

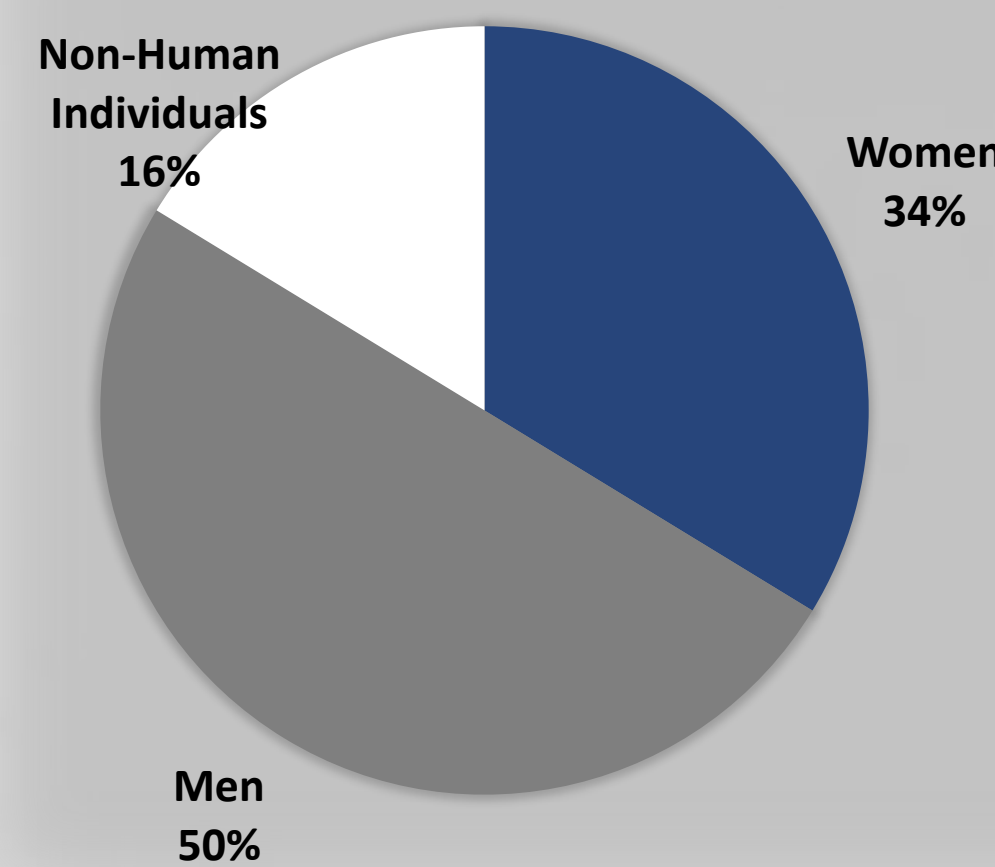
# “When You’re Finished Strategic Voting, Dinner’s Ready” Assessing Representations of Canadian Voters in Editorial Cartoons

## Abstract

This study explores the relationship between masculinity, femininity and political agency during the 2015 Canadian federal election. It uses the gendered mediation thesis to develop an understanding of how voters are incorporated into the gendered narrative of Canadian politics. While considerable research exists on the presentations of individual politicians, little attention has been paid to how voters are integrated into this gendered political narrative. In this project, I conduct a content and discourse analysis of Canadian voters in Canadian editorial cartoons during the 2015 federal election. The findings reveal that the stereotyped imagery regularly used by the media to discuss female politicians is also applied to female voters. Through this analysis, I argue that representations of voters in political cartoons normalize an acceptance of masculine-style politics and subvert the autonomy and agency of women within politics.

## Representations of Voters in Political Cartoons Normalize the Political Autonomy and Agency of Men While Subverting the Role of Women in Politics

### By the Numbers



Newspaper Selected	Number of Cartoons
The Globe and Mail	11
The Calgary Herald	7
The Vancouver Sun	6
The Winnipeg Free Press	10
The Toronto Star	12
The Montreal Gazette	6
The Halifax Chronicle	10
Northern News	0
Total Cartoons	62

### Where’s the Conflict?: Game and War Metaphors in the Dataset



- Cartoonists criticized the election for its lack of competition
- Cartoonists tied voters’ lack of interest in the election to the lack of excitement and intensity of the election
- Even events such as leaders debates that often evoke the most conflict and excitement were depicted by cartoonists as tedious and uneventful
- Rather, voters were interested in events that reflected a more intense type of competition and excitement such as sporting events and the rivalry and turmoil of the American Republican Party leader debates

### Personalisation and the Politics of the Home



- 20% of all cartoons in the dataset showed voters in domestic spaces however, women and men occupied this space differently
- Women in Supporting Roles**
  - Cartoonist highlighted women’s roles as partners to men and showed female voters as dependent on men for information about politics
  - Women in the home rarely act politically but rather encourage the men in their lives to do so
- Men as the Voting Public**
  - Men were the dominant sources of political knowledge and action

### Gendered Stereotypes and Political Engagement



Who Speaks?	
Women (n=29)	9 (31%)
Men (n=43)	22 (51%)

Who is Knowledgeable?	
Women (n=29)	4 (14%)
Men (n=43)	19 (44%)

## Research Question

To what extent does the gendered mediation thesis apply to contemporary portrayals of voters in Canadian political cartoons?

## Methodology

### DATA SET

62 cartoons from eight Canadian newspapers

### ANALYSIS

Content and discourse analysis focusing on war and sport metaphors, personalization and gendered stereotypes

### TIMEFRAME

The entirety of the 2015 Canadian federal election (August 4, 2015 to October 19, 2015)

## Conclusions

The findings of this analysis reveal that similar gendered narratives and stereotypes often applied by media sources to politicians also exist present when considering the representations of voters. Women’s ability to engage politically and possess political knowledge becomes minimized and contested by these images. If Canadian media sources cannot fully accept women as voters, then it is not surprising that gendered mediation scholars continually show that the media contest the presence of women in high-level political leadership roles.

## Selected References

- Gidengil, Elisabeth and Joanna Everitt. 1999. “Metaphors and Misrepresentation Gendered Mediation in News Coverage of the 1993 Canadian Leaders’ Debates.” *The Harvard International Journal of Press* 4(1):48-65.
- Trimble, Linda Angelia, Wagner, Shannon Sampert, Daisy Raphael, and Bailey Gerrits. 2013. “Is it personal? Gendered mediation in newspaper coverage of Canadian National Party leadership contests, 1975–2012.” *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 18(4): 462-481.

## Gendered Mediation Thesis

Gendered Mediation

Game and War Metaphors

Personal References

Gendered Stereotypes

## Background

Scholars note that the media act a key perpetrators of tactic gendered beliefs and values often enforcing the notion that politics is a male pursuit. Women who enter politics face the threat of misrepresentation through the media’s use of gendered discourses when discussing politics (Gidengil and Everitt 1999; Trimble et al. 2013.). However, the research on the gendered mediation of politics focuses on the presentations of political leadership and thus neglects alternative ways in which Canadians engage politically. This research focuses on the way in which voters are integrated into this gendered narrative.

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