

MULTI-MODAL DISCOURSE HISTORICAL APPROACH TO ANALYZING NEGATIVE POLITICAL ADVERTISING

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1. Introduction

Within 24 hours of Justin Trudeau being elected leader of the Liberal Party of Canada on April 14, 2013, the governing Conservative Party launched a suite of attack ads against the eldest son of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, questioning his judgement and experience (Visser 2013). While the ads minimise Justin Trudeau's accomplishments and exploit decontextualized footage to sensationalise misattributed statements, a minor backlash against the ads also tapped into public perception that the ads were latently homophobic, or at least called Trudeau's masculinity into question (Ditchburn 2013).

In deploying the 'attack ad' genre of political advertising, the producers attempt to tap into Canadian anxieties about manhood and modernity for Conservative benefit. While the overall effectiveness of such ads is undeterminable given the potential for longer-term subconscious impacts on voters (Fridkin Kahn and Kenney 1999, Geer and Geer 2003), I employ Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) Discourse-Historical Approach of Critical Discourse Analysis and draw from Baldry and Thibault's (2007) Multimodal Text Analysis to examine (1) how the linguistic and other auditory-visual resources interact in the argumentation process to advance a message that is politically meaningful; and (2) how the ads navigate variable hegemonic norms among their differing target audiences in Francophone and Anglophone television markets. Discussion also explores the place of the ads in shifting acceptable public discourse on the topic of accommodating religious and cultural minorities in Canada.

2. Method

In addition to its theoretical alignment with critical theory, Wodak defines the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as concerned with the internal inconsistencies within a given text and with elucidating the persuasive or manipulative construction of a piece of discourse (2009:64). Consequently it is a natural choice for analyzing political advertising due to its ubiquitous persuasive and manipulative purpose.

One of the significant benefits to DHA is also its compatibility with multiple unique methods, primarily seeking utility for tackling specific discourse problems (2009: 65). In the case of analyzing a television attack ad, with its multimodal construction of meaning, drawing on visual, kinetic, auditory, and linguistic forms, extra-linguistic systems of analysis are also required, not for the sake of going beyond language, but to see how linguistic forms are complemented by other modalities in the construction of ostensibly persuasive discourse. Baldry and Thibault (2006) have consolidated a body of functionalist approaches to language, semiosis, and meaning making to create a systematic means for transcribing and analyzing multimodal texts. The approach breaks down a text based on the visual, kinesic, and auditory elements. These paradigms, along

with shots of the visual image for reference, appear in columns that unfold against a diachronic axis subdivided into seconds (or other appropriate units of time over which meaningful change occurs from one unit to the next). An additional column provides metafunctional commentary, noting how the data complement one another in the construction of distinctive meanings. Rather than being subdivided into units of time, the metafunctional column is divided into phases, which Baldry and Thibault describe as a 'set of copatterned semiotic selections that are codeployed in a consistent way over a given stretch of text' (2006:47). Identifying phases in a text, then, seeks to identify where various semiotic resources are being deployed to advance specific meanings in a particular segment of space-time within the text. Subphases may also occur where a phase with an identifiable larger meaning is generated through the sequencing of two or more smaller phases with their own particular meanings. At the level of the phase, the stratification of the integration of various semiotic resources is analyzed for its experiential, interpersonal-orientational, textural, and (when relevant) logical-transitional function for the viewer (Baldry and Thibault 2006:226).

Multimodal Text Analysis (MTA) is most useful to a DHA project in the text-specific operations of the analysis. Central to DHA is the principle of triangulation, which attempts to develop a more refined understanding of the text in question by examining its context across four distinct facets: (1) its text-internal context; (2) its inter-discursive¹ context; (3) its 'context of situation,' or relation to the norms of institutional, social, or genre frames; and (4) its 'broader socio-political and historical context' (Reisigl and Wodak 2009:93). For the texts in questions, these facets reflect (1) the meaning making processes within the ad itself; (2) the relationship of those discourses drawn on in the text to larger, text-external discourses; (3) the relationship of the text to the attack ad sub-genre; and (4) the Canadian political climate, and the history of hegemonic masculinities in Canada. Each of these facets shall be investigated at length in the discussion of the results.

2.1 Data

Each of the three ads run to 30 seconds in length. Two of the ads focus at least nominally on the topic of judgement, one in English and one in French. The third ad is in English with no French counterpart, focussing on the topic of experience. All three ads are narrated by an unseen man's voice that guides the audience through the argumentation advanced by a combination of TV interview and news footage, sound effects and instrumental accompaniments, as well as written text of quoted material, titles, lists, and references.

While all of the ads share similarities, each fuses the previously noted elements in unique ways to produce slight variations on a common, overarching topic: That Justin Trudeau is unfit to be Prime Minister. The ads also touch on distinct topics in constructing an argument in support of their shared purpose, and it's from these topics (and their respective languages) that the ads take their names: *Judgement*, *Jugement*, and

¹ For the sake of clarity, 'discourse' should be understood herein to be 'primarily topic-related' rather than as language-in-context, per Reisigl and Wodak (2009:90).

Experience.

Judgement and *Experience* both contain seven (sub)phases, though the internal organization of both ads is relatively unique, drawing on different texts and discourses to support their respective topics. *Experience* is a ‘contrast ad’ per Goldstein and Freedman (2002), comparing Trudeau and Harper, while both *Judgement* and *Jugement* are ‘pure negative’ spots, focussing on negative evaluations of Trudeau without reference to any other actor.

While one might expect both judgement-focussed ads to be relatively equivalent to one another with respect to their meaning making processes, the number of phases varies between the two, with *Jugement* containing only five (sub)phases, suggesting that each ad conveys (at least slightly) different means for relating Trudeau’s judgement to his unsuitability for high office. Furthermore, the variance between the two judgement-themed ads demonstrates that the message conveyed to Anglophone audiences varies from that conveyed through francophone media in Québec.

Both ads begin with the same footage of Trudeau from an interview with Patrick Legacé from November 24, 2010 on Télé-Québec’s, *Les francs-tireurs*. In the slow-motion footage, Trudeau’s gaze is focussed above the camera, avoiding eye contact with the viewer as he inhales gradually and exhales with an abrupt sigh, consisting of a single shot and constituting the initial metafunctional interpretation phase of both ads. Both versions then transition to footage of Trudeau at a charity auction where he is seen walking up and down a catwalk, gradually removing his blazer and shirt. Both ads feature three subphases within the second phase, with the first (2a) featuring both text and narration that calls Trudeau’s judgement into question and establishes the frame for the larger phase, the second subphase (2b) features text and narration calling Trudeau’s commitment to Canadian federalism into question, and the third (2c) focuses on the rights of women in the face of a perceived threat of ‘cultural violence.’

What distinguishes the ads are two supplemental phases in the English variant, which proceeds into a third phase featuring footage from a much older interview with Trudeau in which he appears to describe Quebecers as ‘better’ than the rest of Canadians, and a fourth phase in which the narrator provides interpretation of Trudeau’s comments overtop of video from the previous auction news footage, linking the comments to a lack of judgement on Trudeau’s part. In the same time-space of the French version, subphase 2b is extended with audio of Trudeau stating he would ‘think about making Quebec a country,’ potentially supporting the narrator’s earlier claim.

Both versions close with the same final phase featuring slow-motion video from the Télé-Québec interview of Trudeau sighing with his name appearing spelled out in cursive script by a flash of sparkles and a coda-like statement by the narrator re-stating Trudeau’s name, followed by the tagline, ‘he’s in way over his head.’ The Conservative Party logo features prominently in the lower right quadrant of the shot, along with a web address designed to support the ads’ central message while containing a play on Trudeau’s first name, ‘justinoverhishead.ca.’ Text required by Canada’s political advertising laws also appears at the bottom of the screen in extremely small type, noting the ad was funded and authorized by an agent of the Conservative Party of Canada.

The *Experience* ad follows a different trajectory. The initial phase features the same footage as that of the judgement-focussed ads with changes to the script to meet the ad’s unique purpose. The first subphase (1a) introduces Trudeau as a topic, while the

second (1b) calls his experience into question with respect to the credentials necessary of a Prime Minister. The second phase, however, transitions to various footage of Stephen Harper, with the first subphase (2a) containing that footage within a blue frame, indexing the Conservative party, while a list of accomplishments scrolls upward from the bottom of the screen and the narrator draws a contrast between Harper and Trudeau. The second subphase (2b) abandons the blue sensory border and transitions to footage of Harper speaking with U.S. President Barack Obama, while the list of accomplishments reaches the top of the screen and remains stationary thereafter. The third phase features a split screen, with Harper to the right, visible behind the list of accomplishments that has shifted to the right to cover the previous footage, while the left of the screen is taken up by slow-motion footage of Trudeau removing his shirt at the charity auction described earlier. Super-imposed over Trudeau is the text ‘And Justin Trudeau?’ that is echoed by the narrator, which subsequently scrolls upward, followed by a list of Trudeau’s allegedly incommensurate experience. The fourth phase shifts to footage of Trudeau alone from the charity auction, performing an elaborate bow in front of purple curtains. The text ‘can he really run Canada’s economy?’ appears superimposed over the shot, while the narrator provides evaluative commentary. The fifth and final phase echoes that of the judgement ads, featuring the same slow-motion footage, logo, text, tagline, and narration, fastening a link between all three ads in addition to their shared intetextual resources.

3. Results

3.1 Discourse Topics

Figure 1 illustrates the interplay of the principal discourse topics contained in all of the three ads as a whole, and the field of action in which they are located.

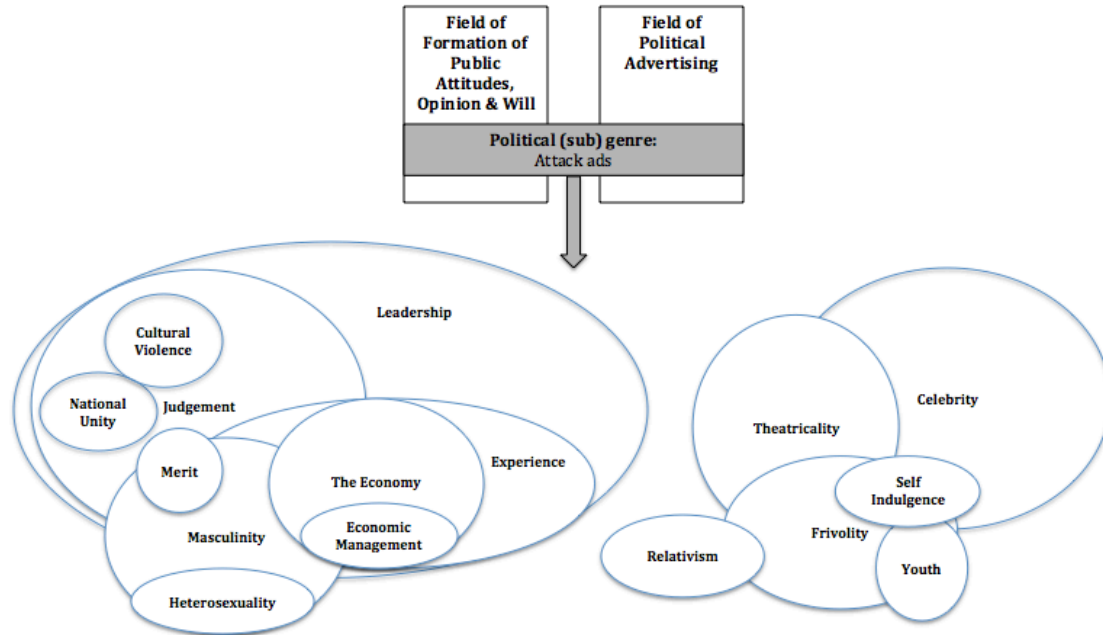
Two distinct clusters of discourse topics are immediately apparent, one centred on the topic of leadership, the other on the topic of celebrity. The cleavage is significant, as further analysis will illustrate how discourses of celebrity and their related discourse topics are systematically constructed as being outside of the confines of leadership qualities and inherently connected to Justin Trudeau, while the positive attributes contained in the leadership cluster are both implicitly and explicitly projected onto Stephen Harper.

Within the confines of the discourse on leadership, judgement and experience are predictably two dominant themes, with each English-language ad focussing on one or the other topic as they both construct a narrative of effective, acceptable leadership.

3.2 Multimodal Construction of Canadian Leadership

In all of the ads, the juxtaposition of the predications to the question ‘But does he have the X to be Prime Minister?’ with its initial contrastive conjunction infers that these predications are indicative of poor judgement and deficient experience. Because of the texts multi-modal nature, the predication and argumentation strategies are not solely pursued through aural testimony, but rather also through visual and non-linguistic auditory cues.

Figure 1: Discourse topics in the attack ads against Justin Trudeau



With the rhetorical structure defined by questioning whether Trudeau has certain qualities assumed to be prerequisites of leadership, the predications about Trudeau form the evidence for the argumentation process, with each predication eliciting *topoi*, or certain premises, that connect the argument to the conclusion of Trudeau's deficiency from the standard of leadership. The use of questions in the first phase of each ad serves to mitigate whatever status Trudeau is deemed to have (which has been minimized to having a 'famous last name') and, as discussed in preceding text, the use of contrastive conjunctions in the questions especially suggests a conclusion that is discordant with the initial positive (though loaded) trait attributed to him.

Experience uses its contrastive narrative structure to depict Trudeau as a deficient leader in comparison to Stephen Harper, whose predications all speak to leadership and the economy. At the outset of the ad's second phase, Harper is named specifically 'Prime Minister Harper,' evoking the *topos* of incumbency supporting the phases' claim that Harper has experience. A marquee of Harper's ostensive accomplishments simultaneously rolls up the screen, including such measures as '900,000 new jobs since the recession,' 'strongest job creation record in the G7,' 'Cut the GST,' and '\$100 per child tax credit,' all appearing in upper case sans-serif font. Meanwhile, the accompanying narration explains:

- (1) 01: Prime Minister (*)Harper has focused on the e(*)co:nomy and cre(*)ating jobs
02: through tough ti:mes a:nd into the recovery

The visual collocation of video of Harper superimposed over a blue backdrop creates a sensory coding orientation that brings the viewer outside of the naturalistic object of their

gaze. The blue colour indexes the Conservative Party, as it has consistently used the colour in its logos, literature and signage, while the abstractness of the backdrop introduces an idealized, hyperreal textural metafunction. The font once again conveys straightforward, serious qualities and forms a covariate tie with the prime ministerial frame activated by the narrator's initial question, while the scroll effect triggers a sense of abundance. The framing positions the viewer as an observer to Harper's competent and purposeful action, as he appears first wearing a hard hat and inspecting an industrial setting, and in the subsequent shot walking briskly with his wife, Laureen.

Subphase 2b provides a transition from the ideal to the natural world, positioning Harper as both ideal and relatable. In the new shot, the hyperreal blue backdrop disappears as Harper appears perched on a ledge in front of abundant shrubbery, engaged in an intimate conversation with US President, Barack Obama, though his face is never visible. Their proximity and business-casual attire signals an intimate conversation, while Obama's presence indexes Canada's relationship with the United States. With Obama's back to the camera, the viewer is positioned as an observer on a private moment, while Harper's gaze, position, and forward-moving camera position invites the viewer to participate.

Each of the measures included in the marquee are both claims in their own right as well as supporting the phase's primary claim that Harper has the experience to be Prime Minister. The narration likewise supports this larger claim by articulating several premise claims that Harper has focused on the economy and creating jobs; that he has done so through tough times; and that he has done so into a recovery. A mutually reinforcing relationship between the spoken and written claims rests on a topos of economic recovery as well as fallacies of causation that presume such a recovery to be attributable to Harper's tenure because of their concurrence. The association of claims about the GST and child tax benefit to any notion of economic recovery and job creation also rely on a neoliberal topos of low taxation improving the climate for business that in turn results in job creation, without which the claims would be simple non-sequiturs. The subsequent visual and auditory content in the second subphase activate topoi of trade, relationship, and engagement that add complexity to the representation of leadership exemplified by Harper.

Significantly, the second shot of the phase, featuring Harper and his wife, introduces new topoi of marriage and heterosexuality due to Harper's foregrounded marital and heterosexual status. The corresponding lack of acknowledgement of Trudeau's marital status or sexual orientation renders it undetermined to the audience in contrast to the definitively heterosexual Harper. While the ad does not feature any arguments actively disavowing the capacity of women to be leaders or to become Prime Minister, the two social agents whose leadership is being evaluated are both men, creating a *de facto* focus on men's leadership, bringing masculinity into relevance within the narrative. Through the collocation of Stephen and Laureen Harper, their contrasting gender presentations also affirms the boundaries between men and women, affirming Stephen's masculinity and Laureen's femininity simultaneously. The topos of heterosexual marriage, by virtue of heteronormative social mores, then reinforces Stephen Harper's masculine image further, while its collocation with discourses of economic management connects masculinity and heterosexuality to the idealized form of leadership constructed by the ad.

Both of the other ads focus on Trudeau as the principal social actor and foreground judgement as a condition of leadership, constructing the notion of ‘good judgement’ in relation to attitudes toward Québec sovereignty, the severity of rhetoric used to describe culturally contested forms of violence, and attitudes towards different regions of Canada. As more purely negative ads, they rely on the narrator’s pitch and volume to convey the ostensive absurdity of Trudeau’s judgement calls, prior to the narrator’s concluding negative evaluation. By diminishing Trudeau’s judgement based on the examples cited in the text, the model of good judgement implicit within the text is premised on three topoi, including a rejection of Québec sovereignty, a hardline on the question of cultural accommodation, and a belief in regional equality, though this latter topos is omitted from the French version of the ad.

Both ads also spend considerable time on the topic of ‘cultural violence,’ premised on a fallacy of presupposition that some forms of violence against women are linked to certain non-hegemonic cultures in North America, while other forms of violence against women are *not* culturally based. The use of the adjective ‘cultural’ marks these forms of violence against women, attributing them to an exotic ‘other.’

While the English version of the ad only refers to ‘cultural violence against women,’ the French version lists ‘*soi-disant crimes d’honneur* [so-called honour crimes]’ and names the Conservatives as those describing cultural violence as ‘barbaric.’ By fixing violence against women to the cultural practices of an ‘other,’ the ad, and conservative government discourse more generally, exploits moral outrage to justify cultural evaluations that ultimately motivate the disdainful rebuke of Trudeau’s criticism of the word ‘barbaric.’

3.3 Trudeau’s Deficient Leadership

Just as linguistic, visual, and auditory resources combine to construct the model of masculine leadership against which Trudeau is judged, so too do they work in concert to construct his deficiencies.

The use of non-linguistic resources, in particular, is used to advance certain predications about Trudeau that would be otherwise politically dangerous to articulate. For instance, text of Trudeau’s name appears on the screen not only in cursive script, but also accompanied by sparkles and the high-pitched scale of a wind-chime, and collocated with an image of Trudeau. This occurs both as Trudeau is introduced as the primary topic of the ads in the opening 2 seconds and in the ad’s summary conclusion in the final 4 seconds of each ad. In both of these scenarios, the accompanying video footage is of a close shot of Trudeau’s face that has been slowed down as he sighs and gazes upward, above the corresponding gaze of the audience. The script and sound effects evoke notions of refinement, delicateness, softness that form an indexical chain association with femininity, while the manipulation of the video evokes a sense that Trudeau is either lost in thought or exasperated by his interlocutor. Together these resources construct a predication of Trudeau as effete and self-involved.

Also notable in all of the ads, the narrator at some point laughs when offering some kind of evaluative commentary. In *Experience*, the laughter accompanies the question ‘and now he thinks he can run Canada’s economy?,’ while in *Judgement* it appears twice, once when introducing Trudeau as the topic, and again accompanying the

statement ‘yes, nothing says good judgement like saying one region is better than another,’ rendering its implicit sarcasm indubitable. In its French equivalent, the laughter accompanies the narrator’s final evaluation, ‘*il nest pas à la hauteur.*’ The collective impact of this laughter evokes a sense that not only is Trudeau’s experience or judgement laughable, but that he himself is a laughable candidate for Prime Minister.

Finally, all of the ads open with the factive presupposition that Trudeau inherited a ‘famous last name,’ and it is in contrast to this predication that the questions about his judgement and experience are posed. Notably, the fame is not attributed to Trudeau himself, but rather to his name, something that he has inherited, conceding only his pedigree as pertaining to the office of Prime Minister, while each ad subsequently questions Trudeau’s suitability for the office based on his character and merit. While fame is not necessarily a negative attribute, in the context created in the ads it is used to underscore Trudeau’s privilege and elite status.

The contrast established between Trudeau and Harper in the *Experience* ad is represented visually in its third phase by a split-screen that juxtaposes the two leaders. The previous shot of Harper is frozen with his list of his economic credentials superimposed on his image, while footage from Trudeau’s appearance at a charity fundraiser is used, depicting him walking up a catwalk and gradually removing his clothes. Circus-like music plays simultaneously, conveying a sense of spectacle when paired with the visual strip tease. The Narrator’s speech underscores the contrast to the expectations of the economic frame.

- (2) 05 And Justin Trudeau?
 06 Well (.) he’s been a camp counsellor.
 07 A white water rafting instructor.
 08 A *drama* teacher for two years.
 09 A member of parliament with one of the *worst* attendance records.
 10 And *no:w* he thinks he can run Canada’s *economy*?

Lines 05 - 09 list a number of Trudeau’s past occupations each without any relevance to economic management. Once again, the list scrolls upward, mirroring the abundance triggered in the previous phase, but this time representing the irrelevance of Trudeau’s experience. The narrator’s pitch also highlights the word ‘drama’ in line 08, highlighting an indexical association between Trudeau and theatricality, and ‘worst attendance records,’ indexing absence and lack.

The fourth phase underscores the pejorative themes associated with Trudeau: theatricality, frivolity, celebrity, self-absorption, and ineptitude. The split screen is replaced with footage from the same auction of Trudeau in an undershirt and trousers, this time waving his hands in a circular motion as he bows at the waist. The bow positions Trudeau as an actor concluding a performance, with the viewer positioned as an audience for his ‘act.’ The ‘spectacle’ frame is maintained with the covariate ties of Trudeau’s smirk and stripping, the ongoing circus music, camera flashes and snapping sounds added by the producers for dramatic effect. Occupying the bottom half of the centre of the screen, again in the same condensed sans-serif font evoking a serious contrast to the images of frivolity on the screen, the words ‘Can he really run Canada’s economy?’ Once again the ‘spectacle’ frame is juxtaposed against the ‘economic

management' frame, emphasizing the disparity between the discourses of leadership and theatricality.

Both *Judgement* ads draw from the same interview footage as the *Experience* ad in their first phases. The second phase of the English text once again features Trudeau walking down a catwalk. Drawing on common visuals, including Trudeau's strut, the catwalk, and additional camera flashes added with visual effects, along with recurring audio cues, including the male narrator and the circus music that also takes prominence in the judgement ads, covariate ties are constructed not only between each phase, but between the suite of ads themselves.

As in *Experience*, the narrator's initial evaluative question appears in the same condensed non-serif font, overlaid on the video of Trudeau. In the second subphase in the same font, 'I'd think of wanting to make Quebec a country' replaces the question on the screen, along with a reference to a Canadian Press story appearing in much smaller text. In a subsequent shot, Trudeau appears to remove his shirt; while the transition to the third subphase is completed, the text reads 'Trudeau blasted the Conservatives for using the term "barbaric."' Once again the quote takes prominence, with its attribution appearing in smaller, indeterminable type.

Trudeau's perceived relativism is the crux of the third subphase as he is described criticizing Conservative condemnation of cultural violence. This reproach affirms the association of Trudeau with cultural relativism, and while relativism is not an innately negative trait, it is tainted in the conservative modernist paradigm where, in this case, one's cultural background ostensibly becomes an excuse to avoid culpability for crimes. With the violence against women described in the ad already presupposed to be culturally-generated by a foreign other, Trudeau's criticism is positioned as mitigating the condemnation of a presumed agent, rather than distinguishing between perpetrators and their culture, or for that matter, a more global understanding of violence against women that situates the phenomenon within the context of Euro-American culture as well. In sum, the negative evaluation of Trudeau's criticism rests on the presumption that he condones cultural forms of violence, possibly attributable to his relativistic, intellectual perspective.

The English version of the ad includes a third phase, initiated by a red star-wipe, the star symbolic of celebrity and the colour indexing the traditional colour of the Liberal party. The wipe transitions to video footage of a much younger Trudeau responding to an interviewer outside of the visual frame. The TV Interview frame is then activated with the viewer positioned as a non-participant observer. The narrator introduces Trudeau's quote in line 06, using the comparative adverb 'even' combined with emphasis on the pronominal 'this' to intensify Trudeau's alleged lack of judgement.

- (3) 06 NR: He even said *this*
 07 JT: Quebecers (.) *are* better (.) that the rest of Canada
 08 JT: because (.) y'know (.) we're Quebecers or whatever
 09 NR: ((laughing)) Ye:s nothing says good judgement
 10 NR: like saying one region is *better* than another.

Given the disdain preceding the excerpted speech from Trudeau, viewers are intended to identify with a hypothetical 'rest of Canada,' positioned in opposition to Trudeau's

assertion of innate Quebec superiority. With the bulk of Anglophone voters residing outside of Québec, the predication of Trudeau's supposed belief in the innate superiority of Quebecers works in the context of resentment in English Canada against the Québec sovereignty movement and of the political control that was perceived to be centred in Québec under the last four Liberal Prime Ministers. Within this political social context, Trudeau's statements portray himself as a member of the Québec-based political and intellectual elite. The phase closes with another star-wipe, this time back to footage of Trudeau from the same event as in phase 2. Here, Trudeau, wearing nothing but an undershirt and slacks, waves his arms in a circular motion and bows at the waist. Trudeau's bow positions him as an actor concluding a performance, while the viewer is positioned as an audience for Trudeau's act.

The final phases, nearly identical across each of the three ads apart from their obvious language difference, act as a coda, refocussing the viewer to an overall assessment of Trudeau's abilities. The earlier slow-motion interview footage returns, along with Trudeau's name and the same visual and auditory cues as the first phase. In this final shot, however, Trudeau sighs and blinks, while the Conservative Party logo appears in the 'signature space' of the visual frame. Below his name, in the contrasting sans-serif font appears new text echoed by the narrator.

The covariate ties, such as the contrast of cursive and sans-serif scripts, Trudeau's witless gaze, and circus-like soundtrack evoke the textural themes of Trudeau as effete, ineffectual, and laughable. The overall logical-transitional metafunction conveys Trudeau to be deficient both as a prime ministerial candidate, but also through an indexical chain of associations tying leadership to masculine managerialism, deficient as a man.

4. Discussion

The text-internal argumentation process, as we have seen, emphasizes three principal topoi that validate the leadership of Stephen Harper and the Conservatives while undermining the intelligibility of Justin Trudeau as a leader. The topoi of definition frames public debate around the concepts of judgement and experience. By their own turn, these concepts are shaped not only through lexical choices and presuppositions that trigger associations with neo-liberal economic ideology and modernist economic anthropocentric managerialism, but also reinforced by the auditory and visual elements that trigger associations of progress, industry, trade, and tellingly, heterosexual marriage. These same visual cues also assist in constructing the topos of authority premised on Harper's perceived competence and the Conservative Party's decisiveness, along with the definition of Harper *as* the sitting Prime Minister, invoking his incumbency and existing status. The inferences drawn out in the text are rendered all the more powerful by significant discourses of masculinity prevalent in Francophone and Anglophone Canada respectively.

Modernist gender ideologies that affirmed male dominance with respect to various forms of technical expertise, according to Dummitt (2007), took root in Canada following the First World War and the Great Depression, stemming from the rapid growth of industrialism and the need to reaffirm the gender order following the flux that was prevalent during the war years and the Depression (2). Likewise earlier North American masculine archetypes, such as that of the 'self made man,' are also indexed by

the attack ads through their inferences about Trudeau's inherited political capital and frivolous record of public service, in contrast to Harper's construction as the embodiment of 'the manly modern' (Kimmel 2001:147, Dummitt 2007:2).

By contrast, gender discourses in Québec followed a somewhat different trajectory due in part to their early connection with the gender ideologies of 16th century France and later an agrarian-focused French-Canadian Catholic Church (Forth 2007:86, Vacante 2012:30). Confronted by the threat of assimilation following the British conquest of New France, Stanton explains that 'institutions and traditions aimed at preserving *la nation*' delayed the onset of modernity by preserving the role of the Catholic Church and the largely agrarian provincial economy (1994:77).

The death of the authoritarian Premier, Maurice Duplessis, and the Quiet Revolution that ensued throughout the 1950s not only ushered in the modern era in Québec, but also challenged modernist assumptions about the function and composition of the efficient, homogeneous, technocratic state (Johnston 2013:267). These changes also provoked a realignment of Québec's politics along the lines of sovereignty vs. federalism, drawing significant federal attention for decades to come in an effort to assuage residents of the province and maintain national unity, and ultimately provoking resentment in Canada's increasingly Anglophone western provinces that would eventually form Stephen Harper's political base (Johnston 2013:267, Behiels 2010:121-5).

Consequentially, the distinct socio-political contexts of Francophone and Anglophone audiences in Canada necessarily draw on distinct gender-infused anxieties. The French-language ad focuses more on cultural threats to Québec culture that are embodied in contemporary times by debates over cultural accommodation immigrants, while foregrounding Trudeau's deficient masculinity exemplified by his overly urbane mannerisms in contrast of early 20th century models of traditional Québec masculinity (CBC News 2008, Vacante 2012:28). The English ads, by contrast, draw tighter connections with modernist technocratic ideologies and fear of the relocation of Canada's political elite in Québec.

Not surprising, the topos of threat defines Justin Trudeau's role as spoiler to the competent, economic manager. The foregrounding of the threat of Québec separatism and a cultural 'other' that poses a threat of violence against women all feed into modernist anxieties about the instability of the state and the loss of power, whether it be at the hands of sovereignists or an outside threat. Similarly, references to Trudeau's base in Québec serve multiple ends, as it is also used to position him as an élite intellectual who risks shifting the centre of Canadian political power back to Québec, drawing on public recollection of Liberal Party dominance in the latter half of the 20th century and its preoccupation with the province throughout (Clarkson 2001:238).

With respect to their relationship to the genre of negative advertising, the Trudeau ads focus on framing the questions that will guide voter choices. Schenck-Hamlin, Procter and Rumsey (2000) highlight the importance of framing, particularly with respect to the positioning of agents and themes in a given ad, noting 'different frames produce systematic differences in viewer interpretations and evaluations of political events' (2000:54). In the Trudeau attack ads, the emphasis on the question of leadership naturally favours the incumbent, and in these texts, the models of leadership are built up around Harper's perceived strengths: his shrewd, decisive manner, his focus on the economy, and

thanks to a cameo appearance by Laureen Harper, his status as a heterosexual family man.

One of the strengths of DHA in the context of analysing multi-modal texts is that the non-linguistic predications only work through their inter-discursive power, which DHA foregrounds as a facet of analysis. Without the activation of frames that trigger indexical associations to other, socio-historically embedded discourses, non-linguistic resources play little role in the argumentation processes.

Harper's gender, for instance, is indexed in largely taken for granted ways, including most obviously his clothes and haircut, but where masculinity overlaps with discourse of economic management stems from a modernist association of masculinity with systems of rational management. Notably no women appear in this ad until Harper is depicted with his wife Laureen, and no women appear afterward. Crucially, the image of Harper walking briskly with this wife in hand conveys not only a sense of purpose, but indexes Harper's heterosexual marriage, bringing his family life into relevance in a text ostensibly about leadership, experience, and the economy.

The images of Trudeau, by contrast, all include only the Liberal leader. Even where other people are present, they have been cropped from the shot so as to focus only on Trudeau. His solo appearances function on two distinct levels, the dominant being the effort to cast Trudeau as a self-indulgent celebrity, while the other is to render his heterosexuality invisible. Repetitive associations with refinement, theatricality, and even with the predominantly French-speaking province of Québec itself also undermine Trudeau's masculinity, as Forth and Ducat note that French culture has long been associated with effeminacy in discourses of Anglo-American masculinities (Forth 2007:89-90, Ducat 2004:84).

5. Conclusion

The attack ads against Justin Trudeau draw on multiple argumentation strategies to convey his deficient leadership skills. Drawing on a topos of definition, prime ministerialism is defined by the qualities of judgement and experience, rooted in prudent economic management and the confines of the heterosexual family; The topos of authority is used to underscore Harper's own legitimacy as a national manager; and the topos of threat invokes the audience to reject the spectre of Québec sovereignty and 'cultural violence' to which Trudeau would ostensibly pander. While many of the inferences are explicit, much of the topoi that form the foundations of the argumentation strategies deployed in the ads are constructed through the predications that are evoked through the integration of visual and non-linguistic auditory resources, particularly where explicit articulation of the predications (such as those questioning Trudeau's masculinity) would likely provoke stern rebuke across the political spectrum.

Each of these strategies is premised on discourses that privilege modernist models of masculinity that carry a greater weight in English Canada due to Quebec's cultural distinctiveness and the province's comparatively short history with modernism. This is not to say that one political party is more modern or post-modern than another, rather that the imagery and discourses elaborated in the attack ads against Justin Trudeau functionally draw from a cleavage based on a rejection of a racialized post-modern

masculinity.

Embedded within this rejection is a repudiation of cultural relativism and of cultivated privilege. Again, the portrayal of Trudeau as a privileged celebrity is associated indexically to frivolity that is related through an indexical chain of associations to discourses of femininity. Consequentially, Trudeau's deficient masculinity leaves him unfit for high office.

Regardless as to whether the indexical associations drawn on in the ads are all intentional or not, the co-deployment of various meaning making tools (pitch, imagery, soundtrack, etc.) creates a text that is active across various pre-existing discourses, and draws on the historical baggage of those discourses, leading audiences to make the kinds of inferences about masculinity that have been alleged in the Canadian press. Likewise they foster cross-cultural suspicion and lay the foundation for judgements about Trudeau's sexuality without making explicit inferences.

In early 2014, the Conservatives launched another volley of attack ads against Trudeau, this time restricted to three 30-second English language ads focussing on the themes of the economy, terrorism, and Trudeau's support for legalizing marijuana. While the male narrator's voice is gone and new quotes are taken out of context, the video of Trudeau removing his clothes and the tagline of 'he's in way over his head' continues. The new ads thus perpetuate the associations of the first, more developed campaign through their intertextual relationship and the indexical association of one ad to the next.

Ultimately the success of the ads cannot be measured alone by whether the Conservatives maintain their hold on power in the upcoming 2015 federal election. The ads may still have the power to influence the parameters of prime ministerialism in the public imagination, and in this capacity their androcentric and modernist discourses may have a lasting, negative impact on the experiences of women in politics, while proscribing a more rigid model of masculinity for any man pretending to the Prime Minister's Office. Likewise, they may contribute to the power of discourses of cultural difference and the marginalization of non-white or non-Christian members of Canadian and Quebec society. Yet each of the ads speak to existing constituencies. Their most significant threat lies with that clientele, with their capacity to embolden and normalize the white 'manly modern' as the prototypical personification of Canadian nationhood.

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