A Thing of Humour?
Exploring Gender and Hostile Humour in Alberta Political Cartoons

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the intersections existing between gender, violence and political humour in Alberta political cartoons. I ask the following question: do cartoonists more frequently use hostile humour to represent women premiers, and, if so, what do these representations communicate about gender and political leadership and Alberta political culture? To answer this question, I conducted a content and discourse analysis of 154 political cartoons presenting Alberta premiers Rachel Notley, Alison Redford, and Ed Stelmach during their first eighteen months in office. I argue that while hostile humour was a key part of the jokes in editorial cartoons directed at Notley, Redford and Stelmach, hostile humour is complex and nuanced. In the case of Alberta, hostile humour in political cartoons creates a hierarchy of what is and is not politically acceptable by enforcing gendered and ideological views about the political status-quo, thus reinforcing the belief that politics exists as a male and conservative pursuit.

DEDICATION

To two of Augustana's greatest professors.
To Dr. Lars Hallström, who taught me to love research.
To Dr. Mélanie Méthot, who showed me kindness when I needed it the most.
It's amazing how the two people who I tried to spend my undergraduate degree avoiding turned out to have the biggest impacts.

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fundamentally shifted how I understand mental illness, research and myself. I hope that one day I will be able to reflect that same level of kindness that you have shown me on to others.

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GLOSSARY

Deserving Victim: an individual who is presented in cartoons as deserving of the violence being directed at them.

Frontier Masculinity: Forms of masculinity associated with male control over land, the economic and public space, and the aggressive protection of individualistic, conservative values.

Gendered Mediation: A term first discussed by Annabelle Sreberny and Karen Ross in 1996. This growing body of literature illustrates that the media is far from gender neutral and treats the male perspective as the norm when presenting politics.

Hostile Humour: Humour in which individuals are embarrassed, insulted, humiliated or physically hurt, or about to be physically hurt. It also includes the following themes of subjugation: subordinate, controlled, passive and threatening to men.

Rural Masculinity: Forms of masculinity associated with rural independence and isolation.

Underserving Victim/Sympathetic Victim: an individual presented in cartoons whom the cartoonists encourage the reader to feel sympathetic to after the individual receives violence.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

OPENING THOUGHTS

"I've been beating this drum for 10,11 years. I will continue to beat it, I promise.
But it's against the law to beat Rachel Notley."

These were the words uttered by then Wildrose Party leader Brian Jean on August 30, 2016, during a town hall meeting in Fort McMurray Alberta. According to the local newspaper, *Fort McMurray Today,* "much of the audience laughed, while other corners of the room gasped in shock" (McDermott 2016). Jean later apologized for his words, referring to them as an "inappropriate attempt" at humour. Jean's comments came just weeks after an Alberta golf course used a picture of Notley's face as a target during a local golf tournament. Ernest Bothi, president of the Big Country Oilmen's Association in Brooks, the organization responsible for hosting the tournament, later responded to the incident by saying; "my goal was just to make people laugh… it was a thing of humour."

In reaction to these events, an Alberta cartoonist published a cartoon depicting Brian Jean standing on a golf course angrily shouting "Damn it! I thought she'd make an easier target!" A man standing next to Jean advised, "she's veering left again" (Mayes 2016a). While cartoons and humour have historically been used to challenge common beliefs and values (see Becker 2012; Tsakon and Popa 2013) the release of this cartoon simply reinforced the notion of violence towards politicians as normal, acceptable and even humorous. These events highlight the importance, and urgency, of investigating the role of humour and cartoons in facilitating sexist and volatile discussions about political leadership.

Indeed, violence against politicians and women politicians, in particular, has been the topic of increasing discussion in the news. Through a freedom of information request made by *Post Media*, files from attained from Alberta Justice and the Solicitor General revealed that among the five most recent Alberta premiers, the women who have served in that role—Alison Redford and Rachel Notley—received significantly more threats than did their male predecessors or successors, when threats are considered in proportion to the amount of time spent as premier

(Gerein 2017). Additionally, a 2018 investigation conducted by the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* found that Rachel Notley had been the recipient of 11 death threats during her first three years as premier, including a funeral application with Notley's name penned where the deceased is identified (Trynacity 2018). In response to the findings, federal Green Party Leader Elizabeth May pointed to the gendered implication of these death threats, observing that female politicians are more often the subject of such violence (Marotta 2018). Former Ontario premier Kathleen Wynne elaborated the intensity and urgency of the problem: "what we are dealing with in terms of what's happening in Alberta is happening everywhere, you know. Misogyny is a reality that is something that we have to acknowledge" (Wynne quoted in Marotta 2018).

The events in Canada are not isolated. Rather, they mirror global discussions about gender, violence and political leadership. A 2016 study by the Inter-Party Union based on interviews conducted with 55 female parliamentarians across 39 countries found that 81.8 per cent of the politicians interviewed had experienced psychological violence. Another 44.4 per cent of those interview subjects noted that they had been the recipients of threats, including threats of death, rape, abduction and beatings, as well as warnings that their children would be killed (IPU 2016, 4). Meanwhile, the 2016 murder of British Labour politician Jo Cox and physical assault of Mexican senator Ana Gabriela Guevara sparked international attention to the dangers experienced by women in politics. These events point to a greater need to consider how gendered discourses on violence and political leadership are constructed, especially through humour, which is rarely examined as a vehicle of violence. How do gendered forms of humour communicate socially and culturally resonant norms and assumptions about violence directed toward women? This thesis explores how political humour has been used a mechanism to normalize violence in the political sphere, thereby situating women as outsiders to politics and conveying discomfort with the idea of women exercising governmental power and authority.

In this study, I use the term "hostile humour" as a concept designed to characterize and systematically analyze the aggressive content of Canadian political humour. This concept refers to forms of humour in which individuals are embarrassed, insulted, humiliated or physically hurt (Weinstein 2011, 1044). However, in order to provide more compressive analysis of how hostility is visualized in cartoons, I expand the definition to include themes of victimization. As well, I operationalize the concept of hostile humour to look at the ways in which violence is directed at the individual as well as the degree to which key actors (in this case, Alberta

premiers) are presented as threatening. By further operationalizing this concept in these ways, I aim to extend the concept of hostile humour to provide a more expansive analysis of the ways in which editorial cartoons published in Alberta newspapers convey hostile and gendered political meanings.

In this thesis, I examined 154 political cartoons presenting the current Alberta premier, Rachel Notley, and her two predecessors, Alison Redford and Ed Stelmach, during their first eighteen months in office. The province of Alberta was used as a case study because it is one of only two Canadian provinces that has seen two women serve as premier. The fact that the two women also served as leaders of two ideologically different parties makes Alberta a particularly interesting and valuable case study. From 1971 until 2015, the Progressive Conservative Party led the province, making it the longest serving government in Canadian history. Alison Redford was elected in 2011, making her one of many politicians to lead this party during its period of one-party dominance. In contrast, Rachel Notley was elected as leader of the left-leaning New Democratic Party in 2014. At the time of Notley's election, the party only had four seats in the Alberta Legislative Assembly. Notley would later go on to end the 44-year Progressive Conservative regime by winning the 2015 election. As a result, studying Alberta politics provides the opportunity to undertake a comparative analysis of the gendered nature of hostile humour, as the presentations of two women political leaders and a male comparator can be considered.

Content and discourse analysis techniques were employed to examine the linkages between hostile humour and representations of women and men premiers in Alberta political cartoons. I argue that, through the use of hostile humour, Alberta's leading political cartoonists work to maintain the political status-quo by conveying what is and is not politically acceptable in Alberta. In particular, editorial cartoons reflect highly gendered discourses that reinforce the agency of men in politics and situate women as outsiders to political life. Hostile humour assists in facilitating this gendered discourse by reinforcing rather than challenging common stereotypical beliefs about the role of women in the political sphere. While hostile humour is regularly employed in political humour, regardless of the gender of political actor, political cartoonists are significantly more likely to use humour to cast women as deviant from the political status-quo rather than integrate them fully into conventional violent narratives about politics. I found that the deployment of hostile humour was mediated by both the politician's

gender and their political party, as even between the two women studied stark differences in presentation can be found, reflecting different perceptions of conservative and left-leaning women politicians.

Goals of Thesis and Research Questions

The primary goal of this thesis is to consider how violence becomes normalized in Alberta political humour. I am also interested in understanding the extent to which gender and political party mediate this political rhetoric. To achieve these objectives, I pose the following research overarching question: Do cartoonists more frequently use hostile humour to represent women premiers, and, if so, what do these representations communicate about gender and political leadership and Alberta political culture? With this research question, I address whether hostile humour reflects themes and rhetorical devices found in the gendered mediation literature. This body of literature demonstrates that political media coverage is rarely gender-neutral; rather, the news situates stereotypically male perspectives as the norm when covering politics.

Finally, in this thesis, I examine the extent to which hostile humour in Alberta political communication is inflected by tropes of frontier masculinity. Frontier masculinity has been broadly referred to as a form of masculinity tied to the myth of the frontier by evoking ideas of the "wild west" or the cowboy (Connell 1993; Anahita and Mix 2003). It is also often characterized by themes of violence and domination (Wight 2001; Anahita and Mix 2003). By considering these three points of analysis, I provide insights into the relationships between hostility, gender, and the Alberta political context.

Structure of Thesis

The aim of this chapter has been to briefly introduce the key topics of my thesis. I will now turn to how I will present this analysis. This thesis, by its very nature, calls for attention to be paid to seemingly diverse bodies of literature calling in order to accurately decipher how notions of gender and hostility are communicated in Alberta political communication. Because no research has worked to address the topic of gendered hostile humour to date, I combine three bodies of existing literature to develop a conceptual framework for my study. When deciding which bodies of research would form the basis of my literature review, I considered how I would methodologically address gender and hostility in the cartoons. Working backwards from this

goal, I realized that there were three key realms of research at play in my research question. These areas of research range from the very broad theme of humour to the specific elements of gendered and aggressive forms of political communication. The final crucial element of the literature review is the political cartoon, as these texts comprise the object of study that I interrogate in order to determine how discussions on gender, hostility and humour take place. The literature review chapter addresses the following questions: (1) How have notions about gender been communicated in humour? (2) How have hostile topics been communicated through humour? (3) Do the themes of gender and hostility ever intersect in previous research and, if so, how? Moving from questions about humour, I then narrowed the focus of my research specifically to how these discussions have been manifested in political communication research, leading to an additional question: (4) How has the study of political communication specifically addressed themes of hostility and gender? Finally, I was interested in how political cartoons have historically been treated as a source of analysis by researchers.

In Chapter 2, I consider the three bodies of research discussed above. These three areas of research are important because they allow me to systematically move from broad concerns concerning the gendered and hostile nature of humour to how similar discussions on gender and aggression are manifested in political communication. The first area of research that I draw from is the literature on humour and specifically how humour becomes gendered and hostile. I then address the literature on the gendered nature of political communication, narrowing the focus to research on gendered mediation as it is this specific body of scholarship that communicates how political media coverage reflects gendered meanings through the use of aggressive metaphors and domestic stereotypes. Finally, I engage with the research on political cartoons to highlight their potency, their gendered attributes and their potential for revealing important understandings about humour in political communication. These three themes allow me to form a mixed-methods approach combining the study of humour, hostility, media and gender.

Chapter 3 of this thesis acknowledges that humour does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, it is produced and reproduced within specific cultural contexts that determine which ideas, beliefs, and values are and are not acceptable. Because of its continued importance in the province of Alberta, I use the concept of frontier masculinity to provide a gendered overview of Alberta political culture, arguing that masculinity, violence and the Alberta identity exist in conjunction with one another. To validate this approach, as there is no scholarly literature linking frontier

masculinity and Alberta political humour, I then turned to two sources of humour in Alberta, the *Facebook* page *Meanwhile in Alberta* and the published cartoon *collection You Might be From Alberta If…*, and assessed the extent to which values of masculinity and violence are present in humour circulating in Alberta. I make no claim that these two sources represent the entirety of Alberta humour. Rather, the two case studies serve as examples in of the how gender and violence are represented in popular forms of humour circulated in Alberta.

Chapter 4 discusses the cases, methodology and findings of my analysis of the 154 editorial cartoons published by *The Calgary Herald* and *The Edmonton Journal* to chronicle, and critique, the premierships of Ed Stelmach, Alison Redford and Rachel Notley during their first year and half in the premiers' office. In the methodology section, I operationalize hostile humour into four measurable variables, or indicators of hostility. These variables are: (1) characterizations of the premier as threatened or threatening; (2) hostile humour themes, i.e. jokes that position the premier as humiliated, insulted, embarrassed or physically hurt; (3) the ways in which violence is directed at the premier (if violence comes from a person or event); and (4) representations of the nature of victimhood. I also explain my selection of texts and the importance of using a mixed method approach, which includes both quantitative content analysis and qualitative discourse analysis techniques, to studying political humour in this section. I then present the findings of the content and discourse analysis, illustrating the ways in which humour conveys gendered meanings in Alberta. Finally, in Chapter 5, I offer my concluding thoughts about the nature of hostile humour in Alberta political cartoons before discussing opportunities for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

At the time of submission of this thesis, no research has considered the gendered and hostile nature of Canadian political humour. As a result, I draw upon an array of diverse bodies of literature, whose insights are used to formulate a methodology that can accurately assess the gendered dimensions of hostile humour in Canadian political cartoons. In this chapter, I examine concepts, theories and findings from three bodies of literature. First, I consider the importance of humour. Why study humour? What makes humour gendered? To answer these questions, I discuss how humour is used as a tool to both challenge and contest the socio-political and cultural status-quo. I also bring forth three key themes found in the literature—sexist humour, sexual humour, and feminist humour—that shed light on the ways in which humour reflects gendered norms and assumptions. This subsection also addresses the role of political humour – one of the key areas of focus of this thesis – and explores how political humour becomes gendered by its use of hostile humour. The subsection ends by dissecting the literature on who has and has not been more likely to appreciate the content of hostile humour, as understanding who is more likely to enjoy this humour also reflects highly gendered dynamics of humour.

The argument that political communication has a highly gendered component has been persistently made over the past several decades by scholars in political science, gender studies, and communication studies (Ross and Sreberny 2000; Gidengil and Everitt 2003; Trimble 2005; Doan 2010, Murray 2010, Campus 2013). As political cartoons exist within this broader sphere of political communication, it is important to consider how past research has perceived the gendered undertones of political media coverage. To achieve this goal, I examine the research on gendered mediation and scrutinize the themes that emerge from this body of literature, demonstrating that there are clear observational and methodological similarities between the literature on humour and the research on gendered mediation. While the two bodies of research have rarely engaged with one another, the similarities exiting between the two fields indicate the possibility for the development of a methodology that can explore the concerns at the intersections of both bodies of research. These similarities informed my empirical approach to analyzing the political humour evident in Alberta's editorial cartoons.

After this overview of the key themes of the gendered mediation literature is presented, I reflect on how scholars have approached the media text explored in my research, the political cartoon. Much of the research in political science has neglected the importance of political cartoons, focusing instead on mainstream news organizations and the political news communicated through newspapers and television coverage. As such, I am first concerned with the question of what makes political cartoons an important element of study in political science. I also review the literature on the gendered features of political cartoons, showing how the cartoon often normalizes traditional assumptions about women in politics such by focusing on a female politician's appearance or emotions.

HUMOUR

Humour is socially, politically and culturally-situated. Arthur Schnitzler (quoted in Driessen 2016, 141) went so far as to state that, "in order to understand a country, you can study its economic data and demographic statistics. Or you can collect its jokes." Studying humour provides valuable understandings on specific cultural and social arrangements and reveals which actions are considered acceptable and unacceptable within society (Dodds and Kriby 2013; Drieseen 2016). Within this broader body of research on humour, researchers also note that humour reinforces common gendered beliefs and values (Mackie 1990). As the research demonstrates, studying humour provides an opportunity to critically evaluate important issues pertaining to gender, agency, culture, and, by extension, politics. For the purpose of this thesis, I will briefly address how humour becomes gendered before focusing the attention of my thesis on the hostile, masculine and often exclusionary elements of humour.

HUMOUR AND GENDER

By studying humour, researchers can identify which values and beliefs are understood as accepted knowledge. For instance, Pfister (2002) suggests that the main objective of humour is to normalize and hide gendered hierarchies as well as gendered relations and roles (vi). Mackie (1990) argues that humour elides the gendered hierarchies existing within a society, offering two reasons for why this is the case. First, humour underscores the superiority of male authority and privilege. Second, while humour can undermine authority, it is less likely to challenge gendered ideals because doing so also challenges the legitimacy of those creating the joke. In this sense,

"social order is still in the hands of males who make the rules" (Mackie 1990, 23). Indeed, the vast majority of political cartoonists, or "joke makers," in Canada have been men. For example, until her retirement in 2016, Sue Dewar was Canada's first and only full-time political cartoonist (McLeod 2012; Post Media 2016). As a result, according to Mackie, those responsible for creating humour tend to avert their attention from unfair gender norms, instead choosing to simply enforce them.

But how does humour become gendered? Looking more broadly at the study of humour, scholars note that gender identities and power dynamics are articulated through humour. However, the research on gender and humour makes two contrasting claims. First, humour "exists as an ideological buttress of the patriarchal status-quo" (Mackie 1990, 23) situating gender inequalities as normal and natural. Second, humour is used to challenge gender imbalances, including sexist attitudes about women and men. Taking a gendered approach to the research on humour, I found three ways in which humour intersects with discussions on gender and power: through humour that is sexist in nature (i.e. humour that upholds power dynamics between men and women), with sexual humour, and via feminist humour. These three forms of humour demonstrate that it can be used as a device to both reinforce and challenge gendered assumptions about women and men.

Sexist humour reinforces common cultural perceptions that justify gender inequality (Ford et al. 2013). Mackie (1990) notes that sexist humour often occurs when women enter traditionally male environments, operating as a form of resistance and as a means to enforce established male dominance. As a result, sexist humour works to trivialize sexism, creating a "norm of tolerance of sex discrimination" (Romero-Sánchez et al. 2017, 952). For instance, consider jokes like the one offered by Ford et al. (2008, 162): "A man and a woman were stranded in an elevator and they knew they were gonna die. The woman turns to the man and says, 'Make me feel like a woman before I die.' So he takes off his clothes and says, 'Fold them!'" It illustrates how sexism is articulated through humour, which offers a socially accepted means of releasing sexist and prejudiced values through the behavior of joking. Sexist humour has also been found to encourage a broader culture accepting of violence against women. Ford et al. (2008), for example, found that when exposed to sexist humour, men who already had antagonistic views towards women were more comfortable releasing hostile, sexist values.

Moreover, by claiming that such behaviors are simply humorous acts ("it was just a joke!), the effects of hostile statements and actions are minimized (Romero-Sánchez et al. 2017).

Sexual humour exists as an extension of sexist humour but focuses on women's role as sexually appealing objects of male desire. In observing joke patterns, Crawford (1997, 156) noted that discussions on sexual innuendo are one of the few places in which women are incorporated into humour narratives. Although little research exists on women's sexual humour—that is, humour that places the sexual narrative under the gaze of a woman as opposed to that of a man—Mulkay (1988) demonstrated that men's sexual humour is based on the sexual availability of all women to men, inferring that all men are entitled to sex from another woman. Sexual humour, therefore, assumes that men have the right to choose their (female) sexual partner from an endless pool of women, all of whom are assumed to be heterosexual and desiring of a man's love and affection. Women, in contrast, are meant to be passive and subjected to the gaze, and sexual advances, of men.

The final form of gendered humour is feminist humour. Feminist humour is particularly relevant to my analysis because it indicates the possibility that satire can act as a form of critique, exposing and distributing gender bias, inequality and sexism. Feminist humour is one of the few types of humour that challenges societal understandings about gender. According to Kaufman (1980, 13), "feminist humour is based on the perception that societies have generally been organized as systems of oppression and exploitation and that the largest (but not the only) oppressed group has been the female." She then goes on to say that feminist humour "is also based on the conviction that such oppression is undesirable and unnecessary". Thirty years later, Shifman and Lemish (2010) identified four elements of feminist humour. These are: opposition to gender inequalities and gendered stereotyping; the need for empowerment and the evaluation of social reality; focusing humour on gender; and having an outlet to share this humour. Rather than ridiculing people, feminist humour "is about ridiculing a social system that exploits and trivializes women" (Lee 1992, 90).

These three types of humour shed light on the ways in which gender has been woven into humorous discussions. Sexist humour upholds the belief that women are inferior to men while sexist humour suggests that all women are sexually available to men. In contrast, feminist humour contests these assumptions and norms. Considering the three types of humour demonstrates that humour does not simply serve the purpose of replicating common societal

beliefs, as feminist humour shines a light on humour's capacity to inform counter-discourses on the status-quo. Collectively, sexist, sexual and feminist humour demonstrate the centrality of gender to humour and show how humour can be used to both maintain and challenge common understandings about the roles of women and men in society.

HOSTILITY AND POLITICAL HUMOUR

In this thesis, I focus on the gendered nature of political humour in political cartoons. In this subsection, I address the question of how political humour becomes gendered. I propose that tropes of hostility gender political humour by normalizing stereotypically male perspectives about politics, especially when the humour is directed at women occupying positions of political power.

Political humour at its most basic level refers to humour that addresses "political issues, namely political acts and decisions, policies, politicians, political debates, power inequalities, etc." (Tsakona and Popa 2013, 2). As is the case with humour more broadly, political humour both challenges and reinforces common assumptions about politics. In Tsakona and Popa's (2013) book on political humour, the authors mirror discussions about the gendered dynamics of humour in the sense that they claim that political humour serves two purposes. First, it challenges the political status-quo. Second, it reinforces hegemonic views about politics. But how does political humour reinforce or challenge conventional gendered norms about politics? When considering what beliefs and values form the foundations of political humour, it becomes clear that political humour is in fact gendered. Research notes that hostile humour is a central aspect of political humour. While hostile humour has not traditionally been seen as a form of gendered humour, as hostile humour often avoids using explicit sexual or sexist imagery, I argue that hostile humour exists as a subtler but perhaps more potent type of gendered humour.

According to Gillooly 2012, "humour is gendered masculine when it expresses aggression towards its victim in socially and psychologically acceptable ways" (203). The fact that political humour is also often considered synonymous with satire further situates political humour as hostile and aggressive and, accepting Gillooy's 2012 argument, gendered masculine as a result of its aggressive nature. As is the case for traditional news sources such as television and newspapers, political humour's use of aggressive metaphors casts politics, and especially elections, as a "battleground" (see Gidengil and Everitt 1999; 2003). Moreover, this type of

humour is more likely to be used and enjoyed by men, further demonstrating the ways in which political humour is perceived through a masculine lens.

According to Bemiller (2010) "what is told as a joke is not really a joke at all, but instead a form of power that is used to oppress and subordinate entire groups of people" (463). Hostile humour refers to humour in which targets are insulted, embarrassed, humiliated or physically hurt (Weinstein et al. 2011, 1044). Freud (1971) referred to hostile humour as "disguised aggressiveness" (129). By extension, hostile humour also includes aggression, in that it is "employed to purposely alienate, hurt or manipulate others, mostly to defend oneself against threat" (Van den Broeck et al. 2012, 87). Political humour is thus, by extension, hostile humour. According to Mary Beard (2014, 18), humour is always meant to have a victim: "we always laugh, more or less aggressively, at the butt of our jokes or the object of our mirth, and in the process, we assert our superiority over them". This type of humour has also been referred to a "male mode of humour" because it is more likely to be produced and enjoyed by men (Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2001; Dyck and Holtzman 2013; Schwarz et al.2015). For instance, Becker's (2012, 796) study of satire in late night comedy found that hostile humour dominated. Comedians consistently offered unflattering portrayals of politics, such as referring to the John McCain campaign as a bag of dog poop.

Hostile humour also shapes how individuals perceive others. Berkowitz (1970) found that women who were exposed to aggressive humour and then told to evaluate potential job candidates were more aggressive towards the perspective applicants than were women who had been exposed to neutral humour. The use of hostile humour by comedians also had more of an effect on political attitudes than humour that was deemed "friendlier" and more "playful" by the audience (Becker 2012, 806). Despite political humour's association with aggressive acts and sentiments, research finds that its reception is not universally accepted as highly humorous. In 1967, Gollob and Levine conducted a study in which they asked female students to examine a series of cartoons and then explain why the cartoons were funny. When the participants had to explain the content of cartoons, and thereby further reflect on why the cartoons were considered funny, they were less likely to be amused by cartoons with hostile or aggressive messages. More recent research by Chan et al. (2016) noted that, in general, hostile jokes were not seen as funnier than non-hostile jokes.

Not everyone enjoys hostile humour equally. The research finds that this approach to joking is more likely to be appreciated by those who possess feelings of aggression (Dworkin and Efran 1967; Samson and Mayer 2010; Weinstein et al. 2011; Chan et al. 2016). As Dworkin and Efran (1967) discovered, male undergraduate students who were previously disposed to criticism that caused them to become angry rated hostile humour as funnier than did undergraduate students who had not previously had their moods altered. Early research on hostile humour conducted by Byrne (1956) found that individuals who displayed hostile behaviour were more likely to enjoy cartoons that employed its use. More recent research mirrors these findings. Samson and Meye (2010) and Weinstein et al. (2011) determined that study participants were more likely to enjoy hostile humour if they themselves were aggressive. Additionally, as noted above, if audiences are forced to think critically about the nature of hostile humour, they are more likely to perceive it as less amusing (Gollob and Levine 1967).

Overall, this subsection demonstrates that hostility has the capacity to gender political humour by foregrounding and normalizing stereotypically male perspectives about the political sphere. Hostile humour moves beyond the application of sexual jokes and gendered stereotypes by employing aggression to situate humour in the context of unequal power dynamics. By considering hostile humour as part of a broader body of literature on how humour becomes gendered, it is then possible to address political humour as a form of gendered political communication, as political humour is often marked by the presence of hostile humour (see Becker 2012).

PINK AND BLUE HUMOUR?

Are these gendered humour styles existent within society simply because they are commonly accepted by the general population as humorous? This leads to the question of whether men and women prefer different types of humour. It is important to note that I acknowledge that the imperfections of suggesting that there are two genders that will appreciate different types of humour by virtue of a culturally assigned label as either a man or a woman. While such essentialist views of gender might seem overly simplistic, research consistently uses the categories of men and women to identify both the consumers and the producers of humour. As such, while imperfect, this research reveals that there are certain sections of the population that are more likely to appreciate specific types of humour than others.

Men tend to prefer humour that is hostile and differentiating. According to Mundorf et al. (1988), male participants in a study were more likely than the female participants to rate hostile and sexual jokes more positively. Crawford (1995) found that men are more likely to prefer hostile forms of humour and were more likely than women to use hostile humour when making jokes. Likewise, Hay (2000) as well as Robinson and Smith-Lovin (2001) established that men's humour worked to highlight their status and the ways in which women were differentiated from men. As such, men's humour reinforced male superiority and male interests. These findings were mirrored by Schwarz et al. (2015) who discovered that men were more likely to appreciate humour that enhanced their own statuses as individuals. In contrast, women are less likely to appreciate hostile humour. Researchers note that women are more likely to appreciate forms of humour that evoke feelings of empathy (Schwarz et al. 2015). Women are also more likely than men to use humour to share personal information about themselves (Hay 2000). In observing workplace humour, Schnurr found that a woman may employ humour in order to minimize the authoritative nature of her behaviour (2009, 112).

Just as the content of humour is gendered, so too is its production and reception. These findings reveal that the production of humour is gendered insofar that men and women employ different types of humour. The differences in reception also highlight another gendered element of humour, as whether or not an individual will prefer humour that is hostile and differentiating or humour that is empathic is shaped by a person's gender.

The next subsection turns to how scholars are have taken a gendered approach to the study of political communication more broadly. Specifically, I focus on the research that has addressed the concept of gendered mediation. In doing so, I highlight the conceptual and mythological similarities between gendered mediation and the research on humour. These similarities will then be used later in the thesis to develop a methodology for systematically assessing how political humour in political cartoons is gendered.

GENDER AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

That political discourse is gendered is far from a new argument. These ideas are articulated through the growing body of research on gendered mediation, a body of literature sparked by Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross in 1996. The gendered mediation thesis argues that ‘‘the way in which politics is reported is significantly determined by a male-oriented agenda that

privileges the practice of politics as an essentially male pursuit" (Ross and Sreberny 2000, 93). Research on gendered mediation demonstrates that the news media reinforce the public man/private woman binary by questioning women politicians' capacity to lead parties or governments (Trimble 2005; Doan 2010, Murray 2010, Campus 2013). The concept also helps researchers understand the discursive, visual and contextual influences that contribute to gendered understandings of politics. This section synthesizes the literature on gendered mediation into three key areas of focus important to the development of my analysis of gendered hostile humour in political cartoons. These areas are (1) war metaphors; (2) game frames and (3) domestic stereotypes. These elements are important to my investigation of political cartoons as they reveal key gendered assumptions about the role of men and women in politics and highlight the gendered lexical choices, metaphors, images, ideas and arguments that have been employed by news sources when discussing politics. By integrating these three themes into my methodology for analyzing political cartoons, I can assess the extent to which humour communicates the meanings suggested by gendered mediation scholars.

Much of the literature on gendered mediation emphasizes that the use of war and conflict metaphors establishes the foundation for political media coverage. Through the use of allegories of battle and confrontation, media sources "limit the nature of the acceptable electoral performance to norms of political competition shaped by understandings of warfare" (Trimble 2017, 117). Elizabeth Gidengil and Joanna Everitt's (1999) analysis of television coverage of female leaders illustrated that masculine metaphors of war, sports and confrontation existed as a fundamental part of political news reporting. In fact, one in three metaphors used the language of the battlefield. Examples included phrases such as "fighting a war on several fronts" and "a master of the blindside attack" (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 59). While political leaders "fired up the troops" and "scored very well," they were also "bruised" and "hammered" by engaging in political combat (Gidengil and Everitt 1999, 59). As Gidengil and Everitt's findings show, the public man/private women binary associating men with the agentic qualities associated for political leadership and women with the communal qualities linked to domestic roles, thus solidifying the perception that politics exists as a masculine pursuit.

Other research finds that war metaphors lead to unrealistic evaluations of female politicians. Gidengil and Everitt (2003) studied Canadian television coverage of Canadian federal party leaders' debates and found that the media tended to ignore female leaders when

they failed to adopt aggressive behaviour and give them disproportionately more attention when they took on more aggressive personas. This is because aggressive behaviour on the part of a woman "runs counter to deeply rooted conceptions of the feminine norm" (Gidengil and Everitt 2003, 561). Gidengil and Everitt (2003) also argued that since women are not commonly associated with masculinity, they fall outside of public understandings of what it means to be political.

However, debate remains about whether the masculine coverage of political leaders is always detrimental for women. Trimble (2017) found evidence to support the claim that masculine coverage is both helpful and harmful to female politicians. War-centered discussions that "were inflected with gendered understandings of political power... tended to demean women leaders and challenge the legitimacy of their leadership" (Trimble 2017, 190). It is when unequal gendered power dynamics are at play in political news reporting that these war metaphors challenge the legitimacy of women in politics. When these power dynamics are absent from political coverage, such as when women are positioned as powerful and agentic in the public sphere, the use of war metaphors to describe women politicians work to challenge the "public man/private woman binary" (Trimble 2017, 178). Situating women in these contexts can also "communicate the understanding that women politicians can exercise both power and agency" (Trimble 2017, 179).

While the presence and implications of war metaphors have been considered when assessing gendered representations of politicians in television and print media, limited research has examined the role of these metaphors in political cartoons (McCullough 2016). This metaphor is particularly important to my analysis of aggressive metaphors and imagery in editorial cartoons as it highlights the hostile nature of political communication. Do war metaphors exist in political cartoons? If so, does the hostility of these metaphors shape the presentations of men and women in the same ways? These are questions I will be addressing in the upcoming sections of the thesis.

The third key theme in the gendered mediation literature is the use of game frames. Game frames, or horserace frames, occur when news "is dominated by a focus on the tactics of the campaigns and who is ahead and behind in the polls" (Waldmann and Devitt 1998, 304). These frames simplify politics by focusing on the competition and animosity between leaders and parties, thereby deflecting attention from issues related to policy (Dunaway and Lawrence

2015). In these cases, the lives of politicians "take on an epic form, ending in tragedy or triumph" (Street 2011, 49). Game frames and the media's use of war metaphors often exist hand-in-hand. However, I have chosen to discuss these two issues separately because horserace frames encompass a much more diverse set of framing techniques that go beyond the simple use of war metaphors. For instance, while the media often choose to frame politics as a battleground, journalists may also communicate similar types of dramatic urgency by framing political events as races or family feuds, all of which fit within the parameters of the game frame.

Research finds that these frames dominate political coverage. Trimble and Sampert's (2004, 60) analysis of newspaper headlines about the 2000 Canadian election showed that the headings focused on "leaders, strategies, poll results and nuances of party support," with an average of 74% of newspaper headlines studied employing the game frame metaphor. Farnswortha et al. (2009) examined CBC news coverage of the 2006 Liberal Party leadership campaign, finding similar results. Their analysis revealed that during the final week of the campaign, game frames accounted for over half of all news coverage (Farnswortha et al. 2009, 295). The media also focused primarily on electorally viable candidates and ignored trailing nominees (Farnswortha et al. 2009, 29).

The use of game frames can be particularly challenging for women in politics. Until recently, women have typically led non-competitive parties. As a result, the use of the game metaphors has the capacity to perpetually enforce the perception that women continue to be unreliable leaders and thus further facilitate what Trimble and Arscott (2003) referred to as the "revolving door" for female political leaders (2003, 98-99) by suggesting that women cannot "play the game" properly. Metaphors of sport and battles situate political competition as a masculine field of endeavour. As a result, the use of these metaphors highlights gender stereotypes associated with the "men take charge and women take care" binary. Stereotypes establish accepted behaviours based on the group to which an individual belongs (Goodyear-Grant 2009). Gidengil, Everitt, and Banducci (2009, 171) maintain that when the media use metaphors tied to masculinity, they, in turn, shed light on "women's minority status at elite levels of public life, and it may enhance the salience and accessibility of gender-trait stereotypes in the minds of voters". Indeed, media use of domestic stereotypes is a well-established topic in gendered mediation research. By presenting women as emotional, mothers, sex objects, unruly

women, and witches, news coverage employs stereotypes to characterize women as outsiders to political life (Braden 2015; Falk 2013; Sapiro 1993).

The use of domestic stereotypes in the media can prove to be de-legitimizing for female politicians. Huddy (1994, 177) stated that a woman politician "stereotyped as a typical feminine woman would almost certainly lose electoral support because she would be seen to lack male traits and expertise in policy areas thought most necessary for effective national leadership". The use of these stereotypes also reveals a level of uncertainty with women in power (Falk 2013). However, stereotypes are not always harmful to female politicians. As Kahn (1994) demonstrated, the media's use of feminine stereotypes, such as women being more honest than men and women being more knowledgeable on women's issues, assist female politicians in receiving positive evaluations from voters.

Gendered mediation research demonstrates that the presence of war metaphors, gender stereotypes and game frames in news coverage of political life work to present women as largely incapable of participating in politics in an authentic, competent and legitimate manner. What has been omitted from this body of research is the ways in which political humour exists as an extension of this gendered narrative. While humour is seen as an important element of political discourse, gendered mediation scholars have not addressed the gendered complexities of political humour. However, this is not to say that the two bodies of literature are methodologically incompatible with one another. Gendered mediation mirrors much of the literature on gendered humour in that it focuses on the gendered use of discursive devices to uphold traditional power structures. If political communication is assumed to enforce highly hostile and aggressive understandings about politics, then it is logical to suggest that political humour will also, by extension, reflect this violent rhetoric.

POLITICAL CARTOONS

Political cartoons – also referred to as editorial cartoons - are "humorous graphic illustrations, satirical drawings or visual satire" (Kuhlmann 2012, 300). They exist as "cultural artifacts that not only reflect but also mold and construct social reality" (Mainye Omanga 2016, 104). Although political cartoons have been referred to as the spine of Canadian political culture (Rasporisch 2006), little research has addressed how these images have constructed and affected

Canadian political discourse. This subsection considers the importance of political cartoons before addressing the gendered component of political cartoons.

Historically, politicians have feared political cartoonists (Buell and Maus 1988; Danjoux 2007). In some cases, political leaders have gone so far as to ban cartoons from being published due to the political cartoon's ability to challenge political leaders and shape public opinion (Lamb 2004). Harrison (1981, 14) points to three reasons why politicians fear political cartoons. First, cartoons more often than not provide an unflattering representation of politicians by distorting their physical appearances. Second, cartoons assert a call for action by focusing their audience's attention on specific issues and holding politicians accountable for such issues. Finally, the simplicity of cartoons makes them easily accessible to a broader audience. Thus, even those who are not overly politically engaged can still understand the message being presented by the cartoonist (Harrison 1981, 14). These three features—of representation, action, and simplicity—continue to dominate much of the research on political cartoons and highlight their significance as important objects of study in political science research, as is illustrated below.

In their portrayals of American presidential nominees, political cartoonists repeatedly presented politicians in unflattering ways (Buell and Maus 1988). In a sample of 246 cartoons, Buell and Maus (1988) found that cartoonists tended to apply certain negative stereotypes to specific politicians. For instance, cartoonists commonly portrayed Republican Party nominee George Bush as a wimp while presenting Democratic Party nominee Michael Dukakis as short and boring. Similarly, Feldman's (1995) assessment of the depiction of Japanese politicians determined that cartoonists placed a significant amount of emphasis on the appearances of politicians. By exploring how political cartoons across two national newspapers presented Japanese prime ministers, Feldman found that politicians often appeared in an unattractive physical state. In particular, cartoonists presented these individuals as old, ugly and sick (Feldman 1995, 579).

Research also addresses the subliminal call for action reflected in political cartoons by sparking interest in politics and forcing readers to think critically about politics. Baumgartner's (2008) study revealed that, when exposed to political cartoons, participants became more politically interested. As such, exposure to political humour had a positive effect on political participation. Additionally, in 2009, El Refaie measured how individuals understood and

interpreted political cartoons. Through a series of interviews, El Rafaie determined that political cartoons encouraged a "critical thought processes about the connections between seemingly unrelated areas of reality" (El Refaie 2009, 200).

Finally, cartoons represent a form of media representation that can be easily consumed by a broad range of individuals. Harrison (1981, 53) demonstrates that the political cartoon is "communication to the quick" because it simplifies and exaggerates certain images, values, and ideas. More recent research continues to highlight these ideas. Cartoons have an important capacity to "communicate blunt, clear, easily understood messages that resonate" with individuals (Trimble, Way and Sampert 2010, 71). Cultural symbols and metaphors that are assumed to be commonly understood by a population dominate the content of political cartoons, assisting in their accessibility (El Refaie and Hörschelmann 2010). Since cartoons are interpreted quickly, the ideas presented in the cartoon must be simple enough to be understood by a general audience. Because of this simplicity, the impact of political cartoons is significantly more immediate than other types of political communication (El Rafaie 2003, 87).

GENDER AND CARTOONS

Political cartoons have a highly gendered component. They reveal key assumptions about gender that are often made normal and invisible within society (Edwards 2007). Past studies have mapped the depiction of women as a group in political cartoons, showing that the presentations of women in political cartoons parallel "traditional patriarchal dynamics between men and women" (Morrison 1992, 49). Specifically, the literature highlights how cartoons reinforce, hence conventionalize, traditional assumptions about women.

When researchers compare portrayals of men and women, they find that men were more prominent in political cartoons than women; and when women are presented, they are depicted within a narrow and traditionalized spectrum of femininity (Brabant and Mooney 1986; Gilmartin and Brunn 1998; Meyer et al. 1980; Morrison 1992). A study of cartoons about the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, found that the female participants were trivialized and shown as weak and submissive, particularly when in the presence of male authority figures (Gilmartin and Brunn 1998). Likewise, other researchers demonstrate that women in political cartoons exist as "passive onlookers" and are rarely presented as active political subjects (Brabant and Mooney 1986, 147; Meyer et al. 1980;

Morrison 1992). Meyer et al.'s analysis of women in American fourth of July political cartoons found that in addition to men being more visible, women were portrayed as passive and subordinate to men. Their conclusions sum up the body of literature on women in political cartoons particularly well by stating that these texts demonstrate a "resistance to changing old norms and difficulty in coping with emerging ones" (Meyer et al. 1980, 29). Thus, political cartoons articulate a discourse that both enforces and propels traditional gendered understandings of women.

For female politicians, cartoons can be especially troublesome. As I have already demonstrated, humour enforces existing gendered hierarchies, perpetuating discourses that are largely accepted by the public (Hay 1999). Additionally, political cartoons often explicitly target politicians by making them the central component of the joke. As a result, the humour directed at women politicians is two-sided as the joke highlights both their "unusual" role as politicians as well as their gender identities (Edwards 2007). These research findings reflect a persistent use of gendered themes that go beyond simple issues of distorted physical appearances as articulated by Harrison (1981). Rather than simply being drawn as 'old, ugly and sick' (Feldman 1995, 579), the visual depiction of female politicians not only enforces common gendered appearances but also highlights their emotional instability as well as their incompatibility with the political sphere. These themes are abundant in cartoon portrayals of American politician Hillary Clinton as she served as first lady, sought and won office as a Senator, and contested the Democratic Party's nomination for the presidency.

The portrayal of Clinton is the subject of much of the discussions concerning the depiction of women politicians in political cartoons. Charlotte Templin (1999) looked at Clinton's early appearances in political cartoons. She revealed that Clinton's independence and assertiveness as both a politician and a first lady made her a consistent target for cartoonists. Clinton was considered a threat to dominant feminine values. Cartoonists responded to this threat by presenting her as an angry and overpowering burden to her husband, and to America. As a result, Templin found that the cartoons revealed, "fear and resentment resulting from the loss of female subordination" (Templin 1999, 31). More recent research addresses Clinton's depiction as a Democratic leadership candidate in 2008. When comparing Clinton's presentation to the depiction of fellow Democratic Party nominee, Barack Obama, Connors (2010) found that, unlike Obama, Clinton's policies were rarely critiqued by cartoonists. Rather, as emphasized by

the literature on gendered mediation, cartoons prominently featured Clinton's emotions and appearance (Conners 2010).

As was the case for Hillary Clinton, cartoonists framed Republican Party leadership candidate Elizabeth Dole in the context of traditional feminine stereotypes (Gilmartin 2001). In an analysis of 30 cartoons containing Dole, cartoonists represented her as a wife to husband Robert Dole in just over half of the cartoons (Gilmartin 2001, 57). She was also drawn in her home in half of the cartoons, thus tying her role as a politician to the traditionally feminine and safe realm of the domestic sphere (Gilmartin 2001, 62). Cartoonists also often sexualized Dole and showed her as quiet and submissive. Overall, the analysis revealed that cartoonists portrayed Dole as failing to emulate presidential qualities. Her political ambitions were largely dismissed by cartoonists, who did not see Dole as a strong leadership candidate (Gilmartin 2001).

Manon Tremblay and Nathalie Bélanger's 1997 study is the only Canadian work that addresses the gendered nature of political cartoons. In this case, the authors looked at the individual constructions of Kim Campbell and Audrey McLaughlin during the 1993 federal election campaign, during which Campbell, as leader of the governing Progressive Conservative Party, was the sitting prime minister and McLaughlin was leader of the New Democratic Party. In particular, Tremblay and Bélanger examined what they were presented saying, the activities they conducted, and the relationships existing between the sexes. They found that "plus souvent que leurs homologues masculins les femmes sont montrées avec une faiblesse de caractère et n'ont pas le contrôle de la situation" (Tremblay and Bélanger 1997, 67). While Tremblay and Bélanger made it clear that women politicians were not associated with the stereotypically female realm of the private sphere, their power and influence in the political sphere were limited in the cartoons.

Very few studies have found evidence that political cartoons challenge traditional assumptions about gender. Edwards and MacDonald (2010) studied portrayals of Clinton alongside those of Republican politician Sarah Palin and found that the candidates were often represented as gender-neutral in the sense that cartoonists did not highlight their female gender identities. The authors suggested that this finding might point to a broader acceptance of women in politics. However, other authors call into question the contention that political coverage can be gender-neutral given that political media coverage is often created by men, for men. Aliefendioglu and Arslan (2011), for instance, challenge the perceived "genderless" nature of

some media coverage. The argue that this purported gender-neutrality is actually gendered masculine since an assumed male audience is still expected to be the consumers of media coverage. Thus, even when research finds gender-neutral results, it is important to think beyond the content of media and critically consider gendered aspects of production and reception.

Despite the discursive potency of political cartoons, little research has been conducted on the ways in which these "editorials in pictures" communicate gendered understandings of political leadership, especially in the Canadian context. The above research mapping the depiction of women in political cartoons shows that these representations parallel "traditional patriarchal dynamics between men and women" (Morrison 1992, 49). Specifically, the literature highlights the ways in which cartoons reinforce traditional assumptions about women in politics. It is worth noting that the exact nature of the humour in these studies was rarely taken into consideration as a major element of study. Despite the fact that some studies casually mention the importance of humour when discussing its relationship to political cartoons, the representations of bodies in political cartoons dominate as a key motif in the research on gender and cartoons. As a result, humour—that is, the joke itself—is often mentioned in research but approached as a significant subject of research.

Despite the fact that humour is not directly addressed, elements of sexual and sexist humour might be "read into" the findings of some of the studies highlighted above. For instance, the finding of sexualization in Gilmartin (2001)'s study of Elizabeth Dole might point to the use of sexual humour by cartoonists, depending on how these visual and discursive elements were employed. Similarly, focusing on matters of appearance (Templin 1999), passivity (Brabant and Mooney 1986, 147; Meyer et al. 1980; Morrison 1992) and gendered stereotypes (Gilmartin 2001) suggests the use of sexist humour. Additionally, Templin's 1999 work that showed Hillary Clinton as dominant and domineering might indicate the presence of hostile humour. While it is impossible to know for sure if the research mentioned found evidence of the use of sexual, sexist, or hostile forms of humour, the findings from previous research indicates the salience of these tropes in cartoons about women politicians.

GAPS IN RESEARCH

This literature review has addressed three key areas of focus. First, I considered humour as an important area of study when conducting political science research. I demonstrated that

humour is often gendered through its use of stereotypical imagery to simplify cultural beliefs about the role of women and men. Humour also often conveys hostility by separating who can and cannot engage in the joke telling process and disciplining actions and actors that challenge the dominant values of a group. This process, in turn, feeds into and supports the gendered nature of humour by enforcing gendered hierarchies or power and inequality. I situated this literature in conversation with traditional research on gender and political communication, highlighting the similarities in research on humour and research on gendered mediation. I then turned to the text that will form the corpus of my research, political cartoons, and demonstrated that the visual composition of political cartoons often relies on traditionally gendered serotypes to convey meaning.

The literature review reveals four gaps in the present research. First, the hostile and gendered nature of humour has yet to be explored in the Canadian political context. Despite the recent rise in the number of women as provincial leaders in Canada, little attention has been paid to how humour has been directed at them. This is the first project to examine the role of humour in normalizing and perpetuating violent narratives about political actors and to explore the ways in which norms of gender mediate this violence.

Second, there continues to be a separation between the work on gendered mediation and the literature on humour. While the research avoids positioning humour through the theoretical framework of gendered mediation, this separation does not suggest that these areas are completely incompatible with each other. The evidence presented in past research points to the conclusion that both humour and political discourse feature gendered components. Gendered mediation and humour become compatible with each other due to the fact that they address "implicit assumptions on what is conventionally appropriate for men and women" (Crawford 1992, 23). However, the theoretical and methodological connections between gendered mediation and humour remain largely unexplored.

Third, the literature on political cartoons fails to move beyond analysis of the visual construction of individual politicians. Thus, it does not fully address how humour is developed in the context of these images. Failing to consider how humour is reflected in political cartoons means that the current research cannot fully reveal the connections existing between humour and power. This is not to say that humour is not addressed in the literature. Indeed, the majority of the research on political cartoons does consider the elements of cartoons which make them

amusing. However, this research simply acknowledges humour as a powerful aspect of political cartoons. The assumptions lie in the notion that cartoons are inherently funny and therefore powerful. However, the questions of what makes political cartoons funny and which power structures these jokes seek to enforce have yet to be fully answered.

Finally, while some research has addressed the regional dynamic of Canadian humour, Alberta has been left out of these discussions. In the next chapter, I will reflect on the gendered cultural discourses of Alberta, the province used as the case study for this thesis. I demonstrate that domination, hostility and the Alberta identity are inherently linked through the reinforcement of frontier masculinity in Alberta cultural discourse. I also consider how these gendered cultural discourses are reflected in two Alberta humour sources. In doing so, the next section frames my methodology and contributes to the conceptual framework created for analyzing the political cartoons about the three Alberta premiers studied.

CHAPTER 3: THE ALBERTA CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

One cannot study humour or cartoons without understanding the culture in which they emerge. Hay (2000) demonstrates how humour is "culturally grounded." It reflects, idealizes, or even challenges assumptions present within a community. As Walt (2004, 1) emphasizes, "every cartoon assumes an ideal viewer who has the relevant cultural memory" to understand enough of the context to find them humorous. As such, the site of production greatly influences what can be stated through humour and political cartoons, and what can be understood by audiences. In order to provide a gendered assessment of Alberta political humour in political cartoons, an understanding of the culture in which humour and cartoons emerge needs to be considered. While scholars have considered Alberta political culture more broadly (see Stewart and Archer 2000; Wesley 2011), little research has employed a feminist lens to the study of Alberta culture and identity. There is presently no research that addresses Alberta humour and political cartoons, or that considers the gendered nature of joke-making in this province.

According to Kathleen Lahey (2015), women in Alberta are "among the most disadvantaged in Canada." Alberta culture has remained resistant to integrating the interests of women and feminist groups (Harder 2003; O'Neil 2013), suggesting that male interests and values set the political and cultural agenda in Alberta. Most academic observers have attributed gender inequality to economic forces. Alberta has one of the highest gender wage gaps in the country and Alberta women work some of the highest unpaid work hours in Canada (Lahey 2016, 9). These gender inequalities result largely from Alberta's dependence on the oil and gas industry (Lahey 2016; Hussey and Jackson 2017) creating what Lahey (2016, 1) refers to as a form of "occupational segregation" in which women occupy lower-waged service positions while men are over-represented in high-wage jobs in the oil and gas sector.

But how have these economic forces affected, and been shaped by, similar forces in the political culture? In particular, how has a masculine culture been reinforced more broadly in Alberta? In this chapter, I consider how images, symbols, and values uphold notions of masculinity in Alberta cultural discourse. By employing a feminist lens to the study of Alberta culture and identity and considering how past research has addressed the notion of gender in the

study of Alberta culture, I answer the following questions: Who considered an ideal Albertan? Who represents the public interest? Who can and cannot engage in public discourse? After examining foundational aspects of Alberta identity, I use these questions to examine how humour exists in relation to these hegemonic gendered understandings of Alberta identity. I demonstrate that the ideals of frontier masculinity which normalize the autonomy and agency of men are embedded within Alberta culture. These ideals are, in turn, reflected and reinforced in Alberta's publicly disseminated humour. In short, humor has been a vehicle for the transmission of Alberta political culture, in particular, its masculinist norms and assumptions.

Conservatism has been the backbone of Alberta politics from the province's beginnings (Banack 2013, 231). Themes of individualism, fiscal prudence and family values dominate Alberta political discourse. According to McCormick (2001, 403), Alberta is defined by "a mixture of social conservatism, nostalgia for an economy and society organized around such institutions as the 'family farm,' traditional family values, and a greater salience for religious convictions that carry over into public action." Alberta's conservative political culture has existed in conjunction with the normalization of a hegemonic type of masculinity which, for the purpose of this thesis, I will be referring to as frontier masculinity. This concept is used by authors including Wright 2001 and Miller 2004 to capture the forms of masculinity evident in resource-reliant contexts which valorize certain traits, behaviours and attitudes. Frontier masculinity emerges with a large-scale dependence on resource-based economies. Davidson and MacKendrick (2004) demonstrate that, since settlement, Alberta has been defined largely by its dependence on its resource-based economy (51). This is seen through its historic economic reliance on farming industries and its present-day dependence on the oil and gas industry.

The cultural importance of farming and oilfield industries have played such a dominant role in Alberta that they often go unrecognized. Miller (2004, 48) notes that "the oil industry is masculine, not only in the historical and contemporary, demographic composition of its employees but in its assumptions, values and everyday practices." As a result, frontier masculinity becomes a taken for granted aspect of Alberta culture. Miller 2004). While scholars note that the nature of masculinity in Alberta has been fluid (see Kelm 2009), the core aspects of frontier masculinity remain consistent over time.

Frontier masculinity differentiates from other forms of masculinity in the sense that is can be characterized by an aggressive attempt for control and domination. This can be seen in the

pursuit of and control over land, the economic and public space, as well as the use of these forms of control to protect the individualistic, conservative values that maintain the presence of frontier masculinity. Frontier masculinity exists as an extension of rural masculinity (see Campbell and Mayerfeld Bell 2000) in that is its closely tied to elements of rural independence and isolation. Sampert (2008) and Takach (2017) note that despite the increasing urbanization of Alberta (it is estimated that approximately 20% of the province's population resides in rural areas), Alberta still possesses a rural culture in the sense that rural areas are the perceived dominant demographic in Alberta. Within this rural masculinity, the control of land and resources provides the foundation for frontier masculinity. Early farming masculinity in rural Canada saw the mastery over nature as a key element (Wilson 2014). The mystery and volatility of the land situated the land as something that needed to be dominated and used for the self-interest of its male conqueror (Wright 2001).

This domination of land and animals inserts itself, and the violent undertones that come with it, into the Alberta culture as a whole. As Perron (2013, 326) demonstrates, the province of Alberta must consistently devour its own territory in order to ensure the beliefs and values that sustain. Struthers Montford (2013, 107) adds that the use of violence and domination over the land and animals in Alberta are minimized through the industry's focus on profit and the cultural acceptance of this domination as a "necessary sacrifice for the constitution of [a] dominant Albertan identity."

Frontier masculinity ensures that public spaces are synonymous with male spaces and that women's presence is minimalized or erased completely (Carrington 2010). Wright (2001) suggests that the repetition of public discourses upholding the supremacy of the rugged individualistic male hero positions this type of man as the sole contributor to economic growth and the only individual capable of possessing complete agency and autonomy. As a result, women's participation in the oil industry has been challenged by gendered notions that men dominate the industry (see Miller 2004). In doing so, frontier masculinity creates a definitive "other" within Alberta cultural discourse. Women, urban individuals and people who are not white constitute this other. According to Wright (2001), if these social divides are to be maintained, "the frontier man must ensure that the "proper social order" is upheld by enacting violence that is seen as justified, hence encouraged. In doing so, just as land needs to be conquered, so too must these deviant individuals.

Finally, frontier masculinity ensures that values of individualism and social conservatism are upheld. The discourses of frontier masculinity inflected by nostalgic notions of the prairie cowboy as well as Alberta's dependence on the oil industry speak to the need for minimal government regulation and a desire to place the economic interests of these individuals ahead of others. As a result, women and those who do not fit this mold are not included in social, political and economic discussions. Sampert (2008) notes that these reiterations of masculinity are not accidental. Rather, they mirror contemporary and historical portraits of power in Alberta. Specifically, they construct the image of a political individual as a rugged, white man. Wright (2001) suggests that the idealization of individualistic individuals such as the cowboy creates a culture in opposition to large governments, as large governments are seen as antithetical to individual freedom. As such, large governments defy the autonomy and agency of the dominant male population, creating a situation where violence towards the government is regarded as justifiable. These views cultivate acceptance of the use of violence and control to maintain the individualistic, conservative system that normalizes frontier masculinity.

The individualistic, conservative culture of Alberta has allowed for a specific type of masculinity to circulate within Alberta cultural discourse. This type of masculinity is defined by persistent and often violent control of the land, the economic and public space, and the use of control to protect the ideological foundations that allow it to thrive. Frontier masculinity becomes embedded in Alberta culture through the idealized and mythic portrayal of the cowboy and the pursuit of oil interests. Frontier masculinity, then, overflows into Alberta political discourse by situating Alberta's needs as the needs of the male resource workers. As a result, frontier masculinity and Alberta's individualistic, socially conservative culture exist hand-in-hand, normalizing the presence of one another as quintessential elements of Alberta culture.

ALBERTA HUMOUR

Is there an Alberta sense of humour? If so, what are the defining features of this humour? Canadian comedian Will Ferguson claimed that there is indeed an Alberta sense of humour, stating that "it is not as florid or as richly layered as Newfoundland's, nor as gentle as that of the Maritimes, but it is very effective. In Alberta, the humour—like the politics—is based on ruthlessness and common sense" (Ferguson quoted in Takach 2010, 113). This section works to understand the cultural and political references that have shaped Alberta humour by identifying

the metaphors, ideas and discourses evident in popular forms of humour currently disseminated in the province.

While some research has explored the regional aspects of Canadian political humour, the focus of the research remains largely on Quebec (see Charaudeau 2006; Brouard and Pare 2017). This subsection takes steps to address this gap. In particular, I am interested in exploring the gendered dynamics of Alberta humour. The previous subsection identified common images and values associated with Alberta, arguing that frontier masculinity exists as an important way of understanding Alberta culture and identity. In order to further test the reliability of this assumption, I consider the role of frontier masculinity in relation to Alberta humour. I argue that Alberta humour enforces notions of frontier masculinity in two ways. First, it creates a ranking of policy items that enforces the centrality and importance of staples industries by heightening of the importance of the oil industry and farming industries. Second, Alberta humour articulates, thus reinforces, right-wing beliefs such as the authority of the autonomous, white male, the submission of women, and anti-immigration sentiments. These humoristic elements reflect a culture of exclusion that situates white men as the agents of political, economic and social autonomy in Alberta.

In order to determine whether or not these propositions about Alberta humour are valid, I conducted an exploratory analysis of two Alberta humour sources: the Facebook page *Meanwhile in Alberta* and the cartoon book *You Might be from Alberta If...* These two sources were chosen due to their similar uses of visual humour to convey cultural beliefs and values. Additionally, both sources consistently craft the Alberta experience as collective experience, suggesting that there are certain experiences, images, and values that can be shared and laughed at by all Albertans. I wish to emphasize that I do not claim that these two sources represent all of mainstream Alberta humour. However, I am saying that these sources are part of a genre of humour present in Alberta. Whether this is the mainstream genre of Alberta humour is up to the reader to interpret.

The 2015 book *You Might be from Alberta If...* published by MacIntyre Press, provides a series of 119 cartoons crafted by Alberta political cartoonist Dave Elston. The cartoons use humour to articulate beliefs and values about Alberta culture and identity. The content of the cartoons finishes the phrase "you might be from Alberta if…" with responses such as "you read books like the three little rig pigs," or "you have shopped at all the stores in West Edmonton

Mall." Additionally, in the book, an assumed "you" is always present in the cartoons, either literally through the representation of a human body or imaginatively through the assumed presence of a figure beyond the frame of the cartoon.

Likewise, the Facebook page *Meanwhile in Alberta* mirrors a similar type of cultural rhetoric. With over 200 000 likes, the page presents a broad range of content including cartoons, photos, videos and links to news sources. While the *Facebook* page itself does not provide a description of the content it circulates, the page includes a link to its online store where it states, under the heading "Alberta Pride Alberta wide," that "not everything here will be political [sic] correct but all is Alberta proud" (Meanwhile in Alberta 2013). This notion of Alberta pride is reflective in much of the content circulated by the Facebook page.

A total of 200 *Meanwhile in Alberta* (MIA) Facebook posts from January 1st, 2017 to December 31st, 2017 were assessed. All 119 cartoons from the 2015 book *You Might be from Alberta If...* were considered. The analysis broadly assessed three elements of the cartoons and Facebook posts: (1) the *space*—where the post/cartoon was taking place; (2) the *we*—who was presented to depict Albertans; and (3) the *what* – the images and issues displayed.

Overall, the Facebook page *Meanwhile in Alberta* provided a more diverse range of humour in comparison to the book *You Might be from Alberta If…*. While the cartoons in the book, *You Might be from Alberta If…* provided one image captions that humorously addressed the perceived shared identity of Alberta, the posts in the Facebook page *Meanwhile in Alberta* provided a more in-depth form of social and political commentary that used multiple methods (such as the use of videos, memes and photos) to provide a multifaceted approach to upholding the values tied to frontier masculinity.

The analysis revealed that elements of frontier masculinity are firmly embedded in Alberta humour. The agenda-setting function of humour in the sources was also more prevalent in the Facebook posts of MIA. While the posts on MIA were often humorous, other posts were blatantly hostile towards people and ideas that did not uphold values of frontier masculinity. This agenda-setting function of humour was also made evident by the sharing function of Facebook, which allowed re-posting of content aligned with the key themes of frontier masculinity such as posts that came from the Facebook pages "Canadian Farm Community," "National Conservative News Network Canada" and "Eat Cow. Drill Oil. Rope Calves." being shared multiple times.

The Space

Of the 200 posts from the *Meanwhile in Alberta* Facebook page, 139 featured images of the outdoors. Similarly, a majority of cartoons (71 out of the 119) in the book *You Might be from Alberta If...* showed the outdoors as the setting for the cartoons. Overall, I found that both of these sites of humour positioned the land as something to be conquered, tamed, looked upon, and used for the benefit of Albertans. In addition to depicting the land in this fashion, the representations of rural areas significantly outnumbered urban areas in both cases, as shown in

Table 3.1: Settings Portrayed			
	Rural	Urban	Unknown
Meanwhile in Alberta (n=200)	60 (30%)	14 (7%)	126 (63%)
You Might be From Alberta If (n=119)	28 (24%)	5 (4%)	86 (72%)
Total (319)	88 (27%)	19 (5%)	219 (68%)

The land existed as a frontier to be fought with, overcome and dominated. This can be seen through the use of snow storm and tornado references. Of the posts on the MIA Facebook page, 19 referenced snow and 13 referenced tornadoes. The images portrayed Albertans as tough and capable of surviving and thriving in the harsh weather conditions of the Canadian north. Miller (2004) notes the connections of these images with frontier masculinity, stating that "success in the harsh frontier environment required toughness and tenacity. And those qualities, which were originally required of ranchers and hired hands, are still admired. They have left cultural imprints on the contemporary scene" (61). She argues that these cultural imprints remain prevalent in Alberta culture and indeed the findings of this subsection upheld this claim. For instance, a post from June 3rd, 2017 commented on the "no fucks given" mentality of the man who became an internet celebrity after mowing his lawn while a tornado swirled behind him (MIA 2017a). Other posts celebrated the "get'er done" mindset of Albertans who struggled with and eventually overcame nature, for instance by showing large trucks plowing their way through roads with large snow-lined drifts or weather-damaged buildings being repaired.

The untamed frontier was marked in both case studies by images of rugged mountains and open prairies. Photos of mountains, lakes, and rivers constructed the land as belonging to the collective gaze of Albertans. For instance, MIA circulated a picture of the sun setting over mountains and a lake with the words "proud to be Albertans" across the image (MIA 2017b).

Likewise, a cartoon from *You Might be from Alberta If…* captioned "sometimes you have the world's coolest nightlight" (Elston 2015, 51) highlighted the land as belonging to Albertans and as a subject for enjoyment.

Oil and farm images highlighted the land as a resource for human consumption. In a post from March 2017, MIA circulated a meme showing two children standing in a field, captioned "we made it through winter, thanks fossil fuels!" (MIA 2017c). The comic *You Might be from Alberta If…* mirrored these ideas but took a more light-hearted approach to this dependence on the oil industry in a cartoon that showed a truck's bumper sticker saying, "dear Lord, let there be another oil boom. I promise I won't piss it away this time" (Elston 2015, 71). In these cases, the land's importance was emphasized in relation to it being harnessed for the survival of Albertans.

The "We"

When the land is presented as something that should be conquered and used for the benefit of Albertans, the question becomes: who are these prototypical Albertans? The analysis revealed that the masculine nature of regional citizenship in Alberta discussed by Perron (2013) was evident in Alberta humour. As shown in Table 3.2, of the 260 human figures presented in the cartoons and Facebook posts, 210 were male.

Table 3.2: Gender of Individuals Present

	Men	Women	Unidentifiable	**Total**
Meanwhile in Alberta	100 (79%)	24 (19%)	2 (2%)	126
You Might be From Alberta If…	110 (82%)	23 (17%)	1 (1%)	134
Total	210 (81%)	47 (18%)	3 (1%)	260

When considering how men were presented, *You Might be from Alberta If…* upheld frontier masculinity stereotypes insofar as 20 percent of images depicted a man as a farmer or a cowboy (see Table 3.3 below). In these images, the cowboy was not mythologized but instead presented as a representation of an "everyday" Albertan. These individuals spent more on their trucks than their education (Elston 2015), smugly offered their ignorant friends from Toronto prairie oysters (Elston 2015, 123) or got teary eyed when they heard Paul Brandt's "Alberta

Bound" and expressed the view that this song should be the provincial anthem (Elston 2015, 38). These findings contrasted greatly with the findings from MIA. Overall, the images in MIA placed generic men as the representation of all Albertans. These men were not given obvious identifiers that classified them as anything in particular. Rather, men were simply present; for the creators of the images, men's purpose or importance did not need to be explained or stereotyped. Thus, the narratives within the humour expressed in MIA constructed "a solitary male protagonist" in which Albertan ideals and values were filtered through a male perspective (George 2015, 143).

Table 3.3: Images presenting men as engaged in one the following professions			
	Oil/Trades	Farmers	Total
Meanwhile in Alberta (n=200)	4 (2%)	3 (3%)	7 (4%)
You Might be From Alberta If (n=119)	3 (3%)	24 (20%)	27 (23%)
Total (n=319)	7 (2%)	27 (9%)	34 (11%)

Even when men were not physically existent in the images, the discourse analysis revealed an implied male, heterosexual presence. This was seen in the references made to sex and alcohol. For instance, MIA posted images of poorly constructed signs advertising blow jobs and requesting nudes (MIA 2017d) while other posts referenced strip clubs (MIA 2017e) or porn hubs (MIA 2017f). Additionally, eleven posts mentioned or depicted alcohol. De Visser and Smith (2007), as well as Dempster (2011), have found that alcohol consumption is often culturally associated with masculinity in Western culture. These posts highlighted the link between of alcohol use and being Albertan by showing bars, saloons and liquor stores as places of community and recreation. Thus, while the expected imagery of oilfield workers and cowboys were not employed by MIA, themes of frontier masculinity associated with the autonomy and agency of the male were still present in the texts.

Women were often presented in stereotypically feminine roles. Women's association with supporting roles was in fact a key aspect of the humour in the sources assessed. Rather than being representing as typical of all Albertans, women were characterized as background individuals, sex objects or as engaged in stereotypically feminine roles. As previously noted, in the cartoons presented in the book *You Might be from Alberta If…*, an assumed "you" is always present. Of the 24 women shown, only nine women were drawn to represent the "you"—the

Albertan—in the cartoons. The rest were cast in supportive roles. *You Might be from Alberta If...* associated women with gardening (Elston 2015, 115), beauty pageants (Elston 2015, 121) and shopping (Elston 2015, 29 and 64). Likewise, MIA showed images of women as service workers (MIA 2017g), as Barbie throwing up because of alcohol consumed at the Calgary Stampede (MIA 2017h), or as shirtless while riding on boats (MIA 2017i). It is worth noting that even when posts on the Facebook page MIA did not rely on visual stereotypes to convey meaning, feminine stereotypes were regularly depicted.

The Issue

Amidst the various humorous images present in the cases studies were highly politicized messages. These messages reinforced the belief that conservatism was synonymous with the Alberta identity and expressed a discomfort with centrist politics. Importantly, neither source ever expressed outright support for a particular party. Rather the images constructed conservatism as normal, natural and quintessentially Albertan. The Facebook page *Meanwhile in Alberta* took these discussions one step further by aggressively situating centrist politicians as antagonists to Alberta's people, values, and ideals, while employing a subliminal call for Albertans to take action against, and react negatively towards these individuals.

Both sets of texts referenced the legacy of Progressive Conservative premier Ralph Klein. One cartoon in *You Might be from Alberta If...* captioned "you learned the three R's and the three S's," showed a young boy standing in front of a whiteboard. In addition to writing "'reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic," the boy added the words "shoot, shovel' and shut-up," the former premier's response to the 2003 mad cow crisis in Alberta (Elston 2015, 71). In a Facebook post from August 10, 2017, MIA shared a post with a picture of a plate of food in which the sauce on the plate formed an image of a human face. The post was captioned, "I was having supper last night and when I was done eating I realized that the great Ralph Klein wearing a cowboy hat had come back from the grave to save our province" (MIA 2017j). While Klein may have resigned from Alberta politics in December 2006, these images demonstrated that the Klein legacy is alive and well in Alberta cultural discourse.

Other cartoons and posts took a more humorous approach to the importance of conservatism in Alberta culture. For instance, a cartoon from *You Might be from Alberta If...* referenced the fact that for a time, Alberta had two main conservative parties—the Progressive

Conservative Party and the Wildrose Party—by stating: "your Thanksgiving turkey has two right wings" (Elston 2017, 9) Another cartoon referenced the highly individualistic and masculinist culture of Alberta by showing an image of a truck with two guns hanging across the back window. The caption read: "you have a nice rack" (Elston 2017, 75).

A discomfort for centrist politics was also prominent throughout the two case studies. The book *You Might be from Alberta If...* highlighted the perceived discomfort in Alberta with having a sales tax. This concern was communicated through a cartoon, captioned "you know that 'four strong winds' aren't the only things that blow," which offered a picture of the Alberta legislature within a speech bubble overhead saying "I know! Let's introduce a provincial sales tax!" Taxes were also addressed in the case of *Meanwhile in Alberta* with the circulation of a meme featuring a befuddled Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and captioned: "everyone is filling out tax forms that say sorry you are asking for more than I can give" (MIA 2018). Other images suggested support for center and left-of-center values is nonexistent in Alberta. A cartoon captioned "You've visited ghost towns" showed a child standing in front of a sign saying "welcome to Liberalville."

Meanwhile in Alberta positioned individuals with liberal values as ignorant. For instance, the page shared a post telling a story of a classroom discussion:

> A teacher asked her 6th grade class how many of them were Justin Trudeau fans.
>
> Not really knowing what a Trudeau fan is, but wanting to be liked by the teacher, all the kids raised their hands except Little Johnny.
>
> The Teacher asked Little Johnny whom had decided to be different…again.
>
> Little Johnny said, "Because I am not a Trudeau fan."
>
> The Teacher asked, "Why aren't you a fan of Trudeau?"
>
> Johnny said, "Because I am a Conservative."
>
> The teacher asked him why he is a Conservative.
>
> Little Johnny answered, "Well my mom is a Conservative and my dad is a Conservative, so I am a Conservative.
>
> Annoyed by this answer, the teacher asked, "if your mom was a moron and your dad was an idiot, what would that make you?
>
> With a big smile, Little Johnny replied, "that would make me a Trudeau fan." (MIA 2017k)

This story in and of itself speaks to the presence of conservatism in Alberta humour. Stupidity comes from the act of supporting a non-Conservative leader while the voice of rationality in the joke is the child whose conservative ideological leanings come from his parents.

In addition to being viewed as ignorant, those possessing non-conservative values were represented as hypocritical and violent. In a post from January 2017, the MIA page shared an image of a tweet saying, "I'd take this #WomensMarch more seriously had 50 Shades of Grey not made 547.4 million at the box office," and, "ladies be honest how many of you marched today but read or saw 50 Shades of Grey" (MIA 2017l). Another post stated: "your [sic] marching for women's rights but you hit a woman in the face… but that's none of my business. How's that for equality?" while sharing a video showing a supposed NDP supporter punching an individual from Rebel Media in the face (MIA 2017m).

Other posts attacked Alberta New Democratic Party premier Rachel Notley. A total of 12 posts referenced Notley or her political party. Notley herself was also the target of ridicule. For instance, on March 8th, 2017, MIA posted an image of a pickup truck with a poster on its backend. On the poster was a picture of Rachel Notley's face, and the caption said: "does this ass make my truck look big?" (MIA 2017n). One post showed a washroom hand dryer with a sticky note on it saying "press here for a speech from Rachel Notley." Another concocted an image of premier Notley declaring, "Fuck it... We're never getting elected again. Blow it all." (MIA 2017o) and yet another post portrayed her as a witch (MIA 2017p). These images constructed Notley as inferior, dangerous and subject to the collective dislike of Albertans.

Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated that elements of frontier masculinity are reflected in Alberta humour. I have shown how the two sources studied (the Facebook page *Meanwhile in Alberta* and the cartoon book *You Might be from Alberta If...*) enforced ideals of frontier masculinity in two ways. First, the humour in the two maintained a ranking of policy items that enforced the importance of staples industries. This occurred through the continuous depiction of oil industry and farming industries. It was also seen by the content that was shared by the Facebook page *Meanwhile in Alberta* that included posts originally from conservative Facebook pages such as "National Conservative News Network Canada" and "Canadian Farm Community."

Second, the humour circulated in the Facebook page *Meanwhile in Alberta* and the cartoon book *You Might be from Alberta If...* demonstrated that right-wing beliefs, including the submission of women and the authority of the autonomous white male, were important elements of the Alberta identity. These values were articulated in the fact that eighty-two percent of all individuals portrayed in the two sources were men. These ideas could also be found in the portrayal of women in stereotypical roles such as service workers or sex objects. Additionally, right-wing values were present in the humour circulated by the two sources through the assertion that center or left-of-center values were either inexistent in Alberta or that these values could be condemned. This could be seen through the villainizing of Rachel Notley and the criticizations of the 2017 Women's March.

Overall, this chapter showed that the cartoon book *You Might be from Alberta If...* and the Facebook page *Meanwhile in Alberta* enforced notions of frontier masculinity and reinforced a culture of exclusion. Both tropes illustrated that, in Alberta, white men act as the primary sources of economic, political and social autonomy. These findings also punctuate the importance of assessing the cultural and political elements present within the humour of an area as they suggest that gendered discourses are present within popular forms of humour created and consumed in Alberta. The next section integrates these finings into the conceptual framework used for assessing political humour in Alberta political cartoons.

CHAPTER 4: CASES, METHODS, AND FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Humour is regularly used to normalize beliefs and values, yet little attention has been paid to the role of humour in facilitating gendered and hostile representations of political leaders. How does hostile humour reflect norms and understandings of gender? More specifically, how does one take a gendered approach to the study of hostile humour when examining Alberta politics? In this thesis, I demonstrate that research must go beyond simply recognizing the joke expressed by a political cartoon. Rather, humour in political cartoons has the capacity to expresses anger towards a politician in addition to showing violence enacted upon a politician.

While I acknowledge that humour is complex and multifaceted, my focus is on the gendered meanings communicated by hostile humour. I created a gender-based framework for considering how hostility towards political leaders is articulated in political cartoons. This framework is designed to extend the gendered mediation literature by interrogating aggression and hostility as a key part of political humour in the same way that aggression exists as an important part of mainstream political commentary in newspapers and television coverage. In doing so, I demonstrate that hostility in political humour reflects the findings in the gendered mediation literature in that it works to situate women politicians as outsiders to political life.

The methodology for this analysis draws on gendered mediation research as well as research investigating the relationships between humour, hostility and gender-based violence (see Shifman and Lemish 2010) to develop a framework for conducting content and discourse analysis of the cartoons. This framework allows me to identify and interpret the key aspects of hostile humour, each of which is further elaborated below. I propose four ways in which humour reinforces gendered hostile beliefs about political life. Briefly, these are (1) characterizations of the premier as threatened or threatening; (2) hostile humour themes, that is, jokes that position the premier as humiliated, insulted, embarrassed or physically hurt; (3) how violence is directed at the premier (if it is from a person or an event); and (4) representations of the nature of victimhood (presentations of the premier as victim or victimizer). (See the Appendix for the codebook used for this study.)

However, given the culturally-centered nature of humour, elaborated in Chapter 3, additional themes and tropes needed to be considered to fully understand how hostile humour

operates in the Alberta context. In order to address this, I determine how the three themes of frontier masculinity—male control over land, the economic and public space, and the aggressive protection of individualistic, conservative values—exist in relation to the hostility expressed in Alberta political cartoons. The initial exploratory analysis in the previous chapter illustrated that themes of frontier masculinity were often present in the two humour sources studied, thus indicating that they are likely to be articulated in the humour directed at the premiers studied in this thesis.

SELECTION OF TEXTS

This thesis carefully analyzes 154 political cartoons published in the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* containing physical depictions of Alberta premiers Edward (Ed) Stelmach, Alison Redford, and Rachel Notley. These three individuals were selected as they constitute all of Alberta's most recent premiers who served at least one year as government leader. I excluded analysis of interim premiers because they served for short periods of time in the office. As well, I did not include former premier Jim Prentice in this study because he served for only eight months before being defeated in the 2015 Alberta general election. As such, Stelmach was the most appropriate male comparator to the two women premiers, Redford and Notley. I wanted to analyze the meanings expressed in political cartoons both during and after the so-called "honeymoon" period (usually seen as the first six months of a political leaders' career). I examined the first eighteen months of each premier's cartoon representations for two reasons. First, this time frame allows for a comparison of how humour was directed at a premier in both during and beyond the honeymoon period. Second, it captures the metaphors and rhetorical devices consistently applied by political cartoonists to the premiers over time. Choosing this eighteen-month time period proved to be particularly successful as, during the initial stages of the content analysis, I found that the metaphors and stereotypes applied to the premiers tended to solidify following the premier's first twelve to fifteen months in office. Extending my analysis beyond the first year in office further ensured that the metaphors, stereotypes and rhetorical devices applied to the politicians studied could be easily identified during the content and discourse analysis.

I chose to analyze political cartoons because of their ability to convey important cultural meanings through visual and lexical framing techniques. I looked for the appearance of each

premier in editorial cartoons published on the editorial pages of Alberta's two opinion-leading newspapers, *The Edmonton Journal* and *The Calgary Herald*. In addition to their status as two of Alberta's highest circulating newspapers, the two publications play an important agenda-setting role in the province of Alberta and have been used previously by other researchers when studying Alberta media (see Gunster and Saurette 2014; Nelson et al. 2015). The corpus of cartoons was manually retrieved from the University of Alberta's microfiche copies of *The Edmonton Journal* and *The Calgary Herald*. A sample size of 154 cartoons was collected, representing all visual depictions of each of the three premiers over their first eighteen months in that office.

The author acknowledges two limitations of the research design. First, given that I only considered how political cartoonists for *The Edmonton Journal* and *The Calgary Herald* depicted premiers Notley, Redford and Stelmach, the corpus was limited to the works of a small group of cartoonists. That *The Edmonton Journal* and *The Calgary Herald* are owned by the same company, and the papers shared cartoons, meant that repeat political cartoons were frequent in the corpus. Repeat cartoons were only coded once and were deleted when found in the data collection process as not to interfere with the coding process later. This further limited the perspectives present within the dataset. Second, given that this project only focused on Alberta leaders and their portrayals in regional newspapers, it is not possible to generalize from these results to make an argument about how Canadian political cartoonists as a whole depict women and men politicians in political cartoons.

Individuals Studied

Ed Stelmach (December 14, 2006 to October 7, 2011)

Ed Stelmach succeeded Ralph Klein, who is widely regarded as one of the most popular premiers of all time in Alberta, by winning the Progressive Conservative Party's leadership contest on December 14th, 2006. Stelmach's rise to power in Alberta was largely unexpected. He was seen to have "made no discernible impact either as a backbencher before 1997 or a cabinet minister thereafter" (Harasymiw 2014, 221). In Harasymiw's assessment of the Progressive Conservative Party 2006 leadership race, he notes that "of the three frontrunners, Stelmach was the most unremarkable" (2014, 220). While Stelmach had significantly less support than his

counterparts, his ability to attract new voters, combined with the nature of the leadership selection process, facilitated his victory. The process allowed for two rounds of voting. If a candidate did not receive a clear (50% +1) of the vote on the first ballot, a second vote containing the three candidates who received the most votes was conducted. Stelmach found himself among this group. During this second vote, voters selected their first and second choices for leaders of the party. If a candidate did not receive a majority of the votes, the person who came in third place was removed from the list of potential leaders and the second choices from the dropped candidate redistributed among the remaining two politicians (Morton 2013). In the 2006 contest, those party members who voted for the third-place candidate, Ted Morton, were more likely to select Stelmach as a second choice, thereby propelling him to the top of the list.

Stelmach spent nearly five years as Alberta's premier. His policies were seen as ideologically ambiguous in the sense that they veered between the progressive and the fiscally conservative. According to Wesley (2011, 109), during the 2006 leadership race, Stelmach was seen as "safe change" in the sense that "progressives could take solace in Stelmach's commitment to universal social programs and pledges to preserves Alberta's multicultural heritage, while conservatives could support his promises for democratic reform and fiscal responsibility." As his time as Alberta premier progressed, Stelmach's policies remained ideologically equivocal. In 2008, he announced a review of the oil and gas industry but, despite recommendations to increase oil royalties, Stelmach then announced a one billion-dollar royalty break over the course of five years. He then cut healthcare expenditures while changing the Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act to include sexual orientation as one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination. Despite leading his party to a strong majority in the 2008 provincial election campaign, Stelmach announced his resignation in 2011 after being pushed out of office by members of his own party (Wingrove et al. 2011). For this study, I examined Stelmach's career from December 14, 2006 to June 14, 2007. Key events that occurred during this time period included signing the *Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement* with the province of British Columbia (Legislative Assembly of Alberta 2018). Stelmach also approved a controversial a review of oil and gas revenues during his first year as premier.

Alison Redford (October 7, 2011 to March 23, 2014)

Alison Redford became Alberta's first female premier on October 7th, 2011. Prior to becoming premier, Redford worked as an international lawyer before being elected as a Member Legislative Assembly on March 13th, 2008. Notably, Redford was immediately appointed to cabinet, and held the prestigious portfolio of Minister of Justice. She sought the party's leadership after Stelmach's resignation. With the support of only one member of caucus during 2011 Progressive Conservative Party leadership race, Redford positioned herself as an agent of change, running as an alternative to her party's legacy (Craigie 2012, 635). Like Stelmach, Redford secured her position as premier after the second-choice preferences of the third-place candidate on the second ballot were redistributed during the leadership election.

Within months into Redford's leadership, she called a provincial election. Alberta's historic provincial election of 2012 saw Redford run against Wildrose Party leader Danielle Smith. The election was the first election in Alberta's history which featured women leading two competitive parties. As University of Toronto political scientist Sylvia Bashevkin highlighted in a newspaper piece during the election, "Albertans will wake up on April 24 with a female premier. The appropriate question is which woman" (Bashevkin 2012). Redford succeeded in the election, becoming one of only a handful of Canadian women to win a party leadership bid and lead her party to victory in a subsequent election. However, after a series of spending controversies, including her intention to use government money to build a personal "sky palace," (Purdy 2014; Bennett 2015), Redford announced that she would resign from politics effective March 23rd, 2014. For the purpose of this thesis, I considered the following dates of Redford's career: October 7, 2011 to April 7, 2013. Key events that happened during this timeframe included choosing to run a deficit in the 2012 provincial budget and the 2012 provincial election campaign.

Rachel Notley (May 24, 2015-Present)

After Redford's resignation, interim Progressive Conservative leader Dave Hancock led the government for six months prior to the election of Jim Prentice to the PC leadership in September 2014. Prentice served only eight months as premier before he was defeated by New Democratic Party leader Rachel Notley in the 2015 provincial election held on May 24th. Within just four years since the election of Alberta's first female premier, Rachel Notley become

Alberta's second woman to gain the top job.

At the time of the 2015 provincial election campaign, the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party had won twelve consecutive elections, holding office since 1971. Rachel Notley, a former labour lawyer, served as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for eight years prior to the 2015 election. As was the case for Redford and Stelmach, Notley's ascension to the highest echelons of Alberta politics was unexpected. Even as the 2015 election progressed, it was still assumed unlikely, even to Notley herself, that she would be premier (Sharpe and Braid 2016). A week prior to the election, when polls suggested a clear lead for the New Democratic Party and on May 24th, 2015, Notley greeted supporters with the words, "I think we might have made a little bit of history" (Notley, quoted in Maclean 2015). Indeed, the election of the New Democratic Party was historic, both in terms of it ending the 44-year political dynasty of the Progressive Conservative Party and with respect to the election of a record number of women to office. Key actions taken by the Notley government include creating a Ministry for the Status of Women, instituting a tuition freeze in 2015, and implementing Bill 24, a bill that prohibits schools from informing parents if their child joins a gay-straight alliance. Notley also conducted a royalty review of the oil and gas industry in 2016. At the time of the submission of this thesis, Rachel Notley continues to hold the position of Alberta's premier. The months of data collection for Notley are May 24, 2015 to November 24, 2016 and key events that occurred during that time are banning donations from corporations and unions to political parties and passing the farm safety legislation, Bill 6.

ANALYSIS OF TEXTS

This study employs a mixed-methods approach by using both content and discourse analysis when assessing the data. Both methods have proven to be very successful in analyzing media coverage, and they are regularly used when addressing visual media sources such as political cartoons (see Gilmartin 2001; Greenberge 2002; Mazid 2008; Trimble et al. 2010). Content and discourse analysis can also be helpful when assessing the nature of humour. Tsakona (2009) found that the mode of humour in political cartoons was tied to both the textual and pictorial elements presented. Thus, the very nature of political cartoons demands that visual and discursive elements be analyzed in conjunction to one another. While some themes can be

disaggregated and observed through content analysis, others require qualitative observation to capture nuances and complexities.

Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis

Content analysis was used to determine the extent to which hostile themes were present in the corpus of cartoons. Content analysis is described as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson 1952, 18). It assigns numeric values to account for specific images, words, metaphors, or themes (Riffe et al. 2005). The value of content analysis lies in its ability to critically analyze patterns existing within documents (Stemler 2001) and to form valid inferences about the meaning of data with a reduced chance of bias (Krippendorff 1980; Halperin and Heath 2012; Riffe et al. 2005; Van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2004). Because of these characteristics, content analysis has long been employed as a key method for investigating how social and political issues are manifested in the media (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2004, 1).

Discourse analysis served as a means to fully understand how the connections between violence and gender were visualized in the cartoons. It also serves as a means to articulate the connections existing between frontier masculinity and Alberta political humour. Discourse analysis allows the researcher to determine which metaphors, ideas and values dominate political discussions (Burnham et al. 2008). Because the methodology involves assessing "the relationship between discourse and reality in a particular context" (Halperin and Heath 2012), discourse analysis allows researchers to "go beyond exploring what is manifestly expressed" and "to understand the meanings for political life" (Trimble and Treiberg 2015, 235).

The purpose of the discourse analysis is to provide additional insights into the role that gendered hostile humour plays in the Alberta political context. Do the discursive devices used in the cartoons (especially in the case of Rachel Notley and Alison Redford) mirror the violent rhetoric directed at female politicians more broadly and, if so, how are these meanings communicated? To answer this question, I considered the relations at play between hostile humour, gendered mediation and frontier masculinity. I looked specifically at the cartoons containing at least one hostile humour themes and considered more broadly the relationships between hostility, gender and politics in the cartoons. I determined where and when elements of frontier masculinity emerged in the data and assessed their relationship to hostile humour. As

Wright (2001) notes, frontier masculinity and hostility often exist simultaneously with one another and as a result, it is expected that cartoons employing hostile humour will also highlight elements of frontier masculinity, confirming Wright's observations.

The content analysis and discourse analyses explored how hostile humour was employed by political cartoonists when physical representations of the premiers—Rachel Notley, Alison Redford and Ed Stelmach—were presented. Gendered mediation demonstrates that metaphors of aggression and hostility dominate political coverage. However, no research has developed a conceptual framework to determine how these references are visually and discursively manifested in political humour. I consider four ways in which gendered hostile humour is developed in political humour.

First, in the same manner in which political coverage is personalized (see Trimble et al. 2013), hostility about political actors is articulated in the degree of threat indicated by the behaviour and demeanor ascribed to a politician by a cartoonist. Cartoonists have the capacity to repetitively assign behaviours to leaders through their visual depictions of politicians, thereby communicating how a politician might respond to violence or the possible threat of violence. The actions taken (or not taken) by a politician in the cartoon communicate how and when they are shown to enact violence on to others, and also how they react to the threat of violence if it is directed at them. I am particularly concerned with whether cartoonists represent the premiers as active agents who engage in acts of violence, or as submissive actors whose demeanors are depicted as passive and non-threatening.

The second way that gendered hostile humour occurs in political cartoons stems from the types of violence directed at premiers. To investigate depictions of violence, I searched the cartoons for the four hostile humour themes identified by Weinstein et al. (2011): eliciting a laugh by showing an individual as insulted, embarrassed, humiliated or physically hurt. However, simply analyzing the types of humour present in the cartoons does not provide enough information to accurately determine how violence was communicated in the cartoons. Therefore, the third way that gendered hostile humour is articulated in political cartoons can be identified by analyzing where violence directed at the premiers comes from. By doing this, I was able to determine whether the violence directed the premiers was presented as accidental or as a purposeful result of the actions of another person in the cartoon. If violence directed at the premiers comes from a person or representation of the broader Albertan public, the findings

would indicate a level of acceptance with seeing a premier being harmed by representatives of "Alberta".

Finally, it is important to not only consider how the premier receives violence but also how the premier enacts violence on to others. The fourth way that gendered hostile humour becomes evident in cartoons is by observing violence as something that the premier can engage in and identifying victims they create as a result of their violence. For the purpose of this thesis, I look at who is depicted as the victims of violence in the cartoons and how victimization narratives reflect elements of gendered mediation (by presenting women as outsiders to political life) and frontier masculinity (by depicting women in leadership roles as threatening to the prosperity of men).

CODING

I coded the cartoons based on the following criteria discussed below by assigning a code of 1 if the theme or message was present in the text and a 0 when it was not (see the Appendix for the codebook). Internal reliability measures including techniques of double coding and open coding were taken to improve the reliability and validity of the data.

Characterizations of the premier as threatened or threatening

When coding for characterizations, I considered the presence of four characterizations assigned by cartoonists to each premier and the extent to which the premiers were considered threatening or non-threatening. This section was inspired by the research on violence conducted by Shifman and Lemish (2010) and Flood and Pease (2009). Gendered mediation research underscores the importance of considering how political performances are constructed in the media. Casting women as passive and subordinate, for instance, suggests they lack the qualities and demeanor associated with political leadership. Focusing specifically on violence and hostility, research indicates that violence is more likely to be found humorous by individuals when it characterizes the subject of the joke as: threatening to men; subjected to control or discipline; passive; or submissive (see Flood and Pease 2009). These characteristics were then further grouped as: unthreatening and lacking power and agency (as seen by the characteristics controlled or corrected, passive and subordinate); or as threatening to men. These categories were not mutually exclusive. I classified these characteristics as:

1. Threatening to men: The cartoonist portrays the premier as a threat to the bodies, values or goals of men (e.g. by showing a premier hitting a man).
2. Controlled or corrected: The cartoonist depicts the premier as being controlled or corrected by others. In this case, I looked at other individuals in the cartoons and their relationship to the premiers and noted when individuals possessed control of the premier (e.g. a premier being hit by another person).
3. Passive: The premier is shown as not responding to events; she or he stands by, inactive and/or docile.
4. Subordinate: The cartoonist uses words or images, or both, to represent the premier as physically, emotionally and mentally inferior to others or to their surroundings. The representation was characterized as "subordinate" when, for example, the cartoonist highlighted a premier's incapacity to perform a task, or portrayed the premier as a child as a way of elevating the status of other individuals in the cartoon.

Hostile Humour Themes

Hostile humour themes were coded using Weinstein's (2011) definition of hostile humour and the themes identified in research on this topic (see Crawford 1995; Fine 1980). According to this literature, when an actor is the object of hostile humour, they are typically:

1. Humiliated: Showing the premier being the recipient of disrespect from another person (e.g. the cartoon depicts a person throwing a pie in the premier's face);
2. Insulted: Showing the premier as the recipient of an offensive remark (e.g. the premier is called an inappropriate name by someone else);
3. Embarrassed: Showing the premier in an uncomfortable situation but not in a position of being the recipient of physical violence (e.g. the premier forgets what they are supposed to say when giving a speech);
4. Physically Hurt: Showing violence being enacted upon the body of the premier (e.g. the premier is being stabbed).

Upon coding the cartoons, I noticed that often the premiers were not presented as physically hurt in the frame of the cartoon. Rather, humour came in the *threat* of physical violence, inferred by captions or or reactions, but not actually drawn into the cartoon. In order to differentiate between the two different types of violence presented in the cartoons, a fifth category—incoming physical

violence—was added to the codebook. If a cartoon included violence being enacted on the body of a politician, it was coded as "physically hurt." If physical violence was clearly about to happen to the body of the premier but was not directly happening in the frame of the cartoon, the cartoon was coded as "physically hurt (incoming)."

Nature of the Violence directed at Premier

While the definition provided by Weinstein et al. (2011) offers a foundational understanding of hostile humour, it cannot fully assess the relationship between victim and attacker as expressed in political cartoons. In order to provide a more nuanced interpretation of the nature of hostile humour, I considered how antagonism was directed at the premiers. Who perpetuates the violence? Are premiers situated as the direct victims of violence, or as subjected to threats of violence? Is the violence drawn as actually occurring, or is it anticipated?

I disaggregated the data further by determining if a visual representation of an attacker was present. This decision was made because the presence of a violence directed at the premier from another human being is indicative of cartoonists reinforcing acceptance of this type of violence. I also assessed the texts to see if a premier was more likely to be the subject of violence that was directly occurring in the frame of the cartoon or if violence was perceived as incoming. Doing so was important because the direct depiction of harm illustrates the acceptance by the cartoonist with the violence happening in the cartoon. In contrast, by hinting at the expected threat of violence in the cartoon, the cartoonist is able to refrain from directly integrating the physical harm of the premier into the humorous narrative created. Four categories were created to capture these nuances:

1. Violence enacted by a person who is present in the cartoon: such as showing an individual punching a premier;
2. Violence enacted as a result of an imagined person: for example, portraying a premier with a knife in their back without showing the individual who stabbed them;
3. Violence that is anticipated or shown as about to occur: for instance, showing a premier who is about to drive off a cliff;
4. Other: An "other" category was also created in order to account for alternative portrayals of violence.

Victimization

Finally, the issue of victimization was considered in order to provide more nuance to the research by providing another opportunity to explore how violence is visually represented in cartoons. Who were the victims of violence in cartoons? Were the premiers studied more likely to be victims or perpetrators of violence? Were cartoonists conveying sympathy for the victims? Were the victims portrayed as deserving or undeserving? For the purposes of this thesis, "deserving victim" describes an individual who is presented as deserving of the violence being directed at them while "sympathetic victim" describes an individual for whom the cartoonists encourage the reader to feel sympathetic. I identified five distinct narratives of victimization:

1. Premier is the perpetrator of violence to a deserving victim: (e.g. the premier attacks an individual who the cartoonist primes the reader not to be sympathetic to)
2. Premier is the perpetrator of violence to an undeserving victim: (e.g. the premier attacks an individual who the cartoonist primes the reader to be sympathetic to)
3. Premier is the deserving victim: (e.g. cartoon suggests the premier is deserving of violence being directed at them)
4. Premier is the undeserving victim: (e.g. cartoon infers the premier does not deserve of violence being inflicted upon them)
5. Other: As with the previous section, an "other" category was added to ensure that other narratives of victimization could be considered.

FINDINGS

Below I present the findings of the analysis. I begin by exploring how often the cartoonists portrayed Rachel Notley, Alison Redford and Ed Stelmach as threatening, on the one hand, or as passive, submissive or controlled, hence unthreatening. I then discuss how hostile humour themes were directed at the premiers studied. Following this, I reflect on the sources of the violence directed at the premiers before addressing themes of victimization. To allow for a more effective discussion of the findings, the content and discourse analyses for each set of the four forms of hostile humour are interwoven in the analysis, with qualitative observations used to illuminate data from the content analysis.

CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE PREMIER AS THREATENED OR THREATENING

To what extent were Rachel Notley, Alison Redford, and Ed Stelmach presented as threatening in political cartoons featuring their likeness? The literature on violence reveals that violence is more likely to be consumed and found humorous by individuals who perceive others as threatening to men, submissive, being controlled or disciplined, or passive. This analysis revealed that Notley was more likely than Redford and Stelmach to be drawn with these characteristics. Additionally, male bodies were used by cartoonists as a means to signify the inferiority status of Notley in the cartoons.

Table 4.1: Characterizations of the Premier as Threatening or Unthreatening

The Premier is drawn as:	Rachel Notley (n=61)		Alison Redford (n=36)		Ed Stelmach (n=57)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Subordinate	7	(12%)	2	(6%)	3	(5%)
Controlled or disciplined	5	(8%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)
Passive	7	(12%)	3	(8%)	5	(9%)
Totals: unthreatening characteristics	19	(31%)	5	(14%)	8	(14%)
Threatening to men	10	(16%)	0	(0%)	1	(2%)
Totals: all characteristics	**29**	**(48%)**	**13**	**(14%)**	**8**	**(15%)**

Overall, 29 cartoons—48 percent of all cartoons containing Notley— showed her as either subordinate (7 cartoons, or 12 percent of total cartoons showing Notley), controlled or disciplined (5, representing 8 percent of cartoons containing Notley), or passive (7 cartoons, 12 percent). Ten cartoons (11 percent of the total) represented Notley as threatening to men. Meanwhile, Alison Redford was portrayed as passive in eight percent of cartoons, subordinate in six percent of the cartoons and *never* as threatening to men. Stelmach was presented as subordinate in five percent of cartoons containing him, threatening to men in two percent of the cartoons, and passive in nine percent of cartoons. Neither Stelmach nor Redford were presented as being controlled or corrected by others.

Rachel Notley was more likely than the two Progressive Conservative Party leaders to be characterized as subordinate in her demeanor or behaviour. This subordination largely came

from the use of infantilization metaphors and the presentation of Notley as a child. One cartoonist depicted her as the wide-eyed "Little Cindy Lou Who" staring innocently up at the Grinch while holding a lump of coal that said "credit down-grade" on it. Another cartoon highlighted Notley's apparent inexperience as a leader by drawing her as a small child riding a large bicycle (representing Alberta) with the aid of training wheels. These findings work to delegitimize Notley's role as Alberta's premier by linking her actions with childlike innocence and ignorance as well as to mirror linguistic attempts to associate women with girlishness and a childlike demeanor.

Rachel Notley's construction as a girl, as opposed to a woman, illustrates another manner in which Alberta cartoonists situated Notley as not fitting within the political realm. These findings reflect findings from the gendered mediation literature by showing Notley as weak and incapable of being an effective political leader. Rather than using metaphors of childhood to describe Notley, as shown by past research (see Braden 2015), cartoonists literally portrayed her as a child. Furthermore, by depicting Notley as a girl, cartoonists suggested that "a woman is a person who is both too immature and too far from real life to been trusted with responsibilities and with decisions of any serious nature" (Lakoff and Bucholtz 2004, 56).

Notley was the only one of the three premiers to be constructed in cartoons as the subject of control or correction from others. Cartoonists illustrated Notley as the flimsy rag puppet of former federal New Democratic Party leader Thomas Mulcair in one cartoon, and as taking marching orders from two men representing the left and right sides of the political spectrum in another. In response to the Notley government's farm safety legislation, Bill 6, a cartoon captioned "yet another unfortunate farm accident" featured Notley with a pitchfork in her back while a male farmer stood behind her and simply said, "oops" (Mayes 2015a; see Figure 1, below). In this case, the presentation of a male unapologetically enacting violence on the body of a woman was used as both a source of humour and as a way of symbolizing the Alberta public's perceived negative response to the passing of the bill. This finding also reinforces notions of frontier masculinity in that it emphasizes male domination and control by showing men's capabilities to control a deviant woman. In this case Rachel Notley's body is used as the target. It is worth noting that Notley is only subjected to correction and control from men. Women are never shown disciplining or controlling Notley. This finding, of men shown enacting power and

control over a female body reinforces one of the key aspects of frontier masculinity previously highlighted in the thesis.

Figure 1: Yet Another Unfortunate Farm Accident

This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions. Figure 1, a cartoon by Malcolm Mayes, can be accessed at Artizans.com or using the following link:

https://www.artizans.com/image/MAY3729/another-farm-accident-occurs-after-rachel-notley-proceeds-with-bill-6-color/

Passivity was an important theme in cartoonists' depictions of Rachel Notley. They used the trope of passivity to insinuate Notley's perceived inability to deflect violence or to defend herself against it. In the cartoons, female passivity and violence go hand-in-hand. Notley never takes steps to defend herself when presented with aggression. Instead, when faced with violence or the threat of violence, Notley stands by docilely, mutely accepting the violence or waiting for the incoming violence directed at her.

Finally, Notley was also more likely than the two Progressive Conservative premiers to be presented as threatening to men.[1] While she was portrayed as a threat to men in ten cartoons (16% of cartoons about her), this trope only appeared in one of the cartoons about Stelmach (2%) and none of the cartoons about Redford during her first 18 months in the premier's office. In Notley's case, this finding was largely due to the casting of male bodies as exemplars of the entire Alberta population. For instance, Notley pushed Albertans out of a hot air balloon (Mayes 2015b) and was satirized as a dog biting the behind of a cowboy meant to represent all Albertans (Rodewalt 2015a). The one cartoon that did depict Stelmach as directing violence onto another

[1] While Redford was more likely than Stelmach to be presented as threatening, Notley was significantly more likely than Redford to be presented as specifically threatening to men. Additionally, while Redford was presented as threatening, she was more often than not, portrayed alone in cartoons leaving the target of her threatening demeanour up to the interpretation of the reader.

man showed him striking the head of former Edmonton mayor Stephen Mandel with a large tree branch labeled "municipal funding plan." As this finding consistently intersected with themes of victimization, I discuss it further, below, in the section detailing how the premiers were portrayed as enacting or being subjected to aggressive acts. But it is worth emphasizing that while Stelmach's violent act was against an opponent, the cartoons portrayed Notley's aggression as directed at all Albertans, or at the province as an entity.

Finally, when I totaled the "unthreatening" representations (subordinate, controlled, passive), Notley was represented in this manner in 31 percent of the cartoons, compared to 14 percent for both Redford and Stelmach. Yet she was also drawn more often than her predecessors as threatening to men. While these seemingly contradictory findings exist, collectively, they work to cast Notley as a natural subject of violence and aggression. First, the findings reinforce notions of frontier masculinity by showing how Notley's leadership is perceived as a threat to the established conservative political order and traditional norms about gender roles. By marking her as deviant from the political status-quo in Alberta, the cartoonists highlight a need to contest Notley's leadership by situating her as a threat to Alberta. Second, by presenting Notley as passive, subordinate or controlled, humourists are suggesting that Notley lacks agency and autonomy. As a result, presenting Notley as both a threat to Albertans and as simultaneously unthreatening to them reinforces two highly gendered notions about women and violence. In this case, Notley's leadership is constructed as both a threat to the Albertan public but she is also a passive and accepting target of violence. As such, cartoonists depict Notley in such a way that Albertans can feel intimated by her as well as attack her without any threat of future consequences.

HOSTILE HUMOUR THEMES

Hostile humour themes—the types of jokes that are known to attract audiences and prompt them to laugh—were used by Alberta cartoonists as a means to mock and critique the leadership characteristics of Redford, Notley, and Stelmach. Of the three premiers studied, Redford received the most hostile humour references with 28 percent of cartoons about her depicting her featuring some form of hostility. In Rachel Notley's case, 20 percent of cartoons depicting her containing one of these forms of hostility, while Ed Stelmach was portrayed this way in 16 percent of the cartoons in which he is placed in the frame. The differences between

Redford and the other two premiers are likely a result of political context. Alison Redford was the only premier to face an election campaign during the first eighteen months of her career. Gendered mediation scholars note that elections are often used as opportunities to use violent metaphors (see Gidengil and Everitte 2003) and game frames (see Trimble and Sampert 2003), both of which work to highlight the aggressive nature of politics. The 2012 election in Alberta provided multiple opportunities for cartoonists to visually convey the brutal nature of politics. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that some of the humour themes emerged as a result of the 2012 election, as Redford had to spend the month-long election period campaigning. Meanwhile, Notley and Stelmach did not face an election during their first eighteen-month period that they spent as premier. Thus, cartoonists were less likely to use violent references in the cartoons as a result.

Table 4.2: Hostile Humour Themes in Representations of the Premier

The Premier is drawn as:	Rachel Notley (n=61)		Alison Redford (n=36)		Ed Stelmach (n=57)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Humiliated	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)
Insulted	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)
Embarrassed	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)
Physically hurt	2	(3%)	3	(8%)	3	(5%)
Physically hurt (incoming)	6	(10%)	5	(14%)	6	(11%)
Harassed	4	(7%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)
Totals	**12**	**(20%)**	**8**	**(22%)**	**9**	**(16%)**

Crucially, of the four hostile humour themes identified by Weinstein 2011, only one of the four themes, physical harm, was found within the corpus of cartoons analyzed (see Table 4.2, above). References to humiliation, insult or embarrassment were not overtly represented in any of the cartoons, suggesting that cartoonists are more likely to use explicit forms of violence that could be easily visualized such as the causing of bodily harm. In contrast, other more subtle forms of violence, such as being insulted or embarrassed, may not be able to be as easily represented in a drawing, or as quickly recognized by a reader.

Physical violence was the only hostile humour theme evident in cartoons about the three premiers. Since discourse analysis revealed that it took two forms—the actual enactment of bodily harm, or the threat of physical harm—I coded these as discrete categories. For instance, Ed Stelmach was drawn skyrocketing into the air along with the rising costs of oil prices (Rodewalt 2008a). The fall would have invariably killed or maimed him. In another cartoon, Alison Redford's head was swallowed by a large snake representing the National Energy Strategy (Mayes 2012a). In a 2015 cartoon, Rachel Notley hangs a red blanket on a laundry line, unaware of an angry bull, representing Alberta farmers, about to charge in her direction and impale her with its horns (Mayes 2015c). In these cases, the premier's incapacity to notice the impeding violence heightened the humorous nature of the cartoon.

While it can be argued that all political humour is meant to target a politician and thus engage in a process of humiliation, insult or embarrassment, direct references to these themes were not evident. However, discourse analysis revealed an additional form of hostile humour: harassment. This form of antagonism was characterized by persistent behaviors that were presented as unwelcomed by the premier but which failed to cause immediate or expected physical harm. While harassment has not been considered traditionally as an element of hostile humour, including this element provides an opportunity to understand how this form of humour is used to evaluate political leaders. As little research has considered the gendered nature of hostile humour in political cartoons, adding additional themes that are often gendered in nature provides a more nuanced interpretation of hostile humour in these texts. Importantly, Rachel Notley was the only premier in the sample to be portrayed as the subject of harassment, a theme that appeared in four of the cartoons (7% of the total number of cartoons in which she is included). For instance, one cartoon featured a frazzled Notley sitting at a desk wielding a fly swatter while a fly representing Rebel Media buzzed aggressively around her (Mayes 2016a). Another referenced chants uttered at a political rally that was aided and abetted by a Conservative Party of Canada leadership candidate, Chris Alexander. In the cartoon, Notley was shown being taunted by crowds who chanted "lock her up" (Mayes 2016b). This cartoon also echoed the chants that were directed at American presidential candidate Hillary Clinton at rallies for Republican candidate Donald Trump in 2016.

Overall, all three premiers were subjected to one key form of hostile humour, physical violence, especially the threat of physical harm. Only Notley was presented as the subject of

harassment. This finding emulates the political reality of Alberta in that the images reflect the harassment Notley has received online and present these actions as humorous rather than problematic. When considering how the findings of this subsection relate to the broader body of research on political communication, I argue that they mirror the gendered mediation research in that violent themes exist present in the depictions of a politician, regardless of their gender. However, as the discourse analysis revealed, they also support the gendered mediation thesis by showing that the relationship that men and women have towards this violence is often gendered. As discussed in the following sections, this is seen in the fact that the ways in which these violent metaphors are applied to politicians reinforced gendered assumptions about agency, motivation, and power in the Alberta political context.

PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST PREMIERS

Looking further at who perpetuates violence against premiers in these cartoons, I found that Notley was more likely than either Redford or Stelmach to be the recipient, or soon to be the recipient, of violence from Albertans or representations of Alberta voters (see Table 4.3, below). In the table below, the N refers to the number of cartoons depicting each premier as physically harmed, or as about to be harmed. Doing so allows for a clearer understanding of how violence is depicted at each one of the premiers studied. The table highlights that a significantly larger percentage of the depictions of violence against Notley show a visible person harming her in the frame of the cartoon. Additionally, Notley is more likely to be the recipient of the violence that is incoming or anticipated as a result of a person. Below, I discuss these findings in greater detail.

The content analysis revealed, violence against the three premiers was, more often than not, anticipated as opposed to actually occurring in the frame of the cartoon. Additionally, as discourse analysis determined, the women premiers, Notley and Redford, were more likely to be portrayed as the subjects of more gruesome types of violence. For instance, a haggard Alison Redford was shown with knives and swords sticking out of her back as she returned from a trip to Washington. Both Redford and Notley were chased by wolves and zombies, and characterized as about to be swallowed by large animals representing a form of the Alberta public. For example, a 2016 cartoon drew Rachel Notley holding a small bowl of pet food while standing in the mouth of a crocodile labeled “unions,” suggesting that Notley is moments away from being

swallowed by the beast (Larter 2016). In these cases, the bodies of Redford and Notley were the direct targets of violence.

Table 4.3: Perpetrators of Violence Directed at the Premier

The violence directed at the premier is occurring as a result of:	Rachel Notley (n=12)		Alison Redford (n=8)		Ed Stelmach (n=9)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Another person (visible)	5	(42%)	2	(25%)	0	(0%)
Another person (imagined)	0	(0%)	1	(12.5%)	3	(33%)
Incoming/anticipated (as a result of a person)	4	(33%)	0	(0%)	1	(11%)
Incoming/anticipated (other)	2	(17%)	3	(37.5%)	4	(45%)
Other	1	(8%)	2	(25%)	1	(11%)

Notley and Redford were also the only premiers to have their attackers drawn as present in the frame of the cartoons. Three cartoons presented Notley in this way and two cartoons showed Alison Redford in a similar manner. For instance, in a cartoon captioned "Sales Tax Idea Catches Fire in Alberta," Redford was drawn tied to a post, surrounded by logs, as a male farmer lit a match in an attempt to start the logs on fire. In another image, Notley was stabbed in the back by an angry farmer (Mayes 2015a). In these cartoons, men were more likely than women to be drawn as the unapologetic aggressors, enacting violence onto the body of a woman premier. In contrast, when Ed Stelmach was harmed as a result of a human attacker, the attacker was almost always left out of the frame of the cartoon. For instance, in a cartoon from *The Calgary Herald*, Stelmach lay in a hospital bed wrapped in bandages while an inspector took a statement from him, asking: "and how would you say is your relationship with the oilfield industry is now, Mr. Stelmach?" Stelmach replies "pretty good I'd say. Nobody really got hurt" (Rodewalt 2007a, See Figure 2, below) In this case, the physical depiction of the oilfield is left out of the frame of the cartoon. Through images like this, cartoonists obscured the identities of the instigators of violence when it came to Stelmach but challenged the anonymity of violence when it came to Notley and Redford by drawing their attackers as human representations.

This finding is significant because it shows that cartoonists did not criticize the men in the cartoons for perpetrating violence onto the female premiers. Instead, by showing that the

enactment of violence from men onto the body of a female premier is legitimate and necessary for Alberta to thrive, cartoonists inferred that the violence directed towards these women was acceptable and even humorous. This finding also functions as an extension of frontier masculinity in that, when their actions challenge conservative principals such as when considering a sales tax or passing farm safety legislation, Notley and Redford's actions were characterized as in need of physical retaliation from men. In this sense, male aggression is constructed as acceptable when it is directed at women who challenge ideological norms in Alberta.

Figure 2: Stelmach and the Oil Industry

This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The cartoon, by Vance Rodewalt, was originally published in the Calgary Herald on October 26th, 2008 on page A24.

VICTIMIZATION

Victimization was a significant theme in the cartoons. In addition to being represented as victims of violence, the three premiers studied were also drawn as perpetrators of violence (see Table 4.4, below). The content and discourse analyses also found differences between the three leaders studied, with Notley being represented more often than Stelmach and Redford as the perpetrator of violence against an underserving victim. Cartoonists used victimization and violence frames to situate New Democratic Party premier Rachel Notley as a threat to Alberta values and the broader Alberta public. While constructed as threatening in the cartoons, Alison Redford's victims remain anonymous, and their invisibility in the frame of the cartoon makes her appear less threatening than is the case for portrayals of Notley. Meanwhile, Ed Stelmach is rarely constructed as enacting violence; rather he is shown as the deserving victim of violence, thereby marking him as "not man enough" for the political sphere.

Table 4.4: Depictions of Premiers as Perpetrators or Victims of Violence

The Premier is drawn as:	Rachel Notley (n=61)		Alison Redford (n=36)		Ed Stelmach (n=57)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
The perpetrator of violence against a deserving victim	0	(0%)	2	(6%)	1	(2%)
The perpetrator of violence against an undeserving victim	6	(10%)	3	(8%)	0	(0%)
The deserving victim	12	(20%)	8	(28%)	9	(16%)
The undeserving victim	0	(0%)	0	(0%)	0	(0%)

Hostile humour in the cartoons reinforced the belief that Notley and Redford were threats to Alberta security and prosperity. This trend can be demonstrated by assessing how the premiers were depicted as effecting violence onto others as shown in Table 6. Ten percent of cartoons containing Notley cast her as perpetrating violence. Redford was portrayed this way in 14 percent of cartoons about her. In contrast, in only one cartoon (2% of the cartoons about him) was Stelmach represented as enacting violence, and it was towards a "deserving victim," or someone who cartoonists depicted as warranting the violence being directed at them.

However, the use of the constructed Alberta body as a target for Notley's violence situated her in stark contrast to the two other premiers studied. Notley was regularly depicted as performing violence on the bodies of Albertans, or a representation of them or their collective interests. In a cartoon captioned "Paris Climate Change Offerings," Rachel Notley is shown as down on her knees presenting the severed head of a horse labeled "Alberta" to the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (Rodewalt 2015b). Notley was also drawn floating in a hot air balloon representing minimum wage increases. She asks her male counterpart, "when will the impact be felt by the workers?" as two men and a woman are thrown over the side of the hot air balloon (Mayes 2015d).[2] To further illustrate this point, a cartoon captioned "Stockholm Syndrome in Alberta" showed a man (representing Alberta) kissing the feet of Rachel Notley and Justin Trudeau after having been released from a ball and chain marked "pipeline prison" (Larter

[2] As I will discuss in further detail in the "Victimization" subsection. Male bodies existed as the primary representations of the victims of the violence provoked by Rachel Notley. This was the only cartoon to show a woman as the victim of Notley's violence.

2016, see Figure 3). Through images like these, Notley is cast as the villainous antagonist to the broader Alberta public. As Wilson (1979) points out, these constructions of evil in humour are not accidental. Rather, villainization in humour "serves to cement feelings of criticism or dislike within a group" (213). When applied to the Alberta political context, these images further push Rachel Notley to the margins of what is considered acceptable within Alberta politics by vilifying her as the enemy of the Alberta people by either working against their interests and causing them harm.

Figure 3: Stockholm Syndrome in Alberta

This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The cartoon, by Vance Rodewalt, was originally published in the Calgary Herald, December 2nd, 2016 on page A11.

In contrast, while Redford's presentation in cartoons is characterized by the perpetuation of violence, the discourse analysis revealed stark differences in how Redford and Notley directed violence at others. The images showing Redford indicate that violence is either about to happen or has happened. However, the actual act of violence is rarely shown in the drawing. Additionally, the physical presentation of a victim from the violence enacted by Redford is rarely, if ever, included in the frame of the cartoon. For instance, a *Calgary Herald* cartoon displayed Redford standing between two large muscular men, both wearing T-shirts saying "Alberta PC Party". One of the men is menacingly wielding a baseball bat. Redford sneers towards the viewer of the cartoon, warning "we know where you live" (Larter 2012, see Figure 4). It is not clear who is being menaced in this representation, but Redford and her party obviously constitute the threat. In another editorial cartoon, Redford stands in an area marked "Alberta off-leash area" while releasing a large crocodile representing government borrowing (Larter 2012). Here government debt is positioned as the danger to Alberta. In yet another

cartoon, Redford declares, “I repeat… there are no new taxes on the table,” while a large monster labeled “future tax hikes” with a pointed baton holds up the table at which the premier is sitting at (Mayes 2013).

Figure 4: “We know where you live”

This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The cartoon, by Vance Rodewalt, was originally published in the Calgary Herald, March 10th, 2011 on page A11.

While these images depict Redford as the instigator of violence, they rarely show her directly enacting it herself. Rather, the violence is perceived by the viewer as a possibility or implied threat. Meanwhile, the representation of the victim who suffers under the consequences of Redford’s violence remains invisible in the cartoons, suggesting that her actions do not have the direct human consequences of Notley’s actions. These images imply that under Redford’s leadership, “violence is about to happen” which stands in contrast to Notley, whose construction in cartoons often provokes the urgent narrative that “violence is happening now, to you.”

Stelmach was never portrayed as a threat to Albertans. The one cartoon that did present Stelmach as aggressively perpetrating violence onto a victim highlighted his ability to dominate another male politician. In an *Edmonton Journal* cartoon from September 2007, Stelmach slapped a large wooden plank labeled “municipal funding plan” over the head of former Edmonton mayor Stephen Mandel. Stelmach then responded with these words: “I beg to differ… Edmonton did not get the short end of the stick” (Mayes 2007).

Figure 5: Friends

This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions. Figure 5, a cartoon by Vance Rodewalt, can be accessed at Artizans.com or using the following link:

https://www.artizans.com/image/VROD199/ed-stelmach-tries-to-make-friends-with-calgary-color/

Rather than being villainized in the images, cartoonists cast Stelmach as the "bumbling idiot" of the three premiers studied. His antics in cartoons are defined by his ignorance and almost childlike innocence, often highlighting the "nice guy" persona that he embodied during his 2006 leadership bid (Harasymiw 2014). Images of Stelmach holding on to the tail of a running horse, unsure if the horse was "out of control" or not, standing with an open bag under the backend of an elephant labelled "oil sands" (Rodewalt 2008b), or wide-eyed and hugging the Calgary Tower while asking if they were friends (Rodewalt 2008c, see Figure 5, above), branded him as fundamentally unthreatening and incapable of acting aggressively towards others. While these cartoons do question Stelmach's capacity to lead, they show that his actions do not have violent consequences. They also demonstrate that his actions were often a result of his own incompetence and naivety rather than his desire to cause harm or to engage in hostility towards Albertans. Therefore, Stelmach's actions were not to be taken seriously. His actions had no effects on the Alberta public and did not expose the Alberta electorate to harm or insecurity. The only victim of Stelmach's actions was Stelmach himself.

When considering specifically who was and was not shown as a victim in the cartoons and which victims cartoonists expressed sympathy towards, I found evidence that this component of hostile humour differently shaped characterizations of the three premiers. However, similarities between the three premiers exist in the fact that cartoonists always showed these politicians as deserving of the violence being directed at them.

Violence in the cartoons was represented as a normal and natural aspect of the political process. This can be seen by the fact that cartoonists never used humour to critique the hostile nature of politics. They also never showed remorse for the victims of this hostility in their cartoons if these victims were politicians. The only individuals who cartoonists saw as undeserving victims of violence were Albertans. However, I found that men were significantly overrepresented as visually constituting the Alberta public in these cartoons.

As I noted in the "Characterizations" subsection, male bodies were used by cartoonists to represent the collective interests of Alberta when cartoonists depicted Rachel Notley. When considering themes of victimization in the cartoons, I also found that the bodies of men were then used to represent the undeserving victims of the political decisions made by Notley. For instance, an *Edmonton Journal* cartoon captioned "Binding Agreement" presented Rachel Notley standing, along with the politicians Barack Obama, Justin Trudeau and Stephon Dion, in front of a man wearing a hard hat labeled "oil jobs" drawn with his hands tied in front of him and his mouth gagged shut. The group of political leaders then agrees to tie his hands behind his back in case the man wiggles loose. Along with other liberal or "progressive" political leaders, Notley is seen to be harming those who work in the oil and gas industry, represented as a male (Mayes 2015g). Notley was also drawn as a tiny dog biting the behind of an Alberta cowboy who wondered "why we were so mad at the Tories" (Rodewalt 2015c). In this sense, hostile humour highlights Notley's putatively negative relationship with the broader Alberta public.

Even if men are not directly harmed by Notley, they are shown as suffering to some extent under Notley's leadership. For instance, Notley was drawn walking along the Energy East Pipeline—as if she was walking a tightrope—while supporting a man representing Alberta on her shoulders. She tells the man "not bad for a rookie eh?" To which the man responds with the words, "East is that way" while pointing in the opposite direction (Mayes 2015e). According to the man who stands for Alberta, the premier is taking the province, and its people, in the wrong direction by bungling pipeline policy. Similarly, in a three-panel cartoon, Notley tells a male service worker that "all employees deserve a minimum of $15 per hour." The worker then goes on to relay this information to his male boss, only to be replaced by a self-serve checkout machine (Mayes 2016c). The alleged harm caused by a higher minimum wage is received by a male worker, suggesting either that men represent the majority of minimum wage earners (which is not the case), or that, once again, men stand for the Alberta collectivity. In another example,

Notley sits at the front end of a boat shouting "Stroke…Stroke… Stroke…" as an exhausted man representing "job-killing minimum wage increases" paddles forward while another equally-tired man representing "job-creating tax credits" rows in the opposite the direction (Mayes 2015f). Finally, a cartoonist drew Notley—pregnant with the Alberta budget—being escorted by a discouraged man who thinks to himself "gawd, I hope it's not ugly" (Rodewalt 2015d). While these cartoons do not directly cast Notley as hostile, they do position her in opposition to Alberta goals and interests, cast as the exclusive purview of men. These images collectively show that, rather than providing substantial critiques of Notley's positions on policies, cartoonists tended to draw Notley as causing harm and discomfort to Albertans as a result of her positions. They also uphold principals of frontier masculinity as they argue that a women government leader from a perceived left-of-center party works to hinder male goals and interests.

Violence directed at the premiers was commonly constructed as a normal and natural part of the political process. For instance, Notley was shown tied up and about to be pulled down a cliff (Mayes 2016d), and as being disturbed by angry protesters (Rodewalt 2015e). A cartoon about Stelmach places the premier at a complaints office, appearing bruised and worn down. He is told by a staff member that "conservatives are usually pretty safe in this town, maybe you did something to tick somebody off" (Rodewalt 2007b). Likewise, in response to the 2012 election, Redford was depicted as awaiting decapitation from a male executioner representing the Wildrose party (Mayes 2012b, see Figure 6). Rather than critiquing the individuals in these cartoons for directing violence at the two premiers, cartoonists commended the perpetrators of violence for taking appropriate action on behalf of opponents or the public

Figure 6: Failed Decapacitation

This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions. Figure 5, a cartoon by Malcolm Mayes, can be accessed at Artizans.com or using the following link:

There were very few individuals whom cartoonists deemed deserving of violence from Notley, Redford, and Stelmach. The only people who did fit into this category were other politicians. For instance, during the 2012 election, a cartoon showed Alison Redford engaging in physical combat with Wildrose Party leader Daniel Smith. By suggesting that the only deserving victims of violence in political cartoons are politicians themselves, political cartoonists normalized the association with violence and political leadership.

Overall, the data reveal that the two female premiers, Alison Redford and Rachel Notley, were more likely to be the recipients of hostile humour than was the male premier, Ed Stelmach. However, differences between the two female premiers were also found. Redford was more likely than Notley to be the recipient of hostile humour. Notley was more likely to be featured in political cartoons than Redford and Stelmach, and to be the recipient of hostile humour that highlighted her allegedly antagonistic relationship with the Alberta public.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

These research findings provide important insights into the ways in which hostile humour is employed as a form of gendered political rhetoric in Alberta political cartoons. All three premiers studied received a substantial number of hostile humour references, thereby supporting the gendered mediation thesis by demonstrating that politics is associated with aggression and acts of violence. However, as is noted by gendered mediation scholars, women and men are not represented as equals in these violent narratives.

The two women premiers were in general more likely than the equivalent man to be the targets of hostile humour. However, hostile humour in political cartoons is complex and multifaceted. Direct references to the hostile humour themes initially considered, notably insult and embarrassment, were never found in the corpus of cartoons about Alberta premiers. Instead, the violence was physical and communicated in a nuanced way by cartoonists. This is seen by the fact that, rather than having violence directly occur in the frame of the cartoon, the impending threat of physical violence was the most often employed vehicle of hostile humour. Depending on the individual studied, the violence depicted had the capacity to highlight perceived feelings of animosity between the politician and the broader Alberta public.

As I demonstrated, political cartoonists used hostile humour to enforce what is and is not politically acceptable in Alberta and thus created a hierarchy of political actors that was mediated

by both gender and political party. At the top of this hierarchy was former Progressive Conservative Party premier Ed Stelmach. While sixteen percent of cartoons did show Stelmach as the recipient of hostile humour, cartoonists used this form of humour to emphasize Stelmach's ignorance rather than to characterize him as antagonistic to Albertans or their wellbeing. Indeed, cartoonists avoided positioning Stelmach in relation to the Alberta public. In contrast, hostile humour became synonymous with the relationships that Alison Redford and Rachel Notley had with the Alberta public. Hostile humour, when applied to Alison Redford, was used to cast her as threatening to the viewer of the cartoon. However, the removal of a physical representation of a victim minimizes the extent to which Redford's actions are perceived as threatening. Finally, Rachel Notley exists at the bottom of this hierarchy. The hostile humour directed at Notley differs from Redford's in that it characterizes Notley's relationship with the broader Alberta public, a public that is often constructed as male, as negative and violent. Hostile humour presents Notley as the unapologetic instigator of violence and as a threat to the interests of men. She is also more likely to be the subject of violence from another person as opposed to an event or her own misdoings, suggesting that violence directed at Notley from another person is acceptable and even humorous.

Victimization was also an important theme in the corpus. Cartoonists constructed two vastly different types of victims in the cartoons. One group was the undeserving victims of violence intended to be the recipients of sympathy and compassion by the reader. The undeserving victims in the cartoons were the Alberta electorate who suffered because of the actions of its leaders. The other group was the deserving victims of violence. These deserving victims were always represented the politicians in the cartoons. Of the three politicians studied, Notley was most likely to be subjected to this form of violence.

These findings, and my analysis of them, contributes to the research on humour, gendered political communication and political cartoons in three ways. First, mine is the first project to critically examine the linkages between hostility, gender and Canadian political humour, revealing that hostility is a key component of political humour. This research also adds specifically to the study of Alberta politics by illustrating the cultural linkages between humour, violence, gender and political agency in Alberta.

Second, this thesis builds on the previous work of gendered mediation scholars who demonstrate that metaphors of aggression and hostility dominate political news coverage. I have

shown that in the same hostility exists present in political humor. As do gendered mediation scholars, I note that, in humour, this commonly accepted hostility associated with politics affects political actors differently and is mediated by both a politician's gender and their political party. Notably, the hostile humour directed at Notley, Redford and Stelmach differentiated greatly in its content.

Finally, I provided valuable insights to the ways in which political cartoons communicate humour. While past research on political cartoons acknowledges humour as an important element of cartoons, limited research has focused on how humour is developed in these images. In this thesis, I conceptualized four ways in which hostile humour is manifested in cartoons— characterizations of the premier as threatened or threatening; being humiliated, insulted, embarrassed or physically hurt; nature of violence is directed at the premier; and representations of the nature of victimhood— illustrating the complex ways in which hostility is communicated through humour in political cartoons.

The findings of this analysis underscore the need to take the content of political humour seriously and for future research to consider how humour mediates the normalization of violence in politics. The fact that humour is often not seen as something that is meant to be taken seriously means that the societal effects of humour are likely to go uncriticized. Wilson (1979) points to the double-bind of humour stating that "the joke content presents serious abuse, while the joke form implies levity and unserious interoperation" (191). In the concluding chapter, I further discuss the implications of the findings of the thesis and suggest opportunities for further research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

While Canada has had eleven female premiers, little attention has been paid to how they have been laughed at. Indeed, discussions about the gendered and often violent nature of Canadian political humour remain largely underdeveloped in Canadian political science. This thesis examined the role of humour in perpetuating and normalizing violent narratives about politics, and especially about women political leaders. The infamous event concerning the image of Rachel Notley's face as a target for golfers combined with Wildrose Party leader Brian Jean's allegedly "humorous" comments about "beating" the premier offer evidence of the disturbing intersections between humour and violence. The recent discussions concerning violence, gender and political participation that have taken place more broadly across Canada and around the world illustrate a greater need to consider how narratives surrounding violence, victimization, and the political space are constructed.

By conducting content and discourse analysis of 154 political cartoons, I found that the two female premiers included in this study, Alison Redford and Rachel Notley, were more likely than their male comparator, Ed Stelmach, to be the recipients of hostile humour. Furthermore, hostile humour in political cartoons is complex, multifaceted, and layered with gendered meanings. Discourse analysis revealed that each of the three individuals received different types of hostile references, all tending to reinforce the idea that the ideal politician in Alberta is male and conservative. The findings of this thesis reinforce arguments made by gendered mediation scholars by showing how men are constructed as by the media as the preferred type of politician. They also mirror cultural discourse in Alberta as they reinforce notions of frontier masculinity insofar as cartoonists were more likely to direct hostile humour themes at Rachel Notley, whose gender and political party situate her as in conflict with the dominant cultural rhetoric of Alberta. As a result, these potent political texts ("editorials in pictures") crafted a hierarchy of political acceptability within the content of the Alberta political humour.

This hierarchy becomes evident by evaluating the presentations of Notley and Redford. While they are similar in that they are both female, their assent as female leaders of two different political parties, one that was perceived as right-of-center and the other as left-of-center, shapes

the ways in which hostile humour is applied. Notley received hostile humour references that portrayed her as having an aggressive relationship with the Alberta public. The humour also illustrated a level of collective animosity among Albertans towards Notley as premier. I argue that this finding results from the fact that Notley challenges two aspects of ascribed political normalcy in Alberta. First, she is a woman and therefore deviates from the standard male norm in politics broadly. Second, she is the leader of a left-of-center party and as a result, challenges the conservative status-quo in Alberta politics.[3]

Considering that Redford and Notley have been the recipient of a significant number of violent threats from members of the public, I argue that the humour communicated by political cartoonists published in *The Edmonton Journal* and *The Calgary Herald* legitimated these violent discussions. Cartoons featuring tropes of violence often placed Redford and Notley as the antagonist who was in conflict with the needs and values of Alberta citizens. Additionally, not only were Notley's behaviours more intensely assessed but, by showing Notley as the recipient of violence and aggression, cartoonists demonstrated that Notley's actions were the subjects of retaliation.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Hostility in the political sphere continues to be an important subject of discussion and research. This thesis has shone a light on how humour reinforces notions of violence in political rhetoric. As I have demonstrated through this analysis, hostile humour is multifaced and complex. More research is needed in order to fully understand how violence towards women and men is normalized and perhaps even reified through humour.

Attention needs to be paid to the interpretation and reception of hostile humour in political cartoons. While research has demonstrated that hostile humour is not considered funnier than other types of humour (Chan et al. 2016), studying the effects of hostile humour in the Canadian political context presents an important avenue for new research. How does the use of hostile humour shape public perceptions of the targeted politician? Does exposure to hostile political humour make an individual more aggressive towards the politician presented? Does

[3] Elizabeth Gidengil, Joanna Everitt and Susan Banducci (2009) have also suggested that the further to the left a politician fell on the political spectrum, the more likely they were to be presented in stereotypically feminine ways thus further suggesting that political party can serve as a mediate for the types of coverage a politician receives.

exposure to hostile humour affect an individual's likelihood to vote for the targeted politician? What effects does the use of hostile humour have on individuals considering running for political office, particularly women and those representing left-of-center parties? Addressing these questions could reveal important insights into how hostile humour shapes the political process.

The regional dynamics of hostile humour also need to be considered. As this thesis only considered political cartoons that were published in Alberta newspapers, it is unclear if these cartoons express a broader acceptance of hostile humour in Canada or if these images were simply present because the regional political culture of Alberta allowed them to be perceived as funny. Further scholarship is needed to consider how other provinces in Canada incorporate hostile humour into their own political rhetoric. Attention should be paid especially to provinces that have seen a woman become premier, allowing a broader comparative analysis of the ways in which hostile humour is constructed and directed towards women and men. Were the findings of this thesis reflective of the Albertan frontier masculine culture or do they speak more broadly to the reality of being a politician in Canada?

To fully understand how hostile humour is integrated into political humour in Canada, it would be fruitful to examine how forms of political humour other than editorial cartoons have employed the use of hostile tropes and images. Possible avenues of research include looking at humour in television political satire shows or how aggressive tropes in humour are employed in online political humour such as through the circulation of memes and videos.

While this research has highlighted that hostile humour was an important component of the cartoons assessed, it is not clear if this finding is simply reflective of the beliefs and values of the cartoonists used in this analysis. Additionally, this study only considered the presentations of three Canadian premiers. Are other political leaders just as likely to be the recipients of hostile humour as were Rachel Notley, Alison Redford, and Ed Stelmach? By considering a greater sample size and a more diverse set of political cartoonists, there provides a more comprehensive way of addressing the hostile nature of Canadian political humour.

Finally, as humour exists as a means to both reinforce and contest common values (Mackie 1990), researchers need to take into consideration how humour can exist as a pathway to challenge conventionally accepted notions about the hostility of the Canadian political sphere. Do all sources of political humour accept hostility as a normal element of political commentary?

Is it possible that humour can assist in creating counter-narratives that defy these conventional discussions?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Violence in politics not simply affects the individual targeted but also serves as a warning for other women against engaging in politics (Krook and Sanín 2016). The findings of this thesis are particularly concerning as they illustrate the centrality of violence as a key theme in Alberta political humour. It is worth noting that, during my research, I could not find any signs of backlash from the public towards the hostile cartoons circulated by the newspapers such as through the use of op-ed pieces and letters to the editor. Additionally, most of the cartoons studied were then published on the website www.artizans.com, making them even more accessible to the public.

Political cartoonists were significantly more likely to use humour to reinforce notions of hostility to women in politics and as a result, reflected highly gendered discourses that normalized the agency of men in politics and situated women as outsiders to political life. In doing so, despite the physical presence of women as provincial leaders, political cartoonists still worked to delegitimatize these women's roles as political actors through the use of hostile humour. By accentuating violence with humour, cartoonists further normalized violence towards premiers studied. These findings are particularly troubling. The fact that Notley and Redford were the recipients of violence from Albertans illustrated them as submissive to the authority of Albertans. More importantly, the fact that humour was consistently applied to these instances showed that cartoonists commonly associated amusement and enjoyment with the image of a woman being dominated.

Despite its potent nature, the idea that humour is not meant to be taken seriously excuses these violent, sexist remarks by representing them as harmless. They are simply dismissed as "just jokes." However, as I have shown in this thesis, the hostile and violent ideation directed at women politicians in political cartoons is a key theme of the humour reflected in Alberta political cartoons. This rhetoric produced by the cartoons is much more than just "a thing of humour." Rather, these characterizations exist as a "thing of violence" aimed at women political leaders.

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APPENDIX

CODEBOOK

Name of Premier and Case ID:	
Value	**Included**
Characteristics of Premier	
Subordination	
Control	
Passive	
Threatening to men	
Conventional Hostile Humour Themes Directed at Premier	
Humiliation	
Insult	
Embarrassment	
Physically hurt	
Physically hurt (incoming)	
Nature of Violence Directed at Premier	
Occurring as a result of a person (imagined)	
Occurring as a result of a person (visible)	
Incoming/anticipated	
Other	
Victimization	
The Perpetuator of Violence to a Deserving Victim	
The Perpetuator of Violence to an Undeserving Victim	
The Deserving Victim	
The Undeserving Victim	
Other	