The Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy

Working Paper Series

**Talking Tough: Gender and Reported Speech
in Campaign News Coverage**

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#2000-12

The Joan Shorenstein Center
PRESS ▪ POLITICS
▪ PUBLIC POLICY ▪
Harvard University
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Abstract

Reported speech represents an important means of analyzing how party leaders' messages are

mediated by the masculine norms of political reporting. Building on the notion of "gendered

mediation", we argue that conventional news frames construct politics in stereotypically

masculine terms and we examine the implications of these news frames for the coverage of

female leaders. Content analysis of reported speech in television news coverage of the 1993

Canadian election, combined with the results of an experiment, reveals that the speech of the two

women leaders was subject to more interpretation by the media and was reported in more

negative and aggressive language. The study concludes that gendered mediation serves to hinder

women's chances of electoral success.

"X makes statements and I make outbursts"

(female British MP quoted in Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996)

Female politicians world wide have criticized the media for coverage which is more negative than their male colleagues', which focuses more on appearances than on issues and which reinforces masculine and feminine stereotypes (Kahn 1996; Herzog 1998; Robinson and Saint-Jean 1991; Jamieson 1995). To counteract this tendency and to show that they belong in the traditionally "masculine" world of politics, women running for elected office have attempted to emphasize stereotypically masculine traits such as "assertiveness" and "competence" through adopting strong stances on political issues or highlighting their toughness. However, "talking tough" has not necessarily solved their problems with the media. Instead, the gendered nature of political reporting has meant that women who act assertively often face subtle and insidious forms of gender bias (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 2000).

Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross's (1996) notion of "gendered mediation" helps to account for this bias. It argues that from being gender-neutral, conventional news frames treat the male as normative. News reports favor a "masculine narrative" (Rakow and Kranich 1991, 8) that constructs politics in stereotypically masculine terms. Politics is likened to a battlefield or a boxing ring; politicians are portrayed as soldiers waging war or as prizefighters seeking the knockout blow (Blankenship 1976; Blankenship and Kang 1991, Gingras 1997, Gidengil and Everitt 1999). The fact that these roles are not conventionally associated with women has at least two implications for the way that female politicians are covered by the media. As long-time non-combatants, their behavior is subject to more evaluation and interpretation. And, to the extent that they **do** "join the fray" and behave combatively, the behavior counter to traditional feminine

stereotypes receives disproportionate media attention. Not only is their coverage more mediated, but the mediation process itself is gendered. This can be seen in the selection of soundbites and in the metaphorical constructions of their behaviour (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 2000).

In this study, we ask whether it is also evident in the way that their speech is reported. There is anecdotal evidence that the speech of female politicians is reported in more highly charged and emotionally-loaded terms than their male counterparts', but there has been little systematic comparison. We explore this subject by addressing three questions: Is the speech of female leaders really reported in more negatively charged language? How should we account for such sex-differentiated coverage? And what difference is it likely to make to viewers' impressions of the leaders?.

We use television news coverage of the 1993 Canadian election to answer these questions. The dearth of women selected to lead national parties in industrial democracies makes the Canadian case a particularly interesting one to study. In the 1993 election, not one, but two, of the five political parties were led by women. And one of those leaders–former prime minister Kim Campbell–blamed her party's defeat squarely on the media. There is certainly no shortage of other possible explanations for her electoral misfortunes, but what makes her accusation particularly interesting is the terms in which it was cast: "new politics, old media...when you're not a traditional politician, they don't know what to make of you".[1] This charge raises profound questions about the gendered implications of the media's traditional constructions of politics and politicians.

Gendered Mediation

The gendered mediation thesis rests on the assumption that the media serve as a "cultural looking glass" (Bridge 1995, 19), both reflecting and reinforcing the norms, values and

stereotypes of the larger society in which they operate (see Rakow and Kranich 1991; Peake 1997). This is particularly evident in political coverage. Politics remains a male-dominated preserve that operates according to stereotypically masculine norms. Mirroring this, press coverage is replete with images of warfare, violence, and traditional masculine sports. The media's resort to this stereotypically masculine imagery, in turn, reinforces the perception that politics is a masculine pursuit. We have argued that this results in a classic "damned if you do, damned if you don't" dilemma for women seeking high political office: if they conform to the dominant conflictual norms, media coverage will focus disproportionately on their confrontational behavior, but if they fail to conform to those norms, media attention will flag (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 2000). Either way, female candidates will find it harder to get their message across to voters.

This "media double bind" (Jamieson 1995) can be traced to the operation of news values and to the existence of deeply rooted conceptions of how women should behave. Conflict in itself is newsworthy (Patterson 1980; Bell 1991). As Patterson (1980) explains, "issues that provoke conflict and controversy among the candidates provide...a ready audience" (p. 32). Conflictual behavior on the part of women, though, is doubly newsworthy because it is also unexpected. This is where feminine stereotypes come into play. When female candidates for high office behave combatively, they are contravening deeply held notions of appropriate female behavior. Behavior that is counter to stereotype is unexpected and unexpected behavior is newsworthy (Bell 1991).

It is not just a matter of the media paying disproportionate attention to the confrontational behavior; the behavior itself may be exaggerated. To understand why, we need to recognize that media personnel have been socialized into prevailing cultural norms and values. To the extent

that this is so, women who behave assertively will present a "basic schema incompatibility" (Butler and Geis 1990).[2] The effect of this gender-role incongruence will be to accentuate the incongruent behavior (Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky 1992). Words and actions that would be perceived as merely assertive on the part of a male candidate may appear as downright aggressive on the part of a female candidate.

Studies of television news coverage of the leaders' debates in the 1993 Canadian election support the gendered mediation thesis. Stereotypically masculine imagery predominated and that imagery was evoked in strikingly sex-differentiated fashion. Both female leaders were portrayed as being on the attack more frequently than their male counterparts and, more to the point, more frequently than their actual behavior in the debates warranted (Gidengil and Everitt 1999). An analysis of debate sound bites confirmed that media coverage marginalizes women when they adopt a low-key, non-confrontational style, but over-emphasizes the counter-stereotypical behavior when they do behave combatively (Gidengil and Everitt 2000). In contrast to their male counterparts', the female leaders' sound bites focused disproportionately on displays of aggressive verbal behavior and gestures.

Underpinning both of our earlier studies is the assumption that these patterns of media coverage work to women's disadvantage. But it remains just that, an assumption. This is a critically important question. The case could be made that gendered mediation actually works to women's advantage by making them appear more suited to the world of politics. Emphasizing their combativeness may convey the message that they belong in what is still very much a man's world. Indeed, the advice to female candidates has been to "act tough". This counsel derives from experimental studies of candidate stereotyping that suggest that women can play up their combative side without compromising their supposed "feminine strengths" (Huddy and

Terkildsen 1993; Leeper 1991). This is exactly what many female candidates have tried to do. Kahn (1996) has shown that women often stress "masculine" traits and rely on "masculine" adjectives in their campaign advertising in order to present an image of themselves as strong and viable candidates.

This strategy may backfire, though, if media coverage overplays the combativeness. There is evidence to suggest that audiences react negatively to overly aggressive behavior on the part of politicians. Studies of viewers' reactions to candidate debates reveal that an attacking style goes over more poorly than a positive, non-attacking style of debate (Schrott and Lanoue 1992; Schütz 1998). It is possible that negative reactions are heightened when it is female candidates who are displaying the aggressive behavior. The evidence on this score comes from studies of female leaders in non-political settings. Butler and Geis (1990), for example, show that "competent assertiveness" on the part of a woman evokes a more negative response (in the form of nonverbal affect cues) than identical behavior on a man's part. They attribute this to the fact that the woman's behavior runs counter to deeply rooted "feminine" norms. "Schema violation", they conclude, "causes negative affect" (p. 55). Similarly, a meta-analysis of sixty-one studies of gender and leader evaluation concludes that "women are negatively evaluated when they exhibit masculine leadership styles" (Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky 1992). This is especially so if the women are occupying leadership roles that have traditionally been male-dominated. Eagly and her colleagues explain these findings in terms of the incongruence between the female leaders' behavior and gender-role-expectations. It remains to be determined whether a "masculine style of leadership" also causes female political leaders to be evaluated more negatively.

A second question about gendered mediation that remains unanswered is the implications for **men** of behaving in counter-stereotypical ways. Logically, at least, we might expect that a

male leader who adopts a low-key, non-confrontational style would suffer both in terms of media coverage and negative evaluations. Indeed, Croteau and Hoynes (1992) have argued that male domination of the media has resulted in the construction of an "ideal" male identity that marginalizes men who do not conform to the tough, macho stereotype. In doing so, the news media reinforce notions of "'appropriate' or 'sanctioned' gender and political roles for men" (p. 157). And experiment-based studies of stereotyping provide ample evidence that male candidates are constructed in stereotypically masculine fashion as tough and assertive (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993).

There is reason, nonetheless, to believe that the effects of gendered mediation may not in fact be symmetrical. Again, the evidence on this point comes from non-political settings. A range of studies has found that men seem to enjoy more latitude than women when it comes to violating gender-role expectations. Eagly and her colleagues (1992), for example, report that male leaders tend not to be devalued when they adopt a "feminine" leadership style. They speculate that men can engage in a wider range of leadership styles without penalty because men's claim to leadership is unquestioned. They also cite studies that suggest that stereotypical expectations are more likely to come into play when the people being evaluated belong to a numerically rare group. This would apply to female leaders in male-dominated settings, but not to their male counterparts. Turning to political settings, Hitchon and Chang's (1995) work on the gender-schematic processing of political commercials lends support to the notion of asymmetrical effects. They argue that their findings are consistent with the idea that "a male politician tends to be categorized as an instance of the subtype candidate" whereas "To the extent that a subtype for women candidates exists, it bears strong resemblance to the broader stereotype of woman" (p. 453).

Attribution Bias

Analyzing the verbs used in television news broadcasts to report on the speech of party leaders provides an opportunity to examine the implications of the mediation process for both female and male leaders, while permitting a further test of the gendered mediation thesis. Speech verbs are worthy of study for a number of reasons. Reports on speech account for a significant proportion of news coverage: "News, to a remarkable degree, is what people say and how they say it" (Cappon 1991, 79). This is especially true of campaign news. It is very much a matter of what the party leaders are saying. Indeed, if the leader takes a day off from campaigning, the party is likely to receive little or no coverage on that night's news (Mendelsohn 1993). Party leaders, in turn, are heavily dependent on the news media and television, in particular, for getting their message out to voters. Sound-bites and direct quotes on the evening news give voters an opportunity to hear that message for themselves. How the message is perceived, though, may depend critically on how the speech is reported. There is considerable scope for subjectivity in the choice of verbs used in reporting speech and the evidence suggests that this choice matters. 'Stronger verbs' can 'rub off' on the person being quoted (Cole and Shaw 1974). Strongly negative verbs like *blame*, *attack*, and *taunt* can lead the speaker to be perceived negatively, while strongly positive verbs like *assure*, *endorse,* and *reaffirm* can have the opposite effect (Geis 1987).

Verbs of reported speech, of course, are only one aspect of the mediation process. They can be viewed as the "tip of the iceberg", standing in for a host of decisions, conscious or unconscious, that media personnel make in reporting speech. Leaders can be quoted out of context, quoted selectively, or even misquoted (Bell 1991). Verbs of reported speech have the advantage of lending themselves to systematic study. There has been relatively little study of

sound bite selection and editing for the simple reason that selectivity can only be assessed when a complete record of the reported behavior is available and that is rarely the case.[3] The choice of verbs of reported speech, on the other hand, can be assessed in light of journalistic norms. The advice to journalists on this point is clear:

> "Among attributive verbs, *said* usually says it best. It's short, clear, neutral and unfailingly accurate, a verb for all seasons." (Associated Press Guide to News Writing 1991, 73)

> 'The verb *to say* is usually the best, neutral choice in reporting a speech or statement." (Reuters Handbook for Journalists 1992, 98)

> "'Said'...pegs a statement to a source unmistakably and unobtrusively. That is, readers are so used to seeing it they know it signals attribution, but it does not stand out and stop them. Their attention remains on what was said, not how it was said. To skilled news writers, it is the best attributive." (Lorenz and Vivian, News Reporting and Writing, 122)

It is easy to understand why journalists do not take this advice too literally. Repeated use of *said* makes for flat stories. Substituting verbs like *pointed out*, *maintained*, *asserted* or *commented* relieves the monotony. The problem is that verbs like these are not true synonyms for *said*. *Pointed out*, for example, lends the reported speech "an aura of fact" (Associated Press Guide to News Writing 1991, 74). It implies endorsement of the statement being reported. *Maintained* has the opposite connotation, suggesting scepticism about the statement (Reuters Handbook for Journalists 1992, 91). *Asserted* implies a strongly held belief, while *commented* suggests an offhand remark (Associated Press Guide to News Writing 1991, 75).

The problems are compounded when journalists opt for stronger verbs like *charge*, *accuse*, or *blast*. One reason they do so is to enliven their news reports. There is more to it, though, than the desire to enhance the news value of stories. In principle, at least, these verbs could make the stories more accurate (Geis 1987, 93-4). If the speaker *did* blast his or her opponent, the neutral *said* would make for a less faithful report. There are at least two possible responses to this objection. First, if the speaker *did* blast, the reported statement should be able to speak for itself.[4] Second, there is a considerable degree of subjectivity involved in deciding whether or not a statement qualifies as a *blast* and it is media personnel who decide.

By way of illustration, compare CTV and CBC coverage of Liberal leader Jean Chretien during the opening week of the 1993 Canadian campaign. Here is CTV's Ken Ernhofer:

Chretien has questioned Campbell's convictions before. Now he *says* her flip-

flops on issues like helicopters raise doubts about her ability to govern: [sound

bite]

Jean Chretien: Cutting social programs en français and not cutting en anglais.

Come on. Is it competence or is it integrity? I really don't know.

Meanwhile here is Keith Boag on CBC:

He *ridiculed* her decision to cut the number of military helicopters that the

government will buy: [sound bite]

Jean Chretien: And she said it was the toughest decision of her life to cut seven of

them. What a tough issue, What a person.

The CTV report allows the quote to speak for itself, leaving it to the viewer to infer the tone of Chretien's remarks. The CBC report, by contrast, interprets those remarks for the viewer. It is

very much the news writer's judgment, though, that Chretien was ridiculing Campbell's decision. He could have been portrayed instead as mocking, poking fun or simply joking.

In choosing a verb of reported speech, the television news writer or reporter is intervening between the viewer and the words of the person being reported. The degree of mediation will vary with the choice of verb. Drawing on the work of speech-act theorists like Austin (1962), Searle (1969, 1979) and Leech (1983), Caldas-Coulthard (1987) has developed a typology of speech report verbs. *Say* and *tell* involve the least mediation. These are the "canonical neutral speech verbs" (Bell 1991, 206). With both verbs, it is left to viewers to infer the illocutionary force of the reported speech. Based on the statement being reported, viewers decide for themselves whether the speaker was blasting, criticizing, or merely saying. *Tell* is used less frequently than *say* because it requires the listener(s) to be specified. Then there are what Caldas-Coulthard terms the "structuring verbs", like *ask*, *question*, *reply* and *answer*. They are structuring in the sense that they describe how the reported statement fits into a sequence of exchanges, but they can also be used simply to indicate that the speaker was engaged in an exchange. Either way, they imply little about the illocutionary force of the statement or how it was said. The "illocutionary reporting verbs", on the other hand, typically involve a high degree of meditation. These verbs do not just report speech; "they also have the function of clarifying and consequently making explicit the illocutionary force of the quote they refer to" (Caldas-Coutlhard 1987, 157). The news writer or reporter, in effect, is telling the viewer how to interpret the intended meaning or the assertiveness of the statement being reported. "Expressives", like *accuse*, *complain*, and *reproach*, represent an especially high degree of mediation because they purport to describe the speaker's feelings and state of mind.

Clearly, the choice of speech verb can entail a good deal of subjective interpretation on

the part of the reporter or the news writer. And this choice, in turn, can influence the impressions that are being conveyed of the people whose speech is being reported. It is these two features that have made speech verbs a focus of studies of possible media bias (Merrill 1965, Robinson and Shehan 1983, Geis 1987, Caldes-Coulthard 1995; Just, Crigler, and Buhr 1999). The approach was pioneered by Merrill (1965) in his study of *Time* magazine's coverage of US presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy. Merrill focused on what he termed "attribution bias".[5] This is bias "which is contained in the synonym for the word *said*" (p. 564). It is attributional in the sense that it attributes states of mind and motivations to the reported speaker through the use of affectively charged verbs. These are verbs that evoke an emotional response and encourage a judgment. Merrill concluded that *Time* showed a clear bias against Truman and an equally clear bias in favor of Eisnehower, and achieved neutrality only in covering Kennedy. Geis (1987) expanded upon Merrill's work. "By using...'powerful verbs' and 'body language'", he argued, "journalists can paint reports on speech with any brush they like, which is to say that there is considerable room for the manifestation of bias in reports on speech" (p. 124). Where Merrill had offered no replicable criteria for determining attribution bias, Geis used undergraduate students to rate the affect of all of the verbs of reported speech used by *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *US News & World Report* in covering the 1984 US presidential campaign. He concluded that Reagan's speech was reported in more favourable terms than Mondale's and that *Newsweek* offered the most neutral account while *US News & World Review* favored Reagan with respect to choice of speech verb.

Studies in this tradition make two assumptions: that language choices "encode values" (Caldas-Coulthard 1995 c.f. Fry and Fry 1986) and that there is a relationship between the choice of speech verb and the speaker whose speech is being reported (Bell 1991, 207). The gendered

mediation thesis implies that the language selected to report the speech of female candidates will reflect norms of female-appropriate behavior. As novelties on the electoral scene, women's coverage will be more heavily mediated. Newswriters will feel more need to evaluate and interpret their behavior and this will be evident in their choice of speech verbs. The neutral verbs, *say* and *tell* will be used less frequently and a wider range of non-neutral speech verbs will appear in coverage of female candidates.

The gendered mediation thesis also predicts that the speech of female candidates will be reported in more negatively-charged and aggressive tones. When female candidates act combatively, they are violating deeply rooted notions of appropriate female behavior. To the extent that media personnel are influenced (however unconsciously) by those same gender-role norms, they are likely to perceive the women's behavior as being unduly aggressive. This perceptual distortion is consistent with research showing that the behavior of female leaders who contravene gender-role expectations is perceived in more extreme, and hence more negative, terms than similar behavior on the part of male leaders (Eagly et al 1992).

There is good reason to expect that this "gender-schematic processing" (Hitchon and Chang 1995) will be reflected in the verbs used to report the speech of female candidates. A number of studies have demonstrated the stubborn persistence of stereotypical assumptions about the speech of men and women (Berryman 1980; Daly, Bench and Chappell 1996) and there is ample evidence that gender "affects expectations of appropriate speech style" (Wiley and Eskilson 1985). Work on impression formation suggests that any violation of these expectations will receive heightened attention and will lead to perceptual distortions (Bradac and Street 1989/90). These, in turn, will affect judgments of the speaker. Indeed, Wiley and Eskilson (1985) report that women using a powerful speech style were rated as being more aggressive than

similarly acting men. It is important to emphasize that much of this work relates to initial impression contexts and to small-group or dyadic interactions and focuses specifically on linguistic features. While some caution is obviously warranted in generalizing these findings to perceptions of politicians' speech, there is certainly evidence of links between gender stereotyping and language perception.

These same studies suggest that men may have more latitude than women in deviating from stereotypical expectations about appropriate linguistic behavior (Bradac and Street 1989/90; Lindsey and Zakahi 1996; Burgoon and Klingle 1998). Again, this is linked to their possession of uncontested power and higher credibility. These findings are consistent with those reported in the studies of leadership styles discussed above, and lead to the prediction that male politicians will not be perceived less favorably when their speech is reported using bland speech verbs.

Some of these studies of speech styles and gender stereotypes also report sex differences in reactions to counter-stereotypical language behavior. In their work on the speech style of managerial job applicants, for example, Wiley and Eskilson (1985), found that the ratings of female respondents were more affected by speech style than were the ratings of male respondents. They also found that female respondents rated female applicants more positively when they adopted a powerful speech style, but male respondents rated female applicants more positively when they adopted a powerless style. Speech style made no difference to either men's or women's liking of a male applicant. Leadership evaluation studies report a similar pattern. Butler and Geis (1990) found that women responded more positively to a competent, assertive woman than men did, while Eagly and her colleagues (1992) report that male respondents were more likely than female respondents to devalue women in leadership roles. It is not clear, though,

what accounts for these sex differences and whether they would generalize to the political setting. Moreover, being portrayed as competent and assertive or as powerful is not the same thing as being portrayed as aggressive. In order to pursue this question, our study design allows for possible interactions between the sex of the speaker and the sex of the rater.

Data and Methods

The chosen design uses a combination of content analysis and experimental manipulation. The content analysis involved identifying every verb of reported speech used by anchors, correspondents and reporters in CBC and CTV nightly news coverage of the election campaign. This task was performed by a research assistant, using transcripts of the broadcasts.[6] A verb of reported speech was defined as a verb used to report what was said by a leader on an identifiable occasion. The test of whether a verb is a verb of reported speech is straightforward: can the sentence containing the verb be rephrased substituting either *say* or *tell*?[7] The canonical forms are thus: Leader A [said][what] and Leader A [told][who][what]. The *what* can be either a sound bite or a direct quote or an indirect quote:

Chretien *criticized* the purchase: [sound bite] "The helicopter deal is a waste of

taxpayers' money"

"The helicopter deal is a waste of taxpayers' money," Chretien *declared*.

Chretien *stated* that the helicopter purchase was a waste of money.

The *what* criterion is crucial because it differentiates verbs used to report speech from verbs that are used to report *on* speech. The statement "Campbell tried to convince voters that her party is worthy of their trust and here's how voters reacted" is a report *on* speech. It is not reporting what Campbell actually said, even by way of summary.

In order to obtain affect scores for the verbs identified in the transcripts, we recruited student volunteers at two Canadian universities to rate each verb.[8] The students read a series of statements, each of which identified a fictitious speaker, a verb of reported speech, and the generic statement "such and "such". The use of dummy subjects and generic statements was intended to avoid the possible biasing effect of the identity of the speaker and/or the content of the reported speech. While this sentence structure may have made for repetitious reading, varying the content or using actual speech content instead would have risked confounding the results. The students were asked to rate each verb on a five-point scale according to how negatively or positively the reported speaker came across. They were then asked to rate each verb according to the impression created of the reported speaker on a five-point aggressiveness scale.[9] In order to test for possible interactions between sex of speaker and sex of rater, the sex of the fictitious speaker was varied randomly so that half of the women and half of the men rated a female speaker (Jan Jones) while the other half rated a male speaker (John Jones). The students were not aware that gender was the focus of the study. They were simply told that they were participating in a study of the language used in reporting on the speech of political leaders. One hundred and thirty-one of the participants were women and 111 were men.

The experimental manipulation enabled us to score each verb in the transcripts based on whether it was being attributed to a female speaker or to a male speaker and whether the verb was being assessed by a woman or by a man. In each case, the scores were simple arithmetic means. These scores were then used to rate each leader's coverage. This involved multiplying the number of times each verb was actually used in reporting the leader's speech by its affect score, summing the products, and then dividing by the total number of instances of reported speech to obtain the average rating.

Findings

The content analysis of the nightly news transcripts identified 958 instances of the use of verbs of reported speech. CBC accounted for 575 instances and CTV accounted for 383 instances. One hundred and seven different verbs were identified. Over half of these verbs were used only once (42) or twice (24). Table 1 lists all of the verbs that were used ten times or more. It is clear that *say* is by far the most frequent choice. This parallels the pattern observed in both US (Robinson and Shehan 1983) and British (Caldes-Coulthard 1995) studies. The next most frequently used verb is the other neutral speech verb, *tell*. The relative frequency of these two verbs is remarkably similar across the two networks. *Say* accounted for 51.0 percent of all speech verbs on CBC and 51.7 percent of all speech verbs on CTV. For *tell*, the figures are 6.1 percent and 6.5 percent, respectively. The neutral *say* and *tell* clearly dominate the list of the most commonly used speech verbs[10], but the list also contains verbs that have been characterized as "potentially partisan" and best avoided (Reuter's Handbook for Journalists 1992, 99). These include *admit,* with its overtones of guilt or prior concealment, *suggest*, with its connotation of tentative assertion, and *warn*, which smacks of "rhetorical overkill" (Associated Press Guide to News Writing 1991, 74). Then there are the expressive verbs (Caldas-Coulthard 1987), like *attack* and *accuse*.

[Table 1 about here]

In fact, both *attack* and *accuse* rank among the most affectively negative speech verbs. Table 2 lists the 25 most negative verbs and the 25 most positive verbs, based on the mean scores of our student raters. A score of three (3.00) represents an affectively neutral verb. Like Geis (1987), we found that the positive verbs were not very positive, whereas the negative verbs were quite negative. There was more variation among our verbs, though, than Geis found.[11] His scores

ranged from 2.04 to 3.77, with a mean of 3.01, whereas ours ranged from 1.47 to 4.02, with a

mean of 2.84. Several natural groupings can be identified among the most negative verbs: *boast*,

show off, and *brag; ridicule*, *taunt*, and *mock*; *accuse*, *charge*, and *complain*; *deny*, *argue*, and

reject; *slam*, *criticize* and *condemn*. Above all, though, many of these strongly negative verbs

carry connotations of aggression.

[Table 2 about here]

This comes out clearly when the 25 most aggressive and the 25 least aggressive verbs are

tabulated (see Table 3). Twenty verbs figure on the lists of both the most negative verbs and the

most aggressive verbs of reported speech, and the more aggressive the verb, the more negative

the rating. There is one interesting exception and that is the verb *challenge*. Despite being rated

as fairly aggressive, its perceived affect was mildly positive (3.13). Neither *insist* nor *hammer*

home were seen as particularly negative either, with affect scores of 2.81 and 2.73, respectively.

All of the other aggressive verbs, though, are seen in unambiguously negative terms. This is in

line with research that has shown that people react negatively to displays of aggressive behavior

on politicians' part (Schrott and Lanoue 1992; Schütz 1998). If aggressive tends to equate with

negative, the reverse is not always the case. *Boast*, *show off*, and *brag* may all elicit a critical

response, but it is not because they are seen as highly aggressive. And *complain* and *deny* are

seen as only modestly aggressive, with scores of 3.16 and 3.28, respectively, compared with a

mean aggressiveness score of 3.31 for all 106 verbs. At the other end of the scale, there is much

less overlap between the most positive and the least aggressive verbs. Only eleven verbs figure

on both lists. Being reported in non-aggressive language does not guarantee a favourable

perception. Low-key verbs like *agree*, *offer*, *joke*, and *acknowledge*, though, do seem to elicit a

warm response. Interestingly, three of the most positively rated verbs are commissives: *pledge*,

promise, and *offer*. All three imply a commitment on the part of the reported speaker, and that goes over well.

[Table 3 about here]

Women clearly react more strongly to the negatively charged and aggressive verbs than men do. Table 4 shows the sex differences for the 25 most negatively charged verbs. Seventeen of these differences are statistically significant at the .05 level and another three are of borderline significance (<.10).[12] Of the remaining five verbs, only two (*mock* and *reject*) appear in the list of the 25 most aggressive verbs and they are the least aggressive of those verbs. This is not simply a matter of women having some general tendency to rank verbs more negatively than men do. Women give significantly more negative scores than men to only seven of the remaining 81 verbs.[13]

[Table 4 about here]

Table 5 suggests a possible reason why women rate these verbs more negatively than men do: they also perceive them to be more aggressive than men do. Of the 25 most aggressive verbs, 15 receive significantly (p<.05) higher aggressiveness scores from women. Sex differences on another two verbs approach statistical significance (p<.10). Again, these differences do not merely reflect some general propensity on women's part to rate verbs higher in aggressiveness. Of the remaining 81 verbs, only nine received significantly higher scores from women.[14] This pattern of sex differences is consistent with work on the perception of anger expression: women perceive the same behavior to be more aggressive and less appropriate than men do (Smith et al. 1989).

[Table 5 about here]

The conclusion seems clear: people in general and women in particular react negatively to aggressive speech verbs. The results of the rating exercise strongly suggest that speakers come across more negatively when they are portrayed as attacking, blasting, and lashing out at opponents. Overplaying their combative behavior, then, is likely to hurt rather than help female candidates, especially among women.

The sex of the speaker *per se* does not significantly affect the ratings of individual verbs.[15] In particular, there is no evidence that bland speech verbs create a more negative perception of male speakers. When quoted using the verb *say* the affect value for male speakers was 3.16, compared with 3.13 for female speakers. The verb *tell* produced affect scores of 3.03 for male speakers and 2.93 for female speakers.[16] It could be, of course, that the stimulus was too weak. All the experiment entailed was changing the name of the fictitious speaker. It is possible that the sex of the speaker barely registered. When the verbs actually used to report each leader's speech are scored, though, it becomes clear that women's ratings **are** affected by the sex of the speaker. As we shall see, a series of small sex-of-speaker differences in women's ratings has a cumulative effect and it works to the disadvantage of female speakers.

For all of the leaders *say* is by far the most frequently used verb of reported speech (Table 6). There are, nonetheless, sex differences in the use of the most common verbs of reported speech. As predicted, Campbell's speech is less likely than her male colleagues' to be reported using the neutral *say*. *Say* is also used less frequently in reporting the speech of the other female leader, Audrey McLaughlin, of the New Democratic Party. The difference between McLaughlin and Chretien, though, is negligible. The use of *tell* reveals a clearer difference. The relative frequency of this verb is lower for both women than for any of the men.[17] Overall, *say* and *tell* make up 61.6 percent of the verbs used to report the men's speech, compared with only

52.4 percent for the two women, a difference that exceeds conventional levels of statistical significance (chi square=8.279 p<.004).

[Table 6 about here]

Not only are the neutral verbs used less often in reporting the women's speech, but the less common verbs are used more frequently. Twenty-six point seven (26.7) percent of the verbs applied to the women do not figure on the list of the most commonly used verbs, compared with 19.3 percent for the men. As Figure 1 shows, though, coverage of Campbell and Chretien was fairly similar in this respect. Now it is McLaughlin who stands out. The less conventional verbs were used twice as often in reporting her speech as in reporting the speech of Bloc quebecois leader Lucien Bouchard or Reform Party leader Preston Manning. The variety of verbs applied to McLaughlin is the more striking given that verbs of reported speech were used less often in her coverage than for three of the other four leaders.

[Figure 1 about here]

Simply looking at the relative frequency with which the neutral speech verbs and the more common speech verbs are used thus provides some support for our two key propositions about gendered mediation. Overall, the women's speech is reported in less neutral and more unconventional terms than the men's.

When the relative affect of the various verbs is taken into account, the results are also clearly in line with the gendered mediation thesis. The verbs used to report on the women's speech are twice as likely (12.7 percent) as the men's (6.6 percent) to appear on the list of the 25 most negative speech verbs. Not only is this difference statistically significant (chi square=10.519 p<.001), but Chretien's coverage is now clearly different from the two women's. As Figure 2 shows, affectively negative verbs were used much more frequently in reporting

Campbell's and McLaughlin's speech than Chretien's and Manning's. The pattern is repeated

when we look at the use of the most aggressive verbs. These verbs were applied much more

frequently to the women (13.6 percent) than to the men (7.9 percent), a difference that is again

statistically significant (chi square=8.350 p<.004). Indeed, on both dimensions–negative affect

and aggressiveness–the sex difference would be larger still, but for the inclusion of Bouchard. It

bears emphasis that the women's speech was reported using more negative language and (in

Campbell's case, at least) more aggressive language than was used to report on a leader who was

committed to the breakup of the country.

[Figure 2 about here]

Table 7 presents the mean affect and aggressiveness scores for each leader, based on all

of the verbs used to report their speech in the nightly news. The results indicate that Chretien and

Manning were reported in more positive terms than were Bouchard and the two women leaders.

The differences are modest, but they are comparable in magnitude to those observed in coverage

of presidential candidates[18] and the overall sex difference (even with Bouchard included) is

statistically significant (p<.005). Moreover, the impression of neutrality in the women's (and

Bouchard's) coverage is deceptive. It reflects the fact that *say* had mildly positive connotations

for our coders, receiving a mean affect score of 3.15 . When *say* and *tell* are excluded from the

calculation, the difference between Campbell and McLaughlin, on the one hand, and Chretien

and Manning, on the other, becomes sharper. The coverage of Chretien and Manning is neutral,

while the two women's coverage (and Bouchard's) is clearly negative in tone. The same pattern

is repeated for the aggressivenss scores. With *say* and *tell* removed, coverage of all five leaders

tends to the aggressive side, but the women's coverage is a good deal more aggressive in tone

than Chretien's and Manning's. The differences may not be great, but the pattern is both clear

and consistent: the verbs used to report the women's speech are both more negative and more aggressive in tone than those used to report the men's speech. Bouchard is, of course, an exception to this pattern of sex differences, but his scores serve to reinforce the conclusions about the women's coverage. When it came to the choice of speech verbs, the two women were covered more like the separatist leader than like their other two male counterparts.

[Table 7 about here]

The final question concerns the interaction between sex-of-speaker and sex-of-rater. We saw above that the experimental manipulation revealed few statistically significant sex-of-speaker effects for individual verbs. Table 8 shows what happens, though, when the coverage of the two female leaders is scored using men's and women's ratings of a female speaker and the three male leaders' coverage is scored using men's and women's ratings of a male speaker. Based on the verbs used to report their speech, men and women alike would form a more negative impression of Campbell and McLaughlin than of their male counterparts, but the women would form a more negative impression than the men. The sex of the leader clearly has more of an impact on women's ratings than on men's. In fact, reversing the affect ratings (so that the female leaders were scored like male speakers and the male leaders like female speakers) would leave the men's ratings basically unchanged. Women's ratings, on the other hand, would become more negative for the male leaders and more positive for the female leaders.

[Table 8 about here]

The sex of the leader also has more impact on women's aggressiveness ratings, though the nature of the impact varies depending on whether or not *say* and *tell* are included. With the two 'neutral' speech verbs included, women would rate the male (but not the female) leaders' coverage as less aggressive in tone than would men.[19] Apart from *say* and *tell*, though, women

would generally rate the same verbs as more aggressive in tone than men, especially when they are applied to female leaders. If reactions to verbs of reported speech are any guide, then, women would perceive the female leaders' speech to be more aggressive than their male counterparts' and they would form a more negative impression of them. It should be noted that this finding is at odds with the patterns observed in non-political settings where counter-stereotypical behavior on women's part elicited more negative reactions from men and more positive reactions from women (see above).

[Table 9 about here]

Intriguingly, we obtain a similar finding when we look at the impact of the reporter's sex. As Table 9 shows, the sex of the leader generally had more impact on the female reporters' choice of verb than on their male colleagues'. Male and female reporters alike reported Campbell's and McLaughlin's speech in more negatively charged and aggressive language than their male counterparts', but the verbs used by the female reporters were even more negatively charged and (excluding *say* and *tell*) more aggressive in tone than those used by the male reporters. The differences should certainly not be overstated, but the congruence in the pattern for female reporters and for female raters suggests that women may indeed react more negatively to counter-stereotypical behavior on the part of female leaders. The lowest mean affect scores and the highest aggressiveness scores are recorded for the verbs used by female reporters to report the speech of the female leaders. Similarly, the lowest mean affect scores and the highest mean aggressiveness scores are recorded when female raters rate verbs used to report the speech of a female speaker. This congruence supports the notion that the media serve as a "cultural looking glass". Just as women are likely to respond more critically than men to female leaders who are quoted using aggressive language, so female journalists may be more likely than male

journalists to react critically to assertive and non-stereotypical behaviour on the part of female leaders.

To be sure, the sex-of-reporters effects are modest, but it is worth noting that female reporters were more likely to be reporting the speech of female leaders (68.7 percent), whereas male reporters were more likely to be reporting the speech of male leaders (68.6 percent). If this reflects a more general pattern in the assignment of reporters, even a modest tendency for female journalists to use more negatively-charged and aggressive verbs to report on the speech of female leaders becomes consequential.

Discussion

The implications of this paper are troubling for they provide support for claims that the media use more highly charged language in reporting the statements of female politicians. Gendered mediation was apparent in the selection of verbs used to report the leaders' speech during the 1993 Canadian election campaign. First, statements made by the two female leaders were less likely to be left to speak for themselves. While *say* and *tell* dominated the list of the most frequently used speech verbs, they were not used as often in reporting the women's statements, suggesting that news personnel feel more need to interpret the speech of female candidates. Secondly, more unconventional verbs were used to report the women's speech, reflecting the status of female leaders as novelties on the electoral scene.

Moreover, just as the gendered mediation thesis would predict, these verbs played up the women's combativeness. The speech of the two women leaders was reported in more negative and aggressive language. Verbs that were **only** used to report their speech (and never the men's) include *argue*, *blast*, *fire at*, *hammer* away, *hammer home*, *launch an attack*, *mock*, and *rebuff*. It could be, of course, that the media were merely presenting an accurate report of the women's

behavior. Without an independent measure of just how aggressively (or not) the various leaders behaved, we cannot rule out the possibility that the two female leaders were following common advice to act tough and so they **did** behave more aggressively. However, our previous analyses of coverage of the televised leaders' debates afforded a rare opportunity to compare media portrayals with the leaders' actual behavior and they strongly support the claim that the media overemphasized aggressive behavior in reporting on both Campbell and McLaughlin (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 2000). It is also telling that the verbs used to report the speech of both women were as negatively charged and aggressive in tone as those used to report the speech of Bouchard, the leader of a party that is committed to breaking up the country.

Our earlier work on gendered mediation left two questions unanswered: Does gendered mediation help or hinder female candidates? And what are the implications of gendered mediation for male candidates? Based on reactions to speech verbs, at least, the answer to the first question is clear. Gendered mediation hinders women's chances of success. It is reflected in the use of aggressive verbs that play up women's combativeness. The choice of speech verb matters because it affects perceptions of the person whose speech is being reported. The use of non-neutral speech verbs shifts the attention from "what was said" to "how it was said" (Lorenz and Vivian 1996, 122) and, as Clayman (1990, 90) notes, "*what* people is say is assessed and evaluated in the light of *how* they say it". It is clear that aggressive verbs elicit negative affect. This is the case whether the purported speaker is male or female, but gendered mediation means that female candidates are more likely to be portrayed as blasting, attacking, and accusing. As a result, viewers are likely to form a more negative impression of female candidates. There is no support, though, for the suggestion that male candidates will be penalized for counter-stereotypic

behavior. Bland speech verbs did not elicit less favorable reactions when the purported speaker was a male.

Another important finding of this study is that women clearly responded more negatively to aggressive speech verbs than men did and they perceived those verbs to be more aggressive in tone. This is line with research showing that speech style has more impact on female than on male respondents (Wiley and Eskilson 1985), as well as research on gender and perceptions of aggression (Harris and Knight-Bohnhoff 1996). The implication is that gendered mediation makes it harder for female candidates to appeal to female voters. It is generally assumed by women running for political office and by academics that female candidates will benefit from the support of female voters (Plutzer and Zipp 1996; O'Neill 1998). If media coverage overplays the combativeness of female candidates this may not be the case. While their popularity will suffer among men and women alike, their popularity will suffer more among women than among men, counteracting any benefits that might accrue from gender identification.

The findings reported here provide further confirmation of the gendered mediation thesis. As in the choice of metaphors and sound bites, so in the choice of speech verbs, media coverage plays up the combativeness of female candidates. And now we have been able to provide evidence that this is likely to diminish, not enhance, their appeal. Gendered mediation is cause for concern. In response to Kim Campbell's charge, the media gave themselves a clean bill of health. And certainly, blatant use of feminine stereotypes would be hard to find in transcripts of the nightly news coverage of the 1993 election. The problem lies at a deeper level in the conventional constructions of politics that frame media coverage. Far from being gender neutral, these constructions are stereotypically masculine. Women are not conventionally associated with the battlefield or the boxing ring. As novelties, their words and actions are subject to more

analysis and interpretation and their combative displays attract disproportionate attention. The traditional news frames, in short, continue to result in sex-differentiated coverage and this hurts, not helps, women's chances of electoral success.

Table 1: The Most Commonly Used Verbs of Reported Speech
in Television News Coverage of the 1993 Canadian Election Campaign

		N
say	51.3%	491
tell	6.3%	60
promise	3.5%	34
call	3.1%	30
insist	2.0%	19
warn	1.9%	18
accuse	1.8%	17
admit	1.7%	16
talk about	1.4%	13
repeat	1.3%	12
suggest	1.1%	11
urge	1.1%	11
attack	1.0%	10

Table 2: Affectively-Laden Speech Verbs

Negative Affect	Mean	Positive Affect	Mean
attack	1.47	reassure	4.02
lash out	1.48	agree	3.94
show off	1.48	pledge	3.81
blast	1.52	promise	3.78
fire at	1.56	offer	3.77
slam	1.59	joke	3.70
ridicule	1.69	acknowledge	3.69
accuse	1.71	propose	3.66
hammer away	1.77	explain	3.61
taunt	1.78	address	3.58
brag	1.83	outline	3.55
mock	1.83	announce	3.55
shoot back	1.87	try to explain	3.53
complain	1.92	add	3.52
launch an attack	1.92	point out	3.50
criticize	1.96	make clear	3.48
condemn	1.99	present	3.47
jump in	2.06	indicate	3.45
boast	2.17	continue emphasizing	3.45
deny	2.17	suggest	3.41
go after	2.18	quote	3.41
charge	2.22	attribute	3.41
argue	2.23	maintain	3.38
reject	2.23	conclude	3.38
take aim	2.23	predict	3.36

Note: The rating scale ran from '1' to '5'. The lower the score, the more negative the affect. '3' indicates a neutral score.

Table 3: Aggressive Speech Verbs

Aggressive	Mean	Non-aggressive	Mean
attack	4.76	apologize	1.84
blast	4.76	agree	2.19
fire at	4.76	joke	2.20
lash out	4.75	wonder	2.20
jump in	4.65	hint	2.25
hammer away	4.63	admit	2.32
accuse	4.52	appear to say	2.33
launch an attack	4.52	acknowledge	2.39
slam	4.49	offer	2.40
shoot back	4.43	mention	2.41
argue	4.39	ask	2.44
charge	4.39	talk about	2.54
go after	4.35	suggest	2.54
condemn	4.30	add	2.57
dare	4.30	concede	2.60
criticize	4.25	reassure	2.62
take aim	4.24	echo	2.64
challenge	4.23	note	2.65
hammer home	4.21	explain	2.66
send a warning	4.18	attribute	2.69
ridicule	4.15	answer	2.69
insist	4.08	present	2.71
taunt	4.06	speak	2.71
mock	4.00	outline	2.72
reject	3.95	appeal to	2.73

Note: The rating scale ran from one (non-aggressive) to five (aggressive)

Table 4: Sex Differences in Negative Affect Ratings

	Men	Women	Sig.
attack	1.64	1.34	.005
lash out	1.60	1.38	.031
show off	1.58	1.40	.043
blast	1.69	1.38	.010
fire at	1.68	1.46	.031
slam	1.77	1.44	.002
ridicule	1.85	1.56	.004
accuse	1.93	1.53	.000
hammer away	1.98	1.60	.004
taunt	1.94	1.64	.002
brag	1.89	1.78	ns
mock	1.89	1.78	ns
shoot back	2.01	1.76	.035
complain	2.03	1.83	.031
launch an attack	2.06	1.81	.096
criticize	2.18	1.78	.000
condemn	2.17	1.84	.009
jump in	2.31	1.85	.001
boast	2.26	2.09	ns
deny	2.25	2.10	ns
go after	2.36	2.02	.003
charge	2.32	2.13	.077
argue	2.36	2.12	.062
reject	2.30	2.18	ns
take aim	2.38	2.11	.018

Note: The rating scale ran from '1' to '5'. The lower the score, the more negative the affect. '3' indicates a neutral score.

Table 5: Sex Differences in Ratings of Aggressiveness

	Men	Women	Sig.
attack	4.62	4.88	.005
blast	4.66	4.84	.038
fire	4.64	4.89	.005
lash out	4.68	4.81	.093
jump in	4.52	4.76	.008
hammer away	4.47	4.76	.003
accuse	4.46	4.58	ns
launch attack	4.40	4.62	.037
slam	4.42	4.55	ns
shoot back	4.28	4.56	.005
argue	4.22	4.54	.003
charge	4.24	4.52	.009
go after	4.22	4.47	.026
dare	4.24	4.36	ns
condemn	4.15	4.43	.014
criticize	4.20	4.29	ns
take aim	4.13	4.32	.052
challenge	4.11	4.33	.021
hammer home	4.25	4.17	ns
send a warning	4.02	4.32	.004
ridicule	4.05	4.24	ns
insist	3.88	4.25	.000
taunt	4.04	4.08	ns
mock	3.93	4.05	ns
reject	3.85	4.04	.083

Note: The rating scale ran from '1' (non-aggressive) to '5' (aggressive)

Table 6: The Most Commonly Used Verbs of Reported Speech by Leader
(as percentage of leader's total)

	Kim Campbell	Audrey McLaughlin	Lucien Bouchard	Jean Chretien	Preston Manning
say	47.8	50.4	52.3	50.6	58.8
tell	3.7	4.1	16.2	6.1	6.3
promise	4.7	1.6	0.9	4.9	2.5
call	4.0	1.6	2.7	2.3	4.4
insist	3.3	–	2.7	1.5	1.3
warn	2.7	1.6	1.8	1.9	0.6
accuse	2.0	2.4	3.6	0.8	1.3
admit	1.7	–	2.7	1.9	1.9
talk about	1.3	–	–	2.7	1.3
repeat	1.0	3.3	–	1.9	–
suggest	0.7	1.6	–	1.1	2.5
urge	1.0	–	0.9	0.4	3.8
attack	1.7	1.6	–	0.8	0.6
Total verbs	301	123	111	263	160

Table 7: Mean Affect and Aggressiveness Scores by leader

1. Affect

	Including *say*/*tell*	Excluding *say*/*tell*
Campbell	2.98	2.82
McLaughlin	2.98	2.78
Chretien	3.09	3.03
Manning	3.08	2.98
Bouchard	2.99	2.72

2. Aggressiveness

	Including *say*/*tell*	Excluding *say*/*tell*
Campbell	3.01	3.42
McLaughlin	2.98	3.40
Chretien	2.86	3.16
Manning	2.84	3.23
Bouchard	2.95	3.50

Table 8: Sex-Specific Mean Affect and Aggressiveness Scores by Leader

1. Affect

	Including *say*/*tell*		Excluding *say*/*tell*	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Campbell	3.02	2.92	2.86	2.78
McLaughlin	3.02	2.91	2.85	2.72
Chretien	3.11	3.10	3.07	3.03
Manning	3.10	3.09	3.01	2.97
Bouchard	3.01	2.99	2.78	2.67

2. Aggressiveness

	Including *say*/*tell*		Excluding *say*/*tell*	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Campbell	3.01	3.06	3.36	3.55
McLaughlin	2.99	3.01	3.37	3.51
Chretien	2.95	2.75	3.07	3.16
Manning	2.94	2.72	3.09	3.26
Bouchard	3.05	2.82	3.37	3.51

Note: the two female leaders are scored using men's and women's ratings of a female speaker while the three male leaders are scored using men's and women's ratings of a male speaker.

Table 9: Sex of Reporter and Affect and Aggressiveness of Speech Verbs

1. Affect

	Including *say*/*tell*		Excluding *say*/*tell*	
	Reporter		Reporter	
Leader	Male	Female	Male	Female
Male	3.06 (429)	3.08 (103)	2.96 (159)	3.01 (44)
Female	3.01 (196)	2.96 (226)	2.87 (96)	2.75 (105)

2. Aggressiveness

	Including *say*/*tell*		Excluding *say*/*tell*	
	Reporter		Reporter	
Leader	Male	Female	Male	Female
Male	2.86 (429)	2.92 (103)	3.21 (159)	3.30 (44)
Female	2.96 (196)	3.03 (226)	3.33 (96)	3.49 (105)

Note: number of verbs shown in parentheses
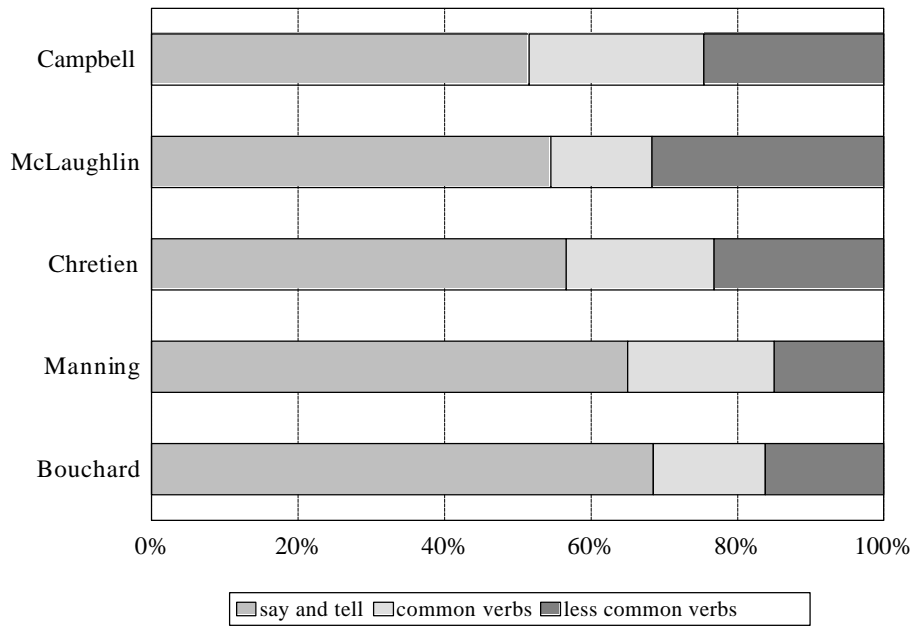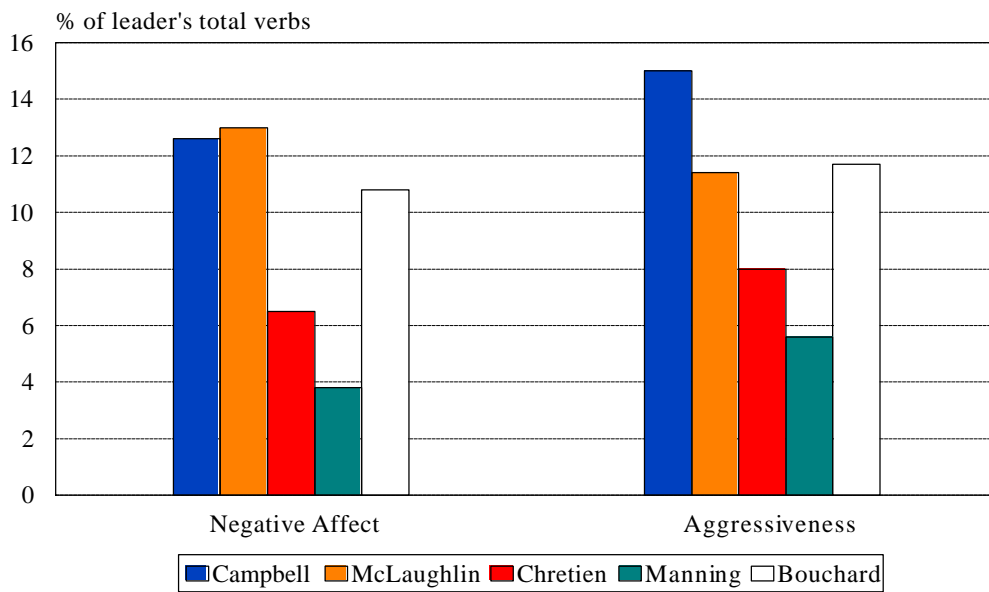
Figure 1: Frequency of Verb Types by Leader

say and tell ☐ common verbs ■ less common verbs

Figure 2: Relative Frequency of the Most Negative and Aggressive Verbs by Leader

■ Campbell ■ McLaughlin ■ Chretien ■ Manning ☐ Bouchard

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Endnotes

1.Quoted in Robert Russo, "Campbell not making many personal plans after Oct. 25 election",

The Gazette October 12, 1993, A8. It is not our intent to address the complex, and perhaps

irresolvable, issue of apportioning blame for her party's stunning defeat. Any serious attempt to

do so would have to consider her predecessor's legacy of mounting debt, joblessness, failed

constitutional negotiations, and unpopular policy initiatives like the Goods and Services Tax and

the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement. It is worth noting, though, that her party was in a

competitive race with the Liberals when the campaign began.

2.As Butler and Geis emphasize, this can happen even when conscious gender-role beliefs are

egalitarian.

3.Televised candidates' debates offer an opportunity for this type of study (see Tiemens et al.

1985; Clayman 1995). Analysis of sound bite selection in coverage of the 1993 Canadian

leaders' debates supports the gendered mediation argument (Gidengil and Everitt 2000).

4.Cappon (1991, 75) makes a similar point in advising against the use of *assert*.

5.Merrill (1965) also looked at adverbial bias. The verb *said* may be neutral enough, but *said*

aggressively is surely as affectively loaded as *blasted* or *attacked*.

6.We are grateful to the National Media Archives at the Fraser Institute for making the

transcripts of the campaign coverage available to us. The Institute does dot bear any

responsibility for the analysis and interpretation presented here.

7.In order to ensure that the criteria were consistently applied, a second assistant coded randomly

selected transcripts. The level of intercoder reliability was 91 percent.

8.One hundred and eighty-four students were from the University of New Brunswick (Saint John) and 58 students were from McGill University.

9.Ratings were obtained on a four other bipolar scales (competent-incompetent, untrustworthy-trustworthy, approachable-unapproachable, weak leader-strong leader). These results await analysis.

10.Just and her colleagues (1999) report that neutral verbs predominated in press coverage of the 1992 US presidential campaign, as well.

11.It is testimony to the range of possible speech verbs that there is only modest overlap between the verbs identified in our study and those identified by Geis (1987).

12.All significance levels are based on F-tests.

13.These verbs are *admit*, *claim*, *compare*, *counter*, *methodically dissect*, *try to make it sound*, and *try to persuade*. The difference for *dismiss* was of borderline statistical significance (p<.10). Women reacted more positively than men to two verbs, *maintain* and *try to explain*, but both differences were of borderline significance.

14.These verbs are *warn*, *zero in*, *urge*, *rebuff*, *continue emphasizing*, *defend*, *try to persuade*, *contrast*, and *call*. Women gave *answer* and *say* significantly lower aggressiveness scores.

15. There were few statistically significant interactions between the sex-of-speaker and the sex-of-rater, either. Among men, *reject* and *taunt* created a **more** negative impression when the

reported speaker was a woman, while among women, *attack* and *fire at* created a **less** negative impression when the reported speaker was a woman.

16. These sex-of-speaker differences were not statistically significant.

17. In the leaders' debates, at least, Bouchard stood out for his aggressive speaking manner (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 2000). The relative frequency with which *tell* is used to report his speech might seem to cast doubt on whether this really is a neutral speech verb. According to our raters, though, it most certainly is, recording a mean score of 2.98.

18. Geis (1987) reports differences between Mondale and Reagan ranging from .03 (weak-strong) to .14 (excitable-calm) for the five traits he examined.

19. Applied to a male speaker, *say* receives a mean aggressiveness score of 2.82 from men, compared with only 2.39 from women, while *tell* receives mean scores of 3.18 and 2.85, respectively. Applied to a female speaker, on the other hand, the comparable scores are 2.64 and 2.56 for *say* and 3.06 and 3.03 for *tell*.