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Beating (Up) the Boys

Newspaper Coverage of Helen Clark in New Zealand Elections, 1996-2005

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Newspaper Coverage of Helen Clark in New Zealand Elections, 1996 – 2005.

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New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark is a success story; she has won three national elections (in 1999, 2002 and 2005) and will soon seek a fourth term in office. She has faced male and female incumbents and, since winning power, has held off two male challengers for the top job. Our paper contrasts newspaper coverage of Clark with coverage of her primary opponents for the elections she has contested as leader of the New Zealand Labour party. Since Helen Clark lost her first election as leader, in 1996, we are able to compare coverage of one electoral defeat with three wins. Also, since her opponents have featured three men and one woman, we investigate sex differences in the treatment of male and female leaders. Finally, by tracking coverage of Clark over four elections, we are able to determine whether the press treatment of Clark has changed as she has consolidated power. We use content analysis to assess differences in the amount of attention to feminine and masculine aspects of leader persona and campaign behaviours of the five party leaders included in our sample (Helen Clark and the four National party leaders, Jim Bolger, Jenny Shipley, Bill English and Don Brash). Discourse analysis techniques are employed to analyse gendered mediation in the news texts.

Introduction

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark is a success story; ranked by Forbes magazine as one of the most powerful women in the world, she has won three national elections and will soon seek a fourth term in office. She has faced male and female incumbents and, since winning power, has held off two male challengers for the top job. Our project responds to Norris' (1997b) call for longitudinal, systematic analysis of press treatment of powerful political women by contrasting newspaper coverage of Clark with coverage of her opponents for the elections she has contested as leader of the New Zealand Labour party.[1] Since Helen Clark lost her first election as leader, in 1996, we are able to compare coverage of one electoral defeat with three wins. Also, Clark's primary opponents have included three men and one woman, allowing us to investigate sex differences in the treatment of competitive male and female leaders. For each of the elections contested by Helen Clark as leader of the Labour party we compared reportage of Clark with that of her primary challenger, the leader of the National party.[2] Content and discourse analysis methods were used to assess newspaper articles about the five party leaders central to the election campaigns investigated in this study.

Media representations are powerful cultural forms through which political meanings and norms about political leadership are communicated. By tracking gendered mediation of Clark and her male and female opponents over four elections, we are able to address the following questions. When does gender enter into the election news narrative? What forms does it take? Do feminising or masculinising frames convey similar or different meanings for male and female leaders? Are such frames prompted by the leader's performance of his or her gender, or are they imposed by the press or other political actors? Finally, to what extent is gendered mediation shaped by the status, power and competitiveness of the leader? We are particularly interested in the evolution of discourses about Helen Clark as she has established her political image and secured political power. Our findings show that while highly personalizing attention has been paid to Clark's appearance and sexuality, her campaign persona has been mediated by the norm of "aggressively masterful" and adversarial political leadership.[3]

Gendered Mediation: Female Politicians and the Press

[1] The research project from which this paper is drawn examines newspaper coverage of Canadian and New Zealand prime ministers over several stages in their careers, from ascension to the party leadership role, to governance phases and electoral victories and defeats. Supported by a SSRHC Standard Research Grant, the project examines newspaper coverage of Canadian Prime Ministers Kim Campbell and Jean Chrétien, and New Zealand Prime Ministers Jim Bolger, Jenny Shipley and Helen Clark. For the 2002 and 2005 New Zealand elections, we also examined newspaper coverage of Helen Clark's male competitors, Bill English and Don Brash, respectively.

[2] New Zealand was an archetypal two party system prior to the introduction of MMP in the 1996 election, with Labour and National competing to hold power. Although MMP brought several parties into electoral competition, Labour and National are still the major parties and they build coalitions with the minor parties in Parliament to form the government. See Catt, 2000 and Vowles 2006.

[3] See Nunn (2002, 13) for a discussion of Margaret Thatcher's unique blend of feminine and masculine approaches.

The concept of *mediation* captures the tendency of news coverage to go beyond merely reporting the "facts" by offering analysis and evaluations (Nesbitt-Larking 2007, ch.13; Patterson 1996). Political reporting necessarily involves a process of filtering, selection and emphasis as no political event can be described in its entirety given the time and space demands of news organizations (Nesbitt-Larking 2007, 316-17). Political events and actors are then further mediated when journalists and editors use frames, stereotypes and short-cuts to ensure the gist of the story is comprehensible to the audience (Feder et. al. 2001, 6; Norris 1997a, 2). Framing is an important element of mediation as news frames determine what is included, what is excluded, what is seen as salient and what is regarded is unimportant (Cappella and Jameison 1997, 38). While mediation is neither new nor unusual, Patterson (1996) argues that it has increased in prevalence and intensity over the last few decades in response to the ascendance of television news. The traditional newspaper story, which features straightforward descriptive reporting of political events guided by the five "Ws" (who said what to whom, when and why), has given way to an interpretive style that mixes facts and analysis (Patterson 1996, 101). This style of reporting relies on mediation and fore-grounds the news value of celebrity, conflict, personalities, drama and surprise or unusualness (Feder et. al. 2001, 6; Scharrer 2002, 395; Stanyer and Wring 2004; Taras 1990, 100-108). During election campaigns, the interpretive style leads to increased emphasis on party leaders[4] and a tendency to mediate their personas by dramatising, personalising and sensationalising their campaign events and behaviours. Women politicians who meet the news value of unusualness because of their celebrity status are likely to be heavily mediated (see Muir 2005; Trimble and Everitt 2009).

Mediation is *gendered* when the news reflects sex-based norms and assumptions by, for instance, using masculine metaphors to describe political events or by highlighting the sex of a political actor despite its irrelevance to the news event (Gidengil and Everitt 1999; Trimble, Treiberg and Girard 2007). As Ross and Sreberny (2000, 93) argue, the "way in which politics is reported is significantly determined by a male-oriented agenda that privileges the practice of politics as an essentially male pursuit". The most overt type of gendered mediation makes explicit reference to a politician's sex, often situating the politician's sex as the most important aspect of her persona (Helman, Carroll and Olsen 2000: 8; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996: 109). For instance, the "first woman" frame suggests a female politician's sex is as important as her political accomplishments. However, gendered framing goes well beyond noting the sex of the politician to emphasize gender-specific attributes and behaviours, including stereotypically feminine roles, characteristics and bodily attributes. There is considerable evidence that news media highlight the marital status, sexuality, appearance and domestic roles of women politicians (Bystrom et. al., 2004; Carroll and Schreiber 1997; Devitt 1999; Fountaine 2002; Fountaine and McGregor 2003; Heldman, Carroll and Olson 2005; McGregor 1996; Robinson and Saint-Jean 1991, 1996; Van Acker 1999). New Zealand media studies indicate frequent and consistent references to the looks,

[4] For instance, Catt (2000, 300) noted that, during the 1999 New Zealand election, TV election specials concentrated on the party leaders.

wardrobes, hairstyles, family lives and personalities of women politicians (Devere and Davies 2006, 71-3; Fountaine 2002, 11-17; McGregor 1996, 317-18). Ross (2002, 69) argues that, for women politicians, these feminising and domesticating emphases have profoundly damaging consequences; "the media's expectations (and therefore, the ways in which they direct their audiences) make them doubly damned: on the one hand, journalists focus on their sartorial style, the extent of their femininity (or lack of it) and their domestic arrangements, while on the other hand, they complain that they are not leadership material because they are too feminine". Indeed, sex-stereotypes and gender-based frames have been used to describe, and even de-legitimize, women in political leadership positions (re: New Zealand, see Fountaine and McGregor 2003 and McGregor 1996).

The observation that female politicians are invariably feminised by gendered mediation needs to be systematically tested with a longitudinal analysis of a successful female politician's coverage over several elections because several factors point to the importance of masculinising scripts and frames in media treatment of female political leaders. Feminist international relations scholars have highlighted both the male dominance of state institutions and the masculinist framing of politics inherent in popular and academic understandings of these institutions (Enloe 2000, 6; Kantola 2007, 271; Parpart 1998, 203; Sjolander 2003, 62; Tickner 1999, 2; Youngs 2004, 76;). As Sjolander (2003) notes, the histories of (male) diplomats, soldiers and heads of state provide the dominant narratives of the international system, and these stories focus on performances of masculinity on the international stage. Moreover, masculinity and war are strongly associated (Tickner 1999, 57), and war-like imagery pervades descriptions of political life. The "metaphors of high politics reverberate with images of hyper-masculine men ready to 'do battle with their enemies'" (Parpart 1998, 202). Stafford (1995, 486) asks whether "rule itself is gendered masculine". Media representations of political competition construct an "ideal" male identity based on a tough, macho stereotype– one which celebrates masculine characteristics of power, aggression and single-mindedness (Gidengil and Everitt 2003b, 212; Sjolander 2003, 71). Leadership prototypes feature "particular expressions of gender and sexuality that continue to support male leadership structures" (Clare 2002, 2). As a result, and as Lee (2007, 286) argues, female political leaders, especially successful leaders, may downplay their gender identities and focus on the attributes considered important to political success, attributes that are typically gendered masculine. In other words, powerful women politicians have an interest in performing gender according to established norms, reducing opportunities for the press to apply feminising foci and descriptions. This could explain why Norris's (1997b) study of newspaper coverage of female heads of state during their first week in office revealed very few examples of overt bias or sex-stereotyping.

In this paper we focus on elections because we are interested in the interactions between the masculinising tropes associated with the game frame for election coverage and the feminising approaches discussed above. Several studies have confirmed that news media frame elections as games by focusing on leaders or frontrunners, strategic concerns, polling data and explanations

for wins and losses (Cappella and Jamieson 1997: 37-57; Patterson 1994: 53-93; Trimble and Sampert 2004). Moreover, the game frame is replete with aggressive language and masculine imagery given its metaphoric construction of political contests as wars, races, battles and bouts (Everitt and Gidgenil 1999; Sampert and Trimble 2003; Trimble and Sampert 2004). As Gidengil and Everitt (2003, 562) put it, election campaigns "are routinely framed as battles between warring camps and party leaders as boxers going for the knockout punch". Female politicians fall on the margins or even outside the game frame when they are not the leaders of parties or the frontrunners in leadership contests (Gilmartin 2001; Ross 1995; Sampert and Trimble 2003; Scharrer 2002). However, once women leaders win the leadership of their parties and contest office, especially at the national level, they are considered "in the game" by the press and framed accordingly. For instance Semetko and Boomgaarden (2007, 166) found that horse-race (or game) framing dominated newspaper and television reporting of the 2005 German Bundestag election, particularly in stories that featured both the female and male candidates for chancellor. During the 1999 New Zealand general election, which was a competition between two women for the prime minister's job, "the traditional (and masculine) sports- and military-inspired language of politics" was fully evident in press coverage of the campaign (Fountaine 2002, 5; Fountaine and McGregor 2003).

Even though the game frame is applied to women leaders, the cognitive dissonance created by a competitive woman stepping onto the "electoral battlefield" may confound the press. By describing the 1999 New Zealand electoral contest between Jenny Shipley and Helen Clark as a "catfight" between the "Xena warriors" the media reified the electoral "game" while trivialising its female competitors (Fountaine and McGregor 2003). Canadian research shows the dilemma faced by female party leaders, who are damned if they conform to the game frame's masculine script, and damned if they don't behave aggressively (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 2000, 2003). Gidengil and Everitt carefully analysed the behaviours of male and female party leaders during televised leader's debates in the 1993, 1997 and 2000 Canadian national elections, and compared the actual behaviour of the leaders with the reporting of the debates by television news. They found that female leaders who acted aggressively had their behaviours exaggerated by the news media. For instance, although Kim Campbell was "no more aggressive than the other leaders [in the 1993 leaders' debate], she was the most likely to be portrayed as a warrior doing battle or as a street fighter" (Gidengil and Everitt 2003, 570). Gidengil and Everitt (2003, 262-3) suggest the media overstate the aggressive rhetoric or behaviours of women leaders because these actions run counter to gendered expectations.

In sum, competitive female political leaders face feminising and masculinising news frames at one and the same time. It is important to recognize that these frames have distinct resonances for men and women politicians. Election stories that emphasize a male leader's wife and children normalise his masculinity and heterosexuality; in contrast, stories focusing on a female leader's family life position her femininity as oppositional to her quest for political power by implying domestic and political roles are, for women, mutually exclusive. On the flip side, "framing female

politicians in the conventional language of the news can result in sex-differentiated coverage" (Gidengil and Everitt 2003, 562). For instance, describing political competition in highly masculinised battle language insinuates that political leadership roles are best held by men (or women who act like men). Clearly an important aspect of gendered mediation is its differential connotations and consequences for male and female political actors. In summary, we see the phenomenon of gendered mediation as complex and multi-faceted, reflecting relationships between the sex of the leader, his or her role in the political event or competition, and the application of dominant news frames.

Methodology

Articles from selected New Zealand newspapers were analysed for this study.[5] While most New Zealanders turn to television for news coverage, newspaper readership remains high and "the metropolitan press remains a key source of political information during an election campaign" (Cross and Henderson 2004, 143). New Zealand does not have a national newspaper, thus the following dailies were chosen for sampling: the capital city (Wellington) papers, the Dominion and the Evening Post, which merged in July 2002 to become the Dominion Post; Auckland's New Zealand Herald; and the main South Island paper, Christchurch's The Press. These are the largest circulation dailies in the country (Bale 2005, 389).[6] According to Cross and Henderson (2004, 143-144), these three leading papers provide "generous 'op-ed' space" for political coverage and debates about current events. The media environment in New Zealand is highly de-regulated and concentrated in the hands of a few multinational media conglomerates (Atkinson 2003, 305; Cross and Henderson 2004, 145-9). In this context, which lends itself to mediation, Atkinson feels the newspapers offer "qual-pop" journalism, "an uneasy compromise between quality and popular news discourses" (2003, 317). Cross and Henderson point to the increased personalisation of politics by New Zealand media, as well as an intense interest in exposing politicians' gaffes, legal offenses, and errors in judgement (2004, 152-6). According to Bale (2995, 389) there is no "tabloid-broadsheet divide in New Zealand daily newspaper), thus the newspapers in our sample are likely to mix traditional journalistic styles with the interpretive approach. In short, the three newspapers are appropriate sites of investigation for an analysis of gendered mediation.

The news articles analysed for this study included hard news, columns, opinion pieces, features and editorials that offered substantive coverage of Helen Clark and her primary competitors, the leaders of the National party in each of the four elections Clark contested as leader of the Labour party:

[5] Two data bases were used to gather the articles; Factiva was used for all papers and elections except the Christchurch Press for the 1996 election, which was searched using Lexis-Nexis.
[6] The New Zealand Herald has a circulation of 200,000, the Dominion Post just over 100,000 and the Christchurch Press 90,000 (Bale 2005, 389). New Zealand's population as of the 2001 census was 3,792,654.

- 1996 election: Clark vs. National leader, PM Jim Bolger (Clark lost);
- 1999 election: Clark vs. National leader, PM Jenny Shipley (Clark won);
- 2002 election: PM Clark vs. National leader Bill English (Clark won);
- 2005 election: PM Clark vs. National leader Don Brash (Clark won).

For each election, we examined all news stories over 250 words that mentioned each leader in the headline or lead paragraph and devoted at least 50 per cent of the story to that particular leader. We began the story search from the day the writ was dropped and ended the search on the day after a coalition government was established. This end-point was chosen because a government is not immediately formed after the votes are counted. A feature of the MMP electoral system used in New Zealand since 1996 is that it often takes time for a government to emerge and we wanted our analysis to include the crucial post-vote coalition-building phase of electoral contests. Table 1 reports the search dates and number of stories analysed for each leader, and it illustrates a jump in the number of stories focusing on Helen Clark in the 2002 election, as well as for the two main party leaders during the 2005 election.

Table 1: Search Dates and Number of Stories Analysed, by Election and Leader

	1996		**1999**		**2002**		**2005**	
Search dates	12 Sept. – 11 Dec.		27 Oct. – 7 Dec.		25 June – 9 Aug.		17 Aug. – 18 Oct.	
Leader name	***Jim Bolger***	***Helen Clark***	***Jenny Shipley***	***Helen Clark***	***Bill English***	***Helen Clark***	***Don Brash***	***Helen Clark***
(N) Stories that met sampling criteria	81	84	78	88	70	103	133	114

Both content analysis and critical discourse analysis were used to examine newspaper coverage of the five politicians and three elections included in our study. Content analysis employs "objective and systematic counting and recording procedures to produce a quantitative description of the symbolic content in a text" (Neuman 2000: 293). A detailed coding framework was developed, including precise coding notes, to ensure that all variables were carefully operationalised and ambiguities were eliminated. We agree with van Zoonen (1994, 73) about the limitations of content analysis; for instance, noting that a certain percentage of news stories about a leader mention his or her appearance tells us that the press is paying some attention to the politician's looks, but it does not tell us what, precisely, is being said and what it might mean. As a result, we employed critical discourse analysis, a conceptual framework and technique which investigates "the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance" (van Dijk 1993: 249), to explore gendered framing in the news texts. By producing an inventory of references to each leader's sex, sexuality, appearance, marriage, children as well as any gendered metaphors or images used to describe them, we were able to analyse what was being said and, as importantly, what the patterns and anomalies in the discourses conveyed about gendered mediation of political leadership.

Gendered mediation was assessed with several variables. First we looked at the sorts of gender-based frames that tend to have feminising consequences for female leaders. For each news story, we determined whether or not any of the following aspects of the leader's gendered persona were mentioned: sex, sexuality, appearance, marital status, and children (or childlessness). We also noted any feminine descriptors or metaphors. The discourse analysis of these references looked at changes over time and between Clark and the National leaders, noting the divergent meanings of these references for male and female politicians. Secondly, we examined the deployment of masculine frames, metaphors or descriptors in the texts. The presence of aggressive game language (i.e. "attacked") in the story was noted, and in our discourse analysis, we determined whether the leaders were associated with these words and phrases, and if so, whether they were the initiators or the recipients of the rhetorical aggression.

The literature led us to hypothesize that Helen Clark would be both feminised and masculinised by the coverage. We expected that she would be marked more often and more overtly by sex-specific references and descriptions, for instance, by mentions of looks and family life, or by feminine metaphors. However, we also anticipated that Helen Clark's portrayal would become less feminised over time as she won and consolidated power. The discourse analysis of feminine-typed references and descriptions was informed by an expectation that the feminising references would take different forms and meanings for male and female leaders. On the masculinisation front, we hypothesised that Clark would be described as acting as combatively as her male competitors. Due to the ubiquity of game framing in election coverage, Helen Clark should be as likely as her opponents, if not more likely, to be described with masculine metaphors and depicted as deploying aggressive tactics during the campaign. In particular, we felt Helen Clark's portrayal would become more intensely masculine over time because of her electoral success (in game-frame terms, her ability to play and win a "man's game").

Findings

Feminising Frames and Descriptions

H1*: Helen Clark will be marked more often than her male competitors by feminising and personalising references.*

H2: *The number of feminising descriptions of Helen Clark will diminish with each election.*

Table 2 and Figure 1 indicate that the content analysis data do not substantiate either hypothesis. In particular, Clark's marriage and family life were not discussed more often than those of her competitors in any of the elections. The data reveal a much more complex picture, featuring three distinct patterns. The first pattern supports hypothesis one, but only applies to the 1996 election. During that campaign, Helen Clark's first as leader of the Labour party, stories about Clark were

more likely than stories about Jim Bolger to discuss her sex, sexuality and appearance, and these differences were statistically significant. The second pattern is shown in the 1999 election, when Clark competed against another woman. As Figure 1 illustrates, the highest level of attention to the feminisation measures for Helen Clark occurred during this election and there were no statistically significant differences between the two female leaders on any of the measures. The third pattern was established after Clark became prime minister, when she was competing to hold power in the 2002 and 2005 elections. In both competitions, Clark was no more likely than her male opponents to be described in feminising or privatising ways. In fact, the lone measure presenting a statistically significant difference was references to children/childlessness in the 2002 election, when Bill English's large family was discussed considerably more often than was Clark's childlessness. More intriguingly, during the 2005 election Don Brash had a higher proportion of mentions on all measures except marital status. In short, the press gave as much or more attention to Clark's male opponents' sex, looks and personal lives in 2002 and 2005. The third pattern suggests Clark was less likely to be feminised than her male competitors, but because references to a leader's family or physical persona can have very different meanings for male and female leaders, it is necessary to employ discourse analysis of the qualitative data on each of the five variables. The discourse analysis reveals the intriguing ways in which Clark was both feminised and masculinised by discussion of her sex, looks and private life.

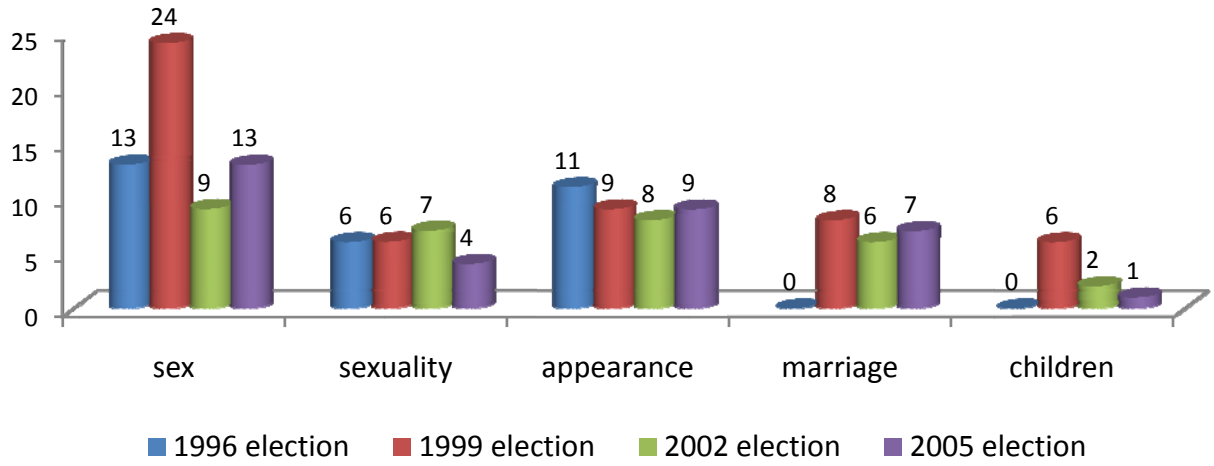
Table 2: Feminisation Measures by Election and Leader

Mentioned in story: N (%)	**1996 election**		**1999 Election**		**2002 Election**		**2005 Election**	
	National (Bolger)	**Labour (Clark)**	**National (Shipley)**	**Labour (Clark)**	**National (English)**	**Labour (Clark)**	**National (Brash)**	**Labour (Clark)**
Leader's sex	3 (4%)*	11 (13%)*	15 (19%)	21 (24%)	9 (13%)	9 (9%)	24 (19%)	15 (13%)
Leader's sexuality	0 (0%)*	5 (6%)*	2 (3%)	5 (6%)	3 (4%)	7 (7%)	13 (8%)	4 (4%)
Leader's appearance	1 (1%)*	9 (11%)*	9 (12%)	8 (9%)	3 (4%)	8 (8%)	18 (14%)	10 (9%)
Leader's marital status	5 (6%)*	0 (0%)*	5 (6%)	7 (8%)	10 (14%)	6 (6%)	9 (7%)	8 (7%)
Leader's children[7]	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	4 (5%)	5 (6%)	6 (9%)*	2 (2%)*	5 (4%)	1 (1%)

* $p < .05$

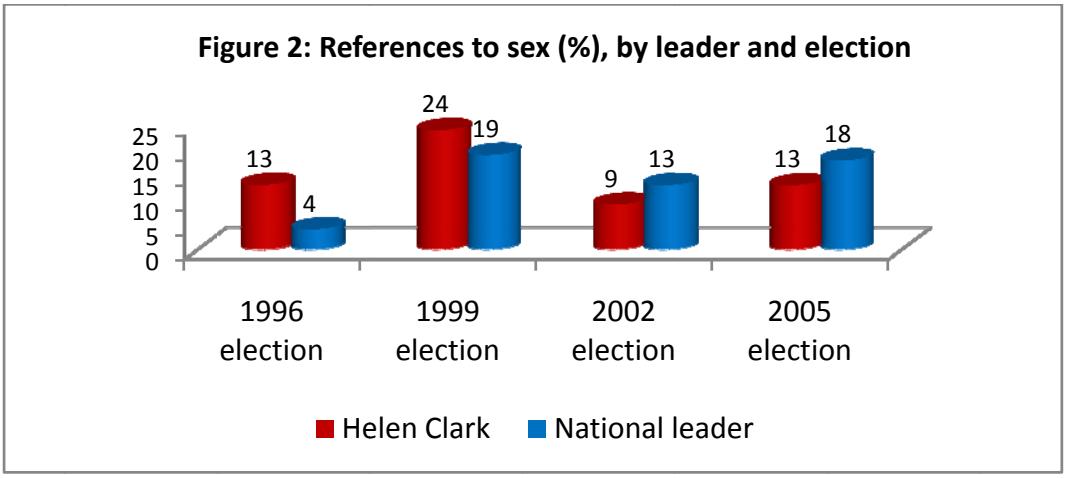
[7] This includes references to childlessness in the case of Helen Clark.

Figure 1: References to feminisation measures (%), Helen Clark



Sex: The literature indicates that female politicians are marked by their sex. This was the case for Helen Clark and Jenny Shipley because of their pioneering roles as the first women to assume the role as prime minister. Shipley was first, but Clark was the first to be elected to the post. Thus it was not surprising that the sex of the female leaders was discussed in the 1996 and 1999 elections. In 1996 several stories about Labour leader Helen Clark included her sex as a point of discussion with most pointing out that Clark would become New Zealand's first female prime minister if she won the election. Similarly, during the 1999 election, which was certain to produce the first elected female prime minister, the sex of the women leaders was reported in approximately a fifth of the news stories. News articles employed the "first woman" or breakthrough" frame (see Norris 1997b), noting that there were "two strong women" in the running to be the "first woman elected Prime Minister".[8] However, as Figure 2 indicates, once the first woman frame was passé, Helen Clark's sex was noted *less often* than was the sex of her male opponents. Bill English's sex was referenced more often than was Clark's in the 2002 election, and this was also the case for Don Brash in the 2005 election. Our discourse analysis revealed that, after the "first woman" frame disappeared, mentions of the leaders' sex took one of two forms. The comments were either factual (simply calling the leader a woman or man) or they were embedded in descriptions of the leader's appearance, family status or character. The latter gendered the descriptions in interestingly evaluative ways. For example, in the 2002 election, Bill English was called a 'family man", a "man of incredibly ability and integrity", a "sensitive man", a "handsome man" and "Mr. Nice Guy". In 2002 Helen Clark was referred to as "a favourite aunty", a "lady at the helm", a "woman of many suits" and an "elegantly tailored woman".

[8] Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from the newspaper articles in our sample.



During the 2005 election, a comment by National leader Don Brash invited an active discussion of gender politics in the newspapers. Criticized for a lacklustre debate performance, Brash told reporters he "went easy on Prime Minister Helen Clark" because it is "not entirely appropriate for a man to aggressively attack a woman". This comment prompted a great deal of reaction in the coverage of both Brash and Clark. Some pundits complimented Brash's "gentlemanly" stance and others suggested his views were sexist and outmoded.[9] While a few of the references to Clark's sex in 2005 drew attention to her femininity ("daughter", "wife", "Lady of the house", "girlish enthusiasm"), most focused on her toughness and resolve, suggesting she was able to take anything Brash was willing to dish out. One article about Clark described her image as a "cold, unemotional, purpose-driven woman with a steely determination". "The Prime Minister didn't get to the top of the Labour Party and hold her position within the party by being ladylike", another article stated. Narratives about Clark's toughness circulate through her coverage and illustrate how references to her sex often suggest she is stronger and more manly than her male opponents.

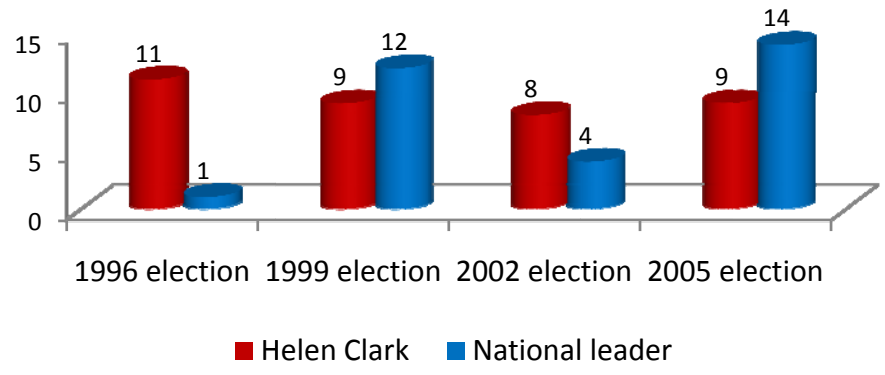
Appearance: The literature on media coverage of female politicians led us to expect gender differences in media attention to leader appearance, with more, and more overt, focus on the looks of the women leaders (see Bystrom et. al, 2004, 178). This was the case for Helen Clark in 1996 and 2002, but not in 2005. We thought there would be more attention to Helen Clark's looks early in her career as leader but expected it to decline over time. Figure 3 shows fairly consistent attention to Clark's appearance over the four elections.

The difference between the male and female leader was statistically significant in 1996, as there was only one mention of Bolger's looks and a small amount of attention to the appearance of Helen Clark. However, these descriptions of "Cinderella Clark", highlighted by the headline "Clark changes from ugly duckling to canny swan" were coded as referencing Clark's looks even though reporters were in fact commenting on her transformation from awkward TV presenter (complete

[9] For instance, one commentator said Brash's "old-fashioned gentlemanly good manners inhibited him in the debate with Clark".

with "off-putting, tight smile") to competent, poised and approachable speaker. In 1999, a handful of news articles discussed the two women leaders' looks, hair and wardrobe choices, and a few of these speculated that either Helen Clark's campaign photo was "airbrushed" or the Labour leader had had a lot of "work" done. During the 2002 election, while there were only a few stories that discussed Helen Clark's appearance, these articles had a great deal to say about her smile, complexion, hair, and particularly about her wardrobe. The colour, line, style and visual appeal of Clark's outfits was analyzed in considerable detail in two articles, while Bill English's blue ties and "conservative dark blue suits" were merely mentioned. As Kimmel argues, everything women wear "'signifies' something….the workplace is, itself, gendered, and standards of success, including dressing for success, are tailored to the other sex" (2000, 17). During the 2005 election, the male leader, Don Brash, attracted considerably more stories mentioning his appearance than did Helen Clark. Clark's "nice teeth" and red outfits and lipstick were noted. Both leaders were described as strained and shaken, though this was much more prevalent for Brash, as much of the attention to his appearance suggested he didn't look the part of prime minister. Brash was described as old, geeky, bland, unattractive, awkward, bespectacled, shifty, stodgy, flustered, tired, rattled, hunched, unprepared, uncomfortable, red-faced and bumbling. Helen Clark's view that her looks and wardrobe have been unduly profiled by the media is substantiated, but in her most recent election the press was especially attentive to the appearance of a challenger who did not appear polished and confident.

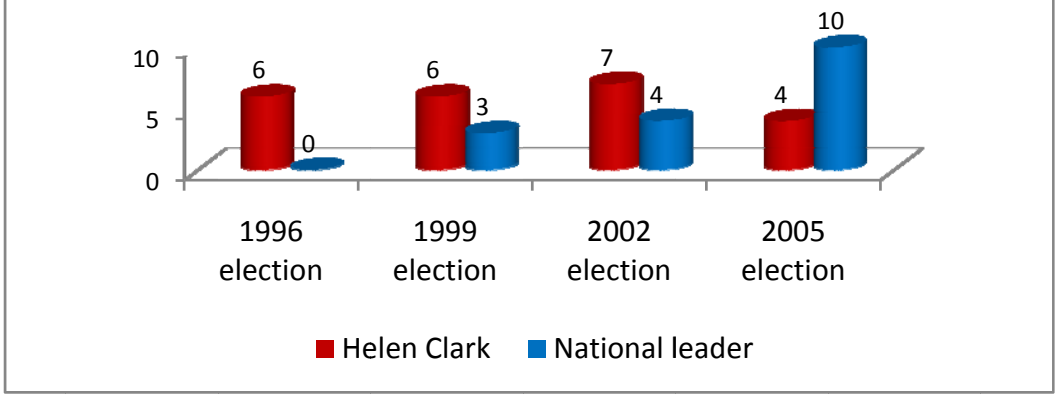
Figure 3: References to appearance (%), by leader and election



Sexualisation: We counted the number of stories that noted or inferred a sexual identity or proclivity for each leader, expecting the sexuality of female leaders to be highlighted more often and more directly. After all, the female body is anomalous in the political sphere, disruptive to the sex/gender order which construct politics as masculine territory. There was attention to Helen Clark's body and sexuality over the course of the four elections she has contested, and it was more prevalent than for any of the male leaders except Don Brash. However, sexualizing references were by no means limited to the female leaders, as Figure 4 shows. Our discourse analysis of the

comments revealed two important trends. The first was the presence of two distinct types of sexualizing reference, those drawing attention to the body and sexuality of the leader, and those employing the metaphoric language of intimate relationships to describe the coalition-building process. The second trend was that often the "author" of the remark was not a journalist. Some of the sexualising comments, particularly those employing the relationship metaphor, were direct quotes from the (male) leaders of minor parties.

Figure 4: References to sexuality (%), by leader and election



During the 1999 election, two stories mentioned Clark's "toned Auckland body". Another two stories quoted New Zealand First leader Winston Peters, who, in response to Helen Clark's allegedly "touched up" campaign photograph, told reporters, "This woman would make my heart flutter". We expected to find discussion of Clark's sexuality because of rumours about a "lesbian conspiracy" in the Labour party that emerged when she sought the leadership in 1993 (Brickell, Ch. 8, 243). While this rumour was not mentioned in either the 1996 or the 1999 election coverage, it came up in 2002 with an article noting a "whispering campaign" and again in 2005, as Helen Clark told a reporter she was called a "no-kids lesbo" by an audience member during a televised leaders' debate. As well, a reporter's labelling of Clark as a "political dominatrix" in 2005 positioned her as sexually (and politically) aggressive. Moreover, a 2005 election television special featuring a home visit to both leaders by popular TV presenter Paul Holmes profiled both leaders' intimate relationships with their spouses. Holmes asked pointed questions of Clark about her physical relationship with her husband, Peter Davis, and "accused the couple of having an ambiguous marriage". Don Brash's second marriage was also highlighted in the TV show and newspaper articles reported that "Brash spoke candidly about the affair that broke up his first marriage" (also see Devere and Davies77-79). Arguably Brash was as sexualised by this coverage

as was Clark, but because his adultery and re-marriage complied with hetero-normative expectations, it was not positioned as anomalous or dangerous.[10]

The dominant trend we observed over the course of the four election campaigns was the sexualisation of coalition building activities. For example, 1996 election newspaper articles declared that "Helen Clark and David Lange have kissed and made up…" and "Clark Rejects Anderton's New Coalition Advances". In contrast, Jim Bolger's attempts at building a winning coalition in the 1996 election were not described with sexual references. The 1999 election, with two women leaders competing to build a winning coalition with parties led by men, gave the press additional opportunities to apply the metaphor, and articles said New Zealand First leader Winston Peters "spurned Clark's advances"; meanwhile, Jenny Shipley let Peters "keep her dangling as he made overtures to Labour". The metaphor was applied to both Helen Clark and Bill English in 2002, though more often and more floridly to Clark; one headline said "More Suitors Vie for Hand of 'Black Widow'". New Zealand First leader Winston Peters was responsible for the "black widow" comment and indeed was the originator of many of the relationship metaphors that appeared in Clark's coverage in 2002. Peters told reporters he had been "jilted" by Helen Clark, but claimed she "secretly" liked him. In the 2005 campaign, Clark's attempts at coalition-making were not described in this way. Don Brash's were, however, because a Maori MP, Hone Harawira, was quoted as saying "I can't ever see myself getting into bed with Don Brash". Brash's attempts to "court" the Maori Party were described as "making overtures".

Marriage and Family: Figures 5 and 6 reveal that more attention was paid by the press to the family circumstances of the *male* leaders. In this context it is important to note that discussion of a male leader's wife and family presents a traditional (read: "normal") family trope. The "figure of the male politician as family man routinely features in [New Zealand] election campaigns" (Cross and Henderson 2004, 152). This is unsurprising as, fore-grounding their wives and children is a strategy of normalisation for male politicians, one that suggests they "are complete human beings combining caring and working responsibilities" (van Zoonen 2006, 298). In contrast, media narratives about a female politician's family life represent a privatising manoeuvre that can undermine their political legitimacy (see van Zoonen, 2006). Fountaine (2002, 14) argues that Helen Clark's childlessness has been a constant reference point for the media throughout her political career. Further, according to Fountaine and McGregor, "the motherhood theme was closely linked to the women's (Clark in particular) perceived ability to lead the country" (2003, 4). As such, one would expect male leaders to draw media attention to their wives and families and female leaders to steer clear of such dangerous territory.

[10] Brickell argues that the alleged 'lesbian plot' to unseat Labour leader Mike Moore and replace him with Helen Clark was constructed as threatening, with newspaper articles and editorials "forming the image of a terrifying force threatening to conquer the party" (p. 244).

Figure 5: References to marital status (%), by leader and election

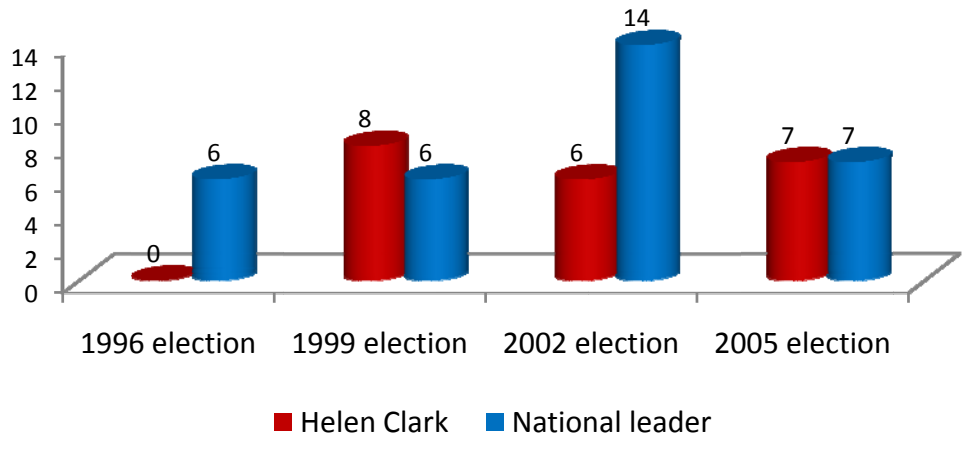
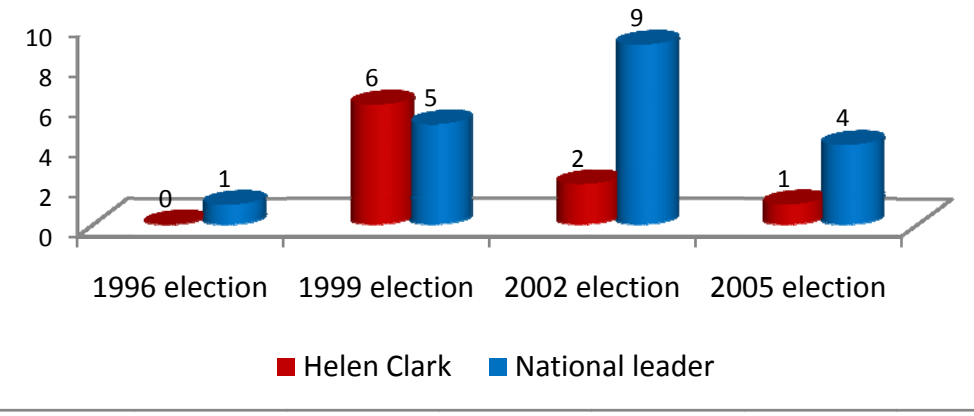


Figure 6: References to children, or childlessness (%), by leader and election



During the 1996 election, Clark's first election as Labour leader, her marriage and decision not to have children were never discussed in the news articles in our sample. Clearly she did not raise the issue. Her opponent, Jim Bolger, talked about his wife but did not draw attention to Clark's domestic life. In contrast, during the 1999 election Jenny Shipley played the "mom" card as a matter of credibility and experience, contrasting Clark's childlessness with her role as a mother. Indeed, Shipley took pains to bring this distinction to the attention of the media; "I'm a politician, but I'm also a Mum", she told reporters. Fountaine argues that Jenny "Shipley appears to have deliberately highlighted her status as a mother, in an attempt to influence the media framing of her and Clark's leadership styles" (2002, 13). Because of the National party's election strategy in 1999, for Shipley and Clark, "the private and personal issue of motherhood became linked to their mediated political identity as prime ministerial candidates" (Cross and Henderson 2004, 155).

During the 2002 and 2005 elections, Clark's childlessness was given only nominal consideration, though her marriage was discussed. Notably, in all three elections featuring a male opponent, Clark's domestic life was given *less* attention than were the wives and families of the National leaders. Bill English and Don Brash, like Jim Bolger in 1996, drew media focus on their families, either by the constant presence of their spouse at their side on the campaign trail or by talking about their wife and children with reporters. In contrast, Helen Clark's husband, a busy academic, is not ever-present at campaign events. When asked by a bystander at a rally, "Are you here today with your husband?" Clark replied "No, actually I'm allowed to go out on my own everyday". These findings suggest the newspapers are willing to take the bait offered by the leaders with traditional nuclear families, and, perhaps more importantly, that leaders have some agency in the relationship with the press and can play a role in framing their opponents. For example, Helen Clark does not hesitate to remind reporters (and in 1999, her challenger, Jenny Shipley, who advanced the "Mum angle") that whether the leader has children or not is "irrelevant to the election campaign."

Discussion: Overall, the content and discourse analyses reveal that Helen Clark has tried to adopt a low-key performance of femininity. When Clark's sex, sexuality, appearance and family have been mentioned during election campaigns, it is usually because other leaders or the press have drawn attention to her gender or physical persona. That downplaying femininity has its risks for female leaders is illustrated by the extent to which Clark has been constructed as tough, cold, unemotional and ruthless. By undertaking an image makeover prior to the 1999 election and agreeing to an intimate and and invasive television interview in 2005, Clark has attempted to soften the edges of her image. However, as we show in the next two sections, mediation of Helen Clark stresses masculine scripts, depicting her leadership style as unrelentingly aggressive and adversarial.

Gendered Metaphors

H^3: *Feminine metaphors or descriptions are more likely to be assigned to Clark than to her male opponents.*

H^4: *The proportion of masculine descriptors will increase for Helen Clark with each successive election.*

We examined the presence of overtly gendered metaphors and descriptions in the coverage, anticipating that there would be more feminine descriptions of Helen Clark than for the male leaders, but also that more masculine metaphors would be applied with each successive election. An example of a feminine metaphor is a leader 'stitching together' a coalition deal or being referred to as a 'queen'; descriptions of a leader "attacking", "fighting" or "hitting" were deemed masculine. Some news stories included both feminine and masculine descriptors, and these were

classified as mixed metaphors. Table 3 shows that, until the 2005 election, a higher percentage of stories about Helen Clark applied gendered metaphors than did stories about her male competitors. However, despite the higher proportion of gendered references in articles about Helen Clark, hypothesis 3 was not supported. Table 3 shows that reporters avoided feminine metaphors and descriptions for Clark, and applied feminine descriptors in roughly equal number to the male and female leaders. While there were more mixed metaphors about the female leaders, Clark and Shipley, the majority of the metaphors applied to male and female leaders alike were masculine, suggesting masculine framing devices dominate media coverage of party leaders during election campaigns.

Table 3: Gendered Metaphors by Election and Leader

N (% of stories about the leader)	**1996 Election**		**1999 Election**		**2002 Election**		**2005 Election**	
	Bolger	**Clark**	**Shipley**	**Clark**	**English**	**Clark**	**Brash**	**Clark**
Masculine metaphor	13 (16%)	20 (24%)	24 (31%)	17 (19%)	19 (27%)	34 (33%)	39 (29%)	33 (29%)
Feminine metaphor	4 (5%)	2 (2%)	4 (5%)	2 (2%)	2 (3%)	2 (2%)	9 (7%)	8 (7%)
Mixed metaphor	0 (0%)	6 (7%)	7 (9%)	7 (8%)	0 (0%)	9 (9%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)
Total N (%) of stories with gendered metaphors	17 (21%)	28 (33%)	35 (45%)	26 (30%)	21 (30%)	45 (44%)	50 (38%)	43 (38%)

In the 1996 New Zealand election there were only two stories about Helen Clark that contained feminine metaphors, and there were four for her male competitor, Jim Bolger, who was described as being "vulnerable" and "coy" and as "stitching together a coalition deal." Helen Clark's 1996 feminine descriptions included reference to her metamorphosis from a "political ugly duckling" into a "swan" and her "softer" image. In 1999, Clark's lack of sewing proficiency and the role of New Zealand First Leader Winston Peters as "queen-maker" were the only feminine metaphors to be found, as Shipley attracted more feminine metaphors than did Clark. These descriptions of Shipley were arguably self-imposed as she referred to herself as a "good Presbyterian girl", and her emphasis on her motherhood was picked up by the media when they referred to her as the "mother of the nation", and discussed her "tendency to lecture audiences in the manner of an exasperated mother". Helen Clark "stitched" another coalition deal in 2002, and was described as "bubbly" and as a "queen". Bill English was feminised by references to him crying and becoming "choked up". There were more feminine descriptors in 2005, perhaps reflecting a higher level of mediation for both leaders. Clark "stitched together" yet another coalition, did some cooking, gave her cabinet a "makeover", and was described as "coy" and "in love". Feminising references to Brash challenged his manhood, describing him as a victim in need of

rescue and as domesticated enough to "wash his own dirty socks when travelling".[11] More damningly, a voter was quoted as saying "Helen Clark is more of a man than Don Brash is".

Table 3 shows that when gendered metaphors or descriptions are applied to Helen Clark they are invariably masculine, and this has not changed over four election campaigns. In fact, masculine metaphors and descriptions were more prevalent for Clark than for her male opponents during the 1996 and 2002 elections, and equally widespread in the 2005 election. In 2002, not only was Clark as likely or more likely than her male opponent to be described in masculine terms, the language that was employed was highly aggressive. Clark was routinely and persistently described as a battler, hitting, attacking and landing body blows on her opponents. Words like "attack", "shoot", and "hammered" comprised most of the masculine descriptors, but she was also called a "rottweiller", and a "mongrel", and was likened to "Joseph Stalin". While this sort of hyper-masculine language was used to describe the male leaders as well, it has a different resonance for Clark. Helen Clark was, as we will illustrate in the next section, described as more effective in her "attacks" and, most tellingly, was likened to a man. In the 2005 election she was referred to as a "hardened political operator", "da man", and a "stronger leader". A sign wielded by a University student at a rally said this about the electoral outcome; "either way, there is going to be a man in charge".

Masculinisation and the Game Frame

H5*: Helen Clark will be as likely as her male opponents to be depicted as deploying aggressive tactics during the election campaigns.*

H6*: With each election, the proportion of stories portraying Helen Clark as behaving aggressively will increase.*

Aggressive game language (i.e. "attack", "fight", "hit" and "blast") appeared in many of the news stories in our sample and we wanted to understand the discursive construction of this rhetorical aggression and its gendered implications. After all, if men are situated as antagonists while women are positioned as casualties, the message being communicated is that women don't have the fortitude to "play" (never mind win) the electoral game. However, positing women as aggressors in classic masculine terms can create cognitive dissonance and question their femininity. By systematically listing and analysing all of the aggressive words and phrases appearing in each story we determined whether the leader who was the focus of the story was positioned as the attacker or as the recipient of the attack. For instance, "Helen Clark attacks his credibility" situates her as the aggressor, while "Bill English launched a torrid attack on Prime

[11] Indeed, the headline for the article read "Brash Washes Socks", a clear illustration of the trivialising and personalising nature of the interpretive style of journalism.

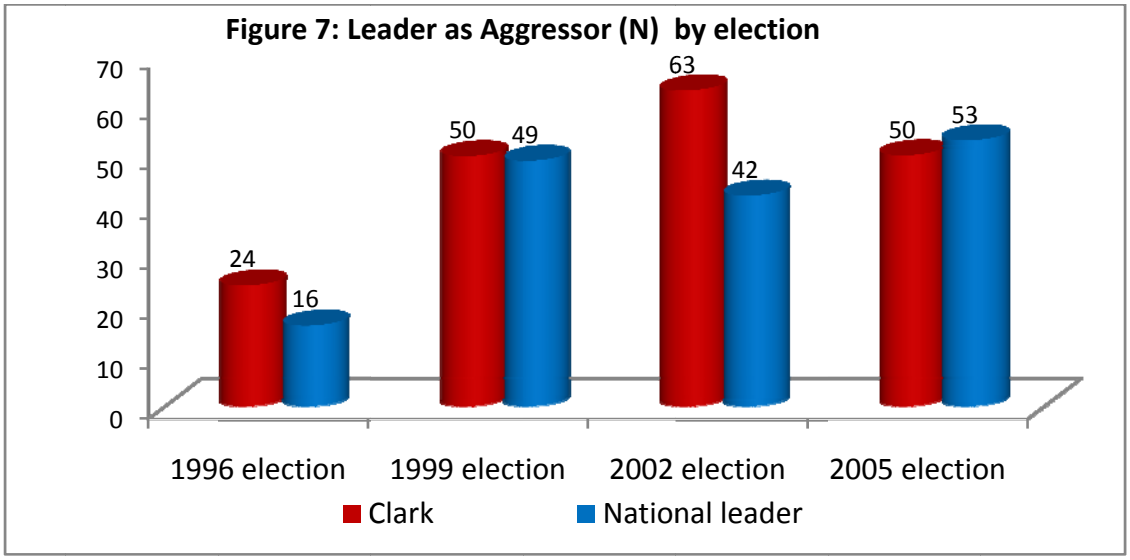
Minister Helen Clark" positions Clark as the person being assailed. We totalled the number of aggressive acts depicted in the news stories, as often there were several per story, then subtracted those which did not directly implicate the leader (for instance, "an end to hostilities between Labour and the Greens" in an article about Clark) from the total aggressive acts to arrive at the number of instances when the leader was described as either victim or aggressor.

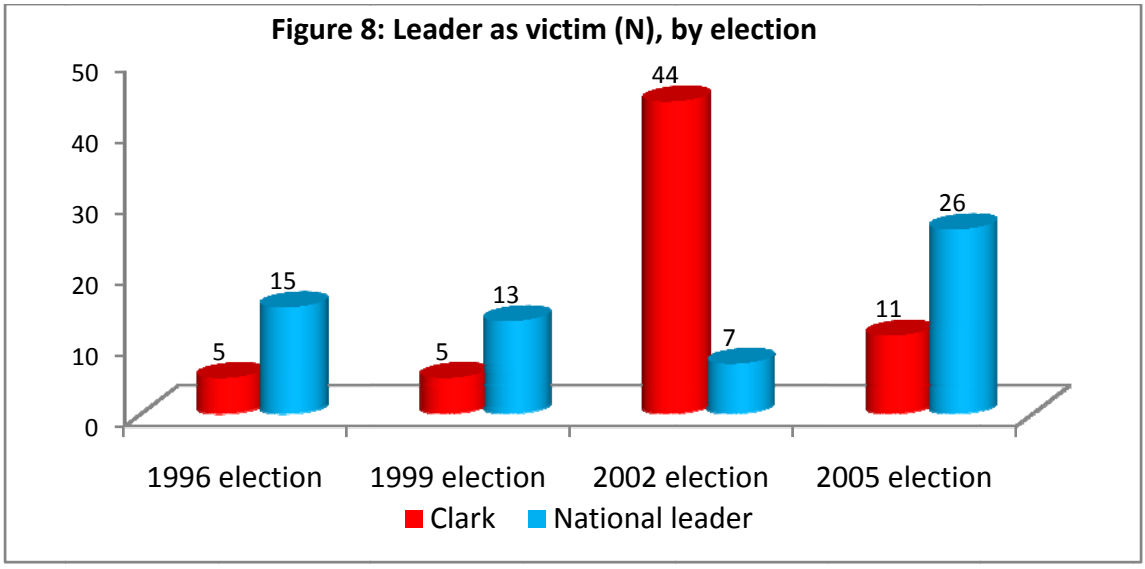
The results support the hypothesis that Clark was as likely as her male opponent to be described as the aggressor (see Figure 7). In all four elections Helen Clark was represented as the aggressor significantly more often than as the victims. Indeed, Clark was depicted as more belligerent than her opponents with the exception of the 2005 election (and this was only by a small margin of three aggressive acts). Apart from the 2002 election Clark was less likely to be described as the recipient of aggressive acts (see Figure 8). Hypothesis 6 was supported in part, as the number of "attacks" perpetrated by Clark increased after the 1996 election, but as Figure 7 shows, stayed at a much higher number after that. In short, through all four elections Helen Clark has been portrayed as assertive, in control, unafraid to launch attacks, and eminently capable of fighting off all challengers. In fact, according to the newspaper coverage, none of her opponents have been able to "dent" her "Teflon" veneer.

Table 4: Use of Aggressive Game Language by Election and Leader

Mentioned in story: N (%)	**1996 Election**		**1999 Election**		**2002 Election**		**2005 Election**	
	Bolger	**Clark**	**Shipley**	**Clark**	**English**	**Clark**	**Brash**	**Clark**
Number of stories with aggressive game language	29 (36%)	33 (39%)	49 (62%)	42 (48%)	38 (54%)	61 (59%)	78 (59%)	49 (43%)
Number of aggressive ***acts*** depicted in stories about the leader*	58	70	125	106	99	163	172	99
Leader is associated with the aggressive act **	31 (53%)	29 (41%)	62 (50%)	55 (52%)	49 (49%)	107 (66%)	79 (46%)	61 (62%)
Leader is the aggressor	16	24	49	50	42	63	53	50
Leader is the victim of aggression	15	5	13	5	7	44	26	11

*Many of the stories with aggressive game language included several aggressive acts.
**Percentages were calculated as a proportion of the total number of aggressive acts depicted in the stories about each leader.





In her first campaign as Labour Leader, articles had Clark committing more aggressive acts than Jim Bolger, and also situated her as the recipient of the aggression less often than Bolger. Thus in the 1996 election, Jim Bolger was "rattled by the drubbing he took," "attacked" by Clark, "under fire" and "looking weak". In contrast, Clark's "attacks" were described as effective; "Ms. Clark successfully elbowed her Opposition rivals aside in the battle to take on Mr. Bolger", said an article. Headlines announced "Clark Draws First Blood," and "Clark Triumphs in TV Joust". The theme of Helen Clark's ruthlessness was introduced in this election; for instance a Labour MP commented that Clark "doesn't mind who gets steam-rolled in her path".

Clark's second campaign was against National's Jenny Shipley, and as Fountaine (2002) found, the press did not hesitate to employ the classic pugilistic language of the game frame. "It's always a prize fight, even when the combatants are the first women to go head to head" declared

one article. Another quoted a Labour party official as saying the country was interested in "seeing two women battle it out". The "Xena princesses" as Shipley and Clark were called, "crossed swords", "battled", "fought", "cracked the whip", "lashed out", "launched attacks", and "fired salvos", but "neither scored a knockout blow". Still, the aggressive game language situated Clark as the aggressor as often as Shipley. Moreover, Clark was rarely portrayed as the victim of the "attacks" and was described as a "formidable, single-minded, intelligent and hardworking battler" who "demonstrated coolness under pressure and steely ability to withstand assaults that would have felled most men".

The 2002 election stood apart from the others, as Clark was portrayed as the victim of attacks significantly more often than in the other three elections. Interestingly, she was also positioned as the aggressor more often in this election. Moreover, this was the only election in which the National leader was the recipient of fewer aggressive acts than was Clark. The explanation lies in the electoral context; this was not a fiercely competitive race and National was not really in the running.[12] In fact, the press didn't see English as a major "player" in the 2002 electoral game, as illustrated in this analysis of one of the debates: "The "little creep" [debate moderator] clashed with the "black widow" [Helen Clark] on television last night and National leader Bill English was there, too." English delivered "personal attacks on Ms. Clark's leadership style" and integrity. Indeed, his tactics were described in violent language, as "torrid", "furious" and "blistering" attacks, as "ambushes" and as "declaring war" on Clark. Nevertheless, his attacks on Clark were delivered in campaign speeches rather than in head-to-head confrontations during the leaders' debates and perhaps this is why Clark seemed unwounded by English's forceful strategy. One headline about a leaders' debate declared "English Fails to Land Body Blows". He "needed to score a knockout punch but it was never going to happen" said another article. National leader Bill English was "launching furious attacks" on Clark, but he wasn't "able to dent her". Clark avoided direct critiques of English because she didn't want to raise his profile. In fact Clark directed her attention to minor parties in an attempt to attain a majority government without the need of a coalition partner. As a result, most of Helen Clark's "attacks" were against other leaders or the media; she "savaged the Greens co-leader", "attacked TV3", mounted "attacks on her potential coalition allies", and "launched a fierce attack on New Zealand First leader Winston Peters".

The 2005 election saw Clark as the attacker almost as often as her male opponent and once again less likely to be the recipient of "attacks". As discussed above, National leader Don Brash claimed he was trying to act the gentleman by refraining from attacking Clark during a televised leaders' debate. Brash said it wasn't "appropriate for a man to aggressively attack a woman". Reporters indicated scepticism about Brash's explanation. "When a Rottweiler is biting your head off, pondering its gender would seem of rather secondary importance" commented one writer, and another said he did "not think of Helen Clark as a woman but as a tough political candidate". Furthermore, the sentiment that party leaders are expected to act aggressively in debates was

[12] National only garnered 21% of the popular vote in this election.

communicated by comments like "he desperately needs to land a hit on her" and "Don Brash seems to be taking the most whacks". Many of the "whacks" came from Clark, who "hammered", "swiped", 'pilloried", "shot" and "easily landed more hits" on Dr. Brash. The "battle-hardened PM" was described as a "political dominatrix" whose weapons included a whip ("crack the whip"), a knife ("PMs knife"), and a gun ("Clark to shoot back" and "Miss Clark will ride shotgun). The theme of ruthlessness re-emerged, with a headline declaring "PM lets a little mongrel off the leash", and the story explaining that the leaders' debate "instantly erased her practised pleasantness and brought out the mongrel as she knocked and mocked and scrapped…."

In sum, Helen Clark's mediation reflected norms of hegemonic warrior masculinity. When aggressive game language was used to describe Clark and her opponents she was, with one exception, more likely to be positioned as the assailant and less likely to be described as the recipient of the rhetorical aggression. Clark was discursively constructed as a tough, powerful, uncompromising leader who single-mindedly attacked her opponents. In all four campaigns she was described as a highly successful political pugilist, eager to enter the battle and capable of regularly landing the "knockout punch". In our view, the laudatory terms used to depict Clark "doing battle" suggest this masculine script for electoral competition, particular for leaders' debates, is deeply entrenched and perhaps even non-negotiable.

Conclusions

Our study analysed gendered mediation of Helen Clark during the four New Zealand election campaigns she has contested as leader of the Labour party. We compared Clark's newspaper coverage with that of her primary opponent for each election, and we looked for change in reportage about Clark as she gained and consolidated power. We found that gender was a prominent feature of the election news narrative in all four campaigns, and, as anticipated, Clark was both feminised and masculinised by the coverage. However, contrary to our expectation that Clark would be less feminised and more masculinised as she won office and wielded power, we found few consistent changes in the gendered mediation of Clark over time. Rather, depictions of Clark have been influenced by the campaign context, including the unusual scenario of two women competing for political power, as well as by the strategies of other leaders. As well, we found that the leaders had a modicum of agency in their media framing, as what they had to say about themselves and their opponents certainly influenced the gendered nature of the coverage.

Overall our findings strongly support van Zoonen's assertion that the "cultural model of politician is much closer to the ideas of masculinity than of femininity, which will make a successful performance more complicated for women" (2005, 75). Attempting to execute the role of tough and adversarial political leader, while at the same time presenting a normalized version of femininity, has proven to be tricky for Helen Clark. Apart from her first election as Labour leader, when stories about Clark included more references to her sex, appearance and sexuality than did stories about Jim Bolger, Clark has attracted no more feminising descriptions than her

male opponents. However, as our discourse analysis shows, the quantity of feminine-types references is much less important than their meanings. For instance, Clark may not have been sexualised more often by the coverage, but she was sexualised in a way that draws attention to her body and sexual orientation, thus positions her as anomalous. Characterizations of Clark as a "political dominatrix, and as a "black widow" who kills and devours her opponents, suggest her femininity, when it does come into play, is threatening and dangerous. Moreover, that Clark's family life has been discussed less often in election news articles than the families of the National party leaders, challenges rather than reinforces her femininity. Silence about her childlessness, punctuated by occasional juxtapositions of her choice not to have children against the large families of her opponents, serve as a reminder of Clark's "odd choice of public mission instead of private fulfillment" (van Zoonen 2006, 299).

The ubiquity and forcefully masculine tone of game framing in election coverage is demonstrated by our study. Helen Clark was as likely as her competitors, and often more likely, to be described with masculine metaphors and depicted as deploying aggressive campaign tactics. Clark's portrayal did not grow more intensely masculinised over time, as we expected, but this is because it could hardly become more gladiatorial. From her first campaign as Labour leader Clark was presented as an extremely successful practitioner of masterful leadership, and arguably as more skilled at the techniques of heroic warrior masculinity than her male opponents. Even her campaign against another woman was mediated through highly confrontational battle imagery. It seems powerful, victorious women like Helen Clark are included in the election news script as pseudo-males, perpetuating the "extreme polarization of femininity and politics"[13] and consolidating the perception of political leadership as a masculine performance.

[13] Van Zoonen 2006, 287.

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