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**New Media/ Old News:
Intersectionality, Women Politicians and Mainstream Online News
Media in New Zealand**

Janice Sharan

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to examine the representation of women politicians in mainstream online news media. In the last 20 years, there have been increases in the number of women in New Zealand Parliament and women have held key leadership positions, including Prime Minister. Nevertheless, women still only make up about a third of New Zealand Parliament, despite being half the nation's population. The way women politicians are represented in mainstream news media is often referred to as an obstacle to women's participation in politics. Previous studies have concluded that women are frequently underrepresented and misrepresented in mainstream news. News coverage focuses on sex-based stereotypes and/or employs gendered news frames which portray women as political outsiders or agents of change.

I conduct a content analysis, underpinned by framing and intersectional theories to assess whether mainstream online news continues to exhibit patterns of gendered news coverage identified in previous research on women, politics and traditional forms of news media. Intersectional theory draws attention to the influence of multiple categories of social difference such as race, age, class and sexuality. The news websites selected for study are *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald*, as these are the two most visited news websites based in New Zealand. Analysis focuses on women political leaders and leadership candidates. The first case study examines the intersection of gender and race in mainstream online news coverage of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei during the 2014 general election; while the second examines the intersection of gender and age in mainstream online news coverage of Labour deputy leader candidates Annette King and Jacinda Ardern during the months of August and November 2015.

My findings indicate that gendered news frames and sex stereotyping are still evident in mainstream online news media. I also conclude that when we break down the category of women and consider intersecting categories of social difference we find that some women politicians are more likely to be omitted from news stories or portrayed as political outsiders. News coverage therefore not only differs between women and men, but between women politicians as well.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Traditionally, politics and the mainstream news media are spaces dominated by middle aged, middle class, white, heterosexual men. This thesis is concerned with the representation of women politicians in mainstream online news media in Aotearoa New Zealand. As a nation, we tend to pride ourselves on being an egalitarian society and a leader in women's rights and gender equality. In many ways, the New Zealand Parliament reflects this assertion with a high level of participation by women and members of other perceived minority groups compared to similar democratic societies. The Ministry for Women/ Minitatanga mō ngā Wāhine declares that since New Zealand led the world in giving women the vote in 1893, it has continued to ensure that women have full and equal rights, and the opportunity to fully participate at all levels in society (*The Ministry for Women*). Under the previous political system, first past the post, New Zealand had the highest number of women representatives compared to other countries with similar systems and women have regularly held ministerial positions since the 1970s (Devere and Davis 70). Since its inception in 1996, the mixed member proportional (MMP) political system has facilitated an increase in electoral diversity and resulted in more women and members of other perceived minority groups securing seats in the New Zealand House of Representatives. Under the MMP political system, not only have the number of women representatives increased overall, but women have also held several high ranking positions in parliament, including leaders of major political parties, Speaker of the House and Prime Minister.

Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go towards truly proportional representation of women in Parliament. Despite significant political achievements, women politicians in New Zealand only make up about a third of the members of Parliament, whereas, according to the 2013 National Census data, women make up about 51% of the country's population (*Statistics New Zealand*). The number of women in leadership positions is also significantly low. At the time of the 2014 general election there was only one woman leading a political party with a presence in Parliament, The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand co-leader Metiria Turei.

Mainstream news media representations of women politicians have often been cited as one of the obstacles in the way of women's participation in Government as stereotypical and gendered news coverage may undermine women's viability and credibility as politicians (Carroll and Schreiber 131; Fiig, 41; Kahn 1996, 57; Kittilson and Fridkin 371; Norris 1997b,

150; Karen Ross 2004, 66). Stereotypical, intrusive and antagonistic news coverage may also discourage women pursuing political careers and positions of leadership (Karen Ross 2004, 68). This kind of gendered news coverage has been consistently identified, despite the optimism that an increase in women in politics would result in more equitable news coverage.

In this thesis, I investigate whether mainstream online political journalism in Aotearoa New Zealand has reflected women's achievements in politics and improved the quality of media representations of women politicians, or whether journalists still rely on stereotypes and gendered forms of representation. The purpose of this study is to identify common themes in coverage of women political leaders and leadership candidates in New Zealand and assess to what extent mainstream online news media continue to report on women politicians in gendered ways. I also acknowledge that not all women politicians experience the same kinds of media bias. I therefore employ an intersectional perspective to examine how race, class, age and sexuality impact on the reporting of women politicians. Within a framework of media and power, I utilise framing and intersectionality theories to conduct content analyses of news articles on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites featuring women political leaders and leadership candidates during the 2014 general election and the re-evaluation of the position of Labour Party deputy leader in 2015. The following sections in this chapter outline the theoretical framework of this thesis and describe the scope of the research.

Women, News Media and Politics

Researchers in New Zealand and around the world have identified issues of misogyny and gender bias in mainstream news media coverage of women in politics, despite increases in women representatives worldwide. Common issues largely relate to the ways in which women politicians are treated differently to men through the use of gender based stereotypes and a stronger focus on their private lives. Studies document the prominent use of prescriptive sex stereotypes, such as a focus on the appearance of women politicians and their personal lives (Devitt 457; McGregor 181; Karen Ross 2004, 63-66; Van Acker 2003, 116-117). Sex stereotyping is also evident in issue based coverage as women are largely used as subjects and/or sources in relation to 'women's' or minority group issues and rarely as experts on areas traditionally considered 'masculine', such as finance, foreign policy or defence (Aday and Devitt 69; Carroll and Schreiber 145; Fiig 42-43; Fountaine 2002b, 246;). There is also evidence of more subtle forms of bias through the use of frames which draw attention to gender in the coverage featuring women politicians (Burke and Mazzarella 412;

Devere and Davis 66; Norris 1997b, 161-165; Karen Ross 2004, 66; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 113). Conventional political frames and the language and imagery associated with politics may also disadvantage women politicians as they typically privilege politics as a domain for men (Burke and Mazzarella 401; Gidengil and Everitt 2003, 201). These trends have been identified worldwide across different forms of mainstream news media, although these analyses tend to focus on television and print newspapers.

Writing within a New Zealand context in 1996, Judy McGregor identified examples of what she labels “media misogyny” in New Zealand news media’s coverage of women politicians (181). She cites media obsessions with then Labour leader Helen Clark’s “hairstyle and voice...persistent comment about whether former Alliance leader Sandra Lee’s voice sounds as if she is on the verge of tears”, and “a portrayal of Eden Member of Parliament Christine Fletcher as okay now that she’s more like one of the boys” as examples of misogynistic news media coverage in New Zealand (McGregor 181). McGregor argued that poor gender dynamics in political reporting showed no sign of improving anytime soon (182). Twenty years later, there is little evidence to suggest the high-profile achievements of women politicians such as Jenny Shipley (the first woman to hold the office of Prime Minister) and Helen Clark (the first woman Prime Minister elect, serving three terms) have resulted in more equitable news media representations of women in politics in Aotearoa. News narratives very similar to those described by McGregor can be identified in mainstream news reports from the last five years. In 2011, articles about the Auckland Central electoral contest between the Labour Party candidate Jacinda Ardern and National Party candidate Nikki Kaye focussed on what they wore to a debate against one another, while the contest itself was described as the “prettiest” electoral race and labelled the “Battle of the Babes”. In 2014, mainstream news media echoed the coverage of former Alliance MP Sandra Lee, which was criticised by McGregor, as it relished in reporting that the usually “tough” National Cabinet Minister, Judith Collins almost cried when facing allegations about misusing her political position. These news articles are only a small example of those which exhibit gender-based representations.

There is value in investigating news media representations of women politicians at this time because both the New Zealand political context and news media environment have undergone significant social, economic and technological changes in the last two decades. There are two significant ways in which this study accounts for these developments and differs from previous research on women, politics and news media. Firstly, whereas most

research on women, politics and news media has analysed traditional forms of media such as print, radio and television, this thesis examines online news articles. At this stage, there is little research published on the patterns of representation evident in online news. Given the significance of the medium as a primary source of information for many voters, how online news articles represent women politicians is an area that requires more close scholarly attention (Burke and Mazzarella 396; Ritchie 115). Citizens are regularly using the Internet as their main source of news (Allan 2006, 3; Matheson 133; Sissons and Mulrennan 283; Street 2011, 261). It has been suggested that online news media have the “potential for space and equality” that traditional forms of news media (print, radio and broadcast) lack, such as space and time restrictions (Yun et al. 930). Online news media therefore have the opportunity to present more diverse content with equal representation of all factions of society (Yun et al. 930). Whether mainstream online news media in New Zealand has taken up this opportunity has yet to be thoroughly analysed. So far, studies examining new media and politics in New Zealand have focused on blogs and social media, but not mainstream news (Hopkins and Matheson 2005, 92; Hopkins and Matheson 2012, 108; Matheson 132; Ross, Fountaine and Comrie 252). This thesis aims to establish whether the trends and patterns of coverage identified in previous studies on women, media and politics are evident in mainstream online news media in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The second key contribution of this thesis to the existing body of literature is the adoption of an intersectional perspective. I acknowledge that New Zealand is a diverse nation and that women politicians are not all the same and do not experience the same media treatment. Women are not the only perceived minority group that have been found to be treated unfairly by mainstream news media. For example, scholars have identified patterns of underrepresentation, marginalisation and negativity in mainstream news coverage of Māori (Abel 259; Barnes et al. 197). Moreover, individuals within the category of ‘woman’ also associate themselves with other traditionally marginalised groups. Of the 121 members of Parliament following the 2011 general election, 39 identified as women, comprising just 32% of Parliament (*New Zealand Parliament/ Pāremata Aotearoa*). Of these 39 women politicians, nine identified as Māori (23 %), one identified as Pacific Peoples (2.6 %) and one as Asian (2.6 %); three women politicians in the 50th Parliament openly identified as lesbian (7.7 %) and one identified as a person with a disability (2.3 %). Intersectionality theory suggests that multiple social and cultural categories such as gender, race, class and sexual orientation, interact in daily life to influence the experiences of individuals, and contribute to

systems of privilege and oppression such as racism, sexism, classism and other forms of identity based discrimination. Several international studies on the representation of women in the media have been broadened by taking an intersectional perspective, which “deepens the understanding of the ways the media organise power, through stereotypical representation and homogenisation of social categories” (Fiig 42). This thesis therefore incorporates intersectional analysis with content and framing analyses, to broaden our understanding of how different women politicians are represented and why.

Why News Media Matters

Mainstream news media have a significant role in the democratic process in terms of providing voters with information about candidates, policies and key issues, as well as acting as watchdogs for those in power. Their responsibilities are conceptualised in social responsibility theory, which asserts that journalists are expected to uphold “high professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity, and balance” and be “pluralist, reflecting the diversity of [the] society” in which they operate (Norris 1997a, 1-2). This in practice means that journalists should be familiar with the diverse range of communities and perspectives in Aotearoa New Zealand so they can adequately represent the community within which they operate (Archie 75; Tara Ross, 62). The principles outlined in social responsibility theory have been adopted by mainstream news media worldwide as a guide of the standards they should uphold (Norris 1997a, 1-2). These principles have also informed codes of ethics and professional conduct guidelines under which press councils and other news media complaints boards scrutinise the press (McQuail 173). In New Zealand, the Press Council is the regulatory body for print media, including newspapers and their websites. The council describes the important role of the press to provide information in New Zealand’s democratic society, insisting “proper fulfilment of that role requires a fundamental responsibility to maintain high standards of accuracy, fairness and balance” while remaining independent (*New Zealand Press Council*).

It is important to understand how mainstream news media represent politicians who identify with traditionally marginalised groups because news media are instrumental in how audiences understand their political representatives and the political environment. It is impossible for people to have first- hand knowledge of every issue and social group in their society, therefore mainstream news media are a main source of knowledge and perspectives (Abel 258). However, mainstream news representations are never simply a reflection of

reality, but “artfully constructed creations designed to appeal to our emotions and influence our ideas” (Dines and Humez xi). Several scholars argue that during election campaigns in particular, the mainstream news media have considerable power to draw attention to and emphasise particular issues and political candidates because voters strongly rely on news media for information on candidates, policies and important issues (Gershon 110; Kahn 1996, 55; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 103). This is not to say that there are direct correlations between media representations and voting behaviour. Rather, the news media have the power to draw attention to some aspects of politics and candidates while deflecting attention from others (Entman 53; Major and Coleman 318; Norris 1997a, 2; Karen Ross 2004, 72). If mainstream news media representations of women politicians online contain gender stereotypes and consistently frame women in gendered ways, it may imply to citizens that women in politics are preoccupied with things like appearances, homes and their personal lives rather than representing their constituents.

There is evidence to suggest that mainstream news media are not meeting the standards of fairness and diversity as they reinforce the views of the privileged and powerful dominant groups in society, which are usually white, middle-class and middle-aged, heterosexual men (Abel 258; Karen Ross 2004, 62; Tara Ross 62). Diverse reporting is important as it can help facilitate understanding of ‘minority’ groups, whereas ignoring or misrepresenting diversity can lead to misunderstanding, and fuel divisions. Commercial interests are likely behind the affirmation of the dominant culture, as news organisations want to attract as large an audience as possible (Karen Ross 2004, 62; Tara Ross 63). In order to attract the attention and maintain the support of dominant groups, mainstream online news media may frame stories in ways which reflect the beliefs and values of those groups. Economically and socially privileged groups also tend to monopolise powerful tools such as the opportunity to create and distribute mainstream news media and subsequently “reproduce and maintain their own economic and symbolic privilege” (Hodgets et al. 193). The composition of news organisations in New Zealand therefore also contribute to the favouring of white, male perspectives as the majority of company executives, editors and high ranking journalists tend to be Pākehā men.

There is need for further analysis of online news as the popularity and power of mainstream online news media increases. The Internet is a growing source for news and information (Allan 2006, 25; Sissons and Mulrennan 283; Street 2011, 261). There was optimism that the internet would provide users a space free of discrimination and better

access to information (Burke and Mazzarella 396). Advantages of online news compared to print or television are that the Internet offers more space to share different points of view, it has the capacity for more in-depth reporting and news articles can be updated as soon as new information becomes available (Allan 2006, 25; Sissons and Mulrennan 284; Yun et al. 930). News articles published online will immediately be available and are not limited by time or space in the same way as television, radio bulletins and newspapers are. However, the immediacy of the Internet can also be disadvantageous for online news as journalists scramble to publish information as soon as possible. Comrie and McGregor argue that in a New Zealand context, the expectations that new technology would improve journalism have “proved to be a fallacy” due to the demands of increased real time news and the 24 hour news cycle (10). In addition to a lack of in-depth information and analysis, there are issues of reliability associated with the push for news as it happens, as journalists have less time to fact check and reflect on issues. They may also rely more heavily on stereotypes when they lack sufficient information about an issue or individual because of the requirement to publish as quickly as possible.

Terms

It is important to define some of the terminology used throughout this thesis, as critical analysis of political journalism within a New Zealand context means it is essential to use some specific terms and abbreviations. New Zealand operates under a political system known as mixed member proportional (MMP) which is based on proportional representation. Voters can cast two votes, one for the political party they most want in Government (which allows the party to field list MPs); and the second for their local electorate representative. Politicians who are elected to the House of Representatives (also referred to as ‘the House’ and ‘Parliament’) are known as members of parliament (MP). They can be either Electorate MPs or List MPs. An Electorate MP is elected in a specific geographical area whereas a List MP is elected via the party list. The party list is a ranked list of candidates put forward by the party before the election. The person named at the top of the party list becomes Prime Minister if the party wins the majority of the seats in Parliament, or forms a majority coalition.

The concept of ‘mainstream’ reflects and reinforces dominant discourses in society. As Pākehā are the majority of the population, the dominant discourse favours Pākehā culture and values. The term ‘mainstream news media’ refers to those media organisations that both

are the largest news media organisations operating in Aotearoa, in terms of company size and reach, audience numbers and economic status, and reflect dominant cultural values. The mainstream news media are therefore English-language based, and the majority of reporters, editors and owners tend to be of Pākehā descent. It is important to acknowledge that mainstream news media are not a monolithic body reproducing the same ideas. Stuart Hall explains that critics of media cannot “subscribe to too simple or reductive a view of their operations” as this “lacks credibility and weakens the case they are making because the theories and critiques don’t square with reality” (106). The term ‘mainstream online news media’ when used in this thesis refers to the specific news websites of New Zealand’s largest mainstream communicative media organisations Fairfax and NZME (New Zealand Media and Entertainment- a subsidiary of APN News and Media). These are the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites. There are of course a number of other sources for news online, including blogs, the websites associated with television stations, radio stations and independent news platforms that may present a similar or alternative perspective when it comes to representations of women politicians. However, for the purposes of this study, I am interested in those organisations that have the greatest reach based on the number of website visitors.

Chapter Outlines

In chapter two I provide a review of existing literature on mainstream news media representations of women in politics. The chapter explores why research in this field is important and provides the data set against which my own findings will be compared. Previous research on women, politics and the news media has identified several consistent themes in the coverage of women politicians. This chapter discusses the theme of sex-stereotyping, and the news media’s focus on personal themes, gendered news frames (the breakthrough frame, women as political outsiders frame and women as agents of change frame). The chapter aims to identify the gaps in the current research and outline how this thesis will address them through analysis of articles in online mainstream news media and the incorporation of intersectional theory. The studies discussed in this chapter inform the research design for this project, which is outlined in the methodology in chapter three.

Chapter three defines and discusses the methodologies used in this thesis. Framing and intersectional theories inform an analysis of mainstream online news media articles from the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites during the 2014 general election year and

between August 2015 to November 2015 when Labour leader Andrew Little was poised to name a deputy leader. It also explains how articles were selected for analysis and outlines the main research questions this thesis seeks to answer.

Chapter four analyses mainstream online news coverage of the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand co-leader Metiria Turei during the months leading up to the 2014. The chapter examines how Turei was presented in online articles and how news media representations of her were coloured by the intersecting social identity categories of gender, race and class. I discuss how the political outsider frame is applied to Turei, a Māori woman politician from a lower-socio economic background, emphasising her gender, race and class. This frame is reinforced by a disproportionate focus on Turei's clothes, role as a mother and her home compared to her policies and political work. I also discuss how the conflict frame, which is often used in political journalism, is used in relation to women politicians as well as how this frame tends to support a Pākehā perspective in news about Māori people and Māori issues.

Chapter five analyses mainstream online news coverage of the Labour Party Members of Parliament Annette King and Jacinda Ardern when they were reported as the frontrunners for the Labour Party deputy leader position. The chapter explores how the intersection of gender and age influences different, albeit still gendered, coverage of Jacinda Ardern and Annette King. I demonstrate that underrepresentation is an issue for Annette King as an older woman politician; whereas Jacinda Ardern, as a younger woman in politics receives plenty of press attention. I discuss the presence of sex stereotypes in relation to personal traits and issues; and demonstrate that the agents of change news frame is applied to Ardern as a fresh face who will save the Labour Party from another poor election result. I also discuss evidence of personalisation and celebrity treatment in coverage of Ardern and what this communicates about her credibility and viability as a politician.

The final chapter summarises the findings of this research. It discusses the key conclusions reached from the analyses and overall conclusions about the representation of women politicians in mainstream online news media. The findings of an intersectional perspective will make a particularly significant contribution to the existing literature on the news media representations of women politicians in New Zealand.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

There is a well-established body of literature examining the representation of women politicians in mainstream news media. This thesis aims to add to this body of work by analysing mainstream online news media websites and by adopting an intersectional perspective to ascertain how coverage is influenced by categories of social difference. The purpose of this chapter is to review the existing literature on women, politics and the news media with the aim of identifying common themes and patterns, which will inform my research design. Studies examining news coverage of women politicians have identified several recurring themes and patterns of representation. These themes tend to be consistent across different countries and different political systems.

Firstly, research in this area has identified the issue of visibility, or what could be more aptly described as the invisibility of women in mainstream news media compared to their male colleagues (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49; Kahn 1996, 55; Kahn and Goldenberg 195-196; Ross and Sreberny-Mohammadi 1996, 103; Tuchman 1978, 8). Secondly, studies demonstrate that when women politicians are visible, news coverage tends to use stereotypically feminine terms to describe women politicians and/or narrowly focus on topics stereotypically considered to be ‘women’s issues’ like education, healthcare and social welfare (Aday and Devitt 69; Carroll and Schreiber 142; Major and Coleman 372). Thirdly, scholars have drawn attention to subtle bias in the form of gendered news framing which draws attention to gender when it is not particularly relevant to the story (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49; Norris 1997b, 155; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 113). The key conclusion from previous studies is that women politicians are treated differently to their male colleagues, in ways which tend to disadvantage women as political leadership candidates (Carroll and Schreiber 144-146; Devitt 457; Karen Ross 2004, 73; Norris 1997b, 164; Ritchie 2013, 102; Van Acker 2003, 116). This thesis aims to identify the extent to which gendered news patterns are still apparent in mainstream online political journalism in New Zealand at present.

Women, Politics and the News Media

Early research on the representation of women politicians in mainstream news media focused on the issue of visibility as women politicians and candidates received significantly less news coverage compared with their male colleagues (Kahn 1994, 164; Kahn 1996, 132; Kahn and Goldberg 197; Tuchman 1978, 8-9). Gaye Tuchman’s theory of how symbolic

annihilation applies to mass media representations of women is perhaps the most widely cited body of work on the issue of visibility (Fountain and McGregor 1). Tuchman referred to symbolic annihilation to describe the way in which mass media omit women as subjects and news sources, and devalue or belittle their political contributions through trivialisation and condemnation (8). In multiple studies, Kahn and Goldenberg found evidence to support Tuchman's assessment as women political candidates were featured in far fewer news stories compared to men political candidates (Kahn 1994, 164; Kahn 1996, 43-45; Kahn and Goldenberg 185). Additionally, they found that the news coverage women political candidates were featured in disproportionately focused on their viability as candidates rather than their positions on key issues (Kahn 1994, 164; Kahn 1996, 132; Kahn and Goldenberg 197). Lack of attention on women's serious political work could leave the impression that they do not make meaningful contributions in the public sphere.

There is evidence to suggest that mainstream news media's treatment of women politicians in terms of visibility, overt trivialisation and condemnation has improved as women's representation in politics has increased. Several studies demonstrate that issues of visibility have decreased as more women participate in elections and in Parliament's worldwide (Carroll and Schreiber 130; Devitt 453; Fountain and McGregor 1; Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49; Norris 1997b 164). In her seminal study on new coverage of women political leaders worldwide, Pippa Norris found that while women are still less visible than men as political sources and news subjects, the difference is not substantial (1997b, 163). Devitt also concludes that women and men gubernatorial nominees received the same amount of coverage in a daily newspaper articles in the United States (453). In some cases, women may even be more visible as news media consider them novelties compared to the male norm, and thus more newsworthy by virtue of being different (Karen Ross 2004, 64; Meeks 178-179; Ross and Comrie 970; Van Acker 2003, 132). An increase in visibility however, does not necessarily equate to improvements in the quality of coverage and studies continue to identify issues with the type of coverage women politicians receive.

One of the main concerns highlighted by scholars examining the quality of news coverage of women politicians is the prominent use of gender stereotypes (Aday and Devitt 69; Carroll and Schreiber 145; Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49; Van Acker 2003, 117). The practice of basing news media representations on generalisations and assumptions about women or men by virtue of their gender is widely referred to as sex stereotyping. Sex stereotypical representations can be either positive or negative, and in relation to the personal

characteristics of politicians or political issues (Norris 1997a 8; Norris 1997b 153). Kahn explains that sex stereotypes are formed in different societal contexts, and while the news media may not create stereotypes, they can contribute to the reinforcement of particular stereotypes (1996, 6). Most sex stereotypes are rooted in ideas about the appropriate ways to perform femininity and masculinity. For women politicians, they are often tied to physical appearance and the domestic sphere, as these are traditionally women's domains, whereas the public sphere is matched to men.

The mainstream news media's tendency to focus on women politicians' appearances and their personal details constitutes some of the primary criticism of women's coverage in regards to stereotypes. Compared to their male colleagues, women in politics are more likely scrutinised for the lengths of their skirts, how they wear their hair and their weight amongst a myriad of other aspects of their physical appearance (Van Acker 2003, 117). Karen Ross reveals that women politicians themselves feel that their appearance attracts more news media attention than anything else they do (2004, 64). There are some contradictory findings on the prevalence of overt sex stereotyping. Norris concludes that overall simple and crude sex stereotypes of women and gratuitous remarks about appearances are rare (1997b, 159). She also stresses that sexist remarks in news tend to be exception, not the norm (Norris 1997b, 159). Carroll and Schreiber find some examples of reporters discussing women politicians' appearance and personal lives, but conclude that by and large, mainstream news media seem to have "gotten the message that it is inappropriate to discuss the appearance and clothing" of women in politics (139). However, analysis of news media coverage of several prominent women leaders shows that crude sex stereotyping is evident.

Analysing mainstream news media coverage of former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Woodward finds significant evidence of references to Gillard's appearance. A few examples include an entire article devoted to analysis of Julia Gillard's shoe in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, as though it would offer "insight" into her leadership style; and an article dedicated to her handbag in national news section of *The Australian* (Woodward 31-32). She also identifies scrutiny of Julia Gillard's marital status, with news media badgering her about her and her partner's living arrangement (29). Some reporters go so far as to question Gillard about her partner's sexuality, implying that a man dating a powerful woman could not possibly be heterosexual (Woodward 29).

There are parallels between coverage of Julia Gillard and coverage of New Zealand's first elected woman Prime Minister, Helen Clark. Clark's relationship with her husband and her family life was also a topic for news media speculation. For example, Devere and Davis note that during the 1999 general election, articles referred to Clark's husband as her "partner" and made references to her "childlessness" (73). There was also media analysis of Clark and her husband's sleeping arrangement and the presence of 'his' and 'her' mugs in their home (Devere and Davis 79). McGregor recalls *The Dominion Post* publishing a particularly unflattering photo of Clark and her husband kissing after she became Prime Minister, with the caption "Leadership passion" (185). She explains the Press Council ruled that the photograph "introduced elements of ridicule and bad taste" and women reporters from the paper revealed to Clark that there were nicer photographs that could have been used (McGregor 185).

Further abroad, Van Dembrouke demonstrates that news media in Argentina and internationally have focused on Argentinian President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's appearance, "her make-up, her extensions and long hair, her being fond of high heels, her being inappropriately sexy" (1063). She notes that Fernández de Kirchner has been criticised for being more interested in fashion than politics due to the overemphasis on her appearance as opposed to her political performance and policies (1063). In a study of media coverage of the Democratic Presidential Primary Candidate Hillary Clinton, and the Republican Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin, Carlin and Winfrey also find overtly sexist representations in mainstream news media. They demonstrate that Palin's appearance and personal history as a beauty pageant contestant resulted in media references to her "sexiness" while Clinton's appearance was referred to in derogatory ways with references to her pantsuits and "cankles (thick ankles)" (Carlin and Winfrey 330). They also note references to Clinton and Palin's personal lives through discussion of them as wives and mothers (Carlin and Winfrey 337). These examples of references to political leaders in Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and the United States suggest that crude sex stereotyping is still evident in mainstream news media coverage of women politicians globally. Although the news media also report on the appearances and personal details of men politician's lives, the extent to which women are scrutinised in the news media for their clothes, hair, relationships and other personal details is unparalleled.

Sex stereotyping is also evident in relation to issue based coverage. Although, issue based coverage is unlikely to be a concern for women politicians in New Zealand as

spokespersons on topics are dependent on party structures, political party leaders and leadership candidates may be expected to have ideas about issues outside their specified portfolios. Several scholars show that news coverage of women politicians tends to relegate issue coverage to ‘soft’ topics traditionally considered “women’s issues” like health, abortion, family violence, child care and education (Carroll and Schreiber 145; Gershon 316; Goodyear-Grant 54). Men politicians on the other hand are covered in relation to their stance and history on “hard topics” like crime, finance, the economy and defence (Gershon 316). Gershon finds that news media will cover a woman political candidate in reference to stereotypical women’s issues even when there is evidence that she “has greater experience with traditionally masculine issues” (326). Carroll and Schreiber also demonstrate that women politicians are often portrayed as working collectively on these issues (140). This representation may be viewed as positive, as it shows that women can harmoniously work together to achieve results. However, coverage which groups women politicians together in this way denies the complexity of women’s interests (Van Acker 2003, 117). Issue based news media representations thus suggest that women can only contribute to politics in relation to stereotypically women’s issues and in stereotypically feminine ways such as sharing and collaboration.

Framing Research

Another concern consistently highlighted in studies analysing the quality of women’s representation in news media regards gendered framing. Norris refers to framing as a more subtle form of bias than overt sex stereotyping (1997b, 161). She identifies three frames which are frequently applied to women leaders: the breakthrough frame, women as outsiders, and women politicians as agents of change (Norris 1997b, 161). Goodyear-Grant notes that the gendered news frames applied to women politicians are “remarkably similar” across different countries and political systems (55). The key descriptor in all these frames is gender. Although some may seem positive, they nevertheless draw attention to gender differences and reinforce the theme of politics being a male preserve.

The outsider frame and the agents of change frame are particularly relevant for this thesis. Given the high-profile achievements of politicians like Jenny Shipley and Helen Clark, the breakthrough frame is now likely to be less relevant in New Zealand news media representations. The agent of change frame suggests that by virtue of their gender, women will inspire change in politics. This change can be related to either the nature of politics itself

if citizens feel there is a too much corruption, or in the performance of political parties if they are not performing well under male leadership (Jamieson 115; Norris 1997b, 164; Van Acker 2003, 120; Wright and Holland 458-459). The frame is reflective of news media expecting better standards of behaviour from women politicians. Karen Ross argues that media expect women to exhibit “higher moral values, more honesty, integrity, and loyalty” (2004, 63). Norris explains that while the agent of change frame may appear positive at first, it “may create false expectations for what” women leaders can achieve (Norris 1997b, 164-165). In the long term the frame may lead to disappointment in women politicians when they do not meet unrealistic expectations.

Women and men leaders are both likely to be covered as agents of change, but the frame is more dominant in coverage of women politicians (Norris 1997b, 163). For women, the frame appears to be more focused on gender than it is on political expertise, experiences or prior achievements that might make them a genuine catalyst for change. Van Acker explains that Australian news media portrayed Bronwyn Bishop as the politician that would “rescue the Liberal Party from its woes” (2003, 119). Bishop’s popularity rose as she was frequently featured in favourable news media coverage. However, when she began demonstrating that she may not be up to the job of Prime Minister and the majority of the party itself did not support her, media quickly abandoned the “golden girl” and party saviour representation (Van Acker 2003, 120). Van Acker explains that the news media held Bishop to higher standards of behaviour because she is a woman (2003, 120). Although Bishop did not make any significant political mistakes, she was seen to have failed as the saviour of the Liberal Party because of unrealistic expectations that she would fix their problems.

A second frame which is often evident in coverage of women politicians is the women as outsiders frame (Fountain and McGregor 4; Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49; Norris 1997b, 162; Van Acker 2003, 117-118). Norris explains that the women as political outsiders frame stresses women politicians’ deviations from “conventional qualifications and prior political experience” (1997b, 162). She argues that ‘women experience a process of de-qualification when acting in what is perceived as a man’s world of diplomacy and international security’; a process which consists of “undermining or underestimating a woman leader’s capabilities and experiences, and seeing the appropriate qualification for the job in terms of the (masculine) characteristics of the past officeholders” (Norris 1997b, 162). Although women may bring a wide range of skills and experiences to politics, the news media tend to ignore or undervalue those which do not conform to the masculine skill set traditionally associated with politics.

Additionally, related to the political outsider framing is the treatment of women politicians as novelties. As women in key leadership roles are still rare in many places, there is often heightened news media interest on women politicians when they run for significant positions (Karen Ross 2004, 64; Meeks 178-179; Ross and Comrie 970; Van Acker 2003, 132). Novelty treatment of women politicians is evident when extra attention is paid to aspects which signify them as deviations from the stereotypical heterosexual, middle aged male candidate (Meeks 178). For instance, Meeks identifies a significant number of novelty references such as “lone”, “pioneer”, “woman” and “wife” in news coverage of American Republican Party Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin in 2008 (Meeks 185-186). In comparison the male candidates for President in the same election “did not receive a *single* uniqueness reference” [emphasis in the original] (186). The treatment of women politicians as novelties reinforces the notion of women as political outsiders by drawing attention to aspects that make them different to typical, male politicians.

The language typically used in political journalism may also contribute to the framing of women as political outsiders by reinforcing masculinity as the norm against which women are marked as different (Campus 116; Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49 and 2003, 201; Jamieson 120; Meeks 177; Wright and Holland 456). Gidengil and Everitt argue that traditional political news frames, such as the conflict frame disadvantage women because they are built around the dominance of men in politics (1999, 49; 2003 201). For example, political contests are usually reported with reference to warfare, battles and sports games, drawing upon the language and imagery of areas traditionally dominated by men (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 50). This type of bias is sometimes referred to as gendered mediation. Gidengil and Everitt argue that because the language and imagery of political journalism typically reflects men’s dominance in politics, its application to women politicians results in preoccupation with women’s behaviour that does not fit with the traditional expectations of feminine behaviour (1999, 49). This draws attention to the challenge that women politicians’ face of having to perform both masculine and feminine traits in their leadership styles.

To counteract being framed as political outsiders, some women politicians attempt to emphasise masculine traits (Campus 12). However, this may backfire on women due to the challenge of the “double bind”. Jamieson explains that women leadership candidates are expected to demonstrate a balance of stereotypically feminine characteristics and stereotypically masculine characteristics (120). Analysing coverage of former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Appleby explains that women must be “compassionate and

tough” but not so tough that they appear unfeminine (Appleby 155). If women politicians fail to find the correct balance, news media will disproportionately focus on their unfeminine behaviour. Appleby’s case study of Julia Gillard shows that “displays of ambition, authority and decisiveness- qualities appropriate for political leaders- were quickly relabelled in the news media as inappropriately aggressive and, ultimately, seen as evidence of her failure to meet the normative expectations attached to the category of ‘female leader’” (155). Wright and Holland’s analysis of news coverage following Julia Gillard’s speech about sexism and misogyny in Australia supports Appleby’s argument. Wright and Holland identify an overall negative news media response to Gillard’s speech (461). The mainstream news media portrayed Gillard’s speech as a calculated “attack” and Gillard herself as “ambitious and aggressive”, instead of focusing on the important issues highlighted in her speech (Wright and Holland 461). Wright and Holland also attribute this representation to the perception that Julia Gillard is not displaying the right balance between feminine and masculine characteristics (461).

Ritchie also finds evidence of the double bind in online news coverage. In an analysis of coverage of Hillary Clinton, Ritchie concludes that “Clinton’s refusal to conform to gender norms in her appearance and behaviour result in a particularly brutal media attack on both her character and her gender” (104). Ritchie identifies a “castration” theme in coverage of Clinton because she appears *too* tough for a woman politician (104). Rather than being portrayed as firm and strong as a male candidate might be, Clinton is portrayed as “violent and destructive” for hard-line positions on defence and foreign policy (Ritchie 104). It is evident that as long as mainstream news media focus on gender, women politicians are in a no-win situation.

Intersectionality Research

Studies on women politicians and the news media largely focus on content analysis from the perspective of a single social category: gender. Research that treats women as a single category risks concluding that all women receive the same news media treatment. However, gender does not operate alone in the way different women or men experience news media treatment (Yuval-Davis 195). Intersectional research aims to understand how multiple categories of social difference interact to inform news media coverage of different women politicians. Studies examining the representation of women politicians with an intersectional perspective demonstrate that news coverage which is gender biased may be worsened by

other factors such as race, age and sexuality (Fiig 49; Gershon 109-118; Hancock 248; Major and Coleman 316-320). Gershon, for example, examining the intersection of race, gender and news media in the United States finds that racial minority congresswomen receive less news coverage compared to other congressional members (117). She also finds that coverage tends to be “more negative than that of their peers” and that their perceived areas of expertise are more limited (Gershon 109-118). Gershon concludes that while gender or race alone does not necessarily “provide the serious barriers to equal media coverage that they once did”, the “cumulative impact of the identities” diminishes the quality and quantity of news coverage (107-116).

Major and Coleman find evidence to concur that news media often rely on stereotypes when reporting on the policy expertise of perceived minority political candidates (320). Women are perceived to have specific areas of expertise related to gender, such as education and health care and racial minority candidates are perceived to be experts in race related topics (316-320). Thus when women candidates also identify with a racial minority group there areas of expertise are perceived to be even more limited. This may prevent minority women candidates from attracting broad support if they are seen to only be able to contribute to niche political areas.

In some contexts, women politicians also incur the cumulative impact of gender and religious identities. Fiig analyses news media coverage of a Danish woman politician and finds the representations focused on her Turkish ethnic background and her religion despite her own self-representation and politics focusing on class (46). Fiig argues that even when the topic at hand is related to motherhood, news media representations of Ozlem Cekic shift the focus back to ethnicity and religion (46). These findings demonstrate that depending on social context, emphasis is placed on some categories of social difference more so than others. Within a New Zealand social context, I expect to find that the categories of race, class and age (linked with sexuality) will have the greatest influence on coverage of women politicians.

Women Politicians and the News Media in New Zealand

Studies show that New Zealand news media’s representation of women politicians identify many of the trends and patterns of coverage identified in international research. It has now been 20 years since Judy McGregor analysed mainstream news content of women politicians and concluded that news media representations were “misogynistic” (181).

McGregor found examples of overt sex stereotyping as news media were obsessed with women politicians' hairstyles and voices, and whether or not they would cry on television (181). Van Acker also identifies examples of news media focusing on personal details like motherhood and sexuality (121-122). There is also evidence to suggest that news media coverage judged women on their expression of feminine and masculine characteristics. Helen Clark for example was heavily scrutinised for appearing too aggressive and assertive-qualities that would usually be valued in a leader (Van Acker 2003, 121). This exemplifies the challenge of the double bind for women participating in what is usually thought of as men's domain.

Scholars in New Zealand have also found the visibility of women politicians in the news media is linked with the presence of women in Parliament and in leadership roles. Fountaine and McGregor for example, find that in 2000, when the three major constitutional positions were held by women (Prime Minister, Governor-General and Chief Justice), there were high numbers of women sources used in political news stories (2). They conclude that "women's representation in the news media" changed "to reflect their increased political status" (5). Devere and Davis reach a similar conclusion stating that as women have consistently held leadership positions since 1996, they have "remained" visible in the news (79). However, Fountaine and McGregor, and Devere and Davis reached these conclusions while Helen Clark was still Prime Minister and since her departure in 2008, only minor political parties in the House have been co-led by women politicians. It will be interesting to see whether positive trends in coverage have continued since women have not been in high-profile leadership positions.

Fountaine and Comrie suggest that the quality of news coverage of women politicians does not reflect the high-profile success of women in politics either, as they identify examples of sex stereotyping and gendered framing (272). Although there have been increases in the number of women running for and winning seats in Parliament, news media continue to "cast women as novelties and norm breakers" (279). They illustrate similarities between news coverage of the Auckland Central Electorate contest with new coverage of Jenny Shipley and Helen Clark in 1999 (278). The Auckland Central contest between National's Nikki Kaye and Labour's Jacinda Ardern was labelled "battle of the babes" and articles frequently refer to their clothes, their shoes and their make-up. Fountaine and Comrie draw parallels between this coverage and coverage labelling the contest between Clark and Shipley "battle of the Boadicea's" (278). This demonstrates that the feminised version of the

conflict frame, the cat-fight frame, were still employed by New Zealand news media more than ten years since two women first contested an election against one another. It leaves the impression that little had changed in New Zealand news media representations of women political candidates.

Preoccupation with the appropriate behaviour of women and men politicians is also evident in New Zealand news media coverage. Devere and Davis find examples of the double bind for women evident in coverage of the 2005 general election when the incumbent Helen Clark was up against the National Party leader Don Brash. Although the difference in gender between the two leaders was not initially part of news media coverage, news media “seized the opportunity” to focus on gender after Brash raised the issue (Devere and Davis 75). Following a leader’s debate, Brash stated that he “restrained” himself during the debate because it was “not entirely appropriate for a man to aggressively attack a woman”. Brash was criticised in the news media for his sexist remarks, however Devere and Davis demonstrate that moving forward, news media used the opportunity to frame the contest between Clark and Brash as one “between a courteous, chivalrous, slightly old-fashioned, but polite, gentlemanly Brash and the strident, unladylike, aggressive ‘Rottweiler’, feminist Clark” (75). They suggest that this framing of Clark shows that “the qualities expected in a leader, such as assertiveness, ambition and strength, are perceived as inappropriate for a woman” (75). Their assessment is aligned with overseas conclusions about the expectations of femininity and leadership.

Ross and Comrie analyse news coverage of the 2008 general election and also find examples of gendered based coverage. They support Devere and Davis’s view that Helen Clark is criticised for displaying the traits of assertion and strength, usually valued in men politicians (974). They also concur with McGregor that the news media were obsessed with Clark’s private life, providing evidence of news media speculating on her sexuality and her relationship with her husband (972). Ross and Comrie also find that Clark received less meaningful coverage compared to her younger, male opponent at the 2008 election, John Key (970). They explain that while Clark featured in slightly more newspaper stories than Key, she was usually quoted or paraphrased towards the middle or end of stories, whereas Key was quoted or paraphrased nearer the beginning (978). Given appearing first or last in a story has more lasting significance for readers, this could be seen to constitute an unequal distribution of news media coverage between the party leaders.

Ross and Comrie's study is one of the few in New Zealand which acknowledges how the intersection between categories of social difference can influence news media coverage. They suggest that age was a factor in coverage of Helen Clark at the 2008 election, when she was up against a younger, male candidate (981). They argue that Clark, who had been Prime Minister for nine years at that point, was disadvantaged by the "media's desire for new personalities" (981). Ross and Comrie demonstrate the coverage of Clark was far from objective as she was less visible than Key, and coverage of her tended to be more negative (978-981). There has been little research conducted from an intersectional perspective into the representation of women politicians. Considering the rich diversity amongst New Zealand's Members of Parliament, there is room for more analysis considering the intersection of race, gender, age and sexuality.

News Media and Democracy

The representation of women politicians in mainstream news media is a topic which requires investigation because persistent gendered news coverage may negatively affect women's participation in Government. Differences in news treatment may present an obstacle to women's electoral success as women candidates might be less recognisable and voters may not be aware of their prior achievements and experience, or policy positions (Kahn 1996, 131-132; Kahn and Goldenberg 194; Ross and Carter 148; Ross and Comrie 970). Relegating women to the private sphere and reinforcing sex-role stereotypes may suggest that women are unsuited to positions of political power (Carroll and Schreiber 131; Fiig 41; Kahn 1996 58; Karen Ross 2004, 62; Kittilson and Fridkin 371; Norris 1997b 150). Fewer women may also choose to run for office if they see the political process as a disproportionately negative one (Karen Ross 2004, 68). Their chances of a successful campaign may also be harmed by negative representations by skewing the attitudes of "key gatekeepers like campaign donors, party activists, and voters" who provide vital support to political candidates (Norris 1997b, 150). It is therefore important to examine how mainstream news media represent women politicians because fair and accurate news coverage is essential to the democratic process.

Mainstream online news media in this thesis refers to the New Zealand news websites *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald*. There has been optimism that the development of new media technologies, such as news online, would resolve the issue of mainstream news media covering women and minority politicians in limited ways (Ritchie 2013, 107; Yun et al. 930). This is largely attributed to the fact that online news is not limited by many of the

restrictions imposed on print or television, such as time and space. Yun et al. insist that “limitless space, the low cost of production, the ease of updating online content, and informal organisation of website information... have the potential to change media’s current gatekeeping values to allow more stories to be published” (943). The gatekeeping values of mainstream news media in New Zealand have been typically been recognised as favouring the interests of heterosexual, Pākehā men (Archie 75; Tara Ross 63). The medium of online news media provides an opportunity for mainstream news media to forego old news values which privilege dominate groups when deciding what to publish, and instead publish stories which reflect the diverse society in which they operate.

However, literature examining mainstream online news coverage suggests that news organisations have yet to capitalise on the time and space afforded to it by the Internet to present more equitable news (Ritchie 114; Yun et al. 939-943). Although literature in New Zealand has explored the role of new media technologies in politics, this research tends to be focused how political commentators and politicians themselves use forums like blogs, live streaming and social media rather than how politicians are represented in mainstream online news (Hopkins and Matheson 2005, 92; Hopkins and Matheson 2012, 108; Matheson 132; Ross, Fountaine and Comrie 252). Hence there is a gap in the literature regarding mainstream online news media, women and politics, one which this thesis aims to address.

Summary and Implications

This chapter demonstrates that international and New Zealand based research have identified similar issues with gender based news coverage of women politicians. Overall, the existing body of literature on women politicians and the news media illustrates that news media treat women differently to their male colleagues. Although some issues, such as quantity of coverage and crude stereotyping may be less prevalent in coverage of women politicians as a group, the literature demonstrates that mainstream news media still employ gendered news frames which portray women as political outsiders or unfairly set them up as agents of change (Norris 1997b, 163-164; Van Acker 2003, 120; Wright and Holland 159). Additionally, intersectional research has demonstrated that individual women politicians, based on other categories of social difference such as race and religion, may experience more severe instances of news media bias in regards to visibility, stereotyping and framing (Fiig 49; Gershon 109-118; Hancock 248; Major and Coleman 316-320). The review has identified prominent issues in the news coverage of women politicians that will inform the key research

design for this project which, as the literature recommends, are largely focused on the quality of news coverage women politicians receive.

This review has also identified gaps in the existing body of literature on women politicians and the news media in New Zealand. Although, the representation of women politicians in mainstream news media has received considerable critical attention since 1996, this chapter demonstrates that there is room for more analysis of mainstream news media from an intersectional perspective and analysis of online news media. Research which considers the intersection of multiple categories of social difference in mainstream news media representations of women in politics is lacking. For example, studies analysing the representation of Māori and the news media conclude that Māori are significantly underrepresented, marginalised and often portrayed negatively (Abel 259; Barnes et al. 197; Nairn et al. 39). However, few scholars have considered the impact of gender and race intersecting, i.e. how Māori women are represented in the mainstream news compared to their white women or male peers of any race. Hence, the two main contributions of this research to the existing body of literature on women, politics and the news media in New Zealand is to adopt an intersectional perspective and the examine mainstream online news content.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodologies and key theories used in this examination of mainstream online news media coverage of women politicians in 2014 and 2015. In order to understand how women politicians are covered in online news, I conducted an analysis of news articles on the most frequently visited New Zealand news websites, *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald*, informed by the principles of framing and intersectionality theories. Several scholars have argued that a mixed method approach which combines different levels of quantitative and qualitative analysis and tools, is the most appropriate approach to news media analysis (Hansen et al. 91; Macnamara 6; Wodak and Busch 108). Wodak and Busch explain that “media analysis is problem oriented and not dogmatically related any one theory or methodology” (108). Therefore it is appropriate to apply different methods where useful.

This research benefits from a three-fold approach to analysing media texts. Content analysis informs the definition of a text and the aspects of texts that communicate information and ideas to audiences (Neuman 272–273). The principles of framing and intersectionality theory are adopted for a more critical and interpretative approach to reading media texts. The first section of this chapter provides an explanation of framing theory, why it is useful for the purpose of this thesis and its limitations. Following this is a section providing an explanation for intersectionality theory and how it deepens our understanding of how media represent women politicians who may identify with other social minority groups in addition to gender. Finally, I outline the process for selecting news media texts for analysis including chronology and subject matter.

Framing Analysis

Framing theory focuses on the way in which the news media select and present information about events, issues and individuals. A frame refers to the “central organising idea” through which selected facts and information are presented to audiences (Tankard 96). Frames provide a structure for storytelling and a way for reporters and audiences to make sense of news events. Norris explains that frames give events a “conventional ‘peg’ to arrange the narrative, to make sense of facts, to focus the headline, and define events as newsworthy” (1997a, 2). The metaphor of a photograph can be used to describe how a frame selects some aspects of a situation, as though they constitute a complete picture, while other aspects are excluded (Cappella and Jamieson 38; Fountaine and McGregor 2; Tankard 98-

99). Similarly, the metaphor of constructing a building describes how, just as the frame of a house guides its structure, news frames can provide the structure for news stories, determining the overall shape of the news product (Fountain and McGregor 2).

The wider societal context usually informs the types of frames that become prevalent in mainstream news media. News frames will often reflect dominant values and norms in society as they are “a product of a particular time and place” (Norris 1997a, 7). Frames commonly applied to the news about women politicians can then be seen to reflect deeper societal attitudes towards women. In a New Zealand context frames applied to stories about racial and ethnic ‘minority’ groups can be seen to reflect broader social attitudes towards those who do not identify as Pākehā. Common frames can be produced by the way the news media routinely present stories, and are reinforced by journalistic training and practices, news values and contexts of production (Norris 1997a, 8). For example, since most of New Zealand news media is owned by a select few and most editors and high-ranking reporters are Pākehā men, the most prevalent news frames can be expected to reflect the interests of white, heterosexual men.

Understanding frames is important in the field of gender and politics because the way news is presented can have an impact on *how* audiences think about particular issues and individuals. The aim of this thesis is not to measure how news affects public opinion, but how news media may leave the impression that certain issues, individuals and interpretations are more salient than others. Frames make some things seem more salient as the application of frames leads to the prioritization of certain facts, opinions and events over others. Framing involves the selection of some stories and some aspects of those stories, thereby drawing attention to some people, events and issues while simultaneously deflecting attention from others (Entman 53; Major and Coleman 318; Norris 1997a 2; Karen Ross 2004, 72). In doing so, the media text “promote[s] a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman 52). This is not to say that the presence of frames guarantees audiences will understand an issue the way journalists and editors may want them too. Rather that frames make some information, issues and/or concepts more noticeable, meaningful and/or memorable to audiences, “thereby elevating them in salience” (Entman 53). Entman explains that this is done through “placement or repetition”, or “by associating bits of information with more culturally familiar symbols” or stereotypes (53). Aspects of an article like the headline, the length of quotes and whose opinion is shared first can all contribute to how audiences understand the events in a news story.

Gender can sometimes be the component around which news narratives are structured. Gendered news frames make gender the central element of a story, even when gender is not particularly relevant (Devere and Davis 65). As frames rely on familiar concepts, stereotypical phrases and images to reinforce common ways of interpreting news, gendered news frames can be seen to draw upon conventional ideas of masculinity and femininity to encourage audiences to interpret an issue, event or individual in relation to sex based stereotypes. These are commonly referred to as “sex-stereotypes” and they “relate to both political issues and the personal characteristics of politicians” (Norris 1997a, 8). Sex-stereotyping in political news generally portrays women as “compassionate, practical, honest, and hardworking” whereas men are portrayed as “ruthless, ambitious, and tough leaders” (Norris 1997a, 9). Sex-stereotypes suggest that women are usually experts in “domestic” issues like child care, social policy, health and education, while men are experts in things like economic issues, foreign policy and national security. Depending upon the broader context, drawing attention to gender in this way can either help or hinder women political leaders, but in either case it leads to evaluations based on gender rather than actual political expertise, experience or achievements.

Norris identifies three frames which are frequently applied to women political leaders. The breakthrough frame celebrates women’s electoral success against the odds; the women as political outsiders frame stresses that women leaders lack conventional qualifications and experience for politics while also undervaluing their broader experiences; and the agents of change frame suggests women will bring about healthy change to either their own political parties or politics in general (Norris 1997b, 161-165). While the breakthrough frame and the women as agents of change frame may appear positive at first, in the long term they may create false and impossible expectations of new women leaders (Norris 1997b, 165).

Framing analysis offers a solution for many of the challenges presented by content analysis of news media texts. Content analysis is commonly used as a research methodology for gathering and analysing media texts (Macnamara 6). The basic premise and definitions offered by content analysis are useful for this research. Content analysis allows for an examination of large quantities of data over time to identify frequent discourses and what they might mean (Macnamara 6). Analysis can be conducted without encountering the restrictions of time consuming and expensive audience based research (Macnamara 6). The methodology defines a text as anything that is “written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication” and “content” as “words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas,

themes, or any message that can be communicated” (Neuman 272-273). Content analysis is useful for identifying positive or negative words and images to surmise the tone of coverage presented. However, the quantitative focus on this analysis can be problematic. While systematically recording the volume of particular words, images and/or ideas communicated in news media texts may give content analysis a sense of scientific reliability, Newbold et al. explain that “there is no simple relationship between media texts and their impact, and it would be too simplistic to base decisions in this regard on mere figures obtained from statistical content analysis” (80).

Framing theory in combination with content analysis therefore offers a more qualitative approach to analysing media texts. The tenets of framing theory allow me to evaluate *how* mainstream news media presents women politicians and how these representations give some ideas, issues or information more salience. For example, whether stories highlight a politician’s area of expertise or something relevant to her portfolios or position, or whether the story focuses on irrelevant aspects like gender, race, age or sexuality. Hertog and McLeod outline what steps researchers should take in order to conduct framing analysis, beginning with the identification to key concepts in stories (151). Researchers should identify: who is speaking; what groups or individuals are privileged by the language used; what images or ideas are stressed by the vocabulary used and whose stories are not being told (Hertog and McLeod 151-154). Additionally, Tankard suggests researchers should make a clear list of frames they are looking for, and develop a list of “keywords, catch phrases and symbols” to help identify them (100). The frames this study is primarily searching for are the commonly identified political outsider frame, the agent of change frame and frames associated with gendered mediation, such as the conflict frame.

A limitation of frame analysis is that it tends to focus too closely on one aspect of the subjects social identities. Identifying the use of gendered news frames for example does not account for other aspects of a woman politician’s identity, such as race, age and sexuality, which may influence how news media representations are constructed. In this sense, gendered frame analysis may present misleading findings about how *all* women politicians within a particular society face the same media bias. However, this is obviously not the case as “no social group is homogenous” (Simien 267). Identification with other perceived minority groups will also influence the news coverage that women politicians receive and focusing on a single social identity category fails to capture the complexity of why some women are represented in particular ways. This limitation is addressed by adopting an intersectional approach which broadens the focus of this research beyond a gender perspective.

Intersectional Analysis

The concept of intersectionality draws attention to the problem of treating gender, race and other social identity categories as “mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis” (Crenshaw 25). Intersectionality theory asserts that social identity categories cannot be separated when considering the lived experiences of individuals. Simien explains that categories of difference such as “race, class and gender fuse” to create unique experiences of both privilege and oppression (269). Intersectional analysis facilitates an understanding of how gender in combination with other social categories is represented in mainstream political news media. This is achieved by deconstructing the category of “women” allowing for “a more precise analysis of different groups of women politicians” (Fiig 47). An intersectional perspective acknowledges that within the group of women, other social identity markers such as race, age or sexuality intersect with gender to create complex and unique experiences. Intersectionality theory rejects the idea that these categories can be separated when considering an individual’s experience (Simien, 265). Intersectional analysis adds to frame analysis by considering how social categories intersect to influence how different women are presented in news media. This is important in a New Zealand context as there are a significant number of women representatives from perceived ethnic minority backgrounds, women representatives of different ages and different sexual orientations.

One of the challenges of an intersectional approach is limiting the number of social identity categories to examine and justifying these limitations. Yuval-Davis suggests that race, gender and class are traditionally ‘perceived to be the three major social divisions’ in intersectional analysis, as the theory was originally developed to address black women’s exclusion from the feminist and anti-racist movements (201). The list however, has since grown to include an ever-increasing number of social identity markers. It is necessary to limit the categories in this research project due to time and space restrictions. Yuval-Davis argues that categories function differently depending on their location and social context (203). Taking this into consideration, within a New Zealand context I have decided to limit the categories of social identity examined in this thesis to race, age and gender.

Race is important given New Zealand’s history of colonisation and ongoing relations between Māori and Pākehā. The representation of Māori in mainstream news media has previously been criticised for presenting Māori people and issues in negative ways (Abel 259; Barnes et al. 197; Nairn et al. 39; Saunders 168). There is also evidence to suggest that Māori perspectives are given less space in mainstream news media, which gives more prominence

to Pākehā voices (Abel 263). Previous studies incorporating the categories of gender and race have found that “the combination of being both a woman and a minority leads to coverage that tends to be more negative in tone than the coverage other members receive” (Gershon 117). As Māori people tend to be represented as a minority, Māori women politicians may experience discrimination in a unique way on the basis of their gender and race. The intersection of age and gender is significant in that Parliament is mostly inhabited by middle-aged men. Women candidates and MPs may therefore face unique discrimination if in addition to being against the gender norm, they are deemed “too young” or “too old” for Parliament. In the broader context of news media representations, age is a relevant social descriptor to add to this analysis.

Source selection

News articles selected for this study are from the two mainstream New Zealand based news websites *Stuff* (www.stuff.co.nz) and *The New Zealand Herald* website (www.nzherald.co.nz). These are the two main competitors in the online news market, each owned by a different media corporation. *Stuff* is owned by the Australian run Fairfax media company, while *The New Zealand Herald* is run by NZME (New Zealand Media and Entertainment), which itself is a subsidiary of the Australian owned APN News and Media Limited. In order to limit the scope of this study I chose to focus on the representations of women political leaders during the 2014 general election and the two women frontrunners for the New Zealand Labour Party deputy leader position in 2015. This was necessary due the time and space restrictions of this project. The sample therefore includes the woman co-leader of the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand, Metiria Turei, and Labour Party Members of Parliament Annette King and Jacinda Ardern.

To select a sample of articles for the first chapter of analysis, I entered “Metiria Turei” into the search boxes of the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites. *Stuff* returned a total of ten pages, which I looked through to first pick out stories from 2014 as there was no option to limit the search to articles from this year. I then excluded stories that only briefly mentioned Turei or only included a single line paraphrasing or quoting her. I narrowed the selection down to stories that featured Turei as the subject of the article. This left me with three events to focus on: candidate profiles for party leaders contesting the 2014 general election, Metiria Turei’s speech at Waitangi, and an incident involving Turei and two other politicians at the start of the year about the cost of her home and clothes.

The New Zealand Herald website allowed me to narrow the search of Turei's name to articles published in 2014, after which I followed the same process as I did with the *Stuff* search results. This also narrowed the selection down to articles about the same media events, although the number of articles were different. As well as news articles, *The New Zealand Herald* search results returned editorials, comments and blog entries.

I used a similar process to select stories about the Labour Party deputy leader contenders Annette King and Jacinda Ardern. I entered each of their names into the search engines on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites and then narrowed articles down to those discussing the deputy leadership position between August and November 2015. I excluded brief mentions, such as those that simply named them as contenders or included only a single line quoting or paraphrasing them.

Research questions

The key research questions that this thesis aims to answer are derived from the patterns of coverage identified in the body of literature that examines women politicians in mainstream news media. The previous Literature Review chapter supports Gidengil and Everitt's argument that questions of visibility, sex stereotyping and framing dominate the research in this field (2003, 560). Several studies have found that the issue of omission has become less prevalent as the numbers of women in politics have increased (Carroll and Schreiber 139; Fountaine and McGregor 2; Norris 1997b 164). The development of including women politicians in the news more often is good progress; however there is still room for improvement if women politicians continue to receive stereotypical, gender based coverage. As the literature review demonstrates, there is a wide body of literature in this field suggesting that mainstream news media persistently report on women politicians using sex stereotypes and gendered news frames (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49; Fountaine 2002a, 246; Norris 1997b, 165).

I approach the analysis with the following research questions: Does mainstream online news media represent women politicians using overt sex stereotypes? What news frames are prevalent in the coverage of women politicians and is there evidence of gender framing as identified by Norris in coverage of women political leaders? An intersectional perspective facilitates the examination of how women politicians are represented in relation to other social categories of differences. The third and fourth research question examine how the intersection of race and gender is reflected in news coverage of Māori women politicians Metiria Turei; and, how is the intersection of gender and age reflected in mainstream online

news coverage of Annette King (an older woman politician) and Jacinda Ardern (a younger woman politician)? With these questions in mind, this study aims to identify whether gendered themes and news trends, stereotyping, women as agents of change and women as political outsiders are evident in mainstream news media online. This will tell us whether the gender biased patterns of coverage evident in traditional print and televised news media continue to be an issue in online news.

Chapter Four:

Gender, Race, Political Leadership and the News Media

This chapter is concerned with the intersection of gender and race news media and political leadership. The analysis in this chapter focuses on mainstream online news media representations of the Green Party co-leader, Metiria Turei (who is a woman of Māori descent) during the 2014 general election year. Research on the representation of women politicians and research on the representation of Māori has found that both groups face news media bias and discrimination. As discussed in chapter two, there is an extensive body of research outlining the mainstream news media's tendency to report on women politicians in stereotypically gendered ways. Scholars have identified the use of sex-stereotypical language and themes, and news frames which focus on gender rather than political interests, accomplishments, expertise or fair criticism of women politicians based on their work (Aday and Devitt 69; Devitt 457; Carroll and Schreiber 142; Karen Ross 2004, 73; Major and Coleman 372; Norris 1997b, 164; Ritchie 2013, 102; Van Acker 2003, 116). Studies in New Zealand on the mainstream news media representations of Māori have also found that Māori people experience marginal and negative coverage that often places race at the forefront of the story (Abel 259; Barnes et al. 197; Nairn et al. 39; Saunders 168). With reference to the mainstream online news media coverage of Metiria Turei in 2014, I argue that a Māori woman political leader experiences a combination of gender and class based discrimination in mainstream online news media coverage.

As indigenous New Zealanders, or tangata whenua ("people of the land"), the electoral participation of Māori is a significant part of New Zealand and its political system. It is an important aspect to the adherence of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) principles of biculturalism and partnership between Māori and other New Zealanders, and the participation of Māori in significant positions within society. As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, New Zealand's political system supports the participation of Māori and women representatives in at least two ways. Firstly, MMP has helped facilitate an increase in representatives from perceived minority groups, including women and representatives of Māori descent. Secondly, the improvement of Māori electorate seats following the MMP reforms in 1996 has encouraged an increase in Māori political representatives. Following the 2011 general election, 17 % of the 121 politicians elected to the House of Representatives were of Māori descent – just 1% below the proportion of New Zealanders who identified as Māori in the 2006 census; and of those 21 Māori MPs, nine were women (New Zealand

Parliament). However, despite success in efforts to increase both women's and Māori participation in politics, leadership positions in parliament are still predominantly held by Pākehā men.

The analysis in this chapter concentrates on news coverage in 2014, a general election year. There is evidence to suggest that news media are more interested in political candidates during an election year, and the mainstream news media serve as a crucial source of information for voters during this time (Gershon 111). Media provide information about candidates' policy, as well as hold them to account for their political actions. It is therefore important to understand how mainstream news organisations represent political candidates, and how this coverage may vary depending on candidates' associations within different social identity categories such as race, class and gender (Gershon 106). During an election year, with heightened public interest in political news, media have the capability to draw public attention towards particular candidates and issues, while downplaying the significance of others (Major and Coleman 318; Ross and Sreberny-Mohammadi 1996, 103). Political journalism therefore may play a key role in shaping the public perception of Metiria Turei, her political interests and policy by selecting which stories to cover and how that information is presented, or framed.

This chapter presents four key findings: firstly, that coverage features examples of sex-stereotyping by focusing on Turei's appearance and home/the domestic sphere. Secondly, the "conflict frame", which is commonly used in political reporting was applied in coverage of Metiria Turei, and because of the subject matter upon which the frame is focused, it reinforces the notion of politics as men's space (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49). Thirdly, the news around significant media events involving Metiria Turei in 2014 were presented from a Pākehā perspective; and finally, the Metiria Turei was presented as a political outsider in coverage providing profiles of party leaders during the 2014 general election.

Metiria Turei

In the lead up to the 2014 general election, Metiria Turei was the only woman leading a political party already in Government, and she was one of three leaders of Māori descent. Turei shares leadership responsibilities for the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand with a male co-leader, who at the time of the 2014 general election was Russell Norman. The Green Party is the third largest party in Parliament, having won 14 seats in both 2011 and 2014. It always has two co-leaders, a woman and a man. Turei first entered the New Zealand House

of Representatives as a Green Party list Member of Parliament in 2002 and she was elected as the party's female co-leader in 2009.

Turei's biography on the official Green Party website describes her as an educated individual with a wealth of experience in law and advocacy work (*Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand*). She has a law degree from the University of Auckland and has previously worked as a lawyer at one of New Zealand's leading commercial law firms, Simpson Grierson (*Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand*). During her time at University, Turei recalls her work to push "law firms to engage with more Māori students" when it came to summer student work (*Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand*). The biography also includes information about Turei's marital and family status, her ethnicity and class background, but it predominantly emphasises her political and activist work, her achievements as a Green Party MP and her passion for the work she does to help others. The biography lists her portfolios and areas of policy expertise as Building and Housing, Inequality and Māori Affairs. Given her qualifications and relevant experience in government, law and advocacy, what image would the mainstream news media construct of Metiria Turei in 2014?

Sex-Stereotypical Coverage

There is evidence of sex stereotyping in mainstream online news media coverage of Metiria Turei early 2014, with several articles on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* website prioritising Turei's appearance and home over her political work. The use of stereotypes in media representations is a thoroughly documented practice. Norris explains that stereotyping refers to "describing individuals positively or negatively on the basis of characteristics seen as common to their group" (1997b, 154). Thus sex stereotyping refers to describing women in terms of characteristics traditionally *perceived* to be feminine. Van Acker explains that stereotypes tend to be negative "as they are built on extreme characteristics" (Van Acker 1999, 144). A frequently identified example of sex-stereotyping in news coverage featuring women politicians is a focus on stereotypically feminine themes such as appearances (clothes, hair, make-up, shoes and accessories) (Devere and Davis 67; Fiig 42; Fountaine and Comrie 275; McGregor 181-182; Karen Ross 2004, 64; Van Acker 2003, 117). Studies also suggest that mainstream media representations attempt to locate women politicians in the domestic/ private sphere, the 'feminine' domain, whereas the social/ public world of politics is traditionally considered a 'masculine' domain (Fiig 42; Fountaine 2002a, 245; Van Acker 2003, 117). The regular use of sex stereotypes such as these in the

representation of women politicians trivialises women's voices, marginalises their political contributions and interferes with more serious discussion about political issues.

Evidence of sex-stereotyping is discernible in online news media coverage of Metiria Turei in January 2014, in coverage about insults directed at Turei by National Party Cabinet Minister Anne Tolley about Turei's clothes and home. The event reportedly started when, in response to Prime Minister John Key's opening statement in the Parliament, Turei criticised the Government's perceived lack of action on issues of child poverty. Turei did so as an introduction to the Green Party's policy for schools. The following day, the then Minister for Corrections and Member for the East Coast electorate Anne Tolley said she felt insulted by Turei's criticism and accused Turei of hypocrisy, suggesting she could not claim to advocate for children living in lower socio-economic environments when she came to the debating chamber wearing "\$2,000 designer jackets" and lived in a "castle". When asked to respond to Anne Tolley's comments about her home and clothes, Turei suggested that they were based on assumptions about her race and class background. Turei explained that Tolley was basing her statements on the idea that a Māori woman from a working-class background is not entitled to wear the same expensive, designer brands that Tolley and her National Party colleagues wore. Subsequently, National Party Cabinet Minister Judith Collins added her voice to the chorus by insulting Turei's clothes on social media and sharing her opinion on the matter with the press. Collins labelled Turei's clothes "ugly", suggested that she was being overly-sensitive and that Turei's accusations of bullying and racism against Tolley were ridiculous.

This event attracted more media attention than any of Turei's policy announcements or comments on key political issues throughout the entire election year. The sensationalist nature of women politicians apparently fighting meant that online news media jumped on it because it would attract audience members (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 53). "Combative displays" by women politicians attracts "disproportionate attention" because of the novelty of the situation and because women are perceived to be disobeying stereotypical ideas about how women should behave (Gidengil and Everitt 2003, 228). Although this situation presented the an opportunity to explore politics as a site of discrimination and to question the ideologies of Parliament in relation to gender, race and class, mainstream news media chose to focus almost exclusively on Turei's wardrobe and her South Island Dunedin home. Metiria Turei's accusations of racism and classism, as well as the opportunity to analyse the cultural context, or discuss the inappropriateness of Tolley and Collins's conduct were largely ignored in favour of fashion analysis. The incident led to multiple articles being

published online, spanning several days on both the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites. News articles featured on the homepages of the two websites, in the national and politics sections, and in the lifestyle and fashion sections.

The *Stuff* website was the first to publish an article about this event, entitled “MP’s clothes jibe leads to racism call”, published January 30, 2014. This was followed by another titled “Collins jumps in on ‘racist’ clothes fight” published January 31, 2014. Both articles include references to appearances in the headlines. The first article includes Turei’s explanation on why she perceived Tolley’s comments to be based on assumptions about race and class. It summarises the explanation as “she said she shopped at the same place some of her opponents did”. It is evident that Turei is also asked to justify wearing expensive clothes, as she is quoted saying that news media would not ask other (white male) leaders to justify the cost of their suits.

On January 31, 2014 *Stuff* also published an article in its lifestyle and fashion section comparing the outfits of Turei, Tolley and Collins titled “So, how do they dress?” The article presented a slideshow of photographs of each politician in different outfits ranked from “best to worst”. The text assessed their outfits, commented on their make-up and criticised their fashion and hairstyle choices. The article concluded that “all of these ladies have made good and bad choices when it comes to their wardrobe” and therefore none of them were in a position to judge one another. An opinion piece on *Stuff* titled “It’s all rather OTT in the girl armour dept” published February 3, 2014 also analysed the jackets worn by all women politicians in New Zealand Parliament. The author, Bowron states that jackets worn in parliament “are like those not seen anywhere else...they come with panels, tassels, a bloat of bling, a plethora of patterns, florals and flamboyant cuts” and concludes that fashion is a significant issue for all women “competing in a man’s world”.

Featuring women politicians in the fashion and lifestyle sections is an example of how media treat women politicians less seriously than their male colleagues by focusing on superficial details like fashion and style. The placement of articles in the fashion and lifestyle sections suggests that their political activities are not significant enough to be newsworthy and that their political contributions are not as important as how much they spend on clothes or how they decorate their homes (Carroll and Schreiber 137). Although we cannot prove media effects, a sample of the comments section on these articles support the argument that focusing on women politicians’ appearance makes it look as though they are too preoccupied with accoutrements to focus on politics. Some of the readers’ comments published on *Stuff* articles demonstrate concerns that viewing women politicians through a stereotypical lens can

impact on their “credibility as politicians” (Fountaine and Comrie 275). Although there are some published comments which point out the sexism in this kind of news coverage, others questioned whether Turei, Tolley and Collins are suited for politics and add to the article’s criticism of their appearances. Several readers suggest that they were acting inappropriately for Parliament and questioned their professionalism. One commenter for example called them “childish” and others suggested they were treating Parliament as though it were a “fashion parade”. While some comments show some readers can acknowledge gender based media biases and inappropriate reporting, the content of other published comments support the argument that featuring women in the fashion and lifestyle sections of news websites and focusing on their outfits leaves the impression that they are not doing important work in parliament.

Media interest in Turei’s home also demonstrated the idea that mainstream media locate women within the domestic/private sphere (Fiig 44; Ross and Sreberny-Mohammadi 2003, 107; Van Acker 2003, 117). Online news coverage, in particular by *The New Zealand Herald* scrutinised Turei’s home and examined whether it did constitute a “castle” as Tolley had suggested. On February 2, 2015, *The New Zealand Herald* published an article titled “Metiria opens the doors to her castle- and THAT wardrobe”, an account of an *Otago Daily Times* reporter’s tour of Turei’s home and closet. The article states that Turei “tentatively” allowed a photographer and reporter into her home, as though acknowledging the fact that this was outside the bounds of the normal politician/reporter relationship. It suggests that Turei’s home is not excessive in price and that aspects of her wardrobe are appropriate for a woman politician claiming to represent constituents from a lower-socio economic background. The reporter describes Turei’s home as filled with reused and recycled materials, and states it cost only \$137,000 in 2013. He also provides an inventory of her wardrobe, stating that it includes clothes from expensive New Zealand designers, as well as inexpensive stores like The Warehouse and opportunity shops.

The article features two photographs of Metiria Turei within the domestic space, dressed down with no make-up on. Ross and Sreberny-Mohammadi explain that news media representations will domesticate women politicians not only by focusing on their appearances and homes, but also photographing them amongst “various feminine accoutrement... which subtly privilege gender over profession” (107). The photographs included in the article appear to do just that. The first is of Turei standing in her backyard, in seemingly ordinary and inexpensive clothes, not what a professional politician would usually be photographed in. The second is of Turei amongst some “feminine accoutrement [s]” (Ross and Sreberny-

Mohammadi 107). It shows her looking through a rack of her clothes while explaining to the reporter that she owns a number of inexpensive items from low-cost stores as well as a few expensive items.

The text quotes Turei explaining that with a “slightly older and more luscious shape, it can be difficult to find really good quality suits that fit off the rack”. The reporter also states that other women politicians and the Prime Minister’s wife own clothes by the same designers. He does not remark on the cost of suits worn by any male politicians, nor does he remark on the professional standards of Parliament that would require Turei to invest in a few higher-priced clothes. This *New Zealand Herald* “investigation” of Turei’s wardrobe and home does not at any point suggest that Tolley and Collins’s comments were inappropriate, or indicate that there is anything wrong with evaluating women politicians’ homes or clothes. Instead, it only suggests that Collins and Tolley were factually wrong in implying that Turei lived in an expensive home and had an expensive wardrobe. The article implies that Turei’s living situation is not exorbitant and justifies her few expensive work-outfits by describing her cheaper casual wear. The reporter suggests that her home and wardrobe are acceptable for a Green MP wanting to discuss issues of child poverty. This suggests that Turei has to ‘prove’ that she lives modestly if she wants to continue advocating for constituents in low socio-economic environments. This does not appear to be a condition for Pākehā or men politicians, or even women politicians from different ideological perspectives such as Jacinda Ardern, wanting to advocate for constituents in similar situations, as neither *Stuff* nor *The New Zealand Herald* have investigated the homes or wardrobes of any Pākehā or men politicians from The Green Party, or any other political party.

These examples provide evidence that mainstream online news media in New Zealand continue to use sex-stereotypes in the coverage of women political leaders. The use of sex stereotypes in news media coverage of women politicians is problematic for several reasons. The “domestication” of women politicians by reporting on their homes and wardrobes suggests that this is what “preoccupies our women politicians” (Karen Ross 2004, 73). This implies they are not prioritising the business of Parliament because they are too focused on clothes and homes. This is reflected in some of the comments on the articles which question Turei’s credibility and her priorities. Presenting Turei, Tolley and Collins as preoccupied with clothing also denies the complexity and variation of women politicians’ interests (Van Acker 2003, 117). Although their policy expertise is in different areas, Turei, Tolley and Collins are grouped together as “female” politicians because of their supposed interest in

clothes. This leaves the impression that men politicians are focused on what is ‘important’, while women politicians are not.

The Cat Fight/ Conflict Frame

The conflict frame is also evident in mainstream online news coverage of this event. Scholars have documented the prominent use of a conflict frame in political news in general (Devere and Davis 70; Fountaine 2002b, 2; Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 50; Van Acker 1999, 156). The conflict frame is frequently used because framing interactions between politicians as an argument or heated debate satisfies the news values of conflict and controversy. Conflict makes political news “more entertaining” and facilitates “the communication of abstract/complex ideas” without having to conduct in depth research or analysis, making it easier for the reader to understand (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 51). The conflict frame uses a vocabulary which favours language and imagery traditionally associated with masculinity, such as sports and warfare (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 51). The imagery of sports and warfare disadvantages women politicians by evoking stereotypes of spaces which traditionally exclude women. If voters cannot imagine women in these stereotypically masculine spaces, they may have difficulty imagining them as competent political leaders (Rowlison 23-24). The mechanisms of the conflict frame are evident in the headlines, word choice and source selection of articles, opinion pieces, editorials and blogs published on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites.

Articles on *The New Zealand Herald* website make reference to the fighting motif with headlines like “What the blazers?...Politicians’ jacket spat”, and “Full battle jacket as MPs squabble” and the opinion piece “Political sparring gets my vote”. These articles repeatedly refer to the politicians as “attacking” one another. Similarly, articles on the *Stuff* website frame the event as a conflict between the politicians with the headlines “Racism card shown in clothes joust” “Collins jumps in ‘racist’ clothes fight” and ‘It’s all rather OTT in the girl armour dept”. The use of terms such as “battle” and imagery usually associated with “boxing matches or duels” may disadvantage women by reinforcing the idea of politics as a masculine space (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 51). Further reinforcing the analogy of a sports match, “joust” or “battle”, journalists seek commentary from “experts” on fashion, just as journalists covering a sporting game might, including the perceived authoritative opinion of the Prime Minister John Key on women politicians’ behaviour. The *Stuff* article “Collins jumps in ‘racist’ clothes-fight” for example, states Key defended his “female colleagues” and that he does not know the appropriate amount for women to spend on clothes, as his “wife

Bronagh did not consult him on how much she spent”. The article stresses this is a gender issue by including the label “female” instead of just calling them Key’s “colleagues”. “Full battle jacket as MPs squabble” and “What the blazers...? Politicians’ jacket spat” quote the opinion of “fashion figure Colin Mathura-Jeffree” on the importance of clothes for women politicians. *The New Zealand Herald* online articles quote Jeffree joking that the women politicians should “at least wear clothes that fit”, reinforcing the trivial nature of politicians arguing about the cost of one another’s clothes. *The New Zealand Herald* also states that it tried to get a comment from the New Zealand designer of some of Turei’s and other women politicians’ jackets, but she “did not respond”. This is an example of the news media seeking comment on a prominent politician from someone who does not specialise in politics.

The fighting motif is gendered in these articles because it fixates on the stereotypically ‘feminine’ interest in fashion, makes reference to Turei, Tolley and Collins as “female politicians” rather than just politicians, and the construction of a ‘cat fight’. When used to emphasise rivalry between women on opposing political sides, the conflict frame reflects the stereotype of women politicians as outsiders by suggesting that the event is a ‘cat fight’ rather than a series of stories driven by the press’ interest. Fountaine and McGregor note New Zealand media’s focus on a “cat fight” frame during the 1999 general election when the Labour Party and the National Party were both led by women (Fountaine 2002b, 2; Fountaine and McGregor 4). The ‘cat fight’ frame trivialises confrontation between women politicians (Fountaine 2002b, 6) Characteristics synonymous with the idea of a cat fight are that women are attacking one another on a personal level, ‘getting their nails out’ because women are seen as having long, impractical nails and acting unreasonably, which are not qualities valued in political leaders. Voters may find cat fighting immature and a waste of time, leading to questions about women’s political credibility (Rowlison 23). While *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* refrained from explicitly labelling this event a cat fight, the emphasis was on the gender of the politicians involved and the trivial nature of the event.

Articles on *The New Zealand Herald* and *Stuff* websites construct a linear narrative of a “war of words” between Turei and Tolley, with Collins entering to aid and defend her National Party colleague. However, this description of the event is misleading. Rather than being a linear argument the media event was a series of disparate comments from several sources, such as parliamentary sittings and comments to the press. Judith Collins for example made her comments while she was fielding questions about a high profile court case. Articles reporting on the event suggest Tolley and Turei traded insults back and forth, starting with Turei labelling Tolley as “out of touch”. For example, the Herald article “What the

Blazers...? Politicians' jacket spat" opens with the statement: "The long running tit-for-tat between Metiria Turei and senior Government ministers over her clothes has reignited again with claims of racism and hypocrisy being exchanged between the Greens co-leader and Police Minister Anne Tolley". This suggests Turei and other women politicians are frequently preoccupied with fashion. Similarly, the *Stuff* articles "MPs clothes jibe leads to racism call" and "Collins jumps in 'racist' clothes fight" both state that this is not the first time National MPs have commented on Turei's clothing, quoting a Tweet by Collins in 2013 calling Turei "vile, wrong and ugly, just like her jacket today". The *Stuff* articles make no mention of National Party Minister Chris Finlayson also insulting Turei's clothes. These three articles on *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald*, along with a fourth on the Herald website, "Full Battle Jacket as MPs squabble" follow similar structures which present the argument from Tolley and Collins's position and then Turei's, and so on back and forth, creating the illusion of an argument.

The cat fight frame is evident in this coverage as the fighting motif emphasizes conflict between women politicians specifically. The application of the conflict frame in relation to this interaction between Turei, Tolley and Collins focuses on the most superficial aspects of the debate: fashion. This trivialises the matter and minimises the deeper socio-political issues brought up by Turei, which go largely ignored in favour of a reading that makes all the women involved look like they are not taking their jobs as politicians seriously as they are more concerned with commenting on one another's clothes than debating policy. Suggesting that Turei, and other women politicians care more about fashion than politics undermines their serious contributions to Parliament. Fountaine explains this as a form of media "backlash", a strategy which consists of "blaming women, creating divisions between women, and portraying men as victims of women" (Fountaine 2002b 248). The backlash described may be reflective of uneasiness about women stepping out of the traditional feminine private sphere into the male preserve of politics. The description of media backlash is consistent with the theory of gendered mediation which suggests that the violation of traditional feminine norms of behaviour may attract negative press treatment (Burke and Mazzarella 400).

If voters subscribe to the stereotypes about the way women politicians are expected to behave (for example, be less confrontational, more cooperative and benevolent, when news media exaggerate conflict between women politicians,), they "may be disappointed in women for not setting higher standards of behaviour, or making an obvious difference to the nature of politics" (Fountaine 2002a, 250-251). The narrative of this media event does not focus on the

Green Party or National Party policies, or present this as a debate about anything politically substantial. Instead, it focuses on women politicians behaving badly irrespective of party affiliations or political positions. It focuses on personality and personal attacks outside of the environment of Parliament. The topic of the debate is presented as trivial as headlines and commentators make jokes about jackets. The primary focus in these articles undermines not only the politicians involved but any ideological concerns Turei raises about racism in the House of Representatives.

Pākehā Perspective

An intersectional perspective reveals that in addition to being framed in relation to gender, news articles, editorials, comments and blog entries featuring Metiria Turei are overwhelmingly framed from Pākehā points of view. Previous research on the representation of perceived ethnic minority groups in Aotearoa, such as Māori, have identified patterns of coverage which favour European New Zealanders' points of view (Abel 259; Barnes et al 197). This is reflective of mainstream media's tendency to support the values and beliefs of dominant groups, "which in Western societies are white" (Abel 258). The conflict frame applied in coverage of the interaction between Turei, Anne Tolley and Judith Collins does not only emphasize a rivalry between women politicians, it also emphasizes a rivalry between Pākehā women politicians and a Māori woman politician. This is obviously influenced by the fact that Turei accuses Tolley of racism, but most of the mainstream online news coverage on *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* unfairly represents Turei's accusations and her point of view. As suggested in the previous section, Turei is positioned as the instigator of the argument in the narrative constructed by mainstream online news articles. Additionally, her accusations of racism and classism are reduced to over-sensitivity and arbitrarily "playing the race card".

A Pākehā point of view is supported by the amount of space afforded to Pākehā voices in coverage. Alternating between Tolley and Collins's position on the matter and then Turei's position constructs what looks to be a balanced news articles, as the voices on both sides of the argument are communicated. However, Pākehā voices constitute the majority of the sources quoted and paraphrased in news articles on this event. Ross explains that "who speaks matters" because sources provide the "the point of view being supported in a given story" (Karen Ross 2007, 450). In the articles on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites Tolley and Collins are paraphrased in more detail, there are lengthier quotes from them included and their opinions are often presented first. Additionally, the line of

questioning proposed by journalists supports a Pākehā perspective by placing the onus on Turei to justify her position, rather than question why National Party ministers single her out or explore the nature of their insults.

Most of the opinion pieces, editorials and blogs on this matter are written by Pākehā political commentators who deny Turei's unique experience as a Māori woman politician. For example, in the Editorial "Insults part of the job", published on *The New Zealand Herald* website February 2, 2014, reporter Annemarie Quill insists Tolley's remarks about Turei were "never about race". Quill, who herself is of Pākehā descent, suggests Turei was wrong in accusing Tolley of racism by stating that "one cannot imagine a similar response from the likes of Helen Clark, Margaret Thatcher, Hilary Clinton or Angela Merkel". The problem with Quill's comparison is that the four politicians she compares Turei to are also all of European descent. She fails to consider the intersection of race and gender in Turei's experience and simply dismisses it.

The ways in which Metiria Turei is covered with regard to her claims of racism finds parallels with the ways in which Māori people and issues important to Māori are frequently covered in mainstream news media as trivial and/or negative. There is evidence to suggest that mainstream media often portray Māori issues in a negative way by depicting Māori as sources of conflict and as hypersensitive (Abel 261; Barnes et al 2012, 198-202; McGregor and Comrie 2002, 11; Saunders 169). A Pākehā perspective does not accurately or responsibly report on this issue. Firstly, in framing the interaction between Turei, Tolley and Collins as a conflict or cat fight which followed a back and forth structure, the representation of this news event also positions Metiria Turei as the instigator of a "war of words" between herself, and the two National Party Ministers. Suggesting Turei started the argument reflects the theme of Māori as sources of conflict (Abel 261; Saunders 169). This is despite Parliamentary reports showing Tolley's singling out of Turei and the criticism focusing on personal aspects of Turei's life like her clothes and home, rather than her political work was unwarranted. The online news coverage leaves the impression that Turei provoked Tolley and Collins's response.

Several items published online also suggest Turei was being unreasonable in accusing Tolley of racism. Studies focusing on the representation of Māori in the mainstream media have identified a theme of Māori as "unduly sensitive" (Barnes et al 202). When Māori are offended by statements or the actions of Pākehā New Zealanders, mainstream media tends to support Pākehā points of view by suggesting that whatever Pākehā have done to cause offense was unintentional, that Māori are too easily offended and that the onus should be on

them for any cultural misunderstanding (Barnes et al 202). This idea is also manifested in coverage of Māori as opportunistic by capitalising on cultural misunderstandings for sympathy or justification of their position. This is reflected in online coverage which describes Turei as “playing the race card”. In the opinion piece “The low end of our MPs’ high life” published February 2, 2014, by columnist Kerre McIvor, McIvor reduces Turei’s position to playing the “racism card” as a last resort in an argument that the Pākehā politician, Anne Tolley was winning. The Herald article “What the Blazers...? Politicians jacket spat” paraphrases John Key’s opinion by saying he did not think it was appropriate for Turei to play the race card; and the *Stuff* article “Racism Card shown in clothes joust” immediately reduces Turei’s position to playing the race card in the headline.

Nairn et al. explain that mainstream media utilise “negative personal characteristics in their constructions of indigenous people” such as “grasping opportunism” (39). News articles suggest Turei plays “the race card” to capitalise on the situation and score “political points” by making Tolley and her National Party colleagues seem bigoted, while also justifying how much she might spend on her professional wardrobes. Allan explains “the intricate, often subtle ways in which white perspectives shape the framing of news reports concerning race-related issues can have a profound effect on public attitudes to racial discrimination” whether journalists intended this or not (2000, 165). This idea is reflected in reader comments published on *Stuff* articles, many of which condemn Turei for “pulling out the racism card”. Allan explains that this kind of reporting helps to “create and reinforce the fears of what are predominantly white audiences towards other ethnic groups” (2000, 164). The “threat” of Māori to Pākehā audiences on this occasion is against the opportunity to voice their opinions without being accused of racism.

Negative coverage of Māori and Māori issues generally stems from a failure to include or elaborate on historical and cultural context. Abel explains that historical grievances give Māori “legal and moral claims” against the state in relation to “resources taken and the suppression of their languages and cultures” (261). This position puts Māori directly in conflict with the state and dominant Pākehā culture (Abel 261). This kind of representation is especially noticeable in coverage of Waitangi Day and can be identified in articles reporting on Turei’s historic speech at Waitangi in February 2014. On February 5, 2014, Turei became the first woman political leader to speak at party leaders’ powhiri at Te Tii marae at Waitangi. Although a positive frame is employed to communicate the significance of Turei’s speech in the *Stuff* article “Metiria Turei speaks at Te Tii Marae” published February 5, 2014, the article quickly shifts the focus on Waitangi day conflict and

the video at the very top of the article features footage of men politicians, Prime Minister John Key, Business, Investments and Economic Minister Steven Joyce and New Zealand First leader Winston Peters discussing a Hikoi (protest) against deep sea drilling. The first third of the text in the article frames Turei speaking at Te Tii Marae using the breakthrough frame, which Norris explains celebrates women's success and progress (1997b, 161). The article quotes Turei saying her speech at Waitangi shows "that Māori culture is a living culture" which responds to issues and change as needed. However, the remaining two thirds focus on the actions of protestors and statements about how their behaviour is disruptive without any explanation as to the historical or cultural reasons for protests.

With regards to Turei's "conflict" with Collins and Tolley, an intersectional perspective suggests that the historical and cultural context is also invisible in other where an understanding of history is essential to the understanding of a Māori perspective. It is this context that Turei is referring to when she accuses Anne Tolley of racism and classism. An understanding of this context is essential to understanding her accusations, but articles on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites fail to acknowledge the context of her claims. Even opinion pieces that appear to support Turei do not draw attention to New Zealand's history of race relations. For example, the article "Racist imagery used in fashion row", published February 4, 2014, by Press columnist Chris Trotter provides a detailed example of the stereotypes used to represent black women politicians in the United States and the parallels between those and the treatment of Metiria Turei by National Party ministers. However, even Trotter fails to detail the New Zealand context of Māori and Pākehā relations that Turei is referencing when she accuses Tolley of racism.

It has previously been suggested that time constraints and a reliance on images are reasons why news on traditional mediums like television fail to provide historical context or other relevant information to understand news involving perceived ethnic minorities (Abel 263). However, online news is not limited by time, as news can be published and updated at any time and immediately made available to readers. Online news can also incorporate multi-media like sound, images, video and text. The mainstream news value of frequency (most likely influences mainstream online media's failure to provide in-depth and relevant context. The value of frequency dictates that what happens today is what is important; therefore history may be overlooked or ignored. The capacity to publish a lot of content is evident on *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* as both websites published multiple articles on this event over several days. Their failure to provide context or seek further information is also evident

however, as in most cases the same few quotes are repeated or paraphrased and the same information is more or less repeated in each article.

Political Outsider Frame

The political outsider frame is reinforced by sex-stereotyping and a Pākehā perspective in news about Metiria Turei. In the lead up to a general election, the publication of articles providing profiles of political party leaders is common. Such articles published on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites in the three months leading up to the 2014 tend to emphasise aspects of Turei's personality, past experiences and interests that would be considered out of the ordinary for a political leader. Institutions such as Parliament tend to privilege the race and gender norms of white masculinity and conventional news frames reflect the idea of politics as a masculine domain (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49; Van Acker 2003, 117-118). The news framing of Metiria Turei as unconventional and eccentric compared to traditional expectations or assumptions about political leaders is consistent with the theme of women leaders as outsiders; a gendered news theme which is commonly identified in the coverage of women politicians in mainstream political journalism.

The framing theme of women leaders as outsiders stresses “the lack of conventional qualifications and prior political experience” of women in leadership positions (Norris 1997b, 162). It is commonly applied to women politicians who “fail to follow the conventional path to power, whether because of their prior political careers, their political styles, or the policy interests” (Norris 1997b, 164). Had the media focused on Turei's degree in law, her experience working in corporate law and time spent as a political activist, it would be difficult to portray her as less than experienced for the position of leading a significant political party based on conventional work and education expectations. Rather than suggest that her education or experience is inadequate, mainstream online news media representations of Turei frame her as a political outsider by virtue of her gender, race and class background, and the experiences these aspects of her social identity have afforded her, such as an “unstable” childhood, homelessness, motherhood at a young age and an association with alternative culture.

Metiria Turei's gender is highlighted in the profile news articles through reference to her as a mother, daughter, sister and wife. Gendering of news coverage occurs when news accounts unnecessarily differentiate between women and men (Burke and Mazzarella 402). This is done with the use of prefixes that refer to gender (e.g. Mrs, Miss and Mr) and consistent labelling of politicians who are women as “female politicians” as opposed to just

“politicians”. A narrow focus on “stereotypically feminine terms” has been noted in a number of studies on the media representation of women leaders (Fiig 43-44). Turei herself discusses aspects of motherhood with reporters and her daughter was present at the interview with the reporter of *The New Zealand Herald* article, “Leaders unplugged: Metiria Turei- Punk, funk, ukulele are all part of the mix” (30 July 2014). Therefore it cannot be said that Turei attempts to completely isolate her personal life from the mainstream online news media. Nevertheless, reporters tend to focus on and emphasise these aspects of Turei: in addition to the information she reveals, they sought quotes from her family and daughter about Turei as a mother and older sister, and provided their own comments on Turei concerning her maternal role. This reflects scholar’s criticism that women politicians are first seen as “women” and then maybe as politicians (McGregor 1996, 185; Karen Ross 2004, 63). In *The New Zealand Herald* article “Leaders unplugged: Metiria Turei- Punk, funk, ukulele are all part of the mix”, reporter Adam Bennett describes Turei and her daughter Piupiu’s relationship. He suggests their interactions “would give fellow diners the impression they were sisters or friends rather than mother and daughter” (Bennett 30 July 2014). Meanwhile, the *Stuff* article, “Metiria Turei’s big plans”, (17th August, 2014) includes an anecdote about Turei and her spouse unsuccessfully trying to conceive with the help of fertility treatment. This article also shares Turei’s sister’s opinion of her as a politician and as an older sister, describes Turei reading to a group of primary school children and includes an image of her singing and playing the ukulele to children.

The association of Metiria Turei with the roles of mother, older sister and wife attributes traditionally feminine qualities to Turei, such as being caring and nurturing. In the *Stuff* article, “Metiria Turei’s big plans” direct quotes emphasise Turei’s compassion for constituents who may need extra Government support, and her reflection on how her job as a politician affects the daily lives of people in New Zealand. It quotes Turei acknowledging that “the consequences of politician’s failure are played out in people’s lives every day in ways we don’t see”. Characteristics traditionally perceived as masculine, like toughness and resolve, tend to be valued in political leaders and privileged in parliament (Goodyear-Grant 140; Kittilson and Fridkin 386; Van Acker 2003, 117). Although the image of a caring and considerate mother figure may appear to be a positive representation, emphasizing these aspects in a political context highlights the ways in which Turei does not conform to the masculine qualities traditionally associated with and valued in political leaders. By focusing on these stereotypically feminine traits, the media representations also deny Turei the opportunity to demonstrate her leadership skills and expertise (Kittilson and Fridkin 386).

The association of Turei with the private, domestic sphere as opposed to the social and public world of politics reinforces the political outsider theme.

Of the three online articles providing a profile of Metiria Turei in the lead up to the 2014 general election on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites, only one mentions her education and qualifications that are relevant to the job for politicians. Norris argues that “women experience a process of dequalification when acting in what is perceived as a man’s world of diplomacy” (1997b, 162). She explains that the process “consists of undermining or underestimating a woman leader’s capabilities and experiences, and seeing the appropriate qualification for the job in terms of the (masculine) characteristics of the past officeholders” (Norris, 1997b, 162). In Turei’s case this is done by largely ignoring what would be perceived appropriate qualifications for the job and instead focusing on experiences and personality traits that would be considered unrelated.

The *Stuff* article “Metiria Turei’s big plans” briefly mentions Turei’s more conventional qualifications and experience, stating that she studied law at University and worked as a lawyer before entering Parliament. However, the predominant focus of this article is on Turei’s lower-socio economic background, which makes her an “unconventional” politician. In “Metiria Turei’s big plans” the reporter immediately focuses on Turei’s lower-socio economic background and unconventional childhood in Palmerston North, and suggests that these aspects of Turei’s background are largely attributed to her family’s Māori heritage. It starts by stating “Twice she lived in a car” before explaining Turei’s family rarely had a fixed abode due to her father’s work as a farm labourer and due to his dark skin tone (Knight 17th August 2014). The article quotes Turei recalling the story her mother told her of how due to the fact that he was Māori, landlords did not want to rent him a house (Knight 17th August 2014). It then provides a list of Turei’s various “carnations” before being elected to Parliament for the first time: “First daughter, elder sister, high school drop-out. Pot smoker, wannabe MP, activist, anthropology student, and almost a teacher. Mother, lawyer, wife, and eventually, Member of Parliament” (Knight 17th August 2014). The first two “carnations[sic]”, “first daughter and elder sister” draw attention to Turei’s gender; while the labels of “high school drop-out” and “pot smoker” may allude to negative stereotypes of people of Māori descent and people perceived to belong to a lower economic status. Knight also writes that during her interview with Turei “the body language is more distracted teen than seasoned three-term MP”, implying that Turei does not demonstrate the maturity expected of serious political leaders. Overall, many of these descriptions, apart from

“lawyer” which is third from the bottom of the list, are not perceived as traditional traits of a political leader and may call into question Turei’s viability as a leader.

Turei is also presented as a political outsider based on her personality and interests outside politics. A second leaders profile article on the *Stuff* website also emphasises that Turei brings “colour” to Parliament and explicitly uses the adjective unconventional to describe her compared to others in the House of Representatives. The article “Meet the leaders: Metiria Turei” written by Michael Fox, published September 18, 2014, declares that “in a House of Representatives often short of colour and character, Turei remains unconventional”. The article points interest that would traditionally be considered unusual for “serious” politician: “violent” roller derby, playing in a rock, ukulele punk band, and wearing “floral-printed Doc Martens”. Additionally, although the intended use of the word “colour” in this article may be to describe Turei as someone who stands out against most other politicians in terms, it could also be referring to the fact that Turei’s skin tone is literally different to that of the majority of politicians in the House of Representatives, who are mostly of Pākehā descent.

The New Zealand Herald’s profile of Metiria Turei makes no attempt to mention her traditional qualifications for a political leadership position, or discuss her areas of expertise or political interests. Instead, the article “Leaders unplugged: Metiria Turei- Punk, funk, ukulele are all part of the mix” focuses entirely on her eccentricities and unusual background for a political leader. Similar to the *Stuff* news profiles of Turei, *The New Zealand Herald* article immediately draws attention to the fact that Turei’s youth and background make her an unconventional candidate. The article begins by stating that a concert for the “legendary hard core rockers Sticky Filth with their affinity for the Magog Motorcycle Club, magic mushrooms and misogyny” is an unusual place to find a political leader, but that it was one of the first concerts Turei attended in her youth (Bennett, July 2014). It then suggests Turei was an unusual attendant at the concert. The implication is that she was one of few (if any other) Māori women there. In the article, she is also an unusual participant in parliament: responding to her statement that there “was nobody else like us in the whole place”, the article states “a bit like Parliament then” (Bennett July 2014).

The article continues to highlight other aspects of Turei’s personal life that would be considered unconventional for a political leader: the fact that she’s a member of a punk ukulele band, and that she hosted a mock Scottish battle at her home earlier in the year. The reporter states that “footage of the mock battle made it to the television news earlier this year as further evidence of Metiria and the Greens' eccentricities” (Bennett July 2014).

Comparatively, the article on David Cunliffe in the “leaders unplugged” series started by describing Cunliffe as looking “completely Prime Ministerial” and used adjectives like “decent” and “sincere” to describe him whereas the article on Turei emphasises aspects of her personality that may be considered strange and unusual for a political leader. The article on John Key in the series discusses politics and policy implies that his interests (golf and holidays in Hawaii) are more appropriate for a political leader. Overall, the article portrays Turei and the Green Party as political outsiders because of her past and current personal interests and hobbies.

Although coverage of Turei may be perceived as positive (because she has a good relationship with her daughter, cares about her constituents and is reflective upon how her job as a politician's affects the lives of New Zealanders) aspects of it still singles her out as unusual and draws attention to how her gender, race and class background make her different. This is a common aspect of gendered news coverage in the mainstream media which downplays or undervalues “the prior experience of women leaders...set against conventional qualifications” (Norris 1997b, 164). Rather than exploring the notion that Turei’s unique experience as a woman of Māori descent with alternative interests may bring something useful to politics, the articles focus on how her personal traits are opposed to the norms for a career in politics by labelling them “unconventional” and calling her a “colourful character” compared to the majority of those in the House of Representatives.

Her “colourful” character is not something Turei herself denies or tries to keep out of the public eye, however by focusing on her personality before her policy expertise and political goals, and refusing to acknowledge the unique experience she brings to Parliament, the mainstream news media’s representation of Turei subtly questions her viability as a serious political leader as she does not conform to the standards of white masculinity. This is a practice commonly noted in the coverage of women politicians worldwide (Goldenberg and Kahn, 181; Norris 1997b, 162; Van Dembroucke 1060). It is outside the scope of this research to consider what effects questioning women candidates’ viability as political leaders may have on the decisions of voters; but the representation of Metiria Turei as a political outsider in candidate profiles published only a few months before the general election certainly make the question of her viability as a major party leader more salient.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that stereotypes associated with gender, race and class intersect in the coverage of Metiria Turei to reinforce the political outsider theme, portray

Turei as a source of conflict and overly sensitive. Sex-stereotypical coverage is evident in the focus on Turei's clothes and home following critical comments by Anne Tolley and Judith Collins. Sex-stereotypical coverage in this instance trivialises the politicians involved and may encourage cynicism and disillusionment about women in politics (Ross and Sreberny-Mohammadi 102). It also distracts from the opportunity to examine significant ideological and social issues in relation to women, race, class and politics.

Although a focus on Turei's clothes and personal life do not appear to be a reoccurring pattern of coverage in the 2014 general election year, obsessive coverage about Turei's clothes during this media event distracted from serious political debate about racism, sexism and classism in politics. Instead of exploring how this event was reflective of systematic, ideological issues in New Zealand politics, mainstream online news media first focused on the most trivial aspect of the debate: fashion and houses; and second, framed it as a conflict between a Māori woman politician and two white women politicians about the trivial matter of who can and should wear what. The Pākehā perspective is evident as Turei is portrayed as the overly sensitive and trouble making Māori woman.

Analysis of New Zealand mainstream news media representations of Māori has consistently found that Māori are portrayed in negative and unfair ways (Abel 261; Barnes et al. 197; Nairn et al. 37; Saunders 169). Nairn et al. argue that repeatedly portraying Māori and other perceived minority groups as though they are problems encourages New Zealanders to see members of these groups as "threatening the social order and burdening our society" (38). Abel supports this view, suggesting that negative representations help foster negative attitudes towards Māori and Māori issues (257). The representation of Turei as the instigator of conflict between her and National Party ministers Anne Tolley and Judith Collins about the cost of clothing and homes leaves the impression that she was attacking National Party ministers and distracting from important political debate.

The notion of "playing the race card" suggests Turei was trying to capitalise on the conflict by unjustly linking it to ideological issues regarding racism and classism from National Party ministers, with the implications that a Pākehā politician would never be offended by Tolley's comments in the same way. The idea of "playing the race card" minimises the issue Turei is trying to draw attention to and it denies her unique experience with regards to systems of oppression as a Māori, woman politician. Overall, although all the women involved in this issue were portrayed negatively within a "cat fight" narrative, Turei was portrayed negatively based on deeply rooted social stereotypes about Māori as well as women in professional fields of work.

There is little evidence to suggest that the promise of the Internet as a space free of discrimination, liberated from the ideologies and hierarchies of the society has translated into reality. Mainstream online news media appears to carry over many of the gender and race based biases identified in traditional forms of news media when reporting on a politician who is both a woman and of Māori descent.

Chapter Five:

Gender, Age, Political Leadership and the Media

This chapter is concerned with the intersection of gender and age in mainstream online news coverage of women political leader candidates. The analysis focuses on the coverage of Labour Party Members of Parliament Annette King and Jacinda Ardern, both of whom were the focus of media attention speculating on who would (and should be the Labour Party deputy leader in news coverage between the months of August and November 2015. Previous research has highlighted mainstream news media's affinity for portraying political contests as a competition between two candidates even when other people may be in the running (Campus 23; Fountaine 2002b, 2). According to articles published on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites, the two obvious contenders for the position of Labour deputy leader were incumbent Annette King and Labour MP Jacinda Ardern.

It is imperative to note that King and Ardern were portrayed in the mainstream news media to be competing for the deputy leader position despite there being no formal announcement of candidates, no formal election process or even any informal expression of interest from Jacinda Ardern. Therefore, unlike other political contests such as an election in an electorate or the contest for Prime Minister, the candidates did not campaign, make specific public appearances in regards to the role or solicit media attention to promote themselves for it. Even though voters would not be selecting their preferred candidate for the position, the media coverage of Annette King and Jacinda Ardern is significant as perceived public support for candidates would have been an important consideration for those involved in making the final decision on who to appoint as deputy leader.

As discussed in previous chapters, the number of women in Parliament has increased since the introduction of MMP. Women have also held key leadership positions such as Prime Minister and Speaker of the House, and both major political parties have at some stage been led by women. However, despite these successful appointments, there is currently a deficit of women in key leadership positions within New Zealand politics. Only two 'minor' political parties in the house (the Green Party and the Māori Party) were led by women in co-leadership roles in 2015. Scholars have argued that as long as women hold few high-ranking positions in politics, they will remain a curiosity for the news media (Karen Ross 2004, 64; Van Acker 2003, 132). The novelty of women leadership candidates sometimes means women politicians and/or the contests they are running in are considered more newsworthy

than if the race were between men (the standard politician) (Gidengil and Everitt 2003, 228; Karen Ross 2004, 64; Meeks 178-179; Ross and Comrie 1970; Van Acker 2003, 132). While political contests are newsworthy due to their relevance to the social system, contests which include women politicians are doubly newsworthy because they “are both socially significant *and* deviant” [emphasis in the original] (Meeks 178). It is for this reason that the Labour Party deputy leader position attracted more media attention than an announcement of a deputy leader usually does, as the frontrunners for the position were both women. Additionally, there is a marked age difference between King and Ardern, which is reflected in the news coverage.

With reference to the coverage of the Labour deputy leader role between August and November 2015, I argue that women political leadership candidates experience different forms of gendered news coverage based on the intersections of gender and age. There was significantly more press attention afforded to one candidate than the other based on ageist and sexist ideas about leadership. The novelty of a young woman politician in the running for a deputy leader meant also Jacinda Ardern was the primary focus of most articles, while Annette King, when included in articles was only briefly mentioned. This demonstrates that mainstream online news media continues to utilise the gender biased patterns of coverage previously identified in literature on women politicians and the news media.

This chapter presents four key findings. Firstly when we break down the category of ‘women’ and consider other social categories of difference, such as age, it is evident that visibility in mainstream online news media remains an issue for some women politicians. Secondly, crude sex stereotyping is not prevalent, however there are examples of news media focusing on typically feminine characteristics such as compassion, nurturing and co-operation. There is also evidence of news media focusing on the perceived problems women in politics face more than their political work and accomplishments. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that the display of stereotypical feminine characteristics strongly influences how mainstream online news media frame women political leadership candidates; and finally the agent of change frame is evident, however, only in coverage of the younger politician, Jacinda Ardern.

Annette King and Jacinda Ardern

Annette King and Jacinda Ardern are both Labour Party MPs, the second largest party in Parliament. King is the electorate MP for Rongotai, while Ardern is a list MP. Shortly after

Andrew Little was announced the new Labour Party leader in 2014, he appointed Annette King to the position of deputy leader. At the time, Little suggested this was an interim appointment and that he would re-evaluate who held the role in a year. Hence, nearly twelve months after King's appointment, media speculation began on whether Little would keep her in the role or choose another Labour MP to help him lead the party into the 2017 general election. As one of the major parties in New Zealand politics, the politicians leading the party usually receive a significant amount of media coverage. Nonetheless, the attention given to the deputy leadership appointment in 2015 was atypical.

King's biography on the Labour Party website says she has "proudly represented the eastern and southern suburbs of Wellington for 21 years" (*Labour*). The website also provides a list of five "career highlights" which includes establishing District Health Boards contributing to the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act, and serving as Minister of Health under the fifth Labour Government (*Labour*). King's commitment to the public health sector is strongly evident. She regularly posts blog entries on the website in relation to the health sector, such as criticisms of the food served in hospitals and surgery waiting lists.

Ardern's profile on the Labour Party website describes her as Labour's spokesperson for Justice, Arts, Culture and Heritage, Children and Small Business, and the Associate Spokesperson for Auckland Issues (*Labour*). The profile states she joined the Labour Party when she was 17 years old, but does not focus on or even indicate her current age. It describes a substantial amount of experience working in policy development, managing a large not for profit organisation and working in the United Kingdom Cabinet Office interfacing with businesses (*Labour*). Ardern also posts blog entries on the Labour Party website about a wide range of topics, including New Zealand's film industry, Child Youth and Family reforms and the relationship between small businesses and the Dairy Industry. Additionally, Ardern has her own website which reveals significantly more information about her political work, motivations and interests. On her personal website, she describes her own background and her work experience, including a link to her LinkedIn page which further lists her qualifications and previous jobs (*Jacinda Ardern*). She also posts her own blog entries, separate to those published on the Labour Party website, about her political work, ideas and opinions. She draws no attention to her age, her appearance or her personal life.

Despite their wide and varied areas of political interest and experiences, mainstream online news media coverage of King and Ardern in relation to the deputy leadership

appointment focused on a limited number of things: news media coverage does not draw upon their work history to compare the candidates but instead reflects their differences in age, and Ardern's perceived popularity. The defining difference between the two candidates are their respective ages, and this chapter questions how this is reflected in the quantity and quality of news coverage they each received on both the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites.

Age and In/visibility

The intersections of gender and age are reflected in the quality and quantity of press attention that King and Ardern receive compared to one another. There is obvious media bias against King for being the older candidate, as supposed calls for 'freshness' in the Labour leadership team result in Ardern receiving more favourable coverage. This follows a similar trend to that identified by Ross and Comrie in the 2008 general election coverage, where the younger Prime Ministerial contender John Key was more visible than the incumbent Prime Minister Helen Clark (978). Ross and Comrie also argue the quality of the coverage Clark received was poor compared to Key, arguing that the media's "desire for new personalities" and Clark's age "unfavourably juxtaposed against the younger, male pretender" combined to produce news coverage which was 'explicitly sexist' and far from objective (981). The news coverage exhibited an obvious bias against Clark "in tone and content" and "visibility" (981). There are parallels between Ross and Comrie's analysis and my findings comparing coverage of King and Ardern. Compared to King, Ardern is significantly more visible in content on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites about the deputy leader role and content is more positive in tone. According to most articles, Ardern should be chosen for the deputy leader position because she is young and popular.

For example, in the *Stuff* article "Nanaia Mahuta: Queen or casualty as Labour revamps its lineup?" published August 28, 2015, Vernon Small insists Ardern is "the logical choice" for deputy leader, because "she gives the leadership team the balance it needs: a woman, from a younger generation and, crucially, from Auckland". In *The New Zealand Herald* article "Political roundup: can Little and Ardern save Labour?" published September 30, 2015, Bryce Edwards assumes Ardern will become Labour's new deputy leader because "the calls for freshness are likely to trump [King's] achievements". These assumptions prevail despite political commentators generally acknowledging that King is doing and has done a good job. *The New Zealand Herald* article editorial "Little facing dilemma over

deputy choice” published October 15, 2015, states that “Ms King has been excellent in the role- loyal, experienced, sensible in public statements, liked and respected by friend and foe, a safe pair of hand [sic]”. Nevertheless, the article suggests Ardern may be better suited to the role because she is “young, presentable and appears to have a popular following”. The article insists that Labour need to “project the image of a fresh, new potential government” and because she is younger, Ardern “can help project that image” but “Ms King cannot”.

When King is referred to in mainstream news media coverage, she is often called a ‘veteran MP’ and articles associate her with ‘old’ Labour values. This representation draws obvious attention to her age and implies that she is unlikely to have any news ideas for the party heading into the 2017 general election. Contradicting the general trend in articles, opinion pieces and editorials to favourably represent Ardern is *The New Zealand Herald* opinion piece by Phil Quin “Labour beware- King and Ardern poles apart for deputy”, published October 8, 2015. However, Quin’s reasons for suggesting Ardern is not the best choice for the role are also based on the age difference between King and Ardern. He claims “the advantages of a generational swap between King and Jacinda Ardern, the widely touted alternative, are fewer than they initially appear, and the risks are greater”. He suggests Ardern will be a threat to Andrew Little if she is appointed his deputy, stating that “King is not a leadership rival to Andrew Little” but “the same cannot be said of Ardern”. Quin argues that Ardern would risk overshadowing him whereas King will quietly work hard in the background while Little builds up his own profile. His argument is based on the assumption that Ardern’s age makes her ambitious whereas King’s age means it is not. He concludes that “in politics there are loyal, safe, non-threatening deputies and there are ambitious deputies, using the post as a step to the top job”.

Even articles announcing that King will keep the deputy leadership position focus on Jacinda Ardern. For example, *The New Zealand Herald* article “Annette King to stay as deputy leader” published October 21st, 2015 states that “Labour leader Andrew Little will keep party veteran Annette King on as his deputy leader until the 2017 election, saying that Jacinda Ardern told him she did not want the job”. This statement suggests that had she wanted the position, Ardern would have been selected to replace King. The remainder of the article discusses Ardern’s perceived popularity with voters and suggests Little did not select her because she would have threatened his position as the party leader. The article also quotes Ardern on why she does not want to be the deputy leader, but does not feature a quote, or even a paraphrased sentence from King.

Similarly, the *Stuff* article "Labour leader sticking with Annette King" also published on October 21, 2015 focuses on the fact that Ardern did not get the role more than it does on King becoming the permanent deputy leader. The article opens with the line "Labour leader Andrew Little says rising star Jacinda Ardern didn't want the deputy leadership". This is followed by a quote from leader Andrew Little stating why he did not select Ardern. The article suggests that Ardern was perceived to be the favourite candidate due to her "star" being "on the rise" and references opinion polls documenting her perceived popularity with voters. The article continues to quote Ardern confirming that she did not want the position before King is finally quoted about halfway through the text. The length of this quote however, barely compares to the amount of space given to discussing and quoting Jacinda Ardern. Like *The New Zealand Herald* article, this *Stuff* article also draws attention to the idea that Little did not select Ardern because she would have threatened his position as leader.

These examples show that King receives significantly less press attention compared to Ardern in coverage speculating on the deputy leader role. Scholars have previously documented the underrepresentation and marginalisation of older women politicians in mainstream news media (Burke and Mazzarella 399; Jamieson 115; Ross and Comrie 971). Jamieson links the invisibility of older women in the news to ideas about femininity and sexuality, explaining that older women are featured less in the news than younger women or men of any age because "after menopause, women's bodies are perceived to be in some kind of decline" (150). She explains that age is more concerning for women than it is for men because society marks women's age by the biological event of menopause (Jamieson 150). While "middle age can confer power and increased sex appeal on men, in women the reverse is held to be the case" (Jamieson 150). The idea of women's bodies being in decline after menopause is reflected in mainstream online news media coverage of King as stories on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites largely assume that she has little left to contribute to the Labour Party. Whereas Ardern is often referred to as a "rising star" who will revive the party's support base, King is portrayed as reaching the end of her political career and thus having nothing new to contribute to improving the party's support base. News stories on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites make no effort to explore what King's ideas for the party, in relation to policy or publicity when evaluating whether she is the right choice for deputy leader. Her value to the party is instead ascribed to stereotypically nurturing role for younger MPs in the party.

Sex Stereotypes: Gender Roles and Women's Issues

Further to the issue of visibility, there is evidence to suggest that gender and age intersect to produce sex stereotypical media representations of Annette King and Jacinda Ardern. Sex stereotypes, which can be used to describe women politicians positively or negatively, are based on characteristics seen as common to a group (Norris 1997b, 154). In Annette King's case, this is perceived to be older women whereas for Ardern the 'group' is professional young women. In addition to the image of a 'veteran MP' Annette King is portrayed as 'Auntie Annette' in articles on *The New Zealand Herald* website. Jamieson explains that it is not unusual for women politicians to be portrayed as grandmothers, aunts, headmistresses or nannies in mainstream media (160). This is because characterisations such as these are extensions of the wife and mother role (Jamieson 160). The construction of Annette King as 'Auntie Annette', who is portrayed as a nurturing, supportive and resolving figure in the Labour Party caucus conforms to this idea. The image suggests her value to the party is mainly in relation to keeping other party members in line. For example, in the article "Labour beware- King and Ardern poles apart for deputy" published on *The New Zealand Herald* website on October 8th, 2015, Phil Quin refers to King as "Aunty Annette [sic]" and suggests that she keeps the Labour caucus in check. He writes "hardly an intimidating figure in the Helen Clark mould, Auntie Annette nevertheless inspires in Labour MPs a desire to get and remain in her good books".

The article "Annette King backing Jacinda Ardern to win Auckland Central" on the *Stuff* website, published October 27, 2015, reinforces Annette King's role as a supportive figure to Jacinda Ardern. The article is in relation to the deputy leader role after it was confirmed King would stay in the position. It is based on an interview with King, but it focuses almost entirely on Jacinda Ardern. The quotes used suggest that King was asked to comment on Ardern's popularity and why Ardern was not chosen for deputy leader. It quotes King saying Ardern's popularity is not about her looks but "her ability and her understanding of politics and her commitment to politics", and that she did not get the deputy leader role because "she did not seek the job at this time". It also quotes King predicting that Ardern will win the Auckland Central electorate at the next general election.

The use of this gender specific term to describe King associates her with women's traditional role in society of a nurturing, supportive mother figure. This representation echoes Norris's finding that women candidates "are more likely to be described in terms of the

personal traits associated with traditional ‘female’ stereotypes” than in terms associated with the professional work (1997b, 154). Additionally, the reference to King as the gender and arguably age-specific “auntie” draws attention to the novelty of older women in parliament in party leader roles (Meeks 185). On one hand, the image of Auntie Annette helping younger women in politics is a positive one, as it may encourage more women to enter politics. On the other hand however, by almost exclusively portraying King as either a veteran MP or Auntie Annette, mainstream news media representations neglect to provide coverage of King’s own political accomplishments and work in progress, such as those highlights listed in her Labour Party profile page. Her previous contributions to the Labour Party and to Parliament are devalued through lack of mention. They are summarised within the term “veteran MP” which highlights that she has been with the party for a long time, but does not actually draw attention to any of her achievements. It also carries the connotation that like military veterans she has retired from active service. Her value to the party is reduced to her mothering the caucus by keeping them “in check” and nurturing young MPs like Ardern. There is no evidence of labelling like this which reduces candidates to a supportive role being applied to male leaders in Parliament.

A positive aspect of fleeting media attention because is that women politicians can proceed with their political work with less media scrutiny of their personal lives and appearances. Although there are examples of sex stereotyping in coverage of King, like the image of “Auntie Annette” this does not persist across the majority of mainstream online news coverage. Of course this is not true for every older woman politician, but in King’s case because the media do not view her as an ideal feminine candidate and are not compelled by her sexuality, she is almost exclusively included in online news articles in her capacity as the deputy Labour leader and/or Labour’s spokesperson on health. While coverage of Ardern does not focus on the fact that she is not married and does not have children, her private relationships and appearance remain areas of interest for the news media. Media interest in Ardern’s social life is also evident. During discussions about the Labour deputy role, there are references to Ardern’s appearance and her personal relationship as well as her youth and popularity.

For example, the *Stuff* article “I don’t want to be prime minister- Jacinda Ardern” published November 28, 2015, features several photographs of Ardern and provides details of her personal life. The article includes a photograph of Ardern at an art exhibition event and describes her relationship with television and radio host Clarke Gayford. Ironically, above the

photograph is a quote from Ardern saying that she does not want to be Prime Minister because she wants to “preserve some private life”. The photograph and the information about her partner are not only unnecessary to the story but they do the very thing Jacinda Ardern says she wants to avoid: media scrutiny of her private life. The article also describes social appearances made by Ardern, including a DJ set at Auckland’s Laneway Festival. The *Stuff* article, “Jacinda Ardern in da House – from red carpet celebrity to green leather politician” published November 29, 2015 describes Ardern as New Zealand politics “it” girl- a term usually used to describe popular, young and attractive female celebrities. Again, the article features several photographs of Ardern including one of her in the House of Representatives, at the Auckland Diwali festival with Labour leader Andrew Little, DJing at the Auckland Laneway Festival and next to her partner at a social event. The article describes Ardern as “gracing the social pages”, labels her a “celebrity MP” and describes her leadership potential based on perceived popularity. It is only in a small section towards the end that the article mentions anything about her political ideas.

In this instance, *The New Zealand Herald* website does not match coverage of the *Stuff* website with references to Ardern’s appearance for personal lives, at least not in the months of coverage this study analyses. While Ardern’s image is used frequently in articles- even when the main focus of the article is not on her, there are few overt mentions of about her looks, her partner or the social events she attends. The only references to her appearance are in relation to her youth and “fresh face”. This signals that sex-stereotypical coverage of Ardern’s appearance and personal details are also not persistent across the majority of news coverage she receives, at least in the time period between August to November, 2015, A significant amount of coverage is however devoted to Ardern having to deal with the sexist comments that others in the media and political commentators sometimes make about her.

Carroll and Schreiber argue that although media coverage of women politicians has improved in many respects, one key issue is the amount of coverage that focuses on the negative “problems that women in politics confront rather than their accomplishments” (138). Two of the most common “problem areas” identified by mainstream news media coverage of women are “juggling the demands of family and career and the sexism and exclusion they encounter” (Carroll and Schreiber 138). There is evidence of mainstream online news media focusing on the latter of these two topics in coverage of Jacinda Ardern at the same time media were speculating on the Labour deputy leader position. During the months of speculation about Jacinda Ardern and Labour leadership, former rugby league coach Graham

Lowe described Ardern as a “pretty little thing” who would “look good” as Prime Minister. The comments sparked criticism of Lowe for sexism and Ardern for not dealing with the issue of sexism in a firm enough manner. Media reports about the event on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* website focus on Lowe’s comments and are on how and why Jacinda Ardern has to deal with sexism (the why being her perceived popularity and appearance). *The New Zealand Herald* includes the incident in the article “Sexism is alive and well” published September 17, 2015, which is essentially a list of recent examples of sexism.

While reporters are preoccupied with the sexist comments made about Ardern, her popularity and her appearance, they neglect to either praise or criticise her political accomplishments. Of five articles published on the *Stuff* website about the sexist comments, only one mentions any of Ardern’s political work. The opinion piece “Jacinda Ardern—Much more than a ‘pretty little thing’” published August 26, 2015 notes that Ardern “has the respect of business, and in particular the notoriously hard to please Auckland business clique, who rate her understanding of their sector highly”. Small also mentions Ardern’s previous occupation as “president of the International Union of Socialist Youth”. The four remaining articles on the *Stuff* website and the five articles on *The New Zealand Herald* website make no mention of her experiences of accomplishments.

Even opinion pieces criticising sexism in politics and defending Jacinda Ardern’s popularity fail to highlight her political work. For example, in the opinion piece “Not so pretty: Sexism and Jacinda Ardern” published on *The New Zealand Herald* website September 1, 2015, Rachel Smalley argues that Ardern should not be dismissed because she is attractive and popular. Smalley criticises other people in the media for focusing on whether Ardern is “deserving” of her popularity; however, she does exactly what she criticises others of doing. She fails to mention any of Ardern’s accomplishments in her defence of why Ardern deserves the attention she receives. Instead, Smalley’s argument suggest Ardern’s defining characteristic is her age, as she insists ‘political parties need new blood, they need fresh faces, they need to rejuvenate, and they need to engage youth’. She is heavily critical of others not being able to “see past [Ardern’s] bright eyes and good skin” while she herself argues the party needs a ‘fresh face’.

While the issue of sexism in politics is a significant topic that requires coverage, the focus of articles on this news event is misdirected. The onus is on Ardern to respond to sexist comments and defend against accusations that she possesses ‘style over substance’ rather

than on the people making derogatory comments. Instead of exploring systemic deficits, the source of sexism and the wider implications for women's participation in politics, the articles on *Stuff* and the *New Zealand Herald* made it appear as though sexism is a women's issue- not an issue everyone needs to address. Therefore this news coverage is not constructive to the wider social issue.

Although there is an expectation for Ardern to respond to sexism, previous research shows that when women politicians do respond, they tend to experience a media backlash. It is a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation- as described by Ardern herself in a piece she wrote for *Metro* magazine about responding to sexism. Wright and Holland find examples of media backlash after former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard delivered a speech about sexism and misogyny in Australian Parliament in 2012. They find that news media framed Gillard's speech either as a calculated attack "for political gain" as opposed to "an attempt to draw attention to an important issue"; or outburst of "uncontrolled emotion" akin with the gendered stereotype of "female hysteria" (Wright and Holland 461-463). Wright and Hollard explain that "women leaders face a double bind when expressing anger because they are viewed as out of control" (458). Campus shares a similar sentiment that while the expression of anger for men is "an indicator of power" for women it is "an indicator of powerlessness" (Campus 58-59).

Initially, Ardern held back on responding to sexist comments made by Graham Lowe. However, after continuous media focus on the event, she eventually commented on the issue. Ardern expressed frustration at not just Lowe's comments, but the attention given to his remarks and the questions about Ardern's credibility that followed them. She did not perform a speech in the same way Julia Gillard did and thus was not portrayed in the same way as disobeying gender norms. Ardern was perceived to have retained her stereotypically feminine poise by writing about her feelings in a column for *Metro* magazine. The media representation of Ardern that followed was gendered but not in the same way as Julia Gillard. Mainstream online media reports portrayed her more like a victim than a hysterical woman on the attack.

The language used to describe Ardern commenting on the event are similar to the language used when reporting on women who have opened up about domestic violence or other abusive situations. For example, the *Stuff* article "Jacinda Ardern responds to being called 'pretty bloody stupid'" *Stuff* October 30, 2015 states "Jacinda Ardern has broken her

silence over how she deals with sexism”. The majority of the article itself focuses on right wing political commentators attack on Ardern for having “no political acumen at all” because she did not respond strategically to Graham Lowe’s comments. Similarly, *The New Zealand Herald* article “Ardern responds to ‘pretty little thing’ remark” published September 20, 2015 states that “Labour MP Jacinda Ardern has spoken publicly about Graham Lowe’s description of her as a ‘pretty little thing’ for the first time”. One third of the article is also taken up by a large photo of Ardern, positioned at the top of the page, with a sorrowful expression. Articles also highlight the people who came to Jacinda Ardern’s aide, as though she had relied on others to help fight her battles. The characterisation of the victim ascribes stereotypically feminine traits of “passivity and fragility” which are indicative of weakness in political leaders (Van Acker 1999, 144). Appleby notes that it is for this reason that many women politicians choose not to speak out against the sexism they experience, as they fear being “cast a victim and thus too weak” to be a leader (160). Overall, the image contributes to criticism by some that she is not tough enough to be in a leadership role. The focus on her having to deal with sexism from rugby league coaches and political commentators also distracts from her political work. Ardern is criticised when she does not meet expectations about how she should have had some sort of profound response to sexist comments. This latter point is reminiscent of the potential consequences of the agents of change frame, which is applied to Ardern in several instances.

Agent of Change Frame

The news media’s approval of Ardern and her perceived popularity results in coverage which speculates that she will not only become the Labour Party deputy leader, but could eventually lead the party to a general election victory and become Prime Minister. One of the frames frequently identified in news coverage of women political leader candidate is the agent of change frame (Norris 1997b, 163; Van Acker 2003, 116; Van Zoonen 2006, 288; Wright and Holland 458). Norris and Wright and Holland demonstrate that the agent of change frame is often applied to women when there is the perception that the political establishment is corrupt or dysfunctional (Norris 1997b, 163; Wright and Holland 459). Additionally, Van Acker finds that agent of change frame is employed in news media coverage to portray women politicians as saviours who will “solve the problems of their political parties” if their parties are performing poorly (2003, 116). This is the perception of the Labour Party, as since an election loss in 2008 it has struggled to raise its popularity with voters. At the 2014 general election, the Labour Party achieved only 25 per cent of the vote,

resulting in the party's worst election defeat since 1922. Since Helen Clark's resignation after the 2008 election defeat, the Labour Party has had three leaders, all of whom have been heterosexual white men over the age of 50. Ardern deviates from these leaders based on the categories of gender and age.

The agent of change frame is evident in mainstream online news media coverage of Jacinda Ardern. Several articles on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites suggest that if Ardern were part of the Labour Party leadership team the party would perform better at the next general election. This representation is in response to a perception that the Labour Party needs someone fresh and new to lead it, someone who is distant from any supposed party infighting. For example, in the opinion piece "Government has stumbled but do voters really care?" published on the *Stuff* website, September 26, 2015 Duncan Garner suggested Labour needs respond to calls for freshness by replacing Annette King with Jacinda Ardern. Garner argues that Ardern will signal a "mood change", her appointment will "excite the public" and help Labour earn votes at the next general election. Also on *The New Zealand Herald* website, the article "Little facing dilemma over deputy choice" insists that Ardern has a "popular following" and that "a political party in Labour's predicament cannot afford to let her appeal go to waste".

A similar sentiment for a change of 'mood' is echoed in the *Stuff* article "Leaders mastering the art of the political reshuffle" published October 23, 2015. The article begins with a large photograph of Jacinda Ardern smiling at the top of the page with the caption "Jacinda Ardern Labour's face for change" below it. Published in the wake of the announcement that King was to stay on as deputy leader, the article suggests that Andrew Little made the wrong choice because the party needs to signal change and "Ardern fit that bill". The reporter, Tracy Watkins reinforces the agents of change idea by referring to Ardern as "the face of the next generation" and stating that "Ardern has star power- something Labour desperately needs more of, not less". She references Ardern youth and appearance when suggesting Ardern would have been the best candidate for the deputy leader role but follows the trend of failing to mention any other reason why Ardern would have been a good choice.

The agent of change frame is gendered as the news media proposes Ardern will improve Labour Party performance because of stereotypically feminine traits. Hall and Donaghue demonstrate that in time of crisis, women are likely to be appointed to leadership

roles because of a sense that they can turn things around based on feminine characteristics (635). They explain that while men are characterised by “assertiveness, competitiveness, confidence, and self-promotion” women are characterised with an emphasis on “communal characteristics of warmth, sensitivity, nurturance and self-effacement” (Hall and Donaghue 635). Women are also seen to be flexible, empathetic, and creative and possess “the interpersonal skills needed to motivate [colleagues] to work together in recovering from a crisis” (Hall and Donaghue 635). Therefore, in a party which is perceived to be experiencing internal strife, as the Labour party was, the agent of change frame is applied to women preferentially because they are expected to be community minded and promote party unity in keeping with ‘feminine’ communal traits.

Initially, when there is the perception that change is need within a political party the theme of women leaders as agents of change may appear to be a positive one (Norris 1997b, 164). Articles on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites suggest Jacinda Ardern’s perceived popularity will help revive the Labour Party’s support base, following poor performances at all three general elections since 2008. News coverage proposes that Ardern will initiate change by uniting a (supposedly) divided party and attract public support for Labour. However, the notion that Ardern will signal drastic change for Labour has several potential consequences for her political career.

Previous studies have shown that when women politicians are, sometimes unrealistically, expected to make significant changes and do not, the disappointment leads to heightened criticism (Norris 1997b, 165; Van Acker 2003, 120; Wright and Holland 459). Van Acker argues that media in New Zealand and Australia like to “embrace women quickly and fully early in their careers” but turn on them when they do not live up to high expectations (2003, 116). Karen Ross echoes this criticism of the news media, stating that when women do not meet the standards set up by news media representations, they undergo “a doubly unfair trial by media” and are criticised more than their male colleagues would be (2004, 64). Moreover, when women are appointment to positions “with a higher than usual chance of failure” there are “profound consequences” for their careers as well as the careers of other women (Hall and Donaghue 635). Women leaders’ failure to meet expectations may reflect poorly on women as a group, as their defining difference from previous leaders (those who were deemed problematic) is likely to be gender.

While the long term effects of Ardern being represented in this way remain to be seen, short term it has resulted in unfair criticism and questions about her skills and experience to be an MP at all. The overemphasis on Ardern as Labour's potential saviour has led to questions about her credibility as a politician, with some commentators she has not done any substantial political work to earn the attention she gets. The article "Leaders mastering the art of the political reshuffle" published on the *Stuff* website September 23, 2015, speculates that even members of the Labour Party believe "Ardern's profile was more about looks and youth" than her work.

Furthermore, the agent of change frame ignores Ardern's own intentions for her political career. She has previously stated that she does not want to be the Labour Party leader or run for Prime Minister ("Jacinda Ardern on Sexism, Leadership and Political Ambition"). In an interview with TV One's Q&A programme, Ardern stated that she has always asserted she does not aspire to be the Labour Party leader or Prime Minister ("Jacinda Ardern on Sexism, Leadership and Political Ambition"). Media build up around her taking up a leadership role may lead to disappointment for voters who expect Ardern to take on the extra responsibilities.

Femininity and the Double Bind

It is evident from analysis of the mainstream online news media coverage of Annette King and Jacinda Ardern that the perception of femininity strongly influences the coverage of women political leadership candidates. McGregor and Van Acker both argue New Zealand mainstream news media follows similar trends in international media of favourably representing women politicians who appear to conform to traditional notions of femininity (McGregor 1996, 183; Van Acker 2003, 116). This is evident in the many examples of positive coverage about Jacinda Ardern and enthusiasm about her rise in popularity. Articles on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites suggest Ardern should become the deputy leader (and maybe eventually become the Labour Party leader) without any reference to her political accomplishments or experiences.

The intersection of gender, age and sexuality, and additional social categories like race mean Ardern conforms to what McGregor describes as the media's idealised woman politician (145). She argues that mainstream news media in New Zealand long for a "gendered ideal": a candidate who "combines political energy and power with a stereotypical femininity expressed in conventional prettiness" (McGregor 183). Additionally, Van Acker

argues that “the white, thin, young woman is constructed by the media as the norm for all women” (1999, 145). Ardern is perceived to conform to these expectations and ideals, and the image offers her the opportunity of exposure which is good for politicians who need public support to be an MP. However, given the coverage is based on stereotypically feminine characteristics and attributes like her sense of style, or who she is dating rather than her political work, she is subjected to criticism for appearing to possess ‘style over substance’.

This is indicative of the “double bind” issue identified by previous researchers, where women politicians have to perform a balance of stereotypically feminine and stereotypically masculine characteristics (Campus 116; Jamieson 120; Meeks 177; Wright and Holland 456). Aggressive women politicians may appear unfeminine and therefore unacceptable but overly feminine women politicians are deemed incompetent and ineffective leaders. Scholars have previously demonstrated that when women politicians overemphasise characteristics traditionally expected of men leaders, such as assertiveness and determination, tend to be treated harshly by news media for doing so (Burke and Mazarella 400; Devere and Davis 75; Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 62; Van Acker 2003, 116). In Julia Gillard’s case for example, Wright and Holland demonstrate that she was heavily criticised for displaying aggression and assertiveness when she delivered a speech about sexism and misogyny in Australian Parliament (462). Whereas news coverage about a man politician delivering a similar speech may have been covered neutrally or even positively, Gillard was criticised for “bringing up the ‘soft gender issue’” and conversely criticised for doing so for “strategic gain” (Wright and Holland 462). Wright and Holland explain that the overwhelming rhetoric of news coverage of Gillard’s speech was that she had to “cast aside her femininity to take up an aggressive (masculine prescribed) stance” which was deemed “unacceptable” and delegitimised her message about the issue of sexism in politics (462).

In Ardern’s case, there are some examples of mainstream online news media questioning her capabilities for a leadership role based on a lack of perceived masculine characteristics. For example, in the previously mentioned *New Zealand Herald* article “Labour beware- King and Ardern poles apart for deputy”, Phil Quin argues that the Labour deputy leader will need to be tough and at times be able to discipline the caucus or deliver bad news. Quin’s impression of Ardern in the role is that it would be “hard to imagine an MP less temperamentally suited to inheriting ‘bad cop’ duties”. He suggests that if Ardern was in the role, leader Andrew Little would have to pick up the slack from her lack of assertiveness

and firmness. News articles on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites also include coverage of instances where political commentators question her credibility because of an excess of perceived feminine characteristics like passiveness- for example, the criticism by Matthew Hooten of Ardern's initial lack of a response to the "pretty little thing" comments outlined earlier in this chapter.

Similarly to the consequences of the agent of change frame, the long term consequences of the double bind are yet to appear frequently in news coverage of Jacinda Ardern. As demonstrated in previous studies, they are more likely to become evident later in Ardern's career if she takes on a significant leadership position within the Labour Party and/or Parliament and fails to enact change through perceived lack of masculine leadership characteristics.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The aim of this study was to assess whether patterns of gendered news coverage were evident in mainstream online news coverage of women political leaders and leadership candidates in Aotearoa New Zealand. Previous studies on the representation of women politicians in the news media have identified visibility, sex stereotyping and gendered news frames as key examples of how the coverage of women politicians differs from that of their male colleagues (Devitt 457; McGregor 181; Karen Ross 2004, 63-66; Kahn 1996, 57; Kittilson and Fridkin 371; Norris 1997b, 150; Van Acker 2003, 116-117). These studies have focused on the representation of women politicians in traditional forms of media, such as print and television; and have focused on news media coverage from the point of view of a single social category: gender.

Intersectional research has shown, however, that gender does not operate alone in the way different women politicians are represented in the mainstream news media (Fiig 49; Gershon 109-118; Major and Coleman 316-320; Yuval-Davis 195). Therefore, the methodology used to examine news content in this study was underpinned by frame and intersectional analyses, in order to broaden our understanding of how different women politicians are covered in mainstream online news media. Analysis focused on the intersections of race, class and gender in coverage of the Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei during the 2014 general election; and on the intersection of gender and age in coverage of Labour deputy leader candidates Annette King and Jacinda Ardern in 2015.

This thesis demonstrates that the key patterns of coverage identified in previous literature on women, politics and the media, visibility (or invisibility), sex-stereotyping and gendered framing are still evident in mainstream online news coverage of women politicians in New Zealand. However, the extent to which they are of concern depends on other categories of social difference. Interesting patterns and differences emerge in the news coverage of women politicians when we consider the intersection of categories of social difference: gender, race and age.

Sex Stereotyping

Scholars have previously found that “journalists tend to highlight the personal in reporting on women” including their appearance, marital status and parental status (Aday and Devitt 56). Chapter four demonstrates an instance of the news media focusing on Metiria

Turei's appearance and house at the expense of serious ideological discussion about racism, sexism and classism in New Zealand, and the intersection thereof. The coverage was in response to remarks made by National Party MPs about the cost of Turei's clothes and the state of her home. Anne Tolley, supported by her colleague Judith Collins, claimed that Metiria Turei was not in a position to advocate for people in lower-socio economic situations, because she came to Parliament wearing \$2,000 jackets and lived in a 'castle'.

Turei responded to Tolley's criticism by accusing her of basing her remarks on racist and classist ideologies about a Māori woman from a working class background. Despite the opportunity to explore the ideological biases present in Parliament, the mainstream online news media websites *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* devoted most of the coverage of this event to comparing Metiria Turei, Anne Tolley and Judith Collins's clothes. This type of news media coverage trivialises not only the women politicians involved, but has the potential to lead to cynicism and disillusionment about women in politics (Ross and Sreberny-Mohammadi 102). The coverage also distracted from serious issues that could have been discussed. Although this was prominent example of sex-stereotypical coverage, this was the only instance of media coverage focusing on Turei's appearance and personal life.

Chapter five also demonstrates examples of sex stereotyping. This includes characterising women politicians in relation to stereotypical maternal roles, as is evident in coverage of Annette King which characterises her as the nurturing, supportive figure of "Auntie Annette". Some coverage of Jacinda Ardern focused on her appearance and named her partner, however overt instances of this were rare in the four month period I analysed. The main sex based coverage of Ardern was actually in relation to the issue of sexism, as media focused on comments made about Ardern. Carroll and Schreiber also found that overt instances of sex stereotyping were rare, but identify news media's tendency to focus on negative aspects of women politicians' careers in politics like the sexism they encounter (Carroll and Schreiber 138). My research supports this finding.

Although these were prominent instances of sex stereotyping, the vast majority of coverage about Metiria Turei, Annette King and Jacinda Ardern did not make references to their appearances or personal lives. Thus there is evidence to suggest that mainstream online news media has made some improvements with regards to sex stereotyping. For example, the coverage of King and Ardern in competition does not attract the same kinds of comparisons identified in coverage of previous competitions between women politicians, such as Helen Clark and Jenny Shipley when they contested the 1999 general election. Motherhood was a strong point of focus for media coverage and Clark's "childlessness" was scrutinised in

media coverage, with suggestions that she could not “understand the experiences [s]of other women” because she was not a mother (Devere and Davis 80). Mainstream online news media does not make comparisons of King and Ardern based on their different paternal statuses.

Gendered News Frames

One of the gendered news frames frequently identified in news media coverage of women politicians is the agents of change frame (Jamieson 115; Norris 1997b, 164; Van Acker 2003, 120; Wright and Holland 458-459). Chapter five demonstrates that the agent of change frame is applied to Jacinda Ardern as a young woman politician who will save the Labour Party from another bad election result. Jacinda deviates from the trend of white, middle aged men who have led the Labour Party through three significant election losses. The theme of Ardern as an agent of change for the Labour Party is strongly evident as media speculation about her replacing Annette King for the deputy leader role, and maybe eventually Andrew Little for the party leader position.

Hall and Donaghue argue that the agent of change frame is based stereotypically feminine characteristics, such as flexibility, empathy, creativity and interpersonal skill, which are useful when political parties are seen to be in crisis (Hall and Donaghue 635). Coverage of Ardern using this frame suggests she will save the Labour Party from another poor election result, but this is an unrealistic expectation for an individual politician. Previous studies have shown that when women politicians are (unrealistically) expected to make significant changes and do not, the disappointment leads to heightened criticism (Norris 1997b, 165; Van Acker 2003, 120; Wright and Holland 459).

Additionally, Ardern’s popularity with the press can be somewhat attributed to her performance of femininity. If she were to become a leader, there is likely to be a greater emphasis on the challenge of the double bind, which describes the position women political leaders find themselves in when they are expected to negotiate a balance between stereotypically feminine and stereotypically masculine characteristics (Campus 116; Jamieson 120; Meeks 177; Wright and Holland 456). The long term effects of this representation of Ardern remains to be seen, but in the short term there is evidence to suggest that it has led to questions about her credibility and viability as a political leader.

A second frame which is often evident in coverage of women politicians in mainstream news media is the women as outsiders frame (Fountain and McGregor 4; Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49; Norris 1997b, 162; Van Acker 2003, 117-118). Chapter four

demonstrates that this frame is applied in mainstream online news coverage of Metiria Turei. Although her biography on the Green Party website describes a politician with traditionally valued qualifications and experience for a political leader, mainstream online news media representations leave the impression that Turei's eccentricities, her affiliation with alternative cultures and her unconventional background compared to standard, middle aged white male politicians (a Māori woman from a lower socio economic background who was an unwed mother at a young age) make her a political outsider. This frame is reinforced by the Pākehā perspective in mainstream news media.

The Intersection of Gender and Race

Chapter five focuses on the mainstream online news media coverage of a Māori woman political leader with reference to the intersection of race and gender. It is evident from the analysis in this chapter that mainstream news media is framed from a Pākehā perspective. This Pākehā perspective tends to result in negative and stereotypical news about Māori. This may disadvantage Māori politicians and their views and it contributes to the upholding of dominant Pākehā social norms in New Zealand society. Applied to Turei, it fits in with narratives suggesting she is a political outsider based on the social identity marker of race as well as gender.

The Intersection of Gender and Age

Chapter five focuses on the mainstream online news media coverage of women political leader candidates with reference to the intersection of gender and age. Intersectional analysis reveals a particularly interesting pattern of news coverage in this chapter. When we break down the category of 'women' and consider other social categories, such as age, we see that the visibility of some women politicians in mainstream news media is still an issue. The difference in age between Annette King and Jacinda Ardern influences the quality and quantity of coverage on the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites. Several studies on the representation of women politicians and the media have concluded that the issue of visibility, although still of concern is not as great an issue as it was when Gaye Tuchman wrote of 'symbolic annihilation' (Carroll and Schreiber 130; Devere and Davis 66; Fountaine and McGregor 1-4; Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 49; Norris 1997b 164; Ross and Carter 1151). The majority of studies analysing the visibility of women politicians in mainstream news media compare the coverage of women with coverage of their male colleagues. There is a gap

in the existing literature regarding how some women politicians are covered compared to other who may differ in race, age, sexuality or other categories of social difference. An intersectional perspective reveals that although the tenets of symbolic annihilation may not be an issue for women as a group, some women politicians, depending on multiple categories of social difference might still face media bias in the form of omission. The intersection of gender and age is closely linked with the category of sexuality and the perception of femininity. It is evident from analysis of the mainstream online news media coverage of Annette King and Jacinda Ardern that the perception of femininity strongly influences the coverage of women political leadership candidates, as Ardern who is perceived to be more feminine due to the intersection of the intersection of youth and womanhood, and more visible than King.

Limitations and Future Study

There are two main limitations in this study, however both could easily be address in a larger project using the same research design. Firstly, the analysis is limited to two mainstream online news websites, *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald*. The websites chosen are associated with print newspapers. I chose to restrict analysis to these as most of the literature informing this study had analysed newspaper coverage and a key aim of this article was to assess whether the patterns of coverage identified in traditional media had been carried across to a different medium. The news organisations that produce the country's most popular newspapers, Fairfax and NZME/APN also run the *Stuff* and *The New Zealand Herald* websites. Therefore, limiting analysis to these websites was logical. There are however a myriad of other news websites that could be analysed in future research to get a broader sense of the way women politicians are represented in online news media. These include websites associated with televised mainstream news programmes, such as Newshub.co.nz (formerly 3News) and ONE News on tvnz.co.nz/one-news. Additionally, radio stations with a focus on news and current affairs have news and entertainment websites, such as Newstalkzb.co.nz and Radio New Zealand's website radionz.co.nz; and there are also alternative news websites, the websites of current affairs magazines and political blogs which could be considered in future research.

A second limitation of this project is that the analysis focuses on three women politicians. This is due to the focus of this project being limited to women leaders and leadership candidates. The analysis in Chapter four for example is limited by the fact that

there was only one Māori woman leading a party already in Parliament into the election. The research in this field could be strengthened in future by analysing the coverage of the Māori Party co-leader Marama Fox at the next general election, or by analysing the coverage of Māori women politicians in general and considering more social categories of difference. For example, it would be interesting to examine the representations the Green Party newcomer Marama Davidson regarding the intersections of race, gender and age, and the Labour Party MP Louisa Wall regarding the intersections of race, gender and sexuality.

Similarly, the analysis in chapter four is limited by the fact that media focused on two women candidates for the role of Labour Party deputy leader. Future research into the intersection of gender and age in mainstream online representations of women politician would benefit from a more widespread investigation into whether other young women politicians are covered in ways similar to Ardern; and other older women politicians are covered in ways similar to King when it comes to leadership roles. Future research could take into consideration the intersection of gender with other categories of social difference such as disability or religion to understand how women leadership candidates are covered.

Contributions and Conclusion

The contribution of this thesis to the existing body of work on the representation of women politicians in the media in New Zealand lies in the adoption of an intersectional perspective. Intersectional analysis reveals the significance of categories of social difference in the quality and quantity of coverage women politicians receive and demonstrates the difficulty of separating them out in lived experiences of real women. For example, although the primary focus of analysis of Metiria Turei was the intersection of gender and race, it became evident that class in combination with race and gender was significant in the representations of Turei in mainstream news media. Similarly, the primary focus of analysis of Annette King and Jacinda Ardern was the intersection of gender and age, but it became evident that race and sexuality were also significant factors in the representation of King and Ardern. The categories of race, gender, age and sexuality intersect to reflect ideas about femininity that mainstream media tend to value. It is evident from coverage of King and Ardern that the perception of femininity is a significant factor in the quality and quantity of mainstream online news media coverage of women leadership candidates.

The second key contribution of this thesis is that it analyses mainstream online news media. Scholars in New Zealand have provided analysis of how politicians are represented in blogs and social media (Hopkins and Matheson 2005, 92; Hopkins and Matheson 2012, 108;

Matheson 132; Ross, Fountaine and Comrie 252) However, there is deficit in analysis of mainstream online news media. While this study is only a snapshot of how women politicians are represented in the mainstream online news media, the analysis it does provide is an indication of how three of the most visible women politicians were represented. It is therefore hard to imagine that other women would have fared better. It is evident that issues of sex stereotyping and gendered news framing are still prevalent in mainstream online news media as well as bias based on other categories of social difference, such as race, class and age.

These findings indicate that mainstream online news media have not responded to optimism that mainstream news online could offer more diverse and balanced stories, in depth information and well researched articles (Allan 2006, 25; Burke and Mazzearella 396; Sissons and Mulrennan 284; Yun et al. 930). Rather than utilise the opportunities made available by the Internet, such as vast time and space to offer comprehensive news from a diverse range of perspectives, mainstream online news media carries over many of the old news values and discriminatory practices of traditional print and televised news media. These values and practices favour and reinforce the dominant male and Pākehā social norms. Overall, it seems that the change to a digital platform has not stopped mainstream online political journalism in New Zealand privileging middle aged, middle class, white, heterosexual men.

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