



PASCALE FOURNIER  
Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation

Scientific Studies 1  
"Power and Knowledge"

Institute for Engaged Leadership  
Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation

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### **Power and knowledge: understanding in order to change**

The first cycle of the Institute for Engaged Leadership, which is to be set up by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation in 2019, will focus on the dynamic relationship between "Power and Knowledge". Power represents authority and the capacity to impose decisions and define terms.

Knowledge is understanding who has authority and through which mechanisms and structures it manifests itself. Power and knowledge are interrelated. Knowledge is power. Understanding this relationship and the roots of power imbalances allows for critical analysis, change, and altering the balance of power.

The general notion of "knowledge-power" is addressed according to three secondary themes that are interconnected: gender, the environment, and the status of individuals in the social space.

Connected, because these power relationships are intertwined, adding to and amplifying the effects of one another. Only by highlighting the issues inherent to these sub-themes can we examine how they intersect.

By immersing scholars in this critical environment, the mission of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation is to train engaged leaders who are aware of the impact of their research on different communities, are aware of various forms of non-conventional knowledge, and are eager to translate their know-how into sustainable engagement in Canadian society. Furthermore, by sharing the knowledge of the Foundation's scholars and mentors, the Institute for Engaged Leadership may contribute to the democratization of knowledge and to social inclusion.

This document presents all of the issues for research and discussion which will guide undergraduate studies at the Institute For Engaged Leadership.

### **1. The gender of power: questioning and changing the gender order**

Power excludes: there are those who hold authority, and those who are subject to it. This exclusion has long existed – and continues to exist -- based on gender. The gender of power still dictates the power that is given to gender: equality is still a thing to negotiate, and authority sets the terms for the very discussion. Questioning power from the perspective of gender first means learning to recognize it: How does this power wield its authority, and how does the hierarchy stemming from it affect gender identities and social relations?

What power, what knowledge? The importance of a feminist epistemology in order to understand. Understanding the gender of power, and changing it, assumes that we grasp gender norms, and their influence in the building of humanities and social sciences. How do our processes, methodologies and modes of knowledge affect the objects of our studies, our

approaches, and our conclusions? How do gender norms affect our understanding of the social and political structures that surround us? How is this form of gender-based authority embodied in our notion of knowledge and its production? Is it possible that we have excluded forms of knowledge, deemed unimportant or erroneous, on the basis of gender-related prejudices?

How, in other words, can we conceive and create knowledge that takes into account this historical exclusion and that overcomes it? The work of sociologist Danielle Juteau, 2003 fellow of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, falls particularly within this line of study: throughout her academy career, Juteau has strived to develop a feminist epistemology that allows us to remake categories, to consider this diversity and to see in it a learning opportunity rather than a negligible minority.

For institutions and organizations affected by gender norms, the separation of the political world and homemaking to which women have historically been relegated, must also be reconsidered. The political presence of women is no longer an exception. Yet, social replication and the mechanisms that go with it are still deeply rooted in gender order: women still bear the responsibility for the upkeep of private life, allowing public life to be possible. This shows how gender norms dictate the terms of the negotiation that is currently underway: work family balance, instead of being discussed as an overall societal issue, continues to be viewed specifically as a women's issue. Therefore, how can we define the role and place of parenthood and of mental load, of social replication, given critiques that stem from gender norms? What is the relevance of such a stark division between private and public life? How can we restructure welfare networks that enable true equality when it comes to caring for children, the elderly, and others needing care?

How are we to view the persistent social devaluation of occupations that are said to be typically "women's work" that concern care (nurses, teachers, nannies, housewives, etc.? How can we overcome this division that multiplies, rather than abolishing, gender inequalities? Jane Jenson, 2004 fellow of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, addressed these very questions. The core of her research focuses on the work of mothers and how we collectively assign value to these roles.

### Power relations and multiple genders

Questioning the impact of gender on modes of knowledge also involves questioning the binarity it forces onto the discussion. Gender order excludes not only women but all identities that are marginalized by structures of power. This is the case for transgender LGBTQI2+ communities. Power dictates the dimension on which authority is built, while making other dimensions which nonetheless make up our reality invisible. What perspectives does gender order wipe out? How does the meeting point between gender and other factors of discrimination influence the making of power relations between the dominant and the dominated? How does the balance of power itself create a hierarchy of exclusion and oppression based on sexual difference and the social roles that are assigned therein? What impacts do race, social class, sexual identity and orientation, physical or mental capacity, culture and religion have on the way we perceive

gender issues? How can we bring consistency to the specific issues that are raised by each of these exclusion points? Malinda S. Smith, 2018 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, raises the issue of invisibility of Canadian black women in the historical construction of Canada. Smith's challenge is to give these excluded women a voice by producing a more inclusive narrative which represents the complexities and diversity of experiences.

### Addressing inequity: How can we attain gender equality?

Ultimately, the most fundamental question is: How do we define gender equality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Does gender even still have meaning? How can we address inequity, in other words, how can we acknowledge the wrong done to women and to sexual minorities, and how can we move beyond this trauma? Or, is it preferable to transcend gender? How can we represent the diversity of sexual identities without maintaining a kind of hierarchy (quotas, positive discrimination, etc.)? How can we promote diversity without crushing it? And finally, how can we rethink the structures that maintain gender norms within our social institutions? Education seems crucial in this process of transformation. But how exactly are we to go about it?

## **2. Centres of power: the environment between space and resources**

The Earth is a living environment, the place where human beings do the things they do; on Earth we draw boundaries, occupy it, cross it or even leave it. But the Earth is also a resource, one that we need to survive. It is where we find our food, warmth, shelter and clothing. This existential conflict between space and resources has made the Earth the centre of power struggles which are intertwined with practices and processes of accession, exclusion, and control. Whoever wields power dictates their view of Earth and imposes that view on others. When we understand environmental issues such as they appear for each community (visions and mythologies relative to Earth), we can then pinpoint imbalances and transform them. In other words, we must reformulate the problem from the point of view of those who do not have power of authority. Only by restoring these often-excluded perspectives can be truly contest the underpinnings of the dominant order.

### Earth as a space: governance and sovereignty

To question the terms of authority, we must first understand the structures of governance that regulate the control of access to land. Who excludes what, why, and by what means? How does authority, through a process of exclusion, define identities? One example that comes to mind, of course, are migrants, and the international and domestic rules that govern their movement. In these cases, how do we view power relationships between governing bodies within the broader world order? What sovereignty should governments have, within the context of large scale population movements? These are central questions for Catherine Dauvergne, 2012 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation. In her work, Dauvergne seeks to develop a better understanding of the regulation and mechanisms of governance in matters of immigration on a global scale. But the structures of governance are not limited to the treatment of immigrants: What about recognition of local populations and of their own culture,

specifically in cases where it differs from the dominant culture? The case of Indigenous populations, in Canada and elsewhere around the world, has one fundamental feature: How have power relations determined the recognition or non-recognition of historical treaties negotiated between colonial authorities and Indigenous communities, and how access to the land of Indigenous communities has been, and continues to be, transfigured by this power dynamic? How are Indigenous identities and cultures defined by these events, and how are they finding a place in the governance processes? John Borrows, 2006 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, dedicates his academic research to the strengthening of constitutional and political relations between Canada and Indigenous nations. Jean Leclair, 2013 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, also examines the possibility of aligning Indigenous perspectives of the Earth with those of the federal government. But issues of collective recognition do not settle questions raised by the governance of the territories. These issues also appear at an individual level. The existence of different cultures within one piece of territory that clash raises the matter of how one individual fits in: How can we respect one set of beliefs when they conflict with the beliefs of others? How can we reconcile one person's freedom of thought with the right to equality and integrity of others? Daniel Weinstock, 2004 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, looked at these issues of integration and openness to diversity from a philosophical perspective. All these issues have a common thread, which is the relationship to land and its governance: knowing how power determines borders, but also the identities that are made possible (or not) through these processes of accession and exclusion, is a first step toward transformation.

#### Land as a resource: between protection and usage

The environment is under pressure. In fact, the competition for resources in the context of scarcity exacerbates the existential tension between space and resource. Consequently, the issue of preservation and protection of the environment fuels proposals for reform pertaining to management policies and land-use planning which, themselves, have the power to reinforce or transform the authority figure which informs the viewpoints that we hold of the Earth. In fact, whoever dictates the terms for the protection of lands does so according to a preset point of view. In this case, can this vision be reconciled with that of the players who do not hold power? In other words, is it possible to rethink the power associated with control of land in a manner that would accommodate the various meanings which may be assigned to the Earth? Can the possibility of ongoing resource development coexist with the notion of territory as sacred land? Can the commercialization of resources cohabit with a perception that resources are not a right but rather a responsibility? Karen Bakker, 2017 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, heads a participatory project that seeks to understand and protect the governance of water by Indigenous peoples. But the protection of traditional land use is only one facet of environmental protection. Another is the way that the law considers companies and their civil and criminal liabilities, and how this structure influences the protection of resources and land. Infrastructure – domestic and international – in the energy, food, transport and safety sectors are devised on the notion of appropriation regulated by private interests which are essentially cut off from the interests of the communities affected. Deborah Cowen, 2016 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau foundation, examines these

structures, and looks at opportunities for collaboration between private players and social movements, communities and deliberative processes used to find viable solutions for the stakeholders involved. But these deliberative and cooperative processes between users of resources raise one specific problem with regards to intergenerational justice: How can we take into account the needs and challenges that future generations will face in matters of food sovereignty, sustainable development, access to resources and space, public health, when their interests are all-too-often underrepresented in the discussions relative to the current development of resources? How do our current practices – both individual and collective – impact the opportunities of future generations? These questions highlight the multiple facets of power and its effects on past, present and future communities. Economist Jennifer Clapp, 2013 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, studies the complex mechanisms by which the functioning and regulation of the world economy influence environmental results, especially with regards to sustainability within the scope of the world's food system. Her research opens the door to a reflection of the way that economic mechanisms can support food self-dependence models that are viable over the long-term, for present and future generations, particularly in the case of developing countries.

### **3. The status of individuals and power relations: the need to strike a balance**

Power divides. It groups some people together while engendering the exclusion of others, all on terms that are imposed. Concealed behind closed doors, power feeds into itself. To understand power, and the way it informs and structures our institutions, we must determine what groups dictate what norms, and to whom. Power is not static but rather represents a dynamic force: there is no master without a subordinate, and one cannot be understood without the other. To understand power, it is necessary to observe each of the parties in the relationship.

Each relation being distinct, one will then be able to question the bases of this power, and on the rhetoric of the tension which places in opposition he or she who sets the terms and the person who is subject to those terms.

Social class, cultural or religious affiliation, and even sovereignty all raise discourses on power: each one offers insights into the specific aspects of authority, but also on its universality. And each of these occurrences enable us to perceive the power relation, and the possibility of moving beyond it.

#### Social classes and working conditions: a national and transnational issue

Individuals from vulnerable or poor social classes are usually those most likely to accept mediocre working conditions. Low pay, little or no insurance in the event of an accident or an illness; this workforce is treated as if it were just one commodity like any other. It gets replaced as supply and demand fluctuate, with no regard for humaneness. In this era of globalization and fast-paced growth, the working conditions that are imposed on certain workers can unquestionably be characterized as exploitation. Considering the intricacies of work contracts

in transnational treaties signed between governments, how can we ensure the protection of workers, in Canada as well as elsewhere else? If we could be even more bold, would it even be possible to eliminate the notion that work is a mere commodity among other commodities? How can we ensure decent conditions for those jobs that only the most vulnerable and the disadvantaged end up taking? Consider cases such as: workers who put their health at risk in mines or otherwise toxic environments; migrant farm workers who fear deportation and keep quiet about substandard health conditions; clandestine workers, nannies, and housekeepers who tolerate abusive situations, fearing that their irregular status will be called out; or even people working for minimum wage who cannot make enough to meet their own basic needs. In these cases, the employer, corporation, government dictate the working conditions, knowing that the worker cannot refuse. Here, the balance of power is tipped against the worker's ability to negotiate. How can this imbalance be resolved? And how can we ensure that workers have access to conditions which offer a minimum of dignity and autonomy? How can we rethink domestic and international laws that regulate the labour market to ensure that the most vulnerable enjoy basic protections? Adelle Blackett, 2017 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, works on the rights of domestic and migrant workers within the scope of laws that reach beyond nation borders: How could organizations, such as the International Labour Organization, place enough pressure on corporations and governments so that workers would have access to decent living conditions? The relationship between workers and employers is affected by an interconnected world order, and by governments that too often have difficulty regulating the behaviour of the corporations. Transforming working conditions involves calling into question the very relationship which is sustained by this trifecta of factors.

#### Religious and cultural minorities: fault line between integration and assimilation

Cultural, religious or political affiliation can engender power relations, especially between majority groups and minority groups. For example, consider cultural groups stemming from immigration whose culture or religion may clash with the fundamental values of the host country. This is a situation which is playing out in several western countries today, following waves of immigration from non-western countries. The United States has adopted one the most drastic measures in this regard, by categorically banning immigration from Muslim-majority countries such as Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. Although few governments have adopted such a practice, the integration of certain cultural or religious groups is nonetheless presented like a real socio-political problem. In Québec, for example, there was a proposal which came from the Parti Québécois to adopt a Charter of Values meant to provide guidelines for cultural accommodations, as well as legislation aimed at prohibiting the wearing or displaying of conspicuous religious symbols by public sector employers. The PQ also moved to require anyone providing or receiving a government service to have their face uncovered. Québec is in line with other European countries such as France, whose discourse for several decades has been built around the need to ensure religious neutrality in the public spaces and in the exercise of democracy. Although debatable, there are laws, such as the ban on wearing the niqab in France (2011), that have in fact been upheld by the European Court of Human Rights (2014). The integration of cultural and religious groups is a delicate issue: on the one hand it contributes to misperceptions about religious symbols and their meaning. On the other

hand, in certain cases, these accommodations lead to a genuine conflict between respecting freedom of religion and conscience and the will of the government to ensure certain values, such as gender equality. How are we to juggle these divergent individual and collective interests? How can we overcome this fear of the other, and by what means could we initiate a dialogue between various cultural and religious groups? How can we integrate, in a spirit of harmonious fellowship, people from different cultural and religious groups, and how can we ensure the preservation of their heritage and distinct cultural baggage without losing the notion of Canadian values? For example, Audrey Macklin, 2017 Fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, begins by raising these questions from the perspective of integration.

She studies specifically how private sponsorship of refugees has an influence on the sponsors themselves as citizens, and she examines their motivations and communal experiences with new arrivals. Ayesha Chaudhry, 2018 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, undertakes a deep reflection into what it means to be a Muslim Canadian citizen by sparking a conversation on the legal reform of Islam. Others, such as Simon Harel, 2009 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, have developed hybrid models – between theory and practice – that aim to identify unstable, often conflicting, forms of cultural mobility. These approaches emphasize the fact that rethinking integration begins with gaining a better understanding of each other. Haideh Moghissi, 2011 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, demonstrates this perfectly in his research. An analyst of issues concerning women in Muslim societies, Moghissi is particularly interested in the interrelated elements that define the growing tensions between immigrants who identify themselves as Muslim and their new countries.

Of course, immigration is not the only context where the question of how majorities treat minority groups is raised. In Canada, we have the case of francophone Canadians, who were long denied recognition of their rights as a linguistic minority in a primarily English-speaking society. And an even greater issue is the tragic treatment of First Nations by the federal and provincial governments and how a balance of power forged, and in certain cases annihilated, their identity. Canada is only just starting to acknowledge its responsibility in the impact that the residential schools had on the conservation of culture and distinct character. In the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Report, will the Canadian government be able to right the wrongs caused by years of cultural genocide against First Nations? Even then, do the terms of reparation and reconciliation make sense for Indigenous nations which are each distinct from one another? Or, are they contested? How can we define the place of Indigenous communities in the current political context, and how can we encourage the emergence of Indigenous identities? Kent Roach, 2013 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, is particularly interested in the role of judicial review in democracy, the recourses prescribed by the courts or other institutions, the effect of the criminal justice system on Indigenous people in Canada as well as the reparation of the abuses in the residential schools. Jason Edward Lewis, 2014 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, initiated identity reconstruction with Indigenous youth. Both are from the Kahnawake Mohawk community and participated through visual arts and media to imagine a new Indigenous future. Defining the balance of power highlights the crucial importance of developing the future.

Sovereignty in peril: the balance of power between private and public players

The capacity of governments to implement legitimate and democratic decisions is also contradicted by the influence and power of private players. The growth in number and in importance of free trade treaties can tie the hands of governments on fundamental issues, such as how to regulate the conduct and decisions of multinational companies, especially in matters such as liability, taxation, or even competition law. In a globalized world, how can we develop the autonomy and sovereignty of governments when the latter have little or no power against the choices of private corporations? Do these agreements represent progress, or are they a threat to western democracies and to the advancement of developing countries? How can we raise the accountability of corporations, when they are not subject to the laws of host countries? Poonam Puri, 2016 fellow with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, places a focus on managerial responsibility within the framework of multinationals, and on ways to overcome obstacles that governments and individuals encounter in order to force international or domestic businesses to provide compensation or reparations for any damage they may cause.

In conclusion, the Institute for Engaged Leadership invites researchers to challenge the evidence and dissect the relationships between knowledge and power. The primary aim is to train and encourage scholars to take the time to understand and listen, as a necessary step before being able to take effective action.