



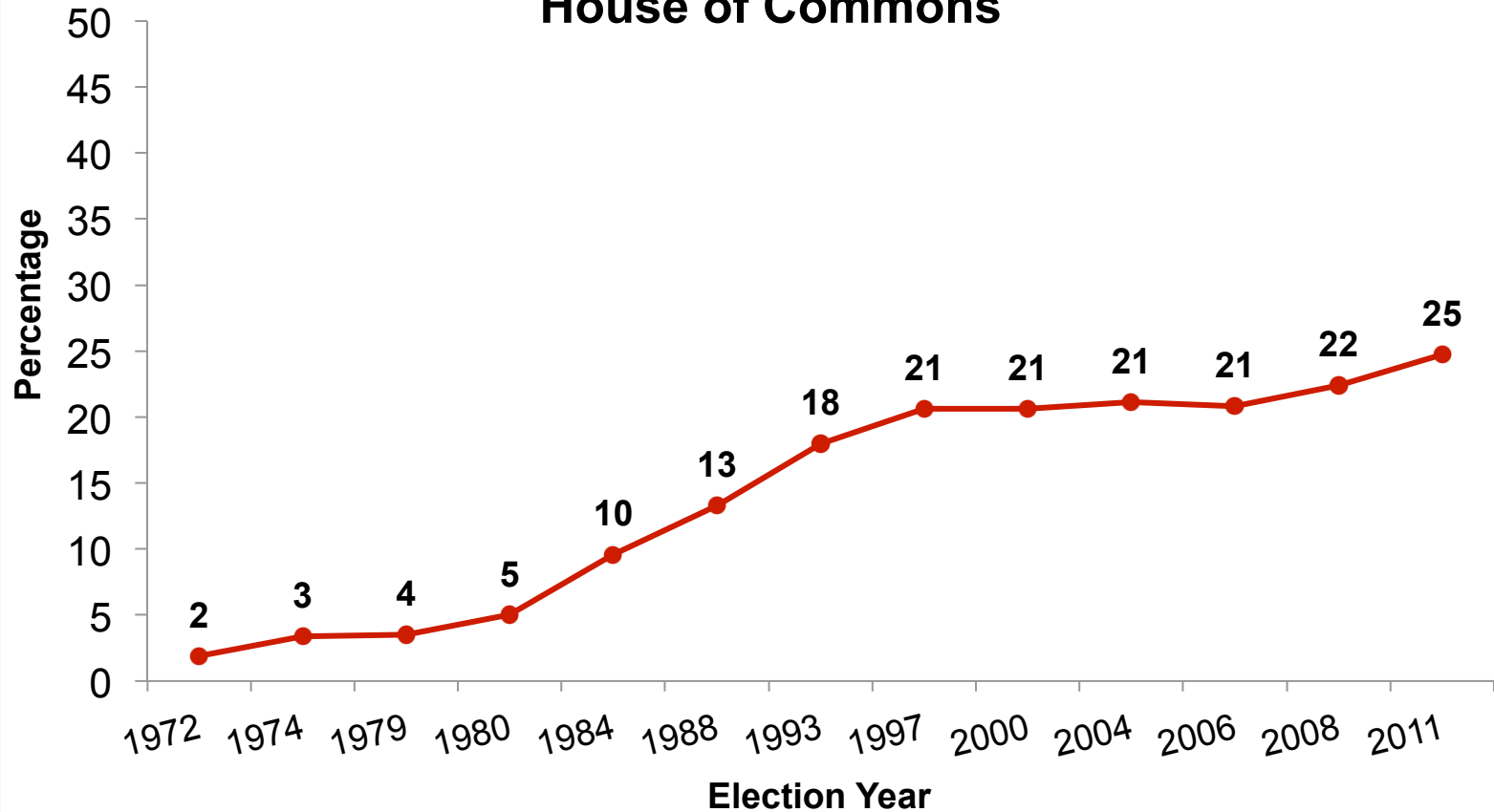
Gendered News: Reflections on Theoretical and Practical Issues

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Overview

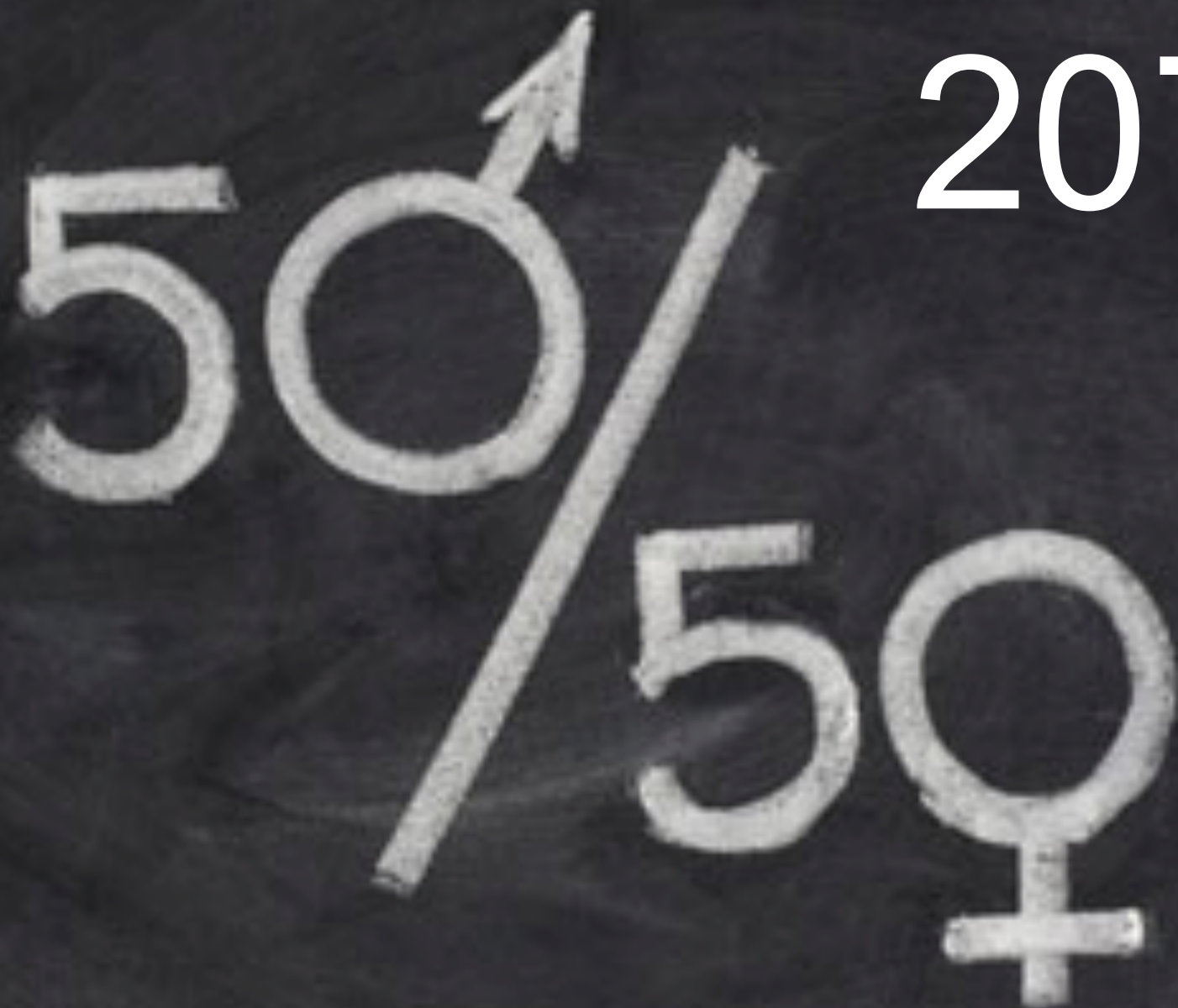
1. State of the gender, media, and politics (GMP) field
2. My work
3. Gaps and new directions

Women's Proportion of Seats in the House of Commons



2075

50% / 50

The image features a large, stylized graphic on a dark, textured background. It consists of the number '50' followed by a diagonal slash, and then another '50' followed by a female symbol (a circle with a vertical line and a horizontal crossbar). The male symbol (a circle with an arrow) is positioned above the first '50'. The entire graphic is rendered in a light, metallic or chalk-like color.

Two branches of GMP field

1. Gender lens on “mainstream” models and methods
2. Critical feminist media studies (e.g., Gill 2006; McRobbie 2008, Thornham 2007, and van Zoonen 1994)

Two themes for today

1. Quality of coverage
 - Focus on framing
 - Recent work on lack of gender differences in coverage
2. Effects of coverage
 - Proximal v. distal
 - Effects on supply v. demand
 - durability

Quality of coverage

1. Agenda-setting – issue salience transfer
2. Priming – cuing of evaluative criteria through agenda-setting
3. Framing – application of interpretive lens, peg, or storyline

1 & 2 are assumed to work through accessibility mechanisms

Framing is different

Classic studies: Kahneman and Tversky (1979, 1984)

When offered a choice framed in terms of losses (20% of lives may be lost), subjects are risk-averse, but offered the same choice framed in terms of gains (80% of lives may be saved) subjects are risk-seeking. The only difference is the frame – gains v. losses

GMP Literature – Quality of Coverage

- Emphasis on framing
 - Personalized or privatized frames
 - Game frames (Trimble, Sampert, and their team; also Gidengil and Everitt)



GMP Literature – Quality of Coverage

- Emerging work on gender balance in coverage
 - Two arguments:
 - diminished novelty of women candidates + increased party polarization = decline of gender and rise of party as driver of news content
 - Gender is “old news”?
 - Hayes (2006)
 - Hayes and Lawless (2015)

GMP Literature – Effects of Coverage

- Within the GMP literature, very little focus on effects
- When attempted, effects often measured indirectly – e.g., Fowler and Lawless (2009)

GMP Literature – Effects of Coverage

Challenges:

1. GMP field hasn't grappled with questions about what we mean by "effects", and by extension, which effects "matter" and why
2. Types of effects: for example, on the supply of vs. demand for women candidates
3. Proximal vs. distal effects
4. Durability of effects

ELIZABETH GOODYEAR-GRANT



gendered
coverage



under-
representation

Media Coverage and Electoral Politics in Canada

Some Key findings

Content:

- Few differences in visibility
- Women's issue positions seem faithfully represented
- Few systematic differences across outlets
- More privatized or personalized coverage of women than of men
- Women more mediated
- Women's attack-style behaviour exaggerated

Some Key findings

Effects:

1. Attack-style news harmed voters' perceptions of the woman leader in 2000, but not perceptions of the male comparators
 - attitudinal data + audience response study + news content data
2. Women MPs understand that they are covered differently than their male counterparts, and adjust their behaviour accordingly, in some cases – e.g., self-censure, avoidance of certain types of events or media formats, etc.
 - in-depth interviews with former MPs, including party leaders, and former PM Kim Campbell

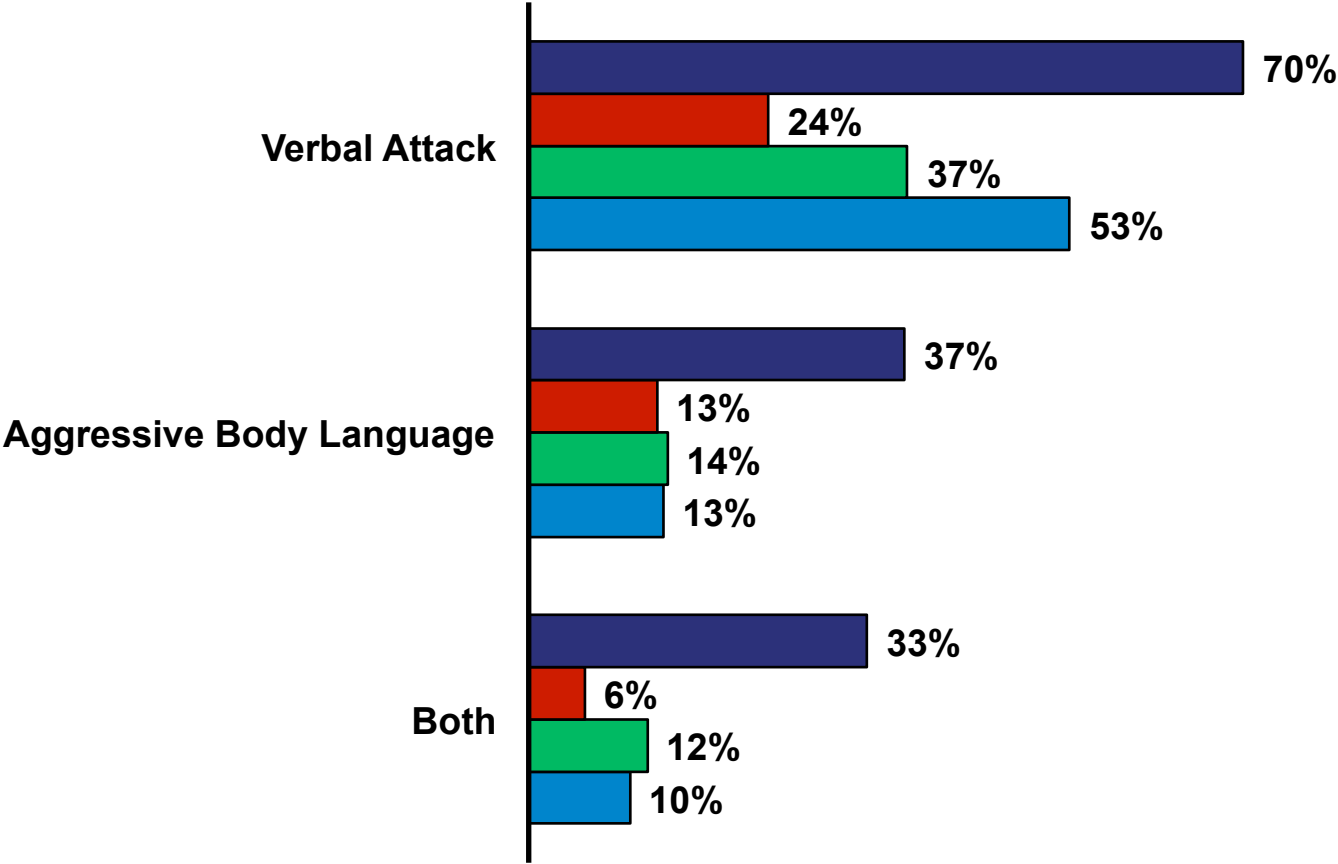
Two central contributions:

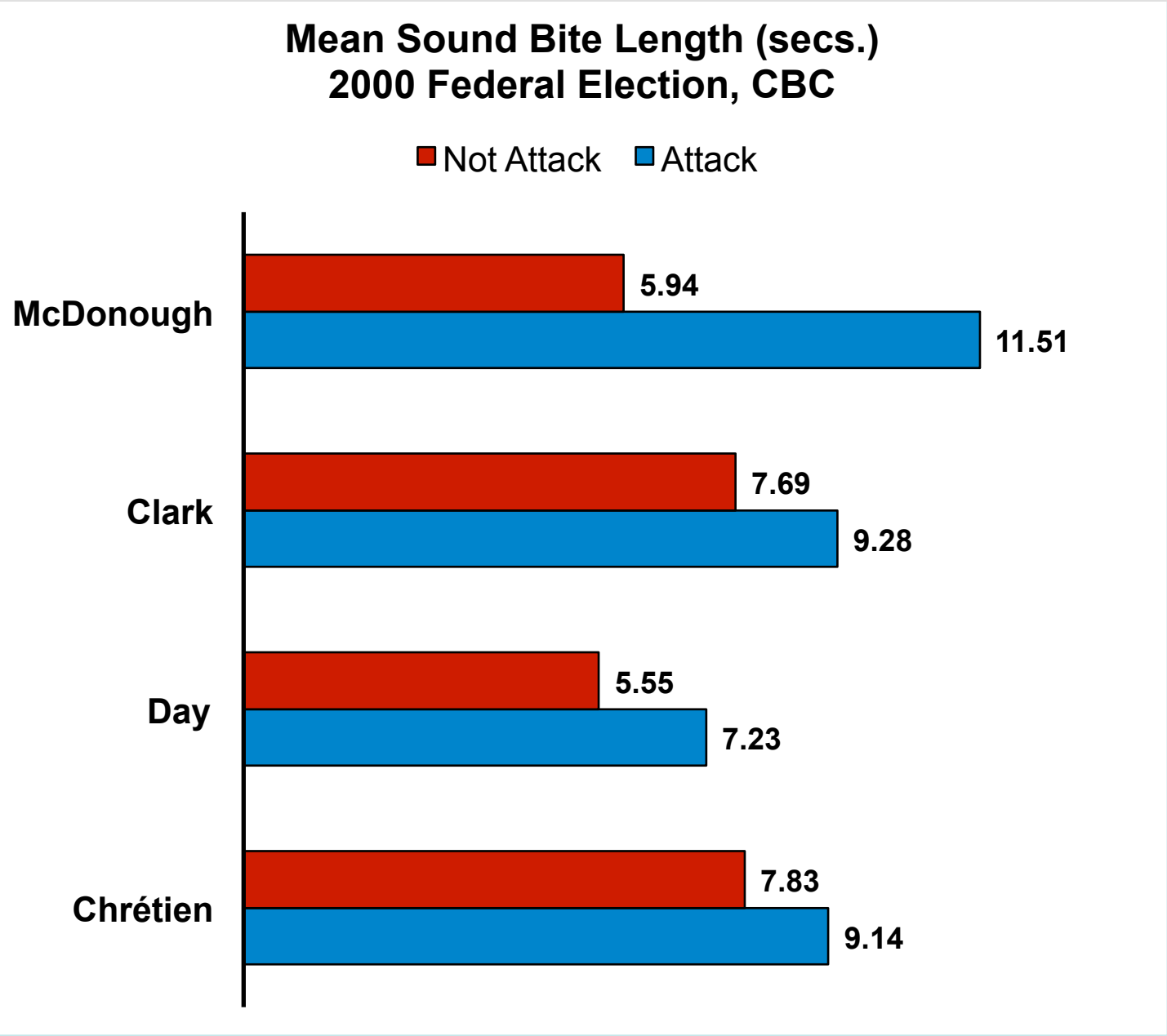
1. Analytically separating provision from presentation
2. Theorizing and testing effects of gendered news
 - If we account for news using a “distorted mirror” model, we must separate the mirror from the distortions!
 - Takes seriously the known gender differences in political behaviour
 - Consistent with work on women campaigning “as women”, allowing for strategic mobilization of gender by women for electoral gain
 - E.g., leaders’ issue coverage in news of the 2000 campaign v. parties’ press releases – provision, not presentation
 - E.g., attack-style coverage v. indicators of real-world behaviour – lots of presentation

Attack-Style News Coverage

Sound Bites, 2000 Federal Election, CBC

■ McDonough ■ Chrétien ■ Day ■ Clark





Two central contributions:

1. Analytically separating provision from presentation
2. Theorizing and testing for effects of gendered news

Three possible outcomes:

1. Backlash effect
2. Viability boost
3. No difference - effect of attack-style news not conditional on gender of leader

Audience response study:

Rating scale:

- recoded 0, 1 (bad, good)

Leaders' news ratings vary:

- Mostly good for McDonough (81%) and Clark (70%)
- Fairly even split for Chrétien (52%) and Day (41%)

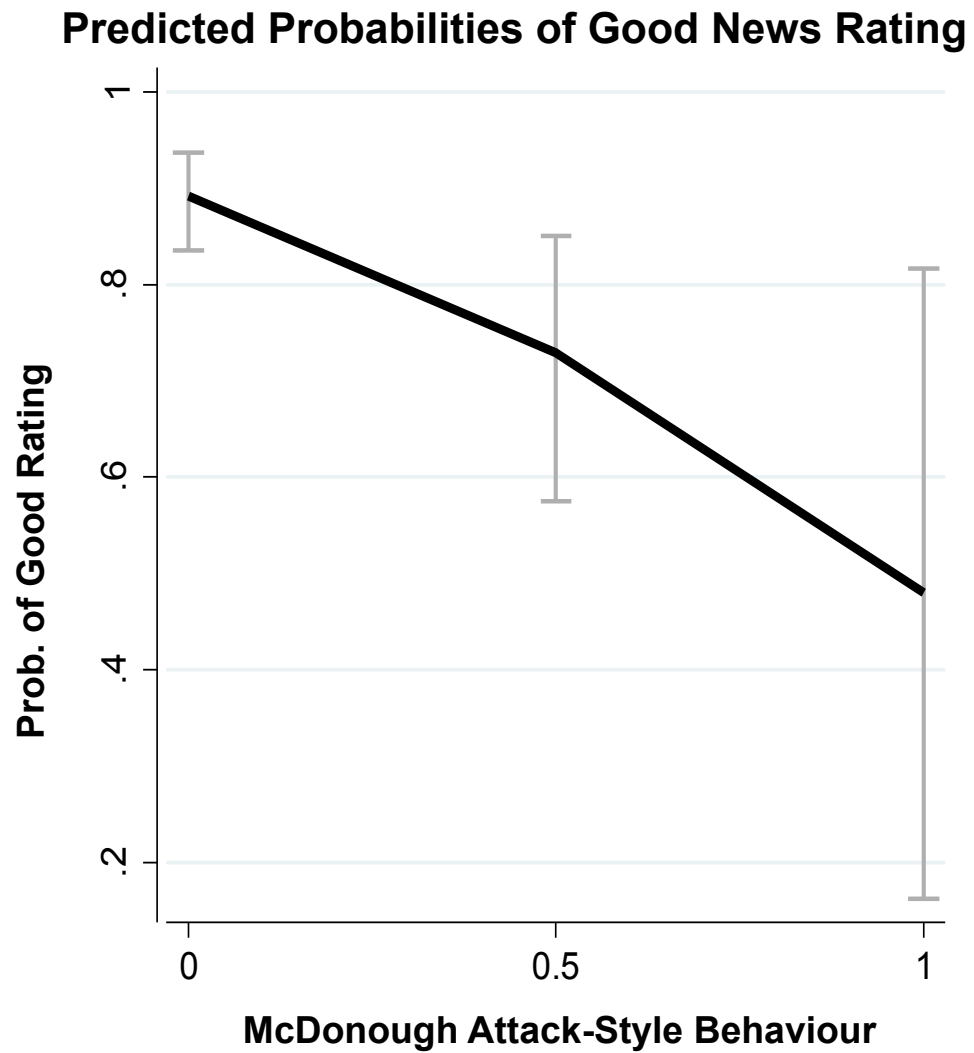
McDonough is the only leader of the four whose ratings decline unequivocally when she is shown on the attack

Effects of Leaders' Attack-Style Behaviour on News Story Ratings
(selected by party that = news story focus, binary logistic regressions)

	Chrétien Stories	Day Stories	Clark stories	McDonough Stories
Female	-0.17 (0.09)	0.08 (0.08)	0.27 (0.20)	0.26 (0.17)
Party ID Match	1.00*** (0.09)	-0.31 (0.23)	0.09 (0.13)	0.39 (0.22)
Positive Leader Feeling	0.90*** (0.17)	1.44*** (0.17)	1.32*** (0.26)	0.64 (0.37)
Gender Ideology	0.34*** (0.11)	-0.14 (0.10)	0.23 (0.16)	0.11 (0.17)
Leader Attack	2.06*** (0.51)	-0.14 (0.50)	0.97 (0.59)	-1.14** (0.56)
N	2010	1913	1101	949

Cells contain logits, with robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < .01$ ** $p < .05$



Gaps:

“When normative concerns show up in political communication research, they often take the form of assertions rather than assessments.” (Althaus 2012: 97)

Questions for consideration:

- How to formulate normative criteria for whether gendered news “matters”?
- What criteria are implicit in existing work?
 - Fairness or equity in coverage
 - Equality in political representation
- Is gendered news “bad” when it’s the result of gendered provision, perhaps even of the strategic mobilization of gender for electoral gain?
- Does gendered news matter if it doesn’t have effects? Or if its effects are minimal or fleeting?
- Is gendered news “good” when it has positive effects for women’s representation?

Thank you.



Iron Maiden



“Ms. Clinton responded with indignation, histrionics....”

25 January 2013, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

Pet



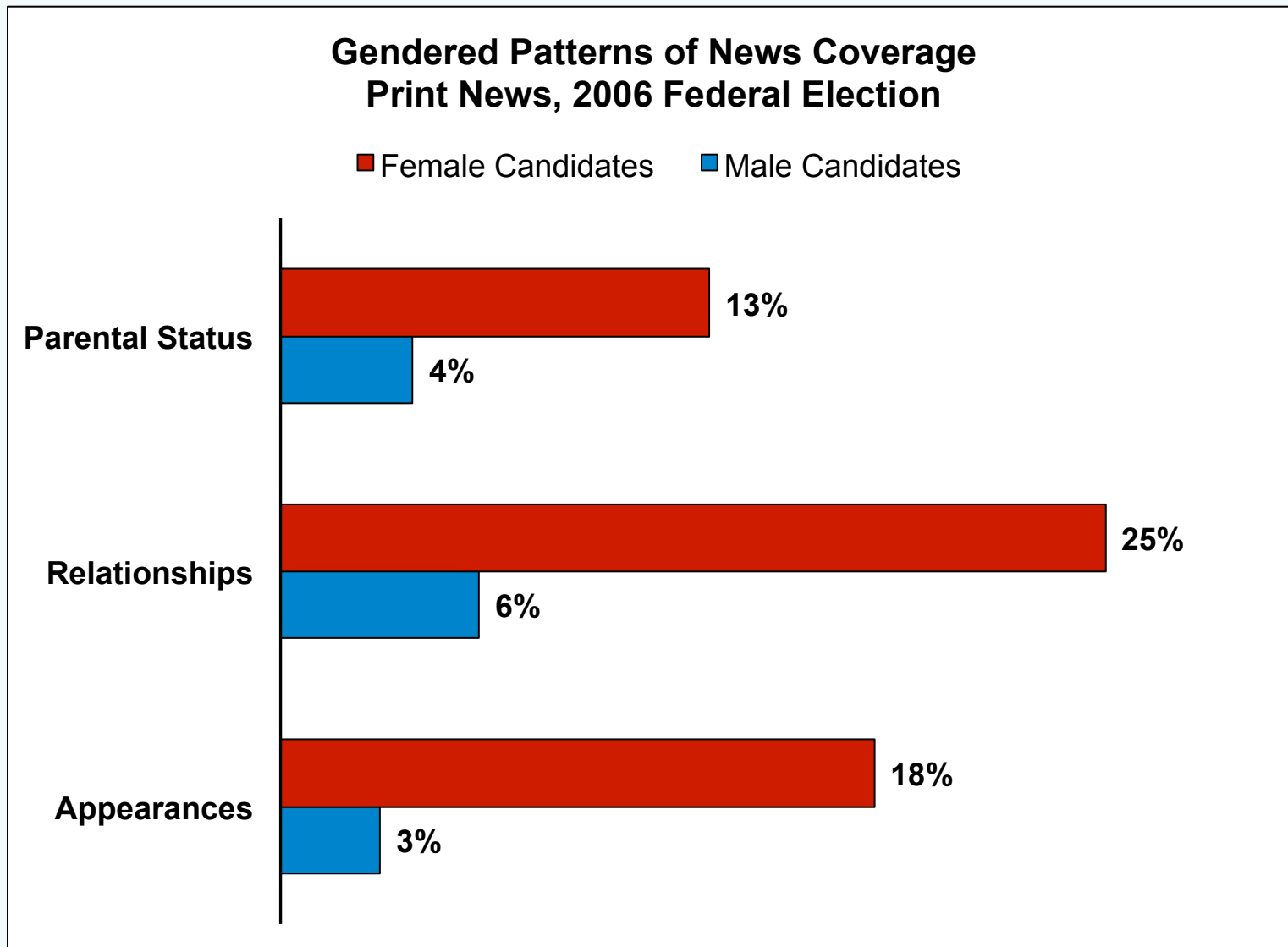
Sex Object

“slim, blonde, and striking”

“...looking ... like Jennifer Aniston in her calf-length boots and tan leather jacket”

Mother







1. Short-term electoral effects: **diminished prospects for women candidates**
2. Recruitment and role modelling effects: **diminished supply pool of candidates from which to draw**
3. Long-term societal impact: **perpetuation of gender stereotypes and biases, in and out of politics**