

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

A city under siege: A rhetorical analysis of the political rhetoric produced in response to the  
truckers' protests

By Bray S. Jamieson

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

“BA HONOURS COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES”

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, MEDIA, AND FILM

CALGARY, ALBERTA

APRIL 2023

© Bray S. Jamieson 2023

## **Abstract**

As it stands, very little research has been published on the truckers' protest movement that occupied Ottawa's downtown core and Canadian border crossing points during the early months of 2022. This thesis aims to address this gap in the academic literature by examining the political crisis response rhetoric that was produced by mainstream Canadian politicians in response to the truckers' protest movement. Using Butler's theory of performativity, I examine YouTube videos which feature the initial political performances of both Justin Trudeau and Pierre Poilievre in order to demonstrate the ways in which their rhetoric served to construct the truckers' protest movement. Ultimately, the aim of this thesis is to explore how mainstream Canadian politicians rhetorically constructed the protest movement through the content and delivery of their respective speeches. I argue throughout this paper that mainstream Canadian politicians, rather than earnestly addressing the fears and concerns of Canadians, chose to use the protest movement as a means through which to advance a conception of what it means for one to be a Canadian and ultimately served to construct the truckers' protest movement as an inherently ambiguous phenomenon.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my honours supervisor, Dr. Maria Victoria Guglietti. I cannot thank you enough for your commitment, dedication, and support. Your kind words of encouragement were immensely appreciated. I would also like you to thank you for reminding me to, when appropriate, take a day of occasional rest. Without you, this thesis would not have been possible. I would also like to thank the members of my honours committee, Dr. Maria Bakardjieva and Dr. Gregory Taylor for taking the time to read, review, and assess my work. To Dr. Bakardjieva, I thank you for serving as the inspiration for this project by prompting myself and other academics to take the truckers' protest movement seriously as an area of scholarship. To Dr. Samantha Thrift, thank you for your continued reassurance, time, and for continuously holding me accountable. To my honours cohort: I greatly appreciate all of your help and contributions throughout this process; I greatly admire your commitment to academic excellence.

A special thank-you to my family for instilling me with the values and work ethic required to overcome the challenges I faced over the last year. To my friends and peers, thank you for providing me with the space to discuss my work and troubleshoot in times of difficulty. To Aristotle, Binx, and Sam, thank you for being by my side throughout this process and for your relentless support of my ambitions. To Sam, thank you for providing me with confidence when needed, listening to me discuss my research on a near-daily basis, and for calling my bluff when I tried to use words that I don't know the meaning of; I appreciate you dearly.

Finally, I wish to advance a huge thank you to Skyler Wallander. You continue to motivate and inspire me by pushing me to achieve excellence and treat those around me with kindness.

## Table of Contents

<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Chapter 1: Rhetorical Situation &amp; Literature Review.....</i>	<i>3</i>
§1 The Rhetorical Situation .....	3
§2 Crisis Communications .....	5
§3 Crisis Communications in a Political Context.....	10
Conclusion .....	13
<i>Chapter 2: Theory &amp; Methods.....</i>	<i>15</i>
§1 Theory .....	15
Performativity and Political Rhetoric.....	17
Orientalist Rhetoric .....	18
§2 Sample & Methods.....	18
Sample.....	18
Methods.....	20
Limitations.....	22
<i>Chapter 3: Analysis.....</i>	<i>23</i>
§1 Justin Trudeau: Canadian Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Party.....	23
Context & Preliminary Rhetorical Construction.....	23
Rhetorical Performance .....	24
<i>Rhetorical Tension</i> .....	26
<i>Orientalist Rhetoric</i> .....	32
§2 Pierre Poilievre: Current Leader of the Canadian Conservative Party .....	33
Context and Preliminary Rhetorical Construction .....	33
Rhetorical Performance .....	34
<i>Rhetorical Tension</i> .....	39
§3 Discussion .....	40
<i>Chapter 4: Conclusion.....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>References .....</i>	<i>47</i>



## Introduction

The primary purpose of this thesis is to deconstruct and analyze the political rhetorical performances conducted by mainstream Canadian politicians in response to the truckers' protest movement that occupied Ottawa's downtown core and two Canadian border crossing locations in the early months of 2022. More specifically, I will be examining YouTube videos featuring both Justin Trudeau and Pierre Poilievre in order to provide an account of the ways in which their rhetorical performances constructed the protest movement. Ultimately, the aim of this thesis is to explore how mainstream Canadian politicians (Justin Trudeau and Pierre Poilievre) rhetorically constructed the truckers' protest in their initial address to Canadians: the first rhetorical instance wherein they responded to the crisis situation unfolding in the streets of the nation's capital. This thesis will regard Trudeau's and Poilievre's speeches as performative in line with Judith Butler's (1999) notion of performativity. This complicates some traditional rhetorical approaches that do not sufficiently reflect on the power of rhetoric to *produce* our social reality.

The first chapter of this thesis provides readers with a more detailed account of the truckers' protests and the correlated controversies which surrounded the movement. Additionally, the literature review section of the first chapter, presents an overview of academic literature from the field of crisis communications and explores the various ways in which political figures have historically employed rhetoric in response to crisis situations. Chapter two outlines, in detail, the theoretical perspective, sample, and methodological approach employed for the purposes of this paper. In the third chapter of this work, I delve into the analysis and findings of this research whilst also offering an account of the potential implications of the findings.

I wish to make clear that the intention of this thesis is not to promote or advance any particular position about the protest movement itself; rather, this thesis is dedicated to examining

an instance of political communication in response to the protesters' arrival in Ottawa. As will be discussed in greater detail, the protest movement was regarded as highly controversial; as a result, discourses surrounding the protest movement often provoked a polarizing response amongst Canadians. For this reason, it is a worthwhile exercise to briefly discuss the terminology which will be employed for the purposes of this thesis. Note that an array of terminology has been used in various discursive settings in order to provide a label for the group of protesters. For example, while the protestors called the movement 'the Freedom Convoy', media sources and online discourses often employed the label 'the so-called Freedom Convoy'. Additionally, media sources would use the terminology proposed by movement's leaders; however, they would place the term 'Freedom Convoy' within quotation marks.

The use of terminology is important on account of the fact that throughout the movement the use of different labels often signified either support for or dissent against the protest movement. As previously discussed, the intention of this project is not to advocate for or against the truckers' protest movement; my intention is solely to explore political communication and rhetorical strategies from a position of non-partisanship. For this reason, I have used the descriptive label 'truckers' protest movement'.

## **Chapter 1: Rhetorical Situation & Literature Review**

As it currently stands, very little research has been published on the topic of interest. However, as will be further demonstrated throughout this chapter, the rhetorical response to the truckers' protest that was produced by Canadian politicians is best understood as intentional political crisis response rhetoric. Though, prior to presenting the literature review, I will first examine and contextualize the rhetorical situation of the truckers' protest. The first section of this chapter will act as a synthesis of available media coverage pertaining to truckers' protest movement and impact.

This chapter will first focus on how contemporary academic literature has defined 'crisis', the theory behind crisis response communications in public relations, and the ways in which corporate communicators recommend that organizations communicate with their primary stakeholders in response to an unfolding crisis. Despite the fact that this research is not specifically rooted in the field of public relations, the academic literature offered by the discipline provides valuable context and a framework to rhetorically explore this crisis response produced by Canadian politicians. The final section of this chapter is dedicated to exploring the specific rhetorical practices which have been used by various American presidents in response to crisis situations such as the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. I will provide an overview of the rhetorical characteristics of traditional political crisis response communication whilst simultaneously noting the main methodological approaches employed by academics in their analyses of presidential rhetoric.

### **§1 The Rhetorical Situation**

During the final days of January 2022, "Freedom Protestors" began to gather in a number of locations across Canada in preparation for their descent upon Canada's national



capital (CBC, 2022; Staff, 2022). As of mid-afternoon January 29<sup>th</sup>, thousands of protestors, in a demonstration of opposition to federal COVID-19 vaccine mandates which required that foreign truck drivers be fully vaccinated in order to cross the Canadian border, swarmed Parliament Hill whilst semi-trucks and trailers gridlocked the downtown core, filling the air with the stench of burning diesel (CBC, 2022; Staff, 2022; Coletta & Hassan, 2022; Pringle & Raymond, 2022). Josh Pringle and Ted Raymond (2022) claim that there were an “estimated 1000 vehicles and 5000 people” (para. 2) occupying downtown Ottawa, yet, others have suggested that at the peak of the movement more than 8000 people joined in the demonstrations (Coletta & Hassan, 2022). Numbers would eventually dwindle after the first weekend’s activities, however, many protestors remained in Ottawa for more than three weeks (CBC, 2022; Staff, 2022).

The movement was shrouded in controversy as a result of the protestor’s unruly behavior and a collection of online images which depicted participants sporting visible “symbols of hatred” such as the Confederate flag and Swastikas (Coletta & Hassan, 2022, para. 1; CBC, 2022). Furthermore, as noted by Amanda Coletta and Jennifer Hassan (2022), the movement which was originally intended to protest vaccine requirements for foreign truck drivers “spiraled into a demonstration against [Justin Trudeau]” and wider “coronavirus restrictions, which are mostly imposed by provincial governments” (para. 6). Additionally, whilst protests in Ottawa blared their truck horns and radios, other demonstrations simultaneously took place at Coutts’ and Windsor’s border crossings, severely restricting the flow of both imported and exported goods, perpetuating damage to the Canadian economy (Kost & Easton, 2022).

The controversial nature of the events was augmented on account of the fact that “the Canadian Trucking Alliance disavowed the protest” (Soucy, 2022, para.9). Many truckers took to social media to make it clear that “the convoy [didn’t] speak for them” (Soucy, 2022, para. 9).

This further poses questions regarding the driving forces behind, and the main motivations of, the movement at large. As the events unfolded, it became evident that Canadian politicians, at every level of government, were witnessing the unfolding of a crisis situation which required an effective communicative response. However, an array of politicians and media practitioners have questioned the ways in which the crisis response was handled by members of the Canadian government (Al-Hakim, 2022; Porter Robbins, 2022; Walsh & Mcleod, 2022; Edwards, 2022). The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to examining contemporary academic literature pertaining to effective crisis communications and an exploration of the rhetorical specificities employed by various political leaders in response to a crisis situation.

## **§2 Crisis Communications**

Historically, the primary aim of crisis communications research was to explore the communicative practices employed by for-profit businesses in the face of an unfolding crisis. Most of this research was conducted by researchers and professionals in the field of public relations. However, contemporary studies in the field have noted that “every crisis [involves] a political dimension [which] makes exploring political communication perspectives on crises all the more relevant” (Metag & Dalmus, 2019, p.65). Throughout this section I aim to situate the following research project within the realm of crisis communications studies because, as will be demonstrated, the Canadian government’s response to the truckers’ protest was first and foremost an exercise in political crisis communication. The remainder of this section will outline the key tenets of crisis communications; this will provide further context for the examination of the political communication produced in response to the truckers’ protest.

The practice of crisis communications refers to the use of strategic communicative practices for the purpose of responding to a crisis event (Anderson-Meli, & Koshy, 2020,

Coombs, 2010; Seeger, & Sellnow, 2019). When faced with a crisis, organizations engage in deliberate, intentional, and highly strategic communication in order to mitigate, to the greatest extent, the potential damages posed by the crisis towards their stakeholders and the organization itself (Fronz, 2012). Prominent scholars in the field of public relations have noted that there is a shared interest in crisis communications among both for-profit and government organizations (Coombs, 2019). However, there is a difference of priorities between the two sectors as “corporations focus [primarily] on profit while politicians focus on power and ideas” (Coombs, 2019, p.208)

Within the crisis communication academic literature there is not one stable and universally agreed upon conception as to what should be considered a crisis (Coombs, 2009). Some scholars are insistent that crises are ultimately predictable events which arise as a result of improper foresight on the part of an organization (Heath and Millar, 2004). However, most scholars maintain that crises are unforeseeable events which shatter and disrupt habitual patterns, routines, and perception of reality itself (Coombs, 2007; Boin, McConell, and ‘t Hart, 2008, Anthonissen, 2008). They also agree on the fact that crises may cause serious harms to organizations and their stakeholders (Heath and Millar, 2003; Coombs, 2010; Boin, McConell, and ‘t Hart, 2008; Seeger, & Sellnow, 2019). Timothy Coombs (2007) defines a crisis as “a sudden and unexpected event that threatens to disrupt an organization’s operations and poses both a financial and a reputational threat” which “can harm stakeholders physically, emotionally, and/or financially” (p.164). In consideration of this definition, the truckers’ protest falls within the scope of crisis communications, seeing as the Canadian government and government-run institutions were both unprepared and unable to handle the challenges and disruptions presented by the unfolding events (Yogaretnam, 2022).

The key commonality across all instances of crisis is that they require an *effectively* communicated response (Crandall, Parnell, & Spillan, 2014). As stated by Coombs (2015) “just because [an organization] communicates during a crisis does not mean [they] necessarily made the situation better” (p.141). Ineffective communication in the face of a crisis can result in further escalation and “complicate an already complex situation” (Crandall, Parnell, & Spillan, 2014, p. 19). Furthermore, depending upon the nature of a crisis, “effective and efficient communication can, ultimately, be a matter of life and death” (Anthonissen, 2008, p.9). The intention for the practice of crisis communication is that it be strategic such that it serves to limit, to the greatest possible extent, the potential damages of an unfolding crisis (Coombs, 2015; Crandall, Parnell, & Spillan, 2014).

Timothy Coombs (2015) claims that organizations, when faced with a crisis situation, can implement two different crisis communication strategies: “(1) managing information, and (2) managing meaning” (p.142). Of primary importance for the purpose of this project is the process of “managing meaning” (Coombs, 2015, p.142) wherein organizations intentionally employ strategic communications tactics in an attempt to construct their audience’s perception of a crisis in alignment with the organization’s ideology and values (Coombs, 2015; Coombs, 2014). In other words, organizations contribute to the construction of the perceptual meaning of a crisis using communicative practices (Coombs, 2014). A similar phenomenon occurs in the political arena. It has been noted that there is no relinquishing of political interest and ideology in the face of a crisis (Boin, McConnell, and ‘t Hart, 2008). Rather, political parties and individual political agents engage in a form of ideological warfare and “struggle to produce the dominant interpretation of the implications of the crisis” (Boin, McConnell, and ‘t Hart, 2008, p.9).

Ultimately, the aim of this research is to examine this phenomenon in relation to the truckers' protest.

A crisis can be co-opted to serve the interests of those responding to the crisis (Anthonissen, 2008; Coombs, 2010). This is especially common in the political sphere. Researchers in the field of political science have found that political leaders use crises to rhetorically bolster their reputation and/or promote partisan specific political ideals (Boin, McConell, and 't Hart, 2008). In other words, instances of crisis are often politicized for partisan or individual political aims (Boin, McConell, and 't Hart, 2008).

The final thing to make note of in this section are the various rhetorical practices that crisis communications scholars recommend that an organization employ should they need to respond to a crisis. From the perspective of a crisis communications scholar, an effective crisis communications strategy is dependent upon three factors: (1) the timeliness of the response, (2) the rhetorical construction of the organization's ethos, and (3) the orator's ability to evoke the emotions of their audience (Gable, 2008; Coombs, 2014; Wheeler, 2018; Crandall, Parnell, & Spillan, 2014).

Scholars suggest that an organization's initial response to a crisis takes place "within one hour of the crisis event" (Coombs, 2014, p.42). A prompt response may mitigate the potential spread of misinformation or information which could otherwise harm an organization (Coombs, 2014). Crisis communication scholars have also noted that a rapid crisis response may increase the ethos of the organization as it shows that it can efficiently respond to a crisis. (Wheeler, 2018; Crandall, Parnell, & Spillan, 2014). However, an organization's ethos is not solely dependent upon the timeliness of the response. The organization's spokesperson and their ability to speak to stakeholders in response to the crisis also plays an important role in the stakeholder's

perception of the organization's credibility (Crandall, Parnell, & Spillan, 2014; Wheeler, 2018).

An organization's ethos is thought to be substantially enhanced when an orator is sufficiently knowledgeable about the crisis and can effectively communicate this knowledge to the organization's wider audiences (Crandall, Parnell, & Spillan, 2014). However, the organization's spokesperson must also communicate in such a way that their audience recognizes that the spokesperson is truthfully representing the state of the crisis and how the organization intends to respond or intervene to limit any further damage (Crandall, Parnell, & Spillan, 2014).

Finally, it is recommended that organizations, when responding to a crisis, communicate in such a manner that will lead their audiences to believe that the organization is working directly out of concern for those affected by the crisis (Crandall, Parnell, & Spillan, 2014; Coombs, 2014; Wheeler, 2018). The importance of this perception is evident in the following claim from Adrian Wheeler (2018): "In a real crisis people remember the emotional content more than finely crafted statements, no matter how smoothly they are delivered" (p.68). This emotional content can be a product of both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. An organization's verbal communication in response to a crisis must stylistically reflect the severity of the event whilst simultaneously reflecting the organization's commitment to, and sympathy for, those affected by the crisis (Coombs, 2014; Wheeler, 2018). Furthermore, it is recommended that an organization's spokesperson be attentive to both their personal body language and dress in order to visually signal to their audience that they recognize and appreciate the severity of the situation (Wheeler, 2018).

There is a substantial overlap between corporate and political crisis communication (Coombs, 2019). For this reason, crisis communication literature offers a framework to conceptualize the ways in which Canadian government officials would have perceived the event

and the rhetorical communications strategies that could have been recommended by their various communications teams in response to the unfolding crisis.

### **§3 Crisis Communications in a Political Context**

Throughout the final section of this chapter, I will discuss the rhetorical practices which have been historically employed by government officials in response to a crisis situation and the ways in which these rhetorical practices have been documented in scholarly literature.

Unfortunately, there is an evident lack of scholarly attention to the crisis communications rhetoric delivered by Canadian politicians. Only two articles focus on Canadian political crisis response rhetoric; these articles offer very little relevant information for the purposes of this project. However, there is a large body of literature which explores American politicians' rhetorical performance during times of crisis and turmoil, specifically, in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the unfolding of the Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, scholars have noted that Bush and his administration employed an array of rhetorical practices in response speeches to the terrorists' attacks of September 11th, 2001, which in turn served to discursively shape the general perception of the events in America (Maggio, 2007; Ryan, 2004; Bligh, et al., 2004; Bligh, et al., 2004; Kuś, 2020;). Domke et al., (2007) argue that the presidential rhetoric employed after the 9/11 attacks likely had a direct impact upon policy decisions, and served to promote partisan interests (Anthonissen, 2008; Coombs, 2010). In his post 9/11 addresses, Bush reiterated themes which were thought to remind the American people of his administration's commitment to preserving and maintaining public safety whilst simultaneously stressing the evil forces which laid abroad that had to be dealt with both swiftly and forcefully (John et al., 2007; Ryan, 2004). The president engaged in an Orientalist style of rhetoric that promoted binary distinctions between the freedom and unity offered by the United States of America with the

savagery and cruel disposition of Islamic fundamentalists (Maggio, 2007; Ryan, 2004; Said, 1979; Bligh, et al., 2004; Kuś, 2020). Bligh et al., (2004), noted that Bush's rhetoric dramatically shifted in response to the crisis as he began to position himself as a charismatic leader through an evident emphasis on personal ethos and the use of emotionally charged language.

The main methodological approach present in the literature is qualitative content analysis (Maggio, 2007; John et al., 2007; Bligh, et al., 2004; Bligh, et al., 2004) and most authors give very little attention to non-verbal components of Bush's rhetorical delivery (Maggio, 2007; John et al., 2007; Bligh, et al., 2004; Bligh, et al., 2004). This suggests that these studies regard rhetorical performances in a political crisis response context as limited to the semantic choices of the elected officials. For example, only one article highlighted the rhetorical significance of the location from where Bush chose to address Americans (Kuś, 2020) and none of the studies examined the way in which Bush was positioned or visually represented as a rhetorical actor.

Another more recent crisis event that has received widespread academic attention is the Covid-19 pandemic. In this case, scholars also focused on purely textual content or engaged in linguistic centered analyses to examine political crisis response rhetoric (Neville-Shepard, 2021; Montiel et al., 2021; Yang & Tian, 2022; Yarchi & Hershman-Shitrit, 2022; Wang, 2022; Watkins & Clevenger, 2021; Callahan, 2021). Even in the work of Eleni Andreouli and Emma Brice (2020), who recognized the performative nature of political discourses and rhetoric, there is no consideration of how non-verbal elements impacted political rhetorical strategy. To my knowledge, at this time, none of the available literature in this field has examined any non-linguistic rhetorical elements and their unique role in the array of political rhetorical performances which occurred throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This research project aims to further widen the scope of previous analyses of political crisis response rhetoric by insisting



upon the importance of performative rhetorical elements as a component of the political rhetorical performance.

In terms of the rhetorical strategies mobilized by political actors during the Covid-19 pandemic, John Callahan (2021) noted that Trump opted to perform a positive rhetorical style wherein he “attempted to build confidence by painting the impact of the virus and the US response in a positive light” (p.69) and claimed that the United States was poised to navigate the challenges that laid ahead with ease. Trump demonstrated an evident appeal to ethos and personal character, engaged in the practice of mythopoesis, and continuously employed the rhetorical device of metaphor (Wang, 2022).

These rhetorical practices are not novel nor unique. In fact, they are highly reminiscent of the political crisis rhetoric employed by former Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper in response to the impending financial crisis of 2008 (Glushko, 2008). Harper, like Trump, opted to perform a rhetoric of optimism in response to the impending financial crisis in a “deliberate attempt to reassure the most-affected Canadians of his government’s competency” (Glushko, 2008, p.87). However, this was not the only rhetorical tactic employed by Harper, as he also used metaphors and biblical analogy in an attempt to increase his personal ethos to maintain the trust of Canadian citizens (Glushko, 2008). Additionally, he engaged in epideictic rhetoric, linguistically attacking his political opponents in an effort to situate his party in a favorable light (Glushko, 2008).

This section of the literature has established a collection of political crisis response rhetorical practices and tactics which have been routinely used by elected officials in response to an unfolding crisis. In the face of a crisis, politicians tend to use highly emotional language (Bligh, et al., 2004), promote their character in an attempt to bolster personal ethos (Bligh, et al.,

2004; Glushko, 2009), and further their ideological position through metaphors (Glushko, 2009; Wang, 2022). Furthermore, the examination of this body of literature reveals that scholars have almost exclusively studied the performance of political crisis response rhetoric as a linguistic or semantic phenomenon (Neville-Shepard, 2021; Montiel et al., 2021; Yang & Tian, 2022; Yarchi & Hershman-Shitrit, 2022; Wang, 2022; Watkins & Clevenger, 2021; Callahan, 2021; Maggio, 2007; John et al., 2007; Bligh, et al., 2004; Bligh, et al., 2004). This research aims to address gaps in the available academic literature by studying an instance of political crisis response rhetoric in a Canadian context whilst also widening the scope of the rhetorical performance analysis in a political context to demonstrate the importance of non-verbal, performative, rhetorical elements as a key component of persuasive speech.

### **Conclusion**

The truckers' protest, as outlined in the opening section of the chapter, when considered within the context of the academic literature on public relations crisis response, meets the relevant criteria to be considered a crisis on account of it being “unforeseen”, “disruptive”, and a potential threat towards the reputation and operations of the Canadian government and government led institutions (Coombs, 2007, p.164). Not only did the protest and protest related events disrupt and interfere with the lives of the residents of Ottawa (Coombs, 2007), but they also served to damage both the Canadian economy and downtown Ottawa infrastructure. Because the truckers' protest falls within the scope of crisis response communication, it is important, throughout our analysis, to remain aware of the fact that the rhetorical specificities employed by Canadian government officials in response to the movement were likely prepared intentionally with the purpose of advancing a distinct political agenda. This body of literature makes it evident that political crisis response rhetoric is not arbitrary; it serves a specific agenda

that isn't always necessarily primarily concerned with mitigating the potential impact of the crisis.

As previously noted, very little academic literature has been dedicated to the rhetorical practices employed by Canadian politicians in response to an unfolding crisis. Furthermore, in consideration of the existent literature pertaining to political crisis response rhetoric, it is evident that further research is required which focuses on political rhetoric from a position which recognizes the importance of non-linguistic rhetorical tactics. As mentioned, nothing about a political crisis response rhetoric is arbitrary. Neglecting to include the non-linguistic/verbal component of the political rhetorical performance in any analysis of political crisis response rhetoric severely limits the scope of the research.

## Chapter 2: Theory & Methods

The primary purpose of this chapter is to outline the theoretical approach, methodological procedure, and sample used for the purposes of this research project. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the limitations of this work.

### §1 Theory

This project is informed by Judith Butler's (1999) discussion of "performativity" (p.33). Butler first introduces the term performativity during the introductory chapter of their highly influential text *Gender Trouble* as a means to explain the various discursive and embodied forces at play in the construction of both gender and gender identity. My intention throughout this section is to draw attention to the potential of Butler's theory to examine the political rhetoric produced in response to the truckers' protest.

As per Butler (1999), both gender and gender identity are products of performative construction that are best explained by the concept of performativity. From this perspective, Butler claims that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender" (p.33). In other words, there is no inherent or natural essence of gender external to or driving/motivating one's performance of gender. Rather, gender and gender identity are constructed *entirely* through, and as a result of, an agent's performance of gender (Butler, 1999). This leads Butler (1990) to conclude that the phenomenon of gender "is real only to the extent that it is performed" (p. 278). Gender, outside of one's performance of gender, simply does not exist.

Butler's (1999) notion of performativity is intended to account for the constructive processes through which a given agent's gender is produced. Gender, Butler (1999) claims, "is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (p.179). In other words, people's gender is an unstable and evolving

component of their identity, constituted through performance. As noted by James Loxley (2007), these performative acts are “conventional gestures, movements, and styles, which [serve to] produce us as gendered” (p.119). While Loxley (2007) claims that one’s gender is composed of innumerable factors, Butler (1999) maintains that the most prominent of these factors are discursive elements such as one’s linguistic choices and the delivery of spoken language as well as components of physical appearance such as clothing, hairstyle, makeup, and/or bodily movements, etc. Performativity, as per Butler (1999), is the articulation of performative elements for the purpose of constructing gender at some distinct moment in time. This research will be focused on examining both the discursive elements, the spoken content, of political performance as well as the elements of delivery which serve to supplement and enhance the rhetorical construction of the truckers’ protest movement.

Butler (1999) maintains that one’s construction of gender remains limited and confined to previously available social norms and cultural boundaries. One cannot circumvent cultural conditions entirely in order to perform a completely novel conception of gender (Butler, 1999). To draw an analogy, one must play within the predetermined rules of the game that are imposed by cultural conditions. Performativity, in this way, is ultimately bound to existing power structures (Loxley, 2007).

Despite the fact that Butler’s concept of performativity was originally conceived of as a means through which to describe the process of gender construction, the concept has garnered wider academic focus in a number of disciplines. Throughout the remainder of this section, I aim to demonstrate how the concept of performativity will be employed for the purpose of analyzing political rhetoric.

## **Performativity and Political Rhetoric**

The truckers' protest, considered in the context of Butler's theory of performativity, is a phenomenon constructed of innumerable components. However, due to the political nature of the protests, I argue that one of the key constituting components was the rhetorical performances of prominent Canadian politicians. From this perspective, the truckers' protest movement, like gender, has no essential or inherent nature in and of itself, rather the protests are the result of the collective 'truckers' protest' performance'. This research project will employ Butler's concept of performativity to analyze how mainstream Canadian politicians rhetorically constructed the truckers' protest movement during their initial address to Canadians.

Each component of the rhetorical performances will be regarded as intentionally produced for the purpose of constructing the truckers' protest movement in accordance with political ideology (Anthonissen, 2008; Coombs, 2010; Boin, McConell, and 't Hart, 2008). However, just as the construction of gender is limited by social conventions (Butler, 1999), mainstream political agents' construction of the protest movement is limited by the nature of its existence within the political genre (Martin, 2013). Political construction is not an unconstrained practice: "politics depends upon the political dimension to define limits to what can legitimately be said and done" (Martin, 2013, p.5).

What I have proposed throughout this chapter is not common within the discipline of rhetorical studies. I have yet to see other scholars employ Butler's (1999) concept of performativity as a lens through which to examine political rhetoric. However, this is not to say that scholars have not employed postmodern principles for the purpose of conducting rhetorical analysis. Scholars such as James Wilson and Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson (2001), in their work on embodied rhetoric as it pertains to disability and the construction of the disabled subject, claim

that there is a “power to language to shape the social world” (p.12) and that a greater understanding of this power can ultimately “further the inclusion and self-empowerment of the disabled” (p.12). Postmodern scholars typically promote the notion that discourses shape, at least to an extent, social reality.

### **Orientalist Rhetoric**

Orientalism is a theory developed by Edward Said (1978) which captures the objectification of the “Oriental” by imperial powers such as Britain, France and, later, the United States. Said (1978) defines “Orientalism [as] a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the “the Orient” and “the Occident” (p.2). In other words, the orient is situated as that which is positioned as starkly in contrast with a hegemonic European tradition and culture (Said, 1978). Said (1978) also claims that the Occident requires the Orient in order to define itself due to the fact that humans understand things in binaries. In practice, Orientalism functions through the binary oppositions of ‘the Orient vs the Occident’: ‘Us vs Them’. I employ the term ‘orientalist rhetoric’ to categorize the rhetorical practice of employing binary relationships as a means to construct a particular image of ‘self’ and the ‘other’.

## **§2 Sample & Methods**

### **Sample**

The sample for this research was purposively selected and consists of a selection of two YouTube video clips which highlight the political crisis response produced by the leader of the Liberal party, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and the current leader of the Conservative Party, Pierre Poilievre, during their initial address to Canadians regarding the truckers' protest movement. I decided to analyze the rhetorical performance of these two particular political

figures because I wanted my sample to consist of the rhetorical performances that were the most prominent, visible, and vocal throughout the truckers' protest movement. While a number of politicians played a role in the rhetorical construction of the truckers' protest and were considered for the sample, in order to narrow the scope of this project and focus my analysis, these two politicians were ultimately chosen due to their visibility and salient contributions to discourses pertaining to the protest movement.

The videos selected for this research were released to a Canadian audience within the first four days of the truckers' protest movement. It is important to remain aware of the fact that the construction of the truckers' protest movement is continuously in flux. For example, as I write this chapter, over a year since the inception of the movement, novel discourses are still being generated by both media and political agents. Selecting these particular videos affords me the opportunity to explore a distinct moment in the rhetorical construction of the protest movement: the initial moments of the protests, the first four days wherein protestors first arrived in Ottawa.

As noted by Olga Bloch (2014), “the initial stages of [any] crisis [is] characterized by [a] lack of information and uncertainty” (p.29). It is during these uncertain moments wherein there is a “high demand for information” (Bloch, 2014, p.55). Crisis communications scholars adamantly claim that the initial moments of a crisis are crucial for any organization or agent who wishes to manage the information available to the public or the audience’s perception, the meaning, of the unfolding crisis (Bloch, 2014; Coombs, 2015). I argue that in the context of the truckers' protest, if there were a struggle between politicians “to produce the dominant interpretation and implications of the crisis” (Boin, McConnell, and ‘t Hart, 2008, p.9), it would be most evident during the initial moments of the movement.



The video medium was chosen for this research because it provides the best means through which to analyze political rhetoric as a *performance*. In this way, the analysis is not limited to examining merely the content of the rhetorical speeches, but also includes a discussion of how various elements of rhetorical delivery impacted the rhetorical construction of the truckers' protest movement.

## **Methods**

The inspiration for the methodological approach used throughout this project is the framework for political rhetorical analysis proposed by political scientist James Martin (2015) in his text *Situating Speech: A Rhetorical Approach to Political Strategy*. Martin (2015) claims that the purpose of employing a rhetorical approach to examine political speech is to “interpret the way ideas are given charge in argumentative processes that unsettle, transform, or simply reaffirm established narratives” (p.28). Martin (2015) states that these processes tend to function simultaneously such that they could be said to “[endorse] established ideas while simultaneously advancing new ones” (p.28). Thus, to examine rhetoric is to analyze the initial introductory moment of a novel constructed discourse (Martin, 2013). However, Martin (2015) is aware of the fact that rhetorical analysis should not solely focus on the given content of a speech act: “rhetoric is not strictly about language” (p.29). Rhetorical analysis “describes a composite, multilayered performance embodied in communication [wherein] a speaker mobilizes language and emotion, personal-authority, bodily gestures and audible voice to make an argument work” (Martin, 2015, p.29).

In this thesis, I adopt Martin’s (2015) trifold approach to rhetorical analysis. The first step consists of examining and describing the rhetorical context, “the conditions giving rise to a speech occasion” (Martin, 2015, p. 34). An exploration of rhetorical context is a vital and

commonly overlooked component of rhetorical analyses (Martin, 2015). Prior to each analysis, I will provide a brief contextual overview of each video in the sample which will “[identify] the historical time and place of the intervention, the exigence to which it is a response, and any broader circumstances the intervention also seeks to shape” (Martin, 2015, p.34). This practice also affords the opportunity to draw attention to the way in which previous political statements, which were made prior to the release of the videos in the sample, served to inform the initial rhetorical construction of the truckers' protest movement.

The second step of Martin's (2015) trifold approach is the analysis of the “rhetorical argument” (p.34). For the purposes of my analysis, I have chosen to use the term “rhetorical performance” rather than Martin's own term, “rhetorical argument”. Martin (2015) defines rhetorical argument as “the moment that ideas are shaped into an argument for the audience... and are shaped to maximize [their] effect and persuasive force” (p.35). It is important to remember that Martin (2015) does not conceive of rhetoric as merely discursive; rather his approach to rhetorical analysis requires a systematic analysis of the rhetorical performance as a holistic phenomenon composed of discursive and embodied elements as well as elements of rhetorical delivery. The selected sample for this research project was analyzed in accordance with Martin's (2015) perspective in order to account for how the rhetorical performances of both Justin Trudeau and Pierre Poilievre served to construct the truckers' protest movement.

The final step of the methodological framework offered by Martin (2015) is an analysis of the “rhetorical effects” (p.35). From a political science perspective, Martin (2015) focuses on “whether any constraints have been overcome and certain actions made possible” (p.35). Because my intentions as a researcher are not to examine the outcomes of political rhetoric, my approach differs slightly from that of Martin (2015). For the purposes of this research project, the

“rhetorical effects” (Martin, 2015, p.35) of the sample are simply conceived as the rhetorical construction of the truckers' protest movement.

### **Limitations**

Methodologically, this research is limited because the data will not be examined as a mediated phenomenon. For example, the video which features Justin Trudeau was released by *CTV News*; it is possible that *CTV News* edited the video such that it alters Trudeau's intended rhetorical construction of the truckers' protest movement. However, for the purposes of this assignment, the potential interventions of this nature will be ignored. The data for this research will be analyzed as if it was an eyewitness account of the rhetorical performances. The second limitation of this project is that it will not account for the way in which the rhetorical construction of the truckers' protest movement is impacted by the ways in which YouTube, as a digital media sharing platform, rhetorically frames the videos.

Lastly, I should note that this research is limited in the sense that mainstream political rhetoric is only one of the many components which played a role in the initial construction of the truckers' protest movement. Subsequent research is required in order to generate a wider understanding of how the protests were constructed by traditional media outlets, alternative media sources, foreign governments, online influencers, as well as through discourses generated on social media. This is not to say that this research is not important, only that its scope is limited. The aim is simply to fill the gaps in the academic literature.

## **Chapter 3: Analysis**

### **§1 Justin Trudeau: Canadian Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Party**

#### **Context & Preliminary Rhetorical Construction**

After the preliminary weekend of the truckers' protest movement's arrival in Ottawa's downtown core, Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, Justin Trudeau, held a press-conference outside of his home in Ottawa. The reason that the press conference was held at Trudeau's home was because that morning he found himself testing positive for Covid-19. Trudeau claims early in his speech that "two of [his] own children have contracted it (Covid-19)" (CTV News, 2022, 0:11) as well. Even though he "[felt] well and had no symptoms" (CTV News, 2022, 0:23), Trudeau informed the media that he would be "working remotely this week and will keep following public health guidelines" (CTV News, 2022, 0:24).

For further context, it is important to note that the public address Trudeau makes in the video, which serves as the centerpiece of this section of the analysis, does not represent the first time that Trudeau spoke with the media regarding the truckers' protest movement. Trudeau's first statement took place on January 26, 2022, during a media question period following a press conference dedicated to discussing Canadian support for the Ukrainians against the Russian invasion. One of the reporters took advantage of the opportunity to ask the Prime Minister for an official statement regarding the growing protest movement which was said to be en route to the Canadian Parliament. Because many of the rhetorical tactics employed by Trudeau in his response to this question overlap with those I will discuss in further detail throughout this section of the analysis, they will not be discussed here. That being said, I do wish to highlight that in his response, Trudeau claims that there is a "small fringe minority of people who are on their way to Ottawa who hold unacceptable views of Canadians" (CPAC, 2022, 23:26). Trudeau's response

to this question highlights an important rhetorical phenomenon: he rhetorically diminished both the scale and significance of the protest movement. Thus, I argue that Trudeau's brief initial rhetorical statement constructs the truckers' movement as something inherently insignificant and unworthy of the attention and concern of Canadian citizens; a theme which plays a prominent role in Trudeau's rhetorical performance.

After the first weekend of the protests, the movement garnered a widespread amount of media coverage in not only Canada, but also the United States of America and other western European nations. For this reason, Trudeau's intended audience is both local and international. It is clear throughout his speech that Trudeau aims to address both supporters and critics of the movement with the intention of condemning the anarchy of the previous weekend as well as prompting protestors to leave Ottawa's downtown core.

### **Rhetorical Performance**

Trudeau's rhetorical performance lasts just over thirty-two minutes (32:12). Over the first nine minutes and forty-five seconds, Trudeau addresses Canadians by performing a prepared speech which he often glances at for reference. Throughout the speech, he fluently transitions from English to French; each time he speaks in French, a translator's voice provides audiences with an English translation. At the ten-minute mark a shift occurs wherein journalists are afforded the opportunity to question the Prime-Minister directly. For the purposes of this project, despite this shift, I analyze the performance in its entirety as both the rhetorical speech as well as the allotted question period contributed to the construction of the truckers' protest movement. Thematically, Trudeau's speech demonstrated a primary focus on the truckers' protest movement; however, he also briefly highlights the Covid-19 pandemic, the heroism of healthcare

workers, the efficacy and need for vaccinations, and the behavior of his political opponents during the first weekend of the protest movement.

As mentioned in the previous section, Trudeau begins his speech by addressing the fact that both he and members of his family had tested positive for Covid-19. In fact, Trudeau uses the first 1:18 of his speech to highlight the wide array of challenges Canadians have faced on account of the pandemic. He highlights how “throughout [the] pandemic, people have lost loved ones” (CTV News, 2022, 0:54) and urges Canadians to both “get vaccinated” (CTV News, 2022, 0:34), “be there for one another” (CTV News, 2022, 1:05), and “steel [themselves] for the challenges ahead” (CTV News, 2022, 1:11). After the first 1:18, the remainder of the speech is dedicated to discussion of the truckers' protest movement.

By beginning his speech with a discussion of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact upon Canadians, Trudeau rhetorically situates the protest movement within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. This rhetorical move constructs the protest movement as a consequence of pandemic related frustrations, disregarding completely the notion that the protests could be rooted in dissatisfaction with the policies implemented by his government. This rhetorical tactic is extremely clear later in the speech. During the scheduled question period, a reporter asks Trudeau how he might attempt to appease the frustrations and anger of the protestors (CTV News, 2022). Trudeau responds with the following claim:

I think many people across the country in Ottawa or elsewhere are frustrated. Everyone is sick of this pandemic. Everyone is tired and wants to be done with it. Everyone would love to be able to say okay, it's over, and move on. But the vast majority of Canadians know that's not how we can end this pandemic. The way out of this pandemic is getting vaccinated. It's listening to public health advice (CTV, 2022, 12:39).

This response highlights a key component of Trudeau's construction of the truckers' protest movement. From his perspective, the driving force of the movement is not, as the protestors claimed, contempt for the policies implemented by the Liberal government, but rather a mere response to the buildup of frustration generated as a result of the ongoing challenges imposed upon Canadians throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Trudeau's rhetorical performance constructs the protest movement as both undemocratic and inherently rooted in hatred. Trudeau begins his discussion of the protest movement by dismissing it because various protestors were spotted flying flags which prominently featured Nazi symbols and other racist imagery. From Trudeau's perspective, the movement falls definitively outside the scope of democratic practices because these symbols were displayed. Trudeau synecdochally equates the protest movement with the individuals who opted to publicly display such problematic symbols. Thus, he further constructs the movement as firmly grounded in hatred which Trudeau claims "can never be the answer" (CNN, 2022, 1:48).

### ***Rhetorical Tension***

Trudeau's rhetorical performance is marked by a fascinating tension between his discursive framing of the protest movement as both small and insignificant whilst simultaneously, through various elements of rhetorical delivery, suggesting the contrary. In the first section of this chapter, I mentioned that Trudeau used his preliminary address to construct the truckers' protest movement as insignificant and unworthy of the attention of Canadians. This rhetorical construction tactic continues throughout Trudeau's rhetorical performance. The most blatant example of this phenomenon occurs near the conclusion of Trudeau's performance when he repeats the same phrase that he said in his preliminary address, referring to the protestors as a

“fringe minority” (CTV News, 2022, 30:23). However, this is not the only way in which Trudeau’s speech could be said to rhetorically undermine the significance of the protest movement.

Throughout his speech, Trudeau continuously refers to both the “90 percent of Canadians” (CTV News, 2022, 15:09) as well as the “90 percent of truckers” (CTV News, 2022, 19:02). For context, when Trudeau references “the 90 percent” (CTV News, 2022, 5:10) he makes it clear that he is referring to the majority of Canadians “who have been doing the right thing to keep [others] safe” (CTV News, 2022, 11:53). In other words, he is speaking to those who have followed public health guidelines and have chosen to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. By repeating the phrase “90 percent” (CTV News, 2022, 5:10), Trudeau further constructs the protest movement as inconsequential by alluding to the fact that only a small component of Canadian citizens and truckers (ten percent at most) would have any reason to align their perspectives with those participating in the protests. Note that this line of argumentation also relies on Trudeau’s earlier construction of the protest movement as merely a response to the Covid-19 pandemic rather than a challenge towards the policies implemented by his government. Trudeau craftily constructs the protest movement such that it could only conceivably be supported by those who have chosen not to be vaccinated (the 10 percent). These two rhetorical tactics work in tandem to construct the protestors as a small, insignificant minority of Canadians.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, a number of elements of Trudeau’s rhetorical delivery evidently contradict his verbal argumentation, thus highlighting a considerable tension between the content and the delivery of the speech. First, it is important to consider the rhetorical implications of the rhetorical situation. Despite the fact that Trudeau verbally aims to minimize the significance of the protest movement, the very fact that he



participated in a media press conference suggests the opposite, as rarely does the Prime Minister take the time to hold a dedicated press conference for insignificant or trivial matters. Therefore, I argue that the way in which Trudeau chose to address Canadians constructs the protests as a movement of great significance.

However, the context of the rhetorical situation is not the only element of delivery which constructs the movement in this way. There is also the epideictic nature of Trudeau's speech. Traditionally, political rhetoric falls within the scope of deliberative rhetoric; however, this particular speech is better understood as epideictic on account of the way in which Trudeau demonstrates a commitment to assigning blame towards the members of the protest movement. Because epideictic rhetoric typically contextualizes monumental occasions (Silva Rhetoricae, 2007), the very nature of the speech suggests that the event is significant. Furthermore, the rhetorical construction of the protest as a moment of significance is supported by Trudeau's choice of dress, his distinct facial expressions, and his somber and serious tone of voice. The remainder of this section will be dedicated to briefly exploring each of these three elements. In order to supplement my discussion, I will provide a reference image of a screenshot from the video below (Figure 1).

## Figure 1

*Screenshot of Justin Trudeau*



*Note.* (CTV News, 2022, 1:46)

The first rhetorical element I will explore is Trudeau's choice of dress. Trudeau opted to address the media wearing formal attire. Specifically, I want to point out the fact that Trudeau chose to wear a tie under his coat and scarf. While this choice was not uncommon for the Prime Minister, it is important to note that throughout the pandemic Trudeau, on multiple occasions, addressed Canadians from the same podium outside of his Ottawa home, in almost the exact same outfit, though without wearing a tie (Figure 2).

## Figure 2

*Justin Trudeau Press Conference in 2020*



*Note. From Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is speaking with premiers later today to discuss the Covid-19 pandemic [photograph], by Justin Tang, 2020, CBC*  
(<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-covid19-premiers-address-1.5506473>).

While the difference between Trudeau's clothing choices in the two images might be subtle, his decision to wear a tie during his rhetorical speech plays a vital role in both fabrication of Trudeau's personal ethos as well as the construction of the truckers' protests in the sense that it hints at the movement's significance. Through his dress, Trudeau positions himself as both an authoritative and credible leader. Note that ties are normally worn during occasions which require an increased level of formality. As depicted by Figure 2, even though a tie is a commonplace component of male political dress, Trudeau has previously demonstrated that he is willing to address Canadians without wearing a tie. Therefore, Trudeau's choice to wear a tie during his media address imposes formality on the context of the truckers' protest thus constructing the movement as something which requires an official response from the government, something untrivial which cannot be ignored. Furthermore, this line of

argumentation is enhanced by the way in which Trudeau constructs the movement as requiring a firm response from an authoritative figure.

Another important rhetorical element to consider is Trudeau's distinctly serious facial expressions. Throughout most of his rhetorical performance, Trudeau maintains a furrowed brow, a perpetual frown, wrinkled skin on his forehead, and partially squinted eyes which make direct piercing eye contact with the camera (Figure 1). His unchanging facial features enhance the tense rigidity of his rhetorical speech. Trudeau's solemn facial features suggest a high level of both frustration and concern. This feature of Trudeau's performance is complemented by his tone of voice. Trudeau's rhetorical tone plays a very similar role to that of his dress and facial expressions in the sense that it contributes to the evident tension between the content speech and the delivery of the speech as his tone of voice further communicates the significance of the protest movement. Throughout his speech, Trudeau's tone of voice remains soft, somber, and subdued. He speaks slowly with minimal modulation. In other words, his tone of voice suggests an air of both seriousness and formality. Herein, Trudeau evokes the rhetorical element of pathos and thus situates the protest movement within a distinct, emotionally-charged context. Trudeau's tone and solemn emotional disposition suggests both the non-triviality and gravity of the situation unfolding in Ottawa's downtown core.

Throughout this section I have demonstrated that Trudeau's rhetorical performance ambiguously constructed the truckers' protest movement due to the evident tension between the content and its delivery. Whilst the content of Trudeau's speech constructed the protest movement as insignificant, the rhetorical delivery of his speech, specifically the rhetorical context, choice of clothing, Trudeau's tense and rigid facial features, and somber tone of voice,

constructed the protests as the opposite, significant, serious, formal, and worthy of the both the time and attention of the Canadian government.

### ***Orientalist Rhetoric***

The final component of this section will be dedicated to examining Justin Trudeau's use of 'orientalist rhetorical' tactics and how these tactics serve to inform the construction of the truckers' protest movement as in direct opposition with Canadian values. In fact, Trudeau goes so far as to construct the protest movement as inherently 'un-Canadian'. For example, early in his speech Trudeau claims that "Canadians were shocked and frankly disgusted by the behavior displayed by *some people* protesting in our nation's capital" (CNN, 2022, 1:54). Trudeau's choice of language in this quote constructs the protest as inherently un-Canadian; he situates those protesting as a group not entailed by the term 'Canadian'. This notion is more clearly advanced later in his speech after a reporter asks him if he "or anyone from [his] government [will] meet with them (protestors) or negotiate with them in any way" (CNN, 2022, 10:23). In response, Trudeau states that his "focus is standing with *Canadians* and getting through this pandemic" (CNN, 2022, 10:30). In other words, Canadians are exclusively those who have chosen not to participate in the truckers' protest movement. In the words of Trudeau, "Canadians know that [protesting] is not how we can end this pandemic" (CNN, 2022, 13:02).

Another way in which this rhetorical tactic is evident is through Trudeau's use of pronouns:

*We* are not intimidated by those who hurl insults and abuse at small business workers and steal food from the homeless. *We* won't give in to those who fly racist flags. *We* won't cave to those who engage in vandalism or dishonor the memory of our veterans (CNN, 2022, 2:08).

The use of the term ‘we’ in this selection of the speech further highlights how Trudeau rhetorically constructs members of the protest movement in opposition to “Canadians.” As per Trudeau, “Canadians are compassionate, kind, strong, and resilient” (CNN, 2022, 8:19), they “stand up for what’s right and stand up for each other” (CNN, 2022, 9:28), and that is “how [they] remain true to who [they] are” (CNN, 2022, 9:43). Trudeau’s orientalist rhetoric constructs members of the protest movement in stark opposition to the positive traits of Canadians.

## **§2 Pierre Poilievre: Current Leader of the Canadian Conservative Party**

### **Context and Preliminary Rhetorical Construction**

At the time of the protests Poilievre was not the leader of the Conservative Party. In fact, he would not become leader of the Canadian Conservative Party until early September 2022. Throughout the protest movement Poilievre was serving as a Member of Parliament representing the Ottawa area riding of Carleton and played a very prominent role in the political construction of the truckers' protests as he was very vocal and willing to share his perspectives with a wider Canadian audience through his personal Twitter page and his YouTube channel. Poilievre employed each of these social media channels to share short video clips outlining his support for the protest movement.

Poilievre’s initial comments on the protest movement were not uploaded to his personal channels, instead, he opted to share his insights with journalists from the *CBC*. In a brief video (40 seconds) offered by the *CBC*, Poilievre states that “he supports peaceful protest by legitimate truckers who simply want to protect their livelihoods” (CBC, 2022, 0:21). He continues to claim that this support can be offered whilst “simultaneously denouncing those who promote extremism” (CBC, 2022, 0:36). In this way, Poilievre constructs the movement as inherently

justifiable and reasonable. Members of the movement are established as heroic patriots of the working class striving to defend their liberties.

Unlike Justin Trudeau, Pierre Poilievre did not wait until after the preliminary weekend of the protest movement to make an official statement. Instead, his first address to Canadians took place on January 29th, 2022: the first Saturday of the movement. Rather than holding a dedicated press conference, Poilievre decided to join a small group of individuals, presumably Canadian citizens, on a highway overpass outside of the city of Ottawa. This group flew Canadian flags and welcomed truckers into the city with cheers and whistles. As the crowd faces the honking semi-trucks rolling into Ottawa, Poilievre faces the camera with his back to both the crowd and the road. Rhetorically, the contextual situation wherein Poilievre chose to produce his first address to Canadians constructs the protests as decidedly Canadian.

Because Poilievre's rhetorical performance was shared on his personal YouTube page, it is likely that the intended audience is composed primarily of individuals who share in his conservative ideology and thus likely agree with his proposed construction of the truckers' protest movement. This is evident in consideration of the fact that, unlike Trudeau, Poilievre does not employ his rhetorical performance as a means to reach both those who agree and disagree with the occurrence of the protest movement; rather, Poilievre's speech is directed only to supporters. Poilievre used his personal social media channel to "micro-target the exact audience he wished to reach" (Bostdorff, 2022, p.250).

### **Rhetorical Performance**

Poilievre's speech is epideictic in nature as it is primarily employed as a means to levy praise towards the participants of the truckers' protest movement. The video used for the purposes of this analysis, lasts just over a single minute (1:04); however, as will be

demonstrated, its brevity does not limit its rhetorical potential. The primary focus of the speech is the truckers' protest movement; however, Poilievre also criticizes the government and mainstream media. It is worth making note of the fact that the formal technical elements of the video clip are unusually poor. Unlike the other available videos found on Poilievre's channel, the visual quality of this video is quite low; likely this video was shot on a cell phone rather than a professional camera. This is especially interesting in consideration of the fact that Poilievre's YouTube videos are typically pristine and well edited. This rhetorical technique highlights one of the ways in which Poilievre attempts to situate the protests outside the realm of formal political elitism in favor of constructing the movement as a phenomenon for the typical, every day, Canadian citizen.

The most prominent rhetorical tactic is Poilievre's construction of the protest movement as a distinctly Canadian phenomenon. Not only does he situate himself amidst an array of individuals waving Canadian flags, but he also opts to wear a highly recognizable pair of the iconic red team Canada mittens, which noticeably feature a white maple leaf. Additionally, Poilievre sports a black Canada Goose branded parka. The visual foregrounding of these common markers of Canadian identity serve to rhetorically construct the protesters and supporters of the movement as within the confines of Canadian identity.

However, this is not the only way in which Poilievre's rhetorical construction of the protest movement is informed by his choice of dress. Poilievre typically presents himself in a distinctly formal manner; his hair is usually neatly slicked back and his primary choice of dress is either a full suit or a button-up dress shirt with trousers (Figure 3). There is a clear contrast between Poilievre's typical dress and how he chose to present himself in his initial address to Canadians during the truckers' protest movement (Figure 4).



### Figure 3

*Pierre Poilievre*



*Note.* From *Conservative Member of Parliament Pierre Poilievre in Ottawa February 16, 2022* [photograph], Blair Gabel, 2022, Macleans (<https://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/pierre-poilievre-on-his-combative-style-of-politics-and-his-plans-for-canada/>)

### Figure 4

*Pierre Poilievre: Screenshot January 29*



*Note.* (Poilievre, 2022, 0:13).

Rather than his standard formal attire, Poilievre, wore a large parka, Canadian flag mittens, aviator sunglasses, and left his hair unkempt. He evidently did not approach this rhetorical speech with the same level of formality typical of his rhetorical performances. Instead, his appearance is laid back, relaxed, and informal. In this way, Poilievre appeals to ethos to construct an image of himself as an ‘everyday man’, a standard representation of the Canadian people. Rather than presenting himself in his typical political garb, Poilievre donned the costume of a democratically engaged Canadian citizen celebrating their civil liberties. This tactic further cements the rhetorical construct of the protest as distinctly Canadian as well as removed from the realm of the ‘political’ because he contextualizes the movement as a matter of interest for the ‘typical’, ‘everyday’, Canadian people. Whilst Justin Trudeau rejects the aims of the movement and condemns the arrival of protesters in Ottawa’s downtown core, the people, Canadians, are those who are willing to advocate for their freedoms and come forward to support not only truckers, but all Canadians whose liberties have been restricted by the Liberal Government. These factors play an important role in Poilievre’s construction of the protest movement as monumental and worthy of both the attention and admiration of the wider Canadian public.

Another salient component of Poilievre’s rhetorical construction of the truckers’ protest movement is his use of language. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the truckers’ protest has been donned a number of different names primarily dependent upon political affiliation. However, Poilievre is one of the few to refer to the protest movement as a “rally for truckers” (Poilievre, 2022, 0:01). By using the term ‘rally’ rather than ‘protest’ Poilievre rhetorically emphasizes the communal spirit of the ongoing phenomenon, thus situating the protest in a positive and optimistic light. The use of this particular label during the opening line of his speech, as will be discussed in greater detail, highlights a key component of Poilievre’s rhetorical

performance: the rhetorical construction of the protest movement as something to be regarded in a favorable light.

Poilievre's construction of the truckers' protest is rather ambiguous in the sense that neither his verbal content nor his rhetorical delivery provides a clear and cohesive construction of the movement. First, I will examine the verbal content. The most prominent line of the Poilievre's (2022) speech, a line which is repeated a total of nine times over the course of a speech which only lasts just over a minute, is "this (the truckers' "rally") is for X<sup>1</sup>" (0:01); each time the phrase is repeated, Poilievre (2022) assigns the truckers' protest movement with a different purpose. He claims that "this is for" (Poilievre, 2022, 0:01):

1. Truckers (0:02).
2. The 60 percent of Canadians who say they cannot afford food (0:05).
3. The 60-year-old small businessman who spent his whole life building up an enterprise only to have it wiped out (0:11).
4. The depressed 14-year-old who has been locked out of school (0:17).
5. The families who can't take it anymore (0:25).
6. The people who want to stand up and speak for their freedoms (0:27).
7. Those that our government and media have left behind (0:33).
8. The people who work hard to put food on our table and stock our shelves (0:38).
9. All that is great that attracts thousands of people to come here...for our freedom (0:46).

Poilievre doesn't provide his audience with a clear or concise depiction of the protest movement, rather he ambiguously constructs the movement as a direct response to a wide number of the

---

<sup>1</sup> X is employed as a variable which is replaced by each of the various elements listed below throughout the speech.

perceived challenges plaguing Canadian citizens. However, despite the ambiguity, the rhetorical content of Poilievre's speech does, in fact, further construct the nature of the movement as inherently monumental on account of it being situated as a response to a great number of perceived problems.

### ***Rhetorical Tension***

Poilievre's speech, much like that of Justin Trudeau's, is also distinctly marked by a tension between various rhetorical elements, further contributing to the unclear, ambiguous, and conflicting construction of the truckers' protest movement. Poilievre's unique use of language serves to construct the protest movement in a distinctly positive and optimistic light. Furthermore, Poilievre also employed the rhetorical context of his performance to situate the movement as a hopeful celebration of 'Canadianness'. In the video Poilievre positioned himself amidst a collection of loudly cheering individuals as they waved Canadian flags and welcomed truck drivers into the city of Ottawa. Contextually, Poilievre situates the movement as more of a hopeful celebration of 'Canadianness' than a dissenting protest.

However, a tension exists between the rhetorical construction of the protest movement as such and other Poilievre's rhetorical performances. It is important to consider the tone which would be appropriate for a politician in responding to and discussing a "rally" (Poilievre, 2022, 0:01) as constructed by Poilievre. While one might expect Poilievre's rhetorical delivery to communicate optimism and/or hopefulness, his tone of voice, throughout this speech, remains stern in a way that suggests seriousness. He speaks in a non-emotive, matter-of-fact, fashion with little inflection. As he works his way through his list of forces driving the protest forward, he sounds frustrated and annoyed rather than hopeful and optimistic. Much like Trudeau, Poilievre's

tone suggests an appeal to the construction of an authoritative ethos, thus contradicting his attempt to position himself as a common, everyday man of the people.

However, it is not only Poilievre's tone of voice which suggests a rhetorical performance that contradicts the optimistic construction of the protest movement. Another key rhetorical element to consider is Poilievre's physical movements. More specifically, his use of arm motion. Throughout this speech, Poilievre prominently waves his arms and swings fists while he speaks, continuously punching the air, adding emphasis to his rhetorical argument. Likely this rhetorical tactic is another indication of Poilievre's attempt to construct an authoritative and powerful ethos. Though, this begs the following question: if the nature of the truckers' protests movement is, as constructed by Poilievre, hopeful and optimistic, then the "truckers' rally" (Poilievre, 2022, 0:01) does not warrant the need for a political leader of this nature. The protest movement would not be in need of an authoritative or powerful figure. Thus, these contradictory elements further contribute to Poilievre's ambiguous and unclear construction of the truckers' protest.

### **§3 Discussion**

The analysis of Trudeau's and Poilievre's rhetorical performances demonstrates that the initial rhetorical construction of the truckers' protest movement differs in a number of substantial ways; however, despite these differences, they also present significant similarities. Considering the verbal content, the two rhetorical performances evidently contrast. Trudeau's rhetorical content constructs the protests as insignificant, unworthy of Canadian's attention, and in stark opposition to both the character and essential moral values of Canadians. Contrastingly, the rhetorical content of Poilievre's speech advanced a construction of a movement which is monumental by nature, distinctly Canadian, inherently favorable, and worthy of the widespread praise and appreciation of Canadian citizens.

The politically polarizing nature of the protest movement, the evident contrast between the verbal content of the most prominent and vocal members of both the Liberal and Conservative parties of Canada, was likely to be expected, as support for the movement primarily wavered along partisan lines. Proponents of the convoy movement tended to fall within the ranks of the Conservative Party whilst members of the Liberal Party appeared to unanimously disavow the actions of the protesters. However, despite the distinct differences between the two rhetorical performances, the more interesting and insightful finding of this analysis is the existence of salient similarities between the rhetorical performances of Poilievre and Trudeau.

In the analysis of both political figures an evident rhetorical tension was found wherein the rhetorical content was seemingly contradicted by key elements of the respective political agent's rhetorical performance. For example, whilst Trudeau's rhetorical content constructed the protest movement as definitively insignificant, his rhetorical performance suggested the opposite. In consideration of Trudeau's deliberate delivery and enactment of his speech, it became clear that very prominent rhetorical elements of his performance served to construct the truckers' protest movement as significant, serious, formal, and worthy of the attention of a wide Canadian audience. A similar phenomenon was uncovered in the analysis of Poilievre's rhetorical performance. Despite the lack of clarity and precision in Poilievre's speech, the rhetorical performance clearly posits the protests in a favorable light, as a movement which should be regarded with hopefulness and optimism. On the other hand, Poilievre's authoritative performance and agonizing tone suggested seriousness and gravity rather than glee and celebration. I argue that Poilievre's lack of clarity and the rhetorical tension, which is evident in both respective rhetorical performances, ultimately served to construct the truckers' protest

movement as an inherently ambiguous phenomenon. In other words, neither Poilievre or Trudeau dealt with the substantive issues brought forward by the protest movement in any meaningful, informative, direct, or nuanced capacity.

Instead of earnestly addressing the fears and concerns of Canadians, both politicians chose to use the protest movement as a means through which to advance a conception of ‘Canadianness’: what it means for one to be a Canadian and partake in a Canadian identity. As per Trudeau (2022), Canadians are those who stepped up to receive the Covid-19 vaccination, trust in and support healthcare workers, and, most importantly, disavow the occurrence of the truckers' protest movement. Contrastingly, Poilievre employs his rhetorical performance as a means through which to situate support for the protest movement, as well as the movement itself, directly within the confines of ‘Canadianness’. Ultimately, the rhetorical performances of both politicians, when considered in tandem, provide a distinctly contradictory account regarding the nature of ‘Canadianness’. In this way, Poilievre and Trudeau likely contributed to the construction and/or amplification of political polarization in Canada due to the fact that they established Canadians, dependent upon political partisanship and ideological disposition, in stark opposition to one another.

The question which must be examined by further scholarship is to what extent is the communicative ambiguity and lack of informative, nuanced political speech, as depicted throughout this project, a product of the limitations imposed upon elected officials by the boundaries of the political genre (Butler, 1999; Martin, 2013). Is the contemporary political communications landscape constituted such that it does not allow for elected officials to employ their rhetorical performance as a means through which to communicate with their respective constituents in a direct, clear, informative, and nuanced manner?

What needs to be considered is the potential implications of our elected officials performing political rhetoric of this nature. First, it seems very likely that political rhetoric, as discussed in this thesis, will serve to contribute to increased political polarization in Canada. If our most prominent political figures continue to utilize moments of crisis as a means through which to advance a conception of ‘Canadianness’ rather than substantively address the concerns and trepidations of their constituents, this process will almost certainly foster polarization between citizens as well as between citizens and their elected officials. Secondly, the sort of political rhetoric employed by Poilievre and Trudeau does very little to deal with or mitigate the effect of conflicts or crises in any meaningful capacity. If these rhetorical trends continue, then a crisis of a greater scale and magnitude could potentially lead to dire consequences. Politicians need to consider the productivity of their rhetoric: the tangible effects of their speech and the ways in which this rhetoric serves to constitute social reality.

I argue that both Pierre Poilievre and Justin Trudeau failed to satisfy the key tenets of crisis communications. Previously, in the first chapter of this thesis, I wrote that the primary intention for the practice of crisis communication is to limit, to the greatest possible extent, the potential damages of an unfolding crisis (Coombs, 2015; Crandall, Parnell, & Spillan, 2014). Despite my awareness of the fact that politicians commonly utilize moments of crisis as a means through which to promote their own political agenda (Boin, McConell, and ‘t Hart, 2008), I had also hoped that they would simultaneously promote and prioritize, to a greater extent, the key tenet of crisis communications as outlined above. Arguably, both Trudeau and Poilievre failed to satisfy this tenet on account of their ambiguous, politically contradictory, and polarizing construction of the protest movement. I argue that providing Canadians with an explicit and clearly comprehensible construction of the protest movement through a concise, consistent, and



informative rhetorical performance, free from partisan political motivations, could have potentially limited the magnitude, scope, duration, and effects of the protest movement.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

Mere weeks prior to the completion of this thesis, Justice Paul Rouleau, the judge tasked with examining whether the truckers' protest movement met the required threshold to justify the Liberal government's use of the Emergencies Act, published his final report. Of particular interest for the purposes of this research is the report's focus on political communication.

Rouleau, in his report, criticized the communicative practices of Canada's elected officials. The report (2023) states that the "messaging by politicians, public officials, and to some extent, the media, should have been more balanced, and drawn a clearer distinction between those who were protesting peacefully and those who were not" (p.197). In other words, the findings of this report (2023) echo the arguments of this thesis by claiming that political communication in a time of crisis should be clear, informative, nuanced, and free from partisan political influence.

Throughout this thesis, it was maintained that the truckers' protest movement was constructed as politically polarizing, contradictory, as well as ambiguous. The contradictory and politically polarizing construction of the movement resulted from the fact that both Trudeau and Poilievre, through the rhetorical content of their speeches, constructed the protests according to their respective partisan ideologies. The ambiguous construction of the protest movement occurred as a result of the evident rhetorical tension between the content and delivery of both Trudeau and Poilievre's rhetorical performances. I conclude this research by arguing that both Poilievre and Trudeau failed to satisfy the key tenets of crisis communications on account of their willingness to utilize a moment of national crisis as a means through which to employ political rhetoric to advance partisan ideology by proposing a definition of 'Canadianness' rather than employing nuanced and informative communicative practices to deal with the substantive issues brought forward as a result of the protest movement.

The nature of this research is limited such that it cannot provide any definitive insights into the effects of the rhetorical construction of the protest movement produced by mainstream Canadian political figures. However, herein lies the opportunity for further research which could focus on the ways in which the rhetorical construction of the protest movement informed the actions of protestors, political agents, or onlooking Canadian citizens. Subsequent scholarship is required, in a number of academic fields, should we wish to provide a robust account of the events which transpired in Canada's national capital.

I wish to conclude this thesis with the following line of thought: it is crucial that we as academics continue to produce scholarship dedicated to the unpacking of even the most controversial social movements. Movements of this nature require academic attention so that we, as members of a Canadian society, learn to better employ our communicative efforts to limit the scope of all the inevitable future partisan-oriented conflicts. Furthermore, as revealed by the findings of this research, we must remain vigilant in holding our elected officials accountable for their communicative practices.

## References

- Al-Hakim, A. (2020, February 24). *Trudeau's convoy response gets failing grade, but even fewer support protesters: poll*. Global News. <https://globalnews.ca/news/8640772/ipsos-poll-trudeau-convoy-response/>
- Anderson-Meli, L., & Koshy, S. (2020). *Public relations crisis communication*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429287763>
- Anthonissen, P. (2008). *Crisis communication: Practical pr strategies for reputation management and company survival*. Kogan Page Ltd.
- Bligh, M., Meindl, J., & Kohles, J. (2004). Charting the language of leadership: A methodological investigation of President Bush and the crisis of 9/11. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(3), 562-574. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.3.562>
- Bligh, M., Meindl, J., & Kohles, J. (2004). Charisma under crisis: Presidential leadership, rhetoric, and media responses before and after the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15, 211-239. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2004.02.005>
- Bloch, O. (2014). *Corporate identity and crisis response strategies: Challenges and opportunities of communication in times of crisis*. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-06222-4>
- Boin, A., McConnell, A., & 't Hart, P. (2008). *Governing after crisis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bostdorff, D. (2022). US presidents and crisis communication. In Coombs, T., & Holladay, S (Eds.), *The handbook of crisis communication* (pp. 247-260). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Butler, J. (1999). *Gender trouble*. Routledge.

- Callahan, J. (2021). The United States: Politics versus science? In Lilleker, D., Coman I., Gregor, M., & Novelli, E (Eds.), *Political communication and Covid-19: Governance and rhetoric in times of crisis* (pp.67- 78). Routledge.
- CBC. (2022, February 17). *The convoy crisis in Ottawa: A timeline of key events*.  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/timeline-of-convoy-protest-in-ottawa-1.6351432>
- Coletta, A., & Hassan, J. (2022, January 31). *Police investigate 'illegal' acts at Ottawa anti-vaccine mandate trucker protests*. The Washington Post.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/01/31/canada-ottawa-protests-trucker-coronavirus-vaccine>
- Coombs, T. (2014). Crisis communication: A developing field. In Coombs, T. (Eds). *Crisis communication: Volume 1* (pp.3-18). Sage.
- Coombs, T. (2010). Parameters for crisis communication. In Coombs, T., & Holladay, S (Eds.). *The handbook of crisis communication* (pp.17-53). Blackwell Publishing Inc.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444314885>
- Coombs, T. (2019). Political public relations and crisis communication: A public relations perspective. In Stromback, J., & Kioussis, S. *Political public relations* (pp.208-226). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351053143>
- Coombs, T. (2007). Protecting organization reputations during a crisis: The development and application of situational crisis communication theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(3), pp.163-176. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550049>
- Coombs, T. (2015). The value of communications during a crisis: Insights from strategic communication research. *Business Horizons*, 58(2), 141-148.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2014.10.003>

Crandall, W., Parnell, J., & Spillan, J. (2014). Crisis management in the new strategy landscape.

In Coombs, T. (Eds). *Crisis communication: Volume 1* (pp.19-40). Sage.

CTV News. (January 31, 2022). *Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addresses freedom convoy protests in Ottawa | COVID-19 in Canada* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zmm4D5t-wts&t=166s>

Edwards, S. (2022, March 24). *Trudeau criticized by some far-right European parliament members over response to Ottawa convoy protests*. The Globe and Mail.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-trudeau-european-parliament-criticism-speeches/>

Gable, T. (2008). Chapter 03: Image as a part of corporate strategy. In *Crisis communication practical PR strategies for reputation management and company survival*. (pp. 45-54).

Kogan Page Ltd.

Fronz, C. (2012). *Strategic management in crisis communication: A multinational approach*.

Diplomica Verlag.

Glushko, A. (2009). Canada: the politics of optimism. In Hart, P., & Tindall, K (Eds.), *Framing the global economic downturn* (pp. 69-95). ANU Press.

John, S., Domke, D., Coe, K., & Graham, E. (2007). Going public, crisis after crisis: The Bush Administration and the press from September 11 to Saddam. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 10(2), 195-220. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rap.2007/0039>

Kost, H., & Easton, R. (2022, February 1). *Kenney calls for calm at Alberta border blockade after some protestors breach police barriers*. CBC.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/coutts-border-blockade-protest-alberta-1.6334990>

- Kuś, R. (2020). "Our grief and anger": George W. Bush's rhetoric in the aftermath of 9/11 as presidential crisis communication. *Res Rhetorica*, 7(1), 44-60.  
<https://doi.org/10.29107/rr2020.1.3>
- Loxley, J. (2007). *Performativity*. Routledge.
- Maggio, J. (2007). The presidential rhetoric of terror. *Politics & Policy*, 35(4), 810-835.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2007.00085.x>
- Martin, J. (2015). Situating speech: A rhetorical approach to political strategy. *Political Studies*, 63, 25-42. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12039>
- Martin, J. (2013). *Politics and rhetoric: A critical introduction*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315886893>
- Metag, J, and Dalmus, C. (2019). Political communication in and about crisis: Introduction to the thematic section. *Studies in Communication Sciences*, 19(1), 65-68.  
<https://doi.org/10.24434/j.scoms.2019.01.005>
- Millar, D., & Heath, R. (2004). *Responding to crisis: A rhetorical approach to crisis communication*. Routledge.
- Montiel, C., Uyheng, J., & Dela Paz, E. (2021). The language of pandemic leaderships: Mapping political rhetoric during the Covid-19 outbreak. *Political Psychology*, 42(5), 747-766.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12753>
- Neville-Shepard, M. (2021). Masks and emasculation: Populist crisis rhetoric and the 2020 presidential election. *American Behaviour Science*, 00(0), 1-15.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642211011223>
- Poillievre, P. (2022, January 29). *Freedom over fear* [Video]. YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuViJnQilO4>

- Porter-Robbins, C. (2022, March 4). *How Trudeau botched the trucker protests response*. Foreign Policy. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/04/trudeau-trucker-vaccine-protests-canada-communications/>
- Pringle, J., & Raymond, T. (2022, February 6). *'We need an additional surge of resources.'* *Ottawa police chief*. CTV. <https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/we-need-an-additional-surge-of-resources-ottawa-police-chief-1.5769085>
- Public Order Emergency Commission. (2023). *Report of the public inquiry into the 2022 public order emergency (Volume 3): Analysis (part 2) and recommendations*. Retrieved from <https://publicorderemergencycommission.ca/files/documents/Final-Report/Vol-3-Report-of-the-Public-Inquiry-into-the-2022-Public-Order-Emergency.pdf>
- Ryan, D. (2004). Framing September 11: Rhetorical device and photographic opinion. *European Journal of American Culture*, 23(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1386/ejac.23.1.5/0>
- Said, S. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.
- Silva Rhetoricae. (2007). *Branches of oratory*. <http://rhetoric.byu.edu/Branches%20of%20Oratory/Branches%20of%20Oratory.htm>
- Seeger, M., & Sellnow, T. (2019). *Communication in times of trouble*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Soucy, P. (2022, January 28). *Trucker convoy leaves Kingston heading for weekend rally in Ottawa*. Global News. <https://globalnews.ca/news/8578086/trucker-convoy-leaves-kingston-weekend-rally-ottawa/>
- Staff, S. (2022, February 22). *Timeline of the 'freedom convoy'*. Toronto Star. <https://www.thestar.com/news/investigations/2022/02/22/timeline-of-the-freedom-convoy.html>



- Tian, Y., & Yang, J. (2022). Deny or bolster? A comparative study in crisis communication strategies between Trump and Cuomo in Covid-19. *Public Relations Review*, 48(2), 8-14.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2022.10218>
- Walsh, M., & McLeod, M. (2022, October 18). *Trudeau accused Ontario premier Doug Ford of 'hiding' during convoy protests, new documents show*. The Globe and Mail.  
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-emergencies-act-inquiry-ottawa-mayor-testimony/>
- Wheeler, A. (2018). *Crisis communications management*. Emerald Publishing.
- Wilson, J. C., & Lewicki-Wilson, C. (Eds.). (2001). *Embodied rhetorics: Disability in language and culture*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Yogaretnam, S. (2022, June 2). *Freedom Convoy occupation 'unforeseen,' former police chief says*. CBC. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/freedom-convoy-occupation-unforeseen-former-police-chief-says-1.6475413>