

COMPETING MASCULINITIES AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS¹

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Introduction

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has introduced Canadians to a new form of masculinity in a party leader. A self-proclaimed feminist, Trudeau is as comfortable paddling down the Bow River in Calgary as he is marching in Vancouver's Pride Parade. Throughout the 2015 Canadian federal election, political commentators described the Liberal leader as "emotional", "boyish", and "charismatic yet inexperienced", but also "self-assured", "quick-minded", and "earnest" (Salutin 2015; Nicholls 2015; Brown 2015; Gagnon 2015; Kay 2015; Den Tandt 2015c). Trudeau's masculinity has been a source for media fodder, a tool for potent political image making and, at times, a political liability. As Canada's twenty-third prime minister, Trudeau has received largely positive attention for posing in *Vogue* magazine, dressing as Han Solo for Halloween, and inviting the media to watch him train at a boxing gym in New York City. However, Trudeau's political opponents have also attacked him for his gender presentation almost continually since his selection as Liberal party leader in 2013. Crucially, these opponents have made both implicit and explicit connections between Trudeau's masculinity and his fitness for government. As one senior member of the parliamentary press gallery put it, "There was an attempt by the

¹ The authors would like to thank the participants in this study and, especially, Erin Tolley at the University of Toronto for her timely assistance and wisdom in helping with the completion of this chapter.

Conservative Party to paint Justin Trudeau as somehow not masculine — that he wasn't 'man enough' to be prime minister" (Anon, pers. comm.).

The form of masculinity embraced by Trudeau, and cultivated by his advisors, has contrasted sharply with those of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper and of Thomas Mulcair, leader of the NDP. Harper inhabited a more traditional form of masculinity in Canadian politics — managerial, desexualized, and stoic. Various participants in our study described him as the stereotypical “1950s suburban dad”. While Mulcair’s gender presentation was equally conventional, pundits continually noted his aggression, labelling him “Angry Tom” for his performances in the House of Commons and in media scrums (Den Tandt 2015a). At the same time that they cultivated their own forms of masculinity, Harper and Mulcair cast aspersions on Trudeau’s age, masculine presentation, and professional experience — all traditional preoccupations of masculinist politics.

Using the 2015 federal election campaign as a case study, this paper brings the rich body of literature on gender and politics into conversation with contemporary scholarship on the politics of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Hearn 2004; Conroy 2015). In virtually all Anglo-American jurisdictions, political life continues to be dominated by men. Recent scholarship on gender and politics has pointed to both formal and informal barriers women experience when seeking to participate in public life (Vickers 1997; Newman & White 2006; Bashevkin 2009; Dobrowolsky 2009; Thomas 2013), along with the chronic underrepresentation of women in political institutions (Tolley 2012; Thomas & Bodet 2013). While these accounts usefully analyze the effect of masculinity norms on women’s ability to participate in politics, this chapter considers how *hegemonic masculinity* — a theory used to describe the set of practices associated with ideal notions of what it means to be a man — shaped the campaigns of federal

party leaders in the lead-up and aftermath of the 2015 Canadian federal election (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, 832).

In examining the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and the 2015 federal election campaign, this chapter poses three central research questions:

1. How have federal campaigns deployed masculine imagery or narratives in the self-presentation of party leaders?
2. How have political parties used masculinity to undermine political opponents? How has political news coverage mediated these competing masculinities? And,
3. What are the consequences of competing masculinities in politics for candidates of all genders?

In grappling with these questions, we argue that masculinity has been an important feature of recent Canadian politics. Political parties and leaders have used masculinity both to bolster their own political images and policy positions, and to attack perceived weaknesses in their opponent's gender presentation. Ultimately, Justin Trudeau's victory in the 2015 general election may signal a shift in the hegemony of traditional forms of masculinity in Canadian politics.

We begin this chapter by laying out the theoretical origins of hegemonic masculinity and discussing its operation in contemporary Anglo-American politics. We then turn to a discussion of our mixed-method approach, including a media discourse analysis, a content analysis of selected campaign artifacts, and key participant interviews with six political communication consultants and members of Ottawa's parliamentary press gallery.² We present our primary findings and then explore the mediated and gender self-presentation of each of the major party

² Following our ethics procedures, two of these participants have requested anonymity in their responses. See Appendix # for a list of participants.

leaders: Stephen Harper, Justin Trudeau, and Thomas Mulcair. We conclude by asking what effect competing masculinities have on Canadian political discourse and elections, as well as its influence on women's participation in Canadian politics.

Theorizing Hegemonic Masculinity

Contemporary theories tend to describe gender as constitutive and performative, rather than essential and static (Butler 1990/2008; Hearn 2004; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Ducat 2004). The concept of hegemonic masculinity emerges out of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's work on cultural hegemony. In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci develops the concept of hegemony to describe the complex set of processes that take shape when dominant classes present their worldview in such a way that subordinate classes begin to treat it as little more than common sense, ordinary, and normal (Gramsci 1971). In this way, dominant classes maintain and stabilize their position of power by marshaling the state's various apparatuses to punish those who fail to conform with established norms (Gramsci 1971).

Building upon this work, R.W. Connell develops the theory of hegemonic masculinity to account for contemporary dynamics of gender, sexuality, and power relations in Anglo-American society (Kessler et al. 1982; Connell 1982; Connell 1983; Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985; Connell 1987). Hegemonic masculinity helps to explain how ideal notions of what it means to be a man are constituted and performed in historically specific ways across different societies. In doing so, the theory usefully overcomes the essentialism and biological determinism of sex-role theory (e.g. Barash 1977; Goldberg 1974; Wilson 1978). Rather than assuming that individuals behave in particular ways *because* of the sex assigned to them at birth, hegemonic masculinity underscores the ways in which men play a role in the larger project of ritualizing,

naturalizing, and reproducing dominant forms of masculinity and, in the process, subordinating women and feminized men.

Moving the concept of hegemonic masculinity into the political domain, recent literature on gender and Canadian politics underscores the extent to which politicians use a wide range of bodily activities — from personal grooming decisions to photo opportunities with their families — to convey normative messages about their suitability for public office. In a political system that continues to associate masculinity with competence and femininity with incompetence, these messages are invariably mediated in and through the language of gender (Goodyear-Grant 2013; Timble et al 2015).

On one end of this spectrum, politicians who embody ideal notions of what it means to be a man are associated with hegemonic masculinity. While hegemonic masculinity has the capacity to change over time and across geographical regions, it tends to be associated with the practice of using race, sexuality, class, and personal characteristics to secure and maintain power. In particular, hegemonic masculinity is associated with midcentury Anglo-American archetypes — naturalized over time — of the “male breadwinner” or the “male head of household”. Accordingly, hegemonic masculinity tends to be related to characteristics such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, confidence, strength, and stoicism (Conroy 2015).

In operationalizing hegemonic masculinity in the context of Anglo-American politics, one communications expert Ian Capstick, Founding Partner and Creative Director of MediaStyle, described the idealized male politician as:

Clean-shaven; above 6 feet; mildly muscular, not overly muscular; and has a friendly, generalized, generic disposition. That is your ideal politician — who you want to run. The vast majority of any honest political tacticians will tell you that. Hopefully, university educated; clean, straight teeth; hopefully with a wife, 1.5 children, and a dog.

Susan Delacourt, political columnist and author, notes that the ideal male politician should always associate himself with marriage and fatherhood. She explained:

He has to be married. It seems to be a prerequisite that a man politician has a wife to stand on stage with him...A man with children, especially, and often they even have to have the ability to say — even when it is a non-sequitur — ‘as a father, I think this...’ But no matter what, they have to be able to say ‘I am a father.’ Being tough. Having to prove they are tough and a fighter.

While a limited number of men are able to embody this ideal version of masculinity, it is the standard against which all others — including women and feminized men — are judged (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Jackson, 1990). As another Ottawa-based communications consultant put it, “I feel that people expect their ideal [male] politician to be perfect, almost superhuman” (Anon., pers. comm.).

On the other end of the spectrum, men who fail to comply with ideal male norms are associated with stereotypically feminine traits — a term often referred to in the literature as *subordinate masculinity* (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Anderson 2002; Duerst-Lahti 2007; Fahey 2007). Subordinate masculinity is usually associated with traits such as indecision, passiveness, weakness, emotiveness (excepting anger and aggressiveness), and emasculation. The concept tends to be demonstrated through terms of patriarchal subordination such as young, boyish, or inexperienced (Conroy 2015). Ultimately, the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and subordinate masculinity work to iteratively sustain each other — an ideal type can only exist when there is an inferior type against which it can be compared, valued, and judged (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

Method

In our study, we employed a set of mixed methods, including a media discourse analysis, a content analysis of selected campaign artefacts, and a series of six semi-structured key participant interviews. We began by conducting a media scan of editorials and opinion pieces written about the Canadian federal election campaign between August 4, 2015 and October 19, 2015 — the period covering the writ drop to election day. This scan covered Canada’s ten most widely circulated English-language newspapers: the *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Vancouver Sun*, *Toronto Sun*, *The Province*, *National Post*, *Calgary Herald*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, and *Ottawa Citizen*. In total, we collected 756 articles in our sample, excluding duplicates.³

We generated a list of five key terms commonly associated with hegemonic masculinity, developed using hegemonic masculinity theory and the political science literature on gender and the media. We also developed a list of five key terms commonly associated with subordinate masculinity. See *Table 1* for a complete list of trait terms, suggested synonyms, and sample occurrence. After developing these lists, we used a qualitative research program to scan, code, and analyze the occurrence of these terms and the contexts in which they appeared.

Table 1 – Term sets and co-occurrences

<i>Terms associated with hegemonic masculinity</i> [136]	<i>Terms associated with subordinate masculinity</i> [47]
Aggressiveness (incl. angry, anger) [43]	Indecision [0]
Competitiveness [9]	Emotive (incl. emotional, passionate) [19]
Confidence (incl. assured, self-assured) [23]	Passiveness [0]
Strength (incl. muscular, tough, strong) [36]	Emasculation (incl. boy, boyish, effeminate, florid, young) [16]
Stoicism (incl. restrained, restraint) [25]	Weakness [12]

³ We collected these editorials and opinion pieces using Factiva. We used key terms: “Harper”, “Mulcair”, “Trudeau”, and “Elizabeth May” to gather the sample. We selected editorial and opinion pieces in order to narrow the sample, and to capture gender mediation which may be less apparent in news articles.

We then analyzed our data set for co-occurrences of these terms and our three case studies: Stephen Harper, Thomas Mulcair, and Justin Trudeau.⁴ Our analysis found 136 co-occurrences between the party leaders and hegemonic masculinity descriptors, and 46 co-occurrences with subordinate masculinity terms. The instances of these co-occurring terms are displayed in *Table 1*. The greater occurrence of hegemonic terms reflects the dominance of this mode of gender presentation in contemporary Canadian politics, but as the 2015 election demonstrates, not necessarily electoral success. We discuss the results of this analysis in greater detail below.

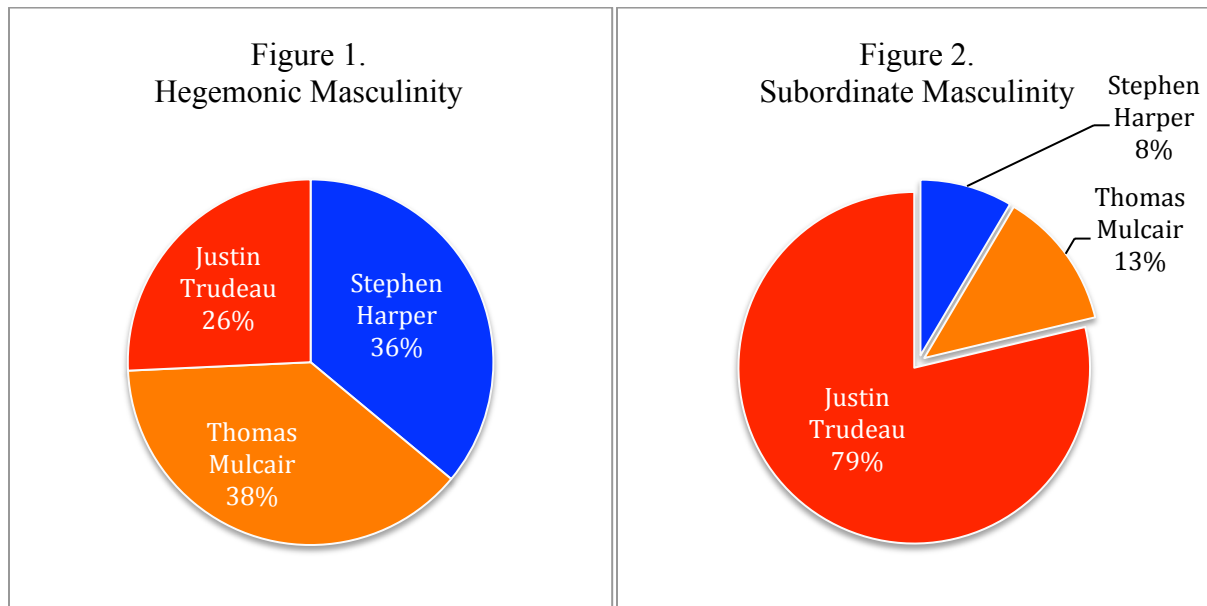
Second, we collected materials developed by political campaigns before and during the 2015 federal election that included masculine self-presentation or mediated the masculinity of another male leader (Bystrom et al. 2004). These materials include political advertisements, campaign literature, campaign apparel (e.g. buttons and t-shirts), and other miscellaneous communications (i.e. social media and internet memes). We analyzed the material's format (the location, tone, language, illustration, and typographical features of the materials), content (the information contained in the materials), and context (the larger background in which the materials are situated) (Valverde 2006, 28-39).

Finally, in May 2016, we conducted six key participant interviews with Ottawa-based political communication consultants and members of the parliamentary press gallery. We asked participants a set of semi-structured questions, a list of which appear in Appendix A. We used these interviews to provide context for our findings and to provide insights into the construction of masculinity by federal leaders and campaigns that would not be apparent through other methods.

⁴ While a media scan was conducted for Elizabeth May, there were insufficient results to conduct a similar co-occurrence analysis. Gilles Duceppe, leader of the Bloc Québécois was not included in this study because the leader and his party did not receive sufficient media coverage in the English-language press.

Findings: Media, Masculinities, and Party Leaders

Our analysis demonstrates that the gendered mediation of Canada's three major party leaders is an exercise in contrasts. While political commentators and editorial boards most commonly described Stephen Harper and Thomas Mulcair using terms affiliated with hegemonic masculinity, Justin Trudeau was overwhelmingly cited for his non-normative gender presentation. In our media content analysis, we found that terms related to hegemonic masculinity were, in aggregate, more frequently used for Mulcair (38%) and Harper (36%), than for Trudeau (26%), as seen in *Figure 1*.



The most frequent hegemonic terms used for each leader also differed. In our sample, Harper was most frequently described as “strong”, “muscular”, and “tough”, while Mulcair was most frequently described as “angry” or “aggressive”. Trudeau was most frequently described as “confident” and “self-assured”, but these terms appeared in the context of articles about his debate performance and were usually discussed as an unexpected trait of the Liberal leader, a point we return to below.

In contrast, the distribution of subordinate masculinity terms was striking. We observed that 79% of the co-occurrences were in reference to Justin Trudeau, while Stephen Harper (8%) and Thomas Mulcair (13%) received significantly fewer references, as seen in *Figure 2*. These references were most frequent in describing Trudeau using emotive or emasculatory terms, such as “young” and “boyish”. While much less frequent, when subordinate terms were used to describe the other party leaders, Harper was most often characterized as weak and Mulcair as emotive.

Table 2 – Co-occurrences by leader

	<i>Hegemonic masculinity</i>	<i>Subordinate masculinity</i>	<i>Total co-occurrences</i>
Stephen Harper	49	4	53
Thomas Mulcair	52	6	58
Justin Trudeau	35	37	72
TOTAL	136	47	183

Indeed, as *Table 2* demonstrates, political commentators and editorial boards most frequently commented on Justin Trudeau’s gender presentation, with Trudeau receiving slightly more descriptions using terms associated with subordinate masculinity than hegemonic masculinity. Overall, Thomas Mulcair received the most hegemonic descriptors, owing largely to the frequent use of the moniker “Angry Tom”. Stephen Harper was described using relatively the same number of hegemonic and subordinate terms as Mulcair, although his mix of terms relied on strength and stoicism, instead of aggression and anger.

Our findings reflect those of studies examining media coverage of women candidates, where gendered descriptions are more frequently used for female candidates over their male counterparts (Kahn and Goldenberg 1991). The media treatment of Justin Trudeau fits this general pattern, but differs in significantly higher coverage of his candidacy over the course of

the election campaign. Other commentators have noted this trend. In a 2015 column, Susan Delacourt argued that characterizations of Trudeau using subordinate terms and imagery — such as focussing on Trudeau’s hair or “riding on the coattails of another man’s intelligence or money (in this case, his father’s)” — was “the kind of sniggering that is often directed at women with aspirations in politics, though we would probably call such attacks sexist if Trudeau were a female running to be prime minister” (Delacourt, 2015).

Figure 3. Political cartoon by Pascal, November 2013

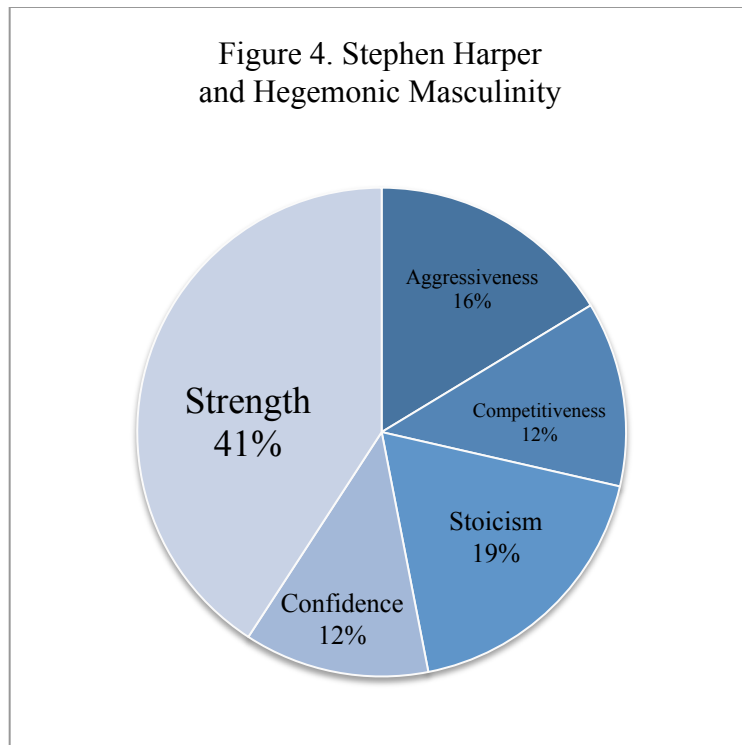
One political cartoon, published in the *Montreal Gazette* in November 2013, illustrates the differences in the gendered mediation of the three major party leaders. Published following four federal by-elections in Alberta and Ontario, the cartoon (*Figure 3*) encapsulates the divide between hegemonic and subordinate depictions of each leader’s masculinity. The cartoonist Pascal draws Mulcair with steam escaping from his nostrils, like a raging bull, as the NDP leader

throttles then Prime Minister Stephen Harper. A lithe Justin Trudeau is depicted stroking Mulcair's forehead. With a cinched waist, a woman's blouse open at the neck, and feminized facial features, Trudeau's emasculated appearance is underscored by the text in his speech balloon: "Don't hate me because I'm beautiful..."

Of course, the news media is not the only means through which the public absorbs gendered messages about political leaders. While our media analysis demonstrates particular masculine narratives for Harper, Trudeau, and Mulcair, gendered messages are also conveyed to voters through alternative means. In the section that follows, we turn to each major leader, analyzing how before, during, and after the 2015 federal election campaign, the media portrayed each leader's masculinity, how their campaigns presented each leader's masculinity, and how each leader's masculinity was portrayed by political opponents.

Stephen Harper

In our media sample, Stephen Harper was portrayed as the stereotypical strong man. Described by political commentators variously as "tough" on crime, terrorism, Russia, and the economy, pundits found Harper's approach to politics to be "strident" and "consistently strong" (Taylor 2015; Den Tandt 2015b). When asked to characterize the gender presentation of Harper during the last election campaign, one communications consultant chose "very masculine" and "traditional" as central to Harper's persona.



Strength (41%), stoicism (19%), and aggressiveness (16%), were the most common terms of hegemonic masculinity used in relation to Harper's gender presentation (see *Figure 4*). While theories of masculinity would suggest that these characteristics are often viewed positively, in the 2015 election campaign, the tone was decidedly negative. In one *Toronto Star* column, Harper is painted in the following terms: "Speaking with evangelical certitude, he projects to many a reassuring presence in a troubled world. But his biographers portray him as hot-tempered, foul-mouthed, paranoid, suspicious, secretive, mean and vindictive" (Siddiqui 2015). While Harper's brand of masculinity was at least tolerated by his supporters, it clearly was also a liability among his detractors.

Harper's political team is well documented for its tight control of the former prime minister's image and political messaging (Boyer 2015; Martin 2010). While commentators such as Ibbitson (2015) argue that Harper never had a particularly strong public persona, what was

presented is telling as it relates to masculinity. Ibbitson (2015) described Harper as “the ordinary guy, the family man who gets his coffee at Time Horton’s (or would, if he drank coffee) and his hamburgers at Harvey’s. A hockey dad” (184). Susan Delacourt echoed this characterization of Harper as a family man — a key aspect of the idealized masculine politician. As she described his masculine persona: “Harper was very much the 1950s dad — ‘you know, I’m just a guy who is a hard working dad’, ‘I work late at night’, ‘I’m just like you’” (pers. comm.).

Figure 5. Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper (bottom right) participating in Operation NANOOK, Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, in August 2013

There is, however, a dark side to this persona — one that the prime minister cultivated to bolster his political image. Capstick noted that Harper “was not afraid to be known as a dictator, a person who was in control, the centre of attention” (pers. comm.). This too, Capstick argued,

fed into his stereotypical image as “1950s/1960s Canada dad.” Both of these masculine personas were present in media narratives about Harper’s masculinity. A steady-hand on Canada’s economy, one version goes, yet tough on threats to Canadian communities, families, and individuals. The alternative narrative cast Harper as competitive, deceitful, and cut throat, playing upon the darker aspects of hegemonic masculinity.

As election artefacts demonstrate, the Harper campaign used a variety of images to develop a political narrative not only about the Conservative leader, but also about the Conservative Party’s policy program. During the campaign, Harper’s speaking podium was branded with slogans such as “Leadership” and “Stronger Canada”, while Harper’s campaign bus said: “Proven Leadership/Safer Canada/Stronger Economy”. Here, Harper’s personal gender presentation — based in strength, stoicism, and aggression — mixed with his party’s political campaign branding.

This type of branding, however, required years of political image making to achieve. As one member of the parliamentary press gallery told us, “Harper, over the years, did do certain events that were meant to be more masculine, like riding ATVs in the North” (Anon., pers. comm.). These images reinforce not only Harper’s masculinity, but also his policy positions. Harper’s team repeated these images throughout his time as prime minister, reflecting his political commitment to Canada’s military, its history, and the North. As Capstick puts it:

Harper spent a long time as a non-military man aligning himself with the military. He spent seven, eight, nine years [taking] any chance he could get to get into a flight jumper, into a uniform of some sort, and beside guns and shit that went ‘boom’, because it served their political purposes which was to reinforce Canada’s military heritage (pers. comm.).

An example from 2013 demonstrates this political image crafting. In *Figure 5*, Stephen Harper is photographed in Gjoa Haven, Nunavut participating in Operation NANOOK alongside the

Canadian Rangers. In the official image released by the Prime Minister's Office, we see Harper lying on the ground, aiming a gun in a shooting exercise.

By reinforcing Harper's masculinity in these ways, the campaign also served to contrast Harper with his political opponents and, especially over the past three elections, with Liberal leaders such as Stéphane Dion, Michael Ignatieff, and the current leader, Justin Trudeau. In reviewing this strategy of masculine image building, Ibbitson (2015) notes that:

[Even] if the ploy failed to convince voters that [Harper] was your next-door neighbour who sat in coach with everyone else, shoving his carry-on under the seat, it at least reminded voters that he came from where they came from, that his values were fundamentally their values, and that his opponents' emphatically were not (184).

This strategy would extend itself to attacking not only Justin Trudeau's policies, viability as a candidate, and suitability for the job of prime minister, but also, and perhaps fundamentally, his masculinity. Conservatives would try to cast the central question about Trudeau in stark, masculine terms: Is he man enough to be our prime minister?

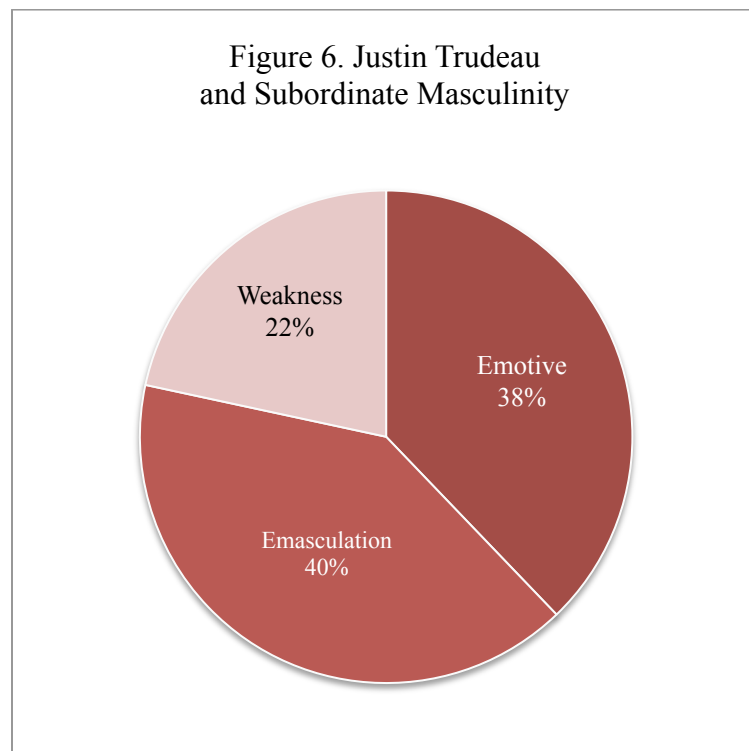
Justin Trudeau

In describing Justin Trudeau's masculinity, one Ottawa-based communications consultant argued that while it differed from those of Harper and Mulcair, it did not lack for confidence in its presentation:

He is not your typical 'guy's guy.' He is masculine, but does not try to be a tough guy. He seems very comfortable in his own skin. He has some traditional feminine qualities — he seems like a sensitive person, he seems softer in his mannerisms, but yet also masculine. He is very comfortable with his masculinity, but in a very different way from Harper and Mulcair (Anon., pers. comm.).

The consultant did not find Trudeau "to be a traditional, masculine figure", but instead to present a new kind of masculinity to the Canadian public.

This difference in masculine presentation also surfaced in our media analysis. Of the subordinate terms used in our sample, four-fifths were used to describe Justin Trudeau. *Figure 6* presents these co-occurrences, which primarily describe Trudeau using emasculating (40%) or emotive (38%) terms. While some of these descriptors were positive — Trudeau was frequently described as “passionate” about the issues — they also undermined his position as the leader of a major Canadian party.



For example, Trudeau was 43 years old during the last election campaign, three years older than the average age of the Canadian population, yet he was consistently described as “young” and “boyish” by political commentators. As Michael Den Tandt (2015d) wrote in the *Calgary Herald* during the final weeks of the 2015 campaign: “There’s poetic justice, if not fairness, in this interminable campaign finally resolving itself into a knock-down, drag-out grind to the finish between the old warrior, Stephen Harper, and his young nemesis, Justin Trudeau.” With just 13 years separating Trudeau and Harper — who was 56 during the 2015 campaign —

the refrain of boyishness and youth clearly played a different role in media campaign narratives than simply noting each leader's age.

As we argue, both the Conservative and NDP campaigns, along with segments of the media, saw Trudeau's gender presentation as a liability to his electoral prospects. This opinion formed early following Trudeau's leadership win in 2013, when the Conservatives released an attack ad targeting Trudeau with the tag line, "He's in way over his head" written in fairy dust typeface (Ditchburn 2013). According to another Ottawa political communications consultant:

The Conservatives were trying to picture or show that they were stronger and tough and serious — the ones able to deal with terrorism and serious economic issues. They were trying to paint [Trudeau] — when they realized that the threat was Justin Trudeau — as a weak fairy (and that's a terrible word to say), but a princess or a show pony. They tried everything to make him look less serious, less trustworthy, less masculine. To show that this less masculine person is not a good person to be in charge. (Anon., pers. comm.).

These types of attacks continued, particularly with reference to Justin Trudeau's hair. There is a well-documented association in Anglo-American society between long hair as "irrefutably feminine", and short hair as masculine. As sociologist Anthony Synnott (1987) argues, "men are not usually so interested in unique hair styles... Indeed, conventionally, norms for males tend to emphasize uniformity and mutual identity. Not only are male styles generally similar to one another, but they have hardly changed since the 1930s and '40s" (385). Trudeau's long hair was not only unconventional among male Canadian politicians, it was, at times, feminine in cut and length.

The Conservatives played upon this trope again in a 2015 attack ad titled "The Interview," in which a hiring team evaluates Trudeau's resume. They note he "included his picture" — an allusion to his vanity — discussed his inexperience, his likeness to a celebrity who "says things before thinking them through", and his age, before concluding that while he was not

ready to be prime minister, he had “nice hair, though.” The ad concluded with the tag line: “Justin Trudeau — he’s just not ready.”

The Liberals countered these attacks by underscoring Trudeau’s masculine strengths. His famous 2013 boxing match against Conservative Senator Patrick Brazeau is a prime example of image making designed to “recuperate” Trudeau’s masculinity. As Maiolino (2015) argues, Trudeau’s win against Brazeau enabled a “shift from precarious masculinity to an earned hegemonic masculinity” for the Liberal leader (124). This shift would prove impermanent, as our study demonstrates, and something the Trudeau campaign had to address in its own advertising throughout the 2015 campaign. In the second edition of *Shopping for Votes*, Susan Delacourt recounts how Trudeau’s team came to use his unconventional masculinity to his advantage:

When [ad executive David] Rosenberg first met Trudeau in a quick, get-to-know-each-other session in an airport lounge, he had been struck by what he called his ‘physicality’ — Trudeau’s easy movements, his ease with himself. In advertising, you work with your product’s strength, especially as it stands against your competitors. So Rosenberg featured Trudeau on the move whenever possible in advertising, with the unspoken, implicit question: Would either Harper or Mulcair do an ad like this? When Rosenberg was pulling together an ad for British Columbia audiences, for instance, he assembled clips of Trudeau climbing a mountain trail in North Vancouver, the famous Grouse Grind, a 2.9-kilometre uphill hike billed as ‘Mother Nature’s Stairmaster.’ Trudeau, not even winded by the climb, talked about his deep roots in BC as the ad cameras rolled. (Delacourt, 2016, 313).

These images — Trudeau paddling down the Bow River, climbing the Grouse Grind, walking up an escalator, training in a boxing ring — came to define Trudeau as a confident, self-assured, and masculine leader.

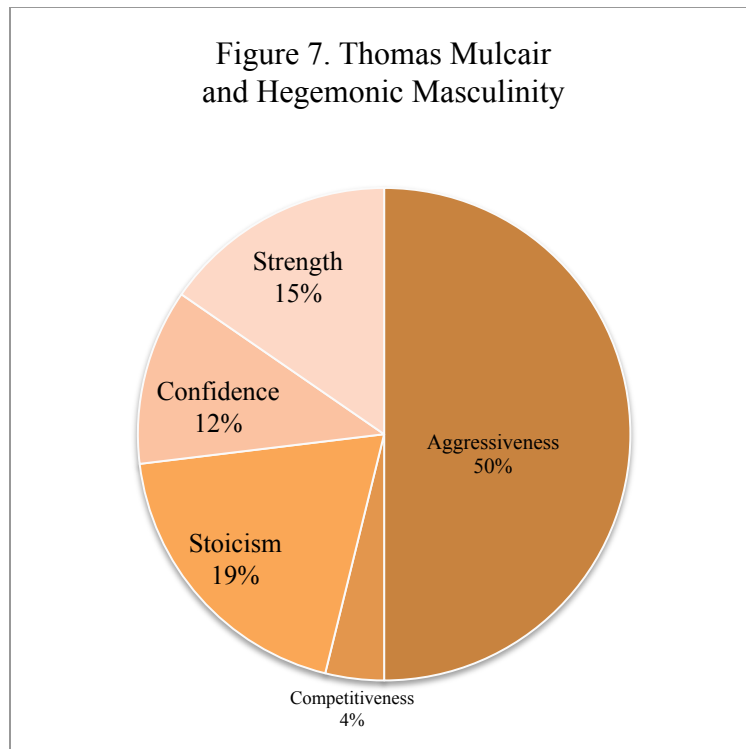
Indeed, Trudeau’s most common hegemonic descriptors in the press were “confident” and “self-assured”. These came later in the campaign, however, particularly as his debate performances improved. *The Globe and Mail*’s Lysiane Gagnon (2015) described Trudeau as “more articulate than previously” and appearing “calm and self-assured”, as if these qualities

might not be expected from a leader of a national political party. This treatment by the press echoes Tolley's (2015) findings on representation of racialized political candidates in the media and their success as equally surprising to an unsuspecting Canadian voting public. Ultimately, Trudeau's gender presentation was not an electoral liability, with the Liberals winning an historic majority government victory in the 2015 general election.

Thomas Mulcair

When comparing NDP leader Thomas Mulcair's gender presentation with those of Harper and Trudeau, Capstick exclaimed: "He wasn't dad, and he most certainly wasn't DILF" (pers. comm.). While sharing many of the traditional tropes of suburban masculinity with Stephen Harper, in our sample, Mulcair's hegemonic descriptors were overwhelmingly in reference to his aggressiveness (50%), stoicism (19%), and strength (15%). Indeed, as *Figure 7* shows, the relationship between Mulcair and aggressiveness is marked. Frequently described as "Angry Tom" in the Canadian media, Mulcair's assertiveness and temper were portrayed as both as an asset during Question Period in the House of Commons, but also a liability for his likability as a national leader.

In the past, Delacourt argues, "the NDP used 'Angry Tom' to show that he is a fighter" (pers. comm.). In the lead up to the election, however, the NDP moved to distance Mulcair from that moniker, something Michael Den Tandt (2015a) noted in a *National Post* column as a "point of vulnerability: he has a tendency to rush when his dander is up. He and his handlers have spent the better part of a year dispelling his old reputation as 'Angry Tom,' replacing it with a new image of him as grandfatherly but tough." Fearing for his likeability, NDP handlers sought to shift Mulcair's persona away from aggressiveness and towards a softer, grandfatherly demeanor.



As Capstick argues, “the NDP tried to get rid of that. Had [the NDP] wanted to play off his masculinity, or his masculine strength, they would have allowed him to be a strong angry leader” (pers. comm.). The strategy backfired, according to Justin Ling, political reporter for *Vice*

Canada:

They forced Tom Mulcair into this role that he was very uncomfortable in — being this smiling, happy, suburban dad. It just didn't play well. He is a passionate guy, a guy that sometimes gets angry, and to force him to pretend that he is this smiling, happy, friendly, ‘neighborino’. It doesn’t work. It made him look creepy, it made him look disingenuous, it made him look fake. And people picked up on that (pers. comm.).

An authentic gender presentation is therefore an important feature of hegemonic masculinity. By recasting Mulcair’s masculinity in an inauthentic way, NDP handlers contributed to a growing unease among the Canadian voting public with Mulcair and his leadership.

Figure 8. NDP Campaign T-Shirt

A unique aspect of Mulcair's gender presentation was his beard. Unlike the ideal vision of a male politician who is clean-shaven, Mulcair has sported a beard throughout his political career. Delacourt notes that there is a connection between Mulcair's facial hair and Trudeau's long hair. Both the beard and the long hair are "unusual... I guess because they stray from an ideal man as clean shaven and clean haircut — tidy hair and no facial hair" (pers. comm.). However, as an Ottawa communications consultant argued, beards are becoming an increasingly grey area in political circles: "When certain politicians have facial hair, it is always talked about, it is noted, and it is negative. But times are changing. For a long time, facial hair was not in style, and now it is. I feel like it is becoming more acceptable, and maybe in the future it will not be an issue" (Anon., pers. comm.). The NDP played off the beard, printing t-shirts (*Figure 8*), pins, and placards with an outline of Mulcair's beard. A common tag line on these materials was, "Beard a part of it!" In presenting these images, the NDP worked to distance Mulcair from

Angry Tom, replacing him with a more playful take on the masculinity of a Canadian political leader.

Conclusions

This study has tasked itself with answering three central questions. First, how have federal campaigns deployed masculine imagery or narratives in the self-presentation of party leaders? Campaigns have done this in many ways, particularly in response to perceived weakness in their leaders' masculine presentation. For Harper, this involved constructing his image as both an everyman — the mid-century archetype of suburban dad — as well as a militaristic tough guy. Justin Trudeau recuperated his masculinity by accentuating his physicality — through boxing, physical activity, and general movement in his political advertising. The NDP attempted to recast Mulcair's masculinity in friendlier terms, but this attempt failed because of its inauthenticity.

Second, how have political parties used masculinity to undermine political opponents? How has political news coverage mediated these competing masculinities? Political opponents most commonly attacked Trudeau's gender presentation. From commentary on his hair, youth, and appearance, to questioning his intelligence, experience, and emotional control, both the Conservatives and NDP sought to undermine his candidacy through tropes of masculinity. We have demonstrated that the media reinforced these narratives about Trudeau, using subordinate masculine terms to describe the Liberal leader with significantly greater frequency than either Harper or Mulcair. In addition, the media bolstered the hegemonic masculinity of the Conservative and NDP leaders. While this coverage was sometimes negative, it did not call into question either leader's fundamental masculinity or their legitimacy as a national political figure.

Finally, what are the consequences of competing masculinities in politics for candidates of all genders? On the one hand, Justin Trudeau's victory may signal a shift in perceptions about

gender presentation and electability. One Ottawa communications consultant argued that, in the past few years, “Women are not trying to man-up. They’re not concerned with trying to be less feminine. They are being themselves. It was that way in years past, but now I think women are being themselves and they are not thinking about how tough they are going to appear, how serious — slowly that is starting to fade” (Anon., pers. comm.). On the other hand, this shift could also normalize a form of masculinity — and a way of speaking about male politicians — that may not be productive. As Jennifer Ditchburn, Editor-in-Chief of *Policy Options*, told us:

I do think it is interesting — post-election — I have noticed that there is extremely sexualized commentary about Trudeau — the kind of article that would never be written about a woman. In terms of the attention he is getting from magazines, people calling him ‘hottie’, and commenting on his physicality and looks. A lot of those things would be considered offensive if they were written about a woman (pers. comm.).

It may be a pyrrhic victory if, as many gender and media scholars have sought to counter, male politicians are sexualized in the same way women are.

One consequence of this focus on competing masculinities is the shutting out of women leaders from the fray. Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party, while receiving some coverage during the 2015 federal election, is not able to engage in the same kinds of image making as her male counterparts. What Justin Trudeau’s victory does signal here, however, is that hewing to forms of hegemonic masculinity is not the only path to victory in Canadian politics.

By analyzing competing versions of masculinity in the 2015 election campaign, our study provides a window into contemporary dynamics of gender, sexuality, and power relations. In examining the concept of hegemonic masculinity as it relates to Stephen Harper, Thomas Mulcair, and Justin Trudeau, it would be a mistake to assume that the ways in which ideal notions of masculinity are constituted and performed will not continue to change over time. Underscoring the dynamic nature of their theory, Connell and Messerschmidt explain,

[T]here could be a struggle for hegemony, and older forms of masculinity might be displaced by new ones. This was the element of optimism in an otherwise rather bleak theory. It was perhaps possible that a more humane, less oppressive, means of being a man might become hegemonic, as part of a process leading toward an abolition of gender hierarchies (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, 833).

Some political observers may be inclined to conclude that Justin Trudeau's victory in the 2015 election signals the beginning of a new era in the history of hegemonic masculinity and Canadian politics. Indeed, our study provides preliminary support for this proposition — while Justin Trudeau's opponents, along with the Canadian news media, tended to associate him with notions of subordinate masculinity, he led the Liberal party to an historic majority government during the 42nd federal election. While we welcome the emergence of a new political landscape, one where leaders have an opportunity to flourish, regardless of their gender, sexuality, race, or class position, only time and further research will tell whether we are in the midst of a watershed moment in the history of gender and Canadian politics.

APPENDIX A - Method

List of ten most circulated English-language newspapers

Toronto Star
The Globe and Mail
Montreal Gazette
Vancouver Sun
Toronto Sun
The Province
National Post
Calgary Herald
Winnipeg Free Press
Ottawa Citizen

List of participants

Anonymous political communications consultant
Anonymous parliamentary reporter
Ian Capstick, Founding Partner and Creative Director, MediaStyle
Susan Delacourt, political columnist and author
Jennifer Ditchburn, Editor-in-Chief, *Policy Options*
Justin Ling, Canadian politics reporter, *Vice Canada*

Semi-structured interview questions

General questions

1. Is there an “ideal” male politician? If so, then what are his characteristics?
2. How do political campaign teams shape male politicians’ gender presentation?
3. How can masculinity be used to support or attack male politicians?
4. What effect do competing masculinities have for women politicians?

2015 federal election

1. How would you characterize Stephen Harper’s gender presentation during the campaign?
How would you characterize the media’s coverage of his gender presentation?
2. How would you characterize Thomas Mulcair’s gender presentation during the campaign? How would you characterize the media’s coverage of his gender presentation?
3. How would you characterize Justin Trudeau’s gender presentation during the campaign?
How would you characterize the media’s coverage of his gender presentation?

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