general election campaign last November, Mr Johnson beat Ms Sturgeon in the favourability stakes, across the whole of Britain. With a positive approval rating of 4 across the country, up from minus 32 in November, Ms Sturgeon soundly beats Mr Johnson, whose own rating has slumped from minus 7 to minus 19.' *Times*, 24<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2020.

(19) 'The Scottish National Party won 48 of 59 seats in Scotland in last December's general election.

More recently, a number of polls have also suggested a majority of Scots are in favour of separation.' *Independent*, 28<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020.

(20) 'Other commitments include:

- In addition to a 20% increase in frontline NHS spending, a £10bn programme of investment in NHS facilities, and a minimum 25% rise in mental health spending.
- Establishing a national care service, backed by a 25% increase in social care investment.
- Doubling the value of the Scottish child payment to £20 a week for every child in a low-income family.' *Guardian*, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

In (18), the statistics provided are from YouGov – a reliable and oft-cited data analytics and market research firm (YouGov, 2022). Therefore, *The Times* is informing the reader that the included statistics are trustworthy and, consequently, so is the newspaper. YouGov's statistics are recontextualised in order to represent Sturgeon as a SWL by materialising her popularity



for the reader, once again demonstrating her alignment to ‘the people’. Example (19), from *The Independent*, offers more figures – showing that Sturgeon’s party won the most seats in the last election. This positions Sturgeon’s party as strong by drawing on recent history, which then works to boost the next statement that argues that ‘a number of polls’ have showed that independence is also popular, further validating the previous figures that show Sturgeon’s success. Thus, Sturgeon’s party – the pro-independence SNP – are placed in a doubly strong position. Though *The Independent* does not offer the source for the polls mentioned here – indicating, perhaps, less reliable or recognisable sources – that it does mention ‘a number’ lends further weight to its framing of the SNP as a strong and stable leading party of Scotland and, by extension, Sturgeon as the SWL of the party.

In (20), *The Guardian* offers a breakdown of the SNP’s election manifesto, enabling its readers to make informed decisions about Sturgeon’s electability and values. This information – which has been selected from the party’s manifesto – is used to positively represent Sturgeon’s party by highlighting their progressive and moral values that are likely to resonate with *Guardian* readers. This list reveals that Sturgeon’s SNP values health and social care, education, and tackling poverty. The newspaper also gives specific details of how these values will be enacted in policy, with budgetary figures that imply a thought-through plan, suggesting practicality and reliability, as well as ideals. *The Guardian*, by intertextually linking the SNP’s manifesto to its report on Sturgeon’s chance of election victory, is effectively backing Sturgeon’s election bid by representing her as responsible for the party’s progressive manifesto, once again representing her as a woman with strong principles that indicate (to this newspaper at least) strong and reliable leadership.

Likewise, examples (21) and (22) are taken from articles published just after Sturgeon was re-elected on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021:

(21) ‘The SNP won 64 seats, missing out on an overall majority by just one seat, after winning a record number of constituencies despite a surge in anti-independence tactical voting.’ *Observer*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

(22) ‘The SNP won 38 of the 47 constituencies announced yesterday, giving the Nationalists a fourth term and an overwhelming win 14 years after they took office. An SNP majority would be a nightmare for Mr Johnson, making it much more difficult to refuse Ms Sturgeon's request for a referendum than if she had fallen short. The results were in stark contrast to the huge success the Prime Minister enjoyed in

the English local elections. Ms Sturgeon has pledged she will focus on tackling Covid initially, but plans a second referendum by the end of 2023, when Scotland is still recovering from the pandemic'. *Telegraph*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Example (21), from *The Observer*, positively frames the SNP's victory. The article simply states that the SNP won the election and minimises the fact that it was without a majority through the adverb 'just', which predicates the statement that Sturgeon's party lost the majority by 'one seat'. This works to emphasise the smallness of the margin and thus still strongly position the SNP, even though they have not got the majority. The strength of their position is intensified again when it is stated that the SNP 'won a record number of constituencies', once again mitigating that they did not win the majority by demonstrating that their achievement is still the best of all the Scottish elections through the collocation 'record number'.

Contrastingly, example (22) (from *The Telegraph*) negatively frames the victory. Opening on what could be construed as a positive frame, the article states that the SNP won the most constituencies and that this marks an 'overwhelming win'. The term 'overwhelming' is an ambiguous choice, without explicitly positive or negative connotations, but certainly with superlative meaning. In this case, considering what follows, this can be taken as a negative framing, suggesting that the SNP's success and longevity in power is in excess. The following statement, 'after 14 years in power', emphasises the length of time the SNP have governed Scotland by positioning their election victory in 2021 as extending an already unusually long tenure for any political party in a democracy (fourteen years). The prepositional deixis 'after' links the superlative phrase 'overwhelming win' to this extended period of power. This phrasing suggests, essentially, that this is an inordinate amount of time for the SNP to control Scotland. However, it could also be taken as validation of the strength of the SNP by acknowledging their maintenance of power and, therefore, could be read as an affirmation of Sturgeon's success in sustaining the SNP's popularity.

Whilst *The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent* focus solely on Sturgeon and the SNP, *The Telegraph* and *The Times* make direct comparisons between Sturgeon and Johnson, indicating a desire to problematise Sturgeon's SWL identity. To return to (18), the journalist frames the cited poll – showing that Sturgeon is in a strong position in public opinion – in comparison to Johnson's own popularity. The comparisons made seem to rebalance the asymmetrical categorical pair of Johnson versus Sturgeon in Sturgeon's favour, citing

popularity polls that show Sturgeon is more popular than Johnson. Yet, the article goes on to argue that an outright majority would be a ‘nightmare for Mr Johnson’. This foregrounds the Conservative Prime Minister and frames what would be a huge victory for the SNP instead as a loss for the Tory favourite, who becomes the negative beneficiary of Sturgeon’s power. This is compounded by the statement at the end of this quote that ‘The results were in stark contrast to the huge success the Prime Minister enjoyed in the English local elections.’ This significantly undermines Sturgeon’s victory and squarely re-positions Johnson as the most powerful of the categorical pair, through the superlative collocation ‘huge success’. Thus, though this article acknowledges Sturgeon’s victory, it is not possessed by her in the same way as recent Conservative election victories under Johnson. Johnson ‘enjoyed’ his victory, implying active involvement and pleasure. On the other hand, Sturgeon is backgrounded, with the victory attributed to the impersonal party (the SNP). By qualifying and negatively framing Sturgeon’s success, this article implies that Johnson remains more powerful as a leader and thereby undermines Sturgeon’s SWL role as secondary to the strength of (right-wing) Johnson’s leadership. This shows that, even when representing Sturgeon through D1 in articles on her election victory, the right-wing broadsheets mitigate the strength of her leadership, whereas the left-leaning broadsheets unambiguously represent her as a SWL.

### **5.2.3. Summary**

The driving force producing D1 remains, however, Sturgeon’s own representation of herself through direct speech representation. Sturgeon’s ability to style-shift from traditional politician to honest and relatable means that extended SR foregrounds her fluency in political speech-making, particularly during the heights of the pandemic when newspapers arguably had a responsibility to represent extended communications from national leaders in order to encourage public compliance to health regulations (Cameron and Shaw, 2016; Shaw, 2020). Sturgeon can be direct and authoritative (“masculine”), but also collaborative and empathetic (“feminine”). Her propensity for style-shifting means that she has created a dynamic public persona which she can adapt to the situation at hand, simultaneously leading and co-operating with the Scottish public, enabling a positive representation through her navigation of the ‘double-bind’ (Cameron and Shaw, 2016; Higgins and McKay, 2016; McKay, 2020; Shaw, 2020). Sturgeon’s strong woman leadership is grounded in authentication, her relatability and alignment with the public, which she can best showcase in extended speeches where her self-alignment with the people of Scotland works to validate her power as representative of the will of the nation and, thus, as morally and democratically authorised. However, what

Sturgeon (and the left) claim to be the best for ‘the people’ is fundamentally opposed to what the right-wing newspapers claim. Hence, these newspapers are less likely to represent her as an SWL.

The inclusion of unmediated SR of Sturgeon, which allows her to espouse her own values and justifications for her actions, and contextual information, which affirms the strength of the support for her and positively frames her represented values, in both *The Independent/I* and *The Guardian/Observer* is key to the positive D1 representation of Sturgeon as it allows her to establish her character, communication and reasoning more vividly and from a seemingly unmediated perspective. In the left-leaning broadsheets, Sturgeon is a woman of ‘the people’, attuned to their desires and fears, caring for them and fighting for their rights. Sturgeon’s own discursive deployment of populism is distinctly left-leaning in that she uses the concept of ‘the people’ as a monolithic entity whose interests and desires she champions against the right-wing elite (Wodak, 2021; Zappettini, 2021). The right-wing broadsheets are, consequently, more ambiguous in their praise of Sturgeon because ‘the people’ that *they* speak for are those who are right-wing and, thus, unlikely to be aligned to the social values that Sturgeon espouses. Whereas the right-wing newspapers’ representation of Sturgeon as a SWL only occurs in relation to specific pandemic-related *events* (externalised), and breaks their overall trend for negatively representing her, the left-leaning broadsheets represent her as a SWL more consistently and straightforwardly, foregrounding her core values. Hence, positive representation, and the pro-feminist stance of D1, seems to be driven by the newspapers’ alignment with the politics of the represented woman leader, not by her womanhood alone.

### **5.3. Kamala Harris**

I will now compare the representation of Sturgeon in D1 to representations of US Democrat and current Vice President, Kamala Harris. Unlike D1 articles on Sturgeon, which remained gender-neutral (see Graph 5, p.90), nearly 30 percent of D1 articles on Harris were pro-feminist. Additionally, unlike those on Sturgeon, these articles did not represent a prolonged focus on Harris’ leadership throughout the data collection period. Instead, 32 out of 46 articles on Harris were published in a two-month period, from October-November 2020. This is because the US presidential election took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> November that year, and this election in particular was highly anticipated. Not only did Harris’ victory make her the first ever woman, and first ever woman of colour, elected to executive office in the USA, but the divisions between the two major parties – the Republicans and Democrats – were stark. The

then Republican President, Donald Trump, has become infamous for his aggressive, far-right populist style of politics, and his Republican government has been accused of hatred, bigotry, and corruption (Hodges, 2020; Locke and Joseph, 2021; McIntosh, 2020; Slotta, 2020; Wodak, 2021). On the other hand, Harris, a black woman, became the embodiment of what the Democrats claimed to represent – gender and racial equality and “progressive” politics. In the end, the Democrats emerged victorious and Joe Biden became the President, with his running mate, Harris, becoming the Vice President (Locke and Joseph, 2021).

Yet, whilst there is an ideological divide in the production of D1 articles pertaining to Sturgeon, *all* newspapers represent Harris as a trailblazer. This complicates the hypothesis that feminism is a tool wielded by newspapers to positively represent female politicians most aligned to their ideology. If this was the case, then *The Times* and *Telegraph* would negatively represent Harris, who is a Democrat. Yet, half of articles written by both *The Telegraph* and *The Times* about Harris represented her as a SWL. Moreover, in contrast to Sturgeon, Harris is represented as a SWL, not due to her actions or values in leadership, but rather due to her identity itself – i.e. her essential characteristics as a woman of colour. Harris’ black womanhood became symbolic of a certain type of leadership, aligned with what Snyder (2017, p.118) has termed ‘the politics of inevitability’ – the sense that history can only move in one direction: towards a liberal, equal democracy. On the other hand, Trump’s Republicans can be viewed as embodying the ‘politics of eternity’ – the call for a return to a mythicised past of a virtuous nation (*ibid.*, pp.121-124). This representation of Harris transcends the SWL identity to represent her as an offshoot of this category: the trailblazer. The trailblazer is a feminist leader – she tends to be the first woman to break into a traditionally male realm (such as politics) and, because of this, is seen a role model for other women.

Through the analysis below, I aim to show how the “trailblazer” representation embodies a (neo)liberal feminist stereotype of strong woman leadership that highlights how hegemonic femininity can be updated through the appropriation of certain marginalised femininities, such a black femininity. I will focus on the linguistic strategies examined in the analysis of D1 articles about Sturgeon – speech representation and contextualisation – in order to compare and contrast the representations of the two women leaders.

### 5.3.1. Speech Representation

During this time period, Harris made several campaign and victory speeches. Yet, she is given less unmediated SR in D1 articles compared to Sturgeon. Table 11 shows the breakdown of SR of Harris herself in all D1 articles about her, according to newspaper (compare this to Table 10, p.99):

	<b>I</b>	<b>GO</b>	<b>TI</b>	<b>TE</b>
<b>% SR overall</b>	<b>28.65</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>% NV</b>	8.84	9.1	8.7	0
<b>% IS</b>	7.1	3.9	1.4	0
<b>% DS</b>	12.7	10.6	15	0

Table 11: Speech representation distribution in D1 articles about Kamala Harris, by newspaper.

Table 11 shows that direct speech is also the dominant form of SR in D1 articles on Harris, demonstrating that articles that positively represent a woman leader as strong are more likely to give more space to her directly quoted words than to mediate them, supporting Baxter’s (2018, p.147) argument. However, the average SR of Harris in D1 articles is 19.3 percent, compared to 40 percent for D1 articles on Sturgeon. This is skewed by the absence of any SR of Harris herself in *The Telegraph* articles about her, however. It should be noted that this newspaper only published two D1 articles on Harris’ leadership, but neither of these articles represented speech from her at all – instead, they are entirely built around SR of third parties talking *about* Harris (see 5.3.1.3.). The lower percentage of SR of Harris in all newspapers compared to Sturgeon can also partly be explained in practical terms – Harris is a US politician and, therefore, there is arguably less call for the reproduction of campaign pledges and the like than there was for Sturgeon in the build-up to her re-election, which has more of a local impact for the UK. Still, as I will demonstrate, the lower amount of SR for Harris also indicates a trailblazer identification, suggesting that articles are more descriptive, focusing on her identity, as opposed to reporting on her self-professed values and leadership aims.

#### 5.3.1.1. Historical lineage

Firstly, extended direct speech representation of Harris is used to emphasise her historical lineage, which represents a departure from the typical political leader – Harris is a woman of colour raised by her mother, an Indian immigrant. In examples (23)-(25), from *The Times*, SR from Harris invokes the memory of her mother, constructing both her racial and gender

identity and a line of female succession that moves in a linear way through history and towards progress, and the liberal politics of inevitability:

- (23) "My mother understood very well that she was raising two black daughters," Harris wrote in her autobiography *The Truths We Hold*. "She knew that her adopted homeland would see Maya and me as black girls, and she was determined to make sure we would grow into confident, proud black women." 8<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020.
- (24) "While I will be the first woman in the office, I will not be the last, because every little girl watching tonight sees that this is a country of possibilities," she said. "To the children of our country, regardless of your gender, our country has sent you a clear message: dream with ambition, lead with conviction and see yourselves in a way that others may not simply because they've never seen it before." 9<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020.
- (25) "But [Harris' mother] believed so deeply in an America where a moment like this is possible, and so I am thinking about her and about the generations of women, black women, Asian, white, Latina, Native American women - who throughout our nation's history have paved the way for this moment, women who fought and sacrificed so much for equality and liberty and justice for all." 9<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020.

In (23), the reporter embeds an extract from Harris' autobiography into their report of her election victory. Hence, a reflection from Harris on her own life is recontextualised for the purpose of constructing her family history as a key determiner of the present-day identity of vice-president-elect Harris. In this SR, Harris identifies her mother as an immigrant (the USA is named 'her adopted homeland') and a mother of two 'black girls'. Thanks to the determination of her mother, these 'black girls' grew into 'confident, proud black women'. Therefore, Harris' own identification of herself as strong ('confident, proud') is attributed to her matriarchal upbringing (there is no mention of her father) and her mother's racial awareness, implied in her understanding that her daughters would be racialised as black in the USA. Through this intertextuality, Harris' feminist values are invoked – she values motherhood and strength, and is cognisant of the intersections of race and gender (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; Locke and Joseph, 2021) – and directly related to her new leadership role which the article is reporting on.

In (24), SR of Harris' victory speech establishes her as the first in a line of women who will assume office in the future, as she is quoted confidently stating that she 'will not be the last' woman in office. She then names 'every little girl' as the positive beneficiaries of her

trailblazing. The invocation of youth, both through the noun ‘girl’ and the preposition ‘little’, denotes a linear temporal trajectory, where the (generic) girl projects herself into the future (i.e. womanhood) through dreams which have now been made reality by Harris. Harris’ individual leadership is thus directly linked to progress for girls across the nation, marking her as a feminist trailblazer. Through SR, the article reifies Harris’ transformative role by quoting her own declaration that her leadership position has determined that gender can now be disregarded when it comes to the ability to lead – again, her individual success is represented as a success for all who share her gender identity. In (25), SR invokes the past by naming ‘generations of women’, emphasising women of colour, who ‘paved the way’ for Harris’ success. By framing US history from a female perspective (both generally and specifically, through her mother), Harris herself constructs a feminist lineage that has been progressing towards her own victory. She undermines the politics of eternity by reframing history as shaped by women of colour (as opposed to white men) and uses this to construct the politics of inevitability which she now symbolises.

Like Sturgeon, Harris represents herself as having a positive impact on ‘the people’, though this category is specified as women – making her a distinctly feminist leader (whilst Sturgeon represents the general Scottish public). Yet, Harris is not so much of ‘the people’ (as Sturgeon represents herself as “in it together” with her people, both in ‘steering’ through the pandemic and in the desire for independence), but is more distanced, leading them into a better future rather than embodying them. Harris represents herself as transformative, yet the mythical future that she constructs is culturally recognisable, embodying the “American Dream” (Samuel, 2012). Indeed, evidence of the Dream is clear throughout the above SR, through Harris’ mother’s immigration narrative and Harris’ representation of the USA as a ‘country of possibility’ (23), that values ‘liberty, equality, and justice for all’ (25). Harris is thereby identified through this selected SR as the embodiment of the “American Dream” and thus is represented as proof of social mobility and equal opportunity in the USA, representing a break from the obstacles of racism and sexism that have historically blocked women’s path to success (*ibid.*).

#### 5.3.1.2. ‘Mr Vice President, I’m Speaking’

One speech event in particular captured the attention of the left-leaning broadsheets, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. The vice-presidential debate between Harris and incumbent Vice President under Trump, Mike Pence, on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020, drew public attention in part



because of how frequently Pence interrupted Harris and, perhaps more so, because of Harris' response to these interruptions. Articles focused on one of Harris' verbal responses to interruption: 'Mr Vice-President, I'm speaking'. The below examples show how this speech act was narrated by reporters to contrast Harris to the (old, white) men that embody typical leaders:

(26) 'When Trump interrupted like a jackhammer, Biden eventually snapped: "Will you shut up, man?" Harris had a more elegant rebuke prepared: "Mr Vice-President, I'm speaking."' *Guardian*, 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2020.

(27) '"Mr vice president, I'm speaking". // That was the response from senator Kamala Harris last night to repeated interruptions from Mike Pence, during the VP debate.' *Independent*, 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2020.

(26), from *The Guardian*, compares Harris' response favourably to the interaction between the two (old, white) men in presidential debate (which had happened the week before): Trump and Biden. Trump's 'repeated interruptions' of Biden lead him to be characterised as a 'jackhammer', connoting aggression typically associated with masculinity. Biden's response is also framed as aggressive. The narrator's voice, that frames Biden's speech act as a 'snap', suggests a slip in composure driven by frustration and anger (Semino and Short, 2004). Harris' response to interruption, on the other hand, is reported as an 'elegant rebuke'. Thus, Harris is positively represented for *not* responding in a masculine (aggressive) way.

(27), from *The Independent*, shows the opening two paragraphs of the article published after the debate. The position of the SR from Harris, in a standalone sentence opening the article, demonstrates its prime importance and suggests that Harris is a powerful figure – able to establish a newsworthy event through one utterance. Yet, Harris' power comes from her *passive* aggression – she is not the jackhammer, but the composed challenger. Harris' simple statement, addressed in respectful language (she addresses Pence by his formal title), is presented by the left-leaning broadsheets as embodying her power to challenge (white) men who otherwise subordinate her on the conversational floor and, therefore, identifying her as a break from tradition. However, this reproduces gendered stereotypes that require women to minimise their passion in order to remain composed and "sensible" in the public space to navigate the 'double-bind' (Hancock, 2015; McKay, 2020).

Indeed, the positive evaluation that Harris drew for her composed retort stems from a desire to contrast her to the "Angry Black Woman" stereotype. According to Harris-Perry

(2015, pp.87-96), the Angry Black Woman is a characterisation of black women as shrill, argumentative, nagging, and abusive that functions to illegitimate the substance of black women's anger by reducing it to irrationality. The representation of Harris' speech act as composed and 'elegant' thus challenges this stereotype. What both *The Guardian* and *The Independent* positively evaluate is Harris' ability to navigate this bind, to feminise the masculine – to be passive aggressive rather than just aggressive – and to still dominate (and, thus, emasculate) her male counterpart in doing so. In this remark, Harris is represented as shutting down Pence's interruption and reclaiming the conversational floor without resorting to aggressive, 'jackhammer'-like interruption. Just as Sturgeon is positively evaluated for softening her "feisty" image to successfully navigate the 'double-bind', Harris is positively evaluated for doing the same in maintaining "sensible" composure (Higgins and McKay, 2016, p.291). However, this essentially praises Harris for being an ideal (composed, rather than "angry") black woman, ultimately maintaining rather than challenging the double-bind. Moreover, for Harris, this 'double-bind' is a triple-bind – she must balance the masculine and feminine whilst also negotiating racial and cultural expectations that are likely to perceive her as more aggressive than her white counterparts (Crenshaw, 1991; Harris-Perry, 2015; Hill Collins, 2002). Paradoxically, though these newspapers represent Harris as a trailblazer breaking away from the politics of eternity (and the politics of masculinity), her leadership is positively evaluated because of how it conforms to expectations of socially acceptable public behaviour from black women.

### 5.3.1.3. *Harris the inspiration*

Finally, Harris is characterised as a trailblazer through the SR of "ordinary" people in a way not seen in representations of Sturgeon. In particular, I wish to focus on one article from *The Telegraph*, published on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The journalist writing this piece has travelled to Thulasendrapuram in India, where Harris' maternal grandmother was from, to report on Harris' election victory. The piece in its entirety is an exoticisation of Harris that functions to other her even as it ostensibly celebrates her ascension to power. SR of villagers is used to achieve this:

- (28) "From a country like India, in which women have very little privilege, it is still extremely difficult for a woman to dream about even becoming a village president," Malarvannan, the village's leader, told *The Sunday Telegraph*.'

(29) “My fellow girl students and I are very inspired hearing stories about our akkas [sister in Tamil] Kamala Harris,” said Viji Vijayalakshmi, a student.

“We are determined to achieve at least 10 per cent of what she has and work hard in our passion to become a junior Kamala Harris.””

In (28), speech from the village leader (a male authorised person) is reproduced, whilst speech from Harris herself is absent from the text. The speaker describes India as a country that can be grouped with many others ‘like’ it (thereby setting up for the homogenisation of the global south as under/undeveloped, i.e. uncivilised) where ‘women have very little privilege’. Consequently, India is established as a gender unequal country and the USA is implied to be its counterpart, where women enjoy privilege, power and gender equality – as evidenced by Harris’ election victory. This is further emphasised through the invocation of a generic ‘woman’ (i.e. all Indian women) who cannot even ‘dream’ of becoming a ‘village president’. The use of the adverb ‘even’ before specifying ‘village president’ suggests that the role of village president is far below that of US Vice President. Thus, the village, which, in this article, comes to symbolise India itself, is subordinated to the greater power of the West, symbolised by the USA. In India, gender inequality means that women cannot even aspire (‘dream’) to the diminutive power of village leader, whilst in the USA Harris is living the feminist dream of “‘real’/authentic leadership and women and girls can ‘dream with ambition’” (24). Hence, the USA is represented as a *postfeminist* utopia, in which their reality represents the dreams to which Indian women can hardly even aspire to.

Example (29) illustrates this further, through the SR of a student who states that her and her ‘fellow girl students’ are inspired by Harris. Harris’ trailblazing role is shown as younger generations (young girls) look up to her and hope to emulate her in the future – to become ‘even 10 percent’ of a Kamala Harris is the dream for Indian ‘girl students.’ This invocation of youth and dreams is key to the trailblazer identification, as shown in examples (23) and (24), as it represents Harris’ present success as a future promise for the next generation. Through the SR of villagers in this text, *The Telegraph* establishes a femonationalist frame by representing Harris as a trailblazer and the USA as enabling this trailblazing. India, and Indian women, are represented as aspiring to Western standards and as being oppressed in their own society. Hence, hegemony is reproduced as, though she may be a woman of colour, Harris has gained power by fitting into the hegemonic model – she has achieved individual power, which can now be used as evidence that anyone, regardless of race or gender, can obtain such power in the USA. This not only minimises, in fact

suppresses, the challenges of misogyny and racism that Harris did face in her career and on the campaign trail, but also represents women in India as weak and disempowered. Whilst Sturgeon herself asserts that she speaks for and represents ‘the people’, who are her direct electorate, in this article on Harris’ leadership, ‘the people’ that she represents are not the US electorate who voted for her, but villagers in India who she is elevated above. This demonstrates how Harris’ identity and heritage are foregrounded over her political experience, making the strength of her leadership dependent on the conceptualisation of the USA as a postfeminist nation that enabled her success, as opposed to on her own values or actions.

### **5.3.2. Contextual Information**

The most striking difference between the representation of Sturgeon as a SWL in the broadsheets and Harris as a trailblazer SWL is the emphasis on Harris’ ancestry, combined with the backgrounding of her political values and professional experience. It is Harris’ essential identity as the daughter of an Indian immigrant mother, her race, her gender, that push her leadership into a trailblazer status – because she is not just a woman, but a woman of colour, she is presented as representing a shift towards more inclusive, diverse politics in the USA. On the other hand, though Sturgeon’s gender does represent a break from the dominant trajectory of British politics (in which leaders are typically white men), this is not foregrounded in articles about her leadership. This is, however, likely due to the fact that Sturgeon is an established leader who has been in power for eight years, meaning that the novelty of her break from tradition, so central to the trailblazer identity, has worn off. However, the ways that the context of Harris’ victory is represented reveals gendered and racial biases that produce a feminist stereotype of the trailblazer.

#### *5.3.2.1. Harris: A postfeminist icon*

The examples below show how Harris’ leadership is represented as trailblazing by providing contextual that is emphasises Harris’ feminist status, such as her influence on other women:

- (30) ‘She has also secured a cultural following among women who see themselves reflected in her. After she wore Chuck Taylor trainers on the campaign trail, there was a surge in sales. She received news of Mr Biden's victory on Saturday while out for a run in a Nike top that is expected to receive similar acclaim.’ *Times*, 8<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020.

Example (30) foregrounds the generic homogenised category of ‘women’ who see themselves reflected in [Harris]’ to represent Harris as a leader through the identification of her followers. The ‘women’ inspired by Harris could be women of colour who now have Harris as an example of a woman who looks like them in leadership, or they could be white women who have also never had an example of a woman leader in their own country. However, this inspiration is limited in the account by *The Times* to Harris’ ‘cultural following’. What is listed as evidence of her power to inspire is not examples of other women entering into politics or the law, but rather the clothes that they wear. We are offered no information about how Harris’ political track record has challenged Trump, but *The Times* instead emphasises Harris’ clothing choices. By emphasising what Litosseliti et al (2019, p.6) label ‘aesthetic labour’, *The Times* re-places Harris’ power into the traditionally feminine sphere by focusing on her appearance as the key site of her value, as opposed to her political leadership or experience. It constructs a feminist timeline where Harris’ present status and power are reduced to items of clothing that shape the future only through encouraging other women to consume – constructing a ‘postfeminist I-identity’ in which the power that Harris holds over other women is rooted in purchasing power (Lazar, 2014). Once again, Harris’ leadership is touted by the newspaper as transformative, as counterhegemonic, whilst at the same time it is used to reproduce hegemonic femininity through the suggestion that women express their political ideology through consumption.

Additionally, Harris’ superlative leadership status (her being the ‘first’ such leader) is central to her representation as a trailblazer, and similarly backgrounds the context of her career trajectory or her political beliefs. For example:

- (31) ‘From the moment that Kamala Harris, in suffragette white, appeared on stage to the strains of Mary J Blige’s ‘Work That’, it was clear that this pair of leaders would celebrate America as it is – not hearken back to the whiter America of the past. Harris paid tribute to her mother, who immigrated to the US from India at the age of 19, not knowing her daughter would go on to be, as Biden said, “the first woman, first Black woman, first woman of South Asian descent, and first daughter of immigrants ever elected to national office in this country.”’ *Guardian*, 8<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020.
- (32) ‘With Joe Biden on track to win the presidency, Kamala Harris, his deputy, has history in her sights as the first woman, and first person of colour, to serve as the US vice-president.’ *Telegraph* 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2020.

Example (31), from *The Guardian*, notes that Harris wore ‘suffragette white’ for the inauguration ceremony. The intertextual connection made between the suffragettes and Harris’ victory further reifies the imagined linear trajectory of the trailblazer by connecting Harris’ current senior political position with the fight for the right to vote, thus representing Harris as an embodiment of the suffragette fight for women’s place in the political realm. However, once again, Harris’ political resistance is reduced to her choice of clothes, as opposed to action and experience. Example (31) also states that Harris does not represent the past (i.e. the politics of eternity) of a ‘whiter America’ (this version of the USA’s past is itself dependent on the hegemonic colonial narrative that erases the indigenous population of the USA in favour of the myth of a white origin story), but instead her leadership celebrates ‘America as it is.’ Again, we see the past and future combined in Harris as a present-day historical figure, making her mark on the linear timeline of progress as a distinct departure from outdated notions of leadership (i.e. white, male leaders). Yet, we see little of her present actions or values represented, and little of the challenges of racism and misogyny that she has faced. Harris’ ascension to power is presented as the materialisation of the politics of inevitability that implies that the USA under Trump can be consigned to the past, written off as a blip in history that is non-representative of what the USA really is, thereby justifying the erasure of issues that were brought to the surface during the Trump administration (i.e. white supremacy). Trump’s rule is consequently dismissed and Harris’ leadership becomes both a departure from his era of division and antagonism and a restoration of the “real” USA that is presupposed to embrace diversity. *The Guardian* represents Harris as a saviour, suppressing the continued race, gender, and class inequalities that pervade the country.

Furthermore, every article on Harris during this time period foregrounds her race/ethnicity. In example (32), Harris is labelled according to the superlative nature of her achievement – as the ‘first woman, and first person of colour, to serve as the US vice president.’ In (31), this labelling is reproduced through SR of Biden embedded into the description of Harris’ own speech, extending and specifying Harris’ identities to ‘daughter of immigrants’, ‘Black’, and of ‘South Asian descent’ – a list of marginalised identities in the US context. By embedding this identification of Harris into the report’s own representation of her victory, the reporter can foreground Harris’ identity and directly connect it to her leadership (Semino and Short, 2004). Through this, they can claim a progressive stance that values the inclusion of marginalised identities, without having to align to the politics that foregrounds such representation. Biden’s choice of Harris as his running mate was itself built

around her identity – he pledged to choose a woman of colour as his running mate in order to represent his commitment to progressive politics. According to Locke and Joseph (2021, p.454), because of this, when Harris became Biden’s running mate, her own record and experience became less important than her essential identity as a black woman. Thus, the focus on Harris’ identity in the British broadsheets reflects how she was represented by Biden and the Democrats. Her own experience, beliefs and aims in power matter less than her symbolisation of the politics of inevitability that the Democrats used to present themselves as the antithesis to Trump. Indeed, her secondary status as *Vice President* leads to her objectification as a symbol of *Biden’s* values, not her own. It is hard not to read this power dynamic as incredibly gendered – in many ways, Harris is Biden’s helpmate, her power lying in her support of him and her embodiment of his values and not in her own abilities, experience or ideological stance.

#### 5.3.2.2. *Harris: A femonationalist icon*

An extreme example of this focus on Harris’ ancestry, as opposed to focusing on contextual detail regarding her campaign pledges or political goals, comes from *The Telegraph* article published on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The contextualisation of the report in India is used to represent the USA as a postfeminist society, which ultimately justifies the marginalisation of India/the global south through femonationalist interdiscursivity.

Femonationalism is defined by Farris (2017, p.4) as the exploitation of feminist themes by nationalists and neoliberals in anti-Islamic and anti-immigration campaigns, to justify the subordination of others by claiming to be “saving” women from oppressive cultures. However, it can also be used to justify any form of racism under the guise of feminist concern or desire for gender equality. Below, evidence from *The Telegraph* shows how Harris’ trailblazer status is used to subordinate India to the USA:

- (33) ‘You would be forgiven for thinking Diwali celebrations had begun a week early in the small Indian village of Thulasendrapuram. // But it was here, 8,000 miles from the White House in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, that the grandmother of Kamala Harris, the next vice-president of the United States, was born.’
- (34) ‘Perhaps the greater influence on Ms Harris, though, is that of her mother Shyamala who was born in the city of Chennai. She emigrated to California alone in

the Fifties to complete a master's degree – confounding society's expectations of an Indian woman.'

The opening paragraph of the article (33) invokes Diwali, a Hindu religious festival. This functions to distinguish the space in which the article is set ('the small Indian village of Thulasendrapuram') from the USA by foregrounding religious and cultural differences. For instance, the journalist could have given any example of a big celebration (i.e. New Year's Eve in Times Square) to generate an image of festivity, but chose to foreground a well-known Indian celebration, which is well-established in the Western world, to highlight the "Indianness" (i.e. non-whiteness, otherness) of the location and, by extension, of Harris' ancestral roots.

This is reinforced in the following paragraph that specifies that the village is '8,000 miles away from the White House'. Here, the White House – the official residence of the President and offices of the Vice President – represents Western politics and culture. The physical distance between this and Harris' ancestral village therefore figuratively represents the distance between the cultural-political status of the USA (postfeminist, post-racial, "civilised") and India (patriarchal, "uncivilised", underdeveloped). Indeed, in example (34), the journalist states that Harris' mother was born in Chennai, a city. That they explicitly chose to find an ancestral link to an Indian *village* (to Harris' grandmother, rather than mother) to contextualise Harris' victory indicates a desire to draw on stereotypes of India as underdeveloped, as cities are developed, urban areas. A village on the other hand, enables a "third world" imagery to be established that fulfils the femonationalist aims of the piece – to represent the USA as superior to India through the presupposition of gender equality which can be used a symbol of Western development. The journalist also notes that Harris' mother emigrated to the USA for her education, 'confounding the expectations of an Indian woman'. This again draws on "third world" stereotypes of countries like India as "backwards", uneducated and oppressive towards women (Anzaldúa, 2015; Lethabo King, 2019). As Farris (2017) argues, by presenting other countries as oppressive towards women, discrimination and aggression against such (non-white) countries (and their people) can be justified under the guise of desiring to "liberate" oppressed women from patriarchal cultures. Though more overtly an exoticisation of Harris' Indian ancestry, *The Telegraph* is similar to *The Times*, *Guardian* and *Independent* in foregrounding contextual information that presents Harris' leadership as evidence of the USA as a superior, postfeminist nation and backgrounding information about her own professional and political career.



### 5.3.3. Summary

All broadsheets in this dataset reproduce D1 when reporting on Harris' ascension to Vice President of the USA. However, all newspapers represent Harris as a SWL who is a trailblazer, whilst Sturgeon is not represented as trailblazing in her leadership. Articles took up an ostensibly pro-feminist stance and represented Harris as challenging the traditional white male demographic of US politics. However, this also leads to the reduction of Harris to a symbolic leadership role. Whilst Sturgeon's power is shown through her actions in leadership during the pandemic, her alignment with (and embodiment of) 'the people', and her political aims and values, Harris' power is about *identity*. 'The people' that Harris is represented as leading/inspiring are distant (both geographically and relationally) – Harris is not represented as having any direct communication with them. Hence, her leadership – and *who* she leads – is intentionally ambiguous so that it can extend beyond ideological boundaries.

That the ideological divide found in the production of D1 in articles about Sturgeon was not reflected in articles about Harris further supports this argument that Harris' own politics were not at the centre of her leadership representation. Locke and Joseph (2021, p.454) argue that, though Harris' leadership challenges the white hegemony of US politics and represents the possibility for marginalised groups to achieve political leadership, she is also a 'safe' woman of colour to fulfil this role. Harris is by no means a radical progressive. Indeed, her record as an attorney general has been much criticised by progressives (*ibid.*). Therefore, she provides the broadsheets with an opportunity to align themselves superficially with feminism, without taking the risk of undermining hegemony. In short, Harris is tokenised – she is used to prove the social mobility promise of neoliberal capitalism in the West, i.e. the "American Dream". Harris' leadership is positively evaluated as aspirational, but there is not substance to it. On the other hand, though D1 articles on Sturgeon were ostensibly gender-neutral, for the left-leaning broadsheets this encoded a pro-feminist stance as Sturgeon is positively evaluated for what she *does*, how she enacts her values in leadership, not for her identity alone.

However, both women leaders are ultimately praised for avoiding the 'double-bind', reproducing that very bind by positively evaluating women leaders who successfully navigate, rather than challenge, it. Sturgeon is positively represented as a direct communicator, but with nurturing values. Harris is praised for ability to weaponize her words and appearance in order to disempower her opponents without resorting to a masculinised

political style. However, because Harris is limited to her identity, rather than her actions and values, all sides of the political spectrum within the broadsheets manipulate her representation to appropriate feminism for their own ends. The right-wing can use her to push a femonationalist agenda. On the other hand, the moderate, left-*leaning* broadsheets can claim her as proof of the success of (neo)liberal politics, thus quenching calls for more radical change. Indeed, the uncritical embrace of Harris as a SWL and trailblazer by the British broadsheets reflects the desire by *all* newspapers in this dataset to maintain hegemonic femininity, updating it by using Harris' status as fuel for the myth of social mobility that sees feminism reduced to individual power and success. Just as Snyder (2017, pp.119-121) argues that the 'politics of eternity' is preoccupied with a mythicised past, the politics of inevitability is preoccupied with a mythicised future of ever 'deepening reason, and growing prosperity', which is represented by Harris and used to conveniently suppress continued social inequality whilst claiming a pro-feminist stance.

## Chapter 6: The Iron Maiden

### 6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore the negative discursive representations of Sturgeon in this dataset, which were alluded to in the previous chapter. Once again analysing articles about Sturgeon's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and her politics in the build up to the May elections, I explore how linguistic strategies are deployed in broadsheet news text to reproduce the Iron Maiden discourse (D2). This discourse is named after one of Kanter's (1993) original 'role traps', updated and reapplied for contemporary newspaper representations by Baxter (2018), as explained in Chapter Three ([3.4.5.1.](#), pp.61-63). The Iron Maiden is one such role trap: she is a woman in a powerful position who is seen to be aggressive or "bitchy". She is negatively represented due to her appropriation of what are considered normatively masculine leadership traits and styles, like competitiveness, frankness, and a 'warlike' approach to leadership (Higgins and McKay, 2016, p.278). Hence, activation – the representation of the social actor as an active force – is crucial to the production of this discourse. Furthermore, Baxter (2018, p.26) states that, in this toughness, 'there may also be a touch of madness: The Lady Macbeth persona'. Thus, unlike D1 articles, rhetorical features such as metaphor and simile are mobilised in D2 in order to exaggerate or sensationalise the actions of the woman leader. Moreover, contextual information that may justify or rationalise her actions is suppressed in favour of information that renders her actions inexplicable and unjustified. By representing women who are "tough" leaders as scary, bullying, and "mad" the implication is that it is undesirable and unnatural for women to lead in this way (Donaldson, 2008; Kanter, 1993). This reifies the notion of natural and opposing gender roles which dictate that women should be soft, kind and collaborative by ridiculing those women who "crossover" into masculinized gender practice (Serano, 2016). The Iron Maiden discourse is therefore an anti-feminist discourse.

There were 66 articles foregrounding this discourse in the dataset. Though this was not as pervasive as D1 ([Chapter Five](#)) or D3 ([Chapter Seven](#)), when it comes to representations of the most dominant woman in the dataset – Nicola Sturgeon – more than eleven percent of articles represented her through this discourse and over half of all D2 articles are about her. This shows that this sexist trope is still pervasive when it comes to characterising the most dominant woman leader in the news cycle, warranting further investigation. Referring back to Table 6 (p.92), this shows that most D2 articles about

Sturgeon come from *The Telegraph*. Approximately sixteen percent of *The Telegraph* articles about Sturgeon foreground D2 (25 articles), and just over 11.5 percent (9 articles) from *The Times* do; whereas *The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent/I* newspapers do not represent Sturgeon as an Iron Maiden at all. This could indicate that the left-leaning, supposedly progressive newspapers are less likely to deploy anti-feminist stereotypes in their discursive representation of women politicians. However, when it comes to articles on Conservative Home Secretary at the time, Priti Patel, this does not hold up because all newspapers include articles which reproduce this discourse when reporting on her (see Appendices 1 and 2). This indicates that anti-feminism, such as the Iron Maiden discourse, is used by the broadsheets to undermine women whose politics are ideologically divergent from the newspaper writing about them. *The Telegraph* and *The Times* – the two newspapers most critical of Sturgeon – mobilise D2 in articles about her, whilst *The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent/I* are more likely to represent her through D1.

Below, I analyse representations of Sturgeon that produced D2 in the right-wing broadsheets in order to gain an understanding of how Sturgeon's leadership is challenged. This will further the understanding of how ideological alignment impacts the gendered representation of prominent women leaders.

## 6.2. Nicola Sturgeon

Throughout the pandemic, *The Telegraph*, in particular, ridiculed the restrictions that Sturgeon placed on Scotland, which were stricter compared to those placed on England by the Tory government. This became a contentious issue for the right-wing press, ostensibly for restricting the liberties of normal people and hindering the economy through the closure of pubs, shops and other businesses.

Here, I discuss the linguistic features deployed by *The Telegraph* and *The Times* to reproduce D2 in articles about Sturgeon, which can then be compared to the positive representations produced through [D1](#). Key features for the representation of a woman politician as an Iron Maiden are: activation, connoting aggression and hostility; metaphors, similes and other rhetorical features to ridicule the extremity or absurdity of the leader's actions; foregrounding of contextual information that undermines their decision-making, and the suppression/backgrounding of contextual information that would otherwise justify their actions (Baxter, 2018, p.147; van Leeuwen, 1996). Unlike D1, SR is not a key feature of D2 articles, with *The Times* having an average of just 12.2 percent SR of Sturgeon, and *The*

*Telegraph* having 25.9 percent, mostly of indirect SR. Interestingly, the average SR of Sturgeon in D2 is nineteen percent – far below the 40 percent average for D1 articles on Sturgeon, but around the same as the average for D1 articles on Kamala Harris. This indicates that D2 articles on Sturgeon also depend on heavily framing her speech, suggesting that the reporter’s narrative dominates, rather than the self-professed policies or attitudes of Sturgeon herself. Unlike D1 articles on Harris, however, this was to *negatively* represent Sturgeon as an Iron Maiden.

### 6.2.1. Activation

Activation is crucial to representing a woman as an Iron Maiden because it enables the representation of her as a dynamic and agentive social force whose actions can then be framed as aggressive, tough and scary – i.e. “masculinised” (Baxter, 2018; Kanter, 1993; van Leeuwen, 1996, p.43). Consequently, high modal verbs were typical in the production of D2, showing the social actor to be dominating others (the negative beneficiaries), along with adverbs that framed the reported social action negatively. Such “masculinised” social practice (i.e. being active, rather than passive) enables *The Telegraph* and *The Times* to draw on anti-feminist, sexist stereotypes that negatively evaluate and limit female power by representing dominating social practice enacted by women as unnatural and excessive. Hence, through denaturalisation, the female social actor (in this case, Nicola Sturgeon) is associated with the ‘Lady Macbeth persona’ and illegitimated (Baxter, 2018, p.26; Kanter, 1993).

#### 6.2.1.1. Sturgeon and COVID-19

The following examples are taken from articles about Sturgeon’s handling of the pandemic – namely, her establishment of lockdowns and other restrictions designed to curb the spread of COVID-19 – and demonstrate how her activation was used to problematise her leadership:

- (35) ‘Although the original "circuit breaker" lockdown plan was supposed to provide a short shock to aggressively reduce the spread of the virus, she refused to give any indication of how long they would be in place.’ *Telegraph*, 7 Oct. 2020.
- (36) ‘NICOLA STURGEON'S refusal to give town halls a formal role in setting lockdown restrictions will lead to the imposition of rules set in secret with the potential to cripple local economies.’ *Telegraph*, 20 Oct. 2020.
- (37) ‘The First Minister also denied displaying "control-freakery" over her refusal to hand councils a formal role in setting restrictions for their local areas.’ *Telegraph*, 22 Oct. 2020.

In these excerpts, the verb 'refuse' is used three times. In all of these cases, it is Sturgeon alone who enacts the reported refusal. This means that the responsibility (and blame) for the unpopularity of decisions made during COVID-19 rests solely with her. The verb 'refuse' has negative connotations in these reports because the high modality of the term and the possessivation of the action by Sturgeon alone suggests the control of one person over the masses. As reported by the right-wing broadsheets, the public are the negative beneficiaries of Sturgeon's actions and are passivated by her 'refusal' to give more information or allow others to share in the decision-making. Verb phrases, like the 'imposition of rules' that 'cripple' local economies (36), further contribute to this image of Sturgeon as an autocratic and tough leader. Her actions are forced onto ('imposed') the passivated public, who are 'crippled' – a term denoting disability. Sturgeon disabling her public is a violent image that represents both the businesses and the people in Scotland as her victims. Moreover, Sturgeon's actions are directly related to her character – her supposed 'control-freakery' – as opposed to the context of the pandemic. The term 'control-freak' implies that Sturgeon's power is used to exert control over others, to the point of obsession, madness, or "freakery". The representation of Sturgeon's actions as disabling her public, as well as Sturgeon herself as a 'freak' or power-obsessed monster, interdiscursively link to discourses of disability itself as a weakness (Garland-Thomson, 2008). Such terms are used to other Sturgeon's actions and denaturalise her leadership, presupposing that to be physically disabled or 'crippled' is to be subjugated and rendered helpless (*ibid.*, p.21). Moreover, Garland-Thomson (2008, p.21) notes that historically the term monster, or freak, has denoted disability, associating it with the grotesque. Hence, in these representations, Sturgeon's apparent ruthlessness is connected to her disabling impact on others and to her own self as monstrous, further associating disability (and disabled femininity, in particular) with otherness.

Similarly, verb phrases also associate Sturgeon with the toughness of the Iron Maiden. For instance, in (38), below, Sturgeon's measures in response to the second-wave are framed as 'tougher':

- (38) 'Sturgeon threatens tougher version of tier system; Fourth level for the worst virus hotspots could be introduced as Scottish Covid cases hit new daily high' 'NICOLA STURGEON is to toughen Boris Johnson's "traffic light" local lockdown system.' *Telegraph*, 14 Oct. 2020.

The verb 'tough' is associated with something or someone that is unfeeling and strong, characteristics typically associated with masculinity. Moreover, the use of the comparative

(‘tougher’) presupposes that the tiered lockdown system, put in place by Johnson’s government, was already tough, implying that Sturgeon’s actions are extreme compared to Johnson’s as they further already established ‘toughness’. Moreover, the headline (the first quotation) frames Sturgeon’s actions as threatening and tough from the outset – implying that the public will be negative beneficiaries of her action. That Sturgeon’s speech act in announcing the tier system is reported as a ‘threat’ – along with the repetition of the term ‘tough’ – enhances the association of Sturgeon’s leadership with aggression, or ‘toughness’, and extremeness.

In (39), Sturgeon is represented as having ‘scrapped the plan’ to ease restrictions and, in (40), it is reported that she ‘tore up plans’, leaving businesses facing ‘indefinite closure’:

(39) ‘Ms Sturgeon scrapped the plan on Saturday evening and said the "strict" ban would continue over Christmas, with strengthened enforcement from police. The First Minister said the "harsh" U-turn was required to prevent any more of the new faster spreading variant of Covid-19 entering Scotland.’ *Telegraph*, 22 Dec. 2020.

(40) ‘She tore up plans for a "temporary" shutdown of venues and instead left some businesses facing indefinite closure.’ *Telegraph*, 20 Oct. 2020.

These verb phrases contribute to the image of an aggressive Sturgeon – scrapping and tearing are destructive actions associated with rage. This creates an image of Sturgeon as a leader whose power is actively destructive. Moreover, the adverbs that frame her actions as ‘strict’ and ‘harsh’ (39), intertextually link Sturgeon to a Lady Macbeth persona, with connotations of obsessive control and manipulation to the point of causing harm, and even madness. Thus, whilst Sturgeon’s power is framed by *The Telegraph* and *Times* as excessive, it is also in some ways trivialised because of its ‘control-freakery’ – her actions are negatively evaluated through descriptors that also describe someone’s character (i.e. harshness or strictness), whilst they are not contextualised as responsive to the pandemic (i.e. number of cases). Hence, they seem unjustified and extreme – implying madness or irrationality that is itself associated with women who fail to restrain themselves (Donaldson, 2008, pp.99-100). Thus, as with Lady Macbeth, Sturgeon’s authority is represented as unnaturally blending personal, excessive desire for control with political power, interdiscursively drawing on the subordination of mental illness in society. Unlike D1 representations, Sturgeon is far from aligned with her public and is, instead, represented as alienating them, and even actively harming them.

It is this exercise of power in such a direct way that appears to be what negatively characterises Sturgeon for these newspapers, though it is typically seen as a positive characteristic of male leadership (Higgins and McKay, 2016; McKay, 2020; O'Neill et al, 2016). The quotes below further illustrate how Sturgeon's actions are represented as controlling and autocratic:

- (41) 'Although she did not stipulate how long the draconian move would last, she gave a strong hint it would still be in place this summer.' *Telegraph*, 3 Feb. 2021.
- (42) 'At Holyrood, the First Minister was attacked for announcing the "draconian" restrictions on freedom of movement without appropriate scrutiny or the consent of parliament.' *Telegraph*, 18 Nov. 2020.
- (43) 'Thus far, her iron determination to call all the shots has been a serious weakness.' *Telegraph*, 24 Oct. 2020.
- (44) 'Nicola Sturgeon would be marching about - think Miss Jean Brodie meets firebrand preacher John Knox - denouncing English cronyism and corruption while demanding resignations and a referendum on breaking up the United Kingdom.' *Times*, 8 Oct. 2020.

COVID-19 related restrictions introduced by Sturgeon are framed as 'draconian' by *The Telegraph* in examples (41) and (42). This, once again, associates Sturgeon with excessive power and has connotations of tyranny and dictatorship. She is again represented as negatively impacting the public and forcing them into submission. The nominalisation 'iron determination' brings up strong associations of another female leader, though one who was (and still is) positively viewed by *The Telegraph* – former Conservative Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. Originally labelled the 'Iron Lady' as an insult by the Russian media during the Cold War, this label was later somewhat reclaimed by Thatcher as a marker of pride in her successful crossover to the masculine political realm. Still, it has connotations clearly aligned with the Iron Maiden trope – being tough and uncompromising. Indeed, Thatcher remains (in)famous for her tough leadership style, in which she consciously shaped herself according to masculinised ideals of leadership, such as directness, determination, aggression, competition. In the same way, Sturgeon's directness is characterised here as tough, harsh, strict and unwavering ('iron' connoting immobility and strength). Yet, this is negatively evaluated as evidence of her 'weakness.'



The militaristic imagery produced through *The Times*' representation of Sturgeon 'marching about' (44) makes her appear hyper-masculinised through the connotations of war in the verb 'marching', implying that she has a warlike (i.e. aggressive) approach to leadership. Yet, her leadership is also trivialised when this image is compounded with the caricaturist comparisons that follow. The comparison to a 'firebrand preacher', associated with forceful ('fiery') speech and exaggerated actions, pushes Sturgeon's 'marching' into the ridiculous through the implication of hyperbolic gesture. That this comparison is made alongside a comparison to the fictional character Miss Jean Brodie – a teacher, which is a stereotypical feminine occupation associated with nurturing – relocates Sturgeon's power back into the more personal, domesticated ("feminine") realm. It is this conflict between hyper-masculine, warlike leadership (embodied by the army image of Sturgeon 'marching about) and hyper-feminine aspects of domesticity (nurturing the young through education) that associate Sturgeon with a Lady Macbeth/Iron Maiden character. Unlike the Strong Woman Leader, who successfully blends masculine and feminine leadership styles by avoiding excess of either (i.e. being passive aggressive, rather than aggressive), Sturgeon has taken power (not typically afforded to women) to the extreme, indicated through the representation of her as 'firebrand' – connoting an excess of passion. Sturgeon's masculine style is in conflict with femininity and is therefore unnatural, an evaluation realised through implications of madness. That the 'Iron Lady' is still revered by the right-wing press, parties and commentators in the UK, but similar leadership characteristics are ridiculed when it comes to Sturgeon, suggests that Sturgeon's exercise of power based on opposing ideologies to the political right is the reason for mobilising the Iron Maiden trope to undermine her. It is as much Sturgeon's leftism as her womanhood that makes her subject to madness in these representations.

#### 6.2.1.2. *Scottish independence*

There is a similar negative framing in the next examples, from articles about the possibility of a second Scottish independence referendum. When it comes to the issue of independence, Sturgeon is characterised as a monomaniac, obsessed with getting independence at whatever cost:

- (45) 'Sturgeon vows to demand independence referendum well before recovery from Covid; We've been given the choice of recovery or referendum, say Tories'

‘NICOLA STURGEON has backed away from her threat to hold a new independence referendum this year.’ *Telegraph*, 30 April 2021.

(46) ‘An angry Ms Sturgeon said she would not request but "demand" the Prime Minister gives her the powers for another vote if there is a nationalist majority after the May 6 poll.

If Boris Johnson refused to drop his opposition, the manifesto said the SNP would push through its own wildcat Independence Referendum Bill, then "vigorously defend" it in court if the UK Government took legal action to block it. Douglas Ross, the Scottish Tories' leader, said Ms Sturgeon winning a majority would mean "the SNP will put a referendum roadblock in front of Scotland's recovery." *Telegraph*, 16 April 2021.

(47) ‘Even if the SNP falls short, so long as pro-independence parties command a majority in the parliament Ms Sturgeon is still likely to push for a referendum.’ *Times*, 5 May 2021.

The verb ‘demand’ appears in (45) and (46) as an action possessed solely by Sturgeon. This feeds into the image of Sturgeon as autocratic in her leadership – she does not ask or collaborate, but imposes her will onto others in a domineering way. In contrast, in (45) – a headline from *The Telegraph* – the Scottish Tory leader (Douglas Ross) states that ‘We’ve been given the choice of recovery or referendum’. Firstly, that *The Telegraph* foregrounds the voice of the (right-wing) opposition, but not Sturgeon, is telling of their alignment to the right-wing party and gives insight into the reasons for their negative representation of left-leaning Sturgeon. Secondly, by foregrounding Ross’ voice, *The Telegraph* is able to portray the ‘we’ that Ross is speaking of as aligned with the Tory party (rather than the SNP that Sturgeon leads) – Ross is therefore aligned with ‘the people’, speaking both *for* and *with* the public (Kramsch, 2020, p.55). Finally, this ‘we’ is represented by Ross as victims – the negative beneficiaries – of Sturgeon’s actions. The ‘choice’ they have been given is not really a choice – the implication is that Sturgeon is pushing so hard for independence that she will plunge the country into economic chaos by overlooking the ongoing emergency of the pandemic. Hence, Sturgeon is characterised as selfish and a ‘control-freak’ who is obsessed with getting what she wants. This “us versus them” framing (where Sturgeon is the impersonalised “them”) is made again in (46), where Sturgeon is represented as making demands of Johnson, whose perspective is foregrounded. Once again, a right-wing Conservative leader is centred. Johnson is represented as the negative beneficiary of

Sturgeon's 'iron determination' – producing the asymmetric categorical pair of Sturgeon versus Johnson, in which Sturgeon is dominating and Johnson is passive (despite the fact that Johnson is Prime Minister and, consequently, has more power than Sturgeon). Thus, once again, Sturgeon's power is negatively framed by constructing her actions as victimising others (including Johnson) who are presupposed to be innocent.

Similarly, Sturgeon's actions are negatively represented through verbs such as 'threat' (45) and 'push' (46, 47). These verbs have connotations of forcefulness. The verb 'push' suggests that Sturgeon is the active force and the public are passive, associating her power with autocratic rule in which one person has control over an entire nation/people. Similarly, in (46), the independence referendum is represented by Ross as a 'roadblock' to COVID-19 recovery. Again, the implication is that Sturgeon is callous as she prioritises her political desires over the emergency of COVID-19. The image of a roadblock implies toughness and stubbornness (i.e. immovability) to characterise Sturgeon's dogmatic determination as negatively impacting the public, making their lives harder by blocking the path to recovery. Interestingly, in a D1 example (13), it is Sturgeon who represents Johnson and the Tories as the 'block' to the Scottish public's 'right' to a referendum. Moreover, the right-wing broadsheets represent Sturgeon as neglecting the pandemic here, but earlier criticised her for being too 'strict' with her COVID-19 restrictions (see examples 35-44). This indicates that representations of leaders in positive (D1) or negative (D2) lights are ideologically motivated. Still, though in D2 representations Sturgeon is activated, her power is also undermined. The report quoted in example (45) claims that Sturgeon has been forced to 'back away' from her 'threats'. Hence, she is weakened by the implication that she has not been able to follow through and complete the illocutionary act of threatening another referendum. She is construed as out of touch with reality, wanting to force a referendum when no one wants one, in contrast to D1 framings where, through SR, she is represented as acting on the will of the Scottish people.

In addition, the headline and article lead quoted in example (48), below, also mark Sturgeon as aggressive, whilst simultaneously trivialising her power:

(48) 'Punching Shadows; Nicola Sturgeon is full of fighting talk on independence but it will be a phoney war until Britain recovers from the coronavirus pandemic.'

'Ms Sturgeon may sound bullish but she and her closest advisers know that - as things stand - she would be most likely to lose a second referendum.' *Times*, 10 May 2021.

The metaphoric verb phrase ‘Punching Shadows’ conjures up an image of a “feisty” Sturgeon pointlessly lashing out (McKay, 2020). The headline goes on to say that she is ‘full of fighting talk’ on independence. Both phrases imply that Sturgeon’s aggression is ultimately superficial and illusive – she can *talk* about fighting, but she cannot actually fight; her punches do not land because she is directing them at ‘shadows’, an ominous, dark shape that is, ultimately, without substance. Hence, the notion of Scottish independence as a legitimate political debate or idea is also implicitly associated with insubstantiality. In the article text, the journalist goes on to say that Sturgeon ‘may sound bullish’. Again, this simile functions to reduce Sturgeon’s *actions* to mere *talk*. A bull is an aggressive animal, but its aggression is often seen as a blind rage. What’s more, Sturgeon only *sounds* bullish. Her actions and power are again trivialised as she is represented as angry and aggressive, but unable to actually act. The emphasis on her emotions also implies irrationality – typically associated with women to illegitimate their anger (Donaldson, 2008). Thus, Sturgeon’s power is reduced to a performance. In the same way a child may lash out in a rage, but is powerless to change their situation, Sturgeon lashes out to try and force Scotland into independence, but she does not actually have the power to do so. This infantilising is typical of representations of female leaders (see McKay, 2020 and O’Neill et al, 2016) and trivialises female power and female entry into the “masculine” realm by making it seem overemotional, misdirected, and futile.

### **6.2.2. Metaphor and Simile: ‘Operation Overlord’**

Nowhere was the characterisation of Sturgeon as an Iron Maiden more pronounced than in the use of metaphors and similes to make direct comparisons between her leadership style and that of totalitarian regimes. When it comes to COVID-19, this functions to make the restrictions that Sturgeon introduced, and which England did *not* introduce, seem not just excessive, but like the sign of a leader mad with power. Johnson’s government are positively represented through the implication that their rule is democratic as Sturgeon and her devolved leadership are represented as autocratic and totalitarian. This, in turn, enables these newspapers to continue such negative characterisations of Sturgeon when it comes to reports on the independence debate. The pro-independence SNP that leads the Scottish government is undermined through associations of Sturgeon with dictatorship and its associations with corruption, tyranny, anti-democracy and brutality.

### 6.2.2.1. *Sturgeon and COVID-19*

The examples below are taken from an article published in *The Telegraph* on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020, reporting on Sturgeon's COVID-19-related restrictions and comparing her to a dictator:

- (49) 'Sturgeon secrecy on tiers 'like Soviet state'; Town hall leaders alarmed at local curbs being imposed by Scottish government Local councillors want more say over Scottish lockdowns'
- (50) 'The joint leaders of the council in Aberdeen said they had faced a wall of secrecy from Ms Sturgeon.'
- (51) "With the secrecy and lack of transparency, it was almost like living in some sort of Soviet state. We would welcome more influence on lockdown within the city, but I can't see that happening from a Scottish government that seems to be obsessed with controlling as much power as it can.
- (52) However, Ms Laing warned that the approach would lead to poorer decision making. She also said she feared that SNP-run town halls would roll over and accept diktats from Edinburgh due to a "slavish devotion" to their party.' *Telegraph*, 20 Oct. 2020.

Sturgeon is consistently characterised in this article as secretive and aggressive in the way that she issues COVID-related laws, runs her party, and pursues independence. In the headline (49), her alleged secrecy is directly compared to 'a Soviet state' through the preposition 'like'. That this comparison is placed in the headline of the article, and then repeated in the article text, indicates that this is the primary association that *The Telegraph* want readers to have with Sturgeon. Soviet states were under the dictatorship of the former USSR, a *communist* dictatorship. This is important to note as the right-wing broadsheet's negative perception of Sturgeon is ideologically motivated – Sturgeon is left-leaning and, therefore, the right-wing press illegitimate her power by comparing her to a notoriously brutal communist dictatorship. This is further compounded in the article text by the labelling of the restrictions put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as 'diktats' (52) – i.e. orders imposed onto the masses by a leader-figure without popular consent. This sensationalist framing is a tactic often mobilised by the British news media to illegitimate left-wing opposition to the conservative status quo (for instance, when the socialist Jeremy Corbyn was leader of the Labour party). It can thus be said that this is a strategy used in order to invoke

Cold War fears of the “Red Scare” in order to prevent left-wing parties and politicians from gaining support for socialist policies (Whittle, 2021).

This interdiscursivity with historical “Red Scare” discourse is reified further through the repeated emphasis on Sturgeon’s alleged secrecy. It is reported that there is a ‘wall of secrecy’ (50) around Sturgeon that means that lower-level local council leaders cannot have an input on the COVID-19 restrictions. This wall metaphor creates the image of Sturgeon fortifying herself with secrets – a warlike image of defence. Secrets are, of course, associated with dishonesty and corruption and are necessary in a totalitarian state to ensure that the leader can minimise threats to their rule by limiting public knowledge of their actions. Additionally, the notion of Sturgeon having total control over the SNP is made perhaps the clearest in (52), with the party being described as having a ‘slavish devotion’ to Sturgeon. The use of the adverb ‘slavish’ has negative connotations through historical interdiscursivity that implies an all-powerful and brutal master and a passive or brainwashed victim. Hence, in this article Sturgeon is represented as a fully-fledged dictator in order to illegitimate her rule during COVID-19 and denaturalise her leadership through the implications of extremism.

Such sensationalist characterisations (more commonly associated with the tabloid press – see Chadwick et al, 2018) are typical of the right-wing broadsheets during this time, as can be seen below:

(53) ‘No, she was acting on the advice of a small army of advisers but their counsel went only to her and nobody seemed accountable to the people who had to follow her decisions.

As I’ve said before in this space cynics may well reckon that La Sturgeon might not mind if others share the burden, the responsibility and the blame if things go pear-shaped.’ *Telegraph*, 28 Oct. 2020.

(54) ‘And in a document that almost bears comparison with Operation Overlord’s plans for D-Day, so studded is it with graphs and charts, nowhere are the difficulties more apparent than in the rules for pubs and restaurants.’ *Telegraph*, 24 Oct. 2020.

(55) ‘Sturgeon doesn’t trust us to go for a drink; The first minister, a latter-day prohibitionist, is punishing the majority for the sins of a few’. *Times*, 12 Oct. 2020.

(56) ‘There are lessons to be drawn from the wartime experiment.’ *Times*, 12 Oct. 2020.

These examples show how *The Telegraph* and *Times* produce an Iron Maiden discourse through explicit and implicit comparisons to dictators, including the notion that Sturgeon has a small, secretive circle of advisers. In (53), this is characterised as a ‘small army of advisers’, which boosts the association of Sturgeon with secrecy and corruption by implying that she trusts only a few, select individuals and demands total loyalty from them (or a ‘slavish devotion’). By characterising her cabinet as an ‘army’, Sturgeon is again represented as a military figure. Once again, she is hyper-masculinised as her actions are framed in stereotypically masculine semantic fields, such as war and the military. The Sturgeon-as-warlord image is made again in (54), where she is named ‘Operation Overlord’ – associating her again with military leadership and extreme power, aiming to lord over the public. The sense that she is waging war *against* the public (as opposed to against COVID-19, for instance) is produced by labelling her plans for introducing more restrictions as ‘D-day’, or ‘dooms-day’, plans. In (56), Sturgeon’s COVID-19 restrictions are labelled a ‘wartime experiment’ and Sturgeon is labelled a ‘prohibitionist’ (55), again associating her with extremity. Returning to example (53), she is named ‘La Sturgeon’. The use of the Spanish word for ‘the’ (‘la’) subtly invokes images of Latin American dictators. Though these were largely fascist dictators (one thing that the right-wing press seems to suppress in their emphasis on the Soviet State as the epitome of dictatorship and totalitarian rule is the multitude of *right-wing* dictatorships in recent history), this nomination draws on historical, Western-centric associations of Latin America with brutality and a failure to maintain the democracy that is so revered by Western society as a symbol of its superior, enlightened status (Hancock, 2015). Hence, Sturgeon is characterised as a violent, warmongering figure of dread, doom and extremism by these newspapers.

#### 6.2.2.2. *Sturgeon, Brexit, the SNP and Scottish independence*

The example below (57) is about fishery disputes due to Brexit. The article in *The Times* bemoans the fact that fishery protection is devolved, meaning that it is the pro-EU Sturgeon who is in charge of ruling on the protection of vessels in the sea around Scotland (as opposed to the British government) and she will, presumably, be more lenient on EU members who venture into so-called “British waters”:

- (57) ‘New cod war will be waged closer to home; Any divergence between Edinburgh and London on fisheries protection does not bode well for the future of the Union’

‘This is the nearest Scotland has got to a navy. Ms Sturgeon is commander-in-chief. If any continental European trawlers are minded, in the absence of a Brexit deal, to fish unauthorised in Scottish waters, it will be the first minister who has to decide how to respond. Britannia does not rule these waves. Nicola Sturgeon does.’ *Times*, 16 Dec. 2020.

The debate around fisheries is framed through a pun as the new ‘cod war’ (cod being a type of fish). By alluding to the Cold War, Sturgeon is again associated with Communist totalitarian rule. This has the effect of producing an “us versus them” frame, in which Sturgeon is othered through her alignment to the EU and represented as a threat to Britain (“us”). Yet, once again, the power implicit in Sturgeon’s alleged war-waging is trivialised. By using a pun, the journalist is drawing attention to the absurdity of such a trivial matter of fish (‘cod’) being comparable to the Cold War, and thus mocks Sturgeon as the apparent reason for this absurdity, undermining her devolved power to respond to EU fishing in Scottish waters. This pun indexes the ideological agenda of the newspaper and/or journalist, both in terms of pro-Brexit interdiscursivity and the denigration of Scottish independence (Richardson, 2007, p.70). By belittling Sturgeon here, both the EU and Scottish independence can be illegitimated through associations with communist dictatorship and mockery.

Sturgeon is again hyper-masculinised through associations with the army as she is labelled the ‘commander-in-chief’, implying absolute military power. Yet, once again this is belittled through the diminutive nature of the dispute itself – such hyperbolic representation of her position is outsized to the topic of fishing, thus making Sturgeon appear ridiculous. Later in the text, the journalist summarises: ‘Britannia does not rule these waves. Nicola Sturgeon does.’ This phrase intertextually draws on the imperial anthem, ‘Rule, Britannia!’, that celebrates Britain’s imperial rule over the seas (and land) during empire. The implication is that Sturgeon and the EU (together symbolising the *communist* Soviet Union in the Cold War) have destroyed the British empire and have taken over. This narrative is indeed one that shaped the pro-Brexit movement, used to characterise the EU as a new USSR seeking to strip European nations of their sovereignty (Zappettini, 2021). This is, of course, ironic considering that it has historically been Britain (along with other European nations) that has stripped nations of their sovereignty through colonisation. In fact, Scotland counts itself amongst the nations thus colonised by Britain (refer back to [5.2.1.2.](#)). To flip this narrative to re-present Sturgeon and the EU as colonising forces is to once again cast left-leaning Sturgeon as a tyrannical ruler who victimises others. Yet, it also belittles her rule by mocking



and exaggerating her policies and actions as a leader, making her into a bombastic figure and a caricature of a warlord/dictator. She is, to put it simply, too big for her boots and, so, a figure of ridicule.

The examples below are from articles that foreground the grievances of discontented SNP members/former-members. They show how Sturgeon is represented as a villain through the represented victimisation of others:

(58) ‘Alex Salmond, the former SNP leader, was cleared earlier this year on charges of sexual assault. His supporters accuse a Sturgeon-ite cabal (otherwise known as the Scottish government) of a conspiracy to prevent him returning to power.’ *Times*, 8 Oct. 2020.

(59) ‘In a nod to the tight clique that governs the party - which includes Ms Sturgeon's husband Peter Murrell, the SNP chief executive - Ms Cherry said it was damaging to "put all your faith on one person" and the party "shouldn't be about the cult of leader, whether it's Alex [Salmond] or Nicola, or anyone else.’” *Times*, 28 Nov. 2020.

The SNP is once again represented as a nepotistic, secretive party – a ‘Sturgeon-ite cabal’ (58) and a ‘tight clique’ (59). That this supposed ‘cabal’ is “defined” in brackets as ‘the Scottish government’ makes direct links between the SNP government and secrecy, and thus between Sturgeon and secrecy because Sturgeon possesses ownership of the SNP through the nominalisation ‘Sturgeon-ite’. The term ‘cabal’ in itself is highly charged with ideological implications and gives the impression that Sturgeon’s left-wing ideology in itself is secretive, dictatorial and repressive. Thus, *The Times* not only discredits the Scottish government, the SNP and Sturgeon, but also left-wing politics itself by associating such ideology with secrecy and corruption – interdiscursively linking to the “Red Scare”.

To return to example (59), *The Times* foregrounds the voice of one of Sturgeon’s detractors, Joanna Cherry – a vocal TERF who fell out with Sturgeon over the SNP’s commitments to reform Scotland’s Gender Recognition Act (see [Chapter Eight](#)), to characterise the SNP as a cult of personality around Sturgeon – the ‘cult of a leader’. This has strong interdiscursive links with totalitarian regimes, such as the Soviet regime, in which the cult of personality around the dictator is necessary to maintaining control. A cult in itself has connotations of collective madness, delusion and deviancy. Sturgeon, in many ways, is characterised as a classic stereotype of the manipulative woman – she is a control-freak who

is secretive, and thus suspect, self-obsessed and hysterical. Sturgeon's deviations from and challenges to, not just the right-wing Westminster government, but to the senior *male* Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, render her actions dangerous in the eyes of the right-wing press, who then negatively represent her through the Iron Maiden trope to illegitimate her leadership through its representation as hyper-masculinised and, therefore, unnatural.

### 6.2.3. Contextual Information

As shown above, *The Times* and *The Telegraph* foreground speech from those who are opposed to Sturgeon's leadership, ensuring that Sturgeon's own voice/interpretation of events is backgrounded. As Baxter (2018, p.147) argues in her explanation of the importance of contextual information in the representation of women leaders, 'limited contextual detail given about the leader's rise to success' and 'simplistic individualisation and personalisation of leader' indicate an anti-feminist stance. In this case, I adapt Baxter's argument to propose that limited contextual detail about the reasoning behind Sturgeon's decision-making (i.e. COVID-19 restrictions), rather than her rise to power (as, at this time, she had been in power for several years), is what indexes an anti-feminist stance. Sturgeon is characterised as a villain through the foregrounding of contextual information and voices that negatively evaluate her decision-making and the backgrounding of information that would otherwise justify and explain her reasoning (i.e. statistics and figures that show the death toll of COVID-19).

#### 6.2.3.1. Sturgeon and COVID-19

The examples below show how Sturgeon's leadership during the pandemic is framed by *The Telegraph* and *Times* as victimising innocent people. Her power is once again represented as tyrannical and oppressive, and she is characterised as a callous authoritarian leader:

- (60) 'By declaring war on the owners of licensed premises, without distinguishing between those who are model citizens and those who flout the guidelines, the government risks losing the trust and respect of those on whom it ultimately depends to deliver a safe society.' *Times*, 12 Oct. 2020.
- (61) 'The Scottish Pub & Beer Association said her words had filled the sector with "complete dread" and it was "unaware of any data" showing the hospitality sector was a major cause of transmission. Emma McClarkin, the SPBA chief executive, warned Ms Sturgeon that further restrictions without economic support "would mean

hundreds of businesses closing for good with thousands of jobs lost and livelihoods ruined." *Telegraph*, 7 Oct. 2020.

- (62) 'Camra said that pubs and breweries felt as though they were being "offered up as a sacrificial lamb without sufficient evidence" while the Scottish Chambers of Commerce said businesses were "absolutely devastated" that "restrictions now look to be in place indefinitely.'" *Telegraph*, 22 Oct. 2020.

In the examples above, businesses are personalised and animated in order to represent Sturgeon's COVID-19 measures as cruel and persecutory, with reporters from both *The Telegraph* and *The Times* aligning themselves with 'pubs and breweries' (62) – locations that are associated with hegemonic masculine socialising (i.e. beer, watching football and so on) and against Sturgeon. In (60), Sturgeon is again at war – but this time with 'licensed premises' (i.e. bars and pubs) as she has introduced temporary laws that require them to close early to discourage people from mass socialisation that would spread the virus. By foregrounding the *owners* of these premises, the article can humanise an economic issue that may not typically be seen as empathy-inducing (especially in comparison to loss of life in a pandemic).

In (61), the 'Scottish Beer & Pub Association' – a group representing licensed premises – is personalised through narrative reporting that gives the Association itself (rather than a spokesperson) a voice (Semino and Short, 2004). This humanises the Association by embedding a quotation, 'complete dread', that emphasises human emotion in response to Sturgeon's actions. Thus, the reader is encouraged to sympathise with this business association, that has human feelings of anxiety, and not with Sturgeon. The SR later on in the quote furthers this by explicitly naming the 'jobs lost and livelihoods ruined' as the impact of Sturgeon's actions. By focusing on the human impact of economic failure, *The Times* characterises Sturgeon as callous and her actions as catastrophic. However, this also depends on the suppression of contextual detail regarding the human cost of COVID-19 – i.e. the death toll.

The humanisation of business is mirrored in *The Telegraph* – in (62) the Scottish Chambers of Commerce is personalised through narrative framing that gives it a voice and through the reporting of the *feelings* of pubs and breweries (which are inanimate buildings/businesses). The speech of the Chambers of Commerce is reported through the emotive verb as feeling as though they have been offered up as a 'sacrificial lamb' by

Sturgeon to appease scientists who are recommending a lockdown. This framing embeds the narrative into the journalist's own report, rather than representing it as the viewpoint of a third party (Richardson, 2007). Sturgeon, and the scientific data, are backgrounded, but her actions have sinister and negative impacts on her "victims". She is thus represented as a menacing figure once again – with sacrifices being associated with witchcraft and evil. The 'Lady Macbeth' connotations are stark through the imagery of Sturgeon offering up the public as a sacrifice to her political goals for control – here, magic is a political tool through which power is gained, as in the Shakespearian tragedy. By foregrounding the economic context of the pandemic over the public health context, both *The Telegraph* and *Times* represent Sturgeon as causing harm to 'the people' through the loss of income and, therefore, as a cruel, mean and bullying leader.

#### 6.2.3.2. *May 2021 elections and Scottish independence*

These next examples are taken from articles published in the build up to the May 2021 elections, and show the foregrounding of politicians and ideologies aligned to *The Telegraph's* and *Times's* right-wing ideology and the backgrounding of Sturgeon's own pro-independence rationale:

- (63) 'Amid the SNP's wreckage, there's hope for the UK; After 14 years of Nationalist rule in Holyrood, the Tories now have their best chance to save our Union.' *Telegraph*, 13 March 2021.
- (64) 'Douglas Ross, the Scottish Tories' leader, said Ms Sturgeon winning a majority would mean "the SNP will put a referendum roadblock in front of Scotland's recovery.'" *Telegraph*, 16 April 2021.
- (65) 'Douglas Ross, the Scottish Tory leader, said people were "watching in disbelief" [at] Ms Sturgeon's demand after she reassured them only a few days ago in a TV debate that their SNP votes would not be used to endorse a second independence referendum.' *Telegraph*, 9 May 2021.

Once again, *The Telegraph* foregrounds the Scottish Tories, centring SR from Scottish Tory leader Douglas Ross. Here, Ross is again aligned with 'the people' through the oracle effect (Kramsch, 2020, p.55). He speaks on behalf of 'people' (65), expressing their disbelief at Sturgeon's apparent prioritisation of an independence referendum over COVID-19 recovery and, therefore, rendering her actions distinct through the construction of a consensus that universally rejects Sturgeon's plans. On the other hand, the SNP and, by extension, Sturgeon

are responsible for ‘wreckage’ (63) and putting a ‘roadblock’ (64) on recovery. Through SR, Ross and the Tories are constructed as the “us” that includes the (homogenised) public, whilst Sturgeon and the SNP are “them” – their actions have a negative, destructive and inhibiting impact on the public, but they are not personalised. This backgrounding of Sturgeon allows negative representation of her leadership, leaving her open to ridicule.

Similarly, the examples from articles published by *The Times* below foreground SR from another Sturgeon detractor, centring around Joanna Cherry’s grievances against Sturgeon:

(66) ‘Speaking to *The Times* on the eve of the SNP’s party conference, Ms Cherry said: “This no debate mentality is really unhealthy. It’s an unfortunate tendency in modern political discourse, which I’ve labelled #nodebate. It typifies a small minority in my party and has bled through from the debate about reform of the gender recognition act, to include alternative plans for an independence referendum. I think it’s very unhealthy and I don’t think it represents the majority view in the party.”  
*Times*, 28 Nov. 2020.

(67) ‘Joanna Cherry, one of the SNP’s most prominent MPs, has pleaded with Nicola Sturgeon to condemn the torrent of abuse and “smears” that she routinely endures online.’ *Times*, 28 Nov. 2020.

(68) ‘Ms Cherry, the Edinburgh South West MP, said that she was frequently abused, including by accounts in the US. She was regularly sent a “violent image” showing a cartoon figure pointing a gun with the message: “Shut the f\*\*\* up Terf”. Terf refers to “trans-exclusionary radical feminists”, a term for people who raise concerns about the expansion of transgender rights.’ *Times*, 28 Nov. 2020.

(69) ‘It is understood that Ms Cherry sent examples of the abuse to Ms Sturgeon and senior SNP officials early yesterday morning. However, the first minister said that she was unaware of what the MP was referring to when she was asked about the issue during a radio interview.’ *Times*, 1 Dec. 2020.

In (66), SR of Cherry continues her earlier framing of Sturgeon as a contaminating force, associating her with disease and infection due to her alleged obsession with secrecy through the repetition that the apparent stifling of debate in Sturgeon’s SNP is ‘unhealthy’ – i.e. is causing the body of the party to become sick or weak. In this SR, Cherry claims to have coined the term ‘#nodebate’ and represents herself as a victim of oppression, essentially casting Sturgeon as a dictator/bully who has taken away the right to freedom of speech and

opinion from within the SNP. This exposes one of the reasons that *The Times* – the newspaper in this dataset with the highest number of transphobic articles – platforms Cherry, a former SNP member, so frequently (see [Chapter Eight](#)). Foregrounding Cherry’s representation of her grievances allows the newspaper to perpetrate the “war on woke” that has become a defining agenda of the British Tory party. Thus, though Cherry was at this time an SNP member, her trans-exclusionary stance and alignment with the right-wing iteration of the “freedom of speech debate” – in which it is apparently left-wing progressives who are repressing freedom of speech and ruthlessly culling those who do not conform to their “woke” agenda – make her useful fodder for *The Times*.

Cherry’s possessivation of the SNP (‘my party’) lends authorisation to her account by making it seem that she has access to the thoughts and feelings of all of the party. Mobilising the oracle effect in (66), she is quoted stating that she does not ‘think it represents the majority view in the party’, thus implying that Sturgeon is an autocratic leader as opposed to a leader representing the values and views of their political party. Furthermore, in examples (67) and (68), Cherry represents herself as a victim – she ‘pleads’ (67) with an unsympathetic and unresponsive Sturgeon (69), representing herself as the negative beneficiary of Sturgeon’s *inaction*. The victimisation of trans people (both online and through various campaigns that Cherry supports), and of other women in politics, is backgrounded. Indeed, Sturgeon is quoted later on in this article noting that she is also the victim of online harassment, as are all women politicians (Baxter, 2018; O’Neill et al, 2016; Powell et al, 2020). Yet, this SR of Sturgeon is placed after direct and indirect speech representation of Cherry and so is backgrounded, whilst Cherry’s interpretation is foregrounded. The reproduction through embedded quotation of the abuse that Cherry faces (68), with profanities included but censored, further contributes to the casting of Cherry as the victim by showing the aggression with which she is addressed. The censoring of words through asterisks highlights their taboo and violent nature by showing that they are unsuitable for reprint. This also contributes to *The Times* ulterior motive, which is to legitimise transphobia by representing transphobic people as victims of censorship and attack – here, because Cherry is abused for being transphobic, the implication is that to be anti-trans is to be persecuted and marginalised. Thus, transphobia is implicitly rendered innocent – transphobes are framed as people who ‘raise concerns’ (68) about transgender rights, an innocuous characterisation. Sturgeon, contrastingly, is not personalised. She is represented as uncaring and effectively abandoning Cherry – ignoring her and forcing her to ‘plea’ for a response.

Sturgeon is rendered an unfeeling ('iron') control-freak, purging those within her own party who do not exhibit the 'slavish devotion' to her and the "woke" ideology that her totalitarian rule demands.

The final example here is taken from an article published by *The Telegraph* in February 2021, about the Salmond inquiry (the investigation into whether Sturgeon misled parliament about what she knew about the sexual misconduct allegations against her predecessor, Alex Salmond), and encapsulates all of the features discussed in the examples above:

- (70) 'NICOLA STURGEON has launched an astonishing attack on Alex Salmond after she was accused of behaving like a "tin-pot dictator" who risked bringing UK politics into worldwide disrepute.' 25 Feb. 2021.

Above, SR of one of Sturgeon's detractors, Alex Salmond, is again used to represent Sturgeon as a villain through the representation of Salmond as a victim of Sturgeon. The quote above is the headline of an article, where Sturgeon is *again* characterised as a 'dictator' (and, yet again, is simultaneously trivialised through the diminutive preposition 'tin-pot'). Sturgeon is activated as aggressive – she launches an attack on the passivated Salmond. This 'attack' is negatively framed as 'astonishing', implying that Sturgeon's actions are extraordinary, subtly characterising Salmond as innocent and unworthy of attack and implying that Sturgeon is irrational. The details of the sexual assault allegations against Salmond that led to this scandal are backgrounded. In the article text, it is Sturgeon's response to the allegations that is negatively evaluated, as opposed to the allegations themselves. It is *Sturgeon's* actions that are apparently bringing 'UK politics into worldwide disrepute', *not* the 'Me Too' cases against former First Minister Salmond. The reporting of Sturgeon's actions as leading to 'worldwide disrepute' is hyperbolic, suggesting that there is a global consensus that the nation is disgraced because of Sturgeon's alleged mishandling of allegations against her former mentor. By backgrounding important context that would reveal what Salmond is accused of, *The Telegraph* can use Salmond to negatively represent Sturgeon as a villain by foregrounding his alleged victimhood. This also reflects the broader trajectory of the newspaper (which significantly underreports sexual violence – [Chapter Seven](#)) as it chooses to background sexual assault allegations in order to condemn and undermine a woman politician's response to them.

The contextual information foregrounded in articles from the right-wing broadsheets humanises those who are anti-Sturgeon and align with the ideology of the right-wing press – whether that be in terms of capitalism, transphobia, culture wars or simply being anti-Sturgeon. On the other hand, the contextual information backgrounded by *The Telegraph* and *Times* prevents the reasoning behind Sturgeon’s actions from being explained – i.e. public health reasons for COVID-19 restrictions, or cultural and moral arguments for independence. This enables these newspapers to construct the image of Sturgeon as unreasonable and uncompromising, producing an image of her as an Iron Maiden leader.

#### **6.2.4. Summary**

*The Telegraph* and *The Times* mobilise D2 to undermine Sturgeon’s leadership and open it up to scrutiny. This is motivated primarily because of her ideological principles and actions, and the threat that this could pose to right-wing power. Yet, that she is a woman, means that sexist tropes, like the Iron Maiden, are available with which to challenge her power. Such culturally embedded stereotypes mean that these broadsheets can problematise, both subtly and unsubtly, Sturgeon’s ability to lead. Higgins and McKay (2016, p. 287) argue that politics is typically framed in a masculine ‘war as metaphor’ way, that casts it as a struggle for domination and the destruction of enemies. In the case of a dictatorship, however, this is taken to the extreme – everyone becomes a potential enemy in the pursuit of absolute power. To represent Sturgeon – a democratically elected leader and experienced politician (McKay, 2020; Shaw, 2020) – as a dictator casts left-wing women leaders’ as extremist, playing on culturally embedded role traps which dictate that women cannot be in powerful positions without becoming somehow contaminated by masculinity, which is unnatural and, therefore, dangerous.

This intertextually links to several other narratives of female evilness and corruption – such as Lady Macbeth, who, famously, goes mad after manipulating her husband to start a war in order to feed her hunger for power. Indeed, this highlights the interdiscursivity with the Iron Maiden and discourses of the “madwoman”. The use of madness to illegitimate female power and emotion has long been documented (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979). Sturgeon’s directness, her willingness to challenge the power of Boris Johnson and the political Establishment, and the fact that she actually does have the potential to radically challenge the status quo by breaking up the UK, mean that she is seen as stepping beyond the remit of acceptable female power. Consequently, the broadsheets that have a strong allegiance to the Tory government take advantage of this to illegitimate her authority. By mobilising



hyperbole and contrasting hypermasculine war imagery with hyperfeminine associations of manipulation and falseness, these newspapers make Sturgeon's power seem irrational and out of control, effectively illegitimizing her leadership and, consequently, ambitions for independence (Serano, 2016, p.43). The representations of her as mad expose the subordination of mental illness in society, as this prejudice is used to undermine Sturgeon's position. Unlike D1 articles, Sturgeon is represented as imposing her will onto the people, with little concern for them and, instead, a monomaniacal obsession with her own power, a mania which apparently renders her dangerous. The conflicting combination of hypermasculinity and hyperfemininity in D2 representations of Sturgeon relies on hegemonic binary understandings of both masculinity and femininity. Sturgeon is represented as both excessively masculine (through associations with war and aggression) and excessively feminine (through associations with hysteria and irrationality) and, consequently, fails to conform to the restrictions of the double-bind.

## Chapter 7: Women Are Victims

### 7.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will analyse news reports that reproduce the ‘women are victims’ discourse, focusing again on contextual information and speech representation. The ‘women are victims’ discourse, henceforth D3, represents women as victims of some external force and is strongly aligned to the topic area of sexual violence. Within the dataset, women politicians were rarely represented as victims of discrimination, for instance. In this sense, victimhood tends to be conceived of on an individual level – news reports of sexual violence represented an individual woman as a victim of a crime. The woman as a victim has typically been represented as passive: her victimisation presumed to be the effect of her inherent vulnerability, which is derived from her passive defencelessness (Ehrlich, 2021, p.432; Estrich, 1987). On the other hand, the woman victim has also been activated in a way that places responsibility onto her for her own victimisation (victim-blaming). For instance, in the 1970s, reports of the sexual violence and murder committed by Peter Sutcliffe largely focused on the occupations of the victims (some of whom were sex workers), and on their actions before their tragic deaths (BBC, 2020b). The onus was thus placed on women to police their own behaviour, and they were even advised by police to stay at home – just as in the aftermath of Sarah Everard’s disappearance (Reclaim These Streets, 2021). The fact that D3 is so prevalent in the dataset (with 162 articles) indicates that, at least in British society, women are often victimised, suggesting continued gender inequality that places women at risk of violence, harassment and abuse.

However, in the immediate aftermath of the Everard case, some news articles did extend their analysis to examine women as a group and as the victims of systemic male sexual violence. Hence, within this dataset, there are variations in how D3 is constructed. For instance, some framings individualise and exoticize female victimhood when it comes to sexual violence – focusing, for example, on construing Everard as an ‘ideal victim’ of ‘real rape’ (Ehrlich, 2021, p.432; Estrich, 1987). On the other hand, others use assimilation to represent Sarah Everard’s case within a broader analysis of sexual violence as a social issue that affects women as a group, reflecting women’s subordinate position in patriarchal society (van Leeuwen, 1996, p.48). These framings align to anti-feminist (individualisation) and pro-feminist (assimilation) stances on sexual violence and female victimisation.

These variations will be explored further below, where I will analyse the reporting of the Everard case and how this constructed a ‘women are victims’ discourse in the broadsheets.

## 7.2. Sarah Everard

The data breakdown ([4.4.1.2.](#), pp.82-83) has shown that that the broadsheets vastly underreport sexual violence, with the largest number of articles being focused on one case: the Sarah Everard case. These articles all occur within a three-week period from Everard’s disappearance on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021. In this analysis, I identify two dominant framings that (re)produce the discourse that ‘women are victims’ – individualisation and assimilation. According to van Leeuwen’s (1996) model for the representation of social actors, individualisation refers to the social actor (in this case, the perpetrator and/or victim) and action as individual, i.e. as distinct from a group. On the other hand, assimilation is where the social actor is referred to as (part of) a group. In the case of the ‘women are victims’ discourse, individualisation functions to exceptionalise female victimhood and male sexual violence, whereas assimilation constructs sexual violence as a social phenomenon that effects all women and girls as a group. The latter framing, therefore, offers a counterhegemonic critique and is more likely to be pro-feminist. Indeed, as will be shown, most of these reports occurred in the aftermath of the case and in response to a feminist outcry about male sexual violence. Importantly, referring back to Graph 6 (p.91), all newspapers did include some pro-feminist articles when reporting on the Everard case, indicating that there was some systemic analysis of gender-based violence in the broadsheets. However, the two right-wing papers (*The Telegraph* and *The Times*) also include one anti-feminist article each, suggesting that their coverage on issues of sexual violence is more conservative than the left-leaning papers.

First of all, I would like to be clear that, when discussing the Everard case, I do not seek to reduce Everard to the horrific circumstances of her death. For this reason, I will not be reproducing the details of her murder. This case is discussed in detail in this thesis because of its prominence in my dataset ([4.3.1.](#)). My aim, through this analysis, is to highlight the way that newspapers report on sexual violence, not place Sarah Everard herself under scrutiny. In articles that have an individualising frame, contextual information foregrounds Everard’s individual characteristics and represents the circumstances of the case as exceptional, whilst in articles that adopt an assimilation frame, the case is represented in an explicitly gendered context (c.f. Baxter, 2018, p.147). In such articles, feminist politicians and organisers are likely to have their speech represented; in individualising articles, the voice of the police and

other Establishment figures are more likely to be uncritically reproduced. Understanding these patterns enables us to better understand the attitudes towards sexual violence across the broadsheet press, and in society more broadly. Below, I will examine the linguistic strategies that (re)produce D3, first of all via individualisation (7.2.1.) and then via assimilation (7.2.2.).

### 7.2.1. Individualisation

D3 articles that adopt an anti-feminist stance represent women as victims in individualised instances of sexual violence. Sexual violence is represented as both enacted by an individual and effecting an individual, rather than being a systemic threat to women. Hence, sexual violence is exceptionalised and exoticized. This represents the hegemonic conception of sexual violence as Estrich's (1987) important text, *Real Rape*, explains. Estrich explores how the legal system prioritises cases of aggravated, stranger rape and sexual violence compared to the more common cases of intimate partner violence (c.f. Centre for Women's Justice et al, 2020). This gives the impression that "real" rape is only that which is violent and random, therefore giving the impression that sexual violence is rare, rather than pervasive. Estrich's text exposes how cultural misconceptions are both constructed and reflected within the legal system, and are thus institutionalised and rendered hegemonic. In the broadsheets, female victimhood is individualised by foregrounding contextual information that focuses on local details and exoticizes the case, distinguishing Sarah from other women. SR is used to bring the focus onto Everard as an individual case, rather than a victim of a wider issue.

#### 7.2.1.1. Contextual information: The 'blame game'

Below, I analyse how contextual details foregrounded in articles on the Everard case are used to frame the case (and, thus, sexual violence more broadly) as exceptional. Individualisation occurred both in terms of placing inappropriate emphasis on Everard's actions as somehow non-normative (and thus contributing to her own victimhood), and in terms of characterising the violence done to her.

First of all, in the reporting of Everard's disappearance by *The Telegraph* (categorised as anti-feminist), the account of her last known movements places emphasis on the distance that she walked home. For example:

- (71) 'Sarah Everard was on the long walk home when she vanished, seemingly "into thin air" as police would later describe it.' *Telegraph*, 11 March 2021.

The article continues:

(72) ‘Sarah was waved off by her friends at just after 9pm last Wednesday on the journey from Leathwaite Road in Clapham, a gentrified street of Victorian terraces, to her own flat in Brixton, two and a half miles and a 50-minute walk away. The 33-year-old never made it home.’ *Telegraph*, 11 March 2021.

In (71), the adverb ‘long’ before the collocation ‘walk home’ implies that the length of the walk is key information for understanding what happened to Everard – it has a superlative effect, suggesting a great length, which implies that the decision to walk was an unusual one. By opening with this information, *The Telegraph* is placing it in a position of prime importance (van Dijk, 1991, p.118). Everard is agentive – she is named as the actor in the action of walking home and is thus implicated in the length of the walk. Her abductor, on the other hand, is backgrounded through the declarative that Everard then ‘vanished’ into ‘thin air’. The length of the walk home is structurally linked to Everard’s disappearance, as opposed to her disappearance being linked to any other social actor (i.e. the perpetrator). Yet, by this point it was clear that Everard had not, in fact, ‘vanished’ into thin air, but had been kidnapped. In fact, the article goes on to report that PC Wayne Couzens had been arrested on suspicion of Everard’s murder. Yet, the text continues to place emphasis on Everard’s act of walking home, specifying that the walk was ‘50 minutes and two and a half miles away’ (72). This reinforces the implication that this information is critical to understanding what happened to her. The simple sentence that follows, ‘The 33-year-old never made it home’, makes a direct connection between the failure to make it home and Everard’s decision to walk as the clause that states that she did not get home follows the clause that emphasises the length of the walk. Though subtle, this amounts to victim-blaming. According to Angouri and Wodak (2014), the ‘blame game’ is an attempt to construct scapegoats in order to explain a crisis – perceived harm can be attributed to the agency of an identifiable ‘other’, without which the harm would have been avoided. In this case, *The Telegraph* implicitly blames Everard herself for walking home, implying that it is women’s own responsibility to protect themselves from predatory men, rather than men’s responsibility not to commit acts of violence against women.

Even in ostensibly gender-neutral articles that represent Everard as a victim, we see residual gendered framings in the contextual detail that demonstrate the blame game at work. For instance, the following example is from a gender-neutral article published by *The Telegraph*:

- (73) ‘Miss Everard, who started a new marketing job last month, had been visiting friends in Leathwaite Road close to Clapham Common on Wednesday evening and set off around 9pm intending to make the 50-minute journey back home to Brixton on foot.’ *Telegraph*, 8 March 2021.

The last clause in this sentence places focus on the means by which Everard made her way home. Once again, *The Telegraph* specifies both the time of night and the length of the journey. But it is the two words, ‘on foot’, at the very end of the sentence that place emphasis on Everard’s chosen method of transport home. This contextualisation, though not explicitly evaluating Everard’s decision, emphasises her agency in these last moments and draws on culturally embedded tropes of victim-blaming that conceptualise women walking home at night as knowingly putting themselves at risk of harm. *The Telegraph* gives the reader room to victim-blame Everard, whilst also ensuring that it can plausibly deny that it is victim-blaming as the declarative form of the quote above ensures that it can also be read as purely informative.

Compare this to the next examples, published in *The Independent* and *The Guardian*:

- (74) ‘She is thought to have walked across Clapham Common and was expected to arrive home approximately 50 minutes later, but has not been seen or heard from since.’ *Independent*, 11 March 2021.
- (75) ‘Ms Everard is thought to have walked through Clapham Common towards her house in Brixton - a journey which should have taken around 50 minutes.’ *Independent*, 13 March 2021.
- (76) ‘Everard disappeared after leaving a friend’s house in the south of the capital at about 9pm on 3 March and beginning a 50-minute walk home.’ *Guardian*, 11 March 2021

In the above examples, the time it would have taken for Everard to walk home is mentioned. However, the syntactical structure does not place emphasis on Everard’s own agency. In (74) and (75), the use of past tense and modal verbs that denote a high probability function to legitimise Everard’s journey. The verb phrase ‘was expected to arrive’ (74) denotes a high expectation that making this journey would result in Everard returning home. Moreover, the use of the preposition ‘approximately’ before the time frame for the journey de-emphasises the length of the walk. In (75), the auxiliary verb ‘should’ presupposes, again, that the normal expectation would be for Everard to complete her journey. The fact that she did not,

therefore, is not connected to Everard's own agency (i.e. her mode of getting home). In (76), the time that Everard left is mentioned, but again this is mitigated through the preposition 'about'. Everard's journey home is represented as one that she should have completed, through the noun 'beginning', which implies an end. Moreover, the phrase 'walk home' is more typical than *The Telegraph's* phrasing 'on foot', which emphasises Everard's own agency through the use of 'foot'. This is synecdoche-like, as one aspect of Everard's own body is used to denote the entire act of walking home, ensuring that the action is directly associated with Everard herself. A '50-minute walk home', on the other hand, characterises the walk itself – this nominalisation removes the focus on a walk as an action taken by Everard and instead presents it as a noun that describes a journey which could be taken by anyone. *The Independent* and *The Guardian* normalise Everard's journey and, consequently, the decision of women to walk home when they want.

Indeed, though *The Telegraph* article quoted in examples (71)-(73) reports on the fact that the Metropolitan Police has 'arrested one of their own', and names Couzens, the focus throughout is on Everard. Though this could be to ensure that empathy remains with the victim, rather than foregrounding the perpetrator, details of the text do not support this. Instead, there is a dramatization of Everard's last movements that once again background the perpetrator and leave room for victim-blaming:

(77) 'In that now haunting [CCTV] image, her face is hidden by a Covid mask and she is holding her mobile phone to her right ear.' *Telegraph*, 8 March 2021.

(78) 'After that the trail went cold, chillingly cold.' *Telegraph*, 8 March 2021.

The adverbs 'haunting' and 'chillingly' intertextually link this case to the mystery novel genre – the reader is invited to speculate about the crime through the creation of intrigue. To suggest that the last image of Everard is 'haunting' creates an aura of mystery around her, as though she was marked before she was even attacked. The phrase 'the trail went cold' (78) also appears intertextually linked to the mystery novel genre. Everard has 'vanished' and the trail has gone 'cold', meaning that there are missing pieces to a puzzle that must be solved to understand what happened. This is qualified through the subordinate clause, 'chillingly cold'. The adverb 'chillingly' suggests not just mystery, but horror. By characterising Everard's last movements in this way, *The Telegraph* is drawing on an entertainment genre – creating suspense through the suggestion that Everard is somehow 'haunted' (or marked) in the last known image of her and that her case is a mystery. Reading this, there is no inclusion

whatsoever of the fact that the so-called ‘trail’ has, in fact, led police to believe that Everard had been abducted and murdered. The agency of the perpetrator is left to conjecture, and the details of the case postponed in favour of dramatizing Everard’s last actions. The mystery and the unknown exoticize the case, backgrounding the agency of a perpetrator, and thus representing what happened to Everard as exceptional and distanced from the average woman.

Of course, this unknowability is contrived. Even given the fact that at this stage Couzens had yet to plead guilty, it is clear by this point that Everard was the victim of violence, and likely by a male perpetrator. This in itself is no shocking mystery – male violence against women and girls is a pervasive aspect of our society (Centre for Women’s Justice et al, 2020; Ehrlich, 2007, 2014, 2021; Estrich, 1987). Yet, this contextualisation of sexual violence as an enigmatic event is echoed by *The Times*. With the headline ‘Sarah’s attacker was a stranger’, the anti-feminist report analysed below centres around the fact that what happened to Everard was a stranger attack:

(79) ‘Sarah Everard was lured off the street and had no connection with whoever abducted her.’ *Times*, 12 March 2021.

(80) ‘Police sources have told the *Times* that the investigation is being treated as a “stranger attack.”’ *Times*, 12 March 2021.

In (79), the opening sentence of this article, the perpetrator is backgrounded – the action of ‘luring’ Everard off the street is present, but the actor is absent. An actor is introduced in the following clause, but they are described as ‘whoever abducted her’. This vagueness is likely to be at least partly motivated by the necessity to ensure a fair trial (to name Couzens here before he was found guilty of the crime would be inappropriate). However, it also leaves a void in the space of the actor that leaves the focus on Everard as the only identified social actor. In (80), the case is characterised as a ‘stranger attack’ again. By focusing on this, *The Times* is able to individualise the case. A ‘stranger attack’ implies a single individual and a random event. Indeed, neither article examines the fact that Couzens was a serving police officer (Dodd, 2022; Knight, 2022; Sabbagh, 2021). Moreover, neither article acknowledges that violence against women and girls is pervasive at all, nor that its perpetrators are typically men (Centre for Women’s Justice et al, 2020). The two anti-feminist articles from *The Telegraph* and *The Times* foreground contextual information that individualises Everard’s case, focusing on her actions as exceptional and implying, through this, that female agency is



paramount to understanding violence against women. However, it is also the contextual detail that is *not* included in these articles that facilitates the blame game of victim-blaming – by suppressing the fact that sexual violence is pervasive, these reports can other the case. This erasure then functions to normalise sexual violence on the whole, through the misleading frame that it is an individual, not social, issue (Estrich, 1987).

#### 7.2.1.2. *Speech representation: Embodying hegemonic femininity*

In addition, *The Telegraph* article includes extensive speech representation from Everard’s family members in order to maintain emphasis on Everard as an individual. In example (81) below, her aunt is quoted:

- (81) “She is that type of person, incredibly grounded and sensible. Even as a child she was extremely sensible and organised and would let people know where she was and what she was doing [...] I cannot stress how organised and together she is so wandering off is just not something she’d do.” *Telegraph*, 11 March 2021.

By including this characterisation of Everard in a way that dramatizes the represented words, the article implies that the case is even more shocking because it is presented as a deviation from Everard’s personality. By including SR that repeats the adjectives ‘sensible’ and ‘organised’, the implication is that violence typically happens to people who are *not* sensible and *not* organised. Licata (2022, p.170) argues that women have typically been associated with hysteria and irrationality to denigrate them (see [Chapter Six](#)), signifying that the unmarked (i.e. hegemonic) behaviour for women is poise and calmness. By including this characterisation of Everard, *The Telegraph* presupposes that violence done to women who are not ‘sensible’ is less shocking (and so more normal), once again exoticizing the case and distancing it from the average woman’s experience. By emphasising that disappearing is ‘just not something she’d do’, there is the insinuation that it is women’s actions/characters that *typically* determine their safety – Everard *should* have been safe because she is sensible and that is why it is shocking that she was not safe. By focusing on characterising Everard through her essential personality, the article maintains emphasis on Everard herself, rather than the perpetrator as a violent social actor, and implies that some victims are more innocent than others.

The same article goes on to quote Everard’s uncle:

- (82) “I don’t know London well but I fear there could have been some bad people about who approached her.” *Telegraph*, 11 March 2021.

Through the naming of London in this SR, negative connotations around big cities are brought up – such as crime, unfriendliness, dirt and grime. London, in this quote, represents the unknown and, as a result, is a scary and dangerous place. In some sense, it is the city, rather than misogyny, that is responsible for violence against women that renders them victims. Having established, through (81), that Everard is an undeserving (or at least atypical) victim, the image constructed is of an innocent young woman in a dangerous place. Speech from Everard’s uncle represents his fears there could be ‘some bad people about’ in London, confirming the characterisation of the big city as one that harbours deviants. This interdiscursively links to the “bad apple” narrative that is often used to defend the police against accusations of institutional racism (Gruber, 2021). According to this narrative, violence is not institutional, but is the result of the individual, and impacting only an individual – with the impact heightened or lessened depending on how innocent they are perceived to be. This effectively absolves institutions, such as the police, from responsibility for their officers and perpetuates the myth that violence against women is exceptional rather than systemic. Female victimisation, therefore, is represented as an individual issue in the sense that it is related to a victim’s own character and their location, rather than social systems of inequality that enable abuse.

However, even in gender-neutral articles, personalisation is used to represent Everard as a victim, as shown below:

- (83) ‘Mr Everard, who is a professor of electronics at York University, and his wife, who is a charity worker, are understood to have travelled from their home in York to London to help in the search. "It was only recently that she was telling me the good news about her new role as a senior marketing account manager, which she was excited to start.’ *Telegraph*, 8 March 2021.

- (84) ‘In a statement, [Everard’s family] described the marketing executive as a "bright and beautiful" woman.

They described her as a "wonderful daughter and sister", adding: "She was kind and thoughtful, caring and dependable. She always put others first and had the most amazing sense of humour."

They added: "She was strong and principled and a shining example to us all. We are very proud of her and she brought so much joy to our lives.' *Guardian*, 11 March 2021 (c).

In the examples above, SR of Everard's family is included to humanise her. Thus, Everard becomes not just a reported story, but an individual with family. However, the represented characterisation of each article is revealing. In example (83), from *The Telegraph*, we learn that Sarah's father is a professor and his unnamed wife is a charity worker. In this, we once again see residual anti-feminist stereotypes bleed through into this newspaper's reporting, as 'Mr Everard' is named with his career – a well-respected, middle class position – noted in a primary position, and Everard's mother introduced only through possessivation by her husband. This structure is a patriarchal one, with Everard's father's position at the head of the sentence reflecting his socio-cultural position as head of the nuclear family, with his wife (and daughter) being characterised primarily through their relationship to him. Everard's mother, it is also worth noting, works as a 'charity worker', another respectable career, but represented as secondary to Mr Everard's work, confirming his overall superior position in the family. Everard's own career is also described, through direct SR from Everard's father that is embedded directly into the text, omitting the reporting verb, which suggests a desire to humanise Everard whilst also foregrounding her career – another respectable, middle-class position that is emblematic of capitalist success. The emphasis on the newness of this role represents Everard as a career-climber, aligning her firmly with neoliberal capitalist values that favour individual success (Furlong and Cartmel, 2005). *The Telegraph* uses Everard's family members to demonstrate her fulfilment of hegemonic femininity as she is clearly middle-class and from a nuclear family. Looking at the quantitative data from this newspaper (4.4.1.4, Table 4, p.85), overall it has a lower representation of women of colour compared to the other broadsheets. That Everard's possession of hegemonic femininity is used by this newspaper to humanise her therefore suggests that, for *The Telegraph*, legitimate victimhood (i.e. being 'sensible' and, so, deserving of sympathy) depends on the embodiment of hegemonic femininity.

In (84), from *The Guardian*, there is a positive characterisation of Everard, but it is less dependent on the characterisation of her family and work than *The Telegraph* (though her position as a 'marketing executive' is mentioned). *The Guardian* instead foregrounds more essential characteristics. Everard is described as "beautiful", "bright", "wonderful", "kind and thoughtful, caring and dependable". Still, these characteristics of nurturing and selflessness

are strongly associated with femininity (Litosseliti, 2002, p.133). However, her family also describe her as ‘strong and principled’. The characteristic of strength has traditionally been associated with masculine qualities. The inclusion of ‘principled’ also implies that Everard had strong morals that perhaps guided her kindness and selflessness, as opposed to her being inherently so. *The Guardian* thus balances out the masculine and feminine in its characterisation of Everard, perhaps aiming to ensure that they do not reproduce any stereotypes. However, more features in this quote can be aligned with the traditionally feminine than the traditionally masculine, and the inclusion of ‘strength’ is vague enough that readers can project their own conceptions of this onto her. Throughout the above quotes, Everard is characterised as having a loving family. *The Telegraph* in particular places emphasis on the background of this family, representing them as respectable and middle-class, whereas *The Guardian* places more emphasis on Everard’s personality. Nevertheless, both articles positively represent hegemonic feminine characteristics. Such personalisation encourages the reader to sympathise with Everard on the basis of her embodiment of hegemonic femininity, implying that certain qualities – such as being connected to a nuclear (i.e. heteronormative) family, middle-class, working in a corporate career, and being nurturing and selfless – are what constitutes a victim worthy of empathy and extensive news coverage.

### 7.2.1.3. “Good apples”: *Recuperating institutions of the State*

Speech representation is also used to individualise the case by positively representing state institutions, such as the police and government, thereby deflecting criticism of sexual violence as a social, cultural and political issue. For example, SR of the police itself is foregrounded in order to represent the police as a sympathetic institution, deflecting from the fact that the perpetrator in this case was a police officer:

- (85) ‘The Metropolitan police made an announcement, which by the force’s own admission was “both shocking and disturbing”: they had arrested one of their own.’  
*Telegraph*, 8 March 2021.

By representing the police’s arrest of Couzens’ actions through their own words, as ‘shocking and disturbing’, the article foregrounds the “bad apple” narrative. To frame violence against women by police as ‘shocking’ is to presuppose that police officers are typically protectors of the community. Yet, evidence shows that violence against women is in fact pervasive within the police in the UK, with one woman a week coming forward with allegations of abuse from

their partner in the police force (Stephenson, 2021; Walker, 2021). Yet, *The Telegraph* uses SR of the police – embedded into the reporter’s own text as free indirect speech (Semino and Short, 2004) – to present sexual violence from the police as rare. Furthermore, by framing the arrest of Couzens as the police arresting ‘one of their own’, the police are positively represented as a family, connoting fraternal bonding through the representation of officers as belonging to each other and/or the force. The report does not speculate about how Couzens’ role as a police officer created a power imbalance that he was able to exploit to commit acts of sexual violence. Everard’s victimhood is instead represented as an exceptional case and the perpetrator is represented as exceptional themselves, implying that women are victims only in rare cases and of perpetrators who are not reflective of a wider social issue but are, instead, just “bad” people.

However, we do see the espousal of feminist views in the SR of the Establishment included in gender-neutral articles. For example, members of the government and police have their voices foregrounded where they call for reform:

(86) ‘Claire Waxman, London's victims' commissioner, said a register would be a "step towards the police and relevant agencies being able effectively to identify and monitor serial abusers and stalkers with a consistent information-sharing approach". *Times*, 14 March 2021.

(87) ‘Colin Sutton, the senior investigating officer in the Metropolitan police who helped to convict Levi Bellfield, who murdered Millie Dowler in 2002, and Delroy Grant, a serial rapist, said the new register was a "good idea", adding: "You can never have too much information." *Times*, 14 March 2021.

(88) [Assistant Commissioner Nick Ephgrave] said "As a father myself, of four young women, I can only imagine the anguish that Sarah's family are feeling at this very very difficult time." *Independent*, 10 March 2021.

Examples (86) and (87) focus on the government response to the case and the plans to create a register for violent men in the hopes of protecting women’s safety. This reformist position is positively framed through the SR of the victims’ commissioner (86) and a Metropolitan Police officer (87). The victims’ commissioner works within the Ministry of Justice and is therefore a part of the government Establishment. Yet, her title – in which her role as commissioner is defined in relation to being possessed by victims (thus giving the impression that she works for them) – is used to authenticate and authorise her assessment through

alignment to victims themselves. In (87), the speaker – who is a part of the very force of which Everard’s attacker was a part – is also positively represented by detailing previous cases in which he is aligned with victims and given the role of a “good apple”. The Metropolitan Police’s image is thus recuperated through the characterisation of one of their officers as someone who has had success in persecuting perpetrators of sexual violence. *The Times* does not ridicule or question the institutions of government or the police, but rather re-authenticates them through the use of SR of individuals within these systems who are aligned with victims. Both speakers’ calls for reform are used to reflect the desire of the Establishment to do more to protect women victims, but the notion of the register itself still presupposes that ‘serial abusers and stalkers’ actions are symptomatic only of individuals, not wider society. Such reactionary reformism focuses on punishing perpetrators, rather than preventing sexual violence from occurring in the first place. Hence, this SR individualises women as victims by individualising the perpetrators and by avoiding any criticism of the police as an institution that itself victimises women.

In example (88), from *The Independent*, the voice of Assistant Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Nick Ephgrave, is foregrounded. Once again, this lends legitimacy to the very institution whose officer perpetrated the crime being reported. SR of Ephgrave aligns him with the victims rather than the perpetrator. However, he does this by identifying himself as ‘A father [...] of four young women’. Though the use of the noun ‘women’ rather than ‘girls’ shows a shift away from the infantilization of women victims, this framing itself is traditional. Ephgrave essentially casts himself as a feminist, able to offer empathy to Everard and her family, due to his alignment with women in the role of a father. This has long been a tactic used by individual men to align themselves with feminism through the presupposition that having daughters has given them insight into the female experience. Yet, implicit within such an alignment is that men cannot empathise with women unless they are close to women in their family, thereby implying that men and women are somehow inherently different to one another, and subtly absolving men of responsibility for sexual violence by emphasising familial ties as necessary to the ability to humanise women. This also reproduces a condescending paternalism that interdiscursively links to historical relationships between fathers and daughters, in which the father’s ownership over his daughter(s) confers the responsibility of “protecting” her onto him, until a husband can take over the role of protector. All three quotes above effectively recuperate the institutions of government and police, whose authority is being challenged by feminist voices in society. Hence, the type of

feminism that is denoted in these quotes is liberal and reformist – neither speaker poses a threat to the status quo, but suggests some change *within* the system. Women are still represented as victims, but their victimhood is constructed as the result of a few “bad apples” and, therefore, is presented as exceptional rather than culturally embedded.

### 7.2.2. Assimilation

On the other hand, D3 articles that adopt a pro-feminist stance represent women as victims of a society which enables and institutionalises sexual violence. Hence, sexual violence affects a group (women) and is perpetrated by a group (men). That pro-feminist articles were more likely in the reporting of the aftermath of the case is indicative of the impact of the feminist outcry, rather than newspapers spontaneously taking a feminist stance against sexual violence (Day, 2021). This is supported by the fact that newspapers largely depend on using SR of feminist politicians and experts to espouse feminist critiques of state institutions. However, reports do also foreground contextual information that presents the case as symptomatic of a wider social issue of sexual violence, rather than an exceptional case.

#### 7.2.2.1. Contextual information: A ‘women’s issue’

Whereas the anti-feminist articles from *The Telegraph* and *Times* quoted above focus on Everard’s actions before she went missing, pro-feminist articles about this case include statistics and figures about sexual violence in the country. Thus, female victimhood is framed as a social, rather than individual, issue. Below are some examples of the statistics and figures used to contextualise the Everard case:

(89) ‘A recent survey by UN Women UK found that 97% of women aged 18-24 had been sexually harassed, while 80% of women of all ages said they had experienced sexual harassment in public spaces.’ *Guardian*, 11 March 2021 (a).

(90) ‘Troubling updates on Everard's case - human remains were discovered in Kent woodlands on Wednesday - come as a survey by UN Women this week found 97 per cent of young women in the UK said they had been sexually harassed, while 80 per cent reported experiencing sexual harassment in public spaces.’ *Independent*, 12 March 2021.

(91) ‘While domestic abuse has surged in the wake of the Covid crisis - with the UK's national domestic abuse helpline seeing a 34 per cent rise in contacts and calls between April and December last year compared to the same period the previous year.’ *Independent*, 12 March 2021.

- (92) 'Women's fears about street harassment have also soared during the pandemic, with research finding that almost three-quarters of women are scared of exercising outside in the dark, and another study revealing young women say sexual harassment became worse during lockdown.' *Independent*, 12 March 2021.
- (93) 'Polls show 90 per cent of women have experienced it.' *Telegraph*, 12 March 2021.

Example (89), from *The Guardian*, quotes a UN survey that is represented in several other articles in the dataset. This is likely because the findings show an incredibly high number of women in the country have experienced sexual harassment (between 80 and 97 percent). Such statistics aim to inform readers who may not be aware of how pervasive sexual harassment is in the UK. They frame Everard's victimhood as further evidence of the state of gender inequality by materialising for readers the extent of sexual harassment against women and thus placing Everard's case within this wider context (Lampropoulou, 2018). Example (90), from *The Independent*, quotes the same statistics as *The Guardian*. However, *The Independent* represents these statistics in more direct relation to the Everard case. The update on the police investigation included in the subordinate clause is framed as 'troubling', demonstrating *The Independent's* sympathetic stance to Everard without dramatizing the case in the way *The Telegraph* does (77, 78). The adverb 'troubling' functions to show that the newspaper conceives of this case as disturbing. This is then temporally linked to the UN survey. The verb phrase 'came as' that precedes the results of the survey indicates that the updates on Everard's individual case happened simultaneously to the release of the statistics. By temporally linking the two, the article links gender inequality and sexual harassment in the UK to Everard's individual case. Like in *The Guardian*, the survey is used to represent Everard's case as a symptom of a society in which women on the whole are victimised by sexual violence. Moreover, in the same article, *The Independent* cites three more sets of statistics (91, 92). By citing these statistics, the article implies that so-called random sexual violence is connected to intimate partner violence. Both are thus constructed as symptoms of a wider issue of male violence. Women are represented as victims on a global scale, rather than on the local scale of an individual case.

It is interesting to compare this to (93), from *The Telegraph*. As mentioned earlier, several articles quoted the UN Women UK survey, as *The Telegraph* does here. However, *The Telegraph* is the only article that offers less specificity. The statistic presented, '90 percent', is unlikely to be a rounding up of the statistic showing that 80 percent of women of



all ages have experienced harassment, as this is already a round number. It is more likely to be rounding *down* the even more stark statistic that 97 percent of women aged 18-24 have experienced harassment. Moreover, *The Telegraph* does not actually name the survey conducted by the UN, instead using the vaguer term ‘poll’ to index the study. On the other hand, both *The Guardian* and *Independent* name the source of the survey. This shows good journalistic practice, but is also a way to authorise the statistics. The UN is an internationally known organisation that carries high prestige and authority. This imbues the statistics with authority, ensuring that they are seen as a legitimate and accurate assessment of sexual harassment in the UK. That *The Telegraph* both fails to name the source of its statistics and seems to downplay their significance minimises the implication that such statistics hold of perceptions of British society as a “safe”, postfeminist/gender equal place for women.

In this contextualisation of the Everard case as part of a wider issue of women’s safety in the UK, articles make generalising statements about women as a category/group in order to represent the issue as global/universal, such as the opening paragraph of an article in *The Guardian*:

- (94) ‘Women will find no reassurance in the Metropolitan Police’s statement that the abduction and murder of women on the street is rare, multiple MPs have said, with dozens calling for further action from the government to tackle male violence and misogyny.’ *Guardian*, 11 March 2021 (b).

The article opens with the declarative: ‘Women will find no reassurance’ in the statement given by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Cressida Dick, that what happened to Everard is rare. By using a declarative, boosted further through the high modality of the verb ‘will’, *The Guardian* is presupposing access to the thoughts and feelings of *all* women, presuming that these thoughts are unified. The certainty of the statement homogenises women as a group and constructs a feminist consensus in which the reactions of women to this statement can be confidently predicted. Only in the subordinate clause that follows is this declarative framed as SR of ‘multiple MPs’. This syntactic structure ensures that what the reader first reads presents as fact the view that Dick’s statement will be met with scepticism by women in the UK, and thus the reader takes it for granted as true. It also positions the Metropolitan Police Commissioner *against* the feminist consensus, in contrast to the recuperation of the force discussed earlier (refer to examples 87-88). The final clause, that states that ‘dozens’ of MPs have called for action from the government to ‘tackle male

violence and misogyny’, is therefore linked to the wishes of all women. Hence, the institutional responses to Everard’s tragic murder are immediately framed as inadequate and the individualising D3 frame discussed in earlier is outright disputed. The use of the label ‘male violence’ is also a key development. By naming men, instead of women, the responsibility is placed on men (as a category/group) for the issue and the actions become collective instead of individualised. Everard’s case is again placed in a wider context of violence which is presupposed to be systemic – linked directly to the identity group ‘male’. This is a departure from traditional framings of sexual violence, in which emphasis is placed on women to ensure their own safety.

#### 7.2.2.2. *Espousal of feminist views: “Each and every woman”*

Within the SR included in articles that adopt the assimilation approach to (re)producing D3, there were more overt espousals of feminist views that enabled reports to adopt a pro-feminist stance whilst ostensibly remaining neutral – through the voices of others, particularly women. In SR included in articles published in *The Telegraph* and *Times*, sexual violence is framed through the homogenising of women and womanhood. Both include SR from then-Home Secretary, Priti Patel:

(95) “These are so powerful because each and every woman can relate. Every woman should feel safe to walk on our streets without fear of harassment or violence.” *Telegraph*, 12 March 2021.

(96) ‘Patel said: “Too many of us have walked home from school or work alone, only to hear footsteps uncomfortably close behind us. Too many of us have pretended to be on the phone to a friend to scare someone off. Too many of us have clutched our keys in our fists in case we need to defend ourselves.”’ *Times*, 16 March 2021.

Patel is a Conservative and both *The Telegraph* and *The Times* consistently back the Conservative party in elections. The right-wing, however, is not typically associated with feminist politics because conservative ideology tends to promote “traditional” gender roles and values (Farris, 2017; Wodak, 2021). Yet, in the quotes above, Patel aligns herself with feminism through adequation (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). In (95), her response to the stories of sexual harassment being shared by politicians and members of the public in the wake of Everard’s murder is quoted. She is represented using the collocation ‘every woman’ to construct a homogenous category of womanhood. The determiner ‘every’ presupposes that sexual harassment is an experience of all women, thus acknowledging the pervasiveness of

harassment and including herself in this category of female victimhood. This aligns Patel to the public through the sameness of shared experience. In (96), SR from Patel repeats the phrase ‘too many of us’ to the same effect. The collective pronoun ‘us’ is again inclusive of Patel herself, producing the imagined community of women with common experiences of victimhood. The prepositional phrase ‘too many’ presupposes that sexual harassment should not be occurring in such high numbers, aligning Patel to a protest over the current state of affairs. By including direct quotations from Patel, *The Telegraph* and *The Times* align her with the feminist response to Everard’s death. In so doing, they assimilate the violence committed against Everard into the experiences of women as a group, thus associating female victimhood with the experiences of all women, as opposed to exceptionalising it. However, they also recuperate the image of both the state and the political right by aligning Patel – the Tory Home Secretary at this time – with feminism. This reflects the ability of the political right to appropriate a neoliberal, reformist feminism that backgrounds the role of the state in reproducing power inequalities and foregrounds individual alignment with individualised feminist issues. This functions to deflect criticism of the Tory government and its escalation of ‘law and order’ policies that bolster the power of the police (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009; Wodak, 2021). Hence, female victimhood is represented as a global issue, but one that is not related to the policies of government (i.e. is not institutionalised).

Though *The Independent* also quotes Patel, it also foregrounds SR of activists that places the Everard case in the context of grassroots feminist movements and updates the narrative of female victimhood to one of survivorship:

(97) ‘Campaigners accused the government of failing to properly fund services that tackle domestic and sexual violence’ *Independent*, 12 March 2021.

(98) ‘Ms Kneer, who runs Reigate and Banstead Women's Aid refuge for domestic abuse victims at risk of murder in their own homes, called for investment in victims’ services [...] The domestic abuse survivor, whose violent partner was jailed for seven years in 2011, added: "Real investment that means if a woman picks up the phone to call, after seeing a fancy social media campaign, there will be a service which can help her."’ *Independent*, 13 March 2021.

Example (97) is the headline of an article published by *The Independent* which centres around the outrage of feminist activists at the Tory government’s austerity measures and their impact on women’s safety (Olufemi, 2020, pp.25-28). By foregrounding the voices of

‘campaigners’ and their criticism of the government and other state institutions (i.e. the police), *The Independent* represents female victimhood in a more directly activist context. In another article (98), *The Independent* foregrounds the voice of a domestic abuse campaigner, who they identify as a ‘survivor’. This labelling empowers Kneer – the nominalisation of the verb ‘to survive’ suggests activation and endurance, as opposed to passivating victims of abuse. Through this label, and by specifying Kneer’s role in running an organisation, the article reclaims women’s agency in narratives in which they have traditionally been viewed as weak. Additionally, Kneer’s personal experience not only authenticates her statements, but also authorises her assessment about the need for ‘real investment’, undermining the government’s position and their alleged commitment to feminism. Moreover, by quoting Kneer – a survivor of intimate partner violence – in the first place, *The Independent* is once again connecting the violence that was done to Everard to domestic abuse, constructing a chain in which female victimisation is represented as affecting women both in the streets and in ‘their own homes’. Drawing on notions of ownership and belonging (as Patel does when she states that women should feel safe to walk ‘our streets’ in example 95), women are presupposed to have ownership over the space of the home (and of their country), highlighting the violation inherent in sexual abuse.

By foregrounding the voices of activists, *The Independent* is presenting Everard’s case as requiring an activist response, implying that the government must be made to act. Contrastingly, *The Telegraph* tends to represent the government as on side with feminists and feminism, and tends to construct a feminist frame through more personalised narratives of harassment that do not scrutinise the government. Below, the newspaper quotes a campaigner at length:

- (99)        ‘Writing for The Daily Telegraph, Ms Ali said [...] "Change is possible - I know this because through my and others' work campaigning to end FGM, it is now a tangible reality that FGM will end in my lifetime."’ *Telegraph*, 12 March 2021.

Indeed, going further than merely quoting the anti-FGM (female genital mutilation) campaigner, *The Telegraph* gives Ali the space to write her own take for the newspaper – centring her voice. Ali speaks in declaratives to position herself as an authority on issues of street harassment and violence against women and girls, and bases this on her experience campaigning to end FGM. Her feminist activism thus authenticates her voice, in a similar way to the foregrounding of Kneer’s voice by *The Independent*. This gives Ali the authority

to condemn the ‘law’ (but, importantly, not the police or government) and aligns the newspaper with feminism. Yet, in the same article, *The Telegraph* identifies Ali as follows:

- (100) ‘Ms Ali, who is a godparent to Boris Johnson's son Wilfred, is close to Carrie Symonds who supported the campaign to keep black-cab rapist John Worboys in prison after the parole board recommended his release.’ *Telegraph*, 12 March 2021.

*The Telegraph* seems to be foregrounding Conservative-aligned women to talk from a position of feminism. Ali is aligned to the Prime Minister, as godparent to his son and a friend of his wife, Carrie Symonds. The report also directly aligns Symonds with feminism by reporting her ‘campaign’ against another sexual abuser. Hence, the article implicitly renders then-Prime Minister Johnson (and his government/party) a feminist-by-association – firstly through his ties to Ali, secondly by representing Symonds as a feminist, and lastly through the SR of Johnson’s Home Secretary, Patel. Thus, even when framing the Everard case in an ostensibly pro-feminist way, *The Telegraph* does ideological work to associate right-wing, traditionally anti-feminist politics with feminism. Through this, women are represented as victims, but this victimhood is not associated with the institutions of the state, enabling the government to deny that it is responsible for the pervasiveness of male sexual violence.

On the other hand, that is not to say that the left-leaning newspapers do not also produce problematic feminist stereotypes in their effort to align feminism with their own values. For instance, the SR included in *The Guardian* foregrounds the voices of feminist politicians who, though criticising state institutions and social structures, also perpetuate hegemonic femininity, such as in the example below:

- (101) ‘Phillips said she was a "tough cookie" but said that "when I was a teenager a man pulled up next to me and exposed himself to me”. “It’s got absolutely nothing to do with anything I can do. I can’t change the chromosomes in my body ... I’m not stereotyping women as weak, I’m not even stereotyping men as all being perpetrators.’ *Guardian*, 11 March 2021 (c).

*The Guardian* quotes Labour MP Jess Phillips at length. Phillips’ statement is interesting – even as she is represented as claiming not to reproduce stereotypes, she reproduces several. The article first frames her story of harassment by predicating it with Phillips’ own characterisation of herself as a ‘tough cookie’. Her personal narrative of experiencing sexual

harassment, meant to align herself with the imagined community of all women/every woman, is connected to this characterisation through the conjunction ‘but’. This implies that sexual harassment is contradictory to her characterisation as ‘tough’. In this SR, Labour’s Phillips is presupposing that ‘toughness’ is typically a barrier to harassment, implying that it is women’s own responsibility to shape themselves into a more masculinised character (i.e. ‘toughness’ – see [6.2.1.1.](#)) that protects them from harassment. This is not dissimilar to the anti-feminist framing that presupposes that Everard’s ‘sensible’ personality would normally protect her from sexual violence (81). Both perspectives implicitly reproduce the notion that it is women’s responsibility to keep themselves safe, and that it is women’s character as “soft”, weak or irresponsible that makes them victims. This is compounded by Phillips’ represented claim that she ‘cannot change the chromosomes in [her] body’. Here, Phillips’ speech connects genetics and biology (chromosomes) to the social act of sexual violence that victimises women. Hence, implicitly, Phillips is taking for granted that systemic male violence occurs because of women’s biology and *inherent* weakness (Serano, 2016, pp.102-115; 2017). Through this assumption, Phillips separates out the systems that lead to harassment of LGBTQ+ people and that of cisgender women, presupposing that it is this latter group that face the type of harassment that she is relating to. In the text, SR reproduces binary notions of gender that construct cisgender women as inherently vulnerable and weak, and sexual violence as a cisgender women’s issue (a representation that is perpetuated in the [trans representation](#) within this newspaper, see the next chapter). *The Guardian* is aligning itself to the branch of “feminism” that problematically conceives women as victims of their own biology (Faye, 2021m pp.224-260; Olufemi, 2020, pp.49-66; Serano, 2018)

### 7.2.2.3. *An “epidemic”: Sexual violence as a disease*

Finally, a common theme in the SR of various feminists included in the left-leaning broadsheet press during this time is the references to male sexual violence through the semantic field of illness:

- (102) ‘Violence against women is an epidemic which requires far more attention and resources, Labour's shadow minister for domestic violence, Jess Phillips, has said, in the wake of the disappearance of Sarah Everard.’ *Guardian*, 11 March 2021 (c).
- (103) ‘Several experts said the "penny has still not dropped" about the endemic nature of violence against women and girls.’ *Guardian*, 17 March 2021.

(104) ‘Sarah Everard: Epidemic of violence against women in UK not taken seriously enough after 33-year-old's disappearance, MPs warn.’ *Independent*, 12 March 2021.

(105) ‘[Ms Aziza] said: "Violence against women and girls is a pandemic.’  
*Independent*, 13 March 2021.

By referring to sexual harassment and violence as an ‘epidemic’, ‘pandemic’ and as ‘endemic’, these speakers all use metaphors of disease to reify the pervasiveness of sexual violence in British society. The image created is of the nation as body politic infected and contaminated by a virus of sexual violence (c.f. Anderson, 2006). Hence, sexual violence is constructed as systemic, as a societal sickness that has spread throughout the whole country and needs to be “treated”. Particularly within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, such metaphors are incredibly effective as most readers can relate to and understand them, having lived through a pandemic themselves. This intertextuality between the public health pandemic that has impacted the entire nation (and world) and sexual violence as pandemic is a device used as a “wake up call” for the audience, alerting them to the reality of sexual violence as a systemic threat. However, the focus still remains of the effect of this illness on women (i.e. the symptom), as opposed to patriarchy socialising men into sexually violent roles (i.e. the cause). Whether pro-feminist or otherwise, the emphasis in articles on the Everard case remains on (cisgender) women as victims, and not on what causes female victimisation. Reports themselves do not scrutinise government austerity measures or the institution of the police as one that harbours misogyny and instead tend to foreground a reformist, neoliberal feminism that aims to operate within the state’s ‘law and order’ discourse to punish offenders on an individualised basis, rather than an intersectional feminism that would seek to challenge the mechanisms of the state as key to the pervasiveness of male sexual violence in the first place (Olufemi, 2020).

### **7.2.3. Summary**

In my original assessment of the data analysed above, I concluded that it was Everard’s whiteness that made her case worthy of extensive reporting – i.e. her embodiment of hegemonic (white, middle-class) femininity. I believed that Everard’s white privilege made her an “ideal victim” in the eyes of the media and police, whereas black women and other women of colour have historically not been viewed as victims and have instead been construed as ‘angry’ or blamed for their own victimisation (Ehrlich, 2021; Harris-Perry, 2015; Hill Collins, 2002). Then, in September 2021 (after I had finished my data collection),

a 28-year-old teacher, Sabina Nessa (who was a woman of colour), was found murdered in London. During this time, I read an opinion piece by Aviah Day, published by Novara Media, called: ‘We must stop comparing Sabina Nessa’s murder with Sarah Everard’s’ (Day, 2021). In the article, Day critiques the public discourse that was, as I had been doing in my own assessment, deploying Everard’s death as a ‘case study of white privilege’ (*ibid.*). Though, as Day herself writes, ‘race certainly accounted for a large part of the media attention given to Everard’s case’, and her embodiment of hegemonic femininity was emphasised in certain reports (examples 81-84), and even in the SR of some politicians and campaigners claiming a pro-feminist stance (99-101), there is a serious issue with the ‘notion that any person who has been murdered is privileged’ (*ibid.*). Day makes the case that Everard’s murder in fact attracted so much media attention because of the response to it, both from feminists and the police. The fact that the perpetrator in this case was a serving police officer made the power abuse at work stark, and led to a feminist outcry against institutional misogyny. Day’s article enlightened me to the fact that it was feminism itself that had propelled Everard’s case into the news cycle. My original assessment was not only backgrounding the impact of feminism, but was ‘weighing victims’ worthiness against one another’ and, in this, was failing to do exactly what my research claims to do: encourage intersectional feminist strategies for resistance that bring *all* women and marginalised genders together to fight ‘for a world free from gendered violence’ (Day, 2021).

Importantly, in my rush to connect articles on Everard to the white privilege of hegemonic femininity, I had missed a key pattern in the quantitative results. From the number of articles on sexual violence in the dataset (refer back to Graph 2, p.83), one might conclude that it is incredibly rare in the UK, limited to just a few individual cases. Though the cases that make up coverage of this topic were primarily about white women, they are also about cases that are not reflective of the pervasiveness of sexual violence in society overall. The tragic rape and murder of Libby Squire was, like Everard’s murder, carried out by a perpetrator not known to the victim. This accounts for only 10 percent of cases of rape in the country (Centre for Women’s Justice et al, 2020, p.31). Moreover, ‘Me Too’ cases tend to gain traction in the press when they are perpetrated by high profile, public figures (as opposed to within the general public). There are no reports in this dataset on cases of sexual violence that occur in relation to domestic abuse – the cases that are most common (*ibid.*). In fact, that *The Guardian/Observer* reported more on issues of sexual violence overall, but less specifically about the Everard case, implies a more systemic, rather than exceptionalising,



analysis of sexual violence. Overall, however, whilst sexual violence is undoubtedly occurring in the UK, the broadsheet press is suppressing any meaningful reporting on it that could potentially lead to accountability and social change.

The ‘women are victims’ discourse is (re)produced in both feminist and anti-feminist ways; it can offer an individualised or systemic analysis, seek to activate or passivate its subject(s), and challenge or uphold patriarchal stereotypes. Above, I have shown how Everard’s victimhood was constructed by the broadsheets as individualised and exceptional. Even within feminist framings, stereotypes that overgeneralise women as weak and powerless, or homogenise the female experience, were found. There was a low number of anti-feminist articles about this case, both from the right-wing broadsheets, that showed victim-blaming tropes and an emphasis on Everard’s worthiness as a victim. Within this, there is an emphasis on Everard’s embodiment of hegemonic femininity, which appeared to be invoked to generate sympathy from the reader by characterising her as an “innocent victim”. Even in gender-neutral articles, there was residual reproduction of these anti-feminist tropes. However, it is significant that there are more pro-feminist articles than anti-feminist articles about the case overall. SR from feminist politicians as well as activists was included and functioned to bring this individual case into a wider, systemic analysis of sexual violence. This indicates that the feminist response to the case did impact how it was reported as the pro-feminist articles all appeared in the aftermath of Couzens’ arrest and after feminist protests.

Overall, however, a distinction does emerge between the left-leaning and right-wing broadsheets. *The Times* and *Telegraph* were both more likely to reproduce anti-feminist tropes and to emphasise hegemonic femininity. The left-leaning broadsheets were more likely to foreground SR from grassroots feminist activists and to engage in systemic analysis. This is in line with the quantitative data that shows that *The Guardian*, in particular, more consistently reports on sexual violence than other newspapers, especially compared to the right-wing broadsheets. It can be concluded, therefore, that the more progressive political stance of *The Guardian* and *The Independent* leads to a more feminist framing of women as victims of sexual violence. Whilst the right-wing stance of *The Telegraph* and *The Times* do produce pro-feminist articles, and anti-feminist articles are rare, these newspapers remain invested in maintaining the (patriarchal) status quo in which sexual violence is a normalised aspect of society. The absence of explicit misogyny appears to be replaced by the re-framing of right-wing politics as feminist. Hence, these newspapers can claim a feminist stance,

whilst ultimately maintaining and updating hegemonic systems that enable male violence. On the whole, though the broadsheets may adopt a more pro-feminist stance on the cases that they choose to report on, their selection of what types of sexual violence are newsworthy actually maintains hegemonic femininity through the maintenance of what Estrich (1987) labelled the 'real rape' myth – that sexual violence is rare, aggravated and perpetrated by a stranger, and that its victims are typically white, cisgender, middle-class women. In this, the culture of hegemonic masculinity behind the pervasiveness of male sexual violence is left unexamined and, consequently, normalised.

## Chapter 8: Trans Representation

### 8.1. Introduction

This chapter will explore the representation of trans femininity in this dataset. As mentioned in Chapter Four (4.4.1.3.), the data show an overrepresentation of trans identity in the British broadsheet press. Table 8 (p.94) shows the discursive representation of trans identity across all newspapers in this study and shows that ‘trans rights are dangerous’ (TD1) and ‘trans rights are under threat’ (TD2) are the most dominant discourses reproduced. All newspapers reproduced TD1 articles, which are discourses that are grounded in transphobic ideology. TD1 makes up over a third of trans articles overall. TD2, on the other hand, makes up about 15.5 percent of articles on trans subjects. *The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent/I* reproduced TD2, a discourse that is sympathetic to the struggle of the trans community against discrimination, whilst *The Telegraph* and *The Times* do not. Thus, whilst the right-wing newspapers do not “crossover” to the progressive/liberal position of TD2, the left-leaning papers do crossover to discriminatory discourse (TD1). Hence, this chapter will explore the linguistic strategies deployed to produce the most dominant discourse: ‘trans rights are dangerous’ (TD1) and the most dominant sympathetic discourse: ‘trans rights are under threat’ (TD2).

Using examples from articles (re)producing both TD1 and TD2, I will demonstrate how both sides of the so-called “debate” over trans rights deploy similar linguistic strategies to construct different groups as the victims of hostility, largely focusing on the most pervasive discourse, TD1, which represents society as the victims of a so-called “trans agenda”, whilst TD2, representing trans people as victims, is less pervasive. However, I believe that TD2 should still be assessed to give insight into the other “side” of trans representation in the British broadsheets. When *The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent/I* publish articles that reproduce TD2, they mobilise speech representation in order to authenticate trans victimhood and contextual information that assimilates discrimination into the trans community as a group. However, when *all* newspapers publish articles producing TD1, they mobilise the same strategies to centre cisgender people (especially TERFS, or so-called “gender critical” “feminists”) and dehumanise and “other” trans women. These articles foreground SR of TERFs, backgrounding the voices of trans people themselves, and suppress contextual information that demonstrates the impact of anti-trans discrimination in favour of foregrounding sensationalist and, often, false narratives about the trans community.

## 8.2. Trans rights are dangerous

This discourse is deployed in order to both stir up and justify the marginalisation of trans identity by representing trans femininity and the trans community more broadly as a threat to wider society. In order to achieve this, trans women in particular are dehumanised and “othered” – or denaturalised and differentiated from the hegemonic “norm” (i.e. cisgender identity). One way that this is achieved is through interdiscursivity with the discourse labelled ‘trans women are not “real” women’ (refer back to Table 8, p.94), which is enabled through speech representation that centres voices of trans-exclusionary commentators, especially those who claim to be “feminists”. This allows newspapers to deny prejudice by appropriating the feminist movement, whilst simultaneously dramatizing and sensationalising the alleged threat of trans women. On the other hand, trans voices are backgrounded and suppressed, dehumanising trans people and depersonalising the effects of discrimination. Consensus is manufactured through assimilation, which constructs the category “woman” as a homogenous group predicated on cisgender (hegemonic) femininity. This produces a cisgender in-group, distinguished from the transgender out-group, creating an “us vs them” frame. Such assimilation is achieved via essentialisation and has the effect of denaturalising trans identity (Serano, 2017). Finally, trans people are represented through activation as agentive. However, this is not in a liberating, positive way but, rather, in a threatening way to the cisgender in-group.

Below, these linguistic strategies are analysed and related to Goode and Ben-Yehuda’s (2009, pp.37-40, see [2.5.2.](#), pp.22-23) model for constituting a moral panic – primarily via the four elements of concern, hostility, consensus and disproportion.

### 8.2.1. Speech Representation

As described above, SR in TD1 articles is used to foreground the views of so-called gender-critical “feminists” (or TERFs), authenticating their trans-exclusionary position by humanising their perspective, in which they construct themselves as innocent victims of a hostile “trans agenda”:

(106) ‘A spokesperson for For Women Scotland said: “Marion is naturally upset that the police have decided to press ahead with charges. The past few weeks have been a nightmare for Marion and her family and it seems there is no end in sight.”’

*Guardian*, 4 June 2021.

The example above shows how even the more progressive, left-leaning newspapers, like *The Guardian*, platform the voices of TERFs. *The Guardian*, in a report about the “trans debate” within Scottish politics, foregrounds SR from a Scottish woman, Marion Miller, and that of her “gender critical” lobbying group, For Women Scotland (which is described in the article as ‘a gender critical feminist group’ – authorising their claims to feminism despite their lobbying against trans inclusion and, therefore, presupposing that feminism is not trans-inclusive). The article reports on the fact that Miller has been referred to the police for homophobic and transphobic tweets, but focuses on *her* apparent victimisation. Nowhere in the article is the voice of any member of the LGBTQ+ community who are affected by such social media abuse represented (Powell et al, 2020). In fact, Miller and For Women Scotland’s voice dominates the text. In the example above, Marion’s emotional response is represented through a spokesperson, who references her feelings, which are authenticated (‘naturally upset’) as a reasonable response to accusations of transphobia, and the invocation of her family as also subjected to suffering (‘a nightmare’ in which they are included). Hence, being accused of transphobia is what is represented as victimising people, rather than being on the receiving end of transphobia. This therefore characterises the call for trans rights and increasing trans visibility in the UK as a threat to the cisgender population.

Similarly, in an article published within the same week, *The Independent* also centres the voice of a cisgender woman accused of transphobia. The article reports on an appeal to an employment tribunal, brought to the court by Maya Forstater, who lost her job at the Centre for Global Development (CGD) for making transphobic tweets. The article explains:

(107) ‘In one tweet, she wrote: "I don't think being a woman/female is a matter of identity or womanly feelings. What I am so surprised at is that smart people who I admire... are tying themselves in knots to avoid saying the truth that men cannot change into women."’ *Independent*, 10 June 2021.

Though *The Independent* does include a counter-position, representing the voice of the company that let Forstater go due to her transphobia, this is only towards the end of the text and is thus in a secondary position compared to Forstater’s own perspective. By reproducing one of Forstater’s offensive tweets in full (107) and then foregrounding her voice, and the voice of the judge who ruled in favour of her appeal, *The Independent* authorises the transphobic sentiments of the tweet – that ‘men cannot change into women’. This statement labels transgender women ‘men’ and feeds into harmful narratives that conceive of

transgender femininity as a deception, used to do harm to cisgender women (Serano, 2021c). It also reproduces Forstater's assertion that trans women 'cannot' claim a woman identity because their identity is based (according to her) on 'womanly feelings' – undermining and trivialising trans women's gender identity by associating it with sensation (which is often thought to be flimsy or fleeting) as opposed to essential identity. In reporting on Forstater's case in the first place, *The Independent* (and the other broadsheets, which also report on the case) fuels the sensationalism surrounding trans rights that feeds the moral panic that 'irrational trans activism' (i.e. the call for trans rights) is harmful to "ordinary" (i.e. cisgender) citizens (Serano, 2021b). This consequently reproduces the hegemony of cisgender femininity through the presupposition that trans women are attempting to deny the "reality" that gender is binary and immutable and that people therefore 'cannot' transition. Hence, cisgender identity is authentication whilst transgender identity is denaturalised.

This foregrounding of SR of TERFs enables newspapers to showcase transphobic perspectives whilst being able to deny accusations of discrimination because such views can be said to be representative of the person quoted, not the newspaper itself. *The Telegraph* and *The Times* are particularly committed to platforming such voices, as evidenced below:

- (108) 'JK Rowling, the Harry Potter author, attracted a huge backlash in the summer after responding to a headline on an online article discussing "people who menstruate" by writing in a tweet: "I'm sure there used to be a word for those people. Someone help me out. Wumben? Wimpund? Woomud?"' *Telegraph*, 19 Dec. 2020.
- (109) 'Lucy Hunter Blackburn, speaking for the group, said: "Amendments that would have provided protection in relation to discussion on sex and gender identity were hastily introduced and then withdrawn after a backlash.' *Times*, 4 Mar. 2021.
- (110) "This is a matter of basic biological fact and I won't be silenced". *Times*, 18 May 2021.

Example (108) is from an article by *The Telegraph* on Scottish politics – reporting that a Green MSP (Member of the Scottish Parliament) resigned from their position due to the Green party's trans-inclusive stance. J.K Rowling, the author of the *Harry Potter* books who is quoted in the text, is therefore ostensibly irrelevant to this issue. However, she is foregrounded here as she has become something of a poster woman for trans-exclusionary "feminism" since she revealed her transphobic position in the tweet quoted. By foregrounding the position of Rowling, a hugely well-known and popular author, the

impression given is that her view is the general consensus because her voice is recognisable and respected. Moreover, by suppressing trans voices, the threat that trans people face from such discrimination and bigotry is erased. Example (109), from *The Times*, represents a response to Scotland's Hate Crime Bill amendment: the SNP's plans to amend the nation's Hate Crime Bill to include a new offence for stirring up hatred on the grounds of disability, age, religion, sexuality or transgender identity. This amendment caused a lot of controversy and was widely covered (and encouraged) by the broadsheets. Indeed, this reflects the 'peculiar acceptability' of anti-trans sentiment in British political discourse as none of the other protected characteristics caused comparable controversy (Montiel McCann, 2022, p.15). *The Times* foregrounds SR from Lucy Hunter Blackburn who, it is said, represents 'an independent policy analysis group'. This is a misrepresentation as the group that Blackburn represents, Murray Blackburn Mackenzie, is a "gender critical" lobbying group that was established in 2018 with a particular emphasis on resisting any amendments to Scotland's GRA that would make it easier for trans people to legally transition – hardly independent or unbiased. By representing such groups and individuals so innocuously, these newspapers normalise and authorise their bigotry, mitigating and suppressing the negative impacts of their actions whilst making those same actions palatable by characterising them as non-threatening.

I would like to draw attention to example (110) in particular. In this article, *The Times* defends another cisgender woman accused of transphobia – Lisa Keogh. Keogh was disciplined by her university, Abertay University (also, interestingly, in Scotland), for making transphobic and victim-blaming statements in class which distressed other students. Free direct speech of Keogh defending herself, claiming a victim identity, and reproducing her transphobic views makes up the majority of the text. *The Times* then uses this to make the "freedom of speech" argument, suggesting that the human right to freedom of speech is being repressed by universities due to pressure from the "trans agenda" (suppressing the impact on Keogh's fellow students). In the example above, Keogh is quoted as stating, in defiance, that she 'will not be silenced', implying that a powerful trans "lobby" of students and staff who complained about her are 'silencing' her (Serano 2018; 2021b). This is a typical perspective of so-called "gender critical feminists", who claim that the "trans agenda" is oppressing them. This is, of course, patently untrue seems as Keogh is being quoted extensively in a major national newspaper (I did not find any other cases of disciplinary action taken against a student by a university reported in any of the newspapers included in this dataset). However,

transphobic “feminists” must continue to contrive their victimhood in order to present trans rights as hostile and threatening to wider society, and they are aided in this by the Establishment of the British press who platform their voices to shape the public discourse on trans rights (Lewis, 2019; Wodak, 2021).

Consequently, what is constructed in TD1 articles is the “trans debate”. This is the notion that ‘trans rights, trans identity, and even the very existence of trans people themselves, is up for “debate”’ (Montiel McCann, 2022, p.23). This in itself authorises the holding of transphobic opinions and, ultimately, actions through the presupposition that there is something worth contesting. Hence, TD1 articles go out of their way to frame the SR of transphobes as part of a legitimate political and cultural debate that reflects genuine concern from the general public:

- (111) Lady Justice Simler asked: "What about an academic or a feminist philosopher who responds to a public consultation expressing concerns about permitting a transsexual woman to use a woman's refuge and [someone] complains about that, perceiving that to be hostile. Would it be right for that to be declared on an enhanced criminal record check when that academic wants to transfer to become a teacher in a school where there are transgender children?" *Telegraph*, 11 Mar. 2021
- (112) ‘That explains how you end up with Jo O’Grady of the University and College Union dismissing women’s concerns. “Treating the lives of trans people as a philosophical debate dehumanises trans people,” she tweeted, effectively delegitimising any discussion of what gender means and how it relates to sex.’ *Times*, 12 June 2021.

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009, p.38) claim that one crucial element in producing a moral panic is ‘consensus’ – the ‘substantial or widespread agreement [...] that [a] threat is real, serious and caused by the wrongdoing group’, in this case, trans women. In the above quotes, the views of transphobic women are framed as part of a legitimate ‘discussion’ (112) and the authorised sector of academia is used to suggest such legitimacy (111). In example (111), transphobia is assimilated into the fields of academia and ‘feminist philosoph[y]’, giving the impression that in academia there is a consensus that transgender identity is problematic/contestable. Moreover, the judge is directly quoted using outdated terminology – referring to trans women as ‘transsexual[s]’, a term which is considered by many within the trans community to be dehumanising through its emphasis on sex and implications of medical



transition as a defining feature of trans identity (Zottola, 2021, p.71, p.175). Indeed, the preoccupation with trans women’s bodies reveals the latent transmisogyny of many of these articles and the voices represented within them, as such an objectification of cisgender women’s bodies and preoccupation with cisgender women’s genitalia would likely not be tolerated in the press (Serano, 2016; 2017; 2018; 2021a).

On the other hand, in example (112), criticism of the so-called “trans debate” as dehumanising trans people – reducing them to objects up for debate – made by an academic is negatively framed. O’Grady’s critique of the “debate” is framed as a delegitimization of ‘any discussion of what gender means and how it relates to sex’. Once again, trans allies and people are represented as threatening freedom of speech and thereby presenting a threat to wider society. O’Grady (and her position) is represented as powerful – being able to silence the debate and, therefore, having the institutional power to do so. This presupposes that cisgender society and transphobes lack power which, of course, they do not, considering that they are repeatedly platformed in the mainstream news media and that the British government holds an increasingly hostile position to the trans community. This pattern of SR shows that *The Times* is not interested in objectively representing both sides of a ‘legitimate public debate’, but is actively supporting the anti-trans side of this “debate” as they continually platform transphobes whilst backgrounding and undermining the other “side” of the argument (i.e. trans inclusion).

### **8.2.2. A “Feminist” Consensus**

This production of a so-called “trans debate” produces an “us vs them” framing in which the trans community are represented as the out-group, the “other” – i.e. the ‘folk devil’ – and the rest of society (including the reader) is represented as under threat from “them” (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009). By foregrounding SR of TERFs, it is these voices that are constructed as the vulnerable and victimised in-group. Through this, the broadsheets produce the notion that there is a consensus that trans rights are a source of concern for society, which validates the designation of trans people as the “enemy” and supports calls for restrictions to their rights.

Below, evidence shows how TERFs are represented as unproblematically aligned to feminism, as opposed to holding a minority position within the heterogeneous movement (Faye, 2021; Lewis, 2019; Serano, 2016):

- (113) ‘Gender-critical feminists disagree with the view of some LGBT activists that gender identity should be prioritised over biological sex in terms of law-making and

policy. They fear sex is being argued into non-existence and that this will erode rights hard-won by women in the face of historical biological discrimination.' *Guardian*, 4 June 2021.

(114) 'De Wahls is no cosy cross-stitcher: she deploys her needle for political, especially feminist purpose. She embroiders fallopian tubes giving the finger, had a show called Big Swinging Ovaries, ran a vagina sewing workshop at Tate Modern. She's funny, outspoken, has bright red hair and lavish tattoos. As all artists should be, she's freethinking and bold.' *Times*, 17 June 2021.

(115) 'Millar emerged from Coatbridge police station after an interview of almost two hours to be greeted by applause and cheers from a group of supporters, many of them wearing T-shirts with the words "#WomenWontWheest" a hashtag she helped popularise.' *Times*, 5 June 2021.

In the above examples, the actions of transphobic lobbying groups and anti-trans activists are framed as non-aggressive, non-hostile and fundamentally feminist. In (113), from *The Guardian*, the anti-trans lobby is innocuously represented as gender-critical “feminists” ‘disagreeing’ with LGBT activists about gender identity. This makes the “trans debate” appear legitimate and respectable, suppressing the hostility directed at trans folk. Indeed, in this framing, both sides of this “debate” seem to have equal power – in fact, the label ‘activists’ implies that ‘LGBT activists’ are the ones doing the most to further their “agenda”. It is they who pose a threat to cisgender women’s protection from ‘historical biological discrimination’ – a non-defined term that takes advantage of the association of science (‘biology’) with fact and invokes historical feminist movements without specifying exactly what ‘biological discrimination’ cisgender women have faced that is threatened by the expansion of trans rights (Serano, 2021b). Indeed, as Serano (2016; 2017) argues, the misogyny inherent in discrimination against cis women is also faced by trans women in the form of transmisogyny, where there is a fixation on the genitalia and ‘biology’ of trans women that is used to marginalise them in society, for instance through restricting their access to bathrooms and “women only” spaces.

In examples (114) and (115), also from *The Times*, TERFs are positively and unproblematically represented as part of the feminist community. In (114), De Wahls – an artist championed throughout the piece, whose work was removed from the giftshop at the Royal Academy of the Arts due to her previous transphobic statements – is described as using art for a ‘feminist’ purpose. Her feminism is then represented through references to cisgender

female biology – to ‘fallopian tubes’, ‘ovaries’ and the ‘vagina’ – predicating feminist activism on the presence of such reproductive organs and genitalia and, thus, implicitly excluding trans women (as well as trans and cisgender men, nonbinary people, and cisgender women without ovaries etc.) from inclusion in feminist discourse. De Wahls is also represented as a member of the artist community, who ‘should be [...] freethinking and bold’. By framing trans-exclusion as boldness, even as counterhegemonic ‘freethinking’, and associating it with feminism, *The Times* attempts to assert that De Wahls’ membership in the feminist art community entitles her to enact transphobia without consequence. In (115), Millar – from For Women Scotland – is also represented unproblematically as a member of the feminist community, with ‘supporters’ who greet her as a hero, implying that her position is the consensus within the Scottish feminist community. By aligning trans-exclusion with a homogenised feminism, *The Times* and *The Guardian* can legitimise their creation of a moral panic surrounding trans rights by representing them as a threat to an already victimised group – (cisgender) women (Serano, 2018). This is a sinister appropriation, especially from *The Times*, whose support for feminism is, at best, uneven, with only 7.9 percent of its articles in this dataset being categorised as pro-feminist (4.4.2., Graph 4, p.89).

By representing a rogue faction of feminism as the de facto feminism, newspapers can use feminism’s alignment with a disempowered group to authenticate the “concern” about trans rights. Trans people are identified as ‘folk devils’ who are allocated power in the news media that is entirely disproportionate to any actual power that they have in society (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009, p.28). Contrastingly, cisgender women are represented as a homogenous, powerless group:

(116) ‘FWS said it was disappointed by the ruling and would be consulting its lawyers. "At a time where the endemic nature of the discrimination and violence women experience on the basis of sex is more apparent than ever, it will come as a shock to many women in Scotland that the Scottish government can redefine what it means to be a woman in law, so that it is little more than a name on a utilities bill," it said.’ *Times*, 24 Mar. 2021.

(117) "We will be following with interest what candidates and parties have to say in the upcoming election campaign, and they can certainly expect to be asked whether they support women's rights and the use of single-sex exemptions under the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that women have the right to single-sex spaces such as changing rooms, refuges and rape crisis counselling." *Times*, 24 Mar. 2021.

In the article quoted in examples (116) and (117), For Women Scotland (FWS) is platformed and quoted extensively. They state that ‘the endemic nature of the discrimination and violence women experience on the basis of sex’ is increasingly apparent (116). In case anyone thought that this spokesperson was including trans women in their naming of ‘women’, they further specify the exclusion by claiming that the discrimination that women face is ‘on the basis of sex’, thereby presuming that patriarchal discrimination and violence is motivated purely by a person’s genitalia/gonads/chromosomes (typically not visible to the onlooker) and that transgender, nonbinary and GNC people are not victims of violence and discrimination (which, of course, they are – and at higher rates than cisgender women: Faye, 2021, p.54; Murchison et al, 2019; Olufemi, 2020; Serano, 2017; 2021c). Moreover, FWS also claims a consensus amongst Scottish women, claiming that ‘many Scottish women’ will be ‘shocked’ by the Hate Crime Bill amendment, representing Scottish women as a group in which a great number (indicated through the determiner ‘many’) are opposed to trans rights.

Additionally, the supporting of ‘women’s rights’ (117) is represented as necessitating opposition to trans rights, and the issues of feminism – such as sexual violence – are presupposed to only affect cisgender women. Indeed, reproducing such SR as free direct speech fulfils *The Times*’ wider agenda – by foregrounding positions that blame trans women for affecting women’s access to ‘refuges and rape crisis counselling’, not only does the newspaper suppress the violence committed against trans people, therefore enabling their demonization, but it also uses them as a scapegoat for austerity. It is austerity – implemented by successive Tory governments – that has restricted access to and availability of such services, with refuges across the UK being forced to refuse two thirds of cases due to a lack of funds, not trans women – who themselves face more than twice the amount of domestic abuse than cisgender women and should also be entitled to support – taking up cisgender women’s spaces (Bachmann and Gooch, 2018; Faye, 2021, p.54; Olufemi, 2020). The implication through such “us vs them” (or “real” women vs trans women) framings is that trans women are separate from the global community (and thus represented an existential threat). Trans people are represented, not as victims themselves (41 percent of trans people have experienced a hate crime or incident in the past year – Bachmann and Gooch, 2018, p.7), but as a danger to cisgender women. This is enabled through the appropriation of the mainstream feminist discourse ‘women are victims’ (D3), which is exploited to demonise trans women by playing on the high emotivity of feminist concerns about sexual violence.

### 8.2.3. Essentialising and Naturalisation as ‘Concern’

A key tenet of the supposed “concern” surrounding trans people is this notion that trans rights somehow endanger cisgender women. This myth is grounded in the discourse that ‘trans women are not “real” women’, itself grounded in the myth that biological sex is the key determiner of gender identity, both of which are presupposed to be binary (Ainsworth, 2015; Fiennes, 2019, pp.15-18; Serano, 2017). TD1 articles all have interdiscursivity with this discourse, and mobilise it in order to denaturalise trans womanhood and authenticate cisgender women’s alleged victimhood at the hands of trans women, thereby justifying the disproportionate ‘concern’ over trans identity on which these articles are supposedly based.

A crucial way that essentialism is reproduced in TD1 texts is through SR of transphobic “feminists”, who use this argument to hold up their contradictory feminist and transphobic identity. Below, are some examples of SR that reproduce essentialist arguments about sex and gender:

- (118) ‘A woman who lost her job after tweeting that men cannot change their biological sex has won her appeal against an employment tribunal.’ *Independent*, 10 June 2021.
- (119) ‘Forstater lost her job at the Centre for Global Development after publicly sharing her belief that all humans have a sex, and whether male or female, that sex cannot change. Those who identify or live as the other sex should be respected and treated with dignity, she said, but the basic facts of biology cannot be pretended away.’ *Times*, 12 June 2021.

Example (118) is taken from the opening of an *Independent* article on the Forstater case. The deeply problematic premise of Forstater’s Twitter statement – that transgender women do not exist (and therefore do not deserve human rights) – is backgrounded. Indeed, in the representation of the tweet, transgender women are defined as ‘men’ and changing sex is deemed impossible, despite the fact that people can and do change and alter biological sex characteristics, through gender reassignment surgery, hysterectomies, mastectomies, hormone injections and so on (Faye, 2021; Fiennes, 2019; Serano, 2017). In example (119), about the same case but from *The Times*, Forstater’s transphobia is once again represented as harmless. It is paraphrased as a declaration that ‘all humans have a sex’ and that ‘sex cannot change’. These statements are, indeed, not entirely factually correct but are presented in declarative form under the presupposition that they are. The specification that sex is not binary is

suppressed in favour of this exaggerated, overly-simplistic framing. Both articles, from different newspapers, represent the declaration made in the tweet as an axiom, narratively reporting the speech act by embedding it within their own report (Semino and Short, 2004). Forstater herself becomes innocent through such paraphrasing as her position is represented within the informative and “objective” register of a news report. Of course, trans rights activists are not attempting to assert that sex is non-existent, and Forstater was not merely stating established ‘facts of biology’, but was in fact denying the existence of trans womanhood by claiming that assigned sex at birth determines one’s gender identity and is immutable. By foregrounding biological sex, which is hegemonic in society due to the perception that it is objectively binary, *The Times* and *The Independent* represent transphobia as merely the assertion of reality. This functions to denaturalise trans identity and thereby justify its illegitimation in society. This, in turn, authorises the belief that trans people do not, or ‘cannot’, really exist in their gender.

Moreover, biological essentialism is used in order to scaremonger readers about trans identity through the invocation of the spectre of sexual violence. In order to feed the moral panic surrounding trans rights, broadsheets exaggerate figures and cases that represent trans women as dangerous and deviant through interdiscursivity with D3:

(120) ‘Trans inmates ‘a danger to women’; Official policy of placing transgender criminals in female jails is challenged in High Court by prisoner.’ *Telegraph*, 3 Mar. 2021.

(121) ‘FDJ’s lawyers claim that J has a gender recognition certificate - which is not admitted by the MoJ. As a result, they are arguing that the Government’s policy of allocating trans inmates to prisons based on their declared gender identity unlawfully discriminates against women.’ *Telegraph*, 3 Mar. 2021.

The headline of an article published in *The Times* (120) reveals one of the key preoccupations of the so-called “trans debate”: the myth that transgender women placed in women’s prisons sexually assault cisgender women prisoners (c.f. Faye, 2021). This further reveals the political agenda behind the so called “trans debate” as, once again, *The Times* claims concern over an area they typically do not pay attention to the prison industrial complex and, as the quantitative data shows, sexual violence (refer back to [4.4.1.2.](#), Graph 2, p.83). In this headline, we once again see the label ‘women’ excluding trans women, and the two

apparently separate categories being represented as in direct opposition to one another, with ‘trans inmates’ being the social actors whose actions harm the passivated ‘women’ prisoners.

In (121), the article goes on to detail a case in which a cisgender woman prisoner (FDJ) claims that she was sexually assaulted by a trans woman prisoner (J). I do not intend to diminish the suffering of FDJ as a victim of sexual assault here, but merely to expose how her case is used in order to justify anti-trans discrimination rather than target sexual violence. A binary is created that distinguishes trans women from “real” women by focusing on J’s ‘gender recognition certificate’. J’s gender is represented as based on a ‘certificate’ – a piece of paper – whilst the ‘women’ that they are allegedly harming have their gender identity presupposed to be inherent. This denaturalises trans identity by representing it as based on a document rather than any essential identity. J’s alleged essential “manhood” can thus be presumed based on this distinction. FDJ’s case is then used to claim that *all* trans women inmates are a danger to cisgender women – neglecting the fact that the overwhelming majority of sexual assault that is committed in women’s prison is by cisgender women, and that trans people are actually far more likely to be a victim of sexual assault in prisons than cisgender inmates (Faye, 2021, p.180; Keen, 2020; Parsons, 2020; D. Shaw, 2020).

*The Times* uses this highly emotive issue, with its feminist associations, to disproportionately represent trans people as dangerous. This is a transmisogynistic stance that reveals the harmful effects of essentialism. It presupposes that (cisgender) men are predisposed to violence, particularly sexual violence, and that (cisgender) women are predisposed to vulnerability and weakness (Fiennes, 2019, p.15; Serano 2016; 2021c). Patterns of behaviour are seen as natural and essential (thus, unchangeable) as opposed to a result of patriarchal socialisation. By this logic, transgender women, because they have or have had a penis and testes, will always be predisposed to sexual violence and, therefore, place cisgender women at risk. This conveniently ignores the fact that cisgender men and cisgender women can, and do, coexist peacefully and that trans women are many times more likely to be the victims of violence than its perpetrators (Bachman and Gooch, 2018; James et al, 2016; Faye, 2021, p.174; Fiennes, 2019, p.30; Murchison et al, 2019).

Indeed, both *The Times* and *The Telegraph* report on cases highlighting ‘concern’ around transgender rights on the basis of this transmisogynist myth that trans women in particular pose a threat of sexual violence to cisgender women, despite both newspapers

showing dismal coverage of sexual violence overall (4.4.1.2.). Below are some examples of how this “concern” is justified in two articles on the Scottish legal reform:

- (122) ‘Opponents claim the legislation would put women at risk from predatory men, who could take advantage of the lack of checks to gain access to "safe spaces" like female lavatories and hospital wards.’ *Telegraph*, 19 Sept. 2020.
- (123) ‘Rape suspects can choose to self-identify as female.’ *Times*. 17 April 2021.
- (124) ‘Police Scotland said that if a rape or attempted rape was perpetrated by a male who self-identifies as a woman ... the male who self-identifies as a woman would be expected to be recorded as a female on relevant police systems.’ *Times*, 17 April 2021.

In example (122), from *The Telegraph*, we see the exclusion of trans women from the category ‘women’. Indeed, here, the newspaper talks only about ‘women’ and ‘predatory men’. This asymmetrical categorical pair (in which men are the predators and thus the dominating agents and women are passive victims) implicitly suggests that trans women *are* predatory men, which functions to denaturalise trans womanhood and construct trans people as ‘folk devils’ and (sexual) deviants by drawing on feminist discourses of female victimhood (i.e. D3). Of course, the fact that it is incredibly rare that a cisgender man claims a transgender identity to access women-only places is suppressed (James et al, 2016; Serano, 2021).

In example (123), another *Times*’ headline, the spectre of rape is invoked to draw on a highly emotive issue in order to demonise the trans community. The article, along with *The Telegraph* article (122), claims that new legislation will mean that sexually predatory men can merely state that they are women to be housed in women’s prisons, backgrounding the fact that the Ministry of Justice has a rigorous process for vetting prisoners (Faye, 2021, pp.176-180; D. Shaw, 2020). Moreover, such essentialist binaries effectively authenticate male sexual violence and naturalise female victimhood, and so the feminist movement for change is made redundant. Furthermore, these are two newspapers that refused to refer to sexual violence when discussing the Everard case as ‘male violence’, as *The Guardian* did (example 94, 7.1.2.1., p.168). This once again suggests that the representation of sexual violence as a male issue is only made in order to denaturalise and other trans womanhood. Indeed, as Serano (2021c) explains, the “sexual predator” trope is a general tactic used to stigmatise marginalised groups, such as gay people in the 1970s and 1980s. It uses highly



emotive issues, such as rape, to stir up panic that actually trivialises the issue of sexual violence by using it to target a minority group rather than actually addressing the group in which it is most common (cisgender men). Trans rights, such as legal recognition of gender identity, are sensationalised in such narratives, which scaremonger readers by representing such rights as enabling the endangerment of (cisgender) women.

#### 8.2.4. Activation as ‘Hostility’

Whilst TD1 does not reduce trans people to passive objects, it instead negatively represents and exaggerates their agency as hostile and threatening. Indeed, it depends to the reproduction of the age-old essentialist trope often found in D3, that (cisgender) women are passive and, therefore, vulnerable. This reproduces the second of Goode and Ben-Yehuda’s (2009, p.38) elements of a moral panic: ‘hostility’ – perceptions of the out-group as hostile to the in-group.

As seen above, trans people are represented as sexual predators and deviants, and as lobbying according to a dangerous “trans agenda”. More examples are below:

- (125) ‘Speaking on the first day of the two-day remote hearing, Karon Monaghan QC, representing FDJ, told the court that trans inmates account for one per cent of the population of women's prisons, yet "they are responsible for 5.6 per cent of sexual assaults. // "There's a disproportionality," she said, adding that trans inmates are "more likely to be committing sexual assaults in the prison estate."’ *Telegraph*, 3 Mar. 2021.

This article from *The Telegraph* is about the FDJ case also reported by *The Times* (120-121). Indirect speech of FDJ’s lawyer, Monaghan, is represented and gives statistics apparently showing that transgender women are dangerous. Monaghan is quoted giving the above statistics authoritatively, in a high register that authorises her position, to declare that ‘trans inmates are “more likely to be committing sexual assaults in the prison estate”’. The mediation of this SR, that is embedded into the reporter’s own text, enhances the authorisation of these figures by merging them with the informative register of a news report. According to Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009, p.44), in order to justify the disproportionate concern of a moral panic – in this case, over transgender prisoners (particularly women) – figures are often exaggerated and even fabricated. Throughout the article by *The Telegraph*, neither the paper nor Monaghan state where she has got her figures from. Before I get to problematising these figures, let’s first address the obvious. If under six percent of sexual

assaults occurring in women's prisons are by transgender women, then 94 percent of assaults are committed by cisgender women. Yet, throughout my data collection period, I did not come across a single article showing any concern about the cisgender women being sexually assaulted by other cisgender women in prison. This is similar to the lack of coverage of so-called 'simple rape' cases (Estrich, 1987) in the press. Even though 90 percent of rapes are perpetrated by someone known to the victim, they are far less likely to be reported on in the news and prosecuted than aggravated rape by a stranger (Centre for Women's Justice et al, 2020). This means that the impression society has of rape is that it is rare, overtly violent, and committed by deviant strangers, thus enabling the maintenance of patriarchy by normalising the majority of rape through erasure ([Chapter Seven](#)). Likewise, by only reporting on alleged sexual assault cases committed by trans prisoners, and suppressing the amount committed by cisgender prisoners, the latter sexual violence is rendered invisible, and thus acceptable, in order to exaggerate the threat of trans people and represent them as sexually deviant.

Moreover, both *The Telegraph* and Monaghan conveniently suppress the fact that trans prisoners are sexually assaulted at a higher rate than cisgender prisoners (both men and women) and are far more likely to be the victim than the perpetrator. In 2019, eleven trans women were sexually assaulted whilst housed in male prisons, whilst five of the 122 sexual assaults committed across prisons in England and Wales that year were committed by a trans inmate (Faye, 2021, p.180; Keen, 2020; Parsons, 2020; D. Shaw, 2020). Hence, Monaghan's statistics appear to be incorrect. If there were 122 sexual assaults in prisons in 2019, and five were committed by a trans prisoner, then the that figure Monaghan cites, that trans inmates are responsible for 5.6 percent of sexual assaults, is incorrect – it is actually 4.1 percent. This means that 96 percent of assaults are carried out by cisgender prisoners. The fact that the figures cited in *The Telegraph* are incorrect demonstrates the willingness of supposedly respectable newspapers to include unverified and unreliable statistics and information in their articles, particularly on trans people. This misinformation – the citing of inaccurate figures – makes transgender women prisoners seem more dangerous than they are, in order to make trans people into villains, rather than victims. Newspapers like *The Telegraph* and *The Times* appear not to be concerned about sexual violence when it is cisgender people assaulting transgender people, or when it is cisgender men sexually assaulting cisgender men, or cisgender women assaulting cisgender women – indeed, so much for their claims to feminist concern here, they are largely unconcerned about cisgender men sexually assaulting cisgender women. This reveals the disproportionality that Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2009)

state is crucial to a moral panic: transgender sexual violence is disproportionately covered compared to the far higher figures of sexual violence amongst the cisgender population.

It is not just sexual violence that is used to demonise trans people, trans activism – the fight for trans rights – is also represented as hostile and threatening:

- (126) ‘Further concerns are being raised by medics, including Dr David Bell, who blew the whistle on practices at the NHS Tavistock clinic. He warned that the law could be a Trojan horse for trans activists to put pressure on clinicians.’ *Telegraph*, 6 May 2021.
- (127) ‘Bailey, who is the daughter of Jamaican immigrants and was called to the Bar in 2001, said that "new trans activism operated a crude but effective system of punishment and reward: agree with every demand of the trans lobby and be safe; object and face vilification, abuse, boycott, character assassination and cancellation.”’ *Times*, 2 June 2021.
- (128) ‘Those who question trans activism are already subject to persistent harassment and frequently targeted at work.’ *Times*, 12 June 2021.
- (129) ‘Anatomy of a cancellation by the culture Stasi; The Royal Academy’s decision to ban an artist’s work over her views should be a test case for anti-discrimination laws.’ *Times*, 17 June 2021.
- (130) ‘The response was immediate and merciless. She was driven from her Soho Theatre salon.’ *Times*, 17 June 2021.

In the above examples, trans activists are represented as warmongering, unreasonable and totalitarian social actors. They are represented as warriors tricking innocent society into accepting their demands (the ‘trojan horse’ metaphor in 126), as threatening people’s ‘safety’ (127-128), and effectively holding innocent people hostage with the threat of ‘vilification, abuse’ and ‘character assassination’ (127). Trans activists are apparently ‘harassing’ people at work (128), yet the harassment that they face in all aspects of society, including at work, is suppressed (Bachmann and Gooch, 2018, p.7). It is worth noting that none of these articles actually explain what it is that trans activists are ‘demanding’. Instead, focus is placed on characterising them as dangerously, but abstractly, “woke”. *The Times*, in particular, uses the “trans debate” in order to further a far-right agenda – that is, to further the Tory “war on woke”, in which progressive politics is framed as an existential threat to traditional, family values (Kramsch, 2020; McIntosh, 2020; Sierra and Shrikant, 2020; Snyder, 2017; Wodak,

2021). *The Times* mentions so-called “cancel culture” in examples (127) and (129), characterising trans activists as the ‘cancellation Stasi’ (129). The Stasi were the communist secret police who terrorised the East German population during the Cold War. This is an egregious exaggeration – *The Times* claims to be concerned with the alleged repression of freedom of speech, and yet it trivialises actual human rights violations by comparing contemporary trans activists to the Stasi. This association of trans activism and progressive politics with totalitarianism – involving ‘denouncing’ and ‘cancelling’ people (similar to purges), repressing freedom of speech, and being ‘merciless’ (130) – transforms human rights into an ideological agenda. That this agenda is associated with communism in the right-wing press is no coincidence – it fulfils the right-wing agenda to illegitimate left-wing, progressive politics that threaten the political right’s power and was also mobilised against Sturgeon (6.2.3.).

The symbol of this supposed trans totalitarianism in the eyes of the British press has become the country’s largest LGBTQ+ rights charity, Stonewall:

- (131) ‘Stonewall uses equality index to “bully bosses and silence dissent.”’ *Times*, 26 June 2021.
- (132) ‘It is understood that companies and public bodies pay Stonewall at least £2,500 a year to be part of the scheme and that it has raised more than £3.2 million in 2019 on the back of the diversity champions and other schemes.’ *Times*, 2 June 2021.
- (133) ‘Stonewall is already under fire for ordering public bodies to banish the word “mother” from their maternity policies and replace it with “birthing parent” or “pregnant employee” to boost scores.’ *Times*, 26 June 2021.
- (134) ‘In a fundraising campaign to support her legal action, Bailey said: “This was an attempt by Stonewall to intimidate and silence me and others critical of what we see as its malign influence in British life: workplaces, schools, universities, the police, the judiciary, the Crown Prosecution Service and all government departments.”’ *Times*, 2 June 2021.

In the above examples from *The Times*, Stonewall is represented as a ‘bully’ that represses free speech by ‘silenc[ing] dissent’ (131, 134), it is implied that it is corrupt (in example 132, the implication is that Stonewall is making millions ‘on the back of’ its equality schemes, without stating where this money goes in the registered charity, implying that Stonewall is a mere money-making scheme), and that it ‘order[s]’, ‘banishes’ (133) and intimidates people

(134) – all actions associated with totalitarian or aggressive power. None of Stonewall’s actual work is reported on, nor are the equality index or diversity schemes mentioned in examples (131) and (132) defined. Stonewall’s *guidelines* for more inclusive language at work – that by no means exclude cisgender women, but aim to expand our language so that all people who give birth (trans men and nonbinary people can, and do, give birth) are included – are represented as an extremist erasure of cisgender women (133). This representation of Stonewall as a Stasi of its own functions to illegitimate the entire trans rights movement, as Stonewall becomes a synecdoche for trans rights as a whole. Indeed, the demonization of Stonewall by the British broadsheets is a harrowing example of how moral panics stoked by the press function to illegitimate certain groups in society, as the British government recently withdrew itself from Stonewall’s equality index schemes and urged other organisations that were a part of it to leave too (Somerville, 2021). This sets a dangerous precedent which allows corporations to reject inclusivity in the workplace and justify prejudice, and even outright discrimination.

#### **8.2.5. Summary**

The linguistic strategies explained above heavily align with Goode and Ben-Yehuda’s (2009) outline of the key features of socially-constructed moral panics – also applied to explain the fixation on the so-called “transgender issue” by Shon Faye (2021, p.36). For instance, by foregrounding the SR of transphobic “feminists”, newspapers can give the impression of having a genuine ‘concern’ for cisgender women. This constructs cis people as the in-group giving the impression of a consensus that “we” are under attack from “them” and implying that feminism is universally trans-exclusionary. This ensures that conceiving of trans femininity as dangerous is seen as the “common sense” response. Such essentialising, by categorising womanhood as predicated solely on the (mis)conception of sex as binary and immutable, denaturalises trans womanhood and feeds into the representation of trans femininity as deviant and deceptive. This is furthered through activation, in which trans people are represented as ‘folk devils’, as deviant and ‘hostile’ to the in-group of society. All of this has the effect of justifying the prejudiced calls of these articles for action that is wildly disproportionate to any real “threat” that trans people present (Faye, 2021, p.36; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009, p.40).

Additionally, the moral panic surrounding trans identity that the broadsheets are feeding functions to maintain hegemony. The assumption underlying all of the articles explored above is that gender is determined by sex, which is binary and inherent, and that

cisgender women are weak, passive victims of cisgender men, who are powerful and predatory. This implies that sexual violence by cisgender men is natural and that women's subordinate position in society is also natural (Serano, 2016; 2021a.). Consequently, though superficially claiming feminism, the illegitimation of trans femininity ultimately provides a gateway to the maintenance of patriarchy. The “feminists” quoted throughout TD1 articles may have been sucked into believing that trans femininity presents a threat to them by the moral panic or they may be cynical opportunists, leveraging their hegemonic (cisgender, white, middle-upper class) femininity in order to subordinate other women and gain privilege and power through patriarchy (Lewis, 2019). But it is the British broadsheet press that freely platforms their views and uses them to shape the public discourse on transgender rights, exploiting claims to feminism in order to affect concern for (cisgender) women that effectively divides the feminist movement and scapegoats transgender people for crises generated by the government.

### **8.3. Trans Rights Are Under Threat**

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, this discourse functions to highlight anti-trans discrimination and is thus sympathetic to trans rights. Trans voices are foregrounded, authenticating trans identity by ensuring that trans people can represent their own experience of the “transgender issue” (Faye, 2021). Voices of experts in such “issues”, such as medical professionals and workers from LGBTQ+ organisations, are also foregrounded to further authenticate and authorise the negative impact of discrimination. The voices of the detractors, so frequently foregrounded in TD1 articles, are backgrounded. Additionally, contextual detail in the form of statistics and figures, showing the negative impact of discrimination through assimilation, frames such voices. Hence, the consensus manufactured is that trans people face discrimination and prejudice, as opposed to that there is an “issue” surrounding the impact of trans rights on *others*.

Below, using examples from *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, I explore how speech representation and contextual information work to humanise and materialise the negative impact of the threat to trans rights and, therefore, encourage sympathy from readers.

#### **8.3.1. Speech Representation**

In TD2, SR of trans subjects themselves is less central than in the ‘trans people are people too’ discourse (see Montiel McCann, 2022), but it is still evident. This is because it is vital for any article wishing to positively, or at least sympathetically, represent trans identity to

commit to actually including trans voices themselves – something that is noticeably absent from the British broadsheets on the whole, but most obviously from articles in *The Times*. By including SR of trans people, the impact of the illegitimation of trans identity (the legislative and judicial undermining of trans people’s rights) is humanised.

In TD2 articles, SR is used to materialise the discrimination that trans people face by showing the harmful impact that it has through personal experience narration (Georgakopoulou, 1997):

(135) "It's the whole uncertainty of everything at every moment, all the time right now," they said. "Everything just feels really hopeless. And this is another thing to just toss on everybody." *Guardian*, 27 Oct. 2020.

(136) ‘In a statement before the court at the hearing earlier in March, XY, who has fully transitioned socially and changed her name via deed poll, described the prospect of beginning male puberty as "very distressing."’ *Independent*, 26 March 2021.

(137) ‘The 15-year-old said she would have been "devastated" to develop "any additional male characteristics", explaining that she discussed everything with her parents who have been "hugely supportive and understanding"’. *Independent*, 26 March 2021.

The above examples are from two articles that report on how anti-trans discrimination is being implemented (135) or challenged in law (136-137). *The Guardian’s* article (135) reports on how Republican legislatures in the USA are attempting to roll back the Affordable Care Act (also known as ‘Obamacare’) and how this negatively impacts trans people’s access to healthcare. An article in *The Independent* (136-137) reports on a High Court ruling in the UK that has declared that parents can consent to their children receiving puberty blockers as part of gender-affirming healthcare. The report states that this ruling challenged (in part) an earlier ruling by the High Court that declared that children under-sixteen could not consent to be given puberty blockers. By declaring that their parents could consent on their behalf, the article argues that many of the ‘practical effects’ of the earlier ruling are reversed (though, the article does not address the issue of trans children who do not have sympathetic guardians – Bachmann and Gooch, 2018, p.15). In both articles, the voices of trans people affected by legislature on trans rights demonstrate the negative impact that restricting access to healthcare has on trans lives.

However, each article uses SR to different degrees. In *The Guardian* (135), a trans nonbinary speaker (Jiminez) is represented through direct speech as they are shown explaining their feelings of hopelessness as trans rights come under increasing attack from Republicans (Semino and Short, 2004). In their extended SR, Jiminez responds to the threat to trans rights with emotive language by referring to their feelings, further underscored with intensifiers such as ‘whole’, ‘really’ and ‘all the time’. In (136) and (137), *The Independent* includes SR of the 15-year-old girl (known only as ‘XY’ for legal reasons) whose case led to the ruling that her parents could consent to puberty blockers on her behalf. SR from XY is heavily mediated, however, and is only included in the form of indirect speech (*ibid.*). The article first explains that XY has ‘socially transitioned’ – legitimising her trans girlhood by implying that she is performing (hegemonic) femininity through socially-approved means (i.e. by having a female name and presumably presenting herself in “feminine” ways). The article then embeds a quote from XY to describe her emotions at, what the report describes as, ‘the prospect of beginning male puberty’. XY’s emotive language is quoted directly, describing this prospect as ‘very distressing’ (136) and ‘devastating’ (137), to authenticate the report’s own claims that refusing puberty blockers to teens is harmful. Both articles, therefore, use SR to materialise and dramatize the suffering caused to trans people in the restriction of their rights, but show differing levels of involvement (Georgakopoulou, 1997, pp.124-144). *The Guardian* reproduce direct speech from Jiminez without much mediation, giving them the space to represent their own narrative, in which they represent the reported threat to trans rights as part of a relentless assault (‘another thing’ being ‘toss[ed] at everybody’). On the other hand, *The Independent* uses indirect speech representation that is heavily mediated, using XY’s voice to enhance the immediacy and drama of their own report about a single threat to trans rights.

Furthermore, in TD2 articles, SR of authorised voices (such as experts in LGBTQ+ human rights, lawyers and medical professionals) is just as important as that from trans people. This is because, as this discourse is primarily concerned with trans *rights*, articles must challenge the authorisation of anti-trans discrimination. To do this, they use voices whose own authorisation undermines and challenges that of the state:

- (138) ‘The ban prohibits doctors from providing gender-affirming hormone treatment, puberty blockers or surgery to anyone under 18 years old, or from referring them to other providers for the treatment. The treatments are part of a gradual process



that can vastly improve young people's mental health, and can be life-saving, experts say.' *Guardian*, 7 April 2021.

(139) "This legislation perpetuates the very things we know are harmful to trans youth," said Dr Robert Garofalo, the division head of adolescent and young adult medicine at Lurie Children's hospital in Chicago, speaking on a press conference call held by the Human Rights Campaign.' *Guardian*, 7 April 2021.

The examples above are from an article published in *The Guardian* on trans healthcare in the USA. In this case, the newspaper reports that Arkansas has become the first state to ban young people from accessing gender-affirming healthcare, and centres the voices of medical professionals. In (138), the voices of 'experts' are used to narratively frame the treatments given to trans youth, such as puberty blockers, as 'part of a gradual process that can vastly improve young people's mental health.' By using the adverb 'gradual' to describe the treatment process, the text undermines anti-trans arguments which claim that it is dangerous to provide medical treatment for trans children (Faye, 2021, p.77). Moreover, by using the adverb 'vastly' to describe the benefit of this treatment, the positives are shown to outweigh any negatives. Characterising the banned treatments positively, through the reported speech of 'experts', authorises such treatments and thus problematises the bans outlined in the first sentence. In (139), the voice of a medical expert is quoted directly to authorise the argument that restricting trans healthcare is 'harmful'. Dr Garofalo states that 'we know [such legislation is] harmful to trans youth.' This declarative statement reflects the authorisation of the doctor's voice: their expertise gives them access to knowledge and factual information that enables them to make such statements, which can then be taken as valid and reliable. Additionally, that the SR is of direct speech, unmediated by the journalist, demonstrates that their authority need not be bolstered by interventions from the text, unlike in *The Independent* article about XY discussed above (Georgakopoulou, 1997; Semino and Short, 2004). Through the SR of trans people, the threat to trans rights is authenticated. The inclusion of the authorised voices of experts then legitimates this speech – demonstrating that trans people's claims to suffering are real and widespread. However, this also reveals how trans voices alone are not seen as authorised – their claims to suffering must be supported by figures who are viewed as socially legitimate or by mediation from the journalist's own (authorised) voice, consequently exposing the subordinate position of trans identity in society.

### 8.3.2. Contextual Information: Statistics and Figures

In addition, TD2 articles use statistics and figures to contextualise trans rights as being under threat. This also functions as assimilation – statistics and figures, as well as studies and facts, show that the threat to trans rights causes suffering to the trans community as a group, not just individuals. Therefore, suffering becomes a shared experience for trans people that is the result of the undermining of their human rights.

Below, are statistics and figures from *The Guardian*'s article on the Trump administration's threat to trans healthcare discussed earlier (135), which function to demonstrate the threat to the trans *community*:

(140) 'People with untreated gender dysphoria often deal with high rates of suicidal ideation. The 2015 USTS found that 41% of respondents reported having attempted suicide at least once in their lifetimes, with 7.3% reporting attempts within the last year.' *Guardian*, 27 Oct. 2020.

Example (140) uses statistics, from a named source (demonstrating verifiability and, thus, validity and reliability), to represent trans people as the negative beneficiaries of social and political discrimination. By using shocking statistics, and clearly labelling their source, *The Guardian* provides 'measurable evidence for the size and scale' of anti-trans discrimination that foregrounds its negative and harmful impact on trans lives (Lampropoulou, 2018). Such figures function to legitimise the claims to suffering of trans people (as shown in examples 135-137) and, therefore, negatively evaluate discrimination by showing it to be victimising a significant proportion of a community and leaving them vulnerable. However, in such statistics, trans people are objectified and medicalised as 'people with untreated gender dysphoria', associating trans identity with illness (Hines, 2010), and are rendered passive – they are negatively impacted by these threats to their rights, but their agency in resistance (that is well documented: Faye, 2021; Olufemi, 2020; Serano, 2016; 2018; 2021b.; 2021c.) is backgrounded. This could have a negative impact on the public image of trans people by potentially rendering them as weak and in need of "saving".

Furthermore, *The Guardian* published an article on 13 May 2021 reporting on the case of two trans women who had been imprisoned in Cameroon for 'attempting homosexuality'. To establish the context of the threat to LGBTQ+ rights in the country, *The Guardian* states:

(141) ‘Last May, 53 people were arrested in raids on groups providing HIV and Aids prevention and treatment, with some victims reporting having been beaten and subjected to forced "anal examinations".’

(142) ‘Between February and April there were at least 24 incidents where Cameroonian security forces arbitrarily arrested, beat or threatened people for alleged consensual same-sex conduct or gender nonconformity, Ghoshal said.’

By giving specific details of state-sanctioned brutality against the LGBTQ+ community, *The Guardian* reifies the threat to the trans community through case studies of police brutality. Moreover, the examples above contextualise the discrimination committed against the two trans women at the centre of the article as part of a wider assault on the LGBTQ+ community in Cameroon. Example (141) details a raid on ‘groups providing HIV and Aids prevention treatment’ – presumably because of the association between HIV and Aids and the LGBTQ+ community – and example (142) details brutality committed against people for ‘same-sex conduct’ (i.e. homosexuality) ‘or gender nonconformity’. Thus, gender and sexuality are intertwined in the representation of the Cameroonian authorities’ targeting of trans rights, which is represented as the result of the conflation of homosexuality and transgender identity. It is reported that the two imprisoned trans women are targeted for ‘attempting homosexuality’, with the authorities represented as not acknowledging their trans identity and instead, presumably, erasing their gender identity and imposing the hegemonic sex-based binary onto the women, identifying them as cisgender gay men. Through the inclusion of these details, and how they are framed, *The Guardian* demonstrates that anti-trans discrimination is part and parcel with homophobic discrimination in Cameroon. This ensures adequation – showing that lesbian, gay, bisexual and other non-heterosexual identities are under attack as well as trans identity – concretising the threat of the Cameroonian authorities to anyone not performing hegemonic gender identities and sexuality.

### **8.3.3. Summary**

TD2 is a discourse that centres on rights – the legal entitlement of people to certain provisions and protections from the state – and therefore focuses on exposing and undermining the illegitimation of trans people in wider society. The inclusion of SR of experts supports trans people’s own assertions of the suffering caused when their access to healthcare and other human rights are revoked, and when they are persecuted by forces of the state (such as the police). Crucial to this discourse is the demonstration of how the trans *community* is affected, as this demonstrates the discriminatory nature of the threat to their

rights. Rather than targeting an individual, when the state targets a *category* of people (especially a marginalised group) this reflects discrimination – the unjust targeting of people based on a prejudice. TD2 articles, therefore, are largely informative. They seek to inform the reader of the threat to trans rights and to materialise this threat through SR and contextual information, representing trans people as victims and, therefore, encouraging sympathy from the reader.

However, this also reduces trans people to the sum of their suffering, and represents them as passive, negative beneficiaries rather than dynamic social actors. Moreover, it is significant that all but one of the articles quoted above have an international focus, reporting on the threat to trans rights in the USA and Cameroon. Despite the threat to trans healthcare in the UK (demonstrated by *The Independent's* article on XY's case), *The Guardian*, in particular, foregrounds other countries, giving the impression that trans rights are largely under threat *elsewhere* – though, evidentially, trans rights are under imminent threat in the UK (as demonstrated by the dominance of TD1 in the dataset). This separates the “gender critical” attacks on trans identity/rights in the UK from discrimination, as the broadsheets reproducing TD2 ignore the pervasive *local* challenges to trans rights (in Scotland, for instance) that so dominate TD1 articles. This is why I have labelled this discourse a sympathetic, rather than positive, discursive representation. Though the aim of these articles is to highlight the discrimination that trans people face and encourage sympathy, they do not necessarily positively represent trans people as agentive, socially engaged, or able to experience anything beyond suffering.

Finally, there is also the implicit reproduction of hegemony within this discourse. For instance, in *The Independent's* legitimisation of XY's gender identity based on the fact that she has 'socially transitioned' (31), and thus conformed to hegemonic feminine gender expression. Her girlhood is not presupposed as inherent (as in the hegemonic conception of binary gender identity), showing subtle interdiscursivity with TD4, as XY is distinguished from cisgender, or “real”, girls who do not have to prove their gender identity socially. Indeed, this mirrors the government's own stance on gender identity through the GRA (2004), which dictates that a person must have lived for two years in their gender (i.e. performing the “appropriate” – or hegemonic – practices associated with masculinity/femininity) in order to legally transition (Hines, 2010). Indeed, SR from trans people themselves does not dominate these texts and is instead heavily mediated by either the journalist (as in the report on XY's case) or through the voices of experts (in *The Guardian*,

for example). This furthers the assumption that trans identity and experiences must be authorised through medicalisation or pathologizing practices (such as psychological understandings of gender dysphoria), again reflecting the terms of the GRA that dictate that trans identity must conform to hegemonic (binary) understandings of gender.

#### **8.4. Conclusion: Trans Representation in the Broadsheets**

The broadsheets use various linguistic strategies to make their cases for or against the discrimination of trans people in the UK. TD2 articles are sympathetic to trans identity and function to humanise the issue and undermine discrimination. They achieve this by informing readers about the impact of such discrimination and by foregrounding the voices of trans people, who are then able to establish and authenticate the negative impact of discrimination on the trans community. On the other hand, TD1 is reproduced through the backgrounding of trans voices and the foregrounding of SR of so-called “feminists”, denaturalising transgender womanhood, and representing trans agency as a threat to the rights of cisgender women and the public as a whole. *The Times*, in particular, achieves this through the appropriation of feminism and the deployment of the “freedom of speech argument”.

The “freedom of speech argument”, as it is mobilised by right-wing politicians and commentators, is grounded in an ‘intentional misconception’ of language and symbolic power (Kramsch 2020; Montiel McCann, 2022, p.22). The right claim that the progressives on the left (typical supporters of politically correct, or ‘PC’, language) are restricting *their* rights, presupposing that the left has symbolic power and that the right does not (van Dijk 1991, 203; Kramsch 2020; Montiel McCann, 2022, p.22; Serano, 2018). Of course, in the UK, the political right does not lack power – the right-wing Tories have a huge parliamentary majority and have been in power for over twelve years (Montiel McCann, 2022, p.22). Another presupposition of the freedom of speech argument is that language is not a social act, but merely a reflection of a person’s opinions, thereby justifying transphobia by representing hate speech as merely ‘concerns’ (111), ‘views’ (113) and ‘discussions’ (112). Language is, of course, a social act – we *do* things with language. Temple (2008, p.149) offers the scenario of shouting ‘fire!’ in a crowded theatre to expose this misconception. One *can* certainly utter ‘fire!’ in this context, but that does not mean that they will not be punished (i.e. with a fine) for disrupting a performance and creating a panic that could potentially cause harm (i.e. causing a stampede). Yet, TD1 articles presuppose that transphobic language does not enact harm. To justify this, moralising arguments are appropriated but voided of their context: freedom of speech is appropriated from human rights discourse, and feminism is appropriated

in order to (re)present trans people as villains, rather than victims (Montiel McCann, 2022, p.22).

The cynical appropriation of feminism that is so central to TD1 is enabled only through the categorisation of “women” according to hegemonic femininity, in which only cisgender women count as “real”, authentic women (and citizens), and are thus perceived to be more entitled to civil and human rights than trans women (*ibid*, p.23). However, TD2 also reproduces hegemonic femininity. For example, this discourse does not situate the gender discrimination that trans people face within feminist discourse. Instead, articles objectify trans people by representing them through figures and statistics, or as passive victims. Indeed, this passivation is comparable to that which is often reproduced through D3, which feminists have long fought against, that represent women as vulnerable, weak and in need of “saving” – thus, as inherently subordinate. In fact, femininity itself is not so much at the foreground of these sympathetic articles, but transness as a separate, even distant, category. Trans women are sympathetically represented (as in the report on XY’s case), but their femininity is subordinated to cis femininity. That D3 is not inclusive of trans women, and that TD2 does not encompass the ways that threats to trans rights intersect with threats to *all* women’s rights, leaves trans femininity distinguished from the cisgender norm of hegemonic femininity, excluding it from mainstream representations of feminism and thereby normalising TERF ideology (Faye, 2021; Olufemi, 2020; Serano, 2016).

Finally, an interesting pattern emerged in the analysis in this chapter. TD2 articles are almost entirely focused on international cases of discrimination. On the other hand, TD1 articles were largely focused on the UK, particularly on Scotland – a nation in the UK which is planning to reform its GRA and to amend its Hate Crime Bill to be more trans-inclusive. The negative coverage of trans rights in Scotland demonstrates the British press’ revolt at the potential for the local authorisation of trans identity. Moreover, the majority of these articles were written in *The Times* – a newspaper that also has a predominantly negative position on Scotland’s left-leaning First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon (refer back to [Chapter Six](#)). *The Times* relentlessly presents Scotland’s Hate Crime Bill amendment as an authoritarian, extremist threat to society – as it also represents Sturgeon’s COVID-19 precautions. This is not a coincidence. In fact, it reveals that the right-wing press in particular are using the moral panic surrounding trans rights to stoke up fear over progressive politics more broadly. The impression given by the coverage *across* the broadsheets is that trans rights are indeed an issue in the UK. For instance, though *The Guardian* may be responsible for the most

ostensibly trans-inclusive articles, these are all reporting on non-British contexts. Through this, *The Guardian* can claim a progressive, trans-inclusive identity whilst still representing trans rights as a real, local threat *within* the UK. The fact that Scotland is particularly targeted shows how the British press responds to challenges to the hegemonic order at home with hostility and, frankly, dubious and discriminatory reporting that is designed to manufacture panic which attracts support for maintaining the subordination of trans identities within the hegemonic gender binary and, ultimately, for a more conservative “feminism” and politics.

## Chapter 9: Summary and Conclusion

### 9.1. Introduction

This chapter summarises the key findings of the quantitative and qualitative discourse analysis that made up Chapters Four to Eight. By summarising the discursive representations analysed above, I aim to relate them to the theory of hegemonic femininity developed in Chapter Two. Through this, I will answer the research questions that have driven this research: Does the British broadsheet press update, undermine or maintain hegemonic femininity in news articles? And: How does this relate to political agendas of the broadsheet newspapers? Below, I will first summarise the intersectional model of hegemonic femininity as the key theoretical contribution of this thesis. I will then relate this theory to the research findings, focusing on ideological and discursive comparisons between the broadsheet newspapers: the left-leaning newspapers, *The Independent/1* and *The Guardian/Observer* and the right-wing newspapers, *The (Sunday) Telegraph* and *The (Sunday) Times*. Next, these findings will be discussed in order to draw conclusions about their relationship to hegemonic femininity in the British political context. I will then outline further contributions of this research, within the field and beyond, as well as exploring key limitations. Finally, I will highlight areas for further research and make recommendations for radical reform of both British journalism and feminism.

### 9.2. Hegemonic Femininity and Postfeminism

One of the key contributions of this research has been the development of Schippers' (2007, p.95) definition of hegemonic femininity: 'the characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and *complementary* relationship to hegemonic masculinity, and so *guarantee the dominance of men and the subordination of women*' (emphasis mine). Applying Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) criteria for interactional identity formation, I made the argument in Chapter Two that hegemonic femininity is the type of femininity that is authorised, authenticated and adequated. The notion of adequation – claims to sameness with a group – is applied to the concept of the gender binary itself through the presupposition that women and men are two separate categories whose members share characteristics and traits (i.e. of femininity and masculinity) that are fundamentally opposed to the "opposite" category, but also *complementary* to them. This, in turn, authenticates what Julia Serano (2016, p.13) has termed 'oppositional sexism' – the 'belief that female and male are rigid, mutually exclusive categories.' This enables the subordination and marginalisation



of those who do not conform to their predetermined categorisation – for instance, trans and nonbinary people, or women occupying traditionally “masculine” spheres (such as the Iron Maiden). The authorisation of hegemonic femininity refers to how it is institutionalised – for instance, in the law through the GRA or through the nearly non-existent conviction rates for intimate partner violence (Centre for Women’s Justice et al, 2020; Estrich, 1987; Hines, 2010). This ensures the reproduction of the gender binary, maintaining opposing gender categories and normalising male sexual violence against women, thus legitimising what Serano (2016, p.14) labels ‘traditional sexism’, the belief that maleness and masculinity are superior to femaleness and femininity. Consequently, by expanding the theory of hegemonic femininity, I related it to the concept of binary gender itself as a key mode of authentication for sexism and misogyny.

The key privilege of hegemonic femininity (itself ‘subordinate’ to hegemonic masculinity), which had been thus far underdeveloped in the literature, is the ability to subordinate and marginalise other types of femininity (and masculinity) that do not conform to binary, oppositional and traditional notions of gender. A key avenue that shaped Chapter Two to expand the concept of hegemonic femininity was intersectional feminist theory. Through works of such seminal feminists as Audre Lorde (1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1996d), bell hooks (2000a; 2000b), Angela Davis (1982), Judith Butler (1990), Patricia Hill Collins (2002), Reni Eddo-Lodge (2018), and Julia Serano (2016; 2017; 2021a; 2021b), the concept of hegemonic femininity was expanded to create a comprehensive model of dominance and subordination that explains why certain women enjoy privilege and power in society and others do not. This theory can then be applied to understand media representations of femininity, such as those that made up the dataset for this research. For instance, subordination and marginalisation function through erasure – such as the erasure of queer, disabled and working-class femininity, giving the impression that such femininities do not exist and, therefore, that the systems that create their marginalisation need not be challenged. Subordination also occurs through misrepresentation, which is stark when we look at the overrepresentation of trans identity in the dataset and the prevalence of negative stereotypes. The erasure of subordinate femininities functions to normalise their marginalisation, whilst misrepresentation functions to demonise nonconformity, justifying marginalisation. Hence, the hegemonic form of white, cisgender, heteronormative, middle-class and non-disabled femininity is continually authenticated as the definition of ‘woman’ that others must conform to (Butler, 1990).

Lastly, Chapter Two extended the intersectional concept of hegemonic femininity further by drawing on the concept of postfeminism, as explained and applied by Gill (2007; 2016; 2017), Lazar (2014), Litosseliti et al (2019) and McRobbie (2004). It was proposed that the cultural currency of feminism as a counterhegemonic force can be exploited by voiding it of its political roots and transforming it into an individual lifestyle choice. Through this, feminist discourses of empowerment are individualised into self-expressions of ultra-confidence and independence that are achieved through, among others, consumption (Gill and Orghad, 2017; Lazar, 2014, pp.222-223). Hence, white supremacist capitalist patriarchy is maintained through its ability to update itself to appear to be embracing feminism, whilst reinforcing neoliberalism that upholds capitalism (McRobbie, 2004, p.255). Indeed, the neoliberal individualisation of feminism makes it available as a political tool that can be manipulated to glorify or ridicule expressions of femininity according to its (lack of) conformity to a preconceived capitalist ideal. In other words, women who may otherwise be marginalised (i.e. women of colour, queer women etc.), but conform to hegemonic femininity by embracing capitalist and white supremacist patriarchal ideology, are extended privilege because their presence at the top of the hierarchy does not undermine the vertical structure itself.

This theory of (post)feminism as an adaptable and useful tool for the maintenance of hegemonic femininity was then applied to the discourse analysis of the broadsheet news reporting that was related to femininity – i.e. reporting on women and other feminised identities or issues. Through Nexis, British broadsheet news articles with a woman or feminised subject were collected throughout a forty-week period from September 2020 until July 2021. Over this period, articles were selected and categorised according to the dominance of the topic in the weekly news cycle and gendered discourse. At the end of data collection, a dataset of 1,263 news articles reflected the key women and issues that dominated the British broadsheets, as well as the representation of marginalised femininities. This allowed me to track the key issues of femininity in the news cycle: the leadership of Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, sexual violence and the Sarah Everard case, and the so-called “trans debate”. By quantifying topical patterns and dominant discourses, I could then analyse these topics according to the dominant gendered discourses that were (re)produced across the broadsheets’ reporting of them through a hybrid feminist critical and feminist poststructuralist discourse analytical framework. Hence, I was able to analyse in-depth the attitudes towards femininity across the broadsheet press, make comparisons, and draw

conclusions about whether hegemonic femininity was being maintained, undermined, or updated in individual newspapers and across all of the broadsheets.

### **9.3. Left-Leaning versus Right-Wing Broadsheet Representations**

This section addresses the third research question (p.5) by making comparisons between the broadly-assigned categories of the broadsheet press, the left-leaning, so-called “progressive” broadsheets (*The Independent/I* and *The Guardian/Observer*) and the right-wing, conservative broadsheets (*The (Sunday) Telegraph* and *The (Sunday) Times*), and their orientation towards hegemonic femininity. It summarises the findings of the feminist discourse analysis (Chapters Five-Eight) and explores their relationship to the research questions.

#### **9.3.1. Differences**

The most obvious ideological divide between the left-leaning broadsheets and the right-wing broadsheets is their explicit orientations towards feminism, as exemplified through the application of Baxter’s (2018) Feminist Agenda Spectrum (FAS). *The Independent/I* and *The Guardian/Observer* have minimal anti-feminist articles. Meanwhile, a quarter of *The Independent/I*’s articles in this dataset were categorised as pro-feminist, whilst 39 percent of *The Guardian/Observer* articles in the dataset were pro-feminist. On the other hand, the right-wing broadsheets are more likely to produce anti-feminist articles, with 11 percent of *The (Sunday) Telegraph*’s articles in this dataset being categorised as anti-feminist, compared to just 3.7 percent pro-feminist, and 13.6 percent of *The (Sunday) Times*’ articles in this dataset being anti-feminist, compared to 7.9 percent pro-feminist (4.4.2., Graph 4, p.89). However, it is significant that all newspapers in the dataset do include pro-feminist articles and, given the high percentage of pro-feminism within the left-leaning broadsheets, the number of anti-feminist articles in the right-wing broadsheets is lower than may be expected for newspapers with a conservative ideological stance. This shows that the broadsheet newspapers are orienting away from an explicitly anti-feminist stance. Yet, discursively, it became clear that this was not representative of a significant ideological shift towards feminist principles, but instead confirmed Baxter’s (2018) findings that the newspaper industry can no longer ignore negative perceptions of sexism and, thus, must code anti-feminist sentiments.

This became apparent in the discursive representation of femininity across the topics that dominated the news cycle during the data collection period of September 2020-July 2021: Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP, sexual violence and the Everard case, and the so-called

“transgender issue” (Faye, 2021). For instance, representations of Sturgeon revealed ideological divisions. The left-leaning newspapers were more likely to represent Sturgeon through D1, as a Strong Woman Leader, and this positive representation was rooted in Sturgeon’s self-professed ideological beliefs. Though the right-wing broadsheets also represented Sturgeon through D1, this was to a lesser extent, and these articles were restricted to her actions during the pandemic, when her popularity was high across the nation and the need for unmediated speech representation of leaders announcing COVID-19 restrictions meant that Sturgeon’s self-representation as a SWL was platformed more than in other contexts. Hence, the left-leaning newspapers were more likely to positively represent Sturgeon as a SWL for her politics and leadership style, whilst the right-wing broadsheets typically produced this representation in relation to the unprecedented COVID-19 situation, whilst often still problematising her leadership.

On the other hand, the right-wing broadsheets were far more likely to reproduce the anti-feminist Iron Maiden discourse (D2) in articles about Sturgeon. Indeed, both *The Telegraph* and *The Times* produced a considerably higher number of articles about Sturgeon, with *The Telegraph* in particular scrutinising her leadership. This coverage built up until the May 2021 elections, and then dropped off considerably, and was largely negative. This indicates that the right-wing broadsheets deployed the Iron Maiden stereotype to ridicule and destabilise Sturgeon’s leadership – namely, her centre-left ideology and will for Scottish independence – to ultimately undermine her re-election bid. Sturgeon was represented as tough, ruthless and extreme in her desire for independence, and her actions were often compared to that of a tyrannical dictator and madwoman. The right-wing broadsheets’ demonization of Sturgeon aligns very closely with Zappettini’s (2021) conceptualisation of populism in contemporary European political discourse, with Sturgeon being rendered the “enemy” of the people who, in the case of the right-wing broadsheets’ representation, were being subjected to her monomaniacal desire for power. Contrastingly, in D1 representations of Sturgeon in the left-leaning press, Sturgeon’s own deployment of populist tactics – appropriating the voice and will of ‘the people’ to justify her ideological goals – was a key aspect of authenticating her strong leadership as representative of her membership within the in-group of the Scottish people (Kramsch, 2020; Wodak, 2021; Zappettini, 2021).

Moreover, the left-leaning broadsheets, in line with their “progressive” orientation, did demonstrate a higher coverage of so-called feminist issues, namely sexual violence. The most overtly-progressively aligned newspaper, *The Guardian/Observer*, consistently covered

sexual violence cases to a higher degree than any other newspaper. The right-wing broadsheets, contrastingly, had very low reporting on this issue – particularly in *The Telegraph*. Furthermore, when it came to reporting on sexual violence during the Everard case, the right-wing broadsheets were the newspapers that did produce an anti-feminist article each. Though this was minimal, it does suggest that these conservative newspapers continue to have residual anti-feminist attitudes towards sexual violence in British society, deploying strategies such as ‘the blame-game’ to deflect feminist criticism of institutional misogyny (Angouri and Wodak, 2014). This seems to confirm broad perceptions of right-wing, conservative ideology as concerned with maintaining traditional sexism and left-wing, progressive ideology with challenging such sexism.

Finally, the discursive representation of trans identity and “issues” also seems to match ideological agendas. For example, *The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent/I* do produce “sympathetic” discourses regarding trans identity, highlighting anti-trans discrimination and humanising the issue. *The Times* and *The Telegraph*, on the other hand, have openly hostile discourse representation of trans identity – with *The Times*, in particular, being incredibly antagonistic in its representation of trans rights (and trans women). Again, this is in line with the conservative ideology that this newspaper is aligned with. The Tory government have abandoned plans to reform the GRA and have increasingly targeted trans people as a key enemy in their “war on woke” (Baker, 2021; Faye, 2021). From this, and the above examinations, that the left-leaning broadsheets appear to be more pro-feminist and the right-wing broadsheets appear to be more anti-feminist seems to align to “progressive” and “conservative” alignments.

### **9.3.2. Similarities**

However, these differences begin to dissipate when we examine *how* feminism is reproduced in the broadsheets. As mentioned above, *The Times* and *The Telegraph* do both mobilise D1 in articles about Sturgeon and other women politicians, showing that they do reproduce feminist-aligned discourse. Likewise, both *The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent/I* also mobilise D2. The right-wing broadsheets’ mobilisation of the anti-feminist Iron Maiden role trap when representing Sturgeon directs animosity towards her as an individual. Indeed, most of these articles are categorised as gender-neutral precisely because they are careful to avoid explicitly critiquing Sturgeon on the basis of her gender. This individualisation can explain why the apparently pro-feminist *The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent/I* do also occasionally deploy this discourse in representations of then-Home Secretary, Priti Patel.

As with the tabloids (Childs, 2008; O'Neill et al, 2016), anti-feminist stereotypes and tropes are found in the broadsheets, but have become more coded to avoid backlash (Baxter, 2018). Taken alongside the fact that D1 representations of Sturgeon by the right-wing press are less consistent and more problematised than D1 representations in the left-leaning broadsheets, this confirms the hypothesis that feminism is, in fact, a tool used by newspapers and journalists to boost representations of women whose politics they support, and anti-feminist stereotypes are used to undermine those whose ideology they do not support.

As Baxter (2018, p.139) argues, increased feminist consciousness in the general public means that sexism must become subtler in media representations. By targeting hostility at an individual woman, articles can encode their denigration of femininity as merely legitimate criticism of one, individual woman. Likewise, I argue that pro-feminist representations can be manipulated in a similar way. The left-leaning broadsheets particularly praise Sturgeon's (well-documented: Cameron and Shaw, 2016; Higgins and McKay, 2016; McKay, 2020; Shaw, 2020) fluency with both feminine and masculine speech and leadership styles. They are careful not to explicitly praise Sturgeon on the basis of her womanhood, instead using gender-neutrality to normalise her position in politics. However, this reproduces a *feminist* stereotype in which individual women leaders are glorified based on their ability to negotiate the 'double-bind', reinforcing the notion that women must carefully manage their femininity whilst also avoiding being seen as overly masculine (i.e. as an Iron Maiden). Hence, individual female power is normalised, but only when it reinforces oppositional and traditional sexist beliefs that women should not "crossover" into masculinity, and that femininity is not conducive to political power. This emphasis on women leaders as individuals enables newspapers to alternate between pro- and anti-feminism as they choose, avoiding analysing the gendered power imbalances of politics and, in doing so, normalising them.

In the discourse analysis of D1, however, one important representation seemed to undermine this theory that anti-/pro-feminism is a political tool wielded to further opposing ideological agendas. Kamala Harris was universally positively represented by both the left-leaning and right-wing broadsheets in reports on her 2020 election to the Vice Presidency, with all newspapers taking a more pro-feminist stance in their articles about her. However, *how* this pro-feminism was deployed by each newspaper confirms the above argument. Harris is represented in this dataset as evidence of the Western world as a postfeminist and post-racial society. She is represented as bold, empowered and empowering, and as hailing in a

new era of progress after four years of Trump's disruptive leadership (Litosseliti et al, 2019, p.8; Snyder, 2017). However, for the right-wing newspapers, such as *The Telegraph*, this offered an opportunity to align themselves with feminism – recuperating the image of the right-wing – whilst simultaneously aligning it to a Western-centric notion of superiority. Harris – as a black woman – was used to represent the social mobility and postfeminist promise of Western capitalist democracy, which was in turn used to represent the West as superior as a gender-equal society and to subordinate other countries as inferior, backwards and “other” because of their supposed gender *inequality*. Consequently, Harris was praised as an individual woman who had achieved success, and then used as proof that *all* women in countries like the USA and UK enjoy the same opportunities (Farris, 2017). The left-leaning newspapers, though less explicitly femonationalist in their D1 representations of Harris, did use her individual success as evidence of supposed gender equality and proof that the “brand” of feminism that they support – a neoliberal, reformist feminism – is successful. Consequently, the individualisation of feminism was shown to enable its appropriation, with Harris becoming a feminist stereotype that revealed the desire across the broadsheets to update hegemonic femininity by making it seem feminist.

Similarly, though the left-leaning broadsheets did exhibit a more explicitly pro-feminist stance when it came to reporting on the Everard case, a key finding of this research was that *all* newspapers drastically underreport sexual violence and focus on exceptional cases of stranger attacks, which make up only ten percent of rape cases in the country (Centre for Women's Justice et al, 2020). This reporting produces the same normalisation of intimate partner sexual violence as identified in the tabloid press by Clark (1998), exposing the tabloidization of the broadsheets. Moreover, though all newspapers did include pro-feminist articles about the Everard case, this was driven by a feminist outcry at a grassroots level, as opposed to the ideological underpinnings of the newspapers themselves (Day, 2021). Indeed, this much is clear when we look at the feminist voices centred in the texts. *The Times* and *The Telegraph* foregrounded the voices of right-wing women, such as Priti Patel. Thus, as with representations of Harris, the right-wing exploit the individualisation of feminism in order to recuperate the image of the political right by aligning it to feminism at a time where it was facing harsh criticism from feminist activists for policies that have further marginalised women in British society. On the other hand, though *The Independent/1* and *The Guardian/Observer* foreground the voices of grassroot feminists, these tend to be from organisations that do not adopt a radical position (or, at least, such positions are not

represented in the reports themselves), as well as left-wing politicians who adopt a neoliberal feminist stance. For instance, the position of Sisters Uncut – the radical feminist direct action group that was responsible for defying police attempts to block a vigil for Everard – was not represented in any of the articles in this dataset. Hence, as with reports on Harris, the left-leaning newspapers reproduce a neoliberal, reformist feminism that boosts their *centre-left* ideology, without radically challenging the institutions of police and government that authorise patriarchy. The impression of sexual violence given from the broadsheets on the whole perpetuates hegemonic femininity and masculinity through the reproduction of the “real rape” myth which erases the systemic nature of sexual violence by only reporting on rarer cases.

This disproportionate focus on rarer cases of sexual violence, that functions to normalise systemic cisgender male violence on the whole, is connected to the astonishing amount of transphobia found in this dataset. Though sympathetic discourse representing trans people does exist (TD2), it is far less pervasive than transphobic discourse (TD1) and functions to separate trans rights activism from feminist activism in a way that further enables transphobia under the guise of feminism and prevents any thorough analysis of the intersections of violence against cisgender women and the LGBTQ+ community from gaining mainstream traction. Trans womanhood is demonised, objectified, and pathologized in the dataset. Just as sexual violence against cisgender women is disproportionately blamed on a few “bad apples”, it is also disproportionately blamed on trans women, especially by *The Times*. Indeed, this newspaper in particular has a frankly discriminatory stance on trans identity that would not be tolerated against any other marginalised identity and is, in fact, enabled by the authorisation of the so-called trans “debate” by the other newspapers in the dataset. The objectification of trans people (re)produced by debating their existence and rights, whilst rarely giving them the space to represent their own experiences, is used to weaponize the so-called “issue” – shown in the use of the divide over trans rights within the SNP to further the characterisation of Sturgeon as an Iron Maiden. By repeatedly platforming TERFs and presupposing that “real” womanhood is predicated on cisgender identity, the broadsheets are able to claim the countercultural currency of feminism whilst paradoxically maintaining systems of oppositional sexism (hegemonic femininity and masculinity) that enable patriarchy – i.e. by representing womanhood as necessarily cisgender.



#### **9.4. Updating Hegemonic Femininity in the Broadsheets: Neoliberal, Reformist Feminism and the Naturalisation of the Gender Binary**

The above comparisons reveal that the ideological divisions between the so-called progressive (*The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent/T*) and conservative (*The Times* and *The Telegraph*) broadsheets are shallow. The left-leaning, “progressive” newspapers may produce more overtly pro-feminist “progressive” reporting, but the feminism that is platformed and promoted is a neoliberal reformist feminism that itself is grounded in hegemonic femininity as the definition of the category ‘woman’. This feminism has long had a history of working within the constraints of the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy to bargain for privilege to be extended to certain women, of a certain class, at the expense of other women (hooks, 2000a). This has enabled it to become co-opted by the very systems of capitalist patriarchy that it claims to resist, leading to the postfeminist individualisation of feminism that has made it ripe for appropriation by the political right.

Indeed, both *The Times* and *The Telegraph* do orient towards feminist discourse, but use this to update the image of the political right for a more feminist-inclined audience, and to justify systems of dominance such as white supremacy, countering criticisms of institutionalised misogyny and weaponizing feminist concern in order to justify nationalistic, populist and discriminatory domestic and international policies. This depoliticization of feminism since the second-wave has paradoxically allowed it to become manipulated as a rhetorical tool for various, often contradictory, political agendas. The British broadsheets may be overtly divided between conservative and progressive, but the so-called “progressive” broadsheets are only left-*leaning* and, hence, not diametrically opposed to the political right. After all, the readers of these newspapers are generally of similar backgrounds – tending to occupy hegemonic gendered class and race positions. Hence, the maintenance of hegemony – even if it is dressed up as a challenge to the current systems of the state that institutionalise it – is desirable for the broadsheet readership. Those readers who occupy more liberal politics are reassured of their liberalism through diversity and claims to feminism, whilst being permitted to support capitalist politics that ensure their own privilege, and those who occupy conservative positions are given the permission to support increasingly far-right nationalistic policies through the claims to feminism the denial of bigotry (Garland-Thomson, 2008; Wodak, 2021).

The gender binary that naturalises hegemonic femininity is a product of white colonialism which categorised imperial subjects into racial, gendered and class/caste hierarchies that were designed to justify the subordination of the masses whilst ensuring that they remained divided so that their strength in numbers would not be realised (Carastathis, 2014; Lethabo King, 2019; Lugones, 2010). In Lewis' (2019) pertinent article for the *New York Times*, she argues that the failure of British feminism to interrogate this legacy has resulted in its lagging behind other feminist movements (i.e. in the USA, Latin America, and Ireland) in terms of a mainstream embrace of intersectionality. The fact that the UK is not a settler colony (as the USA is) means that it is not confronted in the same way with the impact of colonisation and empire. As such, British society has remained notoriously class-divided, and this division is reflected within the British feminist movement. Indeed, the British press Establishment platforms commentators, politicians, academics and feminists from within the same Establishment. Just as Fowler (1991), Temple (2008) and van Dijk (1991) argue that the British press remains conservative because it reports on the political Establishment that is made up of the same class as the press Establishment, creating a feedback loop of hegemonic discourse, the same is true for the brand of "feminism" that it is likely to promote. Indeed, any interrogation of British imperial norms – i.e. Scottish demands for independence – is largely negatively represented in the British press, and with no small amount of animosity, demonstrating the will of the broadsheet Establishment to maintain a British (white, neo-colonial, classist, patriarchal and capitalist) hegemony.

## **9.5. Strengths and Limitations**

A key strength of this thesis is that it fills a gap in news media research by focusing on the UK's broadsheet, or "quality", newspapers. The 'tabloidization' of British/European politics in recent years has become an increasing area of academic interest (Chadwick et al, 2018; Wodak, 2021; Zappettini, 2021), but it has not been associated with the British broadsheet press. The reputation of the broadsheets as newspapers of quality journalism has often protected them from critiques of sensationalism. However, just as other aspects of news media have become impacted by the shift to the right within European politics, so too have the broadsheets. The broadsheets, too, have to compete in a world where print media has long been in decline, and arguably have to do more to generate customers than the cheaper tabloids. Hence, they are unlikely to challenge their readership base in any meaningful way for fear of the loss of crucial income. This research has demonstrated that the "quality" newspapers in the UK are also subject to tabloidization and sensationalism, displaying similar

patterns of sensationalism and anti-feminist stereotyping that are found in the tabloids (Childs, 2008; Clark, 1998; O’Neill et al, 2016), particularly regarding trans representation. In addition, this research has been conducted on broadsheet news articles that were analysed live – capturing the contemporary British news and political climate. The political contingencies surrounding the topics and events discussed in this thesis – namely, Scottish independence and Sturgeon’s leadership (she has since resigned as First Minister), sexual violence in the UK, and the so-called “trans debate” – continue to influence British politics and, hence, conclusions drawn from this research are pertinent to our understanding of the current socio-political climate of the UK. Furthermore, the large scope of this research in examining *femininities*, as opposed to being restricted to cisgender women politicians, means that it avoids perpetuating hegemonic femininity by presupposing categorisations for womanhood. This research captures instead the issues of femininity that emerged within the news cycle for an extended period of time, investigating how femininity was related to female leadership and gendered issues of sexual violence and trans rights. This has produced valid, timely research with interdisciplinary applications ranging from feminist studies, media studies, politics and beyond academia itself.

Moreover, a crucial contribution to the field of gender studies made by this research is its interrogation of the neoliberal reformist ideology that dominates British broadsheet press and the connection of this to the concept of postfeminism. The finding that feminism is used as a tool to further political agendas – whether that be the far-right “war on woke” or the neoliberal capitalist emphasis on individual success – has revealed that the feminism oriented to in the broadsheet news cycle is superficial and designed to maintain and update hegemonic femininity. There was no real challenge throughout the entirety of the dataset to systems of heteronormativity, trans-exclusion, white supremacy, ableism and capitalism – indeed, there was often the perpetuation of such systems through stereotyping and the elevation of women who embody hegemonic femininity. Instead, the UK, and the West more broadly, are represented as postfeminist – women politicians are expected to balance masculinity and femininity in order to be taken seriously as leaders, sexual violence is exceptionalised or scapegoated onto others who challenge gender hegemony (i.e. trans women) and a moral panic surrounding trans rights is stoked up in order to deflect from those who offer radical challenges to the status quo, i.e. defunding the police, ending austerity and seriously addressing male sexual violence. The application of intersectional theory in both the modelling of hegemonic femininity and in the methodological framework used for this study

adds to a growing body of work in the field of language and gender that takes an intersectional stance as imperative. The exploration of the racialisation of Kamala Harris throughout the broadsheets, the focus of marginalisation (in particular regarding trans femininity), and the self-reflexivity in the analysis of the Everard case, embraces complexity, plurality and multiplicity and strengthens FCDA methodology by supplementing it with FPDA. This sets an example of intersectional practice that factors the complexities of femininity and feminism into the fabric of the research design itself.

However, there are also limitations to the extent to which this study can claim to successfully practice intersectionality. As Carastathis (2014, pp.309-310) argues, feminist research that intends to be intersectional can often end up emphasising one factor or experience over another as researchers grapple with a bind of whether to collapse categories or separate them out for analysis. In order to explore the hierarchies within femininity in Chapter Two, I separated out categories of sexuality, trans identity, race, disability, and class. Due to absences of disability, lesbian and working-class representation in my dataset, I did not explore these aspects of femininity in my analysis. In this sense, the multiplicity of femininity was fragmented, leaving the potential for a continuation of the fragmentation of feminism as a movement. Thus, despite my efforts, aspects of hegemonic femininity were reinforced through the marginalisation of disabled, working-class, and lesbian femininities in my data analysis. Furthermore, throughout the research above, I have focused on the broadsheet news media as a powerful entity that shapes British politics and gender relations. Though I do believe that the British Establishment press does have considerable power in shaping public opinion and political debate, the readers of these broadsheets are not passive receivers of such content, but agents who are able to critique the news that they absorb (Temple, 2008, pp.118-120). Readers may resist the discourses (re)produced in a news text through various means, such as through debates within their own social circle, social media responses, complaints to the editors and more. Additionally, newspaper audiences are not homogenous. Though I have examined the broadsheets as ideologically aligned and, therefore, likely to have readers who are right-wing (*The Times* and *The Telegraph*) or left-wing (*The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent*), it is over-simplistic to assume that *all* readers of these newspapers share the same political ideologies or interpret their political alignments in the same way. As my research did not examine audience perceptions of these news articles, there is an issue with applying my conclusions about the broadsheet press to British public opinion and, hence, to the socio-political context as a whole. Future research

could examine the audience(s) reception of such articles as have been included in this thesis by studying the comments sections of the online versions of news articles or by investigating social media responses to news articles.

This, in turn, relates to another weakness of this research: my own position and occupation of hegemonic femininity. As a middle-class, cisgender, heterosexual academic, I have been cognisant of the question of whether I am authorised to be the judge of how marginalisation among women functions. It is a key criticism of (feminist) critical discourse analysis that the researcher's own biases and political alignment may influence their interpretation of the data. Though I have made the argument in Chapter Three that no research is unaffected by such issues, it is an important consideration when approaching such politically-charged research as that which is presented in this thesis. Indeed, I would not have conducted such research if I had not been motivated by my own feminist ideology, but my interpretation and understanding of feminism may also be skewed by my own privileged position. This may have influenced my results, in particular my discourse analysis. However, I took steps to address this issue through the supplementation of FCDA with FPDA, which emphasised conducting research whilst being open to questioning my own interpretations. Indeed, particularly in the analysis on representations of sexual violence in Chapter Seven, I have aimed to maintain a self-reflexivity and transparency about my own biases and make it clear how I have been challenged in my own analysis. Still, it must be acknowledged that the arguments presented in this thesis are based on my own interpretations and, therefore, are open to (and, in fact, welcome) challenges and criticism.

## **9.6. Suggestions for Future Research and Recommendations**

The interdisciplinary and intersectional foundations of the theory of hegemonic femininity that has driven this paper are applicable to a wide range of academic and social research. For instance, the model of hegemonic femininity presented in Chapter Two can be applied to other linguistic and feminist research on representations of women and femininity in the media that seeks to use an intersectional approach. It is my belief that all gender-based research must adopt such an approach in order to grasp the heterogeneity of femininities and how their institutionalisation (or not) benefits power structures of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. This model can also be adopted and applied beyond academia. For instance, during my time developing this thesis, I have given various talks to LGBTQ+ organisations and support groups. I believe that this model of hegemonic femininity, and the research that it has produced, can be used to encourage a more intersectional understanding of gender that

can help grassroots organisers to develop strategies for how to communicate the need for drastic reform on issues such as the GRA to the general public. However, further research is also needed, particularly that which addresses the intersections between discourses of femininity and disability, class, and homosexuality in the news media. In order to achieve this, a nuanced approach directed at capturing these specific intersections is needed that can capture the few articles that directly address these issues, or that can decipher the encoded attitudes towards them in articles such as those analysed for this thesis. Additionally, similar research could be conducted on masculinities, to understand how hegemonic masculinity is upheld in the press, and its relationship to hegemonic femininity. Finally, the hybrid FCDA/FPDA methodological approach applied in this study could be applied to a wide range of feminist research. This hybrid approach has the potential to change the way that we “do” research by legitimising the inclusion of multiple interpretations of data and encouraging researcher transparency in terms of not just aims and stances, but also in terms of openly exploring errors. This approach can improve research validity by drawing on multiple perspectives, as well as taking steps to avoid the marginalisation of already marginalised voices (i.e. people of colour, working class people etc.) within academia itself. In future research, I plan to fulfil my original plan of literally incorporating other voices by conducting interviews to produce a more collaborative analysis that acknowledges divergences.

In addition, I have two key recommendations based on the findings of this thesis. As explained above, I believe that the model of hegemonic femininity can be applied to other areas of research, including beyond academia, that can be used to develop educational strategies designed to target the misinformation and myths surrounding gender identity in the British context. I believe that this research itself should be made widely accessible for others working directly with marginalised communities – such as the LGBTQ+ community and survivors of domestic abuse – to use in their lobbying of the government and political parties to adopt policies that would address issues of discrimination and lack of access to resources. For instance, organisations like Gendered Intelligence or the Centre for Women’s Justice can use this research to create training programmes for politicians, journalists, care and health workers, and to develop cases that highlight the impact of the British broadsheets’ modes of reporting on marginalised genders. One way that this research can become accessible for this, and for further research, is to transform the dataset into a corpus, that can be divided by topic (i.e. those addressed in this thesis, as well as the less dominant topics identified – see Appendix 5), that can then become searchable for others to conduct research and access

broadsheet news articles on key issues of femininity and feminism in the British press from 2020-2021.

My second recommendation concerns the regulation of the British press. The British press, unlike British broadcasting, is not regulated by a statutory body and this has enabled a culture of poor practice, some of which has been identified in this thesis (Sabbagh, 2012). The response to the findings of the Leveson Inquiry (Leveson, 2012) into the ethics, culture and practices of the British press and the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) was the dissolution of the PCC and the founding of a new regulator, the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), which newspapers voluntarily sign up for. As of now, *The Telegraph* and *The Times* are regulated by IPSO. However, IPSO has faced severe criticism since its inception for essentially being a rebrand of the disgraced PCC. IPSO, like the PCC, was formed by newspaper editors and publishers themselves and this has caused criticism that it is essentially a body designed to protect publishers, rather than to uphold ethical and professional standards supposedly enshrined in the Editor's Code (Greenslade, 2014). This is the reason that *The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent/I* decided not to sign up for IPSO and instead have their own complaints procedures (Pilling, 2014).

Indeed, IPSO's own external review (*ibid.*) found that it was not trusted as a regulator. There is one clause in IPSO's Editor's Code in particular that I believe my research has exposed as a loophole for newspapers to reproduce discriminatory discourse without consequence: Clause 12 i) Discrimination, which states: the 'Press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative references to an *individual's* race, colour, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any physical or mental illness or disability' (emphasis mine – IpsO, 2021). My research has found discriminatory and unethical reporting, particularly from *The Times*, on transgender identity that is clearly prejudiced and pejorative (indeed, some of the reporting on Sturgeon from this newspaper and *The Telegraph* was also clearly pejorative and sexist). However, *The Times* can escape penalties for breach of the Code due to the curious specification emphasised above that discrimination only applies to the targeting of an *individual*. This is, frankly, a ludicrous specification – discrimination, by its very nature, targets a *group* of people, such as transgender people. By specifying an individual, newspapers are able to discriminate against races, sexualities, genders, disabilities and religions so long as they do not name an individual, and can thus perpetuate discriminatory discourse like transphobia.

I am, therefore, in agreement with *The Guardian/Observer* and *The Independent/I* that IPSO is not an acceptable regulator. Through the course of my research, I have come to view IPSO as an organisation designed to protect the British press from criticisms of discrimination and poor practice, as opposed to upholding journalistic and ethical standards. In this interpretation, it has been very effective – not issuing a single major fine to any of the newspapers that it regulates since its inception (Pilling, 2014). Yet, I do believe that, like broadcasting, all broadsheets should be under a single regulator – *The Guardian/Observer's* and *Independent/I's* independent complaints system could indeed be subject to the same criticisms of bias as IPSO. My suggestion is that these newspapers are all regulated by IMPRESS, which has been specifically designed for news in a digital age, maintains a progressive Standards Code, has a more diverse Board than IPSO, and has been endorsed by the National Union of Journalists (Impress, no date; Greenslade, 2016).

The mainstream news media is vital to society, especially in the digital age of fake news. The broadsheets, unlike 24-hour digital news circulated on social media, have the time to conduct rigorous journalistic research, identify reliable sources, corroborate stories and, therefore, produce dependable news. However, the pressures of the decline in print media have meant that this kind of rigorous, quality journalism that the broadsheets are known for has fallen away. This is why I believe that there should be a statutory regulator of the British press that can ensure that a code of practice that upholds standards of integrity, accuracy and ethics is maintained. I am not arguing for political neutrality in the British broadsheets – the publishers of the newspapers studied in this thesis are entitled to their own political views, as are their readers. However, they should not be enabled to push their agenda through sensationalist, discriminatory or unreliable news sharing. As discrimination becomes increasingly coded, such as the sexism identified in this thesis, we should encourage researchers, commentators and the general public to scrutinise all news that they receive and outright bigotry, such as the transphobic nature of the British press, should be clearly and directly challenged through the issuing of meaningful fines. *The Times* newspaper, in particular, should face a higher-level fine for its incessant campaign of transphobia that is clearly discriminatory.

This thesis is also an appeal to the British mainstream feminist movement, and to the journalists who draw their information from such sources: the belief that some women deserve “equality” more than others is inherently antithetical to the ambitions of feminism and the concept of equality in and of itself. It risks alignment with ideologies of white



supremacy, capitalism, homophobia and ableism that have always functioned to maintain the subordination of women through the reproduction of hegemonic femininity. It has permitted the co-optation of feminism by forces with dubious motivations for such associations. However, the findings of this thesis have shown that grassroots feminism does have an impact on broadsheet reporting of feminist issues. A truly intersectional, trans-inclusive feminist movement has the power to radically change the trajectory of the British press' reporting on issues such as sexual violence. With a unified voice, that embraces heterogeneity and intersectionality, the British feminist movement must interrogate the imperialist foundations that shape British society and have influenced its feminist movement. In doing so, it can become a movement with real power to resist patriarchy by challenging austerity, encouraging funding for domestic abuse services for all genders, improving healthcare for *all* women to have access to life- and gender-affirming care, and defunding the institutionally misogynistic police force – changes that could save countless lives and seriously destabilise gender discrimination in this country.

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## Appendix 1: Articles collected from *The Independent/I*

<b>Date range</b>	<b>FAS</b>	<b>Journalist</b>	<b>Discourse</b>	<b>Subject</b>
20200928-1005	GN	Hannah Knowles	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20200928-1005	GN	Alex Woodward	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20200928-1005	GN	<i>ibid.</i>	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20200928-1005	GN	AP news press	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20200928-1005	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Trump's women	Coney Barrett
20200928-1005	GN	Danielle Zoellner	Trump's women	Coney Barrett
20200928-1005	GN	AP news press	Agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett
20200928-1005	GN	Graig Graziosi	Trump's women	McEnany and the press
20200928-1005	GN	Griffin Connolly	Trump's women	McEnany and the press
20200928-1005	GN	Alex Woodward	Trump's women	McEnany and the press
20200928-1005	GN	Hugo Gye	The reckless politician	C19: Ferrier scandal (SNP)
20200928-1005	GN	Kate Devlin	The reckless politician	C19: Ferrier scandal (SNP)
20200928-1005	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The target	Patel versus asylum seekers
20200928-1005	GN	Andrew Woodcock	SWL	Patel versus asylum seekers
20200928-1005	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus asylum seekers
20200928-1005	GN	Sean O'Grady	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus asylum seekers
20200928-1005	GN	May Bulman	Women beating the system	Asylum seeker wins case
20200928-1005	GN	May Bulman	Women beating the system	Asylum seeker wins case
20200928-1005	GN	AP news press	Trans folk as victims	USA: survey LGBTQ+ suffer more violence
20200928-1005	GN	Gemma Fox	LGBTQI+ folk as victims	EGY: police use Grindr to entrap LGBTQ+
20201005-1012	GN	Gino Spoccia	Agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201005-1012	GN	AP news press	Agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett supreme court

20201005-1012	PF	Louise Hall	The misogynoir establishment	Kamala Harris VP nomination
20201005-1012	GN	AP news press	SWL	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201005-1012	GN	Griffin Connolly	SWL	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201005-1012	GN	John T. Bennett	SWL	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201005-1012 (I)	PF	Matt Mathers	SWL	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201005-1012	GN	Michael Martina	The accomplished woman	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201005-1012	GN	AP news press	Black women do it better/she's one of us!	Kamala Harris VP nomination
20201005-1012	GN	Graeme Massie	Lock her up! The rise of male supremacy	Whitmer kidnapping plot
20201005-1012	GN	Graeme Massie	Lock her up! The rise of male supremacy	Whitmer kidnapping plot
20201005-1012	GN	Josh Marcus	Lock her up! The rise of male supremacy	Whitmer kidnapping plot
20201005-1012	GN	Andrew Naughtie	Lock her up! The rise of male supremacy	Whitmer kidnapping plot
20201005-1012	GN	AP news press	Lock her up! The rise of male supremacy	Whitmer kidnapping plot
20201005-1012	GN	Andrew Woodcock	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201005-1012	GN	Danielle Zoellner	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20201005-1012	GN	Josh Marcus	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20201005-1012	GN	Chris Green	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201012-1019	PF	Jonathan Marshall	The Mother	Jacinda Ardern wins election 2020
20201012-1019	PF	Andrew Buncombe	Mother protector	Breonna Taylor's mother interview
20201012-1019	GN	Harriet Alexander	The RW woman (-)	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	GN	Griffin Connolly	The RW woman (-)	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	GN	John T. Bennett	Trump's women	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	GN	AP news press	Trump's women	Coney Barrett supreme court

20201012-1019	GN	Griffin Connolly	Trump's women	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	GN	Griffin Connolly	Trump's women	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	GN	Louise Boyle	The RW woman (-)	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	GN	Chris Riotta	The RW woman (-)	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	GN	Griffin Connolly	Agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	PF	Claire Cain Miller	Motherhood as political strategy	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	PF	Matt Mathers	Trump's women	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	PF	Graeme Massie	Agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	GN	Griffin Connolly	Progressives rise up!	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201012-1019	GN	Griffin Connolly	SWL	Kamala Harris vs Coney Barrett
20201012-1019	PF	Alex Woodward	SWL	Kamala Harris vs Coney Barrett
20201012-1019	GN	Griffin Connolly	SWL	Kamala Harris vs Coney Barrett
20201012-1019	GN	Andrew Buncombe	The fierce fighter	McGrath vs McConnell
20201012-1019	GN	Andrew Buncombe	The fierce fighter	McGrath vs McConnell
20201012-1019	GN	Andrew Naughtie	The fierce fighter	McGrath vs McConnell
20201012-1019	GN	Craig Paton	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201012-1019	PF	AP news press	The anti-Karen	Suburban women vs Trump
20201012-1019	PF	Lisa Lerer	The anti-Karen	Suburban women vs Trump
20201012-1019	PF	Namita Singh	The anti-Karen	Suburban women vs Trump
20201019-1026	GN	Matt Mathers	B(W)LM	Tafara Williams
20201019-1026	GN	Danielle Zoellner	The RW woman (-): trump's women	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201019-1026	GN	AP news press	Agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201019-1026	GN	AP news press	Trump's women	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201019-1026	GN	James Crump	The RW woman (-): check your privilege	Ivanka Trump



20201019-1026	GN	Harriet Alexander	The RW woman (-): check your privilege	Ivanka Trump
20201019-1026	GN	Jonathan Stempel	A fall from grace	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201019-1026	GN	Justin Vallejo	The master manipulator	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201019-1026	GN	James Crump	The master manipulator	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201019-1026	GN	Gino Spoccia	A fall from grace	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201019-1026	GN	Louise Hall	The master manipulator	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201019-1026	GN	Matt Mathers	Agents of patriarchy	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201019-1026	GN	AP news press	The master manipulator	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201019-1026	GN	Chris Riotta	The master manipulator	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201019-1026	GN	Graig Graziosi	A fall from grace	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201019-1026	GN	Justin Vallejo	The master manipulator	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201026-1102	GN	Andrew Buncombe	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20201026-1102	GN	Louise Hall	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20201026-1102	GN	Josh Marcus	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20201026-1102	GN	Graig Graziosi	B(W)LM	Tafara Williams
20201026-1102	GN	Griffin Connolly	Trump's women	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201026-1102	GN	Griffin Connolly	Trump's women	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201026-1102	GN	Mayank Aggarwal	The RW woman (-): agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201026-1102	GN	Matt Mathers	Trump's women	Coney Barrett supreme court
20201026-1102	GN	Chris Riotta	The defiant woman	Hirono versus Coney Barrett
20201026-1102	GN	AP news press	Trump's women	Ginni Thomas conspiracy theorist
20201026-1102	GN	James Crump	Trump's women	Ginni Thomas conspiracy theorist
20201026-1102	GN	Matt Mathers	The deviant woman	Janice McGeachin COVID conspiracy
20201026-1102	PF	AP news press	The misogynoir (anti)establishment	Kamala Harris VP nomination
20201026-1102	GN	Danielle Zoellner	The deviant woman	Kamala Harris VP popularity

20201026-1102	GN	Graeme Massie	The mysterious woman	Melania Trump conspiracy theory
20201026-1102	GN	AP news press	Trump's women	Melania Trump speech
20201026-1102	PF	Roli Srivastava	Trans folk as victims	Trans farmers IND
20201026-1102	PF	AP news press	Feminism, interrupted	UN peacekeeping women
20201026-1102	GN	Richard Hall	B(W)[votes]M	Black voters in Georgia 2020 US election
20201026-1102	GN	Griffin Connolly	The RW woman (-)	Republican Senators fighting for re-election
20201102-1109	GN	James Crump	Progressives rise up!	AOC on US election
20201102-1109	GN	Louise Boyle	Progressives rise up!	AOC on US election
20201102-1109	GN	Louise Hall	The defiant woman	AOC on US election
20201102-1109	GN	John T. Bennett	The deviant woman	AOC on US election
20201102-1109	GN	Louise Hall	The deviant woman	AOC on US election
20201102-1109	GN	Andrew Buncombe	SWL	Biden-Harris 2020 victory speeches
20201102-1109	GN	Rory Sullivan	SWL	Biden-Harris 2020 victory speeches
20201102-1109	PF	Andrew Buncombe	SWL	Kamala Harris VP-Elect
20201102-1109	PF	Danielle Zoellner	SWL	Kamala Harris VP-Elect speech
20201102-1109	GN	Courtney Weaver	SWL	Kamala Harris VP-Elect
20201102-1109	GN	Joe Sommerlad	The defiant woman	Stacey Abrams credited for blue Georgia
20201102-1109	GN	Reis Thebault	The defiant woman	Stacey Abrams credited for blue Georgia
20201109-1116	GN	Richard Vaughan	Lady Macbeth: the master manipulator	Carrie Symonds blocks Cain appointment
20201109-1116	GN	Jane Merrick	Lady Macbeth: the master manipulator	Carrie Symonds blocks Cain appointment
20201109-1116	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Peter Sutcliffe death
20201109-1116	GN	Colin Drury	The woman-slayer	Peter Sutcliffe death
20201116-1123	GN	AP news press	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor

20201116-1123	GN	Graeme Massie	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20201116-1123	GN	Ashley Cowburn	LGBTQI+ rights are under threat	Govt end LGBTQI+ anti-bullying program
20201116-1123	GN	Griffin Connolly	SWL	Pelosi tries to unite Democrats
20201116-1123	GN	AP news press	SWL	Pelosi as House speaker 2021-23
20201116-1123	GN	Griffin Connolly	SWL	Pelosi as House speaker 2021-23
20201116-1123	GN	Andrew Woodcock	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201116-1123	GN	Andrew Woodcock	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201116-1123	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The Iron Maiden	Patel bullying report
20201116-1123	GN	Jane Dalton	The Iron Maiden	Patel bullying report
20201116-1123	GN	Tom Peck	The Iron Maiden	Patel bullying report
20201116-1123	GN	Andrew Grice	The Iron Maiden	Patel bullying report
20201116-1123	GN	Kate Ng	Female rivalry	Wagatha Christie court case
20201123-1130	GN	Alex Woodward	Trump's women	Murphy blocking transition
20201123-1130	GN	Andrew Buncombe	Trump's women	Murphy allows transition
20201123-1130	GN	Danielle Zoellner	Trump's women	Murphy allows transition
20201123-1130	GN	Andrew Naughtie	Trump's women	Trump's team distance from Powell
20201123-1130	GN	Andrew Naughtie	The deviant woman	Sidney Powell conspiracy theorist
20201123-1130	GN	Holly Baxter	The deviant woman	Sidney Powell conspiracy theorist
20201123-1130	GN	AP news press	Trump's women	Melania Trump Christmas parties White House
20201123-1130	GN	Louise Hall	Trump's women	Lara Trump says election was rigged
20201123-1130	GN	Adam Forrest	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Scottish independence
20201123-1130	GN	Kate Devlin	SWL	Sturgeon: Scottish independence
20201123-1130	GN	John T. Bennett	SWL	Yellen nominated by Biden to Fed Reserve
20201123-1130	GN	John T. Bennett	SWL	Yellen nominated by Biden to Fed Reserve

20201130-1207	GN	May Bulman	BLM/The Hostile Environment	Deportation flight to Jamaica stopped
20201130-1207	GN	May Bulman	Women as victims	Trafficking victims denied rights in UK
20201130-1207	GN	James Crump	Dawn of a new era	Biden to reverse 45 anti-LGBTQI+ policies
20201130-1207	PF	Sirena Bergman	Trans folk as victims	Elliot Page coming out & deadnaming
20201130-1207	GN	Adam Forrest	The embattled politician	Sturgeon admits C19 mistakes
20201130-1207	GN	Ashley Cowburn	Mother protector	Sturgeon pledges £500 to NHS workers
20201130-1207	GN	Andrew Naughtie	The deviant woman	GOP opposes Tanden nomination
20201130-1207	GN	John T. Bennett	The def/viant woman	GOP opposes Tanden nomination
20201130-1207	GN	Graig Graziosi	The deviant woman	GOP opposes Tanden nomination
20201130-1207	GN	Justin Vallejo	The deviant woman	GOP opposes Tanden nomination
20201130-1207	GN	AP news press	The def/viant woman	GOP opposes Tanden nomination
20201130-1207	GN	Josh Marcus	Progressives rise up!	The Squad demand C19 stimulus checks
20201130-1207	GN	James Crump	Progressives rise up!	Omar vs Obama on defund the police
20201130-1207	GN	Graig Graziosi	Progressives rise up!	AOC and Sanders vs Betsy DeVos
20201130-1207	PF	AP news press	Women as victims	Trafficking increased due to C19
20201130-1207	GN	Graig Graziosi	The deviant woman	Sidney Powell conspiracy theorist
20201130-1207	GN	Chris Riotta	The deviant woman	Carone attacks lawmakers at fraud hearing
20201130-1207	GN	Gino Spoccia	The deviant woman	Sidney Powell conspiracy theorist
20201130-1207	GN	James Crump	The deviant woman	SNL mocks Giuliani and Carone
20201207-1214	GN	Jon Stone	SWL	Merkel backs harder line on Brexit
20201207-1214	GN	Jon Stone	SWL	Von der Leyen to meet Johnson: Brexit
20201207-1214	GN	Chris Riotta	Lock her up! The rise of white nationalism	Johnson threatened with lynching by trump supporters
20201207-1214	GN	Griffin Connolly	Trump's women	Loeffler backs trump's election fraud claims

20201207-1214	GN	Josh Marcus	Trump's women	McEnany backs trump's election fraud claims
20201207-1214	GN	Graig Graziosi	Trump's women	Trump hopes Coney Barrett will overturn election
20201214-1221	GN	AP news press	(Black) women as victims	Botched raid targets Chicago woman
20201214-1221	GN	AP news press	Wolf in sheep's clothing	Ghislaine Maxwell attempts bail
20201214-1221	GN	AP news press	The master manipulator	Ghislaine Maxwell attempts bail
20201214-1221	PF	James Crump	The misogynist establishment	WSJ op-ed on Jill Biden
20201214-1221	PF	Graig Graziosi	The misogynist establishment	WSJ op-ed on Jill Biden
20201214-1221	PF	Oliver O'Connell	The misogynist establishment	WSJ op-ed on Jill Biden
20201214-1221	GN	Matt Mathers	Trump's women	McEnany criticised for claiming EC fraud
20201214-1221	GN	Alex Woodward	Trump's women	McEnany lashes out at reporters
20201214-1221	GN	Richard Hall	SWL (Strong Black Woman)	Nurse is first in US to get vaccine
20201214-1221	GN	Alessio Peronne	Trans folk as victims	Classmates protest after suicide of trans student
20201221-1228	GN	AP news press	Family first	Native American tribes and C19
20201221-1228	GN	Adam Forrest	The embattled politician	Patel forced to delete tweet about trafficking case
20201221-1228	GN	Adam Forrest	The embattled politician	Patel says lorry drivers stuck in Dover to be tested
20201221-1228	GN	Lizzie Dearden	SWL	Patel advises police on C19 law enforcement
20201228-20210104	PF	Maya Oppenheim	My Body My Rights	Argentina legalises abortion
20201228-20210104	PF	Maya Oppenheim	My Body My Rights	Argentina legalises abortion

20201228-20210104	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Lock her up! Patriarchal tyranny	al-Hathloul sentenced
20201228-20210104	GN	Rob Merrick	The rise of white nationalism	Head of Runnymede Trust criticises govt
20210104-0111	PF	AP news press	My Body, My Rights	Brazilian women forced to Argentina for abortion
20210104-0111	PF	Maya Oppenheim	My Body, My Rights	British women needing abortions during lockdown
20210104-0111	GN	AP news press	B(W)LM	Officers fired in Breonna Taylor case
20210104-0111	GN	AP news press	Trump's women	Babbitt killed during Capitol coup
20210104-0111	GN	AP news press	The(alt)RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Babbitt killed during Capitol coup
20210104-0111	GN	Graig Graziosi	The rise of white nationalism	Democrats responses to Capitol coup
20210104-0111	GN	Chelsea Ritschel	Trump's women	Ivanka Trump calls Capitol rioters 'patriots'
20210104-0111	GN	Griffin Connolly	Trump's women	McEnany refuses questions RE Capitol coup
20210104-0111	GN	Louise Hall	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Palin blames Antifa for Capitol coup
20210104-0111	GN	Chelsea Ritschel	Let them eat cake!	Tiffany Trump tone death tweet after Capitol coup
20210104-0111	GN	Andrew Woodcock	Johnson's women	Patel speaks out on Capitol coup
20210104-0111	GN	Ashley Cowburn	The typical politician	Patel speaks out on Capitol coup
20210104-0111	GN	Craig Paton	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210111-0118	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Boebert linked to Capitol coup
20210111-0118	GN	James Crump	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Boebert refuses metal detectors at Capitol
20210111-0118	GN	Namita Singh	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Boebert linked to Capitol coup

20210111-0118	GN	Gustaf Kilander	Libertarianism is a threat	Coleman COVID positive after Capitol coup
20210111-0118	GN	James Crump	Libertarianism is a threat	Coleman & Jayapal COVID positive after Capitol coup
20210111-0118	GN	Chris Riotta	The master manipulator	Melania Trump casts herself as victim
20210111-0118	GN	Griffin Connolly	SWL	Pelosi: impeachment 2.0
20210111-0118	GN	Griffin Connolly	SWL	Pelosi: impeachment 2.0
20210111-0118	GN	Graig Graziosi	The defiant woman	Cruz comms director resigns over Capitol coup
20210111-0118	GN	Gino Spoccia	Women as victims	Pressley panic buttons torn out - Capitol coup
20210111-0118	GN	Louise Hall	Lock them up! The rise of white nationalism	Sherrill accuses GOP of reconnaissance Capitol coup
20210111-0118	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Kay's Law: bail conditions for domestic abuse suspects
20210111-0118	GN	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Ask for ANI pharmacy domestic abuse scheme
20210111-0118	GN	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Funding shortages for domestic abuse support C19
20210111-0118	GN	Sam Hancock	LGBTQI+ rights are under threat	POL trial of 3 LGBTQIA+ activists
20210118-0125	PF	Jon Sharman	Feminism, interrupted	Biden admin uphill struggle to reinstate abortion
20210118-0125	PF	AP news press	The war on women	Kansas attempts to ban abortion
20210118-0125	PF	Maya Oppenheim	The war on women	HON furthers ban on abortion
20210118-0125	PF	AP news press	The war on women	ARG abortion laws come into effect
20210118-0125	PF	Andrew Buncombe	SWL	Jill Biden: First Lady like no other
20210118-0125	GN	Oliver O'Connell	The dawn of a new era	Ashley Biden: Melania snubs Dr Jill
20210118-0125	GN	Danielle Zoellner	The Mother	Jill Biden gives cookies to National Guard

20210118-0125	GN	Gino Spoccia	The trailblazer	Kamala Harris gives up Senate seat
20210118-0125	PF	AP news press	SWL	Kamala Harris VP
20210118-0125	GN	Chiara Giordano	SWL	May says PM abandoned global moral leadership
20210118-0125	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The defiant woman	Patel clashes with PM over border closures C19
20210118-0125	GN	Nigel Morris	The deviant woman	Patel clashes with PM over border closures C19
20210118-0125	PF	Alice Hutton	The defiant woman	Gorman inaugural poem
20210118-0125	GN	James Crump	SWL	The queen sent Biden a letter
20210125-0201	GN	Graig Graziosi	The defiant woman	AOC comes for Ted Cruz over Capitol coup
20210125-0201	PF	Maya Oppenheim	The war on women	Poland abortion ban
20210125-0201	GN	AP news press	The war on women	S Carolina abortion ban passes to Senate
20210125-0201	GN	Josh Marcus	An unlikely friendship	AOC and Trump Jr agree RE GameStop
20210125-0201	GN	Gino Spoccia	The defiant woman	AOC rebukes GOP for being beholden to Q-Anon
20210125-0201	GN	Alex Woodward	Trans rights are human rights	Biden reverses trans military ban
20210125-0201	GN	James Crump	Transphobia is rampant	Army chaplain argues trans ppl mentally unfit
20210125-0201	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The defiant woman	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	PF	AP news press	The defiant woman	Suu Kyi detained in Myanmar coup
20210125-0201	PF	Adam Forrest	The def/viant woman	Suu Kyi detained in Myanmar coup
20210125-0201	GN	Justin Vallejo	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene video harassing Parkland survivor
20210125-0201	GN	Alex Woodward	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene condemned by Pelosi



20210125-0201	GN	Louise Hall	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene condemned by Hogs
20210125-0201	GN	Gustaf Kilander	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene video harassing Parkland survivor
20210125-0201	GN	Alex Woodward	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Bush forced to move office from Taylor Greene
20210125-0201	GN	Alex Woodward	Trump's women	Bush forced to move office from Taylor Greene
20210125-0201	GN	Louise Hall	Trump's women	Taylor Greene won primary because trump endorsed
20210125-0201	GN	Gino Spoccia	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene uses slur about Down's Syndrome
20210125-0201	GN	Gino Spoccia	Trump's women	Taylor Greene has trump's support
20210125-0201	GN	Griffin Connolly	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Democrats call for Taylor Greene's expulsion
20210125-0201	GN	Josh Marcus	Trump's women	Lincoln Project sasses Taylor Greene on Twitter
20210125-0201	GN	James Crump	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene refuses to disavow Parkland conspiracy
20210201-0208	PF	Andrew Buncombe	Women as survivors	AOC comes out as survivor
20210201-0208	PF	Mayank Aggarwal	Women as survivors	AOC comes out as survivor
20210201-0208	GN	Justin Vallejo	The defiant woman	AOC responds to backlash RE Capitol coup account
20210201-0208	PF	Graig Graziosi	Women as victims	Porter corroborates AOC account capitol coup
20210201-0208	PF	Graeme Massie	The defiant woman	AOC responds to backlash RE Capitol coup account
20210201-0208	GN	AP news press	A fall from grace	Suu Kyi detained in Myanmar coup
20210201-0208	GN	Stuti Mishra	The embattled politician	Suu Kyi detained in Myanmar coup
20210201-0208	GN	Adam Forrest	Power battle	SNP divided (Sturgeon)

20210201-0208	GN	Cleo Skopeliti	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210201-0208	GN	Adam Forrest	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210201-0208	GN	Katy Balls	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210201-0208	GN	James Crump	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene refuses to disavow Parkland conspiracy
20210201-0208	GN	Graig Graziosi	Trump's women	Graham tries to defend Taylor Greene
20210201-0208	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	McCarthy criticized for not condemning Taylor Greene
20210201-0208	GN	Griffin Connolly	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene condemned by McConnell
20210201-0208	GN	Josh Marcus	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene condemned by Romney
20210201-0208	GN	Gino Spoccia	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene likely to be removed from Committees
20210201-0208	GN	Griffin Connolly	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Dems move forward to remove Taylor Greene
20210201-0208	GN	James Crump	Trump's women	Tuberville fails to condemn Taylor Greene
20210201-0208	GN	?	The def/viant woman	Taylor Greene versus Cheney
20210201-0208	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	McCarthy criticized for not condemning Taylor Greene
20210201-0208	GN	Graeme Massie	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene refuses to apologise
20210201-0208	GN	Gino Spoccia	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene House speech in full
20210201-0208	GN	Griffin Connolly	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	GOP refuses to remove Taylor Greene Committees
20210201-0208	GN	Chris Riotta	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Bush condemns Taylor Greene
20210201-0208	GN	Alex Woodward	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	House Dems removed Taylor Greene Committees

20210201-0208	GN	James Crump	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene calls to be reinstated to Committees
20210201-0208	GN	Griffin Connolly	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	GOP threatens retaliation over Taylor Greene
20210201-0208	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene hypocrite for AOC attacks
20210201-0208	GN	Sean O'Grady	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	GOP threatens retaliation over Taylor Greene
20210201-0208	GN	Louise Hall	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene sponsors ban on BLM & Pride flags
20210208-0215	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	al-Hathloul released
20210208-0215	PF	Bel Trew	Women as victims	al-Hathloul released
20210208-0215	PF	Bel Trew	The defiant woman	al-Hathloul released
20210208-0215	PF	Bel Trew	Women as victims	al-Hathloul released
20210208-0215	PF	Bel Trew	The defiant woman	al-Hathloul released
20210208-0215	GN	AP news press	The defiant woman	Miller name removed from same-sex custody dispute
20210208-0215	GN	Vincent Wood	Women as victims	Man found guilty of murder of Libby Squire
20210208-0215	GN	Matt Mathers	Women as victims	Man sentenced for murder of Libby Squire
20210208-0215	GN	Adam Forrest	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210208-0215	GN	Andrew Buncombe	The rise of white nationalism	DeGette makes case for impeachment
20210208-0215	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Mace shut down for impeachment claims
20210208-0215	GN	Andrew Buncombe	The RW woman (+): the defiant woman	GOP Beutler votes to impeach 45
20210208-0215	GN	Griffin Connolly	The RW woman (+): the defiant woman	GOP Beutler votes to impeach 45

20210215-0222	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Fancelli major donor to Capitol coup attempt
20210215-0222	GN	AP news press	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Konald recruited to Proud Boys for Capitol coup
20210215-0222	GN	AP news press	SWL	Pelosi calls for bipartisan investigation Capitol coup
20210215-0222	GN	Kate Ng	Mother protector	Longfield raises concerns about SM and teens
20210215-0222	GN	Zoe Tidman	Mother protector	Longfield highlights negative impact on children C19
20210215-0222	PF	Shweta Sharma	Me too: the defiant woman	Ramani wins defamation case
20210215-0222	PF	Rituparna Chatterjee	Me too: the defiant woman	Ramani wins defamation case
20210215-0222	GN	Joe Sommerlad	Women as victims	Odey sexual assault accusation
20210215-0222	GN	Adam Forrest	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210215-0222	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene wants troops in schools
20210215-0222	GN	James Crump	The defiant woman	Woman flies anti-Trump banner near his home
20210222-0301	GN	AP news press	Me Too	Historical rape allegations AUS minister
20210222-0301	GN	Katie Shepherd	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Woman arrested RE Capitol coup investigation
20210222-0301	GN	Louise Hall	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Oath Keeper member charged Capitol coup
20210222-0301	GN	Shweta Sharma	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Woman arrested RE Capitol coup investigation
20210222-0301	GN	Griffin Connolly	SWL	Police: Mendoza account Capitol coup
20210222-0301	GN	Alex Woodward	SWL	Capitol police chief account of coup attempt
20210222-0301	GN	AP news press	SWL	Capitol police chief account of coup attempt

20210222-0301	GN	AP news press	Me Too	Boylan accuses Cuomo of sexual harassment
20210222-0301	GN	Danielle Zoellner	Me Too	Boylan accuses Cuomo of sexual harassment
20210222-0301	PF	Justin Vallejo	Me Too	Boylan accuses Cuomo of sexual harassment
20210222-0301	GN	AP news press	Me Too	Boylan accuses Cuomo of sexual harassment
20210222-0301	GN	Lizzie Dearden	The Iron Maiden	Patel increases prison sentence for 'smugglers'
20210222-0301	GN	Sam Hancock	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210222-0301	GN	Adam Forrest	Power battle	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Chiara Giodarno	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The deviant woman	No 10 denies Symonds influence
20210222-0301	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The target	No 10 denies Symonds influence
20210222-0301	PF	Griffin Connolly	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene transphobic sign in Congress
20210222-0301	PF	Justin Vallejo	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene transphobic sign in Congress
20210222-0301	GN	Josh Marcus	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene transphobic sign in Congress
20210222-0301	PF	Justin Vallejo	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene transphobic sign in Congress
20210301-0308	GN	Namita Singh	Agents of patriarchy	Reynolds response Higgins rape allegations
20210301-0308	PF	AP news press	Me Too	Historical rape allegations AUS minister
20210301-0308	PF	Jane Merrick	The misogynist establishment	Women in power face bias
20210301-0308	PF	AP news press	The misogynoir establishment	Black women leaders in Vermont face bias

20210301-0308	PF	Stella Creasy	Women are oppressed	Mothers negatively impacted C19
20210301-0308	PF	Laura Bates	Women are oppressed	Women negatively impacted C19
20210301-0308	PF	Graeme Massie	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210301-0308	PF	AP news press	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210301-0308	PF	Gino Spoccia	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210301-0308	PF	Gustaf Kilander	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210301-0308	PF	AP news press	Women failing women	Gillibrand fails to call for Cuomo resignation
20210301-0308	PF	Graig Graziosi	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210301-0308	PF	AP news press	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210301-0308	PF	? (i)	The target	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210301-0308	PF	Shweta Sharma	Trans people as victims	S Korea trans soldier dies
20210301-0308	PF	Kate Ng	Trans people as victims	Trans Muslim woman receiving death threats MAL
20210301-0308	GN	Ella Glover	Women as victims	Zaghari-Ratcliffe prison sentence comes to end
20210301-0308	GN	Tom Batchelor	Women as victims	Zaghari-Ratcliffe prison sentence comes to end
20210301-0308	GN	Kim Sengupta	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe prison sentence comes to end
20210308-0315	GN	AP news press	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210308-0315	GN	AP news press	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210308-0315	PF	Maya Oppenheim	The struggling working mum	Working mums' shoulder childcare burden
20210308-0315	PF	Eleanor Sly	Women are oppressed	1/4 women and girls suffer domestic violence
20210308-0315	PF	Lizzie Dearden	Women are oppressed	Low rape conviction rate
20210308-0315	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Women torn between work and fam	Women 2X likely quit jobs due to caring responsibilities

20210308-0315	PF	AP news press	The target	Female firefighters face discrimination USA
20210308-0315	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The defiant woman	Markle Oprah interview
20210308-0315	GN	Adam Forrest	The target	Royals using Markle to distract from Andrew
20210308-0315	GN	Benjamin Butterworth	Who's the crybaby now?	Morgan quits GMB after Markle remarks
20210308-0315	GN	Kate Ng	The embattled (leader)	Queen response to Markle Oprah interview
20210308-0315	GN	Joe Sommerlad	A fall from grace	Maxwell brother interview
20210308-0315	GN	Adam Forrest	The incompetent politician	Equality ministers quit
20210308-0315	GN	Jon Stone	The war on woke	Equality ministers quit
20210308-0315	GN	Kate Ng	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Lizzie Dearden	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Jane Dalton	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Chiara Giordano	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	David Woode	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Lizzie Dearden	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Chiara Giordano	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Chiara Giordano	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Sam Hancock	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Jane Dalton	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Samuel Osborne	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	PF	Lizzie Dearden	The defiant woman	Sarah Everard case: the vigil
20210308-0315	PF	Andrew Woodcock	The defiant woman	Sarah Everard case: the vigil
20210308-0315	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case: the response
20210308-0315	PF	Emily Goddard	The def/viant woman	Sarah Everard case: the response
20210308-0315	PF	Jane Merrick	The defiant woman	Sarah Everard case: the vigil

20210308-0315	PF	Serina Sadhu	The defiant woman	Sarah Everard case: Reclaim the Night
20210308-0315	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case: the response
20210308-0315	GN	Adam Forrest	SWL	Sturgeon: May elections
20210308-0315	GN	Griffin Connolly	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene: C19 Relief Bill
20210308-0315	GN	Oliver O'Connell	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Taylor Greene: C19 Relief Bill
20210308-0315	GN	Graig Graziosi	Trump's women	Taylor Greene vs Congress
20210308-0315	PF	AP news press	Women beating the system	Gates' gender equality fund (IWD)
20210308-0315	PF	AP news press	Women beating the system	Zimbabwean female truck drivers (IWD)
20210308-0315	PF	Namita Singh	Women beating the system	Indian women join the farmers' protests (IWD)
20210308-0315	GN	Liam James	Women as victims	Zaghari-Ratcliffe prison sentence comes to end
20210308-0315	GN	Mayank Aggarwal	Women as victims	Zaghari-Ratcliffe prison sentence comes to end
20210308-0315	GN	Daisy Lester	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe prison sentence comes to end
20210315-0322	PF	AP news press	Women (of colour) as victims	Atlanta terrorist attack
20210315-0322	GN	Graig Graziosi	Women as victims	Atlanta terrorist attack
20210315-0322	GN	AP news press	Women (of colour) as victims	Atlanta terrorist attack
20210315-0322	GN	Chris Riotta	Women (of colour) as victims	Atlanta terrorist attack
20210315-0322	PF	Josh Marcus	Women (of colour) as victims	Atlanta terrorist attack
20210315-0322	PF	Alex Woodward	Women (of colour) as victims	Atlanta terrorist attack



20210315-0322	GN	Justin Vallejo	The creep	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210315-0322	PF	Danielle Zoellner	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210315-0322	PF	AP news press	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210315-0322	PF	AP news press	The misogynist establishment	AUS gender discrimination protests
20210315-0322	PF	Matt Mathers	The misogynist establishment	Police and women's safety (Everard)
20210315-0322	PF	Maya Oppenheim	The misogynist establishment	Police and women's safety (Everard)
20210315-0322	PF	Kate Devlin	The misogynist establishment	Police and women's safety (Everard)
20210315-0322	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The def/viant woman	Policing of Everard vigil
20210315-0322	GN	Serina Sadhu	Women as victims	Policing of Everard vigil
20210315-0322	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The embattled politician	Policing of Everard vigil
20210315-0322	PF	Andrew Woodcock	Male chauvinist pigs	PM refuses to regret previous sexism (Everard)
20210315-0322	PF	Jane Dalton	Women as victims	NHS and women's safety (Everard)
20210315-0322	GN	Kate Devlin	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210315-0322	GN	Kate Devlin	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210315-0322	GN	Chris Green	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210315-0322	GN	Kate Devlin	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210315-0322	GN	Richard Vaughan	The Iron Maiden	von der Leyen threatens to block vaccine exports
20210322-0329	PF	Shweta Sharma	Me Too	Laming accused of harassment AUS
20210322-0329	GN	Louise Hall	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Boebert and guns
20210322-0329	GN	James Crump	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Boebert and guns
20210322-0329	GN	Justin Vallejo	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Boebert and guns

20210322-0329	GN	Justin Vallejo	Women as victims	Heslop disappearance
20210322-0329	GN	Rob Merrick	The vindicated woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210322-0329	GN	Ashley Cowburn	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210322-0329	GN	Rob Merrick	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210322-0329	GN	Rob Merrick	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210322-0329	GN	AP news press	The defiant woman	Colorado baker refuses to bake cake for trans woman
20210322-0329	GN	Nathan Place	The defiant woman	Colorado baker refuses to bake cake for trans woman
20210322-0329	GN	Cleo Skopeliti	Trans rights are human rights	Trans people to be protected from conversion therapy
20210322-0329	GN	Gustaf Kilander	Trans people are discriminated against	Trans student wins lawsuit RE changing rooms
20210322-0329	GN	Cleo Skopeliti	Trans rights are under threat	Court rules parents can consent to puberty blockers
20210329-0405	GN	James Crump	Women (of colour) as victims	65 y/o Asian woman victim of hate crime
20210329-0405	GN	Shweta Sharma	Women (of colour) as victims	65 y/o Asian woman victim of hate crime
20210329-0405	GN	AP news press	Women (of colour) as victims	65 y/o Asian woman victim of hate crime
20210329-0405	GN	Joe Sommerlad	The def/viant woman	Arcuri and Johnson affair
20210329-0405	GN	Namita Singh	Agents of patriarchy	AUS parliament culture: McQueen comments
20210329-0405	GN	AP news press	The master manipulator	Maxwell new charges
20210329-0405	GN	Gustaf Kilander	The master manipulator	Maxwell new charges
20210329-0405	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Sex abuse in education: Miller
20210329-0405	PF	Samuel Osborne	Women as victims	Sex abuse in education
20210329-0405	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Sex abuse in education
20210329-0405	PF	Zoe Tidman	Women as victims	Sex abuse in education

20210329-0405	GN	Jon Stone	SWL	Sturgeon: May elections
20210329-0405	GN	Adam Forrest	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210329-0405	PF	AP news press	Nonbinary people are people too	Nonbinary New Yorkers sue state for discrimination
20210405-0412	GN	Nadine White	Women of colour as victims	Evidence Joel on her son's disappearance and death
20210405-0412	GN	Nadine White	Women of colour as victims	Evidence Joel on her son's disappearance and death
20210405-0412	GN	Zoe Tidman	Women of colour as victims	Evidence Joel on her son's disappearance and death
20210405-0412	GN	Zoe Tidman	Women of colour as victims	Evidence Joel on her son's disappearance and death
20210405-0412	GN	Graeme Massie	The deviant woman	Maxwell jail conditions
20210405-0412	GN	AP news press	The deviant woman	Maxwell jail conditions
20210405-0412	GN	AP news press	The deviant woman	Maxwell new charges
20210405-0412	GN	Maroosha Muzaffar	The RW woman: trump's women	Caitlyn Jenner advised by ex-Trump adviser
20210405-0412	GN	Liam James	Trans rights are under threat	POL judge identifies trans girl on Twitter
20210405-0412	PF	AP news press	Feminism, interrupted	Von der Leyen: sofagate
20210405-0412	PF	Adam Forrest	Feminism, interrupted	Von der Leyen: sofagate
20210405-0412	PF	Adam Forrest	Feminism, interrupted	Von der Leyen: sofagate
20210412-0419	GN	Chiara Giordano	The target	Arlene Foster sues Jessen over Tweet
20210412-0419	GN	Chiara Giordano	The target	Arlene Foster sues Jessen over Tweet
20210412-0419	GN	May Bulman	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus asylum seekers
20210412-0419	GN	May Bulman	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus asylum seekers
20210412-0419	GN	Gino Spoccia	The defiant woman	AOC on Wright murder
20210412-0419	GN	Gustaf Kilander	The devoted mother	Wright's mother speaks out on murder
20210412-0419	GN	Andrew Buncombe	The devoted mother	Wright's mother speaks out on murder

20210412-0419	GN	Andrew Buncombe	The devoted mother	Wright's mother speaks out on murder
20210412-0419	GN	Justin Vallejo	The devoted mother	Wright's mother speaks out on murder
20210412-0419	GN	Shweta Sharma	The deviant woman	Kim Potter: murderer of Daunte Wright
20210412-0419	GN	Andrew Buncombe	The deviant woman	Kim Potter: murderer of Daunte Wright
20210419-0426	AF	Justin Vallejo	The Angry Black Woman	Maxine Waters comments on Chauvin trial
20210419-0426	GN	Danielle Zoellner	The dignified woman	Chauvin ex-wife
20210419-0426	GN	Laura Vozzella	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Chase condemns Chauvin verdict
20210419-0426	GN	Daisy Dunne	The devoted mother	Ella's Law: Roasmund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah
20210419-0426	GN	Daisy Dunne	The defiant woman	Ella's Law: Roasmund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah
20210419-0426	GN	Tom Bawden	The devoted mother	Ella's Law: Roasmund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah
20210419-0426	GN	AP news press	Mother protector	Jill Biden visits Navajo Nation
20210419-0426	GN	AP news press	Mother protector	Jill Biden visits Navajo Nation
20210419-0426	GN	Alex Woodward	B(W)LM	Ma'Khia murder by police USA
20210419-0426	GN	Farnoush Amiri	The Angry Black Woman	Ma'Khia murder by police USA
20210419-0426	GN	Graeme Massie	The Angry Black Woman	Ma'Khia murder by police USA
20210419-0426	GN	James Crump	Progressives rise up!	Ma'Khia murder by police USA
20210419-0426	PF	Ella Glover	The misogynist establishment	Spy cops: Wilson
20210419-0426	PF	Vincent Wood	The misogynist establishment	Spy cops
20210419-0426	GN	Jon Stone	The def/viant woman	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210419-0426	GN	AP news press	Trans rights are human rights	North Carolina trans youth ban
20210419-0426	GN	David Taintor	The def/viant woman	Caitlyn Jenner run for governor CALI

20210419-0426	GN	Louise Hall	The def/viant woman	Caitlyn Jenner run for governor CALI
20210419-0426	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The incompetent politician	Truss trade deal with AUS
20210426-0503	GN	Ashley Cowburn	Weak woman leader	Foster resigns
20210426-0503	PF	Nigel Morris	The embattled politician	Foster resigns
20210426-0503	GN	Peter Stubley	Women as victims	Julia James' murder
20210426-0503	PF	Maya Oppenheim	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus asylum seekers
20210426-0503	GN	May Bulman	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus the Windrush victims
20210426-0503	GN	AP news press	Women are oppressed	Von der Leyen: sofagate
20210426-0503	GN	Mayank Aggarwal	Women are oppressed	Von der Leyen: sofagate
20210426-0503	GN	Ashley Cowburn	SWL	Sturgeon: May elections
20210426-0503	GN	Andy Gregory	SWL	Sturgeon: May elections
20210426-0503	GN	Bel Trew	Women as victims	Zaghari-Ratcliffe sentenced to one more year
20210426-0503	GN	Ashley Cowburn	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe sentenced to one more year
20210426-0503	GN	Kate Ng	Women as victims	Zaghari-Ratcliffe sentenced to one more year
20210426-0503	GN	Chantal da Silva	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe sentenced to one more year
20210426-0503	GN	Oliver O'Connell	Trans rights are under threat	Father arrested speaking against trans youth ban
20210503-0510	GN	Sam Hancock	She has it all	Melinda Gates divorce
20210503-0510	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Divorce and C19
20210503-0510	GN	Clara Hill	Trump's women	GOP push for Stefanik to replace Cheney
20210503-0510	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman: the defiant woman	GOP push for Stefanik to replace Cheney
20210503-0510	GN	Alex Woodward	The RW woman: the def/viant women	GOP push for Stefanik to replace Cheney

20210503-0510	GN	AP news press	The RW woman: the def/viant women	GOP push for Stefanik to replace Cheney
20210503-0510	GN	AP news press	Trump's women	GOP push for Stefanik to replace Cheney
20210503-0510	PF	Colin Drury	The defiant woman	Joanne Anderson mayor Liverpool
20210503-0510	GN	Sam Hancock	Women as victims	Julia James' murder
20210503-0510	GN	Zoe Tidman	Women as victims	Julia James' murder
20210503-0510	GN	Nigel Morris	The target	Dodds/Rayner reshuffled
20210503-0510	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The target	Dodds/Rayner reshuffled
20210503-0510	GN	Kate Devlin	The cautious politician	Sturgeon: May elections
20210503-0510	GN	Chiara Giordano	The defiant woman vs the deviant woman	Sturgeon: May elections
20210503-0510	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210503-0510	GN	Chris Green	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210510-0517	GN	Akshita Jain	The LW woman: the defiant woman	AOC on Israel/Palestine
20210510-0517	GN	Clara Hill	The LW woman: the defiant woman	AOC on Israel/Palestine
20210510-0517	GN	Oliver O'Connell	The RW woman (+): the defiant woman	Cheney removed from leadership role by GOP
20210510-0517	GN	Oliver O'Connell	The RW woman (+): the defiant woman	Cheney removed from leadership role by GOP
20210510-0517	PF	Gustaf Kilander	The RW woman (+): the defiant woman	Cheney removed from leadership role by GOP
20210510-0517	GN	Gino Spoccia	The RW woman (+): the defiant woman	Cheney removed from leadership role by GOP
20210510-0517	GN	Oliver O'Connell	The RW woman (+): the defiant woman	Cheney removed from leadership role by GOP
20210510-0517	GN	Andrew Buncombe	The RW woman: the def/viant women	Cheney removed from leadership role by GOP

20210510-0517	GN	Gustaf Kilander	The RW woman (+): the defiant woman	Cheney removed from leadership role by GOP
20210510-0517	GN	Danielle Zoellner	The RW woman: the def/viant women	Cheney removed from leadership role by GOP
20210510-0517	GN	Oliver O'Connell	The RW woman (-): trump's women	Stefanik replaces Cheney
20210510-0517	GN	AP news press	The RW woman (-): trump's women	Stefanik replaces Cheney
20210510-0517	GN	Nathan Place	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	MTG attacks the Squad over Palestine
20210510-0517	GN	Graeme Massie	The defiant woman vs the deviant woman	MTG attacks AOC in Congress
20210510-0517	GN	Gino Spoccia	The defiant woman vs the deviant woman	MTG attacks AOC in Congress
20210510-0517	GN	Graig Graziosi	The deviant woman	Mother of God cult leader death
20210510-0517	GN	Graig Graziosi	The deviant woman	Mother of God cult leader death
20210510-0517	GN	Graig Graziosi	The deviant woman	Mother of God cult leader death
20210510-0517	GN	Adam Forrest	The def/viant woman	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210510-0517	GN	Chris Green	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210510-0517	GN	Sam Hancock	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210510-0517	GN	Adam Forrest	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210510-0517	GN	AP news press	Trans rights are human rights	Biden reverses Trump era anti-trans discrimination
20210510-0517	GN	Gustaf Kilander	The incompetent politician	Caitlyn Jenner run for governor CALI
20210510-0517	GN	AP news press	The incompetent politician	Caitlyn Jenner run for governor CALI
20210517-0524	PF	AP news press	Feminism, interrupted	Abortion law Indiana, USA
20210517-0524	PF	Claire Cain Miller	Feminism, interrupted	Abortion law, USA
20210517-0524	GN	Lizzie Dearden	The incompetent politician	Priti Patel vs asylum seekers
20210517-0524	GN	Jon Stone	The Iron Maiden	Priti Patel and Brexit

20210517-0524	GN	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Rape victims' special measures in court
20210517-0524	PF	Shweta Sharma	Women as survivors	Smith rape case, USA
20210517-0524	PF	Oliver O'Connell	Women as victims	Bouchard statutory rape, USA
20210517-0524	GN	AP news press	Women as victims	Masterson rape case, USA
20210517-0524	PF	Shweta Sharma	The misogynist establishment	Tejpal rape case, IND
20210517-0524	GN	Ashley Cowburn	The embattled politician	Truss trade deal with AUS
20210517-0524	GN	Rob Merrick	The embattled politician	Truss trade deal with AUS
20210517-0524	GN	Sean O'Grady	The desperate woman	Truss trade deal with AUS
20210517-0524	GN	Rob Merrick	The embattled politician	Truss trade deal with AUS
20210524-0531	GN	Samuel Osborne	How the other half live	Johnson/Symonds wedding
20210524-0531	GN	Oliver O'Connell	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	MTG Holocaust comments
20210524-0531	GN	Danielle Zoellner	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	MTG attacks AOC in Congress
20210524-0531	GN	Alex Woodward	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	MTG Holocaust comments
20210524-0531	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	MTG Holocaust comments
20210524-0531	GN	Alex Woodward	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	MTG Holocaust comments
20210524-0531	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	MTG Holocaust comments
20210524-0531	GN	Nathan Place	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	MTG Holocaust comments
20210524-0531	GN	Lizzie Dearden	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus asylum seekers
20210524-0531	GN	Rob Merrick	The Iron Maiden	Patel Bahrain links
20210524-0531	GN	AP news press	Trans rights are under threat	ACLU challenges Arkansas trans youth healthcare ban
20210531-0607	GN	Adam Forrest	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus asylum seekers



20210531-0607	GN	Rob Merrick	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus asylum seekers
20210531-0607	GN	Hannah Natanson	Crybabies and snowflakes	Teacher refuses to respect student pronouns USA
20210531-0607	GN	Leonie Chao-Fong	Women as victims	Man murders woman in Travelodge
20210607-0614	GN	John Bowden	The embattled politician	Harris on immigration
20210607-0614	GN	AP news press	SWL	Harris on immigration
20210607-0614	GN	Louise Hall	The defiant woman vs the deviant woman	Harris on immigration
20210607-0614	GN	John Bowden	The embattled politician	Harris on immigration
20210607-0614	GN	Michael Day	The Iron Maiden	Harris on immigration
20210607-0614	GN	Alex Woodward	SWL	Harris on immigration
20210607-0614	GN	AP news press	SWL	Harris on immigration
20210607-0614	GN	Danielle Zoellner	The deviant woman	AOC defends Omar comments on Israel
20210607-0614	GN	Louise Hall	The deviant woman	Omar comments on Israel
20210607-0614	GN	Shweta Sharma	The deviant woman	Omar comments on Israel
20210607-0614	PF	Joe Middleton	The incompetent politician	Cressida Dick defends the Met after Everard case
20210607-0614	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Women as victims	Male violence against women/girls (Everard case)
20210607-0614	GN	Samuel Osborne	Progressives rise up!	Oxford students remove picture of queen
20210607-0614	GN	Andrew Woodcock	Progressives rise up!	Oxford students remove picture of queen
20210607-0614	GN	Andrew Woodcock	Progressives rise up!	Oxford students remove picture of queen
20210607-0614	GN	Gino Spoccia	She [does] it all	Queen and presidents' meetings
20210607-0614	GN	Maroosha Muzaffar	SWL	Queen and presidents' meetings
20210607-0614	GN	Robert Mendick	SWL	Queen and presidents' meetings

20210607-0614	GN	Leonie Chao-Fong	Trans rights are dangerous	Forstater wins appeal over transphobic tweets
20210614-0621	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	MTG attempts to fire Fauci
20210614-0621	GN	Gino Spoccia	Trump's women	Lara Trump attacks Harris on immigration
20210614-0621	GN	AP news press	SWL	Harris on immigration
20210614-0621	GN	AP news press	LGBT rights are under threat	Protests in HUN against anti-LGBT legislation
20210614-0621	PF	Gustaf Kilander	The trailblazer	Roem is the first trans state legislator USA
20210614-0621	GN	Andrew Woodcock	The defiant woman vs the deviant woman	Thornberry challenges Truss on AUS trade deal
20210614-0621	GN	Adam Forrest	The has been	Foster resigns as First Minister during NI language row
20210614-0621	GN	Adam Forrest	The def/viant woman	McDonald vs Poots and NI language law
20210614-0621	GN	Alastair Jamieson	The embattled politician	McDonald vs Poots and NI language law
20210614-0621	GN	Graig Graziosi	Trump's women	Blanchard faking Trump's endorsement
20210614-0621	GN	Graig Graziosi	The RW woman (-): the deviant woman	Boebert peddles Q-Anon theory
20210614-0621	GN	John Bowden	Trump's women	Harrington chose as Trump's spokeswoman
20210614-0621	GN	Justin Vallejo	Trump's women	Trump backs Tshibaka over Murkowski
20210621-0628	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Feminism, interrupted	Abortion, NI
20210621-0628	GN	AP news press	Women beating the system	Abortion, NC USA
20210621-0628	PF	Ella Glover	Women beating the system	Abortion, GIB
20210621-0628	PF	Maya Oppenheim	Feminism, interrupted	Google algorithm blocking abortion site

20210621-0628	GN	Ashley Cowburn	The sleazebag and the Other Woman	Hancock/Coladangelo affair
20210621-0628	GN	John Bowden	The embattled politician	Harris on immigration
20210621-0628	GN	Andrew Buncombe	The embattled politician	Harris on immigration
20210621-0628	GN	Chantal da Silva	The embattled politician	Harris on immigration
20210621-0628	GN	Maroosha Muzaffar	Trans rights are human rights	Biden admin puts GCS on Veteran's medical insurance
20210621-0628	GN	Mayank Aggarwal	Trans people are brave	Yokoyama comes out as trans
20210621-0628	GN	AP news press	The dawn of a new era	Biden celebrates Pride month
20210621-0628	GN	Alex Woodward	The LW woman: the deviant woman	Sinema support of filibuster
20210621-0628	GN	John Bowden	The LW woman: the deviant woman	Sinema support of filibuster
20210621-0628	GN	Graig Graziosi	The LW woman: the deviant woman	Sinema support of filibuster
20210628-0705	GN	Jon Stone	Love wins	Kim Leadbeater wins Bately by-election
20210628-0705	GN	Lizzie Dearden	Love wins	Kim Leadbeater wins Bately by-election
20210628-0705	GN	Kate Devlin	The dawn of a new era	Kim Leadbeater wins Bately by-election
20210628-0705	PF	Graeme Massie	Women as victims	Cosby released from prison
20210628-0705	GN	Graeme Massie	Women as victims	Cosby released from prison
20210628-0705	GN	AP news press	Women as victims	Cosby released from prison
20210628-0705	PF	AP news press	Me Too	Cosby released from prison
20210628-0705	GN	Hugo Gye	The opinionated woman	Vine/Gove separation
20210628-0705	GN	Gino Spoccia	The dawn of a new era	NYC GRA
20210628-0705	GN	Adam Forrest	Progressives rise up!	FR legalises IVF for lesbians and single women
20210628-0705	GN	Celine Wadhwa	Trans women are not real women	Judge rules lawful for trans women in F prisons
20210628-0705	GN	Leo Cendrowicz	The Iron Maiden	Merkel wants to block UK tourists C19

20210628-0705	GN	Hugo Gye	SWL	Merkel wants to block UK tourists C19
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## Appendix 2: Articles collected from *The Guardian/Observer*

<b>Date range</b>	<b>FAS</b>	<b>Journalist 1</b>	<b>Discourse</b>	<b>Subject</b>
20200928-1005	GN	Guardian staff and agency	(B(W)LM)	Breonna Taylor
20200928-1005	GN	Guardian staff and agency	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20200928-1005	GN	Stephanie Kirchgaessner	RW woman: agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett
20200928-1005	GN	Matthew Weaver	Reckless woman	C19: Ferrier scandal (SNP)
20200928-1005	GN	Libby Brooks	Reckless woman	C19: Ferrier scandal (SNP)
20200928-1005	GN	Diane Taylor	The defiant woman	Asylum seeking wins claim
20200928-1005	GN	Sam Levin	Trans people are people too	Transcestors
20200928-1005	GN	Hannah Summers	Trans rights are under threat	C19: Panama sex-segregated measures
20201005-1012	GN	Stephanie Kirchgaessner	RW woman: agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett
20201005-1012	PF	Sam Levin	Trans people are people too	Trans prison activists
20201005-1012	GN	Adam Gabbatt	Strong woman leader (SWL)	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201005-1012	GN	Lauren Gambino	SWL	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201005-1012	GN	David Smith	SWL	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201005-1012	GN	Miranda Bryant	Lock her up! The rise of male supremacy	Whitmer kidnapping plot
20201005-1012	GN	Libby Brooks	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201012-1019	GN	Charlotte Graham-McLay	The Iron Maiden	Judith Collins: the anti-Ardern
20201012-1019	PF	Eleanor Ainge Roy	SWL	Ardern wins election 2020
20201012-1019	PF	Eleanor Ainge Roy	SWL	Ardern wins election 2020

20201012-1019	PF	Guardian staff and agency'	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20201012-1019	PF	Lauren Gambino	RW woman: Trump's women	Coney Barrett
20201012-1019	GN	Stephanie Kirchgaessner	RW woman: agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett
20201012-1019	GN	Lauren Gambino	RW woman: Trump's women	Coney Barrett
20201012-1019	GN	David Smith	RW woman: Trump's women	Coney Barrett
20201019-1026	GN	Guardian staff and agency'	B(W)LM	Breonna Taylor
20201019-1026	GN	Martin Pengelly	RW woman: check your privilege	Ivanka Trump
20201019-1026	GN	Victoria Bekiempis	The master manipulator	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201026-1102	GN	Stephanie Kirchgaessner	RW woman: agents of patriarchy	Coney Barrett
20201026-1102	GN	Martin Pengelly	RW woman: Trump's women	Melania Trump returns after COVID
20201026-1102	PF	Katelyn Burns	Trans rights are under threat	Repeal of ACA would affect trans rights
20201026-1102	PF	Carmela Fonbuena	SWL	UN peacekeeping
20201102-1109	PF	Julia Carrie Wonf	SWL	Biden-Harris 2020 victory
20201102-1109	PF	Daniel Strauss	SWL	Kamala Harris VP-Elect
20201102-1109	PF	Arwa Mahdawi	SWL	Kamala Harris VP-Elect
20201109-1116	GN	Anne Davies	Me Too	AUS bonk ban
20201109-1116	GN	Katherine Murphy	Me Too	AUS bonk ban
20201109-1116	PF	Namita Singh	Male chauvinist pigs	AUS bonk ban
20201109-1116	GN	Daniel Boffey	LGBTQI+ rights are human rights	EU rules to protect LGBTQ+ rights
20201109-1116	PF	Helen Pidd	Women as victims	Peter Sutcliffe death
20201109-1116	PF	Alexandra Topping	Women as victims	Peter Sutcliffe death
20201116-1123	PF	Alexandra Topping	Women as victims	Gender pay gap

20201116-1123	GN	Valeria Fernández	Trans rights are under threat	LGBTQ+ abuse in ICE custody
20201116-1123	GN	Clia Skopeliti	LGBTQ+ rights are under threat	HUN bans LGBTQ+ adoption
20201116-1123	GN	Molly Blackall	The Iron Maiden	Patel bullying report
20201116-1123	GN	Owen Bowcott	Female rivalry	Wagatha Christie
20201116-1123	GN	Archie Bland	Female rivalry	Wagatha Christie
20201123-1130	GN	David Smith	RW woman	Cammack election: women in the GOP
20201123-1130	GN	Owen Bowcott	The deviant woman	Shemima Begum
20201123-1130	PF	Amrit Dhillon	Trans people are people too	Trans Mum in India
20201130-1207	GN	Josh Taylor	Love wins	Marriage equality AUS
20201130-1207	GN	Severin Carrell	The master manipulator	Sturgeon & NHS
20201130-1207	PF	Annie Kelly	Women as victims	Trafficking UK
20201130-1207	PF	Nicola Kelly	Women as victims	Trafficking UK
20201207-1214	GN	Severin Carrell	The embattled politician	SNP rebels challenge Sturgeon
20201207-1214	GN	Severin Carrell	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201207-1214	GN	Ed Pilkington	Lock her up! The rise of male supremacy	Far-right groups threaten officials USA
20201207-1214	GN	Oliver Laughland	RW woman (-): Trump's women	Trump loyalists may lose Georgia
20201214-1221	GN	Alexandra Villarreal	Women as victims	Botched raid targets Chicago woman
20201214-1221	GN	Martin Pengelly	The defiant woman	WSJ op-ed on Jill Biden
20201228-20210104	PF	Patrick Wintour	Lock her up! Patriarchal tyranny	al-Hathloul sentenced
20201228-20210104	PF	Haroon Siddique	The rise of white nationalism	Head of Runnymede Trust criticises govt
20201228-20210104	PF	Nicola Kelly	Non-binary people are people too	First NB person granted asylum in UK
20210104-0111	PF	Amy Booth	My Body My Rights	Argentina legalises abortion
20210104-0111	GN	Ben Doherty	Trump's women	Babbitt Capitol coup
20210104-0111	GN	Lois Beckett	The deviant woman	Babbitt Capitol coup

20210104-0111	GN	Peter Beaumont	The defiant woman	DeVos Capitol coup
20210111-0118	PF	Alexandra Topping	The struggling working mum	Working mums
20210111-0118	PF	Hannah Summers	B(W)LM	Black mothers' mortality rate
20210111-0118	GN	Martin Pengelly	The master manipulator	Melania Trump
20210111-0118	GN	Kari Paul	The defiant woman	Capitol coup
20210111-0118	PF	Helen Sullivan	Trans women are women	AUS women's-only pool excludes trans w
20210111-0118	GN	Severin Carrell	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210118-0125	GN	Jessica Elgot	Progressives rise up!	Nandy praises Biden's Democrats
20210118-0125	PF	Libby Brooks	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210125-0201	PF	Michael Safi	The dawn of a new era	Biden repeals global gag rule
20210125-0201	PF	Libby Brooks	Trans rights are human rights	Sturgeon pledges SNP support to trans
20210125-0201	GN	Severin Carrell	The deviant woman	Cherry sacked from SNP frontbench
20210125-0201	GN	David Smith	Trans rights are human rights	Biden reverses trans military ban
20210125-0201	PF	Paul Karp	Trans rights are under threat	O'Brien hands back AO in trans solidarity
20210125-0201	PF	Ben Doherty	The def/viant woman	Suu Kyi Myanmar coup
20210201-0208	PF	Guardian staff and agency'	Women as survivors	AOC comes out as survivor
20210201-0208	GN	Lauren Gambino	The def/viant woman	Taylor Greene versus Cheney
20210208-0215	PF	Martin Choloy	The defiant woman	al-Hathloul released
20210208-0215	GN	Alex Mistlin	Women as victims	Libby Squire
20210208-0215	GN	Alex Mistlin	Women as victims	Libby Squire
20210215-0222	GN	Christopher Knaus	Women as victims	Morrison deals with Higgins rape allegations
20210215-0222	PF	Katherine Murphy	Me Too	Higgins rape allegations
20210215-0222	GN	Katherine Murphy	Me Too	Higgins rape allegations



20210215-0222	GN	Matthew Weaver	Women as victims	Odey sexual assault accusation
20210222-0301	GN	Paul Karp	Me Too	Historical rape allegations AUS
20210222-0301	GN	Katherine Murphy	Women as victims	Historical rape allegations AUS
20210222-0301	GN	Amy Remeikis	Me Too	Historical rape allegations AUS
20210222-0301	GN	Edward Helmore	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment
20210222-0301	PF	Christopher Knaus	Me Too	Higgins rape allegations
20210222-0301	GN	Christopher Knaus	Me Too	Higgins rape allegations
20210222-0301	GN	Christopher Knaus	Me Too	Higgins rape allegations
20210222-0301	GN	Christopher Knaus	Me Too	Higgins rape allegations
20210222-0301	GN	Katherine Murphy	Me Too	Higgins rape allegations
20210222-0301	PF	Mark Townsend	Women as victims	Patel U-turn
20210222-0301	GN	Severin Carrell	SWL	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Severin Carrell	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	PF	Miranda Bryant	The deviant woman	Taylor Greene transphobic sign
20210301-0308	PF	Katherine Murphy	Me Too	Higgins rape allegations
20210301-0308	GN	?	The embattled politician	Higgins rape allegations
20210301-0308	PF	Katherine Murphy	Me Too	Historical rape allegations AUS
20210301-0308	PF	Paul Karp	Me Too	Historical rape allegations AUS
20210301-0308	PF	Katherine Murphy	Women are oppressed	AUS women worse impacted by C19
20210301-0308	PF	Richard Luscombe	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment
20210301-0308	GN	Severin Carrell	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210301-0308	GN	Libby Brooks	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210308-0315	PF	Alexandra Topping	Women are oppressed	Women's wellbeing greater hit by C19
20210308-0315	PF	Liz Ford	Women are oppressed	Domestic violence
20210308-0315	PF	Annie Kelly	Me Too	Female factory workers sexual abuse IND

20210308-0315	AF	Libby Brooks	Trans rights are dangerous	Scotland Hate Crime Bill
20210308-0315	GN	Ben Quinn	The target	Meghan Markle
20210308-0315	GN	Caroline Davis	The deviant woman	Meghan Markle
20210308-0315	GN	Archie Bland	The defiant woman	Markle Oprah interview
20210308-0315	GN	Molly Blackall	The defiant woman	Markle Oprah interview
20210308-0315	GN	Vikram Dodd	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	PF	Jessica Elgot	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	PF	Jessica Elgot	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	PF	Heather Stewart	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	PF	Alexandra Topping	Feminism, interrupted	Women fear return to 1970s (IWD)
20210308-0315	PF	David Agren	The defiant woman	IWD protests in Mexico turn violent
20210308-0315	PF	Alyx Gorman	Women beating the system	AUS IWD protests
20210308-0315	PF	Anne Davies	Women beating the system	AUS IWD protests
20210308-0315	GN	Aubrey Allegretti	The def/viant woman	Equality ministers quit
20210315-0322	PF	Daniel Hurst	The misogynist establishment	AUS gender discrimination protests
20210315-0322	PF	Katherine Murphy	The misogynist establishment	AUS gender discrimination protests
20210315-0322	PF	Tobi Thomas	The misogynist establishment	Police and women's safety (Everard)
20210315-0322	PF	Maya Wolfe-Robinson	The misogynist establishment	Police and women's safety (Everard)
20210315-0322	PF	Jessica Murray	The misogynist establishment	Police and women's safety (Everard)
20210315-0322	GN	Damien Gayle	The defiant woman	Police and women's safety (Everard)
20210315-0322	PF	Alexandra Topping	Women as victims	Govt and women's safety (Everard)

20210322-0329	PF	Katherine Murphy	Male chauvinist pigs	Allegations of solo sex acts AUS
20210322-0329	GN	Sarah Martin	The embattled politician	Allegations of solo sex acts AUS
20210322-0329	PF	Katherine Murphy	The embattled politician	Higgins rape allegations
20210322-0329	GN	Naaman Zhou	The embattled politician	Johnsen accused raping sex worker AUS
20210322-0329	PF	Melissa Davey	Feminism, interrupted	UN women's equality AUS
20210322-0329	GN	Michael McGowan	The embattled politician	Johnsen accused raping sex worker AUS
20210322-0329	GN	Paul Karp	The master manipulator	Allegations of solo sex acts AUS
20210322-0329	PF	Melissa Davey	Feminism, interrupted	Gender pay gap AUS
20210322-0329	PF	Katherine Murphy	Me Too	Porter and Reynolds to stay in govt (Higgins)
20210322-0329	GN	Paul Karp	Me Too	Laming accused of harassment AUS
20210322-0329	PF	Sarah Martin	Me Too	Allen supports drug testing AUS parliament
20210322-0329	GN	Amy Remeikis	The embattled politician	Laming accused of harassment AUS
20210329-0405	GN	Aubrey Allegretti	The corrupt politician	Arcuri and Johnson affair
20210329-0405	GN	Matthew Weaver	The corrupt politician	Arcuri and Johnson affair
20210329-0405	PF	Katherine Murphy	Me Too	AUS parliament culture
20210329-0405	PF	Katherine Murphy	Agents of patriarchy	AUS parliament culture
20210405-0412	GN	Libby Brooks	SWL	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210405-0412	GN	Guardian staff and agency'	Trans rights are under threat	Arkansas bans gender-affirming surgery for youth
20210412-0419	GN	Rory Carroll	The target	Foster sues Jessen over Tweet
20210412-0419	GN	Diane Taylor	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus asylum seekers
20210412-0419	GN	Mark Townsend	The Iron Maiden	Patel versus asylum seekers
20210412-0419	GN	Libby Brooks	SWL	Sturgeon: May election

20210419-0426	PF	Dan Smith	She does it all	Jill Biden vaccine tour USA
20210419-0426	GN	Alexandra Villarreal	B(W)LM	Ma'Khia murder by police USA
20210419-0426	GN	Adam Gabbatt	B(W)LM	Ma'Khia murder by police USA
20210419-0426	PF	Rob Adams	The misogynist establishment	Spy cops
20210419-0426	PF	Rob Adams	The misogynist establishment	Spy cops
20210419-0426	PF	Rob Adams	The misogynist establishment	Spy cops
20210419-0426	GN	Aubrey Allegretti	The RW woman: Johnson's women	Truss defends Johnson flat refurb
20210426-0503	GN	Diane Taylor	The hostile environment	Boy and mother win case against Home Office
20210426-0503	PF	Daniel Boffey	Women are oppressed	Von der Leyen: sofagate
20210426-0503	GN	Patrick Wintour	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20210503-0510	GN	Guardian staff and agency'	The RW woman: the defiant woman	GOP push for Stefanik to replace Cheney
20210503-0510	GN	David Smith	The target	GOP push for Stefanik to replace Cheney
20210503-0510	GN	Maya Wolfe-Robinson	The trailblazer	Joanne Anderson mayor Liverpool
20210503-0510	GN	Severin Carrell	SWL	Sturgeon: May election victory
20210510-0517	PF	Emmanuel Akinwatu	Trans rights are under threat	2 trans women jailed in Cameroon
20210517-0524	GN	Katherine Murphy	The misogynist establishment	Higgins rape allegations AUS
20210517-0524	GN	Michael McGowan	The misogynist establishment	Porter rape allegations AUS
20210517-0524	GN	Michael McGowan	Agents of patriarchy	Porter rape allegations AUS
20210517-0524	GN	Severin Carrell	SWL	Sturgeon cabinet reshuffle
20210517-0524	GN	Libby Brooks	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210524-0531	GN	Diane Taylor	Women beating the system	Asylum seeker wins claim
20210531-0607	GN	Mark Townsend	Refugees are people too	Patel versus asylum seekers

20210531-0607	AF	Libby Brooks	Trans rights are dangerous	TERF charged
20210607-0614	GN	Alexandra Topping	The incompetent politician	Cressida defends Met after Everard case
20210614-0621	GN	Lizzie Davies	LGBT rights are under threat	Protests in HUN against anti-LGBT legislation
20210614-0621	PF	Sandra Cuffe	LGBT rights are under threat	Murder of 3 LGBTQ+ activists in Guatemala
20210621-0628	GN	?	The sleazebag and the Other Woman	Hancock/Coladangelo affair
20210621-0628	GN	Severin Carrell	The incompetent politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210628-0705	PF	Amanda Holpuch	Women as victims/survivors	Cosby released from prison
20210628-0705	PF	Laura Paddison	Trans rights are human rights	HON death of trans woman
20210628-0705	GN	Haroon Siddique	Trans women are not real women	Judge rules lawful for trans women in F prisons

### Appendix 3: Articles collected from *The Telegraph*

Date range	FAS	Journalist	Discourse	Topic
20200928-1005	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20200928-1005	GN	Harry Yorke	Reckless politician	C19: Ferrier scandal (SNP)
20200928-1005	GN	Simon Johnson	Reckless politician	C19: Ferrier scandal (SNP)
20200928-1005	GN	Simon Johnson	Reckless politician	C19: Ferrier scandal (SNP)
20201005-1012	AF	Gabriela Swirling	Trans rights are dangerous	Hormone blockers
20201005-1012	GN	Nick Allen	The accomplished woman	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201005-1012	GN	Simon Johnson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201005-1012	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201005-1012	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201005-1012	GN	Alan Cochrane	Losing her cool	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201005-1012	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201012-1019	GN	Charles Anderson	The Mother	Ardern wins election 2020
20201012-1019	GN	Charles Anderson	SWL	Ardern wins election 2020
20201012-1019	GN	Ben Riley-Smith	Trump's women	Coney Barrett
20201012-1019	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201012-1019	GN	Simon Johnson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201012-1019	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The dev/fiant woman	C19: Sturgeon
20201019-1026	GN	Robert Mendick	Women as victims	Ghislaine Maxwell
20201019-1026	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201019-1026	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201019-1026	AF	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201019-1026	AF	Alan Cochrane	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201026-1102	GN	Rozina Sabur	She's one of us!	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201026-1102	GN	Alan Cochrane	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon

20201026-1102	GN	Alan Cochrane	The master manipulator	C19: Sturgeon
20201026-1102	GN	Josie Ensor	Progressives rise up	Black voters Kenosha USA
20201102-1109	GN	Rozina Sabur	SWL	Kamala Harris VP-Elect
20201102-1109	GN	Joe Wallen	SWL	Kamala Harris VP-Elect
20201102-1109	GN	Rozina Sabur	SWL	Stacey Abrams
20201109-1116	GN	Gordon Rayner	Lady Macbeth: the master manipulator	Carrie Symonds
20201109-1116	GN	Gordon Rayner	Lady Macbeth: the master manipulator	Carrie Symonds
20201109-1116	GN	Rosa Prince	The women's touch	Political spouses
20201109-1116	GN	Gordon Rayner	Battle of the sexes	Carrie Symonds
20201109-1116	GN	Edward Malnick	Lady Macbeth: the master manipulator	Carrie Symonds
20201109-1116	GN	Edward Malnick	Lady Macbeth: the master manipulator	Carrie Symonds
20201109-1116	GN	Robert Mendick	The women's touch	Carrie Symonds
20201116-1123	PF	Margarette Driscoll	Women are (not so) oppressed	Gender Pay Gap
20201116-1123	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201116-1123	GN	Laura Donnelly	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201116-1123	GN	Daniel Sanderson	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201116-1123	GN	Charles Hymas	Women as victims	Patel bullying report
20201116-1123	GN	Charles Hymas	The Iron Maiden or the victim?	Patel bullying report
20201116-1123	PF	Jill Kirby	The Iron Maiden	Patel bullying report
20201116-1123	GN	Izzy Lyons	Female rivalry	Wagatha Christie
20201123-1130	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201123-1130	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: Scottish independence
20201130-1207	GN	Charles Hymas	SWL	Patel vs asylum seekers
20201130-1207	GN	Gabriela Swirling	They're turning our children trans	Tavistock ruling: u/16s cannot get hormone blockers

20201130-1207	GN	Simon Johnson	The master manipulator	Sturgeon & NHS
20201207-1214	GN	Camilla Tominey	The defiant woman	Thatcher
20201207-1214	GN	John Shute	The defiant woman	Red Wall MPs want No Deal
20201207-1214	GN	Gordon Rayner	The Iron Maiden	von der Leyen Brexit
20201207-1214	GN	Simon Johnson	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201207-1214	AF	Daniel Sanderson	The Mother	C19: Sturgeon
20201214-1221	GN	Josie Ensor	A fall from grace	Maxwell case
20201214-1221	GN	Josie Ensor	Dawn of a new era	Nurse first in US to get vaccine
20201214-1221	GN	Simon Johnson	The indecisive leader	C19: Sturgeon
20201214-1221	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon on drugs crisis
20201214-1221	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon on drugs crisis
20201214-1221	GN	Alan Cochrane	The indecisive leader	C19: Sturgeon
20201214-1221	AF	Camilla Tominey	Crybabies and snowflakes	Judge rules anti-trans abuse not crime
20201214-1221	AF	Simon Johnson	Trans rights are dangerous	Green MSP quits in opposition to trans rights
20201221-1228	GN	Simon Johnson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201221-1228	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201221-1228	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The master manipulator	C19: Sturgeon
20201221-1228	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201221-1228	GN	Daniel Sanderson	Reckless politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201228-20210104	GN	Natalie Acoba	My Body My Rights	Argentina legalises abortion
20201228-20210104	GN	Charles Hymas	The defiant woman	Patel succeeds in deporting criminals
20201228-20210104	GN	Simon Johnson	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: Scottish independence
20201228-20210104	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon



20201228-20210104	GN	Simon Johnson	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201228-20210104	GN	Simon Johnson	The pushy woman	C19 vs independence: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Rozina Sabur	The defiant woman	Pelosi Capitol coup
20210104-0111	GN	Simon Johnson	The deviant woman	C19 vs independence: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Simon Johnson	The master manipulator	C19 vs independence: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Simon Johnson	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Alan Cochrane	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Alan Cochrane	The bitter woman	C19: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210104-0111	GN	Alan Cochrane	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210111-0118	PF	Jemima Lewis	Working mums are heroes	Working mums
20210111-0118	GN	Harry Yorke	The reckless politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210111-0118	GN	Harry Yorke	The reckless politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210118-0125	GN	Gordon Rayner	Weak woman leader	Theresa May
20210118-0125	GN	Lisa Armstrong	SWL	What women wore to the inauguration (Jill Biden)
20210118-0125	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210118-0125	GN	Alan Cochrane	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210118-0125	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210118-0125	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210118-0125	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	Nick Allen	Progressives rise up	Biden reverses trans military ban
20210125-0201	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon

20210125-0201	GN	Simon Johnson	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	Simon Johnson	The dangerous woman	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	Simon Johnson	The deviant woman	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	James Crisp	The deviant woman	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	Simon Johnson	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210125-0201	AF	Alan Cochrane	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210125-0201	AF	Frazer Nelson	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210125-0201	GN	Josie Ensor	Trump's women	Democrats call for Taylor Greene's expulsion
20210201-0208	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The defiant woman	Cherry sacked from SNP frontbench
20210201-0208	GN	Louise Watt	The embattled politician	Suu Kyi detained in Myanmar coup
20210201-0208	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210201-0208	GN	Daniel Sanderson	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210201-0208	GN	Simon Johnson	Weak woman leader	C19: Sturgeon
20210201-0208	GN	Simon Johnson	The Iron Maiden or the victim?	C19: Sturgeon
20210201-0208	GN	Daniel Sanderson	Power battle	C19: Sturgeon
20210201-0208	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210201-0208	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210208-0215	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210208-0215	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210208-0215	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210208-0215	GN	Daniel Sanderson	Power battle	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210208-0215	GN	Louise Watt	Progressives rise up	Protests against Myanmar coup
20210208-0215	GN	Nicola Smith	Progressives rise up	Protests against Myanmar coup
20210215-0222	GN	Giovanni Torre	Women as victims	Higgins rape allegations
20210215-0222	GN	Camilla Turner	The professional woman	Negative impact on children C19

20210215-0222	GN	Simon Johnson	Weak woman leader	C19: Sturgeon
20210215-0222	GN	Simon Johnson	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210215-0222	GN	Rozina Sabur	Trump's women	Chase: GOP
20210222-0301	GN	Georgina Hayes	The cautious leader	C19: Sturgeon
20210222-0301	GN	Simon Johnson	Debbie downer	C19: Sturgeon
20210222-0301	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	AF	Daniel Sanderson	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Ben Riley-Smith	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Ben Riley-Smith	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Alan Cochrane	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210301-0308	AF	Victoria Ward	The Angry Black Woman	Meghan Markle
20210301-0308	AF	Alan Cochrane	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210301-0308	AF	Gabriela Swirling	Trans rights are dangerous	Trans inmates more likely to assault
20210301-0308	GN	Roland Oliphant	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20210308-0315	PF	Rosa Silverman	The struggling working mum	Working mums
20210308-0315	AF	Hayley Dixon	Trans women are not 'real' women	Scotland Hate Crime Bill
20210308-0315	GN	Patrick Sawyer	The defiant woman	Meghan Markle
20210308-0315	GN	Robert Mendick	The victim	Maxwell case
20210308-0315	GN	Izzy Lyons	A fall from grace	Maxwell case
20210308-0315	GN	Martin Evans	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Martin Evans	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	AF	Robert Mendick	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Martin Evans	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	PF	Charles Hymas	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case: the response
20210308-0315	PF	Christopher Hope	Weak woman leader	Sarah Everard case: the vigil
20210308-0315	PF	Eleanor Steafel	The defiant woman	Sarah Everard case: the vigil
20210308-0315	PF	Eleanor Steafel	The defiant woman	Sarah Everard case: the vigil

20210308-0315	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210308-0315	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210308-0315	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210308-0315	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: May elections
20210308-0315	GN	Georgina Hayes	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210308-0315	GN	Alan Cochrane	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210308-0315	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The master manipulator	C19: Sturgeon
20210308-0315	GN	James Rothwell	Women as victims	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20210315-0322	GN	Ben Riley-Smith	Women as victims	(Everard) women's safety measures
20210315-0322	GN	Lucy Fisher	The deviant (party)	Labour vote against Bill
20210315-0322	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210315-0322	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210315-0322	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210315-0322	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210315-0322	GN	Simon Johnson	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210315-0322	AF	James Crisp	The Iron Maiden	von der Leyen
20210315-0322	GN	Christopher Hope	The Iron Maiden	von der Leyen
20210322-0329	GN	Patrick Sawyer	Women as victims	Heslop disappearance
20210322-0329	GN	Simon Johnson	The reckless politician	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210322-0329	GN	Simon Johnson	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210322-0329	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The master manipulator	C19: Sturgeon
20210322-0329	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210329-0405	AF	Robert Mendick	The desperate woman	Arcuri and Johnson affair
20210329-0405	GN	Robert Mendick	The target	Maxwell case
20210329-0405	GN	Camilla Turner	Women as victims	Sex abuse in education
20210329-0405	PF	Ben Gartside	Women as victims	Sex abuse in education
20210329-0405	GN	Simon Johnson	The master manipulator	C19: Sturgeon

20210329-0405	GN	Simon Johnson	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210329-0405	GN	Simon Johnson	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210329-0405	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210329-0405	GN	Simon Johnson	The dev/fiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210405-0412	GN	Simon Johnson	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210405-0412	GN	Georgina Hayes	The incompetent politician	Sturgeon: NHS
20210412-0419	GN	Georgina Hayes	The control freak	C19: Sturgeon
20210412-0419	AF	Simon Johnson	Weak woman leader	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210412-0419	AF	Simon Johnson	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: May election
20210412-0419	AF	Georgina Hayes	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: May election
20210412-0419	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: May election
20210412-0419	GN	Rozina Sabur	The deviant woman	Kim Potter
20210419-0426	GN	Simon Johnson	The deviant woman	C19: Sturgeon
20210419-0426	GN	Simon Johnson	The coward	Sturgeon: May election
20210419-0426	GN	Simon Johnson	The incompetent politician	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210419-0426	GN	Christopher Hope	SWL	Truss trade deal AUS
20210426-0503	GN	Harry Yorke	The target	Foster resigns
20210426-0503	GN	Patrick Sawyer	Women as victims	Julia James murder
20210426-0503	GN	James Crisp	The bitter woman	Von der Leyen: sofagate
20210426-0503	AF	Simon Johnson	The incompetent politician	Sturgeon: May election
20210426-0503	GN	Simon Johnson	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: May election
20210426-0503	GN	Simon Johnson	The incompetent politician	Sturgeon: May election
20210426-0503	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: May election
20210426-0503	AF	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: May election
20210426-0503	GN	Alan Cochrane	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: May election
20210426-0503	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210426-0503	GN	Simon Johnson	The incompetent politician	Sturgeon: indyref2

20210426-0503	GN	Campbell MacDiarmid	Women as victims	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20210426-0503	GN	Roland Oliphant	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20210426-0503	GN	James Rothwell	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20210503-0510	AF	Helen Kirwan-Taylor	The master manipulator	Gates' divorce
20210503-0510	GN	Martin Evans	Women as victims	Julia James murder
20210503-0510	GN	Tony Driver	The LW woman: the deviant woman	Rayner reshuffled
20210503-0510	GN	Harry Yorke	The LW woman: the deviant woman	Rayner reshuffled
20210503-0510	GN	Campbell MacDiarmid	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20210503-0510	GN	Mark Almond	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20210503-0510	GN	Roland Oliphant	The target	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20210503-0510	GN	Daniel Sanderson	Weak woman leader	Sturgeon/Salmond split
20210503-0510	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The bad friend	Sturgeon/Salmond split
20210503-0510	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: May election
20210503-0510	GN	Simon Johnson	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: May election
20210503-0510	GN	Ben Riley-Smith	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: May election
20210503-0510	GN	Simon Johnson	SWL	Sturgeon: May election
20210503-0510	GN	Georgina Hayes	SWL	Sturgeon: May election
20210503-0510	GN	Simon Johnson	SWL	Sturgeon: May election
20210503-0510	GN	Christopher Hope	Weak woman leader	Sturgeon: May election
20210503-0510	AF	Simon Johnson	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: May election
20210503-0510	GN	Simon Johnson	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210503-0510	AF	Hayley Dixon	Trans rights are dangerous	Gender dysphoria
20210517-0524	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The defiant woman vs the deviant woman	Patel vs asylum seekers

20210517-0524	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210517-0524	GN	Simon Johnson	Weak woman leader	Sturgeon cabinet reshuffle
20210517-0524	GN	Georgina Hayes	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210517-0524	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon cabinet reshuffle
20210517-0524	GN	Lucy Fisher	The embattled politician	Truss trade deal AUS
20210524-0531	GN	Tim Stanley	Happily, ever after	Johnson/Symonds wedding
20210524-0531	GN	Guy Kelly	Happily, ever after	Johnson/Symonds wedding
20210524-0531	GN	Daniel Sanderson	Weak woman leader	C19: Sturgeon
20210524-0531	GN	Georgina Hayes	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210524-0531	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210524-0531	AF	Camilla Tominey	Weak woman leader	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210531-0607	GN	Lucy Fisher	Weak woman leader	C19: Sturgeon
20210531-0607	GN	Alan Cochrane	Weak woman leader	C19: Sturgeon
20210531-0607	GN	Georgina Hayes	Weak woman leader	C19: Sturgeon
20210531-0607	GN	Izzy Lyons	Women as victims	Cole arrested for murder
20210607-0614	GN	Camilla Turner	The deviant woman	Oxford college defends removal of queen portrait
20210607-0614	GN	Matthew Dennison	SWL	The queen and presidents
20210614-0621	GN	Henry Samuel	SWL	Marine Le Pen
20210614-0621	GN	Nick Squires	SWL	Giorgia Meloni
20210614-0621	AF	Ewan Somerville	Trans rights are dangerous	Truss versus Stonewall
20210621-0628	AF	Allison Pearson	The sleazebag and the Other Woman	Hancock/Coladangelo affair
20210621-0628	GN	Patrick Sawyer	The sleazebag and the Other Woman	Hancock/Coladangelo affair
20210621-0628	AF	Christopher Hope	The Other Woman	Hancock/Coladangelo affair
20210621-0628	GN	Tim Stanley	The sleazebag and the Other Woman	Hancock/Coladangelo affair

20210621-0628	GN	Anna Pujol-Mazzini	The embattled politician	Marine Le Pen
20210621-0628	GN	Henry Samuel	The embattled politician	Marine Le Pen
20210621-0628	GN	Anna Pujol-Mazzini	The embattled politician	Marine Le Pen
20210621-0628	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20210621-0628	GN	Simon Johnson	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210628-0705	GN	Josie Ensor	Women as victims	Maxwell case
20210628-0705	PF	Nick Allen	Me Too	Cosby released from prison
20210628-0705	AF	Melanie McDonagh	The helpmate	Vine/Gove separation
20210628-0705	GN	Ben Riley-Smith	The embattled politician	Angela Merkel
20210628-0705	GN	Daniel Sanderson	Weak woman leader	C19: Sturgeon
20210628-0705	GN	Daniel Sanderson	Weak woman leader	C19: Sturgeon
20210628-0705	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The master manipulator	C19: Sturgeon
20210628-0705	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210628-0705	GN	Georgina Hayes	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210628-0705	GN	Jennifer Rigby	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210628-0705	GN	Daniel Sanderson	The difficult woman	C19: Sturgeon



#### Appendix 4: Articles collected from *The Times*

<b>Date range</b>	<b>FAS</b>	<b>Journalist</b>	<b>Discourse</b>	<b>Subject</b>
20200928-1005	GN	Henry Zeffman	The conservative do-gooder	Coney Barret
20200928-1005	GN	Kenny Farquharson	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20200928-1005	GN	Kieran Andrews	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20200928-1005	GN	Francis Elliott	The reckless politician	C19: Ferrier Scandal (SNP)
20200928-1005	GN	David McCann	The reckless politician	C19: Ferrier Scandal (SNP)
20200928-1005	GN	David Brown	SWL	Patel vs asylum seekers
20200928-1005	GN	Francis Elliott	The target	Patel vs asylum seekers
20201005-1012	GN	Kieran Andrews	The reckless politician	C19: Ferrier Scandal (SNP)
20201005-1012	GN	Mike Wade	The reckless politician	C19: Ferrier Scandal (SNP)
20201005-1012	GN	Mike Wade	The deviant woman	C19: Ferrier Scandal (SNP)
20201005-1012	GN	David Charter	The Iron Maiden	Kamala Harris VP debate
20201005-1012	GN	Kieran Andrews	The deviant woman	C19: Sturgeon
20201005-1012	GN	Helen Puttick	The deviant woman	C19: Sturgeon
20201005-1012	GN	Marc Horne	The tough decision maker	C19: Sturgeon
20201005-1012	GN	Magnus Linklater	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201005-1012	GN	Kieran Andrews	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201005-1012	GN	Iain Marti	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201005-1012	GN	Kieran Andrews	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201005-1012	GN	Kieran Andrews	The bad friend	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201005-1012	GN	Alex Massie	The corrupt politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201012-1019	GN	Bernard Lagan	Progressives rise up?	Ardern election victory 2020
20201012-1019	GN	David Charter	Trump's women	Coney Barret
20201019-1026	GN	David Brown	The defiant woman	Ghislaine Maxwell deposition
20201019-1026	GN	David McCann	SWL	C19: Sturgeon

20201019-1026	GN	Greig Cameron	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201019-1026	GN	Patrick Maguire	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201019-1026	GN	Marc Horne	The shady politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201026-1102	GN	Mark McLaughlin	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201026-1102	GN	Katrine Bussey	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201026-1102	PF	Catherine Philp	SWL	UN women peacekeepers
20201026-1102	GN	Henry Zeffman	Trump's women	Joni Ernst for Senate, Iowa, USA
20201102-1109	GN	Laura Pullman	SWL	Kamala Harris VP-Elect
20201102-1109	GN	Jacqui Goddard	SWL	Kamala Harris VP-Elect
20201109-1116	GN	Steven Swinford	The master manipulator	Carrie Symonds
20201109-1116	GN	Steven Swinford	The master manipulator	Carrie Symonds
20201109-1116	GN	Steven Swinford	The women's touch	Carrie Symonds
20201109-1116	GN	Oliver Wright	The master manipulator	Carrie Symonds
20201109-1116	GN	Charlotte Wace	The wolf in sheep's clothing	Nurse kills babies
20201109-1116	GN	Charlotte Wace	The wolf in sheep's clothing	Nurse kills babies
20201109-1116	GN	Charlotte Wace	The evil woman	Nurse kills babies
20201109-1116	GN	Charlie Mitchell Ottawa	They're turning our children trans	CAN blocks trans teen surgery
20201116-1123	PF	Jennifer Carroll MacNeill	Women are oppressed	Gender pay gap
20201116-1123	GN	Mark McLaughlin	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201116-1123	GN	Helen Puttick	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201116-1123	GN	Mark McLaughlin	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201116-1123	GN	Oliver Wright	The Iron Maiden	Patel bullying report
20201116-1123	GN	Tim Shipman	The Iron Maiden	Patel bullying report
20201116-1123	GN	David Brown	Female rivalry	Wagatha Christie
20201123-1130	PF	Ross Kempzell	The dawn of a new era	BJ on 50:50 gender rep in parliament

20201123-1130	GN	Fiona Hamilton	The deviant woman	Shemima Begum
20201123-1130	GN	Fiona Hamilton	The deviant woman	Shemima Begum
20201123-1130	GN	Chris Strickland	The Iron Maiden	C19: Sturgeon
20201123-1130	GN	Helen Puttick	The deviant woman	C19: Sturgeon
20201123-1130	GN	Mark McLaughlin	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201123-1130	AF	Magnus Linklater	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: Scottish independence
20201123-1130	AF	Mark McLaughlin	Trans rights are dangerous	Anti-discrimination laws Scotland
20201123-1130	GN	Jonathan Ames	Trans people as victims	Trans clergyman abused
20201123-1130	GN	James Dean	SWL	Biden nominates Yellen
20201130-1207	GN	David Brown	Crybabies and snowflakes	Patel vs asylum seekers
20201130-1207	GN	Lucy Bannerman	Trans rights are dangerous	Tavistock ruling: u/16s cannot get hormone blockers
20201130-1207	GN	Kieran Andrews	The Iron Maiden	Joanna Cherry versus Sturgeon
20201130-1207	GN	Tom Eden	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201130-1207	GN	Neil Pooran	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201130-1207	GN	David Charter	The deviant woman	GOP opposes Tanden nomination
20201130-1207	GN	Douglas Barrie	Women as victims	Trafficking UK
20201207-1214	GN	Quentin Letts	The Iron Maiden	Mordaunt Brexit
20201207-1214	GN	Oliver Wright	The Iron Maiden	Von der Leyen Brexit
20201207-1214	GN	Peter Conradi	The accomplished woman	Von der Leyen
20201207-1214	GN	Kieran Andrews	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201207-1214	GN	Kieran Andrews	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201207-1214	GN	Alex Massie	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20201214-1221	GN	Henry Zeffman	Dawn of a new era	Nurse first in US to get vaccine
20201214-1221	GN	Katrine Bussey	The master manipulator	C19: Sturgeon
20201214-1221	GN	Mark McLaughlin	The defiant woman	C19: Sturgeon
20201214-1221	GN	Kenny Farquharson	The Iron Maiden	Brexit: Sturgeon
20201214-1221	GN	David McCann	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon

20201214-1221	AF	Alex Massie	Crybabies and snowflakes	Green MSP quits in opposition to trans rights
20201221-1228	GN	Emma Yeomans	The embattled politician	Patel: C19
20201221-1228	GN	Fiona Hamilton	The Iron Maiden	Patel: C19
20201221-1228	GN	Mark McLaughlin	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20201221-1228	GN	Catherine Philp	Protecting our own	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20201221-1228	GN	?	Protecting our own	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20201221-1228	GN	Catherine Philp	Protecting our own	Zaghari-Ratcliffe
20201221-1228	GN	Richard Spencer	Lock her up! Patriarchal tyranny	al-Hathloul sentenced
20201228-20210104	GN	Eleni Courea	The defiant woman	Patel succeeds in deporting criminals
20201228-20210104	GN	Oliver Wright	SWL	Patel argues Britain safer after Brexit
20201228-20210104	GN	Mike Wade	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201228-20210104	GN	Mark McLaughlin	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20201228-20210104	GN	Kieran Andrews	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Kieran Andrews	The master manipulator	C19: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Kieran Andrews	The pushy woman	C19 vs independence: Sturgeon
20210104-0111	GN	Kieran Andrews	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210104-0111	GN	?	The queen bee	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210104-0111	GN	John Boothman	A fall from grace	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210111-0118	GN	Tom Eden	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210118-0125	GN	Emma Yeomans	The defiant woman	Theresa May
20210118-0125	GN	James Forsyth	Power battle	Johnson vs Sturgeon on indyref2
20210118-0125	GN	Mark McLaughlin	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210118-0125	GN	Mark McLaughlin	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210118-0125	GN	Kieran Andrews	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210118-0125	GN	Mark McLaughlin	Power battle	C19: Sturgeon

20210118-0125	GN	Nicholas Hellen	Transness is a myth	Sex back on the census
20210118-0125	GN	Marcello Mega	Transness is dangerous	Convicted murderer refused reassignment surgery
20210125-0201	GN	Kieran Andrews	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	?	Women leaders are just as bad as men	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	Mark McLaughlin	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210125-0201	GN	Mark McLaughlin	SWL	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210125-0201	AF	Rod Liddle	The Iron Maiden	Johnson vs Sturgeon on indyref2
20210201-0208	AF	Richard Wheeler	The defiant woman	Rees-Mogg defends Cherry
20210201-0208	GN	Kieran Andrews	The Iron Maiden	Cherry compares Sturgeon to Stalin
20210201-0208	AF	Mike Wade	Trans rights are dangerous	SNP divide over trans rights
20210201-0208	GN	Marcello Mega	Trans people as victims	Trans prisoner accuses system of sexism & transphobia
20210201-0208	GN	?	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210208-0215	GN	Charlotte Wace	Women as victims	Libby Squire
20210208-0215	GN	Kieran Andrews	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210215-0222	AF	Sean O'Neill	Women as victims	Odey sexual assault
20210215-0222	GN	?	SWL	C19: Sturgeon
20210215-0222	GN	Jason Allardyce	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Fiona Hamilton	The Iron Maiden	Patel feud with Met chief
20210222-0301	GN	Mike Wade	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	?	The deviant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Alex Massie	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Jason Allardyce	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Mark McLaughlin	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210222-0301	GN	Oliver Wright	The master manipulator	Carrie Symonds
20210301-0308	PF	Nicholas Hellen	The misogynoir establishment	First female Black deacon being targeted by C of E

20210301-0308	GN	Mark McLaughlin	The master manipulator	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210301-0308	AF	?	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210301-0308	GN	Kieran Andrews	The def/viant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210301-0308	GN	Jason Allardyce	Weak woman leader	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210301-0308	AF	Marc Horne	Trans rights are dangerous	Trans rights limit freedom to express sex as binary
20210308-0315	GN	Will Pavia	Me Too	Cuomo sexual harassment allegations
20210308-0315	PF	Helen Puttick	Women torn between work and family	Women worse affected in careers by C19
20210308-0315	PF	Will Humphries	Women as victims	Bristol ban lap dancing clubs
20210308-0315	GN	George Grylls	SWL	Markle Oprah interview
20210308-0315	AF	Fiona Hamilton	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	John Simpson	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210308-0315	GN	Caroline Wheeler	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case: the response
20210308-0315	PF	Emma Yeomans	The defiant woman	Sarah Everard case: the vigil
20210315-0322	PF	Bernard Lagan	The misogynist establishment	AUS gender discrimination protests
20210315-0322	PF	Fiona Hamilton	The misogynist establishment	Police and women's safety (Everard)
20210315-0322	GN	Emma Yeomans	The def/viant woman	Policing of Everard vigil
20210315-0322	GN	Steven Swinford	The embattled politician	Policing of Everard vigil
20210315-0322	PF	Matt Dathan	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210315-0322	PF	Matt Dathan	Women beating the system	Govt intro women's safety measures (Everard)
20210315-0322	PF	John Boothman	The embattled politician	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210322-0329	GN	Jacqui Goddard	Women as victims	Heslop disappearance
20210322-0329	AF	James Mulholland	Trans rights are dangerous	Definition of 'woman' to be expanded to include trans w
20210329-0405	GN	Charlie Mitchell	The master manipulator	Maxwell new charges

20210329-0405	PF	Emma Yeomans	Women as victims	Sex abuse in education
20210329-0405	GN	Kieran Andrews	The defiant woman	Sturgeon: Salmond inquiry
20210329-0405	GN	Jeremy Watson	Trans women are not 'real' women	Distinction between 'sex' and 'gender'
20210412-0419	AF	Ian Marland	Trans rights are dangerous	Rapists can self-ID as female
20210412-0419	GN	Alistair Dawber	The innocent woman	Kim Potter
20210419-0426	GN	?	The devoted mother	Roasmund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah
20210419-0426	GN	Tom Whipple	Crybabies and snowflakes	Dawkins award retracted after transphobic tweets
20210426-0503	GN	Dipesh Gadhher	Women as victims	Julia James' murder
20210426-0503	GN	Nadeem Badshah	Trans rights are dangerous	Microaggression guidelines in university
20210503-0510	PF	Lucy Bannerman	Women as victims	Julia James' murder
20210503-0510	GN	?	The Iron Maiden	Sturgeon: indyref2
20210503-0510	AF	Mike Wade	Trans rights are dangerous	MBM claim Sturgeon misunderstands Equality law
20210503-0510	AF	?	The feisty woman	Sturgeon: May elections
20210503-0510	AF	?	Trans women aren't real women	Press sisters' 1959 Olympic 'gender fraud'
20210503-0510	AF	Mark Macaskill	Trans rights are dangerous	Schools should inform parents of child's gender ID
20210510-0517	GN	Kieran Andrews	The incompetent politician	C19: Sturgeon
20210510-0517	AF	Marc Horne	Trans rights are dangerous	Student reported for sexist and transphobic comments
20210510-0517	AF	Oliver Wright	Trans women aren't real women	Equalities watchdog criticises trans rights
20210517-0524	PF	David Aaronovitch	Feminism, interrupted	Abortion law, USA
20210517-0524	AF	Marc Horne	Trans rights are dangerous	Student reported for sexist and transphobic comments

20210517-0524	AF	Marc Horne	Trans rights are dangerous	Woman investigated for transphobic Tweet
20210524-0531	GN	Kieran Andrews	The master manipulator	C19: Sturgeon
20210531-0607	GN	Fiona Hamilton	Women as victims	Sexual offenders
20210531-0607	GN	Ademola Bello	Women as victims	Sexual offenders
20210531-0607	AF	Jonathan Ames	Trans rights are dangerous	Stonewall as a 'trans lobby'
20210531-0607	AF	Mike Wade	Trans rights are dangerous	TERF charged for transphobic Tweets
20210531-0607	GN	Fiona Hamilton	Women as victims	Sarah Everard case
20210531-0607	GN	Fiona Hamilton	Women as victims	Cole arrested for murder of Vincent
20210607-0614	GN	Charlotte Wace	SWL	Queen meets president
20210607-0614	AF	?	Trans rights are dangerous	Forstater wins appeal
20210607-0614	AF	Sara Ditung	Trans rights are dangerous	Forstater wins appeal
20210607-0614	GN	Mark Macaskill	Trans rights are dangerous	NHS Pride pledge
20210614-0621	GN	Alistair Dawber	Weak woman leader	Harris on immigration
20210614-0621	AF	Janice Turner	Trans rights are dangerous	De Wahls pulled from RA
20210614-0621	AF	Liam Kelly	Trans rights are dangerous	De Wahls pulled from RA
20210614-0621	GN	?	SWL	Truss as Trade Secretary and Equalities Minister
20210621-0628	GN	Jonathan Sumption	Trans rights are dangerous	Forstater wins appeal
20210621-0628	GN	Lucy Bannerman	Trans rights are dangerous	Stonewall as a 'trans lobby'
20210628-0705	GN	Tony Allen-Mills	The unhappy wife	Vine/Gove separation
20210628-0705	GN	Kaya Burgess	The dawn of a new era	Methodist church allows same-sex marriage
20210628-0705	GN	Tom Newton-Dunn	The dawn of a new era	BJ appoints Lord Herbert LGBT minister
20210628-0705	GN	Neil Pooran	The embattled politician	C19: Sturgeon



## Appendix 5: List of Topics in the Dataset

Key:

Colour	Topic area
Orange	Feminism
Light Green	Sexual violence
Light Purple	Women political/public figures
Green	Political spouses
Light Blue	Motherhood
Light Pink	Racism
Red	LGBTQ+ representation
White	Miscellaneous
Yellow	Key topic

Topic	<i>The Independent/I</i>	<i>The Guardian/Observer</i>	<i>The (+Sun) Telegraph</i>	<i>The (+Sun) Times</i>	Total
Abortion	16	2	1	1	20
Feminist protests	6	6		1	13
Women and C19	4	2	2	3	11
Gender pay gap		2	1	1	4
Workplace discrimination	4			2	6
Australian parliament culture	1	3			4
al-Hathloul prison sentence	6	2		1	9
Sexual harassment	22	4	3	6	35
Rape	10	7	1	1	19
Sarah Everard case	28	10	9	10	57
Libby Squire	2	2		1	5
Julia James case	3		2	2	7
Brittany Higgins	1	14	1		16

Heslop	1		1	1	<b>3</b>
Peter Sutcliffe case	2	2			<b>4</b>
Cosby released	4	1	1		<b>6</b>
Trafficking	2	2		1	<b>5</b>
Domestic violence	4	1			<b>5</b>
Spy cops	2	3			<b>5</b>
Amy Coney Barrett	27	7	1	2	<b>37</b>
McEnany	7				<b>7</b>
Kamala Harris	31	6	4	4	<b>45</b>
Whitmer	5	1			<b>6</b>
McGrath	3				<b>3</b>
Joni Ernst				1	<b>1</b>
Yellen	2			1	<b>3</b>
Ivanka Trump	3	1			<b>3</b>
Melania Trump	4	2			<b>6</b>
Lara Trump	2				<b>2</b>
Tiffany Trump	1				<b>1</b>
Sinema	3				<b>3</b>
Joe Biden		1			<b>1</b>
AOC	19	1			<b>20</b>
Ilhan Omar	4				<b>4</b>
The Squad	2				<b>2</b>
Stacey Abrams	2		1		<b>3</b>
Boebert	7				<b>7</b>
Tanden	5			1	<b>6</b>
Amanda Chase			1		<b>1</b>
Kat Cammack		1			<b>1</b>
MTG	47	1	1		<b>49</b>
Liz Cheney	16	2			<b>18</b>

Nancy Pelosi	6		1		7
Ferrier	2	2	3	5	12
Priti Patel	26	5	6	9	46
Nicola Sturgeon	44	17	155	76	292
Angela Rayner	2		2		4
Nandy		1			1
Theresa May	1		1	1	3
The queen	7		2	1	10
Meghan Markle	4	4	2	1	11
Liz Truss	8	2	3		13
Joanne Anderson	1	1			2
Cressida Dick	1	1			2
Kim Leadbeater	3				3
Joanna Cherry		1	1	1	3
Mordaunt				1	1
Thatcher			1		1
Arlene Foster	5	1	1		7
Angela Merkel	3		1		4
Von der Leyen	7	1	4	2	14
Suu Kyi	4	1	3		8
Le Pen			4		4
Meloni			1		1
Ardern	1	4	2	1	8
Vine/Gove divorce	1		1	1	3
Colodangelo/Hancock affair	1	1	4		6
Arcuri/Johnson affair	1	2	1		4
Carrie Symonds	5		8	5	18
Melinda and Bill Gates	1				1
Jill Biden	7	2	1		10

Motherhood	3	1	5		9
Aloo-Kissi-Debrah	3			1	3
Evidence Joel	4				4
Daunte Wright mother	4			1	5
Breonna Taylor	13	4			17
Tafara Williams	2				2
Ma'Khia	4	2			6
Trump supporters	4	2			6
Govt and racism	9	1	1		11
Police and racism	4	1			5
Anti-Asian hate crime	9				9
Refugees	2	4			6
Shemima Begum case		1		2	3
Trans	33	17	10	32	92
LGBTQ+ umbrella	8	7	0	2	17
Non-binary	1	1			2
Amanda Gorman	1				1
Conspiracy theorists	16				16
Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe case	10	1	8	3	22
Ghislaine Maxwell	18	1	6	2	27
UN women	1	2		1	4
Wagatha Christie	1	2		1	4
Capitol coup	15	4			19
MPs (misc)	5		2	1	8

