

Media Coverage of Gender and Sexual Orientation in the Ontario Liberal Leadership Race

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Abstract

On January 26, 2013 Kathleen Wynne became the leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario and the first woman premier of the province. The race was unique in Canadian politics in that the two of the three front runners were female. Previous research on media and federal politics have shown that the media tend to marginalize women candidates. In the Ontario Leadership race, there was a second potential area of marginalization: sexual orientation. Two of the candidates were openly homosexual. To test the gender mediation theory on the race, this paper examines newspaper, television, and CBC websites for the leadership campaign. The coverage is assessed by the two broad categories of quantity and quality. Quantity is measured by the number of stories each candidate was reported in, how prominent they were in the story (e.g. first mentioned), as well as the length of the story and how much time they were able to speak for themselves. Visibility is additionally measured by where in the newscast or newspaper the story appeared. Quality of news coverage focuses on four categories: (1) personal characteristics, appearance, traits, behaviours, roles; (2) professional characteristics – credentials, professional background, political experience; (3) viability – electability, horse race frames, opinion polls; and (4) issues and position – the type of issues the candidates are associated with.

In her speech to the Ontario Liberal Leadership convention on January 26, 2013, Kathleen Wynne put the following issue before the party, “Is Ontario ready for a gay premier? You’ve heard that question. You’ve all heard that question, but let’s say what it actually means. Can a gay woman win? That’s what it means.” Prior to the convention, research on other gay leaders suggested that the media coverage focused on the “otherness” of the candidate rather than their policy positions (Everitt and Camp, 2009). The media depiction of “otherness” has been linked to the lack of diversity in our legislators. The media play a central role in introducing political actors to the public. They not only facilitate information exchanges from leaders to the electorate, but in their choice and selection of narratives, they also set the parameters by which leaders are judged. Politicians know this and spend energy constructing a media persona.

Constructing a public persona is difficult for anyone in public life, but decades of research on the gender frame reveals that stereotypes are especially problematic for women (Kahn, 1996). And it is those stereotypes, that some say, lie at the center of why women are underrepresented in government (Elder, 2008; Bashevkin, 2009; Goodyear-Grant, 2013). On the federal level, the number of women in office is unimpressive. Since 1979, on average only 21% of candidates running for federal office have been women rising to 28% in 2011. In terms of winning seats, during the same time period, women averaged 16% of House of Commons. This breakdown of representation does not accurately reflect the demographics of Canada where women comprise half the population (Statistics Canada). Moreover, female representation in the federal parliament is amongst the lowest in the world and doesn’t meet the minimum benchmark “to ensure a critical mass of parliamentaries” of 30% set by the United Nations (United Nations, 1995). This puts Canada below average among the developed regions (Goetz, 2009).

Looking only at federal politics, however, ignores some remarkable achievements by women in other levels of government. Recent elections for provincial government have shown significant improvement for women. For example, in the 2014 Ontario election, 35% of the MPPs elected are women. Moreover, each of the main parties had women leaders, or deputy leaders elected (Equal Voice, 2014). In the case of the 2015 Alberta election, 45% of the NDP government is represented by women. More significantly, in the last five years, Canadians have elected six women who led political parties that formed government. In addition, during the same time, there have been opposition parties in the provinces that have also been led by female leaders.

While there have been some remarkable achievements by women at the provincial level, the same cannot always be said of other marginalized groups such as those in the lesbian, gay, and bisexual, (LGB) community. As Everitt (2015) notes, openly homosexual politicians have a mixed success record across the country. Those in western provinces have better success rates than those in central Canada. However, the number of openly gay politicians who run for office is considerably smaller than the number of women who seek higher office. This makes the success of Kathleen Wynne, Ontario’s first woman, and first homosexual premier remarkable as it breaks conventional wisdom that a woman, and a lesbian, at that, could be successful in a general election.

There are many theories as to why it has taken so long for women and other minorities to achieve electoral success in Canada. Among those, is the perception of unfavourable media coverage. The literature on media coverage of LGB candidates is notable for its brevity (Everitt,

2015). However, the literature on gender mediation can serve to explain both the way in which women are portrayed in the media, as well as LGB candidates.

Gender Mediation

Early studies on how female political leaders were covered in the media tapped into the agenda-setting, framing, and priming literature. Initially, these studies found that women tended to be treated quite differently than men. Collectively, these researchers found several problems with how women were covered in the media. First, there was the problem of *visibility* (Carroll, 1985; Kahn, 1994; Kahn & Goldenberg, 1997; Norris, 1997; Sampert and Trimble, 2003; Heldman & Olson, 2005; Trimble, 2007; Ross, 2010). Female politicians simply had less coverage than their male counterparts. While some noted that this may have been because many women candidates ran for fringe parties, they also found that the coverage for males in the same parties was still greater than for female candidates (Goodyear-Grant, 2013). Not only was the visibility of female politicians problematic, but researchers also found that the way in which women were covered was different than men (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Sanchez, 2009; Miller et al., 2010; Anderson, 2011; Beail & Longworth, 2012; Miller, Peak, & Rose, 2013). For example, studies looking at *prominence* found that when women candidates were reported on, they tended to be positioned later in the story or in parts of the newspaper or newscast that wasn't as prominent as was given male candidates (Kahn, 1991; 1994; Gunter, 1995; Carroll & Schreiber, 1997).

Gender mediation theory argues that politics and the news is male centered and that the norms and culture of both politics and the newsroom are biased in favour of men (Braden, 1996; Byerly, 2001; Everitt and Cam,p 2009; Trimble and Everitt, 2010). The language of politics is rife with gender biased stereotypes invoking battle or sports metaphors (Blankenship, 1976; Gingras, 1997; Gidengil & Everitt, 2003). Other stereotypes that women are plagued by have been either as sex objects, mothers, or iron maidens (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Sanchez, 2009; Miller et al., 2010; Anderson, 2011; Beail & Longworth, 2012). The most recent Canadian example of a female candidate receiving attention because of her looks was Belinda Stronach when she ran in the federal Conservative leadership race. Trimble & Everitt (2010) found that media coverage disproportionately focused on her appearance, wealth, or style over her professional traits.

The ways in which women are disadvantaged in this type of coverage are numerous. First, when women candidates started to emerge, they were treated as *novelty* candidates which diminished the seriousness of their bid (Fridkin, et al., 2013). Second, their *personal attributes* were covered at the expense of their professional credentials (Sampert & Trimble, 2003; Trimble, 2007; Trimble & Everitt, 2010). Kanter's typology of female "role traps" of professional women have been useful in these analyses (Kanter 1977). While personal attributes may not be emphasized the most in this kind of coverage, when it is, female candidates receive more of this attention than male candidates (Trimble et al., 2013). Third, their *viability* was questioned either as being a candidate who could only appeal to the "women's vote" or as someone whose electability was wanting (Everitt, 2003; Falkn 2008). Much of this research highlighted that women tended to be covered more in the horserace frame rather than on issues and positions (Kahn, 1996; Norris, 1997). The horserace frame is one of the most common in election coverage and one of the most criticized due to the shallowness of examining the election as a race to the exclusion of serious policy debate. It is especially problematic for women

candidates because it emphasizes electability and viability rather than allow for the leaders to focus on their policy stances.

More recent research, however, has shown that the gender bias coverage has, although not been eliminated, waned considerably in recent years (Carroll and Schreiber 1997; Smith 1997; Tremblay and Belanger 1997; Bystrom et al., 2001; 2004; Trimble, 2007; Lawrence and Rosen 2010; Wagner, 2010; Goodyear-Grant 2013; Hayes & Lawless 2015; Wagner et al., 2015). Some attribute this improvement to the change in elite news outlets which tend to be more responsive to societal change (Wagner, 2014). Others, however, argue that times change and so do media practices which means we need to be mindful of when studies were conducted (Brooks, 2013). Many of the studies conducted in Canada and the U.S. were done prior to 2008. This means that the recent victories of provincial leaders have not yet been reflected in the literature. In Canada, the largest number of studies were done in the 1990s and early 2000s when female leaders were largely unsuccessful in either their leadership bid or in gaining seats in a general election (Gidengil & Everitt, 2000). Similarly, studies that focus on third party leaders such as the NDP tend to conflate the lack of success of female leaders with that of the party that has never formed government on the federal level (Sampert & Trimble, 2003; Trimble et al., 2014). By emphasizing the federal races and leaders who have not been successful, the literature on women in politics is incomplete. Thus as Tremblay (2010) posits, “it is possible that this vision of victims is erroneous – that, on the contrary, women politicians have developed strategies to make the media their allies rather than their adversaries” (p. 81).

Yet the narrative remains that female leaders face a hostile media and that their lack of success simultaneously makes it difficult to attract women to politics, and that those women who do enter politics will have a more difficult time with the public and media than male candidates (Bashevkin 2009). Thus, until recently, the conventional wisdom was that for a candidate to be both a woman and homosexual would spell electoral disaster. This study looks at how the media covered the 2012-13 Ontario Liberal Leadership race to see how Kathleen Wynne was able to overcome these perceived obstacles.

Media Matters

The media are an important link between politicians and the public (Cook, 2005; Lawrence, 2006). The media lie at the centre of political life. Election campaigns revolve around the leaders’ tour and the daily questions posed by journalists (Cross et al., 2015). The influence of traditional media (e.g., radio, television and newspapers) have been enhanced with social media amplifying news reports by sharing or linking to new organization websites and in some cases offering a competing avenue for agenda setting (Gaber, 2006). The reach of news media today is greater than ever before (Raitt, 2015).

The media are important to politics because they set the agenda for what the public deems salient in leadership races or election campaigns (Weaver, 1994; Holler & Skott, 2005; Uscinski, 2009; Eissler, et al., 2014). Two theories related to agenda setting are important for this discussion: framing and priming. Framing is the selection of a narrative, or frame, by which the candidate or issue is presented. At its core, framing provides shortcuts for people to understand complex issues and it guides how journalists select and present information by providing easy categories for the public to digest (Goffman, 1974; Iyengar and Simon, 1993; Price et al., 1997; Gross and D’Ambrosio, 2004; Aday, 2006; Entman, 2007; Chong and Druckman, 2007). In past

electoral battles women candidates were framed as novelty candidates who only appealed to one particular segment of the populations, thus limiting their appeal to a mass audience (Fridkin, et al., 2013).

The related theory of priming refers to setting up the standards by which leaders are judged. This matters because because journalists provide the framework by which the public assesses leaders in terms of electability, as well as how they position themselves within the political party they represent. Priming can alter the publics' perception of a candidate or issue because it affects subsequent judgement (Iyengar, 1994). In the 2008 Presidential election, Sarah Palin was judged much more negatively than her Vice-Presidential rival, Joe Biden, even controlling for the negative association with McCain (Miller & Peake, 2013). Combined, the literature on agenda-setting, framing, and priming inform how all candidates for office are able to put forward their policy proposals and position themselves as the best person to deliver votes for their party. This is an especially important role when new leaders emerge on the public stage as the public receives its first impressions of the candidate through the media.

Methodology

Using gender mediation as the theoretical lens, this paper examines newspaper, television, and news website coverage of the 2012-13 Ontario Liberal party leadership race. The content analysis begins with the leadership race from the date Dalton McGuinty announced his resignation (October 23, 2012) to one week after the convention (February 2, 2013). The week delay post campaign is to capture any coverage that might highlight the novelty or "first" of the leader being selected as leader.

Sample

This study uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse coverage in national and regional newspapers and television programs. Many studies of media depictions tend to look only at television (Gidengil & Everitt, 2000; 2003) or only elite newspapers (Sampert & Trimble, 2003; Trimble et al., 2004; Trimble, 2007). Some look at both national newspapers and television (Goodyear-Grant, 2013). However few look at regional papers such as Wagner (2014) or Everitt (2003). In Canada, none have compared national news with local or regional newspapers, and Internet media coverage.

To measure differences between the elite and regional news, this study casts a broad net over media organizations. The national newspapers of the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post*, as well as the transcripts of the national newscasts of CBC *The National* and CTV *News* are examined as representing the elite media in the country. In addition, news channel programs of CBC's *Power and Politics* and CTV's *Powerplay* are also analysed as these programs provide news analysis and commentary by political pundits and journalists that provides more depth and nuance than a typical television news story. The regional news outlet selected is the *Toronto Star* as it has the highest weekly circulation and accessibility through archived searches of media websites. The Internet media sources are the regional programs of CBC on the web for Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor. The goal is to obtain as wide as possible an overview of the way in which leaders are covered in the Ontario Liberal Party leadership race.

The sample is drawn by searching for the name of each declared leader in the Liberal Party leadership. This is similar in approach to Everitt and Camp (2009) where the sample was constructed by searching for the female candidate's name. Similar to Wagner et al., (2015) this

study searches for all leaders' names in each race to allow for comparison between leaders. The University of Windsor's existing subscriptions to ProQuest and Eureka (digital, searchable archives of news) is used to conduct the searches.

Coding

Following the gender mediation research, I assess the coverage by the two broad categories of quantity and quality. To measure quantity, the analysis examines both the amount of coverage the candidates received as well as the visibility of that coverage. **Quantity** is measured by the number of stories each candidate was reported in, as well as the length of the story and how much time they were able to speak for themselves (Aday and Devitt 2011). In other words, are women portrayed as agentic or autonomous speakers? **Visibility** is additionally measured how prominent they were in the story (e.g. first mentioned).

Quality of news coverage focuses on four categories used by Goodyear-Grant (2013):

1. Personal characteristics — appearance, traits, behaviours, roles
2. Professional characteristics – credentials, professional background, political experience
3. Viability – electability, horse race frames, opinion polls
4. Issues and position – the type of issues the candidates are associated with.

Results

Leadership race

The Ontario Liberal leadership race began with Premier Dalton McGuinty's resignation as party leader on October 15, 2012. Seven candidates declared their intention to run as leader between November 4 and 22, of which there were two women, (Pupatello and Wynne); two openly gay (Murray and Wynne) and one visible minority (Takhar). As can be seen in Table 1, all candidates announced their intention in November. By the time of the convention Glenn Murray had withdrawn.

“Insert Table 1 about here”

Quantity

First mention in story

Quantity of coverage is measured by several variables: first mention in a story, length of story in which a candidate is mentioned, and the amount of time that the candidate is able to speak for themselves. For simplicity of reporting, results are presented by male and female candidates combined, and all media combined. Overall, female candidates were most frequently given the first mention. Given the fact that Kathleen Wynne won the leadership contest, this should not come as a surprise as she would be featured heavily in the post campaign analysis. Table 2 compares the coverage of female and male candidates by campaign period. In each of the time frames, female candidates received more coverage than the male candidates. During the campaign period women received 55 per cent of the first mentions. The convention itself had the two female candidates vying for first place, which is reflected in them being the first mention in two-thirds of the stories. Kathleen Wynne was the first mention in 96 per cent of the post-convention stories.

“Insert Table 2 about here”

The question that is most salient, however, is whether these first mentions focused on novelty over other issues? In examining the first mentions only, there are no statistically significant differences of attention presented on male and female candidates. For example, personal attributes were mentioned in 15 per cent of the first mentions of female candidates compared with 14 percent for male candidates. In other words, there was only a 1 per cent difference between the stories that mentioned personal and professional characteristics between the male and female candidates. Professional characteristics were highlighted in 27.6 per cent of the first mentions for the female candidates, compared with 28.4 per cent for male candidates. There was a 3 percentage point difference between male and female candidates on viability and issue positions. For the first mentions viability was mentioned in 41.8 per cent of the cases that mentioned women first compared with 38.9 per cent of the male first mentions. On issues, male candidates had 18.5 per cent of the first mentions compared with 15.4 per cent of the female candidates (table not shown).

Visibility

The length of story was measured by the number of words in the story. There were no statistically significant differences in the length of stories that featured a female versus a male candidate as the first mention. For example, short stories (those in the first quartile) featured male as the first mention in 35 per cent of the cases, compared with 32.7 per cent of female first mentions. The second quartile had slightly more female first mentions than male. There were no differences in the third quartile. Only in longer stories were female candidates mentioned slightly more often (17.8 per cent compared with 16.4 per cent, table not shown).

Each time a candidate's statement was made, coders noted whether they were paraphrased or quoted directly. Female candidates had slightly more direct quotes than male candidates (65.4 per cent compared with 62.4 percent). These differences were not statistically significant.

Quality

In the initial examination of the quantity of coverage, the story was used as the unit of analysis. For quality attributes, covered was assessed by the number of statements referring to a candidate. Each of the following were assessed to determine how and what was being said about the Liberal leadership candidates: personal characteristics, professional characteristics, viability and, issue position. While the first mention of the candidates showed very slight differences in coverage, the overall attention paid to the candidates does provide more context for how the leadership candidates were portrayed.

Table 3 provides an overview of the four quality variables by the gender of the source. The most frequently discussed attribute of all candidates was viability at 42 per cent of total coverage. The male candidates received 45 per cent of their total coverage on viability, compared with 41 per cent of the female candidates. Professional attributes comprised 28 per cent of the total attention about candidates, with slightly higher proportion of the male coverage (29 per cent) focusing on professional than female coverage (28 per cent). Issues comprised only 15 per cent of the coverage of candidates, with the proportions being equal between the male and female candidates. It is on the personal descriptions of the candidates where the main differences in coverage can be seen. For female candidates, personal descriptors were mentioned more than their issue positions (17 per cent compared with 15 per cent). For the male candidates,

personalized descriptors were the least mentioned at 11 per cent compared with issues at 15 per cent.

“Insert Table 3 about here”

Personalized coverage

The focus on personalized of the female candidates compared with the male candidates is consistent with previous studies of media coverage of female politicians (Goodyear-Grant, 2013; Trimble, 2007; Trimble and Everitt, 2010). The emphasis in the Ontario leadership campaign was less on appearance and more on personal life, traits, and behaviours. In fact, personal appearance was proportionately higher for the male candidates than the female candidates. Personal life comprised 41 per cent of the mentions of female candidates compared with 23 per cent of the male candidates (Table 4).

“Insert Table 4 about here”

Novelty drove much of this coverage. When examining the overall coverage of personal by candidates it is clear that sexual orientation and minority status played a large role in describing the candidates. Figure 1 shows the overall attention on personal by the leadership candidates. Over half of the coverage focused on Kathleen Wynne to the exclusion of all other candidates. While it is expected that the eventual winner of the leadership race would receive the most attention, the focus on the personal life of Ms Wynne dominated all in all three periods of the leadership cycle (campaign, convention, and post-convention). Overall, the focus on her personal life comprised nearly half of the personalized coverage (46 per cent). In comparison, Papatello, the other female candidate, her personal life was featured in 28 percent of her personalized coverage. The novelty angle was not only featured for Wynne, but also for the other two minority candidates (Takhar and Murray). Both Takhar and Murry had about one-third of the personalized coverage focusing on their personal lives.

“Insert Figure 1 about here”

Sexual orientation played a large part of the personalized coverage of both Wynne and Murray. For Murray, of the 19 mentions of his personal life, only two did not mention that he was “openly gay”. References to Murray’s sexual orientation typically included the novelty narrative of being Canada’s first openly gay mayor. Wynne’s novelty was double in that she became Ontario’s first woman premier and first openly gay premier. The female novelty comprised 26 percent of the personal coverage, compared with 56 per cent that focused on her sexual orientation. That is not to say that the media were necessarily critical of either. Half of the coverage of Wynne’s personal characteristics was positive and only 12 per cent were negative. Twenty-two per cent were neutral and 15 percent were ambiguous. In contrast, Papatello receive 39 per cent positive in terms of tone of her personal life, 2 per cent negative and 52 per cent neutral.

While sexual orientation was given the novelty frame, it appears that Papatello was able to avoid the novelty frame for being a female leadership contender. Given that leading up to the convention Papatello lead the polls, the first female premier could have been a defining narrative, yet references to gender and Papatello came up only 13 per cent in the personal descriptors of her. For Takhar, the personalized coverage focused on his immigrant status and his

personal narrative of someone who arrived in Canada in 1970 with \$7 in his pocket. He was the only candidate who received more critical than positive assessments of his personal background. While his coverage was small, some stories emerged about past business dealings that were settled in the courts.

Unlike previous studies, appearance was rarely mentioned in the coverage of any of the candidates. In fact, Kennedy received some attention regarding his greying hair in comparison to the last time he ran for leadership. Papatello did have some references to her height, clothing, and choice of footwear. For example, in a January 26 *Globe and Mail* article on the three front runners, Karen Howlett began Papatello's profile saying, "Sandra Papatello's signature stilettos and big hair match her personality, which tends to fill any room" (Howlett, 2013). In contrast, Adrian Morrow began Wynne's profile by emphasizing her policy background, "She has a thorough knowledge of policy, and is able to discuss details of everything from health care to education to public transit" (Morrow, 2013).

As can be seen in Figure 1, coverage of traits was dominant for both Wynne and Papatello. For Wynne, the majority of this attention occurred after she won leadership, whereas for Papatello, it was featured in the campaign period. The coverage of traits was mostly positive for Wynne comprising 66 percent of the statements about her traits (Table 5). For Papatello, there were also more positives than other descriptions at 53 per cent. Combining the male candidates, there were both fewer trait descriptions and a lower proportion of positive evaluations at 47 per cent. Similarly, the male candidates had more negative evaluations of their traits than did the women candidates.

"Insert Table 5 about here"

Professional characteristics

Previous research on the gender frame indicated that personal descriptions of female candidates outweighed their professional credentials. However, as noted above, professional descriptors outweighed personal for both men and women. Within that coverage there were some notable differences. Despite the fact that all candidates vying for the leadership had served in cabinet, and the women leadership contenders has as much, or even more, cabinet experience than the male candidates, male descriptions of credentials, professional background, and political experience were featured as a higher percentage of the coverage than was the case for the women candidates (Table 6). Where the women candidates received a higher proportion of coverage was on political mettle and attributions of success. These results should be treated with some caution as the male candidates had variability between them in terms of the is coverage and could mask some of the campaign dynamics.

"Insert Table 6 about here"

Figure 2 provides the overall attention to professional background by leader. It is noteworthy that although Takhar had served in cabinet as long as Papatello, he still received more attention than she did, despite the fact that Papatello had a higher cabinet profile. By the same token, Papatello and Wynne's experiences outside cabinet were featured more often than the experiences of the male candidates. (Wynne had served as Toronto School Board Trustee, and Papatello had worked in a number of high profile positions after leaving government).

“Insert Figure 2 about here”

Viability

Political viability was the most frequently mentioned item in the leadership campaign. This is consistent with other studies on leadership and election races (Aday and Devitt, 2001; Kahn 1994, 1996). However, unlike those studies, it was the male candidates who had more questions raised about their ability to win than the female candidates. For example, there was more coverage on the horse race frame for the male candidates (10 per cent) compared with the female candidates (6 per cent). As can be seen in Table 7, the coverage of the female candidates focused on the leaders’ activities on the campaign trail (42 per cent for female compared with 33 per cent for male). Similarly, strategic considerations featured more prominently for the female candidates, another sign of front runner status.

“Insert Table 7 about here”

Issues and position

Following Goodyear-Grant (2013) soft issues were considered health, education, and childcare. Hard issues were coded as economics, public finances, debt and deficit issues. Given that provincial government spending is focused primarily on the so-called soft issues it is not surprising that the majority of issue statements were on soft issues. Moreover, it was the male candidates who emphasized these issues more so than the female candidates – 71 per cent compared with 64 per cent (Table 8). Some of the differences were related to the credentials of the candidates themselves. Wynne showed her experience by both having higher degrees in education and as serving as a school board trustee. Eric Hoskins, in contrast was highlighted by the fact he is a trained medical doctor. Papatello also played to her experience in being the former Minister of Education and of Economic Development.

“Insert Table 8 about here”

Discussion & Conclusion

The results of this study of media coverage of the Ontario Liberal leadership race provide mixed results on the gendered media frame. In terms of quantity of coverage, there is little support for the gendered media frame for the female candidates. As found by Wagner and her associations (2015), visibility in the had more to do with competitiveness than gender. The coverage Kathleen Wynne and Sandra Papatello received resulted not from being novelty female candidates but because they were the front runners in the leadership race.

Yet, there is support for the gendered frame when it comes to sexual orientation. Both Kathleen Wynne and Glenn Murray were singled out regarding their personal lives. However, it should be noted, that both candidates spoke directly to the question of whether sexual orientation mattered at all. As a result, while the media did cover sexual orientation, it was often to dismiss it as a factor to be considered.

In the quality of news there is also mixed results with regards to the gendered frame. Similar to other studies on the quality of news coverage (Trimble et al., 2013) while descriptions of personal appearance were minimal, the discussion of personal life was prominent and was so for all minority candidates. For example, sexual orientation played a large part of the personal life

coverage of the two homosexual candidates. Similarly, for Takhar, the only visible minority candidate, coverage focused on his immigrant background to the exclusion of all else.

It is difficult to determine whether the coverage of traits had to do with the gender frame or simply being an artifact of front runner status. Part of Kathleen Wynne's victory had to do with media coverage of endorsements from former cabinet colleagues, former political opponents John Tory, to civil servants, and the outgoing premier. As a result, a large number of the trait coverage focused on these individuals providing examples of why she would make the best premier. Yet, in doing so, she was also contrasted with other the front runner, who also happened to be female: Sandra Pupatello. It is in these comparisons of Wynne and Pupatello that there is the most support for the gendered frame in that a new type of role trap was presented. In one *Toronto Star* column, for example, Haroon Siddiqui wrote in reference to Wynne, "She could even make the legislature work. She listens to others. She is respectful of her adversaries, unlike Pupatello who had a reputation as an attack dog in the legislature" (Siddiqui, 2013). At face value Wynne's coverage seems to be less likely to be framed in a stereotypical manner, yet when the contrast is made between Wynne the "Harvard-educated mediator" and Pupatello, the "attack dog", it appears that a more insidious gender frame is being promulgated. As noted above, Pupatello was not only given more descriptions of her appearance, i.e., hair, jewelry, shoes, but was also framed as a combative personality as in the previous example. Descriptors of Pupatello's traits included, "fiery", "combative", "outspoken", "attack dog", and "pit bull". The female aggressiveness of Pupatello feeds into the gendered mediation thesis (Gidengil, & Everitt, 2003). Given that both front runners in this campaign were women, the choice presented by the media, commentators, and party establishment was between a conciliatory or a combative woman. As Golebiowska (2001) warns this coverage could have electoral consequences as male voters are "less willing to vote for the stereotype-consistent candidate, regardless of his or her gender, than his or her stereotype-inconsistent counterpart" (557).

While this study provided a broad overview of how regional and national media covered the Ontario Liberal leadership race, it did not examine the extent to which the candidates themselves crafted their media persona. Neither does it look at how these depictions impacted voter behaviour. This suggests some interesting avenues for further research. Subsequent studies should seek to obtain insights from the candidates and campaign strategists on how they chose to deal with depictions of the personal. Clearly, in the case of Kathleen Wynne, there was a concerted effort to draw attention to and then dismiss her personal background. Likewise, there is a question whether the "warrior princess" persona of Sandra Pupatello was one perpetuated by the media, or one that she cultivated. Ultimately the electoral victories of Kathleen Wynne in both the leadership race and subsequent provincial election indicate that her gender or sexual orientation did not have a negative impact on her electoral fortunes. However, deeper analysis into the factors for that success should also be pursued.

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Appendix

TABLE 1		
2012-13 Ontario liberal leadership race candidate, date of nomination, and credentials		
Name	Date declared	Previous electoral experience
Eric Hoskins	Nov 3	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (2010–2011); Minister of Children and Youth Services (2011–2012)
Gerard Kennedy	Nov 12	Minister of Education (2003–2006); Candidate for the federal Liberal leadership in 2006; MP for Parkdale—High Park (2008–2011)
Glen Murray	Nov 4	Minister of Research and Innovation (2010–2011); Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (2011–2012); CEO of the Canadian Urban Institute (2007–2010); Mayor of Winnipeg (1998–2004)
Sandra Pupatello	Nov 8	Minister of Community and Social Services (2003–2006); Minister of Education (2006); Minister of Economic Development and Innovation (2006–2008; 2009–2011); Minister of International Trade and Investment (2008–2009);
Charles Sousa	Nov 10	Minister of Labour (2010–2011); Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (2011–2012)
Harinder Takhar	Nov 22	Minister of Transportation (2003–2006; Minister of Consumer Services (2006–2009); Minister of Government Services (2009–2012)
Kathleen Wynne	Nov 5	Minister of Education (2006–2010); Minister of Transportation (2010–2011); Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Aboriginal Affairs (2011–2012); Toronto District School Board Trustee Ward 8 (2000–2003)

Table 2								
First Mention Stories, Campaign Period By Gender								
	CAMPAIGN		CONVENTION		POST- CONVENTION		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	143	55.2	26	66.7	106	95.5	275	67.2
Male	116	44.8	13	33.3	5	4.5	134	32.8
Total	259	100	39	100	111	100	409	100

Chi-Sq 57.243 df = 2 p < .000

Table 3						
Statements About Candidates, Gender By Quality Of Mentions						
	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal	614	16.6	240	11.2	854	14.6
Professional	1030	27.9	625	29.2	1655	28.4
Viability	1505	40.7	960	44.9	2465	42.2
Issues	549	14.8	314	14.7	863	14.8
Total	3698	100	2139	100	5837	100

Chi-Sq 33.375 df = 3 p < .000

Table 4						
Statements About Candidates, Gender By Personal Representations						
	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal Life	248	40.5	54	22.5	302	35.4
Appearance	14	2.3	12	5.0	26	3.0
Traits	224	36.5	77	32.1	301	35.3
Behaviours	127	20.7	97	40.4	224	26.3
Total	240	100	613	100	853	100

Chi-Sq 46.34 df = 3 p < .000

Table 5								
Mentions Of Traits, Leader By Tone								
	Wynne		Pupatello		Male Candidates		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Positive	84	66.1	46	52.9	35	47.3	165	57.3
Negative	17	13.4	13	14.9	20	27	50	17.4
Neutral	8	6.3	15	17.2	12	16.2	35	12.2
Ambiguous	18	14.2	13	14.9	7	9.5	38	13.2
Total	127	100	87	100	74	100	288	100

Chi-Sq 16.27 df = 6 p < .01

Table 6						
Statements About Candidates, Gender By Professional Representations						
	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Credentials	30	3.1	63	10.7	93	5.9
Professional Background	147	15.0	113	19.2	260	16.6
Political Experience	94	9.6	71	12.1	165	10.5
Political Mettle	250	25.5	137	23.3	387	24.7
Attributes Of Success	459	46.8	204	34.7	663	42.3
Total	980	100	588	100	1568	100

Chi-Sq 55.929 df = 4 p < .000

Table 7						
Statements About Candidates, Gender By Viability						
	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Electability	595	42.8	427	48.5	1022	45
Horse Race Frames	81	5.8	91	10.3	12	7.6
Debates	12	.9	17	1.9	29	1.3
Leader Activities	587	42.2	290	33.0	877	38.6
Strategies	106	7.6	38	4.3	144	6.3
Campaign Problems	10	.7	17	1.9	27	1.2
Total	1391	100	880	100	2271	100

Chi-Sq 51.1779 df = 5 p < .000

Table 8						
Statements About Issues, Gender By Type Of Issues						
	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Soft	326	64.2	200	71.2	526	66.7
Hard	182	35.8	81	28.8	263	33.3
Total	508	100	281	100	789	100

Chi-Sq 3.991 df = 1 p<.05

figure 1

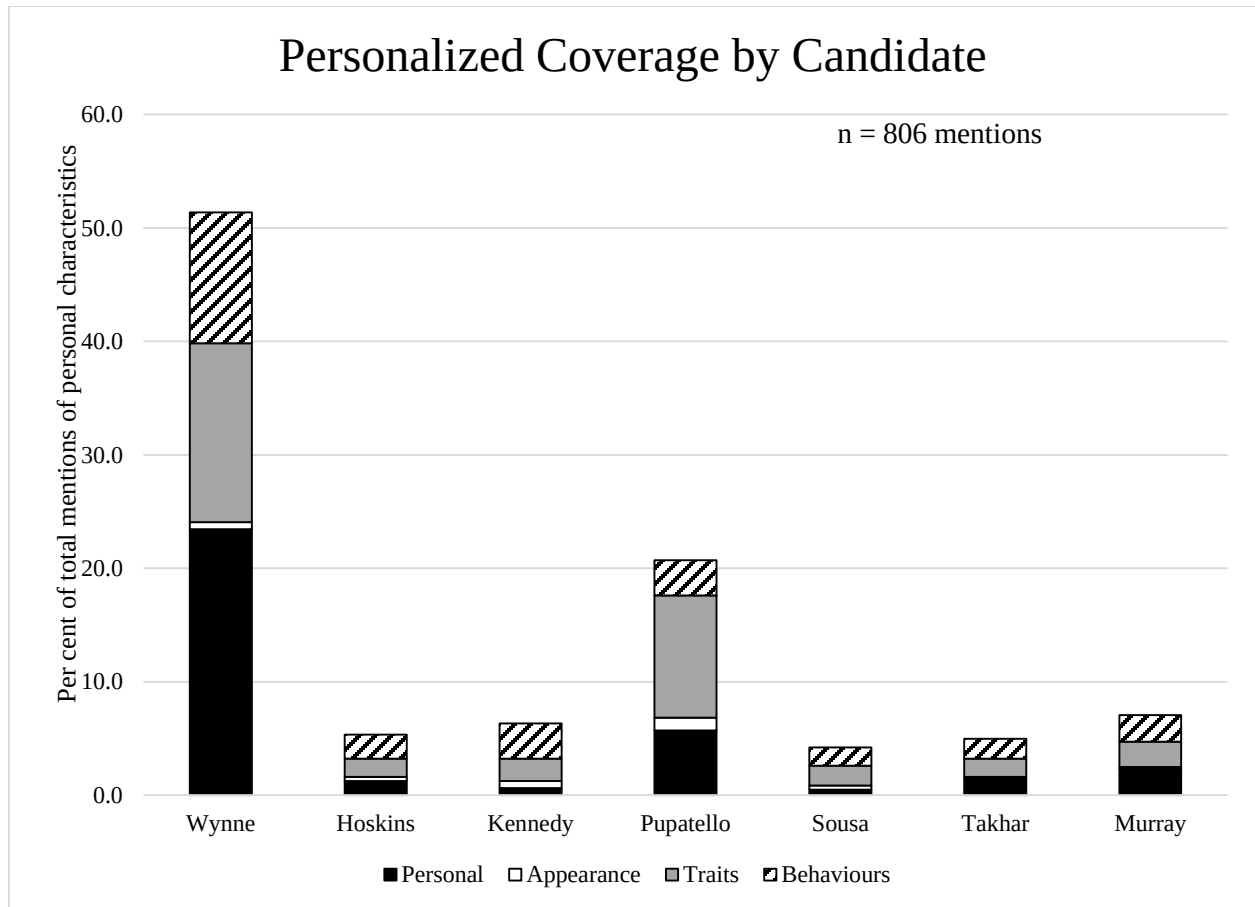


Figure 2

