Torrential Twitter: Climate Change, Female Politicians, and Harassment - Codebook*

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1 Overview

This codebook informs the coding process for my Torrential Twitter thesis. Prior to coding Tweets, the raw data sets were initially collected, cleaned, and tested using the statistical programming software R (R Core Team, 2023), utilizing functions from `voson.tcn` (Gertzel et al., 2022), `tidyverse` (Wickham et al., 2019), `Janitor` (Firke, 2023), and `validate` (Van der Loo et al., 2023). Tweets will then be coded using this Google Form to determine the severity of harassment and type of account.

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*Coding form available at: https://forms.gle/Limy51uAcvM3B7K66

Harassment or gendertrolling is defined as sexist or misogynistic remarks that target a person based on their gender or sexuality and have varying levels of severity (Wagner, 2020). Severity of harassment includes:

- Positive
- Neutral
- Questioning Authority
- Name-calling/Gender insults
- Vicious language
- Credible threats
- Hate speech

Type of account is defined as the dynamics of relationships between followers, followings, and lists and will be determined by analyzing the accounts' bio, profile image, number of Tweets/replies, and other characteristics (Singh et al., 2018; Uddin et al., 2014) and includes:

- Personal
- Professional
- Bots
- Spammers
- Anonymous
- Suspended/Deleted

2 Coding Schedule

2.1 Severity of Harassment

The coding of sentiment in Tweets will be conducted to determine the severity of harassment, measuring Tweets on a seven-point scale I developed, ranging from positive to hate speech (Mantilla, 2013; Nadim & Fladmoe, 2021). The sentiment categories are mutually exclusive, therefore only one of the seven types of harassment can be selected per reply (Krippendorff, 2011). The seven-point scale contains the following categories, and they are:

1. **Positive**

a. Tweets that employ positive wording and tone without expressing complaints (Zavattaro et al., 2015).

b. Punctuation, such as exclamation marks, may be used to covey a positive message (Jansen et al., 2009). See Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 for examples and note the use of exclamation marks.

c. May include language complimenting the work ethic and policies of the female politicians or congratulating them on introducing specific policies.

Table 1: Sample of a **positive** Tweet sent to DPM Freeland.

Tweet
@cafreeland @SigridKaag You do us proud Christya!

Table 2: Sample of a **positive** Tweet sent to MP May.

Tweet
@ElizabethMay @DavidSuzukiFDN @ingrid_waldron @ZannLenore @morricemike Thank you @ElizabethMay !!!!

Table 3: Sample of a **positive** Tweet sent to MP Collins.

Tweet
@Laurel_BC Thanks for the advocacy, @Laurel_BC! And I apologize on behalf of humanity for the replies you get to your twitter posts. Yikes

2. **Neutral**

a. A neutral Tweet states a matter-of-fact without expressing an opinion or exuding judgement (Jansen et al., 2009).

b. No specific punctuation is used and the overall tone of the Tweet is neither positive or harassing.

c. May include Tweets that quote government policies, election platforms, or news media articles.

d. Replies which may state random facts unrelated to the original Tweet or simply contain one word (such as "LNG") would likely fall under this category, as long as the one word is not one of the keywords identified for the other categories.

e. Reference Table 4 for an example where someone states a fact about the current economic situation in Canada. Table 5 summarizes a recent Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) opinion about a piece of Government of Canada legislation, while Table 6 states a fact about the status of Canada's provincial healthcare systems.

Table 4: Sample of a **neutral** Tweet sent to DPM Freeland in reference to the current affordability crisis.

Tweet
@cafreeland Affordable for no one

Table 5: Sample of a **neutral** Tweet sent to MP May.

Tweet
@alyx007 @ElizabethMay Ok, I apologize for presuming you hadn't read Minister Guibeault's response to SCC opinion; he makes it clear gov't will ensure law is constitutional including amendments to ensure same. I could care less law was Harper's implemented by PMJT, I care about its constitutionality

Table 6: Sample of a **neutral** Tweet sent to MP Collins

Tweet
@Laurel_BC @NDP @350Canada We desperately need healthcare improvements and addiction/mental health help for homeless. I hope Premiers come up with plans…..

3. **Questioning Authority**

a. Tweets that question the qualifications and abilities of female politicians, including questioning their ability to understand science and climate change, be effective leaders and govern based on their gender, age, physical appearance (including hair and clothing), party affiliation, and question their common sense and ability to act rationally (Harmer & Southern, 2021). A question mark at the end of the reply will often denote that a Tweet belongs to this category (note the question mark in Table 10).

b. Tweets that suggest the politician "resign", "leave", or "must go" (or any synonyms for those words) will likely fall under this category because the user is suggesting that the female politician is not competent enough to continue being an elected official.

c. Heckling in the House of Commons is described as "verbal backchannel behaviour" and is often gendered in nature with female politicians being more frequently interrupted, cut off, and undermined (Och, 2020; Stopfner, 2018, p. 620). Tweets that directly emulate heckling in the House of Commons, including saying "Mister Speaker" (or a variation of it) fall under this category (see Table 8)

d. For examples, see Table 7 where a user mansplaines DPM Freeland's job to her, while discrediting her policy decisions, Table 9, where a Twitter user questions MP May's understanding of climate science, and Table 10 where MP Collin's understanding of the economy is challenged and criticized. Table 11 highlights all the comments DPM Freeland receives about her wardrobe.

Table 7: Sample of a Tweet **Questioning authority** of DPM Freeland.

Tweet
@cafreeland @G7 @cafreeland Good topics. Maybe add energy security. And be sure to take notes, because you haven't made progress on any of them. That said, you have made and continue to make, all Canadians poorer.

Table 8: Sample of a Tweet emulating heckling sent to DPM Freeland.

Tweet
@cafreeland Missssssster speakkkkkkkkker

Table 9: Sample of a Tweet **Questioning authority** of MP May.

Tweet
@ElizabethMay @YouTube For God sakes Liz. Do some actual research instead of posting crap required by your WEF masters

Table 10: Sample of a Tweet **Questioning authority** of MP Collins.

Tweet
@Laurel_BC @NDP You need to sit down and stop making a fool of yourself. Have you really looked at just how ineffective in the global perspective your proposed measures are. Also have you a clue how much damage to the economy and cost of living these measures mean? You, are just spewing nonsense

Table 11: Another sample of a Tweet **Questioning authority** of DPM Freeland, in reference to her clothing and appearance.

Tweet
@cafreeland @G7 Can you afford a different dress? I bet that one would glow like the sun under a black light with all the WEF protein on it

4. **Name-calling/Gender insults**

   a. The use of offensive language, often grounded in stereotypes to refer to female politicians, their policies, and assumed qualifications (Nadim & Fladmoe, 2021; Theocharis et al., 2020).

b. Derogatory comments and terms used against women, including "whore" and "slut" which are "... designed to insult and humiliate women, especially in regard to their weight and physical appearance" (Mantilla, 2013, p. 564).

c. Tweets that contain the words: "useless", "witch", "nazi", "traitor", "joke", "twit", "hoax", "brainless", and "communist" will very likely fall under this category, unless there is vicious language, credible threats, or presence of hateful symbols, images, or words.

d. Tweets that are likely to fall under this category may call DPM Freeland a "Bank Account Barbie" and call MP May "Lizzie", "Liz", or "Dizzy Lizzy" and claim that she is an alcoholic and that it is impairing her ability to effectively govern. See Table 12 and Table 13, for an examples.

Figure 1: Example of a Tweet containing **Name-calling/Gender insults** sent to DPM Freeland

Table 12: Sample of a Tweet containing **Name-calling/Gender insults** sent to MP May (language redacted for this document).

Tweet
@ElizabethMay @CanadianGreens The drunken green b*tch May concocts issues to deflect from her disgusting love for murderous Hamas terrorists.

Table 13: Sample of a Tweet containing **Name-calling/Gender insults** sent to MP Collins.

Tweet
@Laurel_BC @MajaTait Great. Another useless NDPer, just like Laurel.

5. **Vicious language**

   a. The use of offensive and derogatory language, often grounded in stereotypes regarding weight and physical appearance, used to refer to female politicians, their gender, policies, and assumed qualifications (Nadim & Fladmoe, 2021; Tessier, 2021). Emphasis should be placed on if the Tweet contains *offensive* language when evaluating if it falls under this category.
   b. Be aware of Tweets that abbreviate or intentionally misspell curse words in a way that still sound correct phonetically to avoid content moderation rules. Example include: WTF, FU, Fook you, and kunt.
   c. Table 14 provides an examples.

Table 14: Sample of Tweet containing **Vicious Language** sent to MP May (language redacted for this document).

Tweet
@ElizabethMay F$ck off. It's a hurricane. It'll happen again, and again, and again. It doesn't matter how much you spout off about Climate Change btwn drinks!

6. **Credible Threats**

   a. Tangible threats of violent sexual behaviour, rape, doxxing, stalking, and treason which the gendertrolls would like to subject the female user to (Mantilla, 2013). This includes seeking out or hunting down the female politician with the intent to cause harm (Vickery & Everbach, 2018). Reference the table below and Table 15 for an example.
   b. Any replies that use the word "treason" in reference to one of the female politicians (**not** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau) should be categorized as a **Credible Threat**. This includes hashtags, such as "#FreelandForTreason".
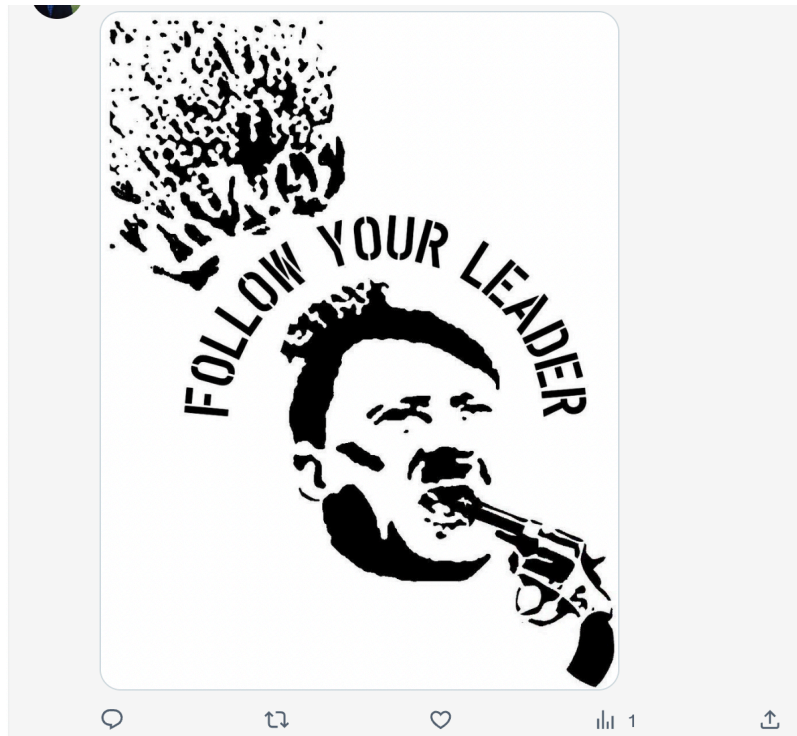
Figure 2: Example of a Tweet containing **Credible Threats** sent to DPM Freeland

Table 15: Sample of a Tweet containing a **Credible Threat** sent to DPM Freeland.

Tweet
@cafreeland #FreelandForTreason #NoWEFpuppets in Canada

7. **Hate speech**

a. Hateful comments which oppose freedom of speech, violate human rights, and may even be unlawful (Chetty & Alathur, 2018; Nadim & Fladmoe, 2021)
b. Online or offline vilification of an individual communicated in a specific context based on "... their immutable characteristics, such as their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or disability" (Carlson, 2021, p. 4).
c. Any form of expression that "... seeks to promote, or has the capacity to increase hatred against a person or group of people because of a characteristic they share, or a group to which they belong" (Saleem et al., 2017, p. 1)
d. Hate speech can be expressed through images and symbols, not simply words. Any media that is part of a Tweet and includes a swastika or the FFF symbol is part of this category (see images below).
e. The phrase "honk honk" is a "... stand-in for"Heil Hitler"" and is generally understood to be a hateful phrase/symbol (Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, 2022, p. 5)

Figure 3: Example of Tweet containing **Hate Speech** sent to DPM Freeland

Table 16: Sample of Tweet containing **Hate Speech** sent to DPM Freeland.

Tweet
@cafreeland Honk honk!! May be time for you retarded liberals to pull your heads out of each other asses and build some pipelines to allow North America be be free of foreign oil!! #TrudeauDestroyingCanada #TrudeauMustGo

Figure 4: Example of Tweet containing **Hate Speech** sent to MP Collins

2.2 Type of Account

Only one type of account can be selected and will also be coded mutually exclusively. If one user replies to a single Tweet by a female politician using multiple separate Tweets, then each Tweet will be coded separately. There will be no limit on the coding of the number of replies sent by an individual account. Pay specific attention to the URL, Follower, Following, Bio, Username, Profile_picture, and Location columns in the dataset when determining the type of account. Also, have Twitter open and look up each user by their Username so you can see how many Tweets/replies they have sent.

Types of accounts include and are defined as:

1. **Personal**

a. People who represent their own views and interests and use their account for fun, to read the news, and socially interact (Uddin et al., 2014, p. 2)
b. To determine if an account is **Personal** look if there is a real person in the profile picture and/or header picture, if they say "views are my own" (or something along those lines) in the bio, and if they include other personally identifying information such as a URL to their Linkedin, personal website, etc and a specific location (like Vancouver, BC).
c. They will likely have under 10K Tweets, but there are identified instances of personal accounts having 30K (or more) Tweets.

2. **Professional**

a. Share information about their area of expertise and may include businesses who use the platform to market their products and reach new audiences (Uddin et al., 2014, p. 2)
b. This category includes politicians, political parties, and organizations and can be distinguished by looking at logos, branding, and URLs linked to the profile.

3. **Bots**

a. Automated "… online agents that are used to intervene in political discourse online" and are intentionally created to circulate disinformation, malicious content, and flood the notifications of users (Dubois & McKelvey, 2019, p. 28; Marlow et al., 2021).
b. However, not all bots are bad. There are some automated agents which circulate helpful information and will be labeled as "automated" by Twitter.
c. It is challenging to determine if accounts are bots these days with third parties such as Botometer being discontinued.

4. **Spammers**

a. Intentionally "spread malicious content" (Singh et al., 2018, p. 2).
b. May show up as one individual who has created multiple accounts to bolster their ability to send harassing content (Mantilla, 2015).
c. Can be determined by looking at the frequency of replies (over 10K), randomness of the profile picture and bio (or lack of both/either), and may have a default, Twitter generated username (such as @Bob047328416).
d. Check to see how many Tweets/replies they have on their account (over 10K means they are likely a spammer, unless other signs strongly point toward the account being a personal one) and see when it was created. Any accounts created in 2022 or 2023 and already have over 10K Tweets/replies suggests that the user is simply on the platform to cause havoc.

5. **Anonymous**

a. An individually intentionally hiding information about their identity and location for the purposes of using the platform maliciously. May include not adding a profile picture or using an obscured, random picture and not revealing their actual name, age, gender, and other identifying characteristics (Trifiro et al., 2021).
b. Hide behind fake usernames and "… express sexist, racist, or homophobic views with little fear of being held accountable for their comments" (Wagner, 2020, p. 8).
c. Can be determined by looking at a user's bio which will either be blank (listed as NA in the data set) or say something very random and unidentifiable such as "love the outdoors". The user's profile picture will either be Twitter's default, a picture of a random animal, or a political meme (such as Prime Minister Trudeau wearing a silly hat).
d. Their profile characteristics may be similar to those as spammers, but will have fewer than 10K Tweets and may have been on the platform for years and prefer to lurk.

6. **Suspended/Deleted**

a. Accounts found to be in violation of Twitter's Terms of Services and temporarily or permanently removed from the platform.
b. May include people who chose to terminate their account, especially following Elon Musk's takeover of the platform.

3 Other Guidelines

3.1 Retweets & Quote Tweets

Retweets and quote Tweets are not to be coded, only responses to Tweets that are initiated from the accounts of one of the three female politicians. A simple retweet or quote Tweet (retweet with comment) would not count, as the Tweet being shared was not originally authored by one of female politicians. There should be no retweets or quote Tweets in the datasets, however, please skip them and let me know if you find any.

3.2 Threaded Responses

Threaded responses occur when one user posts a connected series of Tweets which contribute towards building the same message or narrative. They may be numbered as 1, 2, 3, … out of the total number of responses.

For the purposes of this study, each Tweet in a threaded response will be analyzed and coded as a separate Tweet.

For the Tweets collected from each female politician, if they mentioned the words `climate` or `environment` in the first Tweet of their own thread, then the entire Tweet thread and all

public replies were collected. Their own responses were omitted during the first round of data cleaning. However, if for any reason replies by the female politicians remain in the dataset, they should be categorized as `neutral` (2), unless there is a significant positive or negative tone. For threads in this the first Tweet did not include the words `climate` or `environment` and the words only appear in passing later on the thread, these were not collected or included because the main message is not about the climate or environment.

3.3 Replies in other languages

In the original dataset, pre-cleaning, I identified instances of replies to English Tweets being sent primarily in French, but also Russian and Ukrainian. There should be only replies in English left, but if any non-English replies are identified, please let me know.

If a user's bio contains words or phrases in other languages, that is totally fine. Please add this information to the coding form as normal.

3.4 Media

Twitter defines any gifs, memes, images, and videos as media (Developer, 2023). Media embedded in Tweets should be considered as part of the written text of the Tweet and coded accordingly, given that hateful speech can also be expressed through images and symbols (Carlson, 2021). With increasing doctoring and creation of media for the purpose of deception and political gain, any media embedded in Tweets should be analyzed for manipulation and machine-learning generated deepfakes, which are compelling fake pictures and videos (Appel & Prietzel, 2022; Farid, 2019).

For Tweets that contain a picture without additional text, the nature, context, and suggestiveness of the picture should be analysed to determine the severity of harassment (Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2017). Emojis, if included in a Tweet, should be interpreted as both a picture and text, analysing the rest of the Tweet for context (Swartz & Crooks, 2020). Moreover, hashtags will be coded in the same manner as regular text in Tweets (Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2017). Any URLs in Tweets should be opened and examine to assist in determining the severity of harassment.

3.4.1 Emojis

Emojis are increasingly used to represent thoughts and ideas on Twitter and need to be taken into consideration. Take emojis literally when reading them. Some common emojis and their contextualized meanings are:

- **Clown emoji**: You're a joke, you're in competent, likely `Questioning Authority`(3) or `Name Calling/Gender insults` (4).

- **Eye-roll emoji**: You're kidding, you're in competent, likely `Questioning Authority`(3).

- **Laughing/crying face emoji**: You're a joke, likely `Questioning Authority`(3) or `Name Calling/Gender insults` (4).

- **Green throwing up face emoji**: You're disgusting, you make me sick likely `Questioning Authority`(3) or `Name Calling/Gender insults` (4).

- **Middle finger emoji**: Exactly the same as writing out F**k you. Likely `Vicious Language` (5).

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